

CHAPTER IV

JINAPANJARA: AN ANALYSIS ON CHANTING AND CHANTERS

In the course of this research, in depth interviews have been done with various groups of people. It was found that Jinapanjara chanters are not limited to elder persons or people who have strong interest in religious practice this chant is also known and believed among teenagers and middle-class workers as well.

The following were the topics set up to explore what people feel and do with respect to the *Jinapanjara*.

- How do people feel about it?
- How do they practice it?
- What are benefits they have gotten from serious chanting?
- What are the main differences between *Jinapanjara* and other Buddhist prayers?

4.1. SOME JINAPANJARA CHANTERS IN THE INTERNET

As mentioned previously, if the word “Jinapanjara” is searched on the internet, many items will be retrieved, both on websites and web boards. For example, on one internet web board, a man posted his belief in Jinapanjara Gatha, saying he chants it regularly and really believes it is capable of protecting him when someone tends to harm or beat him for any reason. He made a posting on 17-01-2005, and then 47 readers came to share this topic, posting their views and chanting experience until 13-10-2006. Most of the people posting comments were also chanters who often or regularly chant and have faith in Jinapanjara, while some just came to appreciation the good topic and said they would try this after being inspired by the amazing experiences. One point worth mentioning here is that some of readers started chanting Jinapanjara since they were young:

“I started chanting Jinapanjara because of my Grandma. At that time, I was in secondary school. Noticeably, after chanting regularly, I often could get some amazing support.”

“10 years ago, when I was in university, I suffered from a severe backache because of renal calculus. Knowing that it required a lot of money to heal, I, though I should make a wish to Somdej Toh and ask him to help me and I offered chanting Jinapanjara 100 times for worship. One

week after that, surprisingly, the backache was absolutely gone. By this experience, I really believe in it and still keep chanting until today”¹

The Bad Guy

“I started chanting Jinapanjara since I was in M.1 (first year in Thai secondary school). I took 3 days to remember the whole thing. This is because my mother said that Jinapanjara always providing good things to chanters.”²

Khochpaak

“For me it is a supreme prayer, because it was the first one I chanted when I was in secondary school. Since then I still keep chanting especially when I have an examination. Once I could not prepare enough for an exam and this subject was very important to me. But something strange happened. The teacher could not find my exam paper. I needed to use that score result to ask for permission. Finally, I passed that subject with just exactly the point that permission required. Until now I still wondered that it must be due to my teacher loosing my exam paper so that he had to let me pass.”³

Sunny

“I have chanted Jinapanjara since I was a teenager until now, 40 years old. From my experience, I found many good miracles; and moreover I have also used Jinapanjara to help others in emergency incidents many times. I suggest chanters keep on faith while you are chanting because it is not only chanting that makes it work, but keeping faith on the gatha as well as on Somdej Toh is the essence of using it effectively.”⁴

Chanu-123

“I started the chant of Jinapanjara at 18 years old. It is my first prayer which I chant regularly every day until now. Whoever has bad luck, I strong recommend that they chant Jinapanjara 9 times in the morning and 9 times in the evening. Believe me you will get better soon.”⁵

Angus

“I started chanting Jinapanjara since I was in secondary school full of curiosity but without faith. Seven days after that I dreamed of Somdej Toh clearly as if it was true. In the dream he was chanting Jinapanjara

1 “Than Dai Mee Prasobkan Dee Dee Thee Dai Suad Pra Gatha Chinnabanchorn”, <Online> 2006. Available from <http://www.palungjit.com/board//archive/index.php/t-3439.html> <2006, November 20>

2 Ibid. “Than Dai Mee Prasobkan Dee Dee Thee Dai Suad Pra Gatha Chinnabanchorn”

3 Ibid. “Than Dai Mee Prasobkan Dee Dee Thee Dai Suad Pra Gatha Chinnabanchorn”

4 Ibid. “Than Dai Mee Prasobkan Dee Dee Thee Dai Suad Pra Gatha Chinnabanchorn”

5 Ibid. “Than Dai Mee Prasobkan Dee Dee Thee Dai Suad Pra Gatha Chinnabanchorn”

accompanied with another 3 monks. After awakening, amazingly, I could recite the whole gatha. Someone interpreted that Somdej Toh came to me with compassion since I chanted without faith. He came to show his existence in order to create my right attitude on chanting. From this story I advise whoever to chant Jinapanjara and chant translation along with the text for right understanding. That will bring you the most benefit from Jinapanjara.”⁶

Nefertity

These are just a few postings of Jinapanjara chanters appearing in the internet. The significant point is that even the internet and this new technology might take part in increasing Jinapanjara’s popularity. Most of them were inspired personally by their parents, relatives, friends or books. It also shows that Jinapanjara is not some thing far away from the young generation. On the contrary, it is quite close to them as an invisible refuge.

4.2 DIRECT INTERVIEWS

CASE I

UNREVEALED-NAMED GIRL, 21

SECOND YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENT ⁷

“I first started chanting Jinapanjara Gatha at the age of 15. At first, reciting the whole chant was very difficult. Three months later I succeeded reciting without looking at the book. Normally, I chant one time before sleeping. But during the day time, I will do it as often as I can. To me, nine times is excellent. But it is all right to do more or less, depending to my schedule. In a case of special need, which is usually about my studying, such as when I do not feel confident about some subjects, I will chant *99 times*, dedicating it to “Somdej Toh”, as a commitment if my request becomes successful. But chanting for the whole 99 times in one day is quite a big deal. I usually divide chanting into several days and chanted 9-10 times for each day continuously until 99 times has been done finally.”

Apart from her belief, she does not feel the need to offer things when she makes a wish just commit herself to make an effort on a difficult task. This is enough and more effective than offering any objects. When the girl was asked about “Somdej Toh,” she accepted that she has very strong trust in him.

“When I think about monks I would think of him first. For me, he is a kind- hearted monk. He makes me feel warm with a sense of confidence and safety. Sometime, when I have to stay home alone, I do not feel scared because I have him and Jinapanjara Gatha as my refuge that gives me a sense of security. Moreover, I can feel my concentration is better than

⁶ “Than Dai Mee Prasobkan Dee Dee Thee Dai Suad Pra Gatha Chinnabanchorn”

⁷ Interview with Unrevealed - Named Girl, 13 November 2006.

before. This is judged from a fact that I can remember the whole Jinapanjara Gatha. So what about other things?"⁸

CASE II
PAPHICHAYA CHAISKUL, 24
MASTER DEGREE STUDENT IN ENGINEERING
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY⁹

Initially, Jinapanjara was introduced to Papitchaya by his father when he was 18 years old and a first year student of Engineering Faculty, Chulalongkorn University. But this first recommendation was not effective since after he tried chanting a bit he quit shortly after that. The second inspiration was made by Dr. Boonchai Kosolthanakul, the teacher and owner of FAST ENGLISH one of the well-known English Teaching School in Bangkok. This time it was successful in motivating Paphichaya to become one of the ardent chanters of Jinapanjara.

"Basically, I respect Dr. Boonchai as he is a talented person. For this reason when he mentioned and suggested that students chant Jinapanjara Gatha in order to improve learning skills, I was interested to try again to chanting this long gatha."

According to Papitchaya, Dr. Boonchai often gave talks on the benefits of Jinapanjara Gatha and also other Dhamma subjects especially those related to "Somdej Toh" while he was giving lectures on English lessons.

"He usually stated that concentration is one of the main success factors in doing anything, especially studying. By his words, Jinapanjara is good for increasing concentration. Personally, I respect him so I believe everything he advised. That is why I try to chant Jinapanjara again whether it works for me or not and it already proved –it absolutely works."

From a student who was quite poor in English and got "D" grade in the first year, Paphichaya was capable of getting a high score in TOEFL after he chanted Jinapanjara seriously 9 times every day and making a wish that he get 650 score. The result surprised his friends and even himself because he got 647 score. That is very high score and close to his wish.

"I think Jinapanjara is a good tool for building concentration and also in the attempt in doing everything especially studying and doing tough tasks like exams. It was very incredible for me to get such a high score like this. Even though I studied really hard, without supporting from Jinapanjara I think it was impossible."

This happened not only one time, on his second time at taking the TOEFL examination, he made a wish from "Somdej Toh" again that may he get the full score 677. This time he got 667.

⁸ Interview with Unrevealed - Named Girl, 13 November 2006.

⁹ Interview with Paphichaya Chaiskul, 4 July 2006.

“Two of my friends who study with Dr. Boonchai like me used to make very specific requests from “Somdej Toh” in TOEFL’s WRITING PART which contains 180 issues. They made a wish that the issues they prepared be identical with the issues in the exam. And very unbelievable, it was as they requested. The issues in the examination were the issues they had prepared. That enabled them to get a good score on that exam.”

In addition, he believed that not only his memory and concentration became better, his self confidence is also better as well.

“I am a kind of negative thinking person. This makes me usually depressed with a lack of confidence. Importantly, I was unhappy in daily life; but after I chanted the Jinapanjara continuously, everything I said disappeared. My mental health improved; good things often come to my life.”

“Actually, I am such a person who never pays attention to religious issues; but now I feel interested in the *Dhamma* and have the Jinapanjara as my inner – refuge. This makes me realize how religion is important to my life.”

CASE III
MATTHEW (NICK NAME), THAI, 27
A BANK’S SALE EXECUTIVE¹⁰

Among people who were chanting together in a dimly light hall, a young man sat quietly for hours without any movement. He looked calm and serious during his long time in Bor Nam Mon at Wat Indravihan. He managed to chant Jinapanjara Gatha 30 times.

“I knew Jinapanjara from a chanting book 9 years ago in 1998. At that time, I was stressed and felt pressured from the economic collapse. I started chanting with the aim to energize myself. Normally I chant 10 times and up and make a wish about working matters and it usually works for me.”

Matthew said that after chanting Jinapanjara everything seems to go in a good direction; his memory improved, as well as his working ability; and his clients increased as well.

“Besides bed time chanting, I also chant whenever I drive. It makes me calm down and can keep everything in control in a troubled situation or emergency.”

Matthew also stated that chanting Jinapanjara with a loud voice is effective since it will generate more power to chanters and will bring good force to chanters. He often comes to chant at Bor Nam Mon, whenever he can, on average 12-13 times/month. Every time at Wat Indra, he normally chants at least 10 times since he believes 10 times is the minimum quantity for being successful especially in business negotiation.

¹⁰ Interview with Matthew.<nick name>, 4 July 2006.

CASE IV
 BENZ (NICK NAME), THAI, 26
 TRADESWOMAN¹¹

Benz is another chanter found at Wat Indravihan. She looked calm. After finishing her chanting activity in Bor Nam Mon and before going home, Benz bought two bottles of holy water. She felt a bit surprised when being asked about Jinapanjara. However, after knowing the aim of the talk, she allowed herself to be interviewed but denied to give her real name. According to Benz, she has been chanting Jinapanjara Gatha for three years, starting on recommendation of her older sister who knew this prayer from Wat Indravihan. With a guarantee that it will bring safety and good luck to the chanter, she created her own way to chant this long prayer by putting it on the table in a prayer room and chanting as loud as she could. She believed that chanting with voice is more effective than chanting in the mind. As a shopkeeper, after chanting Jinapanjara regularly one time every day, Benz noticed that customers began increasing; her financial status and her personal life are now going into a good direction.

“My life is obviously better. I did succeed in several matters. It probably resulted from my peaceful mind so that everything is improving. But, actually, I never have had magical experience like others. I just feel that it is good for me. It provides me the feeling “Sabayjai” and that is enough for keeping it.”

Benz also introduced Jinapanjara to others and strongly recommended that it will bring good things to chanters as well as avert all bad luck. She came to chant at Wat Indra two times and Wat Rakhang two or three times; but normally she chants every morning after offering food to Buddha Images at her home.

“I feel that Jinapanjara is an ancient prayer which is likely a multi-function mantra, and it is quite popular not among the aged but young people too. Inside Bor Nam Mon you will find young people more than elderly.”

Benz used to take three day retreats for Buaj Chee Pram. It could be said that the only religious activity she does nowadays is chanting the Jinapanjara.

CASE V
 LT. PHITHAKRAJ NILPRUEK, 31
 A COMPANY COMMANDER OF MARINE CORPS¹²

LT. Phithakraj had been sent on active duty to Narathivas province from October 2005 till September 2006. Almost one year in the Deep South, he faced bomb incidents several times but survived fortunately without any injury. Some of his friends were killed. LT. Phitharaj said he took Jinapanjara as his amulet and also recommended his subordinates to chant as well.

“My father suggested this prayer to me with advice that it would bring me protective power. According to his experience as a soldier in the Vietnam War, my father kept faith in this prayer and has been chanting

¹¹ Interview with Benze.<nick name>, 4 July 2006.

¹² Interview with LT. Phithakraj Nilpruek, 17 October 2006.

Jinapanjara Gatha until today. Formerly, I was not much interested in this gatha. But when I had to work in the Deep South it became my daily activity, 1-3 times a day depending on the situation. On a usual situation, 1 time before going out to work is enough; on serious day or whenever I feel insecure 3 times is needed. But on every Thursday 9 times is perfect for special occasion.”*

According to LT. Phithakraj, the power of Jinapanjara was shown in 2005 when he and his team faced two serious explosions incidents. He was safe while some of his team got a bit injury.

“When I worked in the Deep South, every amulet was in need. For me I chanted Jinapanjara and “Gatha Luang Poo Tuad.” I suggested to my team to chant too. I didn’t know exactly about its benefit. I just felt that it provided me self-confidence and a sense of courage. That was very important for us. However, with regularly chanted, my team never faced uncontrollable violent incidents whereas other teams did often”

Asked about his private life, he revealed that his girl friend also believed in chanting Jinapanjara. As her home town is in See Kiew, Nakhorn Ratchasima, sometimes when they go there together they would stop at “Somdej Toh Center” built by Soraphong Chartri at See kiew and have a peacefully duo-chanting. With 14 years of chanting Jinapanjara, LT. Phithakraj has been quite impressed by this prayer and recommends to his children to keep on chanting like his father did to him before. Another point should be noted here is that besides Jinapanjara benefits, LT.Phithakraj also related some incredible incidents that he had got “Pra Somdej” amulet by chance from someone.

“I am interested in “Pra Somdej” for a long time and want to own a real one if possible. But it is impossible because they are very expensive. After I have been chanting Jinapanjara, “Pra Somdej” came to me for free by chance. It is quite unbelievable.”

Today, he has moved to work in Bangkok and still chants Jinapanjara sometimes but not seriously and regularly like before when he was in the Deep South.

CASE VI
BOONYARUT APHICHARTTRISORN, 53
INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR
KOM CHAD LUEK NEWSPAPER¹³

As the international news editor of a well known newspaper, Booyarut is not shy to reveal her faith in Jinapanjara, even though it is in quite a contrast with her image. Starting with listening to cassette tapes in the car, Boonyarut turned to chant herself just 4-5 years ago.

“My important motivation was Petch Pra Uma. I am crazy fond of this novel. In Episode II it was mentioned about Jinapanjara as an effective weapon that Darin performed to suppress a monster troop and save every

* Thursday according to Thai belief is a teacher’s day; but in the context of “Somdej Toh” history, it means his birthday.

¹³ Interview with Boonyarut Aphicharttrisorn, 27 November 2006.

life in her team even without supporting by Rapin. I was very impressed then. I started chanting after merely listening to audio tapes several years.”

Boonyarut prefers chanting while driving. As soon as getting in the car, chanting will start automatically with an average of at least 8 times a day. But on the day when there is a traffic jam, it means Boonyarut’s opportunity to chant more than usual. Asking about the motivation to keep on chanting until now, she mentioned about 4 incidents which obviously show Jinapanjara power according to her experience.

1. Two years ago, when she was driving home at night, she had a serious car crash getting hit by a trailer-truck. But even though the car spun around she was totally safe.

2. After that she faced an accident from a trailer- truck due to its stopping suddenly. At that time she was able to stop the car before hitting the truck.

3. Not only did she survive these accidents, but sometime she is able to feel a sixth sense about accidents in the future. Last year on the Motorway road, while she was driving, a scene of car crash appeared clearly to her mind two times. She decided to slow down. After a few minutes, a car in front of her had an accident.

4. October 13, 2005, Booyarut appeared on the first page news as a person who survived a thunderstruck in Cambodia. From her words, the thunderbolt struck straight to her body; she was unconscious just for ten minutes and had a burnt trace on her neck.

Boonyarut stated that the main benefit of Jinapanjara is about preventing or being protected from all kinds of accidents. Moreover the minor potential of Jinapanjara is it also is able to bring chanters good things such as opportunities for a good job or even when plunged into trouble to get support unexpectedly.

“Personally, when there is nobody with me I prefer to recite with a loud voice because it enables me to build concentration better than chanting in the mind. From my opinion, if compare among other famous prayers like *Pahung* and *Yod Pra Kan Tripidok*, Jinapanjara is the simplest one. I feel attached to Jinapanjara sometimes. When I chant, it reminds me of the *Arahant* who are mentioned in its contents.”

As a news editor, Boonyarut applies Jinapanjara as a means to produce concentration as well as consciousness and peaceful mind which are really important to her task. On the other hand, even though she has a strong faith in chanting and *Dhamma*, she does not like chanting in the temple. She just attends *Dhamma* practicing courses sometimes.

“I am rather against every form of practicing the Dhamma, because it has many rules depending on each school of Dhamma. I prefer self-practicing on my own with chanting approach.”

Besides Jinapanjara, she added that *Gatha Luang Poo Tuad Wat Chang Hai*, Pattani is another one she pays respect to most as well as Jinapanjara.*

* Gatha Luang Poo Tuad reads, “*Namo Bhodisatto Akantimaya Itibagava.*”

CASE VII
RATTANAPORN FAROH, 38
YOGA INSTRUCTOR¹⁴

Unlike other cases, Rattanaporn is a Jinapanjara chanter who is able to chant both the central version and the Lanna version. Growing up in a family seriously concerned with chanting, she learned several prayers from her grandmother since she was 3. Eventually, at the age of 22 Rattanaporn became an ardent chanter because of her own belief and experience.

“Originally, I started with Chao Khun Nor version ten times a day after listening to it in the car for a while. But after a retreat at Wat Pradthat Haripunchai, Lampoon, I had a chance to learn Jinapanjara in Lanna Version. So I can chant both general version and Lanna version as well. For me Jinapanjara is a strong Mantra that can build a crystal wall around the body of a chanter. Before you chant you should inform those nonhuman beings around you to go away otherwise they could be hurt by the power of Jinapanjara and come to hurt you later.”

Rattanaporn really believes in Jinapanjara so that she recommends others to chant as well as writing Jinapanjara CD copies herself and distributing them among her friends and also her yoga students. Although, unable to count how many CDs she has given out or how many people that knew Jinapanjara from her, she is a private distributor that has spread out Jinapanjara effectively with a strong recommendation. Today, she still keeps on propagating Jinapanjara in anyway she can. She personally does chanting Jinapanjara ten times a day with belief that this is the right number of chanting Jinapanjara.

CASE VIII
A DOCTOR WHO DENIED TO BE NAMED, 45¹⁵

With a Chinese-Thai background as stereotype of the general doctor, he looks bright, smart and modern. He does not show any sign of being connected to traditional activity like chanting at all. But, in fact, he does. During the last two years, he has been given a number of “Somdej Toh”’s Phra Somdej of different varieties. Some have diamonds and gems on them while some have small pieces of gold in its texture.

“It is so amazing that I can have all these things in my life. I have not tried to calculate the value of all these. And I don’t think about it in this aspect too. I have one small box containing three very old amulets that were distributed at the King V funeral. I also have a specially made bell, sizes about one stand cup, with Somdej Toh imprint and “Pra Tat” (Buddha’s relics) in it. There are so many strange things happening in my life together with all these. It seems to me that I have this special event with some purpose.

So, one little thing that I can do is to pray “Jinapanjara.” The length of this prayer is not a problem for me at all. I spend much more time in chanting. And I am starting to meditate using newly learned techniques from my ‘network’ that help introduce me to “Somdej Toh.” After I have

¹⁴ Interview with Rattanaporn Faroh, 24 November 2006

¹⁵ Interview with Doctor Who Denied to be Named, 20 March 2007.

been exposed to a large amount of “Somdej Toh” amulets, I feel so amazed at how “Somdej Toh” managed to produce all these. I also found some connected feelings with him.

I chant as part of my spiritual life to develop and refine my mind/spirit. When I chant, I observe very closely my breathing. And I experience deep calmness. Therefore, chanting Jinapanjara should not be considered in isolation, but looked at in the whole picture of my belief system and my life practice. The flowing of “Somdej Toh” amulet into my life is an event that shapes/refines my belief system. It’s so special when many special objects like these coming into your life. Many people, however rich they are, can not find these objects.”

Now, he chants Jinapanjara one time before sleeping with other prayers every night. This belief is like a secret that lies behind his modern image.

“Science and technology sometime is limited to provide answers for human questions, especially question about the variation of life.”

That why he keeps on chanting Jinapanjara as well as keeps faith in “Somdej Toh” and has a two-side life; one is connected with superstitious power he experienced and one represents the image of a general doctor who is expected to be in the context of society.

4.3 SOME UNIQUE POINTS IN JINAPANJARA PHENOMENON

All the cases studies here are just a few examples of Jinapanjara chanters selected to be interviewed on a random approach among different groups of people. Besides these cases, the experiences found in the book entitled “*Prasobkan Poosud Pra Gatha Chinabanchorn*” compiled by The Jinapanjara Chanting Club have been used as a source of information as well. The following are the noteworthy points found in the study.

4.3.1 THINKING OF JINAPANJARA, THINKING OF SOMDEJ TOH

It might be said that the Jinapanjara phenomenon is running along with “Somdej Toh” popularity. Many aspects of Jinapanjara are often associated with “Somdej Toh.” No matter who was the actual original author, most of the people seem to ignore that point. They merely know that this gatha was selected by “Somdej Toh” and used in reciting incantation over amulets. That is enough for their faith. As generally understood, the Jinapanjara Gatha ‘belongs’ to “Somdej Toh.” Everyone who wants to chant should ask permission from him or at least think of him whenever they chant.

Starting with the instructions on how to chant, it appears widely in chanting books that new chanters have to start on Thursday with flowers, incense sticks and candles. Some are more specific in detail saying that the offering should be 9 incense sticks, 9 candles, 9 flowers and/or a specified kind of flower, such as lotus

or Jasmine only. New chanters have to worship the Triple Gem first then think of “Somdej Toh” as the owner, asking him for permission to use his chant. It is believed that following these instructions will provide chanters success in reciting it in a short time. As for the starting day, Thursday, it is recognized in Thai society as “the Teachers Day” and it is believed to be an auspicious day for starting any learning. But in the case of Jinapanjara, it means more than that since it was the birthday of “Somdej Toh.”* The good places to start chanting are “Vihan Somdej” at Wat Rakhang and Bor Nam Mon at Wat Indravihan which are both associated with him.

4.3.2 THE MORE YOU CHANT THE MORE EFFECTIVE IT IS

It was found that Jinapanjara has been used by people who demand several things depending on their needs at that moment. The point is the quantity of chanting is treated as the key to success. It is usually applied following the belief of each chanter, meaning that it is related to the wish they request. For example:

-At least 1 time a day, usually used before going sleep or before going out to work, in the usual situation.

-2-3 times, for a bit of an unusual situation or on the day chanters would have a tough task they felt worry about.

-9 times, an auspicious number followed by most chanters, which is considered an efficient quantity enabling chanters to achieve all their wishes.

-10 times, some schools claimed that 10 was the original quantity before it was adapted to be 9 times.

-108 times, the number for big requests, such as before undertaking an important business negotiation or ask for recovery from an illness.

-100 times-1,000 times, the maximum quantity found in the case of Soraphong and his family using this number when he wanted to ask for some thing that is quite special or a very tough task.

-As much as possible, treated by ardent chanters who have strong faith in Jinapanjara and Somdej Toh. In this case the Jinapanjara is usually chanted whenever they drive or on travel.

It should be noted that most serious chanters prefer chanting Jinapanjara during the day time. It is not usually chanted at bed time. They gave the reason that they need time and concentration, so the day time is most suitable. Moreover, chanting with voice as loud as possible is suggested by some ardent chanters because it will bring chanters more success, power and concentration than chanting in the mind.

* “Somdej Toh” was believed to be born on Thursday 17 of April, 1788.

4.3.3 MULTI-FUNCTIONED PRAYER

In general, prayers are usually believed to have some specific benefit such as the *Seven Bojjhanga* being good for one who is suffering from sickness, the *Yantun Nimittang* is good for protection from nightmares or the *Metta Sutta* is good for charming. The Jinapanjara is believed to give more benefits than that. From followers experience and belief, Jinapanjara gives great protection to chanters as well as bringing or leading chanters to good thing. Moreover, some insisted that it also works as mind purification as well. In the book "*Prasobkan Poosud Pra Gatha Chinabanchorn*" of The Jinapanjara Chanting Club, the benefits of regularly chanting Jinapanjara are demonstrated as below:

- Protection from accidents and harms
- As an auspicious charm
- Giving a sixth sense warning in advance in case of accidents and bad luck
- One who has meditative power can use it to make sacred water in order to heal some sicknesses
- Useful in negotiations with "Chao Kam Nai Ven" (one who has anger toward a person who has committed bad karma to him or her in the past and ready to harm them) by offering them plenty of chanting such as 500 or 1,000 times in case of sickness.
- Provide blessing for worker's prosperity as well as student's success
- Decrease bad karma from the past
- Enhance national security in case of big group chantings¹⁶

However, from the interview cases studies and stories from different chanters, it is found that the benefits claimed by chanters are generally as follows:

4.3.3.1 ACCIDENT PROTECTION

This is the most noted benefit widely believed among chanters. It applies to chanting in the car as a car protector, encouraging chanters to feel confident for their safety. In this sense it is usually chanted either when chanters are driving or are struck in a traffic jam. Many chanters trust that Jinapanjara enables them to be safe in case of an accident, despite the fact that they might have a good safety system in their cars.

"Every time I take a motorcycle, I have to chant Jinapanjara because it is the only thing you can do at that time. I don't know whether it can save me or not, but it is better than doing nothing. Actually, it makes me feel

¹⁶ The Jinapanjara Chanting Club, *Prasobkan Poosud Pra Gatha Chinabanchorn*, pp.169-171.

reassured that if an accident happens there is an invisible thing beside me to saves me finally.”¹⁷

A journalist who denied to be named

4.3.3.2 HEALING AND RECOVERING

One of the most significant purposes, besides accident protection, is that many people apply chanting Jinapanjara when they get seriously sick. They have a strong belief that it will enable them to survive or get better from the severe sickness. This can be seen in case of Jinda Hengsomboon, the author of the book “*Kunanuphap hang Pra Gatha Jinapanjara.*” It is stated on page 25 that obviously she survived because of Jinapanjara. In the book the author said that during the time when she was seriously ill, she suffered from weakness, she could not breathe normally and was out of energy. She made an attempt to focus on chanting Jinapanjara and finally got well within three hours. This inspired her to write the book referenced above.

According to Phanomthien’s belief, he said in an interview that when he suffered from temporary paralysis he focused on chanting Jinapanjara continuously from 6 p.m. until 3 a.m. He got better then at 6 a.m. He was absolutely fine and was able to go back home. People in these two cases strongly believed in the Jinapanjara as a remedy prayer which save their life during an emergency moment.

In the instructions of Jinapanjara Chanting Club, instruction number 6 says that if patients keep on chanting when they get sick, it will amazingly enable them to recover sooner. Moreover, it also works for other purposes such as to dedicate the chanting merit to the “Chao Kam Nai Ven” of the sick person.

4.3.3.3. INVISIBLE REFUGE FOR STUDENTS

This benefit could be seen in the case of Dr. Boonchai, Paphichaya and his students, and the unnamed girl at Soraphong’s house. All emphasized that whenever they have to take a tough exam, the Jinapanjara would be used seriously as part of their learning process. Although they worked hard, they still thought it would not be enough. So the Jinapanjara is applied as the students’ refuge. It should be noted that Jinapanjara is only one prayer to serve students for general exams in school to English exams like TOEFL. This seems in strong contrast to their modern and hi-technology image.

¹⁷ Interview with a Journalist who denied to be named, 9 August 2006.



Dr. Boonchai gave an explanation for this benefit that:

“The Jinapanjara is effective for brain arranging. It could be viewed as a “brain’s arranging equipment.” When our brain is in order, it would be very effective to do anything, especially study. There were many parents of my students who called me with thanks that I have made their kids better. Actually, I did nothing, but the Jinapanjara did. I suggested to them to chant Jinapanjara regularly and some wanted to try since they wanted to prove if it really works or not. And finally when they knew by their own experience, they would continue chanting themselves.”¹⁸

It not only works for his students, the Jinapanjara also works to himself. Dr. Boonchai believes that his study has much improved until he could get a good job and has a good life today. All of this he attributes to Jinapanjara, the prayer he has been chanting since the age of 12 until present, 9 times a day.

“In my case, my concentration and thinking are really better than ever. It enables me to control myself and also realize what is good or bad for me; what should be done or should not. Briefly, Jinapanjara affected me so much in terms of developing my brain potential. Originally, I was not an excellent student. I have now succeeded in taking several tough exams amazingly. These include successes in studying at Trium Udom School, in entrancing to the Arts faculty of Chulalongkorn University, in getting a good job in Ministry of Foreign affairs and in getting a Fulbright scholarship. These happened after I kept on regularly chanting Jinapanjara and meanwhile studying hard.”¹⁹

Although Jinapanjara is likely viewed as an instant prayer providing many advantages to chanters, one point that has never been heard from its followers, even among teenagers, are *love and relationship problems*. This aspect has never been mentioned as a Jinapanjara capacity.

4.3.4 ONE PRAYER, MANY PRODUCTS

Normally, prayers appear in prayer books; but in the case of Jinapanjara it is also found on other media which are not normally related in terms of religion. The following are the products of Jinapanjara found in several forms:

¹⁸ Interview with Boonchai Kosolthanakul, 9 October 2005.

¹⁹ Ibid., interview with Boonchai Kosolthanakul.

-The only prayer appeared on the cover page of an English self-learning magazine for adolescents “E-Lang” in December, 2006 issue. The magazine also published the meaning translation in English.

-The only prayer printed on a pillow produced by Propaganda, a modern brand for home interior design.

-As a prayer printed on T-shirts produced and sold by Wat Indravihan.

-As a project called “Jinapanjara Family” which aims to encourage families to chant Jinapanjara as a family activity in order to protect the family from all evils and make new generation to have more virtuous behavior.

-As a commercial program on mobile phone found on several website.

4.3.5 POPULAR AMONG MIDDLE CLASS WORKERS

From media observation, interviews and related documents, it is found that Jinapanjara is quite popular among middle class workers. This middle class group comprises various careers of chanters, even some who work and study in scientific field, such as Dr. Phichai Tovivich, the head of the chanting club, Paphichaya, Boonyarut, and Dr. Boonchai, and this does not include many who asked not to be named. These unnamed people acknowledged that they chant Jinapanjara as regular activity every day at least once a day. Most of them chant before go to sleep. As a religious activity connected to a superstitious story, some prefer hiding this from the public since it is contradictory with their working image. However, some of them openly acknowledge this practice and try to induce others to chant as well are to share their experience on this topic. This type is seen in case of Dr. Phichai, Dr. Boonchai, Booyarut, Paphichaya and Soraphong Chartri, etc.

Pra Paisan Visalo, a scholar monk, gave his view on this phenomenon that:

“This is such a phenomenon that is in accordance with middle class characters that prefer individualism and consumerism. The Jinapanjara can be performed individually and freely without any commitment of place, time or person. Importantly, wealth and safety are the outstanding benefits of Jinapanjara. This well serves the middle class demands.”²⁰

4.3.6 FULL OF MYTH AND MIRACLE STORIES

It should be noted that Jinapanjara is a prayer that is full of myth and stories, not only from “Somdej Toh” but also from the experiences of individual chanters. These stories are often told and retold among chanters. It should not be looked over as a factor behind this phenomenon.

²⁰ Interview with Pra Paisan Visalo, 7 July 2006.

“If you chant Jinapanjara, don’t stop it until it ends. It will provide you safety. Because chanting Jinapanjara will provide a wall throughout your body and if you stop chanting before it ends, there would be some part left from the protection. In case you have bad fate, bad evil might be able to harm you. At the time I was in bad fate I usually faced many bad things. Once I chanted only half Jinapanjara, then took a motorcycle sitting behind my friend, I did not know what happened. But I fell from the motorcycle and rolled down several times on the road. Amazingly, I did not get seriously injured and when I fell down I saw a monk standing in front of me.”²¹

Psychology lecturer in a university

“There was a case that a son chanted for his mother and made a vow that if his mother got well he would chant 108 Jinapanjara as an offering. After that when his mother got well he did not do as he promised. He got sick himself eventually.”²²

Prasert Sukhothanang, secretary of the Chanting Club

“When my mother was 80 she suffered from a gall stone, she chanted Jinapanjara before a Buddha Image. After that one month later the gall stone was absolutely gone”²³

Dr. Phichai Tovivich, The Head of The Jinapanjara Gatha Chanting Club

It should be noted that there is a special belief in Jinapanjara held by members of the club that chanting Jinapanjara is capable to decrease future lives. For example, if one who will be born again 100 times, if he chants the Jinapanjara enough, his mind will be purified. A number of his future lives will be reduced. This is called in the club “Yon Chat Phop” (the reduction of birth).

“One of my friend when he has to make a big business deal or go for an auction, he chants Jinapanjara 108 times. Now he is very rich and successful.”²⁴

Thida Baramanand, Managing Editor of Rak Luk Books

4.3.7 SPIRITUAL REFUGE FOR WEAK PEOPLE

“It is a spiritual refuge for insecure people. Now there are more insecure people so that why chanters have increased”²⁵

21 Interview with a Psychology lecturer in a university who denied to be named, 4 March 2007.

22 Interview with Prasert Sukhothanang, 17 September 2005

23 Interview with Dr. Phichai Tovivich, 22 June 2006

24 Interview with Thida Baramanand, 13 October 2005

25 Ibid., Interview with Dr. Phichai Kosolthanakul.

Dr. Boonchai said, from his own experience, he himself accepted that he used to be an insecure child with a lack of confidence and also had weak physical health. After he chanted Jinapanjara nine times regularly every day, everything seemed better both physically and mentally.

“I became a new person with clearer thinking and not confused like before. I gained more self-confidence, was stronger and full of energy as you seeing now. Whenever I feel blue, stuck in trouble, Jinapanjara is my refuge for holding on. Chanting nine times is effective enough to recover my energy.”²⁶

He proudly said about his inner development because of Jinapanjara.

Similar to other experiences in the same direction, in the case of Paphichaya, it is clearly mentioned that he used to have a lack of confidence and often suffered from too much care for others as well as thinking too much on silly matters. This made him unhappy until he chanted Jinapanjara. As a result, his personality improved to be better including his brain capacity.

“If I were like before, I would not allow you to interview me because it would cause me to feel anxiety. But now I am all right.”²⁷

Likewise, Matthew, a bank sale executive, who looked a bit nervous at first, seemed more relaxing when talking about Jinapanjara.

“I always have a chanting book wherever I go. I chant in the car as much as I can. Once I was stuck in an elevator almost 30 minutes. At that time, just chanting Jinapanjara and thinking of Somdej Toh helped me to stay clam down, not to panic until I was saved. Once again when I got Hemorrhagic Fever and was in a severe condition, during the stay in the hospital I kept on chanting Jinapanjara all day and my blood data increased from 700-800 to 100,000 within a short time amazingly. That caused me get better very soon. It is a miracle that you can see by yourself.”²⁸

Matthew gave a definition of Jinapanjara through his belief and experience similar to the girl who lived in Soraphong’s house as she said that

26 Ibid., Interview with Boonchai Kosolthanakul.

27 Ibid., Interview with Paphichaya Chaikul.

28 Ibid., Interview with Matthew.

“Sometimes I have to stay home alone, but I do not feel scared because I have him and Jinapanjara Gatha as my refuge. This gives me a sense of security.”²⁹

Once on a radio program, the effect of divorce problems was being discussed; one audience member called into the program and revealed that he was abandoned by his parents since he was young. So he had to stay with his relatives and grew up alone until he graduated with a bachelor degree and got a good job eventually. This person shared his experience with a proud feeling for his success. And at the end he mentioned Jinapanjara and Somdej Toh as follows.

“When I feel lonely I chant Jinapanjara and take Somdej Toh as my refuge. This helps me much and provides me with a feeling that I am not alone.”³⁰

4.3.8 NOT POPULAR AMONG DHAMMA PRACTITIONERS

It is worth mentioning here that most ardent chanters in this research *are not intellectual Buddhists*. The term ‘intellectual Buddhists’ here means Buddhists who understand the real teaching of the Buddha. The Buddhists of this kind do not pay much attention on chanting especially chanting Jinapanjara. As seen in the case of Boonyaraut, we have found that she was rather against every form of practicing the Dhamma because it usually requires many rules to follow. She preferred to have a self- practice on her own with chanting approach. It may be possible that for her the practice of Dhamma is more difficult than chanting.

Normally, the Jinapanjara chanters are not interested much in practicing the Dhamma. Or it might be said that ardent chanters has no aims in Nirvana or liberating themselves from defilement. They live their lives as worldly people who are still concerned with wealth, success or fame. Interestingly, people who are concerned with the practice of Dhamma and have the goal to attain Nirvana do not pay attention much on Jinapanjara. Saran Maitreweej or Dung Truen, a well known Dhamma book author, accepted that he used to chant Jinapanjara seriously before; but after he turned to practice the Dhamma he stop chanting Jinapanjara. His reason is that:

“I chanted a lot in the past including Jinapanjara; but after I understood clearly about what is real Buddhism and what is Saiyasart, I stopped chanting Jinapanjara. Prayers in terms of real Buddhism should say about the Dhamma or praising of Buddha. Calling sacred power to be

²⁹ Ibid., Interview with Unrevealed named girl.

³⁰ “Krobkrua Kui Kan,” a radio program, on air Tuesday 13, March, 2007, FM 92 MHz.

the assistant like this is not appropriate in Buddhism's view. So I do not chant Jinapanjara anymore for this reason."³¹

In the same manner, Thanarath Sotajinda, a Buddhist who concerned with the Dhamma practice seriously, said that chanting is not much important for him since he was interested more in following the Buddha's footsteps by practicing the Buddha's teaching to purify his mind and stop being reborn.

"If we do good cause we must gain good result; that is the rule of Karma."³²

Same as Assoc.Pro.Suchao Ploychum, author of "*Prawat Gatha Jinapanjara*," denied chanting Jinapanjara in daily life when being asked if he chanted Jinapanjara or not.

"I do not pay attention much on it. The Jinapanjara is quite far away from Dhamma. Unlike other Buddhist prayers in the Tripitok that obviously mentioned the Dhamma, probably the author might realize that it is hard to bring people in this time to be interested in pure Dhamma. So have the benefit first then lead to Dhamma later."³³

As a Buddhist monk, Pra Paisan Visalo analyzed why Jinapanjara is often taken as the refuge for Thais nowadays.

"Modern life is quite unstable. It shakes people's confidence. So they need something to hold their mind on with effortless approach. Some seek amulets, some offer things to sacred power, and some chant. In my opinion, chanting is rather good because more or less it provides concentration and requires only faith and commitment in the level that not much like when you take Dhamma practicing course in monastery or Dhamma center."³⁴

4.3.9. FOND BY SOME INTELLECTUALS WITH SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION

Whereas another group of Buddhists who are considered as intellectual person, with good educational background seem to view different with their own reason. In case of Dr.Phichai Tovivich, Head of The Jinapanjara Gatha Chanting Club gave reason on this belief that:

"At first you have to accept that sacred power is real, soul is never gone from the world, it still exist. For previous Buddha and Arahants despite they all achieve Nirvana already but their power still exist and

31 Interview with Saran Maitreevej <Dung Truen>, 13 November 2006.

32 Interview with Thanarath Sotajinda, 30 January 2007

33 Interview with Suchao Ploychum, 7 November 2006.

34 Ibid., Interview with Pra Paisan Visalo.

remain actively .If one know the way to tune and receive that wave, it would bring advantage to health and life directly.

These kind of wave or vibrations are not different from FM /AM of radio wave or even mobile wave which we can not see but they are actively for using. As scientist ,I study on chanting and found that chanting creates low frequency vibration which is a good type of vibration that effective and useful to destroy disease caused by high frequency vibration such as cancer's cells. Low frequency vibration is able to recover abnormal conditions by effect to the change at the level of cells .It also helps the balance of cells to be in good order, as this condition, it enables cells to be powerful and stronger enough to prevent and destroy all kinds of diseases. This is my hypothesis on the relation between benefits of chanting and science.

In case of Jinapanjara, it is so special than another prayers since Jinapanjara portrays most sacred names which are like the transmitters connect to pass on that kind of vibration to chanters. This is the distinction of Jinapanjara which reflects the insight of composer that brought in sacred vibrations via mentioning sacred names by chanting."³⁵

In accordance with Dr.Boonchai Kosolthanakul, who explained that chanting Jinapanjara is not a kind of *Saiyasat* or magical matter but it is the difficult for modern people to understand .

"Why don't you wonder to the work of mobile phone which you can not see its wave but you can use it, so does the power of mind .In my opinion, the power of Jinapanjara resulted from the power of sacred figures be mentioned in the content.

Such power is like some kind of vibration or wave though, I believe that their vibrations still remain in universe, it depends on us whether we can tap this kind of power. Jinapanjara Gatha is likely the implement for tuning our mind, re - arranging it to be in good order with self-balancing and inducing it to be ready for receiving good energy.

I believe in the power of mind and believe that Somdej Toh put his power of mind into Pra Somdej and Jinapanjara, for me the miracle of Somdej Toh is nothing else but his power of mind. For as chanting, Jinapanjara can be used in many levels like learning the English language, that we can use as a salesman until as a diplomat."³⁶

From an analysis focuses on chanting and chanters, next, the phenomenon will be analyzed in the last Chapter with conclusion.

³⁵ Ibid., Interview with Dr. Phichai Tovovich.

³⁶ Ibid., Interview with Dr.Boonchai Kosolthanakul.