

# The Effect of Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling Group and ĀNĀPĀNASATI Training on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ of College Students



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**<sup>1</sup>Abstract** The purpose of this research was to study the effect of the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and ĀNĀPĀNASATI training on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ. The research was quasi-experimental with pretest and posttest control group design. The sample included fifty one undergraduate students purposively selected into 6 groups, each consisting of six to eight members. Four experimental groups comprised two groups for the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and then ĀNĀPĀNASATI training, and two groups for the ĀNĀPĀNASATI training and then Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group. The other two were the control groups. Duration of group participation and ĀNĀPĀNASATI training was about 20 hours. The instruments used were the UPEKKHĀ Scale, the short-form PAÑÑĀ Scale, self-report, and diary. Statistical method used was MANOVA. After the experiment, qualitative data via in-depth interview was collected from seven members of the 4 experimental groups for depth analyses. The results showed that the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and

ĀNĀPĀNASATI training could increase UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ after both experiment phases. UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ scores of all the experimental groups were higher than those of the control groups after both phases, but no significant differences were found among the experimental groups. However, the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group, while increasing both UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ scores, more apparently promote PAÑÑĀ, whereas ĀNĀPĀNASATI training raised UPEKKHĀ far more remarkably than PAÑÑĀ. The quality analysis showed that after the procedure of the 1<sup>st</sup> experiment, 1<sup>st</sup> experiment group could increase only UPEKKHĀ in ALOBHA, ATOSA and AMOHA dimension, not in calmness, and could increase PAÑÑĀ in every dimension. The 2<sup>nd</sup> experiment group could increase only UPEKKHĀ in AMOHA dimension, and calmness, not in ALOBHA and ATOSA, and could increase PAÑÑĀ in every dimension. After the procedure of the 2 experiments, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> experiment group could increase UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ in every dimension

**Keywords:** Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling Group, ĀNĀPĀNASATI Training, UPEKKHĀ, PAÑÑĀ

## Buddhist Movement and Psychology

In the past two decades, Buddhist concepts have become more influential in the field of psychology. Many books amalgamating Buddhism with the microcosm of psychotherapy and counseling in the west reveal increasingly intensive influence of Buddhist concepts on psychology (Watt, 1971; Jung, 1978; Nissanka, 1993; Beszia, 1995; Goleman, 1995; Welwood, 2000; Wilber, 2000). Meditation or training of awareness has been introduced into psychological therapies; Buddhist principles have been adopted and applied as philosophical framework in psychological processes and therapies into various settings - hospitals, work organizations and education institutes, etc- or into counseling, therapies, soul

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healing, personal growth, and problem solving (Pookayaporn, 2002; Olusakin, 2005; Nissanka, 2006) as well as personal development of psychologists themselves. All this demonstrates increasing shift in the fundament of psychological concepts from West to East. The study on psychological process returns to *first person psychology* focusing on introspection, implying the movement of psychology more to Buddhist principles (Pokaeo, 2006).

The truly distinct introspection is the process of awareness practice and VIPASSANA in the Buddhist way. Not only is observing one own self from within the personal experience, but it also reflects psychological procedure applied to therapeutic and counseling process (Pokaeo, 2006).

### **Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling Group**

A Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group is the product of integration among Western theories of therapy, healing and development, Buddhist understanding of life and the world, and more than 30 years of experience in group counseling of Asst. Prof. Dr. Soree Pokaeo, Faculty of Psychology, Chulalongkorn University, all of which have been synthesized to create the method of psychological group counseling. Based on Buddhist principles as the philosophical framework within the working scope of behavioral and psychological conditions of group members, this group addresses the important aspects of personal growth and counseling that blend together harmoniously.

The Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group relies on the Buddhist concept of the Four Noble Truths covering passage and quality of life. According to this concept, living under ignorance, not understanding the truth of life and the world and unable to accept changes that occur, leads to suffering, the state of oppressed mind, and wrong thinking, action, and interaction which harm both oneself and others. In contrast, right living with understanding of life and the world brings right understanding, hence leading to inner peace. When the mind is peaceful, it has more capacity left for contemplating truths in life and the world and perspectives become more enlarged; greater peace continuously fills in the mind as the result (Pokaeo, 2001).

When peace finds its place in the mind, confusion, selfishness, bondage and ignorance will evaporate, leaving but relaxation, wideness, flexibility, etc. instead. When a person has peace in mind, his or her mind is orderly and prompt to move along each moment in life. This state of mind is called "concentrated mind." When the mind is concentrated, the owner of such a mind can blend harmoniously with life, and equanimity or UPEKKHĀ arises as the consequence (Pokaeo, 2000).

The past researches using personal growth group and Buddhist psychology developed by Asst. Prof. Dr. Soree Pokaeo as the tools in psychological development and therapy revealed the report on personal experience dimension of those who underwent the process of Buddhist counseling, including self-awareness, openness and understanding of others, understanding of life and acceptance of change, learning of problem-solving, readiness to behavior modification, courage to express oneself and do proper things, and power and encouragement to live. Moreover, they also reported on the dimension of interpersonal relationship, consisting of inner feelings, openness to other's opinions, rapport building and relationship maintaining (Jitnilwong, 2006; Srichannil, 2006; Mosikarat, 2006; Charat, 2006; Kulsueb, 2007; Thanapanich, 2007; Sookcharoen, 2007; Tonbhotong, 2007; Wijaranakul, 2007; Kiatdechpanya, 2007).

### **ĀNĀPĀNASATI Training**

ĀNĀPĀNASATI is a method of mind training that Buddha discovered and practiced until he became enlightened more than 2,500 years ago (Buddhadasa Bhikku, 1987 recorded in ĀNĀPĀNASATI Sutra, (MN.14.282). This technique aims to raise peace in mind and insightful wisdom at the same time (Buddhadasa Bhikku, 1987). The calm mind enables contemplation of both impending and invaluable issues. If the contemplation can continue the unwavering calmness, the mind can then withdraw itself from anything it is holding on to causing it to suffer (Buddhadasa Bhikku, 1990), purify grudges and impurities (Buddhadasa Bhikku, 1987), let go and return to the reality of presence happily. This enables a person to be aware of himself and inner phenomena so distinctly and

profoundly (Kenneth, 1975; cited in Satyapremananda, 1994) that he can observe any changes in the mind and know his true mind. Such a person will no longer stuck in the past or dreaming of the future but stay with every present moment, leading to constant awareness of the reality (Malila, 1997) and increasing understanding of life and the world as they are (Buddhadasa Bhikku, 1987). This person will live the equanimous mind: becoming an observer not actor (Chayasaro Bhikku, 2008).

Nowadays, ĀNĀPĀNASATI training has pervaded into several fields, including medicine, science, and psychology. In the medical and psychological areas, clients are trained to practice ĀNĀPĀNASATI along with conventional treatment, rehabilitation, and prevention (Rungkunakorn, 1999). Moreover; there are some researches applying ĀNĀPĀNASATI training as the treatment tools which compared with other psychological techniques. Those results reveal the ĀNĀPĀNASATI training could improve on personal experience dimension, including psychological stress, depression, decentering and negative reactions to repetitive thoughts. (Feldman, Greeson, & Senville, 2010; Parnitchcharlernphon, 2003; Jard-ngurn, 2000)

### **UPEKKHĀ (Equanimity)**

UPEKKHĀ or equanimity is another psychological factor derived from Buddhist principles and emerged together with the development of the type of counseling group called “Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group”.

UPEKKHĀ is a characteristic of the mind that is strong, stable, calm, unbiased, and unwavering to any expectation, rage, obsession, and fear. It is the minds that never cling to outcomes of any action, never hold on to anything to the extent of suffering, never dismiss any responsibilities, never expect only desirable consequences, and never be self-centered or self-biased. It is the gentle mind that lives with rationality, leaves all false attachment, and does everything with compassion, sympathy, and rejoice (Malila, 1982). Such a mind is ready to act, speak, and think only useful things and neglect anything wasteful (Chayasaro Bhikku, 2009) and compassionately support oneself and others without reserve (Malila, 1982). This mind is conscious, broad, flexible, aware of each moment's reality, awake, cheerful, content, and full (Malila, 1982), also wise, free and light (Pokaeo, 1997). All these mentioned qualities arise when the mind can see all things as they actually are, seeing suchness according to causes and effects, ever-changingness, not-selfness, instability, and interrelatedness of all things.

### **PAÑÑĀ**

PAÑÑĀ is a psychological factor developed by Proetphan Daensilp (2007) with the rise of the development of a counseling group called “Yonisomanasikāra Group” based on Buddhist principles.

According to PAÑÑĀ, understanding of life is the interdependence both among humans and between humans and environment. When the mind feels gratitude toward all life-supporting factors, a person reaches an awareness of his own actions that affect everything around him, making him realize that his deeds, thoughts, and behavior are factors related to other things. Besides, PAÑÑĀ also reflects change and instability appearing in all things. When a person understands that everything is under the law of change, he will ultimately accept the occurring reality despite its contradiction against desire, without expectation that things need to comply with his own wills. This state will enable a person to think and considers things for the best of his and others.

### **Objectives**

This research aims to study the effects of the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and ĀNĀPĀNASATI Training on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ. The research questions are 1) Do the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and ĀNĀPĀNASATI Training affect UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ, how, and are there any differences between them? 2) Does participating Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and then ĀNĀPĀNASATI Training and ĀNĀPĀNASATI Training and then Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group affect UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ, and how? 3) How do UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ of the students change after the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and ĀNĀPĀNASATI Training?

## Hypotheses

1. After the first experiment, all the four experimental groups will score higher on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ than their initial scores before the experiment.
2. After the first experiment, all the four experimental groups will have higher scores on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ than the control groups.
3. After the first experiment, the UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ scores of the experimental groups will not differ significantly.
4. After the second experiment, the experimental groups 1, which participate in the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group, followed by ĀNĀPĀNASATI Training, and the experimental groups 2, which take ĀNĀPĀNASATI Training, followed by Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group, will score higher on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ than after the first experiment.
5. After the second experiment, both the experimental groups 1 and 2 will have higher scores on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ than the control groups.
6. After the second experiment, the scores on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ of the experimental groups 1 and 2 will not differ significantly.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This research applied the mixed method, in which qualitative and quantitative data were gathered. The quantitative part, the quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design, measured the effects of the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and ĀNĀPĀNASATI Training on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ of the students with the UPEKKHĀ Scale developed by the researcher and the short-form PAÑÑĀ Scale that the researcher developed from the original version of Daensilp (2007). The following table summarizes the design of this research.

Table 1. Example group

Groups	Pre-test	Experiment <sub>1</sub>	Posttest <sub>1</sub>	Experiment <sub>2</sub>	Posttest <sub>2</sub>
Ex group 1	$Y_{1a} Y_{2a}$	$X_1$	$Y_{1b} Y_{2b}$	$X_2$	$Y_{1c} Y_{2c}$
Ex group 2	$Y_{1a} Y_{2a}$	$X_2$	$Y_{1b} Y_{2b}$	$X_1$	$Y_{1c} Y_{2c}$
Con group	$Y_{1a} Y_{2a}$	-	$Y_{1b} Y_{2b}$	-	$Y_{1c} Y_{2c}$

*Ex group 1* is the experimental groups 1, which participated in the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group, followed by ĀNĀPĀNASATI training. *Ex group 2* is the experimental groups 2, which practiced ĀNĀPĀNASATI training, followed by the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group. *Con group* stands for control groups, which received no treatments.  $X_1$  means participation in the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group, while  $X_2$  refers to ĀNĀPĀNASATI training.  $Y_{1a}, Y_{1b}, Y_{1c}$  were 3 sets of the UPEKKHĀ Scale, including pre-test, post-test, and repeated post-test. There were two sets of sample groups for two experiments, each of which composed of two experimental groups and a control group, making the total of 6 groups. Each set underwent the similar process of experiment.

### Population and Sample

The population of this research was undergraduate students of Srinakharinwirot University and Burapha University. The first set of samples consisted of 17 senior students, all of which were female from the Department of School Counseling, Srinakarin University, and the second set of samples included 24 female senior students from the Department of Elementary Education, Burapha University, contributing to the total 41 subjects with lower-than-average scores of UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ and willing to be part of the study. Purposive sampling was used to divide the students into 6 groups, each with 6-8 members: 2 experimental groups (experiment groups 1 and 2) and one control group in each experiment.

Intervening variables were controlled by holding the experimental process- participation of Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and ĀNĀPĀNASATI training sessions- at the same period. The control group had never attended any personal growth and counseling group and received ĀNĀPĀNASATI training. Subject rights were preserved by 1) all data were to be kept confidential 2) the rule was set that every group member never reveal the stories of other peer, and 3) the participants had the right to exit the study anytime without the need to declare reasons and this had no effects on the whole experimental groups.

### Variables

1. Independent or treatment variables were the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and ĀNĀPĀNASATI training.
2. Dependent variables were UPEKKHĀ scores measured with the UPEKKHĀ Scale and PAÑÑĀ UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ scores measured with the short-form PAÑÑĀ scale.

### Research Instruments

**1. The UPEKKHĀ Scale** was the self-report Likert scale with five answers to choose, ranking from the least true (1) to the most true (5). The scale had 64 items measuring 4 qualities of the mind: 1) *No Craving* (ALOBHA) is the state of mind that does not attach to things liked or desired and does not aim to possess or expect things to be as one wishes 2) *No Aversion* (ATOSA) is the state of no anger, frustration, or grievance in the mind when one is faced with things he is not pleased with; instead, one understands and accepts, as well as having compassion towards others 3) *No Ignorance* (AMOHA) is the state of no despair, depression, confusion, without self-importance and fear but courage to face the truths in life and tolerance to learn every experience, constant willingness to support anything beneficial to both oneself and others, and ability to manage life properly and see the proper things to do at each moment, and 4) *Calmness* is the state of mind that is calm, unwavering, stable, content, cheerful, tender, and happy, which enables one to live smoothly with the present moment and see the reality of life and the world, including interrelatedness and ever-changingness. The Cronbach's reliability coefficient of the whole scale was .94.

**2. The PAÑÑĀ scale**, a self-report Likert scale, with 5 levels of answers ranking from the least true (1) to the most true (5). This scale measures 2 dimensions: 1) *Understanding Life* included the understanding that lives are all interdependent and gratitude for factors supporting life, leading a person to realize that his actions effect on and relate to entities around himself and that his actions, thoughts, and behavior are also factors related with other entities, and 2) *Understanding Change, Inconstancy, and Instability in Entities* enables a person to accept reality although it goes against his own desire and can live without attachment to his own desire, leading to ability to consider and manage things in a way that benefit himself and others. The overall Cronbach's reliability coefficient of the scale was .90.

**3. The Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group** is a counseling group that applies the Four Noble Truths and other Buddhist principles related to it, including Conditionality, Dependent Origination, and the Three Marks of Existence, as the conceptual foundation in processing a group whose structure and direction is set by the topics that will actually lead the group to learn. The topics are designed in the form of life passage: "*seasons of life*", "*changes*", "*letting go*", "*unwavering*", "*presence is the gift of life*", "*peace subdues movement*", and "*toward liberty*." The group process was held the same in all the experimental groups, with 7 sessions, each of which lasted for about 3 hours extending continuously within 3 days and 2 nights: the total hours of participation for each group were about 20 hours. All the group sessions were conducted or supervised by Sittiporn Kramanon, the professional counselor trained in Buddhist Psychology.

**4. ĀNĀPĀNASATI training** in this study was led by Phra Acharn Pichetwong Bhadhrapanyo, Awutawiksitaran Temple, Bangkok, who has been training ĀNĀPĀNASATI since 1986. He taught the groups in the positions of standing, sitting, walking, and reclining, together with



revision of the training and Dharma talks about ĀNĀPĀNASATI. Each experimental group was trained for 20 hours; at the same period, its experimental counterpart attended the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group.

### Research Procedure

1. The students answered the UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ scales before the first experiment (pre-test). Then, only the students who were willing to attend the study and met the fixed criteria were recruited into 3 groups for each experiment.

2. The researcher led the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group for the experimental groups. After each session, the group members were asked to write a self-report to evaluate the perception of members and submitted the diary after the sessions ended each day. At the same time, the monk, the research assistant, led ĀNĀPĀNASATI training to the other experimental groups and, after that, asked the group to do self-report and diary like their counterparts in the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling did.

Two sets of experiment were conducted, as following:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Experiment: two experiment groups of eleven students attending the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and ĀNĀPĀNASATI training at Baan Klang Suan, Ampawa District, Samut Songkram from 9-13 February, 2001.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Experiment: the 2 experimental groups were made up of 16 students attending the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and ĀNĀPĀNASATI training at Agricultural Support and Development Center, Nongyai District, Chonburi, from 28 February to 4 March, 2001.

3. After the experiments, the experimental groups 1 and 2 answered the UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ scales, post-test 1 version, and were assigned to the other task: the experimental group 1 previously attending the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group participated ĀNĀPĀNASATI training and vice versa for the experimental group 2.

4. After that, the experimental groups 1 and 2 answered the UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ scales, post-test 2 version.

5. After the procedure of the two experiments, seven students from all the experimental groups were purposively sampled for in-depth interview.

### Quantitative Data Analyses

In order to test of the hypotheses, both basic and advance statistics were applied in this study including, mean, standard deviation, t-test, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and MANOVA. After the procedure of the two experiments, the mean scores of UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ were compared in the experimental groups 1, 2 and the control groups. The results were shown as table below.

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation (S.D.) of scores of UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ in each experimental group

phases of experiment	samples	n	Scores of UPEKKHĀ		Scores of PAÑÑĀ	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Before the experiment	1 <sup>st</sup> ex. group	14	222.07	19.672	159.29	18.252
	2 <sup>nd</sup> ex. group	13	219.08	24.978	149.00	14.849
	Con. group	14	218.57	24.988	153.14	17.497
After the 1 <sup>st</sup> experiment	1 <sup>st</sup> ex. group	14	251.93	19.562	173.07	13.853
	2 <sup>nd</sup> ex. group	13	240.46	22.146	164.08	20.666
	Con. group	14	222.21	23.012	149.79	16.637

phases of experiment	samples	n	Scores of UPEKKHĀ		Scores of PAÑÑĀ	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
After the 2 <sup>st</sup> experiment	1 <sup>st</sup> ex. group	14	266.36	27.787	183.50	21.640
	2 <sup>nd</sup> ex. group	13	250.92	23.400	170.92	18.428
	Con. group	14	224.43	21.950	150.14	18.267

Table 3. results of analysis of MANOVA by phases of experiment

phases of experiment	Source	Pilai's Trace	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	p	Partial Eta Squared
Before the experiment	Intercept	.993	2817.129	2.00	37.00	.000	.993
	Group	.064	.623	4.00	76.00	.647	.032
After the 1 <sup>st</sup> experiment	Intercept	.996	4507.519	2.00	37.00	.000	.996
	Group	.428	5.179	4.00	76.00	.001	.214
After the 2 <sup>st</sup> experiment	Intercept	.995	3354.366	2.00	37.00	.000	.995
	Group	.512	6.543	4.00	76.00	.000	.256

a Box's M = 1.604, F = .247, df1 = 6, df2 = 34684.201, p = .961

b Box's M = 3.186, F = .490, df1 = 6, df2 = 34684.201, p = .816

c Box's M = 1.375, F = .212, df1 = 6, df2 = 34684.201, p = .973

Table 4. results of analysis of repeated measure MANOVA by number of experimental group

experimental group	Pilai's Trace	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	p	Partial Eta Squared
1 <sup>st</sup> ex. group	.750	7.484	4.00	10.00	.005	.750
2 <sup>nd</sup> ex. group	.733	6.175	4.00	9.00	.011	.733
Con. group	.216	.691	4.00	10.00	.615	.216

1<sup>st</sup> ex. group = the previously attending the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group participated ĀNĀPĀNASATI training

2<sup>nd</sup> ex. Group = the previously attending ĀNĀPĀNASATI training participated the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group

### Qualitative Data Analyses

The 7 purposively selected subjects from the experimental groups were interviewed in-depth by a research assistant, who also transcribed the contents verbatim into scripts and confirmed the accuracy of the contents by re-listening to the recorded tapes. For trustworthiness, 3 other researchers specialized in this field read the interview scripts word by word, while two research assistants with M.A. in Counseling read the contents in the self-reports the subjects wrote after the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and ĀNĀPĀNASATI training. Revision of the interview scripts and the self-report were done separately to code and categorize them with significant words into themes relevant to UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ. Themes derived from these two sources were compared to identify similarities and differences and, with integration and synthesis, generate the summary that could explain the fundamental structure of this phenomenon from real experience.

## Results

### Quantitative Results

1. After the 1<sup>st</sup> experiment, the experimental group 1, attending the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group first, scored higher on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ scales with the significant statistical level at .01 and .05. The experimental groups 2 with initial ĀNĀPĀNASATI training had significantly higher scores on UPEKKHĀ at the statistical level of .05, but their PAÑÑĀ scores were not significantly different from the pre-test scores.

2. After the 1<sup>st</sup> experiment, the experimental group 1 had the significantly higher scores of UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ than the control groups at the statistical level of .005 and .005, whereas these scores of the experimental group 2 were not significantly different from those of the control at the statistical level of .05.

3. After the 1<sup>st</sup> experiment, the scores on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ of the experimental group 1 were not significantly different from those of their experimental counterpart at the statistical level of .05.

4. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> experiment, UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ scores of the experimental group 1, attending the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group before ĀNĀPĀNASATI training, did not differ significantly from those of the experimental group 2, participating the ĀNĀPĀNASATI training before the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group, at statistical level of .05.

5. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> experiment, the experimental group 1 had significantly higher scores on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ than the control group at the statistical level of .001 and .001, so did the experimental group 2, but at the statistical level of .05 and .05.

6. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> experiment, the UPEKKHĀ scores of the experimental group 1 did not differ from theirs after the 1<sup>st</sup> experiment, but their PAÑÑĀ scores were higher at the significant statistical level of .05. The other experimental group had significantly higher UPEKKHĀ scores than those after the 1<sup>st</sup> experiment at the statistical level of .01, but their PAÑÑĀ scores were not significantly different from the previous ones at the statistical level of .05.

### Qualitative Results

The mind with UPEKKHĀ was found, based on the sample from experimental groups, to possess the following qualities. *No Craving* was made up of no yearning for happiness and disinclination of suffering. *No Aversion* consisted of letting go of frustration, willingness to forgive, no rage at those who harm but treating back with compassion, choosing to overlook whatever used to stir anger. *No Ignorance* comprised reducing the part of “self”, no self-centeredness, acceptance toward others, ability to reconcile with friends, self-esteem, no comparison with others, courage to face the future, awareness in everyday life causing no confusion, good management of life, and generousness. *Calmness* was composed of inner peace and content, staying with presence moments, will power, concentration on work at hand, perception of things as they are, and ability to renounce problems and pains.

Moreover, the results revealed that the mind with PAÑÑĀ of the subjects consisted of interrelatedness of the mind- gratitude to parents, understanding interrelationship between humans and nature, bond of friendship, and understanding thoughts and feelings of friends with absolute acceptance and understanding of changes comprising the vision of ephemerality of things, understanding changes in life, and living with tolerable and understandable changes.

### Discussion

The findings from the study revealed that after the 1<sup>st</sup> experiment the subjects who attended the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group primarily had higher scores on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ than before the experiment and those of the control group, while the same was true only for the post-test scores on UPEKKHĀ of the subjects receiving ĀNĀPĀNASATI training first. That Buddhist personal growth had obvious impact on UPEKKHĀ of the subjects agrees with the words of Buddha in *Kayasutta* (SN. 19.95) in *Tripitaka* that sheds the light on the process of the personal



growth group: the group leader applied Yonisomanasikāra, contemplation with the calm mind, to lead the group into such deep learning of life and the world that UPEKKHĀ grew in their minds. In comparison, the raise of UPEKKHĀ by ĀNĀPĀNASATI training was supported by the quotation of Chayasaro Bhikku (2008) that ĀNĀPĀNASATI training is the way to enhance awareness, hence promoting mind concentration, and as the mind is aware of itself, it can withdraw itself from sorrow, frustration, and inner suffering, making it calm, gentle, and unbiased- as such is called UPEKKHĀ.

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> experiment, that both the experimental groups 1 and 2 had higher scores on UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ than the control groups confirmed the effectiveness of the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group that enabled the subjects to calm down and clear any grievances in the mind by contemplating until perceiving the reality of life and the world. ĀNĀPĀNASATI training also added the degree of calmness, which raised concentration, content, and pleasure to the degree that they became the foundation for contemplating the world and life in reality, including interrelatedness and ever-changingness of entities. This led to intrapersonal and interpersonal growth as a result.

That the scores on UPEKKHĀ of the experimental groups 1 after the 2<sup>nd</sup> experiment did not differ from those after the 1<sup>st</sup> experiment in contrast with the increasing PAÑÑĀ scores can be explained by the remarkable influence of the Buddhist personal growth group on UPEKKHĀ in the previous stage, causing the subjects to be calmer and more able to understand changes and interrelationship of entities. This further rise in PAÑÑĀ was supported by the statement of Buddhadasa Bhikku (1987) that the calm concentrated, content, and pleasant mind can serve as the base for contemplating the truths of life and the world, which is a characteristic of PAÑÑĀ. However, the already high level of UPEKKHĀ could not be affected much. On the contrary, the UPEKKHĀ scores of the experimental groups 2 were significantly higher after the 2<sup>nd</sup> experiment, but not the scores on PAÑÑĀ. This could be explained by the fact that the later Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group could further help remove expectation (no craving), frustration and unfinished business in the mind (no aversion) and boost courage and readiness to live (no ignorance) as well as peace and stability. Thus, UPEKKHĀ could take firmer root in the mind, according to Pokao (2000).

In addition, that, after both the experiments, the UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ scores of the experimental groups 1 and 2 were not significantly different, reflected the potential of the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and ĀNĀPĀNASATI training on the development of these two variables to a certain degree. The limitation might partly be due to the small number of the subjects in the study, impeding the full manifestation of potentials bound in both instruments, or partly because of the successive sessions of the experiments causing exhaustion and affecting the willingness to take part in the second experiment.

In the qualitative part, the rise of UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ in every dimension support the effectiveness of the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group as shown in the quantitative part, which is clearly illustrated in the words of one of the interviewed subject, "Entering the group helped me release milliard of things and problems. They melted away. It is as though we had always been holding something very heavy. Once in the group, we could solve them. It is like we let go of something we were carrying" (Interview, ID3). Regarding ĀNĀPĀNASATI training, another subject mentioned, "I could feel that nothingness was emptiness. Because of emptiness, we need not think, so no suffering. And the mind is calm; the body is refreshed. I am content, for I can let go" (Self-report after ĀNĀPĀNASATI training, session 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> experiment).

Important methodological limitations of this study included the sample was predominantly female and a small sample size together with purposive, as opposed to random. Hence, it's difficult to generalize the results to other undergraduate students. Furthermore, limitations were placed on statistical analysis due to issues of low power.

## Recommendations

The future similar study should be conducted with male or mixed-sex members and expand to cover other populations besides college students because different group conditions can give the clearer picture on the effectiveness of the Buddhist Personal Growth and Counseling group and ĀNĀPĀNASATI training as instruments for developing better UPEKKHĀ and PAÑÑĀ among people general in the society.

The UPEKKHĀ Scale developed by the researcher should be developed to become standardized for greater use by testing with and collecting data from various population groups.

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