RADICAL CONSERVATISM

BUDDHISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

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"Its title, ***Radical Conservatism***, reflects the curious nature of Buddhadasa's approach to Buddhism, working within the strict framework of Therevada Buddhism but also radically reaffirming and renewing that ancient tradition... The 'radical' nature of Buddhadasa's thought is apparent...marked by a desire to go to the roots of Buddhism and present its base ideas in a language which is understandable in the modern world." (From the introduction)

Radical Conservatism

First published 1990
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ISBN 974-85712-8-9

มูลนิธิเสฐียรโกเศศ-นาคะประทีป
จัดพิมพ์โดยความร่วมมือจาก มูลนิธิ จอห์น เอฟ เคนเนดี้

Front cover designed by Pichai Lertsuwansri

Photograph on p.v by R. Bunnag

Distributed by Suksit Siam
113-115 Fuang Nakorn Rd.,
(Opp. Wat Rajabopit), Bangkok 10200
Tel. 222-5696-8, Fax: 222-5188

750 Baht (Thailand)
1,200 Baht Hardcover (Thailand)
US$38.00 Overseas (Postage included)
US$60.00 Hardcover

Radical Conservatism

Buddhism in the Contemporary World

Articles in Honour of
Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's 84th Birthday Anniversary

พุทธทาส อินทปัญโญ

Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development

International Network of Engaged Buddhists

Bangkok 2533 (1990)

BUDDHASSĀHAṀ NIYYĀDEMI SARĪRAÑJĪVITAÑCIDAṀ
BUDDHASĀHASMI DĀSOVA BUDDHO ME SĀMIKISSARO – ITI

The Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian Buddhist Era seems to be one year later than that of Burma, Sri Lanka and India. In fact this is not so. The difference is that while the latter regards the year of the Maha Parinibbana as B.E.I., the former takes it to be the first anniversary after the Master' s Passing Away. For example this year is B.E. 2533 according to the Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian calendar, but it is B.E. 2534 according to the Burmese, Ceylonese and Indian calendar.

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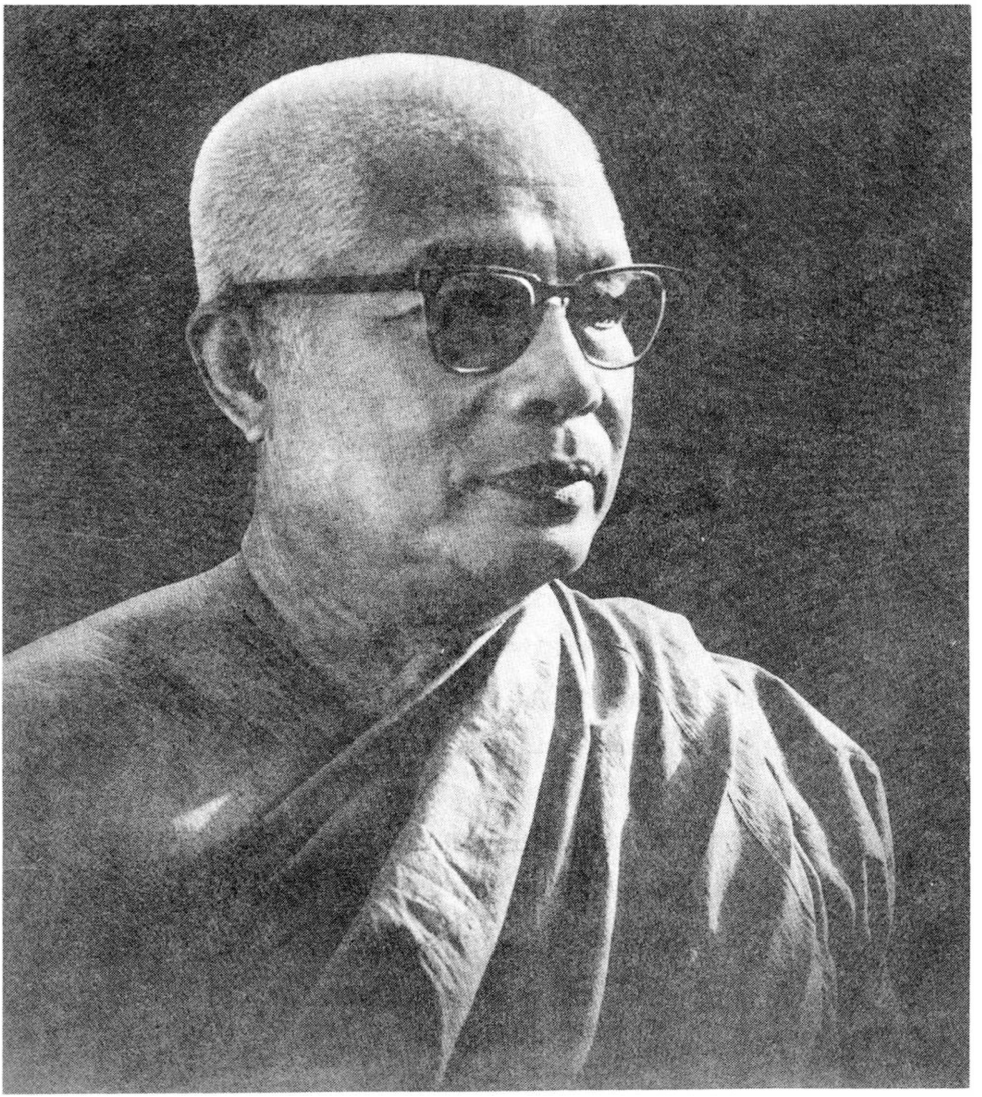

BHIKKHU BUDDHADASA

คาถาถวายพร

ท่านพุทธทาส พระธรรมโกศาจารย์

(เงื้อม อินฺทปญฺโญ)

ในวโรกาสมีชนมายุครบ 7 รอบ นักษัตร

27 พฤษภาคม 2533

****

1. อิทานิ จตุราสีติ-
อินฺทปญฺโญ วรภิกฺขุ
2. ยสสฺสี ธมฺมโกสาจา-
ทีฆมายุ ว นิสฺสาย
3. พหุสฺสุโต สุสิกฺขิโต
สลฺเลโข ธุตวาที จ
4. พุทฺธสาสนปาฐโก
วาสี โมกฺขพลาราเม
5. รตนตฺตยานุภาเวน
กตปุญฺญานุภาเวน
6. สุขิโต อตฺถลทฺโธ โส
อโรโค โหตุ ทีฆายุ
7. โมกฺขพลํ ปวตฺตตุ
ตสฺส จ อนุยนฺตานํ

วสฺสทฺเทสิกมานิโต
พุทฺธทาโส มหาถิโร
ริโย ญาโต จตุทฺทิสา
พหุคุณํ อกาสิ โส
ยุตฺโต สุปฏิปตฺติยา
ลิขิตเทสนาวสี
มหาชนาภิมานิโต
ปนฺตารญฺเญ มโนรเม
รตนตฺตยเตชสา
กตปุญฺญสฺส เตชสา
วิรุฬฺโห พุทฺธสาสเน
อิจฺฉิตพฺพํ สมิชฺฌตุ
นิพฺพานํ ปรมํ สุขํ
เตนานุสาสิตาน จาติ.

คำแปล

1. บัดนี้ พระภิกษุ ฉายา อินฺทปญฺโญ คือท่านพุทธทาส ผู้มั่นคงมาก เจริญอายุนับได้ 84 ปี
2. ท่านมีสมณศักดิ์ว่า พระธรรมโกศาจารย์ มีชื่อเสียงที่รู้จักกันตลอด 4 ทิศ ได้อาศัยอายุยืนยาว ประกอบกระทำคุณประโยชน์เป็นอันมาก
3. เป็นพหูสูต สดับตรับฟังมาก ศึกษาดี ประกอบด้วยสุปฏิปัตติ ปฏิบัติชัดเกลา มีปรกติกล่าวขจัดกิเลสพอใจธุดงควัตร เชี่ยวชาญในการเขียนและเทศนา
4. เป็นนักปาฐกพุทธศาสนา อันมหาชนนับถือยิ่ง อยู่ในสวนโมกขพลาราม อันเป็นป่าที่สงบสงัด เป็นที่รื่นรมย์
5. ด้วยอานุภาพพระรัตนตรัย ด้วยเดชพระรัตนตรัย ด้วยอานุภาพบุญที่ได้ทำแล้ว ด้วยเดชบุญที่ได้ทำแล้ว
6. ขอท่านจงบรรลุสุข ได้ประโยชน์ที่ต้องการ งอกงามในพุทธศาสนา ไม่มีโรค มีอายุยืน ขอประโยชน์สิ่งที่พึงปรารถนา จงสำเร็จ
7. พลังแห่งโมกขะ นิพพานเป็นสุขอย่างยิ่ง จงเป็นไปแก่ท่านและบรรดาผู้ที่ท่านอนุศาสน์พร่ำสอน ปฏิบัติไปตามเทอญ ฯ

Blessings for
Venerable Buddhadasa Phra Dhammakosācāriya
(Ngeuam Indapañño)

On the occassion of his completing 7 celestial cycles
27 May 2533 (1990)

****

1. Idāni caturāsīti-
   Indapañño varabhikkhu
2. Yasassī dhammakosācā-
   Dighamāyuṁ va nissāya
3. Bahussuto susikkhito
   Sallekho dhūtavādī ca
4. Buddhasāsanapāṭhako
   Vāsī mokkhabalārāme
5. Ratanattayānubhāvena
   Katapuññānubhāvena
6. Sukhito atthaladdho so
   Aroko hotu dighāyu
7. Mokkhabalaṁ pavattatu
   Tassa ca anuyantānaṁ

vassuddesikamānito
buddhadāso mahāthiro
riyo ñāto catuddisā
bahugunaṁ akāsi so
yutto supaṭipattiyā
likhitadesanāvasī
mahājanābhimānito
pantārañño manorame
ratanattayatejasā
katapuññassa tejasā
virulho buddhasāsane
icchitabbaṁ samijjhatu
nibbanaṁ paraṁ sukhaṁ
tenānusāsitana cāti.

Translation

****

1. Now, the bhikkhu ordained Indapañño, namely, Venerable Buddhadasa, one most secure, has prospered through the age of 84 years.
2. His ecclesiastical title is Phra Dhammakosācāriya, his fame is known in all four directions, throughout his long life he has done many worthy things.
3. He has heard and learned much, has studied and trained well. He practices well to purify himself, speaks only to destroy defilement, delights in dhutanga practices,and is expert in writing and speaking.
4. A Buddhist speaker most honored by the people, he lives in Suan Mokkhabalārāma,a quiet, peaceful,and refreshing forest.
5. Through the power and might of the Triple Gem, through the power and might of the good he has done.
6. May he realize happiness, achieve his purpose, thrive within Buddhism, be free of illness, and live long. May he be succesful in all worthy goals.
7. May the power of mokkha and the supreme happiness of nibbāna be for him and for all those who practice as he has taught them.

THE DALAI LAMA

THEKCHEN CHOELING
McLEOD GANJ 176219
KANGRA DISTRICT
HIMACHAL PRADESH

MESSAGE

I am happy to send my warm felicitations on the occasion of the 84th birthday of Ven Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. His way of life and his activities in the propagation of the Dharma is laudable. I wish him many more years of health and success in his noble work.

December 27, 1989

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation is a legal entity, acting as an umbrella for the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD) and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB). The Foundation feels it is appropriate that the two organizations should be the publishers of this volume, since the Venerable Acariya Buddhadasa Maha Thera is a patron of both.

We are very grateful to the John F. Kennedy Foundation for its financial support of this volume, and to all the contributors who donate their royalities to the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation so that the Foundation's Ashrama for life and Society will become possible as a center for alternative education for the young and the disadvantaged to grow both intellectually and spiritually. Money derived from the sale of the volume will also be set aside for the operation of the Ashrama.

Their Holinesses the Dalai Lama and the Thai Supreme Patriarch have kindly written special messages for this volume on the auspicious occasion of the Venerable Acariya's birthday. He is gratified by every well-wisher, but he himself does not celebrate his birthday and instead mocks it. This year in particular he said it was the "end of his age".

Most of the articles, though not all, were written especially for the Venerable Acariya. Those which were presented earlier elsewhere are hereby acknowledged.

We are especially grateful to Ven. Dr.Sheng-Yen, President of the Chung-Wa Institute of Buddhist Studies, Taiwan R.O.C., for being so generous in allowing a number of scholar papers presented at the First Chung-Wa International Conference on Buddhism in Taipei from 12-15 January, 1990 to be published here. These papers include those written by Dr. Cromwell Crawford, Dr. John H. Crook, Dr. Lewis Lancaster, and Dr. David Loy.

The Article by Dr. G. Lubsantseren was presented at the Inter-Cultural Seminar, March 11-15, 1990, Bangkok.

Thich Nhat Hanh's article, written with Anne Simpkinson, was first

published in ***Common Boundary,*** Nov.-Dec., 1989. and Ninian Smart's article was first published in ***The Journal of Oriental Studies.*** We thank the editors of both for allowing us to reprint them here.

We are also thankful to the United Nations University for allowing us to publish the Ven. Phra Debvedi's article here, prior to the UNU's publication of "Buddhism and the Desirable Society of the Future" UNU. In that volume, of which I am the editor, are quite a number of contributions from leading scholars, some of which are also included in this volume.

Dr. Louis Gabaude not only wrote an article for us, but also provided his compilation on Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's work in various languages up to the date of the Ven. Acariya's birthday – May 27, 1990.

All of our staff in various branches of the Foundation have been very helpful in this publication. Nicholas Kholer has worked harder than most in the editorial board; Daw Tint Tint Than and Jonathan Watts have been very patient and meticulous proofreaders.

I trust that the volume is worthy of the "Servant of the Buddha", who has tirelessly worked to bring Buddhism to be relevant and vital in the contemporary world.

S. Sivaraksa
On behalf of the Editorial Board

INTRODUCTION

This volume of articles, published in honor of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's birthday anniversary and completion of a seventh 12-year life cycle on May 27, 1990, is intended not only to focus on the work of Buddhadasa and Thai Buddhism but to also explore aspects of Buddhism – and other religions – which are connected, explicitly and implicitly, with his extensive corpus of thought. Its title ***RADICAL CONSERVATISM*** reflects the curious nature of Buddhadasa's approach to Buddhism, working within the strict framework of Therevada Buddhism but also radically reaffirming and renewing that ancient tradition. Indeed, when he first began his monastery of Suan Mokh over 50 years ago he received little support from the official Thai Sangha, but his dedication to the ideals of Therevada and insight into the tradition have gradually earned him their recognition. So much so, in fact, that some of his disciples have become worried that his own simple wishes for the treatment of his corpse after his death will not be allowed, with the Sangha requiring an official ceremony instead.

The 'radical' nature of Buddhadasa's thought is readily apparent, and is discussed in some of the articles in the section ***Buddhadasa and Siamese Buddhism***. It is marked by a desire to go to the roots of Buddhism and present its base ideas in a language which is understandable in the modern world. In support of this representation, he examines ways of discussing Buddhism by a contrast of 'Dhamma language' and 'ordinary language', underscoring the necessity of not letting common conventions of speech block the understanding of true Dhamma, which is beyond verbalization.

Other strong currents in his thought are the concepts of 'freed mind' and that of selflessness, marked by lack of self-centeredness and the maintenance of a correct internal ecology, which will be reflected in one's relationship to the outside world. Buddhadasa also places great emphasis on practice and the search for enlightenment in the here-and-now, for both monks and the laity – a concern which is not a primary one for the ordinary Thai lay Buddhist.

What is especially notable is Buddhadasa's willingness to examine and engage with other traditions of thought, both those within Budddhism, such as the Mahayana, and religions and philosophies outside of Buddhism, Eastern and Western, ancient and modern. This willingness is more remarkable in that he

is from the East, not the West, coming from a well-established tradition and that he draws from these others without sacrificing his own. The sections in this volume ***Buddhist Thought in the Contemporary World, Perspectives on Buddhist Practice,*** and ***Interreligious Dialogues toward Human Development*** are a reflection of his openness and desire to relate with other trends of thought.

The remaining section, ***Socially Engaged Buddhism,*** is an examination of Buddhism's confrontation with the material world, mainly concentrating on modern times but including a look at the 'social activism' of Buddha himself, in John McConnell's article "The Rohini Conflict and the Buddha's Intervention." Buddhadasa's relationship to this aspect of Buddhism, which has had a remarkable flowering in modern times in conjunction with the growing trends of peace, human rights, and environmental activism in the East and the West, is intimate. His emphasis on the here-and-now and his criticism of modern society, especially its greed and consumerism, have inspired and influenced many activists. He has done this in a way which answers the criticism of Buddhism as an 'otherworldly' religion unconcerned with the material world and yet maintains his seperation as a Bhikkhu from the mundane concerns of life, by providing theoretical and moral support for activists while refusing to directly engage in politics. This is a difficult position to maintain, open to criticism from those who would have him concern himself either more or less with the material world, but a position which he has gracefully maintained for years. It is a truly Buddhist balancing which allows great acheivement through seeming inaction.

It is hoped that these essays, articles, and Dhamma talks will honor Buddhadasa and the great tradition which he represents, as well as encourage the further exploration and illumination of that tradition by others. In a world where it is increasingly apparent that the benefits of technology, Western rationalism, and capitalism have corresponding drawbacks such as self-centeredness, greed, intolerance, and pollution, a voice like Buddhadasa's is both a warning and a hopeful alternative. It would be well if people listened.

Nicholas P. Kohler

I

Buddhist thought in the contemporary world

THE BUDDHIST IDEA OF A PERFECT SOCIETY

Actually society can never be perfect. We can have an image of it, an ideal for a perfect society which we can use as something to guide us, something to aim for. But we don't expect society ever to be perfect and continuously the way that we would like it to be because part of the perfection lies in the fact that everything changes; nothing can remain the same. Just as a rose reaches its perfect fullness, perfect form, perfect fragrance and then changes; so societies reach peaks and then they degenerate. This is the natural movement of all conditioned phenomena. Any sensory condition follows that pattern.

To contemplate the arising and ceasing of conditions allows us to understand them; we are not just caught in the arising and ceasing of the world – or of the human body – like a helpless creature that has no way of knowing anything beyond it. We actually have the power and ability to transcend the world, the society, the body, the self. All that is most dear and precious, all that we are most frightened of, all that we can possibly conceive of or believe in, we can transcend. What do I mean by transcendence? To "transcend the world" sounds like you are somehow getting out of the whole thing by going somewhere else. To many people it would mean that you had left the world behind, that you were no longer interested in or concerned about it in any way, that you lived on a totally different plane.

But first of all we need to contemplate what we mean by the world. Of course with our materialist mind, conditioned through education and geography courses, we tend to see the world as a kind of map or globe. We think the world is the planet Earth, and to transcend the planet Earth we have to get off it somehow, and maybe go up to the moon. But when Buddhists talk about the world, we talk about the mind because that's what we live in. Even the concept of the planet is a concept of the mind. Opinions we have about the world, about ourselves, about other beings, about other planets, are in fact the conditions that arise and cease in the mind. We think that the world is something we must seek as an external object. We say, "We'll go and study the world," meaning that we'll go to every country on the planet. That's not it. You don't have to go anywhere to actually transcend the world or to see through the world so that you can transcend it. You open your mind, you begin to notice the way things actually are, that

all that arises ceases.

Here in Britain just on a day like this, we are affected by the stunning beauty of nature: the undulating hills and the greenness, the extraordinary abundance and delicacy of flowers and their beautiful shapes, colours and patterns.

So here on this planet, in this one small country, we can actually perceive form and colour taken to perfection. Try to imagine forms more perfect than flowers, or colours more beautiful than theirs. The precedent for perfection is really what we have already been able to perceive in form and colour; we judge by what we've already seen. And yet beauty changes; it's not static. The seasons change and all the leaves fall off the trees, all the flowers disappear. Everything becomes bleak, almost monotone in winter when there is hardly any noticeable contrast, except in the shades of dark and lightness. Then if we compare winter with spring, we might say that spring is more beautiful if we prefer vibrant colours, beautiful flowers, and the kind of energy that spring brings. But then if we open our mind, we also begin to recognize the subtle beauty of winter. The colorlessness, and silence of winter can be as much appreciated as the energy of spring. But this appreciation comes from not having opinions about things being perfect in a static way, the rose being a perfect rose in spring, summer, autumn and winter. For that you need a plastic rose, one that can be perfect all year round. But even the best, most perfectly made artificial rose is never as satisfying to us as even a less beautiful natural rose. Why? Because we know that it's artificial. It's pretending to be something it's not, while the real flower isn't pretending to be anything. It's just what it is. Its beauty is pure beauty without any pretence. It's not trying to say it's the most beautiful rose, either. Nor is it trying to hold on to its beauty. It's willing to let it go.

So in this way we begin to open to the perfection of nature and of the sensory world. Our view of perfection is no longer a fixed idea that things have to be only one way to be perfect, that when they change in a way we may not want them to, then that's the end of what we hold dear and of what to us is perfect.

Now contemplate an ideal for a perfect society. The Buddhists could point to the fact that a perfect society would be one of fully enlightened human beings, *arahants,* who had no selfish inclinations, understood everything as it is, were no longer attached to the world out of ignorance, but who had transcended the world. Transcendence means not clinging to the world. It doesn't mean floating up in the sky and floating away from it; it means living within all the sensory conditions for a lifetime within the

human form, but no longer being deluded by them. It means we have used our ability to reflect and contemplate existence to the point where we see it clearly as it is. That is what we call transcending the world. So one who is transcending the world can still act and live in the world but in a very clear and pure way because the world is no longer a delusion. We are not expecting the world to be anything other than what it is. And the world is the mind itself, this mind.

Arahant is the Pali term for one who has no more delusions at all about the nature of the world. That is the term we use for a perfected human being, one who has wisely reflected and transcended the world but who still lives in the world and works in the world for the welfare of other beings. If you have seen through the sense of self, broken through, let go of selfish interest in the world, then what else is there to do? Certainly you don't live your life for any false sense of self anymore, if that has been transcended. So one lives the life of a human being for the welfare of others and of the society. So *arahants* in a society would be a great blessing. Where there is total self disinterest, such a one no longer thinks in terms of getting any rewards for what they do, not even gratitude or praise or any kind of remuneration. So the perfect society then would be the society of enlightened ones.

Now today we begin to look at our mind to see how this relates to us as individual beings. We can look at the state of the society, or the world in general – the United States, the Soviet Union, the Third World – and we see that it is in a terrible state of confusion. Human societies, in general, are all somehow out of harmony with the Dhamma, with nature. We are so involved with our own personal views, our own attachments, our endless demands on the society and our environment, that we are taking the planet itself to destruction. This is the first time in human history (that we know of, anyway) that we are capable of destroying nearly all living beings on the planet. We have been so selfish and have so lost our sense of responsibility for the planet, that we are quite willing to corrupt and pollute the very home of the human being. We even think that if we blow it up in the future or if it becomes so polluted we can't live on it anymore, that with modern technology we can probably escape to another planet and live there!

But rather than seeing the planet in the selfish, childish way that we do when we take it for granted and misuse it, we should begin to look at it as a place we must respect and learn to take care of. This the human being is capable of doing. As selfish and as corrupt as we can be, we can also be that noble. We can take on the responsibilities of caring for other human beings as well as for the animal kingdom and for the whole planet.

This is where I hope modern consciousness is taking us. A certain

hopeful trend we can see at this time is what they call "expansion of consciousness," where more and more human beings are awakening to this potential for transcending the world in order to be able to operate freely and wisely within the sensory realm, not for personal gain any more but for the welfare of other beings.

There are listed in the Pali Cannon, the scriptures for the Theravadin Buddhists, what are called the *rājadhammas*, the virtues and duties of a wise ruler. The first one is the virtue of *dāna*, which means generosity, giving. In almost all Buddhist lists of virtues, or *pāramitās*, *dāna* is always the first one. Isn't that significant? Why do they always list *dāna* first? In a Buddhist sense, any kind of ruler – a universal monarch, a prime minister, a president, a chairman – needs to have this sense of giving, generosity – because this is what opens the heart of a human being. Just reflect on the act of giving without selfish demand in return, without expecting a reward, when we give something we like or want, to somebody else, that opens the heart. And that always engenders a sense of nobility. Humanity is at its best when it gives what it loves, what it wants, to others.

The next one is *sila*, or high moral conduct. A ruler should be impeccable in morality, a human being you can fully trust. Whether you agree with a ruler's actions or political positions isn't terribly important; it's the moral integrity of the ruler that is most important, because you can't trust somebody who is immoral. But people can easily feel suspicious about someone who has not committed themselves fully to refrain from cruelty, from killing, from taking things that have not been given, from sexual misconduct, from false speech and from addictive drugs and drinks. These standards of restraint are the basic moral precepts, the *sila*, that you are expected to keep if you consider yourself a Buddhist.

The third virtue is *pariccāga*, or self-sacrifice. This means giving up personal happiness, safety and comfort for the welfare of the nation. Self-sacrifice is something we need to consider. Are we willing to sacrifice personal comfort, privilege, convenience, for the welfare of our families? In the past fifty years or so, self-sacrifice has almost come to be regarded with contempt, or put down as being foolish or naive. It seems that the tendency is to think of yourself first. What has this government done for you? What can you get out of it? Whenever I've thought in those ways I've always felt I could not respect myself at all. But any time that I sacrificed myself for something, I've always felt that doing so was the right thing to do. Giving up personal interest, personal convenience and comfort for the welfare of others – that is always something that I look back on now with no regret.

The fourth one is *ajjava,* which is honesty and integrity. This means more than not telling lies to others, but being honest with yourself. You have to be undeluded by all the desires and fears that go on in your own mind in order to have this sense of personal honesty, where you are not blaming or condemning others or looking at the world in the wrong way.

The fifth is *maddava,* which means kindness or gentleness. Living in Britain I've noticed that there is a tremendous desire for kindness and gentleness, and an idealism that holds to that; but in actual daily life one finds a kind of harshness towards oneself or towards others: a tendency to make harsh judgments, to react with anger, and to regard kindness as a bit soppy and wet. Gentleness is weak. So we've emphasized the practice of *mettā;* I think, here in Britain more than in Thailand. *Mettā* is loving-kindness; it's kindness and gentleness towards oneself and towards others. When we hold to high standards and ideas, we often lack kindness. We are always looking at how things should be, and we become frustrated with life as it is, angry and cruel. To be kind and gentle seems wishy-washy and weak, and yet it is a virtue that a universal monarch should have in order to be considered truly a universal monarch.

The sixth is *tapa* – meaning austerity or self-control; giving up what you don't really need. The seventh one is *akkodha,* which is non-anger, non-impulsiveness, calmness. This is quite difficult: remaining calm in the midst of confusion and chaos, when things are frustrating, instead of acting just on impulse, saying something in anger, acting in anger. *Akkodha* is non-anger.

The eighth is *avihimsa,* or non-violence, non-oppression: not using violent means against enemies or against anyone, not being oppressive or forcing your will unmercifully on other people. Even high-mindedness can be oppressive, can't it? If you live with people who have very high standards and high ideals, they can push you down all the time with their ideas. It's a kind of violence, even though they might believe in non-violence and think they are not acting with violence. You can say, "I believe in *avihimsa*" but still be very oppressive about it. That's why we often tend to see it as hypocrisy. When we talk about morality now, some people get very tense , because they remember morality as being oppressive, like in Victorian times when people were intimidated and frightened by moral judgments. But that is not *avihimsa. Avihimsa* is non-oppression.

After *avihimsa* is *khanti,* which is patience, forbearance, tolerance. To be non-oppressive and non-violent, not to follow anger, one needs to be patient. We need to bear with what is irritating, frustrating, unwanted, unloved, unbeautiful. We need to forbear rather than react violently to

it, oppress it, annihilate it.

The last one is *avirodhana,* non-deviation from righteousness, or conformity to the law, the Dhamma. Non-deviation from righteousness sounds oppressive, doesn't it? When we become righteous we can often become very oppressive. I've seen it in myself. When I get full of righteous indignation I come at people like a demon, like one of those Old Testament Gods. "Thou shalt not!" I can be pretty frightening to people when I'm righteous. *Avirodhana* isn't that kind of patriarchal, oppressive righteousness, but it is knowing what is right, what is appropriate to time and place. Here in Britain, we believe that thinking rationally and being reasonable is right. Everything that follows from that, we think is right, and everything that is irrational or unreasonable, we think is wrong. We don't trust it. But when we attach to reason, then we often lack patience, because we are not open to the movement and flow of emotion. The spaciousness of life is completely overlooked. We are so attached to time, efficiency, the quickness of thought, the perfection of rational thinking, that we view temporal conditions as reality, and space we no longer notice. So the emotional nature, the feeling, the intuitive, the psychic, all are dismissed, neglected, and annihilated.

Avirodhana, or conformity to the Dhamma, entails a steadiness in one's life to conform to the way things are. The only reason we don't conform to it is that we don't know it. Human beings are quite capable of believing in anything at all; so we tend to go every-which-way and follow any old thing. But once you discover the Dhamma, then your only inclination is to conform to the law of the Way Things Are.

So these are the *rājadhammas,* the Dhammas of a universal ruler. Now let's apply all these lists. We might think: "Well that's what the Prime Minister should be doing, and the President of the United States, definitely. Maybe we should send them the list of the *rājadhammas,* leave it up to them to do it." But what is it within ourselves that we might consider the universal ruler? What would be the universal ruler in our own lives, internally? This is the way of reflection. You are taking these lists and applying them to the practical experience of being a human being, not looking at them as a way of judging the present rulers of the world. We could get into a lot of interesting criticisms, couldn't we, if we decided to see how much *dāna, sila,* or *pariccāga* the President has and judge them according to this list. But that would be of no value, would it? We could figure out what *they* should do, but we wouldn't have the vaguest idea of what we should do. How *our* lives should move. How *we* should change. Yet the more we move towards developing the universal ruler *within,* then the more chance there is of actually getting one of these proper universal rulers *outside* sometime.

We can, in daily life, move toward these virtues. These lists are not to be used as judgements against ourselves to say, "Oh I'm not generous enough; my morality isn't good enough; I'm too selfish to think of sacrificing myself," going on down the whole list like that. But you look at this list in order to aspire, to move upward more and more in daily life experiences, and to be able to do that we need to begin to know ourselves as we are, rather than making judgments about ourselves as we think we are. By understanding yourself, you will understand everyone else, and then you will understand the society.

So a perfect society can only happen when there are perfect human beings. And what is a perfect individual human being? One who is not deluded by the appearance of the sensory realm, who has transcended that these virtues are then the natural manifestation of relating to all other beings. When there is not a concept or an attachment to selfish position, selfish view, then generosity becomes a natural way of relating. One wants to share. One realizes just what one needs and is willing to share the extra. The tendency towards hoarding up for oneself diminishes.

In the world today we see this terrible discrepancy between the affluent Western world and the poverty-stricken Third World. We live at a very high standard of living while most of the people in the world live at a very low standard. Many are not even able to get enough to eat. We can contemplate this as not being right. We can condemn the Western world, or we can justify our affluence or feel sorry for the Third World.

But what can we actually do about it? If we have not influence enough with the governments and leaders of the affluent West, we know they won't listen to us. Maybe we can't really change much on that level. But we *can* change the way we relate to the world, can't we? We can learn to practice meditation, learn to live in a way whereby we become less and less selfish, so that what we do have we are willing to share with others. Then we find the joy of sharing as the reward but not an expected reward. We can contemplate *sila :* our responsibility for action and speech. What are we doing now to live in a way that is not harmful to other creatures? We can refrain from violent actions and speech, from exploitation, from all that causes division, confusion, anguish and despair in the lives of other beings. We try to avoid committing actions or using speech that causes those in the minds of others. We can practice – with our family, with the people we work with, with the society we have to live with – how to live in a way that is non-violent, that is moral, that takes on the responsibility for what we say and do.

Self-sacrifice. Not a kind of soppy martyrdom where I'm sacrificing

myself for this no-good lot, pretending to be a martyr. Self-sacrifice doesn't come from self-involvement but from no longer regarding oneself as more important than anyone else. You have to know yourself before you can do that. The idea of sacrificing yourself without knowing yourself only makes you one of those sentimental martyrs. Self-sacrifice comes from mental clarity, not from sentimentality.

Ajjava: honesty, integrity. *Maddava:* kindness, gentleness. We can really put forth attentiveness to life in a way which is gentle and kind. The reason why we lack in kindness is not that we don't want to be kind; it's that we are too impatient to be kind. To be kind you have to be patient with life. To be gentle with it means you have to give in a lot. You can't just bend things and force things to fit your ideas just for convenience, just for efficiency. Kindness means that you are, just in little things in daily life, learning to be a little more gentle and open, especially with things that you don't like or don't want. It's easy to be open to the things we like and to be kind to little children when they are being sweet and loveable. But to that which is annoying, irritating, frustrating, being kind takes considerable attention, doesn't it? We have to put forth the effort not to react with aversion. And that's very good for us, to work with the irritations of daily life in little ways, to just try to be gentle and kind in situations where we tend to become cruel, harsh, judgemental.

Tapa: self-control, non-indulgence, austerity. Austerity is a frightening word for the modern age. You have to give up everything, so that is a bit daunting. But just practising *tapa,* questioning yourself: how much do you really need? How much is an indulgence? Not passing judgment and saying, "Oh I'm an indulgent so and so," but just beginning to note what is the right amount between what is necessary and what is indulgence. This takes attentiveness also. You have to be honest and notice the difference between indulging and just taking what is necessary, what you need.

Akkodha: non-anger, non-impulsiveness. It takes determination to pay attention and not just to follow anger, to react to impulse, to react to life. *Avihimsa:* non-violence, non-oppression. *Khanti:* patience, forebearance. And *avirodhana:* non-deviation from righteousness. The more we are aware of these virtues, the more they can manifest in our lives. Trying to be virtuous from ideas alone can be a disaster. You just end up criticizing yourself. It's like comparing all the stages of the rose with the rose at is best. You take the rose at its perfect unfoldment, perfect fragrance, and compare the bud and the decayed rose with that. "I don't like this, I don't like that, but this is how everything should be." But when we see that the sensory world is a process, that it's change, that it's flux, then we begin to appreciate it in all its change; we no longer demand to fix it in

a static way and then judge everything according to some fixed view we have about it.

Apply all this to the society, too, as well as to yourself, even though society will never be perfect just as the rose can never maintain itself at its peak. We have to always realize that it will reach its peak. The more we free ourselves from delusion, self-interest, ignorance, the more we can be part of and appreciate the flow and change of life, just as we can appreciate the cycle of the rose instead of just grasping at the peak of its beauty.

So now we can contemplate society, say, here in Britain. What stage is it in? We can't say it's at its peak , can we? We can say, "It's no good, it's not like it used to be, it shouldn't be like this," and go on like this endlessly, getting depressed, upset, hating it because it's not at its peak. But where is it? As we open ourselves to its change, to the law, the Dhamma, then we can flow with it in a way that will give it strength to be a healthy society rather than a sick, weak, unloved one. If you don't take care of a rose properly, it can't survive. And if it does, it is just weakened and no longer capable of producing a beautiful flower. How can we help society to grow or to change in the way that it can reach its peak; where its cycle can be reproduced; where we can appreciate the whole of it rather than hanging on to fixed views and opinions, to this terrible ignorance of just looking at how everything should be?

In Buddhism there is no particular attempt to describe how the perfect society should operate, as a monarchy or a democracy, as socialist or communist – any of these. At the time the Pali Canon was written, I don't suppose they had too many choices. Monarchy tended to be the way, though there were natural democracies also. But even monarchy in those days was not an oppressive system where the king had divine right to do anything he wanted at the expense of everyone else. We are conditioned to think that monarchs are degenerates who are all corrupt, that a monarchy is just for the privileged few and everyone else has to pay for it and suffer. But actually the theory of monarchy always stemmed from righteousness; it wasn't intended to be an oppressive system, though in many cases it became that, just as communism and democracy can become oppressive systems.

Western democracy, with all its so-called freedom, tends to bring us towards degeneration. Parents now worry about their children endlessly. They have lost all ability to direct their children in skillful ways because children now have the freedom to do anything they want to. We no longer have the right to guide or direct anyone towards what is right and good and beautiful. We just say, "You are free to do what you want." And communism with all its high-minded idealism tends to oppress. It seems to take all these lovely

ideas of sharing, equal distribution, equality, and just shove them down your throat. That is certainly not what we mean as the goal for a Buddhist society.

But actually all the existing structures would be workable if you had the right understanding. In Britain, there is nothing really wrong with the political structure, the government. These agencies are quite all right in themselves. But what is missing is the enlightened human being, the human being who sees clearly. Modern politics tends to come from desire for power, for personal acclaim. Morality doesn't play a terribly important part in the choices of leaders or politicians. It's how you cajole and convince, how clever you might be. What do we look for in leadership now? Ask yourselves, "What do we expect in leadership for our country?"

Now modern attitudes might be such that we think, "Venerable Sumedho is just talking a bunch of optimistic ideals that have no relevance to anything practical in daily life." But that's a pessimistic view. All I'm trying to do is to present a way of looking that would be of great benefit towards the understanding of life on the individual plane and for the perfection of a society.

Bhikkhu Sumedho

Amaravati Buddhist Centre, Great Gaddesden,
Hemel Hempstead, Herts, England.

THE GARDEN OF DHAMMA

Venerable Acariya Buddhadasa who in the distant past I had the good fortune to meet has created Suan Mokh – the Garden of Liberation, an unusual Wat where people can come and learn about, and then practise, Dhamma. I remember well the murals and the sculptures, the latter reproduced finely from early Buddhist aniconic work in India, and ,of course, the Acharn's clear explanations of all these things. Now that he has reached the venerable age of seven cycles it is a great honour to contribute a small piece for inclusion in his Festschift. This is a possible chapter from a future book combining themes of Dhamma and gardening. May the Venerable Acharn live long to benefit many more beings!

Gardening is one of those activities which is never really finished, for whatever one does, there is always more to do. A good gardener always has plans for changes, new schemes and more areas to plant or to replant. In autumn one buys bulbs for the spring, in winter seeds and shrubs for the spring and summer, in spring there are annuals to sow for the summer and autumn – and here we have only touched on the flower garden. With vegetables and fruit it is similar, a round of planting, flowering, fruiting, and with annual plants, dying.

This round of birth and death in the garden, beautiful though many of the effects may be, and nutritious too in the case of fruits and vegetables, suggests a very close parallel with the Buddhist teachings on what is called 'the wandering-on' or to give it its technical name, *samsāra*. Human beings and all sorts of sentient life, that is, excluding the plant world, wander from birth through life to death, and then wander again from there to another birth, an unending cycle if no wisdom is developed.

I can hear some people protesting that birth and growth and flowering are all beautiful things, much enjoyed in their gardens. They may even say that dying leaves in autumn are a splendid sight (but not in Australia with its predominant evergreen flora). Still, they would have to admit that a tangle of dead annuals or spent vegetables are scarcely admirable. Those plants have to be cleared away, tidied up to make way for the next year's show, or crop.

Yes, when one considers birth and death in relation to plants, it is easy to admire the beauty and perhaps even to accept death. The beauties of spring,

summer and autumn, though they are menaced by a thousand factors of weather, insects and fungus, can yet be enjoyed because they are really not too near to oneself. Even though gardeners mourn over the death of choice plants and bushes, they do not long continue to sorrow, for there are always plans for next year. "Perhaps we'll try it in a new place and see how it does there" – there is always such hope.

All this points to the general truths of impermanence and endlessness. As in gardens, so among human beings, there are no unchanging entities. We share with all other natural things, sentient and non-sentient, the nature of change, a nature which has two sides to it: growth and decay. One is never found without the other so that it is truly pitiful to find people who can only accept growth. They may accept it as the growing up of the body, as the growth of their knowledge, as growth of possessions and wealth, as the growth of their family, but they keep quiet about the other side of the coin and hope that decay somehow will go away. Even material development on an international level is viewed as ever-increasing growth. No attention is paid to the inevitable decline which must accompany it. No one dare say a word about it because who can contemplate putting industry into reverse gear, slowing everything down, making everything simpler, abandoning the doctrine that knowing more and more about everything must lead to human benefit? All this is simply too frightful to contemplate !

Good gardeners though cannot be people who shut their eyes to the dark side of life. They are faced with death and decay all the time and must plan accordingly. They may grudge the death of choice plants, bushes or trees, but they must admit the truth of it.

Buddhists analyze impermanence into three aspects: exterior persons or things, one's own body, and the mind. The impermanence which concerns the world out there may be painful sometimes, as when someone's dearly beloved dies, or it may be bearable, as with the death of garden plants. Some rather remote types of change may not affect us at all, even though other people may be suffering. We see on television some film of Chinese students dying in Peking, and while we may feel some mild regrets, even that slight emotion has vanished five minutes later. On the whole, so long as this 'exterior' manifestation of impermanence does not come too near to us, it can be borne.

When it is nearer 'home', we may not be so happy, as when this body is touched by the dark side of impermanence. Look at it in the mirror – more grey hairs, more wrinkles. Feel its weakness or stiffness in the trunk or limbs. Experience its inability to function so well, either in organs or in senses. This kind of impermanence is alarming, and though we may try to arrest it, through various operations on its exterior, a futile exercise, or through

good exercise and wholesome food, certainly more effective, finally, decay will win. Hear what the Buddha has to say:

> ***See this body beautiful***
> ***a mass of sores, a congeries,***
> ***much considered but miserable***
> ***where nothing's stable, nothing persists.*** (Dhp. 147)

Though it begins by being a beautiful body and though one considers its needs constantly, yet it decays eventually. Our age is rather fascinated by the body beautiful. Think of all the advertising for it, all the products to promote its beauty and above all, think of all the time that is spent on it ! A measure of how materialistic we are is provided by a check on how much time we spend on the body every day , as opposed to the length of time, if it can be called that, devoted to the mind. Just count up the minutes, the hours, spent on getting up and lying down (not to speak of the hours in between which are mostly for the body), washing, dressing, eating, excreting, work and exercise. Much considered indeed ! When all our attention has been focused on the body, to keep it beautiful,to keep it fit,to keep it alive, finally, 'ungrateful' for our efforts, it dies! Those who practice Dhamma, though, will not fear the body's decay for that is just the nature of it.

The essence of impermanence is the way that the mind works. The 'blips' of mental information arise and pass away all the time. They do so without self, soul, or any notion of 'I'. I do not and cannot control them, because 'I' is just another idea among many others in the mind.

This all-pervading impermanence, when it is fully investigated, makes one aware of the conditioned nature and hence fragility of all existence. It is as though our lives always hang by a thread even when we are young and apparently healthy. Only one small chemical change has to take place somewhere in the body's vast chemical works for serious pain and disability to happen. It hangs by a thread...

Such thoughts might be stimulated by seeing some of the more extraordinary 'potted landscapes', usually known in the 'west' as bonsai. I remember that during my stay in Taiwan I had been taken by my very generous host to San-i, a town where an extraordinary number of wood-carvers are concentrated. As we wandered down the main street (with eyes skinned for wild-chicken taxis and other errant traffic), we came across one or two places making and selling 'potted landscapes'. Many were ordinary examples, some exquisite in their delicacy, but for one or two only the word 'extraordinary' would apply. One, seemingly a dead piece of pale-coloured driftwood, scoured and twisted, leaned crazily over the side of a pot but, marvel of marvels, had

clusters of leaves on a few twigs which somehow were still alive on its end. Beautiful, astonishing, – yes ! But also a reminder about life and its fragility. Perhaps others would add "and its tenacity too", and they would be right for clinging and craving are very tenacious. Contemplating impermanence easily leads to an appreciation of endlessness. Gardeners know all about the endless nature of gardens for they are always planning or working on new developments, and when they are finished, there is something else to do. The seasons and the round of change define a natural endlessness, and what now I may regard as my garden will go on growing and decaying without any intervention from me. Of course, it will not grow as I wish, and what I call weeds may be knee even shoulder high – still it goes on. The whole of nature is like this, and unless humans demonstrate their extreme stupidity by blowing the world up, it will continue the cycles of birth and death. Even with this world reduced to a irradiated cinder, life will still go on somewhere else as our world is less than a dust-mote compared to the universe's immensity.

Endlessness is the characteristic of the Buddhist concept of *Samsāra* , the beginningless and seemingly endless round of birth and death of beings blinded by delusion and driven by craving. This keeps the wheel of birth and death turning, the endless transmigration of beings from one form to another, all limited and conditioned by the kinds of kamma they have made. We are on this wheel of transmigration, part of the cycle of birth and death controlled not only by well-known physical limitations but also by the mental-emotional choices and the subsequent kammic results of individual humans. We go round and round again ! 'Not so bad' the fortunate gardener may say, or even 'I don't mind another time round if it gives me a chance to grow Welwitzias' (or some other impossible plants!). That would all be fine if the round of birth and death had no sufferings in it. Buddhist tradition lists eight of these:

One's born in pain,
decay is pain,
and pain, disease,
and death is pain.
Pain to be joined
with those not loved,
pain, parted from
the ones one loves,
Not getting what
one wants is pain,
and grasped – at groups
of being - pain.

Coming back for more and more looks different viewed in this light ! This is called 'the blind return' and contrasted with teachers who come again,

and again out of compassion for the repeated sufferings of living beings. Their way has not the blind drivenness of ordinary mortals but is more like a pilgrimage to Awakening. It is called 'the eyed return' since they come back not out of ignorance but because of *seeing* all these sufferings and not being afraid of them.

This is going to need a lot of effort. In the gardening simile used earlier we noted that one has to use all the conditions, even broken bottles, that one starts with. Effort is needed for this.

Weeds and rubbish have to be cleared before anything can be planted, though sometimes the weeds can be turned to good account when they are composted. Then with the appropriate efforts of removing the unwanted and establishing the beautiful or nutritious plants a garden comes into existence. Though we might wish ever so hard for a garden, yet one will not happen without the appropriate conditions. 'Wishing' alone does not produce either beauty or nutriment so that whatever kind of garden one wants it will only exist after effort. That effort means the right actions at the right time after which desires can be realized and plans come to fruit. This formula for a successful garden is also, if you think about it, the way to succeed in spiritual matters. Though one might desire an enlightened mind devoid of conflicts and trouble, yet a start must be made with the greed, hate and delusion which is already present. The mind-garden, or heart-garden if you prefer it, begins with these unpromising materials, this rubbish, these weeds. Gardeners can get rid of junk, prunings and weeds that they do not want; either they take it to the local tip or else the garbage disposal people will remove it. But what is to be done with the mental-emotional junk ? *Who* will remove it and *where* will they dump it? This seems a great puzzle because, unlike the garden trash, that rubbish is me whether I like it or not. I cannot get rid of it, for how can I get rid of a part of myself ?

So, with interior gardening there seems to be two possibilities: I shall leave it all as it is, unsatisfactory though this state of affairs will be, and just try to live with the rubbish. This is like viewing a weed-infested backyard and thinking, "It's too much trouble to do anything. Just leave it be". On the other hand, one might charge out into that wilderness determined to put it all to rights to make it the way one wants it. Such vigour might seem admirable until this simile is applied to the mind: *who* is going to put what to rights ?

In the first case, I have to suffer the conflicts and troubles which I tell myself won't change. So my garden is going to remain densely overgrown. The weeds of greed, hate and delusion will continue to be as strong as ever, and inevitably life will still be the experience of sufferings, if indeed these sufferings do not increase. This does not seem to offer much chance of a change

for the better.

If I decide that something has to be done and then 'change' vigorously through my mind attempting to get rid of various troublesome tendencies, then it is not only the weeds, in this case, that get damaged. I shall just do myself injury by such an unsubtle approach. This means in fact that effort without all the other factors spoken of here will result in either repression or in widening the splits, the widely differing mind-states, in myself.

Only mindfulness and wisdom applied with gentleness will help to bring about a change. The rash and ignorant spiritual gardener in trying to change his land may succeed only in injury of himself.

The roots of weeds can go deep and be hard to pull up. With many of them eradication is not possible all at once and continued effort will be needed for a long time. This is the same with troublesome habits and tendencies long established in the mind which will need patient attention over months or years before any change is seen.

The other side of effort, in gardens and in minds, is to nurture the young shoots of beauty, the seedlings of happiness, which will become in time the flowers and fruits that give true satisfaction. This nurturing needs patience and gentleness, on the part of the gardener with the young plants and on the part of the practicer with oneself.

In between birth and death and mixed with growth and decay, there is a great deal of beauty, surely one of the things that makes this life bearable. Beauty is something of a puzzle as no fixed laws appear to be possible saying what is and what is not beautiful. The perception of beauty arises dependent upon a large number of factors including past kamma, present-life family, education and surroundings. Gardeners provide good examples of the very wide range of aesthetic appreciation. I know one who is mad on what we call 'blobs and globs', strange plants from mostly desert areas which he dignifies with the title 'caudiciform'. It is unlikely that this appreciation of them would be shared by a dahlia-lover devoted to dinner-plate dahlias. Others taste in beauty runs to well-controlled plants such as one sees in early topiary gardens. Control of a more subtle kind is seen in the beauty of 'potted landscapes' (bonsai) where naturalness and balance are reckoned important. And in my student days I was fascinated by the strangely formal and yet subtle blooms of the green-edged auricula. There is, of course, in Britain, a society devoted to its cultivation... And now, in the Australian spring I keep my eyes peeled for flying duck orchids which appear apparently randomly in different places each year. An almost invisible stem bears two or three dark red hard-to-see flowers which are

amazingly like miniature ducks in flight. They are beautiful indeed but you have to get down on your knees to see them.

All these things are called beautiful by different horticulturalists, and while they may argue that this or that is the most beautiful, it all depends upon personal tastes – and these upon the factors mentioned above.

Generally speaking, aesthetic appreciation occurs with some kind of desire, if only a subtle one. It is obvious that desire for beauty can be very strong, one of the factors that leads to falling in love, while at the other end of the scale there is the subtle grasping at a beautiful work of art, a landscape, or a garden. We may not, in the latter case, want it to belong to us or even to be attached to us, still one wants to experience this sort of sense stimulation as against other kinds which one labels 'ugly'. Gardeners, then are sure to have some attachment for their own garden and probably will have some for others' gardens (and the plants they contain!). You would be something of a super-gardener not to have any such attachment but live with equanimity. Such gardeners must be rare but perhaps not unknown, as every year they are treated to the cycle of growth and decay, the Dhamma being taught by flowers and vegetables.

Buddhist monks and nuns have few problems of attachment to gardens but may,because of their celibate life, experience difficulty with desire arising on the basis of the beauty of others' bodies. To help them overcome this problem the Buddha has taught some verses:

> ***One who beauty contemplates,***
> ***Whose faculties are unrestrained,***
> ***in food no moderation knows,***
> ***is languid, who is indolent:***
> ***that one does Mara overthrow***
> ***as wind a tree of little strength.***
>
> ***One who foulness contemplates***
> ***whose faculties are well-restrained,***
> ***in food does moderation know,***
> ***is full of faith, who's diligent:***
> ***that one no Mara overthrows***
> ***as wind does not a rocky mount.*** (Dhp. 7-8)

Contemplating beauty in others can lead to internal conflicts, while taking a look at the dark side of the body : all the internal organs, the stinks and stenches, the excretory functions and its ageing and decay, all of which are ordinarily present but ignored, is very helpful. Still, these verses and other Buddhist material of the same sort, while sometimes useful to monks, nuns and

others with lust problems, do not mean that beauty may not be appreciated if this is done without attachment. That it is possible to appreciate beauty with the mind completely awake and free is shown by some of the verses uttered by monks in the Buddha's time. Here is Talaputa, a former actor-manager of a repertory company and obviously an excellent poet, showing his appreciation of the beauty of the wilds in which he lived when a monk:

> ***When in the season of the black raincloud***
> ***shall I follow the path within the wood***
> ***trodden by Those who See; robes moistened***
> ***by new falling rain ? When indeed will it be?***
>
> ***When in a mountain cave having heard the peacock's cry,***
> ***that crested twice-born bird down in the wood,***
> ***shall I arise and collect together mind***
> ***for attaining the undying ? When indeed will it be?***
>
> ***Fair blue-throated and fair crested, the peacock fair of tail,***
> ***wing-plumes of many hues, the passengers of air,***
> ***greeting the thunder with fair-sounding cries***
> ***will bring to you joy meditating in the wood.***
> (Thag. 1102-3-1136)

Beauty as an abstract quality does not decay, but what perceives it does, as well as the objects of beauty. From a practical point of view though, there is only one thing that does not decay:

> ***Even rich royal chariots rot,***
> ***the body too does rot, decay,***
> ***but undecaying's Dhamma of the Good***
> ***who to the good declare.***
> (Dhp. 151)

The rich royal chariots these days would be Rolls Royces and Jaguars but bodies are still the same as in the Buddha's days; all these compounded and conditioned things come to an end. Dhamma does not decay; in fact unlike other things which are used up or worn away, the more Dhamma is practised, the stronger it becomes. Especially the Dhamma of the Good, meaning the truth spoken by enlightened people, never loses its significance to other good people. The Buddha advised people not to depend on wealth and possessions which will all disappear sooner or later but to engage in good practices of generosity and compassion, turn riches which cannot be touched by worldly changes. Somewhat humorously he says:

A man a treasure-store lays by
Deep in a water-level pit;
He thinks 'if need arise for aid
it will be there to aid me then
for my discharge, from kings were I
denounced, or from a brigand else
if held to ransom, or of debts,
in famines, or in accidents'.
With suchlike aims, what in the world
is called a store will be laid by.
Though be it never so well laid by
deep in a water-level pit,
not all of it will yet suffice
to serve him all the time ; and then
the store gets shifted from its place,
or he perhaps forgets the marks,
or Naga-serpents hale it off
or spirits fritter it away,
or else the heirs he cannot bear
abstract it while he does not see;
and when his merit is consumed,
the whole will vanish utterly !
(Khp. VIII 1-5)

The treasure-stores of worldly things – houses, properties, land, vehicles, valuables, clothes, furniture and everything else that may be expensive and rare – all vanish utterly at death, if not before then. Therefore wise people practise Dhamma to lay up a treasure store within their own hearts which cannot be affected by worldly conditions.

Bhikkhu Khantipalo

Wat Buddha Dhamma, Buddhist Monastery,
Ten Mile Hollow, Wisemans Ferry, N.S.W. Australia.

BUDDHISM AND MONEY

The modern world is so materialistic that we sometimes joke about the religion of "moneytheism ". But the joke is on us; for more and more people, the value-system of money is supplanting traditional religions, as part of a profound secular conversion we only dimly understand. I think that Buddhism (with some help from the psychoanalytic concept of repression) can explain this historical transformation and show us how to overcome it.

The Buddhist doctrine of no-self implies that our fundamental repression is not sex (as Freud thought) nor even death (as existential psychologists think but the intuition that *the ego-self does not exist,* that our *self*-consciousness is a mental construction. In this case, the repressed intuition "returns to consciousness in distorted form" as all the symbolic ways we compulsively try to ground ourselves and make ourselves real in the world, such as power, fame, and, of course, money.

In order to present a Buddhist critique of the money-complex, and the Buddhist solution, this paper is divided into two parts. The first part summarizes the existential-psychoanalytic understanding of the human condition and modifies that by bringing in the fundamental insight of *anatma,* the denial of ego-self. The Buddhist critique of the ego-self not only gives us a different perspective on repression, it also suggests a different way of resolving the problem of repression. The second part applies those conclusions to understand the psychological and *spiritual* role of money for modern secular man, demonstrating how the money complex, amounts to a demonic religion – *demonic* because it cannot absolve our sense-of-*lack.*

The Repression of Emptiness

> When Samuel Johnson was asked, "I wonder what pleasure men can take in making beasts of themselves?, "he answered, "He who makes a beast of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man".(Murray's *Johnsonia)*

The painful truth is that Dr.Johnson's reply also points to why we anaesthetize ourselves with alcohol, television and so many other physical and mental addictions; and, as he knew so well, the alternative to not getting rid of that pain is often depression. Today Western philosophy and science have finally caught

up with his insight; existentialism highlights the anguish of the human condition, and psychoanalysis traces neurosis, including the low-grade neurosis we call normality, back to anxiety. But why is it painful just to be a human being? What causes our anguish and anxiety? This is where I think Buddhism carries the analysis one step further.

Freud always emphasized that repression is the key discovery underlying all of psychoanalysis. The concept is basically simple. When something (usually a thought or a feeling) makes me uncomfortable and I don't want to cope with it consciously, I may choose to ignore or "forget" it This clears the way for me to concentrate on something else, but at a price. Part of my psychic energy must be spent resisting what has been repressed, to keep it out of consciousness, so there's persistent tension; and, even worse, what has been repressed tends to return to consciousness anyway, by transforming into a symptom which is symbolic (because that symptom re-presents the repressed thing in distorted form). Freud understood the hysterias and phobias of his middle-class Viennese patients to be symptoms of repressed sexuality, and therefore he concluded that sexual repression is our primal repression– although, like many of us, his attention gradually shifted from sex to death as he got older. More recent existential psychologists, such as the analysts Rollo May and Irvin Yalom and the scholars Norman O. Brown and Ernest Becker, have shifted the focus from sexual dynamics to the fundamental issues of life and death, freedom and responsibility, groundlessness and meaninglessness – concerns that are just as central to Buddhism, and therefore make possible a more fruitful dialogue between Buddhism and psychoanalysis.[1]

William James observed that "mankind's common instinct for reality...has always held the world to be essentially a theater for heroism.", but why do we want to be heroes? Natural narcissism and our need for self-esteem mean that each of us needs *to feel of* special value, "first in the Universe." Heroism is how we justify that need to count more than anyone or anything else, because it *can qualify us for a special destiny.* And why do we need a special destiny? Because the alternative is literally too much to contemplate. The irony of mankind's unique ability to symbolize is that it reveals our fate that much more clearly. According to most existential psychoanalysts, man's primary repression is not sex but the fact that we are going to die. Although fear of death is needed for self-preservation, it must be repressed for us to function with any psychological comfort. Most animals have such fears programmed into them as instincts, but man fashions his fears out of the ways he perceives the world[2], which suggests that if we can come to experience the world differently we might be able to fashion our fears differently, too. Or is it the other way around: do our fears cause us to perceive the world the way we do, and might someone experience the world differently who was brave enough to face the thing we avoid most?

According to Becker, "everything that man does in his symbolic world is an attempt to deny and overcome his grotesque fate. He literally drives himself into a blind obliviousness with social games, psychological tricks, personal preoccupations so far removed from the reality of his situation that they are forms of madness." Even our character-traits are an example of this, because they automatize a particular way of reacting to situations. These sedimented habits are a necessary protection, for without them there can only be "full and open psychosis" to see the world as it really is "devastating and terrifying," *it makes routine, automatic, secure, self-confident activity impossible...*It places a trembling animal at the mercy of the entire cosmos and the problem of the meaning of it." Thus the bite in Pascal's aphorism, "Men are so necessarily mad that not to be mad would amount to another form of madness." For Becker this is literally true; what we regard as normality is our collective, protective madness,in which we repress the grim truth of the human condition, and those who have difficulty playing this game are the ones we call mentally-ill. Schizophrenics are suffering from the truth. Psychoanalysis reveals the high price of denying this truth about man's condition, "what we might call *the costs of pretending not to be mad.*"[3]

Then the early experience of the child becomes his attempt "to deny the anxiety of his emergence, his fear of losing his support, of standing alone, helpless and afraid." This leads to what Becker calls "the great scientific simplification of psychoanalysis" :

> This despair he avoids by building defenses; and these defenses allow him to feel a basic sense of self-worth, of meaningfulness, of power. They allow him to feel that he *controls* his life and his death, that he really does live and act as a willful and free individual, that he has a unique and self-fashioned identity, that he *is somebody*... All of us are driven to be supported in a self-forgetful way, ignorant of what energies we really draw on, of the kind of lie we have fashioned to live securely and serenely.[4]

This implies a different way of understanding such key Freudian concepts as guilt and the Oedipal complex. Freud traced guilt back to early ambivalent feelings of the child, especially hate and death-wishes toward parents that alternate with fears of losing them. But existential psychoanalysis sees the problem as something far more basic. "Guilt, as the existentialists put it, is the guilt of being itself. It reflects the self-conscious animal's bafflement at having emerged from nature, at sticking out too much without knowing what for,at not being able to securely place himself in an eternal meaning system."[5] Such "pure" guilt has nothing to do with feared punishment for secret wishes; rather, the major sin is the sin of being born, as Samuel Beckett put it. It is the worm in the heart of the human condition, apparently an inescapable

consequence of self-consciousness itself.

In the same way, this transforms Freud's Oedipal complex into an Oedipal *project:* the never-ending attempt to become father of oneself, as Freud realized, but not by sleeping with mother. Why? To become one's own father is to become what Nagarjuna described as *self existing* – and refuted as impossible. Becker calls the Oedipal project a flight from obliteration and *contingency.* The child wants to conquer death by becoming the creator and sustainer of his own life. *To be one's own father is to be one's own origin.* In Buddhist terms, we could say that the Oedipal project is the attempt of the developing sense-of-self to become autonomous. It is the quest to deny one's groundlessness by becoming one's own ground, the ground (socially conditioned and approved but nonetheless illusory) of being an independent person, a self-sufficient Cartesian-type ego. From a Buddhist perspective, then, what is called the Oedipal complex is due to the discovery of the child that he is not part of mother, after all. The problem is not so much that Dad had first claim on Mom, as what that contributes to the child's dawning realization of separation, "but if I'm not part of Mom, what am I part of?" This becomes, more generally: what am I? who am I? That generates the need to discover one's own ground, or rather the need to create it – a futile project never to be fulfilled, except by *identifying* with something ("I may not be Mom, but I am *this* I") – which, of course, always includes the fear of losing whatever one is attached to. The result of all this is a delusive sense-of-self always anxious about its own groundlessness.

If this is what happens, the Oedipal project actually derives from our intuition that *self*-consciousness is not something obviously "self-existing" but a fiction, ungrounded because it is a mental construct. Rather than being self-sufficient, consciousness is more like the surface of the sea, dependent on unknown depths ("conditions," the Buddha called them) that it cannot grasp because it is a manifestation *of* them. The problem arises because this conditioned (and therefore unstable) consciousness wants to ground itself, to make itself *real.* But to realize itself is to objectify itself, which means, to grasp itself, since an object is that-which-is-grasped. The ego-self is this continuing *attempt* to objectify oneself by grasping oneself; something we can no more do than a hand can grasp itself.

The consequence of this that the sense-of-self always has,as its inescapable shadow, a sense-of-lack, which(alas!) it always tries to escape. It is here that the psychoanalytic concept of repression becomes helpful, for the idea of "the return of the repressed" distorted into a symptom shows us how to link this basic yet hopeless project with the symbolic ways we try to overcome our sense-of-*lack* by making ourselves real *in* the world. We experience this deep sense of *lack* as the feeling that "there is something wrong with me," but that feeling can manifest in many different forms and we can react to that feeling in

many different ways. One of the most popular is the money complex, which will be discussed later. A better example for most of us intellectuals is the craving to be famous, which illustrates perhaps the main way we try to make ourselves real: through the eyes of others. (If we can persuade enough others that we exist,...) In its "purer" forms *lack* appears as guilt or anxiety that is almost unbearable because it gnaws on the very core of one's being. For that reason we are eager to objectify anxiety into fear *of* something, because then we know what to do; we have ways to defend ourselves against the feared thing.

The tragedy of these objectifications, however, is that (for example) no amount of fame can ever be enough if it's not really fame you want. When we don't understand what is actually motivating us, because what we *think* we want is only a symptom of something else (in this case, our desire to *become real)*, we end up compulsive, "driven." Such a Buddhist analysis implies that no true "mental health" can be found except in an enlightenment which puts an end to the sense-of-*lack* that "shadows" the sense-of-self, by putting an end to the sense-of-self.

I don't know if psychoanalysis is getting close to realizing the same thing, but it has come to agree with the great insight of existentialism: anxiety is fundamental to the self, not something we have but something we are. The anguish and despair that the neurotic complains of are not the result of his symptoms but their cause; those symptoms are what shield him from the tragic contradictions at the heart of the human situation: death, guilt, meaninglessness. *"The irony of man's condition is that the deepest need is to be free of the anxiety of death and annihilation; but it is life itself which awakens it, and so we must shrink from being fully alive."*[6]

This suggests a new perspective on the sense of guilt that seems to bedevil our lives. It is not the cause of our unhappiness, but its effect. "The ultimate problem is not guilt but the incapacity to live. The illusion of guilt is necessary for an animal that cannot enjoy life, in order to organize a life of nonenjoyment." (Brown)[7] This shifts the essential issue from what we have done to why we feel bad. From the Buddhist perspective, if the autonomy of self-consciousness is a delusion which can never quite shake off its shadow-feeling that "something is wrong with me," it will need to rationalize that sense of inadequacy somehow. But if fear of death rebounds as fear of life, they become two sides of the same coin. *Then genuine life cannot be opposed to death but must embrace both life and death.* "Whoever rightly understands and celebrates death, at the same time magnifies life." (Rilke) The great irony is that as long as we crave immortality we are dead.

Most psychoanalysts have decided that it is not possible to put an end to anxiety, but that conclusion does not necessarily follow. What is implied is that

ending death anxiety would require ending the ego-self as usually experienced, a possibility Brown is sympathetic to, "since anxiety is the ego's incapacity to accept death, the sexual organizations [Freud's anal, oral and genital stages of ego-development] were perhaps constructed by the ego in its flight from death, and could be abolished by an ego strong enough to die."[8] *An ego strong enough to die:* in Buddhist terms, a sense-of-self that suspects it is a fiction, a delusive construction, and is brave enough to "let go" of itself.

Anxiety about death is our reaction to becoming aware of ourselves and our inevitable fate; so it is something we have learned. But exactly what have we learned? Is the dilemma of life-confronting-death an objective fact we just see, or is this too something constructed and projected, more like *an unconscious, deeply repressed game that each of us is playing with himself?* According to Buddhism, life-against-death is a delusive way of thinking because it is *dualistic,* but if the denial of being dead is how the ego affirms itself as being alive, that also implies it is *the act by which the ego constitutes itself.* To be self-conscious is to be conscious of oneself, to *grasp oneself,* as being alive. Then death-terror is not something the ego has, it is what the ego *is.* The irony here is that the death-terror which is the ego actually defends only itself. Everything outside is what the ungrounded ego is terrified of, but what is inside? Fear ***is*** the inside, for that is what makes everything else the outside.

If the ego is mentally constituted by such a dualistic way of thinking, the ego should be able to die without physical death. And that is precisely the claim of Buddhism: the sense-of-self can disappear but there remains something else that cannot really die because it was never born. *Anatma* is the "middle way" between the extremes of eternalism (the self survives death) and annihilationism (the self is destroyed at death). Buddhism resolves the problem of life-and-death by *deconstructing* it. The evaporation of this dualistic way of thinking reveals what is prior to it. There are many names for this "prior," but one of the most common is "the unborn."

In the Pali Canon, the two most famous descriptions of *nirvāna* both refer to "the unborn," where "neither this world nor the other, nor coming, going or standing, *neither death nor birth,* nor sense-objects are to be found."[9] Similar claims are common in Mahayana. The most important term in Mahayana is *sunyatā* ,"emptiness," and the adjectives most used to explain *sunyatā* are "unborn," "uncreated" and "unproduced." The laconic *Heart Sutra* explains that all things are *sunya* because they are "not created, not annihilated, not impure and not pure, not increasing and not decreasing."

The "Song of Enlightenment" of Yung-chia, a disciple of the sixth Ch'an patriarch, says, "Since I abruptly realized the unborn, I have had no reason for joy or sorrow at any honor or disgrace." That "all things are perfectly resolved

in the Unborn" was the great realization and the central teaching of the Japanese Zen master Bankei, "When you dwell in the Unborn itself, you're dwelling at the very wellhead of Buddhas and patriarchs." The Unborn is the Buddha-mind, and this Buddha-mind is beyond living and dying.[10]

For Buddhism, the dualism between life and death is only one instance of the more general problems with dualistic thinking. We discriminate between such opposites as life and death in order to affirm one and deny the other, and, as we have seen, our tragedy lies in the paradox that the two opposed terms are so interdependent. In this case, there is no life without death and, what we are more likely to overlook , there is no death without life. This means our problem is not death but life-and-death. If we can realize that there is no delineated ego-self which is alive *now,* the *problem* of life-and-death is solved. Since our minds have created this dualism, they should be able to un-create or deconstruct it. This is not a devious intellectual trick that claims to solve the problem logically, while leaving our anguish as deep as before. The examples above refer to a different way of experiencing, not some conceptual understanding. It can be no coincidence that the *Prajñāparamitā Sūtras* of Mahayana also repeatedly emphasize that *there are no sentient beings.*

> The Buddha: *"Subhūti,* what do you think? You should not say that the *Tathāgata* has this thought, 'I should liberate living beings.' *Subhūti* , you should not think so. Why? Because there are really no living beings whom the *Tathāgata* can liberate. If there were, the *Tathāgata* would hold (the concept of) an ego, a personality, a being and a life. *Subhūti,* (when) the *Tathāgata* speaks of an ego, there is in reality no ego, although common men think so. *Subhūti* , the *Tathāgata* says common men are not, but are (expediently) called, common men.[11]

If there is no one who has life, then there is no reason to fear death. If the ego-self is not a thing but a continual *process* of consciousness trying to grab hold of itself and objectify itself , which, since it can never do so, leads to self-paralysis , *unmediated experience "of" the Unborn is the final shipwreck of that project.* The problem is resolved at its source. The ego-self that has been trying to make itself real by identifying with one thing or another in the objective world collapses. In terms of life-versus-death, the ego-self fore-closes on its greatest anxiety by letting-go and dying right now. "Die before you die, so that when you come to die you will not have to die," as the Sufis put it. Of course, if the ego is really a construct – composed of automatized, mutually-reinforcing ways of thinking, feeling and acting – it can't really die, yet it can *evaporate* in the sense that those cease to recur. But insofar as these constitute our basic defenses against the world (in psychoanalytic terms) and our main hopes of making ourselves real (in Buddhist terms), this letting-go is not going to be easy. It means giving up my most cherished ways of thinking about myself

(notice the reflexivity), *which are what I think I am* to stand naked and exposed. No wonder it is called the Great Death.

Needless to say, this cannot save the body from aging and rotting; then does such ego-death really solve our problem? Yes, because the Buddhist analysis of the "empty" ego-self implies that death is not our deepest fear and the desire to become immortal is not our deepest hope, for even they are symptoms that represent something else. What do they symbolize? The desire of the sense-of-self to become a real self, to transform its anguished *lack* of being into genuine being. Even the terror of death represses something, for that terror is preferable to facing one's lack of being *now*; death-fear at least allows us to project the problem into the future. In that way we avoid facing what we are (or are *not)* right now.

One way to approach this is to consider whether immortality, the actuality of an existence that never ended, could really satisfy us. As much as we may fear death, is ceaseless life really the solution? Many have suspected that, like "the immortal" in Borges' story of the same title, our existence would sooner or later become a burden, unless we discovered a meaning-system to place it in, a cosmology wherein we had both home and role. As the interminable succession of centuries undermined all my futile projects to make myself real, what anguish would accumulate! More immortality would become unbearable as soon as I no longer craved it. As with other symbolic (because repressed) games, victory in the form I seek it cannot satisfy me if it's really something else I want.

This implies that our ultimate hunger is ontological. It can be satisfied by nothing less than becoming real, which in the nondualist term of Mahayana means realizing that my mind is actually one with – nothing other than the whole universe; and *this is possible if the "core" of my own ego-consciousness is not self-existing but "Hollow," because groundless.* If consciousness is not "inside," there is no outside.[12] Then even desire for immortality becomes reduced to a symptom, the usual (but distorted) way that we become aware of this repressed spiritual thirst; and death too becomes reduced to a symbol, not only representing the feared failure of this reality-project, but also serving as a "catch-all" for all the ugly, negative, tragic aspects of existence that we cannot cope with and so project as the Shadow of Life generally.

Why do we need to project ourselves indefinitely into the future, unless something is felt to be lacking *now?* The obvious answer is that we are afraid of losing something *then* that we have now; but many have found this unpersuasive, answering it with variations on the theme that if life is not something we have but something we *are,* there's nothing to fear because we shall not be around to notice (what) we're missing. Epicurus stoically asserted that, "the most horrible of all evils, death, is nothing to us, for when we exist, death is

not present; but when death is present, then we are not." A more Buddhist formulation is that if nothing is lacking now, then immortality loses its compulsion as the way to resolve *lack*, and whether or not we survive physical death in some form becomes, if not irrelevant, at least not the main point.

Then what is the main point? According to this account of "Buddhist psychoanalytics," our most intimate duality is not life-versus-death but being-versus-nonbeing; and our most troublesome repression is not life-repressing-death but the sense-of-self repressing its suspected nothingness. Instead of identifying with being, the Buddhist approach is to conflate their duality by not rejecting non-being; that can lead to the discovery of what is prior to the polarization between them. "Being is not being; non-being is not non-being. Miss this rule by a hair and you are off by a thousand miles." (Yung-chia again) The speculations of theologians and metaphysicians are only the most abstract form of this game, which I suspect is our most troublesome game because the bifurcation between being and nonbeing (or reality versus nothingness, existence versus emptiness, etc.) is not obvious and "natural" but mentally constructed, a keeping-apart that has to be maintained; and that tension between them is the core of existential anguish, the source of our sense of *lack*. Again we see why a sense-of-*lack* is the "shadow" of the sense-of-self: like the matter and anti-matter particles of quantum physics, they arise together, in opposition to each other; and they disappear together by collapsing back into each other, which leaves not the nothingness we so dread (for this is one of the two terms) but...what?

The way to end that bifurcation, like other dualisms, is to yield to the side that we have been holding at arm's length, in this instance, to "forget" oneself and "let go." If it is nothingness we are afraid of, the solution is to become nothing. Meditation is learning to "forget" the self by becoming absorbed into one's meditation-object (*mantra*, etc.). If the sense-of-self is a result of consciousness attempting to reflect back upon itself in order to grasp itself, meditation is an exercise in de-reflection. Enlightenment or liberation occurs when the usually-automatized reflexivity of consciousness ceases, *which is experienced as a letting-go and falling into the void.* "Men are afraid to forget their minds, fearing to fall through the Void with nothing to stay their fall. They do not know that the Void is not really void, but the realm of the real Dharma." (Huang-po)[13] What we fear as nothingness is not really nothingness, for that is the perspective of a groundless sense-of-self haunted by the fear of losing its grip on itself. (Religious faith should provide not a bulwark against such nothingness, but the courage to let oneself fall into it.) Letting-go of myself and merging with that nothingness leads to something else, the common origin both of which I experience as nothingness and of what I experience as myself. When consciousness stops trying to catch its own tail, I become nothing, and discover that I am everything – or, more precisely, that I can be anything.[14]

The Money Complex

> If there is to be a psychoanalysis of money it must start from the hypothesis that the money complex has the essential structure of religion, or, if you will, the negation of religion, the demonic. The psychoanalytic theory of money must start by establishing the proposition that money is, in Shakespeare's words, the "visible god"; in Luther's words, "the God of this world." (Brown)[15]

How can money be both religious and the negation of religion? Because the money complex is motivated by our religious need to redeem ourselves (fill in our sense-of-*lack)*. In Buddhist terms, the demonic results from the sense-of-self trying to make itself real (that is, objectify itself) by grasping the spiritual in *this* world. This can be done only unconsciously, which means symbolically, and our most important symbol today is money.

One of Schopenhauer's aphorisms says that money is human happiness *in abstracto;* consequently he who is no longer capable of happiness *in concreto* sets his whole heart on money. It is questionable whether there is really such a thing as happiness in abstraction, but the second half is true. To the extent one becomes preoccupied with symbolic happiness, one is not alive to concrete happiness. The difficulty is not with money as a convenient medium of exchange, but with the "money complex" that arises when money becomes the desired thing , that is, desirable in itself. How does this happen? Given our sense of lack, how could this not happen?

Money is the "purest" symbol "because there is nothing in reality that corresponds to it."[16] In itself it is worthless; you can't eat or drink it, plant it, ride in it or sleep under it. But it has more value than anything else because it is value, because it is how we define value, and therefore it can transform into anything else. The psychological problem occurs when life becomes motivated by the desire for "pure" value. We all sense what is wrong with this but it's helpful to make it explicit: to the extent that life becomes focussed around the desire for money, an ironic reversal takes place between means and ends; everything else is degraded into a mere means to that "worthless" end, all else devalued in order to maximize a merely symbolic end, because our desires have been fetishized into that "pure" symbol. We end up rejoicing not at a worthwhile job well done, or meeting a friend, or hearing a bird-song , the genuine elements of our life , but at accumulating pieces of paper. How such madness could occur becomes apparent when we relate it to the sense-of-self 's sense-of-*lack,* whose festering keeps us from being able to fully enjoy that bird-song (just *this!),* etc. Since we no longer believe in any "original sin", what can it be that is wrong with us? Without some religious expiation, how can we hope to get over it? Today the socially-approved explanation , the contemporary "original sin" , is that we don't have enough money; and the solution is to get

more, until we have enough and no longer feel any *lack*, which ends up being never.

Something about money used to puzzle me: how did it ever get started? The transition from barter is hard to understand; how can human cravings be fetishized into pieces of metal? The answer is elegant because it reveals not only the origin of money but its character even today; money was and still is literally sacred. "It has long been known that the first markets were sacred markets, the first banks were temples, the first to issue money were priests or priestkings."[17] The first coins were minted and distributed by temples because they were medallions inscribed with the image of their god and embodying his protective power. Containing such *manna*, they were naturally in demand, not because you could buy things with them but vice-versa; since they were popular you could exchange them for other things.

The consequence of this was that (as Becker puts it) "now the cosmic powers could be the property of everyman, without even the need to visit temples: you could now traffic in immortality in the marketplace." This eventually led to the emergence of a new kind of person "who based the value of his life – and so of his immortality – on a new cosmology centered on coins." A new meaning-system arose, which our present economic system makes more and more *the* meaning-system. "Money becomes the distilled value of all existence...a single immortality symbol, a ready way of relating the increase of oneself to all the important objects and events of one's world."[18] If we replace "immortality" with "becoming real," the point becomes Buddhist. Beyond its usefulness as a medium of exchange, money has become modern man's most popular way of accumulating Being, of coping with our gnawing intuition that we don't really exist. Suspecting that the sense-of-self is a groundless construction, we used to go to temples and churches to ground ourselves in God; now we work to ground ourselves financially.

The problem is that the true meaning of this meaning-system is unconscious, which means, as usual, that we end up paying a heavy price for it. The value we place on money karmically rebounds back against us. The more we value it, the more we use it to evaluate ourselves. In his great historical study of death in Western culture. *The Hour of Our Death,* Philippe Aries considers the modern attitude toward material things and turns our usual critique upside-down. Today we complain about materialism but modern man is not really materialistic, because "things have become means of production, or objects to be consumed or devoured."

> Can one describe a civilization that has emptied things in this way as materialistic? On the contrary, it is the late Middle Ages, up to the beginning of modern times, that were materialistic!...the ordinary man [now] in his daily life no more believes in matter than he believes in

> God. The man of the Middle Ages believed in matter and in God, in life and in death, in the enjoyment of things and their renunciation.[19]

Our problem today is that we no longer believe in things but in *symbols,* hence our life has passed over into these symbols and their manipulation , and then we find ourselves manipulated by the symbols we take so seriously. We are preoccupied not so much with what money can buy, but its power and status; not with a Mercedes-Benz in itself, but what owning a Mercedes car says about us. Modern man wouldn't be able to endure real economic equality "because he has no faith in self-transcendent, other-worldly immortality symbols; visible physical worth is the only thing he has to give him eternal life." Or real Being. Alas, that our spiritual hunger to become real, or at least to occupy a special place in the cosmos, is reduced to having a bigger car than our neighbors! It seems that we can't get rid of the sacred, because we can't get rid of our ultimate concerns, except by repressing them, whereupon we become "the more uncontrollably driven by them."[20]

The most brilliant chapter of *Life Against Death,* "Filthy Lucre," links money to guilt. "Whatever the ultimate explanation of guilt may be, we put forward the hypothesis that the whole money complex is rooted in the psychology of guilt." The psychological advantage of archaic man is that he "knew" what his problem was and therefore how to overcome it. Belief in sin allowed the possibility of expiation, which occurred in seasonal rituals and sacrifices. That provides a different perspective on the origin of gods. "The gods exist to receive gifts, that is to say sacrifices; the gods exist in order to structure the human need for self-sacrifice."[21] For Christianity that sacrifice is incarnated in Christ, who is believed to "take away" our sins. Religion gives the opportunity to expiate our sense of lack by means of symbols , e.g., the crucifix, eucharist, the mass, whose validity is socially agreed and maintained. In such a context, we do feel purified and closer to God after taking Holy Communion.

But what of the modern "neurotic type" who "feels a sinner without the religious belief in sin, for which he therefore needs a new rational explanation"?[22] What do you do with your sense of *lack* when there is no religious explanation for it, and therefore no socially-agreed way to expiate it? The main secular alternative today is to experience our *lack* as "not yet enough." This converts cyclic time (maintained by seasonal rituals of atonement) in linear time (in which the atonement of *lack* is reached-for but perpetually postponed, because never achieved). The sense of *lack* remains a constant, but our collective reaction to it has become the need for growth: the "good life" of consumerism (but *lack* means the consumer never has enough) and the gospel of sustained economic growth (because corporations and the GNP are never big enough). The heart (or rather blood) of both is the money complex. "A dollar is...a codified psychosis normal in one sub-species of this animal, an institu-

tionalized dream that everyone is having at once." (LaBarre[23]) Brown is almost as damning:

> If the money complex is constructed out of an unconscious sense of guilt, it is a neurosis...The dialectic of neurosis contains its own "attempts at explanation and cure," energized by the ceaseless upward pressure of the repressed unconscious and producing the return of the repressed to consciousness, although in an increasingly distorted form, as long as the basic repression (denial)is maintained and the neurosis endures. The modern economy is characterized by an aggravation of the neurosis, which is at the same time a fuller delineation of the nature of the neurosis, a fuller return of the repressed. In the archaic consciousness the sense of indebtedness exists together with the illusion that the debt is payable; the gods exist to make the debt payable. Hence the archaic economy is embedded in religion, limited by the religious framework, and mitigated by the consolations of religion – above all, removal of indebtedness and guilt. The modern consciousness represents an increased sense of guilt, more specifically a breakthrough from the unconscious of the truth that the burden of guilt is unpayable.[24]

The result of this is "an economy driven by a pure sense of guilt, unmitigated by any sense of redemption," "the more uncontrollably driven by the sense of guilt because the problem of guilt is repressed by denial into the unconscious."[25] Nietzsche said that it's not only the reason of millennia but their insanity too that breaks out in us: today our particular form of that insanity is the cult of economic growth, which has become our main religious myth. "We no longer give our surplus to God; the process of producing an ever-expanding surplus is in itself our God...To quote Schumpeter: 'Capitalist rationality does not do away with sub-or super-rational impulses. It merely makes them get out of hand by removing the restraint of sacred or semi-sacred tradition.'"[26]

Once we see this, we realize what the problem is: money (the blood) and economic growth (the body) constitute a defective myth because they can provide no expiation of guilt – in Buddhist terms, no resolution of *lack.* Our new *holy of holies,* the true temple of modern man, is the stock market, and our rite of worship is communing with the Dow Jones average; in return we receive the kiss of profits and the promise of more to come, but there is no atonement in this. Of course, insofar as we have lost belief in sin we no longer see anything to atone for, which means we end up unconsciously atoning in the only way we know, working hard to acquire all those things that society tells us are important and will make us happy; and then we cannot understand why they don't make us happy, why they don't resolve our sense of *lack.* The reason can only be that we don't yet have *enough...* "But the fact is that the human animal is distinc-

tively characterized, as a species and from the start, by the drive to produce a surplus; ...there is something in the human psyche which commits man to nonenjoyment, to work." Where are we all going so eagerly? "Having no real aim, acquisitiveness, as Aristotle correctly said, has no limit." Not to anywhere but from something, which is why there can be no end to it as long as that something is our own *lack*-shadow. "Economies, archaic and civilized, are ultimately driven by that flight from death which turns life into death-in-life."[27] Or by that flight from emptiness that makes life empty, by an intuition of nothingness which, when repressed, only deepens my sense that there is something very wrong with me. In Buddhist terms, then, money symbolizes *becoming real,* but since we never quite become real we only make our sense-o f-*lack* more real. We end up holding pure deferral, for those chips we have accumulated can never be cashed in. The moment we do so, the illusion that money can resolve *lack* is dispelled; we would be left more empty and *lack*-ridden than before, because deprived of our fantasy for escaping lack. We unconsciously suspect and fear this; the only answer is to flee faster into the future.

I think this points to the fundamental defect of any economic system that requires continual growth if it's not to collapse; it is based not on needs but on fear, for it feeds on, and feeds, our sense of *lack.* In sum, our preoccupation with manipulating these symbols, which we suppose to be the means of solving the problem of life, turns out to be a symptom of the problem itself: today,this is probably the most popular way we flee from our sense of *lack,* is only to end up reifying our sense of *lack.*

If this critique of the money complex is valid, what is the solution? It is the same solution that Buddhism has always offered: not any quick fix that can be "conditioned" into us, but the personal transformation that occurs when we make the effort to follow the Buddhist path, which means learning how to let-go of ourselves and "die."

Once we are good and dead, once we have become nothing and realize that we can be anything, then we see money for what it is: not a symbolic way to make ourselves real, to measure ourselves by, but a socially-constituted device that expands our freedom and power. Then we become truly free to determine our attitude towards it, towards getting it and using it. If we are really "dead" there is nothing wrong with money. Not money but love of money is the root of evil. However, if we are truly "dead" we also know that our essential-nature does not get better or worse, just as it does not come or go, so it has nothing to gain or to lose. This means that, for those who do not experience themselves as separate from the world , as other than the world , the value of money becomes closely tied to its ability to help alleviate suffering.

Bodhisattvas are not attached to it, and therefore neither are they afraid of it; so they know what to do with it.[28]

David Loy

Omachi 3-20-8, Kamakura 248, Japan.

ENDNOTES :

1. Rollo May et. al., ed., ***Existence*** (New York:Basic Books, 1958). Irvin D. Yalom, ***Existential Psychotherapy*** (New York: Basic Books, 1980). Norman O.Brown, ***Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History*** [hereafter "LAD"] (New York: Vintage, 1961). Ernest Becker, ***The Denial of Death*** ["DD"] and ***Escape from Evil***["EE"] (New York: The Tree Press,1973-1975).
2. DD11-18.
3. DD 27,66,60,29; EE 163. Pascal's Pensées no.414.
4. DD 54-55.
5. EE 158.
6. DD 181-2 (quoting Roy D.Waldman); 66, my emphasis.
7. LAD 268.
8. LAD 113.
9. Udana 6; 7: 1-3. My italics in the first.
10. Norman Waddell, ed. and trans., ***The Unborn: The Life and Teachings of Zen Master Bankei*** (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984), 47, 52, 55. The Yung-chia quotation is from an unpublished translation by Robert Aitken, director of the Diamond Sangha in Honolulu, Hawaii. Many other Buddhist examples of "the Unborn" and "the Uncreated" could be cited.
11. *Vajracchedika-Prajñā-Paramitā Sūtra* ("Diamond Sutra"), trans. Charles Luk (Hong Kong Buddhist Book distributor, no date), 20; Luk's parentheses.
12. For an analysis of nonduality, especially subject-object nonduality, see ***Nonduality : A Study in Comparative Philosophy*** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).
13. ***The Zen Teaching of Huang Po,*** trans. and ed. John Blofeld (London: The Buddhist Society,1958), 41.
14. For a more detailed exposition of the argument condensed in "Part and Death," in ***Philosophy East and West***, Vol.50, no.2 (April ,1990).
15. LAD 240-1.
16. LAD 271.
17. LAD 246.
18. EE 76, 79 (ref. Geza Roheim), 80-1.
19. Philippe Aries, ***The Hour of Our Death*** (Hamondsworth: Penguin,1981),136-7.
20. EE 85 (ref. Rank), Rilke; "Even for our grandparents a 'house,' a 'well,' a familliar tower, their very clothes, their coat; were infinitely more, infinitely more intimate; almost everything a vessel in which they found the human and added to the store of the human. Now, from America, empty indifferent things are pouring across, sham things, *dummy life*... A house, in the American sense, an American apple or a grapevine there, has nothing in common with the house, the fruit, the grape into which went the hopes and reflections of our forefathers...Live things, things lived and conscient of us, are running out and can no longer be replaced. *We are perhaps the last still to have known such things.*" (Letter to Witold von Hulewicz, 1925)

21. LAD 265.
22. Otto Rank, ***Beyond Psychology*** (New York: Dover, 1958), 194.
23. Weston LaBarre, ***The Human Animal*** (University of Chicago Press, 1954), 173.
24. LAD 270-1.
25. LAD 272.
26. LAD 261.
27. LAD 256, 258, 285.
28. The conclusions of this paper challenge the dualism we tend to presuppose between the sacred and the profane, the spiritual and the secular. Nagarjuna emphasized that the limits of *nirvāna* are none other than the limits of *samsāra ;* in other words, they are only different aspects, different ways of taking the world. But, although many of us accept that intellectually, nevertheless we unconsciously fall back into an expectation that the religious path involves an escape from this world (which we suppose to be inescapably tainted by *lack). Samsāra* is this world experienced as a field of attachments; but why do we become attached? Again we return to *lack,* due to which we experience various phenomena in the world as seductive. In the mental realm, this seductiveness manifests as a battleground of conflicting *ideologies* competing for our allegiance. They are seductive because they offer the groundless sense-of-self a *ground:* the sense of security that comes from having a home, a grasp on the world that organizes it by informing us what is important. Ideologies teach us in what way the world is meaningful and what our role in that meaning is. This puts very different ideologies such as religions, philosophies, nationalisms, scientism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, the money complex, etc., on the same level, but there are some important *internal* differences. Some ideologies are very difficult to escape because once you are committed there are conceptual devices to keep you in: a Marxist that starts criticizing Marxism will be told to purge himself of his bourgeois tendencies, a Catholic will be instructed that his doubts are from the Devil and he must throw them away and *believe.* On the other side, there are what might be called *meta-ideologies* (Buddhism *at its best* is a pre-eminent example) that are designed to transcend themselves and be *self-negating*: to free us from all ideologies including their own. The point of Buddhism is to realize the relativity (the "emptiness") of all ideologies, including Buddhist ideology – which requires, however, that we end the sense-of-*lack* that causes us to experience ideologies as seductive.

This in turn implies that the important thing in Buddhism is the *liberating* function of any doctrine or practice. This must be emphasized because the very same thought or practice that is liberating at one time may serve exactly the opposite function at another time or place. Insights lose their freshness and become a dogma which is "sticky," seductive because it offers us something to cling to rather than a means to freedom. The history of Buddhism is full of such examples, which require us to distinguish between Buddhism as a path of liberation – a painful, anxious path of dying and letting-go of ourselves – and Buddhism as a means of cultural and psychological security, reassuring us of the meaningfulness of the Buddhist world-view and our place within it. If we are not careful, the first slips almost imperceptibly into the second, but in fact they are opposed to each other and the tension between them is perennial.

A MEDITATION ON BUDDHIST HISTORY AND ITS LESSONS FOR TODAY

Buddhist history is vast, and it has not yet been much studied for the lessons it may yield, for the very practical purpose of learning how to best go about introducing Buddhism into the modern world.

One of Buddhism's great strengths is that it has illumined the full range of human cultural production: the arts, scholarship, popular ritual. It has done so not because these activities are particularly meritorious in themselves, but because they can be tools to realise the way beyond the sufferings inherent in the human condition. Buddhism is practical, concerned with the immediacy of dissatisfaction and suffering.

The study of Buddhist history has been energetically pursued over the past century by Japanese and western scholars but seldom as a tool of Buddhist practice. Indeed, most of the scholarship has had various axes to grind, usually in the service of various nationalisms which have sought to demonstrate national genius, be it Chinese, Tibetan, Korean, Japanese or Indian, in their construction of the form Buddhism took in each civilisation. Buddhism has been fractured thereby; indeed, it has never emerged from its captivity within the bounds of area studies, of which Asian studies is a branch. Western scholarship has been fragmented, and it has fragmented our picture of Buddhism.

This is the fragmented picture modern scholars have given us. Chinese Buddhism is Chinese and owes little or nothing to its origins in India. Buddhism was the ruin of Mongolia. Mahayana Buddhism is politically incompetent because historically it has failed to thrive when it is forcibly repressed by men of violence. Other themes repeated by scholars are that Buddhism can be split into a great tradition, of the scholarly intellectuals, and a little tradition, of the mass of peasants, whose Buddhism was quite different to the aesthetic appreciation of the literate. Often, the gentlemen at the royal court are depicted as scholars for whom Buddhism was merely an intellectual plaything, which was not practiced, because meditation practice was unknown to them, and of no interest. Their sole interest was dabbling with novel blends of Buddhism and indigenous philosophies such as Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto etc. As for the

illiterate masses, their understanding was superficial. Buddhism was simply an added source of power over the natural world of malevolent spirits, a new cult superimposed and merging into existing cults to ward off disaster, conceive a child, protect the crops, ensure salvation in the next life and prosperity in this life. They may have been devout, yet what they practiced was ignorant superstition and magic.

As for Buddhism as a major factor in history, its rise is explained by a host of political and economic factors. It appealed to ornate imperial courts and to unlettered warrior horsemen. In some places, Buddhism appealed to rulers because they were unsophisticated men who were dazzled by the display of magical powers of the monks. At other royal courts which already had sophisticated traditions, Buddhism was seen as a good way of uniting a land divided by war or of creating a sense of oneness in an empire which embraced a variety of nationalities. Buddhism filled a vacuum at a time of national weakness, when the explanations which had hitherto provided a comprehensive model of how the world is, had faltered, leaving rulers with a crisis of legitimacy. And Buddhism flourished because it absorbed, adapted to, appropriated, was appropriated by, existing intellectual systems and religions. Buddhists built monasteries, which became centres of trade, of capitalism, building a power base which at times rivalled or even surpassed the power of the state.

Buddhism is in decline almost everywhere it once was the heart of the culture. This supposedly demonstrates its political incompetence, its failure to destroy its enemies, the foolishness of Buddhist tolerance. History is, after all, usually written by winners. Rulers had little option but to persecute a system which was corrupt, unproductive, subversive and a threat to the state. Buddhists had to be kept under tight government regulation lest they foment rebellion. Once Buddhism had become established, it failed to move with the times, to extend its appeal to newly emerging commercial classes, so history moved on and left it behind. Buddhists became complacent, sunk in the lethargy of introspection and ritual. Their other-worldliness left them unprepared to deal with the real world. Those are some of the explanations of Buddhist history readily available today.

However,there is now a fresh wave of Buddhist scholarship, which seeks not to divide Chinese Buddhism from Indian,or Tibetan Buddhism from all others.The new scholarship carefully examines the texts which have survived for one or even two millenia,the sculpture,the paintings,the architecture,the evidence of popular piety, so as to reconstruct in some detail what Buddhism meant in the lives of people in the many times and places which Buddhism deeply influenced.The new scholarship is less divisive,and more inclusive,alert to commonalities which have been masked by seeming differences.

We are now able to question the appropriateness of historical method in helping us gain insight into Buddhist history. The new scholarship does not reject the solid foundations laid by earlier generations, although some of the sweeping conclusions of earlier writers turn out to have been tendentious, and prematurely based on fragmentary knowledge. More recent scholars accept the importance of economic, political and cultural factors in shaping Buddhist history. To this, they have added a major factor which earlier historians not only ignored, but asserted to be outside the proper concern of historians. That factor is meditation practice, the individual practitioner's realisations, which transform one life, and sometimes many lives.

Historical method emphasizes material factors which open or restrict what is possible for societies. Historical method pays little attention to the individual or to subjective factors like clarity of mind, depth of awareness of reality, intuitive ability to know others.

The older generations of scholars do note the charismatic personalities of Buddhist monks, yogis and translators who appear in the records as having a pivotal influence; but on the whole there is little concern for practice as a major force not only in the individual life, but as a force of history. This in turn reflects the very nature of history, which has for centuries gained its strength by seeking objective evidence for what supposedly happened according to those who made it happen at the time.

Historians have developed a rigorous methodology to separate fact from myth. History has emancipated itself from the pious platitudes and self serving rationales produced by people in the thick of things, who often deny their debt to the past, or deny continuities which can later be shown to have influenced them. This is its great strength. However, this can also be its great weakness, especially when historians deal with religion, because there may be very little in the life of a religious person of many centuries ago which can now be shown to be historical.

All too often, those elements which can't be shown to be historical are dismissed as invention, later additions which can be explained as attempts by an institutional religion bolstering its ideological claims to supremacy by making up stories. The historical methods which have been applied to the Jewish, Christian, Greek and Roman traditions have been transferred to Buddhist history in order to separate the historically valid from the pious chaff. Historians, in their enlightenment enthusiasm for positivist evidence, have thrown out the baby with the bathwater; or to use the phrase used to this day in China expressing the same sentiment, they have criticised not only the monk, but also the monk's robe.

Today, the historicity of meditative realisation is no longer excluded by historians who are increasingly manifesting a sympathetic understanding of what Buddhism is. This has happened for two connected reasons. The number of scholars and the amount of published research into Buddhist history, psychology, philosophy and art has grown dramatically, and continues to grow. Secondly, there are more practitioners in the west, many of whom become scholars who know through personal experience that many of the seeming paradoxes and contradictions which earlier scholars dwelt on are merely reflections of the diverse ways Buddhists have, over milennia, sought to represent linguistically what is experientially the same awakening.

What is now emerging is that the awakening to which all Buddhist art, scripture, commentary and practice points, transcends time and place. It transcends history and culture. It is universal.

What demonstrates this transcultural transcendence, this universal encounter with reality which is available to us all, is the history of Buddhism.

The history of Buddhism is the history of a way of seeing which has successfully become part of the way of seeing of half the human race, spanning an extraordinary range of cultures. Buddhism has historically become the heartfelt popular practice of nomadic, shamanic horsemen, and of great sophisticated civilisations, and now is appealing strongly to an elite in the west whose ability to shape western culture is far greater than their numbers would suggest. This extraordinary diversity is itself testimony to Buddhism's ability to transcend the limits of the culture within which it was born and of the cultures into which it subsequently incarnated, while, at the same time, adapting itself thoroughly to those very different societies.

The new scholarship fuses academic methods with meditative realization. It revives and renews scholarship, which has been fragmented, and it does more. It contributes to the major revival of Buddhism now starting to occur in the richest countries. The flood of well-written and researched books on Buddhism now coming off the presses makes Buddhism accessible and practical, where once it had been remote, alien, vague, paradoxical, esoteric.

Westerners should not be too self-important about a movement which is still small, but in Buddhist tradition there are good reasons to suppose a revival of Buddhist insight could well come from the most affluent people of the affluent nations.

We are mercifully in a period where ideologies of race, religion and political philosophy are ceasing to have as firm a hold on human minds as once they did. Old enmities are dissolving. Affluent people, with leisure to ponder

basic questions, no longer take seriously the traditional theories about who our enemies are supposed to be. Yet human suffering remains constant, and a vacuum of meaning remains.

Into this comes a growing awareness of Buddhist universalism, which combines an insistence on personal responsibility with an active compassion for society. The growing appeal of Buddhism in the west is partly due to this timeliness.

The historic importance of this is that until now almost all Buddhists of all times have believed themselves to be alive in times of depravity and decline, a dark age in which the timeless truths spoken by the Buddha are trampled on in the rush for power and wealth.

Such pessimism is understandable, given the steady decline of Buddhism for the past thousand years. The Buddhist challenge to the inbuilt inequality of the Hindu caste system and to the rigid morality of obedience to Confucian authority in China both failed. Now that the European materialist philosophy of Marx has been abandoned in Europe, its only stronghold is in the formerly Buddhist societies of Asia.

Yet throughout Buddhist history there has been a clear picture of the inevitability of decline, and of the following revival. It is far too premature to say that what is now happening in the west is such a revival, but early Buddhist texts point to this:

> "It is also clear from the Buddha's theory of history, as we have reviewed it, that it is people who are in a reasonably prosperous state, in a favourable phase of the evolution of society, who can be expected to reflect on the realities of happiness and unhappiness, to find that even the much sought pleasures of a prosperous life (or a life of luxury such as the Buddha himself reported he had led himself before the renunciation) are still forms of unhappiness in the ultimate analysis, and to give up the worldly life and lead the 'best life' as Buddhist monks or nuns."

The quote is from A.K. Warder's authoritative *Indian Buddhism* (175) in which he translates and comments on sutra number five of the Digha Nikāya. The most recent translation of this sutra is by Maurice Walshe: *Thus Have I Heard* 133-141.

A distinctive characteristic of this new approach to Buddhism is a concern with society, ethics, practical compassion and an engagement in the problems of our times. This is seen in the joint efforts of Asian and western

Buddhists in the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and the International Buddhist Peace Commission.

Whether these efforts will succeed is uncertain. There is a danger they will unwittingly perpetuate the heritage of judgemental moralizing which pervades theistic societies. Buddhist critiques of society will hopefully develop alongside Buddhist critiques of those who make the critiques. Self-awareness is necessary lest old mental habits persist under a veneer of Buddhist universalism. Many modern Buddhists might discover to their surprise that Christian moralising is ingrained in their thinking.

Buddhist insight may eventually emerge as major tool popularly available to westerners seeking to understand their frustrations. If it does, it could become an active force in society, renewing both the materially affluent but spiritually vacant societies of the west, and also the oppressed cultures of Asia which have been subject to crude Leninist attempts at forcible development.

Through this new scholarship a new picture is emerging. Buddhism is Buddhism wherever it has flourished. Chinese Buddhism is not a peculiarly Chinese mixture of Indian Buddhism and Chinese Taoism and Confucianism. Chinese Buddhism has now been shown to be firmly grounded in fully understood and realised Indian Buddhism. The wholehearted depth with which Buddhism was practiced in China led to a remarkable freshness and directness of approach to the awakening at the heart of all Buddhism. This is Ch'an, or in Japan, Zen. Yet it is not a different sort of Buddhism. It is not an anti-intellectual sudden enlightenment, opposed to the gradual, intellectual or devotional approaches of Indian Buddhism. The opposition of gradual versus sudden is false. The actual moment of enlightenment is always a moment, and thus sudden. However instantaneous that moment may be, it may well be preceded by a lifetime of study, devotion and practice, which is the necessary prerequisite to clear the mind of cluttering preconceptions, opening it to the sudden awakening to direct experience of reality.

Likewise, Tibetan Buddhism is not a debased perversion of original Buddhist purity; but is demonstrably true to the insight and awakening of the historic Buddha. The same can be said of other Buddhist cultures.

What is also emerging is that Buddhism has a remarkable ability to innovate fresh ways of approaching that awakening, to discover new tools to awaken the practitioner, to develop an awesome armamentarium of methods which appeal to the full range of human personalities. Buddhism has developed an increasing range of methods, some of which work for illiterate nomadic herders, others which work powerfully for intellectuals, some inspire confidence in the intuitive, others in those of an artistic temperament. Some

methods work for skeptics and for empiricists who have to see before they believe. Others are for those who have embarked on the path but who may fall into the many obvious and subtle traps before full awakening is realised.

It is this remarkable armamentarium which has confused the scholars, who have not had recourse to personal practice in which to discover the seeming contradictions are but differing perspectives on the one awakening.

The relationship between Buddhism and the indigenous traditions of various cultures is emerging as a rich, complex and subtle story in which Buddhism has always managed to remain true to its central insight, yet has developed extraordinary flexibility about how the path to that insight is expressed. Buddhism is not unique, but certainly exceptional in that it very seldom sought to extirpate alternate, indigenous visions of reality, native worldviews incompatible with the great vehicle. What is characteristic of Buddhism in civilization after civilization, whether it was in a position of strength or of weakness, was an impulse to accomodate, to embrace,to incorporate and to transform from within, whatever native genius it found as it blossomed within the heart of so many societies; yet remain true to its experiential core of awakening to that reality which is unbound by any society, or even by human nature.

This complex intertwining is in each case unique, a rich story unfolding over many centuries, which can hardly be told in a few words. Only now are the shapes of those stories beginning to emerge from the hard shell of overconceptualised straitjackets which historians have till now fitted Buddhist history into. The key metaphors historians use to represent this process are changing. In the past, historians wrote of bridging cultural gulfs, the Buddhist conquest of China, of signification, mass conversion, penetration, the creation of a new religion, syncretism, cultural amalgam, synthesis, the matching of concepts, a Chinese religion that has shed its Indian skin, assimilation, cross-fertilization, hybridization, reduction, selection and rejection, Indianization. These are but a few of the metaphors used, some of them based on mechanical models, others organic or chemical.

A Buddhist Study of the Study of Buddhism

Now we have not only more scholars, but a community of practitioner scholars, whose efforts are mutually supportive. Because in the western world knowledge is communicated globally and speedily, that community is global. The distinction between scholar and practitioner is beginning to blur at last.

Historically, Buddhism has developed only where there has been com-

munity, a sangha which has helped keep alive in the lived experience of practitioners a yardstick of valid understanding. Once that fellowship of practitionners disappears, Buddhism exists only in texts, and the history of Buddhism in the west until very recently suggests that the texts most probably will misunderstand, obscure and fracture that clarity of mind which is Buddhism. It is only as a collective enterprise that Buddhism can continue to re-awaken us.

As a scholarly enterprise, Buddhism is shackled, in servitude as a subset of Indian studies, or Chinese studies, or Japanese, or Korean or Tibetan studies, etc; each of which is a subset of Asian studies, which is a subset of area studies, which is an invention of the academic industry for dealing with the non-western world. Within our familiar western world, we do not lump all academic inquiry under one geographical heading, distinguish disciplines from each other: psychology from philosophy, sociology, history, economics, religious studies, politics, fine arts etc.

Buddhism, being manifestly transcultural, deserves to be a discipline in itself, the better to overcome the fragmenting so typical of the field until recently.

While that would be a great step forward, it should also be only an interim measure, because Buddhist studies could readily become a new ghetto, unconnected with the mainstream of inquiry into reality. In the longer term, as the community of Buddhist scholar practitioners grow, Buddhism will be discovered as a powerful critique of culture, as a critical method, as a radical subversion of the givens of orthodox scholarship across a wide range of disciplines. Buddhism, with its practical concern to liberate from what we commonly believe to be our inescapable programmed instinctive destiny, could even help link the separate disciplines which so largely remain ignorant of each other. A major step forward would be to have Buddhist economists in Economics faculties, alongside the monetarists and the Keynesians; to have Buddhist psychologists in the psychology departments, as alternatives to the behaviourists, the Freudians and the humanists. One could go on at length. This is how other ways of seeing have become integrated. There aren't separate departments of marxism or feminism, but disciplines deliberately choose to add Marxist historians or feminist literary theorists to their staff, because they recognise a need to have feminist and Marxist perspectives within their discipline, in order to offer a full range of views.

But this is for the future. Before such development becomes possible, Buddhism needs to be recognised as a profession, with its own self-regulating standards that require both study and meditation practice as the yardstick of professionalism.

And there is a long way to go before the various disciplines recognize the strengths of such professionalism. Right now, many historians are skeptical about the new Buddhist historiography. They fear the western enlightenment is being annulled, in favour of a return to uncritical pietism. In the west there was a long, hard fight to free scholarship from the self serving clerics, to breathe fresh air into a stale, sanctimonious church history. Having fought to establish standards of academic detachment and objectivity, these new Buddhist scholars would plunge us back into the dark ages in which miracles and fantastic events are accepted as historic fact, all because they tell us they have personally had some vision which verifies this mumbo jumbo.

As ever, it is the undead ghost of Christianity which haunts us. Christians made history serve as demonstration of the hand of God shaping the human events of which history is made. Historians rightly reject such theological intent being read into the record. If Buddhists had some similarly tendentious purpose in rewriting history, it would equally be no more than finding what one looks for.

Gabriel Lafitte

Buddhist Council of Victoria, 253 Booran Rd., Glenhuntly, Victoria 3163, Australia.

SEEDING THE UNCONSCIOUS :
New Views on Buddhism and Psychotherapy

Buddhism is usually described as a philosophy, a religion. But Buddhism is also a kind of psychotherapy. Buddhists who are not sick practice so they don't become sick. Those who are ill practice in order to be healed. The first practice is much easier. When you do not suffer very much, it's very easy to get in touch with the wonderful things in life. This nourishes you and keeps you from becoming sick. When you have a lot of pain, it's hard to be in touch with beauty, joy and happiness.

I believe that Buddhism and psychotherapy can come together and learn from and help one another. Buddhists can learn from psychotherapists because psychotherapists deal with the real issues of life. Sometimes Buddhists practicing in a zendo deal with more remote issues like enlightenment or *satori.* They think you should deal with jealousy, anger and hatred before you practice meditation. This is totally wrong. As I see it, Buddhist practice has to do with daily problems, and psychotherapy can help address these problems.

On the other hand, psychotherapists can learn from Buddhist psychology, which is very old, 2,500 years old. Buddhism is based on how the mind works. Its teachings about the unconscious are very deep and important. For example, in Buddhism we have a treasure of literature called the *Abhidhamma* and a very sophisticated teaching on mind called *Vijñāvada* [The School That Teaches Knowing].

The Sanskrit word, *vijñāna* , means consciousness. Sometimes *vijñāna* is called by one name, sometimes another, according to its function. For example, a very deep level of consciousness is called *alaya-vijñāna* , the storehouse.

Feelings, perceptions, suffering and happiness exist in two forms. The first form is that of a seed or *bija.* Suppose you learned to smile when you were five years old. The capacity to smile exists in the form of a seed. You may not have smiled in the last 20 years, but the seed of smiling is still there. Because you have not manifested this seed on the upper level of your consciousness, *mano-vijñāna* , your seed of smiling becomes weaker and weaker.

Suppose you have the seed of sorrow in your *alaya-vijñāna.* If someone

says something to you, what he says enters your *mano-vijñāna*. Right afterward, it falls into your *alaya-vijñāna*. Everything manifested in *mano-vijñāna* engenders a similar seed in *alaya-vijñāna* which makes the original seed stronger. If you allow the seeds of sorrow and pain to monopolize your *mano-vijñāna* , you continue to plant new seeds of the same nature in your *alaya-vijñāna*. Seeds influence each other; they transform each other. If your smiling seeds become too weak, they will have a hard time offering you a smile. Practice allows the seeds of peace, joy and happiness to come up and be strong.

One day, I lost a very close friend, who was very gracious and gave me a lot of joy. He was a Frenchman who helped set up Plum Village. He had a heart attack and died during the night.

I could not sleep the following night because the loss of such a friend was so painful. I had to deliver a speech the next morning, so I wanted to sleep, but I found it difficult with such pain. So I practiced breathing. I lay on my bed visualizing the beautiful cedar trees I had planted in our yard. During walking meditation, I used to stop and bow to these beautiful cedars. I hugged them, breathing in and out. It seemed that these cedars always responded to my hugging and breathing. That night I invited these images up. I just breathed in and out. I became only the trees and the breath. It was very helpful.

Each of us has moments of difficulty. When we are not able to deal with them, we have to ask our seeds of joy to come up. In this way, we counterbalance the suffering.

When I was in Vietnam, the war was very intense. People outside the country did not seem to know the war's true nature. I accepted an invitation to speak about the war. I spoke at Cornell University and then made a tour of North America, Europe and Asia, telling people that the Vietnamese didn't want the war. We wanted a cease-fire, a peaceful agreement. Sometimes our voices were lost in the sound of bombs and mortar, and we had to burn ourselves alive in order to draw attention to the fact that we didn't want the war. Even so, people didn't understand. They thought our actions were political.

After the tour, I was not allowed to go back to Vietnam. I was not at all popular with the anti-Communist government or the Communist government. During that first year of exile, I frequently dreamt of going home. The image I have of my childhood is a beautiful green hill with trees, flowers and small cottages, I dreamt of going back, but as soon as I arrived at the foot of the hill, some obstacle was there and I could not climb up it. Then I would wake up. I had this dream many times.

At that time, I was also practicing mindful living, recognizing what is

beautiful, peaceful and good in Europe and America. There were trees, flowers and fruits that do not exist in Vietnam, and I practiced being in touch with these wonderful things. There were people – Catholics and Protestants – who were very kind.

After some time the dream stopped coming back. I did not have to analyze it; I did not have to deal with it; I did not have to bring it up in order to have a conversation with it. The new seeds I planted took good care of the bad seeds, the feeling of being in exile, the feeling of not being with my friends in Vietnam who were in difficulty. Also, as I worked and supported the peace work of my friends at home, I planted seeds that helped transform the seeds of suffering. You don't have to directly encounter the seeds of your suffering; you can plant new seeds that have a healing nature.

Most of us ask the question, "What is wrong?" We forget to ask, "What is right?" There are many things that are not wrong. When you focus your attention only on what is wrong, you can make the situation worse. Therefore, it is wise to meditate on your capacity to enjoy peace, happiness and joy, your capacity to be in touch with what is not wrong, what is refreshing, healing and wonderful in the present moment.

During the war, we were so busy helping the wounded that we sometimes forgot to smell the flowers. Night has a very pleasant smell, especially in the country. But we would forget to pay attention to the smells of mint, coriander, thyme and sage. I would mention these herbs to the social workers and peace workers so they would be in touch with them.

As a therapist, you can practice that. You can help your clients get in touch with the things inside and outside that are healthy, that are not going wrong. I don't think it is wrong to help people get in touch with their suffering. It's just not enough.

You know, Southeast Asian refugees have a lot of pain within themselves. Many have lost their fathers, their mothers, their children. But when they come to Plum Village, they don't show any of this. They are advised to practice breathing, smiling, looking at children. Children are central in Plum Village. We tell people to help make the children happy. By doing so, the people get happy. We handle problems very discreetly. Our staff notices people who are deeply disturbed and arranges for these people to see me or other friends who are good enough to help them.

Last year there was a 16-year-old girl who came from England. We did not know she was mentally disturbed, that she had been seeing a therapist for three years. In Plum Village, she lived among other young people without any

special attention. After one month she went back to England where she was staying with other children cared for by British social workers. In their estimation she was transformed. She showed no signs of maladaption, and she also helped the other children around her.

We just received a letter from that organization asking if they could send 40 children to Plum Village this summer! We know that we cannot handle these children because the principle of Plum Village is that healthy, happy children must be in the majority. We can only have a few disturbed children and be effective; otherwise more harm than good may occur.

The existence of healthy, joyful communities is very important, and psychotherapists need to take the lead in organizing such communities. Then we can send people who need help there. Community members will become helpers. First, they will help without knowing they're helping. That's the best kind of help. Then you can identify people who need special care and select people to help them. The people who need care will not know they are being helped. They will suddenly find that someone is being sweet and spending time caring for them. That's the way we do it in Plum Village.

This model is deeply rooted in the Buddhist tradition. The Buddha is important because he is the teacher. The ***dharma*** is the way shown by the Buddha, but without the ***sangha*** [community] it is very difficult to practice. It might be a Catholic or Jewish sangha, but it must be a mindful, happy sangha.

Comparing Buddhism and Psychotherapy

In Buddhist circle, there are teachers of the dharma and students of the dharma. But the dharma is not just a doctrine or a theory. One cannot give students a theory; one has to give them the fruit of one's practice and experience. Therefore teachers have to practice.

The same is true in Western psychotherapy. If therapists do not practice what they are trying to achieve for their clients, their therapy is not good. A therapist's practice should be directed to herself first because if she's not happy, she cannot help people. Practicing joy, peace and happiness and transforming the seeds of suffering is the basic work of the psychotherapist. Without it, you cannot help other people. If I needed therapy, I would look for a therapist who is happy. That is my criteria.

As a teacher, I have to practice, and that means I am, at the same time, a student. This illustrates the principle of non-duality. The teacher and student

coexist. Without one, the other cannot be. I am a teacher because there is a student. If the student does not exist, I cannot be called a teacher. By looking deeply, I can see the student in the teacher and the teacher in the student. If there is no teacher within the person of the student, the student has no future.

When a teacher is a good teacher, she tries her best to give birth to the teacher in the student. In this way, the student is not dependent on the teacher. In Buddhist circles, some teachers want their student to be dependent on them. In psychotherapy circles, this is also true. But we have to practice in such a way that the person we help can be on his own way very soon. The way to do this is to give birth to the therapist in the client.

A therapist should be able to share everything with her clients because if something has worked for the therapist, it will work for her clients. Some therapists say that they have learned a number of things by practicing meditation, but they hate to share them with their clients. I don't understand that, because if you cannot use your insights to help your clients, it means you have not been able to integrate those insights into your life and understanding.

Sitting in Meditation

Many think the practice of meditation involves sitting a long time. They may think their clients cannot do this. But sitting is only a small part of practice. Sometimes a disturbed person comes to a Buddhist center, and the teacher, having some insight about him, asks him to sit day and night or to make 1,000 prostrations each morning. This activity helps because his energy is translated into movement. He suffers bodily and therefore suffers less mentally. This teaching has helped many people. But Buddhist practice involves more than that.

Meditation is the practice of mindful living in daily life. You can practice meditation at every moment of your life – when drinking tea, washing the dishes, changing the diapers of a baby. Of course, when you practice like this and you have peace and happiness inside, you can share that way of life with your clients.

Self vs. Non-Self

I hear from Buddhist psychotherapists that the Buddhist teachings about non-self cannot be applied in therapy. They think that for people to

recover their mental health, they have to recover their healthy self. Talking about non-self will confuse people, they say.

Some people think that psychotherapy deals with the "self", and Buddhist practices dissolve the "self." Others say that before we can dissolve the "self," we have to have a healthy "self." I don't think that is so. You cannot dissolve something that is not there. This is a false problem that has become a problem itself. What has to be dissolved are our wrong views concerning the self.

It's important that when we look at a person, at the *pudgala,* we know that he or she does not exist alone. There is no absolute self; no separate self exists independently from other beings. Buddhists, in their practice, are working for a healthy self, a true self, understanding that this self is made only of non-self elements.

Suppose we look at a leaf. There are many leaves on a tree, but each leaf is an individual leaf. When we look more deeply, we see that the leaf cannot exist without non-leaf elements like sunshine, earth, roots, trunk, branches and so on. Non-leaf elements maintain the leaf.

In the *Prajñāparamitā Heart Sūtra* ,there's a term I translate as interbeing. Interbeing means that you cannot be a separate entity. You can only interbe with other people and elements. Interbeing is a good word; you could also call it true self, the awareness that you are made wholly of non-self elements. This insight is very important in the practice of psychotherapy. When a child has a problem and you treat the entire family, not just the child, you are applying the principle of non-self. The family members are not the child, but you have to help them in order to help the child.

When we look at a flower deeply enough, we see non-flower elements in it, like sunshine. Sunshine is not a flower, but you cannot have a flower without it. Another non-flower element is garbage. Those who do not practice meditation look at the flower but don't see the garbage. If they wait five or seven days, they'll see the flower become garbage. Those who look deeply don't have to wait; they see it right away. When we look at garbage, we also see the non-garbage elements. We see the flower there. Good organic gardeners see that, even if they don't practice meditation. When they look at a garbage heap, they see cucumbers and lettuce. That is why they do not throw garbage away. They keep garbage in order to transform it back into cucumbers and lettuce. If a flower is on her way to the garbage, the garbage is on his way to the flower. To me, this is the most important Buddhist teaching on non-duality. The flower does not consider garbage her enemy or panic when she knows she is on her way to the garbage. The garbage does not get depressed and look at the flower as his

enemy. They realize the nature of interbeing. In Buddhist therapy, we preserve the garbage in ourselves. We don't want to throw it out because if we do, we have nothing left to make our flowers grow.

Dealing With Anger

Western therapists tend to take what they don't want out of bodies and minds. Some behave like surgeons, cutting out the negative and throwing it out. Peace activists in the West think of peace that way. They think that throwing out atomic bombs will end war. They don't realize that the roots of our bombs are in our bodies and minds. We must deal with these roots. Anger is energy; it is garbage. We must preserve and transform this energy.

During the war, I wrote a very short poem about my anger after American bombers had, for the fourth time, destroyed a village we helped rebuild. This is the poem:

> ***I hold my face in my two hands.***
> ***No, I'm not crying.***
> ***I hold my face in my two hands in order to keep my loneliness warm.***
> ***Two hands to nourish, two hands to protect***
> ***Two hands to keep my soul from leaving me in anger.***

I held my anger; I did not express it. I took good care of my anger, because I knew I had to transform it into the kind of energy needed for the peace of my country.

You need an effective way to deal with anger before you can help other people. While you are angry, you are not lucid. Therefore, the best thing is to practice breathing and do nothing else.

There is a superstition that every time you get angry, you must express your anger in order to feel better. For example, you may think that by hurting the other person, you will get relief. But it's very naive to believe this. If you say something angry to someone, he will get hurt and say something stronger to you. So you will get hurt more.

Similarly, if you are not very angry, but express anger, you may find yourself becoming angry because you have invited the seeds of anger up. You may want to express your anger, to get it out of your system. but by doing so, you only practice your anger, rehearse it. The more you express your anger, the angrier you become.

When you close the door and hit a pillow, you think that you are getting in touch with your anger. But the fact is that you are transforming the energy of your anger into the energy of pounding and hitting. You feel better because you have spent much energy hitting the pillow. But the seeds and roots of your anger are still there. I don't think you are in touch with your anger as you hit the pillow. You are dominated by your anger and practicing your anger. You are planting more seeds of anger within yourself.

The Buddhist attitude is to take care of anger. We don't suppress it. We don't run away from it. We just breathe and hold our anger in our arms with utmost tenderness. Becoming angry at your anger only doubles it and makes you suffer more. If you leave it alone, it will be destructive. You will say and do angry things. Also, if you don't say or do angry things, it will still continue to destroy you inwardly. The Buddhist practice is to go back to breathing and recognize your anger as anger.

It may also be helpful to go into nature and get fresh air and green trees around you. You will then transform your anger much more easily. I suggest walking meditation. Practice walking, even with your anger still within you. After 15 or 20 minutes, your anger will subside.

When someone else is angry, we can share the practice. We can say, "Come with me and take a walk." Take the person into the open air. Tell him to do as you do and walk with him for 20 to 30 minutes. This is often much better than sitting and talking.

The important thing is to bring out the awareness of your anger in order to protect and sponsor it. Then the anger is no longer alone; it is with your mindfulness. Anger is like a closed flower in the morning. As the sun shines on the flower, the flower will bloom because the sunlight penetrates deeply into the flower.

Mindfulness is like that. If you keep breathing and sponsoring your anger, mindfulness particles will infiltrate the anger. When sunshine penetrates a flower, the flower cannot resist. It has to open itself and show its heart to the sun. If you keep breathing on your anger, shining your compassion and understanding on it, your anger will soon crack and you will be able to look into its depths and see its roots.

A 14-year-old boy in Plum Village who practices mindfulness told me this story. When he was 11 years old, he was very angry at his father. Every time he fell down and got hurt, his father would shout at him. The boy told himself that when he grew up, he would be different. But just a year ago, his sister was playing with another little girl on a hammock. Suddenly they fell off,

and his sister was hurt. The boy got very angry. He wanted to shout at her, "How stupid you are! Why did you do that?" Fortunately, he did not. Because he practiced breathing and mindfulness in Plum Village, he recognized his anger.

While other people were taking care of his wounded sister, he turned away and practiced breathing on his anger. "Suddenly I saw that I was exactly like my father," he told me. "I realized that if I didn't do something about the anger in me, I was going to transmit it to my children. At the same time I saw something important. I saw that my father might have been a victim like me. The seeds of his anger might have been transmitted by my grandfather, I told myself to practice in order to transform my anger into something else. After a few months I was able to look at my father without anger. I brought the fruit of my practice back to my father and told him that I used to be angry at him, but now I understood and wished that he had practiced like me in order to transform his seeds of anger."

What the young man realized is quite remarkable. We usually think that fathers and mothers have to nourish their children. But, in this case, it was the child who brought nourishing things back to his father to help transform him.

Suchness

In Buddhism, we talk about suchness. Suchness is the nature of a person or a thing. When we understand the suchness of a person, we can begin to love and help him.

A person has flowers and garbage within him. When we love, we accept both sides. It's like a bottle of gas. We know that gas is dangerous, but it also helps us cook a good meal. We can live peacefully and happily with gas because we know the suchness of the gas.

So it is with your wife or husband and children. They, too, have their suchness; they too have their flower and their garbage. If you know their suchness, you will be able to live with them happily and peacefully. You will know how to turn on the flower in them and you'll profit from that. If you are ignorant, you will turn on the garbage in them. Therefore, you must understand a person if you want to help him and therefore help yourself. Meditation is the practice of nourishing the flower and transforming the garbage into flowers again. It is a continual process you have to do it your whole life.

Therapists as Peace Workers

Basic peace work is learning to develop the capacity to enjoy the peace that is already available, like breathing and enjoying fresh, clean air. If you

enjoy clean air, you know that it is precious, and you will do something to prevent it from becoming unclean.

Those of us who look at the state of the world feel that everyone should become a peace worker, including therapists. Psychotherapists should not deal only with sick people, but with the roots of that sickness in nature, the environment, society and the family. I urge psychotherapists to apply their own principles to their lives, to spend more time healing themselves and their families.

In the past, we lived in houses surrounded by trees. It was pleasant to sit among the trees and play with our children, with our grandfathers and grandmothers. The family at that time was big. Now, most of us are in cities where we live in boxes, very high and close to the sky. We don't have trees up there; we are surrounded by concrete worlds. In the past, we touched the earth; we planted our vegetables; we played with the soil. Now, children don't play with the soil. They are not in touch with trees or rivers. That is why we become mentally sick.

Therapists, like others, have to make efforts to bring us back to mother earth. If we touch our mother every day, we will be all right.

Thich Nhat Hanh

with

Anne Simpkinson

Lang Hong, Xom Ha, Meyrac, Loubes, Bernac 47120 Duras, France.

TIBETAN BUDDHISM AS A LIVING RELIGIOUS OPTION

In the weeks following John Hick's request that I speak tonight on "Tibetan Buddhism as a Living Religious Option", it struck me that I could not address this topic except through injecting aspects of my own biography. The subject, after all, is not whether Tibetan Buddhism is an option for Tibetans but whether this ancient system, preserved for centuries in relative isolation from the rest of the world, is a living option for any of us in the so-called modern (or post-modern) world. I have found that, whether I admitted it or not, any attempt that I could make to discuss this issue would be intensely personal since indeed I am a Westerner who has come to find much sustenance in the Buddhism of Tibet. Thus, although I do not intend to tell my life story tonight, I have chosen to speak from what is clearly a personal viewpoint, rather than trying to address the motivations and aspirations of the thousands of non-Tibetans around the world who have become interested in Tibetan Buddhism. Therefore, I have chosen to speak from what has attracted me to Tibetan Buddhism over the past twenty-six years; my choice not only relieves me of the impossible burden of trying to explain the many and various interests of a large number of people but also allows me freedom to speak critically about possible pitfalls in the incorporation of this form of Buddhism into non-Tibetan cultures.

First, let us identify Tibet and the cultural region of Tibetan Buddhism. The country of Tibet is by no means limited to a province of China called the Tibetan Autonomous Region on maps as re-drawn by the Communist Chinese after their take-over of the country in 1959. The Chinese absorbed at least one third of Tibet into the provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan, such that the current map of Tibet makes it appear far smaller than it is. Currently, the largest functioning Tibetan monastic university, which has about seven hundred monks, is two provinces away from what the Chinese call Tibet!

In addition, the Tibetan cultural region goes far beyond Tibet, stretching from Kalmuck Mongolian areas near the Volga River (in Europe), where the Volga empties into the Caspian Sea, through Outer and Inner Mongolia as well as the Buriat Republic of Siberia; it also stretches through the Himalayan states of Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh, and parts of Nepal. In all of these areas, Buddhist rituals and philosophic studies are conducted in Tibetan in local

monastic and scholastic institutions. Youths used to come from throughout these vast regions to Tibet to further their studies, usually returning to their original lands after completing their studies, though, one by one, the return home was made impossible by Communist take-overs – some of the most brutal being in areas under the control of Russia.

When, during my senior year at college in late 1962, a friend mentioned Tibetan Buddhism, the image that came to mind was of a culture from the time of the Egyptian pharaohs. It struck me as laughable that it still could have survived. Not only did I not know where Tibet was located on the globe, I did not even have the timing right! Buddhism was brought to Tibet beginning in the seventh century C.E. after the development of a written language of thirty consonants and four vowels expressly for the purpose of translating mainly Sanskrit texts brought from India. The task was eventually undertaken with great care and expense in such a methodical manner continuing through the twelth century that literally thousands of texts that never made their way to East Asia were translated into Tibetan. Fortunately, one of the guiding principles was to preserve the immense diversity of Indian Buddhism, and thus Tibetan serves as a vast repository of materials subsequently lost in India. Lively traditions of indigenous commentary were also encouraged such that, despite presenting themselves as faithful *copies* of Indian precursors, a great wealth of literature, rituals, and practices offers a wide variety of *developments* of Indian trends – certainly not static repetition. Eventually, several very large monastic institutions with from three to ten thousand members became established – their college sub-divisions commanding such allegiance that although the Chinese have re-opened these institutions with token populations of 350 monks each, they have not allowed these basic educational units to function, stifling the intellectual rivalry between these colleges. They have thereby fostered just what they do not want – allegiance to a national cause that has erupted into open demonstrations again this month.

My first encounter with the mountainous culture of Tibetan Buddhism was at the end of 1962 *far away* in the *flatlands* of New Jersey where a Kalmuck-Mongolian scholar and adept, who had spent thirty-five years in Tibet, had founded a small monastery in 1958. My introduction to the lack of moderation that characterizes much of Tibetan Buddhism came immediately upon his opening the door to what should have been the living room of his pink ranch house. The room was ablaze with the rich colors of a host of paintings of deities and great religious figures; it was anchored with the canon of the Tibetan translations of Buddha's word and the Indian commentaries as well as many indigenous works; and it was dominated by a large image of Shakyamuni Buddha, gazing in happiness at an undifferentiated spot in front of himself but curiously involved, certainly not withdrawn into indifference. Inwardly, I reeled, I will never again assume that I know what to expect when I open a door to a house in

modern principles. Within a few years, he opened 3 colleges and 200 schools in several districts of the country, and exercised considerable influence over the younger generation. Ananda College in Colombo which he opened in 1886 was the leading English Buddhist school. Among those of the younger generation who made a life-long sacrifice in the cause of the program initiated by Colonel Olcott was Anagarika Dharmapala, a great Buddhist leader who founded the Maha Bodhi Society and the Buddhist revival movement in India.

On the pattern of the Buddhist Theosophical society, other Buddhist societies were founded, and they also founded more Buddhist schools. Monks who graduated from Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara went back to their home monasteries in the different parts of the country, opened new parivenas affiliated to their respective parivenas and played their parts in the task of educating both the monks and the laity in their localities. The increasing number of parivenas and Buddhist schools roused a fresh enthusiasm and a renewed interest in the Buddhist and national culture.

In contrast to the "English schools" and colleges all of which were in cities and towns and where education was very costly limited to the privileged wealthy class, Buddhist schools and colleges were scattered in several parts of the country and were open to people from all classes. More than seventy-five percent of the students who attended the two parivenas of Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara, now elevated to university status and admitting lay students as well as monks, came from very poor peasant and working class families. "But for these two institutions they never would have had an opportunity to receive any kind of higher education."[47]

Among the Theravada Buddhist countries, Sri Lanka has been the most advanced in modern Buddhist studies. Besides Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara, the older secular university of Sri Lanka offers courses in Pali and Buddhist studies both for the lower and the advanced degrees to all students, Sri Lankan and foreign, including monks.

As the revival of the Buddhist and national culture of Sri Lanka was closely connected or, to a considerable degree, identified with nationalistic movement and the Sri Lankan Buddhist educational institutions were founded in the course of and as a part of this revival, the graduates of these institutions had played a central part in the independence movement. Really, this is in conformity to the Sinhalese monastic tradition observed all along since the times of the Sinhalese kings. After the Independence, the Sri Lankan monks seemed to take even more prominent and active part in public affairs and deeply involve in political activities. To the average Sri Lankan monk, this seems to be the age-old tradition that must be followed, though, to some Sri Lankan Buddhists, the monks' involvement in politics and even the monks' study of modern secular subjects are still matters of controversy.

Thus, not finding something and finding it to be non-existent are two different things. When an ultimate consciousness reasons:

1. whether your car,for instance, is one with the axles, engine, doors, etc. which are its basis of designation;
2. whether it is a different entity from its basis of designation;
3. whether it inherently depends upon its basis of designation;
4. whether its basis of designation inherently depends upon it;
5. whether it inherently possesses its basis of designation;
6. whether it is the shape of its basis of designation;
7. or whether it is the collection of basis of designation.

It finds that the car is none of these and hence does not inherently exist. However, this does not constitute finding that the car does not exist. Rather, it has been found that the car does not exist in the concrete manner in which it originally appeared to your mind. Some people take the failure to find the car as any of these seven as a sign that the reasoning is inadequate to take account of the forceful appearance of the car, however, they have missed the point – the non-finding of the car in these ways indicates that the original appearance of the car is not true. The car appears in a concrete, pointable way, as if it could sustain such analysis but it cannot. That it is not found when sought under analysis indicates that the car, even though existent, does not exist from its own side.

In this way, emptiness is seen as negating only this falsely perceived mode of being of objects; emptiness does not negate their mere existence, and it does not negate their functionality. Hence, far from there being a basic incompatibility between emptiness and appearance, or emptiness and existence, or emptiness and functionality, emptiness is supremely compatible with appearance, existence, and functionality. There is no incompatibility that needs to be bridged by paradox; there is no incompatibility such that realization of emptiness seems to undermine ethics.

The doctrine of illusion is, therefore, that phenomena are *like* illusions, not that they are illusions. This is why all objects except emptiness are called falsities – they appear one way and exist another, even in direct, non-conceptual perception by sense consciousnesses such as an eye consciousness. Within existing, they falsely appear to exist from their own side but actually do not; and from this viewpoint, they are described as falsely existent, falsely established. This false appearance is due not to a fault in the object, but to a fault in the subject. Since, due to faults in our own consciousnesses, objects falsely appear to have a status that they do not have, the objects themselves are said to be falsely established or falsely existent. In this vein, everything except emptiness is said to be deceptive.

Such distinctions open the way for thought to reflect on the nature of objects, on the nature of our lusts and hatreds, and on the nature of ourselves and others. In time, it is said that one comes to see that lust and hatred do not subsist in the nature of the mind but are peripheral or superficial qualities generated by the circumstance of assenting to a false mode of appearance of phenomena. Through such relfective thought, the conceptual mind is put to use to undo a portion of the mess that it has created. Though some Buddhist systems insist on only the stoppage of thought, I find the cail for such analytical thought to be productive, liberative, attractive.

Deity Yoga

Let us turn to my third topic, deity yoga in Tantric Buddhism. I was unable to attend the Buddhist-Christian Theological encounter held at Purdue, as I was serving as a "study guide" for a Smithsonian tour of Tibet. Nevertheless, I contributed a paper on ultimate reality in Tibetan Buddhism and have heard an account of discussions that took place during the conference. Some of the participants at that conference apparently put forth the view that Tantric Buddhism is a degeneration from the high ideals of Great Vehicle Buddhism. Upon hearing this, I could not help but wonder what the participants at that Buddhist-Christian dialogue must think of those of us who are involved in Tantric Buddhism. Spiritual impoverishment! Moral depravity! Psychopathic deviants! If I may carry the joke a little further, perhaps our Christian colleagues – interested in probing the reasons behind the appeal of Eastern religions – are using us as a laboratory for exploring the degenerate reversion to a paradigm suited only to the morally corrupt!

Need I say that I began wondering what dialogue could possibly mean when some participants, both Christian and Buddhist, have such a low view of the very traditions that attract some of us. Upon more reflection, however, I gradually came to consider the surfacing of their perspective as a positive development, a sign that we have come to know each other sufficiently well that deep-seated prejudgments are being expressed. Perhaps, later we will even arrive at such a point of mutual respect and openness that we will choose as a topic in one of our meetings "What Bothers Me About Your Religion". Later, we may even come to discuss "What Bothers Me About My Religion". Perhaps, we will then reach the level of dialogue that Wilfred Cantwell Smith calls "we all" talking with each other about "us".[1]

My first encounter with Tantrism occurred in 1961 in apartment of a friend in Boston, who had left college to pursue karate. A friend of his dropped by and, over my tea, was discussing Tantrism with him, as I was sitting on the other side of the room seemingly absorbed in meditation. I suddenly asked,

"What is Tantrism?" Without hesitation, he replied, "Screwing dead bodies." Need I say that my interest in Tantrism was not sparked!

Eleven years later, in 1972, after nine years of practicing sutra Great Vehicle Buddhism, I began the study and practice of a tradition of Tantrism found in Tibet. I became fascinated experientially and conceptually with the Tantric tradition's presentation of a union of compassion and wisdom in the meditative manifestation of a divine, ideal, physical form. This practice is called deity yoga. Since many Tibetan scholars consider deity yoga to be the central, distinctive feature of Tantrism, let us discuss it briefly from the viewpoint of this high tradition in order to place their interpretation in its own context before proceeding to my final topic, death and the usage of sex in this spiritual path.

In deity yoga, motivated by compassion, one first meditates on emptiness and then uses the consciousness realizing emptiness – or at least an imitation of it – as the basis of emanation of a Buddha. The compassionately motivated wisdom consciousness itself appears as the physical form of a Buddha. This one consciousness thus has two parts – a factor ascertaining emptiness and a factor appearing as a divine being. Hence, the practice of deity yoga combines the two most powerful aspects of Buddhist practice, compassion and realization of the emptiness of inherent existence.

The systems that have this practice are called the *Vajra* or *Diamond* Vehicle because the meditative appearance of a deity is the display of a consciousness that is an *indivisible fusion* of wisdom understanding emptiness and compassion seeking the welfare of others; this inseparable union is symbolized by a vajra, a diamond, the foremost of stones as it is "unbreakable". Since the two elements of the tantric fusion – compassion and wisdom – are the very core of Great Vehicle Buddhism, one can understand that the two basic forms of Buddhism, called sutra and tantra, can be viewed as an integrated system. Compassion is not superceded by tantra but is essential to tantra; also, the wisdom of the realization of emptiness is not forsaken for a deeper understanding of reality in the Tantra Vehicle. In this sense, therefore, Tantrism is not in the least a deviation from the high orientation of the sutra Great Vehicle.

For instance, the *Kâlachakra Tantra* itself speaks eloquently about suffering in the Initiation Chapter (stanza 12) where it says:

> In the womb there is the suffering of dwelling in the womb;
> at birth and while a child there is also suffering.
> Youth and adulthood are filled with the great sufferings of
> losing one's mate, wealth, and fortune, as well as the
> great suffering of the afflictive emotions.
> The old have the suffering of death and again the fright of

the six transmigrations such as the Crying and so forth.
All these transmigrating beings, deluded by illusion,
grasp suffering from suffering.

Moreover, the tantric vows, taken during the initiation ceremony, call for practitioners to commit themselves to liberating all beings:

I will liberate those not liberated (from the obstructions to omniscience).
I will release those not released (from cyclic existence).
I will relieve those unrelieved (in bad transmigrations)
And set sentient beings in nirvana.

Also, that altruism is at the very heart of the initiation ritual is clear from the fact that the process begins with an adjustment of motivation toward altruism and ends with authorization to teach by way of the wise altruism that takes account of individual predispositions and interests.[2]

In a similar vein, the Seventh Dalai Lama says that practitioners of Mantra are especially motivated by compassion, intent on the quickest means of attaining the highest enlightenment in order to be of service to others. He first describes a wrong motivation for practicing Mantra.[3]

> Some see that if they rely on the Perfection Vehicle and so forth, they must amass the collections [of merit and wisdom] for three countless great eons, and thus it would take a long time and involve great difficulty. They cannot bear such hardship and seek to attain Buddhahood in a short time and by a path with little difficulty. These people who claim that they, therefore, are engaging in the short path of the Secret Mantra Vehicle are [actually] outside the realm of Mantra trainees. For to be a person of the great Vehicle in general, one cannot seek peace for oneself alone but, from the viewpoint of holding others more dear than oneself, must be able, for the sake of the welfare of others, to bear whatever type of hardship or suffering might arise. Since Secret Mantrikas are those of extremely sharp faculties within followers of the Great Vehicle, persons who have turned their backs on others' welfare and want little difficulty for themselves are not even close to the quarter of Highest Secret Mantra. ....
>
> One should engage in Highest Yoga Tantra, the secret short path, with the motivation of an altruistic intention to become enlightened, unable to bear that sentient beings will be troubled for a long time by cyclic existence in general and by strong sufferings in particular, thinking, "How nice it would be if I could achieve right now a means to free them!"

Even though the path of the Mantra Vehicle is quicker and easier, a practitioner cannot seek it out of fearing the difficulties of the longer sutra path. Rather, the quicker path is sought due to being particularly moved by compassion; a Mantric practitioner wants to achieve enlightenment sooner in order more quickly to be of service to others.

Death

But, why is sex brought into the path in Highest Yoga Tantra? Why is the bliss of orgasm used in a spiritual path? To understand this, it is necessary first to discuss briefly a presentation of levels of consciousness in Highest Yoga Tantra which culminate in the most subtle and powerful level of mind, called the fundamental innate mind of clear light. It is identified as the eighth in a series of increasingly subtle experiences that pervade conscious life.[4] It manifests at periods when the grosser levels of consciousness cease either intentionally – as in profound states of meditation – or naturally, as in the process of death, going to sleep, ending a dream, fainting, and orgasm.[5] Prior to its manifestation, there are several stages during which increasingly subtler levels of mind are experienced.

Through meditative focusing on sensitive parts of the body, the winds,[6] or currents of energy, that serve as foundations for various levels of consciousness are gradually withdrawn, in the process of which one first has a visual experience of seeing an appearance like a mirage. Then, as the withdrawal is more and more successful, one successively "sees" an appearance like billowing smoke, an appearance like fireflies within smoke, an appearance like a sputtering candle when little wax is left, and then that of a steady candle flame. Then, with the withdrawal of conceptual consciousnesses,[7] a more dramatic phase begins, at which point profound levels of consciousness that are at the core of experience manifest.

The first subtle level of consciousness to manifest is the mind of vivid white appearance. All coarse conceptuality has ceased, and nothing appears except this slightly dualistic vivid white appearance, which is one's consciousness itself appearing as an omnipresent, huge, white, vivid vastness. Then, when that mind is withdrawn, a more subtle mind of vivid red or orange increase dawns; nothing appears except this even less dualistic vivid red or orange appearance. The consciousness remains in this state for a period, and then when this mind is withdrawn, a still more subtle mind of vivid black near-attainment dawns; it is called "near-attainment" because one is close to manifesting the mind of clear light. Nothing appears except this still less dualistic, vivid, black appearance. During the first part of this phase of utter blackness, one remains conscious but then, in a second phase, becomes

unconscious in thick blackness.

Then, when the mind of black near-attainment ceases, the three "pollutants"[8] of the white, red/orange, and black appearances have been entirely cleared away, whereupon the mind of clear light dawns. This is the most subtle level of consciousness; it is compared to the sky's own natural cast without the "pollutions" of moonlight, sunlight, or darkness – the fundamental innate mind of clear light.[9]

Because the more subtle levels of consciousness are considered to be more powerful and thus more effective in realizing the truth of the emptiness of inherent existence, the systems of Highest Yoga Tantra seek to manifest the mind of clear light by way of various techniques. One of these techniques is blissful orgasm because, according to the psychology of Highest Yoga Tantra, orgasm, like dying, going to sleep, and fainting – involves the ceasing of the grosser levels of consciousness and manifestation of the more subtle. The intent in using a blissful, orgasmic mind in the path is to manifest the most subtle mind – the mind of clear light – and use it to realize the emptiness of inherent existence. In this way, the power of the path-consciousness realizing emptiness is enhanced such that it is more effective in overcoming the obstructions to liberation from cyclic existence and the obstructions to omniscience.

A consciousness of orgasmic bliss is used because, when the sense of pleasure is powerful, one's consciousness is totally involved with that pleasure and thus completely withdrawn; this is the reason why the subtler levels of consciousness manifest during the intense bliss of orgasm, even if they are not noticed, nevermind utilized, in common copulation. Without desire, the involvement in the bliss consciousness would be minimal, and thus Highest Yoga Tantra makes use of the arts of love-making, and so forth, to enhance the process.

The usage of desire in the path is, therefore, explicitly for the sake of making the wisdom consciousness more powerful by way of using a subtler level of consciousness. The difficulty of using an orgasmic consciousness to realize anything indicates that it would take a person of great psychological development and capacity to be able to utilize such a subtle state in the path.

Since other, not so intense, levels of bliss are used in a similar way in the other tantra sects, actual practitioners of tantra in general and Highest Yoga Tantra in particular are said to be more highly developed than the practitioners of the sutra version of the Great Vehicle. Far from being a degenerate reversion to an earlier paradigm, the tradition views Tantrism as as an enhancement of basic Buddhist principles.

Conclusion

These four topics– compassion, emptiness, deity yoga, and death – which are central to the practice of Tibetan Buddhism make it relevant, at least to my sight, in today's world. Our world is certainly in need of the sense of world-family – of sisterhood and brotherhood that can be enhanced by implementing the therapeutic techniques that Tibetan Buddhism so carefully presents. The techniques have impressive power when practiced by someone willing to face the horror of the ingrained bias – the deep-seated attachments and hatreds that come to the fore when the meditations are attempted. Similarly, the practice of analytical investigation of objects – oneself, others, objects of lust, and objects of hatred – engenders the disturbing and yet beneficial experience of the repeated shock of the unfindability of our most cherished notions that are at the heart of emotional turmoil. Likewise, the practice of deity yoga embodies compassion and wisdom in active expression of service to others, and the psychology of the process of dying reveals strata of consciousness that can be put to use in spiritual development.

These topics are much of what in Tibetan Buddhism give me sustenance. They are food for development, but they do not come without baggage. In this age when we find ourselves heirs to many cultures, it is important that we who want to make use of techniques transmitted from other cultures be aware of culture-bound accretions to a religion such as Buddhism and separate what is truly valuable from counter-productive cultural trappings. For instance, we must recognize how parochial Tibetan culture is and strive to keep regional and sectarian biases built on socio-economic and political factors from being transmitted to our culture; at this time of global crisis, such myopic perspectives not only have no positive role to play but undermine the very benefit that Tibetan Buddhism can offer. Buddhism in the West should not become a religion of universal compassion cloaked in regional and sectarian bias, and, even worse, it must not become a religion of regional and sectarian bias cloaked in universal compassion.

In addition, we need to avoid the sexist bias of Tibetan culture, in which women have been kept almost entirely away from the intellectual life of the culture. I do not find such sexism to be endemic to Buddhism, but Buddhism indeed has not had the power to remove it from the cultures where it spread. How awful it would be if its Tibetan acculturation were to serve as an excuse for the continuation of sexist bias in the West!

Also, we new Buddhists need to remember the basic Buddhist dictum, "Do not rely on the person; rely on the doctrine." This is particularly important when faced with a culture that has come to be strangely infatuated with recognizing reincarnations of past religious figures in almost every village. I have wondered if Tibetan culture has so enthusiastically embraced the

practice of declaring persons to be highly developed at a very young age in order to excuse itself from having to gain achievements in practice, much as in my own family a claim of greatness was made based on birth as a WASP. What better way to carve a niche for oneself and one's group than not to have to do anything to deserve respect! Greatness due to birth is very attractive! Much of Great Vehicle Buddhism distances enlightenment by claiming that Shakyamuni Buddha was actually enlightened many many eons earlier and by holding that full enlightenment takes three periods of countless eons, but also the Tibetan version appears in some respects to have given up on enlightenment entirely, making religious achievement a matter of what in most cases is arbitrary appointment based on factors having nothing to do with spiritual development. The word "tulku"[10] itself literally refers to an Emanation Body of a Buddha, though in common practice the term has come to refer to those whose rebirth is affected by a compassionate wish to be a service to others. The arbitrary ascription of such a lofty rank suggests discouragement with and even cynicism about the possibility of enlightenment. It is the type of ridiculous exaggeration that stifles analytical investigation and can lead to cultism. Those of us who have spent a long time among Tibetans need to make it known that most Tibetans take all this with a huge grain of salt, maintaining all the while another system of recognition that is based solely on achievement. The culture has mechanisms for keeping persons with such high titles in line, but when they are outside of these strictures, all sort of havoc can take place in the midst of gullible followers. The very mystery of how such a person could be given such a high title establishes the tension that fuels greater and greater excesses. A balanced perspective needs to be gained to avoid what otherwise easily becomes a disaster. Such balance, it seems to me, comes from being mindful of the importance of ethics – of helping others if possible and at least refraining from harming. As the Dalai Lama is fond of saying, "All of Buddhism can be summed up in two sentences: If you have the ability, then help others. If not, at least do not harm them."

After twenty-six years of involvement with Tibetan Buddhism, I do not hesitate to say that I am moved to my quick by the plight of a culture that, despite problems, has much to offer the world, and is being cruelly stamped out. Whether one is Buddhist or non-Buddhist, religious or non-religious, it seems to me that the needs of society and of human development have made Tibetan Buddhism a place in modern culture.

Jeffrey Hopkins
Department of Religious Studies, Cocke Hall,
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

[from a lecture delivered at Claremont College, California, U.S.A. on 20th March 1989.]

ENDNOTES :

1. In ***History of Religions, Essays in Methodology***, ed. by Mircea Eliade and Joseph M. Kitigawa, (Chicago, 1959), see Smith's article "Comparative Religion: Whither – And Why?", pp.31-66 and especially p.34.

2. In ***The Kalachakra Tantra, Rite of Initiation***, see the beginning of the ritual with the Dalai Lama's commentary, pp.170-174. Also, for the end of the ritual, see my introduction, p.124, middle, as well as the ritual and the Dalai Lama's commentary, pp.333-338.
3. Ibid, pp.31-32.

4. The material on the levels of consciousness is drawn from Lati Rinbochay's and my translation of a text by Yang-jen-ga-way-lo- dro (***dbyangs can dga' ba'i blo gros***); see our Death, ***Intermediate State, and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism*** (London:Rider and Co.,1979).
5. The traditional way of explaining the process of proceeding from grosser to subtler states is in the context of dying. The explanation – in Highest Yoga Tantra – of the stages of dying and the physiological reasons behind them is based on complicated theory of winds that serve as foundations for various levels of consciousness. Upon the serial collapse of the ability of these "winds" to serve as bases of consciousness, the events of death – internal and external – unfold. The same experiences also can be induced by consciously withdrawing the winds in the practice of Highest Yoga Tantra.
6. rlung, *prāna*.

7. In the Guhyasamaja system of Highest Yoga Tantra as presented in Nagarjuna's ***Five Stages (rim Inga, pancakrama)***, conceptual consciousnesses are detailed as of eighty types, divided into three classes. The first group of thirty-three is composed of conceptual consciousnesses that involve a strong movement of "wind" to their objects. They include conceptions such as fear, attachment, hunger, thirst, compassion, acquisitiveness, and jealousy. The second group of forty conceptions is composed of conceptual consciousnesses that involve a medium movement of "wind" to their objects – conceptions such as joy, amazement, generosity, desiring to kiss, heroism, non-gentleness, and crookedness. The third group of seven conceptions involve a weak movement of "wind" to their objects – forgetfulness, mistake as in apprehending water in a mirage, catatonia, depression, laziness, doubt, and equal desire and hatred. Although the difference between the first two groups is not obvious (at least to me), it is clear that in the third group the mind is strongly withdrawn; the three represent, on the ordinary level of consciousness, increasingly less dualistic perception.
8. ***bslod byed.***
9. ***gnyug ma lhan cig skyes pa'i' od gsal gyi sems.***

10. ***sprul sku, nirmanakaya.***

THE VALUE OF THE BUDDHIST APPROACH TO DEATH

Buddhism is at its most valuable and perceptive in its approach to death. In this as in other doctrines it resolutely steers a middle path between the rival views adopted by most of humankind. For Buddha denied that death means extinction and yet also denied that we can in any straightforward or simplistic way affirm the ongoing of the self through death. [1] He believed that neither position does justice to the complexity of that final mystery and that both positions claim a knowledge and a certainty which lie beyond the true capacity of the human mind.

The strongest thrust of Buddha's teaching was to face realistically the practical problems of everyday life and in particular to come to terms with the reality of its conditioned and finite nature and the fact of human suffering and how to cope with it. In this context to search for answers to metaphysical questions which lie beyond human competency is simply not helpful. And Buddha refused to engage in such activity. As he told Malunkyaputta "I have not explained these questions because it is not useful to do so, it is not fundamentally connected with the spiritual holy life, is not conducive to aversion, detachment, cessation, tranquillity, deep penetration, full realization, Nirvana. This is why I have not told you about them." [2] Buddhadasa Bhikkhu is thus a faithful follower of the Buddha when he insists that Western inquirers should focus on applying the Buddha's teaching to their everyday life before seeking answers to questions like "Is there rebirth after death?" or "How does rebirth take place?" Such questions he rightly says should be considered at a later stage. [3]

One of the most helpful aspects of the Buddha's teaching was his insistence on a dynamic understanding of what it means to be a person, and his sense of the way in which human self-hood is utterly conditioned by the experiences of everyday existence. The Buddha therefore repudiated the idea of an inner self or "atman" that could exist as a permanent, and unchanging essence, unaffected by the traumas of existence and capable of surviving bodily death. As the Buddha put it: "the speculative view that...I shall be atman after death permanent, abiding, everlasting, unchanging, and that I shall exist as such for eternity, is not that wholly and completely foolish".[4]

Modern philosophy and psychology thoroughly support the Buddha's insight here. To be human is to be ever-changing, ever-developing. This means

that for a Buddhist the concept of re-birth is not simply a belief concerned with a life after death. Re-birth is a reality even in the course of our present existence. For what we do creates what we become. We are not unchanging, we develop all the time shaped by our actions. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has argued that the Dhammic teaching about re-birth into the four woeful states is best interpreted as vivid pictures of common human conditions in the here and now. A person who allows himself to be burnt up with anxiety is picturesquely described as born into hell, a person behaving stupidly is acting as if re-born as a beast, a worrier is like one born as a hungry ghost, and a person with unjustified fears is like a person re-born as a frightened ghost. Likewise the language of heaven often relates to a state of mental well-being in the here and now as well as relating to a future state. [5]

In practice, probably the most important truth of the law of Karma is that what we do in this world effects what happens to us in this world. As the Buddha taught, "What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind." [6] In a world where we are increasingly beseiged by mental images of greed, lust and violence, the Buddha's teaching on the law of Karma is of direct and immediate importance to all who care about the future direction of human civilisation and well-being. And this direct and practical teaching of the Buddha is also the overwhelming emphasis of his contemporary spokesman Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, whose central themes are always concerned with the practical application of living Buddhism.

In approaching death Buddhism remains utterly realistic. It faces the reality of death and urges the overcoming of the fear of death by a calm appraisal of its universality. Thus the Buddha urged a mother grieving over the loss of her child to return to him when she had found a house where no one had ever died. Buddhism also urges us to set death in context, and recognise that in an important sense we have been continually dying and rising to new life throughout our earthly existence. If we recognise that there is no enduring self to be lost, we can face death more calmly and with less sense of anxiety.

Moreover because Buddhism sees death as entirely natural it encourages an attitude of mind that can accept it when it comes. Much of the Western fear of death derives from the egocentricity of Western thought which attaches such great importance to the wants and desires of the individual. Since death calls in question all these wants and desires, it is so greatly feared in the West, and all kinds of expensive and painful medical interventions are resorted to in a vain attempt to hold death at bay for a few more months and days. But Buddhism has always taught us to avoid being slaves to our desires and wants It teaches the path to liberation from egocentric cravings. Hence a good Buddhist and a good Buddhist society will see no value in the frenetic resistance to death in modern

Western societies. Instead it will encourage the philosophy of the hospice movement which helps people to meet an inevitable death with dignity and serenity.

At the same time, however, Buddhism insists that our life will not be wholly lost in death, for the Karmic forces which have been at work throughout life will continue. As Walpola Rahula puts it "Will, volition, thirst to exist, to continue, to become more and more, is a tremendous force...This force does not stop with the functioning of the body, which is death; but it continues manifesting itself in another form, producing re-existence which is called re-birth." [7] In what sense this implies real continuance through death is a matter where Buddhists are divided. For some scholars, particularly for Buddhists living in the secular West like the Californian Theravada Buddhist, Francis Cook, belief in re-birth is seen as almost wholly mythological. Cook insists, against the historical Buddha, that death must mean the final end of all personal existence. [8] But this view has never been typical of authentic Buddhism, and a thorough-going belief in a very real existence beyond the grave has normally characterised the Buddhist response.

The Buddha himself was quite clear. He denied that death meant extinction, and indeed he described that view as a "wicked heresy" and as being "just what I do not say." [9] For him re-birth was as integral to his belief system as the doctrine of Karma itself. He refers to the doctrine in his First Sermon, and in the Dhammapada. As such it is present in the most universally recognised documents of the earliest Buddhist traditions. It may seem to some difficult to reconcile the doctrine of re-birth with the no-self doctrine, but any teaching which claims the authority of the historical Buddha as its founder must seek for a way to do equal justice to both the two doctrines. I believe myself that there is no clash. The fact that we have no enduring and unchanging self-hood in this present life was never seen by the Buddha as any kind of ground for doubting the truth of the doctrine of re-birth. A baby grows to be a man of 60. There is no doubt that the man of 60 is not the same as the baby of 60 years previous. But nor is he another person! Similarly when a person dies here and is reborn elsewhere, he is neither the same person, nor is he another person. [10] The popularity of this analogy in Buddhist sources indicates that Buddhism sees no *more* difficulty in establishing identity between lives as *within* life. The problem of the self remains, but it never in Buddha's view constituted any kind of objection to his firm belief that the human destiny is to move through many lives in many worlds in the long journey to our true fulfillment.

In the Buddhist tradition belief in life after death is usually taken as straightforward matter of fact belief. In popular culture it is often seen in terms of a succession of lives on this earth. This is evidenced by the popularity of the *Jataka* tales of the supposed former lives of the Buddha. It also shows

itself in the enthusiastic interest taken by many Buddhist monks and laity in reported claims made by some young children to remember former lives. [11] The most significant such cases are of course those which occur in Tibetan Lamaism where the succession to posts of great importance is determined by belief in the accuracy of such memories, as demonstrating continuing earthly reincarnation of the "living Buddha".

In recent years ,however, many Buddhists have been increasingly conscious of the difficulty of interpreting re-birth in so straightforward a manner. In the Mahayana tradition the main emphasis has shifted towards a hope for re-birth, not on this earth, but in Buddha's *Pure-Land*. This could also tie in with other ancient traditions which speak of re-birth normally taking place in other worlds, and which speak of a "mind-dependent" existence between such lives.

The exploration of such themes in modern Buddhism has been encouraged by recent reports of people resuscitated from a close encounter with death who seem to describe experience of entering a mind-dependent state and of moving towards other modes of existence. Saeng Chandra-Ngarm from the Theravada tradition has argued that such near-death or after-death experiences reported by those who come back from clinical death support the Buddhist teaching of a connecting-psyche going on as a disembodied entity. [12]

I have followed up this suggestion extensively in comparing accounts from western medical sources with accounts given in the *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* and in some of the Pure-Land Buddhist traditions. [13] There appear to be some remarkable similarities, both with the reports of the resuscitated and with Western philosophical speculations about the idea of a mind-dependent world. Such similarities are particularly striking since such texts are very little known by ordinary Western people, and hence such parallels could not be accounted for in terms of their expectations or their knowledge of such traditions. For example, many resuscitated people speak of being welcomed into the world beyond by a wonderful and gracious "Being of Light". They say that this Being knows them completely and has limitless compassion to them in welcoming them into the life beyond. Sometimes Christians or Hindus will identify this Being with a religious figure from their own spiritual traditions like Jesus or Rama. But it is interesting that the description given of the role of this Being does not accord with traditional expectations in either the Christian or Hindu traditions. However the description does accord remarkably well with Tibetan and Pure-Land descriptions of Amida Buddha appearing at the moment of death in compassion, wisdom and radiant light.

The resuscitated also report a succession of visions which seem to derive from the memories and emotions of their past life. This would seem to

correspond to the Tibetan notion of a mind-dependent state which reflects the Karma of the individual. It seems to me therefore that such reports of the resuscitated remarkably support what these Mahayana texts say concerning the future life as a mind-dependent state leading on to an unimaginably different mode of being. At the very least, they suggest a foundation in experiential reality for insights too often set aside in recent years. Moreover, I have argued that it is possible to show that these teachings are compatible with faithfulness to the insights also of the older Theravada tradition.

John Hick has argued that we should seek to present a global theology of death drawing on the insights of more than one religious tradition. He points out that several Hindu and Buddhist texts speak of re-birth as normally taking place in other worlds. [14] This modification to the classical doctrine would make the belief much more easy to reconcile with modern knowledge of the nature of reality. It would also cohere with contemporary re-interpretations of Christian and Islamic understandings of resurrection which have ceased to look for any kind of literal resurrection of the corpse laid in the grave, but look instead for the essential person being clothed with a new body for an unimaginably different life in heaven. [15]

However it is important to note that all religions see the ultimate destiny of human persons, not as continuing in a succession of lives, but as achieving a state of Moksha, or Nirvana, or a state of oneness with God. Authentic Buddhism will always be suspicious when too great an emphasis is placed on the delights of a future world. For the true Buddhist goal is liberation from all such cravings. This is why Buddhadasa in particular has warned against the tendency in the preaching of many Buddhist Temples to lay too great a stress on such ideas. [16] Buddhadasa insists that the ultimate Buddhist goal is not to be reborn after death in the Land of Gems or the Land of Immortality. It is to get beyond such cravings and achieve the ultimate deathless state of Nirvana (nibbana). [17]

In his insight that the ultimate religious goal must be the ending of all striving. Buddhadasa emphasises a theme which has been constantly seen as the ultimate goal by the great mystics of all traditions. As Buddhadasa writes, "In Dhamma language life refers to the deathless state...This state is the unconditioned, it is what we call *nibbāna* ,and what in other religions is often spoken of as the life everlasting, it is life that never again comes to an end. It is life in God, or whatever one cares to call it. This is the real life, life as understood in Dhamma language." [18] Buddhadasa correctly insists that this ultimate state cannot be thought of as a place of continually striving." If the Kingdom of God is the end of hunger and craving, then it's the same thing as Buddhism teaches: *nibbāna* , or the happiness that is beyond the world because hunger is ended. But if we understand the Kingdom of God differently, Buddhism isn't inter-

ested."[19] But in fact what Buddhadasa says is precisely what as St. Augustine and with him the dominant Christian tradition affirms about the ultimate destiny in the life beyond. Beyond the vivid pictures of a life of heavenly happiness lies the belief in the beatific or unitive vison where all comes to a state of perfect peace and timeless bliss. As St. Augustine says: "We shall rest in the sabbath of eternal life...in the repose which comes when time ceases."[20] This teaching in Christianity of the transcendent goal of ultimate release is present in the writings of its great authorities, but it is not in the forefront of popular Christian thought. The teaching is,however, completely at the forefront of the great contemporary Buddhist teacher whom we honour in these essays and who has taught us once more to see the great value of the Buddhist approach to the fundamental questions of life and death.

Paul Badham

St.David's University College, Lampeter, Wales.

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BUDDHIST EDUCATION

Foundations of Buddhist Education

Buddhism is really the religion of education. The whole system of its practice is called Sikkhā (Pāli; Sk.: Sikṣā), meaning training or education. One making good progress in the right practice of Buddhism is called Sekha (a learner or trainee), while those who have attained to the final goal of Buddhism are called Asekha (those of whom no further training is required, the adepts). Other key concepts in the Buddhist system are all concerned with training or education. Among these, the most central are Dama (taming or training), Bhāvanā (development or training) and Vinaya (discipline or training). That its system is that of education or training is based on the following basic tenets:

1. The Buddhists believe that all men are by nature trainable or educable, and that man has the greatest potential for education of all beings. In Buddhism, the ideal man is the trained or educated man, as the Buddha says, "The trained is the best among men."[1] The Buddha and the Arahants (the Perfect or Worthy Ones) are called Bhāvitatta, the self-developed ones, or Attadanta, the self-trained ones, and they are not only the highest of men but even greater than all the gods in heaven. There is a Buddhist saying, "The Buddha to whom people pay respect, though a human, being self-trained, . . . is revered even by the gods."[2] In short, Buddhism holds that the enlightenment that decides the goal of human perfection and final freedom can be achieved only through the process of training or education.

2. Just as enlightenment is the deciding factor of the attainment of the goal, so insight, wisdom or right knowledge is the essence of the enlightenment. In other words, enlightenment is all in all the consummation of insight or wisdom. Thus, the process of training or education involves the development of insight or wisdom. It also follows that insight or wisdom is the key virtue in Buddhism, as stressed by the Buddha, "Among all the dhammas (virtues or qualities), wisdom (Paññā: insight, knowledge) is supreme."[3] On the opposite side, ignorance or lack of knowledge is, accordingly, the lowest on the scale, as also stated by the Buddha, "Ignorance is the worst of pollutions."[4] The Buddhist system of training or education, above all else, aims at the cultivation of wisdom along with the eradication of ignorance, as evidenced in a saying of the Buddha, "Of those that are falling away , the most excellent is the extinction of ignorance. Of those that are flourishing, the best is the growth of

knowledge."[5]

3. The attainment of the goal, the enlightenment and the development of insight and wisdom are all matters of personal experience to be gained by the individual within himself. No one can achieve and enjoy them for another. The Buddha himself says, "Purity or impurity is one's own. No one can purify another."[6] Education, in the strict sense of the term, is, therefore, based on the principle of self-reliance.

However, self-reliance does not mean that others can be of no help or service to one. Truly, other people can make a significant contribution to the self-reliance of a person. Though no one can purify another, one can induce or encourage another to purify himself and advise or counsel him how to do so. Thus, the Buddha elsewhere said, "There are two factors for the arising of right view or understanding, namely, hearing or learning from others and wise consideration (by oneself)."[7] For the arising of wrong view, there are also two factors, namely, hearing or learning from others and unwise consideration.

Of the two factors for the arising of right view or understanding, the factor of hearing or learning from others is usually referred to as, or identified with, having good friends. This state of having good friends or association with good people (kalyāṇamittatā) is regarded as the external factor, while wise consideration or critical reflection (yonisomanasikāra) is classed as the internal factor.[8] Only very few exceptional people like the Buddha can attain the Enlightenment and secure the final goal of perfect freedom solely through the internal factor of wise reflection. Other people, the educable average, depend for guidance, advice and instruction on the external factor of having good friends. Through the inducement, encouragement or counseling of the 'good friends', the internal factor of wise reflection is aroused and developed and it, in turn, works towards the maturity of insight and wisdom, culminating in the enlightenment and the realization of the final freedom. Good friends, thus, come to play a central part in the Buddhist system of education. The Buddha himself emphasized this, saying, "Ānanda, the state of having good friends is not merely a half, but it is the whole of the Good Life."[9]

By "good friends" are meant all those who give one good counsels, right instruction and proper guidance so that one is well-informed, prepared and encouraged to develop insight and wisdom that culminates in the enlightenment and the realization of perfect freedom. Included among these "good friends" are the Buddha, the great disciples, monks, meditation-masters, preceptors, teachers, parents, good books, good mass media and all sources of right and accurate information. Confirming his position as a good friend, the Buddha says, "Ānanda, I am a good friend of all beings. Depending on me who is their good friend, those beings who are subject to birth, old age, death and all sorts of suffering become freed therefrom."[10]

As already described, the Buddhist system of education can be rightly called the system of good friendship. What is of utmost importance is to be well aware of the extent and limits to which good friends play their meaningful role in the system, the relationship between the external and the internal factors and their proper contributions to the process of right and real education.

Based on the foundations of these fundamental concepts, the Buddhist system of education has developed. Throughout lands and centuries, it has taken different forms subject to circumstances such as the social and political conditions of the various countries and ages. In spite of all the outward differences to answer the demands of time and place, all forms of Buddhist education can still be traced to the same origin of ideas.

The Religion of the Masses

In the year 623 B.C.[11], there was born, in what is now Nepal, a prince named Siddhattha Gotama. As it was predicted at his birth that he would become either a world-ruler or a world teacher, his father, King Suddhodana, who wished the prince to succeed him as ruler, took great pains to shelter him from anything that might incline him toward the religious life. Prince Siddhattha was, therefore, brought up in great luxury. Three palaces with all manner of pleasures, one for each of the three Indian seasons, were built to imprison the future Buddha. The prince lived a married life from the age of sixteen and his wife bore him a son.

However, at the age of 29, during successive excursions from the palace, Prince Siddhattha saw an old man, a sick man, a corpse and a mendicant ascetic. From the first three of these sights he learned the universality and inescapability of the suffering of life and in the serenity of the ascetic he envisioned the path to freedom and peace. Then, he renounced the world to become a mendicant ascetic and search for a solution to the problem of human suffering. Six years of learning and experiment followed, during which he first studied yogic meditation and, having mastered it in no long time and realized its inadequacy, spent the rest of the long time practising the severest forms of austerities. Having ascertained that these practices could not lead to the desired goal and given them up, he, at last, found out the Middle Way which led to the Enlightenment. With the direct knowledge of the Four Noble Truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the absence of suffering and the path leading to the absence of suffering, he came to realize the dependent origination of all phenomena and attain to the state of supreme bliss and perfect freedom of Nibbāna. This happened when he was thirty-five. Now, Prince Siddhattha had become the Buddha.

From the site of the Enlightenment at the foot of the Bodhi Tree in Bodh-

Gaya, the Buddha proceeded to the Deer Park at Sarnath to the north of Banaras, where he preached his first sermon to the five ascetics who had formerly attended him when he had been practising austerities. In this sermon, known as the Discourse of Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dharma, the Buddha set forth the following basic principles of Buddhism:

1. The Middle Way by which one avoids the two extremes of self-mortification and sensual indulgence. This Middle Way consists in the Noble Eightfold Path which is a process of self-training in morality, mental discipline and wisdom. Conditioned and encouraged by the factors of good friendship and wise reflection, it leads eventually to enlightenment and freedom.

2. The Four Noble Truths which are subjects of practical wisdom. This deals with human problems and their solution on pragmatic grounds. It implies in particular a realistic attitude of accepting the fact of human suffering, an optimistic view that human suffering can be put to an end, and the potentiality of man for the solution of their own problems without submitting to supernatural intervention.

The five ascetics became the first disciples of the Buddha and the first members of the Sangha, a community of monks, that the Buddha established. The Buddha continued to preach the Dharma, acting as the chief "good friend" to all people. More and more people joined the Sangha until the number of its early members amounted to sixty. Then, the Buddha sent them in all directions so that there would be "good friends" functioning for the benefit of the people far and wide. He addressed them,

"Go now, monks, and wander for the welfare and happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare and happiness of gods and men. Teach the Dhamma that is good in the beginning, good in the middle and good in the end, with the meaning and the letter. Explain the Good Life that is utterly perfect and pure . . ."[12]

While many more, having listened to the Dharma and gained confidence, joined the Sangha as monks, others who were not prepared to join the organized community remained in their household life practising the Dharma as lay followers. In due course, the Buddhist fraternity developed into the four assemblies of monks, nuns, lay male devotees and lay female devotees, or simply the two sections of monks and nuns on one side and the laity on the other. The Buddha again made suggestions on how monks (and nuns) could act as good friends to the lay people. This time, he prescribed a set of rules, saying that monks (and nuns) should show their goodwill to the laity in six ways:[13]

1) They keep him back from evil.

2) They encourage him to do good.

3) They feel for him with kindly thoughts.

4) They teach him what he has not heard before.
5) They correct and clarify what he has learnt.
6) They show him the way to heaven.

"Kathā" (talk, discussion, exposition, lecture and debate) on the Dhamma was a common and important feature of the Buddhist way of life in those early days. All Buddhist, monks and laymen alike, were encouraged to hold and participate in these intellectual activities. Listening to the Dhamma and discussion on the Dhamma were prescribed by the Buddha as two of the 38 highest blessings.[14] The ability to give good Dhamma discourses was praised by the Buddha and he gave a special mention to a senior bhikkhu as foremost among his bhikkhu disciples in this skill. Among his bhikkhunī and laymen disciples, he did likewise while among his laywomen disciples he praised one as foremost in great learning.[15] Unlike the pre-Buddhist Brahmanical system, the study of the Buddha's teaching was open to all equally. There were no restrictions on account of caste, class, sex, language, whether one wore the garb of a monk or a layperson.

Once, in the Buddha's time, two monks of Brahmin origin proposed to the Buddha that the Buddha's teachings should be put into the sacred language of the Vedas. The Buddha not only refused their request but laid down a rule prohibiting such an act of educational monopolization and further said that all were allowed to study his teachings in their own dialects.[16]

Thus, the Buddha's teachings are intended for all people or, strictly in his own phraseology, for the welfare and happiness of the many (Bahujana). "Bahujana" (the many or many people) is a collective term connoting the masses, the people, or mankind. Buddhism is, accordingly, a religion of the people or a religion of the masses.

As the Buddha himself called it, Buddhism or the religion of the Buddha is specifically termed 'Brahmacariya' meaning the Good or Sublime Life. Brahmacariya or the Good Life is identified with the Middle Way or the way of life (Magga)[17] of those who are well educated or under training in the threefold training of morality, mental discipline and wisdom.

The Buddha said that he would not pass away until both the monks and the laymen, and both the nuns and the laywomen, had become learned and able to convincingly explain the Dhamma, and until Buddhism or the Good Life had become widespread and well-established as the religion of the people. Here is a quote from the Pali Canon:

"I will not pass away until the bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, laymen followers and laywomen followers become disciples who are wise, disciplined, perfectly confident, greatly learned and bearers of the Dhamma, until they practise in perfect conformity to the Dhamma, practise in the right way and walk in accordance with the Dhamma, until, having themselves learnt from their own

teachers, they shall be able to announce and teach and declare and establish and reveal and expound and explain, until they shall be able, by their truth, to refute the theories of others that arise and to teach the wonder-working Dhamma. I will not pass away until this Good Life has become successful, prosperous, widespread, property of the many (Bāhujañña: religion of the masses) and well-established, until it is well exemplified by gods and men."[18]

The main aim of establishing the Good Life as the religion of the people is, as again and again stressed by the Buddha, to achieve the good, welfare and happiness of the many or the masses. This means to act as good friends helping them in the process of self-training towards enlightenment and freedom. All those who have entered the right path, the Good Life, leading to this goal are called Noble Ones and become members of the community of noble disciples or the Saṅgha. If this aim is realized for mankind, the Saṅgha will expand to become the ideal world community of enlightened and free people. This is really the aim of the Buddhist ministry.

On the Way to Realize an Ideal World Community

The Saṅgha or ideal community of noble disciples as described above is one of the three principal features of Buddhism called the Triple Gem or the Three Jewels, i.e. the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. The three Jewels are the highest objects of veneration for all Buddhists, and, also called the Three Refuges, are the guiding principles for all who search for perfect peace, freedom and happiness. They are the three interdependent and interrelated constituents of the integrated whole of the ideal Good Life system. Combined as one, they serve as the embodiment, the scope and measure of the Good Life. They are the ideal representations of the three constituents of the integrated whole of the basic good life system, namely, man, nature and society respectively:

1) The Buddha as the paradigm of man and the full manifestation of the potentiality for his perfection serves as the reminder of man's potentiality for education and development towards perfection.

2) The Dhamma as the paradigm of nature (sometimes confined to the ecosystems) and the law or the truth behind, and the potentiality for, all of its manifestations serves as the reminder of the necessity of the knowledge of truth or the natural law or the true nature of things (such as the dependent origination of all interrelated and interdependent phenomena which are impermanent, subject to stress and conflict, and not self-existing depending on causes and conditions), and the balanced life based thereon, in the achievement of the Good Life and the realization of man's perfection.

3) The Saṅgha as the paradigm of society or the social systems and the

full manifestation of the potentiality for its perfection serves as the reminder of the realization of a good society in the interaction between the development and perfection of the individuals on the one hand and the organization of social systems based on good friendship and cooperation on the other, i.e. where social systems based on good friendship and cooperation contribute to the development and perfection of the individuals and the latter, in turn, enhances the good and well-being of the society.

The Three Jewels or guiding principles are interrelated and interdependent in the following ways:

1. The Buddha or the Teacher (Satthā),[19] as the paradigm of man perfected or the man par excellence, is a man who, by self-training and development in the right way of the Dhamma and discovering the Dhamma, has realized enlightenment and perfect freedom and revealed the Dhamma to the people who, becoming noble disciples, form the ideal community called the Saṅgha.

The Buddha is endowed with three cardinal qualities, namely, wisdom (Paññā), freedom (Vimutti) and compassion (Karuṇā). Possessed of wisdom, he discovered the Dhamma gaining freedom for himself and successfully teaches it to free others who form the Saṅgha. Having secured freedom from suffering and all evils, he enjoys as its corollaries the inner qualities of purity (Visuddhi), peace (Santi) and happiness (Sukha), and adopts the enlightened unbiased attitudes towards all things, seeing them as they are. Without the influence of unwholesome tendencies to obstruct, inhibit, distort or divert them, all virtues automatically develop in and freely emanate from him, pure, sincere and unaffected. With himself already freed and no further concern for his own freedom, his interest, attention and energy are directed outward and flow without restraint towards other people. These are naturally integrated into the virtue of compassion which, supported by the disinterested attitude of seeing things as they are, allows him to readily and clearly perceive the suffering of those in pain and to actively devote himself to the activities of removing their suffering, helping them towards the goal of freedom and join the Saṅgha.

As far as the practitioner is concerned, the guiding principle of the Buddha or the Teacher instills in him the confidence in his human potentiality for perfection and freedom, encourages him all along the path of self-training and development, and provides him with the exemplar of all kinds of virtues to follow.

2. The Dhamma, as the essence of nature, is the truth or the law of nature which has been made known through the discovery and the teaching of the Buddha. This natural cosmic law or universal and ultimate truth, to be realized by wisdom and insight, turns the man who discovers and reveals it into the Buddha, and provides the path of self-training by following which people come

to realize the Dhamma after the Buddha and become the disciples who form the Saṅgha.

As far as the practitioner is concerned, the guiding principle of the Dhamma shows him what, as the matter of the immutable truth or irresistible law of nature, he must inevitably learn and practise if the Good Life is to be realized and the goal of perfect freedom is to be attained.

3. The Saṅgha or the Disciples collectively (Sāvaka: lit., the hearers;[20] *cf.* the society or the people collectively), as the paradigm of the ideal society, is the community of people who have developed or are in the course of developing themselves through the practice and realization of the Dhamma as taught by the Buddha. Depending on the Buddha's compassion, expressed in the teaching of the Dhamma, they realize the Dhamma after the Buddha, and by realizing the Dhamma after the Buddha, they become witnesses and testaments to his Enlightenment. In founding the Saṅgha or enlightening people to become noble disciples to form the Saṅgha, as an act of teaching the Dhamma for the good of the many, the Buddha consummates his Buddhahood. By practising and realizing the Dhamma, people become noble disciples who form the Saṅgha and the Saṅgha is perpetuated. Also, through the Dhamma-practices of discipline and harmony, they become united as a community that is called the Saṅgha. However, the appearance and the perpetuation of the revealed Dhamma, in turn, depends on the existence of the Saṅgha or the disciples who learn, practise, teach and hand down the Dhamma. Again, the Saṅgha is the society where "good friends" can be sought, who teach, clarify and counsel people in the learning and practice of the Dhamma so that the Dhamma will be, as enjoined by the Buddha, maintained and perpetuated for the benefit, welfare and happiness of all mankind.

As far as the practitioner is concerned, the guiding principle of the Saṅgha points to the community which he can resort to for good friends to counsel him in leading the Good Life towards enlightenment and freedom and which he joins to act as a good friend to others in the process of their self-training towards the same goal.

The Buddha's activities of teaching the Dhamma to turn people into noble disciples who form the Saṅgha, the Dhamma as the natural law realizable through insight and wisdom on which the Good Life is based, and the process of self-training which turns one into a noble disciple to join the Saṅgha are all matters of education. The foundations of Buddhist education are embodied in the guiding principles of the Triple Gem.

Once the Buddha has arisen, the Dhamma has been announced and the Saṅgha has been formed, what remains to be done is to expand and perpetuate the Saṅgha, that is, to educate more and more people to join it. This will be best achieved if there are a sufficient number of "good friends" readily in service

to guide people. The Saṅgha as the ideal community of noble disciples is a matter of the individual inner attainments and qualities of the mind intangible to others and does not necessarily imply any social coherence. So, to serve this purpose of education, an organization is needed. This is why the Buddha founded an organized community of monks. This organization is also called the Saṅgha.

Now, two kinds of the Saṅgha should be distinguished, namely, the Saṅgha of noble disciples (Sāvaka-Saṅgha) and the Saṅgha of monks (Bhikkhu-Saṅgha; and also the Saṅgha of nuns (Bhikkhunī-Saṅgha). The Saṅgha of noble disciples, also called the Noble Saṅgha (Ariya-Saṅgha), is, as described above, one of the three guiding principles of Buddhism called the Triple Gem or the Three Jewels. The Saṅgha of monks, also called the Conventional Saṅgha (Sammati-Saṅgha), is an organized community of those who have renounced the world to live monastic lives. While the Noble Saṅgha is based on the inner spiritual attainments of the individuals, the monastic Saṅgha legitimizes the status of its members through ordination or the outward visible act of admission by the assembly.

When the Buddha first organized it, the monastic Saṅgha consisted only of noble disciples since he ordained those who had realized the Dhamma. In other words, the earliest Saṅgha was both the Noble Saṅgha and the monastic Saṅgha simultaneously. In no long time, however, when Buddhism further spread and the monastic Saṅgha expanded, the number of noble disciples who stayed outside the monastic Saṅgha increased while more and more untrained people who had mere faith were admitted to it. Then, the monastic Saṅgha or the Saṅgha of monks (Bhikkhu-Saṅgha) turned to function in three principal ways:

1) It serves as the centre of education which the zealous can join as monks (or nuns) and novices to undergo a process of devoted self-training and to which lay people can readily turn for sermons, counsel, advice and explanation on the Dhamma. It is here that the senior members can exert their full energy and ability in helping both their juniors in the community and its lay followers towards the realization of the Good Life and the final goal.

2) It serves as the stronghold of Buddhism wherefrom its well-trained members are expected to go out in all directions to teach people the Good Life they should follow and as the model of a good society wherein the exemplary noble lives of its members characterized by moral conduct, order, harmony, peace and happiness may influence the wider society, so that the number of people who join the Noble Saṅgha will increase and the Noble Saṅgha will expand towards the realization of the ideal world community of noble disciples.

3) As the noble Saṅgha has not yet been universally realized and the conditions in the surrounding world are not favourable to the ideal life, the monastic Saṅgha serves as the suitable setting in which noble disciples and those inclined towards the ideal life can best live their chosen way of life and most efficiently work to achieve their ideals.

In sum, the main function of the monastic Saṅgha is to act as the principal agent for the expansion and perpetuation of the noble Saṅgha. As an organization in which most of the members are under training, some measure of discipline and a method of training are needed. A significant number of disciplinary rules were, therefore, laid down by the Buddha to ensure the moral conduct of the monks as moral leaders of the people, to create the living conditions that are favourable to the process of self-development of the monks and to their ministries, and to administer all affairs of the monastic Saṅgha in such a way that the elements of the Good Life such as morality, good friendship, cooperation, participation, helpfulness, concord, harmony, order and unity will prevail for the welfare and happiness both of the monastic community and of the people in the wider society, and that the monastic Saṅgha will, thus, thrive as the paradigm of a good society. Included among these disciplinary rules are regulations that enjoin the training of the monks, especially those who are newly ordained.

Two factors played the most important parts in the development of Buddhist educational institutions, namely, the rule laid down by the Buddha enjoining all the monks to keep the annual three-month rains-residence,[21] and the Buddha's prescription of training as part and parcel of a monk's life.[22] In the early period of the Buddha's ministry, monks lived the life of wanderers, which allowed them to go far and wide to preach the Noble Life to the people. However, when the Saṅgha grew in size, the task of training members within the Saṅgha also grew in importance. A settled life was more favourable to the performance of the task. Concurrently, the Buddha laid down a rule prescribing for every monk a period of three-month retreat during the rains. Though it was the common practice among wanderers of all other sects to seek shelter for the season, they did not live together in congregation as Buddhist monks. The latter, while settling in a congregation of fellow monks, found the rains-retreat an occasion for holding regular communal educational activities such as lectures and discussions, for seeking tutorial under senior monks, and for the training of the juniors, especially of those newly ordained. Although the longer period of wandering usually followed on the termination of the yearly retreat period, continuous intensive training might have even led to a more or less permanent residence in later times.

From the time the Buddha made dwellings allowable to monks,[23] devout

and wealthy people increasingly built new ones and dedicated them to the Saṅgha. As more and more monks observed rains-residence in these places and the training of monks was more extensively conducted there, many of them grew into organized monasteries. As new members were incessantly admitted to the community and as self-training is required by the Dhamma of all the monks who have not reached the final goal, education soon became the central activity of the monasteries. In the course of time, on the basis of the above-mentioned regulations and the general principle of self-training, monastic education developed into an elaborate system of education and monasteries grew up as seats of learning. Thus, the long centuries of the rise and spread of Buddhism witnessed the development of mass education in conjunction with that of institutional monastic education.

Development of Monasteries into Universities

In India of the old times, before the advent of Buddhism, the predominant religion was Brahmanism. The Brahmanical system of education is also the most ancient one, dating back to the Vedic age. It is based on an individual teacher with his small group of select resident pupils learning in the teacher's house. In the Jātakas, mention is often made of the city of Taxilā as the great centre of education, where young princes and sons of nobles and rich merchants from various parts of India flocked to study under 'world-famed' teacher (disā-pāmokkha).[24] The Three Vedas and the eighteen arts and sciences were taught, including archery, swordsmanship, philology, law, magic and medicine. The pupils generally paid the teacher on admission a usual fee of about one thousand gold pieces. Poor students could be admitted free of charge, rendering services of manual labour instead of the fee. Paying students were entitled to various privileges and lived with the teacher as members of his family.

Education in the Brahmin system was confined to the males of the higher castes. No sūdras (people of low caste) and outcastes were permitted to study the Vedas. In the sacred law of the Aryans, severe punishments have been prescribed for the low caste people who happen to get access to the Vedas:

"If a sūdra intentionally listens to the recitation of the Vedas, his ears shall be filled with melted lac or lead. If he recites the Vedas, his tongue shall be chopped off. If he happens to learn by heart a passage in the Vedas, his body shall be cut in two."[25]

In the Law of Manu there is a rule forbidding one learned in the Vedas to recite them in the presence of a sūdra.[26]

In the Jātakas, a story is told of two outcaste young men who,desirous of study, had to disguise themselves as Brahmins and went to study at Taxilā. However, on being recognized later, they were beaten and expelled.[27]

All in all, the Brahmanical system of education, being a paid one, limited by its domestic nature and monopolized by the higher castes, especially by the Brahmins, benefited only the privileged few and did not favour mass education and the expansion into a large educational institution.

Against this Brahministic background, the Buddhist system was organized and began to set a new trend. While the educational tradition of the Brahmins is domestic, that of the Buddhist system, on the other hand, is monastic, functioning as part of the regular and regimen of Saṅgha life.

The Vinaya (Discipline for the monks) prescribes for a newly ordained monk a period of training called Nissaya (Dependence) during which he has to stay for ten years as a pupil under the preceptor or a teacher. The period may, however, vary with the trainee's ability to learn. A competent monk may remain in nissaya for five years only, but one not so all his life.[28] Only after completing this period of learning and novitiate, a monk will acquire the full status of a qualified member of a Saṅgha. The Nissaya system is the Buddhist counterpart of the ancient Indian guru-kula ('teacher's house') system in which the teacher presides over a limited number of resident pupils. However, a difference of vital importance is that the domestic environment in the Brahmanical system necessitated a restriction on the size of the school to remain a small one under an individual teacher, while the monastic environment in the Buddhist system allowed it to expand into a large educational federation, controlled by a collective body of teachers.

In contrast to the Brahmanical system reserved for the privileged few, the Buddhist system was open to all. The monasteries welcomed people from all castes, and also the outcastes, to enjoy equal opportunity and equal status in the monastic community. The Buddha himself said:

"Just as all the great rivers give up their former names and identities when they reach the great ocean, and they come to be reckoned one with the great ocean itself, so too there are these four castes, the warrior-nobles, the priests, the burgesses and the plebeians, that, when gone forth from home into the homeless life in the Dhamma and Vinaya declared by the Perfect One, give up their former name and race and come to be reckoned one with the monks who are sons of the Sakyans."[29]

"Whosoever among all these four castes, having become a monk, has freed himself from all cankers, has fulfilled the Good Life, has done what has to be done, . . . has gained freedom through right knowledge, it is he who is called the highest of all the castes and this is in accordance with the Dhamma, not against the Dhamma. Truly, it is the Dhamma that is chief among people, both in this life and in the next."[30]

At the very moment one becomes a monk, he is under the Nissaya and the process of training begins. Throughout the process, all services are rendered and

facilities provided free of charge. It is the matter of absolutely free education.

The subject matter of a monk's education was originally confined to the canonical lore consisting of the Dhamma (the teachings as set forth and expounded in the Buddha's discourses) and the Vinaya (the code of discipline as laid down by the Buddha). The teacher, himself accomplished in canonical lore, instructed the pupil until the trainee mastered the texts of the canon, grasped the fundamental doctrines and basic ideas on which the practice of the Dhamma is based, and gained the ability to explain them to others. To be a qualified independent monk, the trainee should be much-learned (bahussuta) or wise (paṇḍita).

In addition to the disciplinary requirement of training under the preceptor or a regular teacher, the communal life and activities in the monasteries encouraged educational atmosphere and intellectual pursuits even more. All monks were enjoined to participate in the administration of the Saṅgha affairs. This is a system of joint deliberation in which all members enjoyed equality in decision-making on matters of common concern. The admission of new members (called ordination), the appointment of different functionaries, the settlement of a dispute, and so on were all communal transactions (Saṅghakamma) to be carried out by the Saṅgha in formal meetings. To ensure responsible and efficacious deliberation and collective action, a measure of education is needed for all members of the Saṅgha. Much learning was again and again prescribed by the Buddha as a major quality of a respectable monk, a monk who takes a leading position in the monastic community, a monk who is resourceful and helpful to others, and a monk to be appointed in charge of some Saṅgha affairs.

Monks not only held formal meetings to carry out communal transactions, but also assembled, daily or as often as they liked, usually in the meeting hall called Upaṭṭhāna-Sālā where they held symposia and debates or listened to Dhamma talks.[31] Thus, the education of a monk did not come to an end with the close of the Nissaya period, but continued as long as he stayed in the monkhood. The Venerable Ānanda, the permanent attendant of the Buddha, once explained how a monk learned new things relating to the Dhamma, things learnt remained unconfused in him, old things to which he was mentally attuned remained in use, and he set out to know something not known before. He enumerated the following six conditions:[32]

1) A monk himself masters the Dhamma as set forth in all parts of the canon.
2) As learnt, as mastered by himself, he expounds the Dhamma to others in detail.
3) As learnt, as mastered, he teaches it to others in detail.
4) As learnt, as mastered, he rehearses it in detail.
5) As learnt, as mastered, he ever reflects, ponders and pores over it.

6) During the rains, he takes residence in the monastery where reside those elders who are widely learned, versed in traditional lore, bearers of the Dhamma, experts in the Vinaya and specialized in the formularies. There he frequently approaches them and consults and interrogates them on the whats and hows.

In addition to the educational activities, both individual and collective, within the monks' community, the role of the monks as good friends to the laity, as described above, has contributed greatly both to the training of the individual monks and to Buddhist education as a whole. The monks not only talked with these lay people and preached to them when the latter came to see them or to attend monastic activities, but were expected to readily teach and give advice to the latter whenever they happened to be among them outside the monasteries, whether on their wanderings from place to place or on the daily morning almsround.[33] This is the way to educate the people which at the same time necessitated self-training on the part of the monks to develop the ability to teach others. This tradition of learning and scholarship, however, has not been confined only to the monkhood. The fact that the Buddha praised a man as foremost among his lay male disciples who were Dhamma preachers and a woman as pre-eminent among his lay female disciples who were of great learning and declared them to be the ideal layman and the ideal laywoman respectively[34] shows how strongly the Buddha encouraged education and intellectual activities among the laity. Laypeople not only taught, preached, discussed and talked on the Dhamma among themselves, but also engaged in talk and discussion with the monks. Some lay followers like the above-mentioned foremost Dhamma-preacher even helped clarify some points of the Dhamma to monks.[35]

However, it was under the favourable conditions of the monasteries and by the organized community of the monastic Saṅgha that the tradition of learning and scholarship, being incorporated with the Saṅgha life, could be kept steadily continuous and growing. Starting as a system of training for monks, it gradually, over the course of centuries, extended and enlarged in its scope and contents until almost all the arts and sciences were included and some monasteries developed into universities. This evolution probably became apparent in the 1st century A.D. or somewhat earlier and in the Gupta age (A.D. 320-550) a new type of monastery organization called Mahāvihāra had emerged.

As pointed out at the beginning, the reason for the existence of the monasteries was the realization of the good and happiness of the many, that is, the achievement of their resident monks in carrying the blessing and the benefit of the Dhamma to the people through the spread and perpetuation of the Good Life and the Noble Saṅgha. However, in order for the monks to achieve this, they

must be competent and much learned up to the standard set by the Buddha himself, that is, they should, as described earlier, having themselves mastered the Dhamma, be able to effectively explain it to others, both the elite and the populace, and to rightfully refute the doctrines of other faiths, successfully defending and upholding the Buddhist principles in disputation. Moreover, public debates were the life-breath of Indian intellectual life, for which the students in every sect and school must be made prepared. It was perhaps for this reason that the emphasis in Buddhist education was noticeably placed on making a monk intellectually keen. As this particular emphasis grew in Buddhist monasticism, the urge developed in the Buddhist system of education for liberal scholarship along with dialectical skill and ability in argumentation. Buddhist education in India was then characterized by these two interrelated developments:

1) The liberalization of monastic training far beyond the tradition of textual scholarship to cover not only the canonical lore but also the doctrines of other faiths, the various systems of philosophy and subjects of secular character. These included linguistics, logic, astronomy, medicine, music, painting, sculpture and other arts and crafts. Some of these were studied as intellectual equipments with the main object of sharpening mental faculties for success in debate.

2) The emergence of great monastic establishments of the Mahāvihāra type, in which several monasteries, separately erected one by one, were later enclosed in a circuit wall with a single gate and brought into a unitary organization. These huge aggregations of monasteries, classed in modern terms as universities, must have numbered many, though only of five of them do we have a comparatively substantial knowledge. The earliest of them took full shape in the Gupta age (A.D. 320-550) while others were at their zenith in the period of the Pāla dynasty (c. A.D. 660-1140). As seats of Buddhist and liberal learning, they were open not only to monks but to all seekers after knowledge, irrespective of sect, religious denomination and nationality. Lay students were also admitted, some of whom studied purely secular subjects. All these latter-day universities came to a violent end, abruptly and definitely, with the Muslim conquest of northeast India in the closing years of the 12th century.

The Age of the Universities

According to a commentary,[36] King Asoka established, in about 250 B.C., 84,000 monasteries in 84,000 townships all over his vast empire. Of most of them, no traces can now be found. However, among the comparatively small number of the earliest monasteries known to us, most were founded in places associated with the life of the Buddha such as those at the four Buddhist Holy

Places (Kapilavastu, Bodh-Gaya, Sārnāth and Kusinagar) and the one at Saheth or Srāvastī (the site of the Jetavana monastery). Many of these and other later monasteries grew in the course of time into distinguished centres of learning. Some centres like Taxila (in the locality of primitive Brahmanical studies), Nālandā, Sārnāth and Amarāvatī are regarded as universities of the ancient times. Among these, however, the one that is best known to us, the evidences of which are ample and whose status as a full-fledged university is unquestionable, is Nālandā at the present village of Baragaon in the state of Bihār in northern India.

A number of monasteries might have existed at the site of Nālandā before a Gupta king called Sakrāditya (also called Mahendrāditya or Kumāragupta I) founded a monastery there in the first half of the 5th century. This monastery became the nucleus of what later became known as Nālandā-Mahāvihāra. Several later kings of the Gupta dynasty built monasteries of their own on different sides of the original one until the king who founded the sixth monastery (probably Yasodharman) built round all these structures a high wall with one gate, bringing the separate monasteries into aggregation. That was some years after 535 C.E. An official seal of this unitary establishment, belonging to the later Pāla age, has been found, engraved on stone, with the wheel of the Dhamma, flanked with a deer on either side, bearing the inscription: "Nālandā-mahāvihārīya-ārya-bhikṣu-saṅghasya (Of the holy monk-community of Nālandā Mahāvihāra)."

The story of the rise of Nālandā, the academic life and activities prevailing there are known to us almost exclusively from the reports of the Chinese travellers, Hsuan-tsang or Yuan Chwang for the period between 629 and 644 C.E. and I-tsing for the period of the closing decade of that century. Fa-hsien who toured northern India in 400-411 C.E. reported on his visit to two large monastic centres at Pāṭaliputra. From his description, they seem to have resembled the studia generalia of mediaeval Europe, out of which modern universities developed. Perhaps, several monasteries had experienced this line of development between the 5th and the 7th centuries. However, as no evidence of their further development is known to historians, their status as universities has to be ignored. Nālandā, on the other hand, might have not come into existence at the time of Fa-hsien as he made no mention of it, except of the village of Nāla as the birthplace of Sāriputta. Accordingly, Nālandā must have reached its peak of fame as a university some time in the 6th century, between the time of Fa-hsien and that of Hsuan-tsang.

According to Hsuan-tsang, 1,500 teachers and 10,000 students lived, teaching and studying, at the great university. Prospective students had to pass difficult screening examination before they were allowed to enter and a great proportion of the applicants failed. The fame of Nālandā as a great international institution of learning is evident from the eagerness of foreign scholars to come to India to seek for higher studies at Nālandā. As many as 100 chairs or pulpits

used to be daily arranged for lectures and discussions. However, among the different subjects of both Buddhist and Brahmanical learning, both sacred and secular, that they could choose, all students are required to study Mahāyāna philosophy. The monks there maintained high moral character and all students were well-disciplined. Rules and regulations were specially strict, the violation of which entailed "expulsion without sounding the bell".

Such descriptive references in an inscription mentioning 'rows of monasteries with their series of turrets, licking the clouds' and in I-tsing's record made to 'Nālandā's eight halls and three hundred apartments' give some idea of the wealth of its architecture. A whole area in the campus called Dharmagañja was set apart for huge many-storied library buildings, three of which bore the fancy names of Ratnodadhi (Sea of Jewels), Ratnaśāgara (Ocean of Jewels), and Ratnaranjaka (Jewel-adorned), the first-named being nine-storied. In addition to the founding of monasteries and buildings and supplying gifts to them on various occasions, the revenue of more than 200 villages were assigned by kings of many generations for the permanent upkeep of the university.

The following remarks on Indian education found in an American college textbook are noteworthy:

> "During Gupta times, scholarship and science were of a very high caliber. Students from all over Asia came to India's foremost university, situated at Nālandā. The most famous scientist was the astronomer and mathematician Aryabhata, who lived in the fifth century. In verse he discussed quadratic equations, the value of, solstices and equinoxes, the spherical shape of the earth, and the earth's rotation. Other Indian astronomers were able to predict eclipses accurately, to calculate the moon's diameter, and to expound on gravitation.
>
> ". . . The Arabic numerals and the decimal system we use today appear to have come originally from Indian rather than Arabic sources. . . .
>
> "The development of Indian medicine was due to various factors, including an interest in physiology which resulted from yoga. . . .
>
> "Some Gupta physicians were surprisingly modern in their techniques; they prepared carefully for an operation and sterilized wounds by fumigation. Caesarean operations, bone setting, and plastic surgery were all attempted. The Indians also made use of many drugs then unknown in Europe; . . ."[37]

The first half of the sixth century witnessed the break-up of the Gupta empire and the rise of another monastic university in the west of India. There, around 490 C.E., a general of the Guptas established at Valabhī the Maitraka dynasty. The Maitrakas were Saivite, but they followed the Gupta tradition of

royal patronage to monasteries. Throughout the whole period of their dynasty, under their initiatives, care and protection, monasteries were built, which within a century grew into a large centre of learning known as Valabhī, also called Duḍḍā after the name of the princess who founded it. The university of Valabhī remained for over two centuries the foremost educational centre of Western India, specializing in higher studies in logic, astronomy and law. It was the centre of Hīnayāna Buddhism as Nālandā of the east was then the centre of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In his record, made in 690 C.E., I-tsing speaks of Nālandā and Valabhī as the two most prominent seats of higher learning in India in his time.

According to Hsuan-tsang who visited Valabhī in 640 C.E., there were some hundred monastic residences (Saṅghārāma) with about 6,000 monks, most of whom studied the Hīnayāna teachings of the Sāmmitīya school. I-tsing who came a few decades later made a report of the 'Method of learning in the West (i.e. India)'. Buddhist monasteries as seats of learning were open to all, māṇavakas (lay students) as well as monks. Usually, learners received preliminary training somewhere else before seeking for further studies at Nālandā or Valabhī:

> "Thus instructed by their teachers and instructing others they pass two or three years, generally in the Nālandā monastery in central India, or in the country of Valabhī in western India. These two places are like Chin-ma, Shi-chii, Lung-men and Chue-li in China, and there eminent and accomplished men assemble in crowds, discuss possible and impossible doctrines, and, after having been assured of the excellence of their opinions by wise men, become far-famed in their wisdom. To try the sharpness of their wit, they proceed to the king's court to lay down before it the sharp weapon (i.e. of their intelligence); there they present their schemes and show their (political) talent, seeking to be appointed in practical government. . . . They receive grants of land and are advanced to high rank; their famous names are, as a reward, written in white on lofty gates. After this, they can follow whatever occupation they like.'[38]

From this, it can be inferred that, not unlike the Gupta kings, the Maitrakas granted liberal support to the Buddhist monasteries out of their love for culture and learning, without concern for the propagation of Buddhism.

The university of Valabhi was, however, short-lived. It was destroyed in 775 C.E. by the Muslims who attacked the city by sea. Both the city and the university, both the dynasty and the monasteries, vanished through the death-blow from the Arab invaders. No traces of the great university now exist, except some copperplate inscriptions.

In northern India, King Harsha Sīlāditya founded an empire and reigned from 606 to 648 C.E. Harsha was himself a Buddhist. He encouraged learning and literature and Nālandā University was under his patronage. It was during this reign of King Harsha that the great Chinese traveller, Hsuan-tsang, visited India and spent fifteen years there, studying Yogācāra philosophy at Nālandā and travelling throughout the country.

After Harsha's death, northern India was in turmoil until the Pāla dynasty established itself in Bengal in the middle of the 8th century. During four centuries of their rule, the Pāla kings were devoted to the support and protection of Buddhism. They took Nālandā University under their patronage and founded four other universities of their own. The first one founded in the first reign in the newly built city of Odantapura, from which it derived its name, really existed before the Pāla dynasty, but it was under the Pāla kings that it rose as a university. The three others were Vikramasīlā, Somapura and Jagaddala which came into being in the second, the third and the fourteenth reigns respectively.

All that we know about these Pāla establishments come from Tibetan sources, especially from Lama Tāranātha's description in his 'History of Indian Buddhism'. The greatest and most famous of these later universities was Vikramasīlā, which grew in importance and the rising glory of which even dimmed the fame of the older great university of Nālandā. The head of Vikramasīlā used to have control over Nālandā. However, Nālandā was looked upon as the time-honoured exemplar on the model of which the other Mahāvihāras were established and wherefrom a number of learned monks were drawn away to be accommodated in the new centres of the Pālas. Evidences show that the different Buddhist centres of learning under the Pālas formed a network of institutions among which there was a system of coordination and exchange of scholars or their migration from one to another. All of them were evidently under state supervision. Noticeably, each of these institutions had an official seal of its own, which seems to be standardized. To be compared with that of Nālandā, the seal of Somapura, for example, is terra cotta bearing the name of the institution, Srī-Dharmapāladeva-Mahāvihārīya-Ārya-Bhikṣu-saṅgha, beneath a Dharmacakra which is flanked by a deer on each side.

The influence of the monastic universities on the development of culture and learning was strongly felt not only in their homeland of India, but also in foreign countries. Monk-scholars and students from afar came to seek knowledge there and brought home valuable knowledge and experience. Domestic scholars also went abroad to teach or to gain experience. In the heyday of Nālandā during the 7th century, Hsuan-tsang came from China to spend fifteen years in India, including five years of study at Nālandā. On returning home he took with him the Vijñānavāda philosophy to found the Dharmalakṣaṇa school in his country and an extensive collection of Sanskrit texts which he later translated into Chinese. I-tsing who arrived in 673 C.E. via Srīvijaya empire spent ten years

at Nālandā studying and collecting sacred books. I-tsing also made a mention of several Korean monks who had gone to India via Central Asia and others by the sea route who died in India, never seeing their native country again.

Mention is made of Dharmapāla, a famous professor of Nālandā who visited Suvarṇa-dvīpa (present Indonesia) in the 7th century and of a Sailendra king of Srīvijaya (Indonesia) who established monasteries at Nālandā and another place in India, for the maintenance of which Indian kings granted the revenue of some villages. The famous monk and scholar Atīsa Dīpaṅkara who later became head of Vikramasīlā went in his early life to Suvarṇa-dvīpa to study Buddhism. Towards the end of the Pāla age, the degenerate Tantric forms of Buddhism studied at Nālandā, Odantapura and Vikramasīlā were introduced to Java and Sumatra which formed part of the Srīvijaya empire. To the north, after the turn of the 8th century, few Chinese monks came to India in search of knowledge, though Indian monks continued to migrate to China. Through them, the prevailing Tantric Buddhism of the period was introduced into the country. A monk called Amoghavajra, being held in high veneration at the Chinese courts, further pushed it into public acceptance.

Tibet took the place of China when Sino-Indian cultural intercourse came to a complete stop by the middle of the 8th century. Already in the middle of the 7th century, Thonmi Sambhota, a contemporary of Hsuan-tsang, was sent by the king of Tibet to study Buddhism and the Indian language at Nālandā. He succeeded in inventing an alphabetic script for the Tibetan language and made the first Tibetan translations of Buddhist Sanskrit works. He then became known as the father of Tibetan literature. Based on the success of Sambhota was the king's proclamation of Buddhism as Tibet's state religion.

A century later, two monk-scholars were invited to teach Buddhism in Tibet. One was Śāntarakshita, the then Principal of Nālandā, who taught the true doctrine and translated many Sanskrit scriptures into Tibetan. The other was Padmasambhava, who was invited to remove by magical power natural calamities in Tibet, and who introduced Tantric Buddhism to replace the native Bon cult.

Throughout later centuries, it was Vikramasīlā that seemed to have the most cultural intercourse with Tibet. Among scholars cited in Tibetan legends as having visited Tibet, the pre-eminent was Atīsa Dīpaṅkara (also called Dīpaṅkara Srījñāṇa), the great scholar of Vikramasīlā, who was invited in 1038 C.E. to live as a teacher of Buddhism. Atīsa reformed the Tantric teachings on the basis of the Yogācāra traditions and founded the Kadampa school which stressed celibacy and strict observance of disciplinary rules, and discouraged magic practices. The Kadampa school was the basis for the Gelukpa school which Tsongkhapa founded some time after 1357 C.E., and to which the Dalai Lama belongs. All in all, Atīsa has been regarded as the founder of Lamaism in Tibet.

The Fall of Indian Buddhism and the Universities

Surprisingly enough, the age of the universities was also that of the decline of Buddhism. At the beginning of the Maurya period in the latter half of the second century after the passing away of the Buddha, Buddhist activities were mainly confined to the provinces of Magadha and Kosala, though there were a number of monk-communities in the West as far as Mathurā and Ujjayinī. With the advent of King Asoka, Buddhism gained the first great impetus that made it expand rapidly throughout the far-flung empire. Efforts were also made to carry Buddhism to distant countries. After the fall of the Mauryas, in spite of Pushyamitra's persecution, Buddhism, having gained popular support, still made good progress and enjoyed great prosperity. Under King Menander and many later Greeks who adopted Buddhism, the religion also throve well in northwestern India. However, evidences show that strong elements of the popular cult of worship had developed in Buddhism at the expense of monasticism. Then, in 78 C.E., King Kanishka appeared on the scene as the great patron of Mahāyāna and helped the northern branch of Buddhism to spread far and wide.

Throughout this early ages of expansion, monasteries were founded in various parts of the country. As there was no central authority, control or coordinating organization, in the lack of regular communications, distant communities, being subject to local influences, developed their own traditions. This resulted in the rise of various Buddhist sects which King Asoka took measures, especially the convention of the Third Council, to bring back into unity. In spite of all changes in the course of history, monasteries continued to serve the masses as centres of education, and, until the end of the first 850 years since the Buddha's death, Buddhism enjoyed the place of the predominant religion of India.

Then came, in about 308 C.E., the rise of the Hindu Gupta dynasty, which marked the period of the revival of Hinduism. It was also during this period that some monasteries developed into universities. Although most of the Gupta emperors were the adherents of Hinduism, they were patrons of Buddhist monasteries. Under them, Buddhism again reached its height of prosperity. However, deeper underneath, there was a long process of decline. The symptoms of decay were noticed by Fa-hsien who visited northern India at the beginning of the 5th century. In his time, Buddhism had become regional. About two centuries later, it was even more obvious in Hsuan-tsang's record. The number of monasteries had been declining. Many of them, having been deserted, were in neglected and ruinous condition. In others, the number of inmates were dwindling. Buddhism had been losing its adherents while rival faiths were gaining ground against it. This is clearly pictured by an Indian scholar:

"The 'universities' were not flowers of the springtime, but late autumnal

> blooms of Saṅgha life and its cultural tradition. At the time when they flourished, the Saṅgha had dwindled down to its last resort in a small circumscribed area in the east. Their widespread fame, however, within and outside the borders of India, lends a kind of sunset glory to this troublous end-period of Buddhist decline."[39]

Perhaps, a trend had developed in which the production of scholars had come in place of the training of good and wise monks. Facing the rising strength of Brahmanism, Buddhist monks might have had to develop their ability and skill in debates and disputations by liberalizing learning. The Gupta kings were mostly Hindu. Their active patronage and promotion of Buddhist monasteries and their activities should have been regarded by them more as services rendered to the cause of learning and culture than to the cause of Buddhism. To them, the monasteries were centres of leaning rather than Buddhist institutions. Academic activities and the fame of the pre-existing Buddhist centres of learning must have been familiar to them. Some great centres such as Sanchi even came under their dominion. The Gupta kings might like to have one of their own, one that, under their care and protection, should grow to become the greatest institution.

Moreover, Mahāyāna Buddhism had developed in itself philosophical speculations, a pantheon of deities invested to some extent with Hindu symbolisms and ritual practices similar to those of the Hindus, all of which eventually made it hardly distinguished from Hinduism. It might be also because of this likeness between the two religions that the Hindu Gupta kings found no hesitation or reluctance in building and providing for the upkeep of monasteries. This, in turn, hastened the mingling of the Buddhist beliefs and practices with those of the Hindus, in the long run consummating in the final acceptance of the Buddha as a deity of the Hindu pantheon. In the time of the Brahmanical revival, the likeness of Mahāyāna to Hinduism only led to the loss on the part of Buddhism. In spite of this general decline, however, the great centres of Buddhist studies, especially Nālandā, kept the torch of Buddhism burning and liberal learning continued to be at its height throughout the ninth century.

Then came a period of steady decline and final dissolution from the ninth to the close of the twelfth century. The Buddhist Pāla kings who ruled from the 8th century onwards, witnessing the shrinkage of Buddhism in northern India with its waning glory lingering in the eastern areas under their rule, tried to consolidate its position by founding new monastic universities. The Buddhism of this period was weighed down by Tantric developments. The Tantric cult, with its magic spells and practices, grew into predominance at the expense of liberal learning and the Buddhist universities including the longest-lived Nālandā gradually turned into centres of Tantric studies.

When the Buddhist universities were in prosperity, monks flocked from all parts of the country and crowded into these centres of learning, isolating

themselves from the common people. Rural monasteries, if not deserted or falling into neglect, were occupied by unqualified monks. Thus, Buddhism became weakened in all parts of the country and when the central institutions were in need, they could seek for no help from outside. In later days, the number of inmates decreased even at these monastic centres. At Somapura, for example, which seemed to have been designed for the accommodation of 600 to 800, the number of inmates fell in the 11th century to only half.

The Pāla dynasty was brought to an end in 1095 C.E. by the Senas, who were Vaishnavite, from the south. Though anti-Buddhist, the Senas supported the Tantric universities as institutions of learning and culture. The Sena kingdom of Bengal was short-lived. It was conquered in 1199 C.E. by the Muslim Turks whose gruesome massacre and destruction dealt a deathblow both to the universities and to Indian Buddhism. They took the capital of Udantapura and sacked the great monastery of Odantapura. All the monks were put to death and the Mahāvihāra with its huge library was razed to the ground. Like Odantapura, Vikramasīlā was utterly demolished. Other monastic centres were doomed to similar fate, though not so outright as the former two. On Nālandā, several raids are related in Tibetan legends. One raid is said to have been repulsed by the abbot of Nālandā who, riding a stone-lion, fought with magical power. No truth can be credited to the story. A historical reality only has it that the university was attacked and the monks fled abroad.

A handful of survivors who escaped wholesale massacre dispersed and fled with a few bundles of holy texts. Some went to the nearest seaports and sailed away to Arakan or Burma. But most of them headed northwards towards the Himalayas and found their way to Nepal and Tibet.

Thus, as all the other shorter-lived great Buddhist institutions known to us, the last universities of the Buddhists met with a terrible fate at the hands of the invaders. They came like waves, sweeping away everything in their way. First, the university of Taxila and almost all the monasteries in the northwest perished when the White Huns who were Saivite invaded Gandhāra and Kashmīr from 500 to 528 C.E. Two and a half centuries later, the university of Valabhī was completely destroyed by the Arabs who attacked the capital of the Maitrakas in 775 C.E. Then, the violent end of the great monasteries under the Pāla kings in the 12th century brought to a close the age of the Buddhist universities once and for all.

Buddhist education once prosperous in India, despite the final disappearance of Buddhism from her homeland, has left lasting influence on Asian culture. Right from the beginning until leaving the scene, it brought about great revolutionary changes in Indian education. Against the background of the pre-existing Brahmanical system which was characterized by the monopoly of the high castes, the payment of teachers' fees and confinement to the teacher's house,

Buddhist education emerged to set a new trend. In sum, this new trend has achieved for India and the development of civilization the following three principal initiatives, viz.,

1. The realization of mass education that granted equal opportunity to all without restrictions of caste, class, sex, race and religion beyond the confines of a specific language monopolized as sacred.
2. The effectuation of free education in which students not only joined classes and activities free of charge but were even granted support such as in food and accommodation.
3. The institutionalization of education by which educational activities expanded far beyond the residence of an individual teacher into large-scale seats of liberal learning under the administration of corporations of teachers.

Remarks should be made here that throughout the history of Indian Buddhist education, despite the institutionalization of education, the spirit of the Nissaya (the Dependence) which enjoins a close relationship between teachers and students was loyally preserved. Unfortunately, however, regarding women's education, we have no evidences to show when the Bhikkhunī-Saṅgha (the order of nuns) along with the system of education for nuns and girls, which, in the time of King Asoka, was assuredly in a good condition, degenerated and eventually disappeared from the scene of Buddhist monastic life. Also under Asoka, royal edicts inscribed on rocks and stone pillars were in the vernaculars of the regions. It is in accordance with the Buddha's prescription that his teachings be studied in the vernaculars of the people.[40] Contrary to this, however, Sanskrit was apparently the literary medium of the Mahāyāna monk-scholars and the language of scholarship and culture throughout the age of the universities, especially between the 3rd and the 9th centuries C.E. This is a development of doubtful value as it might have been a shortcoming in the process of mass education.

The Theravada Tradition of Scholarship

As mentioned above, the age of the universities in India, from the rise of Nalanda in the 5th century till its destruction at the turn of the 13th century, was the period of Mahayana scholarship. The Mahayana in its pure form flourished until the 9th century before it became adulterated by Tantrism and degenerated from intellectual culture into an esoteric cult. During this period, little is known of the Theravada tradition of scholarship in India. The name of Valabhī appeared as the foremost Hinayana centre of learning contemporary with Nālandā. However, it was short-lived, being on the scene for only two and a half centuries, from sometime before 535 to 775 C.E., and we know nothing of the character of its organization, courses of instruction and the academic life and activities there.

The Theravada tradition of textual scholarship can be traced back to the early history of the Sangha when the monks came to a settled life in monasteries. There, besides training neophytes and novices, preaching to the laity and holding discourses and discussions among themselves, they must have taken upon themselves the task of systematizing and conserving the teachings of the Buddha. An example was set by the Venerable Sariputta, one of the two chief disciples of the Buddha, who delivered the Saṅgīti-Sutta and the Dasuttara-Sutta in which the teachings of the Buddha were classified into numerical groupings, and upon which the Buddha shew a strong approval.[41] Sariputta is also said to have pioneered in composing commentarial and exegetical works as he authored the Niddesa commenting on parts of the Sutta-Nipāta, and the Paṭisambhidāmagga, a work of Abhidhamma nature, analysing various Buddhist concepts of significance.

It has been a major concern of the monks to preserve the purity of the original teachings of the Buddha on one hand and to study the same as the basis for their own correct practice and to teach them to others, both monks and laymen, as the means to achieve the goal of realizing the good and happiness of the many on the other. Monks versed in the Discipline formed a group of Vinayadharas, experts in the general teachings were recognized as the Suttantikas, and those specialized in the formularies of the Abhidhamma became the Matikadharas. The Buddha's sayings were imparted by word of mouth and were retained in memory.

Later on, to keep the Buddha's words and the canonical teachings intact, the First Great Council of Elders was convened only three months after the passing away of the Buddha to establish the texts of the Pali Canon. The original sayings established by consensus were chanted together and committed to memory. Methods of and aids to memorization were developed such as set word-orders, conventional and repetitive epithets, stereotyped fixed-worded descrip-

tions and modes of recital or chanting. In addition to solo recitation, group or congregational chanting was prescribed. There arose the various groups of regular reciters called Bhāṇakas to preserve the different portions of the Canon such as the Dīgha-Bhāṇaka in Charge of the Collection of the Buddha's Long Discourses and the Majjhima-Bhāṇaka in Charge of the Collection of Middling Long Discourses. The exegesis and elucidation of the existing texts became the principal method of the Theravada scholastic tradition. While the Mahayana monk-scholars composed philosophical discourses and treatises in Sanskrit, the Theravada counterparts were exegetists or commentators using the language of the Pali Canon or their own vernaculars to affirm the position of, and to expound and illustrate, the original teachings of the Buddha contained therein.

In the post-canonical period of the oral tradition, the Elder named Nagasena appeared to be the only great monk-scholar of the Theravada. His great dialogue on Buddhism with the Greek king Menander of northern India (2nd century B.C.) was recorded in the Milindapañhā or the "Questions of King Milinda", which has occupied an authoritative position second only to the Pali Canon. It might have been the most consulted scripture and standard reference in dealing with the abstruse teachings of the Buddha and difficult questions on Buddhism. Buddhaghosa, the great commentator in the written tradition, so often quoted it as an authority.

Though the scholastic tradition of the Theravada in India came to a complete stop before the close of the 8th century, it continued, and still keeps going now, in the countries of Southeast Asia. There, it took firm roots first in Sri Lanka in the time of King Asoka in the 3rd century B.C. It was also at that time that commentaries in Sinhalese began to be written. The Theravada had been flourishing in Sri Lanka for two centuries when the country and the religion faced terrible hardships during a great famine and foreign occupation by the Tamils in the middle of the 1st century B.C. In considering that it might not be possible to perpetuate the oral tradition of preserving the Pali Canon if the nation had to confront similar misfortunes in the future, the Elders for the first time committed the whole of the Tipiṭaka to writing. This marks a great change in the tradition of scholarship in the Theravada.

However, it should be noted that, by this time, the number of Buddhist texts, commentaries and later writings had been enormous and the study of the scriptures had become a very big task. Out of this, there had developed a kind of specialization in textual scholarship as clearly contrasted with the devotion to ascetic practices. Then, a debate arose between the Paṁsukūlikas (ascetic monks) and the Dhammakathikas (learned preaching monks) as to which between the study *(Pariyatti)* and the practice *(Paṭipatti)* was the foundation of Buddhism.

In fact, in the Buddha's own time, there used to be a kind of conflict

between the monk-meditators and the monk-preachers. The latter criticized the former as idle and inactive while the former criticized the latter as restless, chatty and windy. They were reconciled by the Elder Mahacunda who admonished them to have an appreciative attitudes towards each other.

This time, however, the argument was more creative and practical. It was the learned preaching monks that won the debate and it was resolved that the study of the Doctrine was the foundation of the religion rather than the practice. It is very probable that the division of monks into village dwellers *(gāmavāsī)* and forest dwellers *(araññavāsī)* is a later development along this same line of differentiation.

Accordingly, from the 1st century B.C. onwards, there arose among the monks a greater interest in learning and two vocations for the monks came to be distinguished, namely, the vocation of study or scholarship called *gantha-dhura* and the vocation of meditation called *vipassanā-dhura*. In this tradition, at least in Sri Lanka. the land of its origin, the vocation of scholarship was considered superior to that of meditation practice and learned monks enjoyed more respect and privilege in society than those devoted to meditation in solitude. Besides being the foundation of the religion, scholarship was the vocation for able and intelligent monks, while meditation was the one to be followed by those of weaker intelligence, especially those who became monks in their old age, lacking the strength of mind and body necessary for scholarship. This is clearly evidenced in the commentaries which relate stories of monks who, upon entering the order in their old age, chose to follow the practice of meditation because, as they themselves pointed out, they were incapable of following the vocation of scholarship.[42]

A famous monk-scholar of Sri Lanka points even beyond this to social reasons:

> " . . . due to social changes and the change of outlook of the people, "scholarship" had to be considered more important than "practice" and meditation. Scholarship rendered a great service to society, hence it was highly respected. The solitude- loving meditator live in seclusion away from society, doing no service to society. The scholar is engaged in service which is necessary for society, and valued by it. It is therefore natural that a learned person who works for society should be highly esteemed. . . ."[43]

In later times, the above classification of monks seems to have led to an even clearer division when they were distinguished as the village dwellers *(gāmavāsī)* and the forest dwellers *(araññavāsī)*. The village dwellers might have evolved from the class of the learned preaching monks *(Dhammakathikas)* who,

living in rural and urban areas among the people, followed the vocation of scholarship and, engaging in social, educational and cultural activities, worked for the well-being of society, while the forest dwellers might have emerged out of the class of the ascetic monks *(Pamsukūlikas)* who, leading a solitary life in secluded places and forest areas dissociating themselves from social activities, followed the vocation of meditation. Later on, however, some forest dwelling monks, though still living away from society, embarked on the task of study and scholarship and even produced literary works.

The tradition of giving precedence of scholarship over the practice of meditation has had a profound and lasting effect on the religion and society. Monks devoted themselves primarily to studies and were less inclined towards meditation. In no long time, the vocation of scholarship extended beyond the study and the teaching of Buddhist scriptures to include secular subjects such as languages, literature, arts, mathematics, sciences, history, law and government. Buddhist monasteries became centers of education where free instruction was provided in every part of the country and monks became teachers of all children, from the royal prince down to the son of the village peasant. The State provided learned monks with special salaries, attendants and other expenses for their sustenance and comfort. Kings even bestowed large tracts of land along with a number of villages on monasteries for their maintenance. Special departments were established for the administration of large monasteries. As time went on, the wealth and the temporalities of monasteries increased enormously. Developments in the social activities of the monks had led to the change in the economy of the monasteries along with the change in the way of life of the monks.

The coming of the great Commentator Buddhaghosa in the 5th century C.E. and his translation of the Sinhala Commentaries into Pali encouraged the vocation of study or scholarship even more. He is regarded in all Theravada countries as the greatest exponent and interpreter of the Pali Canon. His masterpiece called Visuddhimagga (the Path of Purity) became a standard compendium of Buddhist thought and practice in which the mere body of doctrines of the Theravada was developed into a coherent system. In his works, the traditional interpretation of the Buddha's teachings as recognized and preserved in the great circles of Sri Lankan monastic scholarship found a more definite expression. They, therefore, serve to establish the Theravada standpoints in doctrine to so large an extent that the Theravada has practically been indentified, during the many following centuries, with the system of thought and scriptural interpretation presented in his works. By representing most successfully the tradition of Theravada scholarship, Buddhaghosa rendered the importance and superiority of the vocation of scholarship even more strongly pronounced and helped to restore Pali scholarship to a status of prestige at the

time when in India Sanskrit had become the religious and academic language among the Buddhists.

Some time in the same period of the 5th century, an Elder named Mahanama wrote Mahāvaṁsa or the Great Chronicle of Sri Lanka. This is a great step forward in the field of monastic scholarship when a monk's literary work went beyond the confines of religion to cover secular subjects. This work and other works of this kind, all written by monks, have given the Sinhalese people a complete and unbroken history of Sri Lanka. In writing works such as these, the monks did their service both to the religion and to the country.

Thus, the role of monks in education has led to their greater participation in national activities . At a point, they even began to engage in public affairs. As the nation of Sri Lanka faced extreme political and social hardships during the different periods of foreign invasion and occupation by the Tamils and the colonial powers of the West, monks have been drawn even deeper into politics. When the nation and the religion encountered a common danger, if the former became helpless, being unable to protect either herself or the religion, the monks had to protect their own religion and also reached out to protect the nation. In times of peace, they were the usual counselors to the kings of the past who consulted them on all important problems. In the hard times, they even chose a king or gave education to a prince so as to prepare him for kingship. An example can be seen in King Dhatusena in the middle of the 5th century who, when the country was invaded and ruled by a Hindu Tamil king, was brought up and educated by a monk. He ordained and learned at the feet of the Elder the art and law of government. Dhatusena later left the order and liberated his country from foreign rule. All in all, the services rendered by the monks for the common welfare of the people and the contributions they have made towards the advancement of culture and civilization of the nation have been so great beyond doubt.

Generally speaking, Buddhist education in other Theravada countries follows a similar line of development as in Sri Lanka. In Burma, Buddhism reached its golden era under King Anurudh or Anawrata of Pagan in the 11th century when the country was first united. A new era of Burmese Buddhism began as King Anurudh introduced a strong form of Theravada Buddhism from the Mon territory in the southeast to replace and extreme form of Tantric Buddhism that dominated upper Burma. Then, the capital city of Pagan became a great center of Buddhist culture, from where this form of the Theravada spread even to the north of Thailand. From this time on, Theravada Buddhism flourished in Burma as the fountain of the civilization, literature and art of the Burmese, though, in transforming the earlier indigenous worship of spirits, or Nats, it underwent a process of adjustment which has resulted in an amalgam of Theravada Buddhism and local tradition peculiar to Burma.

Buddhist monasteries became centers of education where monks were teachers and not only scriptural texts were studied but secular subjects were also taught. The Burmese has developed the custom of young novice ordination in which every boy, normatively at the age of reaching puberty or completing compulsory education, is expected to ordain as a young novice and stay in the monastery to undergo training under the monks. Besides being the spiritual way of strengthening family tie through the expression of parental love, this is the traditional way of socializing the younger generation and educating the masses. Pali and scriptural studies have been steadily strong in Burma. Pali texts were translated into Burmese and a great number of Pali literary works have been produced by Burmese scholars. In 1954, the Sixth Great Council was held in Rangoon to recite and revise the Pali Canon and to celebrate the completion of the 25th century of Buddhism, in which representatives from Buddhist countries and Buddhist communities all over the world were invited to participate. Subsequent to this Council was the publication in modern book form of the most complete set of Pali scriptures, both canonical and post-canonical. In other Buddhist countries, a large number of these texts are still in palm leaves.

Burma has been especially noted for her Abhidhamma studies and has attracted many monks from Sri Lanka and Thailand to come to study in her monasteries. Some Burmese monk-scholars were also induced to go to teach the Abhidhamma abroad such as in Thailand. Through these Burmese and foreign monks, the Burmese tradition of Abhidhamma scholarship spread to her neighbouring countries. Another tradition which is sill observed in Burmese monasteries is the ancient method of memory-based Pali study. While in her neighbouring Buddhist countries this method of the old days has given way to the modern one and while many people in the monastic circles there have begun to revaluate this traditional method, Burma can take pride to offer her service. In recent years, in addition to the fame in Abhidhamma studies, Burma has also been renowned for her Vipassanā or Insight Meditation practice. Not a small number of people, both monks and laypeople from Buddhist countries in the East and Western people from Europe and America have travelled from afar to undergo Vipassanā meditation courses at meditation centers in Burma. At the present moment, at various meditation centers in Sri Lanka, Thailand and far away in the United States, considerable numbers of practitioners are attending classes in meditation according to the methods and tecniques preached by Burmese meditation masters such as Mahasi Sayadaw.

From Theravada Scholarship to Popular Education

In Thailand, archaeological evidences show that Buddhism might have flourished for very long centuries since the 6th century C.E., if not from the time of King Asoka in the 3rd century B.C. However, little is known of its history,

and it is not the present form of Buddhism as professed by the Thai Buddhists of today. The current form of Thai Buddhism, into which the above older one became absorbed, belongs to the Theravada tradition, and it is called the "Laṅkāvaṁsa" or Sri Lankan Tradition as it was introduced from Sri Lanka.

In the latter half of the 12th century, Sri Lankan Buddhism underwent a great revival and enjoyed generous support under King Parakramabahu I the Great. Then, Sri Lanka became the international center of Buddhist studies. Monks from different countries went to study there and came back home with a strong enthusiasm to disseminate the newly purified Doctrine and Discipline. They also adopted the revised ordination procedure later known as the Laṅkāvaṁsa. In Thailand, the monks of the new Laṅkāvaṁsa tradition settled first in the south. Around this time, the new Thai kingdom of Sukhothai was established. The fame of these monks reached Sukhothai. Then, towards the end of the 13th century, the king of Sukhothai invited a respected monk from there to his capital and gave him support in propagating the purified form of Buddhism. In no long time, Theravada Buddhism of the Laṅkāvaṁsa tradition became dominant in Sukhothai, and the monks of the older sects gradually joined those of the reformed tradition into one single sect. From Sukhothai, the Laṅkāvaṁsa tradition spread to the northern kingdom of Lanna which two centuries ago had professed the Pagan form of Theravada Buddhism spread by the Burmese king Anurudh. Then, the kingdom of Lanna also became converted to the Laṅkāvaṁsa tradition.

The Theravada tradition of scholarship continued strongly in its new home. Strong state support was evident. The king of Sukhothai even made arrangements for the monks to hold and attend classes in Pali and other suitable subjects in the palace. This became a tradition which was observed by the kings of all the Thai capitals down to the early part of the Bangkok period in the middle of the 19th century when the Western system of education was introduced to Thailand. A part of the palace was dedicated and consecrated as a monastery, or a monastery was erected within the palace. Some of the kings who were themselves Pali and Buddhist scholars even held classes for monks and gave instructions themselves. The fifth king of Sukhothai wrote a scholarly dissertation called the Treatise on the Three Worlds (Tebhūmi-kathā) treating on a practical aspect of Buddhism based mainly on commentarial teachings. This book was treated as the standard of Thai Buddhist popular beliefs up to the early period of the Bangkok era.

Pali scholarship in Thailand reached its height in the northern kingdom of Lanna during the period of two hundred years between the latter half of the 14th century and the early part of the 16th century. Then, there appeared on the scene a succession of many monk-scholars who wrote not only on scriptural teachings but also on secular subjects such as grammar, lexicon, history,

cosmology and medicine.

Moreover, during that same period of time, Lithai, the fifth king of Sukhothai, and, later, Borom Trailokanath, the great king of early Ayudhya period, entered the order and stayed as monks for some months in the monasteries. This practice set examples for the following generations and resulted in the custom of Thai youths entering the order for at least a short period in their lives. This is different from the Burmese custom of young novice ordination in which boys prior to or in early teenage ordain as novices. In the Thai custom, every young man is expected to ordain at the age of twenty and stay as a monk to study and undergo monastic training in the monastery temporarily or as long as he likes. This is called the custom of *"Buat-Rian"*, meaning "ordain-and-study" or "ordain to study" which, besides serving religious purposes, has the function of socialization and mass-education.

In fact, traditionally, the Thais did not wait to enter the monasteries when they were twenty. Before that, they usually began their lives in the monasteries at the age of about seven, when their parents put them under the charge of the monks as temple boys or monks' pupils to receive instruction in the three basics of reading, writing and simple arithmetic as well as in religion and morals. Some might not stay in the monasteries though they came to serve the monks and study under them in the daytime and were classed as village boys or house boys. After gaining a practical knowledge of the three basics, a number of boys quitted while others stayed on to learn further. Many of the latter might now ordain as young novices and studied there until the time for higher ordination came at the age of twenty, when they were joined again by the former who turned up at the age of higher ordination. As the tradition of nun-ordination did not come to Thailand, girls have not got access to this kind of education. However, besides learning household arts and crafts under senior women at home, girls accompanied women and elderly people to attend social and public activities at the monasteries. There, they learned to render services to the monasteries and to the community such as in flower-arrangement, working on cloth, dressing and decoration. As far as the spirit and essence of the social and public activities of the monasteries are concerned, girls and women have equal opportunity as others in informal education such as in attending lectures and sermons.

All in all, for the whole Thai society in former days or for the rural society of even today, monasteries have been centers of education, whether formal or informal, both for the monks and for the laity.

It should be noted that in Thailand Buddhism never fell on evil days as it did in Sri Lanka. As it is well known, in Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese nation again and again suffered foreign invasions and occupations by the Indian Tamils, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British. A Sinhalese king became non-Buddhist and was hostile to Buddhism. During such hard times and under foreign or non-

Buddhist rule, Buddhism often faced deteriorations and persecutions, both open and concealed, and at several times the order of monks nearly perished.[44] During these periods of time, Buddhism had to struggle hard for survival. Moreover, when the nation lost freedom and became helpless, the monks had to rise to protect themselves and their religion. In most cases the survival of the religion and of the Sangha depended on the freedom and the survival of the country. Therefore, when the nation became helpless and was unable to protect herself, the monks felt that they were forced to step in to protect her and even join in fighting for her independence. It has been in this way that Sri Lankan monks have come to involve themselves in public affairs and for them to be active in political matters is only a kind of tradition that must be followed.

In contrast to Sri Lanka, both the Thai nation and Thai Buddhism have a continuous history of independence and prosperity. Thailand has never been under a foreign occupation and Thai Buddhism has never encountered a really hard time. The State has taken the position of the protector of Buddhism and there has been no time when Thai Buddhism has had to defend and protect itself, not to speak of the Sangha stepping in to defend the country. Thai tradition has therefore been that of the State as the protector of Buddhism and of Buddhism as an institution under royal patronage and under state protection. The tradition has also developed a kind of unwritten contract in which the monks are regarded as beyond politics and they are expected to maintain the attitude of non-involvement in politics and non-intervention in public affairs. Based on the same principle, the State takes the attitude of non-interference in ecclesiastical affairs, maintaining the position of the patron and protector that provides facilities, comforts and conveniences such as in education. Thus, as an example, if a rival prince or politician ordained, he no further engaged in the rivalry and, at the same time, his opponent, and also the State, would no further act against him.

With the introduction of the Laṅkāvaṁsa purified form of the Theravada, the Thai monkhood came to be classified according to the Sri Lankan tradition into village dwelling monks *(gāmavāsī)* and forest dwelling monks *(Araññav āsī)*. Here, however, monks of the two sections seemed to enjoy equal privilege and respect. At least, the Thai forest dwellers were treated not lower, if not higher, on the scale as their counterparts or their predecessors in Sri Lanka. In the Sukhothai period, probably in early Ayudhya too, each of them had their own separate head or president.

However, the identification of village dwelling with the devotion to the vocation of study or scholarship seemed to be loyally observed only during the early centuries. Later on, the vocation seemed to weaken gradually and became strengthenend only here and there and from time to time. Emphasis was sometimes placed so much on relationship with the laity that many monks

indentified the state of their being village dwellers with the involvement in secular activities in connection with relationships with the laity rather than with study and scholarship. To a considerable degree, these monks were not even conscious of their connection with the vocation of study or scholarship. In the long run, this has led to the decline of the scholastic tradition on one hand and the increasing deviation from the original Doctrine and Discipline on the other. In this way, popular cults have developed in popular Buddhism along with the more prevalence of perverted behaviour among a large number of monks. Although monasteries were still centers of education, a high standard of scholarship was not retained and sufficient attention was rarely paid to a profound study of the original canonical teachings. This eventually resulted in the degradation of the status of prestige of the monks themselves, and they have, to a considerable extent, lost the respect and confidence that their predecessors had won for them from the public.

Though the tradition began for the forest dwelling monks in Thailand with an agreeable, genial and encouraging attitude towards them, they themselves did not seem to have embarked on a strong line of development and steady continuity. As they lived in seclusion dissociating themselves from society and their number was comparatively small, they seemed to be very far away from the people and sometimes even forgotten by the public. Possibly, in some periods, their tradition became very much weakened and their existence was faintly felt. At least a number of them, due to the lack of doctrinal study, even deviated into the way of magic. However, from time to time, as well as recently, there were some strong monks among them who appeared to revise and revive the tradition. And, in spite of all the drawbacks, the spirit of renunciation, simple life, spirituality and contemplation is still loyally followed by some groups of them and comparatively strict monastic discipline is still observed. Very importantly, their way of life is, in the eyes of the public, still identified with the practice of meditation and people still relate meditation to the attainment of the Buddhist final goal of Nibbāna.

At the present time when modern people begin to be disenchanted with material growth and development, seclusion and the solitude of the forest becomes an attraction in itself. More and more people turn towards spirituality and meditation. In the age when the average village dwelling monks regress from their vocation of study and when some even engage in improper secular activities, the endurance and security of Buddhism must be fairly credited to these forest monks. In a way, they may be regarded as the last stronghold of Buddhism. In this time of the degeneration of the tradition of the village monks, many people have begun to turn towards the forest ones for instruction. Now, the trend in Thailand seems to have been reversing as while the village monks are losing ground, the status of prestige and respect is gaining on the part of the

forest monk-meditators.

However, this is a point of concern in that people in general, including some, if not many, monk-meditators themselves, have a tendency to relate the success in meditation and the attainment of Arahatship or perfection to, or even identify them with, the possession or the performance of magical powers. Another concern is that there is a trend among some groups of these (possibly, so-called) forest monk-meditators to erect vast monastery-kingdoms crowded with huge and luxurious buildings. These, in the long run, will be detrimental both to the ideal of Buddhism and to social well-being, and, truly, to their own progress in the Dhamma. To rectify this, adequate knowledge of the Buddha's Doctrine and Discipline, to be supplied by the well-directed vocation of study and scholarship, is needed. Both the monk-scholars and the monk-meditators are expected by the same Doctrine and Discipline to know what the real goal of Buddhism is and not to involve in improper and unbeneficial activities. Knowledge of the original scriptural teachings is needed both for the really beneficial and rightful activities for social well-being and for the correct practice of meditation that leads to the Buddhist goal of freedom. In acting for the benefit of the religion and for the good and happiness of the people, the monk-scholars and the monk-meditators may be likened to the two wings of one and the same birds, but in practising for their own perfection each of the monks has to be the one bird that has two wings. Both study and meditation are necessary for every monk in achieving the goal though in conducting the various activities he may be specialized in one or the other. All in all, a kind of Buddhist education is needed, the one that, conforming to the Buddha's Doctrine and Discipline and meeting the needs of time and place, is suitable and adequate for the monk's personal perfection of his life and the successful performance of his role as public teacher and leader.

Buddhist Education into the Modern Times

When King Asoka patronized the Third Great Council of Buddhism, as recognized by the Theravada, in 255 B.C., about 60,000 or 80,000 heretical monks were expelled from the Buddhist monkhood. According to Asoka's Rock Edict, the King strongly disfavoured schism in the order and tried to bring about harmony and unity in the monastic community. Many sectarian monks fled farther and farther away from the capital of Pāṭali- putra. Among these were the Sarvāstivādins who found their way to the northwest of India. There, the Sarvastivada school flourished for centuries and, long time after the break-up of the Asokan empire, found great support under Kanishka, a great king who ruled the Kushan empire in northwest India and Pakistan in the 1st century C.E.

In the meantime, the Mahāsaṅghikas who seceded from the orthodox

Sangha in the 4th century B.C. had spread to the south and flourished there. In the course of time, there developed in the south a doctrine which was later called the *Mahayana*. However, it was not in the south but in the northwest that the Mahayana made its appearance and began to be active. As time passed by, the centers of the Theravada moved towards the south and eventually flourished outside its homeland. With the decline of the Theravada in India, the Mahayana became stronger in the northern part of the country. In the northwest, it vied for the lead with the Sarvastivada. There, in the northwest, both the Sarvastivada and the Mahayana flourished side by side. From there they spread to Central Asia and further to China.

Under the patronage of King Kanishka, the Sarvastivadins held a great council, not recognized by the Theravada, in Kashmir or Jalandhar. Having adopted Sanskrit for their literary medium, the Sarvastivadins engraved the texts of the Sūtra, the Vinaya and the Abhidharma in Sanskrit. Although a council of the Sarvastivadins, a school of the Hinayana, some Mahayanists also participated. There, a new set of scriptures in Sanskrit was approved along with fundamental Mahayana principles. Thus, according to Tibetan legend, it was called the first great assembly in Buddhist history of the Bodhisattvas. Accordingly, it has been recognized as the first Mahayana council or the third council of Buddhism according to the Mahayanists who, as well as the Sarvastivadins, did not accept the Third Council under King Asoka. A great scholar named Asvaghosa, who was the spiritual adviser of the Emperor and who played a most important part in the council took a leading role in the formulation of the doctrines arrived at by the council. Asvaghoṣa wrote many of the first Mahayana texts, including "The Arising of the Mahayana Faith" (Mahāyāna-sraddhotpāda) and the "Life of the Buddha" (Buddha-carita). He was known as the greatest poet of India before Kālidāsa. From the time of this council, the Mahayana can be said to have taken a separate course of history.

About half a century after Asvaghoṣa, Nāgārjuna, a native of the south (born in Andhra in central India to the south of the Kushan Empire) who spent many years of his life at the great university of Nalanda, wrote Mādhyamaka-kārikā and founded the Madhyamika school of Mahayana. Later, in the 4th century C.E., Vasubandhu, a great champion of the Sarvastivada, was converted to the Mahayana. Together with Asanga, his brother who converted him, Vasubandhu founded the Yogacara school of Mahayana thought. The doctrine of Sūnyavāda of the Mādhyamikas and that of Vijñāvāda of the Yogācara were the two systems of the Mahayana that have exercised very great influence in shaping the Buddhism of China, Korea, Japan and Tibet.

The Mahayana scholastic tradition was enlivened in China by the coming of the Buddhist scholar Kumārajīva from Central Asia in about 401 C.E. Kumārajīva translated a vast number of Sanksrit texts including Nāgārjuna's

works into Chinese and is traditionally regarded as the first teacher of Madhyamika doctrines in China. His translations remained for centuries standard works in Chinese and he was honoured by the Buddhists of China as the most trustworthy authority on the Buddhist doctrine.Thus, a new impetus was given to Buddhist studies in China. After him, other scholars, both Chinese, such as Hsuan-tsang, and foreign, translated the Yogācāra texts and made them widely known in China.

The period of five centuries from the 4th to the 8th C.E. witnessed the Sino-Indian cultural relations based on the ground of spiritual and intellectual interest between India and China, wholly carried on by Buddhist monks in the cause of Buddhism. Chinese monks, among whom eminent names included Fa-Hsien, Hsuan-tsang and I-tsing, came out to India in the way of pilgrimage. Their object was to study Buddhism in its homeland and to collect authentic Buddhist texts. Most of them returned home and made their contributions to the scholastic tradition in their mother country. Indian monk-scholars, in succession, went out to China in the way of promoting Buddhism abroad and most of them settled there as translators of Indian texts into Chinese or as teachers to further the tradition of scholarship.

In 526 C.E., the Indian monk *Bodhidharma* went to China and was invited to the imperial court at Lo-yang or Nanking. There he founded the Ch'an sect or Contemplative Buddhism, which in a few centuries spread all over China and about six centuries later became established in Japan as Zen Buddhism.

During the period of seven centuries from the 6th to the 12th, rightly called the age of the universities, the great monastic centers of learning served as the headquarters to guide and to encourage the cultural relations between India and China as well as other countries such as Tibet, Java and Sumatra. Of these, the great university of Nalanda rendered its services for nearly four centuries, from the 6th to the 9th, before it was eclipsed by Vikramasila and Odantapuri under the Pala kings, which dominated the field of cultural activities from the 9th to the 12th century.

In place of China, with which Indian cultural relations ceased to continue in the 8th century, Tibet became the principal center of cultural intercourse with India, where Indian monk-scholars went out to teach and further the cause of Buddhism for about four more centuries until the Muslim conquest at the close of the 12th century.

With the fall of the Universities and the disappearance of Buddhism from its homeland, the role of India as an international center of learning and culture came to an end. In China and Tibet where Indian monk-scholars used to come in succession to strengthen the tradition and where Sanskrit texts had been translated into Chinese and Tibetan, the local languages took the place of Sanskrit and became the literary medium of Buddhist scholarship. Without

invigoration or support from the original stronghold in India, the tradition of Sanskrit scholarship waned away.

From China, Chinese monks and missionaries carried the message of the Buddha to Korea in 372 C.E. and from Korea, Buddhism spread further to Japan where the official history of Japanese Buddhism began in 552 C.E. In early centuries, Buddhism thrived as in the prime of youth and became the fountain of cultural development, both spiritual and intellectual, of the nations. Monks from Korea and Japan came to China to study and brought back to their respective countries the arts and sciences and the highly developed culture of Buddhist China and the local tradition was developed in each country. However, the heyday of Buddhism in these northern countries did not last long. In 1280 C.E., Mongol rule was established both in China and in Korea and the age of decay started. When the local dynasties established themselves in Korea and China in the middle of the 14th century, they turned to Confucianism for their nationalistic principles and adopted the policy of suppressing Buddhism. Then, Buddhism declined and decayed both in China and in Korea.

In Japan, from the middle of the 11th century onwards, both the nation and the religion suffered from constant internal wars and disorder along with natural disasters which did not end until a new government was established at Kamakura in 1185. The great distress which the people suffered during the period of political unrest and social disorder roused the need for the simplification of religious theories and practices to suit religious needs of the common people. This led to the arising of three major forms of Buddhism, called the three Sects of Kamakura, which still flourish in Modern Japan, namely, Pure Land Buddhism or Amidism (Jodo and Shin or Jodo-Shin), Zen and Nichiren. With the rise of these new sects, the popularization of Buddhism in Japan was achieved. However, the Kamakura period lasted only one and a half centuries. After the founding of the three sects, Japan suffered again a long period of great political unrest. In spite of civil wars and natural disasters, cultural leadership was maintained by Buddhist monks, especially those of Zen, and the arts flourished as never before. The influence of Zen found its expression in the development of tea ceremony, flower arrangement, Noh drama, garden making, painting and other works of art, and also of Judo, Kendo and Bushido, which is the ethical code of the samurai.

In the long period of subsequent internal wars and disorder, great social changes were brought about. Priests and monks even engaged in warfare and battle either to protect themselves or to gain power. When Portuguese Christian missionaries came to Japan in about 1557 C.E., Nobunaga, then the most powerful man in Japan, encouraged their activities. He even attacked the monastic armies on Mount Hiei, burned about 3,000 monasteries and killed all of their inhabitants. Then, the influence of Japanese Buddhism declined and has

never reached a high degree of strength since then.

In Southeast Asia, Buddhism in Malaya and Indonesia (the former Srivijaya Kingdom of Java and Sumatra) ran the same course of decay as it did in India. At first, around 1314 C.E., it degenerated into a Hinduized form. By the close of the 14th century, together with Hinduism, it had been replaced by Islam imported from India. Then came the advent of colonialism from the West along with the suppression of Buddhism. In Sri Lanka, the task of suppression, begun by the Portuguese in 1507, was carried on by the Dutch around 1657 and lastly by the British since 1797. In Indo-china, Buddhism persisted until Burma was made a British colony in 1814, and Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos were brought under French rule in 1883, 1863 and 1893 respectively. In Thailand alone, the religious life of the people remained unaffected and Buddhism continued to flourish with the support both of the ruler and of the public throughout the colonial period without any interruption. A glimpse of the Buddhist situation in these countries may be caught by reading a quote from *"Thai Buddhism in the Buddhist World"*

> "After some time, the contact with the West, its colonialism and its civilization, brought about remarkable changes in the faces of the Asian nations. In countries under foreign occupation where Buddhism was suppressed and persecuted, people turned against Western civilization and a strong urge was aroused in them to protect and maintain their national heritages. This led to the revival of Buddhism and the adjustment of Buddhist institutions and the monkhood to function efficiently in the changing situations. However, in Thailand where people did not experience colonial treatment, this reaction did not take place. On the contrary, the people turned their attention towards the exciting and tempting materialism of Western civilization. While they pursued this new kind of material quest, they became more and more indifferent and cold towards their religious traditions. Buddhist institutions enjoying luxurious support fell into a kind of indulgence and did not adjust themselves to the changing conditions. Material support and cooperation continues to grow, while the intellectual and spiritual gap widens."[45]

The Revival of Buddhist Education

Sinhalese Buddhism has been in close connection with Sinhalese nationalism throughout the history of Sri Lanka. This connection became even stronger during the British colonial period. Under British rule, there were, on several occasions, anti-colonist uprisings. The rebellions were usually originated under the leadership of Buddhist monks. Because of this, some prominent

Sinhalese monks were even condemned to death. The British realized that the unity and solidarity of the Sinhalese nation was based on the strong bond of unity and fidelity between the monks and the laity and that that bond in turn had resulted from the fact that throughout the time of the Sinhala kingdom monks were teachers who gave free education to all Sinhalese children from prince to peasant's son. This was the secret of the security and the strength of the Sinhalese.

In order to destroy this unity and strength, the British developed a political strategy to isolate the monks from society and to replace their role in education with that of Christian missionaries. The colonial government and the Christian missionaries then took the entire school system out of the hands of the Buddhists. Christian schools under the missionaries were opened in different parts of the country. Christianity and Western culture were encouraged. Only Christian Sundays and feast days and the British national holidays were celebrated in this Buddhist country. The missionaries came to replace the monks in all social and welfare activities. The Sinhalese children were taught to look down upon their Sinhalese Buddhist culture, to scorn the Sinhalese language and to despise Sinhalese literature. Sinhalese names and dress were discarded and Western styles were imitated. Many Sinhalese embraced Christianity for the sake of material gains and social privileges. Buddhists became second-class citizens, while the Christians and the English-educated rose to the best positions in the colonial administration. Most importantly, when the younger generation despised their own heritage and took up an alien culture, it strongly pointed to the decline of the Sinhalese culture which was the foundation of the Sinhalese nation. Colonial suppression and threats of religious, national and cultural effacement like these aroused an awareness and led to the Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka.

As the British induced the decline of Buddhism and destroyed the strength of the monks and of the Sinhalese as a whole through an alien system of education, the revival of Buddhism and of the Sinhalese strength had to be achieved through the revival and improvement of Sinhalese education. However, at that time, the conditions of the Sinhalese monkhood seemed to be unfavourable to the desired revival. This is clearly pictured in the words of a famous monk-scholar of Sri Lanka, which well apply to other Theravada countries in Southeast Asia.

> "With the missionaries asserting their power under the Christians, the position of the *bhikkhu* began to deteriorate. As the Buddhist monks could not adapt themselves to suit the changed political, economic, and social situation, they were rendered useless to society. Nor did they receive an education to prepare them for these new conditions. They had

no plan of action. Their word was no more respected. Laymen had nothing to learn from them. Therefore, laymen--particularly those of the upper class--dissociated themselves from *bhikkhus* and the bond between the laity and the clergy declined. *Bhikkhus* lost their places and positions in society. Functions and privileges which they had enjoyed hitherto were usurped by, or fell into the hands of, the missionaries.

Thus the *bhikkhu*, circumscribed both with regard to personality and education, was by force of circumstances driven to limit his activities to the recitation of the *Suttas* (Pirit Chanting), preaching a sermon, attendence at funeral rites and alms-givings in memory of the departed, and to an idle, cloistered life in the temple. In spite of this melancholy and abject situation into which the *bhikkhu* was forced, any remnants of Sinhala Buddhist culture in the country, particularly in the rural areas, however insignificant they might have been, had ultimately been preserved and maintained by the *bhikkhus* themselves."[46]

Thus, the revival of Sinhalese education began with the education of the monks. In 1840, a parivena (monastic college) called the Parama-Dhammacetiya Pirivena was founded which is regarded as the center where the present revival of Sinhalese Buddhist learning and culture originated. Among the important Buddhist leaders produced by this parivena was the Ven. H. Sri Sumangala Thera who established in 1873 the *Vidyodaya Pirivena* in Colombo. Another graduate of great prestige was the Ven. R. Sri Dharmaloka Maha Thera who established in 1875 the *Vidyalankara Pirivena* near Colombo. The two latter parivenas, which were raised to the status of universities in 1959, have played a greatly important part in the revival of the Sinhalese Buddhist culture. Meanwhile, a Thera called Piyaratana opened in 1869 the first Buddhist school in Sri Lanka at Dodanduva.

Then, learned Buddhists led by the Ven. H. Sri Sumangala Thera and the Ven. M. Sri Gunananda initiated a strong anti-Christian movement to restore the Buddhist heritage to its place of honour. They demonstrated their oppositions to Western ideas, values and social practices by arranging public debates with Christian missionaries. The defeat of the missionaries helped much to further the work of revival.

Reading the account of such a controversy published in the Ceylon Times in 1873, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, an American Civil War officer, came to know of the Buddhist conditions in Sri Lanka. Then, in 1880, he came to Sri Lanka to take part in the defence of Buddhism. Travelling around the country, he encouraged the people to revive their historic religion. With the cooperation of the leading Buddhist monks he founded the Buddhist Theosophical Society of Ceylon and reorganized the Buddhist educational system on

modern principles. Within a few years, he opened 3 colleges and 200 schools in several districts of the country, and exercised considerable influence over the younger generation. Ananda College in Colombo which he opened in 1886 was the leading English Buddhist school. Among those of the younger generation who made a life-long sacrifice in the cause of the program initiated by Colonel Olcott was Anagarika Dharmapala, a great Buddhist leader who founded the Maha Bodhi Society and the Buddhist revival movement in India.

On the pattern of the Buddhist Theosophical society, other Buddhist societies were founded, and they also founded more Buddhist schools. Monks who graduated from Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara went back to their home monasteries in the different parts of the country, opened new parivenas affiliated to their respective parivenas and played their parts in the task of educating both the monks and the laity in their localities. The increasing number of parivenas and Buddhist schools roused a fresh enthusiasm and a renewed interest in the Buddhist and national culture.

In contrast to the "English schools" and colleges all of which were in cities and towns and where education was very costly limited to the privileged wealthy class, Buddhist schools and colleges were scattered in several parts of the country and were open to people from all classes. More than seventy-five percent of the students who attended the two parivenas of Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara, now elevated to university status and admitting lay students as well as monks, came from very poor peasant and working class families. "But for these two institutions they never would have had an opportunity to receive any kind of higher education."[47]

Among the Theravada Buddhist countries, Sri Lanka has been the most advanced in modern Buddhist studies. Besides Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara, the older secular university of Sri Lanka offers courses in Pali and Buddhist studies both for the lower and the advanced degrees to all students, Sri Lankan and foreign, including monks.

As the revival of the Buddhist and national culture of Sri Lanka was closely connected or, to a considerable degree, identified with nationalistic movement and the Sri Lankan Buddhist educational institutions were founded in the course of and as a part of this revival, the graduates of these institutions had played a central part in the independence movement. Really, this is in conformity to the Sinhalese monastic tradition observed all along since the times of the Sinhalese kings. After the Independence, the Sri Lankan monks seemed to take even more prominent and active part in public affairs and deeply involve in political activities. To the average Sri Lankan monk, this seems to be the age-old tradition that must be followed, though, to some Sri Lankan Buddhists, the monks' involvement in politics and even the monks' study of modern secular subjects are still matters of controversy.

Burma under British rule was not so much subject to religious suppression as Sri Lanka. Europeanization was not so great there as to affect much the cultural life of the Burmese, since the British administered Burma only as a part of India and the British colonial period there was much shorter than in Sri Lanka. Though there was an identification between Buddhism and nationalism, the monks themselves were divided on whether monks should be involved in politics. It was the younger monks, not the older Sayadaws, who favoured political involvement and joined in the uprisings against British rule. Relying on this background, when political leaders tried to win their support, the monks appeared again on the political scene to campaign for politicians.

As mentioned earlier, the Sixth Buddhist Council was held in 1954-1956 in Rangoon as part of the celebration of the 2500th anniversary of Buddhism. Along with this, many facilities and programmes were initiated for the promotion and advancement of Buddhism such as the International Institute for Advanced Buddhist Studies, a new library, a publishing house and the encouragement of missionary work. Though the then government had achieved the very honorable work of publishing a complete set of the Pali Canon and the Commentaries and a large number of other post-canonical works along with the voluminous Pali-Burmese Dictionary, laying a firm foundation for the progress of Buddhist studies, all of the aforesaid initiatives hardly continued after General Ne Win seized power in 1962. The Ne Win regime also crushed the political role of the monks. Under the socialist government, Buddhism in Burma has embarked on a period of stagnation and inactivity. At least, it has not enjoyed the traditional generous support from the State. In spite of this, the traditional system of Buddhist studies strongly continues in many monasteries. The traditional Pali scholarship, the specialization in the Abhidhamma and the mastership in insight meditation practice cherished in the Burmese tradition are still honoured and sought in international Buddhist circles.

The conditions of Buddhism in Thailand as she embarked on the period of modernization can be seen in a quote from *Thai Buddhism in the Buddhist World* as follows:

> "Buddhism in Thailand reached the modern period under warm support of the king and the people, without the interruption of colonial persecution or suppression. Side by side with the people, the monks came into encounter with Western civilization. Hand in hand with the secular government the monkhood started on modernization. Under King Chulalongkorn (Rama V; 1868-1910) the structure of the secular government was changed to adopt a new pattern and a modern Western system of public education was introduced. With the assistance of the King's half-brother, the Monk-prince Vajiranana-Varorasa, who later became a

supreme patriarch, an important role in public education was assigned to the monks, a new form of ecclesiastical government was established, and a foundation was laid for the modernization of ecclesiastical education. Thailand was credited with the publication of the first complete set of the Pali Canon, known as the Royal Thai Tripitaka. (The king took an initiative to print it in Thai script instead of the traditionally accepted Khmer script, and it was also the first time that the Tripitaka was printed in modern book form instead of inscribing in palm leaves.) A royal library was erected for the preservation of Buddhist sacred books and rare scriptures. Two royal Buddhist academies, Mahamakut and Mahachulalongkorn, were founded with a plan to function in due course as Sangha colleges or universities providing for monks and novices advanced Buddhist studies along with modern higher education.

With the end of the reign of King Chulalongkorn, things changed for the worse.The process of modernization continued on the part of the secular sector, but on the ecclesiastical side it was kept going for only a short period of time and then waned. The monkhood was put in a losing position. Monks were retired from their role in public education, though most of the public schools were still housed in monastery compounds and the monks still collected donations for the building of these schools. Preliminary arrangements for modern higher Buddhist education were set aside, and the plans were not undertaken. Without open suppression, there was no urge to activity. The monks fell into inactivity and became attached to traditionalism. Being deprived of their deserved responsibility, they became under- employed and many developed the habit of idleness, living only on the rich inheritance of traditional popular support.[48]

Since the State took over the responsibility for public education from the monks after the reign of King Chulalongkorn, the State and the monkhood gradually became more and more distinct to the point of being completely separate in educational matters. However, for a long period of time, almost throughout the following century, the State had not yet been able to give its people an equal opportunity to receive an education. Those who were underprivileged, whether geographically as they lived in the upcountry where no school existed or economically as they were too poor to send their sons to a school in a city or in a town, had not got access to state education. Most of these underprivileged people were, and still are, the poor peasants in the far provinces. Being unable to enjoy the opportunity provided by the State and to afford schooling, these poor peasants in the countryside resorted to the custom of ordaining and studying and to the monastery as the traditional center of education. In this way the role of the monastery as the center of education is still

retained. However, this role has undergone a great change, that is to say, having abandoned or having been removed from the status of the center of education for the masses, the monastery has unconsciously turned itself into the center of education for the underprivileged people. For a more appropriate or exact term, the monastery has become a path of mobility for the underprivileged people in the Thai society.

As a consequence of the above educational conditions in the Thai society and the change in the role of the monastery resulted therefrom, most of the so-called permanent monks and novices in Thailand, now numbering about 230,000 are recruited from poor peasant families in the distant countryside. These monks and novices flow into the temples and monasteries in the major cities for further education. Even in the capital city of Bangkok, more than 90% of the monks and novices residing in the different monasteries are from the countryside.This has turned the city monasteries into communities of upcountry people in the middle of the city or rural communities in the urban society. These city-dwelling rural people came from the villages in the way of education. Under social and economical changes in the Thai society, another kind of rural community in the middle of the city has come into being. These have been formed by rural poor people who come to the cities in the way of seeking employment as manual labourers. These have evolved into the slums. Thus, in the major cities beginning with Bangkok today, there are two kinds of rural communities in the middle of the city, namely, the monasteries as educational communities and the slums as economical communities.

At college level, the two royal Buddhist academies, Mahachulalongkorn-rajavidya-laya and Mahamakut-rajavidyalaya, founded by King Chulalongkorn in the 1830s with the plan to function as monastic colleges or universities, after the reign of the royal founder, ceased to develop into the institutions of the designed status. However, half a century later, in the 1940s, the royal plan was taken up by a group of progressive senior monks. Then, classes at the first degree level were opened at both institutions. Courses have been offered both in Pali and Buddhist studies and in modern secular subjects such as psychology, philosophy, sociology, economics, law, government, science and mathematics with the objective of preparing the new generation of monks and religious personnel for the efficient and effective performance of the monks' duties as public teacher and leader for the good and happiness of the people according to the injunction of the Buddha. However, it was not until 1984, after almost 40 classes had graduated, that the first degree of baccalaureate granted by these two Buddhist universities was recognized by the government. It was only in the last academic years of 1988 that courses at the level of the master degree began to be offered.

As in all the other institutions and systems of monastic education in

Thailand, monks and novices who are students attending classes at the two Buddhist universities, now numbering around 2,000, mostly came from the upcountry. In contrast to the secular universities for the laity where most of the students come from the families of privileged people, the wealthy, the rich merchants and government officers, in cities and towns, the monk-students of the monastic universities are recruited from the poor peasant families. As an example, while the big secular university of Thammasat has about 6 percent of its students coming from the families of the agricultural, probably well-to-do farmers, about 97% percent of the monk-students at Mahachula Buddhist University are sons of the poor peasants in the far provinces. To be sure, it is still, and will always be, the ideal of the Buddhist monastic universities to train their students to be good and able monks highly qualified to realize the Buddhist goal of personal perfection of their individual lives on the one hand and acting for the good and happiness of the many on the other. However, whether these monastic institutions come close to the realization of this ideal or not, they, together with all other Buddhist monastic schools and centers with the total enrolment of over 200,000, by serving as the path of mobility for the underprivileged people, have been achieving for the Thai society the alleviation of the long-lasting problem of unequal opportunity in education.

Several other problems still weaken and hinder the progress of Buddhist education in Thailand, such as the disharmonious coexistence of the traditional system of Pali and Dhamma studies and the modernized system of Buddhist college or university studies, the controversy over the monks' study of modern secular subjects, the lack of unity among the various systems of Buddhist education, the shortage of qualified teachers and professors and the inefficiency of ethical education in general. In recent years, Pali and Buddhist studies found their way into some modern secular universities and were offered among courses in oriental languages, religion and philosophy. There, however, Buddhism is studied as an academic subject for informational knowledge. Often, that kind of study does not lead to human development and, therefore, is not education in the real sense of the term. In the midst of the rapidly changing society where mankind is facing more and more serious problems from material and economic development, Buddhist education overwhelmed by such drawbacks and internal problems would hardly inspire hope and confidence in answering the needs of the time. In such a situation, however, the role of informal Buddhist education played by writers, preachers and the like should not be overlooked or underestimated.

In northern countries, an awakening has also been aroused towards the revival of Buddhist education along the modern line. In the Republic of China, founded in 1911, there arose a movement to put an end to cultural features that impeded scientific progress. In seeking to abolish all kinds of superstition, the

movement developed into an antireligious movement under the influence of Marxism. In response to the challenge and threat of a new intellectual climate, the monk Tai-Hsu led his followers in a movement to defend the religion, propagate the faith, reform the order and promote education. Their activities expanded and developed into a powerful reform movement throughout China. Institutes for the training of Buddhist leaders were founded in various parts of China with an objective of re-educating the monks for the reorganization of the outmoded Chinese Buddhist community into an effective vehicle of salvation in the modern era. Schools with Westren style classroom instruction were set up. The study of Buddhist texts was revived and reformed. A journal called the *Sound of the Tide* was published, the World Library of Buddhist Learning was established and students were sent to study Buddhism in Tibet, Japan, Thailand and other countries.

In Korea, the Japanese occupation which lasted for 60 years, from 1885 to 1943, roused the Korean Buddhist institutions to feel the need of revival. They therefore united in the task of reforming their community, especially in education and administration. The Korean Sangha is dedicated to education. The Dongguk Buddhist University was founded, which in 1966 had an enrolment of about 6,000 students. It consists of 6 colleges including the College of Buddhist Studies, which offer 27 academic diciplines, both religious and secular, open both to monks and to lay students. The Korean Sangha also operates independent colleges, high schools, middle schools and kindergartens of its own. Monks have been sent to pursue their studies in other Buddhist countries. There has been an increasing interest in Theravada Buddhism in recent years. Besides sending Korean monks to study in Theravada countries, the Korean Sangha welcomes Theravada ordination in its own country. If the Theravada tradition is established, Buddhist education along the Theravada line will naturally develop in Korea.

In Vietnam, social changes and political situations also became a challenge and a threat that roused in the Vietnamese Buddhists an awareness of the need to reform and revive. In 1963, the persecution of Buddhism and the following Buddhist crisis under the Diem government turned many Buddhist monks political and militant. Buddhist Vietnam was divided between the Mahayana, with a greater number of adherents, and the Theravada. Throughout the French occupation which lasted for nearly one hundred years, Buddhist monks did not have many opportunities to get access to education. Vietnamese Buddhism therefore faced a shortage of qualified leaders. After a successful coup which caused the Diem regime to be overthrown towards the end of 1963, the Vietnamese Buddhists strongly felt the need of unifying and updating Buddhism. In January 1964, the all Buddhist Association, the Vietnamese Theravada Church and other Buddhist organizations in Vietnam came together

in a national conference which resulted in the establishment of The Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam. This united the Theravada followers with the Mahayana sects and gave the Buddhists a new type of organization with an ecclesiastical hierarchy, parallel to the government structure. Among the nine Departments of the Church was the Department of Education.

In that same year of 1964, the Church created in the Department of Education the Institute of Higher Buddhist Studies in Saigon, which was shortly afterwards transformed into *Van Hanh University.* As the first Buddhist university of Vietnam organized along Western lines, it started with two faculties of Buddhist Studies and of the Humanities. By 1970, the Van Hanh Buddhist University had developed to comprise four faculties of the Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Linguistics and Buddhist and Oriental Studies. In 1966, the university had an enrolment of more than 2,000 students.

The philosophy and the aims and objectives of the university, which also indicate the Vietnamese Buddhist conditions of that time can be clearly seen in the inauguration speech of the Rector who said:[49]

> The education that is needed for the present time is one that can wash away from the innocent minds of the young generation all the dogmatic knowledge that has been forced upon them with the purpose of turning them into mere tools of various ideologies and parties. Such a system of education will not only liberate us from the prison of dogma but will also teach us understanding, love, and trust. These qualities, understanding, love, and trust, are the prescriptions needed for the revival of our society that has been paralyzed by suspicion, intrigue, hatred, and frustration.
>
> Buddhist study will not carry the students far in the race for position and wealth. The history of the Tran Dynasty has amply proved this. But the intellectuals of that time had to bear a heavy responsibility for the nation's history when they abandoned Buddhist education for the Confucian system, which was but a preparation for degrees and careers. In the firm belief in the resourcefullness of our nation I wish and desire that we could revive the lively spirit of the educational system of the Ly and Tran Dynasties with a view to freeing our minds and kindling again love and trust in order to save our nation.
>
> The Buddhists of Vietnam desire to mobilize the potential force of their religion in order to rebuild their society, and consequently they have carried Buddhism into every domain of life: culture, economics, politics, and social welfare .
>
> These upheavals must be accepted with the pains that necessarily accompany the current revolution in Vietnamese society. They are the necessary disorders which naturally attend the development of a nation

to maturity. Buddhism is a great spiritual force in search of self-realization amid the chaotic disorders of a society in its utmost stage of disintegration because of the war and political intrigue.

The desire of the Buddhists to reconstruct their country from the grass roots up is materializing through the establishment in Saigon of a community development school whose aims are to train rural development cadres and to mobilize the latent resources of Buddhism to carry out the task of developing the rural areas. This is the self-appointed task of the School of Youth for Social Service. This institution aims to train young people who are willing to work for the improvement and development of the rural areas. It maintains that democracy has its chance only in fairly developed societies.

In the case of Vietnam, industrialization depends largely on rural development. The programs of the school are not mere relief operations but are aimed at radically rebuliding the rural communities. For a long time there has existed a very wide gap between the Vietnamese rural population and the intellectuals. Many of the latter have studied abroad and brought back impressive diplomas but cannot fully understand and befriend the rural masses who constitute up to 90 per cent of the national population. The intellectuals' training and way of living do not enable them to meet the needs of the rural communities. One of the objectives of the School of Youth for Social Service is to raise up a new generation of youth who can mix with the villagers, befriend them, and use the rural-development skills to guide the villagers in co-operative commnity development projects.

. . . The young monks naturally have the support of the intellectuals and the younger generation. Conservative dogmatism and fear of change have always hindered progress. The real issue is how the Buddhist Church can get on with its internal revolution while fulfilling its duty toward society.

In spite of all the efforts of the Vietnamese Buddhists, South Vietnam long suffered in the period of political instability, and the war continued between the South Vietnamese government and the Viet Cong until Saigon fell to the hands of the Viet Cong in 1975, and Vietnam became officially unified under Communist government. No more opportunity is left for the fruition of the well-intended efforts of the Van Hanh University and the Vietnamese Buddhists of the age of revival.

Modern Japanese Buddhism began as a reaction against the persecution under the Shinto nationalism of the *Meiji Restoration* of 1868. Stimulated by the danger, the Buddhists united in common action to resist and took steps to

modernize. Leading monks of the various sects adopted a modern system of education and gave modern education to the younger monks. They founded schools and universities or reorganized their old temple schools and transformed them into modern Buddhist universities.

An example of this development can be found in Otani University of the Shin School in Kyoto. This institution was founded in 1655 as a study centre. After the opening of Japan, alterations and improvements were made in the curriculum and it was transformed into a modern university in 1905. Another example is Ryokoku University of the Jodo School in Kyoto, which was founded as a temple school in 1639, became subject to Western influences in the Meiji period, and was recognized as a university in 1922. All the great sects of Japanese Buddhism have developed their own universities. In Kyoto, the Rinzai branch of the Zen School operates Hana-Zono University, the Jodo School runs Bukkyo University, and the Shingon Sect owns Shuchiin University. The Shingon Sect has another university on Mount Koya called Koyasan University. In Tokyo, Komazawa University of the Soto branch of Zen Buddhism was founded as a temple school in 1759 and raised to the status of a university in 1882. Also in Tokyo are Rissho University of the Nichiren Sect and Taisho University which serves the Jodo, the Tendai and the Shingon sects. Kyoto Women's University of the Shin Sect in Kyoto has been designed specially for the education of women.

Japanese Buddhist education still maintains the traditional close connection between study and meditation. Besides training monks and priests for their special roles, Buddhist universities offer courses to laymen both in the field of Buddhism and religious studies and in the field of secular studies. A number of research institutes specializing in Buddhism or in oriental studies in general have also been founded, such as the Nippon Buddhist Research Association and the Indogaku-Bukkyogakukai (The Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies). With modern educational and research methods, these Buddhist universities and research institutes have been active in their task of preserving the great intellectual heritage of Buddhism, advancing Buddhist studies, and keeping for Buddhism a significant place in the modern intellectual life of the nation.

Besides reaction on the part of the monks, there was a closely related reaction against Europeanization and Christianity, which came about some time after the opening up of Japanese life to European thought, culture and religion, and which led to the reaffirming of the national religious traditions. Buddhism was then revalued as its teachings were found to be compatible with new discoveries and theories of modern science, such as Darwin's theory of evolution. Buddhism was thus reaffirmed and its status was restored. In spite

of this, however, its influence on the national life of Japan was never as strong as in the earlier ages. Generally speaking, the numerous sects were still attached to traditionalism and their main efforts were directed toward maintaining their continuity in the midst of growing secularism and the non-religious attitude of the intelligentsia. As a desirable effect, Buddhist monasteries and temples have become the stronghold for preserving the Buddhist cultural tradition and for resisting the secularizing elements of westernization. As an undesirable effect, the scientific study of Buddhist philosophy which made remarkable early progress slowed down and became confined to leading Buddhist scholars, far beyond the understanding of the public and the interest of the highly westernized intellectuals.

Japanese Buddhism has not only made significant scholarly achievements, become energetically involved in education, social work and humanitar ian activities, and achieved an efficient confrontaiton with Western philosophy and modern intellectual currents, but has also returned to the West with Buddhist thought and ideas valued by and stimulating to the Western mind, and played a leading part in international Buddhist activities. The three sects of Zen, Shin and Nichiren can count among their followers, both priests and laymen, some of the ablest thinkers of the day. In the field of international collaboration, more, or at least not fewer, names of Japanese scholars can be found than those of any other Buddhist country. Numerous Japanese clergymen engage in missionary activities in many countries, especially on the American continent, while a number of Japanese professors are conducting courses in Buddhist studies in American universities. More and more books and articles on Buddhism are being published in Western languages. Through his writings and lectures, Dr. D.T. Suzuki, a Japanese Zen priest and scholar, has exercised on Western thought and culture a deeper and wider influence than any other individual Buddhist.

Internationally, Japan's great contribution to the progress of Buddhism cannot be underestimated, Through the works both of the Japanese and of the Western scholars, the message of the Buddha has been carried to the West. There, in the light of modern studies, the interest has been ever increasing, both in the doctrine and in the practice, especially in Zen psychology and meditation. If a special form of the religion called Western Buddhism is ever developing in the West, it is Japanese Buddhism that has made a great contribution to the process of the development. And it is this contribution that, as a repayment, has helped to keep for Japan a dignified and respected place in the realm of international relations.

In spite of all these efforts and achievements, however, the success of the traditional sects has been confined mostly to the academic and scholarly field. In answering to the religious need of the populace, they are still at a loss.

They may be well known internationally but in their native land they fail to recover their former influence on the Japanese national life. Their position was made even more difficult by Japan's surrender in World War II when , as a reaction, a tendency was developed to reject whatever was traditional. The oldness of these sects has thus resulted in a natural loss of their appeal. It is the hope of these traditional sects that through their intellectual pursuits they will find a channel through which they can achieve the joining of the spiritual with the temporal and the revitalization of the teaching in a way more fit to cope with the general trend of the age and civilization.

The new movements of the so-called New Religions have been a development to fill the gap left by the traditional teachings. Most of them are offshoots of the Nichiren sect. They have been rapidly attracting enthusiastic adherents. Interestingly enough, it is mainly through the practice of certain popular rituals of these new sects, and not through an intellectual role or scholarly achievements, that Buddhism remains an active religion in Japan. Superstitious beliefs and practices are also widely accepted. As a characteristic of Japanese modernity, the many new religions have emerged to meet the modern religious needs of the middle class.

Movements have grown among the Buddhists towards cooperation and unification, and lay Budddhists have taken a more active part in religious activities. This has resulted in the organization of the Japan Chapter of the World Federation of Buddhists, the All Japan Young Buddhist Federation, and the Japan Buddhist Women's Association. Representatives have been sent by the different sects to observe conditions, practices and activities in other Buddhist countries. There are many universities, colleges and schools operated or supported by Buddhist sects. Research activities have been conducted actively in universities and research institutions by scholars using modern methods, on the whole field of Buddhist literature in Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese. As a Japanese professor said a few decades ago which is still true, "Japan is perhaps unique among Buddhist countries today for the extent of the researches being made with modern methods in the Buddhist literature in Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese."[50] Studies in the Indian Buddhist sources and international contacts have also inspired a strong urge to return to original Buddhism.[51]

In March 1959, the Chinese made an attempt to arrest the Dalai Lama who then fled through the Himalaya to India. As Tibet was made part of China, refugees streamed to the northern borders of India and Nepal where they established large colonies. Some of the Tibetans went further to Europe and America where they founded monasteries and refugee communities. Tibetan meditation centres were also established for the native Western people and

since 1965 Tibetan Buddhism has begun to be well known to the Americans. Under competent masters (called Rimpoche), Tibetan meditation centres have multiplied rapidly, and they are gaining new disciples every day.

Among the best-known and most influential of the Tibetan masters in America are Chogyam Trungpa Tulku and Tarthang Tulku. Chogyam Trungpa arrived in the United States in 1970 when he founded the Tail of the Tiger community near Barnet, Vermont, in March. In November of the same year, he moved to Boulder, Colorado, where the Karma Dzong Meditation Center was organized in March 1971 and the Naropa Institute originated in 1974.

Tarthang Tulku arrived in the United States in 1968. It is he who founded the first Tibetan meditation centre for Americans, the Tibetan Nyingmapa Meditation Center in Berkeley, California, which was organized in the spring of 1969.

In Britain, a number of Tibetan Buddhist centres have also been established. Among these are the Tibetan Centre at Samya Ling, the Kham Tibetan House, the Manjushri Institute and the College of Tibetan Buddhist Studies.

The degree of the success of Tibetan Buddhism in the West is clearly indicated in the following words of Needleman, "Tibetan Buddhism will be for the West in the coming decade what Zen Buddhism has been in the last decade and . . . will enrich our understanding of religion no less than Zen Buddhism has."[52]

The Tibetan masters not only hold classes in meditation, but have also organized academic activities. The Naropa Institute, founded in 1974, under Chogyam Trungpa, has been continuing the tradition of Tibetan scholarship in a new modernized form to suit the needs of time and place. Buddhist studies are organized under the garb of an American college in the Western tradition of scholarship, but imparted in the spirit of the contemplative tradition of the Buddhist training. Consisting in the development of man, it is Buddhist education in the real sense of the term, not a study for mere informational or scriptural knowledge.

The Naropa Institute offers undergraduate and graduate programs in the arts, social sciences and humanities. Bachelor of Arts degree programs and one-year Certificate Programs are offered in Buddhist and Western Psychology, Buddhist Studies, Movement Studies--Dance, Movement Studies--Dance Therapy, Music, Writing and Poetics, Psychology of Health and Healing, Book Arts, Theater Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies. Master's Degree programs are currently offered in Contemplative Psychotherapy, Buddhist Studies and Dance Therapy. A Continuing Education Program, whereby students not engaged in degree study can enroll in a broad selection of courses from the year-round degree and certificate programs is also offered.

As described in its Catalog of 1987-1988, the Naropa Institute has been modelled after the Nalanda University which flourished in India from the 5th to the 12th century. The kind of education it offers is called 'contemplative' education which is defined as the education in which the rigors of intellectual study are balanced by the cultivation of awareness, and in which the process of learning itself has supreme relevance to one's daily life. As far as Western civilization is concerned, the Naropa Institute serves to meet the spiritual needs of the society in which emphasis has been too much, to the degree of an extreme, placed on material and economic prosperity. It is a kind of balance that is offered at the time when it is really needed. Seen against the background of the Buddhist spiritual tradition of the East, it points to the same original spirit of Buddhist education hidden in every Buddhist tradition.

In societies that are materially and socially less developed, physical appearances in organization may vary so much from society to society in the effort to meet the temporal needs of the specific society. Sometimes, too much stress is placed on the temporal needs to the neglect of the spiritual ones. Wherever such is the case, the tradition as observed by the Naropa Institute will serve to remind all those concerned of what should be their primary concern and how far should be a balance. In this way, the education offered by the Naropa Institute can be of special service to the Asian Buddhist countries that used to be cradles of that kind of education, but, in the neglect of their own tradition, have been running after the West in the process of satisfying temporal needs.

Phra Debvedi
(Prayudh Payutto)

Wat Phrapirendra, Bangkok.

ENDNOTES :

1. Dh. 321.
2. A. III. 346; Thag. 689.
3. A. IV. 339, 385; A. V. 107.
4. A. IV. 195; Dh. 243.
5. S. I. 42.
6. Dh. 165.
7. M. I. 294; A. I. 87.
8. S. V. 101; A. I. 17.
9. S. V. 2.
10. S. V. 3.
11. Or 563 B.C. according to most Western scholars.
12. Vin. I. 21.
13. D. III. 191.
14. Kh. 3; Sn. 265-266.
15. A. I. 23-26.
16. Vin. II. 139.
17. S. V. 7.
18. D. II. 113; see also D. III. 125.
19. The terms 'Buddha' and 'Satthā' are often treated as alternative.
20. The terms 'Saṅgha' and 'Sāvaka' are in this context treated as alternative.
21. Vin. I. 137.
22. e.g. A.I. 229.
23. Vin. II. 146.
24. e.g. Vin. I. 270; J. I. 159, 356; II. 47, 200; III. 116; IV. 391, 457; V. 128, 161, 210.
25. Apastamba, SBE. II. 236.
26. SBE. 25. 144.
27. J. IV. 390.
28. Vin. I. 60, 80.
29. A. IV. 202.
30. D. III. 97.

31. e.g. M. III. 88, 119, 190; S. II. 280.
32. A. III. 361.
33. S. II. 269.
34. A. I. 88.
35. e.g. S. IV. 282.
36. VinA. 48.
37. T.W. Wallbank and A.M.Taylor. *Civilization: Past and Present.*[Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company (4th ed., 1960), Vol. I,] pp. 273-274.
38. J. Takakusu (Tr.). *A Record of the Buddhist Religion.*(London: Oxford, 1896,) p.177.
39. Sukumar Dutt. *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India.*(London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1962,) p. 29.
40. Vin. II. 139.
41. D. III. 271.
42. e.g., DhA.I.4, AA.I.22.
43. Walpola Rahula, *The Heritage of the Bhikkhu.*(New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1974,) p.27.
44. There were at least four times when assistance had to be sought from other Buddhist countries to restore the higher ordination in Sri Lanka: first time from Burma in 1065 after the driving out of the Tamils, second time from Arakan in Burma in the closing years of the 16th century after the rule by a non-Buddhist king during the period of Portuguese invasion, third and fourth times during the Dutch domination from Arakan around the end of the 17th century and from Thailand in 1750 respectively.
45. Phra Rajavaramuni(presently Phra Debvedi, i.e. the present author), *Thai Buddhism in the Buddhist World.*(Bangkok: Amarin Printing Group, 1984,) p.60.
46. Walpola Rahula, p. 91.
47. Walpola Rahula, p. 112.
48. Phra Rajavaramuni, p. 106.
49. The Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, a pamphlet issued by the Vien Hoa-Dao in Cholon, South Vietnam, around 1970, p. 22.
50. Shinsho Hanayama, 'Buddhism in Japan,' in Kenneth W. Morgan, *The Path off the Buddha.* (New York : The Ronald Press company, 1956,) p. 363.
51. The account of Japanese Buddhist education is condensed from the present author's book, *"Thai Buddhism in the Buddhist World,"* pp. 99-104.
52. Jacob Needlleman, The New Religions (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1970), p.8.

II

Socially engaged Buddhism

BUDDHISM MUST BE ENGAGED

To meditate is to be aware of what is going on – in our body, our feelings, our mind, and the objects of our mind.

from the Satipatthana Sutta

During the Vietnam War, the monks and nuns in that country were forced to choose between continuing to meditate while villages outside the temples were being bombed or to help the people who were crying in pain. They decided to do both – to meditate while helping people. According to Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Zen master who coined the term "engaged Buddhism" during the War, "the object of our mind is the world. When we see clearly and know what is going on, we will do something to help the situation."

The movement known as Engaged Buddhism dates back to the time of the Buddha. The *Cakkavattisihanada Sutta* clearly states that poverty is the cause of immorality and crimes such as theft, falsehood, violence, and cruelty. The *Kutadanta Sutta* explains how futile it is to try to suppress crime through harsh punishment. The Buddha suggests that in order to eradicate crime, economic conditions should be improved. The Buddha is known to have gone far beyond the social restrictions of his time, welcoming women, untouchables, and others into the Sangha.[1]

During the third century B.C.E., the Buddhist King Asoka went far to promote nonviolence, education, and a compassionate welfare policy. In Rock Edict XI, he proposed "the distribution of wealth through Dharma." He built rest-houses and hospices for the poor and sick, patronized medicine, imported doctors and herbs from as far away as Greece, provided for convicts and their families, sent out special ministers to investigate cases of judicial harshness or corruption, freed prisoners 25 times on holidays, and so on.[2]

In our own time, there are many exemplars of socially engaged Buddhism. His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, continuously opposes the Chinese occupation of his country, always doing so nonviolently. Joanna Macy, an American trained in Theravadin Buddhism, works full-time on a project to create guardian sites at nuclear waste dumps so that the residents can mindfully observe the stored nuclear waste, generation after generation, for the next quarter of a million years. Christopher Titmuss, a Vipassana teacher, ran for British Parliament as a

Green party candidate. These people and many others have found that they can bring their Buddhist practice and insight out of the meditation hall and into the social and political spheres.

In 1978, Robert Aitken and Nelson Foster of the Diamond Sangha Zen community in Hawaii, formed the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, a small organization whose statement of purpose was:

> To make clear public witness to the Buddha Way as a way of peace and protection of all beings;
>
> To raise peace and ecology concerns among Buddhists and to promote projects through which the Sangha may respond to these concerns;
>
> To encourage the articulation of the Buddhist way of nonviolence, building from the rich resources of traditional Buddhist teachings a foundation for new action;
>
> To offer avenues to realize the kinship among groups and members of the world Sangha;
>
> To serve as liaison to, and enlist support for, existing Buddhist peace and ecology programs;
>
> To provide a focus for concerns over the persecution of Buddhists, as a particular expression of our intent to protect all beings; and
>
> To bring a Buddhist perspective to contemporary peace and ecology movements.

In its twelve years of existence, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship has grown to several thousand members worldwide, with chapters throughout North America, Europe, and recently Asia as well. As an affiliate of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, it serves as a focus for Buddhist social work and publications, publishing an excellent quarterly magazine. Members of its international advisory board include Sulak Sivaraksa, Maha Ghosananda, Christina Feldman, and most of the exemplars of engaged Buddhism mentioned in this essay.

The Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, whose 84th birthday is being celebrated in this volume, is also unquestionably a champion of a world-involved and socially relevant Buddhism.[3]

> Buddhadasa does not see the quest for personal fulfillment or enlightenment as one of isolated individuals pursuing their own greatest good. We not only live in a shared natural environment, but are part of communities embedded in the natural order of things. Everything is necessarily interrelated. Consequently, the good of the individual parts is predicated on the good of the whole and vice versa. In Buddhadhasa's view such a state is both the moral and normative condition of things.

> Practically speaking it means that a just, equitable, peaceful, and happy society balances the good of the individual and the good of the whole in a "fellowship of restraint."...Buddhadasa's social and political theory, especially his interpretation of dhammic socialism, cannot be divorced from his underlying Buddhistic preoccupation with the overcoming of attachment to self.[4]

It behooves us as the 20th Christian century comes to a close, to reflect on the nature and boundaries of the "self." If we think that the self is contained just within our own skin, or within the walls of our own house, we forget the truth of what Thich Nhat Hanh calls "interbeing." The Buddha, when teaching not-self, did not mean that there is no self whatsoever, but that the self exists solely in relationship to other beings past, present, and future, including our environment. When we see how treating another unjustly causes us grief both in the present moment and in the future, we begin to understand our interconnectedness with other life forms. When we swim in a river that we humans have polluted, we realize that we are the river. Our contemporary malaise offers us a great opportunity to realize the truths of the teachings of the Buddha. To think that we can practice Buddhism independently, in an isolated cell, is to fail to grasp the Buddha's teaching of not-self. If deforestation causes flooding, that is our mind, the mind of our meditation. If air pollution makes it impossible for us to breathe, how can we continue to breathe, even in the serene meditation hall?

Meditation practice helps us learn to act with composure. Equanimity ensures that we are able to sustain the duress of witnessing such extreme suffering. But meditation is not an end in itself. It is a practice which can help us live more peacefully, and share our peace with others.

As a practitioner of Buddhist meditation for the past twenty-two years, I have come to discover that the phrase "engaged Buddhism" is redundant, i.e. Buddhism in order to be Buddhism must be engaged. How can we not see the eyes of the children begging us to create a stable and sane future for them? When we see such embodiments of the Buddha-Dhamma as the leaders of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship or Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, whom I had the honor to meet and hear expound the Dhamma at Wat Suan Mokh just a year ago, we know that an awakened life is possible and our chanting "May all beings be happy" is not just a sacred litany, but our daily responsibility. The Four Holy Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path are no other than a call to know ourselves and to engage in the world in the most enlightened way we can.

Arnold Kotler

Parallax Press, P.O.Box 7335, Berkeley, California.

ENDNOTES

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3. See Peter Jackson, ***Buddhadasa: A Buddhist Thinker for the Modern World*** (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1988).
4. Donald K. Swearer, ***Me and Mine: Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa*** (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), p.6.

BUDDHISM AND NONVIOLENT GLOBAL PROBLEM-SOLVING

This is a brief report on the 4th International Seminar on Buddhism and Leadership for Peace, held in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, during August 15-20, 1989. The seminar was sponsored by the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP), headquartered in Ulan Bator's Gangdantekchenling Monastery, in cooperation with the Center for Global Nonviolence Planning Project, Institute for Peace, University of Hawaii, and the Dae Won Sa Buddhist Temple of Hawaii.

The theme of the 4th seminar was "Buddhism and Global Problem-Solving," following upon the first three seminars that explored Buddhism and leadership for peace (Honolulu, 1983), Buddhism in various countries (Tokyo, 1985), and peacemaking in Buddhist contexts (Honolulu, 1987).[1]

The 4th seminar was especially significant for the diversity of its membership. Participants gathered in Ulan Bator from China, Japan, Korea (both North and South), Mongolia, the Soviet Union, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.[2] The seminar was held in an atmosphere of peaceful congeniality to which Buddhism, Mongolian hospitality, and shared experiences of previous seminars greatly contributed.

We were especially fortunate to be present on a trip to the Gobi area when, after Buddhist prayers for rain, a five-month drought affecting 1.4 million animals (including 140,000 camels) and 400,000 people was broken. Interestingly, we were informed by our Mongolian friends that the Gobi should not be called the Gobi Desert as is customary in English. Gobi, they said, means a certain type of desert-like land in which things grow that can sustain animal life. Deserts do not have that type of vegetation. Thus, they explained, the Gobi is not a desert, and is essentially intranslatable into English. It is simply "the Gobi."

The objective of the seminar was to seek answers to questions about what Buddhism can contribute to solving five major problems that confront humankind at the end of the 20th century. These are peace and disarmament, economic justice, human rights, ecological viability, and universal problem-solving cooperation. As in past seminars, a wide variety of views were invited among Buddhist thinkers, peace scholars, and peace leaders. Various Maha-

yana, Hinayana, and Tibetan traditions were represented, adding to past seminar contributions from Christian, Hindu, Jain, Muslim, Marxist, non-Marxist, and other perspectives.

The tone of the seminar was set by the Most Venerable Khambo Lama Dr. Kh. Gaadan, head of Mongolian Buddhists and president of the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace, who quoted the 7th century Buddhist poet Shendideva:

> ***May the rains of lava, blazing stones, and weapons***
> ***From now on become a rain of flowers;***
> ***And may all battling with weapons***
> ***From now on become a playful exchange of flowers.***[3]

Three keynote presentations raised the question of how Buddhism can contribute to global problem-solving. First, Acharya Sulak Sivaraksa set forth the thesis of the need for an international network of socially engaged Buddhists following the Five Precepts who can "cooperate meaningfully in a common struggle against oppressive social forces that cause suffering." Second, Vice-Rector Kinhide Mushakoji of the United Nations University, emphatically stated his view that Buddhism can help to solve the global crisis of human survival that stems from converging military, political, economic, social, cultural, ecological, and spiritual factors:

> Buddhism, among other religions, has a specific mission in enlightening all peoples of the world in seeking to correct their minds set away from greed and power. Mutual tolerance among different ideologies must be guaranteed by the pluralism of the Middle Path. The sustainability of the coming global civilization can only be built on ahimsa, nonviolence and care for all living beings [emphasis supplied].[4]

Third, Professor Johan Galtung, the world's leading peace researcher, presented his thesis that the way to realize both negative peace (absence of war) and positive peace (presence of peace factors) was to "weave states together, softening them, and interlinking them" from both national and wholistic global perspectives. Such a perspective would combine national military non-aggression and world peacekeeping forces; national economic non-aggression and world economy; national cultural non-aggression and world consciousness; and the internalization of national interests together with the development of world institution for world interests.

Although prepared independently, these three presentations were remarkably complementary. The Buddhist thinker called for the creative engagement of Buddhist principles in problem-solving actions. The United Nations peace leader expressed understanding that spiritual liberation from

selfish greed, hatred, ignorance, and power-seeking in favor of principled commitment to nonviolence is the key to global survival. And the scholarly peace researcher called attention to needed structural changes (simultaneously "softening" states and firming up global institutions), changes to which Buddhist thought and action can be especially appropriate contributors.

In the succeeding sessions of the seminar the five major global problems were taken up, one by one, for general discussion. This discussion will not be detailed here, nor will a report be made on behalf of all participants. Rather, in the spirit of all four seminars, in which each participant remains free to draw from them that which is most meaningful, I will set forth my own understandings of the principal features of Buddhist global problem-solving relevance.

In setting forth these understandings, I am not unaware that Buddhism, like virtually all world religions, has been the victim and vehicle of distorted applications that are completely contrary to its avowed principles. For example, "Buddhists" have sought power, killed, enriched themselves at the expense of the poor, and engaged in inegalitarian discrimination and oppression. They also have engaged in sometimes bloody sectarian conflict with other "Buddhists."[5]

Nevertheless, the life-respecting light of Buddhist truth, Dharma, shines clearly across more than 2,500 years showing the way to a more desirable human future. It is this light that we seek to focus upon global problems. The nonkilling principle, *ahimsa,* provides a fundamental basis from which to seek solutions. Since all problems are interconnected, solutions cannot be sought in isolation. Human capacity to improve mind, body, and thought gives hope that solutions can be found. But to discover them, global reality must be understood just as it is without illusions, drawing upon all sources of scientific and humanistic knowledge. By practicing universal friendliness, compassion, sharing of joys, and steadfast commitment to improving the quality of life, Buddhism can contribute to liberation from suffering of all sentient beings.

Applying these principles to the search for solutions to some of the world's most pressing problems, helps us to see more clearly the path that we should follow. As the Zen Master Ryokan advises us:

> ***If you point your cart north***
> ***When you want to go south,***
> ***How will you arrive?***

Disarmament

A world in arms threatens human survival in many ways, both directly and indirectly. It is now possible to kill more people, more quickly, with more

long lasting effects (e.g., radiation) than at any time in history. Furthermore we not only have developed the technical capability to kill all humans but also to kill the life-sustaining capacity of the planet itself. By committing enormous resources of humanpower, intellect, energy, and raw materials to purposes of annihilation we are not only directly diverting these things from service to basic human survival needs but are inhibiting the creativity and productivity that are required to satisfy them.

The Buddhist approach to disarmament is based upon the principle that we should not kill or cause others to kill. We should not kill in thought, word, or deed. Since the origins of killing are in our minds (greed, hatred, and ignorance) this is where positive steps toward disarmament must begin. Furthermore the principle of right livelihood enjoins us not to pursue occupations that kill, support occupations that kill, or make, sell, or buy weapons that kill.

The Buddhist approach moreover goes beyond simple negation. It also enjoins us to engage in actions and processes that will remove the cause of violence and the need for armaments, whether offensive or defensive in nature. We begin with development of a calm and tranquil mind within ourselves through meditation and contemplation. Then we extend sympathetic consciousness to all sentient beings through universal friendliness *(mettā)* compassion for suffering *(karunā)*, sharing of joys *(muditā)*, and equanimity *(upekkhā)*.[6] This practice cultivates responsiveness to human needs for identity, dignity, distributive justice, freedom, equality, peace, and other values. Nonresponsiveness leads to violence.[7] When we encounter hatred, we respond with love. Confronting violence, we respond with nonviolence. Overcoming violence within ourselves, with a calm and tranquil mind we remove armaments and the causes of armaments through a dialogue of reason based upon the emotion of respect for life. This dialogue then becomes extended into processes of social problem-solving that do not depend upon the threat or use of lethal force. The peaceful mind thus becomes extended into a pervasive nonviolent community consciousness that affirms life and rejects violence. Killing is unthinkable and armaments are unnecessary because we have learned to solve our problems and to resolve conflicts in nonviolent ways.

The effectiveness of Buddhist contributions to disarmament[8] can be measured by the extent to which Buddhists contribute to such things as abolition of nuclear weapons, biochemical weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction; removal of foreign military bases; reduction of armed forces and military budgets; refusal of military taxes; recognition of the right of conscientious objection to military service; abolition of the death penalty; and construction of nonviolent institutions that respond to needs for security and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Economic Justice

The fact of enormous gaps in economic conditions and quality of life within and between rich and poor nations is amply documented and expected to increase.[9] The expected increase of global population from 5 billion persons in 1989 to 10 billion persons by 2025 is expected to be accompanied by unprecedented demands for food, water, energy, housing, clothing, sanitation, medical care, education, transportation, employment, recreation and other needs. Present preventable deaths from economic deprivation now estimated to be at least 20 million persons per year can be expected to continue and to vastly increase unless remedial structural changes in national and global economies are accomplished. The annual loss of life resulting from global economic inequity has been called a "holocaust" by a distinguished interdisciplinary group of Nobel Prize laureates who have identified its cause as primarily "political" and have called for nonviolent transformative action.[10]

Since Buddhism affirms equality – rejecting discrimination based upon caste, class, race, gender, nation, and other divisions – it regards great and increasing gaps between rich and poor to be unacceptable. Furthermore Buddhist compassion make intolerable the suffering produced by economic deprivation. Therefore Buddhism urges cooperation and restraint among all producers and consumers to ensure the wellbeing of all. Buddhism must not be passive in the face of economic injustice. It must oppose both the overindulgence of the rich and the deprivation of the poor. At the same time it must offer a reasonable and practical path of liberation from the greed, hatred, and ignorance that enriches the few at the expense of the many – and that prevents the achievement of global material adequacy. One such practical way is to assist global economic transition from production for infinite wants to production for finite needs.[11] This is completely in harmony with Buddhist principles as illustrated, for example, in the economic life of the ***sangha***, the community of monks and nuns.

Buddhist contributions to economic justice can be measured by conversion of nonproductive military resources to service of civilian needs; provision of basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, health care, and other essentials for all; elimination of such evils as malnutrition, prostitution, and child labor; and steady reduction of the material gap between rich and poor everywhere through governmental and private sector action based upon the principle that all those whose needs are not met should participate in the process of satisfying them.

Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed by resolution

of the U.N. General Assembly on December 10, 1948, was a giant step forward in asserting general standards to promote the dignity, liberties, and material wellbeing of all humankind. Even though there were then only some 52 Western-centered member nations, virtually all of the principles ring true in the context of the post-colonial expansion of U.N. membership to its present 159 member states. For example,

> ***Article 1.*** All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
> ***Article 5.*** No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
> ***Article 9.*** No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
> ***Article 18.*** Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.....
> ***Article 25.*** Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself [herself] and of his [her] family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his [her] control.[12]

In the light of these principles, the atrocious contemporary violations of them are shockingly apparent. These include killings, arbitrary imprisonment, unspeakable tortures, intimidation, racism, patriarchism, slavery, dictatorship, censorship, controls on movement, and economic and cultural deprivation. At any time, as estimated by Amnesty International – which bases its work mainly upon Articles 5,9, and 19 of the Universal Declaration – there are at least 500,000 nonviolent "prisoners of conscience" unjustly imprisoned throughout the world. In addition, untold millions live in internal degradation or in exile seeking escape from coercive threats to life and livelihood.

Buddhism affirms both of the great human values of equality and freedom and is committed to realizing them by nonviolent means. It affirms universal rights to life, material justice, and to freedom from oppression. It rejects all violations of human dignity based upon belief, biology, caste, ethnicity, nationality, or other distinction. It seeks to liberate the human mind from prejudice and ignorance. Although tolerant, Buddhist tolerance does not extend to the greed, hatred, and ignorance that brings about the willful oppression and destruction of human beings and nature. It encourages, defends, and engages in service to ensure the human rights of all by nonviolent means. Because of its tradition of esthetic sensitivity, it encourages creative celebration of life through the arts. In seeking liberation from all forms of mental and

material oppression, Buddhism emphasizes the exercise of reason combined with respect for life in all its forms. It does not impose its views on others by threat or use of lethal force.

Buddhist contributions to human rights can be measured by the use of gentle and skillful means to achieve abolition of the death penalty, elimination of torture, release of all political prisoners who have neither used nor advocated violence, fair and open trials for all, and mutual respect for dignity and freedom among all members of the human community.

Environmental Protection

As we enter the last decade of the 20th century, threats to the viability of the biosphere are becoming more clear than at any time in history. The exploitation and pollution of nature associated with preparations for war, industrialization, consumerism, urbanism, mismanagement, selfishness, profit-seeking, and unprecedented increase in population are threatening the life-sustaining capabilities of our planet. Increasingly, scientific environmentalists are sounding the alarm about potential or actual irreversible harm that is being done to land, air, water, and to all the species that depend upon them for life. In this crisis, Buddhism is challenged to act.

Buddhism can make a strong contribution to global environmental protection both conceptually and in practice because of its emphasis upon the oneness and interdependence of all life. Such oneness, encompassing humans and nature, is completely compatible with ecological science. In turn, ancient Buddhist understandings are supported by the contemporary findings of genetic science that plants, animals, and humans share certain common genetic elements. Furthermore, Buddhism fosters love of nature, beginning with the Buddha's enlightenment under the bodhi tree. This is also expressed in the characteristically close relation to nature of Buddhist temples. From a Buddhist perspective, nature can be understood as the "Mother of human beings." Buddhism understands that the poisoning of land, sea, and air; species loss; exhaustion of nonrenewable resources; and other threats to survival is the result of the greed, hatred and ignorance of self-seeking individuals, profit-seeking businesses, and power-seeking governments. To ensure the environmental sustainability of life for present and future generations, Buddhism urges restraint, renewal, recycling, and encouragement of protective creativity of the highest order. Seeking wisdom from the world's most knowledgeable ecological scientists and connecting it with the ecological economy of everyday life, Buddhism can assist global understanding of harmful and beneficial environmental practices.

The results of Buddhist environmental concern can be measured by

patient efforts to persuade both leaders and the public to replace destructive practices with life-enhancing ones, to educate oncoming generations in the interdependency of all things, and to create non-polluting cycles of production and renewal of resources needed for global wellbeing.

Universal Human Cooperation

As human problems become more global in scope they go beyond the capacity of any single nation or limited set of nations to solve them.[13] Global problems of peace and disarmament, economic justice, human rights, and environmental protection cannot be solved unless all governments, private institutions (including multinational corporations), and global citizens at the local level can cooperate. But as these problems become increasingly global in scope, there is a lag in human capability based on 159 U.N. members and other states to define them, to prescribe solutions for them, and to mobilize support for effective problem-solving actions. As viewed from outer space, humans are a single species living in a planetary ecological niche. But viewed from our national political perspectives, we expect all problems to be solved to our national political advantage. In short, we tend to care more about our own national wellbeing rather than the wellbeing of others. This despite the fact that the wellbeing of any nation is increasingly dependent upon the wellbeing of all nations. No nation is safe if a killer-nation exists; no nation can be economically secure if other nations exploit it; no nation can guarantee human rights if other nations oppress them; no nation can save the planet if other nations destroy it. Air, land, and sea claim no nationality. Their loyalty is to globality upon which their survival and wellbeing depends. Can humans eternally think and act otherwise?

Buddhism affirms and celebrates the great diversity of human beings within the common circle of humanity. It approaches all in a friendly spirit. It considers the suffering and joys of others to be its own. At the same time it maintains a calm and steady commitment to remove the causes of suffering and to join with others to realize a happy life for all. In seeking to solve global problems, Buddhism encourages cooperation among all the peoples of the earth. Because Buddhism views all life as an interdependent whole, it urges totally global problem-solving consciousness and efforts. This means it urges cooperation to save life even though one's own wellbeing may not be perceived as directly threatened. For harm done to one part of the human community or to one part of its planetary home ultimately threatens the life of all. Buddhism also views the microcosm as an analog to the whole. Therefore global problem-solving means analogous thought and action by individuals, families, local communities, nations and other forms of human organization. The wellbeing of

each and all are interdependent.

Buddhist contributions to human cooperation can be measured by increased participation in public and private problem-solving efforts; by removal of barriers that prevent more effective cooperation within, between, and beyond nations; increased support of such global institutions as the United Nations; and by changes in everyday lives of individuals that reflect globally responsible problem-solving consciousness.

Conclusion

Buddhism as related to global problem-solving combines patient dialogue, universal education, and compassionate nonviolent action. This means dialogue with leaders and others whose decisions affect the problems, mass education of all to understand their causes and how to prevent them, and engagement in direct problem-solving action, both alone and in cooperation with others. Over and over again in our Mongolian seminar discussions, it was emphasized that Buddhist problem-solving action means the employment of "gentle and skillful means based upon reason." The importance of this, as contrasted with other conventional problem-solving and problem-creating approaches, is perhaps the single most important guideline for action that emerged from the seminar.

Overall the contribution of Buddhism to nonviolent global problem-solving can be measured by increasing respect for all forms of life throughout the world and by creativity in its expression by present and future generations.

Glenn D. Paige

University of Hawaii, Institute for Peace,

2424 Maile Way, Porteus 717 Honolulu, Hawaii.

ENDNOTES

1. For reports on the first two seminars consult Glenn D. Paige,ed., ***Buddhism and Leadership for Peace*** (Honolulu: Dae Won Sa Buddhist Temple of Hawaii, 1984) and Peace Research Institute, Soka University, Buddhism and Leadership for Peace (Tokyo: Soka University, 1986).
2. Participants included Zhao Baoxu, Lou Yulie,Du Jiwen, Yao Weiqun (China); Hiroharu Seki, Yoichi Kawada, Yoichi Shikano, Noriyoshi Mizufune (Japan); Pak Chang Gon, Hwang Byong Dae, Ri Jong Ryoul, Pang Gang Su, Lee Jim Wol (Korea); D. Choijamts, O. Gundsambuu, D. Tsermaa, Sh. Soninbayar, T. Sovd, D. Dagvadorj, T. Sodnomdargia (Mongolia); Sanje D. Dylykov, Eremei Parnov, Dashitseren Retorov, Erdem Mytypov (Soviet Union); M. Sumanatissa (Sri Lanka); Sulak Sivaraksa,Charal Phakpien, Chim Sivaraksa (Thailand); Glenn D.Paige(Hawaii); and Thich Minh Chau(Vietnam). ABCP–headquarters participants included Kh. Gaadan, G. Lubsantseren, V.B. Tsybikdorjiev, B. Wangchindorj, S. Erdene, and N. Dorzhgotov. Contributions in absentia were made by Kinhide Mushakoji(United Nations University, Tokyo) and Johan Galtung (Oslo and Honolulu).
3. Kh. Gaadan, "Opening Address," p.2.
4. Kinhide Mushakoji, "The United Nations, the Religions and Global Problems: Facing a Crisis of Civilization," ms. (1989), p. 4.
5. For a balanced overview of the frequent discrepancy between principles and actions of people who profess adherence to various faiths consult Henry O. Thompson, ***World Religions in War and Peace*** (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, 1988), esp. "Buddhism, pp. 91-103.
6. K.N. Jayatilleke, ***Buddhism and Peace*** (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1962).
7. John Burton,***Deviance, Terrorism, and War: The Process of Solving Unsolved Social Problems*** (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979).
8. A lucid agenda for global disarmament that was accepted by consensus of 159 nations is contained in the report of the First U.N. General Assembly, ***Final Document of the Assembly Session on Disarmament*** (23 May-1 July, 1978) (New York:United Nations, 1978), S-10/2.
9. See Ruth Leger Sivard, ***World Military and Social Expenditures***, 1989 (Washington: World Priorities, 1989) and previous editions of this authoritative statistical comparison of world nations.
10. "Manifesto of Nobel Prize Winners," ***IFDA Dossier***, September/October 1981, pp. 1(61)-4(64).
11. David Ross and Mahendra Kanthi, ***Gandhian Economics***(Bangalore: Prasad Publications, 1983).
12. ***Universal Declaration of Human Rights*** (New York: U.N. Office of Public Information, 1948). Gender equality supplied. The full Declaration contains 30 articles. I have found that few scholars and students have read the whole text, and therefore regularly include it in courses on nonviolent political alternatives and political leadership.
13. For an excellent discussion of the obstacles to global problem-solving arising from nation-based political leadership and call for an alternative "Party of Humanity" see Robert C. Tucker, ***Politics as Leadership*** (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1981), esp. Chapter 4, "Leadership and the Human Situation," pp. 114-157).

BUDDHISM AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD :
The Problem of Social Action in an Urban Environment

The current topic of concern is that of Buddhist ethics, even though, we do not know exactly which word from the Buddhist vocabulary can be used as the equivalent for 'ethic'. In a recent book, Gunapala Dharmasiri suggests that the word in question is *dhamma,* the teaching of the Buddha which in its several aspects includes a moral dimension.

The word for ethics in the West is from the Greek *ethos* which has the basic meaning of character and thus is the study of moral or value concepts such as "good, "bad", "right", "wrong", "should" etc. Out of the long years of such study in the West has come what can be called "normative ethics", the accepted statements and cues regarding happiness, conduct, concepts of the perfect. While there are naturally varieties of approaches to be found within "normative ethics", there is a great deal of similarity, and one may with some ease compare the moral dimension of *dhamma* to the "normative ethics" of the West. For example, the ideas of what is "good" and what is "bad" may be quite similar in a number of normative ethical statements from a variety of cultures and settings. Killing, lying, stealing, cheating, sexual misconduct are to be found as proscriptions in Buddhism as well as in most ethical systems around the world. We can see this general acceptance of the normative in such a text as the *Kalama Sutta* of the Pali canon:

> "Now, look you Kalamas, do not be led by reports, or traditions, or hearsay. Be not led by authority of religious texts, nor by logic or speculative standpoints, nor by considering appearance, nor by delight in speculative standpoints, nor by considering appearances, nor by the delight in speculative views, nor by seeming possibilities, nor by the idea "this is our teacher". But O Kalamas, when you know for yourselves that certain things are unwholesome and wrong and bad give them up...and when you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome and good accept them and follow them.

Such a statement implies that through some type of common sense, knowledge, one can determine the "normative ethics" without having to resort to another

for assistance.

Sydney Hook, an American philosopher raised questions about the Buddhist stance with regard to these matters and his article still stands in many ways unanswered, even though the well-known Sri Lankan Buddhist philosopher de Silva presented some rebuttals. Professor Hook said that the tragic view of life is not exemplified by Sakyamuni's sight of sickness, old age and death. These, claims Hook, are pitiful but the truly tragic is the "experience of moral doubt and perplexity" which comes when there is a conflict of ideals. This perplexity arises when we must choose between good and the good, between right and what is right. Thus, in times of war it may be considered that killing is a "good" because by doing the killing one may do the good of stopping further or more extensive killing. On the other hand, it is "good" not to kill, but if doing so permits widespread killing, then we are caught in the dilemma which Hook calls the "tragic". De Silva tried to give an answer by saying that Buddhism offers a long-range therapeutic stance. "Why do people get into problematic situations?" is even more crucial than "How do we solve this particular problematic situation?" However, de Silva has been faced in his own country with the battles which involve the Buddhists in conflict with a minority group and he sadly says, "Today the great question is the feasibility of the morally required policy options, the tension between the desirable and the possible."

These questions about doing what is "right" are not always easily answered by normative ethics, and so there has been the development of the study of the language of ethics. The meaning of "good" and "bad", that is looking carefully at each use of the world within a context. This has been called "metaethics". I would like to suggest a different way of looking at this ethical dilemma and perhaps bring about some refinement of what is meant in a given situation by terms such as "right" and "wrong". Since, we focus on situations, I prefer to approach the problem by dealing with meta-narratives and the ethical arrangements which each of these supports.

While there may be normative narratives of moral values which are widely shared by a variety of religions and cultures, the more serious problem before Buddhism today is not proving how close their ethical norms are to others. Rather, in our world, we are faced with ethical values which belong to meta-narratives, that is systems of thought or social structures which have created a special narrative in which ethical and moral issues have been arranged so as to give precedence and privilege to certain values. The meta-narratives that are most often expressed in the contemporary world from the West are those of Christianity, modernization and scientific progress, Marxism, and in Asia, some of the major meta-narratives are Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and popular religious lore. This means that the Buddhist

ethics are not just being judged by the normative "good" and "bad" that they share with other religions and moral codes, but the more telling judgement comes from the meta-narrative holders who see Buddhism from the perspective of their own particular and crucial ethical systems. Therefore the harshest attacks against the Buddhist ethical system have come from those who base their beliefs on the values given greatest valence in the meta-narratives of Marxism or Christianity or any of the many contending narratives of our day.

The Confucians, for example, focused on the values of the family and society and so tended to reject the Buddhist tradition with the values placed on the monastery and the high esteem given to "leaving home". While the focus of the Confucian meta-narrative was often on *jen,* the development of *jen* could never be seen apart from the five relationships that exist in society. Thus, the Buddhists have had to answer the ethical question of why it is "good" to leave home and enter the monastery, when it is generally accepted by the Confucian meta-narrative that it is "good" to stay home and live as a householder with filial concerns.

Another strong rival narrative has been raised against Buddhism by Christianity, whose meta-narrative, among one wing of the church, has given the highest ranking to social action among the needy. This is a battle that is particularly strong in Korea where Christians have become a major power. There the Christians criticize the Buddhists for being remiss in setting up a program of social action. Social welfare as a dominant theme of ethical concerns can be traced in the West to the rise of industrial development and the rapid urbanization of the population. In the nations of Europe these large urban centers of manufacturing and trade created a new group of impoverished people, different from the rural poor of the past. The traditional group of poor were "deserving", widows, orphans, handicapped, those who were victims of circumstances. The new urban poor were the "undeserving", able bodied men and women who were without jobs or worse without drive and ambition. Shaw in his famous play *Pygmalion* depicts this interpretion when one of his characters Mr. Doolittle moans that he is one of the "undeserving poor", unable to secure sympathy or alms. European narratives about ethical matters could not ignore this growing and distressing group within the population. The early attempts to handle the problem can now be looked upon with amazement and even horror. The Poor Laws passed in England, were based on the interpretation of "good" and "right" which stated that help was to be given in order to cut down on crime and disease, but no help could be given to those still living in a household because it might encourage others to become dependent on society for support. Therefore, institutions were set up into which the "undeserving" poor had to go, that is they had to leave whatever home they had and live in workhouses in order to secure support. All aid that went to such poor was made purposefully as degrading as possible so that the recipients would be encour-

aged to find jobs and support themselves in the "right" manner.

There arose in Europe and the United States, social welfare programs that were run by those who were trained to separate the "deserving" from the "undeserving". It was felt that if one could determine the cause for poverty and provide help based on the removal of the cause, then there would be no further damage to society or the people involved. This may seem to be a harsh view of the pioneering attempts to give aid to the urban poor, but these principles seem to still be guiding a good deal of the charity or government support that comes to individuals. Most laws concerning the needy and a good deal of charity based on the narrative of social welfare still focus on separating the "deserving" from the "undeserving". And yet many of the problems of such social programs may arise precisely because of such designations.

Buddhism has been strongly attacked in East Asia by those who hold to social welfare narratives. Some Buddhists have heard these complaints and have tried to mimic the work of Christian missionaries or absorbed the ethical arrangements of this narrative. But there is another meta-narrative in the West that is raising serious questions about the methods of helping others. That narrative is provided by psychology, and the studies are clear that helping others is a difficult task. The pyschologists are now saying that if in helping, one shames the recipient of the aid that may be far more destructive to the individual than the original need. Not only has the pyschological narrative pointed out the destructive nature of some social welfare programs, the discussions among the researchers have turned to those who give the aid and the personality flaws which these "givers" may possess. It is now seen that many people who become caretakers for others are doing so from personal need, and that sometimes that need is to create situations in which another person is seen as being in an inferior position and thus shame can be transferred to them. Because shame is painful to experience. In individuals there are attempts to transfer it to others through acts which are judged to be "good" but are acts which in the end turn out to be in conflict with what is good. This leads us back to Prof. Hook's idea of the tragic. It is good to feed someone who is hungry but if in the feeding we degrade that person then the good is converted into an evil. I bring this up to indicate that social welfare narrative of Christianity and charitable programs in the West is in a state of growing crisis and the tragic element in it is that we have so little idea of how to do the "good" without having the "good" turn into a greater "bad" than the original situation. As example of the narrative that is put forth by psychology with regard to such matters is the following quotation:

> "To patronize is to support, protect or champion someone who is unequal in benefits, knowledge or power; but who has not asked for your support, protection or championing, it is a way to feel one-up on

another person. Being patronizing leaves the other person feeling shame. The interpersonal transfer of shame through patronization is very subtle. On the surface you seem to be helping the other person through support and encouragement, yet in reality the helping doesn't help. He feels ashamed. Patronizing is a cover-up for shame, and usually hides contempt and passive aggressive anger." (Bradshaw p.92)

When the meta-narrative of social action is used to attack the Buddhist ethic, I suggest that before rushing to imitate a flawed model, the Buddhist meta-narrative should be consulted for solutions that have yet to be tried in the urbanized world of the present day. Buddhism may make a greater contribution by using its own narrative to construct methods of dealing with the urban life than have been found in the West. For example, it appears that the First Truth of the Buddhist doctrine "There is suffering" can be applied to our urbanized existence. Suffering is universal, the rich suffer and so do the poor. The idea that we are all in the same condition regardless of the position with regard to money or power, allows some hope for mutual sharing and support. By this narrative, the poor suffer and should be helped; the rich suffer and should be helped. The rich should help the suffering poor, and the poor should help the suffering rich. It seems that only this can offer a method for escaping from the tragic as described by Hook. In the *Prajñāparamitā-Sutras* we find the statement that not everyone should give a gift, only those who have achieved a state of insight which allows them to give a gift with the full awareness that the giver, the receiver and the gift are empty of any permanent substance. Those who believe themselves to be the "giver" and see others as "receiver" can easily fall into the trap of patronizing as described by Bradshaw. Those who see the "gift" as an entity may have the problem of feeling superior by virtue of being able to bestow something of value on another.

Let me once again state the issue before us. The ethical discourse between Buddhism and other systems has little disagreement within the normative ethical concerns which are shared by all within the moral common sense patterns of living. The rivalry is not within the normative systems; it is between the ethics as spelled out by the meta-narratives. The valence-placed upon certain ethical behaviours within given situations by the meta-narratives raises the major issues of conflict between any of the various narrative holders, Buddhism being one. And it is precisely in the ethics of the meta-narratives that we find some attempt to reconcile what Hook has called the tragic element of finding that good can be in conflict with what is good. For example in Marxism, the valence of ethical behaviour is arranged in such a way that revolution of the proletariat is of such high value that violence may be not only condoned but even encouraged. There is in any such ordering, a sense of the

tragic beyond which it seems difficult for the meta-narratives to progress.

Even the narratives of science and progress and modernization have reached a point of the tragic dimension. The new narrative of the ecological movement points out that progress which requires the destruction of nature and the habitat for life is "bad" and cannot be tolerated. The people of Eastern Europe have turned away from the Marxist narrative in a way which is shocking the world, the flaws of the system now being highlighted by the emergence of new meta-narratives championed by such groups as Solidarite in Poland, nationalism in Lithania, democratic reforms in East Germany. We live in a time of rapid communication, and the criticism leveled at other narratives can be quickly spread. No narrative is any longer immune from such appraisals, that is appraisals that point out the conflict in actions that purport to be "good".

The Christian and Marxist attacks against Buddhism in Korea, the pyschologist model as a criticism of social welfare and charity, the reform movements in Europe that reject the Marxist approach, are all examples of how meta-narratives are in conflict with one another with reference to ethical concerns. This is a period of great unrest and the events of Tienamen Square are examples of energy that is generated when two narratives come into open conflict and physical attacks. It is a time of transformation, and that means it is a time of potential, potential which can move in a miriad of directions. The meta-narrative of Buddhism will be asked to provide ethical arrangements and judgments for people in times such as the present. It seems obvious that it will not be sufficient to merely reflect the narrative of others. The religion and its followers will be pressured to present new solutions.

Let us look at the meta-narrative of Buddhism to see some of the ethical implications of the practices and teachings. As we look at the contemporary societies of East Asia, Buddhism remains one of the major cueing sources for culture. It is impossible to read the literature of Asia and not be struck by the Buddhist cues that appear: the doctrine of karma, the nature of rebirth, the life of the monastery, the idea of hells and of paradise, heavens, the judgment which occurs after death, the concepts of cause and effect, the possibility of the enlightened mind, the primacy of mental perception, ways of viewing and judging holy people, universal compassion as a result of enlightenment, acceptance of abundance, health and long life as a reward for meritorious deeds, non-attachment as a way of handling change, suffering as a primary state of human existence, ignorance as the source of suffering. There is no lack of Buddhist cues in the society of any area of East Asia, but there are many questions about how these cues will be used especially in the ethical system.

The history of Buddhism teaches us that this tradition has always been characterized by its willingness and ability to adapt to new locations and to

allow for the presence of other meta-narratives within its sphere. Taoism, Confucianism, Shamanism, popular cults have all served the religious life and practices of Buddhists. This rare quality of acceptance of other narratives as having value, may turn out to be the Buddhist greatest gift to our contemporary situation. We have ample examples of the violence that can result from the battle between people who hold different narratives. The city of Beirut is a constant reminder that religion is not immune to violence of the fierciest type. Religious meta-narratives fuel many of the most crucial conflicts in the world: Moslem and Christian in Lebanon; Moslem and Judaism in Israel; Hindu and Sikhs in India; Buddhists and Tamils in Sri Lanka. It is important to look at the Buddhist approach to heterogenius narratives and see if there are answers that can be applied to such situations. This call for tolerance and recognition of value in many approaches could well be the greatest contribution to the ethical dilemma of our time and the tragic battles that we have seen and the serious danger for the future.

In a somewhat ironic fashion, it may be that Buddhism can be of greatest help in the ethical arena of life, by giving close attention to its ability to exist beside a rival tradition. Exclusive claims in some narratives have led us to the deadlocks where death and destruction have been the only method available for resolution. The Buddhists should present their narrative which not only allows but encourages followers to find support and assistance in a variety of practices. This has been done while still maintaining the integrity of the religion itself. Thus Buddhism might offer the world a narrative of tolerance and support for all who seek spiritual expression and in this way help to overcome the tragic dilemmas of conflicting ethical needs.

Lewis R. Lancaster

University of California,
Department of Oriental Languages, Berkeley, California.

BUDDHISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Teachings

When we study Buddhism we realize there were two types of teachings given by the Buddha, conventional truth *(Sammutti Sacca)* and ultimate truth *(Paramattha Sacca)*. Most teachings given by the Buddha are concerned with conventional truth in order that ordinary people, who have not yet developed wisdom, might understand his doctrine and practise it. The teachings of ultimate truth are deep, abstract and profound teachings in which the nature of the world or ultimate realities are expounded. These latter kind of teachings given to those who have the wisdom eye will enable them to realise how the universe really is. When we have to speak about the material world as we see it with the naked eye, including the environment, we are concerned with the conventional teachings of the Buddha. According to Buddhism the world was not created by a supreme power but is the manifestation of mental and material qualities under the laws of cause and effect. Buddhist cosmology defines the world sphere or universe as dissolving or crumbling in nature, containing earth, moon, sun and all stars and says that in this world sphere exist 31 realms. These are hell, the animal kingdom, the group of hungry ghosts, demons, the human realm, 6 divine realms, 16 fine material Brahma realms and 4 immaterial Brahma realms. All living beings will be reborn again and again into these 31 realms according to their wholesome and unwholesome karmas. In other words, they will manifest as they accumulate karmic forces until they uproot the main causes which are their defilements, and through practising the Eightfold Noble Path, one will be able to uproot the main causes and obtain the ultimate state of Nibbana. Therefore according to this doctrine beings do not come only once to this earth but have to return here countless times in different forms and existences depending on their accumulated karmic energies.

Units of Mind and Matter

In Buddhism we recognise three kinds of world: the world of formations *(Sankhāra-Loka)* which includes all kinds of created and creative physical and mental energies governed by our accumulated karmic forces, the world of beings *(Satta-Loka)* that is these energies manifested as beings under the

control of the law of karma and the world of location or space *(Okasa-Loka)* in which all kinds of matter and material phenomenon or beings exist; this is the whole of space in the entire universe. According to this doctrine the whole universe is nothing but mind and matter which are the fundamental energies of the universe. The Buddha analysed the whole universe into five aggregates: the aggregates of matter, sensations, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness. The Buddha declared that consciousness depends on matter, sensations, perceptions, and mental formations and cannot exist independantly of these. In the same way sensations, perceptions, mental formations and matter are also dependant on each other. They cannot exist independantly but are interedpendant and inter-related.

According to the doctrine of the Abhidhamma, the Buddha reduced the entire material world into kalapas or units of elements. Each kalapa contains the four great primary elements and their secondary characteristics of colour, odour, taste and subtle nutriment. Each of the great elements have two chief qualities, earth element has the qualities of hardness and softness, water has those of fluidity and cohesion, fire has the qualities of heat and cold and air element has the qualities of motion and movement. These kalapas cannot be seen by the naked eye, they are sub-atomic particles in a constant flux. Our mental phenomenon or mental states are also changing, even faster than the material qualities. Therefore Buddhists see the entire universe as mind and matter. They are conditioned, or conditioning states, and interdependant.

Generative forces

The elements such as the four primary elements are not found by themselves but only within the kalapas or units. They arise and pass away at the same time as the kalapa or unit. Now the question arises why do they come into existence? Any unit of matter arises on account of one or other of four causes or conditions. Buddhism describes four principal causes for arising of a unit of matter, these are past action *(karma)*, thought *(citta)*, energy or temperature *(utu)* and nutriment *(āhāra)*. Past action or karma are the volitions of thoughts with which various actions were done in the past. The force of past actions in previous lives creates in the present life certain kinds of matter such as the life element, sex element, and sensitive elements of the body. The second primary cause of matter is thought. These thoughts can generate a number of different kinds of kalapas that can cause the health of body, maintain posture and can also cause muscular movements. Such matter is called unit born of thought. The third primary cause is heat or temperature. It is an integral property of every kind of matter. The interaction between external and internal is responsible for most of the different kinds and states of matter.

According to the Buddhist, matter outside the bodies of living beings is conditioned by this cause of temperature. The fourth cause is nutriment essence which is common to all matter. This is a kind of element within the kalapa, not the kalapa itself.

The external world, such as rocks and rivers, is conditioned by temperature (energy) to generate new kalapas. However, in the body of all living beings all four primary causes are in operation. The causes of mind are casual relations of conditioning states explained in Buddhism. Consciousness arises in the presence of an object and a sensitive base, but continuity of consciousness relies on past karmas, and present thought moments condition the arising of the next thought moment. The mind and matter do not arise of themselves, they are conditioned and also dependent on other causes. Thus Buddhism teaches that everything in the universe comes on account of something else, all animate and inanimate objects are inter-related.

Natural Laws

The animate and inanimate objects in this universe exist on account of primary causes. However they don't exist haphazardly but are governed or controlled by natural laws. According to the Buddhist point of view mental and material phenomena are taken as being subject to invariable and inexorable natural laws, rather than as the product of an arbitrary creator. Those natural laws *(niyāma-dhamma)* in Buddhism are five-fold. They are the laws of past actions *(karma-niyāma)* ,the law of thought *(citta niyāma)* , the law of heredity or biological law *(bīja niyāma)* , the law of energy or physical law *(utu niyāma)* and the law of phenomology *(dhamma niyāma)*. Each unit of mind and matter exist according to these five natural laws.

Ecology

Nowadays ecology has become a popular subject and a household word. A few years ago not many people understood or used this word. Now people are talking about ecology everywhere, particularly in the West. It is concerned with the growth of populations, with plants and animals, and with the resources available to them. Ecology also concerns itself with the structure of communities and their relationship to an environment which is always in a state of flux. Ecologists say that there are many possible kinds of relationships between organisms (plants, animals and other living things) and that part of the non-living world in which they occur. Most relationships between plants,

animals and their environment are baffling in their complexity, and it is virtually impossible to make assumptions about the outcome of deliberate change in or interference with the natural environment. Nevertheless Ecology as a scientific study is concerned with the complex relationships between plants and animals, and according to ecological analysis everything in this world is related to everything else; this includes the growth and decrease of populations, individual and environmental changes, organic development, etc. Human beings are not the only living beings in this world, other beings also have a right to live and to develop. If we observe the history of the earth we see that as much as the human population grows it destroys the natural environment, although human beings understand that they cannot live this earth by themselves but are dependent upon animals and plants.

Buddhist scriptures say that in the beginning of this aeon the life span of human beings was very long because the nutrition of plants and vegetables was of the highest standard. When people developed anger, hatred and delusion, these mental forces governed their physical bodies and their vibrations affected plants and vegetables. The quality of nutrition in plants was consequently reduced and the human life span become shorter. Even now we have to use a large quantity of drugs to fight our diseases. These drugs are also derived from other organisms; in ancient days people used plant roots and leaves as medicines. As previously explained the whole universe is inter-related, so when we generate wholesome or unwholesome energies it will affect others also. If we develop wholesome energies, love, compassion etc., we will distribute these to others as well. Therefore as Buddhists we should be aware of ourselves so as not to contribute any impure energies to other organisms but to develop pure energies so that we can live happily and peacefully, and others including animals and plants will also receive our pure energies.

The Environment

The concept of the environment covers just about everything associated with the organism, and includes other organisms and the non-living part of the world in which life occurs. This environment has about the same meaning as surroundings. In industrial countries, pollution resulting from industry and from agriculture is harmful to people and to the surroundings in which they live. Therefore people these days speak about an environmental crisis.

The environment is a thing which we have helped create and is a designation of the natural process that has moved and developed through innumerable times and inconceivable causes. Moreover the natural world itself is conditioned by innumerable causes in the indefinite past, therefore it is in a

process of change. These changes, whether people recognised them or not, occur continuously. The Buddhist perspective on the environment is from an individual's relationship with the natural world and our transformation of the world. We need to see how things live, and how they are inter-related. It is this context that Buddhism expounds on the wholeness of all things in inter-relationship.In the doctrine of dependent origination *(paticca-samuppāda)* nothing is created or can exist apart from this network of inter-relationships. Things do not exist independently. This network is not a static process but one of dynamic motion with unlimited potential in the boundless universe.

Our Responsibility

The word environment can refer to human beings and to the natural external world. Among living beings human life is the most precious and also carries the greatest responsibility, that of maintaining the harmony not only within human society but also that of any other living beings in the natural world. When we speak of the environmental crisis we do not only mean the pollution and other changes to the natural environment but also change to human society. There is a Burmese proverb which says "When you live with fishermen become a fisherman, and when you live with hunters become a hunter." This means our morality and state of mind are very much influenced by our society. Buddhism teaches a life of harmony with other living beings – one should develop generosity and compassion towards all living beings. This is a way we can establish a harmonious society. If we develop craving, aversion and delusions, we also transfer these energies not only to other living beings but also to the planet on which we live. If we want to establish a better and more harmonious society, first we have to tread the path of enlightenment. This path aims to eradicate craving, aversion and delusion. As long as we have these mental states (defilements) society cannot develop harmoniously. Whatever we see these days, violence and crime in human society are because of these mental defilements. The Buddha's teachings are not to please any diety or superbeing but are the path to purify the human mind. If human society develops any unwholesome mental states then this society also conditions the natural environment. As the Buddha said, the entire universe is inter-related. As we understand the whole universe is inter-related we should not destroy our natural environment unnecessarily. The Buddha mentioned on many occasions his gratitude for trees and plants. After his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree he stood for seven days observing the tree under which he was enlightened Because of this tree he was able to achieve the Buddhahood, therefore he expressed his gratitude for the Bodhi tree. The Buddha laid down a monastic rule prohibiting the members of the order from cutting down trees and plants as one of the monastic rules.

The natural world supports the spiritual development of our human life. We receive good vibrations from it. The environment is part of our life. For many things we depend on our environment, we cannot exist without it. If, therefore, we destroy our natural world it means we are destroying our own home and our own planet. We should care not only for our mental development but also for maintaining the natural world.

Thus each individual is responsible for developing the environment and human society. Whatever situations we experience now are a result of our own karmas. Any kind of actions, karma, have consequences far beyond those which we can easily understand. So any natural environmental changes, good or bad, are also a result of our karma. We therefore should be aware to accumulate wholesome karmas so that we can develop our spiritual path as well as help to improve our environment.

Bhikkhu Rewata Dhamma

Buddhist Vihara, 47 Carlyle Rd., Edgbaston, Birmingham B16 9BH, England.

THE BUDDHIST RESPONSE TO HEALTH AND DISEASE IN ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

In the spring of 1989, the Exxon Valdez ran aground on Bligh Reef, Alaska, and spilled 260,000 barrels of crude oil into one of the most pristine bodies of water in the world. Exxon has just terminated its $1 billion cleanup, but the governor of Alaska and the state environment commissioner have declared it will cost millions more to restore the beaches still fouled with oil. Experts are not prepared to predict how many decades it will finally take for the full recovery of the land and water. The only hard figures at the present point to the terrible toll to wildlife: a body count that exceeds 34,000 birds, and 984 sea otters, not to mention the loss of other animals.[1]

The collossal environmental disaster joins the ghostly ranks of Love Canal, Chernobyl, and Bhopal to dramatize the fact that *environmental pollution is the most dire threat to public health today.* Sometimes the threat is visible, but for the most part it is silent, pervasive, deadly, and always a growing menace to the health and safety of people throughout the world.

Till recently it was thought that much disease was spontaneous, but the evidence is now growing that many of these diseases are in fact environmentally induced. This essay is an attempt to identify that connection. It further argues that since *it is not just a technological problem, involving money and machines, but a human problem, involving the need for attitudinal changes,* it is necessary that we take a closer look at naturalistic ethical systems, such as Buddhism, to tackle the *human dimensions of the problem.* We shall focus on the situation in the U.S.A, though the data is generally applicable to other parts of the industrial world. We shall also confine our remarks to the connection between pollution and two medical areas : chronic respiratory disease and cancer.

The source for this study is the government's Environment Protection Agency's inventory of toxic chemicals emitted by U.S. industries in 1987.[2] The EPA's inventory is a result of a 1986 federal reporting law that covers a list of 328 chemicals and compounds considered hazardous. The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act mandates that large industries report chemical use each year. The regulation followed on the heels of the chemical

disaster in Bhopal, India, that killed and injured thousands of people.

The EPA's inventory reveals a gargantuan problem generated by industrial emissions of toxic pollutants. In 1987 industries spewed 7 billion pounds of toxic chemicals, with 2.65 billion pounds of that going into the air. It appears industries are making the skies into a convenient garbage dump. Of the 50 states, Texas ranked first in the amount of toxic chemicals. Comfort, Texas, released the uncomfortable figure of 465 million pounds of toxic wastes, most of it buried at the facility. Hawaii ranked last, pumping 2.6 million pounds of toxic chemicals in the air, land, and water.

The EPA toxic inventory is a step in the right direction because, for the first time, it gives the public some idea of a national pollution problem. At the same time, the inventory is marred by many limitations and loopholes. The reportage is only required of large plants processing 75,000 pounds of toxic chemicals per annum. The statistics do not cover car emissions, power plants, the military, municipal sewage, and small companies. We are therefore left in doubt about the toxic total, but there is no uncertainty that whatever the true number, environmental pollution is responsible for chronic respiratory disease, cancer, birth defects, mutations and psychobehavioural defects.[3] We shall now take a look at the first two diseases.

Chronic respiratory disease. Large numbers of Americans suffer from bronchitis, asthma, and emphysema which are caused by air pollution, especially from the sulfates found in auto emissions. Epstein states,"It has been estimated that failure to meet current sulfur dioxide standards, which are exceeded in most U.S. cities, is responsible annually for six thousand premature deaths, six million to ten million avoidable asthma attacks, and twenty million to thirty million days of exacerbation of cardiovascular and respiratory disease."[4]

There is a whole host of other chemicals which are hazardous to the lungs and contributive to chronic respiratory diseases. These are: ammonia, a colourless gas used as a refrigerant, and in the manufacture of fertilizers, synthetic fibers, dyes, and explosives; chlorine, a heavy greenish-yellow gas used for water treatment, food processing, making disinfectants, and cleaners; sulfuric acid, a colourless, odorless liquid or crystal used in soaps, auto-batteries, animal feed, and polishes.

Occupational dust is also a toxic agent causing various forms of pneumoconioses. It is estimated that 125,000 coalminers are afflicted with this disease which enfeebles the lungs, and kills approximately 4000 workers each year.[5] Other forms of this debilitating disease are: asbestosis from asbestos dust; byssinosis from cotton dust; bagassosis from sugar cane dust; and

silicosis from silica dust. "Over all, nine thousand annual deaths in the United States are attributed to these occupational dust diseases."[6]

Cancer. The Greeks called it *karkinos* – "the crablike disease" – because of its spreading growths. In its latinised form, "cancer" is the most ominous word in our current vocabulary because it stands for a sentence of death. In fact, cancer is second to cardiovascular diseas as a cause of death, but it is feared most. It afflicts one in four of all Americans now living, with approximately 800,000 newly diagnosed cases each year.[7] One third of that number will survive to live out a normal span of life, but such statistics do not diminish the fears.

Cancer is not a single disease but a congery of different diseases identified by their unregulated cell growth. So the cause, diagnosis, and treatment of cancers will accordingly vary. Our interest is in environmental cemicals and cancer.

In the past decade or so, the media have spotlighted the carcinogenic properties of such household items as sacharin, cyclamate, and methpyrilene (used in sleeping tablets), known from laboratory experiments on rodents. The issue is not yet settled as to whether these chemicals cause cancer in humans. But all of the research sheds new light on the role of chemicals in producing cancer. Till only a few years ago, it was thought that cancers were caused by hereditary factors, and perhaps viruses, but researchers are now pointing to the role of natural and synthetic chemicals as productive of the majority of human cancers.

The evidence for the above conclusion comes from various sources. First, while types of cancers are variously distributed in different parts of the world, cancers occurring in the families of immigrants to another country tend to take on the cancer pattern of the adopted homeland. Secondly, it is now documented that exposure to certain chemicals in the workplace causes cancer. For instance, Benzene is a known carcinogen, associated with leukemia. It is used in the manufacture of rubber, detergent and dyes. Asbestos is a work hazard most talked about in recent years. It is a mineral fiber found in rocks, and is a durable product used in construction and industrial work. The danger comes when the asbestos fibers break into microscopic dust and is inhaled by workers. This produces a condition known as mesothelioma, a cancer of the chest and abdominal membranes. The disease is incurable. Thirdly, the most convincing data linking cancer to chemicals in the environment, arises from the high mortality ratings of lung cancer. During the first 50 years of this century, American males increased their smoking habits by ten per-cent and their death-rate from lung cancer rose by one hundred per-cent (the cycle has been repeated by American women since the end of World War II.) In the words of

one cancer researcher: "It is almost as if Western societies had set out to conduct a vast and fairly well-controlled experiment in carcinogenesis bringing about several million deaths and using their own people as the experimental animals."[8]

Thus, there is the growing consensus that while viruses do produce cancers in laboratory situations, "they seem unlikely to be primarily responsible for causing any of the common human cancers"; and while heredity does play a part in increasing susceptibility to cancer, there is no good evidence to show that common tumors are inherited."[9] The spotlight therefore shifts to environmental chemicals as the causes of cancer. These chemicals may be synthetic, produced in factories, or natural chemicals found in the home (food contaminants), or chemicals produced by bacteria in our large intestine.

Much more can be said about the effect of pollutants in the environment as responsible for disease, but we must move on to the second part of this essay which considers solution to the problem.

The problem of environmental pollution has two dimensions: one technological, the other attitudinal. There are grounds for hope that with improved technology we can anticipate the reduction of harmful levels of toxicity. Technological advances in the nuclear energy industry are a case in point.

Despite setbacks, such as the Three Miles Island accident in 1979, and the shutdown of the Rancho Seco nuclear energy plant in California in June of 1989, nuclear energy production continues to grow in the United States and other countries. In 1988, 17 new units began commercial operation worldwide, increasing generating capacity by 5 percent. At the end of 1988, there were 417 nuclear plants operating commercially in 25 countries. During the year, nuclear energy supplied 1,794 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity – 17 percent of the world total. France obtained nearly 70 percent of its electrical needs from nuclear plants; Japan 28 percent; and the United States, 20 percent. So, notwithstanding the industry's problems, opinion seems to be growing that with improved technologies, nuclear energy is safer and less destructive to the environment than oil or coal.

There are many cases to demonstrate that technology does find ways to solve problems. But hope placed solely on technology is a fiction. Each new technology has its own built-in problems, and there is the inevitable problem of technologically generated waste. Technology is intermixed with toxic and tonic capabilities, and we must be able to see the distinction. Technology can no longer be taken for granted. It must be thought about; not merely produced, celebrated, and accepted in all its manifestations as an irrepressible but essentially benign human phenomenon.

What we need in order to benefit from the blessings of technology and avoid some of its blight, is an ecological attitude. This attitude will be more concerned with questions of health and well-being than with such artificial indicators as the "standard of living." The Buddha clearly saw the role of the mind as formative for developments within our world, and set about the task of helping us reconstitute our world for health and happiness. He says:

> Ideas have mind as their precondition are dominated by mind and are mind-made. If one were to speak or act with a polluted mind, as a result, suffering follows him, like a wheel that follows the foot of the beast of draught.
> Ideas have mind as their pre-condition are dominated by the mind and are mind-made. If one were to speak or act with a serene mind, as a result, happiness follows him like a shadow that does not depart.[10]

Buddhism is primarily a mind-culture that views the human being in a naturalistic perspective and points out both the problems and possibilities of existence. Its ethical system starts, not with values but with facts, and bases values on facts. What then are the facts about nature and the human being as understood by Buddhism, and how does this analysis illuminate the problem of environmental disease?

Buddhism attributes the pollution of earth, air, and water to human avarice that is born of ignorance. Egoistic individuals, profit-seeking corporations, and power-hungry governments poison our environment, and deplete our natural resources. The Buddha traced all such tendencies to three fundamental roots: *lobha* (craving), *dosa* (hatred), and *moha* (ignorance). The majority of cases of environmental pollution give evidence of the pervasive interplay of these three *samsaric* evils.

Unlike Christian teaching the acquisitive impulse is the fruit of wickedness, Buddhism attributes such folly to human ignorance *(moha).* Greed is the psychological outcome of our failure to understand the truth about ourselves and our world. Therefore, one level on which to combat environmental pollution, according to Buddhism, is to acquire correct knowledge about ourselves and our place in the natural order.

First, what is the constitution of the human being? Buddhism declares that man is in nature, and nature is in man. We are not separate from nature; we are nature. Therefore the fundamental environmental principle is that nature is not a *commodity* which we possess, but a *community* to which we belong. Community implies both rights and responsibilities, which is to say that the ties that bind us in nature are not just physical but moral.

Secondly, there is the fact of the interrelationship and interdependence of all life.The Buddhist doctrine of Dependent Origination*(paticca-samuppāda)* states that every event, mental or physical, is dependent upon and conditioned by a universal principle of causation which functions automatically and spontaneously. Nothing in the universe happens capriciously or by divine fiat. This means that interrelationship belongs to the essential nature of things which, in their own way and to their own degree, give rise to other particular things. The thought of being in a dependent relationship with other things and with other beings, attitudinally, should make for feelings of respect and admiration toward all other creatures and nature. The *Ahimsa* (non-injury) ideal receives its universal mandate from this sense of connectedness of all beings. In similar vein the Jataka tales portray a world in which humans and animals freely communicate with one another as equals.

The doctrines of *Anitya* and *Anatma* further characterize the world in terms of non-substantiality. This undercuts human pretensions to creaturely supremacy on the claim of possessing a soul. The truth is, life takes many forms; hence all of life is sacred. The seeds of Buddhahood are invested in all life forms.

Beyond people and animals, the circle of life in Buddhism includes the world of organic life. Starting with gratitude to the Bodhi tree under which he received his enlightenment, the Buddha enjoined upon all monks that they should not harm plants and trees because they, too, possessed sensate existence. The Buddha shared the common Indian belief that nature possessed qualities of beauty and tranquility which could stimulate the human mind and inspire the spirit. Therefore temples and monasteries were always built along the banks of rivers or on hilltops where the air, the earth, and the water made religion a deeply aesthetic experience. We are told that in his quest for illumination Gautama withdrew to Uruvela, "a pleasant spot and beautiful forest."

The Buddha's environmental orientation is vividly illustrated by his repeated use of natural metaphors, similes, and allusions. The Dhammapada, the most influential book in the Buddhist canon, is replete with graphic images from nature. It is not a case of the sage speaking through nature, but of nature speaking through the sage. Nature is not placed at the service of morality, but morality is seen as a function of nature. Indeed, morality is the nature of nature, and when we break nature's laws, it is we who are broken. Health and happiness, disease and defilement, go hand in hand.

The central image of Buddhism is the lotus which, rising above pollution, symbolises the divine possibilities of human nature. In the Master's words, "Just as a sweet-scented and attractive lotus would grow in a heap of rubbish thrown upon the highway, even so does the disciple of the perfectly en-

lightened one, through his wisdom, outshines the egocentric individual blind with ignorance among those who have become (like unto) rubbish."[11]

The Buddha's orientation to the environment could be poetical, but it also could be practical. The Vinaya texts contain abundant material showing the Buddha's concern for the healthy surroundings of his disciples. One text reads: "Now at that time the Bhikkus walked over the mats used for sleeping upon with unwashen or wet feet, or with sandals on; and the matting was soiled. They told those matters to the Blessed One. " You are not, O Bhikkus, to do so, whosoever does, shall be guilty of a dukkhata."[12] In the finest Indian tradition, the Buddha considered health as essential to the good life, and earned for himself the title of "the incomparable physician." The Dhammapada points out: "Diseases have hunger as their worst...Gains have good health as the greatest."[13]

In keeping with the medical mission of their Founder who once said: "He who would care for me should care for the sick," the Buddhist Order developed systematic concern for the physical health of its members. "Buddhist monasteries often served as dispensaries, and it has been suggested that one of the reasons for the spread of Buddhism in Southeast Asia and elsewhere was the medical lore of the Buddhist monks, which, though of course primitive by modern standards, was superior to anything known to the local inhabitants, and thus added to the reputation of the new religion."[14]

It is fair to ask at this juncture: If indeed the Buddha was solicitous for bodily health and his teachings foster love for nature, how do we account for the strong emphasis in Buddhism on the evils of the flesh, and its numerous ascetical prescriptions? We can make three preliminary replies. First, in Buddhist teachings we do find several ascetical practices, such as fasting, but asceticism is here only used as a means to self-control. It will be noted that in his spiritual quest, after severe acts of mortifications, Gautama discovered that weakness of body only produced lassitude of spirit. Secondly, though evil is seen to arise from the flesh, physical well-being is prized because it is the *sine qua non* for achieving freedom, as is explained by Nagasena to the King. Thirdly, the negative statements really only apply to the sinful body, for once the sins are abandoned, one can *practice virtue with the body.* The Dhammapada states: "Abandoning evil conduct in body, one should cultivate good conduct in body."[15]

Our brief overview of Buddhist doctrine, and the life and teachings of the Buddha demonstrate elements in Buddhism which make for an evnironmental ethic that is responsive to issues of health and disease. Next, what are the practical implications of the Buddhist ethic toward the task of preserving the environment and sustaining the health and well-being of present and future life?

Simply stated: Buddhism urges a middle path which avoids the extremes of rape or retreat, and recommends restraint, renewal and the recycling of our resources.

In terms of restraint, statistics show that Americans use the most fossil fuels.[16] The United States emits 24 percent of all carbon dioxide emitted in the world. The total carbon buildup now stands at 5.6 billion tons. The amount of carbon released into the air by burning fossil fuels has tripled in the last 40 years. The tons of carbon released per capita in the United States is 5.03 (in Japan the figure is 2.12).[17] Clearly we need to curb our voracious appetite for energy by stringent new energy-efficiency regulations and widespread conservation practices.

In terms of renewal, there are two kinds of energy: non-renewable and renewable. In the first category, there is natural gas, coal, oil, and peat – all in greatest demand. Unfortunately, most non-renewable sources come from fossil fuels that emit gases which contribute to smog, urban air pollution and acid rain. Society therefore needs to switch to renewable sources of energy by making greater use of wood, plants, water, geothermal heat, solar radiation and wind.

In terms of recycling, a major national problem is garbage disposal.[18] The nation's production of garbage and trash has nearly doubled since 1960, from 87 million tons a year to 160 million tons in 1986. Many communities, especially in the Northeast, are simply running out of places to put their wastes. New York City produces about 26,000 tons of residential and commercial solid waste a day – more than five pounds per person. New York City workers are constructing a great pyramid of refuse in the largest garbage dump on the face of the planet – when finished it will rise to 505 feet and will be the highest point on the Eastern seaboard south of Maine.

The only way to tackle this crisis which is fraught with enormous health hazards, is through recycling. Americans now recycle about 10 percent of their refuse, but need to increase that share to 25 percent by 1992. Manufacturers of such products as disposable diapers and plastic bottles need to look for ways to recycle those products. At present only ten states have recycling laws, which should be expanded. Also the federal government needs to fund more education and advisory projects around the country to generate public enthusiasm for recycling.

In closing this essay it will be recalled that only a decade ago experts were warning us that the world's supply of fuel was dwindling so quickly that mankind would soon face an energy shortage. *Today, most argue that use of fossil fuels could render Earth uninhabitable long before supplies of them are exhausted.*

According to a recent news article:"The only solution, specialists say, lies in a revolution in technology, worldwide economic strategies and – most importantly – the way people think."[19] And there in lies the contribution of the Buddha.

Cromwell Crawford

Department of Religion,
University of Hawaii at Monoa, Honolulu, Hawaii.

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ALTERNATIVE BUDDHIST AGRICULTURE

Modernization is somewhat peculiar. While it seems to be desirable and unavoidable, it is leading more and more to a series of crises. Industrialization, starting a few centuries ago in Europe, led to colonialism which has had tragic and lasting effects in the world. Capitalism associated with it caused conflicts resulting in armed fighting and wars including the two World Wars, and the use of nuclear bombs which destroy lives as never before. Capitalism had led to Marxist ideology and armed revolutions. The world had been divided into two confronting camps with both hot and cold wars, leading to the brink of nuclear conflict. The world faces the risk of total destruction as never before. Super powers' possession of nuclear warheads is adequate to kill all human beings several times over.

Industrialization has bred materialism and consumer culture which is spreading widely all over the world. In societies with materialistic achievement other problems arise. To many conveniences breed boredom and isolation of Man from Nature; suicide and drug abuse become rampant. The conflicts between the infinite material desires and the finite ability to respond lead to social conflicts, crimes and violence in most countries.

Industrialization and consumerism have led to rural disruption and environmental crisis which are inter-related. In the past three to four decades great attempts have been made to solve rural poverty in the Third World countries to no avail. Rural poverty has not been solved. It is subjected to materialistic urban development. We observe rural disruption in four related categories, i.e. economy, family, community system and environment. The old method of integrated farming has been converted to cash crop or mono-crop agriculture for the market system. Chemical fertilizers and insecticides have been introduced at costs, both to the economy of the farmers and the environment. Vast and valuable forests with their bio-diversity have been destroyed for cheap agricultural products such as tapioca, sugar and jute to compete in the world market, a market system that destroys the environment.

Many farmers become bankrupt in the process. The poorer they are the more they destroy the environment. Forests are also destroyed by colonialism, old or new, and governments' wrong policies in giving concession to logging business, local and foreign, and governments' failure to prevent illegal logging. As the forest is a critical component of the rural economic system, its disap-

pearance aggravates rural poverty.

Rural economic disruption causes urban migration leading to the occurrence of a new culture – the urban poor. People have been uprooted from their home and culture. Very often they are separated. It is like a house divided. The poverty, the migration and the uprooting affect quality of life, particularly of the children and the elderly, and lead to social problems such as crimes, child abuse and prostitution.

The community culture which used to be a natural welfare system is gone. The governments in developing countries are not able to substitute it with an urban welfare system. The urban poor who are said to be the Fourth World people represent unsolvable problems and are the root cause of other social problems.

The environmental crisis is before us. Forests have been destroyed to a critical level. Chemical and mono-crop agriculture has destroyed the natural balance. Sulfur dioxide spewed from factories has caused acid rain. Carbon dioxide released from fuel burning and leakage of methane are causing the 'green-house effect'. The chlorofluorocarbons (CFC) released from refrigerants are depleting the ozone layer in the atmosphere. Development associated with the destruction of the environment is said to be unsustainble. Sustainable development and environment are to be sought for as expressed in "Our Common Future" prepared by the World Commission on Development and Environment chaired by Gro Brundtland[1]. *The End of Nature* is eloquently argued by Bill McKibben [2] who holds that Western or industrialized civilization is destructive. This is deep rooted in Western thinking and ways of life. It is not possible to change the ways of life because it has been ingrained in Western culture and the "End of Nature" is unavoidable, unless human species can come to a great realization, so great that it can shake them up to a new consciousness and New Thinking.

"We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive" expressed Albert Einstein.

Just what is the "New Thinking" and how it can be practically implemented are fundamental and extremely difficult questions.

An *Alternative Buddhist Agriculture* is a small example of different thinking.

About a hundred kilometers East of Bangkok there is a village called Ban Huay Hin, Sanamchai Ketr District, Chacherngsao Province. There are 210 families and Mr. Vibul Kemchalerm is the village headman. The village had engaged in tapioca plantation for over 20 years. All were in debts; Mr. Vibul

owed the bank nearly 300,000 Baht. The debts kept increasing. Hard work and the ever increasing indebtedness made the villagers very stressful. Homicide was very prevalent.

Mr. Vibul the village headman, a primary school educated person, came to a decision to change. *Life Changes*[3] is the book he wrote. He wanted to make profit from tapioca and 20 years of relentless hard working had proved that he could not with the existing exploitative market system. He decided to change from trying to make profit to trying to cut losses. Strategies for the two are different he said. To cut loss through spending money he looked for things he could do himself. There are many, such as growing vegetables, fruits, medicinal herbs, raising chickens, etc. There was no use of chemical fertilizers nor insecticides. Vibul said when mind changes so do other things, ecology has returned. The land around the house is full with several hundred kinds of plants, and birds chirping, and squirrels roaming around happily.

"The stomach is full for every body" Vibul said. He said that production to feed oneself is not difficult, but to make profit is extremely difficult or impossible for the small farmers. He sells whatever is left from his own consumption. Debts no longer occur. People become free. Furthermore, they have more time to talk among themselves and with the monks. They began to ask questions "what should we do for our elderly and children", questions they had never asked before. Cultural activities started to come back. The village has cooled down and there are no more crimes and violence. Vibul has become an expert in ecological agriculture. Villagers, NGOs, university people and government officials come to learn from him. His is called a *Village University* – a university which is close to Nature.

In Surin Province, Northeast Thailand, an old farmer by the name of Yu Sunthornthai had thoughts and practices different from other farmers. He was a Buddhist monk before and people call him Maha Yu . Maha Yu thought that if he grew only rice when its price was low he would have no choice but to sell it and lose money. "Why should I do that" he argued. Instead of growing rice alone he has been doing many other things – raising pigs and chickens, keeping fish, growing vegetables and fruits. He uses no chemical fertilizers nor insecticides, because Nature balances itself. Maha Yu has more than enough to eat and he sells a lot and has money in the bank. The environment around his house flourishes because of integrated farming. He has done this for over 40 years and has been well-off. During the oil crisis in the 1970s when other farmers were badly affected, Maha Yu was not at all disturbed. His system is a low risk and immune economically. The cash-crop farmers are at high-risk, having no immunity; they are easily adversely affected like AIDS patients.

Over 10,000 people come to learn from Maha Yu each year. He is a good

teacher and loves to teach. He teaches the philosophy of life he learned during his monkhood, and he teaches the integrated farming in which he has acquired expertise over several decades of doing. We call his also a Village University – a university that teaches about Life and Nature [4,5].

In Japan Masanobu Fukuoka, a former graduate in microbiology, has for over 50 years experimented with 'Natural Farming'. In Nature no body has to put fertilizer to the forest. Instead the bio-diversity synthesizes natural nourishment. No insects can destroy the forests. For a mixed bio system has a mutual control mechanism. If man observes and respects Nature by farming accordingly, "Natural Farming", Nature will look after him. Fukuoka has been very successful in his experiment – his farming system bears fruits and his life is at peace. He has written several books such as *One Straw Revolution* [6] and *Natural Farming.*[7]

He claims that he uses Buddhist philosophy in his Natural Farming. "Farming is not only for produce but for the fulfilment of life" he wrote.

Masanobu Fukuoka was the recipient of the Magsaysay Award, the Asian version of Nobel Prize, in 1988 for his crusading work in Natural Farming.

Thus the Ecological Farming, Integrated Farming and the Natural Farming are not just farming techniques but they have a 'deep ecology' concept of Man and Nature. I call them Buddhist Agriculture [8], but by no means intend to connect it with Buddhist *Religion* or *Institution.* The word Buddha also refers to knowledge, enlightenment and supreme wisdom. Buddhism is greatly ecological. It views Man not as a super ego or center of all things, but as part of Nature. Dharma, the word often used in Buddhist discourse, also means Nature and Law of Nature. Ignorance refers to not understanding Nature. Wisdom means perfect knowledge of Nature. People are trapped in ignorance which leads to egoism and greed, and they lead lives which disturb and destroy other beings, human and nonhuman. This is the root cause of suffering, disturbance and violence. The purpose of life is to attain perfect understanding of Nature that one is part of Nature and thus should behave accordingly. Such wise individuals are free from egoism and greed. They consume the least as necessary for life to be in perfect harmony with Nature.

Wisdom, freedom, happiness and peace become one and the same

This is not just a concept, but there are practical methods to achieve it. The methods include right livelihood and mind training. People' s minds are already programmed for egoism and greed, and they cannot perceive the true

nature of Man and Nature. Ordinary studying cannot de-program this mind. But right learning and mind training can erase the problem of ignorance. There are many examples of people who have trained themselves to be wise, free, happy and at peace with Nature. Thus philosophising and conceptualization alone are inadequate, but practice and training are necessary for harmony between Man and Nature.

Buddhist Agriculture is a practice and a livelihood that helps Man to understand and be in harmony with Nature.

It may be argued that Buddhist Agriculture is 'uneconomic'. This is a matter of the scope of economics. Prevailing Western economics seems to fit with modern development, recognizing egoism and greed as *the nature* of Man. However, this thinking cannot stand the ecological crisis. The present economic calculation does not take ecological costs and future costs into account. It thus lures the people into over-consuming 'cheap' goods which in reality are ecologically very expensive or priceless. This illusion has led to the End of Nature as described by McKibben and the desirability of New Thinking for Development and Environment as expressed by the World Commission .

Buddhist Agriculture cannot be analysed by prevailing present Western economics. It is of a different dimension. It deals with Man and Nature in a holistic way. Buddhist Economics has been written about by Schumacher[9] and by Phra Dhepvedhi (Prayut Payutto). [10]

The International Herald Tribune of 9 - 10 September 1989 issue printed on the front page that research supported by the United States National Academy of Sciences has found non-chemical farming as productive as the chemical one; in some cases it is more productive. A question was then asked why should the U.S. government spend 13.9 billion dollars a year to subsidize chemical farming. It was suggested that farm policies should be debated in the Congress.

Return To The Good Earth: Damaging Effects of Modern Agriculture and The Case For Ecological Farming, recently published by The Third World Network [11] , is a 570-pages dossier gathering together the evidence of devastating effects of modern agriculture on the Third World and on the environment. It argues for ecological agriculture.

Ecologists and organic farmers throughout the world are advocating a return to natural farming systems, to save and regenerate our soils, to clean our waters, and protect health of both the farmers and the consumers.

Thus Buddhist Agriculture is not peculiar to Buddhism. Man and Nature

is a general phenomenon recognized by all major religions and the ancient sages. Modern arrogance has ignored this wisdom. Now the ecological crisis is before us and there are not yet any science and technology based approaches that can avert it, and there is doubt that there will ever be one. It is time to review the basic thinking – the root cause of the crisis. The ancient wisdom about Man in harmony with Nature should be re-examined.

Achariya Buddhadasa Mahathera for over half a century has been doing research into the Buddha' s wealth of knowledge concerning Man and Nature and has produced voluminous teachings. The teachings center around getting rid of 'self' and becoming free to be in harmony with Nature. Long before the contemporary awakening he had loudly pointed out that the World was running into crisis because it was travelling in the wrong track, induced by basically wrong thinking, wrong education and wrong economic system. According to Buddadasa Mahathera, it is morally a wrong way of life. He has been calling for the return of ***Global Ethics***.

This writing is dedicated to the Mahathera on the occasion of his 84th birthday, May 27, 1990. Faced with crisis, the world will be more responsive to his call for the return of Global Ethics so that Man can be in harmony with Nature.

Prawase Wasi, M.D.

Anantaraj Bldg., Hematology Branch, Medical Science Dept.,
Siriraj Hospital, Bangkok.

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BUILDING TRUST THROUGH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT & ECOLOGICAL BALANCE : A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

During the past decades – indeed since the end of World War II in 1945 – our One World has remained divided and disunited. There is confrontation on all fronts: superpower confrontation, ideological confrontation and confrontation between the haves of the world – the developed industrial countries of the North – and the have nots – the third world countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa. Instead of growing internationalism, there is increased and increasing nationalism and parochialism. We are witnessing a major assault on an already fragile structure of international cooperation. Instead of man being his brother' s keeper, there is a widespread display of self-centredness, selfishness and cynicism. Regrettably we are now in what has been described as the Me Era under the guise of which a large and growing number of people and nations have abandoned themselves to a special kind of selfishness and to a unique disregard for the claims of sociability and order, particularly at the international level. And nations particularly the big and powerful ones are busy causing injury and hardships on other nations usually the weak and helpless ones.

What kind of world will exist by the year 2000? What kind of legacy will the twenty-first century inherit from this excessively troubled twentieth century, where might has always been right, where the end has invariably justified the means and the weak have been persistently oppressed by the strong, and man's inhumanity to man, particularly on account of racial and religious differences, has reigned supreme? Not surprisingly, the first five decades of the twentieth century witnessed two savagely-fought World Wars - the so-called civilized countries engaged in very bloody combat against one another. Not surprisingly also, there was a widely-held determination that the Second World War must be a war that ended all wars and that after it, a better world must be built. How far we have succeeded in building a better world is

a moot point.

Suffice it to say that the recognition of the need for a better post-World War II was an admission that much was wrong, which needed not be wrong and which, therefore, could be altered, if the powers that be were so determined. It was also generally agreed that such a better world would have to be built on the foundation of several ideals: justice, particularly economic and social justice, based on a new economic and social order: freedom, particularly political freedom resulting from the elimination of imperialism, aggression, and colonialism: freedom from hunger in place of the build-up of destructive weaponry: tolerance, particularly racial tolerance and the elimination of racism and racial prejudice: and concern for humanity particularly a universal subscription to the ideal of the oneness of humanity and the dignity of man. The extent to which we are today close to the achievement of these ideals and the challenges which our failure to build trust through economic and social development and ecological balance will be our main concern in this paper.

The Promise and Disappointment of Early Post-war Years

First, let us begin with a review of the immediate post-war years. This period saw a vigorous pursuit of the objective of building a better world. The United Nations was established on 24 October 1945, and soon thereafter the Charter of Human Rights was adopted. It was the intention of all concerned that the UN should be a universal organization in the way that the League of Nations was not. And thanks to the Organization, the decolonization process, begun in 1947 when India became independent, was vigorously pursued. Thus the UN which, when it was set up in 1945 had a membership of 51 States, boasted of 159 sovereign Member States in 1985 when it celebrated, with appropriate pomp and pageantry, its fortieth birthday. We now have for the first time in the history of mankind a truly universal world organization which provides a common forum for the small and poor countries to rub shoulders with the big powerful and rich ones on the basis of equality on matters of common concern. In fact in those heady early post-war years, the emphasis in favour of the emergence of a truly united world was so strong that leaders of thought and statesmen were talking about the need for a world government. Yet it must be acknowledged that this universality of the United Nations has become a source of conflict as the big and powerful nations have come to increasingly resent the dominance of the Organization by the small and poor nations. Although a small nation like Siam is now a member of the UN Security Council, still this means nothing as far as decreasing world conflicts go.

Side by side with the setting up of the United Nations came also the establishment of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Bretton Woods institutions. The Bretton Woods system was originally intended to include an International Trade Organization which was negotiated and agreed upon in Havana in 1984. Unfortunately, its charter was never ratified by the US Congress. In its place was established the less ambitious and more restricted General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) in 1984. GATT was intended as an interim arrangement but has become the principal forum for multinational trade negotiations. Given its limited mandate GATT has been unable to address the wider issues of international trade including steps towards organizing commodity markets all of which the International Trade Organization was to deal with had it been established. Equally unfortunate is the fact that unlike the United Nations, the membership of these Bretton Woods institutions is not universal. Some important planned-economy countries of Eastern Europe notably USSR are not members.

Instead of striving to achieve unity in addressing world economic problems the Western and Socialist countries, soon after World War II went their respective ways. In 1947, the U.S. initiated the Marshall Plan for the economic recovery of Western Europe, for which purpose the nucleus of what later became the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was established. On their part the Socialist countries established in 1949 the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA or Comecon). Thus the opportunity was lost to begin the process of establishing a new world economic order which would cut across ideological differences. Although the Third World countries joined the Bank and the IMF as they gained their independence, their impact on these institutions, whose control lies in the hands of major industrial market economies through votes weighted by the size of contributions, has remained marginal. In any case, although the post-war years saw the emergence of Asia and Africa into the political activities of the world, they, together with the Latin American countries,played very minor roles in shaping the post-war world, particularly in the domain of international economic relations.

By their exclusion it was inevitable that the world shape that emerged was Euro-cum-Americo centric. Not surprisingly, therefore, the world soon became divided into two unequal halves – North and South. The North which includes all the countries of Europe, North America and Australasia, (especially Japan) today controls over 90 per cent of the world' s manufacturing industry. And as the Brandt Commission on International Development Issues stated:

> most patents and new technologies are the property of multinational corporations in the North, which conduct a large share of world investment and world trade in raw materials and manufactures. Because of

> this economic power northern countries dominate the international economic system – its rules and regulations, and its international institutions of trade, money and finance...The North...has a quarter of the world's population and four-fifths of its income; the South, including China, has three-quarters of the world's population but living on one-fifth of the world's income.

The high hopes entertained in the fifties and sixties of massive transfer of capital and technological know – how from the North to the South along the lines of the Marshall Plan ,which had proved so vital for European recovery, did not materialize. The enthusiasm which the launching of the first United Nations Development Decade generated soon faded away as it became clear that the will to bring about basic changes and reform in the world economic system was simply lacking. While no one disputes the fact that economic forces left entirely to themselves tend to produce growing inequality, the rich North has showed remarkable reluctance to apply this basic principle to relations between nations within the world community – a principle that has long been universally applied to relations between individuals and societies within a single nation. Countries which have protected the weak and have promoted the principles of justice within their national borders have been half-hearted in their support for, if not downright opposed to, the establishment of a new international order based on justice, freedom, tolerance and humanity. The establishment of the oneness and solidarity of mankind as an axiom in an age whose real achievements were of international application has eluded us because nationalism is fast becoming, as it did during the inter-war years of 1914 to 1939 and omnivorous all-permeating passion. We remember all too well the disastrous consequences of the rampant nationalism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which combined with the pursuit of oligarchy degenerated into the bogus concept of racial purity invoked by the Nazis in their pursuit of world domination. And if we are not careful, Japan may again be involved in the Third World War. If that war takes place there will be no winners, all will be the losers as there may not be anybody left in the world!

The Regression to Nationalism and Isolation

There is no denying the fact that the world is today more interdependent than it has ever been. Politically, economically, culturally and socially, the scale and complexity of the links among the countries and peoples of the world have risen sharply during the last forty years, particularly during the first two and a half decades of the post-World War II era when there developed a strong current of internationalism running through all societies. The Eastern countries cooperated brilliantly to rebuild the war-devastated-economies of

Europe, and throughout the world there was a unique advance in the creation of wealth and income.

But this cooperation, this internationalism, lasted only a generation. As the divide between the rich North and the poor South widened into a gulf, the cooperation disappeared and was replaced by confrontation. Successive economic crises, with low or negative growth rates in the North and consequential chronic mass unemployment, bred parochialism in the industrialized countries of the North. And in such circumstances, North-South cooperation plummetted. But even in the industrialized countries, the economic crisis resulted in a widening gap between the rich and the poor and in the dismantling of essential public services with the inevitable accentuation of social tensions.

Unfortunately, by choosing protectionism the countries of Western democracies have shown that old habits, however bad and deleterious they may be, die-hard. Although not as glaring as in the inter-war years, economic nationalism has begun to rear its ugly head in our world of today which, as we have already repeatedly stated has become very inter-dependent economically. An increasing number of these countries is tightening its restrictions upon the entry of foreigners , particularly non - white foreigners. That these actions have been and/or are being taken by some of the most powerful states proves the veracity of the aphorism that if there is any lesson that history teaches us it is that it teaches us nothing. Our world – particularly the developed part of it – seems to have learned nothing and forgotten nothing!

The dangers posed by the crisis through which international relations and the world economy are now passing are growing more serious every day. The present North-South divide is not in the long-term interest of our world as it is becoming clear that major national problems have significant inter national implications and can only therefore be solved through international cooperation. In other words, the international system has become complicated as well as becoming more inter-dependent with the result that what appear to be national problems – e.g. environmental, energy, money, trade and finance, and unemployment – can only be solved through international cooperation. The achievement of economic growth and development in one country depends increasingly on the performance of others. As the Brandt Commission repeatedly remarked in its report North-South, "The South cannot grow adequately without the North. The North cannot prosper or improve its situation unless there is greater progress in the South."

The regression to the mentality which prevailed after 1918 must be a source of increasing anxiety to all men of goodwill who believe in peace, justice, freedom, tolerance and humanity. In no area is the regression proving so

dangerous and bringing the world so uncomfortably close to the inter-war years as in the crisis of debt, the volatility in exchange rates and the growing menace to free trade. And this regression must be stopped and reversed in order to avert what happened in the inter-war years: the Great Depression and Hitler.

Some Further Economic Obstacles

In view of the gravity of the debt problem, let me devote part of this section to a discussion of it. Whatever the reasons for the huge external debt that developing countries have piled up, one of its main and dangerous consequences is the reverse or negative flow of resources from the poor countries to the rich countries. After 1945 and beginning with the Marshall Plan, there was a one-way flow of resources from the advanced countries to the developing countries to promote their development.

Indeed, this was also the case in the nineteenth century and during the first decade and a half of the twentieth century. Since the debt crisis which broke in 1982, the flows of resources have been reversed. For example according to the estimates of the IMF, there was a resource flow from the seven largest third world borrowers – i.e. Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, Argentina, Venezuela, Indonesia and Philippines – worth US$ 32 billion in 1985 to their more prosperous creditors. This was nearly 20 per cent of the entire export earnings of these countries. Interest payments alone from developing countries in 1985 amounted to US$ 54 billion.

These reverse flows, unnatural as they are, and inimical to the economic well-being of the world as they are, are being elevated into a necessary system of "adjustment" by the official policy of the industrial countries which are unwilling to assume their proper responsibility for the healthy functioning of the world's economy. Yet, as Lord Lever and Christopher Huhne stated in their book *Debt and Danger*.

> .....such abdication of responsibility is singularly misplaced. The world's financial safety and economic health is balanced on a knife-edge. If defaults halt the reverse flow, many of the largest banks in the advanced countries will become insolvent. A crisis of the kind which we have thankfully not experienced since the Great Crash of 1929 would once again be a terrible reality. But if the Third World's debtors continue to generate the large trade surpluses required to make payment to the advanced countries, their economic development, already manifestly inadequate, will be hobbled for a generation. The effort to sustain the large trade surpluses required imposes enormous strains on the world's trading system, as industries in the advanced countries have to

make way for Third World exports and resist the adjustment by means of ever more strident appeals for protectionism. Moreover, the very uncertain type of continued payments in these circumstances of rising political pressures in both debtor and creditor countries causes the banks themselves to slow down their lending, adding a further depressive influence to world trade."

It is only the governments and monetary authorities of the industrialized creditor countries that can resolve the debt crisis. For it is only they which have both the resources and the standing to reconcile the interests of both debtors and bankers and by so doing safeguard the world economy. It is difficult to disagree with Lever and Huhne that,

> debt needs our urgent attention for the threat it poses in itself but also because it epitomizes a sickness in the West ,it is a dramatic crystallization of the failure of Western democracies during the last twenty years to adopt to a world of economic interdependence....The leaders of the world, whether they be politicians, civil servants or central bankers, have consistently failed to provide strategic thinking. Matters are handled piecemeal with no sense of overall design. The case-by-case approach, justified from one angle, is elevated to high principles.
>
> In reality, it is a sign of intellectual bankruptcy, a euphemism for abdicating responsibility for the aggregate results of our actions. "Leave it to the market", we are told, as if financial markets operate in a vacuum and are not powerfully conditioned by the actions of our great institutions.

It is in the mutual interest of all that a solution be found before the debt crisis develops into an incalculable disaster – a situation which might suddenly develop were all the major debtor nations to follow the lead of Peru or even take more drastic unilateral actions.

We have already referred to regression to protectionsim in recent years – a development which is an antithesis of the trade liberalization movement of the post-war era. It was realized then that trade liberalization would need to be supported by stable exchange rates. The enormous cost of competitive devaluation and beggar-my-neighbour policy of the 1930s was recognized as something that must be avoided in the new post-World War II era. Hence the creation of the IMF to provide even-handed support in the periods of balance of payments adjustments. Yet three decades and a half after the Bretton Woods system was inaugurated ,the stable exchange rate system was abandoned. Free floating, contrary to early expectations, has intensified currency speculation and brought new restrictions to domestic policy through its adverse

impact on patterns of trade and production and its immense repercussions on inflation.

Next, we come to the problems of trade deficits. One of the functions which the IMF was set up to perform was to mitigate the injurious consequences of trade imbalances by protecting not only the trade-deficit countries but also their trading partners through balance of payments support. Unfortunately, IMF operations are too limited and short-term focussed as they are designed to solve the problems of temporary deficits rather than of long-term deficits which are inevitable in the developing countries. Indeed, the IMF with its policy of conditionalities is nowadays always the subject of severe criticisms in developing countries that we may be tempted to think that its pills are gladly swallowed by the industrialized countries that may require its assistance. This is far from being the case.

"My personal experience...convinced me of the colonial status which the multinationals have succeeded in imposing upon Britain. The same is true of the international financial power, now symbolized by the International Monetary Fund" wrote Tony Benn in his book *Arguments for Democracy*. He continued: "Two Cabinets in which I served sent to the IMF for bridging loans, one after the 1967 devaluation and the second in 1976. The IMF sent a team to examine Britain's economic policy and laid down the most rigid prescription for corrective measures to be adopted before either instalment of aid was made available...The humiliation that the IMF imperialism imposes upon colonial Britain is deepened, rather than lessened by the knowledge that our government has been compelled to pretend that it wished to follow policies that have in fact been imposed by the pressure of world bankers."

If Britain, once the center of world power, could be humiliated by the neocolonialism of economic powers what about small states in the Third World!

Fundamental Problems of Hunger, Malnutrition and Poverty

Susan George began her extremely readable, frank and thought provoking book *How the Other Half Dies – the Real Reasons for World Hunger* with this incisive comparison:

> The present world political and economic order might be compared to that which reigned over social class relation in individual countries in nineteenth century Europe – with the Third World now playing the role of the working class. All the varied horrors we look back upon with mingled disgust and incredulity have their equivalents, and worse, in the Asian, African and Latin American countries where well over 500

> million people are living in what the World Bank has called absolute poverty. And just as the propertied classes of yesteryear opposed every reform and predicted imminent economic disaster if eight-year-olds could no longer work in the mills so today those groups that profit from the poverty that keeps people hungry are attempting to maintain the status quo between the rich and poor worlds.

Hence she concluded that hunger is not a scourge but a scandal.

Now twelve years after the publication of Susan George's book, a group aiming to eliminate hunger and starvation from our planet by the end of the century has come out with an authoritative and comprehensive publication *Ending Hunger*, an idea whose time has come, whose facts are so horrifying that they should have shocked the conscience of the rich world. Here are some of the horrible facts. In an age where the civilized world boasts that "scientific and technical advances in agriculture have yielded an era in which harvests are now outpacing population growth, producing for the first time more food than the world needs, hunger and starvation take the lives of 13 to 18 million people every year. This works out at an average of 35,000 persons every day, 24 every minute and of these 18 are children. Nearly one billion people – i.e. 20 per cent of mankind – are chronically and seriously under-nourished. While it would be comparatively easy to wipe out famine, the more pernicious consequences of malnutrition will be harder to tackle. They will only disappear when real development takes place in the Third World.

As the Hunger Project publication has also indicated, there is no other disaster that compares to the devastation of hunger. It has killed more people during the past two years than were killed in World War I and World War II combined. Compared with the disaster wrought by hunger every 48 hours the Hiroshima bomb disaster was like a child's play, tragic as it no doubt was. When the most disastrous earthquake in modern history, which took place in China in 1976, resulted in about one quarter of a million deaths the whole world rightly and properly mourned: yet hunger kills that many people every seven days. The Great Hunger Belt stretches from South-East Asia, through the Indian sub-continent and the Middle East through the continent of Africa to the equatorial region of Latin America. About 50 per cent of the world's hungry people live in just five countries – India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Pakistan and Indonesia. One cannot but agree with the Brandt Commission that "the idea of a community of nations has little meaning if...hunger is regarded as a marginal problem which humanity can live with.

Towards Ecological Balance and Human Environment

It is evident that our world is caught up in a cycle. Especially in quantitative development the further it goes the more problems appear, faster than

they can be solved, and the technocrats are not able to stop the spiralling because (1) they are afraid that if the quantity is not increased everything will come to a standstill. Or all the systems will go haywire leading to possible ruin. For instance, the population will increase and there will be insufficient food leading to clashes. Actually in this regard there is enough food, if it were distributed equitably and used without waste. The problem is that those who have the surplus refuse to share it, because (2) they want to maintain the status of the rich. Their hope is that by increasing production most of the poor will receive a portion of the increase, continually raising their standards. But our nature is such that once we ourselves have become more comfortably situated, even though we see some injustices appearing, we don't get much excited about them if they don't touch us too much. Besides, if we do something about them, we might get hurt.

Is it not for these reasons that development has worked out in such a way that the gap has grown between the rich and the poor, and between the wealthy nations and the poor nations? In Siam, since development planning began, a few wealthy people in Bangkok have become continually wealthier, while the people of the northeast have become poorer, not to mention conditions in other parts of the country. And up until now, there has been no indication that any country is considering a change in its development policies, but it goes blithely on following the blueprints of the capitalist economists. If anyone raises objections to these methods or this type of thinking, he is labelled a rabble-rouser, a proponent of communism, or else he is accused of disloyaity to the Nation, Religion and the King. Is it not time that we should speak the truth, especially those who hold themselves to be religious? We must be honest, and if we are honest we must admit that this type of development has not added to the happiness of the people in any real human sense, but on the contrary has taken a form that to a greater or lesser extent is permeated throughout with crooked deceptions. Moreover we must not forget that the increase in production through the use of modern machinery to exploit natural resources cannot go on forever. Oil, coal and iron, once they are gone, cannot be brought back. As for the forests and some wild animals, when they are depleted, if they are to be brought back, it won't be in our time or our children's time. Production on a grand scale not only uses up the raw materials, it also destroys the environment poisoning the air and the water, the fish and the fields, so that people are forced to ingest poison continually. We do not need to expand further on how man takes advantage of his fellowman.

In short, any country that feels itself so inferior as to call itself developing or underdeveloped, cannot and should not try to raise itself up through this kind of quantitative development in order to put itself on a par with those nations which brag that they are developed.

It cannot do so because, as Everett Reimer has said, if every country was like the United States "the oil consumption would be increased fifty times, iron one hundred times and other metals two hundred times. And the United States itself would have to triple its use of these materials simply in the process of production itself. There are not enough raw materials in the world to do this, nor would the atmosphere be able to take the change. The world as we know it would come to an end."

You will no doubt surmise that I do not agree with that form of development which aims at quantity and even not that form of development which has as its objective the improvement of the quality of human life, yet still stresses material things. In reality, the latter, too, diminishes the quality of human life.

It is not only that materialism fosters violence, but modern applied science also destroys the values of time and space. To a materialist civilization time means only that which a clock can measure in terms of work-days, work-hours, work-minutes. Space simply has three dimensions which are filled with material things. That is why Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, a leading Thai monk, says development means confusion for it assumes the more the merrier, the longer one's life the better, with no thought of measuring the real value of a long evil life as against that of a short good life. This is contrary to the teaching of the Buddha who said the life of a good man, however short it may be, is more valuable than that of an evil one, however long he lives.

As a matter of fact, it is only religion, which puts material things in second place and keeps the ultimate goals of development in sight that can bring out the true value in human development. For even in the matter of judging the value of development from the point of view of ethics and morality, it is difficult to keep material considerations from being the sole criteria.

From the Buddhist point of view, development must aim at the reduction of craving, the avoidance of violence, and the development of the spirit rather than of material things. As each individual progresses, he increasingly helps others without waiting for the millennium or for the ideal socialist society. Cooperation is better than competition whether of the capitalist variety which favors the capitalist, or the socialist variety which favors the laborer.

From the standpoint of religion the goal can be attained by stages as evil desires are overcome. So goals are perceived in two ways. From the worldly standpoint the more desires are increased or satisfied, the further development can proceed. From the religious standpoint, the more desires can be reduced the further development can proceed.

Western civilization erodes Christianity or at least real Christian spiritual values and becomes merely capitalistic or socialistic aiming to

increase material goods in order to satisfy craving. The capitalist variety wants to raise the material standard of living of other groups if possible provided the capitalists themselves can stay on top. The socialist variety reverses it and wants the majority to oppress the minority or those who are opposed to them.

The value scale of Western-type development emphasizes extremes. The richer the better: the capitalists apply this to the wealthy and the socialists to the laborer. The quicker the better. The bigger the better. The more knowledge the better. Buddhism on the other hand emphasizes the middle way between extremes, a moderation which strikes a balance appropriate to the balance of nature itself. Knowledge must be a complete knowledge of nature in order to be wisdom: otherwise knowledge is ignorance. Partial knowledge leads to delusion and encourages the growth of greed and hate. These are the roots of evil that lead to ruin. The remedy is the threefold way of self-knowledge leading to right speech and action and right relations to other people and other beings as well as the environment (*sila* or morality), consideration of the inner truth of one's own spirit and of nature *(samādhi* or meditation), leading finally to enlightenment or complete knowledge *(paññā* or wisdom). It is an awakening and a complete awareness of the world.

When one understands this, one understands the three characteristics of all things from the Buddhist point of view: their unsatisfactoriness, their impermanence and their lack of a permanent selfhood.

True development will arrange for the rhythm of life and movement to be in accordance with the facts, while maintaining an awareness that man is but a part of the universe and that ways must be found to integrate mankind with laws of nature. There must be no boasting, no proud self-centered attempts to master nature, no emphasis placed on the creation of material things to the point where people become slaves to things and have no time left for themselves to search after the truth which is out beyond the realm of material things.

In 1929 Max Scheler formulated a remark which is just as true today as then. He said:

> We have never before seriously faced the question whether the entire development of Western civilization, that one-sided and over-active process of expansion outward might not ultimately be an attempt using unsuitable means – if we lose sight of the complementary art of inner self-control over our entire underdeveloped and otherwise involuntary psychological life, an art of meditation, search of soul and forbearance. We must learn anew to envisage the great, invisible solidarity of all

> living beings in universal life of all minds in the eternal spirit – and at the same time the mutual solidarity of the world process and the destiny of its supreme principle, and we must not just accept this world unity as a mere doctrine but practise and promote it in our inner and outer lives.

This is indeed the spirit of Buddhist development where inner strength must be cultivated first; then compassion and loving-kindness to others become possible. Work and play would be interchangeable. There is no need to regard work as something which has to be done, has to be bargained for in order to get more wages or in order to get more leisure time. Work ethics would be not to get ahead of others but to enjoy one's work and to work in harmony with others. Materially there may not be too much to boast about, but the simple life ought to be comfortable enough and simple food is less harmful to the body and mind. Besides a simple diet could be produced without exploiting nature and one would then need not keep animals merely for the sake of man's food.

In *Small Is Beautiful* E.F. Schumacher reminds us that Western economists go for maximization of developmental goals in a material sense so that they hardly care for people. He suggests Buddhist economics as a study of economics as if people mattered. He says that in the Buddhist concept of development, we should avoid gigantism especially of machines which tend to control rather than to serve man. With gigantism, men are driven by an excessive greed in violating and raping nature. If the two extremes (bigness and greed) could be avoided the Middle Path of Buddhist development could be achieved, i.e.both the world of industry and agriculture could be converted into a meaningful habitat for man.

I agree with Schumacher that small is beautiful in the Buddhist concept of development, but what he did not stress is that cultivation must first come from within.

From the Buddhist standpoint man must cultivate his awareness or mindfulness – to know himself in order not to exploit himself. Unfortunately most of us exploit ourselves in the name of fame, success, development or even social justice.

Only when one is less egocentric, would one become humble and natural then one would be in a true position of trying not to exploit others – not only human but animals, birds and bees, as well as being respectful to our environment.

Sila in Buddhism does not only mean an ethical precept for man's personal behaviour to be goody goody, it in fact refers to meaningful social as well

as environmental relations.

Environmental consciousness toward improving the quality of life came along with the change in attitude toward industrial and technological progress. The 1970 report "Toward Balanced Growth: Quantity with Quality" addressed issues of potential consequences of new technologies. Specifically, one of the first successes of the environmentalists involved their challenge of the development of supersonic transport. The Three Mile Island nuclear power plant incident of 1979 confirmed a growing public suspicion that development in science and technology required public scrutiny and control.

The complex situations of the development problem in the 70s were attributed to factors such as limited resources, environmental concerns, the pursuit of material sufficiency for all and a shift from individual to social responsibility. Most of the goals and problems associated with development and environment have not changed over the past three decades, and many environmental aspects have become more pressing. As was expressed in President Carter's environmental message, the situation is one in which "the projected deterioration of the global environmental and resource base" has become one of the world's "most urgent and complex challenges of the 1980s". In this context a "World Conservation Strategy designed to make conservation and development mutually supportive" was announced in Washington and other capitals in 1980.

Although the initial upsurge of interest in conservation came in the 1960s and 1970s the integration of conservation and environmental considerations into the world development process was emphasized in this new strategy under the conviction that it is essential to the future expansion of dynamic world society. Both the First and Third World nations became aware that "international cooperation is an essential factor both in preserving the global balance of nature and in reducing the damage to the world's ecosystems."

Supporting the conservation strategy, the president of the World Bank issued a statement that the bank was committed to the principle of sustainable development and pointed out that "...economic growth on the careless pattern of the past century poses an undeniable threat to the environment and ultimately to the very ecological foundations of development itself". The announcement of the marriage of conservation and development was characterized as a response to the desperate human needs of the poor Third World by abandoning "the elitist Western mould".

Conclusions

Although man is an adaptive creature of evolution, which enables him to cope with environmental changes, the amount and rates of these changes are

so drastic as to overwhelm the ability of human beings to accommodate them. The shortage of resources has become increasingly serious and is essentially worldwide. There is no longer the possibility of choosing dumping sites without deteriorating the ecosystem. Instead, the negative effects induced in the biosphere may be profound and irreversible.

Realizing these facts from the 1960s we should say that there have been considerable efforts in the management of the problem (of which the theme may be summarized as the conservation strategy through international cooperation). Did we succeed? Despite this strategy our senses tell us that we have an increasingly serious environmental problem in the process of post-industrialization. At the moment it looks as if our traditional approach to the problem is going to lose the race against extermination.

Therefore, in conclusion, we should talk about what must be done to implement the recommendations of the past three decades. First of all we must admit the inherent difficulty of the environmental problem itself: especially in a growing industrial society where this very difficult project actively involves the natural and social sciences, technology, economics, politics and so on. However the present approach is geared primarily toward engineering. Given these facts discussion on human environmental problems should be pursued on a multidisciplinary range of professions including the scientific disciplines. We have to learn that many of the mistakes have arisen from an overly narrow assessment of technological change in society.

Secondly, the efforts to solve environmental problems should be carried out by governmental and private sectors of a nation together with close international cooperation. The particular importance of the latter is obvious from bitter experience. Individual attempts to maximize each country's own benefit, although they may seem to bring apparent profits in the short term can only lead to disaster in the end.

Thirdly, people of any great religious tradition should be aware of these problems and should also learn from indigenous spiritualism and animism in their approaches to nature as well as having a deep commitment to ecological balance as part and parcel of building trust through economic and social development.

I am happy to report that now there is a joint Thai-Tibetan project under the patronage of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the Buddhist perception of nature. The project has distributed 3000 books of stories and teachings drawn from Buddhist Scriptures that relate to the environment.

These will be followed by 50,000 others to all Thai monasteries which

are still vital centres of education and social life in rural areas of Buddhist countries in South and Southeast Asia as well as to the secular teacher training collegues. Audiovisual and television programmes are also planned.

Similar literature is being distributed to schools in Tibetan refugee camps of North India. The books – believed to be the first compilation of environmental themes in Buddhism – include vivid tales of monks and lay people who chopped down trees and killed animals and parables in which the Buddha used nature to illustrate how life should be lived and how humans and animals were part of the same continuum.

It is hoped that this project can soon expand to countries like Japan and South Korea which have strong Buddhist roots and considerable resources for fighting environmental problems, and a much-criticized conservation record, especially in their economic expansion to Southeast Asia and other parts of the world including the Pacific.

One member of the project explains:" It's going to work in the long run. But it must be inculcated into our children so when they grow up they feel close to nature. Once you love nature you don't even have to teach about conservation – you nourish it naturally."

The world view that informs us in this inquiry includes the awareness of the interrelatedness of all beings as expressed in Buddhism as well as lived in the spiritual tradition of many indigenous peoples of America, Australia or New Zealand, for instance the Native Americans teach that humans are not separated from nature, and that nature does not exist simply for human manipulation. Instead, humans are products of natural or spiritual forces that created and continue to govern the world. The Native Americans teach that one cannot separate politics from personal life, spirituality from politics, the animal world from the human, art from the crafts necessary for survival. The traditional Native American lives with an awareness of the sacredness of all life that guides each step he takes, each decision he makes. Many native prayers end with the words *Mitak oyasin* meaning all my relations to acknolwedge that every being in the world is part of one' s family.

In 1855, the President of the United States Franklin Pierce pressured the Indian chief of the Swami tribe, Seattle, to sell the land of what is now Washington State. To this the chief, Seattle, replied as follows, excerpt from his letter:

> How can love buy or sell the sky, the warmth of land? Such thoughts to us are inconceivable. We are not in possession of the freshness of the air, or the water-bubbles. Every corner of this land to my people is holy. They remain holy in the mem-

ory of my people – the sparkling pineleaves and the sandy beaches the mist of dark brooding forests to the songs of insects.

We know that White Men do not understand our way of life. Our piece of land is exactly like another, because he comes at night to rob the land of what he needs. Land, to you is not a brother but an enemy. After conquering a piece he proceeds to the next. After devouring the land with his voracious appetite, only deserts remain.

If I were to accept your proposition, you must do me one thing in return. What is man without other animals? If the beasts were to be ravished, man too would suffer and die from loneliness. What happened to animals is also to occur to humans.

Our god is the same god that you worship. His compassion extends equally to White Men and Indians. This land is precious to him and harming it therefore is an insult to our creator. The White Man will be extinquished. If you continue to pollute your sleeping place some day you will find yourself suffocating amidst your wastes. When the buffalos are killed and wild horses tamed, when the sanctified corners of the forest are damaged by the stench of humans, that will be the end of life and the commencement of death.

When the last Indians are extinct from this land and only the shadows of clouds traversing the plains remain, even then the spirit of my people will be preserved by the beaches and forests. This is because like a new-born babe listening to the heartbeat in the bosom of his mother my people love this land.

After we turn over our land to you, keep in mind that we will continue to love and cherish this land as we always have. After you have taken this land from us, love this land as you do your children, as our god does us, with all your might and ability and heart. We know that your god and ours is the same. This land is precious to him and White Men cannot be exempted from this common fate.

This letter could be a revelation not only to the President of 130 years ago but to the modern man who destroys and pollutes Nature.

Dhyani Ywahoo Cherokee ,medicine woman and teacher of Tibetan Buddhism, who has brought together two great traditions in her teaching, has said, "There is a stream of compassionate wisdom of which we are all a part...From that flowing heart comes a great wisdom to which each of us is attuned...So peace is alive within us as a seed as a song. To call it forth is a practice of clear vision and clear speech. See the beauty and praise the beauty, and wisdom's stream

shall flow abundantly in our heart."

Buddhism, through its insistence on the interrelatedness of all life, its teachings of compassion for all beings, its nonviolence and again as with the native spiritual teachings anywhere, its caring for all of existence has been leading some westerners to broader and deeper interpretations of the relationship between social, environmental, racial and sexual justice and peace.

In this area we are inspired by some examples of such movement like the Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka and especially by the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh, who teaches us to pay close attention to the minute particulars in our actions as well as to the giant web of all life.

Now let me describe another example of the interrelatedness of peace and justice as it is played out on American soil, and the implications in its emphasis on compassion and the interconnection of all beings, its inherent nonviolence. Buddhism seems particularly suited to application to peace and justice issues. Buddhism and Native spiritual tradition in any land can lead us away from our anthropocentric position to a caring for the animal world and all of nature. There is a renewed emphasis on the interconnection of all life in modern Buddhism.

An organization that is attempting to move on this awareness in confronting issues of building thrust through economic and social development with an awareness of ecological balance is the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

The BPF consists of a national organization composed of independent local groups in U.S.A. each working on its own projects as well as a chapter in U.K.. It now has also a chapter in Australia. BPF members sponsored a demonstration in San Fransisco for the monks, nuns and writers who are prisoners of conscience in Vietnam and gathered more than 4500 signatures on a petition that was delivered to the UN Human Rights Commission. It also gathers funds to send to Vietnam for the support of hungry families. The most recent project is the attempt to stop the execution of two Buddhist monks in Vietnam who were accused of associating with an anti-government group. To protest this unjust punishment Buddhists and others concerned on human rights sent hundreds of telegrams of protest to the Secretary General of the Communist Party in Hanoi with the result that capital punishment for the two monks has been reduced to twenty years in prisonment!

On one Sunday each month the BPF goes to meditate on the railroad tracks at the Concord Naval Weapons Station in California where weapons are sent to Central America to be used against the people of Nicaragua. Here BPF members join the brave and persistent members of the Nuremberg Action. A member

said, 'Sitting to meditate between the road and the chain link fence we register a silent protest to the imperialist violence of our government and the loud horns of passing hostile care remind us of the noise of our own minds, the violence and carelessness in ourselves'.

Thich Nhat Hanh is a leading inspirational figure for members of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

He particularly stresses nondualism in his teaching and speaks of *being peace* in the moments in one's own life as part of making peace in the world. He stresses the continuity of inner and outer, calling the world our "large self" and asks us to become it actively and to care for it.

His Tiep Hien Order created in Vietnam during the war, is in the lineage of the Zen school of Lin Chi. It is a form of engaged Buddhism in daily life in society. The best translation of Tiep Hien, according to Thich Nhat Hanh, is the "Order of Interbeing," which he explains in this way: "In one sheet of paper we see everything else, the cloud, the forest, the logger. I am, therefore you are. You are, therefore I am. That is the meaning of the word interbeing. We inter-are."

The order of Interbeing, as it is known among BPF members, is based on Thich Nhat Hanh's reformulation of the Buddhist precepts into fourteen guiding statements, designed to explicitly address social justice and peace issues, sensitizing the participant to test his behavior in relation to the needs of the larger community, while freeing him from limiting patterns. These precepts address issues of mind, speech and body.

The first precept is: "Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. All systems of thought are guiding means; they are not absolute truth." And in his discussion of this, Thich Nhat Hanh writes, "If you have a gun, you can shoot one, two, three, five people; but if you have an ideology and stick to it, thinking it is the absolute truth, you can kill millions." and "Peace can only be achieved when we are not attached to a view, when we are free from fanaticism. The more you decide to practice this precept, the deeper you will go into reality and understand the teachings of Buddhism."

Another precept urges us not to avoid contact with suffering but to find ways to be with those who suffer. And another: not to accumulate wealth while millions are hungry.

These precepts create a consciousness of, and a precedent for social justice and peace work grounded firmly in Buddhist principle, in our individual beings and in our practice of mindfulness. The seventh precept is perhaps

the most important: a pivot on which the others turn.

"Do not lose yourself in dispersion and in your surroundings. Learn to practice breathing in order to regain composure of body and mind, to practice mindfulness, and to develop concentration and understanding."

These guiding statements achieve an integration of the traditional five precepts with elements of the Noble Eightfold Path, and I believe Thich Nhat Hanh's decision to elaborate on the traditional precepts came from his observation that one can interpret these to encourage a withdrawal from the world, a passivity in the face of war and injustice, a separation of oneself from the common lot of humanity. In rewriting the precepts he is countering that tendency. In directing us to focus on our interconnection with other beings, he is asking us to experience the continuity between the inner and the outer world, to act in collaboration in mutuality with others in the dynamic unfolding of the truth that nurtures justice and creates peace

Some of us are trying to meet this challenge, and I hope what some of us are trying to do in connecting our being peace within to the outside world engagingly and mindfully will contribute to a better world with social justice, non-violence and with ecological balance – the Middle Way for each and for the society at large, to live in harmony with one another and with nature.

Sulak Sivaraksa

127 Soi Santipap, Nares Road, Bangkok 10500.

[Adapted from a paper prepared for World Conference on Religion and Peace, Fifth Assembly, Monash University, Australia, 22 January 1989.]

CROSSFIRE

A farmer, body hard, black and lean as rock,
Curved blade balanced upon naked shoulder,
Led us to a place beside the path.
Loose earth here and soft underfoot.
A sinewy arm swept the steel across the ground
Scattering palm fronds and dust in clouds.

The angle of his strokes now changed.
The blade, hot from the sun,
Probed the restless earth.
Then it struck, As if against wood.
With curved tip engaged,
He paused and stared,
Expressionless... arid.

Then, with two desperate tugs
A tangle of roots and clods
Came free.. first one, then another..
And another.
It took some seconds to comprehend,
Although I knew too well.

Kneeling now the farmer cradled in his hand
One smaller than the rest.
Between the tatters of a dress,
Pink with flowers, there was
A tangled mass of bones and flesh
That once had smiled and cried and laughed.

His raised eyes searched the sky
In mute despair.
No one spoke.

The air was still.

The faint but distinctive drawl of a troop truck
Suddenly broke his yearning stare and,
Eyes still clutching vainly at the air,
Laid the hopless fragment back to rest.
With a choked farewell he left us,
Running from that barren place.

And we.. too late..
To do ought but imagine
How much pain and panic was
Borne in that little breast.
Too late..by far !

J. A. M.

5 / 5 / 90

THE ROHINI CONFLICT AND THE BUDDHA'S INTERVENTION

An inherant difficulty in peacemaking is that an environment of conflict has often been established before the peacemaker becomes involved. The experiences that shape the present – the deceptions, coercive tactics, the massacres, the political sleights of hand – have already taken place and decision-makers are often captives of the social reality thus created. Once escalation has taken place, threats made, and violence employed, the space for thoughtful consideration of new directions narrows down. Yet if it is the case that destructive attachments are perpetuated it is equally true that we can liberate ourselves from them. The dimensions of future reality are created in the quality of present endeavour.

The problem facing the peacemaker is how to engage most effectively with the conflict. In this essay I will examine an incident in which the Buddha intervenes in a dispute between two neighbouring states – the Koliyas and (his own clan) the Sakyas – who are about to engage in armed conflict. The intervention does not fall easily into the modern categories of protest, non-violent action, mediation, education or arbitration though elements of each are present.

Two different but overlapping versions of the incident occur in the Kunala Jataka and the Dhammapada Commentary. The two accounts clarify rather than conflict with each other, and I am treating them as complementary. I should make clear that I am not a Pali scholar and am very grateful to friends who are for guiding me to various texts. They are not, however, responsible for any clumsiness or innaccuracy [1].

The Sakyas and Koliyas lived on opposite sides of the river Rohini. Fields lay next to the river on each side and behind them lay the two main towns of the two small states. Kupilavatthu was the Sakya capital while that of the Koliyas was named after the tribe.

We know that until the time of the conflict there had been cooperation between them, because a common dam had been constructed and used by both to irrigate their fields. No previous dispute over possession of the river is men-

tioned. Had there been a dispute over ownership the matter could have been more difficult to resolve: disputed territory often comes to symbolise the pride and aspirations of one state and, of course, the vulnerability and weakness of another.

The cause for strain on this amicable relationship was the decrease in volume of water in the river Rohini in the weeks leading up to the harvest. There may have been a shorter rainy period than usual: no expectation of further rains is mentioned.

Someone in the Koliya community suggested that, since the water was insufficient to irrigate both sets of fields and bring all the crops to maturity, the Koliyas should be allowed to divert all available water onto their own fields: "Our crops will thrive with a single watering." It is not clear what the Sakyas were offered in exchange but the implication of later comments by the Sakyans is that they thought they would have to buy some of the Koliya's crops to make up for their own poor harvest.

Some restriction of the distribution of the water would have made sense, but because the offer was couched in such a way that it gave the Koliyas control over the joint food source the offer was viewed with suspicion. The Sakya response was, predictably, that such an offer would be alright if they, rather than the Koliyas, were to be the beneficiaries of the water. They put it this way:

> "When you have filled your garners with corn, we shall hardly have the courage to come with ruddy gold, emeralds and copper coins and with baskets and sacks in our hands to hang about your doors. Our crops will thrive with a single watering. Give us the water." [2]

The plan would cause dependancy on the Koliyas and this would lead to the Sakyan community's demoralization, loss of wealth, degradation as the hired labour of the Koliyas with the consequent erosion of the comunity's political autonomy.

At this juncture had both sides jointly reconsidered the problem of water shortage and considered the anxieties of the other, for a mutually acceptable solution might have been found. Possible soultions might have been for the water to be diverted to the best fields on each side or acceptance of the Koliyan suggestion on condition that the crops be divided at harvest, for example. However, as in so many disputes the parties began to adopt increasingly rigid positions based – not on continued analysis and careful consideration of the alternatives – but for and against one particular suggestion or demand, in this case on the Koliyan suggestion.

As levels of anxiety rise, disputants tend to focus on one or two factors or issues to the exclusion of others. Mindfullness decreases and people, in the words of the psychologist M. Deutsch,

> "lose their creative potential for conceiving a range of options which might make the conflict a constructive experience in which both sides might profit." [3]

Instead of discussion over a range of options, positions become polarised. In this case the exchange went "We will not give it," "Neither will we."

With the negotiaton process deadlocked it is quite likely that the emotional pressures generated by the original problem and heightened by the altercation would become focussed by each side upon the other. 'They' would seem to be to blame. In addition, a phenomenon known as projection would arise. Unacceptable feelings generated by the conflict – perhaps of hostility, or selfishness – would be repressed only to reappear projected onto the other side. The Sakyas, for example, might not be directly aware of these emotions but would perceive the Koliyas as being intolerably selfish and hostile. This would then justify the Sakyans' own unacknowledged feelings. Projected hostility quickly becomes self-fulfilling: the deluded perception affects our own behaviour, our behaviour affects their's, and we are predisposed to take the worst interpretation of their further reactions. [4]

The Sakyans and Koliyas continued to shout at each other and fist-fights took place:

> "As words ran high, one of them rose up and struck another a blow, and he in turn struck a third, and thus it was that with interchanging blows and in spitefully touching on the origin of their princely families they increased the tumult.[5]

In situations of insecurity there is a tendency for people to identify closely with the group. The princely families symbolised the integrity of the communities and insults to them precipitated a further increase in violence. It would not be uncommon for the insults to be much more upsetting than arguments relating to the original problem. Such insults have the effect of crystalizing the frustration that has arisen during the dispute into anger against the offending party. Needless to say rational discussion about the water shortage would be almost impossible until things calmed down. Both Koliya and Sakya labourers had hard words for each other. Both started by being dismissive, something calculated to cause annoyance by devaluing the other person:

> "'Be off with your people of Kapilavatthu, men who like dogs, jackals

and such like beasts, cohabited with their own sisters. What will their elephants and horses, shields and spears, avail against us?' The Sakyan labourers replied, 'Nay, do you wretched lepers, be off with your children, destitute and ill-conditioned fellows, who like brute beasts had their dwelling in a hollow jujube tree (koli). What shall their elephants and horses, their spears and shields avail against us?'" [6]

Insults are directed at others, but there is another, more insidious phenomenon: not what we say to an adversary but what we say to ourselves about them – how we think of them. In the comparisons to animals spoken about the enemy at the end of each statement there is the very first stage of the process of dehumanisation. Dehumanisation, as it becomes more advanced, has a profound affect upon behaviour in regard to the 'enemy'. It allows people to feel that they are so vastly superior and their enemies so vile that they are able to plan and practice violence against them without feeling too guilty about it. It invariably occurs in war situations. Crusaders were able to feel justified in killing 'pagans', Americans in killing Vietnamese 'gooks', Nazis in killing Jews and so on because they did not acknowledge their humanity. There is a verse in the *Mahavamsa* which may have originated in the same way. A group of arahants is said to have assuaged Duttugemenu's post-battle remorse over the many slain in the words:

"From this deed arises no hindrance in thy way to heaven. Only one and a half human beings were slain here by thee...The one had come unto the refuges, the other had taken on himself the five precepts. Unbelievers and men of evil life were the rest, not more to be esteemed than beasts. But for thee, thou wilt bring glory to the doctrine of the Buddha..." [7]

This is, as Rahula points out "diametrically opposed to the teaching of the Buddha" [8]. The effect would be to make it easier for the king to engage in war again.

Reports of what had happened were made to officials and to the princes themselves. That the water problem did not feature too highly in the resulting internal discussions is suggested by the complete absence of mention in the challenges which were issued the following day. The real concern of the leaders was the insult to their good names. The other interesting thing is that each side implicitly accepted the insult levelled against its royal family the previous day. Perhaps each refers to an embarassing incident or story well-known to everyone.

"Then the Sakyas said, 'We will show them how strong and mighty are the men who cohabited with their sisters', and they sallied forth for the

> fray. And the Koliyas replied, 'We will show them how strong and mighty are they who dwelt in the hollow of a jujube tree, and they sallied forth ready for the fight." [9]

The leadership of each state, then, decided to prepare for war not to enforce or resist the proposed solution to the water shortage but over the insults to their royal houses which, they tacitly admitted, had some foundation in fact.

The Buddha's consideration of whether he should intervene is portrayed differently in the two texts. According to the Jataka,

> "He wondered if he were to go there the problem would cease, and he made up his mind and thought, 'I will go there to quell this feud..." [10]

After which he planned how he should teach them. He is concerned whether the intervention will be successful. There is the expectation that at the end of the day several hundred young men – presumably those about to engage in fighting – will be admitted to holy orders. The account in the Dhammapada Commentary stresses the suffering likely to result if the situation is allowed to develop :

> "If I refrain from going to them, these men will destroy each other. It is clearly my duty to go to them." [11]

The Buddha made himself present between the two tribes. The first words of the Sakyas suggest some dismay:

> "The master, our noble kinsman has come. Can he have seen the obligation laid upon us to fight?"

Next comes an expression of shame at the viciousness in which they were about to indulge followed by a dramatic move to disarm even though it might incur danger:

> "'Now that the Master has come it is impossible for us to discharge a weapon against the person of an enemy' ,and they threw down their arms, saying, 'Let the Koliyas slay us or roast us alive.' The Koliyas acted in exactly the same way." [12]

The spiritual integrity of the Buddha has thrown into stark relief the foolishness of the two leaders. The Koliyas are no longer referred to as beasts but as persons once again, the process of dehumanisation interrupted.

The version in the Jatakas has the king of the Sakyas tell the Buddha that the fight is about water (which, as we argued was not quite true) whereas the

Dhammapada Commentary has a section, not without humour, in which the Buddha questions the king of his own clan on the causes of the quarrel:

> "Said the Teacher to his kinsmen, 'What is all this quarrel about, great King?' 'We do not know Reverend sir.' 'Who then would be likely to know?' 'The Commander-in-chief of the army would be likely to know.' The Commander-in-chief of the army said, 'The viceroy would be likely to know.' Thus the teacher put the question first to one and then to another asking the slave labourers last of all. The slave labourers replied, 'The quarrel is about water sir.'" [13]

The planned war could not be construed as in any way justified (by a supposed duty to protect subjects for example), and the king was profoundly embarrassed. His civil servants did not try to explain it in terms of the water dispute , suggesting that by the time it came to the brink of war the dispute was far removed from its original cause. It is left to the slave labourers to mention the water. They, after all, would not have such a stake in the prestige of the royal household and be more in touch with the daily work near the river. Maybe they had been involved in the initial argument. Like the tax collector in the Christian parable their lack of complex pretenses of righteousness meant they were less entangled than the king in this particular knot.

The Buddha then questioned the king again as to the value he set on life and followed this with an analysis of the roots of conflict in the attachments and aversions they had accumulated:

> "Then the teacher asked the king, 'How much is water worth great king?' 'Very little, Reverend Sir.' 'How much are Khattiyas (warriors) worth, great king?' 'Khattiyas are beyond price, Reverend Sri.' 'It is not fitting that because of a little water you should destroy Khattiyas who are beyond price.' They were silent. Then the Teacher addressed them and said, 'Great kings, why do you act in this manner? Were I not present today you would set flowing a river of blood. You have acted in a most unbecoming manner. You live in emnity, indulging in the five kinds of hatred. I live free from hatred..." [14]

The commentator links the incident with verses 197, 198 and 199, the first of which reads:

> "Oh happily let us live! free from hatred, among those who hate; Among those who hate, let us leave free from hatred."

Bearing in mind that in neither version does the king admit to the role played by the insults in bringing the conflict to the point of war, there is an

interesting remark made by the Buddha towards the end of the Jataka account which may well be a deliberate allusion to this:

> "Verily, there is no satisfaction in this quarrel, but owing to a fued, sire, between a certain tree sprite and a black lion which has reached down to the present aeon" [15]

Is this a way of getting royal pretentions into perspective by gentle mockery of the legends of their ancestry? It is followed by a similarly subversive story of a pack of 'quadrupeds' which rushes into the sea "at the word of a hare" and perishes. The moral is, "There ought not to be this blind following of one another." – a message no general or king likes his men to hear.

There are two further stories in the Jataka account both with cautionary elements. In one it is pointed out that if animals seek out the weak points of each other then they can do each other harm irrespective of weakness or strength. The second echoes the advice concerning the Vajjians in the Mahaparinibbhana Sutta – that their unity is the true foundation of defence – and reads as follows:

> "In the case of such that dwell together in unity, no one finds any opening for attack... but when they quarrelled one with another a certain hunter brought about their destruction and went off with them. Verily there is no satisfaction in a quarrel." [16]

Certain aspects of the Buddha's intervention which are relevant to peacemaking initiatives do stand out. The Buddha's involvement arises from his early awareness of the situation. He was able to avert an incident which would have blighted the relationship between the two communities, perhaps causing further wars, for years to come. The text links his awareness to meditation ;

> "At that time the Blessed One was staying in Savatthi, and at dawn of day, while contemplating the world, he beheld them setting out to the fight."

The stillness of mind and awareness of the human condition gained through meditation is of help in being sensitive to the experiences and emotions underlying what is said and thus in becoming aware of the signs that a conflict is becoming destructive. When there are different perceptions of reality, misunderstandings of each other's words and actions, and emotional upset, the presence of a third party, aware but detached, can be of immense help in clarifying the situation.

A second element in the Buddha's involvement was compassion for all those involved in the conflict. This too would have contributed to the Buddha's acceptablity as a third party. Thirdly there was his confidence that interven-

tion could be helpful. As part of the answer to his own question as to whether to act, Gautama worked out how he would approach the kings and what teaching techniques he would use.

Gautama's transcendance of the issues in dispute, and his concern for the fate of all involved, resulted in both sides accepting his role even though he was himself Sakyan. The Buddha's complete spiritual integrity – to which ahimsa was integral – resulted in a moral power that the disputants found compelling. Not only did they spontanaeously disarm, but were willing to recieve far-reaching criticism.

The directness, careful dialogue and stillness that he brought to the encounter made space for a greater awareness about the roots of the conflict. An important element of meditation – as understood by Quakers – is the opening of the spiritual space which allows constructive dialogue to take place; any agreement, to work, has to be seen as right by both sides. The more they contribute to the decision making process, the more they own it and the more likely it will be effective. We learn nothing of precisely what was agreed : if there was an agreement which sorted out how the water shortage should be handled it is not the narrator's concern.

The incident suggests an approach to the spiritual and ethical grounding of intervention in conflict which is of great relevance today.

John A. McConnell

72 Sun Street, Haworth, Keighley, West Yorkshire, England.

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ENDNOTES :

1. I would like to thank Elizabeth Harris, Stewart MacFarlane and Andrew Rawlinson for guiding me to various texts and in discussing points of interpretation with me.
2. Kulana-Jataka PTS p.219.
3. Deutsch ed Sandole, p.40.
4. Ibid p.41.
5. Kulana Jataka PTS p.219.
6. Ibid p.219.
7. Keyes 78 p.147 cf. Rahula 74 p.21.
8. Rahula 74 p.21.
9. K-J p.413 PTS p.219.
10. K-J p.219.
11. Dham. Com. TPS p.71.
12. J-J PTS p.220.
13. Dham. Com. p.71.
14. Dham. Com. p.71.
15. K-J p.220.
16. K-J p.20.

III

Buddhadasa and Siamese Buddhism

THAI SOCIETY AND BUDDHADASA: Structural Difficulties[1]

Not long after the talk on "The mountain on the way to Buddha's Dhamma" which he gave at the Buddhist Association in Bangkok on June 5, 1948, Buddhadasa played down its subversive character, "Merit and giving, for example, any religion has it, and the primitives too. How long shall we have to waste time, repeating again and again the same things? I believe we have now to go forth and make it (Buddhism) complete. Even on a small scale, two or three of us, it would be great! [2] It would enhance our being Buddhist and would save the honor of Thailand at the same time. You can see that not so many people are interested, but it's better than nothing. I feel too that the Buddhist Association is a private one, comprising only progressive students. This kind of talk, made to their demand, must be considered as a private study for a few people. And the magazine *Sasana*[3], well then! Can you see any big-wig interested? It's just a private journal for a minority who want to do some advanced study. How its contents, which would be a bitter potion even for the gods, could possibly have any influence on the majority of the people?" [4]

Then, in 1990, or more than 40 years later, we see Buddhadasa being granted Honoris cause doctorates by virtually all universities in Thailand; his books appear in all the bookshops; meetings at Suan Mokkh are talked of in the press. One could take for granted that his teachings, being practically officially recognized and institutionalized, have an actual "influence on the majority of the people."

"Yes", says Bodhirak. "That's even the reason why these teachings are nuts because the ruling class, influenced by Buddhadasa, drives the country to overconsumption, ecological ruin, superstition and immorality." [5]

"No", answers S.Sivaraksa. "Buddhadasa has no real influence on Thai society because the so-called "high" persons who pretend to be his disciples are just paying him lip-service. They do not radically change their behavior." [6]

Since many have already analysed the historical and thematical development of Buddhadasa's impact on history of ideas in Thailand [7], I won't deal with it here, except to illustrate some points in passing. I'll ask why Buddhadasa's teaching should be a "bitter potion" to swallow for the majority of the Thais.

My opinion is that this relative incompatibility is not only grounded on the moral flaws religiously oriented people are prone to point at such as "egoism", "materialism" and other commonplaces but also on deep social and psychic structures which escape the notice of the very people involved. Conflict between ideas is too often studied only at the level of these "ideas" through such labels as "politics", "merit", "empty mind", "communism" and "socialism", etc. As such, one idea bumps against others without sufficient attention being paid to the psycho-social humus on which they grow. I would like to look beyond those labels and examine the structure of the Thai religious world which conditions the acceptance or the refusal of new religious teachings.

During their history, the Thais have built a religious world, or more precisely a world-view [8]. A first encounter between the traditional world-view and the modern/western one occurred in the 19th century. Prince and later King Mongkut felt the pressure to counter Christian dynamism and put forward those elements in Buddhism that he felt could make Buddhism stand up and out. With a certain amount of demythification, he believed the Buddhist texts could stand against Western science to ground a true "modern" religion, as H.Alabaster made it known in Europe at that time[9]. However this demythification devised by the ruling elite did not succeed nor was it meant to succeed in questioning the overall scheme of Thai Buddhism as a merit-accumulating enterprise aimed at securing a good and if possible better next life with a nibbana well put off in the out-of-sight future. In the meantime, social status and ups-and-downs in life grossly reflected one's balance of merit. Thais considered it out of question to put an end to one's passions and suffering within one lifetime while Christianity's eternal hell was too barbaric. The only way out for almost all Thais was to link liberation to past, present and future meritorious deeds of countless rebirths.

Buddhadasa devoted himself to drawing all the consequences of the demythification begun in the last century by insisting on hic et nunc liberation, on the "egoism" of the ideology of merit, on the "materialism" of the belief in heavens and on the possibility of realizing in this very life, at least partially, some temporary or definite extinction of our ego, that is some temporary or definite nibbana. He did not advertise this "for monks only", but for the laity, too.

Individual duty and fate in the Thai traditional world-view and in Buddhadasa's are strikingly different. I would like to suggest here that the conflict between the two is articulated in "dialectical knots", the most important of which are: the immediate and the remote; the inside and the outside; the moral of the precepts and the moral of ultimate reality; the tradition and the new.

1. The Immediate and the Remote

In Thai folk religion, some anthropologists separate the "animist" level which is supposed to deal with the immediate daily life (birth;rain; crops; health; etc.) and the "Buddhist" level which is supposed to deal with the long run or the remote life (rebirths, nibbana). A problem with this distinction is that, in actual life, both levels intermingle through complexes of rites, festivals and specialists, while canonical Buddhism offers a comprehensive rationale for the whole.

There is another way to differentiate the immediate from the remote which allows us to understand why animism and Buddhism are not actually separated in popular practice. If we understand "immediate" as "im - mediate", that is "given to the mind without mediation" or "immanent" and if we understand "remote" as "whatever is given through mediation" and "not immanent", we will realize that both animism and popular Buddhism are on the distant or the "remote" side: both offer the means to deal with the allegedly ultimate reasons, external to the mind, of events all of us experience.

It has become a common place for many modernist Buddhists to disdain traditional Thai religion as merely absurd rites, irrational beliefs and pitiful superstitions. However, they may well have forgotten that this religion meets basic needs for much of society. Popular religion gives meaning to the daily life of many. Nothing happens that a medium, an astrologer or a monk[10] cannot justify through interaction of spirits, stars and kamma. Heartbreaks, infidelities, bankruptcies, accidents, illnesses and deaths, are given a meaning within both the visible and the invisible social space. Popular religion explains that these events neither occur at random nor are absurd. They may be linked to such and such a spirit I have offended, to what I used to be or do in a former life, or to a spell cast by my neighbour... Everything is explainable. Everything can be hopefully driven from the unknown.

This unknown may be remote in time (a former life), remote in memory (a sin), remote in some heavenly or hellish space, but may be known or comes to my mind through the mediation of a medium, an astrologer or a monk who can establish the invisible and missing link between my life and the remote. That is why we may say that popular religion is not operating on the im - mediate or immanent side (of the mind) even when it deals with immediate or current events. Popular religion is a "medium" between my mind and the remote sources of good and evil.

Once correctly interpreted, any event is manageable through one or several ad hoc rites, although these may be purely magical and/or already devoted to the welfare of the monks. In any case, their function is the same:

automatically, through the virtue of the ritual, the evil force is expelled and whenever possible, the good one brought in. In brief, the welfare of my mind rests upon an action, a rite or a gift, dealing with a field external to myself, outside myself, "remote".

2. What is Buddhadasa's Rationale for the same Events?

For him, it should be out of question to draw meaning out of any "remote" "reason" or rationale such as a spirit, a god, a planet or a former life. Buddhadasa's theory of human and dhammic language (ภาษาธรรม ภาษาคน) deprives spirits and gods of any objective [11] and separate existence. His notion of action (kamma) with an immanent "fruit" prevents him from looking for the cause of an event in a former life. We know that he converts the popular saying "Who does good gains good; who does evil gains evil" into "Who does good, does good; Who does evil, does evil".[12] The remote of the popular religion is eliminated. There is no place for it, for a rationalization from a remote field, outside the mind. The evil (or the good) of an event is produced now, immediately, in the very instant, and immediately, in the very thought, where I let one "contact" *(phassa)* produce a sensation *(vedanā)* evolving in desire *(tanhā)* and in suffering *(dukkha).*[13] The only valid rationale is not given by dreams, mediums, astrologers or monks but is imposed by wisdom *(paññā).* Through the event, wisdom reads for example the three characteristics of existence (*anicca* or impermanence, *dukkha* or suffering, *anattā* or no-self). This wisdom induces us to apprehend the event with an empty mind (จิตว่าง) so that we do not suffer. No need for an avenging spirit, or a bad star, or a former kamma to take its measure and to try to contain its hold on my peace of mind. The death of a child, for example, is first going to be considered as just another manifestation of the impermanence of everything. Therefore, I must keep my mind void of attachment to this being who, in any case, is no more a real being than I am myself. That was the lesson learnt by Kisāgotami after she had come to the Buddha with her son's corpse. The Buddha sent her to look for a mustard-seed taken from a house where nobody had ever died. She could not find such a grain...

To confront such problems, popular religion offers a system of more comforting explanations. First, Death is generally explainable and explained by a detailed cause instead of a general one (impermanence) which does not explain the actual death of one individual at a precise moment; then, the dead person may be contacted through possession of a medium or through concentration by a monk so that his family may know what he needs. The relationship with the dead is not over, no more than the gifts one may still offer. In the play of fate, we remain helpless onlookers of what has already happened but we can always be a committed onlooker of what may still happen. There is in any case

something to be done – a vow, a rite, an offering, – so that the situation may turn out favourably. In other words, the access to the invisible remote given by the specialists is the key to my Immediate. The action that I take against this remote allows me to improve my actual life.

For Buddhadasa, this is a delusion. The popular Buddhist system is bound to fail because it tries to solve an immediate problem on a remote field. It does not quench fire where it burns but elsewhere. It does not quench suffering where "it" suffers but elsewhere, with an "other". Ultimately, it does not quench suffering now but tomorrow, in a later life. What's the use of that? On the contrary, Buddhadasa proposes the only rationale that the Buddha had ever thought of and the only one which is efficient because it quenches the fire in the fire itself. Suffering, which grows in the mind, must be eradicated in the mind. One has to deal with an im-mediate, immanent, mental problem on the field of its im-mediate, mental genesis and not slip outwards to another plane of existence or another life.

Compared with the usual rationale in traditional Thai society, however, Buddhadasa's system suffers two types of deficiencies:

a.) The most evident one is that it does not satisfy the need for consolation that many people implicitly or explicitly demand from religion. In the example cited above, some information about the "reason" for the death and on the actual happy or unhappy situation of the dead person is needed. More generally speaking, the rites contribute to an integration of the individual in the group, the city, the cosmos. Due to lack of space, we won't develop this point here because it is easy to understand.

b.) The second deficiency may be seen as the consequence of the first one: the suppression of those "superstitions" could cut Buddhism out of its humus and off from its popular roots.

Actually, Buddhadasa tries not to suppress the traditional rites all at once. He prefers to grace them with a new meaning. For his birthday, he favours a "mocking-age rite" over an "adding-age rite". To someone who cannot throw away his spirit house, he would say: "Put a Buddha image inside".

However, fundamentally, Buddhadasa reasons like this: "This rite is not Buddhist, let it fall into disuse", or "There is no permanent self, the possession rites imply a belief in a permanent self; let us suppress these rites", or "Earth-spirits do not exist, many so-called Buddhists have a spirit-house near their house; these people are not Buddhists".

It may be interesting to compare here the reformist movement of

Buddhadasa and the Christian Reformation in 16th century Europe. The Protestants, and to a certain extent the Catholics, thought that Europe had not ever been really Christianized, that the Church had integrated too many pre-Christian rites, festivals, practices and that time had come to wipe out all these "superstitions". Those reformers belonged to an urban elite for whom folk religion was actually similar to Roman paganism. They devised methods to educate ministers and priests who would then inculcate the catechism into the common people. In Thailand, Buddhadasa has similarly criticized the Thai population for being Buddhist in name only. His teachings are printed, sold or distributed by an elite who pretend all the more to purify Thai Buddhism from its connatural magic character that it is educated, urban and even Sino-Thai, which means alien from the native magic and rationale.

Historians do not agree on the impact of the purification of Christianity by Protestant and Catholic Reform in Europe.[14] Some are convinced that only after this Reformation did Europe begin to be really "Christian" through the elites. Others argue that by suppressing folk superstitions the Reformers provoked the dechristianization of large rural parts of Europe; folk people could no longer express religiously all the facets of their sensibilities and as a result stopped participating in the elitist cult. This lost ground had never been recovered. Others think that this dechristianization came later on, in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the fear of hell decreased with the modern culture gaining ground. But all historians admit that, in spite of education and scientific rationalism, magic has not disappeared from Europe and has even used science and rationalism to legitimate itself. [15]

I have alluded to the debate within historians of dechristianization in Europe because some opponents to Buddhadasa have blamed him for "destroying religion in Thailand" particularly with his psychological interpretation of rebirth which tends to nullify most of the rites of folk Buddhism. Of course, in spite of a fundamental radicalism, Buddhadasa remains a pragmatist. He believes that religions with their different levels are actually adapted to the socio-cultural levels of such and such a group. He has tried to show that traditional Buddhism hid "pearls" proving that old Thai Buddhists had quite a deep and correct understanding of Buddhism. We should not forget, too, that many of Buddhadasa's ordained rural disciples reinterpret folk rites and beliefs according to the rhythm of evolution that their flocks can stand and understand.[16] Like Buddhadasa, their inspiration, their motivation and their finality are radical, but their presentation, their teaching and their practice remain progressive, relative, modulated.

But, in the end, by asking people to manage their problems only at the immediate, immanent and mental level, Buddhadasa deprives Buddhism from fulfilling one remaining deep need among people used to coping with daily

problems by playing on their "remote" dimension. Blaming this need on a "materialist","egoistic", "urban" or even "western" origin is not solving the difficulty. This may be a reason why Buddhadasa's teaching might suit only a more or less deculturated elite, "deculturated" in the sense that it has no more bent towards "consolation" and ritual security. Buddhadasa's influence would then eventually increase proportionally within this elite.

This second "dialectical knot" examines the immediate and the remote from another point of view. We have seen that traditional Buddhism solves an "immediate" problem by a "remote" solution. Keeping this in mind, we can say now that this same Buddhism solves an "internal" problem by an "external" solution. We now express in terms of otherness what was then expressed in terms of distance. The "internal" side of the "immediate" suffering is of course its subjective aspect, the self which suffers. Its "external" solution, is to call on an "objective" subject, "other" than the one who suffers, to find the cause of the suffering, a yakkha for example, and define a field for dealing with this source of suffering.

To go back to a traditional world-view, we must mention that the average Buddhist knows his place in the Three Worlds (ไตรภูมิ) and can at the same time contemplate the other stages of his continuous lives. Stories, like that of Malaya (พระมาลัย), lead him through the different planes of the worlds. Paintings on religious buildings tell him what the planes and their beings actually look like. Sermons may even tell him how the preacher had travelled in those infinite spaces while mediums have a daily access to them. Everything confirms the belief that these Three Worlds have an objective, external, geographical existence and that one may travel through them exactly as we do in our earthly plane. They are full of the very beings we used to meet, love or hate in our former lives, which conditions our present state of being.

The main consequence of this system is that it causes me to look for the origin of my actual suffering in beings "other" than the one I am now. Evil is first objectified in this "other" I used to be in former lives and which the Three Worlds' visitors, mainly mediums and monks, may remind me of. Here, "I" is really "an other"[17] who grounds, explains, justifies what I am here and now. Evil is then objectified in these others, different from the one I was and the one I am. I find spirits, hungry ghosts and yakkhas busy with devising treacheries, illnesses, accidents, deaths, to make me pay for my former non-meritorious deeds while benevolent gods and souls remain ready to help me. The global perception of the Three Worlds is finally Manichaean in the sense that I am able easily to differentiate evil beings and zones from good ones. The dialectic which plays between the internal and the external, or between I and the other(s), consists of trying to appease the malevolent beings and of securing help from the benevolent ones.

With his theory of human and dhammic language, Buddhadasa has reversed everything. To look at the Three Worlds is not to look at something outside, but at something inside, within my own mind, within my Self. At the very moment I have a greedy thought, I am a hungry ghost; at the very moment I have a high-minded thought, I am a god; at the very moment I have a vicious thought, I am a pig. The stage, the show, the world are inverted, "introverted" we might say. In them, I see my self. "I" is no more an other. On the contrary, the one(s) I believed to be "other(s)" are revealed as being only me.

It follows that the source of my suffering is not this "other" I used to identify in a former life or in any place of the Three Worlds. The source of my suffering is myself, my self, here and now. Moreover, the Manichaean frontier between evil and good no longer runs between planes and/or beings but through my own ever-changing thoughts when any "contact" *(phassa)* is able to transform itself into a sensation leading to attachment or to nonattachment.

Practical consequences of this introversion of the Three Worlds are not always drawn. We believe that the so-called "conservatism" or even the impotence attributed to Buddhadasa's teachings are rooted in the radical impossibility of him drawing a line between evil and good which coincides with a line between one being and another, between one class and another, between one institution and another. The "other", easy to identify as an enemy, is no other than the omnipresent "inside" defilement *(kilesa)*.

If it is true, as wrote Andre Malraux, that "action is Manichaean" because it forces us to choose between more than one type of action and to behave as if all the "good" was crystallized on one side and all the "evil" on the other, then one may understand why Buddhadasa's teaching might not be as action inductive as some hope. Because the line parting the good from the evil, the passionate from the liberated, is actually in the mind and not between people, between institutions or between countries, because this line is always moving, Buddhadasa can hardly "act" with one man against another, one class against another or one religion against another.

This is obvious in his judgement of Gandhi who could have hoped to win total approval. Buddhadasa does not appreciate that the "liberator of India" was actually a "politician".[18] What is a politician if not someone who has to decisively choose between not only types of words but also types of actions? This antipathy to political involvement emerged when Thais had to choose for or against the communist rebellion in Thailand: Kittivuddho chose to favor army action against communists while Buddhadasa chose to fight passions or defilements both in the Thai army and in the communist rebels.[19] When somebody explains that young girls are lured into prostitution because their parents have been deprived of their land and that something has to be done with the exploiters, he again singles out the defilements. The same reticence towards

Manichaean social views may even be observed within the relationship Buddhadasa has with his own disciples with whom we could expect him to "take sides". He does not acknowledge any "disciple" and, from time to time, does not refrain from disapproving of some in general but specifically enough to have the word passed around. The impossibility he sees in attributing all evil or all good to an institution is manifest too in his attitude towards other religions. When he says to a new Caucasian Buddhist monk that, as a Westerner, he would have better suppressed his egoism by practicing Christianity more profoundly than by "losing time in changing his religion", [20] he confirms his conviction that the frontier between good and evil does not separate Christianity and Buddhism but an egoist and a non-egoist mind.

His decision not to take sides whenever it comes to precise social, political or institutional choices makes some disciples feel uneasy when they would hope for practical, direct, Manichaean counselling. Buddhadasa's caution is not only due to his monk status because, when he feels it necessary, he does not compromise his principles and attacks the American bombing of North-Vietnam allegedly made in the name of morals, or the government's "materialistic" policies, or vegetarianism. But he takes care not to say anything that could make him slip from the moral level to the personal level. In his refusal of vegetarianism or his advocating the primacy of wisdom *(paññā)* against morality *(sila),* for example, he probably has never mentioned the name of Bodhirak. His borderline does not separate beings but modes of being.

This theoretical, or we may say "dhammical" radicalism, allergic to any social or political radicalism, seems to some people an impediment for Buddhadasa's teachings to be actualized in Thai society. The reasons are similar to those we mentioned above about the dialectic of the immediate and the remote. In the same way that most rural folk prefer to pay for a rite and strike remotely against a spirit or a yakkha outside of themselves, urban militants prefer to struggle against an alien to their own mind in the concrete form of a communist rebel or a capitalist investor. The Manichaeism which allows them to focus on the other's evil is doubly gratifying. First, it greatly simplifies the analysis of the situation. Secondly, it is systematically and implicitly self-glorifying because it allows any mediocrity to upgrade himself just by looking down at others. In the extreme cases where action aims at the actual, social or physical destruction of the other side, the gratification needs no detailed explanation; moreover, it is supposed to guarantee peace.

Such is not the case for one who struggles against one's own self. Not only is diagnosis less simple and more painful, but victory is hardly ever definite. That is why Buddha's or Buddhadasa's policy is difficult to apply outside of an elite group, be it monastic or non-monastic, and outside of certain individuals.

The problem is that the elite who favour Buddhadasa's approach would like to mould a new society out of his principles. During the seventies, he tried to escape the "communism or capitalism" dilemma with a "Buddhist" political theory concerning a so-called "dictatorial dhammic socialism", another version of the famous "third path". In opposition to capitalism, Buddhism was "socialist" because the rules of the monks *(vinaya)* imply "socialism". In opposition to democracy which allows immorality to rule society, Buddhism had "dhammic" principles which take into account a balanced welfare for everyone while a moral "dictator" insures that the dhammic policy is actually implemented even among those who are not "dictators" to their own passions.

One problem with Buddhadasa's vocabulary is that he uses common words but with a special meaning of his own. While this may cleverly infuse deeper meanings into common words, it causes confusion. "Socialism" "democracy", "dictatorship" have a common meaning affected by the historical implementations of their ideals. They refer not only to a precise set of ideas but to actual experiences. Buddhadasa's new sets refer only to principles, to ideas and to dreams. As for experiences or facts, a Jataka King, a 3rd century B.C. ruler like Asoka, or a 13th century A.D. Sukhothai ruler, Ramakamheng, can hardly be realistic models for ruling our complex societies and our independent citizens.

A civil society is composed of members who did not choose to get into it, who do not want to get out of it, and who do not have the same ideals. A society of "renouncers", such as the religious disciples of the Buddha, is composed of members who chose to "get out" of a civil society and to live according to a given ideal embedded in precise rules. Is it valid to assume that the principles of a community of "renouncers" apply to the society from which they wanted to leave?

Buddhadasa understands that, lacking of a common ideal, dictatorial power is needed to rule society according to the Dhamma. The problem is to define what actually, precisely, fits with the Dhamma and what does not. He trusts the dictator to decide, in a rather Manichaean way, what and who should be "dhammic" and what and who should not. Europeans still remember that, between the two World Wars, joint refusal of liberal democracy and communism gave all dictatorial powers to a "Caudillo", an "Il Duce" and a "Fürher" who were even supported sometimes by some religious groups in the very name of social order, morals, and efficiency. Of course, as a Thai who had then experienced 40 years of "Democracy-a-la-Thai", Buddhadasa had some excuse for his dislike of democracy-as-it-was. He was right to think that democracy needs intelligence and virtue and virtue when, as he is convinced, stupidity and egoism are the most common qualities. He seems to be sure that with the ten royal virtues *(dasarājadhamma)*, the "dictator" would not go astray. But does

personal morality guarantee a political ability and an efficient ruling? And then who will check the virtues of the ruler? Who will decide that he is lacking? And at which point should he quit? And what if he is not willing? So many questions really, and that's only for the head of state. What about the other sub-powers in the society itself?

Concerning political regimes, Buddhadasa is totally Manichaean in placing all the good in his "dictatorial dhammic socialism". At the same time he is very chary of distributing equally bad grades to liberal democracy and communism or to the Thai army and the communist rebels. The only difference is that liberal democracy and communism are real, actual, factual regimes, while "dictatorial dhammic socialism" is a projection or a mental construction. One cannot say he has taken side about one type of "action" in the historical.

If we turn back now to the dialectic of the internal with the external, we can see that Buddhadasa's teaching suffers from two kinds of flaws which impede its being implemented in Thai society:

a.) By switching the Three Worlds into the mind, in everyone's self, he makes the suppression of "evil" much more exacting, much more demanding, much less gratifying. Evil is easier to fight when we see it in others.

b.) When he gives an advice on ruling a society, he is not convincing, as far as real history is concerned, because no one can see how the three commponents of his utopian regime (dictatorship; Dhamma and socialism) could possibly be implemented at the same time in Thai society as it is.

Buddhadasa appears as an inspirer. He lays principles, shows directions and makes projections. He leaves it to others to invent the actual rules because his deep inversion of the external in the internal prevents him from being Manichaean enough for historical "action", even when he pretends to. But that does not mean he will have no real impact in building a new rationale for Thai Buddhists, which should in due course affect their social practice and behavior. This would be of course another kind of "action", not necessarily less remarkable than many "actions" inspired by exclusively social ideals.

Bodhirak's model may be used here as a counter-example. He has been much more Manichaean than Buddhadasa not only by cutting himself off from the Sangha, but by denouncing much more firmly the shortcomings of the monks and of a so-called "Buddhist" society as well. His Manichaeism has allowed him to propose concrete means for managing social communities, as well by helping the political movement of Chamlong Srimuang as by trying to create an ideal society in Nakhorn Pathom province. At the same time, Bodhirak logically slashed Buddhadasa for preaching abstrusely and for not giving practical social and moral advice. But in the end, who is the more conservative? Who is the

more realistic? Who is – or will be – the more efficient?

3. The Moral of Precepts and the Moral of Ultimate Reality

Our third "dialectical knot" concerns the "moral" rationalization of the two preceding ones. In "traditional" popular Buddhism, common morals are grounded a) on the conviction that the rebirth cycle will be very long, b) on the desire for paradises and the fear of hells, c) on the identification of merit as offerings mainly aimed at the welfare of the monkhood.

With frescoes depicting the Three Worlds, everybody can imagine, dream, and follow the long way leading from births to deaths on the different planes of existence, according to good and bad deeds. With the former lives of the Buddha, one may notice that whoever and wherever we are born, we can accumulate merit without any unnecessary urge to realize a problematic and difficult extinction.

The former lives and the sermons explain how every moral or immoral act is worth thousands and millions of years in paradises or hells. The line between the moral and the immoral or the good and the evil is drawn, depending on the lay or monk status, by 5 or 227 precepts. Paradises, although temporary, let us proceed with patience and even pleasure. Hells, being submitted to impermanence as well, do not prevent optimism about our chances to achieve final liberation.

The best means to accumlate merit are found in sermons explaining the "advantages" *(ānisamsa)* of certain offerings. These sermons give examples of ancient meritorious people who have gained paradises by sustaining the "teaching of the Buddha" *(= buddhasāsanā)*, which amounts mainly to sustaining the monks. Such morality, defined by the precepts and commented on by the sermons on the "advantages" of merit-making, has survived in institutional Buddhism as a direct aim and in better rebirths as an indirect aim.

For Buddhadasa, this institutionalized morality, actually grounded on the permanence of the ego from one birth to another, fundamentally opposes the teaching of the Buddha. Buddhadasa accepts that it may have some temporary and practical good effect; it may even be the only one understandable to ordinary folk. But, in such an "advanced" century as ours and so many years after the Buddha, it is time to pass over this non-Buddhist system. That is why he compared the three jewels (Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha) to a very high mountain preventing the Buddhists from advancing on "the way to Buddha's Dhamma" [21]

He invited Thai Buddhists to re-ground the traditional morality.

The new morality, or rather the "true" Buddhist morality, must not be grounded on the satisfaction of an ego by paradise pleasures but on the awareness of the ultimate "nature of things" and specially the three characteristics of existence, impermanence, suffering and no-self. The rebirths that should take all my attention are not those which will follow my death but those with which my mind experiments constantly in each new thought. The extinction that I must achieve is not an hypothetical nibbana postponed after millions of lives, but is the extinction of grasping to me and mine (ตัวกูของกู), here and now, in and by my mind. We may observe that by delegitimizing the strategy of merit through countless lives, Buddhadasa risked delegitimizing all the practical ways of making merit, which also sustains the monks.

The new basic merit-making was the realization of a mind empty of me and mine. Monkhood, though remaining the most practical and convenient way, appeared less necessary even for definite liberation. Everybody was invited to empty his mind, whatever status, profession, social class or sex, including peasants ploughing their fields, politicians governing and even men and women making love. The paradox was that since nothing could possibly escape from the field of the new precept, no precise set of "precepts" could be formulated. Since the quality of mental emptiness was difficult to evaluate, no scale comparable to that of the "Advantages" could be set up.

Now, the value of any "merit-making" did not lay in the act itself but in the lack of the doer's me and mine.

The new morality questioned the institutionalized one on the ground that it nourished, fortified the me and mine it should have aimed at destroying. To this morality closed on easily listed precepts and deeds, Buddhadasa pretended to substitute one open to a never ending reduction of me and mine. For example, Bodhirak has come to a radical vegetarianism he thinks compulsory for Buddhists. Buddhadasa has answered that eating or not eating meat is not the problem. The only real care for Buddhists should be eating without enjoying it, be it meat or vegetable, just like parents would eat their dead child in a desert. On one side, Bodhirak wants the Buddhists to rely on precise markers from which they may define their identity as persons and as a group before measuring their achievement at some point. On the other side, Buddhadasa thinks that those markers are dangerous because instead of remaining departure or exercise lines from where to progress further, they become arrival lines from where one can say: "See what I have achieved", which is an evidence of me and mine.

The difficulties facing this morality in contemporary Thailand have been noted by critics of Buddhadasa. .Some, who say it will bring Buddhism to

its end, mean an end of the traditional religious system focusing on merit-making for the benefit of the monks. Other critics say it is impossible or even dangerous to ask the laity to behave with an empty mind because lay persons would not fulfil their social duties. Bodhirak thinks it is not realistic because it does not take into account the fact that people need norms, markers, precise precepts. He sees its effect as already having caused immorality in Thai society.

4. The Ancient and the New

One of the most frequent criticisms by Thai Buddhists of Buddhadasa has been his parting from tradition, giving a "new" teaching and behaving like a (false) Buddha by pretending to change Gotama's religion. How and to which extent may one be "new" in a Theravada country? This question brings us to the "dialectical knot" of the ancient and the new in Buddhism.

When comparing themselves to Christians, Buddhists take pride in the size of their Scriptures of many volumes and look down on the one volume of the Bible or of the Four Gospels. If we compare canonical documents traditionally held as dating back to the Buddha or to Jesus in each tradition, Christianity has neither a canonical equivalent of the *Vinayapitaka* nor a canonical equivalent of the *Abhidhammapitaka* which most institutional Buddhists still consider as the "Word of the Buddha". We may, up to a certain point, compare the literary genre of the Gospels with the *Suttapitaka* because both present moments of life adorned with teachings. But, even here, we cannot fail to notice a big difference: Gotama asks questions, argues, tells stories of the past, counters other masters for pages and pages to make a point on rather intellectual on even philosophical subjects. Jesus, on the contrary, makes very short statements and his discourses are summed up or reduced to some well coined formulas.

Even if we find some systematic elaboration in the Gospels, especially in John's, they do not offer such as a comprehensive system as the Buddhist Canon, with its disciplinary rules *(vinaya)*, the Buddha's everyday life teaching *(sutta)* and its philosophical elaborations *(abhidhamma)*. So what happened when Christianity developed? Those who were or pretended to be Jesus' disciples had to build such a rationale or parts of it. Actually, many systems evolved in the nearly 2000 years of Christianity. Whoever wanted a set of rules to keep Jesus' spirit alive just made a set of them to suit his own aspirations as well as the personal or social objectives of his community. Whoever wanted a set of philosophical principles to make Christianity stand up to non-Christian philosophies of his time just devised such a rationale. Whoever wanted to explain Jesus's ideals in contemporary terms was free to do so. Those sets of disciplinary rules, of philosophical explanations, of

pastoral advices did not come directly from Jesus and were not supposed to be eternal. They simply fulfilled a temporary historical function. That is why encounters between Christianity and other world-views or even with new intellectual or social concerns have naturally given birth to new "theologies" in which even the non-Christian thought has played some part not only as a contrasting partner but, sometimes, as a constructive one. In the first centuries, theology was formulated within a Hellenistic world-view; in the middle ages, Aristotle's philosophy, known through the Arabs, made its entry in Thomas Aquinas' thought; lately, for example, theologies grounded on the theory of evolution or on social "liberation" have been proposed. The encounter with world religions has already begun to provoke new theological inquiries and systematizations.[22]

Such is not the case in Theravada Buddhist countries. Since these Buddhist were sure to possess everything from the Buddha himself such as monastic rules, standard as well as philosophical teaching, they did not feel the need to invent new formulations and even feared such trends, parting from the Mahayanists who thought on the contrary that Buddhist teaching had not been fully exploited or disclosed. The Theravada masters had no other way to renew than to produce "commentaries" which were only supposed to add "ancient" glosses to the Canon and to develop what was "abridged" in it. There has been some creative periods such as that of Buddhaghosa and the Lan Na "golden age" but, up to our time, popular sermons focused on the former lives of the Buddha or of the "advantages" *(ānisaṁsa)* of merit-making for future lives. Who could pretend to teach better than the Buddha or the exceptional Buddhaghosa? What could be a better model for life than the former lives of the Buddha or those of the ancient Theras? Perhaps the only place for a relative freedom of creation was the field of meditation methods where non-canonical techniques were admitted. As for normal teaching, only in the last century did King Mongkut and Prince-Patriarch Vajirañāṇavarorasa begin to compose or improvise sermons. Ironically, though, they created at the same time a national orthodoxy and structure that spread all over the country in rituals, doctrinal manuals and pre-composed standard sermons, effectively stifling regional traditions.

Theravada Buddhism tiptoed into the twentieth century continuing to preach again and again the same texts, squeezing out of the Canon merit-making for the monks and for good rebirths. Then came Buddhadasa. Stimulated by changing times, by European, Singhalese, Mahayana and Zen Buddhism, by Christian ways of teaching, by the scientific world-view, setting aside the traditional Commentaries and the popular preacher's books, he read through the jungle of the Buddhist Canon to single out what seemed to him essential. He first came out with successive doctrinal units (human and dhammic language; empty spirit; the ego; the conditioned genesis *(paticca-samuppāda)* ; etc.) and then tried to explain how these units could actually deal with contemporary

personal and social problems.

Buddhadasa hardly corresponds to any other figure in the Theravada tradition of Commentators. He has not just repeated sets of texts, and he has been creative in two ways: first by picking up "jewels" from the Scriptures, brief and inspiring formulas such as "nothing is worth grasping as me and mine"; secondly by proposing ways to make those "pearls" change the society and the world. He probably would not be such an original and dangerous figure in a western Christian country where "theologies" develop regularly. But he fits neither in the mold of monks preaching only on how to go to paradises by donating to the monks nor in that of monks preaching extinction for monks only. This makes him, for some, the saviour; for others, the destroyer of Buddhism in Thailand.

Conclusion

We have seen that Buddhadasa's teaching faces structural difficulties within Thailand's social fabric which should not be brushed aside as "moral" flaws. These difficulties with Buddhadasa's teaching are actually rooted in deep psychic structures (need for consolation; need for self-gratification; need for objectifying evil) or in deep religious structures (need for some after-life hope; reaction against a new model of preacher).

If Buddhadasa was teaching just for an elite like he (said he) did in the forties, there would be no problem. He has his elite of followers. Let it be. The problem arises when he and this elite pretend to change popular and general Buddhist habits in Thailand.

If, to be accepted, Buddhadasa's teaching needs some "deculturation" from ancient structures as inferred above, the only condition for a wider acceptance is to wait for this "deculturation" to emerge through urbanization and education. In that case two conditions would be needed: first, the deculturation should not be so strong or so quick that fundamental basic Buddhist concerns might be discarded along with ancient culture; secondly, the presentation of the teaching should not be so radical, sectarian or exclusive that people with deep Buddhist convictions might be forced to establish large alien countergroups. In other words, the level of the teaching must follow the evolution of society. This is, of course, easier said than done. So far, Buddhadasa himself appears to have learnt patience from experience. But experience is difficult to communicate to others, even to followers.

Louis Gabaude

(Ecole Française d'Extreme-orient)
177 Soi 8 Suthep , Mu 2, Nimanhemind Rd., Chieng Mai.

ENDNOTES :

1. I am indebted to Nancy Swearer and Ronald D. Renard for having improved the quality of my English in this paper, except for a few sentences they have not checked.
2. Emphasised by this author.
3. The journal of the "Dhammadana" Association in Chaiya, printed by Dhamadasa, Buddhadasa's brother.
4. BUDDHADASA, 2512, pp. 369-370.
5. See : BODHIRAK, 2528.
6. See : S.SIVARAKSA, 2526, pp.375-376.
7. See : GABAUDE ; JACKSON ; SERI PHONGPHIT; S.SIVARAKSA, 2526 ; 2529; 2532. SWEARER.
8. To be precise or do justice to Thailand's sub-cultures, I should speak of several world-views here, even for the T'ai population. But, dealing only with general level and not the "elite" one, I'll use the singular.
9. See : ALABASTER, 1972.
10. I'll use "monk" knowing that not every monk would give this type of explanation and that some (at least among the "meditation" monks) give a rationale very similar to Buddhadasa's. I just mean that for people who need it, there are always monks around there to fulfil their needs for that matter.
11. I say "objective" because Buddhadasa acknowledges the "subjective" existence of these supernatural beings.
12. Emphasised by this author.
13. I assume that the reader is informed about conditioned genesis *(paticca-samuppāda).*
14. See DELUMEAU J., 1977.
15. In Thailand, the movement of Bunmi Methankun (บุญมี เมธางกูร) may be considered as an offspring of this tendency.
16. Suchira Prayurpitak's (สุจิรา ประยูรพิทักษ์) Ph.D. Dissertation should show the extent of Buddhadasa's influence in some rural groups.
17. Cf. Arthur Rimbaud (1854 -1891) : "Je est un autre".
18. See : BUDDHADASA, 2529, p. 449.
19. See : BUDDHADASA, 2525, pp. 56. Commented on in GABAUDE, 1988, p.439.
20. See : BUDDHADASA, 2528, p.26.
21. See reference in BUDDHADASA, 2512.
22. Actually, this is a simplified overview of Christian tradition. Not every "new" theology is accepted by the inspectors of Catholic orthodoxy in Rome. As for the Protestant theology, it is generally inclined not to trust natural human reflection, be it in form of philosphy or of religion, because everything "natural" is spoiled by original sin and because the only way for man to be saved is through faith. Many modern minor Protestant churches and numerous sects are "fundamentalist" in so far as they read the Bible without the help of any theological, philosophical or hermeneutical system.

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BUDDHA, BUDDHISM AND BHIKKHU BUDDHADASA

The completion of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's seventh cycle (84th year) not only provides an occasion to honor one of Thailand's most distinguished and distinctive monastic voices, but an opportunity to reflect on the impact of his life and thought on Thai Buddhism in particular, and – in more general terms – on his place within our understanding of Theravada Buddhism. In the fifty-eight years since Buddhadasa founded Mokhabalarama (The Garden of Empowering Liberation) in 1932, he has produced a quantitatively large and qualitatively profound corpus of thought. The visitor to Suan Mokhabalarama's library cannot help but be impressed by the shelves of books and tapes which represent the cumulative work of Acharn Buddhadasa.

Although a few monographs on Buddhadasa's life and work have been published, Buddhadasa's scholarship is only at the beginning stages of systematically digesting, studying, analyzing and evaluating his contribution to Buddhist thought.[1]

In this essay I propose to offer a tentative analysis of Buddhadasa's references to the Buddha in such seminal essays as *Phassa Khon, Phassa Tham* (Ordinary Language/Truth Language), but more particularly on *Phra Phutha Chao Khu'Khrai* ("Who is the Buddha", *"Kan Upati Khu'n Khong Sammasamphutha Chao "The Chao Ong Ching"* ("Seeing the True Buddha"), and *Phra Phuta Chao Me Yu Nai Thùk Hon Thuk Haeng* ("The Buddha is Everywhere All the Time").[2]

The person or figure of the Buddha naturally occupies a place of central importance in the Buddhist tradition. It is generally stated that Theravada acclaims the centrality of the historical Buddha, while Mahayana and Vajrayana digress into more philosophical and esoteric conceptualizations. Even the causal observer of various forms of Buddhism realizes the inadequcy of such a generalization. Each of these strands of Buddhism has a Buddhological complexity which defies stereotypes and easy generalizations. Furthermore, conceptions of the Buddha are dynamic and changing, reflecting evolving philosophical and religious committments as well as differing cultural climates and historical environments. No religious tradition is static, even when it comes to such central items of belief as the nature of the founder of that tradition.

We cannot begin to do justice to the complexity of the historical development of stories of the Buddha or "Buddha histories" as they are often called in Thai *(Buddha-prawat).* This fascinating subject has been studied and debated by such noted western Buddhist scholars as E.J. Thomas, Ernst Waldschmidt, Andrea Bareau, Etienne Lamotte, Alfred Foucher, Erich Frauwallner and others.[3] To better understand Buddhadasa's interpretation of the Buddha, however, we propose to look briefly at two classical Theravada biographies – the *Nidanakatha,* a fifth century Pali commentary attributed to Buddhaghosa but of unknown authorship, and a later Pali biography, the *Pathamasambodhi.* The popularity of the 19th century Thai version of the *Pathamasambodhi* composed by Prince Patriarch Paramanuchit (d. 1853) has obscured the fact that this "Buddha history" originated several centuries earlier. Indeed, it is not unreasonable to assume that the *Pathamasambodhi* may have been written in Chieng Mai in the 16th century during one of the greatest periods of Pali scholarship in Thailand.[4]

The second part of the paper focuses on Buddhadasa's interpretation of the Buddha. We shall analyze Buddhadasa's views within the context of late 19th/early 20th century reformist tendencies in Thai Buddhism, in particular, Chao Phya Thipakorawong's demythologized version of the *Tribhumi Phra Ruang* and Supreme Patriarch Sa's (d. 1900) streamlined rendering of the *Pathamasambodhi.* We shall argue that Buddhadasa's picture of the Buddha reflects this reformist, demythologizing trend, although it must also be seen as an expression of Buddhadasa's unique, creative genius.

The Life of the Buddha – Traditional Theravada

There is no single life story of the Buddha in the Pali canon. The absence of such a story might be explained by the view held by many contemporary Theravadins that the Buddha's primary function was to reveal the Dhamma. That is to say, the Buddha'story serves only as a vehicle for propagating the Dhamma. In support of this view they point out that the Buddha said his successor would be the Dhamma, not one of his disciples.

Despite the fact that no single canonical narrative of the Buddha's life exists, the Pali canon does contain various strands of biographical material. These strands were eventually brought together and elaborated in 5th century C.E. commentaries, especially the *Nidanakatha.* Formally this text is an introducton to the Pali Jataka, stories of previous lives of the Buddha. As its date indicates, the standard Theravada life of the Buddha up through his enlightenment was written 1,000 years after the founder's death. Consequently, it represents a rich synthesis of various traditions – canonical and non-canonical, royal and monastic, aristocratic and popular, Buddhist and non-Buddhist.

The traditional life of the Buddha as we know it today in Theravada Buddhism reflects a process of gradual historical development of various biographical cycles.[5] Historically four periods stand out in the development of the traditional Theravada life of the Buddha: the Buddha's own lifetime (circa 567-483 B.C.E.), the reign of King Asoka (circa 275-236 B.C.E.), the formation of the Pali canon (circa last century C.E.) and the compilation of the major Pali commentarial life of the Buddha (circa 5th century C.E). From the standpoint of development of the Buddha biography four major segments can be distinguished: stories of the Buddha's previous lives (i.e. the Jataka); accounts of the Buddha's geneaology, birth and youth; stories of the Buddha's enlightenment and early years of his teaching; accounts of the final months of his life and his parinibbana.[6]

Jataka texts have been a particularly important biographical genre in the Theravada tradition. It was already a well-established type of text in the pre-Asokan period, and both during and after the Asokan reign Jatakas formed the basis of popular views of the Buddha. Texts related to the Jataka, furthermore, e.g. the *Buddhavamsa,* stories of the future Buddha's encounters with the 24 previous Buddhas, and the *Cariyapitaka,* stories in which the future Buddha acquires the moral perfections that lead to Buddhahood, contributed to this segment of the Buddha's biography. Even after the creation of the *Nidanakatha* in the 5th century as an introduction to the 547 canonical Jatakas, both Pali and vernacular birth stories continued to be written. Northern Thailand, in particular, was an important source of Jataka tales, e.g. the *Pannāsajātaka* collection.

The Buddha's birth and youth play a less crucial role in the Pali scriptures. The Mahapadana Sutta which may be rooted in the Asokan period, recounts episodes in the life of the Buddha Vipassi, events mirrored in the life of Gotama as well. Half of the Sutta is devoted to the birth and youth of the Buddha including his descent from Tusita heaven. It also relates the famous story of "The Four Sights" and the Buddha's subsequent renunciation. Professor Frank Reynolds contends that stories of the Buddha's family, birth and youth were prompted by the practice of pilgrimage, especially at Kapilavatthu, and that a cycle of legends emerged relating the Buddha to a royal geneaology.[7] Other important elements added to this segment of the Buddha story included scenes from the Great Renunciation, the Great Departure, and the Buddha's encounter with Mara.

The Buddha's Enlightenment received more attention in the Pali scriptures than accounts of his youth: in the Bhayabherava, Dvedhavitakka, Ariyapariyesana and Mahasaccaka Suttas, and the relatively expansive account in the Mahavagga of the Vinaya Pitaka. Episodes surrounding the Buddha's enlightenment may also have been generated by the practice of pilgrimage to

Uruvela, Benares and Rajagaha.[8] Especially prominent were the following: the Buddha's apprenticeships with Alara Kalama and Uddaka-Ramaputta, Sujata's offering to the Buddha under the Bodhi tree, his preaching of the Abhidhamma, his defeat of the daughters of Mara, and encounters between the Buddha and Devadatta.

The Buddha's death is recounted in one of the richest and most interesting of the Pali Suttas, the Mahaparinibbana Sutta . Later texts of the chronicle or *vamsa* type, e.g. *Thupavamsa, Dhatuvamsa,* elaborate the growing cult of Buddha relics which is at the heart of much popular Buddhist piety, especially the practice of pilgrimage.

The *Nidanakatha* which links several of these elements remains basically faithful to the various segments of the Buddha story referred to above. Generally speaking the narrative highlights the following: the canonical perspective of the Buddha as a historical figure; the virtue of renunciation as evidenced in the Buddha's previous lives, the Great Departure, Siddhattha's ascetic apprenticeship and his eventual rejection of extreme ascetical practice; and, the close relationship between the themes of the universal monarch *(cakkavattin)* and the fully enlightened being *(sammasambuddha).* In sum, the author succeeds in fusing "the human, ascetic and royal themes so that they become absolutely inseparable and interdependent."[9]

The *Nidanakatha* begins with the *Buddhavamsa* story of Sumedha. The tale, related by the Buddha to his disciples, describes how in a previous existence as the Brahman, Sumedha, he first resolved to strive for Buddhahood. Following this story the writer then describes the twenty-four Buddhas that preceeded Gotama and the ten perfections of a future Buddha abridged from the *Cariyapitaka.* In this way the text sets the stage for the Buddha's subsequent birth, youth, renunciation, and the eventual attainment of Buddhahood. Omitted is the Buddha's post-enlightenment history up to and including his parinibbana. The commentary on the *Buddhavamsa,* however, extends the tale to include the first twenty years of the Buddha's teaching career.

The *Nidanakatha* is essentially of a legendary or mythic genre with no clear dividing line between gods and humans, myth and history. Some elements such as the mythic battle with Mara have no canonical grounding. Other aspects of the tale represent hagiographic elaboration of canonical material. For example, in the Majjhima Nikaya (i.246) a relatively unadorned story is told of young prince Siddhattha's jhanic attainment: that one day while the future Buddha's father was working and he was seated under the shade of a rosewood tree, he achieved the first trance state *(jhāna).* In the commentary on the text and in the *Nidanakatha* Prince Siddhattha's father's work becomes an elaborate first ploughing ceremony, and the young prince's trance attainment is signaled

by a miraculous event: "The nurses left [the young prince] and he sat up cross-legged, practised in and out breathing, and attained the first trance. On the return of the nurses the shadows of the other trees had turned, but that of the rose-apple had stood still."[10]

Later Theravada Buddha-histories or biographies engage in even more imaginative mythic and legendary renderings. Two prime examples are the Burmese *Malalankara* Watthu and the Thai *Pathamasambodhi.*[11] These texts greatly elaborate both the historical/human and divine/miraculous sides of the story of the Buddha. For example, chapter 16 of the *Pathamasambodhi* exalts the supermundane dimension of the Buddha story. In it the Buddha overcomes the hardheartedness of the people of Kapilavatthu by miraculously appearing on a crystal bridge in the sky. Yet, the following chapter, "Bimba's Lament", extols the human side of the narrative – Prince Siddhattha's wife's sorrow at being deserted by her husband. In this respect these later Buddha-histories reflect the same disregard for modern distinctions between myth and history, divine and human, space and time that characterized the 5th century commentaries and such related canonical texts as the *Buddhavamsa.* In contrast to the *Nidanakatha,* however, the *Pathamasambodhi* continues the Buddha's story to his parinibbana and the distribution of the Buddha relic *(dhātu).* Included in the tale are such episodes as the Buddha's prediction of the coming of Metteyya, his miraculous preaching of the Dhamma to his mother in Tavatimsa heaven, and the binding of Mara by Upagutta. The mythic and legendary richness of the *Pathamasambodhi* has led one student of modern Thai Buddhism to observe that this work stands as "one of the last important expressions of the Siamese imagination before the penetration of European culture in the second half of the nineteenth century."[12]

Buddhadasa and Modern Thai Buddhism

Scholars trace the begining of modern Thai Buddhism to the reforms of King Mongkut (reign, 1851-1868) and the establishment of the Dhammayutta order. As Buddhist kings of old, Mongkut sought to purify the Sangha by improving the monks' discipline and monastic education, especially the study of Pali. At the same time he sought to refurbish Thailand's religious heritage, particularly Buddhism, as a way of legitimating his reforms.[13] He set in motion changes that were to be more fully realized during the reign of his son, Chulalongkorn (1873-1910) and the Supreme Patriarch of the Thai Sangha, Prince Vajirañāṇavarorasa. In addition to modernizing monastic education and restructuring the Buddhist monastic order along national political lines, Mongkut and others advocated a deymythologized and more rationalized Buddhist worldview. This trend has continued to the present. Buddhadasa and other

contemporary reformist voices seek to recapture what they consider to be the essence of the Buddha's teachings without the mythological trappings which might stand in the ways of a more "rational" understanding of the world.

The work considered to be the barometer of the changing Thai Buddhist worldview in the 19th century is the *Kitchanukit* (1867) by Chao Phya Thiphakorawong. In essence, the *Kitchanukit* transforms the traditional Thai Buddhist worldview as represented by the 14th cosmological treatise, the *Traibhumi-phraruang,* attributed to the Sukhodayan monarch, Phya Lithai [14] through the application of modern 19th century Western science: "The book distinguished between science and religion by presenting examples from the Traiphum cosmography and then countering the Traiphum's explanations with alternative explanations derived from meteorology, geology,and astronomy."[15]

In some cases the *Kitchanukit* counters traditional mythological explanations for natural phenomena with more rational justifications. For example, the book contends that rain falls not because rain-making deities emerged from their abode or because a great serpent thrashed its tail, but because of winds sucking water out of clouds. The author applies a similar scientific or naturalistic point of view to epidemic disease, the formation of mountains, and so on. Yet, rather than rejecting the mythic explanations of traditional Theravada cosmogony as false, the *Kitchanukit* finds symbolic value in them. In the case of eclipses of the sun or moon, for example, the author sees the traditional mythological account of a serpent (Phra Rahu) swallowing the sun or moon as a parable. In other words, the ancient myths of the *Tribhumi* may be bad science, but they are to be respected as part of the inherited tradition. Indeed, in some cases the author believes one should suspend judgment: "It cannot be asserted that the Lord [the Buddha] did not preach on Davadungsa *[Tavatimsa]* any more than the real existence of Mount Meru [the axia mountain of the Indian Buddhist cosmology] can be asserted...With respect to the Lord preaching on Davadungsa as an act of grace to his mother, I believe it to be true, and that one of the many stars or planets is the Davadungsa world."[16]

In the above paragraph Chao Phya Thiphakorawong combines three interpretative perspectives: ethical, mythical, and scientific. He suspends judgment on the mythic claim that the Buddha preached the Dhamma to his mother in Tavatimsa heaven, but opines that if such a heaven exists it has a naturalistic explanation, e.g. a star or planet. But, more importantly, he emphasizes the ethical import of this mythological episode from the life of the Buddha; namely, that it represents honor and respect for the mother.

In the assessment of Henry Alabaster, a contemporary and friend, Chao Phya Thiphakorawong, represents a "modern Buddhist" point of view: "[The 'modern Buddhist'] is a deeply religious man...throughout his work there is a

spiritual tone which shows, that with him, as with us, religion is a link which connects man with the Infinite, and is that which gives a law of conduct depending on a basis more extensive than the mere immediate present."[17] While Chao Phya Thiphakorawong might have disagreed with some the comparisons Alabaster makes between Buddhism and Christianity in his book, *The Wheel of the Law,* he probably would have agreed with this liberal Christian's statement on the nature of a modern religious worldview.

This modern, demythologizing, "rational" approach to the Thai Buddhist worldview is also represented in a new version of the *Pathamasambodhi* written in the 1890's by Somdet Phra Ariyawongsakhatayana known as Supreme Patriarch Sa. Sa's redacted story provides a more concise, less mythic and legendary outline of the Buddha's life, one serialized in a Buddhist periodical and designed for preaching. It covers the most symbolically important moments in that life, the basic teachings of Buddhism, the founding of the order, the distribution of the relics, and the first Buddhist councils.[18] Unlike Prince Paramanuchit's text, Supreme Patriarch's Sa's account of the Buddha's life does not end with Buddhaghosa's prediction that Buddhism would disappear in 5,000 years after the Buddha's enlightenment. Rather, in accord with King Chulalongkorn's decree that monks should not begin sermons with this prediction, the Supreme Patriarch's text emphasizes the Buddha's teachings as motivation for behavior in this world, rather than "... fear that the religion's disappearance would obviate their salvation."[19]

Where does Buddhadasa's view of the Buddha fit into this development of the "lives of the Buddha" from the traditional 5th century Pali story to the 19th century? Generally speaking Buddhadasa's interpretation of the figure of the Buddha reflects the modernized, demythologized, and more rational view of the "modern Buddhist" of the late 19th and early 20th century. In other words, he is an inheritor of the reformist tradition set in motion by King Mongkut, Supreme Patriarch Sa, Prince Patriarch Vajirañāṇavarorasa and others. His Buddhology, however, has also been influenced by various non-Thai modern Theravada interpreters, including the early 20th century Sinhalese reformer the Anagarika Dharmapala and Western Buddhists such as Christmas Humphreys who founded the London Buddhist Society, as well as non-Theravada voices, especially Zen. Despite these influences, however, in the final analysis, Buddhadasa's interpretation of the Buddha should be seen as a unique and creative synthesis of traditional and modern elements.

In the remainder of this essay we shall explore Buddhadasa's understanding of the Buddha. At the outset, we would suggest that two fundamental principles seem to underly his Buddhology: the identity of Buddha and Dhamma; and the distinction between two levels of seeing, understanding, and expressing/speaking (Thai: *phassa khon / phassa tham).* In the following examination

of selected Buddhadasa talks and essays we propose to demonstrate the centrality of these two interpretative principles.

"Whoever sees me [the Buddha] sees the Dhamma; whoever sees the Dhamma sees me [the Buddha]." This canonical statement attributed to the Buddha stands at the core of Buddhadasa's understanding of the meaning and significance of the person of the Buddha. To know the Buddha, indeed, to "be with" the Buddha is to know and to be with the Dhamma. Thus, when Buddhadasa appears to devalue the historical Buddha, he should not be seen as some sort of Docetic Mahayanist rather than a Theravadin. (Indeed, such distinctions are relatively meaningless to Buddhadasa.) His position is, rather, that the physical appearance of the Buddha served to bring the Dhamma into the sphere of human awareness. Thus, the person of the Buddha points to the Dhamma. He propounded a way to realize the Dhamma. Such is the significance of his Enlightenment.

In his talk, "Who Is the Buddha", Buddhadasa refers to the Buddha as being universally present. To interpret this claim in the sense of a universal Buddhakaya or Buddha-body misconstrues Buddhadasa's meaning. He makes clear in the talk that the Buddha is universally present in his legacy of Dhamma-Vinaya, not in some metaphysical sense. To realize the true essence or quality *(guna-sampatti)* of the Buddha, therefore, one must by necessity realize the essence or inherent quality of the Dhamma *(gunadhamma)*.

Buddhadasa defines the essence of the Dhamma or the essential truth of the Dhamma *(sacca-dhamma)* as Interdependent Co-Arising *(paticca -samuppāda)* , or in more general terms as the fundamental Law of Nature *(dhammajāti)*. He also refers to the essence of the Dhamma as the Four Noble Truths, as the way to the realization of Enlightenment which is nothing less than the realization of the essence of the Dhamma. To walk the path to Enlightenment, furthermore, necessarily entails achieving a state of non-attachment through which suffering *(dukkha)* is overcome.

To see the true Buddha (or to truly see the Buddha), therefore, means that one grasps the essential meaning of the Dhamma as Interdependent Co-Arising (=the Law of Nature or the way things really are). To grasp this Truth necessitates achieving a condition of freedom or non-attachment (Thai: *cit wang)* in which the mind sees with a clarity no longer clouded by *kilesa* (lust, depravity, unregenerate nature). In sum, Buddhadasa's claim that the essential meaning of the Buddha as the Dhamma-vinaya entails three fundamental levels of meaning: (1) ontological; that the world is or operates in a particular way which we may refer to in general terms (i.e. the Law of Nature) or in specifically Buddhist terms (i.e. *paticca-samuppāda)* , (2) epistemological; a particular way of understanding the nature of the world and of human existence

freed from the clouds of *kilesa* and, (3) ethical; a particular path or way of being/acting in the world in which one is freed from ordinary attachments to distinctions between good and evil.

In order to provoke his listeners to move beyond a literalistic appreciation of the Buddha as a historical personage or as a presence confined to relics and images, Buddhadasa often chooses unconventional or provocative language:

"We can forget about the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha! – or that he was someone's child, nephew or lived in such and such a city. The Dhamma in the deepest sense is the Truth of Nature *(saccadhamma)*, the Law of Nature *(dhammajati)*. The Buddha that is not circumscribed by time and place – to that the historical Buddha, himself, referred to as the Dhamma. Indeed, the "Dhamma" of "who sees me sees the Dhamma" is nothing other than the Law of Nature and the fundamental Law of Nature is the extinction of suffering. This is the true Dhamma, so to see the true Buddha is to see the arising and cessation of suffering. This is an eternal truth not limited to a particular time and place. Therefore, it is not limited to such events as the birth, enlightenment and the death of the historical Buddha."[20]

Buddhadasa's claim jolts the average Thai Buddhist listener out of a conventional or commonplace understanding of the historical figure of the Buddha or of such reminders of his physical presence as relics and images. On the surface, Buddhadasa seems to undermine the significance of the historical Buddha. We must ask, then, if Buddhadasa dehistoricizes as well as demythologizes the Buddha story.

Buddhadasa's position does not necessarily undermine the historical particularity of the person of the Buddha. Indeed, in his essay, "Seeing the True Buddha" *(Kan Hen Phra Phuta Chao Phra Ong Ching)*, he argues strongly for the historical uniqueness of the Buddha, i.e. the Buddha's Dhamma. He contends that the Buddha appeared to teach the Dhamma; that his message was unique to his time; that the fundamentals of the message were set forth in the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, namely, that the highest, eternal *(nirantara)* freedom is a matter of *citta* (mind), that through the mind one can overcome depravity *(kilesa)* and suffering *(dukkha)*.[21] Buddhadasa asserts, without worrying about historical justification, that at the time of the Buddha the dominant religious teaching was the attainment of an eternal self. The Buddha appeared in history to bring a new message: that true freedom is non-attachment to everything including an eternal self. For the same reason he also transformed teachings about heaven and hell. Previously they had been understood as physical places of reward and punishment. The Buddha reinterpreted them as internal states, that is the six spheres of sense consciousness *(āyatana)*.

Buddhadasa also argues for the particular meaning of the Buddha in terms of his essential virtue or quality *(guna)*. For example, in his talk, "Who Is the Buddha," he discusses a frequently used phrase in Thai Buddhism, *Buddha-guna*, the virtue or essential quality of the Buddha.

In a manner that reflects the tradition but is not bound by it,[22] he states that the term, Buddha, has four levels of meaning: (1) sammasambuddha, (2) paccakabuddha, (3) anubuddha or arahant and (4) sutta-buddha. The first refers to the founder of the tradition *(sāsanā)* , the fully enlightened one who taught the truth of Dhamma; the second is one who reaches enlightenment by his own effort but is unable to propagate the Dhamma; the third achieves the same knowledge as the first two and has overcome the *kilesas* or moral depravities but achieves that state by relying on the Buddha; the fourth is one who has mastered the Buddhist scriptures but has not achieved spiritual and moral transformation. Of these four terms implied by the name, Buddha, the first is preeminent. It is the sammasambuddha that is meant in the statement, "Whoever sees me [Buddha] sees the Dhamma; whoever sees the Dhamma sees me [Buddha]."

The sammasambuddha not only taught a unique Dhamma, but is unique in terms of his *guna*.[23] As the *bhagava* (Blessed One) he achieved and taught the way to Nibbana. This is the Buddha's fundamental *guna* toward us. As the *sugato* (well-gone, sublime) he defeated Mara and attained the highest level of humanity. As one filled with *muditā* he sacrificed himself for our welfare. In short, the Buddha's *guna* represents his own unique accomplishment and what he does for the welfare of others.

In the light of Buddhadasa's discussion of the figure of the Buddha in relationship to the principle, "whoever sees me [Buddha] sees the Dhamma; whoever sees the Dhamma sees me [Buddha]," we are justified in claiming that he holds both a particularistic and a universalistic view regarding the figure of the Buddha. That is, historically the Buddha's uniqueness hinges both on the fact that he brought a new message to humankind and that the bearer of this message, himself, was qualitatively unique *(Buddhaguna)*; at the same time, however, the historical Buddha served only as a means to make the eternal Dhamma present in history. To be attached to the physical presence of the Buddha or the Buddha as a historical personage means that one fails to grasp the essence of the Buddha. One is "stuck" in the outer covering. Thus, Buddhists who limit the Buddha to the commentarial story about him, or whose religious practice focuses on images or relics of the Buddha have not seen the true Buddha. Similarly, Western scholars who do not see beyond the Buddha as a historical figure in India in the 6th century B.C.E. fail to grasp the essential meaning of the Buddha.[24]

The second major principle to keep in mind when exploring the

question of Buddhadasa's views about the nature of the Buddha is the important distinction he makes between two levels of language and, hence, two levels of understanding (Thai: *phassa khon/phassa tham).* This principle also contributes to Buddhadasa's paradoxical Buddhology which is at one and the same time both particularistic and universalistic. Another way of stating this paradox is that particularistic views of the Buddha, e.g. the physical person of the Buddha, the Buddha as a historical being, Buddha biographies, should point in the direction of the eternal and universal Buddha-dhamma. Buddhadasa's polemic against particularistic and conventional views of the Buddha stems from the fact that in actual practice they most often obscure the deeper and more profound significance of the Buddha. It is not, however, an unqualified rejection of legendary lives of the Buddha or of physical reminders of his historical presence.

The most concise way to assess Buddhadasa's application of the ordinary language/Truth language distinction to the Buddha is to look at his treatment of the term in his essay, "Everyday Language and Dhamma Language." Although his discussion repeats many of the previous points, our analysis of this statement will be based on Buddhadasa's epistemic distinction.

"As you know, the Buddha in everyday language refers to the historical Enlightened Being, Gotama Buddha. It refers to a physical man of flesh and bone who was born in India over two thousand years ago, died, and was cremated. This is the meaning of the Buddha in everyday language. Considered in terms of Dhamma language, however, the word Buddha refers to the Truth that the historical Buddha realized and taught, the Dhamma itself...Now the Dhamma is something intangible. It is not something physical, certainly not flesh and bones. Yet the Buddha said it is one and the same as the Enlightened One. Anyone who fails to see the Dhamma cannot be said to have seen the Enlightened One. Thus, in Dhamma language the Buddha is one and the same as that truth by which he became the Buddha, and anyone who sees the truth can be said to have seen the true Buddha..."

"Again the Buddha said, 'The Dhamma and the Vinaya which I have proclaimed...these shall be your teacher when I have passed away.' so the real Buddha has not passed away, has not ceased to exist. What ceased to exist was just the physical body, the outer shell. The real teacher, that is, the Dhamma-Vinaya, is still with us. This is the meaning of the word Buddha in Dhamma language."[25]

In Buddhadasa's view ordinary language and Truth language are two distinct and different modes of speaking; however, Truth language does not obviate or even subrate ordinary language. Rather, all religious language should reflect the experience of Enlightenment or the experience of Dhamma:

"Dhamma language is the language spoken by people who have gained a deep insight into the language spoken by people who have gained a deep insight into the Truth, Dhamma. Having perceived Dhamma, they speak in terms appropriate to their experience..."[26] By way of contrast, everyday or ordinary language is based only on physical and sensory objects, tangible things perceived under ordinary, everyday circumstances, language lacking knowledge of the Truth or, if you will, the depth of spiritual insight.

When this distinction is applied to the Buddha it can be seen that an everyday language understanding of the Buddha cannot perceive the intangible, nonphysical and, hence, profound or Truth level of the meaning of the person of the Buddha or his particular "history." On the other hand, the logic of Buddhadasa's distinction does not lead to the rejection of the historical Buddha or even the use of Buddha images and relics. If the traditional Buddha story or new versions of that story written in different times and circumstances reflect the author's own Enlightenment or penetration of the Dhamma, that story has the potential of pointing beyond itself to a deeper meaning. Whether that deeper meaning is perceived, however, depends on the insight of the reader as well as the writer.

The same claim can be made for images, relics and other physical or tangible form of the Buddha. These historical or physical expressions (i.e. everyday language) may – and, unfortunately most often do – stand in the way of a more profound perception of the true nature of things. On the other hand, they can be a medium to a more profound understanding of the meaning of the Buddha. Buddhadasa's center in southern Thailand, Suan Mokhabalarama, reflects the way in which the distinction between ordinary and Truth language works when applied to the Buddha. Unlike the radical aniconic approach of the contemporary Santi Asoka movement, Buddhadasa does not reject the use of Buddha images or other representations of the Buddha. To be sure, he has a special fondness for the art of the ancient Indian Buddhist sites in which the form of the Buddha is not depicted. Nevertheless, depictions of the Buddha are found on the walls of the Spiritual Theater, and Buddha images are present at such places as the Dhamma hall. Within the context of Suan Mokhbalarama the physical presence of the Buddha in painting, image, spoken and written word seems not to obstruct one's journey to the non-physical truth of the Dhamma, but to be a vehicle toward a more profound understanding of the meaning of the Buddha.

Where does Buddhadasa fit into the long Theravada tradition of "lives of the Buddha?" In contrast to the *Nidanakatha* and Paramanuchit's *Pathamasambodhi,* Buddhadasa does not construct a Buddha biography out of myth and legend. Yet, unlike the late 19th and early 20th century Thai modernizers, e.g. Chao Phya Thipakorawong, he does not feel compelled to reconcile the mythic

worldview of traditional Theravada with modern science. In Buddhadasa's view Buddhism is "scientific" in that it is based on the experience of things as they really are; however, science which is limited to the physical and tangible cannot satisfy the deepest longings of the human mind and heart.

Buddhadasa's interpretation of the Buddha, as well as other aspects of the *sāsanā* (religion), seeks to reveal the core or essence of the Buddha-dhamma but not to the exclusion of the rich and variegated textures of the tradition. His understanding of the person of the Buddha in terms of the principles of "Whoever sees me [Buddha] sees the Dhamma; whoever sees the Dhamma sees me [Buddha]", and the polarity of everyday language and Truth language make a unique contribution to the ongoing Theravada interpretation of the meaning and significance of the founder of their tradition.

Donald K. Swearer

Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

ENDNOTES :

1. The most thorough and scholarly study of Buddhadasa is, Louis Gabaude, ***Une Hermeneutique Bouddhique contemporaine de Thailande: Buddhadasa Bhikkhu.*** Publications de l'Ecole Française d'Extreme Orient, vol. cl (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extreme-Orient, 1988). Less thoroughly grounded in Buddhadasa's scholarship but a useful introduction for the English language reader is Peter A.Jackson, ***Buddhadasa: A Buddhist Thinker for the Modern World*** (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1988). Translations of Buddhadasa's work are now being done more systematically at Suan Mokhabalarama. Phra Santikaro, an American monk, the public translator of Buddhadasa's early morning Dhamma talks, is beginning to publish some of them and hopes to coordinate the work of other translators. The most recent collection of Buddhadasa's translated essays to be published in English is ***Me and Mine : Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa*** edited with and introduction by Donald K. Swearer (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989).
2. My sources for the first two essays were audio tapes of Buddhadasa's Dhamma talks at Suan Mokhabalarama. The second two were lectures printed as volume 48 in the series, "Chut Mun Law" (Turning the Wheel), Bangkok, 2532/1989. Thai transliteration is slightly modified from the Library of Congress standardization.
3. See in particular, Edward J. Thomas, ***The Life of the Buddha As Legend and History,*** 3rd ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1949); Alfred Foucher, ***The Life of the Buddha According to the Ancient Texts & Monuments of India,*** translated from the French by Simone Boas (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1963). My own discussion of the backgrounds to this study of Buddhadasa's interpretation of the Buddha is indebted to Frank E. Reynolds, "The Many Lives of the Buddha," in ***The Biographical Process: Studies in the History and Psychology of Religion*** (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), pp.37-62.
4. George Coedes notes the possibility of 16th century Chiang Mai authorship of the ***Pathamasambodhi*** citing the existence of an old Tai Yuan recension as evidence. He also notes other options. See George Coedes, "Une Vie Indochinoise du Buddha: La Pathamasambodhi." In the article Coedes also discusses manuscript variants, and differences between the Central Thai and Northern Thai versions. Acharn Bumphen Rawin, Chair of the Department of Thai Language at Chiang Mai University has recently published a Thai translation of the Tai Yuan version of the text, ***Lan-na Padhamasambodhi*** (Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University Center for the Promotion of Textbooks, 2532/1989).
5. For much of this discussion I am indebted to the work of Frank E. Reynolds, "The Many Lives of the Buddha," in ***The Biographical Process,*** eds. Frank E. Reynolds and Donald Capps (The Hague: Mouton, 1976).
6. Frank Reynolds, pp. 42-43.
7. Ibid., pp. 44.
8. Once again the view of Reynolds, p. 46.
9. Ibid., p. 52.
10. Edward J. Thomas, ***The Life of the Buddha As Legend and History,*** 3rd ed.

(London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1949), pp. 44-45.

11. Versions of these two biographies are available in English translation. See Reverend P. Bigandet, ***The Life or Legend of Gaudama, the Buddha of the Burmese,*** 3rd ed. (London: Trubner & Co., 1887), and Henry Alabaster, ***The Wheel of the Law,*** Pt. II, (London: Trubner & Co., 1871). A popular, illustrated rendering of the ***Pathamasambodhi*** is Paramanuchit, ***Phrapathomsomphothikatha*** (Bangkok: Liang Chiang, 2530/1987). A comparison of the Thai text with the Albaster rendering reveals that Alabaster was very selective in his translation, ending the story with the Buddha's enlightenment.
12. Craig James Reynolds, The Buddhist Monkhood in Nineteenth Century Thailand (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1983), p. 133.
13. One of the interesting scholarly debates among Thai scholars today is whether Mongkut "discovered" or created the King Ramkhamhaeng Sukhodayan inscription with its description of an Asoka-like conception of Buddhist kingship. The historian who initiated the debate is Dr. Piriya Krairiksh. See, John Hoslin, "Dr. Piriya Krairiksh. Breaking Down the Ivory Towers," ***Sawasdee,*** vol. 19 (February, 1990), pp.24-31.
14. English translation by Frank E. and Mani B. Reynolds, ***Three Worlds According to King Ruang*** (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1982). Dr. Piriya Krairiksh, the controversial historian who has challenged the authenticity of the 1291 King Ramkamhaeng stone inscription as a 1850's forgery by King Mongkut, has now put forth the theory that the ***Traibhumi-phraruang*** is likewise a creation of King Mongkut.
15. Craig J. Reynolds, p. 130.
16. Henry Alabasster, ***The Wheel of the Law***, p. 17.
17. Ibid., p. xvi.
18. Craig Reynolds, p. 134.
19. Ibid., p. 136.
20. Buddhadasa, ***Phra Phuta Chao Me Yu Nai Thuk Hon Thuk Haeng*** ,Turning the Wheel, No. 48, (Bangkok: Bangkok Press, 2532/1989), pp. 51-52.
21. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, ***Kan Hen Phra Phuta Chao Phra Ong Ching.*** The Turning Wheel Series, No. 48 (Bangkok: The Bangkok Press, 2532/1989), pp. 3-5.
22. For the classical Pali delineation of Buddhaguna see Phra Rajavaramuni, ***Dictionary of Buddhism,*** rev. ed. (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, 2528/1984), pp. 262-263.
23. It appears to the author that in this instance Buddhadasa uses the term, guna, in the sense of "essential quality."
24. Buddhadasa, "The Buddha Is Everywhere All the Time" (***Phra Phuta Chao Me Yu Nai Thuk Hon Thuk Haeng.*** Turning the Wheel, No. 48 (Bangkok: Bangkok Press, 2532/1989), pp. 48-49.
25. Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, ***Me and Mine: Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa,*** ed. Donald K. Swearer (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 127-28.
26. Ibid., p. 126.

BUDDHADASA BHIKKHU AND THE BUDDHIST HERMENEUTICS

Certain scholars of religion and theologians believe that language is likely a crucial instrument of religious understanding. Such belief has thus stimulated a scholarly method, aimed at scriptural exegesis and a proper textual knowledge, called hermeneutics. The word "hermeneutics" derives from Greek – "hermeneutikos" which means "interpretation". Hermeneutical method, one can say, plays an important role in analysing and interpreting religious texts philosophically and linguistically.[1] In theology, hermeneutics is the outcome of personal awareness of the canonical ambiguity leading to the art of religious interpretation and the essential meanings of the doctrine. Hermeneutics is used frequently today in the fields of Biblical studies, philosophy, and literary criticism. For the field of religious studies, hermeneutical method is particularly indispensable since religious teachings are always expressed in metaphors, symbolism, and riddles. It helps scholars of religion establish the basic categories, principles, and norms for religious concepts so that they can recover the hidden meanings of religious texts and practices.[2] The ambiguity of religious symbols and meanings can be seen in religious myths such as the myth of the Creation which is beyond space and time of human beings. Though the Creation occurs outside the realm of human history, the lives of Adam and Eve, according to Christian beliefs, exist in the historical time and space as the first ancestors of humankind. And by means of hermeneutical method, one can find the cause of this dilemma and attain the true meaning of the teachings.

The Beginning of the Buddhist Hermeneutics

The Buddhist Hermeneutics began its role right after the death of the Buddha when Buddhists tried to understand the Buddha's final view and position. The causes of the ambiguity of the Buddha's words can be stated as follows:

1. The Buddhist Scriptures, the Tipitaka, were compiled more than 2,000 years ago during the First Buddhist Council. They had been learned by heart until they were first recorded on palm leaves during the second Buddhist Council of Sri Lanka. From Buddhist Council to Buddhist Council and up till

now, the Buddha's words have been referred to and reinterpreted again and again. Besides, the Mahâyana Buddhists have made the posthumous attribution of many discourses to the Buddha. Thus, it is difficult to gauge what the true teachings of the Buddha would be.

2.In the history of Buddhism, "the Buddha is said to have taught different things to different people based on their interests, dispositions, capacities, and levels of intelligence."[3] And due to such method *(upāya)* of his teaching, his words need to be scrupulously and intellectually examined.

3. Since the Buddha's words have lived through many varied times, their meanings are considered and taken according to the eyes of the age. Though contemporary Buddhologists and Buddhists have carefully studied the Buddhist teachings, they still cannot avoid their own subjectivity and prejudice and thus can hardly attain the essence of the teachings.

Consequently, the art of interpretation or the Buddhist hermeneutics is crucial for Buddhist studies. Once, the Buddha taught his monk disciple, Arittha, as follows:

There are some foolish men who learn the *dhamma, suttas, geyas* and so on by heart; but once they have learned it by heart, they do not examine the meaning in order to understand the texts. Those texts, the meaning of which they have not examined in order to understand them, do not please them and the only advantage they gain from their memorization is to be able to contradict (their adversaries) and to give quotations; all the same, they do not reach the goal for the sake of which they memorized the *dhamma;* those texts which they do not understand will, for a long time, earn them much sorrow and suffering. Why? Because those texts have not been understood.[4]

Nevertheless, the examination of *dhamma* can only be done through a person's hard effort and wisdom. It should be based on "personal reasoning *(yukti)*, on what one has oneself known *(jnata)*, seen *(drsta)* and grasped *(vidita)*".[5] In addition, the true meaning of the Buddha's teaching should be in harmony with the Buddhist doctrine *(sutta)*, the monastic discipline *(vinaya)*, and the spirit of Buddhist philosophy.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and the Theory of Everyday Language-Dhamma Language

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (b.1906), one of the most venerable Buddhist monks of contemporary Thailand, innovates an exegesis of the Buddha's doc-

trine. He primarily considers the Buddha's purpose in preaching his *dhamma* regardless of the aims of the compilers and commentators. His method of textual interpretation is similar to Bultmann's theological hermeneutics which examines the *New Testament.*

Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) was a scholar and theologian of the *New Testament.* He was a professor at Marburg from 1921 to 1951, afer which he worked as a professor emeritus until his death. He believes that the *New Testament* needs to be "demythologized" in order to be practically useful to the contemporary world. In the *New Testament and Mythology,* Bultmann shows that the language used for narrating the story is mythical, such as the account of the world as the battle field of God and Satan, the Immaculation of Mary, and so on which contradict contemporary scientific knowledge. Bultmann explains that Christian beliefs are always based on the acceptance of supernatural powers and of the literal sense of the texts. Thus, in order to attain the essence of the Christian teachings, one needs to demythologize the Bible.

Similarly, while Bultmann demythologizes the *New Testament,* Buddhadasa demythologizes the Tipitaka. Buddhadasa eradicates the literal and mythical senses of the Buddhist Scriptures, such as the meanings of hell, heaven, deities, and so on, so that the Buddhists who have read the Tipitaka or have listened to the Buddhist sermons can understand the Buddha's words properly and thus be able to emancipate themselves from suffering.

According to Buddhadasa, the misconceptions of the Buddha's words arise from the use of language. Buddhadasa classifies language into two levels: everyday language and dhamma language. Everyday language is the language used in our daily life. It arises from sense experiences and mundane expectations. Thus, it cannot penetrate the profound spiritual meanings of the Buddhist doctrine. Dhamma language, on the other hand, possesses the meaning beyond the literal sense of a word. It needs to be grasped by wisdom *(paññā).* For example, "God" in everyday language means a deity who possesses a supernatural power and predestines human lives. But "God" in dhamma language is the Law of Nature which originates and governs all phenomena. [6] The meaning of "God" in dhamma language can therefore be accepted in both theistic and atheistic religions.

Louis Gabaude, a brilliant French scholar of Buddhadasa's work, considers Buddhadasa's theory of everyday language-dhamma language the differentiation between "le discours anthropomorphique" *(puggalādhitthāna)* and "le discours doctrinal" *(dhammādhitthāna)* which signifies the levels of language expressions: *lokiya-vohāra* and *lokuttara-vohāra* [7] *Puggalādhitthāna* is the exposition of the doctrine in terms of persons. For example, in a sermon, a monk preaches the merit of good acts through his narration of pleasant lives

of deities, wealthy people, and so on. On the contrary, *dhammādhitthāna* is the exposition of the doctrine in terms of ideas or spiritual principles. For example, a monk preaches the merit of good acts in terms of the spiritual qualities of goodness in a person which may not be found concretely and superficially. *Puggalādhitthāna* is always expressed in mundane language *(lokiya-vohāra)* which is, in Buddhadasa's use of words, everyday language. *Dhammādhitthana,* on the other hand, is in supra-mundane language *(lokuttara-vohāra)* which is, according to Buddhadasa, dhamma language. In the view of Gabaude, the differentiation between the *lokiya-vohāra* and the *lokuttara-vohāra* does not exist in words themselves but in those who understand them.

> "Lokiya-vohāra" et "lokuttara-vohāra" ne sont donc pas des categories descriptives d'une forme determinee de langage mais des categories d'interpretation. Elles creent une faille dans le mot, dans le discours, plus precisement dans la signification que l'auditeur leur donne. Un expression a rejeter en langage courant ("Plus on cherche a faire le bien, plus ca vamal.") doit etre mise en pratique sur le plan *lokuttara.*[8]

Thus, in other words, *lokiya-vohāra* and *lokuttara-vohāra* are methods of Buddhist art of interpretation – the Buddhist hermeneutics. They reveal two different kinds of truth: the conventional truth *(sammuttisacca)* and the absolute truth *(para-mattha-sacca).* The conventional truth is the truth according to human consensus and invention. Depending on the conventional truth, one is trapped in the eternal cycle of birth and death. The absolute truth, contrarily, is the truth of the essence of things spiritually discerned and free from human invention. If one attains the absolute truth, one can attain nibbana. For Gabaude, the conventional truth can be compared to Buddhadasa's everyday language; and the absolute truth is comparable to Buddhadasa's dhamma language.[9] Gabaude believes that Buddhadasa's hermeneutics which have become a Buddhist innovation in contemporary Thailand is an attempt to protect the Buddha's doctrine from being corrupted by animism and popular religions. He, however, does not explain clearly the relation of dhamma language to the quality of human mind. Does one need first to purify one's mind in order to be able to use the dhamma language? Or can one merely use the dhamma language, regardless of one's state of mind, as a technique to attain the essence of Buddhism?

According to Buddhadasa, though dhamma language is a useful device for detecting the meaning of the Buddha's words, it is not the best means to any religious truth. Before one can make a good use of any language, one needs to purify one's own mind. In this respect, Buddhadasa agrees with Zen masters, especially the Venerable Bodhidhamma (ca. 500 C.E.), that textual knowledge cannot sufficiently help us understand the essence of the Buddha's teachings and that we should examine our own mind.[10] Zen Buddhism disregards a literal

study of the Buddhist Scriptures since it "is an experience, actual and personal, and not a knowledge to be gained by analysis or comparison."[11] Zen masters usually use dhammic riddles in a form of a dialogue as means to help their disciples attain the enlightenment. A dhammic riddle of a Zen master may attack, provoke, or confuse a disciple so that he begins to look into his own self and can finally be enlightened. Similarly, Buddhadasa believes that after having examined and purified one's own mind, one can understand all phenomena in terms of dhamma language and thus can be enlightened.

The Buddhist Hermeneutics and Practices of Thai Buddhists

Most Thai Buddhists are not interested in the essence of Buddhism. They do not try to practice according to the Buddha's teachings leading to the end of suffering or *nibbana*. They consider nibbana too far to reach and too profound to understand. They hold to popular Buddhism which allows animistic beliefs and practices. Their understanding of all phenomena is in terms of everyday language. Since they are lowly educated, they are unable to detect the true meaning of the Buddhist Scriptures themselves. Their knowledge of Buddhism merely comes from others and is encouraged in the contexts of Buddhist ceremonies and tradition. Thus, it cannot help them solve their problems, get rid of their defilements, and bring them to the final goal – *nibbana*.

In the light of Buddhadasa, the language which is truly useful to Buddhists, now and in the future, is dhamma language. It can bring all Buddhists to the final goal of Buddhism. One can grasp dhamma language if one frees oneself from all attachments, defilements, and selfishness. One's mind will be clear and be able to penetrate all meanings of one's experiences.

Buddhists should try to attain the real meaning of life through their spiritual practices. They should purify their minds and let their wisdom show them the essence of all things – emptiness. When they are able to see that the real meaning of all things is without meaning or emptiness, they can free themselves from all attachments and suffering. Thus, the Buddhist goal can only be attained through a proper Buddhist practice based on the right understanding, urged by the Buddhist hermeneutics, of the Buddha's doctrine.

Pataraporn Sirikanchana

Thammasat University, Bangkok.

ENDNOTES :

1. W. L. Reese, ***Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*** (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press Inc., 1980), p.221.
2. David E. Klemm, "Introduction", in ***Hermeneutical Inquiry***, Vol.I ed. David E. Klemm (Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1986), p.3.
3. Donald S. Lopez, Jr., "Introduction", in ***Buddhist Hermeneutics***, ed. Donald S. Lopez (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), p.33.
4. Majjhima-nikaya.I.133, quoted in Etienne Lamotte, "The Assessment of Textual Interpretation in Buddhism", in Ibid., p.14.
5. Majjhima-nikaya.I.265, quoted in ibid., p.12.
6. Buddhadasa, ***Toward the Truth***, ed. Donald K. Swearer (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), pp. 576-57.
7. Louis Gabaude, ***Une Hermeneutique Bouddhique contemporaine de Thailande: Buddhadasa Bhikkhu*** (Paris: Ecole Française d' Extreme-Orient,1988), pp. 85-90.
8. Ibid., p. 91.
9. Idid., p. 93.
10. D.T. Suzuki, ***Zen Buddhism***, ed. William Barrett (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956), p. 54.
11. Idid., p. 20.

FROM BUDDHADASA BHIKKHU TO PHRA DEBVEDI : TWO MONKS OF WISDOM

Evolving Categories of Monks Within the Thai Sangha

Presumably, the Buddhist Canon, the Tipitaka, gets its name from the three baskets in which the texts were filed. This was a matter of order and convenience. The Order of Thai Buddhist monks has also not been immune from categorization or classification. In this sense, at least, the categories that have developed for monks also constitute a case of baskets.

Skipping through history, we can note that from the earliest recorded evidence of the first Thai capital, the inscription of King Ramkhamhaeng the Great (ca. 1292), we learn that the first Supreme Patriarch *(sangkharaj;* Pali, *sangharāja)* of the monkhood was a monk "who had studied the Buddhist Canon [or Tipitaka] from beginning to end."[1] He was brought to the capital from the southern city of Nakorn Sri Thammaraj and took up residence at the Forest Temple in the kingdom of Sukhothai. From this brief description, there can be little doubt that he was a learned and knowledgeable monk – but did he meditate? Did the king who chose him care if he meditated? These seemingly important questions about the practices of this monk are left unanswered.

Thai monks have traditionally been categorized or organized along the lines of divisions inherited from other Theravada countries, such as Sri Lanka. The early Thai Sangha was divided and administered along the lines of the forest-dwelling monks *(araññavāsī)* and the town-dwelling monks *(gāmavāsī).* Each of these, in turn, represented a tendency towards different types of "business" or vocations *(dhura)*– meditation *(vipassanā dhura)* and textual studies*(gantha dhura),* or what have come to be called *patibat* and *pariyat,* respectively.[2] While we have no clear picture of the practices of the first Supreme Patriarch of the Thai kingdom, a synthesis was suggested: he was a monk who knew the whole Canon, and he lived at a, or rather *the,* Forest Temple *(Araññika)*– perhaps he was both well-versed in the Canon and a meditating monk.

O'Connor reports that a variety of Fifth Reign (1869-1910) documents tend to categorize monks under three headings: meditation monks *(phra*

wipatsanathura; Pali, *vipassanā dhura)* , teaching/textual monks *(phra khanthathura;* Pali, *gantha dhura),*and chanting monks *(phra suatmon)*[3] Along these lines, monks are thought to have various capabilities: meditative powers that may go as far as allowing them to perform miracles *(phra aphinihan),* Pali and textual skills *(phra parian);* or oratory skills *(phra nakthet).*

This penchant for categorization was further elaborated in the Sangha Acts of 2484/1941 by specifying four all-encompassing committees *(ongkan)* to oversee the activities of the Sangha. According to this act, the four organizations were listed as follows: 1) government and administration *(ongkan pokkhrong);* 2) education *(ongkan suksa);* 3) dissemination *(ongkan phoei-phrae);* and 4) social welfare or, following certain interpretations, construction of religious edifices *(ongkan satharanupakan).* Some monks prefer to identify themselves along the lines of the activities specified by such acts. While the act of 1941 has been superseded by the act of 1962 that took away the power of these *ongkan,* there is a nostalgia for these same divisions, and word has it that the Ministry of Education and the Sangha Elders are working to "update" the act to include five committees of monks to oversee policy and planning, administration, education, religious propagation and public welfare, respectively.[4]

In the early sixties, monks became involved in national projects to promote Thailand's development.[5] One ex-monk I spoke to said that he had the following choices open to him that illustrate general categories within the scope of monks' activities:

> I often asked myself, "If I were to remain a monk, what kind of monk should I be?" I could not be an "institutional" monk, nor did I see myself as a teacher of *vipassanā* meditation. I could only imagine myself as a monk in society, helping to develop society. I went to visit Sarvodaya when I was studying in India, and I was very impressed by my short visit and the things that they were trying to do [to help local communities].[6] The politics in Thailand eventually made up my mind. When the incidents surrounding October 6th took place, many people were persecuted or judged as "communists" for their work in society. I realized that it would be a very long time before I could do what I wanted as a monk in Thai society, and so I decided to leave the Order.[7]

Often a monk, with only a certain number of options, can have some of those options cut off by the political situation of the times, as this monk did between 1973 and 1976. Some people now feel, however, that another group, *phra phatthana,* should be added to the list specified by the Sangha Acts, expressing the more modern conception of "engaged," development monks.[8] Others have suggested that a separate category of "meditation monks" should also be added and recognized by the Sangha Acts. And most recently, while I was carrying out research on the biography of a contemporary monk, Phra Debvedi (Prayudh

Payutto),[9] people identified another category or type of monk, the monk-scholar *(phra nakwichakan).*[10] Both Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and Phra Debvedi have been identified as modern monk-scholars and have been woven into the pattern of the evolution of the Thai Sangha.

On one level, Buddhism warns against the labeling of people and material things; yet on another level it has compiled grand, convenient lists of mental and physical phenomena. While monks are to practice non-attachment and mindful contemplation of ephemeral phenomena, they have maintained a large part of their tradition through the rote learning of overwhelming lists. Buddhism has tended to delineate two basic ways of expressing reality: as higher truth *(paramattha-sacca)* and as conventional truth *(sammatti-sacca).* Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has called these 'Dhamma language' *(phasa tham)* and 'people language' *(phasa khon).*[11] The current categorizations of Buddhist monks and teachers, while sometimes seeming far from higher truth, are another manifestation of the above tendency. In the case of the Sangha Acts, monk's roles may have been categorized out of bureaucratic convenience, but villagers, devotees, and scholars have done so as a convenient way to describe their devotion, identify a particular, preferred approach to Buddhist practice, or to emphasize a monk's expertise and importance.

On one level, all monks are to be seekers of truth according to the general Three Trainings *(tisikkhā)* of morality, concentration meditation, and the development of wisdom; on another level, they are the products of various family backgrounds and the opportunities afforded them by teachers, temples, and local traditions. The Pali Canon exists as a constant reference for monks. But more often than not, Thai monks are steeped in the commentaries, the ways of their Elder teachers, and the needs and demands of the local folks. It is, therefore, easy for monks to become involved in predicting lottery ticket numbers, conjuring magical cures, and blessing new businesses, cars, and airplanes. Aside from the activities already mentioned, monks in Thailand have been observed engaged in activities as various as calligraphy, composing poetry, curing drug addicts through herbal cures, and making rubber stamps. Many of these monks may not become well known for one particular thing or another. Some grow old as monks without rank *(luang ta),*and others leave the order after their ritual commitments have been fulfilled, they have gathered enough education, or their experiment with Buddhism is over. In fact, the majority of the over 200,000 monks in Thailand are merely in transition, many on a "path of mobility" for less fortunate youth with no access to secular education – the majority flowing in and out of the Order in between rainy seasons *(vassa).*[12]

From Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

Occasionally, a monk comes along that does not fit any of the forgone patterns. He decides at an early age to devote himself to the Order. He is engaged in and excels at a number of activities not easily categorized by any one of the above standard notions of Thai Buddhist monks. At first he is criticized for his break with traditional teachings and the conventions of most people's "people language."[13] He continues to be treated or perceived in traditional terms, but later, as more and more people begin to understand the language he speaks, there is increased understanding and acceptance. Such is the case with Buddhadasa Bhikkhu.

There is not enough room here to do justice to the life of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu.[14] Essentially, however, this monk altered Thai Buddhism in the following ways: Buddhadasa Bhikkhu left the city of Bangkok, at the same time turning his back on rank and administrative positions, and he went off to wander near his hometown in the South. There, instead of establishing a new temple, he went off to live in an abandoned one. Later, he eventually founded Suan Mokkhabalarama (or Suan Mokh, for short), "The Garden of Liberation." He used colloquial terminology (such as the derogatory first person pronoun, *ku)* to shock his audience into self-awareness, translated Pali texts and chants into Thai, and generally reified the final goal of Buddhism through his interest in Mahayana and Zen Buddhism, coining the term *chit-wang* ('freed mind' or 'no self,' similar to *anattā* and based on the doctrine of *suññatā).* In over half a century of work at Suan Mokh, Buddhadasa has published the most formidable collection of literature on these and other points of Buddhist doctrine in Thai Buddhist history. According to many, this was just what Buddhism needed at the time.

While conducting interviews, I found that most people who perceived an evolution of scholarship in Thai Buddhism saw Buddhadasa Bhikkhu at the heart of it. Earlier in Thai history, education was being standardized and aided by the great assistance of Prince-Patriarch Wachirayanwarorot (1860-1921). At the turn of the century, and under a certain amount of pressure of the possible control by foreign nations, King Chulalongkorn overhauled the bureaucracy of Siam. At this time a reconsideration of educational reform was also taking place.[15] Wachirayanwarorot revitalized a national Buddhism by writing a number of texts (the influential *Navakovāda* is still used for newly-ordained monks and novices) and standardizing examinations for Buddhist studies. For many decades, he was seen as the patriarch of institutional Thai Buddhism and Buddhist scholarship. But by the mid-1900s, many people were looking for a monk who could revitalize Buddhism and take it beyond many of its established folk traditions and "superstitious" aspects.

While Wachirayan's works cannot be blamed for a certain amount of stagnation of the education of Buddhist monks, their continued use and the status afforded them by those overseeing the Buddhist universities, along with the lack of other high-quality texts, can be faulted. Wachirayan's texts became the basis of a good portion of the rote learning that took place at these institutions. In order to move beyond these texts, some of the works of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu were eventually introduced as supplementary reading. His own questioning of the scope of Buddhism and the status of certain commentaries and commentators, including the "untouchable" Buddhagosha, the famous 5th century commentator, challenged many young minds engaged in the study of Buddhist doctrine. This has continued to the point that Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and his Garden are now viewed as an extension of the course materials and models available to students of Buddhism. As an illustration of his prominence, in January of 1990, two train cars were rented by Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University to take over two hundred monk-students on a pilgrimage south to Suan Mokh.

Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has focused his interests primarily on issues pertaining to doctrine as opposed to moral issues. The Theravada tradition has usually been very conservative and has centered its debates mainly on aspects of discipline, conduct, and the wearing of robes.[16] Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's primary concerns compelled people to redirect their attention to the end point of Buddhist practice – final freedom, or *nibbana*. Taking exception to some of the notions he felt were inherited from Buddhagosha, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu moved the notions of karma, heaven, and hell into the present. In light of his teachings, there is no way that one could postpone paying attention to matters of deliverance or enlightenment until the next life; falling into hell or going to heaven is the direct result of proper actions performed from moment to moment.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu can also be viewed against the background of Thai Buddhism that is categorized or analyzed in another prominent way following the Three Trainings.[17] According to the Three Trainings *(tisikkhā)*, monks are to engage in the development of *sila* (morality), *samadhi* (concentration meditation), and *paññā* (wisdom). This triad of trainings has become a strong part of the Theravada tradition in Thailand because of the attention paid to the writings of Buddhagosha, whose *Visuddhimagga* [The Path of Purification] follows this pattern. Buddhadasa's doctrinal approach has put him in the class of monks of "wisdom" *(paññā)*. In fact, he is seen at the center of a line starting from Prince-Patriarch Wachirayanwarorot, continuing to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, and coming to the most modern period with Phra Debvedi – agreement exists that these monks follow a line of monks of "wisdom."[18] Many Buddhist scholars perceive a significant progression between these three monks in the development of Thai Buddhism. Two middle-aged administrators and Buddhist scholars from Mahachulalongkorn made the following representative assessments in

different interviews:

> **Maha Narong Cittasobhano**: In the Rattanakosin period, Maha Samana Chao [Wachirayanwarorot] was a "modern monk" in the reign of Rama V; later Buddhadasa was a "modern monk" when the change of government took place [following 1932]; after that, there came Phra Rajavaramuni [currently Phra Debvedi] who has given us a "scientific" explanation of Buddhism appropriate for these times.

And when asked if he would compare the works of Phra Debvedi to other outstanding monks in Thailand, another monk responded with the following:

> **Maha Prayoon Mererk**: As I see it, there are only three monks. In the past, there was Maha Samana Chao [Wachirayanwarorot], Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, and Phra Rajavaramuni, and each has his own outstanding features. But after comparison, the work of Phra Rajavaramuni is more like the work of Maha Samana Chao [Wachirayanwarorot], linked with tradition. That of Buddhadasa is more like an "automatic" interpretation, with Mahayana entering into it.[19] But Phra Rajavaramuni is more directly in line with the Canon. He explains the teachings only as far as the Canon permits. His work is more characteristic of theology rather than philosophy, of being true to the Canon.

In fact, many people have followed this same progression in their discovery of these monks. Most people reported that it was in the course of their reading books by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu that they encountered Phra Debvedi's works. Donald Swearer reported that while doing research on Buddhadasa Bhikkhu in 1967-68 he had "wandered into" Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University and began talking to people; he met Phra Debvedi, they talked, and he was left with a lasting impression. Maha Prayoon reported knowing Phra Debvedi as a teacher at the Buddhist university, but it was not until he attended a seminar at Wat Thongnopphakhun, set up by Sulak Sivaraksa during the celebration of "Fifty Years of Suan Mokh," that he had a chance to meet and talk with him. The topic of the seminar was "Buddhadasa and the Younger Generation" *[Buddhadasa kap khon run mai].*[20]

To Phra Debvedi

Phra Debvedi, born Prayudh Arayankura [Arayangkun] on January 12, 1939, in Sriprachan, Suphanburi Province, Central Thailand, was ordained for a short period of time at age seven and then was ordained again at age 11. Bad health was one of the reasons for his entering the monkhood. His family thought that the quiet monastic life would be good for him, and that the merit accrued from ordination might be sufficient to help him overcome his chronic

health problems. In 2504/1961, he first established himself as a great Pali scholar with the passing of the highest Pali grade, 9 *prayok,* as a novice monk. He was one of four novices in the Rattanakosin period to accomplish this, and some monks at the Buddhist universities said that this made him the object of "hero worship" among up-and-coming, young Buddhist scholars.

According to those interviewed, Phra Debvedi's first major appearance in public (then Phra Maha Prayudh Payutto) occurred at a seminar held by the Siam Society between August 9-11 in 2512/1969. The title of the seminar was *"Phraphutthasatsana kap sangkhom Thai patchuban"* [Buddhism and present-day Thai society]. Maha Prayudh delivered a paper entitled *"Botbat khong phrasong nai sangkhom Thai patchuban"* [The role of the monkhood in present-day Thai society].[21] It is this seminar and the exposure that resulted from the subsequent publication of papers given there that is felt by many to have been a turning point in Phra Debvedi's career. His seminar paper is considered by many scholars to be the significant beginning of his pointing out the importance of the application of the Dhamma to Thai society.

In the late 1960s, a project was begun to commemorate the 80th birthday of one of Thammasat University's past rectors and then-president of the Social Science Foundation, Prince Wan Waithayakon. It was agreed that a type of *festschrift* volume would be created that could serve as a university textbook. According to Sulak Sivaraksa and Saneh Chamarik, two of the main coordinators of this project, some of the best scholarly minds in Thailand were asked to write on a variety of subjects including literature, education, and philosophy. Sulak said that they wanted to pose a challenge to see if "the intellectuals or scholars of the day had any brains to do anything." Phra Debvedi was one of those invited to write for this textbook. The committee agreed that this young, learned monk should attempt a new statement on Buddhist doctrine and philosophy. Initially, his article was to be published in the same volume as the other *festschrift* articles; but as his work grew, it could not be contained in the planned volume and had to be published separately. The title of the final work was *Buddha-dhamma,* and it was published in a separate 1971 edition of about two hundred pages. Since that time, it has gone through two more editions, has been revised and increased to about 1,200 pages, and has been proclaimed a "masterpiece" by many Buddhist scholars. It was without a doubt the best piece of scholarship to come out of the textbook project.

Phra Debvedi's *Buddha-dhamma* has been reviewed by many scholars as the most authoritative, systematic, unique, and even "scientific" presentation of Buddhism to have been written within the last century. His use of clear references and textual sources make this a reference book for "modern" Buddhist scholars. His use of broader, more philosophical chapter headings – such as, "What is Life?" and "What is the Life Process?" – instead of the use of simple

doctrinal terms – such as, karma, the Four Noble Truths, and the Eight-fold Path – is seen as modern and unique. Furthermore, Phra Debvedi emphasized other doctrinal concepts – such as dependent origination *(paticca- samuppāda)* and systematic reflection *(yonisomanasikāra)*– that he feels have been inadequately explained in the history of discourse on Buddhism in Thailand. He has been praised for linking Buddhist doctrine that is found scattered throughout the Canon and explaining it in a more accessible and comprehensible manner. In this way, *Buddha-dhamma* is viewed as a major contribution to Thai Buddhist literature and the study of Buddhism. Some have said that this book is the best book they have read on Buddhist doctrine in the Thai language; other Thai scholars, many of whom had been educated abroad, said it is one of the best books they had encountered on Buddhism in any language. Later, after becoming an administrator at Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, Phra Debvedi made major contributions by helping to set up a semester system before this became a trend at other universities; he assisted with the compilation of a catalog of the curriculum, created textbooks and materials for courses in both the University and the Buddhist Sunday School, and expanded the monk's role in society through the establishment of "development" programs involving monks.[22]

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Phra Debvedi was invited to America three times. He taught courses on Buddhism with Donald K. Swearer at both Swarthmore College and Harvard University. These cross-cultural experiences led him to compare Thailand's development with the United States and to lecture and write about applying indigenous, Buddhist principles to national development in Thailand.[23]

Phra Debvedi cited a number of influences in his life: his father, who had been ordained, was a model for him; one of his brothers, who was very interested in the Dhamma, often gave him books on various religious subjects. He was impressed by the works and efforts of Prince-Patriarch Vajiranavarorasa; he read and enjoyed the religious novels of a forerunner to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, a Thammayut monk at Wat Kanmatuyaram, Sujivo Bhikkhu (currently, Sujib Punyanubhab, lay instructor at Mahamakut Buddhist University); and, finally, he mentioned that Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's works had also had a profound influence on him.

When most people interviewed attempted to characterize Phra Debvedi, the only term that came to them was *phra nakwichakan*, a new term for a monk-scholar. They saw him in the line of "scholarly" transmission cited above, from Prince-Patriarch Wachirayanwarorot, to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, and, now, Phra Debvedi.

Links Between Two Monks of Wisdom

Phra Debvedi has continued to gain wide acceptance among scholars. Some say that what he has already written has eclipsed the works of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu in the scholarly arena. One Buddhist thinker, Kovit Khemananda, said that Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has spread out the teachings of the Buddha like a vast sea, of which it is often hard to grasp the measure; whereas, Phra Debvedi has given us a bird's eye view of the teachings. Many people said that this overview, largely contained in the book *Buddha-dhamma,* came like a surge of fresh air through circles of Thai Buddhist scholars and influenced a revitalization of writings that apply Buddhist principles to education, mental health, and other subjects.[24]

People cite various reasons for Phra Debvedi's large acceptance. First of all, he has not incorporated other schools of Buddhism in his analyses; he has consistently used the Pali Tipitaka as his standard reference. One teacher at Mahamakut Buddhist University said the following:

> The Thai are conservative in terms of religion. The reason why Phra [Debvedi] is accepted is that he only uses the Tipitaka as a source. Buddhadasa mixes doctrines, and this has made him subject to criticism.[25]

Furthermore, Chamnong Tongprasert, a scholar at the Royal Institute, said that it is Buddhadasa's borrowing from other traditions – Mahayana, Zen, and Taoism – that has made his teachings too deep for the matter-of-fact approach of traditional adherents to Theravada Buddhism and has left him open to criticism.

> Buddhadasa incorporates other doctrines and speaks a language that is different from the one most people understand. Sometimes this has resulted in a negative reaction towards him. Buddhadasa once wrote that the Triple Gems *(phra ratanatrai* – the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha) were the Himalayas blocking *nibbana.*[26] Some people criticized him for being a communist. I read this statement and felt indifferent *(choei-choei)* because it was true that some people could not get there. When we cross over to the other bank, we have to depend on a boat, and once we get there, we have to get rid of it...if we are going to go to *nibbana,* we have to depend on the Triple Gems, but once we get to *nibbana,* we even have to throw them away. If we do not throw them away, then we have this attachment; when we have this attachment, we have ignorance and how can this be *nibbana?* He spoke like this, and no one understood because he spoke too deeply.

Apparently, it is valuable to have a "deep" *(luk)* presentation of Buddhism – because Phra Debvedi's works are praised for their depth as well – but many Thai do not want it to be too deep. Some of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's most

penetrating comments and commentaries are often dismissed by the remark, "Oh, that's Zen!," and so they are not taken seriously, or not considered really important for the Thai context. Sometimes these teachings initially sound so shocking that people instantly take offense to them – a reaction that often amuses Buddhadasa. Swearer has noted this similarity to Zen and has referred to it as Buddhadasa's "hermeneutic of provocation."[27] The issue of the appropriate depth and breadth of Thai Theravada Buddhism is a perennial one.

Secondly, Phra Debvedi's works are often carefully thought out and systematized approaches to whatever subject is at hand, be it doctrine, education, or social concerns. He likes to incorporate indexes, charts, tables, and clear references, which he feels should be a part of any scholarly work of international standards. By contrast, it is occasionally reported that some professors at secular universities in Thailand do not like Buddhadasa's works and will not assign them to students because of a lack of scholarly references.

Also, most of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's works are spoken, being first recorded on tape and then typed out. This causes a great deal of difficulty for translators and makes assessing his often extemporaneous and repetitive lectures as a philosophical system a major task.[28] Buddhadasa's works have been characterized as topical *(pen kho-kho)*, as lecturing on or emphasizing one point or another of the Buddhist doctrine and then moving on to another. Kovit Khemananda, who spent about eight years at Suan Mokh, reported that there have been different "periods" *(samai)* in Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's thought. His works range from the concepts of Buddhist history "from the mouth of the Buddha," to emptiness *(suññatā)*, freed-mind or no-self *(chit-wang)*, selfhood and selfishness *(tua-ku, khong-ku)*, causality *(iddappac-cayatā* and *paticcasamuppāda)*, and currently to *atammayatā*.[29]

Swearer has said that before any assessment of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's thought can be done, the corpus of his works will have to undergo a thorough and careful editing. (But who is going to be given the authority to perform this task and to determine whether or not Buddhadasa Bhikkhu intended this to be done to his works?) The works by Phra Debvedi that have been praised for their systematic presentation *(pen rabop)*, are, on the other hand, carefully written and edited volumes that have often gone through several revised editions before reaching their most "systematic" forms.

Finally, and this comparison cannot be completely comprehensive, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has tended to take a different view of tradition than has Phra Debvedi. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has taken exception to Buddhagosha, and he has, in the tradition of Mongkut, attempted to do away with "superstition" and magical practices in Thai Buddhism.[30] He, for example, dismisses the practice of pouring holy water as a practice for 'dull-witted people' *(khon panya on)*.

Phra Debvedi, on the other hand, has been said to take a compromising approach *(baep prani-pranom)* to the pouring of holy water; for him, it is a custom that can be maintained out of loving-kindness *(mettā)* and compassion *(karunā)* until people come to higher practices.[31] For Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and others, such as the current head of the controversial Santi Asoke movement, getting people to stop pouring holy water is an act of *mettā* .

Phra Debvedi has been called a *phra nakwichakan* for lack of a more fitting term. Returning to viewing these monks through the Three Trainings, they have been characterized as monks of wisdom because they have gone beyond the more widespread practices of morality and concentration meditation. Being called monks of "wisdom" *(phra panya)* is both a way of expressing their interests and attainments. But while Phra Debvedi has been packaged as a *phra nakwichakan,* and Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has been bundled into this, neither monk neatly fits. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's works have been said to have a "spiritual dimension" or "flavor" *(rot-chat)* that Phra Debvedi's lack. His Garden of Liberation is widely viewed as a pleasant combination of the forest meditation tradition and the more urban scholastic tradition. Buddhadasa has written a handbook on and is well-known for his teachings on breathing meditation, giving his practice more of a dimension of *samādhi* ?[32] Phra Debvedi has written descriptions of proper mindfulness *(sammāsati)* , but he has yet to write a practical treatise on the subject.[33] This has caused some practitioners *(nakpatibat / nakwipatsana)* to say that Phra Debvedi has tried to write about mangoes without first giving them an adequate taste. Phra Debvedi has not given much credit to these categorizations and critiques – even though they are pervasive – saying that a monk must be proficient in each area of training. He has said that the term *patibat,* which, in Thailand, has become more narrowly interpreted as going off to a temple and meditating, really involves putting the Dhamma into practice, be it writing a book, obeying the law while driving a car, preparing a balanced meal, and so on.[34]

We can say, however, that both of these monks have dug deeply into the wisdom of the texts, and we can generally agree on characterizing them as monks of wisdom. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has said that he holds wisdom as foremost, and that the practice of moral codes without proper wisdom and understanding amounts to blind faith. Phra Debvedi has stated that he is writing as well as he can and at the highest level possible to address those with enough wisdom to understand his works.

Each of these monks, in his own way, has acquired the same reputation as the original Supreme Patriarch of the first Thai capital at Sukhothai, of knowing the Buddhist Canon from beginning to end. Their genius involves having broken through the constraints of tradition and rote learning to bring new interpretations of the Dhamma to bear on their own generations. Bud-

dhadasa Bhikkhu has used the more contexual or situational approach of a 'teacher' *(achan)*, and Phra Debvedi has offered a clear overview that may stand as a reference to major doctrinal points in the Canon. To put this another way, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, by rerouting streams of wisdom from other Buddhist schools and letting them flow into the Thai sphere, has enriched a tradition that had become somewhat stagnant and entrenched. After Buddhadasa had let these great teachings spread out into a "sea," Phra Debvedi took us on a flight over the waves and currents to show us his "bird's eye view" of their underlying canonical patterns and importance for modern Thai society. Each monk, while reluctant to make comparisons, has tended to agree with this consensus of characterizations. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu summed up some of these similarities and differences nicely as follows:

> **Buddhadasa Bhikkhu**: (Laughter.) Ah, comparisons, these should not be made in terms of which one is better or worse or more correct; we should look at what direction we are trying to go. [Phra Debvedi] has put together Pali statements *(kho khwam)*that are beautiful*(phairo)*, easy to study and listen to *(na fang)*. In this current age, he has done very well. We [at Suan Mokh] may not have done as well by mainly focusing on certain concepts or ideas *(chapho ruang-chapho ruang)*, speaking directly to certain concepts. But as to whether people now can accept this or not...we speak directly, so this is different. He has paid attention to the artistry of the verse *(roikrong)* that will attract modern people, and this should be of benefit in the future...Chao Khun [Debvedi] has helped to digest*(yoi)* the teachings, to make them relate to one another *(samphan-kan)*, become linked *(nuang-kan)*...
>
> **Phra Debvedi**: Concerning a comparison of the works of the Venerable Buddhadasa and mine, my mind is not inclined towards any comparative estimation or any evaluation at all. However, recently, it occurred to me that I had a sense of what he and I have been doing. I feel that Venerable Buddhadasa has been energetically teaching people to understand what Buddhism is and is not, and how they should and should not behave themselves according to the teachings of the Buddha. His style is more clearly that of a teacher *[achan]*. What I have been doing or trying to do, on the other hand, is merely an exposition of the Buddha's teachings, an effort to show what the Buddha really taught, what additional things he taught and what is the real meaning of what he taught. This may be like a colleague who is presenting a paper rather than that of a teacher.

Finally, each monk can be said to have come up with his own "compromising" approach to improving Thai Buddhism. Neither monk has emphasized rank, but both have received and accepted promotions – even though these promotions came more slowly than they might have had these monks been more directly involved in administrative duties more typically recognized by the

Sangha authorities. Both monks, while being reformers in their own ways, have not caused any further schisms within the Thai Order, but rather they continue to work to improve the Sangha from within.[35] And while there may be differences of opinion about their respective contributions to Buddhist scholarship, they both have received recognition for their contributions through a number of honorary degrees from secular universities.

It is also important to point out that the scholarly importance of these two monks actually exists within a small and limited, albeit growing, circle. Along with scholarly acceptance exists the persistence of tradition. Regardless of their accomplishments, there are still those who insist upon viewing these monks of wisdom within the bounds of more traditional types of devotion. These people have likely not read their works, but have only heard of their growing reputations and related "holiness." While carrying out research on Phra Debvedi, I paid a visit to an older Thai woman in Bangkok. She asked what monk I was studying. The following exchange took place:

"This Phra Raja...what?"

"Phra Rajavaramuni," I reminded her.

"This big monk, can he read the astrological charts and plot a horoscope?"

"He is a monk-scholar and is not interested in those things."

"Have you asked him? If he's such a big and famous monk as everyone says, I'll bet he can do it," she insisted.

While visiting Suan Mokh in the summer of 1982, I sat waiting to see Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. When my chance came to speak with him, he was chuckling as I approached. The monk who accompanied me was bold enough to ask what the three men before us had wanted. Buddhadasa reported that they were soldiers who had driven all the way down to Suan Mokh from the Northeast and had arrived quite drunk. They requested that he blow in their ears for good luck and protection. He told them that he did not know how to do this *("rao tham mai pen")* and sent them up to talk with another monk up the hill (who would tell them about the problems of drinking and smoking and encourage them to quit). More recently when I asked Buddhadasa Bhikkhu about the persistence of traditional perceptions of monks, he did not act surprised.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu:First, the scholars *(nakwichakan)* and intellectuals *(panyachon)* and then more and more common people *(khon thammada)* will become interested. The common people at the lowest levels *(chan tam sut)* cannot really accept it. There is a difficulty with the language *(samnuan wohan)*, too – one must have wisdom to understand – but it should reach these people in the future...This is the natural *(thammada)* course of things. These matters are understood in scholarly circles first, and then when the common people acquire more wisdom, they become interested to the point that they can listen,

understand, and accept them. For the most part, Dhamma is for those with wisdom *(panya)*, not for those who just believe *(chua)*.

These two "monks of wisdom" demand of their audience a constant renewal and reinvestigation of the teachings – not just faith or belief. Their own work is evolving and has yet to cease: Buddhadasa Bhikkhu is building a new international meditation center far across the highway that has cut so close to the peace and quiet of the Garden of Liberation. Phra Debvedi is also building a new temple near the national Buddhist monument Phuttha-monthon, Nakorn Pathom, that will have an extensive Buddhist library as a principal feature; and he has more written works outlined than he has had time to bring to publication. The works of these monks of wisdom will be a legacy that will continue to influence the evolution of Buddhism well into the future.

May both of these monks live long enough to bring what they consider to be their most important contributions into being. I offer this article on the occasion of the 84th birthday of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu as a special appreciation of these two monks. I am certain that Buddhadasa Bhikkhu would prefer that, after so much "people language," this essay might end with a bit of "Dhamma language" : And so, for those on the path, who have really gotten their feet wet by stepping into the stream of the Dhamma, there is probably no basket or category that will hold them for long. New categories may need to be created to accommodate them, but these, too, will not last. After all this, it is with some certainty that we can call this realization the indefinite sign of wisdom.

Grant A. Olson
Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, Illinois , U.S.A.

ENDNOTES :

1. ***The Inscription of King Ramkhamhaeng the Great***, edited by Chulalongkorn University on the 700th Anniversary of the Thai Alphabet, (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, no date).
2. The latter has come to be divided into the activities of ***naktham*** Buddhist studies and the study of the Pali language (***parian***).
3. Richard O'Connor, "Urbanism and Religion: Community, Hierarchy and Sanctity in Urban Thai Buddhist Temples" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1978), p.131.
4. ***The Nation***, December 24, 1989.
5. See Somboon Suksamran, ***Political Buddhism in Southeast Asia: The Role of the Sangha in the Modernization of Thailand*** (London: C. Hurst and Co., 1977).
6. For information on the activities and goals of the Sarvodaya movement, see Joanna Macy, ***Dharma and Development: Religion as a Resource in the Sarvodaya Self-help Movement*** (West Hardford: Kumarian Press, 1983).
7. These quotes are taken from dissertation field research carried out between 1986-87 with Fulbright-Hays and Social Science Research Council assistance. I want to thank all of those interviewed, especially Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and Phra Debvedi, who patiently answered my many questions. Furthermore, I want to thank Sulak Sivaraksa for posing so many challenges and for providing so many opportunities. Professor John Hartmann, Northern Illinois University, combed over this manuscript and provided many helpful suggestions; but, as always, the responsibility for this material is mine.
8. When Buddhism came West, a similar tendency existed. At first, Westerners selectively focused on meditation teachers, and, then, having settled a little too deeply into the meditation cushion, many are now seeking to be "engaged" in social action and are looking for monks who can speak to and enhance this dimension of their practice.
9. Previously, Phra Rajavaramuni. See Grant A. Olson, "A Person - centered Ethnography of Thai Buddhism: The Life of Phra Rajavaramuni" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1989).
10. It is interesting to note, however, that both the categories of meditating monks and monk-scholars that are seeking more explicit recognition by some people are already suggested in the earliest, most fundamental categorizations of Sangha activities, in the two ***dhura*** above.
11. See Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, ***Two Kinds of Language***, translated by Ariyanada Bhikkhu (Bangkok: Siva Phorn, 2517/1974).
12. See Phra Rajavaramuni, ***Buddhism and Education,*** translated by Grant A. Olson (Bangkok: Equanimity House, 1987).
13. For an example of a critique of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, see Bhikkhu Chayanatho (Phra Anant Senakhan) et al., ***Khamson dirathi*** (Bangkok Bophit Kanphim, 2522/1979).

14. For this you may refer to Donald Swearer, ***Me and Mine***, (Albany: State University of New York Press); or for the collections of biographies in Thai, see Phra Prachar Pasannadhammo, editor and interviewer, ***Attachiwaprawat khong than Phutthathat*** [The autobiography of Buddhadasa] in four volumes: one, ***Lao wai mua wai sonthaya***; two, ***Chiwit haengkanthamngan***; three, ***Chiwit haeng kansuksa***; and four, a pictorial biography, ***Phapchiwit 80 pi*** (Bangkok: Komol Keemthong Foundation, 1984/2528-1985/2529).

15. David K. Wyatt, ***Thailand: A Short History*** (New Haven: Yale University Press), p.216.

16. Peter Jackson has stated that rational inquiry has typically not been seen as "profitable" in the Thai scholastic tradition, see ***Buddhadasa: A Buddhist Thinker for the Modern World*** (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1988) p.33. My interviews with past students at the Buddhist universities bear this out; these ex-monks said that it would have been foolish for monks to waste their time engaging in free discussions of Buddhist doctrine because they would never be tested on such matters, Olson (1989).

17. Grant A. Olson, "Viewing Thai Buddhism through the Dimensions of the Three Trainings" presented at the 41st Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Washington D.C., March 17, 1989.

18. Also, in Dr.Prawase Wasi's recent book, ***Suan Mokh, Dhammakaya, Santi Asok*** (Bangkok: Samnakphim Mo Chaoban, 2530/1987), he summarizes his presentations of three Buddhist movements by saying the following: "***Suan Mokh*** = *paññā;* Dhamma-kaya = *samādhi;* and Santi Asok = ***sila***. This is not to say that these groups each do not have the other two trainings, it is only to point out the emphasis or outstanding feature that the public has received from them" (p.96).

19. The word ***attanomat*** or "automatic" has crept into the Thai language in an odd way. Here, it means more of a free or even subjective interpretation.

20. See ***Buddhadasa kap khon run mai: mua khon num-sao tham thung rak khong khwampen Thai*** [Buddhadasa and the younger generation: when young people ask about being Thai] (Bangkok:Komol Keemthong Foundation, 2526/1983).

21. ***Phutthasatsana kap sangkhom Thai patchuban*** (Bangkok: Hanghun Suanchamkat Siwaphon, 2514/1971). This volume, which contains articles from the Siam Society conference, was published upon the promotion of Phra Devamedhi (Ki Marachino, parian 9), abbot of Wat Thongnopphakhun and Ecclesiastical Governor of Thonburi, who was promoted to Phra Dhammacetiya [Thammachedi].

22. The Buddhist role in development aims at having moral, spiritual, as well as a material dimensions. Chai Podhisita, a past graduate of Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, explained that monks were required to work at Mahachula, at upcountry schools, or with development projects for one year following graduation. Only then could they move to other work or choose to disrobe.

23. See Phra Rajavaramuni, ***Looking to America to Solve Thailand's Problems*** [***Mong Amerika ma kae panha Thai***], translated by Grant A. Olson (Satirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation and the Thai- American Project, 1987).

24. See, for example, Sumon Amonwiwat, ***Kanson doi sang sattha lae yoni-somanasikan*** (Bangkok: Odeon, 2530); or the recent popular books on mental health by Dr. Prawase Wasi.

25. As Maha Prayoon stated earlier, "Phra Rajavaramuni is more directly in line with the Canon. He explains the teachings only as far as the Canon permits. It has more characteristics of theology rather than philosophy, of being true to the Canon."

26. For a current edition of this, see Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, ***Phukhao haeng withi phutthatham*** (Bangkok: Thammabucha, 2529/1986). This statement continues to be controversial. On December 19, 1989, this statement by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu came up at the trial of Santi Asoke leader, Phra Phothirak. The lawyer defending Phra Phothirak, Thongbai Thongpao, asked a government official who found some of Phra Photirak's teachings controversial if he found this teaching by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu to be heretical.

27. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, ***Dhammic Socialism***, translated and edited by Donald K.Swearer (Bangkok: Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development, 1986), pp.40-41.

28. Swearer (1989), p.4.

29. This list is not intended as a chronological ordering of the introduction of these concepts. For detailed information on ***atammayata***, see Santikaro Bhikkhu, "***Atammataya***: The Rebirth of a Lost Word," ***Crossroads*** 4:2 (1989), pp.87-90.

30. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, ***Phutthasat kap saiyasat***[Buddhism and magic] (Bangkok: Kanphim Phranakhon, 2526/1983).

31. Olson (1989), p.341. Phra Debvedi's compromising approach even extends to attempts to explain the differences between Buddhagosha and Buddhadasa Bhikkhu.

32. See Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, ***Anapanasati (Mindfulness of Breathing): The Sixteen Steps to Awakening***, translated by Bhikkhu Nagasena(Bangkok: Sublime Life Mission, 2514/1971); and Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, ***Anapanasati, Mindfulness with Breathing: Unveiling the Secrets of Life***, translated by Santikaro Bhikkhu (Bangkok: The Dhamma Study & Practice Group, 1989).

33. Phra Debvedi (Prayudh Payutto), *Sammāsati* : ***An Exposition of Right Mindfulness***, translated by Dhamma-Vijaya (Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1988); or for the Thai discussion of *sammāsati* and *sammāsamādhi* , see Phra Rajavaramuni (Prayudh Payutto), ***Buddha-dhamma***, third edition (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, 2529/1986) pp.803-892.

34. See Olson (1989), p.374.

35. In ***Siamese Resurgence*** (Bangkok: Asian Cultural Forum on Development, 1985), Sulak Sivaraksa compliments Buddhadasa Bhikkhu for advocating reform while not starting a new sect or order, "But King Mongkut made that great error which has now become something very awkward in the history of the Thai Sangha" (p.231). For the case of Phra Debvedi, see Olson (1989), p.70.

THE FUTURE OF SUAN MOKKH

I have been asked to speculate on the future of Suan Mokkh. This task is neither easy, nor clearly useful, for the future is merely thought and lacks its own reality. At best, we are dealing with probabilities; at worst, with illusions. Here at Suan Mokkh, we try to deal with the present reality: living mindfully, solving problems *(dukkha)* as they arise, discovering the "void mind" *(cit waang)* in everyday life, serving humanity, practicing Dhamma. Thought is merely a tool to be employed for the quenching of *dukkha,* we must be careful not to get trapped in it. Nonetheless, we are not afraid to think. So I will give it a try and explore "the future of Suan Mokkh" in the most practical way I can.

Where is Suan Mokkh ?

To begin with, we must have a clear idea of Suan Mokkh, as there continues to be confusion in this matter. Ajahn Buddhadasa has explained the meaning of Suan Mokkh from time to time.

> If asked "Where is Suan Mokkh?" There are four ways of answering. One way is people language, then there are two or three which are Dhamma language. When asked, "Where is Suan Mokkh?" in people language we answer, "At Number 68 Village 6, Lamed Township, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, which is in the South of Thailand." This is the most ordinary and easy to understand reply.
>
> The second answer is in a language other than people language. You could call it "Dhamma language" but not full-scale. Call it "mental language" because all things are experienced by mind. If there is no mind, it's the same as there are no things. Because the mind makes contact with a thing, then "it" is in the mind that experiences that thing. In this way, we would say Suan Mokkh is in the mind which sees Suan Mokkh somewhere. We call this "mind language" or "inner language." Where the real Suan Mokkh is I don't know, but if there's no mind to make contact with it, then it doesn't exist, it's meaningless, it's the same as non-existent. Thus, once mind has contacted Suan Mokkh, then Suan Mokkh appears in the mind. It enters the mind as a sense-object or as

an internal sense-door with everything complete exactly as the mind experiences them. In this way, we answer that Suan Mokkh is in the mind.

Now, if we prefer a more profound language, a Dhamma language, the ancient sages would answer, "Wherever people have stainless minds, right there is Suan Mokkh." Whether a forest, garden, or whatever, Suan Mokkh is where a person's mind is *mokkh** – that is, unstained by defilement and impurities. Wherever a person with a stainless mind goes, that exact place is named "Suan Mokkh," maybe in this forest, or in some other forest, or any place for that matter. A person with a stainless mind – *mokkh* mind – can go anywhere and that place is Suan Mokkh.

Next, if we look with more subtlety, where is this *mokkh* or the state of *mokkh*, which is stainless, clean, purified of defilement? It turns out that it's in the mind, it's in the mind. Therefore, it enters the mind of a person with a stainless mind.

This fourth meaning is more refined, of a more subtle Dhamma language. We answer, "in the stainless mind." Suan Mokkh is in the stainless mind, it's the state of mind which is stainless from coverings, concoctions, attachments. That condition is at the mind or in the mind, however you wish to say it, it's right there. So, we say, "Suan Mokkh enters the mind."[1]

Which Suan Mokkh are we to discuss in this essay? At first, we might concentrate on the first one, the physical-material Suan Mokkh of people language. Otherwise, this would become a Dhamma essay about practising to make the mind stainless in order to discover the state of stainlessness, voidness, and *atammayatā*.** On the other hand, the various meanings of "Suan Mokkh" are not so easily separated. If we focus too much on the material Suan Mokkh, we will end up with a "Suan Mokkh" merely in name. Maybe we must also give adequate consideration to the Dhamma language meanings of "Suan Mokkh", in order to really have a Suan Mokkh.

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* *This is the Thai pronunciation of the Pali mokkha (Sanskrit, mokṣa), which means "liberation."*

** *"Unconcoctability": the knowledge that all phenomena are powerless to concoct the mind; the state of mind that is unshakable, invulnerable, and beyond the power of the positive and the negative; the reality which is beyond all concocting, i.e., the unconditioned, nibbānā*

Looking Back to See Ahead

The present physical Suan Mokkh is the result of a fifty year process of change. Some of the change has been totally natural, as trees, people, and things have flowed with impermanence. Some of the change has been directed by human thought, with the intention of providing a place to promote the study and practice of Dhamma in order to quench *dukkha* and manifest peace in this world. In both cases, the place has had to change as conditions have changed. Tan Ajahn's[#] reputation has grown within Siam, as well as abroad; the Asian Highway was laid at the door; Thailand has undergone modernization willy-nilly; there has been a Buddhist revival among intellectuals and urbanites; Buddhism has spread to all corners of the planet; the need for cooperation between religions has become urgent; people are less interested in superstition and more able to think for themselves: these and other causes have transformed Suan Mokkh from a small forest *wat* to a major teaching center.

With this transformation has come increasing material development. Gravel roads have replaced footpaths, electrical equipment has been installed, more and more housing has been built, and the International Dhamma Hermitage has become a reality. Where all this will lead is a difficult and probably fruitless guessing game. While Tan Ajahn is alive, we can be confident that further changes will be in line with the original principles of Suan Mokkh as much as possible. (Those who are curious about future developments must pick Tan Ajahn's brain and find out how he thinks.) After that, it will depend on the skill and wisdom of those who try to continue and build upon his work.

Tan Ajahn considers his fame and Suan Mokkh's development to be a "fluke." The work he began, he intended to do alone, with the material support of the Dhammadana Group (later the Dhammadana Foundation). He never expected that many people – monks, nuns, intellectuals, farmers, civil servants, business-folk, Thais, *farang* – would volunteer to help. "I feel – unlike others – that it's all a fluke. You came, this monk came, that monk came – all a fluke. There was no plan or intention." He had not planned, or even dreamed, that Suan Mokkh would end up like it is. Even now, with many people at Suan Mokkh, Bangkok, and elsewhere, helping with the work, he neither feels possessive of it or in charge. He continues to do what he can, while he lets others do what they

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[#] *Tan Ajahn is how most of us at Suan Mokkh refer to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. Ajahn is the Thai rendering of the Pali ācāriya (teacher, master), and is a term of respect. "Tan" increases the respect shown. It should be noted that Ajahn Buddhadasa considers himself, following the Lord Buddha, a friend (kalyāna-mitta) rather than a "teacher" or "guru."*

can. In fact, he is very grateful to anyone who assists in anyway, including the cats who keep the mice away from the *Tipitika* and the chickens who keep the caterpillars from killing the trees. Of course, *idappaccayatā* ** lies beneath and through it all. "It's the *idappaccayatā* of a fluke."[2]

Nowadays, most of the work and activities of Suan Mokkh are overseen and carried out by various monks and lay followers. The Spiritual Theatre, audiotape production, books and translations, day-to-day administration, meditation courses, maintenance, the kitchen, Luang Ta Sawai's Workshop, Trainings and Seminars, and other work carry on without Tan Ajahn's direct supervision. He is available for consultation, but all the different workers make the decisions for the areas in which they are responsible. They do so following guidelines originally made by Tan Ajahn, but even these must be modified according to circumstances. And still, new friends come to study, practice, and help. This will continue indefinitely.

Many people ask what will happen after Tan Ajahn dies. Once again, it is difficult to speculate. Although his health has been poor for over 15 years, he continues to work and teach by example. Even as he turns 84 this year, he is going strong, if not physically, definitely mentally and Dhammically. Who among us can know the conditions which will exist in and around Suan Mokkh, as well as in the country and world, when Tan Ajahn passes on. Still, many people have asked Tan Ajahn this question.

Question : Tan Ajahn, the present condition of Suan Mokkh, which we see here, is in good shape according to your wishes and aims. Now, this situation, if Tan Ajahn is still here, can probably preserve the property, material things, or the condition which is Suan Mokkh. If after Tan Ajahn has "used up his merit," we don't know what changes will take place. We would like Tan Ajahn to advise us of the things we ought to do or ought to arrange or carry on in a way that remains in character with the Suan Mokkh which will be broadly beneficial as is now the case.

Tan Ajahn's reply : If we speak about when after I'm dead, it's the duty of the people who come after, not my duty. Whether the people afterward are able to do it or not depends on those people. If they feel that it's good and beneficial, worth the trouble

** *"Conditionality, interdependency, interrelatedness" : the Law of Nature.*

> of preserving it, they'll preserve it in the original condition. This matter will develop on its own. Even if we have no wishes or intentions, it will thrive within itself. The only thing is to be careful to give it a chance to sprout. We have built much faith and trust, what they call "good will." And it is about to continue thriving on its own. More people are starting to think this is a good thing, it's natural.[3]

Tan Ajahn has repeated the above "predictions" in numerous conversations with me and anyone else who broaches the subject. There is no reason to think he might change his mind. His hopes for Suan Mokkh are simple:

> Have Suan Mokkh as a light. That's enough, don't make it into anything much.[4] Make Light *in* the world, *for* the world.[5]

This pretty much answers the question of "The Future of Suan Mokkh," at least in the sense most people consider it.

Not Just That Suan Mokkh

There are, of course, other ways – more interesting and more useful – to consider this question. Tan Ajahn himself has opened the door for us:

> Suan Mokkh – places which make intimacy with nature easy both mentally and physically – should be set up everywhere for the direct study of nature, for understanding the law of nature, and for sampling the taste of nature, until everyone knows how to love nature, which only helps us to understand Dhamma easily.[6]

Suan Mokkh can be any place which lives up to the name and its meaning (as explained above) and follows certain principles (to be discussed below). We needn't be too attached to the Suan Mokkh in Chaiya.

While Suan Mokkh has been developing according to the law of *idappaccayatā*, other centers have been inspired by it and Tan Ajahn's example. Some places have modified themselves after finding out about Suan Mokkh, others were established specifically to emulate it. And there will be new ones, not all limited to monks. This is where the real future of Suan Mokkh lies. The original Suan Mokkh will continue in one form or another, but "Suan Mokkh" must mean more than that.

Nature creates what it needs to suit its purposes. Phenomena arise from

conditions, perform their function and consequently influence other things, then quench. The physical Suan Mokkh follows the same law, as do all places modelled after it. But the Dhamma to which Suan Mokkh is dedicated is the law itself, and therefore is timeless and unchanging. The spiritual Suan Mokkh is always alive to that law in one way or another. From this perspective, that of the true Suan Mokkh, the physical Suan Mokkhs are merely temporary tools or skillful means, more or less effective to the degree they are founded in the spiritual Suan Mokkh.

There will always be a need for new versions of Suan Mokkh in both Siam and elsewhere. Different ages, climates, and cultures will require at least one physical manifestation of Suan Mokkh. Those who begin to understand what "Suan Mokkh" really stands for, will appreciate its value wherever it can be manifested. How many will actually occur, and in what forms, is beyond our power of prophecy. But I am certain that they are everywhere needed, no matter what name and religious tradition they go by.

Nor That Buddhadasa

To many people, Suan Mokkh is synonymous with Buddhadasa. This assumption is both incorrect and true. It depends on the meaning we give to "Buddhadasa." If we mean a particular person, born in 2449 and now an 84 year old *bhikkhu,* then it is false. Those who think that Suan Mokkh depends on any one person do not understand Suan Mokkh as Tan Ajahn does. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has done his work very well, but this doesn't mean that others are incapable of carrying it on. Different people are in fact already doing so in their various ways. Of course, the physical Suan Mokkh will be much different without Tan Ajahn, but it doesn't depend on him alone.

It is true, however, that Suan Mokkh depends on Buddhadasa, if we understand Buddhadasa in a less personal way. We should read "Buddhadasa" in Dhamma language:

> Everyone can be a *buddhadāsa*(servant of the Buddha), if one wants to with a pure heart. Just serve in the propagation of Buddha-Dhamma by setting an example of practice and joyful living that others may see, until they follow along.[7]

Thus, anyone who wishes, and is able, can be a *buddhadāsa* and set up a Suan Mokkh. To become a *buddhadāsa* all one must do is offer one's body, heart, and life in service of the Lord Buddha and all of humanity. From Tan Ajahn's perspective, this is no game.

> I want to tell you that our activities have the whole world at stake. ... If we err, the world is lost. If we are successful, we get the world back. ... We must think that the world is at stake and do our best, do everything possible, because it has great value. Not that we're going to brag or be owner of the world. We act with wisdom and not blind faith. We see that this work has great value because the world is at stake. So it is proper to sacrifice. Don't feel tired, don't get bored or fed up.[8]

We can find the future of Suan Mokkh if we can find more *buddhadāsas.* Some friends are already searching.

A Little Ashram

Who are the people – not just *bhikkhus* please – willing to become *buddhadāsas*? We can only wait and see who shows up. Here it is possible only to sketch how one "future Suan Mokkh" might happen. Whether it actually happens is another matter. For the remainder of this essay, I will try to outline – with as much freedom and imagination as I can summon – one such "project." It does not yet exist physically, but may appear before long. In doing so, we should heed Tan Ajahn's warning:

> Don't "be" anywhere. Don't think where "I" is. Whatever you need, do it. If not here, then wherever. Don't think "I am" or "I do" or "I work," then there are no problems.[9]

Don't think, however, that it is wrong to think about such things. The point is to think carefully, practically, unattached and without *dukkha.*Tan Ajahn has thought about some of these possibilities himself.

> I've thought of making a little Ashram where all live like students, like trainees, both the teacher and disciples. Everyone is a trainee. Everything is *sikṣā*,[#] both learning and teaching. A life of *sikṣā* for nine or ten years, then one will be ready to teach humanity. ... *Sikṣā* from everything that is human, that's associated with humanity: how can humanity have peace? Special *sikṣā*.[10]

[#] *The Thai word for "study" or "education" is the Sanskrit derived sikṣā, equivalent to the Pali sikkhā (training). For Tan Ajahn, sikṣā must carry the full sense of sikkhā: "look, look, look, until seeing ; see, see, see, until knowing; know, know, know, until you can practise ; then practise , practise, practise, until free of* ***dukkha.***"

Details are no problem. But the basic principle is to train people who will have the best knowledge to teach more widely. They must have a life-style which supports *sikṣā* the best. Live as forest monks...a life of constant Dhamma *sikṣā* . Body, mind, speech, eating, living: have it be *sikṣā* in life itself.

It's a project that expands. What we already have is quite a lot. If even bigger, we must think carefully whether it's possible or not. One person might give nine or ten years to *sikṣā* himself in the best way possible in order to propagate Buddha-Dhamma around the world, and in order to not waste time emptily, train another nine or ten people at the same time. Nine or ten years all together. Teamwork : help each other propagate all over the world. It's something big.

If thinking only for oneself, it isn't necessary. It's too much just for oneself. This plot is for the world, for humanity. It must be detailed, correct, quick, clear, like a scientist performing her scientific duties.[11]

Discovering A New Suan Mokkh

Some of us have been inspired by Tan Ajahn's example, not least of all, the way he began Suan Mokkh and how he trained himself in the early years. We would like to do something similar. We are not sure that we have the necessary wisdom and ability, but will try our best. The present Suan Mokkh is too big and busy for our needs, we will look for a suitable location, perhaps nearby.

Because this new project is directly inspired by the life, work, and example of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, his teaching is a starting point and principle resource in its development. In certain talks and writings, Tan Ajahn has set out the basic principles of a Suan Mokkh. I will collect some of the most pertinent here.

Certain principles were explicit from the very beginning of Suan Mokkh, as in the following invitation to SUAN MOKKHABALARAMA:

This is a place which the Dhammadana Group has established and dedicated especially to those who love and enlist in researching the Buddhist science of mind. This requires quiet and solitude. It requires a living area and food free from noisy mingling and socializing, the food

being favorable for those researching *vipassanā-dhura** because supporters have offered to supply whatever is required. This place is open to all practitioners of *vipassanā-dhura*.

All of you who wish to train the mind and spirit higher in calmness, according to the teachings, surely need a place such as this. If any of you find other places inappropriate, or objectionable, in any way, (such as, lacking support and care in line with the aims of this training) then we invite you to visit Suan Mokkhabalarama. Whether you intend to stay temporarily or live for an unspecified length of time, we are happy to help satisfy your needs as far as we are able.

Because this place is offered only to those who have surrendered their time to follow the Buddha's footsteps, there are a few rules to measure each other's characters, to find out if we have the same understanding or not. If our understandings match, it is a sign that there will surely be success in us cooperating to carry out our duties in order to promote the practice of Dhamma in an era when scholarship has progressed greatly.

The minimal rules are: Abstain from all addictive substances, such as, betel nut, tobacco, tea, and including everything which can enslave, except for food. No servants, because there's no kitchen or housing that requires ornament or much cleaning. Food is taken care of through *dhutaṅga* practices, whichever you choose, except in special cases, such as, illness. We don't have anything other than what is necessary to perform our duties as *samaṇa*(monk), and we don't permit anyone to bring anything along, except for what is genuinely necessary, such as, Dhamma books and medicines.

If interested, please correspond by letter.[12]

From this announcement and other sources, we can compile a list of basic principles which all along have guided Suan Mokkh. I would prefer to quote Tan Ajahn directly, but that would require too much space. Forgive me for paraphrasing and summarizing his statements and answers on this subject.

I. Suan Mokkh was established to promote and support Dhamma study and practice. Tan Ajahn had lost faith in the way Bangkok monks lived and decided to return to the life-style of the Buddha. In the cities, monks vied in the study of Pali and scriptures, as well as in sermons and ceremonies, but

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* *"The burden or duty of meditation": this was the popular term for Dhamma practice at the time Suan Mokkh was founded.*

there was little interest in practicing as the Buddha and the first disciples had. Tan Ajahn and his supporters wanted to resurrect Dhamma practice–*vipassanā-dhura*– first of all.[13]

II. Intimacy with Nature was a salient feature in the lives of the Buddha and his original disciples. None of them were awakened in cities or universities, let alone air-conditioned palaces. Catching the spirit of the Suttas, young Buddhadasa Bhikkhu hoped to learn from and be shaped by living close to Nature.

III. Physical needs would be met in simple ways, requiring the least trouble and following the ancient traditions of *pindapāda* (alms round) and *dhutaṅga*(strict practices for cleaning up defilements). Tan Ajahn has always praised "simple living".

IV. Rules would be kept to the minimum necessary to insure harmonious living. Basic guidelines are needed to check whether everyone shares the same understanding and intentions regarding life and practice. Then, a bit of structure prevents against certain problems and allows life to carry on more smoothly.

V. It is expected that practitioners come to Suan Mokkh with sufficient knowledge of the teachings. At Suan Mokkh, that understanding is honed so that each person can practice with confidence and success.[14]

VI. Everyone must use their own knowledge as their principles of practice. They must be willing to take responsibility for themselves, to investigate and experiment according to what they know, and to fill in missing areas of their knowledge.

VII. No one person is the "teacher" or "leader." Practice is an individual thing, except for certain activities and work which must be done together. Nobody is to take responsibility over others or tell them what to do. Each works according to ability and need. At most, everyone is a *kalyānamitta* helping others when difficulties arise.

VIII. Hold to Dhamma and Vinaya principles as they appear in the *Tipitika* , which don't contradict the *Mahāpadesa* principles for the *Suttanta*. The basis for study and practice is the recorded words of the Buddha. Not every word of the Pali *Tipitika* can be taken as the Buddha's teaching, so we must use the *Mahāpadesa* principles, the *Kālāma* Sutta, and other central standards to sort out the contradictions.

IX. Teachings which conflict with the *Tipitika* , even those from the Commentaries and *Visuddhimagga*, will not be followed.

X. Competition among different practice centers and groups is odious. There is no place for arguments about which teacher or "line of practice" is superior. Those who look down on others are not genuine Dhamma practitioners.[15]

XI. All daily activities should be taken as study-training to help us know all things according to reality. This is the only way to avoid getting stuck in things so that we may live free of *dukkha*. Work should be carried out diligently, merely as duties of the body-mind which hasn't broken up yet, so that intelligence and comprehensive understanding arises in all positions and movements, until knowing the highest thing, so that nothing interferes with further learning.[16]

XII. There should be appropriate opportunities for "play" or entertainment in line with Dhamma, in order to maintain good spirits and health, and support good practice. Best of all, such "play" will be "work" which benefits humanity.[17]

XIII. All resources – human and material – must be used thriftily, efficiently, and for the sake of Dhamma.

XIV. Tan Ajahn has repeatedly encouraged everyone to practice the form of meditation which the Buddha himself practiced and taught – *ānāpānasati* (mindfulness with breathing). The Buddha explains how practicing *ānāpānasati* is the same as practicing the four foundations of mindfulness, the heart of Buddhist meditation. It leads to their perfection, which in turn perfects the factors of awakening, and then liberation. Tan Ajahn feels that this is the most practical way to meditate, more straightforward, systematic, and natural than the catalogue of practices in the *Mahā-Satipaṭṭhāna* Sutta.[18]

XV. Suan Mokkh's doors have been open to all religions. The enemy of every religion is the same – selfishness. In this modern world, selfishness has the advantage. Thus, all religions must work together to fight selfishness. To do so, there must be good mutual understanding. Competition and argument will not do. Suan Mokkh does what it can to develop such understanding.

XVI. Propagating correct understanding of Buddha-Dhamma has been central at Suan Mokkh and Tan Ajahn has become one of Thailand's most influential Dhamma teachers. Since his first days as a monk, he has been giving Dhamma talks. All along, Tan Ajahn has experimented with new ways of teaching, explaining, and demonstrating Dhamma. All the residents of Suan Mokkh have helped in this work as part of their training. Training as Dhamma teachers is now an important aspect of life at Suan Mokkh. This is in line with the Buddha's instructions to his first sixty disciples, "Wander for the benefit and

aid of the people, for the happiness of the people, to help all beings in this world, for the happiness of both heavenly beings and humans. Don't two of you take the same way. Preach the Dhamma splendid in the beginning, middle, and end. Announce the Supreme Way of Life *(brahmacariya)* in both letter and spirit, correctly and fully." Although we may not be Arahant as those sixty were, we can still serve the Buddha's goal.[19]

In summary:

I've a trick, so that there are no problems. Make everything *"siksā"* Studying, work, obstacles become *siksā* and there are no problems. Have it all be *siksā* Sublimate problems so they aren't problems at all. Even teaching others should be *siksā*.

It teaches, but are we quick enough to receive? Teaching is *siksā* ; teaching others is the best *siksā*. When we haven't yet realized *maggaphala*, we must do everything as *siksā*. Personal matters, illness, the body, society, and involvement with others are *siksā*. Helping others should be *siksā* don't do it as helping or for some benefit. Then every square-inch of life is *siksā*.

Find a lot of work to do which fits you, then it becomes fun. No headaches.[20]

Unlike fifty years ago, it should be easier now. Ten years should be enough. *Siksā* for ten years. Enter the school within. *Siksā* at the university inside yourself. It will take about ten years if you really *siksā*. With mindfulness in every activity and position, don't let Ego be born. This is the lesson.

When Ego is born, "Oww, born again! Why did it get born? How did it happen? For what purpose?" This is the fourth kind of *samādhibhāvanā* [#], because it leads to the ending of the *āsava* (eruptions). Ego is born, Ego quenches; Ego is born, Ego quenches, ... If we teach this short cut right here, it will be quicker. Ego is born for what reason? Ego is born because of being tricked by positive and negative. It teaches us not to be deceived by positive and negative, so it cuts right through.[21]

[#] *"Development of mind through the power of samādhi (state of calm, firmness, readiness, and flexibility)", in other words, "meditation".*

Although present conditions obscure some of these principles, Tan Ajahn still considers them important and necessary. Whether the rest of us follow them, as he has, is our own responsibility. "Don't call me 'Teacher,' if you don't practice what I teach".

Don't Forget the Fruits

We can further appreciate Suan Mokkh's working principles by noting its accomplishments and innovations. They are many. In his Eighty Years Remembrances Book, Tan Ajahn lists the most important as "Legacies We Would Leave With You" and asks that they be continued. In a talk marking the Fiftieth Anniversary of Suan Mokkh, Tan Ajahn presented a more concise list, with explanations. Here we will review just the main items.

Suan Mokkh was founded in 2475 (1932), one month before the Thai change in government. Ever since,Tan Ajahn's goal has been to "follow in the Arahants' footsteps. He has worked to reform Thai Buddhism in various ways: returning to the forest, resurrecting Dhamma practice, and translating the scriptures into understandable Thai. He introduced certain "improvements": Dhamma lectures freed of ceremony, chanting with translation, elimination of superstitious accretions, and non-ritualistic ceremonies (when necessary). The Dhammadana Group (later Dhammadana Foundation) has published their magazine *Buddha-Sasana* since the second year of Suan Mokkh. His approach has been open-minded toward Mahayana and Zen Buddhism, as well as all other religions. And he has insisted that layfolk are just as capable of realizing Dhamma as monks, it's a matter of practice, not lifestyle and the amount of precepts professed.

Courageous and daring in this reform work, Tan Ajahn has "dug diamonds from the *Tipitika*",in spite of narrow-minded abuse from the clingingly orthodox. He resurrected such terms as *anattā* (not-self), *suññatā* (voidness), *tathatā*(thusness), *idappaccayatā, paticca-samuppāda*(dependent origination), and *atammayatā,* which no other monks mentioned in public. He has coined many simple, direct phrases to convey Dhamma points, a few follow:

"above good, beyond evil"
"die before dying"
"3 C's: Clean, Clear, Calm"
"just like that *(tathatā)*"
"void mind"
"nothing is worth being or having"
"nibbāna here and now"

"nibbāna can be found in *saṁsāra"*
"Dhamma is duty"
"enjoy working, that's happiness in work"

Unfortunately, my renderings lose some of the spirit and clarity of the Thai.

Tan Ajahn has read the Pali scriptures with love, openess, respect, and freedom. In doing so, he has discovered essential "keys" for unlocking the spiritual significance and practical value of the Pali. In turn, he has made these "keys" available to us all, including:

the principle of the *Kālāma Sutta*
the *Mahapadesa* standards
the Buddha taught only *"dukkha* and its quenching"
"all things ought not to be attached to (as me and mine)"
"people language and Dhamma language"
"the Tathagata's teachings are about *suññatā"*

understanding all the teachings as *sanditthiko* and *akāliko :* directly experienced here and now in this life.

Those of us who find traditional interpretations obscure or uninspiring, find Tan Ajahn's approach practical and liberating.

Suan Mokkh has broken out of the staid customs for preaching Dhamma. Rather than following rituals, Tan Ajahn and friends have found innovative ways to help others better comprehend Dhamma. At Suan Mokkh, there are numerous artifacts used for this purpose: the Theatre of Spiritual Entertainment, Nalike Pond, Luang Ta Sawai's work with children, the Dhamma ships, five pillars, outdoor classrooms, natural lecture hall, and wall-less, sky-roofed *uposatha.* There have been numerous experiments with photography, shadow theater, opera, Dhamma songs, poetry, and plaster models.

Listed in this way, the achievements of Suan Mokkh are formidable, although many details have been skipped. Tan Ajahn never envisioned or expected these developments, they are a "fluke" arising out of years of selfless work. Some people excuse themselves from even trying such work by citing how unique and exceptional Tan Ajahn is. No matter how that may be, he is still subject to the law of *idappaccayatā.* Thus, he and Suan Mokkh are what they are due to how he and his friends have lived and the principles they have followed. Some of these achievements require skills which only some of us have, but we all have the capacity to understand and practice Dhamma correctly. Therefore, we can all help to make "diamonds of Dhamma" available to fellow humans who are yet entangled in *dukkha.*

A new Suan Mokkh can carry on from Suan Mokkh's achievements, by understanding and incorporating as many of the teachings as possible, then adapting and improving them according to necessity and ability. Always, we must respond to genuine needs *(dukkha)* with new "pure and noble tricks" *(upāya)*. There is no need for a great deal of planning. Simply understand the fundamental principles and *siksā* according to them all the time.

Suan Atammayo

We might find a new name for a new Suan Mokkh, a word fitting our times. There is a "new word" from the ancient Pali which Tan Ajahn has made much of recently, namely, *"atammayatā,"* which he first rendered as, "Hey, I'm not gonna mess with you any more".* "The little Ashram" might be called "Suan Atammayo." ***Atammayo*** means "the one who has or is *atammayatā." Atammayatā* follows upon *suññatā* and *tathatā in the process of insight* or is the deepest reach of the primary insight. It is the "highest and last word of Buddhism". A new version of Suan Mokkh might take *atammayatā* as inspiration, as its meaning is especially appropriate for the modern world. Used properly, *atammayatā* is a sword capable of slicing through all attachments quickly. And it is another name for *nibbāna*.[22] Suan Atammayo, then, is "The Garden of the Unconcocted," a synonym of "The Garden of Liberation."

"Suan Atammayo" is one practice center dedicated to following the Lord Buddha's Dhamma-Vinaya in order to become *"buddhadāsas"*. The life in Suan Atammayo will be designed for the needs of those "trainees" who have devoted themselves to a long term (9-10 years) training program in the style of Suan Mokkh. Visitors are welcome, if they can fit in with the resident Sangha and share in their lifestyle. Persons interested in this training may sample it step-by-step without making a long term commitment.

Basic Guidelines for Suan Atammayo

The final portion of this article is a restatement of much of the preceding report in the form of a set of guidelines for Suan Atammayo. A tentative charter is in the works, here we offer a rough summary. The actual charter is not so much a plan or rule, as an evolving agreement among those who live, study, practice, and work at Suan Atammayo. It is an attempt to enunciate important working principles.

To start with, Suan Atammayo will follow the original guidelines of Suan

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* *"Ku mai ao kab meung ik to pai woei" : Something like Clark Gable's (Rhett Butler) "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn."*

Mokkh as far as is possible. Regarding the 15 Principles listed above, only a few adjustments will be necessary. It is not feasible to require that newcomers have a certain degree of Dhamma study behind them, as was possible with Thai monks. There will be foreigners and laymen interested in Suan Atammayo and they will require a program of study to enable them to practice correctly. Now that most of the *Tipiṭika* is availalbe in good translations, such study will be easier. And translations of Tan Ajahn's work will help trainees to "dig diamonds out from the *Tipiṭika*."

A word of caution about these guidelines: Suan Atammayo follows a lifestyle which interested monks & friends can share in common, working and training together. Externally, we must fit together, support each other, and let go of habits and selfishness. The inner Dhamma practice is another matter. Overcoming ignorance and self is a purely individual practice. This point must be perfectly clear. We must remain intellectually independent. Nobody has spiritual authority over another. Each must be responsible for himself.

I. The lifestyle at Suan Atammayo is one of "Forest Wat Wild Monks," that is, intimacy with Nature. The location is rural, with plenty of trees and natural facilities (pond, stream, swamp, hill, meadow, etc.). Residents live in harmony with Nature, following environmentally sound principles and setting a good example for neighbors. Life and practice take place outdoors as much as possible. Suan Atammayo will help with forest conservation and wildlife preservation within and near the wat.

II. "Forest Wat Wild Monks" also live simply and humbly for the sake of Dhamma study & practice. *Dhutaṅga* practices regarding robes and food are encouraged. Housing, buildings, and technology are simple, efficient, and inexpensive. We will try to conserve resources and minimize the use of electricity and fossil fuels.

III. Residents of Suan Atammayo live and train as a community (Sangha) in order to overcome selfish desires and habits. This includes working together to maintain the premises and on projects that benefit humanity more broadly. Food, drinks, and requisites are shared. A community store will be kept so that individual *kuṭis* don't get clustered with personal possessions. We will meet a few times each day for chanting, group meditation, the meal, and Dhamma discussion.

IV. At Suan Atammayo we keep a common Vinaya practice. The Vinaya has made it possible for the Buddha-Dhamma to be taught continuously up until today. We will try to maintain this tradition for another generation. In particular, we will try to revive the spirit of the Vinaya and certain ceremonies which have become mere rituals.

V. Proper study is the "teacher" of Suan Atammayo. In order to understand the why, what, and how of Dhamma practice, and to be able to explain Buddha-Dhamma to others correctly, we must know the Buddha's teachings adequately. These we must "study" in the fullest sense of the word *"sikṣā."* We can begin with Tan Ajahn's work and the *Tipiṭika*, especially the *Suttanta*. Members of the Sangha can give regular talks and guests will be invited to share their understanding of Dhamma. Teaching others is as important aspect of our study. It should never be forgotten that all "study" is for the sake of practice.

VI. Each person must practise according to his own understanding of Dhamma, responsible for himself, consulting with *kalyāṇa-mitta* when appropriate. Living within the framework of Vinaya and the guidelines of Suan Atammayo, we watch the mind in order to let go of "me" and "mine" and be free of *dukkha*.

VII. Suan Atammayo is dedicated to serving the Buddha and that means working to free humanity from *dukkha*. According to personal abilities, inclinations, and needs, we all help in promoting Dhamma study and practice through retreats, lectures, books, and other means. Our outlook must be international. We will try to raise a Buddhist voice on important social issues, such as, the environment, education, violence, morality, the rights and responsibilities of women, human rights, and economics. We will try to serve the underprivileged who are often forgotten and will join with other religions in the hope that humanity can overcome selfishness and live in peace.

VIII. Our Books Department will prepare practical and relevant study materials based in pristine Buddha-Dhamma, for the use of residents and visitors, as well as interested friends around the world. These will include translations from Tan Ajahn's works, translations from the *Tipiṭika* in "plain English" (and other languages), original essays, poems, stories, and whatever seems worthwhile.

IX. Suan Atammayo will support special projects as they come along and when the Dhamma value in them is clear. We intend to manifest Dhamma both in our own lives and in society around us. One possibility might be the formation of a "sister community" when that becomes feasible. Such a community of women would share the same principles discussed above, but the women living there would be free to develop things as they see fit. There would be limited interaction with Suan Atammayo, as appropriate, the communities, however, should be independent.

Conclusion

This essay is merely a reflection on how the ideals and principles of

Suan Mokkh might continue. As of yet, there isn't a physical Suan Atammayo in which to live. Nonetheless, it could happen soon and a few people, including Tan Ajahn, are discussing the possibility. Certain people are interested in trying such a venture. Whether they have the necessary wisdom, patience, selflessness, and ability have yet to be seen. There is land near Suan Mokkh on which Suan Atammayo could develop. It is also possible that Suan Atammayo could happen elsewhere in Thailand, or perhaps in another country, such as, America. The location is less important than the inner realization of "Suan Mokkh" or "Suan Atammayo." This essay is merely part of that discussion. For friends who are interested, we will be translating some of Tan Ajahn's talks which are relevant to the discussion.

Bhikkhu Santikaro
Suan Mokkhabalaram, Chaiya, Suratthani.

ENDNOTES :

All references are to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. I know of no standard system for transliterating Thai, so I have followed my own ear with the Thai titles.

1. ***Fifty Years Suan Mokkh*** (Ha-sip Pi Suan Mokkh) ;
(Bangkok : Suan Usom Foundation, 1982). This is a two part collection of articles, interviews, and letters. I use only ***Volume Two : When We Speak With Them and When We Speak Of Us*** (Pak Song : Meua Rao Put Ka Kao Lae Meua Rao Teung Rao). Many of the articles in ***When We Speak Of Us*** are collected from previously published sources, sometimes with new titles. This second half of Volume Two is numbered seperately from the first half. All references to ***Fifty Years Suan Mokkh*** are to the second half of Volume Two.
"Where Is Suan Mokkh ?" p. 244-247 (1983).
2. Personal conservation with author, 20 December 1989.
3. "Carrying On the Work of Suan Mokkh", ***Fifty Years Suan Mokkh***, p. 224.
4. Personal conservation, 20 December 1989.
5. Personal conservation, 8 February 1990.
6. ***The Eighhty Years Rememberance Book From Buddhadasa Bhikkhu*** (Asitisamvaccharayusamanusorn Jak Buddhadasa Bhikkhu) ; (Chaiya, Thailand : Suan Mokkhabalarama, 1986).
"The Dawning of Legacies We Would Leave With You"
(Faa Sang Haeng Moradok Ti Ko Fak Wai), p.107.
Many of the "Legacies" appeared in ***Evolution / Liberation # 4*** (1989) & the rest will appear in the next issue. "Legacy 6".
7. ibid, p. 106. "Legacy 1".
8. Personal conversation, 20 December 1989.
9. Personal conversation, 30 November 1989.
10. ibid.
11. Personal conversation, 20 December 1989.
12. ***Fifty Years Suan Mokkh***, "Suan Mokkhabalarama" p. 297f..(From an announcement which originally appeared in "***Buddha-Sasana***", 1933, Vol.1, No.3).
13. For I. Through III. see ***Fifty Years Suan Mokkh***, "Suan Mokkh With Nature", p. 195 ff., and "Forest Wat Wild Monks", p. 158 ff.
14. For V. through IX. see ***The Style of Practice At Suan Mokkh*** (Naew Kan Patibat Tham Nai Suan Mokkh). (Bangkok : The Dhamma Study and Practice Group, 1986 (First edition 1966), p.1-4. Translated in ***Evolution / Liberation # 4***, pp. 23-26.
15. ***Fifty Years Suan Mokkh***, "Ten Years of Suan Mokkh", p.63 ff.
16 ibid, p.78.
17 ibid, p.76f.
18. There are many books by Tan Ajahn on this subject.
See especially : ***Mindfulness With Breathing***, tr.

Santikaro Bhikkhu; Bangkok: The Dhamma Study and Practice Group, 1988.
Mindfulness of Breathing:
Anapanasati-Bhavana, tr. Bhikkhu Nagasena;
(Bangkok: Dhammapuja, 1974).

19. ***Collected Free Thoughts of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu***
(Chumnum Ko Kit Isara Kong Buddhadasa Bhikkhu),
(Chaiya, Thailand: Dhammadana Group, 1954);
"Framework For Propagating Buddhism In The Modern Era" p.198 ff. Also, "Ten Years of Suan Mokkh", p.59 ff. and 78 f.
20. Personal conversation, 30 November 1989.
21. Personal conversation, 20 December 1989.
22. Many talks and books about *atammayatā* have appeared since Maghapuja 1988. The only piece in English is a short article in ***Evolution/Liberation*** #4 (occasional English language journal of Suan Mokkh).

THE FOREST MONASTERY AND ITS RELEVANCE TO MODERN THAI SOCIETY *

The Making of Forest Monastery in Buddhist Tradition

The Buddhist tradition and forests are closely related. Buddhism arose with the enlightenment of the former prince Siddhartha Guatama in a forest at Bodh-Gaya. And it was in the forest, in the Deer Park of Isipatana, that his First Discourse was delivered, resulting in the conversion of the first member of the Sangha. In other words, each component of the Triple Gem, the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, originated in the forest.

Throughout the 45 years of his public activities, forests were almost always where the Buddha lived and taught. Even the many rains - residences *(vassa)* he spent in the vicinity of prominent towns, particularly Rajagriha and Shravasti, were passed in forested surroundings.

The Buddha regarded forests as places especially conducive to meditation and spiritual development. Those who seek development of mind are aware of the need for close contact with nature, and have great appreciation of it. These are the Buddha's words :

> ***Delightful are the forests,***
> ***Where ordinary people find no pleasure***
> ***There the passionless will rejoice,***
> ***For they seek no sensual pleasure.***
>
> *Dhammapada, v.99*

The Buddha's disciples, from the first generation onward, followed his example, living and practising in the forest, and, as teachers involved with townspeople, praised forest dwelling. Even when situated near towns or cities, Buddhist monasteries were from the beginning surrounded by forests and close to nature.

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* *I would like to offer my sincerest thanks to Phra Charles Nirodho for providing valuable comments as well as helping edit this article tirelessly.*

It can be said that all monasteries in the Buddha's time were forest ones. It is apparent ,however, that monks even then could be roughly classified as meditators or scholars. The former lived in solitude in the forest, practising meditation and relinquishment. The latter, including reciters, undertook activities in association with both fellow-monks and laypeople. To memorize and recite the Buddha's discourses regular meetings were needed, where discourses could be passed on and recital could be checked and corrected.

From the Buddha's time onward, different types of monks were likely to live (seperately), to a certain extent. This is evidenced by the reputation earned by Dabba Mallputta for his care, when allocating lodgings to newly arrived monks, in segregating the different monks. As mentioned in the Suttas:

> He allocated lodgings in the same place to monks who knew the Suttas, saying *' They will be able to chant over the Suttas to one another '*. He allocated lodgings in the same place to monks versed in the Vinaya rules, saying *' They will decide upon the Vinaya with one another.'* He allocated lodgings in the same place to the Dhamma teaching monks, saying *'They will discuss the Dhamma with one another.'* He allocated lodgings in the same place to meditation monks,saying*'They will not disturb one another.'* He allocated lodgings in the same place to the monks who lived indulging in low talk and playing about, saying *'These reverend ones will live according to their pleasure.'*

The passage of time, the spread of Buddhism to a wide variety of places and traditions, and its integration into the daily life of people all contributed to the development of monks' specialization. The time came when a clear division existed between the Araññāvasī (forest dweller) and Gāmavāsī (town dweller.) The town dweller is a monk concerned with learning from books *(ganthadhura),* whereas a forest dweller devotes his life to practising meditation for calm and insight *(vipassanādhura).* Until recent times ,however, this specialization did not go to extremes. Many town dwellers were not completely occupied with book study ; they were also interested in meditation. Neither was the specialization rigid. A town dweller could at times leave for forest life, while a meditation monk attracted to learning could easily undertake book study in the town.

Monasteries were classified as temples and forest monasteries, but until recently the difference between the two was not so great. The town monasteries, which later became an integral part of villages and towns, were still surrounded by forests, and these forests contained a wide variety of animals. The living conditions of town monks resembled that of forest monks. All travelled on foot, treated their diseases with the same kinds of medicine, and lived their lives on limited amounts of necessities.

This classification of monasteries in Theravada Buddhism originated in Sri Lanka, and was adopted as Thai tradition at least seven centuries ago. King Lithai of Sukhothai was the first Siamese king to establish a Sangha organization in this fashion. Subsequently the terms Kana Fai Kwa and Kana Fai Sai - the monasteries of the "right side" and "left side", the alternate terms for town and forest monasteries – are frequently found in Thai chronicles.

The status of town and forest monasteries was significantly effected (about 150 years ago) by the Sangha reforms of Vajirañana Bhikkhu, who later succeeded to the Siamese throne as King Mongkut. Book learning was developed to a great extent, the founding of Dhammayuttika sect being an essential factor in the revival of canonical study. The sect's founder, Vajirañana Bhikkhu, was famous for his great scholarly abilities. Under the influence of modern scientific thought and the urban-centred perspective which was increasingly wide-spread within the Thai elite ,however, the leaders of the Sangha reform movement were critical of the forest tradition and of meditation monks. Peripheral forest monks were regarded as being "magical" and "vagabonds" *(phra jorajat)*. Austerities *(dhutanga)* as a whole were not rated highly by King Mongkut, although some austerity practices relating to eating habits were adopted by the Dhammayuttika as part of its discipline.

The official division of monasteries along these lines was brought to an end in the reign of King Rama V. Sangha reform was now carried out under the leadership of Prince Patriarch Wachirayaan Varoros, who was King Mongkut's son and King Rama V's brother. Again, book learning *(pariyat)* was promoted and modernized, while the practice of the Teachings *(patibat)* was almost ignored. The leaders of the Sangha at that time were all book-learners in Bangkok. It should be noted ,however, that many of those monks involved themselves in practising meditation.

It was not until the reign of King Rama VII that Thailand saw the resurgence of forest meditation, which gradually became a significant aspect in modern Thailand. The monk mostly responsible for this resurgence was undoubtedly Ajaan Mun Bhuridatto (1870-1949 CE). Although a Dhammayuttika monk, he was quite distinct from the others. He steadfastly practised meditation in the seclusion of caves and forests full of wild animals, declining to accept any administrative position offered by his senior and high-ranking friends.

In his early days, Ajaan Mun seldom received support from the establishment, either Sangha or State. The leadership of the Dhammayuttika was openly hostile towards him, considering him "unqualified" to teach Dhamma to his bhikkhu disciples and the laity without a theoretical background. However, his strong determination in combination with strict prac-

tice, and his teachings arising from compassion and wisdom, eventually enables him to win the respect of both ordinary people and the authorities of Sangha and State. His life and teaching inspired a great number of monks and laypeople in the various parts of the country that he visited follow his ascetic practice.

While the movement of forest Dhamma practice in Ajaan Mun's lineage was spreading widely throughout the Northeast, another centre of the forest tradition was being established in the South, practically in the same year that saw the political revolution that brought an end to the absolute monarchy. Within two decades, Suan Mokkhaphalaram (Garden of the Energy for Liberation), led by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, had become known as a centre attracting the young generation concerned with the study and practice of Dhamma. The practice and physical setting in Suan Mokkh have as their models not only the Buddha's Teaching and conditions in the Buddha's time, but also contain a modern element and atmosphere which attracts the young generation. Inspired by Suan Mokkh, many forest monasteries were established throughout the country, even though Buddhadasa, unlike Ajaan Mun, rarely travelled and taught widely.

There are many hundreds of forest monasteries in Thailand, with a wide variety of practices. A large number of them either can be traced back to Ajaan Mun as their source of inspiration (this includes the monasteries of Ajaan Cha and his disciples), or have developed under the influence of Buddhadasa's teaching. These two monks are undoubtedly modern masters, and have played critically important roles in preserving and reviving the forest tradition, and making it available to the present generation.

Characteristics of Forest Monasteries

Despite the wide variety of forest monasteries found in Thailand, the following four characteristics are shared by all of them. Each is situated in or surrounded by forest, places primary emphasis on meditation, keeps strictly to the Vinaya rules, and in each one some of the thirteen austere practises are undertaken.

Each forest monastery has a community of monks, or Sangha, as its core. In fact a Sangha is necessary for any monastery, be it town or forest. The uniqueness of the forest monastery, however, lies in its committment to preserve the real mission and spirit of the Sangha, which is to make it an instrument for a stronghold of individual development along the path to full awakening.

To actualize this objective, the forest monastery serves a number of functions, such as :
- to be a place providing an environment and living conditions that enable the individual to live an ideal life.
- to serve as a centre for training both monks and laypeople in spiritual development.
- to be a setting where monks, by leading exemplary lives, inspire and influence ordinary people to both an interest and progress in Dhamma.

The forest monastery is a community where individual behaviour and relationships between members are based on Vinaya (the Discipline). In this way one can develop oneself, starting from purification of the external aspect of life (bodily action and speech), and progressing to purification of the internal aspect (mind, heart, spirit). Besides, through the observance of Vinaya, a community becomes well-managed and favourable to individual development. Keeping to Vinaya provides a pattern of living that not only benefits both the observing individual and other Sangha members, but also can impress and assure other people of Dhamma values. In other words, it is a non-verbal Dhamma exposition communicated through living the Dhamma.

These values and functions of the forest monastery are aimed at fulfilling the ideal of Sangha as created by the Buddha. It should be noted that these are also the missions of town monasteries, and that to a certain degree they have continued to be performed there. As Buddhism spread ,however, town monasteries, intending to serve people in various ways, have developed some new roles and forms of involvement with the lay community. Some of these roles were at times developed at the expense of the original function of practising Dhamma and of enabling people to reach and embody the highest good *(paramattha)*. That is, these roles were typically confined to the level of temporal welfare *(dittadhammikattha)*, such as improving the living conditions of poor people, providing education to those who had no access to state-run schooling, and giving counsel to the worried and the depressed. In contrast to town monasteries, these activities seldom prevail in forest monasteries which,consequently, have more opportunity to work for and achieve all three levels of benefit: from temporal to spiritual welfare *(samparayikattha)*, and finally the highest good, which is the final goal of the Buddha's Teaching.

The Forest Monastery as An Essential Factor in Society

Despite (in reality, because of) its spiritual orientation, the forest monastery plays an important role in society. This is due to the fact that the

harmony of any society ,however, secular it is, does not depend only on its level of productivity, which can be used to fulfill the material needs of people, nor on its ability to maintain order, but also requires a spiritual foundation. Law and force alone cannot prevent people from harming each other. Peoples' consciences are indeed essential factors for peace and harmonious relationship in society. To achieve that goal, the conscience of people must have a spiritual basis. To refrain from killing because it is against the rule one has chosen to live by is better than refraining for fear of being prosecuted. What is best, however, is refraining out of compassion and respect for the lives of other beings. Such a spiritual foundation, rather than law and force, can ensure the lasting peace of a society.

A spiritual foundation not only contributes to the well-being of the society as a whole, but is crucial for the mental health of the individual. An overdeveloped society can provide people with seemingly a kind of happiness, except for tranquility, or subtle happiness. Material acquisition can become an obstacle to deeper kinds of happiness when it motivates people to spend most of their time and energy in pursuit of material abundance and leaves them no time to cultivate peace in their minds. Although they desire it, their minds are too crude to experience the subtlety and serenity of such peace. Being unaware of the nature of life and unable to experience the deeper happiness, which cannot be delivered by material acquisition, large numbers of people are frustrated, anxious, and depressed. Modern society is therefore characterized by mental disorder. In such a society, physical well-being is also adversely affected by overconsumption of food, and by the pollution caused by production. There is surely no need to mention here the crimes and related problems that arise from competition and the obsession with material gain.

People with a spiritual basis are assured of a peaceful life and livelihood, undisturbed by the impermanence and unsatisfactoriness of the world, and not agitated by craving and desire which lead to exploitation and crime. Every society is therefore badly in need of a spiritual foundation so as to maintain harmonious relationships and to secure peace for its members.

Having forest monasteries amidst their communities, people were in the past influenced a great deal by religion and spirituality. This is quite obvious in a community as small as a village. Forest monasteries, together with the village or town monasteries, were nothing less than the source of the spiritual stream that nourished the life of people. This was achieved by their role as training centres for individual development, as instructors in the proper way of living, and as models for the ideal society.

The lives of forest monks and the pattern of relationships in the Sangha convey to people in the larger society certain "messages", some of which deny

or resist the prevailing values. Such messages point to the true value of life, indicating that development of inwardness is much more important than wealth and power, that the life of tranquility and material simplicity is more rewarding and fulfilling. Such messages provide both hints and warnings which enable people to stop and reflect upon their lives, leading them to seek themselves rather than material gain and glory. Such messages are especially revolutionary for a society blindly obsessed by impoverished values. To have forest monasteries amidst, or,to put it more correctly, elevated above the lay society, is to have communities of resistance that, by their nature and very existence, question the validity of popular values.

These were the values and functions of forest monasteries in traditional Thai society. Nowadays these values and functions still exist, and have indeed become more important than ever, because modern Thai society is increasingly influenced by degraded values and obsessed by material growth. Despite its claim that Buddhism is the national religion, Thailand has single-mindedly aimed all its efforts and resources toward economic growth as the goal for which everything else is worth sacrificing. Rather than quality of life, Gross National Product is considered the criterion that indicates the success and level of development of the country.

To accelerate economic growth, people are geared toward unlimited consumption, so as to increase production, which generates more income for more consumption, etc. Human beings are therefore reduced to consumers and producers, that is to say, to the cogs and wheels of a great economic machine solely designed to produce money as its ultimate product and end.

In a society where material is regarded as superior to spirit, consumption and production superior to personal development, every human being is merely a mechanism, insignificant and powerless. To make one feel important and powerful, one therefore competes with and exploits others in order to gain more wealth and more power. As a result people become alienated from each other. And as one spares no time for reflecting deeply upon oneself, one becomes alienated from oneself. Modern Thailand is therefore developing into a society of the sick and the suffering. To modernize Thailand into a "Newly Industrialized Country" is to accelerate and intensify the sickness and the suffering. This trend is clearly evidenced even in the process of becoming "NIC". The number of Thai people suffering mental disorders is growing at an alarming rate. It is estimated that 15 % of the population suffer from neurosis and 1 % from psychosis. The rate of suicide has increased to 15:1,000,000 annually, in other words, on average there is a suicide every hour. This figure is six times the rate of 30 years ago. At the same time, violence against each other is increasing, with one incident every 20 minutes on average. Suicide and violence are indicators of the level of suffering experienced by Thai people. It

should also be noted that these figures are the tip of the iceberg: beneath the surface lies the suffering of the mass of the people, and these cases are not available to any statistician.

In a society where materialism is epidemic, the forest monastery is one of the few types of community in which individuals can live secluded from such values and without being assaulted by aggressive modern advertising. It is therefore a place where people can return to themselves and discover themselves as they really are. In addition to being a training centre for personal development, the forest monastery is now playing a role as a retreat centre where people who are worn out by competition in society can heal themselves and recover their wholeness through meditation, relaxation, and reflection upon themselves with a new approach to life. Such places are in great demand because a sense of failure is rapidly spreading amongst the majority of people who cannot fulfill their lives in material terms.

The forest monastery in the contemporary world is like an oasis in the desert. Since vitality and freshness are hardly to be expected from life in modern materialistic society, it is not surprising that the number of people seeking peaceful lives in forest monasteries is increasing, as is , despite the reduced forested area, the number of forest monasteries. In contrast to the past, however, today the society surrounding forest monasteries is no longer made up of village communities. The largeness and complexity of modern society prevents the spiritual influence of forest monasteries from spreading widely. Their impact is confined to nearby small communities and to the relatively few people from elsewhere who visit them.

The Need for Innovative Roles for the Forest Monasteries

The traditional roles of the forest monastery are therefore not capable of laying a spiritual groundwork for contemporary Thai society. To accomplish this the forest monastery would need to expand its functions beyond that of a training centre with its emphasis on the individual and of a community structured to make possible an ideal way of life. An attempt is needed to explore how the forest monastery can exercise a direct influence on the society as a whole ; in other words, how the forest monastery, in addition to helping the people in close contact with it to live good lives, can help change the large society as a whole into one favourable to peoples' pursuit of good lives.

I am convinced that the forest monastery can play the latter role, without demanding or exerting pressure for social reconstruction ,which,

though a necessity, is obviously not the role of the forest monastery. What it can do is to convey, with insistence and innovation, "messages" that create "new" values which can bring about cultural change on a fundamental level or encourage a change in the social patterns which inflict suffering and degrade the quality of peoples' lives. Thailand is trying to rapidly become an industralized country, in the process leaving behind its cultural and spiritual heritage. We are now relatively far from our cultural and psychological roots, and are being faced with a wide range of problems, personal, social, and ecological.

The problems on the personal level relate to both physical and psychological well-being. With an excess of wealth leading to overconsumption, an increasingly large number of people suffer from such "civilized diseases" as atherosclerosis, cancer, and diabetes. Anxiety accompanying the pursuit of wealth leads to mental disorders and sometimes suicide. The epidemics of drug addiction and of AIDS hardly require further mention here.

As for social problems, these are already extensive : crime, poverty, mass unemployment, labour unrest, the growing disparity between city and countryside and family breakdown, to name but a few.

We also witness various forms of ecological deterioration, such as water, air and noise pollution, soil erosion, depletion of resources, deforestation. Frequent floods and droughts are obvious indications of how serious the ecological problems Thailand faces are.

These three levels of problems are closely related. Mental disorder leads to crimes. Rural poverty is an important factor in deforestation, while the polluted environment harms people's health. Social problems, such as family breakdown, cause personal suffering, and the natural environment is grossly exploited and damaged in the attempt to reduce personal suffering through material acquisition.

The three levels of problems are all strengthened by, if not actually originating in, the obsession with material growth as promising lasting happiness. Dominated by materialism, people tend to regard each other as either opponents or victims, and to view the environment as a place in which to maximize profits. Ultimately, people become alienated even from themselves. In short, materialistic values sever all relationship between persons, society, and nature, resulting in devastating effects in all three aspects.

Thailand's future will never be promising as long as the obsession with material wealth prevails and until more emphasis is placed on the principle of equilibrium, that is, moderation in living conditions, harmony in society, and balance in nature. Equilibrium on the levels of individual, society, and nature

is critical in solving the problems we face.

Here we can see something of the contribution the forest monastery can render to society, since it is able to preserve the traditional wisdom so badly needed by Thailand and the modern world. This wisdom is not found only in the scriptures or expressed only through words. It is manifested in living communities existing in the context of contemporary society, and is there to be perceived. Such wisdom cannot be apprehended ,however, unless we perceive the forest monastery as a system of relationships between the individual, society and nature. The Sangha in the forest monastery is a society aiming for human development amidst the natural environment. In this system of relationships we can see the wisdom which stresses the interrelatedness and interdependence of persons, society and nature.

To encourage individual realization, the life-style and regulations of the forest monastery are designed to create a community of peaceful relationships which support the individual's endeavours, and to determine the proper relationship with the natural surroundings, which enables the forest to be protected. From the perspective of community, these regulations aim to encourage the individual to take responsibility for the community's well-being, and give priority to the community rather than to the individual. The individual's responsibility includes taking care of nature for the common good, but nature does not exist for the sake of human beings – it has its own value and integrity, which needs to be perceived and respected both by the individual and by society. In short the forest monastery is a place where the essential aspects of life, the person, society and nature, are related to each other meaningfully and creatively.

The principle of the interdependence of and harmonious relationship between persons , society and nature is an invaluable one for modern Thailand. This wisdom is the first "message" the forest monastery can convey to modern people, which can lead to a fundamental change in the relationships within modern society.

Perceiving reality in terms of interrelatedness enables one to be more aware that pursuing the growth of one particular system inevitably brings about devastating effects in every other related system, and finally undermines the well-being of that single system itself. Seen thus, harmony and equilibrium are to be much more highly valued than growth. If this view prevails in society, the pattern of relationships founded upon competition and personal aggrandizement would shift towards one of cooperation for the common good. The modes of production that aim to "conquer" nature, based as they are on the understanding that humankind and nature are seperate entities, would be transformed to ecologically sound ones. The present wasteful pattern

of consumption, where consumption is wrongly viewed as a way to secure happiness, would be replaced with one that is frugal, moderate, and fulfilling.

This first "message", the wisdom of harmony and interdependence, becomes available when the forest monastery is viewed as a system of relationships between the person, society and nature. A second "message" emerges when one regards it as a place for education *(sikkhā)* or development *(bhavanā)*. In addition to establishing harmonious relationships between the person, society and nature, one sees the necessity of developing each aspect to the fullest. This means to elevate the human condition to the level of total liberation (Buddha), to make the harmonious rule of nature (Dhamma) prevail in society, and to transform an ordinary society to one of enlightened individuals (Sangha).

This kind of development, the development of the person, nature, and society towards the goal of being Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, can secure that fundamental change for the better – unattainable through voracious material development and constitutes a wise principle vitally necessary for a country as misdeveloped as Thailand.

If the modern world and Thailand are to survive current crises, these two kinds of wisdom must be seriously taken up and put into practice. Up until the present, the forest monastery has preserved and made available two kinds of wisdom through exemplary practice and community living. Members of the forest monastery not only commend these two principles, they live and witness them. Considering the turbulence of the contemporary world, it is more important than ever that the forest monastery commits itself to the preservation and spread of this wisdom.

In the past, the communication of this wisdom was limited to communities nearby the forest monastery and to individuals who came seeking it. Training was done mainly on a personal basis. Though this is the fundamental and indispensable basis for transmission of these "messages", the current situation calls for a second, complementary type of communication, by which this wisdom can reach a wider audience and have an impact sufficient to transform social relationships.

To reach and touch the larger world, the forest monastery needs to speak in that world's language. This is not only a matter of words, but also involves the use of logic and concepts with which the listeners are familiar, as well as addressing the issues that concern them. To achieve this, related information is needed and must be presented in a systematic way. Speaking, for instance, about global ecological disaster, and then abruptly drawing the conclusion that

greed, hatred and delusion are its cause, is to say almost nothing. Of course the conclusion is true, but it is not the whole truth : it overlooks other factors responsible for that problem.

This mission makes the forest monastery a vital element in modern society. It can be not only a stronghold for those who want to train themselves outside the worldly stream, but also a leader in persuading the larger society to follow its example in order to achieve deeper and more lasting happiness.

From this point of view, Suan Mokkh provides a good model. When young Buddhadasa Bhikkhu abandoned his life of book-learning and became a forest monk near his home village, his goal initially was to live against the mainstream of the world, since he was aware of the danger of following it. Later on he felt it necessary to encourage and persuade the world to follow the way of Dhamma. Hence the mission of Suan Mokkh has from the beginning been not only to provide training in meditation, but also involves Dhamma dessimination through talk, publications, and the innovative use of media to communicate with the larger society, aiming to convey Buddhist wisdom which can save the world from its current crises.

Communicating these "messages" to the modern world is quite a new idea for most forest monasteries. It has been assumed that the forest monastery specializes in meditation, while Dhamma dissemination is the town monastery's responsibility. It has even been held that these two activities are incompatible. Thus, in the early years of Suan Mokkh, Buddhadasa, having undertaken both kinds of activity, underwent a conflict in feeling that he was acting like a town monk while his true nature was that of a forest monk. Eventually he reconciled the two kinds of activity, through developing an attitude of non-attachment together with organizing these activities in such a way that they did not interfere with each other.

A Time for More Openness toward the World

To effectively communicate Buddhist wisdom, the forest monastery needs to be more open to the world. This means being aware of and responsive to the real situation of people in the secular world, and encouraging people to have more access to the forest monastery, not only for meditation but also for learning, sharing and discussion.

Not every forest monastery can or should do this. But there should be some monasteries that are capable of playing this role in addition to functioning as centres of monastic Dhamma practice. Such a policy of openness, however, should be implemented with great caution. Well-selected informa-

tion and well-chosen exposure is needed, together with regulations to keep this kind of activity from disturbing meditation practice and from disrupting the atmosphere of the monastery. This can be effected in part by seperating the meditation section from other sections.

For more than 50 years Suan Mokkh has attempted more than any other forest monastery to perform these two functions. Despite many failures, its achievements are great, and can inspire the modern generation. One of its achievements is the revival of Buddhism, showing its relevance to contemporary life. The life and work of its leader has impressed intellectuals, and persuaded many to turn to Buddhism not only for resolving personal problems but also as a means of providing an intelligent and peaceful solution to the problems of society.

However, Suan Mokkh alone is not sufficient. We need many such forest monasteries if a fundamental change is to be effected in the attitudes of people throughout modern society. Only through such a concerted effort will the relationship between persons, nature and society become beneficial and supportive, and the contemporary Buddha., Dhamma and Sangha come into being for the genuine peace and happiness of Thailand and the modern world.

Phra Phaisan Visalo

Sukato Forest Monastery, Chaiyaphum.

BUDDHIST MONKS AND FOREST CONSERVATION

Siam, the earlier name of Thailand, was an appropriate one, it means dark green. Twenty years ago Thailand had plentiful resources and was truly dark green with 80% of the land covered with rich forest. Within these past 24 years 77.86% of the forest was destroyed.[1] The forest in Thailand is in an alarming state and it covers only 16% of the land in the entire country. Globally, the destruction of 11 million hectares of rainforest annually, resulting in the extinction of 48 species a day is even more alarming.[2]

With the speed of deforestation, a question raised is whether Buddhism has had any role to play. 95% of the population in Thailand claim to be Buddhists – is Buddhism responsible for this deforestation? Or has Buddhism not played its vital role in stopping deforestation? Or what has Buddhism to do with this issue? These critical and demanding problems compelled the Wildlife Fund of Thailand to lead a project on "Buddhism and Nature Conservation". This is an educational project to bring about conservation awareness through the teaching of Buddhism, aiming at the monks as a media to reach the public and convey to them this message.

This paper intends to 1.) present ethical teaching from Buddhism in regard to forest conservation and 2.) to suggest the possible role Buddhist monks could adopt to make forest conservation more effective.

The Need for Buddhist Ecological Ethics

In order to conserve nature, it is necessary to be able to identify the problem, namely the nature of exploitation. As the world is rapidly changing through scientific and technological advancement, we have to examine the ethical values behind it. In considering Western philosophy, it has been pointed out that traditional ethics have contributed to the environmental crisis.[3] In a paper presented at the 17th International Conference on the Unity of Sciences Patsy Hallen says:

> "Moral Western Philosophy is riddled with imperialistic stances towards nature, singling out humans as the only beings who are morally considerable....Such assumptions of human moral superiority help to promote a non-ecological view of the world which regards humans as

> separate from and superior to the rest of nature and which regards environmental values as secondary and derivative."[4]

With this type of mentality and attitude the Western world plunges itself further, conquering nature to prove man's capability and successful scientific progress.

In order to save the world from fast ecological destruction, some philosophers and thinkers now are trying to look towards the East to find basic ethical teaching which supports nature and can counterbalance the exploitative mentality.

To appreciate the Buddhist ecological message one needs to look at the Buddhist concept of nature. "Buddhism views man as part of nature. If nature is destroyed man cannot live. By abusing nature, man abuses himself. Therefore, Buddhist ethics would follow from this basic understanding of nature. Only if we agree on this common ground, can we proceed to save the world."[5]

From a Buddhist point of view, things are interdependent and thus conditional upon each other, as the laws of Buddhist dialectic prevail, whereby when A is, B is and so on. It shows that cause and effect – the sequences of events – play a significant role in nature. That is to say, all are natural phenomena or natural processes; nothing is arbitrary.

Buddhist ecological ethics clearly points out that human conduct, moral or immoral, has significantly affected the course of nature. The Buddha explained in great length that when the kings, monks and ministers are unrighteous this could effect nature. The moon and sun would go wrong in their courses, and eventually the sky-god bestows insufficient rain, the crops ripen in the wrong season. Men who live on such crops are short-lived, ill-favoured, and become weak and sickly. If the whole social structure is righteous, however, "the whole realm dwells in happiness if the king lives aright."[6]

Rain is an important factor for sustaining plant life and other living things on earth. And, such as, when there is no rain for a long period of time, along with the appearance of a second sun up to a seventh sun, all plants, trees, and all other beings come to an end. As it is stated thus:

> "Monks, there comes a time when for many years, for many hundreds of years, for many thousands of years, there is no rain. And when the rains come not, all seed life and vegetation, all trees that yield medicine, palms and giants of the jungle become parched and dried up and are no more."[7]

This ethical understanding is quite important and practical because it

creates a favourable cause and condition, and avoids what will produce a negative result.

Buddhist Concern On the Forest

Anyone who has done primary reading on the Buddha's life cannot help but be struck by the fact that the Buddha experienced all the important events of his life in forest surroundings. He was born in Lumbini Garden, spent six years searching for spiritual enlightenment in the forest and became enlightened under a Bo-tree. He then spent the following 45 years of his life wandering in the forest, and at his last moment passed away between a pair of Sal trees among his disciples.

As the forest was his environment for more than half of his life, it must have indeed left a great impact on his thinking and the life style. Ecological ethics are, therefore, significant to Buddhism as they reflect the basic teaching of the Buddha and show a concern for nature in which man is a part of it.

This paper intends to focus only on the forest, but it must be understood that the forest and wildlife are inter-related – conserving the forest is conserving the wildlife habitat. There is a beautiful expression showing the mutual relation and interdependence between wildlife and forest thus:

> "Come back, O Tigers! to the wood again,
> And let it not be levelled with the plain;
> For, without you, the axe will lay it low;
> You, without it, forever homeless go."[8]

After the Buddha was enlightened, he spent 7 days standing at a distance to the north-east of the Bo-tree, gazing at it for a week with motionless eyes as a mark of gratitude and appreciation for having sheltered him during his enlightenment. This is extremely significant in determining his attitude towards trees and forests. Therefore we find his teaching:

> "The tree that gives you pleasant shade,
> To sit or lie at need, you should not tear
> Its branches down, a cruel wanton deed."[9]

After that he spent 7 days each at different trees in the same vicinity, the banyan tree, the Mucalinda tree and the Rajayantana tree.

King Bimbisara, after his conversion for Buddhism, offerred a bamboo grove to the Buddha and his followers, which became the first forest monastery

in the history of Buddhism.

It should be remembered that the earliest community of the Buddhist Sangha started as forest dwellers. The monks initially lived under trees in the forest, in caves, etc. The Buddha allowed them residence when it was offerred to them in Rajgrha. In the following period the residences for monks gradually developed. But even then, the Buddha encouraged them to leave the residence after the three months rain and travel in the forest.

Even when residences were allowed, they were still situated in forested surroundings. Therefore, it is seen that the ideal setting for monks is still the forest.

As the Buddhist Sangha comprised mainly forest dwellers, members had to be mindful of their natural abode. At that time there was no need for conservation, as trees were in abundance, but there was a strong sense of caring. A Sangha member learned to have respect for each tree that they came in direct contact with. There was a striking story of a monk who cut down the branches of a tree. The tree- god complained to the Buddha of the harm the monk committed in destroying his abode, resulting in the setting down of a rule for monks and nuns to observe which to this day forbids them to cut down trees. It is further explained that such action may not be wrong in the eyes of the world but is considered a sin in the teaching of the Jains (a contemporary religion in India). The story of the tree-god may be symbolic in that cutting down a tree is a selfish act, it causes disturbance to others and deprives the birds and other animals of their natural habitat. Besides, cutting down a tree is in itself an ungrateful act as the monks directly benefit from the trees in their forest dwelling.

Another incident which deserves quoting here was the case of the monk Channa who, by clearing out the plot for the building of a vihara, cut down a large tree which was a cetiya. His action was much criticised by the lay people. The cetiya (object of worship) in question was a large, long standing tree that people worshipped. The worshipping of aged trees has always been a practice in Buddhism, which serves as a very efficient way of preserving them. Practice re-enforces this by making it a rule that the Sangha respect, worship, and thus preserve large and aged trees.

Buddhism does not give importance only to large trees, respect for nature penetrates to all living things. A monk is not allowed to wear sandals made from palm leaves or young bamboo[10] because they may harm young trees and cause their death.

In consuming fruits and grains, the monks must be careful not to stop

their growth. That is, they are not allowed to eat grains and fruits that can still grow. Thus the rule – "Monks, and nuns are not to ask for roast or pound raw grain."[11]

As to fruits, five kinds of fruits are allowed:
1. fruit that has already been burnt by fire,
2. fruit that has already been marked by weapon,
3. fruit that carries finger-nail marks,
4. seedless fruit,
5. fruit of which seed has been removed.[12]

The rule on fruits shows that the Buddha was indeed very concerned that a monk should not stop the growth of a fruit by consuming it. Fruits fallen from the trees are also allowed. This practice is basically formed out of the compassionate heart of the Buddhist practitioner. We may eat fruits with respect and with a sense of gratitude and with the awareness of conservation and not of exploitation.

Again, in order not to destroy the growth of vegetables and plants, the Sangha is not allowed to "pass excrement, urine, or spit on the green."[13]

As forest dwellers, after ordination, a monk will be informed by his preceptor of the 4 *nissaya* or practices expected of him, that is:

1. A monk lives on alms. He leads a simple life of receiving food from families, he is allowed to accept food brought to his residence also. A monk, therefore, must be satisfied with minimal offering.

2. A monk is to wear rag robes. He should have an understanding that if he is not offered a ready-made robe he must be willing to collect pieces of cloth discarded from a corpse to make one.

3. Without residence, a monk must understand that he should be willing to live under the shade of a tree, in the forest or in the mountains.

4. Without medicinal aid, a monk must readily look for natural medicine consisting of herbs or urine. It is permitted to accept butter, ghee, oil, honey or sugar cane,. should it be offerred.

From these fundamental precepts, it is understood that the Buddhist community was to live solely on natural resources. In order to survive in the forest, close to nature, a monk must be aware of the value of various natural herbs.

When Sariputta, the leading disciple of the Buddha fell ill with fever, an elephant helped Moggallana in pulling lotus root so that Moggallana could cure Sariputta with it.[14]

During the Buddha's life-time, forest-dwellers used tooth-wood to clean their teeth, and this tooth-wood is praised for the following qualities;

1. keeping eyes clear,
2. keeping mouth clean,
3. enabling the tongue to receive tastes,
4. keeping phelgm and mucus from food,
5. increasing appetite.[15]

But some monks went to the extreme of destroying the wood; some would even flick novices with it. So the Buddha lay down a rule that tooth-wood must not exceed eight fingers-breadth or be shorter than four fingers-breadth in length. This is for the preservation of the much needed tooth-wood. The idea is that though the monks have to depend on natural resources, they must do so at minimal necessity, and not destroy its source.

In this connection, it would not be out of place to quote part of a poem by Evi Seidman;

Mountains, boulders, stones and rocks
Don't buy and sell like bonds and stocks
Rivers, lakes and deep cool springs
Are a few of my free and favourite things.
You can't cut the tree and muddy the lake
And expect to take and take and take.
The land is rich but the soil is thin
The Earth can't lose, but YOU still WIN.

You think more is coming so you can waste.
Run a credit check on the human race.
We're aspending the future with the faucets on
The earth's our bank – and we're overdrawn.[16]

The very idea which Seidman expressed this century was conceived more than two thousand years ago by the Lord Buddha and inscribed into the monastic code of behaviour for the Sangha.

From the above evidence it would be sufficient to say that the Sangha, through its principles and practices handed down from the past as part of the country's cultural heritage, has provided a great service to forestation and wildlife preservation. Forest-monasteries are not only necessary for Buddhist civilisation but stand as a paragon of world civilisation as well. The forest should be seen as an organism of kindness and benevolence that makes no demands for its sustenance but extends generously the products of its life-giving activities. It affords protection to all beings, offering shade even to the axe man who destroys it.

Role of Buddhist Monks for Forest Conservation

During the Buddha's time there was no need for natural conservation, but now, 2,600 years later, humankind have depleted natural resources to the extent that the environment is at a critical stage. With the ecological ethics from the teaching of Buddhism monks should be able to confront the problems of natures exploitation more effectively than any other religion.

Through the educational project sponsored by Wildlife Fund Thailand, monks will be equipped with Buddhist teachings as regard to natural conservation. They will be able to convey a Buddhist ecological message to the public much more efficiently than before. It is hoped that conveying a conservation message to the Buddhist community through this channel should be more effective than giving them straight conservation awareness. The Buddhist approach should neutralize any possible alienation the people might have towards conservation in general. Monks, being the best medium to reach the public at large, will be the best channel for this communication link.

Besides the need for Buddhist ecological ethics, monks need a large dose of social and environmental concern. The lack of social concern is seen as a serious draw-back of the present Sangha in Thailand.

There are two major factors responsible for it:

1. The lack of knowledge on social issues,
2. The lack of concern deriving from deep rooted misunderstanding towards the teaching of Buddhism.

The first factor should not be too difficult to remedy, provided the monks have basic knowledge and access to knowledge on social issues. They need to be aware and alert to the concerns of society. The latter factor is much more difficult to cope with as it is a collective problem shared by a majority of the Sangha. The Theravada Sangha in Thailand and elsewhere have developed an attitude of practicing dhamma solely for one's own enlightenment. Involvement in social concerns is seen as distraction which will lead one further away from this spiritual goal, an attitude which further leads the practitioner to a denial of the world.

It must be pointed out that after the Buddha's enlightenment, he spent the remainder of his years expressing much concern towards the well-being of society, out of compassion he had towards the suffering of humankind. The practice of dhamma for oneself must go side by side with care for others. In this respect, Mahayana Buddhism has been much more efficient in answering the needs of society.

I am strongly committed to the idea that a person cannot be truly peaceful within unless he helps to bring about peace in the world outside as well. When we talk about peace, we should be able to understand it on two levels – physical and mental. Peace in the physical sense includes a harmonious and well-balanced world, whereas peace on the mental or spiritual level includes justice among humankind as well as all beings. In brief, peace must be understood in a holistic manner. This is where Engaged Buddhism becomes meaningful for the present society.

When the monks themselves are well-fortified with the knowledge of Buddhist ecological teaching on the one hand and have developed a concern for social issues on the other, they will be able to convey their understanding and attitude towards forestation in a much more positive way.

In each and every monastery there is usually a large piece of land attached to it. It is commonly believed and practised that the land or riverfront belonging to a monastery is *abhyadāna* area or protected area. This protected area is basically understood as free from killing, animals living or set free in this area are allowed to live freely. Hence, it has become a custom for people to set free fish, turtles and birds in this protected area. Anyone harming the freed animals is believed to be committing a double sin as the lives were given to live freely in such protected area. There is one particular temple in the north-east where many turtles have found sanctuary and no one harms them.

The meaning of this protected area may be extended to include the forest as well. That is, it is an area protected from the harming of animals, as well as trees. To conserve trees around the monastery would be an ideal for the forest monastery, as seen at the inception of Buddhism. With a large protected area around a monastery monks will serve their role best by setting an example of forest conservation.

As commonly seen, a monastery is usually situated not too far away from a village. It is important then, that the monks should get the villagers involved in understanding and appreciating forest conservation in the protected area around the temple. The involvement of the villages is necessary to make this idea feasible.

A tree as pointed out by Frederic Vester, has much more value than we normally calculate. Vester pointed out that besides the actual value of the wood from the tree, a tree is also a photosynthesizer, a water reservoir, a filter, a climate regulator, a protection against erosion, avalanches, and much more. If trees did not exist, all these functions would have to be replaced by technical means, with consequent high annual costs. This is an example of the kind of knowledge that a monk should be able to inform the villagers about and hence

convince them of the necessity of forest conservation. The need for forest conservation does not stop at the monastery, this is only the beginning, an example for each villager to carry with him back to his own home and field.

A tree planting ceremony which is often performed during auspicious days, e.g. the King's birthday, has existed since the Buddha's time. Ananda, the Buddha's chief attendant and cousin, was responsible to have a Bodhi-tree planted at the entrance of Jetavana forest monastery at the request of Anathapindika, the millionnaire.[17] Monks can easily encourage villagers to be involved in tree planting on any significant day. At one funeral in Bangkok in 1988, the hosts gave out young plants to guests who attended the funeral instead of the customary dhamma book. It indeed sets a fashion which copes with the existing ecological problem the world is facing.

In Thailand, there are approximately 25,000 temples and 300,000 monks and novices in the whole country. If only 10% of them have serious concern in forestation and apply the Buddhist teachings to it, the deforestation situation in Thailand could be much improved.

Serious concern for forestation has started to manifest itself among small and sporadic groups of people. The monks, having direct access to most people, are seen as the most likely force to be able to bring about improvement for society and the world by being engaged.

Chatsumarn Kabilsingh

Thammasat University, Bangkok.

ENDNOTES:

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4. Patsy Hallen,"Eco-Feminism as Reconstruction: Making Peace with Nature", presented at the 17th International Conference on the Unity of Sciences, p.5.
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6. ***Digha Nikaya***, Vol.III, p.85.
7. ***Anguttara Nikaya***, Vol.IV, p.64.
8. ***The Jataka***, Vol.II, p.246.
9. ***The Jataka***, Vol.IV, p.222.
10. ***Thai Tripitaka***, Vol.V, p.15.
11. ***Pacittiya***, II, Vol.III, p.106.
12. ibid, Vol.VII, p.8.
13. ibid, Vol.II, p.712.
14. ibid, Vol.V, p.53.
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WOMEN AND BUDDHISM IN THAILAND: A CHANGING IDENTITY FOR RELIGIOUS WOMEN

Introduction

Thai Buddhism is characterised by its conservative traditions that have endured over many centuries. In the traditional institution of the Buddhist monkhood, the monk has played a central role in the village life of all Thais. In the Twentieth Century, however, developments have taken place that indicate significant change in Thai Buddhism.

While many scholars have contributed to an analysis of these developments, in their discussions they have conspicuously neglected the role of women in this process of change. As women do not hold any formal positions within the Buddhist hierarchy this neglect is perhaps not surprising; however, women are participating in religious affairs in significant numbers. To exclude them from analysis of current developments and future directions denies them any radical potential under the changing circumstances of Thai Buddhism.

Scholars have often acknowledged the low status of monastic women and their secondary supportive role in Thai Buddhism, however with few exceptions has there been any in-depth analysis of their status and role. The prevalence of their low status has inspired the establishment of a Nuns Institute under royal patronage as well as a small movement of academic and religious minded people which specifically aims at improving the situation for Thai nuns.

This paper is an attempt to illustrate that some women are performing a role that is akin to that of the monk and that this should be recognised.

Nuns in Thailand are referred to as mae chii, a common translation is woman *(mae)* in white *(chii)* . Other translations, however, suggest that woman ordained or woman ascetic from Sanskrit roots may be more correct (Terwiel 1979:258). The use of the word ordained in reference to mae chii

usually refers to women who are following eight precepts or rules and is therefore not comparable to the ordained monk who follows 227 rules.

In traditional village Thailand the monk had a central role in daily life. And despite changes in that role the saffron robed monks are still conspicuous with a population of over 300,000 including novices. Less visible however, are the nuns wearing white robes that declare their different status. Their official number in 1979 was 12,083 (Suwanbubbha 1983:3). They have no religious recognition and therefore do not belong to the Thai *sangha* – the community of monks. Like the monks, the mae chii are being encouraged to pursue a community welfare oriented role. Being strictly classified as lay people this should not present a problem but as religious women some may wish to follow a purely religious vocation. I hope to illustrate that their role is becoming less peripheral and while that role may not be formally defined as Buddhist, in terms of the Buddhist hierarchy, many are performing an educational role as Buddhist practitioners. This is not confined to monastic women, however, as some religious lay women, as Buddhist teachers, have formed large followings.

In Thai society women are excluded from certain political and religious functions. Through an exploration of ideologies and organisational structures that influence the status of women and their role in society, it is possible to identify those factors which may allow women to gain some religious authority, whether they follow a monastic lifestyle or live as lay people.

The status or potential status of monastic women, mae chii, may be influenced by institutionsl pressure, for example, whether there is an emphasis on meditation or welfare in their daily activities. Meditation, I argue, does have significance for their status and the potential for influencing societal attitudes.

The increasing participatory role of religious women, particularly monastic women, may mean an elevated status for mae chii, and this may have implications for Buddhism and Thai society.

In recent decades Thailand has undergone rapid economic growth. New socio-economic conditions have affected the whole country with the most rapid and visible changes in urban areas. A distinct and influential middle class has arisen which in turn has given rise to intellectual debate, and reforms, primarily political but also religious.

These developments which may be observed in urban Thailand also have an impact on rural areas. The dominant ideology, despite observable contradictions in a modern, technological society, has as its foundation the traditional metaphysics which through ritual and communion with the monks informs the villagers' life (see Tambiah 1970). Here we observe institutions that resist

change, institutions which may date back to early Buddhism. And it is here that we may observe the mae chii in their more invisible role as monastic women. The presence of mae chii indicates the absence of true Buddhist nuns in Thai Buddhism. In Theravada Buddhism this is a transformation of the original order of fully ordained men and women. It was early in this millennium that the decline and eventual demise of the Order of nuns occurred.

Richard Gombrich suggests in his book *Theravada Buddhism* that the demise of the Order of nuns illustrates the "power of institutional traditions in Theravadin history" (1988:16). The Vinaya states that women "must undergo a double ordination, one by validly ordained monks and the other by validly ordained nuns" (1988:16). Hence, there is justification for the maintenance of the status quo for there are no nuns to ordain women in Sri Lanka or in Thailand. Gombrich refers to this situation as an "unintended consequence of a rule which the Buddha laid down in quite other circumstances" (1988:17).

There is potential, I will argue, for women to challenge this status quo. Primarily, this may be from outside the monastic province, but as illustrated in the final chapter of this paper, mae chii could potentially provoke a quiet revolution. By way of introduction to the role and influence of religious women the following section is concerned with women's position and status in Thai Buddhist society.

WOMEN IN THAI SOCIETY
The Position and Status of Thai Women

Thai women are reported as having the highest work participation in the world (Thitsa 1980:4). They have , it appears, always worked alongside the men in the field. The division of labour usually required men to do the ploughing and other heavy jobs. Under feudalism, however, the corvee labour system required men to be absent from their homes for three to six month periods. This often obliged the women to do all the work. Men were also absent due to the phenomenon of temporary monkhood. Most men ordained in their early twenties for the three month Buddhist lent of the rainy season (Tan and Pandey 1987:8,18). They could, however, be ordained at any time for any duration of time during their lives.

Until the 1960s, Thailand had an abundance of land available for cultivation, creating a paucity of labour and thereby further contributing to women's high participation in the workforce (Kirsch 1982:18).

A. Thomas Kirsch in "Buddhism, Sex Roles and The Thai Economy"

asserts that women's high economic productivity should not be seen as an instance of high status and equality (Kirsch 1982:28). This assertion accords with cross-cultural studies which suggest that status and power are generally derived from the distribution of, and the control of economic organisation, rather than economic production in itself (Tiffany 1979:10 – also see Friedl 1975). Kirsch, however, proposes that women's economic activity is accorded low status due to a "Buddhist devaluation of economic endeavours in general and the relatively disadvantaged position of women in relation to Buddhist values and roles" (1982:28).

Kirsch's reductionist argument stems from doctrinal prohibitions on monks handling money and suggests that such activities are inappropriate for those aspiring to spiritual salvation. This view then suggests that men are more able to enter a spiritual life due to less attachment to worldly aspirations. In contrast, women in their child rearing or regenerative role are viewed as attached to the mundane world. Thus, women are denied a religious role and economic roles are deemed inappropriate for men. In reality, religious and political roles have in the past been the exclusive domain of men, and household economic management the role of women, with their role in the general economy remaining "petty and localised" (Kirsch 1982:27,28).

Buddhism appears to influence all aspects of Thai life and men have direct experience of monastic life where prohibitions include the use of money and all sexual relations. There are difficulties, however, from a too literal interpretation, and from always positing a causal relationship stemming from Buddhism, particularly doctrinal Buddhism. As just indicated, to over-emphasise Buddhism as a factor in women's economic role may undervalue the significance of other cultural historical factors.

Furthermore, the devaluation of economic endeavours may be true for the monk, to whom the Sutta Pitaka is generally directed, however, it is not the case for the laity. Income is essential for the laity to earn merit by supporting the sangha. It is men who hold expensive merit-making ceremonies and maintain and build new wats. In addition, the Thai traditional role of righteous ruler has been responsible for promoting the notion that only a materially prosperous society can be ready for the pursuit of spiritual concerns (Tambiah 1976:431).

Kirsch's analysis has influenced the work of many scholars (see Tan and Pandey 1987: Thitsa 1980: Swanson 1988). He has one prominent detractor, however, in Charles Keyes, who suggests that women have a natural sensitivity to Buddhist values, whereas men must be sensitised by spending time in the wat (Keyes 1984). Space does not permit a full analysis of Keyes' thesis, suffice it to say that while his overall thesis is problematical, he makes two points that

appear to counter much of Kirsch's analysis. For instance, he suggests that the political-administrative roles that are primarily performed by men entail attachment to worldly affairs in much the same way as economic activities are said to for women (1984:224). Secondly, his figures show that a high proportion of women in the economic sector are confined to smaller enterprises and Thai men are now controlling larger enterprises (1984:224). Kirsch is correct in situating women more in the realm of worldly affairs and therefore more attached (see Van Esterik 1982:77); however, I suggest that he places too much emphasis on Buddhist norms, in this case the devaluation of economic activities.

While women may be devalued in Buddhism, as will be discussed later, I stress again that it may be misleading to overlook the total cultural context. Factors influencing women's position and sex roles generally, may be quite separate from the doctrinal tenets of Buddhism. The cultural context in which Buddhism developed in Thailand was that of a feudal society where deference to authority was intrinsic and animist beliefs formed the basis of people's worldview. It is this particular form of Buddhism that appears to sanction an unequal role between men and women. Buddhist beliefs and non-Buddhist beliefs occur alongside each other but are not generally distinguished by the average Thai farmer. The totality of belief comes under the rubric of Buddhism but may be described as a "magico-animist" view (Terwiel 1976:395).

Within this view women are regarded as pollutants to monks. Even the mere touch of a woman is polluting. Menstrual blood is regarded as a pollutant in many pre-capitalist societies. In Thailand it is linked with magical powers that are considered "diametrically opposed to that of the monk" (Terwiel 1976:397). And men often wear amulets to protect themselves from women. The Sutta Pitaka, however, does not implicate women in any way with polluting powers and the Vinaya "does not prescribe the total physical avoidance of women displayed byThai monks" (Terwiel 1976:397). The rule of celibacy and the need for the monk to be seen as indifferent to worldly matters of sexuality may of course contribute to the strict prohibition on touching (Terwiel 1976: 397).

The role that Buddhism plays in influencing female images and in determining women's role in society is open to debate. Kirsch, while recognising other cultural factors, emphasises certain values in Buddhist practice and ideology that directly influence women's role. Khin Thitsa in *Providence and Prostitution* directly blames Buddhism in its doctrinal form for inculcating negative images of women which she suggests are an impetus to prostitution (1982:2). Darunee Tantiwiramanond (Tan) and Shashi Pandey in "The Status and Role of Thai Women: an Historical and Cultural Perspective" assert that an overemphasis on the role of Buddhism fails to fully understand the

cultural and historical context of women's role and status (1987:12).

Penny Van Esterik in "Ideologies and Women in Development Strategies in Thailand" concurs with Tan and Pandey in suggesting the need to develop a framework for defining indicators to determine women's status (1987:597). The authors state the difficulties in accounting for the lives of women "and the full spectrum of their roles" (Tan and Pandey 1987:2). Tan and Pandey present a comprehensive historical analysis that includes both high class women as well as 'low-born' and discusses the different effects on each class according to prevailing political ideologies and forms. Penny Van Esterik in "Laywomen and Theravada Buddhism" presents biographies of three village women illustrating their 'very different lives' (1982:55-71). She concludes in her paper that two of the women were not hampered, in terms of Buddhist evaluations, in performing their daily activities: "As householders they perform the duties of a householder very well" (1982:71). The third woman, however, as a mae chii was hampered bywhat Van Esterik terms her anomalous role (1982:75).

It is argued that the role of mae chii challenges the assumptions of male-defined structures (1982:76). Mae chii are anomalous because they do not correspond to the order of society which says there are ordained men-monks, and the non-ordained – the laity, both men and women (1982:75). This is true for Thai Buddhism as well as for Theravada Buddhism in any contemporary setting (Terwiel 1976:391). In early Buddhism the mae chii position did not exist. The Buddhist Order at this time consisted of monks (or bhikkhu) and fully ordained women (bhikkhuni), and the non-ordained laity, upasaka (male devotee) and upasika (female devotee). These terms are now restricted to the more pious devotees, generally those who attend the wat for a whole day, staying overnight on special days. They are predominantly women who observe eight precepts on such occasions rather than the five for ordinary laypeople and ten for the novice (Terwiel 1979:206). Further discussion on the mae chii role follows later.

I have already alluded to the role of men in merit-making. Now the discussion may be taken further in order to explore women's role. Jane Bunnag, in her book *Buddhist Monk-Buddhist Layman* , suggests some difficulty in constructing a hierarchical order of merit-making activities (Bunnag 1973:145). She agrees with other scholars, however, that to become a monk is the highest merit-making activity (see Terwiel 1979:240-243 for an evaluation of other scholars). All other activities are lay support activities. Consistent with other views she adds that financial support for maintenance and construction of wats is rated highly, as is the sponsorship of important ceremonial occasions. These are almost exclusively the domain of men. It is generally agreed that providing alms to the monks on their morning alms round is routine and of a lower ranking (Bunnag 1973:144 Cook 1981:38). This is

predominantly a women's role. At first light women may be up and preparing their best meals for the monks. Semi-prostrate, eyes lowered and being careful not to touch monk or bowl women may be observed placing fresh rice and vegetables in the monks' alms bowls.

The highest form of merit-making for women is the ordination of a son. In this sense it is incumbent upon women to have a family and provide sons for the monkhood. The ordination process is a popular and elaborate ceremonial occasion marking the rite of passage for young men. Both parents may gain merit from a man's ordination; however, the mother is generally regarded as the main recipient (Cook 1981:38 Keyes 1984:228).

A son is given greater consideration in the family, suggest Tan and Pandey, while the daughter is trained in domestic responsibilities and prepared as a "wife and a life-long caretaker of her parents" (1987:8,9). Similarly, Kirsch suggests that many men may be reluctant to be ordained but do so knowing that it is their mothers' primary means to earning merit. He concludes that having been ordained the son is then "formally freed from his familial and other primordial attachments" (1985:308). Men may also be motivated by the fact that many women in rural areas still consider men who have been ordained at some time as more appropriate marriage partners (Kirsch 1982:17).

Ordination is a most auspicious occasion where the superior position of the monk is made clear. Even a novice or young monk is said to adopt the particular demeanour and deportment appropriate to that of a monk (Bunnag 1973:182 – Cook 1981:30). Most men at a relatively early age experience this high status position. It is noted that Thais adapt very readily to new roles, in part attributed to their often remarked upon social mobility (Bunnag 1973:182).

It is common in Thai society that men will reside with their wife's family after their marriage, at least in the early years of marriage. This uxorilocal pattern of residence along with bilateral inheritance, plus women having links with ancestral spirits, which usually results in the youngest daughter inheriting the familyhome (Bunnag 1973:16-18), affords women some security and responsibility; however, it still allows for male dominance in society (Tan and Pandey 1987:19). Women's economic role, which they share with other women in Southeast Asia and their work in the field where traditionally there was no social stigma attached to doing 'men's work', does appear to give women significant value and importance in village life (Tan and Pandey1987:19 Bunnag 1973:16 P.Van Esterik 1982:2).

The relative freedom and equality attributed to Thai women and their

significant place in village life does not translate into positions of power and authority outside the home. Their freedom appears to be curtailed by the `caretaker' role inherited from, or accentuated by, Thai Buddhist practice. So too their significance appears to be devalued as the son receives greater consideration. In this instance it appears that women's position is adversely affected by Thai Buddhist practice. Perhaps this is another unintended consequence in Buddhist practice as it has evolved in Thailand. However, anthropologists appear to cite the differential treatment of boys and girls as possibly an earlier development of social organisation (Bunnag 1973:16,17 Cohen and Wijeyewardene 1984:258).

It is important to note here that notions of gender may be expressed through an ideology but have evolved from the particular political, economic and social organisation of a particular society. Furthermore, some scholars suggest that both hierarchical as well as less complex societies, while developing forms of social organisation that vary significantly, always subordinate women (Rosaldo 1974). Universal sexual asymmetry, it is stated, confers different roles and activities for men and women in different cultural contexts. While similarities may accord cross-culturally the differences illustrate that gender is a social construction, and that cultures define roles and activities and confer status and value to such, according to the specific context. While it is suggested that women have generally been subordinated, some societies have been relatively egalitarian, in terms of men and women's relations (Friedl 1975). Furthermore, it is argued that many societies have become less egalitarian under historical influences of the major religions and industrialisation (Tiffany 1979:7,11).

I have attempted to illustrate in this section that while Buddhism has a pervasive influence on all aspects of Thai society, social organisation, including relations between men and women, may have roots in other cultural influences. As Bunnag asserts, there is "an exceptionally strong sense of identification...to the state and its symbols: the Monarchy and the Buddhist sangha", on the other hand, however, she highlights the "political and economic features" of Thai society as having significant influence also (Bunnag 1973: 187). Similarly, Keyes, while agreeing that the Thai social order can best be understood by first looking to the Buddhist worldview, argues that society can only be fully understood if the political economy is taken into account. He also states that "both worldview and political-economy are contingent on history" (1978:24).

Women as pollutants is another notion that derives from indigenous beliefs and is reinforced through Buddhism. Through Buddhism reinforcing and reflecting indigenous beliefs, accompanied by a long tradition of only ordaining men, education has been denied to women. This has hampered women in gaining bureaucratic roles and the social mobility which has characterised

men's position. Religious ideology is accompanied by secular ideology in this situation as Thailand became integrated into the international economy. With the development of modern sectors in urban society in recent times women's role in society has undergone radical change, especially for the educated. I will now explore how these changes affect women's role in religion.

Women and Religious Authority

The phenomenon of women meditation teachers in Thailand has received little attention among western scholars. One exception is John Van Esterik in "Women Meditation Teachers in Thailand", which is a study of two women who have been particularly successful in establishing large Buddhist meditation societies (1982:42). The following discussion is concerned with exploring how women are accepted into the male domain of religious authority.

As pollutants to monks and outside of the sangha women were traditionally denied access to a wat education. The state took over the control of education in the latter part of the last century and introduced compulsory schooling in 1921. For the first time girls were given equal opportunity as boys (Cook 1982:34). It was sometime, however, before this was to extend to the more remote areas which meant that much of the population still relied on a wat education depriving many girls of the opportunity. Despite a high female literacy rate it is reported that many girls and women have not completed four years of schooling (Phongpaichit 1980:13).

Education was along western lines, and for upper class women it was designed, in part, to liberalise them from feudal structures. Rather than being a general educative experience for these women, however, the instruction was more concerned with information on how to be better wives and mothers. Education and legislation only served to universalise "so called 'sexual equality' which was once only the privilege of the lower class woman", suggest Tan and Pandey (1987:29). Lower class women, they suggest, had already been enjoying more 'sexual equality', especially in choosing spouses and being more sexually active" (1987:27).

In village Thailand, although there was some flexibility, the sexual division of labour appears to restrict women to familial responsibilities with their economic role perceived as an extension of their domestic role. Thai women's circumstances appear to equate with the statement that "women are given a role definition by virtue either of their age or of their relationship to men" (Rosaldo 1974:29). Post-menopausal women in Thailand appear to be

given a licence to be like men and only at this time are they allowed freely to participate in religious ceremonies (Terwiel 1979:207). Men in Thai society have traditionally achieved public positions, and thus 'differentiated roles', through the often remarked upon 'social mobility' of Thai males via a wat education and male networks of patron-client relationships (Bunnag 1973: 1984).

In the relatively undifferentiated and unchanging village economy of the past, social status was simply accorded to seniority , experience and then sex. Female deference or subordination "primarily focused on the husband and wife relationship" (Tan and Pandey 1987:19). With the incorporation of Thai Buddhism, suggest Tan and Pandey, an undue emphasis was placed on gender, distorting the traditional criteria of authority in the wider community (1987:19). This is explained, in part, they suggest, by the exclusive ordination of males.

As higher education became available for women they were initially channelled into teaching and nursing training. Secondary and tertiary education were generally beyond the means of the poor; however, as the economy grew more women could take advantage of the new opportunities which, over time, meant a greater diversity of jobs was available to them: "Gaining access to advanced education is the key to economic participation in the modern sector" (Tan and Pandey 1987:37).

Girls now outnumber boys in school enrollments; for example, there are more female medical students and a majority of female professors (P. Van Esterik 1987:598). Despite their prominence in education, business and finance women are still "under-represented at the national and community level of decision making processes" (Tan and Pandey 1987:31).

In the modern urban context, however, scholarly qualifications and ability have become important indices of status and authority, as has wealth. This may be true also of Central Thailand and other areas where modern attitudes have permeated. And in some instances the position of women has radically altered to a greater acceptance of them as authority figures. In a relatively short period of time women have gained prestigious positions in commerce and education. Only in the 1970s were old laws repealed allowing women equal rights in divorce and in entering into legally binding contracts without their husband's approval. In modern society women "each teach, amass money and become professionals in many fields" and Thai men "are willing to accept their authority if it appears warranted", states John Van Esterik (1982:50).

The women meditation teachers' acceptance is commensurate with the

higher profile of women in the modern sector. They may be perceived as playing an entrepreneurial and educational role, albeit for purely religious motives. Through impressing their followers with their "prodigious knowledge of the canon" (J.Van Esterik 1982:50) they prove their worth as figures of authority. In a sense they are emulating the traditional village male elder who after spending some time in the wat was proficient in the knowledge of Buddhist scripture and highly respected,albeit in a lay role. Only through access to education do women have an opportunity to gain this knowledge and thus prove themselves as capable. It is also noted that the pedagogic role of the monk has declined in recent times due to the relatively low standards of a monastic education.This allows well-educated people such as these women to gain respect and a following among monk and laypeople alike (J. Van Esterik 1982:52).

As well as proving themselves as highly capable teachers, the teachings of these women are of more relevance to their middle and upper class audiences than the traditional teachings and practices. Their teachings being outside of the norms of Thai Buddhism are cited as another reason for their acceptance. Their primary scriptural source is the Abhidhamma, the third basket of the tripitaka - the three baskets of the Pali Canon, which is usually rejected in favour of the Sutta Pitaka which is easier to understand for the less educated.

The meditation technique they teach is Vipassanā , or insight meditation, which has gained a following in Thailand only in this century, Samātha is the traditional Thai method and still the most common practice today. The teaching of Vipassana and the Abhidhamma is attributed to Burmese influences. By teaching these methods women meditation teachers "do not normally intrude on monastic instruction material" (J. Van Esterik 1982:50), and appeal to a particular segment of the population.

As these organisations are led by women they may be perceived as less politically threatening to the establishment, speculates Van Esterik (1982:45). Such speculation further indicates that these women are working outside of acceptable structures. Despite a significant following they are outside of the sangha norms and thereby operating in ambiguous circumstances not unlike the mae chii.

Traditionally, religious authority is perceived as only residing in the monk and this is attributed to a Buddhist cosmology which is supported and encouraged by the state. Even the most radical reformists are hesitant to "appropriate full religious authority", suggests Jackson. He further states that such appropriation has the potential for undermining "the traditional role of the monk and the institution of the sangha" (1988:79).

In the uncertainty of changing times people may seek old and new ways

to cope with the stresses of modern society. The increase in mediums of recent times (Thitsa 1983:30), who are primarily women, may be evidence of a return to animist beliefs. Thomas Kirsch forecast a possible rise in animist beliefs "as the tensions of living in the modern world... increase" (1977:266). This prognosis is related to his concern with a more specialised role for the monk being associated with the demise of folk Brahman practices. Such a situation, he believes, leaves abstract Buddhism to confront everyday concerns once mediated by folk Brahmanism. He adds that the increasing interest in lay meditation may be explained by not having these other traditions, animism and folk Brahmanism, to refer to (Kirsch 1977:). Lay meditation is an increasing phenomenon for the educated classes in other Theravada Buddhist countries such as Sri Lanka and Burma.

In Sri Lanka lay meditation teachers are predominantly nuns and this trend is occurring in Thailand. The women meditation teachers studied by Van Esterik have been cited, and the following examples are further evidence for this. A mae chii I interviewed at Wat Paknaam travels throughout Bangkok teaching meditation to professional people. At Wat Paknaam there are at any one time ten to twenty professional women living the life of a mae chii for retreats of one to four weeks and practising meditation under the instruction of women.

Bhikkhu Buddhadasa has as one of his main meditation teachers Arjarn Ranjuan, a woman who regularly instructs up to 100 westerners at one time. She calls herself an upāsikā and differentiates herself from mae chii by wearing a black skirt with a white top in the tradition of a highly respected meditation teacher, the late Arjarn Kor Khao Suan Luang. This woman, who was regarded as being very spiritually advanced, also referred to herself as an upāsikā. I have been informed of other women who resemble mae chii in their apparel and in their practices and who refer to themselves as upāsikā.

Apart from the mae chii at Wat Paknaam these women clearly differentiate themselves from monastic women. The two meditation teachers live like mae chii in that they assume an other worldly orientation without the attachment of families (Van Esterik 1982:52). However, they do not dress in white or live monastically and they reject the title of mae chii. This is due "to the low status of mae chii" and the limitation that that role would have on "their ability to lead lay groups", suggests Van Esterik (1982:52).

Thus far, I have primarily focused on social and political changes that appear to have enhanced opportunities for women as Buddhist practitioners. Anthropological inquiry may add to the above explanations. It is still not fully understood, for example, why the acceptance of some women in positions of power and influence does not appear to have an impact on the general status of women, of which it is suggested has seen little improvement (Tan and Pan-

dey1987:41). Perhaps the women meditation teachers are viewed more as aberrations than representing the potential of women generally.

The meditation teachers through appropriating a celibate lifestyle without familial responsibilities adopt a 'social male' role, that is, they become like men. Such cross sex relations are cited in the anthropological literature of North American Indians (Whitehead 1981:87). Among some of these societies men can become 'social women', performing tasks (usually occupations with a relatively high prestige) that are regarded as women's work. And women can become 'social men' as warriors, and be accepted in society as men, sharing bath houses and all male areas of life. Also in Africa there are examples of female chieftains who perform the role of men, ruling autonomously and often marrying wives (Rasaldo 1974:37). It appears that the women meditation teachers cannot be wives or mothers but must, in fact, be in opposition to this category, in the same way men are.

Ortner and Whitehead in *Sexual Meanings* , suggest that the same concepts used to differentiate men from women in various cultures are also used for other social types, such as the selfish and the altruistic: the strong and the weak; the controlled and the uncontrolled (1981:17). They indicate studies where these concerns differentiate not only men from women but seniors from juniors. The point here is that gender constructions are symbols of an ideal type, and like other social constructions are created to make sense of the world. Categorical oppositions help to order society but can be restrictive when viewed as 'natural' constructs that are deemed exclusive categories.

The educated meditation teachers who convey such qualities as altruism or control of the emotions (detachment in Buddhist terms) are displaying so called ideal male attributes usually associated with the monk. They are therefore differentiated from those individuals that do not display these and associated qualities. Similarly, in terms of the mae chii, Penny Van Esterik suggests that the distinction between men and women is not the firm principle that discriminates between women and monks. The distinction is between the ordained and non-ordained, she suggests, the former representing detachment and release, the latter representing attachment and generating (reproduction and the cycle of life and death – *saṁsāra)* (P. Van Esterik 1982:73). The worth of the ordained is expressed and symbolised in a number of ways. The 227 rules; for instance, set monks apart (this will be further elaborated on in later sections), creating an opposition of two categories where the monks become a field of merit for the laity. The fact, as pointed out by Van Esterik, that individual mae chii may be respected, but as a category may be despised (1982:74), indicates the categorical oppositions and definitions that must be conceptually upheld to maintain a certain worldview.

While these women may be viewed as aberrations they would not be seen

as threatening. And as secular leaders they are not directly treading on the domain of monks. At the same time, however, they have monks as their followers and they are winning converts from the more traditional forms of Buddhism. This undoubtedly "represents a fundamental change in the relationship of women to Buddhist values and roles" (Kirsch 1982:39) and indicates a quietly subversive role.

The monk lay distinction appears to be in question due to the laicisation process; especially when meditation teachers such as these women prove popular. And yet these women obviously separate themselves from the laity through orthodox expressions of celibacy and commitment to study and practice. They are ,however, inevitably blurring the distinction between ordained and non-ordained in the same way that mae chii are. It is due to this blurring of roles, suggests Van Esterik, that mae chii are devalued: "they follow no set of rules or restrictions that would cut them off from the laity and guarantee their worthiness" (1982:76).

Penny Van Esterik further suggests that "even though mae chii live lives more reflective of Buddhist values and intensify their religious commitment, they are not held up as models of female behaviour" (1982:74). This indicates their anomalous role but also their commitment to the Buddhist Path. I would speculate that the women meditation teachers have the potential, which may have been realised in part, of being important role models for mae chii and other women , and at the same time contributing to the more general recognition of women as worthy spiritual aspirants. Mae Chii are the subject of the next section.

The Role and Status of Monastic Women

Wats in Thailand exist for men, for monks, and most do not provide for women residents. It is usually the decision of the abbot as to whether women may reside in the wat compound and as to what their duties might be. As they are not acknowledged as monastic women, they must normally pay for their board and lodgings. Most mae chii, it appears, accept such conditions in the knowledge that it is regarded as highly meritorious to support monks. Living near the monks, and cleaning and cooking for them they are simply an extension of the lay support role that helps to maintain wats all over the country. In this sense they are fulfilling a female role of support and nurturance and earning merit in the traditional manner as lay women.

A mae chii is generally not regarded as providing merit for her family

on being 'ordained' and may in fact be a burden on her family that must support her. It appears that traditionally most women who are ordained were elderly, widowed or younger women who have been ill or suffered some misfortune. Hence, there generally has never been any reverence for them comparable to that of the monk: "A mae chii, unlike a (male) monk, was not at all a role for female spirituality nor a venerable symbol of authority in other worldly matters" (Tan and Pandey 1987:21).

Young women would tend to be looked upon as destitute or broken-hearted rather than generally searching for spiritual fulfilment. With an expectation to provide sons and to act as a life -long caretaker it is suggested that a spiritual quest was hardly acceptable as part of a woman's role (Tan and Pandey 1987:21).

This is the general picture of mae chii as depicted by many authors (Thitsa 1983; Suwanbubbha 1983; Cook 1981; P.Van Esterik 1982). I believe, however, that this does not present the full picture of mae chii and their role in modern Thailand. John Van Esterik, for instance, suggests that there is an increase in respect for mae chii in Bangkok, at least for those who are serious meditators. Even some villagers now believe in the magical powers of mae chii for healing, he further suggests (1982:46). There are further references to mae chii as being `assiduous' meditators (Tambiah 1984:173).

In my own research, conducted in selected wats where meditation was encouraged, I was surprised by the age range and purported commitment of the mae chii. And some were financiallysupported by their respective wats. Furthermore, monks and laypeople, when aware of my interest, were eager to tell me of wats (usually associated with the forest tradition), where mae chii were in significant numbers. Many of them were said to be meditating and often supported and encouraged by the abbots.

Evidence of changing attitudes about mae chii may also be gained from a survey of five Bangkok wats by Parichart Suwanbubbha. She found that the most frequent response to why the women had 'ordained' was to pursue practice and study of the dhamma. At the same time, however, 33 percent ordained due to having made a vow that they would do so if they recovered from an illness or misfortune that they were suffering from (Suwanbubbha 1983:187-189). Traditionally, this is a common reason for ordaining, which is usually for a specified period but maybe extended indefinitely if monastic life is appealing (Cook 1981:49). Mai chii now have access to education and training programmes (Tambiah 1976:471), and a few have gained the highest Pali qualifications: however, they do not have the access or encouragement that monks do.

I am careful not to over emphasise this contrasting picture, however, such circumstances are still in the minority, perhaps simply the result of

individual compassionate and supportive monks who by sanctioning the mae chii encourage the monks and laity to do likewise. I point out these instances, however, as evidence of changing circumstances in modern Thailand. And in the following pages I will attempt to construct a picture that might indicate present and future trends for the role of mae chii.

I also present this picture in order to demonstrate that restrictions on a truly monastic role for women still occur despite such support. In many such situations mae chii are still called upon to be domestics. With a decline in ***dekwat,*** young temple boys, who often perform necessary domestic duties, the responsibility may fall upon mae chiis. The majority of wats in Thailand do not have mae chii; however, and so rely on dekwat, young novices and laypeople (Cook 1981:116).

On special occasions when more food is required mae chii may be called upon to do the extra work involved. In personal interviews I was informed that this is often the case in the rains retreat when monks are not on alms rounds. This restricts the time for mae chii's meditation practices at a time when such observances are highly important for the monk. Nerida Cook's study on Wat Paknaam, "The Position of Nuns in Thai Buddhism", is instructive in this context.

In this extraordinary wat with a population of about 1,000 including 200 nuns there is the opportunity for study and meditation for all mae chii. Many of them meditate, with some following a rigorous programme and perhaps teaching meditation. Their daily activities may often be similar to that of the monk; however, as the monks do not go on alms rounds there is much food preparation to be done and this is primarily the responsibility of the mae chii. Despite the respect and recognition of women at this famous wat the mae chii are always seen to be fulfilling a role suitable to women (Cook 1981:121).

The mae chii normally eat with the laity and in many formal occasions in which the mae chii participate the laity are also included. Cook notes, however, that their relation to the monks and the laity varies from context to context (Cook 1981:121). Meditation is one occasion at Wat Paknaam when laity, monks and mae chii are found together (Cook 1981:121). This is further indication of meditation being an acceptable activity for mae chii. Khin Thitsa notes how women are drawn to wats where "meditation practice is highly esteemed" (1983:14). She suggests that the number of lay and monastic women is impressive and indicates that "women [are] taking advantage of an area of Buddhism still relatively free of state control and male authority structures" (1983:26).

Meditation is a role deemed appropriate to mae chii (Bunnag 1973:54).

The average monk; however, does not expend much time or energy on meditation. Study of the Dhamma may take up much of the monks' time and in more recent times secular subjects are often included, especially if the monks are being prepared for community development work.

While the monkhood experiences a decline in authority and in the numbers of men ordaining, monks are still generally revered. It is apparent; however, that their role and position is in flux. Similarly such changes brought about by modernisation will have implications for the role of mae chii. What follows is a discussion concerning monks and mae chii's role in terms of meditation, study and community development. This is followed by a discussion on the potential of mae chii and the possibilities of change.

MAE CHII AND NEW DIRECTIONS

Mae Chii, Choosing a Path

While much is discussed regarding the role of the monk in the complexities of Thai Buddhism, especially in terms of the modernisation process, women are neglected. As I have argued academic research has largely neglected women in religious roles, and the Buddhist hierarchy only recognises women in their peripheral and supportive position, strictly outside of the sangha formal roles.

Kirsch suggests that Mongkut's efforts to upgrade the monkhood may provide a model for the future. Furthermore, writing in the mid 70's Kirsch must have witnessed the decline of the government organised missionary monks, for he concludes that "Perhaps a lesson that could be learned from Mongkut's religious reforms is that the Buddhist monk is most relevant to Thai society when he lives a more orthodox monastic life, a life which does not intrude too deeply into the everyday cares of secular society" (Kirsch, 1975:23). This could be a valuable lesson, I argue, for mae chii as well as monks. Mae chii and women meditation teachers appear to be fulfilling the expectations of a more orthodox role in their practices. As I will illustrate in this chapter there is further potential for women to realise the purification reforms instigated by Mongkut.

Kirsch's above reference pertains to the development role of the monk as instituted by the state in the 1960s. The role is not "consistent with Buddhism as the villagers perceive it", argues Suksamran (1977:119). The religion may be threatened, as may the state, if the people realise the manipulation for political ends, he further suggests. The two Buddhist universities, however, have supported the programmes by building into their curriculum training programmes specifically for the monks. Furthermore, the Thammathut programme was handed over to the Council of Elders in 1965, the

supreme authoritative body within the sangha,with unanimous agreement from the Council.With the demise of this and other programmes the development role for monks continues with the government having less direct involvement.

As the traditional debate between study and practice remains unresolved, although partly subsumed by religious lay authority, the main issue of debate appears to be concerned with whether the role of the monk, as primarily a religious authority, can include the role as a community development worker. There should be no objections to monks gaining a secular education even with getting 'their hands dirty' in village projects. And in many ways such activities occur where monks support and even participate in local village development. In this sense they are participating of their own free will in consultation with the abbot and other monks, and in their local area, as opposed to the programmes cited previously where scholars' objections were primarily directed to government manipulation.

It is this latter role that goes against tradition, or as Saksamran suggests, what people perceive as the traditional role. The former may be integrated into village life and thereby be more comparable with the traditional role of the monk in village life. Mae chii do not have a traditional role to restore as such, however, it is seen as appropriate that they fulfil a social service role in society and this is being encouraged primarily through the Thai Nuns' Institute.

The Institute, established in 1972, while not behoven to any state or sangha authority generally aligns itself with the sangha rules (Cook 1981: 217). Their role has largely been to encourage Dhamma study as well as secular study and community work. Another one of their concerns has been to eliminate 'begging' nuns in Bangkok as a further means to improve the status of mae chii. These nuns are said to be not true mae chii, and as destitute women perpetuate that image of mae chii.

It is not doubted that mae chii can perform an important function in society perhaps as a significant addition to the monks' development role. Many of them, however, have insufficient education which makes them ill prepared for this role. The institute sees its function as improving their educational standards to the level of the monks (Cook 1981:204). Monks, however, have a greater motivation for study due to ecclesiastical titles which qualify them for administration jobs and greater opportunities for work when they leave the sangha. Cook suggests that such reasons account for the lack of interest in further study of the mae chii at Wat Paknaam (Cook 1981:167).

A further reason given for the lack of interest in scriptural or secular study is that the mae chii choose to 'study' meditation (Cook 1973:167). At Wat Paknaam meditation is stressed as being a central practice but it also

accords with the common view that mae chii and laypeople are more suited to meditation than study, due to the latter being more difficult for them (Bunnag 1973:54). Such attitudes are related to meditation being relegated to a position of less importance. This may be explained by "the increasing emphasis being placed on achievement and accepted standards of learning which followed the centralisation of the sangha over the last 100 years" (Cook 1981:168). Meditation is not amenable to assessment as is scriptural study, and in the animistic view meditation is often revered purely as a means to achieving 'magical powers' (Bunnag 1973:54). The paths are not exclusive, of course, however attitudes as to whether greater emphasis should be given to study or meditation varies a great deal, even among educated people.

This debate, however, extends back to very early Buddhism. Since early Buddhism in Sri Lanka and right up to the present, it is suggested that study has been favoured over meditation (Khantipalo 1979:51,70). Meditation requires a great deal of discipline. Serious meditators make a daily commitment to their practices which may take up to several hours a day. Some of the women at Wat Paknaam do a minimum of three hours per day.

As stated previously this age old debate appears to be subsumed by whether the religious role of the monk can include a welfare or development role. Meditation is not perceived as necessary by state or sangha so does not appear to be an issue. It is not a compulsory subject in the Buddhist universities. Meditation is by individual choice as part of the monks' 'personal' role. Meditation may become more crucial to the monastic role in the future, however, and women may be instrumental in this development, as I will discuss at the end of this section.

The monks' development role may be perceived as an extension of his pastoral role. Bunnag depicts three different aspects of the 'monkish persona' in order to analyse the orientations of the monk (Bunnag 1973:52). The 'monastic' aspect relates to rules, ceremonies and structures associated largely with the internal, disciplined life of the wat. The 'personal' aspect is related to study and meditation . According to the doctrine one may only be on the path to nibbana when one can intellectually as well as contemplatively absorb the Buddhist doctrine. The third aspect, the 'pastoral', is the performance of activities that include laypeople, such as in the various merit-making activities referred to elsewhere. This aspect is the area most removed from doctrinal Buddhism and most closely related to the cultural context of animist and folk lore beliefs. These activities may take up more time of the average semi-literate village monk than of the many Bangkok-based monks who maybe more involved in study.

Modernists believe that monks will become irrelevant if they do not

receive a higher education, especially one that includes secular studies. The Buddhist universities now include such studies, with special programmes on development work. While many believe that only subjects that do not contradict Buddhist teachings should be taught (Suwanbubbha 1983:74), traditionalists suggest that according to the canon, worldly knowledge is unnecessary (Khantipalo 1979:101).

Modernists and traditionalists are opposed in regard to the monks' development role also, and there is disagreement within the respective groups as well. Potentially the monks may be more involved in secular activities than was ever experienced in the traditional role. It is feared that this may distract them from their renunciate role and lead to greater numbers returning to lay life. On the other hand, Tambiah proposes that such changes are necessary in order to add vigour and relevance to the monks' role and thereby deterring young men from disrobing (1976:452 also see Gosling 1980:415).

The perception that monks may become too engrossed in secular affairs appears to be a concern for some laypeople in regard to mae chii as well. If mae chii generally adopt a social welfare role it may only serve to confirm their lay status. Some women are choosing to pursue meditation and study which is consistent with Buddhist doctrine and the religious path: "life in a monastic environment seems to be the primary model: it gives an image of peace and serenity to other laypeople who live with difficulty in a competitive world" , the mae chii not "only practice dhamma in a wat [but] also teach dhamma to everyone who would like to have spiritual help" (Suwanbubbha 1983:200).

This role has been the exclusive role of men, and women have been discouraged from pursuing such a path. As indicated this position is changing in modern Thailand. There is the coincidence also of monks and mae chii becoming involved in community work. The work that mae chii are being channelled into, however, is an extension of the work that they have often performed previously, and is typically women's work; for example, teaching, craft work and caring for orphans and people with disabilities. This may be contrasted with the development work that affects the community as a whole, which the monk performs (Cook 1981:211,212).

Cook argues that the Nuns' Institute, by not appealing to doctrinal grounds but to "common Buddhist morality and the model of the role of the monk in order to set standards and make rules for mae chii" casts them in a lay status (1981:218). In this way they are vulnerable, she argues, to government intervention in "imposing conditions on their means of self-support" (1981:219). In this sense the Nuns' Institute colludes with the sangha based and government inspired community works programme to have the mae chii

working for both "financial support and social acceptance" (Cook 1981:216). And as noted earlier this prescribed social role is divorced from the religious path. Cook further states that "for this reason the study of Dhamma is not carried to an advanced level during the training programmes", as it is in the monks' programmes (1981:216).

The attitude and approach to community work then appears quite different for monks and mae chii. Both monks and mae chii do, and can perform important welfare roles in teaching meditation, Dhamma studies, secular school subjects, as well as counselling and other community social roles. It is suggested that many mae chii in fact pursue meditation and study in order to develop "skills to help people and their communities"(Suwanbubbha 1983:7). The foregoing suggests that with a minimum of a structural change or external intervention the community role may be integrated into the pastoral role. If mae chii were to be given religious recognition then any consideration for training programmes and work projects should, it could be argued, have a minimum of discrimination. However, in the existing situation mae chii will be considered as women and laypeople, and given what is perceived as appropriate training and work.

It is implicit in the above that mae chii, in performing their role, should have the same options and opportunities as monks. From earlier discussions it is obvious that such criteria are inappropriate because they do not fulfil the same role expectations of the monk. I have already illustrated, however, reasons why women should be recognised as religious personnel, and will now present precedents that are suggestive of women's inclusion in the Buddhist hierarchy.

A Comparative Study: Sri Lanka

Mae chii appear to be associated with forest wats where there is an emphasis on meditation and it has already been noted that a high proportion of them are associated with the Thammayut Order. The importance of meditation and an exemplary monastic role model may be illustrated by a discussion on nuns in Sri Lanka, which follows.

Nuns in Sri Lanka follow ten precepts and wear yellow robes similar to the monks. They live in separate monasteries and there has been public debate on the reintroduction of the bhikkhuni Order. Lowell Bloss, in "The Female Renunciates of Sri Lanka: The Dasasilmattawa", illustrates the urban elitist push of the 1930s for the dasasilmattawa (herein called dsms) to be involved

in social service (1987:11). This movement, he suggests, was influenced by attempts to unite this-worldly pursuits with other-worldly concerns of Buddhism (1987:12). It was essentially an attempt to modernise popular Buddhism, giving it new relevance for the educated elite, the Buddhist notion of non-attachment to the world (1987:12). This interpretation was also used to encourage lay meditation which is suggestive of parallels with the situation of the 1930s and the 1950s in Thailand (Tambiah 1976:405,410).

A group of dsms, influenced by rural monks, rejected social service, however, and followed the true renunciate life, practising vipassanā meditation. Spurred on by a famous woman meditation teacher who now advocates a "strict renunciation for dsms", many dsms are now practising vipassanā meditation (1987:20).Bloss asserts that a number of them are skilled teachers with some having set up their own vipassanā training centres. In this way they have gained support from middle and upper class urban women (1987:24). This trend may be observed in Bangkok through Wat Paknaam and the lay meditation teachers.

The dsms who have followed this path "have increasingly related themselves to the forest dwelling monks and thus tapped into the prestige which the laity attributes to this group", suggests Bloss (1987:27). And in this way they have proved their worth as teachers while at the same time being disciplined renunciates. As exemplary renunciates it is claimed that they put the monks to shame, especially those reproved for their worldly interests and material comforts. The laxity of the monks is compared unfavourably with that of the dsms. This is reflected in the men being ordained for less than pure motives, such as prestige, free education and family pressures. The same criticism could be directed to Thai monks, while there is evidence that mae chii are increasingly being 'ordained' purely for religious reasons .

Bloss views these women as achieving a quiet revolution as they present no outright challenge but "have quietly begun to fit into the Sri Lanka Buddhist scene" (1987:27). He adds, however, that while there are supportive monks, many of them continue to encourage a social service role for the dsms, as do sections of the urban laity. The fact remains, however, that as meditators they have gained much support and in the process are setting an example for other monks.

The attempted restoration of the monks' role through development work, may be, in part, a solution to the attrition of his traditional role. As some scholars have suggested, however, it may further blur the monk lay distinction as the monk becomes steeped in secular affairs and perhaps jeopardises his respected position (Jackson 1988:248 - Mulder 1985:142). Mae chii, as indicated earlier, could be seen to be blurring the monk lay distinction also, through being aligned with the laity and practising a similar meditation

practice; however, through monastic discipline and as serious meditators and teachers, the distinctions can be quite pronounced. The distinctions are created through an attitude and daily habits rather than through a set of disciplinary rules, as I will explain in the next section.

While some women seek religious recognition, Cook suggests that they are "met with suspicion" and accused of wanting to restore the bhikkhuni Order (181:220). "The issue of the sangha recognition of mae chii is thus a complex and very delicate one", explains Cook (1981:220). The issue is complicated by the problem of who takes responsibility for their organisation. This is pertinent in terms of the mae chii's involvement in social work. The Department of Public Welfare developed the "more politically motivated activity for monks" , while the Buddhist university, under the auspices of the sangha and the department of religious affairs, has emphasised "the low level community development work" (Cook 1981:222). If the sangha is to take responsibility for mae chii, it further involves itself in secular and political functions for which it has already been accused of jeopardising the monks' position (Cook 1981:223).

Following the Rules

Anyone can follow as many rules as they wish, but in Thailand only novices may be ordained into ten precepts and only men into the full 227 rules. The Nuns' Institute does not encourage an elevated status through extra precepts. If women were given ten precepts it would, in theory, allow them to go on alms rounds and be supported by the laity. For the tenth precept forbids the use of money and while many monks now ignore this ruling it remains as a symbol of their dependency on the laity (Cook 1981:132).

There are a few mae chii in Thailand who are ordained with ten precepts. The most well-known group among them is Santi Asoke (Cook 1981:58). In this group the women wear brown robes like the monks. They are given ten precepts because they are considered to be female novices, sikkhamat. Despite their elevated status they must endure an extended training period before being accepted as sikkhamat and, in addition, there must never be more than one sikkhamat to every four monks. Such rules, while stringent and seemingly unnecessary, vaguely correspond to rules supposedly laid down by the Buddha for women (see Khantipalo 1979:139 & Kabilsingh 1984:23). For Santi Asoke then, these rules may be consistent with their philosophy of attempting to follow what they interpret as the original teachings of the Buddha.

One woman has built her own temple where she accomodates mae chii following ten precepts. Voramai Kabilsingh is herself a Bhikshuni who was ordained in Taiwan in 1971. The Thai sangha does not accept her full ordination,

of course, but tolerates her existence and the fact that she wears light yellow robes. She has developed a following through her spiritual healing abilities which she claims to have gained from her meditation practice. She is also very involved in helping the needy and poor (Cook 1981:58).

By not having access to ordination into the 227 rules, mae chii cannot properly fulfil the 'monastic' role of the monk. Furthermore, without agreement on the status of their role they cannot fulfil perfectly the 'pastoral' role either, even though they may teach and take other roles. With meditation and study they may only fulfil the 'personal' aspects of the monastic role. A brief scenario may illustrate this situation more clearly and indicate the artificial nature of the ordained and non-ordained distinctions.

The scholarly view asserts that while "most people do not differentiate between a 'good' or 'bad' monk (Tan and Pandey 1987:7), for they all create a 'merit field', people do observe differences in a monk's devotion or conviction to their religious vocation. The 'construction' of an 'ideal' is essential to the notion of earning merit.

The laity, therefore, projects the monks as ideal representations of detachment and selflessness, in other words, holders of absolute values that they could not aspire to themselves in their worldly existence. Hence,they elevate monks to this 'ideal' status whether they live up to expectations or not.

The forest monk, for example, may form a 'strong' merit-field (see Terwiel 1979:133). This indicates that the subjective perception of the lay person determines the 'strength' of the merit field. Flexibility in the perception of what comprises a merit-field could therefore, theoretically allow for respected mae chii to be part of the merit-field. It has been reported that some Thais already consider that giving to a mae chii is meritorious. Through the promotion of development works involving monks, the government has found it necessary to make additions to the range of highly meritorious acts. They have deliberately promoted development works, such as road building, digging wells and so on, as being equally meritorious as the building and upkeep of wats (Suksamram 1982:85).

I am not necessarily critical of this process, I only use it to demonstrate that, theoretically, the support of mae chii could be deemed to be in the category of highly meritorious acts. It does not necessarily mean that they are equal to monks; however, if it was perceived that mae chii were worthy in a similar way to monks it would serve to diminish the artificial criterion of popular belief that because of the 227 rules monks form a merit-field. As suggested earlier, the rules set the monks apart from the laity and at the end of this chapter I will discuss the relevance of these rules in contemporary society. I

present this scenario to point out that the distinction could be determined by actual behaviour rather than a set of rules, as Khantipalo asserts, "The reason nuns get less support is based on the misapprehension of numbers of precepts", however, he adds that the situation is beginning to change (1979:155).

Many educated people do not perceive the monks as a merit-field but purely as religious specialists. In this context they could view mae chii in a similar way, particularly if they are exemplary in their practices, or "if the bhikkhu is not careful with his vinaya while the nun is pure-hearted" (Khantipalo 1979:155).

The Bhikkhuni Order

The question arises as to whether upgrading the status of mae chii is creating an opportunity for the restoration of the Bhikkhuni Order and whether this is desirable. The argument may be put that women have proved their worth in religious and secular realms and therefore should not be discriminated against. The old myths, it may be argued, are misplaced in a modern society and so barriers of pollution and intellectual inferiority should be cast aside. Furthermore, if the original Order consisted of bhikkhu, bhikkhuni, upāsikā and upāsaka, then why can this not be restored, thereby, abolishing the role of mae chii? Most mae chii could undergo full ordination or become novices.

On the other hand, traditionalists may argue that in Thailand the Order of Nuns has never existed and in fact went into decay soon after the Buddha's death, with the numbers being insignificant for most of the time since. It may be further argued that there would be too much resistance, especially from the monks (Kabilsingh 1980:48), and that it would not be worth causing a schism which could potentially have, it is argued, dire consequences for Thai Buddhism (Cook 1981:223 – Khantipalo 1979:153).

Similar sentiments are expressed in Sri Lanka where some monks and dsms fear for the downfall of the sangha, which they already view as in decline, in the event of such a schism. Many dsms apparently feel it would adversely affect the harmonious relationship generally experienced with the monks and fear it may reduce the freedom they have at present from the monks (Bloss 1987:19). Through not having to follow the 227 rules some dsms argued that they are enjoying "the freedom from monks and monastic rules that their present in between status guarantees" (Bloss 1987:26). Similarly, they assert that "it is better to follow ten rules well than 227 poorly" (Bloss 1979:26), which may be taken for their lack of esteem for some monks.

Many mae chii, it is said, are content to be in a subordinate position in the service of monks. As I have indicated this situation may be changing and as

mae chii have more access to education and facilities their aspirations may grow. Under the present circumstances there are many institutional constraints to them pursuing a path of their choice. Some monks agree that women are capable of following the Buddhist path but appear to ignore the social constraints. If full ordination is not deemed necessary for women then it may not be necessary for men. With laypeople following monastic practices this may be the case; however, it is not suggested that it is easier for laypeople, quite the contrary. Institutional support can provide strong motivation, as Rita Gross convincingly asserts:

> The status and public recognition, and the formal institutions for learning and financial support that go with ordination are helpful; that is, you are much more likely to take your practice and study seriously, it is a very limited argument that women can do it without institutional support and financial backing (Gross 1989:15).

Thai Women and Buddhism in the West

Buddhism has gained a popularity and strength in the West unknown in the past. And many western women are pursuing the Buddhist path. The form and content generally complies with that of the ancient teachings with minimal variation . While the Mahayana Tibetan tradition is extremely popular the Theravada tradition exists in many countries also. Many of the monk teachers and abbots are westerners trained in the Thai tradition, after having spent at least ten rains retreats in Thailand. Until recently full ordination was not available to women in America, necessitating women who desired full ordination to go to Taiwan, Hong Kong and Korea to receive ordination in the Mahayana tradition (Kabilsingh 1985:18). Vietnam, Singapore and Japan may be included in those countries that have bhikshuni ordination. In Taiwan, where over 4,000 bhikshuni may be found, Buddhist scholars argue that there is a direct lineage in womens' ordination from Sri Lanka; hence, it is argued that the Theravada Order of nuns could be reintroduced via this lineage (Kabilsingh 1980:73,74).

In December 1988 America experienced its first truly authentic dual ordination at the Hsi Lai temple in California. In the Mahayana tradition, it was titled 'The Triple Platform Ordination – samanera, bhikshu and boddhisattva: or samaneri, bhikshuni and boddhisattva for women. The latter being a Mahayana concept and, therefore, optional for Theravadins. Of the 200 nuns from nineteen countries, east and west, twelve representing Burma and Thailand but predominantly Sri Lanka were sponsored by the temple. The elaborate ceremonies and rituals, supervised by ten senior bhikshus, and the same number of bhikshunis who were identical in appearance and apparently in status, lasted

some days. The 50 monks had a shorter ceremony than the nuns who had to undergo dual ordination, as set down in the scriptures (Sudharma 1989:17-20).

Also in 1988 a Thai woman was ordained into the Samaneri Order (novice). The ceremony was performed by three Theravada monks in the presence of 25 other monks, Thai and Ceylonese, and eight bhikshunis in robes of the Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese tradition. The Sangha Council of Sri Lanka in North America was consulted as were two leading Thai temples in California (Kabilsingh 1988:21-23).

In 1987 an American and a Thai received samaneri (novice) ordination in a Laotian temple in Southern California. A number of highly respected Theravada monks, it is suggested are now ready to give such ordinations and it is likely that bhikshuni ordination will follow (Kabilsingh 1987:25). In August 1989 two more Thai women received samaneri ordination in Los Angeles. Gombrich suggests, that in contrast to Sri Lanka where public opinion may still be against them, public opinion in western societies is indifferent, and will therefore not be an obstacle to reviving the order (1988:16).

Women have chosen to follow the Theravada path in the knowledge that there are certain constraints on them as women. Women, however, are realising now that they can make changes that may make Buddhism more relevant to them: "Buddhism in the West has to be stripped of all its sexist tendencies and be truly egalitarian (Gross 1989:16 NIBWA).

The extra rules laid down for women in the vinaya, which make a total of 311 as opposed to 227 for men, are restrictive on women, particularly in a modern society. Among these rules are the eight important rules, supposedly laid down by the Buddha as a condition of women's ordination. These rules require women to pay homage to monks who may have only been ordained one day. They also forbid nuns to admonish monks while monks may admonish nuns. Furthermore, nuns are required to spend the rains retreat in a residence where there is a monk, and later rules forbid them to walk or travel alone. Rita Gross in an interview with Kabilsingh suggests that the rules "contradict the essential message of Buddhism that everyone has Buddha nature and that everyone can become enlightened" (1989:14 NIBWA). She therefore suggests that the rules be revoked for they "violate the core meaning of the dhamma" : rules and regulations often contradict the core message of religions, she suggests (1989:14).

Other scholars have questioned the relevance of the monks' rules in a modern society (Gosling 1980:436 Gombrich 1988:31). The Buddhist precepts are not given as commandments but as guidelines and reminders of the

Path. While in practice the monk must carefully observe the rules, it is suggested that individual judgement and flexibility are embedded in the Buddhist texts, which may be an indication that the rules should be secondary (Gombrich 1988:31).

> On his deathbed he [the Buddha] is supposed to have said that the sangha could rescind all the 'minor' rules. But after his death they decided that since they were not sure which rules were 'minor' they would rescind none. The story rings true, for it is hard to imagine that the sangha would have fabricated a saying with such subversive potential for their tradition. However, that Indian veneration for the teacher, the guru, which the Buddha himself seems to have deprecated, prevented change and preserved tradition. Not for nothing is Theravada called 'the doctrine of the Elders'.

Conclusion

I have attempted to illustrate that women are participating in the propagation and teaching of Buddhism in Thailand to a significant degree. And that the emergence of these women in recent times has implications for Thai society that cannot be ignored. Three significant historical periods of change in Thailand have been discussed, firstly, the religious reforms of last century; secondly, secular and religious reforms of this century, which created the first real opportunity for lay religious activity; and thirdly, political, social and economic changes over this century. The resultant modernisation and secularisation has influenced new directions in Thai Buddhism with new opportunities for women.

Secular education and more liberal attitudes to women's participation in the public realm appears to have facilitated women pursing a monastic or other religious role. Furthermore, the general demythologisation and demystification of Buddhism allow women a participatory role in modern Buddhist affairs that they have not experienced in the past. In turn some women have become 'social actors' rather than peripheral performers in Buddhism, or rather than just female nurturers of the faith. Furthermore, many of them have proved their worth as teachers and display a commitment to the Buddhist path that suggests they have the potential to realise the reforms instigated by King Mongkut.

The Nuns' Institute, while being helpful in supporting mae chii and encouraging education, may not be helpful if they do not encourage the very area that mae chii are gaining respect for, namely, meditation. The position and status of nuns in Thailand is lower than both Burma and Sri Lanka, where in recent times the elevated status appears to be associated with the popularity of lay meditation, particularly vipassanā, and the involvement of women as

teachers. There may also be further historical reasons, specific to each cultural context, why the status of women in these countries is relatively higher. The lower status of mae chii in Thailand may be attributed to the close association of Buddhism and the state which helps to ensure that customs and traditions are preserved, thereby maintaining women's subordinate role.

Institutions that preserve customs, preserve existing hierarchies and social relations as if they are part of a 'natural' order. The subordination of women is part of this 'natural' order that the conservative ruling elite perceive must be maintained in order to sustain their legitimacy. Any threat to conservative structures and institutions may also be perceived as a threat to male privilege and prestige.

While individual woman become acceptable it does not directly reflect on attitudes to women in general. The laicisation process that has presented opportunities for women does not appear to have resulted in a liberalisation of institutional structures or attitudes. The formal preserves of power are still closed off to women. In this situation the dominant ideology will continue to influence the people who may comply in maintaining the status quo, particularly in regard to the issues discussed herein – the peripheral and subordinate role of women in religious affairs.

In this context there appears to be an alignment of interests between reformist Buddhists who seek progressive change and those seeking improved opportunities for women. Many women, however, appear content to quietly pursue a religious path, taking advantage of new opportunities for themselves and others as they arise. For many women, however, particularly in rural areas the possibilities of change may still be remote. These women's options in life are few and their opportunities for spiritual practicers or understanding are limited.

In a situation where many monks are determined to maintain their privilege and where mai chii and other women often appear content to serve and support the sangha, it is doubtful that the major impetus for change can come from within. Other Theravadin as well as Mahayana influences can have some affect in this sense; however, their influence seems to be more indirect, through that of the West, primarily, the United States. The West has directly and indirectly influenced Thailand over centuries with unpredictable and sometimes unwelcome consequences. Feminism has spawned Buddhist feminism in the West which may have consequences for Thai women. It may be some time before western ordination is to be accepted in Thailand; however , in the meantime there is the potential for indirect influence where women may be encouraged to seek religious recognition and higher ordination.

Individual women have the potential to pursue their own religious path in the marginally more liberal environment of urban Thailand. Despite

cultural and institutional impediments, the more women who challenge the system and pursue their own path the more opportunities they may create for others. Monks have presented role models for men, but women have had no religious model. The significance of role models cannot be underestimated:

"Feminism has too successfully demonstrated that a consistent lack of role models of one's own gender is experienced as a subtle, non-verbal, often unconscious but very powerful clue as to whether or not one really is included in certain 'generic' classes" (Gross 1986:71).

Allan Bessey

9 Devon St., West Preston, Melbourne 3072, Australia.

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IV

Perspectives on Buddhist practice

DR. AMBEDKAR AND THE NEW BUDDHIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA

"If there is any name which is known outside India which is popular and revered, it is not the name of Rama or Krishna,but the name of the Buddha."

B.R. Ambedkar

Among the supporters and upholders of Buddhism in its land of birth after King Asoka the Great there appear two important persons, namely Anagarika Dhammapala of Sri Lanka (1894-1933) who founded the Mahabodhi Society of India and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, a saviour of the millions of downtrodden people who had turned back the Wheel of Dharma to India again when the Goverment of India had been celebrating the 2500 year anniversary of the Buddha's Parinibbana. Therefore to know Dr. Ambedkar's life, works and mission is to know the real situation of Buddhism in India.

Pre-Ambedkar Buddhism : Some Aspects Observed

It is said that Jambudipa (the Continent of the Rose apple) is the Central world in which all Buddhas must take birth and get enlightenment. Buddhism came to eradicate cruel ceremonies and social evils. Before the time of Lord Buddha Brahmins ,who dominated the entire society, had misguided people by practising animal sacrifices, a caste system, and so on. Only Brahmins could study Vedas and perform rituals, other classes of people were deprived of property and prevented from education. Because of this Indian society was in serious crisis. Into this socio-religious backdrop Lord Buddha came to fulfill historic and human needs by preaching equality, non-violence, and peace.

Buddhism, in contrast to Brahmnism, can be characterised and specified as follows :

Buddhism results from the human effort which is based on ceaseless individual energy, experiences and reason.

There is no place of God in Buddhism. In the place of God the Buddha had set up the systems of morality.

In the Buddha's religion there is no difference in man's birth; equality, freedom brotherhood and sisterhood are based on the law of Karma and loving kindness.

Buddhism has nothing to do with faith, for Sraddha (=confidence) in Buddhist perspective ; the basis is wisdom.

The Supreme Goal is Nirvana, it is to be attained here and now by following the Eightfold Noble Path.

Buddhism is not dogmatic, since the Buddha's Dharma is the eternal and natural truth which the Buddha has discovered, not got as a gift of God.

It should be noted here that Buddhism which was taught by Lord Buddha seems to be different from Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Burma and Siam. The original form of Buddhism was gradually mixed up with local beliefs and practices after it was introduced to those countries. In the early times Buddhism was confined to north India , Bihar and Uttarapradesh states; not much went beyond these. But in the reign of King Asoka the Great, about 300 years after the demise of the Buddha, Buddhism became the state religion. Consequently, the majority of Indians all over the country accepted Buddhist faith, following the holy way of life proclaimed by Lord Buddha. Some Indian so-called untouchable leaders claim that they are the descendents of the Buddhists of Asoka's time. With the rise of Brahmanism in India, Buddhists were deprived of all socio-religious status and opportunities. Due to oppression and suppression they were made outcastes. But these Buddhists were rich, socially happy people in the time of King Asoka. Under his Dharmavijaya policy people belonging to Hindu and Buddhist faiths were given equal social status.

After the time of King Asoka the popularity of Buddhism started declining. Fortunately enough it was in his times that Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka, Siam, Burma, China, Tibet and so on. Therefore, Lord Buddha is honourably praised as the light of Asia for all Asian countries are deeply indebted to and influenced by his teachings.

The causes of the decline of Buddhism were both internal and external: there were many different views and practices held by monks. According to the scriptures there were eighteen schools of Buddhism during the 300-400 years after the demise of the Buddha. In the meantime, Hinduism also started to reform itself by absorbing the essential tenets from Buddhism and then became stronger. Then the great Buddhist university, Nalanda, was burned, thousands

of Bhikkhus brutally killed, some fleeing into Nepal, Tibet and China. Millions of lay Buddhists were forcibly converted to other faiths, especially Islam. From the 12th century A.D., it seems that Buddhism disappeared from India.

Ambedkar and Buddhism

Ambedkar, the leader of millions of the untouchables, the prince without a crown, was born on April 14, 2434 B.E./1891 at Ratanagiri Dist., state of Maharashtra. His full name is Bhima Roa Ramji Ambedka, but is honourably called by his followers as Babashaheb Ambedkar. Ramji and Bhima Bai are his parents. They belonged to Mahar community, which is considered untouchable caste. In such a so-called caste family Ambedkar, a great social and religious reformer, was born, who retorted :

"Not by birth one is noble.
But by deed he is noble.
He, who is well-trained, is the best one among mankind."

As a wonderful and brilliant boy Ambedkar started his educational career at his home town of Bombay. Eventually supported by the king of state he went to pursue further study in America and Europe. Finally he was conferred two Ph.D. degrees; one from Columbia University and another from England. Dr. Ambedkar also completed Bar-at-Law in London during the years 2456-66 B.E. / 1913-23. Ambedkar might be the first Indian of his times who held such a high education.

As one of the Indian representatives Dr. Ambedkar took part in the Round Table Conference held at London to discuss the problem of India's independence. Later he was appointed a minister of law as well as a chairman of the constitution drafting committee. That is why his huge memorial statue has been installed gloriously in front of the Parliament House in New Delhi.

Considering that the socio-religious evils were due to Hinduism, which preaches the doctrine of inequality based on the *Vedas* and the *Bhagavadgita,* Dr. Ambedkar made an announcement : He was born a Hindu, since it is beyond his choice, but he would not die a Hindu. After having spent not less than 20 years in studying various forms of religions and philosophy, he became very enamoured with the Buddha's teaching. He said :

"So far as I know only the religion which satisfies all those tests is Buddhism... Buddhism is the only religion which the world can have. "

Asked by the B.B.C. spokesman why he had chosen Buddhism, Dr.

Ambedkar replied it was because it teaches three principles simultaneously which other religions do not, namely *paññā* (i.e. wisdom), *kurunā*(...compassion) and *samatā* (...equality), which mankind needs for a good life and happiness. Ambedkar said:

> "What I wish to emphasize is that Buddha taught many other things besides Ahimsa.He taught as part of his religion social freedom, intellectual freedom, economic freedom, and political freedom. He taught equality, equality not only between man and man but between man and woman. "

According to Dr. Ambedkar Buddhism must be in accord with science as well as reason. Religion as a code of social life must recognize the fundamental rights and the necessary tenets of liberty, equality and fraternity.

At a press conference Ambedkar said that he had fulfilled his long desire and wishes. After being converted to Buddhism he felt liberated from Hindu discrimination. He also predicted that within 15 years he would make India a Buddhist country. But unfortunately he passed away 7 weeks after his conversion (i.e. Dec. 6, 1956). This was a great loss not only to Indian Buddhists but to Buddhists all over the world.

It should be added here that Buddhism as practised by Indian Buddhists is different from that of other countries. According to them Buddhism is not only the way of life, but the centre or nucleus of all necessary powers, i.e., politics, economics, society, etc. Sometimes Ambedkar used to call on the Buddhist countries in South East Asia to give a political form to Buddhism in order to block up communism. He founded the Republican Party of India based on Buddhist principles. There Buddhist movements in India are involved in politics with a view toward fighting for the social, religious and political rights of new Buddhists in India.

The Present Situation of New Buddhists in India

Since that great conversion the number of Buddhists in India has been growing rapidly. According to the Indian government census (1981) there are 4,719,149 Buddhists. Out of which a majority live in Maharashtra state. But the unofficial number of Indian Buddhists is estimated to be about 8-20 million.

To aid the revival of Buddhism and the uplift of new Buddhists in India Dr. Ambedkar called for the assistance of Buddhist countries and Buddhists in

foreign lands. He said :

> "Propagation cannot be undertaken without men and money. Who can supply these ? Obviously countries where Buddhism is a living religion. It is these countries which must find the men and money at least in its initial stage. "

Influenced by the beautiful teachings and personality of the Buddha and the life of Indian leaders like Dr. Ambedkar, Indian people can never forget Buddhism. However, there are some remaining Buddhist monasteries in India in which no Buddhist monks live and teach the holy way of life. Since poor Indians are really in need of Buddhism, Buddhists who can guide these poor people should closely look into their needs and difficulties. Ambedkar says :

> " If the countries which are Buddhist can develop the will to spread Buddhism, the task of spreading of Buddhism will not be difficult. "

Therefore, now the Wheel of Dharma has been returned to India and still runs on. As Buddhists we who have the same father must transcend nationalism and national boundaries and must take responsibilities to carry on this work out of our compassion and gratitude toward our father, i.e., Lord Buddha. At the same time, Indian Buddhists must try to get rid of the differences among them and unite. In their cooperation the teaching of Lord Buddha will become the eternal light which shows the holy way of life forever in its land of birth.

Phramaha Somchai Kusalacitto

Maha Chulalongkorn Buddhist University, Bangkok.

THE LANKAN MAHASANGHA' S CONCEPT OF A DHARMACRACY AND SOCIETY

The main interpretative frame in the West to explain religious change is social and historical. We have read many times that urbanisation, the rise of a middle class etc. disturbed a religious homogeneity and gave rise to non-orthodox religious expressions. There are also historical factors identified like the diffusion of ideas and rituals from the West and India. There is nothing to comment on this. I agree totally, but still I am not satisfied with the theoretical depth of what "social" means. I shall develop my dissatisfaction by analyzing the concept of a "dharmacracy", which has been presented by the Mahasangha in Lanka. How can we explain the rise of such a religious fundamentalistic phenomenon to be displayed in 1988 in a multicultural island under heavy influence of Western ideas ?

The Mahasangha in Lanka delivered in November 1988 its interpretation of what is meant by "foremost" in a memorandum called "The correct interpretation of the foremost position assigned to Buddhism" was published even in *The Island* on November 11th 1988. The decisions in that memorandum had been moved by the Mahasangha. The Mahasangha has pronounced publicly and officially the statement, that a member of the Buddhist majority should have more than (merely) "more equality", (which is a contradiction of terms). The constitution now already gives the sangha "more equality" through the famous foremost-formulation, but the sangha wants "more equality" than that.

The formulations from the memorandum are given here:

[1]. "In all matters related to administration, reform and development which are of relevance to the propagation and the future of the Buddha Sasana the views of the Mahasangha as a supreme organisation should be sought and the views so obtained should be respected."

[2]. "The Buddha Sasana should be given the foremost place and not be assigned a position of more equality with others."

[3]. "No action that would bring discredit or belittle in any way the Buddha sasana either nationally or internationally should be indulged in".

[4]. "...the national economic framework should be designed in accordance with Buddhist economic values."

[5]. "Buddhist educational principles, which combine knowledge with

moral training should become the basis of an education system which should impart technological knowledge relevant to the present day. Any subject of training to give skills for livelihood that could instil cruelty in a child's mind should be excluded from the curriculum".

[6]. "Laws of the country should be framed to be in conformity with fundamentals of Buddhist ethics."

[7]. "The State should not encourage the consumption of liquor, gambling and immorality, all of which are harmful to the 'mores' of society and action should be taken to stop the use of the media whether directly or indirectly for advertising and promoting these vices."

[8]. "The present communication media be used not for undermining Buddhist values but for protection and fostering of the underlining concepts and moral values in Buddhism."

It is evident from these eight points that the Mahasangha is not satisfied with [merely] "more equality", whatever that may mean, but wants a "foremost" position in a nonconstitutional sense, which then is more than [merely] "more equality". The points given are quite far reaching. They embrace as objects for Buddhist influence law, economy and education. Also, "to belittle" the sangha in any way should not be indulged in. The judge will of course be the Mahasangha, which at any time can create, if not a Rushdie case, at least a case for censorship in advance. There is not even a hint of a reflection in the document on the fact that there are non-Buddhist communities in the island. The Mahasangha's demands come very close to a "dharmacracy", which, however, has not (yet) a basis in the Lankan constitution. The demands of the Mahasangha are very similar to those of the Visva Hindu Parisad in India, who wants to get rid of "secularism" in the typical Indian (not Western) sense of equality of all religions in a multi-religious society.

I have invented that word "dharmacracy" as an analogy to the already existing concept of tora-cracy (not theo-cracy) in Jewish religion. The word "dharmacracy" comes very close in meaning to a precolonial concept of sasana, which was supposed to cover all sectors of society. The word sasana is today consciously revived and counteracts a segmentary view of Buddhism as expressed in the neologism Buddhagama.

In the present conflict, the teaching of a "dharmacracy" counteracts the President's efforts in an Asokan-Theosophical spirit to reconcile the ethnic communities. The demand for a more than merely a foremost position of the Buddhists in Lanka implies a demand for a more than merely foremost position of the Sinhalese, and one group's gain implies generally another group's loss with regard to chances for advancement and status. It should be known, however, that the Mahasangha is not identical with the sum of all Buddhist monks, though it speaks on behalf of all of them. The sangha is as a matter of

fact split on this question. By Mahasangha is meant the leadership of the sangha.

The religious hierarchy being promoted above by the monks seems to be a survival from pre-colonial times and was later renewed as a political concession by the English in 1815 and by the Sinhalese post-colonial governments. It is not atavistic at all from the isolated view point of a national history. At least from the 1920s onwards, it is not only a religious and societal concept. Religion, through the influence of colonial communalist concepts, has been related to the "race" of the Sinhalese, Tamils etc. The defence of a religious hierarchy today is therefore at the same time a defence of a "racial" hierarchy. This religious and racial hierarchy is then also an ideal political power-structure. It now becomes clear what is implied by the refutation of a merely "more equality".

Now, we could try to "explain" the rise of this baffling concept of a dharmacracy with reference to the on-going conflict in Lanka and with reference to attempts to solve it by establishing a multicultural society in Lanka, which, as matter of fact, threatens the foremost position of the Mahasangha. I do not disregard that explanation at all, but it does not explain more than that the conflict is a releasing, but not a producing factor of the concept of a dharmacracy. We have to mobilise a wider context in order to explain this rather anomalic phenomenon.

My main thesis is that this concept of a dharmacracy has to be explained with a theory of secularisation. By secularisation I do not mean a process according to which religions become weaker. Evidently such a definition is immediately contradicted by the facts given about this dharmacracy. Nor do I mean that secularisation produces derived forms of religion, which are derived from secular forms: play boys become pray boys etc. Evidently, the concept of a dharmacracy is not a derivation, but a representation of precolonial forms of relationship between the sangha and the state. Religious weakness and derived forms of religions can be indications of secularisation, but secularisation itself goes much deeper and displays itself in many forms. One of them is the Mahasangha's concept of a dharmacracy, which is a reaction against secularisation.

By secularisation I mean the sectorisation of religious decision-making in accordance with a new structuring of society in functional sectors, which all strive for specialisation. This leads to a specialised "division of labour", but also creates strong dependencies between the sectors. Sectorisation is not a private matter but a "relevant" acting to the new demands of society. The most important sectors are economy, politics and science. We do not solve economic, political and scientific problems with religious means in Western democracies, but with economic, political and scientific means. In Lanka, however, still some politicians take up religious roles like the bodhisattva

role, like President Premadasa and A T Ariyaratne. This shows that Lanka still is in the beginning of a process of differentiating functional sectors of society and it is this process which is a decisive condition for the production or revival of religious forms.

There are in Lanka already three important factors to count with. 1. There is an insight of the non-identity of society and the working field of religion among most religious leaders and politicians. 2. Even in Lanka, at least economy and science are not interpreted religiously, and even in politics one can find non-rational argumentation. 3. There is a consciousness of the dominant religion's and one own religion's segmentation within the religious sector, of religious pluralism and of the existence of non – and anti-religious thinking. The sasana has become the Buddagama, which has to compete with Hindu agama, Muslim agama, Kristiani agama etc. Related to that consciousness is the insight that sectorisation finally leads to privatisation as individual decision-making about the commitment and noncommitment to religion, but remember that the process towards privatisation of religion is not a private matter. It is a structural matter within society.

The reactions to this kind of differentiation of societal sectors, which leads to privatisation of religion, arises a high degree of insecurity among the religious specialists who may not see society as a whole, but only the fact that they are "losing terrain", and they see not the possibility of a fresh reinterpretation of religion adapted to the new circumstances of a new structuring of society. This insecurity may lead to an attempt to strengthen orthodoxy. Orthodoxy provides in Lanka a total interpretation of an imagined precolonial society, which is seen as functionally unsectorised, but as hierarchically stratified with asymmetrical relations of power and status. The concrete public display of such a reaction is the concept of a dharmacracy.

In order to prevent privatisation of religion the state and the main religious organisations turn their interest to the field of education. In Lanka we can study this by the pansala-education organised by the state and Mahasangha in co-operation. The reaction of the Mahasangha by reviving a concept of a dharmacracy is then a reaction which is much far and deeper reaching than only being a protest against compromises in the present conflict. It is a reaction against fundamental structures of a modernizing society as functionally differentiated.

Privatisation of religion as a result of a functional sectorisation of society opens up also the possibility of individual interpretation of the official religion, and interpretation which sometimes deviates from established norms like changes within spirit religion's pantheon and the rise of the demon-god Huniyam in urban religion, the rise of the goddess Kali among Buddhists, the increasing importance of the Kataragama cult, the introduction and develop-

ment of "Protestant" Buddhism, the special form of social engaged Buddhism of the Sarvodava movement, the formation of a "Buddhist marriage", the contemporary resurgence of nuns and the public display of charismatic, emerging, self-appointed and self-ordained religious leaders.

There are also the rational freethinkers, which direct their protest both against orthodoxy and ecstatical, mystical experience and thinking.

Finally, we also have a mediating form of religiosity which transcends orthodoxy and ecstasy and which presents itself as an ethical system or a religion of humanity or universal brotherhood. In Lanka this kind of religiosity is represented by Theosophy and by Buddhist Theosophy as a mediator between the old and the new, or, as they say, between East and West. The mediation is symbolically expressed by the systematic and conscious syncretism of Theosophy both with regards to religious doctrines and emotional religious expressions.

There is also a good explanation for the rise and development of "socially engaged Buddhism" as represented by the Sarvodaya movement and the circles around the journal *Vinivida*. Socially engaged Buddhists usually see themselves as followers of the teaching of the Buddha which has been lost or suppressed and which they now have rediscovered. They represent true Buddhism. This kind of reasoning we can leave behind us immediately and go to the point.

In a functional differentiated societal system the independent sectors are highly dependent on the achievements of the other sectors. Religious leaders get sooner or later an embarrassing question: What is the achievement of the religious sector with regards to external relations to the other sectors?

The non-religious sectors like politics, science and economy are hardly interested in theological reflection or in the communication of specific religious messages. But religious organisations always had one task which in a differentiated society can adopt itself to the interest of non-religious sectors. This is the diaconal work which has a long history even in Buddhism. This diaconal work can be intensified and magnified and is the contribution of religious organisations in a functionally differentiated society. This intensification can be developed to the degree that socially engaged Buddhism becomes a function of diaconal work is also a meeting point of "interreligious dialogue", but is mainly a bridge to donor organisations like OXFAM, SIDA and NORAD. In these relations the specific religious character of "diaconia" becomes rather shallow or is reduced to religious motives.

To come to the point, socially engaged Buddhism is the result of a new

structuring of society in functional sectors and is therefore hardly a " private" matter, but private persons can organise strong organisations because they correspond to a new specific societal structure.

Socially engaged Buddhism, which has cultivated diaconical work and social questions is of course an adequate answer to the demands of a new developing functionally differentiated society, which demands from the religious sector border transgressing achievements.

Socially engaged Buddhists see themselves usually as an avant garde, and true, at a certain stage, they are. But at an other stage they must realise that they do exactly what others expect them to do, that they have become victims instead of spear heads and stand there with a shallow interpretation of Buddhism. At a certain stage a dharmacratic concept of Buddhism, though it is deeply reactionary, may tempt young monks more. Dharmacratic Buddhism imposes itself in a totalitarian way as a model of interpretation and evaluation of all sectors and not only as a one functional specialization as " the putty" between them.

Peter Schalk

Uppsala University, Reqionshistoriska Institutionen, Tradgardsgatan 18, S-752 20 Uppsala, Sweden.

'NOTES ON THE REBIRTH OF KHMER BUDDHISM'

Limited by time and space and mindful of the difficulty of the task assigned us, we seek to share some knowledge on the near annihilation of Buddhism in Kampuchea and abroad. By way of introduction and to provide some context, we begin with an overview of Buddhism and its role in Khmer culture and history. For consistency's sake, "Kampuchea," which had for centuries been the official name of the country in Khmer, will be used in place of the more familar "Cambodia", the Anglicized version of the French "Cambodge".

Historical Background

Unconfirmed Sinhalese sources state that Buddhism was introduced to Suvannabhumi, or the "Golden Peninsula," as mainland Southeast Asia was once referred to, in the 3rd century BCE under the reign of King Asoka, the great Buddhist ruler. According to these sources, two monks, Sona and Uttara, were sent to propagate the doctrine of the Master in this region following the Great Council of 247 BCE held in Asoka's capital in Pataliputta, India. While this mission may be legendary, it points to a truth that Buddhism has been present in Southeast Asia for a long time. Various Buddhist sects and schools, including Tantrism, vied or coexisted with a dominant Brahmanism and indigenous animistic faiths for centuries before the rise of the classical Southeast Asian empires beginning in the 9th century CE. Though in part Indian merchant traders, Indian cultural influence was pervasive in this early period. In Funan(1st to 5th century CE), the first organized Khmer polity, the Khmer people embraced not only the diverse Brahmanic and Buddhist religions but also the social customs and mores of India.

Direct cultural contacts existed between Funan as well as its successor Chenla (6th to 8th century) and both India and China. "Funan" and "Chenla" are Chinese derived names. Both Chinese and Indian sources confirm that Buddhism in Kampuchea was as old as Brahmanism. According to Ma Touan-Lin, a 13th century Chinese chronicler, there were ten monasteries of Buddhist monks and nuns studying the sacred texts in the 4th to 5th centuries CE. He stated that two monks from Funan traveled in this period to China at the request of the Chinese emperor to translate the Sanskrit Tipitaka into Chinese. A passage from the

History of Leang, a Chinese chronicle written in 502-556 CE, tells us that King Rudravarman sent a mission of monks to China in 535 under the direction of an Indian monk, Gunaratna. The delegation arrived in China in 546 C.E. accompanied by 240 palm leaf manuscripts of Mahayana Buddhist texts. Evidence of a cult of Buddha's relics was seen in Rudravarman's request of the Chinese emperor for a 12 foot long relic of Buddha's hair.

Although weakened in the Chenla period, Buddhism of the Mahayana tradition nonetheless survived as seen in the inscriptions of Sambor Prei Kuk (626 CE) and those of Siem Reap dealing, for example, with the erection of a statue of Avalokitesvara (791 CE). Some pre-angkorian statuary in lower Kampuchea and what is now the southern part of Vietnam attest to the existence of Sanskrit-based Theravada Buddhism. Additionally, fragments of Pali inscriptions dating from the 5th to 7th centuries have been discovered in the lower Burmese Mon region (Prome, or Crikshetra) and most recently in Prachinburi, Thailand (Dong Si Mahapot).

During the Angkor Empire (9th to 13 th century CE), the Khmer kingdoms and outlying principalities were loosely unified under Khmer rulers who based their power on Hindu (*devarājā* ,or god-king) and Mahayana Buddhist (*Buddharājā* ,or Buddha-king) cosmological theories of order and political authority. Although several kings and ministers professed the Buddhist way, Suryavarman I (d. 1050 CE) and Jayavarman VII (d. 1218? CE) were Buddharājās of distinction who built numerous religious foundations (hospitals, sanctuaries, statuary, temples) in many parts of the realm. It is interesting to note that Jayavarman's Buddhism had strong Tantric features.

But the presence of the Pali Theravada tradition was also increasingly evident. This Sinhalese-based Theravada (or, "Council of Elders") Buddhist orthodoxy was first propagated in Southeast Asia by Talaing (Mon) monks in the 11th century and, together with Islam in the 13th century in the southern insular reaches of the region, spread as a popularly-based movement among the people. Apart from inscriptions, such as one of the early 12th century found in the present province of Lopburi, there were other signs that the religious venue of Suvannabhumi was changing. Tamalinda, a Khmer monk believed to be the son of Jayavarman VII, took part in an 1180 Burmese - led mission to Sri Lanka to study the Pali canon and on his return in 1190 had adapts of the Sinhala doctrine in his court. Chou Ta-Luan, who led a Chinese mission to Angkor in 1296-7, confirms the significant presence of Pali Theravada monks in the Khmer capital.

The post-Angkor period (14th to 19th century CE) saw the dramatic rise of the Pali Theravada tradition in Southeast Asia and concomittant decline of the Brahmanic and Mahayana Buddhist religious traditions. A 1423 Thai

account of a mission to Sri Lanka mentions eight Khmer monks who again brought the orthodox Mahavihara sect of Sinhalese order to Kampuchea. This particular event belied ,however, the profound societal shift that was taking place from a priestly class structure to a village-based monastic system in the Theravada lands. While adhering to the monastic discipline (***Vinaya***), monks developed their wats, or temple-monasteries, not only into moral-religious but also education, social service, and cultural centers for the people. Wats became the main source of learning and popular education. Early western explorers, settlers, and missionaries reported widespread literacy among the male populations of Burma, Thailand, Kampuchea, Laos, and Vietnam (both Buddhist and Confucian). Until the 19th century, literacy rates exceeded those of Europe in most if not all Theravada lands. In Kampuchea, Buddhism became the transmitter of the Khmer language and culture.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Theravada Buddhism in a weakened Kampuchea and Laos received sustenance from the Thai court and Sangha. With Thai assistance in the late 1840s, the Khmer overcame the Annamese occupation of Cambodia which had destroyed much of the Buddhist culture. This occurred at a time when western commercial and cultural influence had begun to penetrate Thailand. In part as a reponse to this, King Monkut (Rama IV) founded the strict Dhammayuttika reform sect in 1851. Four years later, the sect was requested by the Khmer King Ang Duang (d. 1859) and introduced into Cambodia by his successor, King Narodom (d. 1904), at the time of the 1863 protection treaty with France.

The coronation of Ang Duang in 1847 also marked the beginning of a rebirth and change for Khmer Buddhism that was only arrested by the impact of western-type modernization after World War II. Paradoxically, French colonial rule and its secular industrial development goals served as a foil through which the Sangha and the symbolic aspects of the Khmer court were revitalized from below. The monks led the people's passive resistance to France's "civilizing mission" and succeeded in retaining control over their temple-based school system. Although the process of creating a new governing elite began with the French-based secondary school system in the early 20th century, many well-intentioned French reforms to "modernize" the country were quietly ignored by the people, monks, and pre-World War II indigenous elites. It was not until after World War II that Cambodia's elites in Phnom Penh became westernized and transformed the country from a Buddhist polity into a secular, western-type nation state.

While the Khmer Sangha in western eyes served as a conservative force, it was by no means a dormant or unimaginative institution. In addition to being the principal moral and institutional opposition to colonialism, the Sangha also embarked on its own program of modernization in the first half of the 20th

century that developed more rational ways of understanding and teaching Buddhism. The Dhammayuttika reform movement spurred a renewed orthodoxy and higher academic standards and was in part responsible for a new emphasis on scripture and the study of Pali. The first schools of Pali were opened in Angkor in 1909 and at the Royal Palace wat in Phnom Penh in 1915, both of which merged into the Higher School of Pali in 1922. Its goal was to "favor and develop the study of Buddhist theology through a rational teaching of the ancient sacred languages, Pali and Sanskrit, and all knowledge indispensable to the understanding and explication of the religious texts." These initiatives led to the opening, beginning in 1933, of Pali elementary schools throughout the kingdom. By the 1960s, nearly one-half of the wat schools reported taught at least the first three levels of Pali.

These developments coincided with the reform of the wat elementary schools that began in 1924 with a monk teacher-training program in Kampot province. While the French succeeded in supplanting the indigenous Confucian-based school system with secular schools in Vietnam, they were only able to strike a partial compromise with the Buddhist school system in Kampuchea. The Khmer monks retained control over primary education and saw it in their interest to incorporate some western teaching methods and curricula into what became known as "renovated" temple schools. In conjunction with this, the Kampot teacher-training program developed into several "Applied Schools for Monks," whose purpose was to "place at the disposition of the monkhood practical methods of pedagogy oriented to the reform (renovation) of its mode of teaching." The wat schools were not replaced by secular state schools until the 1950s and 1960s.

In the areas of scripture, King Monivong (d. 1941) launched the Tipitaka Commission in 1927 for the purpose of translating the entire Pali canon into Khmer. Supplementing its own manuscript holdings with original texts from Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand and the Pali Text Society in London, the project commenced in 1929 and continued under the auspices of the Buddhist Institute, which was founded the following year in Wat Unnalom. Completed in 1969 under guidence of Ven. Chuon Nath, the translation comprised 110 volumes between 400 and 800 pages each in length. Some outside commentators claim it represents the first complete translation of the Sinhalese recension of the Tipitaka into another language.

Soon after its founding, the Buddhist Institute became a pivotal institute in Cambodian cultural and intellectual life. In addition to the Tipitaka project, it published Ven. Choun Nath's 2-volume Khmer dictionary in 1935 (5th ed. 1967-68) and used the print media to publish and widely disseminate thousands of volumes of Buddhist and cultural texts for the people. A sister institute was founded in the kingdom of Laos. The Institute also served as a

vehicle for a budding Khmer nationalism in the 1930s.

The development of Khmer Buddhism in the 20th century was also reflected in the increased number of wats and monks in Kampuchea. Although the rate of increase in the population was slightly larger, the number of wats increased from approximately 1,000 in 1870 to 2,600 in 1940 to 3,326 in 1969. Of the latter figure, only 124 wats and less that 1500 monks belonged to the elite Dhammayuttika sect, which in spite of its small numbers enjoyed the advantage of royal patronage. Before the 1970-75 civil war,there were slighted more than 65,000 monks and novices in a country of 7 million inhabitants. During the rainy season or period of Kathen, the number of monks in robes approached 100,000. While no statistics are available to us, the number of nuns, or female lay devotees (yay or mae chii) who take the eight precepts, shave their heads, and wear white robes, was also considerable.

The quantitative growth and academic orientation of the Khmer Sangha in the 20th century was accompanied, critics would say paid for, by a decline in the quality of Buddhist practice in the decades following World War II. Rituals, ceremonies, and festivals became increasingly anachronistic and bereft of meaning in the context of a westernized cultural and governing elite in the capital. Meditation *(vipassanā)* , which had never been a signature of Khmer Buddhism, was not promoted by the Sangha with the same intensity as the Pali language and scriptures, now transmitted through the relatively new medium of print. (The Khmer Sangha did not begin to use movable type until after World War I). Finally, the Sangha was not entirely immune from the ideological rifts that plagued Khmer society in the 1960s, as some modernist monks took part in the political tumults that led to the society's rupture in the 1970s.

The Destruction of the Sangha in the 1970s

The convulsions of the 1970s in Kampuchea still defy adequate explanation, much less documentation. On an historical-theoretical level, we can point to the collision of two worldviews, that of indigenous cultural traditions maintained by the people (i.e., the peasantry for the most part, who comprised more than 85 percent of population in 1970) and the new western ideas; increasingly dominated by ideologies of the "left" and "right", embraced by westernized Khmers seeking or possessing power in Phnom Penh. Not the least among the latter were the top future Khmer Rouge leaders, all of whom had French secondary educations in Kampuchea followed by post-secondary studies – highlighted by a fascination with the French Revolution, Marxism-Leninsm, Maoism, and Nazism – in Paris. Thus, it can be argued that Khmer Buddhist Sangha, as the bearer of the country's traditional culture, fell victim to neglect on the one hand and the pathological forces of western millenarian ideologies on the other.

The actual physical destruction of the Sangha began during the 1970-75 civil war waged by anti-communist vs communist nationalists. Communist atrocities and, by dint of fate, American saturation bombings were the first part of a 10-year period of attrition for the Sangha. By 1975, the number of wats had been reduced to 2,800 and while many monks' lives were lost, many more joined the Sangha to seek protection from the fighting. The second part, or the period of Khmer Rouge control between April 1975 and January 1979, was with no doubt the most catastrophic event in the history of Khmer Buddhism, comparable in this century only to the communist genocide in Tibet in the 1950s and beyond and the Nazi holocaust in Europe in the 1940s.

Although the 1976 constitution of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) upheld the freedom of religion (each citizen "has the right to worship according to any religion"), it also declared that "all reactionary religions that are detrimental to Democratic Kampuchea and the Kampuchean people are strictly forbidden." Along with the two minority religions of Kampuchea, Islam and Christianity, Buddhism was defined as "reactionary" and a tool of the exploiting class. In practice, no religious activity was tolerated as the Khmer Rouge set out to deliberately and systematically extirpate all religions. All Buddhist wats and other places of religious worship, including religious statuary, gates, and stupas were destroyed, damaged, or otherwise desecrated. Some 1,900 wats are believed to have been leveled, particularly those in the countryside, where millions of city and townspeople were herded into labor forces. The urban wats that were to a large extent spared destruction were transformed into centers of political indoctrination or used as storage facilities, prisons, and torture and execution chambers.

Monks were ostracized by the Khmer Rouge for being parasites who ate the rice of the people. As a rule, older venerated and educated monks were executed while younger monks and novices were forced to disrobe or face torture and death. In place of the saffron robe, the latter were required to don the black garb of the revolution and work in the fields with the rest of the population. Many monks who were executed were killed after refusing to kill a chicken. There is fragmentary evidence that in some areas, monks, though restricted from contact with the people, were allowed to remain in their temples. Definitive figures on the number of monks who died in this period have not been agreed upon by scholars. Two independent sources have placed the numbers of monks executed at between 25,000 and 26,000, while there is reason to believe that another 34,000 to 35,000 died of torture, starvation, disease, and forced labor. An emissary of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, while on an April 1981 trip to Kampuchea, was told that of the 3,000 monks in Kampuchea at the time, only 800 had been monks before 1975. But this does not mean that only 800 monks survived. The highest and most recent (1990) estimate of surviving monks that we have seen or heard is 5,000. This

conforms to a report of Kampuchea's First National Buddhist Conference in 1982 which claimed that 60,000 monks had been eliminated during the Pol Pot period.

In addition to the massive destruction of the wats and monkhood, a part of the Khmer Buddhist literary patrimony was permanently lost during the Khmer Rouge period. The entire library collection of the Buddhist Institute is confirmed to have been sacked by fire, water (through discarding into the Mekong River), or use of the paper for other purposes such as rolling cigarettes. Among the valuable holdings stored in the library was ethnographic and literary research of the Commission des Moeurs et Coutumes. Other irreplacable texts were destroyed in smaller holdings, usually in wats, across the country, Through oversight or error, some collections were not damaged or destroyed. In the national library, 343 palm and mulberry leaf manuscripts remained undamaged as well as 185 palm leaf manuscripts stored in the Royal Palace together with a complete set of the Tipitaka. More than 100 palm leaf manuscripts were left undamaged in the museum library along with some 700 volumes from the Tipitaka.

A Khmer eyewitness summed up human drama of the Khmer Rouge period in the following scene of destruction and hope :

> Buddhism was the old religion we were supposed to discard, and Angka [Organization, the euphemism for the communist party] was the new religion we were supposed to accept. As the rainy season began – normally the time when youths from the surrounding villages would shave their heads and join the monkhood – soldiers entered the empty wat and began removing the Buddha statues. Rolling the larger statues end over end, they threw them over the side, dumped them on the ground with heads and hands severed from the bodies, or threw them into the reflecting pond. But they could destroy only the outward signs of our religion, not the beliefs within.

Partial Recovery in the 1980s

The long road to recovery began with the overthrow of Pol Pot's regime by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in January 1979. In the early months, surviving monks surfaced and resumed monk status without official re-ordination. This both undermined the new communist Kampuchean government's control over religion and presented a potential problem of recognition for the Asian Buddhist community. The issue was apparently resolved and Buddhism may be said to have been officially revived on September 18, 1979, when seven Khmer monks were re-ordained by a visiting delegation of Buddhists from Vietnam. The delegation was believed to have come from the

Khmer Krom community in southern Vietnam, where, in spite of religious persecution, wats had not been closed nor destroyed by the communist regime after 1975.

We cited a figure of 3,000 monks in Kampuchea in April 1981. By 1987, 6,810 monks had reportedly been ordained, and in August 1989, there were said to be more than 8,000 monks in some 2,800 functioning wats. Today (May 1990), there are believed to be approximately 10,000 monks in Kampuchea. The relatively slow recovery of the monkhood since 1979 has in part been the result of a significantly reduced adult male population and a lack of resources. But it is perhaps primarily attributed to the restrictions which the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) placed on Buddhism. Prior to 1975, religious activity had been the purview of the Ministry of Cults, under which the Sangha enjoyed relative autonomy. After 1979, it came under the control of a quasi-governmental party organ, the National Front for Construction and Defense. Communities seeking to establish or reestablish a wat were required to apply to the local Front organization for permission, which in most cases was granted. Indeed, the Front assisted some wat committees with materials for construction. As a rule ,however, the reconstruction and maintenance of wats is, as in the past, done through private donation. Most of the wats were initially rebuilt of bamboo and thach structures perched on the foundation stones of the destroyed temple. The practice of monks being fed by the people has also been resumed. In one among several departures from previous practice, wats were obliged to pay a government tax.

Additional changes were introduced within the Buddhist hierarchy. The Dhammayuttika and Mahanikaya orders were abolished in favor of a single ("national") Theravada Buddhist order, which effectively meant the elimination of the smaller Dhammayuttika sect. The position of the *Sangharaja,* or supreme patriarch, was abolished and replaced by a *protean,* or president, with proteans appointed in each province down to the village level. The wat protean corresponds to the pre-1975 *achar* in function and dress. Perhaps the greatest restriction on the monastic practice of Buddhism was a minimum age requirement of 50 for ordination. The rationale for the decree was that younger men were needed for the more productive activities of reconstruction and defense. Another significant restriction limited the number of monks in a given wat to a maximum of four.

Another possible explanation for the slow recovery of the Buddhist Sangha is lack of interest. But given Buddhism's deep roots in Kampuchea, this seems an implausible and uniformed hypothesis. Unconfirmed eyewitness reports have stated that private homes and apartments have been converted into monasteries, suggesting one way of circumventing the four monk limit to a wat. That Buddhism in fact remains strong in the popular consciousness in Kampu-

chea can be seen in the way the government has since 1988 courted Buddhism the way politicians tend to court votes.

The new, more conciliatory attitude towards Buddhism may be said to have begun in July 1988, when the official Phnom Penh Radio began broadcasting Buddhist prayers after an absence of 13 years. In January 1989, Premier Hun Sen apologized for his government's past "mistakes" during a visit he made to his Kampot province wat, where he prostrated himself before the head monk. The following April, the national assembly amended the Constitution to restore Buddhism to its former position as Cambodia's "national religion." Some weeks later, the government decreed that "devout Buddhist followers can be ordained as Buddhist monks as they wish." Although occasional younger monks were seen as early as 1981, this formally opened the way for novice ordinations of boys ten years or older. As all candidates for ordination, they must obtain permission from the local government authorities to become ordained.

The Buddhist Institute has quietly if not officially reopened. It has recovered a small part of its collection and has reprinted, as of April 1990, ten Buddhist texts. It has also on occasion been used for meetings of monks. In the early1980s, the Japanese government expertly reprinted and distributed many important Khmer Buddhist texts deposited in its collections, including the entire Tipitaka and the 2-volume Khmer dictionary published by the Buddhist Institute. Apart from the Institute, which lacks resources, there is reportedly no Buddhist institution providing for the training and education of the monks. Educational resource materials and qualified monk teachers are virtually non-existant. In a confirmed eyewitness report, the previously sizable wat in Kampong Cham revealed the presence of two monks and no texts in December 1989.

In the meantime, the government has promoted large projects to restore Cambodia's architectural and cultural legacy. The Indian government has been engaged for several years in the restoration of Angkor Wat, which was damaged in the fighting although not beyond repair. In spite of this and the above-mentioned recent initiatives, the government's record over the past decade in allowing the free exercise of Buddhism and other religions has been poor. Buddhism has revived in Kampuchea and been declared the state religion, but it has not resumed the status and role it enjoyed prior to the 1970s, when it was the center of village life and the primary transmitter of the Khmer language and culture.

Khmer Buddhism Abroad

The recent catastrophes in Kampuchea dispersed hundreds of thousands of Khmer across its borders into Thailand and the West. Since 1979, Thai

border encampments have housed over 300,000 displaced Khmer who await repatriation to Cambodia pending a political settlement. In May 1990, there were twelve wats with 458 monks and novices and over 300 nuns in the camps. The Site 2 Rithysen camp wat, which had approximately 200 monks and novices in 1989, is the largest single Khmer Buddhist wat in the world. But the wats, for the most part located in the camp peripheries, play a marginal role in the people's lives. A primary reason for this has been the low quality of a young and untrained monkhood. As in Kampuchea over the past decade, the wats have lacked the human and material resources with which to discipline, train, and educate the novices and young monks who now comprise the bulk of the camp Sangha

A phenomenon of increasing interest for the longer term has been the emergence in the 1980s of Khmer Buddhism in the West. There are at least 75 Khmer Buddhist wats and 250 monks in the United States, France, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, Switzerland, and Japan. The largest contingent, comprising some 50 wats and over 150 monks, is in the United States. France reportedly has 10 wats with under 50 monks. Most wats are located in converted private houses or apartments. Less than a handful of wats have been constructed in a modified traditional style, notable ones in Silver Spring, Maryland, near Washington, D.C.(USA) and Montreal, Canada. Numerous wat construction plans and projects are in various stages of completion. As a rule, the wats are run independently and raise their resources from the Khmer refugee communities to teach Buddhism and Khmer culture to both monks and laypersons. Larger wats also engage in various social service activities.

The western wats are loosely represented through the Annual World Conference of Khmer Monks (Conference annuelle mondiale des moines Khmeres), which has met each year since 1982 in the United States, Canada, and lastly in July 1989 in Paris, France. The conferences attract between 30 and 50 monks, the last one including for the first time, monks from Australia, Japan, and the border camps in Thailand. The Conference Secretary-General is Ven.Hok Savann of the Pagode Khmer du Canada. Ven.Maha Ghosananda, of the Khmer Buddhist Society of New England, is a counsellor. The Conference has been used primarily as a vehicle for the exchange of views and to promote peace in Kampuchea.

Peter Gyallay-Pap
and
Michel Tranet

Khmer-Buddhist Education Assistance Project
P.O.Box 229, Amhurst, Massachusette, U.S.A.

CULTURE OF INDIAN BUDDHISM IN MONGOLIA

Since the early Stone Age the territory of Mongolia has been inhabited by people who developed a unique nomadic culture and civilization in Central Asia. This culture has a long history, which was not inward looking, but accepted aspects of culture and civilization from other peoples and countries as well as influencing others. The culture of the Mongolian people was most influenced by two great Eastern cultures, namely, those of neighbouring China and faraway India.

It is my intention in this small paper to say a few words about the influence of the Indian culture ,through Buddhism, in Central Asia.

Mongolian historians believe that Buddhism came to Mongolia three times. According to the sources, in ancient times, that is to say in the 6th century AD., Buddhism spread from the Middle East among the Mongols and Turk tribes inhabiting Mongolia. Even earlier Buddhism was known among the ancient Mongol ancestors – the Huns who had founded their statehood in the 3rd century BC. The second period of Buddhism's spread was during the Mongol Empire, but it took root only within the confines of the imperial court.

From the 16th century onward Buddhism became widely spread among the Mongols. This time Buddhism came to Mongolia from Tibet, in the form of the yellow hat of the founder Tsong-ka-pa. Although some scholars regard the great Tibetan thinker Tsong-ka-pa Lobsangagwan as a reformer of Buddhism, he restored and defended Buddhist practice in Mongolia and in the main followed the ancient Indian tradition as far as the theories and principles of Buddhism are concerned.

The spread of Buddhism in Mongolia brought with itself the great Buddhist Indian culture. The basic authority books and sutras of Mahayana Buddhism – the Ganjur and Danjur – were translated (in the 17th and 18th centuries) into Mongolian and printed by way of wooden blocks (xylography). These two collections consisting of over 330 volumes contain some 5,000 big and small works. Only a few hundred out of these books have been preserved in original Sanskrit. The Ganjur and Danjur in Tibetan and Mongolian which the Mongolian public library now possess are a valuable cultural heritage.

The Mongols did not only translate to copy Indian Buddhist culture, they creatively used it by adapting it to their specific way of life and conditions. The famous Indian Pancha-Tantra tales have, for example, become to be known as Mongol folk tales. The stories told by the sedentary peoples thus are quite similar to those of nomadic people.

Mongol thinkers, having perceived Buddhist thinking, have contributed greatly to its further and creative development. Mongolian scholars supplemented the various fields of knowledge contained in Buddhism with commentaries and wrote their own unique works consisting of one or two, even up to 30, volumes. We now have some 300 such works.

This fact speaks of the development of Mongolian Buddhism in a comprehensive and unique manner of learning. Thus, at the end of the 20th century, the development of Buddhism has reached a high point in Mongolia. Now we are in Mongolia at work to study and popularize this rich traditional heritage.

The spread of Buddhism in Mongolia during the Middle Ages was of great significance in the development of the resources of learning and culture which came in from India. In common with any other phenomenon, there were, however, positive and negative aspects to it. During the Middle Ages countries and powers primarily sought to attack each other in order to conquer and make themselves stronger. The principle of the great Buddha's teaching on compassion could not be effective. Therefore, the Ching Dynasty created by the Manchu defeated the Mongol's traditional fighting spirit and employed the Buddhist principle of loving-kindness other way round to aid in their rule.

Mongols revered Buddhism not only for worship. As a matter of fact, the teaching of the Lord Buddha is not about supernatural or omnipotent things. There is no almighty god in Buddhism. Buddha Sakyamuni created, in effect, a doctrine of human beings, and being himself a humanist, preaches basic tenets of how to liberate human beings from suffering. The principal aim he pursued is to perfect or purify the mind , the inner world of man, and to enrich the wealth of his wisdom because the cause of suffering is not in the external world, but inside man himself. Mongolian thinkers, setting much store by this idea, pursued this line of thought. The Mongolian philosopher Agwangbaldan emphasized in his writings : "Buddha is not my relative and the others are not my foe, I have not seen their existence and action ; and having understood the difference of speech and action respectively, I worship Buddha for his omniscient power. Buddha is not my father and the others are not my foe. Buddha did not give me any wordly thing and the others did not take anything from me. But Buddha's outlook and deed are aimed at helping others, and for this reason I worship him."

Now I wish to say a few words on how the Mongols displayed special

interest and created works devoted to Buddhist doctrine and its scientific and educational heritage. In fact, philosophy, logic, linguistics, literature, medicine, mathematics and astrology occupy an important place in Buddhist thinking.

Coming first to the matter of philosophy and logic, influence came from among the four philosophic schools of Buddhism (Vaibhashika, Suantrantika, Madhyamika and Yogachara.) Madhyamika and Yogachara, which are treated as the two principle schools in Mahayana Buddhism, have been the most developed in Mongolia and Mongolian Buddhist thinkers regarded Madhyamika, which was founded by the ancient Indian great thinker Nagarjuna, as the most supreme and "pure" teaching.

Rejecting the philosophical idea that things are created and eternal or the metaphysical view, and the idea that denies a substantial reality or Nihilism,as well as the idea that recognizes reality and non-reality or eclectism, Nagarjuna dealt with the universe in its continuing changes and in the relation of mutual dependence on the negative and positive, and is therefore considered a deep thinking and highly adroit dialectician.

Apart from this, works of the great thinkers Asanga (4th Century) and Vasubandhu (4th century), who founded Yogachara school and those of other thinkers were studied in Mongolia in the Tibetan and Mongolian languages.

Teachings of logic by the famous Indian philosophers Dignaga (6th century) and Dharmakirti (7th century) were also studied with reverence in Mongolia.

Works and writings of such great Indian thinkers as Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dignaga, Dharmakirti, Shantideva, Buddhagosha, Aryashura and many others were translated into Mongolian and Tibetan, and are now well preserved in Mongolia. And such classic works as *Nadhyamikakarika* (Verses on earthly wisdom) by Nagarjuna ; *Yogacharabhyma* (Land of Yogachara) by Asanga; *Abhidharmakosha* (True Library) by Vasubandhu; *Phramanasamuccaya* (Imponding Ignorance) by Dignaga ; *Nyaya bindu* (A Drop of Wisdom) can be mentioned.

Mongolian scholars and thinkers have done much in the past to develop and deepen Indian Buddhist philosophy by way of making comprehensive commentaries and additions to the Indian thinkers works of different schools and by writing their own works. There are many such Mongolian philosophers and logicians such as Zaya Pandit Lubsanperinlai (17th century), Sumbe Khambo Ishibaljir (17th century), Gebshe Lubsantsultem (18th cent.), Llarampa Agwandandar (18th cent.), Gabje Agwanghaidab (19th cent.), Gabje

Tsorje Agwanbaldan (19th cent.), Gabje Agwandorje (19th cent.), Dandar Agramba (19th cent.), and Gabje Damdin (20th cent.).

In the field of linguistics and literature we can say that Indian linguistic writings and works have had a direct influence on Mongolian linguistics. The works of the linguist Panin (5th cent. BC) *Vijankaranasutra* and its many commentaries were translated and used, and when the Mongolian linguist of the 17th century Choijin Odser wrote his first book on linguistics *Zurhen Tolilu,* he based his writing on Oriental linguistic methods, namely, the theoretical principles developed by Panin. Mongols also studied and mastered Sanskrit, doing a great deal to translate books directly from Sanskrit. For example, the linguist Damdinsuren (end of the 19th century) wrote a book on the elaboration of a grammer of the Sanskrit language and its methods of study.

Mongols also attempted to create a script suitable to the Mongolian language on the basis of Devanagari scripts and to this effect, for example, in 1686 the Mongolian Bogdo Khan Zanabazar invented the Soyombo script.

The dictionary known as "the fountainhead of wisdom" compiled in the Mid 18th century with an eye to translating the *Danjur,* contains various names and terms or phrases, and became an important instrument for translation of many branches of Buddhist knowledge.

Ancient Indian literary and theoretical works, namely *Kaviyadarsha* written by the poet and literary theorist Dandin, had been studied by the Mongols and served as an important instrument for writing verses and literary composition, and they made many commentaries. Also Kalidassa's (4th cent.) *Meghadutam* (Cloud Messenger) and others were translated and staged as well.

The epic *Ramayana*, Indian folklore, tales, and moral stories such as the story of *Vikramidityakatha, 32 Wooden Figures, The Story of the Magic Corpse (Vetalapancha-vishatika), Pancha-Tantra* and others had been translated into Mongolian in the distant past, and consequently most of these stories underwent changes and assumed the form of Mongolian folk tales.

Medical and scientific activities occupy a notable place in the history of Mongol-Indian cultural relations. Since ancient times Mongol had used medical raw materials obtained from wild animals, livestock, plants, minerals and stones for treatment of diseases. This tradition has been supplemented and enriched by The Indian medical science or Ayurvedic remedies. Thus the Mongol traditional medicine has come to use materials from plants, animals, minerals and stones from warmer climes. Ayurvedic healing includes such traditional methods as anatomy, physiology of healing, therapeutics or treatment of communicable diseases and those common with children and women, as

well as pharmacy, surgery, spring water healing, yoga, etc., Sutras of Ayurvedic remedies like *Charakasamhita* (the eight-branched), surgery *Sushrutasamhita*, and Yoga became wide-spread in Mongolia.

Mongolian healers and herbalists were active and worked effectively to make use of those sutras in light of their country's resources of medicinal raw materials obtained from plants herbs, animals and minerals. They wrote books explaining how to adapt and use them in the specific conditions of the country's custom, life, and climate, and made additions to them so as to heal diseases effectively. In connection with this, many names of such Mongol herbalists as Danzabjantsan (17th cent.), Marambo Dandar (19th cent.), Jambaldorje (19th cent.), and others should be mentioned. Additionally some works on medical science written by Maramno Jambaldorje were published in 1970 in New Delhi.

At present, work of scientific and practical importance is being carried on to develop and put the tradition of scientific and cultural ties into effect anew.

The Indian tradition in developing mathematics, especially, algebra and arithmetics – with particular reference to the acheivement in perfecting arithmetics on the basis of decimal fraction – has been far superior to that of Greece and Rome. The highly developed Indian standard in mathematics and astrology greatly helped develop mathematics and astrology in Mongolia, handed down in the Sanskrit language. Mongolian scholars studied and made use of the 20 volumes of works *Brahmasbhutaciddhanta* by the famous Indian Mathematician Brahmagupta (7th cent.). And, in addition to this, there is a source in existence which states that Indian mathematicians used to come to Mongolia, and they helped develop both astrology and mathematics. Based on the Indian tradition of mathematics and astrology, a volume on the same subjects was compiled by mostly Mongol scholars (at the end of the 17th cent. and at the beginning of the 18th cent.). This is called *Salibitson barihyn Bodrol Bichig*. This work deals with the methods for precise calculation of the movement of the Sun, the Moon, Stars and constellations, and many other phenomena, as well as methods for compiling calenders. For further improvement of the volume, Mongolian mathematicians themselves did a good deal of work. The commentary, textbook and illustrated diagrams worked out by Mongolian mathematician Ebugenhoo (19th cent.), Dorombu Gelegjamtso (20th cent.), and other scholars are a case in point.

So, the land of Mongols is noted for the preservation and further development of ancient Indian culture and science, especially the values of Buddhism.

Whereas Buddhism was displaced from India and fell into oblivion there for centuries, the culture and branches of Buddhist knowledge have developed and flourished in northernmost Mongolia. This speaks to the fact that the cultural traditions of the people have mutually influenced each other's development and helped each to make headway.

G. Lubsantseren

Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP)
Headquarters, Ulan Bator-51, Mongolia.

BUDDHIST ETHICS AND THE PROBLEM OF ETHNIC MINORITIES : THE CASE OF LADAKH

Ethnic minorities and global politics

One of the key problems of contemporary society when examined on a global scale is the gradual re-emergence of once self-governing peoples from the colonial suppression of the last two centuries. Many of these peoples form linguistically and culturally distinct entities with characteristically unique customs and values. Most such territories within former European maritime empires have now gained their freedom and representation in the forum of the United Nations but others, originally submerged in the expansion of land-based empires, have only in recent years become enabled to seek such freedom for themselves. This issue has surfaced recently particularly strongly in the Soviet Union where the new openess of glasnost has allowed, if tentatively, its expression and open discussion. Yet it is also present in almost all large, continent -sized states; India has several examples, China is faced with demands from the Tibetans and possibly other restive minorities, while the stituation of the Kurds, whose lands stretch over the borders of Iraq, Iran and Turkey, is especially painful. Related to these movements is the newly discovered political expressiveness and demands for increased rights by Amerindian peoples in the USA and Brazil. In the United Kingdom referanda have been held to test the unity of the state against possible independencies in Wales and Scotland.

These demands for new contractual definitions and autonomies always pose severe problems for a centralised state government but, as in the case of the Welsh and the Scots, democratic referenda do not necessarily lead to movements for total independence. What is often required is a fresh contractual relationship between minority and centre in which the rights of the minority are seen to be adequately respected.

World opinion on such matters is often strikingly in advance of rigidly held attitudes defensively maintained by centralised governments often based upon outdated ideology long bypassed by fresh sociological developments. The

draft copy of the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Rights is especially trenchant. Among numerous detailed recommendations the following statements are especially important.

> ***All indigenous nations and people have the right to self-determination by virture of which they have the right to whatever degree of autonomy or self-government they choose, this includes the right to freely determine their political status, freely pursue their own economic, social, religious and cultural development and determine their own membership and / or citizenship, without external interference.***
>
> ***Indigenous nations and peoples are entitled to the permanent control and enjoyment of their ancestral historical territories.***
>
> ***Indigenous nations and peoples may engage in self defense against state actions in conflict with their right to self-determination.***

While these idealistic entitlements are as yet unconfirmed by the United Nations they clearly indicate the trend of contemporary world opinion. They are a logical extension of the notion of basic human rights for individuals to those of collective entities of common social identity.

In this paper I wish to discuss several aspects of the ways in which traditional Buddhist ethics relate to these issues and to suggest that contemporary Buddhists concerned with the world problematic need to extend their stance to take account of the present state of global society. I will discuss these questions in the light of the current movements for social change and political expression in Buddhist Ladakh, a formerly independent kingdom of a people closely related ethnically, linguistically and culturally to Tibet and now part of the modern state of India.

The case of Ladakh poses several questions of interest on Buddhist ethics and modern society :

1) In what way does the traditional Buddhism of Ladakh relate to the current movement for socio-political change?

2) Does the teaching of Sakyamuni Buddha give us a lead as to how contemporary Buddhists might view this and similar cases?

3) Should contemporary Buddhists express their views collectively on issues of this nature? In other words, do contemporary Buddhists wish to have their views known to institutions such as the United Nations and thereby to participate more intimately in the formation of world opinion?

Ladakh's conflict with the state of Kashmir

Until the last century Ladakh was a sizeable independent state ruled by hereditary kings resident at the capital city of Leh. These kings were of the lineage by remote descent of the old kings of Tibet, relatives of whom had established small kingdoms in western Tibet following the collapse of central authority after the murder of King Langdarma in AD 1248 [Snellgrove.D and H.Richardson 1968; Aizui,J. 1986; Petch, L. 1977] . Tibetan peoples had spread into the area earlier and provided it with a culture which became anchored in the religious values of the monastic universities of Lhasa and Tashi Lhunpo and to which all aspiring monk scholars went to receive their training.

Following a period of governmental and economic weakness the territory was conquered by the Dogras of Jammu in the last century primarily in order to gain control of the lucrative trade in pashmina wool, and eventually became part of the British Raj. Upon Indian independence Ladakh was fused with the large state of Jammu-Kashmir ruled from Shrinagar. Pandit Nehru established a department of Ladakh affairs in the Kashmir state scretariat in order to protect Ladakh's interests; Ladakh at that time being backward in political expertise when compared to the other parts of the triune state.

Following an easing of the tensions between India and both China and Pakistan, the Indian central government opened Ladakh to international tourism in 1974. Already a road system, initially built largely for strategic reasons, was spreading through the area and a large military presence had initiated fresh economic and employment opportunities and the monetisation of the subsistence agricultural economy. This provided an opportunity for the commercially gifted Kashmirs of the central valley of Kashmir, long practised in the tourist trade, to establish new business enterprises and to act as middle men in new tourist ventures. Since the majority of Kashmiris are Muslim, this also meant an increased influence for Islam in the area and new opportunities for the small Muslim community, formerly masters of the caravan trade of the previous century, in and near Leh. The predominantly agricultural Ladakhis, essentially easy going people with little business acumen, soon found themselves outmanuevered commercially and subject to an increasingly negative discrimination. When Kashmiris began to establish new shops and to sell Buddhist religious artifacts in the Leh market place the stage was set for increasing friction between the Buddhist and Muslim communities. Inspite of numerous small incidents and ample evidence, the Kashmir state government made no move to correct a deteriorating situation.

Yet in the last decade the Ladakhis have asserted themselves, converting homes into guest houses, building hotels, creating trekking business, estab-

lishing shops and services and new educational and cultural institutions. Of these the Gompa Association and particularly the Buddhist Association of Ladakh gradually became a forum for discussions of unease and discontent. At the same time the foundation of the Ladakh Ecological and Development Group (LEDG), led to fresh concern about the gross nature of government development schemes and emergence of interests in village level projects aimed at sustainable development [Norberg-Hodge,.H.and J. Pege 1988]. In this context Ladakh began to focus on the ecological adaptedness of their traditional agricul-tural practices and culture. Recently the Student Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh has developed activities for tourists providing them with educational introductions to Ladakh family life and customs and using the funds so obtained for the education of youngsters from disadvantaged homes, often from remote communities.

Many of these initiatives have come from the present generation of young people educated at universities and colleges in India, highly gifted in languages, sciences and engineering but who have not found employment in their home area. The development of their enterprises has faced severe discrimination. For example, to establish bank accounts in Shrinagar some Ladakhis have had to assume Muslim names in order to receive polite attention. In addition, they have found that in any movement for reform the political dice were heavily loaded against them and in favour of both Kashmiri and local Muslims. Rather than being able to join the mainstream of Indian economic development, these young people have been propelled into a close identification with their own land and culture. Although Buddhist by birth many of them have little knowledge of Buddhism, their education being primarily within the traditions of Western liberalism in its Indian form, but it is under the lable of Buddhism that they now struggle for an appropriate respect and recognition.

In the summer of 1989 these simmering resentments burst into flame. Amid riotous confrontations the strategic road between Leh and Shrinagar was blocked by villagers and tourist vehicles stoned. Of course it was this that brought the matter to world attention. The Buddhist Association now created the "Ladakh Peoples Movement for Union Territory Status" and launched an agitation that included extensive poster campaigns, leafleting, public meetings and marches. A carefully prepared pamphlet in English, India's second language in which educated Ladakhis now excell, summarises the prime sources of complaint against the Kashmir Government [Ladakh People's Movement 1989.]

The discriminatory attitude of the Kashmir Government is illustrated by a long catalogue of facts. Among these are the following : Ladakh does not have a single representative in the Kashmir State's 30 membered Council of Ministers. Ladakh has only two members in a state legislature of seventy five. The state educational system is so inept that over ninety percent of students fail in their matriculation examinations (which is the main reason why the Bud-

dhists have formed their own schools in which English is the teaching medium). There is no degree college in the region. The Ladakh Affairs Department and the Ladakh Development Board have been dismantled by the government. Muslims have been favoured and communalism fostered by such policies as splitting the Ladakh region into a mainly Buddhist District (Leh) and a mainly Shiah Muslim District (Kergil). Three of four Ladakhi representatives in the legislative bodies are Muslims. In the offices of Leh, Muslims occupy 39% of jobs but are only 12% of the population, while Buddhists have 50 % of the jobs on 86% of the population. Buddhist women are converted by monetary allurements into Islam, but when such converts wish to return to their natal religion police action is taken to stop it. Finally the government has favoured local Muslims through unfair awarding of contracts and thus fomented further communal antagonism. The pamphlet goes on to outline the historical and social origins of these political and economic problems, carefully providing facts and figures to illustrate its case. Finally it demands that *"The Government in New Delhi in the light of the above facts and in the name of justice to one of the last surviving Himalayan cultures, must pay timely attention to the just demand of the Ladakhis to seperate it from Kashmir in the form of Union Territory of India."* The result has been a sustained silence.

The constitution of India allows for the creation of a number of Union Territiories directly responsible not to a state government but to the central government in New Delhi. There are only ten such territories and they are governed in various ways. The larger examples may have a legislature or a council of ministers with constitutional powers and functions, the members of which are elected or party nominated. A Governor may be appointed by the centre or the Governor of a neighbouring state may act. While the Ladakhi demand is unclear as to detail, we may presume it has a constitution along these lines in mind. It is clear that were such a set of institutions provided leading Ladakhis would then find ample scope for the expression of their powers and abilities.

A positive response from the central Government on this issue will be difficult to obtain. It would mean the splitting of the Kashmir state and could have a domino effect with Jammu also opting for state independence. This would leave an Islamic Kashmir possibly seeking union with Pakistan and hence provoking further destabilisation in a sensitive strategic area where India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Soviet Union and China all have interests. In any case the whole matter is considered quite intolerable by the ruling government of Kashmir itself.

On August 27th 1989 Ladakh exploded. The Buddhists had resorted to daily demonstrations in the large market square of Leh each being organised by people from a different village. They would assemble in the Jokhang, the

central temple of the city, and then march forth waving banners. Usually the police merely arrested some demonstrators and released them in the evening, indeed busing them back to town from the jail. On about August 25th, however, the Kashmir Government flew into Leh units of the Kashmir Armed Police, a tough force used to controlling terrorist activity and mob action in Shrinagar. When the demonstration of the 27th began these police seized a youth and beat him severely leaving him unconscious, possibly dead, on the pavement. The crowd erupted and stoned the police who replied with lathi charges. Battle ensued in which three Buddhists were shot, many more injured, a bus burned and eventually a 24 hour curfew, which was sustained for several days, imposed. The local police resented the high handed methods of the KAP and fights between police occurred. The KAP went on a rampage smashing in Buddhist shop fronts. On following days taxis sporting Buddhist insignia were stopped by police and the drivers pulled out in front of protesting tourist passengers and severely beaten. As a result all transportation in the area ceased. The Jokhang was raided and the leaders of the Buddhist Association rounded up and abducted to Shrinagar where they were held without charge.

Leadership of the movement was then taken over by the Venerable Togden Rimpoche, a leading Lama. The Association proclaimed a general strike. Leaflets were circulated. One of these read as follows : "In the face of the atrocities committed by the State Police Force armed with the most modern weapons and apparently ready to use them to kill our people the only alternative left to us is to adapt the time-tested method which the people of India used to fight the mighty British Empire to win our freedom under the leadship of Mahatma Gandhi. We therefore propose to embark on a Civil Disobedience Movement against the Kashmir Government. No orders issued by the Government were to be obeyed, no one was to work for the Government. Officials were to be denied entry to homes and villages. Courts were to be boycotted. Fees to Government were not to be paid and the demand for Union Status was sustained [Togden Rimpoche 1989]."

In the weeks that followed Ladakh - wide strikes paralysed the region, villagers staged demonstrations on the key strategic roads, a police unit was captured in village , beaten and their arms removed (Army intervention restored peace and the arms a few days later). Various rumours suggested that some Ladakhis of the prestigious frontier force, the Ladakh Scouts had broken camp with their weapons at least for a time. The dangers of military mutiny were in the air. Extensive curfews were regularly in force. A march on Leh from all surrounding villages was planned and a region-wide curfew imposed. Clearly the local Government was no longer in control of the situation and could only respond with high handed and inept methods. Even so the Ladakhis seem to have maintained a tolerant humour and , considering the strength of feeling, remarkably little harm came to anyone. When some conciliatory noises came

from Delhi, the Disobedience movement was temporarily suspended to allow negotiations to begin. So far, however, it seems that the Kashmir Government has not responded. Released from jail under ***habeas corpus*** on central orders from New Delhi, the original leaders are now free and evidently underground. At the time of writing the Ladakh question is clearly unresolved and India is heading into an unpredictable general election.

The Nature of social change in Ladakh and the influence of traditional Buddhism

In order to examine in what way and to what extent the traditional Buddhism of Ladakh has influenced the present crisis, we need to look briefly at both the sociology of traditional Buddhism in the territory and at the underlying roots of the current discontent.

Prior to the development of the growing road system in Ladakh the greater part of the country was inhabited by widely dispersed farming communities on the alluvial fans descending from the glaciers of the Himalayan or Zangskar mountains to the deep valleys of the Indus and its primary tributaries. Between these alluvial fans stretch arid areas of uncultivatible montane desert[Crook,J.H. and H. Osmasion(Eds) 1990]. [Dendeletche,C (ed)1905]. Research shows that the villagers live on agricultural estates according to a monomarital principle [Goldstein,M.C. 1971] whereby a main house is occupied by the reproductive family, traditionally often a polyandrous group of brothers with their wife and children in common and another small house or houses containing the older parental and grandparental generations. This principle reduces the birthrate below that which would arise from monogamous marriages and yields many unmarried women most of whom help on the land. (See [Goldstein,M.C. 1976; Crook,J.H. and S.J. Crook 1900]). In addition, research in Zangskar revealed that 30% of brothers in a large sample of families were monks. The coexistence of monastic communities and polyandry in the traditional society has acted as a severe curb on population expansion and may be seen as a key socio-ecological adaptation to the limited carrying capacity of these montane deserts of the Transhimalaya.

Monastic Buddhism in Ladakh was less influential in matters of government than was the case in Tibet; for in Ladakh the rule of a lay aristocracy never gave place to a monkish theocracy. While large monasteries in the Indus valley had some influence on the aristrocracy, in most of the remote areas an intimate relation on a local scale existed between villages and the gompas in which the unmarried sons lived. Throughout most of the land the main role of

the monks in the life of the people was threefold; I) to provide thaumaturgic rituals ensuring the success of harvests and the placation of local gods of pre-Buddhist origin. II) to provide opportunities for lay folk to gain merit and hence a beneficial rebirth through moral endeavours and services to the monkhood. III) to undergo yogic training to Enlightenment and hence the validation of the Great Tradition.

The world view of the village Ladakhi is an amalgam of Shamanistic notions and Buddhist practices. A central family preoccupation is the cult of the house god *(pha, lha)* which was originally the emblem of the patrilineal clan to which the houshold belonged (See [Crook, J.H. 1990]). Donations in kind and in money to support the monastic round of ceremonies ensures merit as does the moral tone of an individual's life. The villagers hold the monks in high repute and individual monks who pursue the arduous path of yoga are attributed charisma.

These values operate within a system of family relations in which reciprocity between extended patrilineages is central. The Buddhist values of non-harming, non-killing and a compassionate morality underpin this reciprocity with an ethical structure of a higher order than the superstitions of the bedrock Shamanism. One of the main ways in which these values are clearly observable is through the control of violence and discord through deliberate mediation. As soon as an argument arises an older man will endeavour to bring the parties together – often by inviting them to take *chang* (beer) together in a customary good mannered way. While so engaged the mediator then endeavours to resolve the dispute in interaction with the participants. These values form part of a highly integrated system of social relations that enable the hard working farmer to go ahead with a schedule marked by the appropriate agriculturally related rituals of the year while at the same time supporting the religious endeavours of the monkhood.

Since the 1960s major changes in social structure and personal values came about, especially in the area around the capital, Leh. These changes were initiated by the development of a road system that allow mobility and commerce within what was previously an almost entirely subsistance economy. The presence of a large military establishment requiring modern services, garages, schools, canteens, hospitals, heating etc., and the rapid growth of tourism (shops, hotels, transportation, travel agencies etc.,) has provided undreamed of opportunities for employment and hence for wages. This monetisation of the economy has rendered the old polyandrous family structure, in itself an adaptation to agro-ecological constraints, obsolete. Families today are mostly monogamous and the monomarital system no longer operates; although families often occupy houses on an estate still held in common (See [Crook,J.H. and T. Shekya 1903]). Likewise although the recruitment of boys to the monasteries continues, the attractions of commerce and modern life draw

many away from this affiliation. Around the capital a new middle class has emerged, university or high school educated, speaking good English, professionally trained and usually without adequate employment. Furthermore, extensive over-capitalisation in Leh has led to a stituation in which the carrying capacity in terms of room occupancy per night is far above the uptake by tourists except perhaps for a few short midsummer weeks (See [Supply reference 1]). There is thus considerable competitive pressure to make an income sufficient to meet returns on large investment loans. These pressures would be challenging enough without a discriminatory attitude by the State Government favouring the commercial activities of Kashmiris from outside the region.

The social psychologist Henri Tajfel has carried out extensive research on situations in which a minority people are faced with varying degrees of socio-political suppression by a majority [Tejfel,H. 1978; Brown, A. 1988]. An individual realises himself or herself in society to the extent that he/she recognises his / her identity in socially defined and functional terms. Membership of a social, ethnic or cultural group is a form of self definition. Social categorisation is thus a fundamental process by which an individual orients to the world. Under conditions of economic change individuals identify with either a relatively conservative or a relatively advanced portion of the society. Where fame and gain are clearly associated with modernisation then aspirations are towards assuming an identity that is modern. This can have bizarre results, as where the height of fashion may be to sit arrayed in a tourist's anorak and boots and wearing a watch in a culture otherwise consisting of traditionally clad farmers. Individuals who have the means to become socially mobile rapidly assume the styles of dress, speech, mannerisms and values of those of the group with which they wish to affiliate.

Where these aspirations are blocked by forces within a society such as racial or ethnic discrimination, an individual's values tend to refocus on the traditions of his/her natal group and at the same time to look towards socio-political advance for the minority as a whole. In the first case, social mobility, an individual identifies with majority values while, in the second case, identification with traditional values precipitates movements for social change. Where barriers to social mobility are high the emergence of charismatic leadership can then precipitate movements that are radical in their form and revolutionary in their motives. Examples include the Civil Rights Movement in the USA and the current forces for change in South Africa. The problem for smaller minorities is the lack of demographic power. In the case of Ladakh, while the Buddhist Ladakhis are in a minority in the state of Kashmir they are a majority within Ladakh itself. Their struggle is thus not a merely communal one but a territorial one which in previous times would have taken the form of war.

Virtually all the features of Tajfel's theory are visible in Ladakh. The relative deprivation of the Ladakhis and their perception of their common fate has focused their political sensibility around the central feature of their lives in common, namely their Buddhist culture. Those who sense the absence of financial opportunities and political expression most strongly and who perceive the Kashmiri Government as the prime cause of their deprivation are especially vehement in their affiliation to traditional concerns and a desire for social change. There are however Ladakhi families, mostly very well off, who have ample contacts outside Ladakh in Delhi or elsewhere for whom the struggle is of lesser interest. These upwardly mobile families have pan-Indian values and tend to decry the "regionalism" which they see apparent in their confreres.

The paradox in this situation is that the values driving the Buddhists towards social change can hardly be described as Buddhist. Traditional Buddhist values in Ladakh are associated with the subsistence economy of the old village way of life. They focus on mutualistic reciprocity, on collective feeling, on endurance and renunciation. The possibility of a change in social position is barely conceivable in this way of being. The generation of new young leaders in Ladakh has received by contrast an education in the Indian version of what is essentially Western liberalism post-Christian and Humanist in origins. The focus is on individualism, on the legitimacy of competition, on the desirability of wealth and influence, on the pursuit of material happiness. For these ardent supporters of middle class values, Buddhism is merely a lable conveniently indicating their common origin and sense of fate. Of Buddhism itself they have little learning, of the Vajrayana of their own monasteries they are mostly ignorant, and their interest in meditation is limited to the stress reducing, mind calming practices of a non-heirachical non-monastic form suitable for improving the performances of bank managers or engineers.

Even so, the striking features of the Ladakhi Buddhist's movement for Union Territory status is its peaceful nature. Throughout India and Sri Lanka there are revolutionary minority movements that have taken to the mountains, the slums or the jungles in armed terrorism. The violent incidents in Ladakh have been few in number, and the leadership has decried them. The ideology to which appeal is made is the *ahimsa*, the non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi. Faced with the intemperance of the Kashmiri Government, progress may well be slow, but at least the openings to dialogue are always present. New Delhi would be blind indeed if, in the context of the strategic importance of the region and the usefulness of Ladakhi personal in mountain defence, it failed to utilise these characteristics for peace making.

Some Ladakhis are also aware of the historical significance of their

culture as one of the few remaining areas where the traditional culture of Tibet remains alive and well in its environment of origin. They will also be aware of the great influence of their religious leader, the Dalai Lama, his infinite patience, and the award to him of the Nobel Peace Prize. Acknowledging his towering moral stature, Buddhism in the Ladakhi struggle thus operates in an almost underground, perhaps unconscious, way. It is in the deeply held tradition of mediation, of attempting to talk out a problem, of using reason before arms, that the accumulation of merit lies. And, even if, for these modern middle class citizens, merit no longer neccesarily implies a better life next time round, it still evokes respect and positive personal evaluation in this one.

Buddha Sakyamuni's view on political relations

Were Sakyamuni Buddha alive today I have little doubt that he would be acutely interested in the fate of Himalayan peoples of Buddhist persuasion, not only because they are inheritors of his tradition and plausibly also his kinsmen but on account of the nature of the problem itself. I have argued above that the prime causes for the political strife engulfing Ladakh are not so much to be found in the iniquities or otherwise of the Kashmir Government as in the social processes which economic change has induced in the territory. These have forced a radical shift in the ways in which individual Ladakhis conceive of themselves. In that the self-identification within the new middle class is contemporaneously upwardly mobile the frustration of that movement generates severe interethnic tension as the realisation of Muslim Kashmiri dominance and its insidiously descriminating nature becomes apparent. According to the Buddha the whole process of self-identification comprises a psychology of suffering. There are parallels between the present situation and that into which the Buddha was born and about which he contemplated greatly.

One of the key realisations that Sakyamuni Buddha sought to convey in his very first sermons was that the process of identification solidifies a mind into a lonely individuality that is based upon an illusion. Meditation produces an awareness that the mind is actually a complex process in which the attribution of self to awareness is a key component. When the meditator reverses this direction he is enabled once more to witness the processes of mind that antecede the conviction of selfhood. This realisation enables the meditator to see that identification can become voluntary rather than imposed by conditions. Enlightenment essentially is a rediscovery of choice within freedom.

Modern scholars have become increasingly concerned with the views of the Buddha on the context within this realisation could be worked out. In his own time he was faced with conditions that constrained the expressions of

personal freedom and he was well aware that these constraints were not only intrapsychic but also inherent in the social relations of communities. Recent analyses of the suttas have tended therefore to look for a social in addition to an intrapsychic doctrine in the Buddha's words [Ling,T. 1976; Cakravarti. V. 1987].

The Buddha focused his attention on the non-individualistic processes of awareness. His concern was with sentience as such and the conditions under which it was imprisoned in illusion or freed to natural expression. The vehicle for the transmission of such freedom was a social structure that was not based upon an emphasis upon personal individuality – the Sangha. The social role of the Sangha was to effect the transmission of that Enlightenment that relieves illusion. The contract between householder and monk was thus one of sharing. In return for food and sustenance the monk would give from his experience the necessary teachings. Trevor Ling(1976,p 155) puts it as follows:

> ***The Sangha, therefore, provides the environment in which a new dimension of consciousness becomes possible as a result of the denial, not only in theory, but also in practice, of the idea of absolute and permanent individuality.***

The Sangha none the less had to function in a world highly conditioned by those sunk in the karma producing activities of individualism.

Modern scholarship shows that the time of the Buddha the socio-ecology of the peoples of the Gangetic Plain was undergoing a slow change from pastoralism to intense agricultural farming with the cutting of forests. The trend to farm ownership was replacing the older more communal activities of the extended families of the pastoralists. Their reciprocality and collectivist attitudes were being replaced by an emphasis on ownership and exchange of goods in which individualism and the focus on the farm owning family was paramount. Trade led to transportation of goods and the emergence of large cities with rich merchants and guild houses. Again, here the focus was on individual gain and fame. The older pastoralist groups had had a form of communal government, a sort of "republicanism", whereas the cities became governed by ruling families headed by a king. Monarchism, trade and farming were economically more effective than the "republics" which were being progressively absorbed into the competing kingdoms.

The Buddha was born into a "republican" society and clearly appreciated the atmosphere of communal reciprocity within which affairs of state were settled. Yet he spent his adult life mostly in the capitals of powerful kings. His own aristocratic origins brought him into their close company and his teaching was often given to the highest of the land. In creating a social vehicle with which to transmit his teachings to future generations he none the less made use of ideas

stemming from the communalistic processes of "republican" government. He was well aware of the dangers of individualism as expressed in the rule of tyrants.

The social doctrines of the Buddha fall into three mutually related themes (Ling 1976). The commom people of field and marketplace were subject to illusion through addiction to pleasure controlled by the dominance of the senses. Fame and gain increase opportunities for pleasure and thus become addictive, the very motives for action in life. Greed and lust may lead to crime and illness and old age lead to disappointment. Lacking wisdom, the ordinary man and woman is imprisoned by the categorisations that these attitudes and activities foster. Wisdom comes through penetrating the veil of illusion to understand the "real" nature of the mind and human relations. Since those who have followed the way that leads to this understanding are the Sangha, it follows that the Sangha will provide the guidance that common people need. Yet so powerful are the drives of karmic delusion that forceful government is essential. Thus, and it may seem with regret, the Buddha came to emphasize the importance of the wise king, himself guided by the Sangha. Indeed the doctrine of the wise king, the Cakravartin, seems to approximate to the doctrine of the great teacher. They are mirrors to one another.

It was plausibly the visible failure of the old "republican" assemblies that led Buddha to these views. He is known to have said that a certain assembly would prevail only so long as there was agreement between its members. Disagreements grew in proportion to the spread of individualistic notions and hierachical government replaced the more or less "democratic" earlier processes. None the less, in constructing the Sanhga, the idea of a "democratic" assembly of equals was maintained. Only indeed in this way could the powers of individualism be challenged.

Yet what was to be the result when the Sangha itself was subject to interior dispute? In contemporary democracies the majority would win the day. But, to the Buddha, this would be merely another form of individualism in which the more popular ruled the less. Such a system would not be conducive to carrying the torch of Dharma forward. In the Sangha,therefore, the focus is on equality of dress, demeanour and precept and the realisation of the truth yields harmony. Yet, when disagreement arises and cannot be resolved in assembly, then the Sangha is to split with each party going its own way and developing its own view without rancour. This "Law of Schism" *(sangha-bheda)* was the device that maintained the structural unity of local communities of monks through a mechanism of amicable splitting. The whole principle was further discussed at the second Buddhist Council at Vaishali one hundred years or so after the Buddha's death. And,indeed,when compared to other religions and ideologies, the history of Buddhism has been remarkably free

from violent and heavily destructive sectarianism [Dutt,S. 1962].

Although scholars will doubtless differ in their interpretations of the Buddha's social philosophy, three broad principles do appear to be well established. The preceptual life of the Sangha is the touchstone for monarch and subjects alike, a life based in a thorough understanding of the nature of mind and its illusion prone disposition. The subject regulates his life according to sets of reciprocities, parent-child, friend-friend, farmer-merchant, ruler-ruled which are themselves derived from perceptual considerations. The king rules within a social contract that is both strong and wise and again based in the preceptual understanding of behaviour. The Sangha itself is open to individuals of any ethnic origin, caste or class who, renouncing the life of the householder, undertake training in the Dharma and live according to preceptual truth. Yet, the Sangha as an institution has the capacity to change in adapation to circumstance through the permitting of modification or reform arising within the process of amicable schism.

Contemporary Buddhist ethics and the practice of global politics

If the above account of the ethics of the Buddha with respect to social change and governance is acceptable, we can argue that the Ladakhi Buddhist Association's contemporary demand for Union Status within India is broadly in accord with the Buddha's view of politics. The demand is for adequate representation within a system of effective and non-discriminatory government to be brought about by systematic and reasoned schism and realignment within the state of India. There is no madcap demand here for total independence or a threat of terrorism led by some demagogue whose actions would be economically disastrous, but rather a reasoned appeal for effective local democracy. The reasonable nature of these demands and the strength of the case could hardly be denied, but the outcome is far from certain given the pressures inherent in the politics of western India.

There is ,however, a paradox here, already mentioned above, for the motivation behind the political movement in Ladakh can hardly be described as Buddhist in origin. Rather it is the expression of the values of an emerging middle class focusing on the rights inherent in democratic individualism, the ideological sources of which lie in the Western liberal tradition.

If we turn our attention now to the wider stage of global politics we find we are living in a period of dramatic and fast moving historical change.

Everywhere the Western liberal tradition of democratic capitalism is triumphing over its Marxist alternative as a consequence of superior economic productivity. Yet, that very success, in generating gross and uncontrolled planetary pollution, is already undermining itself through the threat of global ecological disaster. It looks as if a democracy that allows the rule of a majority whose views are based in the maximisation of gain in individual and collective life is destined to as severe a failure as Marxism, not so much through political and economic incompetence as such but directly as a result of what the Buddha called "Ignorance".

One is therefore in a position to point out that a Buddhist alternative is available which could act a corrective to the present situation. A number of points may be made in conclusion to this contribution :

a) The current spate of demands by ethnic minorities, of which our Ladakhi case is one example, require imaginative re-alignments in the relationships between centralised states and their constituent ethnic groups. These will sometimes require schism, and sometimes simply renewed efforts at constitutional reform. The rights of minorities as expressed in the draft document of the United Nations resemble the rights of individuals for government under precept outlined by the Buddha. This document may therefore find strong support among Buddhist thinkers.

b) The predictable failure of Western liberalism will be due to uncontrolled motives for the maximisation of gain. This maximisation is ultimately the expression of extreme individualism leading to severe alienation from the underlying social proceses rooted in planetary ecology. The Buddhadharma provides an exacting analysis of the nature of individualism with which contemporary Western psychology is increasingly aligned. [Crook.J.H. and D,Fontana 1990; [Ketz.N(ed) 1983; Perenjoe A.C.D.Y.F. Ho and R.W. Reiber (eds) 1988; {Crook ,J.K. 1980]. Ultimately human suffering is rooted in illusions centering on the selfhood of the mind. Education in such teachings at all levels would provide the means for the gradual subversion of illusion and the destructive grasping to which it leads. A general adherence to the preceptual perspective of Buddhism would constrain Western style democracy through basing it in Wisdom rather than in Profit. The emergence of a *preceptual socialism* could provide a psychological depth that Marxism never had and the development of a *lay Sangha* for its political expression. To this end, Buddhist thinkers need to devote time and energy to examing the social aspects of the contemporary Dharma.

c) The present day dynamics of Buddhism, at least in the West, are largely rooted in lay rather than monastic activities, yet the way in which the life of the householder can effectively enshrine the Wisdom of the Dharma

needs much further consideration. Certainly, the future of the Vajrayana in Ladakh depends on how far the monks are able to come out of their cloisters and find effective ways of instructing the modern laity. Western Buddhists are likely to make major contributions in this area, yet severe errors may arise as they may unconsciously manipulate the Dharma in the direction of personal therapy rather than personal transcendance. The seductive quality of Western life must not be allowed to underline the foundations of the Dharma and Asian teachers need to be very careful in making sure that their understanding of the West is adequate to the task. As Western psychological science draws closer to the psycho-philosophy of Buddhism , so East-West mutual understanding will need constant fostering.

John H. Crook

Department of Psychology, University of Bristol,
8-10 Berkeley Square, Bristol , England.

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SIAMESE BUDDHISM IN A MALAY STATE
SOME NOTES ON TEMPLE ORGANISATION IN KELANTAN, MALAYSIA

Introduction

In Kelantan, Buddhism could be viewed at two diffferent levels. First, it could be seen as a religion which has its own structural organisation and its own domain of followers. At the other level, Kelantanese Buddhism could be seen as an extension of the Sangha organisation of Thailand. The first view will have to take into account the fact that the Sangha of Kelantan is an independent body which recognises the Muslim ruler of Kelantan as its protector, because the appointments of high-ranking officials of the ecclesiatical body are made by the ruler. To this extent Kelantanese Buddhism and its Sangha receive state protection in a manner enjoyed by no other religions in Malaysia, except Islam.[1]

The second view, however, should consider the fact that the practice of Buddhism in Kelantan is related to that of Thailand in many ways. Many temple rituals and ceremonies bear close resemblance to, if not an outright emulation of those conducted in Thailand. A close relationship exists between the Thai Sangha and Kelantanese Sangha. In fact, the former has become the reference point for the latter with regard to the purity of temple tradition and practices.

Religion and Ethnicity

Religion, in the context of Malaysian multi-ethnic society, is one of the defining characteristics of ethnicity. While Islam is associated with the Malays, and forms the basis of Malay ethnicity, in Kelantan, the Siamese are identified with Buddhism. I have argued elsewhere that the close association of Buddhism with the Siamese is attributable to two main factors: first, the membership of the Sangha body is monopolised by the Siamese; second, it is the Siamese laity which play the dominant role in the social organisation of Theravada Buddhist religion in the state.[2] The special relationship that has developed between Buddhism and the Siamese is very pragmatic indeed: a spontaneously flourishing Buddhism ensures the existence and continuity of a Siamese ethnic identity in Kelantan and *vice versa*.[3] Buddhism, it is argued here, underlies Siamese ethnic identity.

Therefore, an important feature of Buddhism in Kelantan is that,

despite the strong and steady support it receives from the Chinese population, it is the Siamese who play the dominant role as bearers and keepers of the religion. They not only serve as monks on long-term and full-time basis, but most of the temple rituals and ceremonies and the management of these monastries are handled by the Siamese. This pattern is partly related to the fact that most Buddhist temples are located in Siamese villages, or in settlements which have a significant number of Siamese population.

There seems to be varying levels of commitment and adherence to Theravada Buddhism various ethnic groups. While the Chinese support Buddhist temples generously and attend most temple ceremonies with predictable regularity, it is the Siamese who play the crucial role in the custodianship of the ritual knowledge of the religion. While Chinese are also ordained, it is the Siamese who persist longest in the monkhood;[4] while the Chinese bring material support to the temple, it is the Siamese who control the distribution of the gifts and their eventual use. Whereas some Chinese are noted for being devout temple goers, it is the Siamese who determine the precise running of temple events and ceremonies. These are religious behaviours, which, when translated in terms of cultural characteristics, differentiate Siamese Buddhists from Chinese Buddhists.

Siamese Temples in Kelantan

There are twenty Buddhist temples in Kelantan. Collectively they constitute a religious and social network which covers southern Thailand and northern Terengganu. Kelantanese temples are grouped together under four religious districts, each headed by an abbot with the title of "District Religious Head" *(caw khana amphoe).* In Tumpat administrative district, two positions of *caw khana amphoe* have been created because of the large number of temples found in the district. Those in the administrative districts of Pasir Mas and Tanah Merah, where there are comparatively lesser number of temples, are placed under the responsibility of only one *caw khana amphoe.* Similarly, temples in the administrative districts of Bachok, Pasir Puteh and Kota Bharu are grouped together under one district religious head.

High-ranking monks of Kelantanese Sangha receive regularly official recognition from the state. The Sultan of Kelantan is responsible, by tradition, for confirmation of the appointments to important positions in the hierarchy of the state Sangha, including that of the Chief Monk (which carries the Malay title of *Ketua Besar Sami Buddha Negeri Kelantan),* his deputy and other monks heading various districts. Such royal consent could be considered as a symbolic expression of the traditional structure of power relation between the state and the Sangha. The Sultan of Kelantan, who is the titular head of Islam, thus plays a role similar to that of the Thai Monarch, that is, as protector of the Buddhist religion *(sāsanūpathamphok).* [5]

Beyond this symbolic role, the state does not interfere in the running of Buddhist temples. The Sangha exists quite independently of the state as far as financial grants from the secular authority are concerned; its senior members do not receive regular stipends from the state. This contrasts with the case of Thailand where monks holding high offices there receive the *nitayaphat* allowance.[6] Nevertheless, occasional grants are made to some temples in Kelantan, by political parties or the government, usually through the mediation of the Chinese. The Kelantanese Sangha also enjoys from the state exemptions from paying taxes on temple land.

Figure 1: Organisation of Kelantan Sangha in 1989

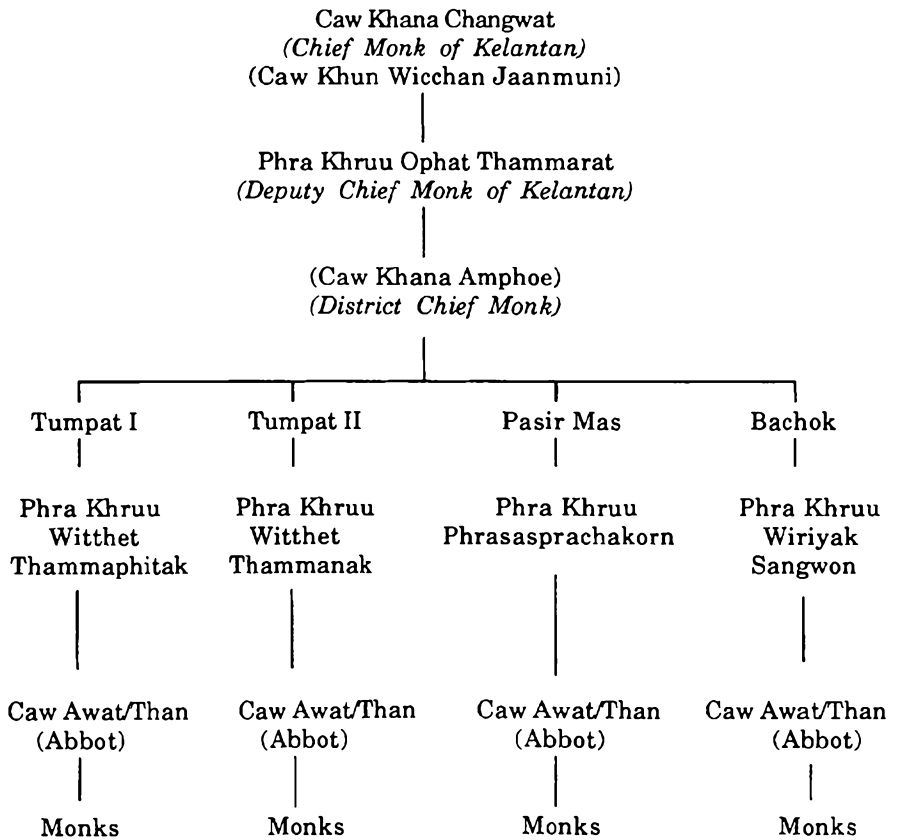

Table 1: Population of Temples in Kelantan For Selected Years

Name of Temples	Number of Monks in					
	1976	1978	1982	1983	1987	1989
1. Tawā	5	6	6(1)	5	5	5
2. Matchimārām	5	7	5	5	6	8
3. Phikhunjaj	5	10	5	7	7	7
4. Prachumtātchonārām	5	6(1)	5	6	5	5
5. Sukhauntārām	5	5	4	0	1	3
6. Phikhunthaung	8	11	8(1)	9	6	8
7. Caengputthāwāt	8	7(3)	9(3)	7	5	5
8. Khoogsiyā	5	5	5	6	5	9
9. Chonphracumthāt	5	6	6	5	5	5
10. Majsuwankhīrī	8	9	7	9	7	7
11. Poothitwihān	8	8	6	5	7	7
12. Majprachāsāmagkhī	0	5(2)	0	0	0	0
13. Pathumwihān	6	6	6	5(1)	6	6
14. Khoosakārām	4	7	0	5	0	0
15. Uttamārām	7	8	6	6	10	6
16. Ariyakīrī	4	9	5(1)	5	1	6
17. Champākaew	5	11(2)	8	6	8	11
18. Phutthaksinmingmongkhon	5	10	5	5	9	8
19. Ciinprakitthārām	5	0	5	5	5	5
20. Prachācīnārām	6	6	5	6	5	6
Total	109	142(8)	106(6)	107(1)	103	117
Average monks per temple	5.5	7.1	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.9

(Source: Deputy Chief Abbot of Kelantan,
Wat Prachaaciinaram, Wakaf Baru. In parentheses, number of novices).

Relationship Between Kelantanese and Thai Temples

Siamese temples in Kelantan are administered as if they are an extension of the ecclesiastical organisation of Thailand. Indeed, the Chief Monk of Kelantan, despite his appointment by the Sultan of Kelantan, is known informally by another Thai title of *caw khana cangwat* (Provincial Religious Head), implying that, so far as Buddhist temples and the State Sangha are concerned, Kelantan is also a "religious province" of Thailand. The ties with Thailand are also expressed ceremonially when the chief monk and other senior monks are given by the Thai Sangha ritual fans *(phat jot)*. The Kelantanese Sangha thus maintains a dualistic existence. While the ceremonial fans given by the Thai Sangha symbolise the close relationship between the two Sangha bodies, the letters of appointments from the Sultan symbolise the patronage of a Malay ruler. This position is tolerated by Thai ecclesiastical authority and Malay political authority simultaneously.

The close relationship between temples in Kelantan and those in Thailand is crucial to the survival of the religion, in more ways than one. Emulating the Thai Sangha in many of its ritual and organisational aspects, the Kelantanese Sangha judges its own purity of practice and tradition by reference to its Thai counterpart. One way of ensuring this is through annual monastic examinations conducted by Thai religious authorities. Thus, ordained candidates contemplating to make the monkhood a long-term career are expected not only to sit for these examinations, but also to pursue further studies in Buddhist doctrine in Thailand and spend a considerable length of time there before returning to serve in Kelantan.

Despite all these, a common problem is shared by most temples in Kelantan: i.e. the declining number of candidates who are prepared to become full-time monks. There are hardly sufficient number of monks to maintain the quorum *(Sangha)* of four necessary for the conduct of certain rituals, some temples have no alternative but to close down temporarily.[7] To ensure that the staffing of temples does not fall below a minimum of four, redistributions of the monastic population are often organised. Hence, monks often change their monastic residence, moving from a temple with a 'surplus' to another which has less than the required minimum.

Sources of Temple Finance

Most temples receive from the laity of the villages in which they are located an adequate supply of cooked food needed to feed the monastic residents. To provide monks with their daily sustenance, households in respective villages take turns to deliver food to the temple. Kelantanese monks do not normally go on their morning rounds to collect alms food *(pajbinthabāt)* except for symbolic reasons on certain days of the year.[8] The setting up of a roster has now become a routine task in most villages with temples.[9]

While the roster guarantees the temple with continuous supply of prepared food, money is still needed to finance running costs of the temple. Monks, despite the austerity of the life they lead, need money for various purposes, such as buying items for personal use and paying transport costs when they travel from one place to another on their tour of duty. Money is also needed for the maintenance and repair of temple buildings and for paying other expenses, such as electricity bills, as well as various items for the use of its residents.

In order to generate the funds needed to pay for its other expenses and running costs, most temples resort to various means to attract gifts of money and material goods from the public. During rituals on Buddhist holy days such as *āsālahabūchā, mākhabūchā, wisākhabūchā and songkrān* , members of the congregation who attend the functions normally contribute a small sum of money. Money is also given to the temple on other occasions, such as during *kathin, thaut phā pā* and ordination ceremonies.

Visitors also contribute significantly to the temple's income. The amount depends on the nature of their relationship with the temple and the monks; but at the least the temple can expect a few dollars to be put into the charity box every time visitors come calling. Moreover, the majority of visitors do not come empty-handed in the first place; the more frequent ones bring along food for the monks.

As a general rule, a temple well-endowed with material wealth is usually one which receives support not only from its village residents but also from outsiders. The larger the outside membership of the *phuak wat* is, the more contributions the temple may expect.[10] In contrast, temples which are located in remote places with difficult road access tend to be visited by fewer people and consequently they receive less in terms of outside donations and help.

Apart from the regular donations received during the calendrical rites, huge amounts of money and material goods are given to temples during

dedicatory celebrations *(ngān chalaung ; ngān būchā).* [11] Sometimes when temples run short of money to continue with the construction of buildings already in progress, special merit-making ceremonies *(ngān hā bia)* are organised and appeals are sent to other Siamese villages for donations.

Dedicatory celebrations are usually organised when certain building projects undertaken by the temples are completed. Such celebrations are seen as an integral part of temple activities and are always looked forward to eagerly, not only by the residents of the village but also by the larger temple congregation including its Chinese members in towns and other settlements in the state and in southern part of Thailand. Quite ironically, these occasions are eagerly anticipated by the local Malays who also enjoy the entertainment on such occasions.

Dedicatory celebrations have a festive atmosphere, blending personal enjoyment *(khwāmsuk)* with the spiritual satisfaction of merit-making. Unlike the religious functions held on certain holy days in the Buddhist calendar (e.g. *wisākhabūchā* and *mākhabūchā)* , *ngān chalaung* are special occasions and usually include performances of traditional folk theatre such as *manōrā, mak yong* and shadow puppet shows. Other forms of entertainment include *ramwong* and lately the staging of open-air concerts in which professional troupes of singers and dancers from Thailand perform Broadway-style musical reviews. Meanwhile, the more traditional entertainments such as *manōrā* and *mak yong* are becoming less frequent because there are now fewer theatrical groups. The entertainment on these special festive occasions also includes the raffling of expensive prizes and games of chance, the proceeds of which go to the temple's coffer.

Temple celebrations of this kind *(kān mahaurasob)* carry special meaning for the Siamese as a minority group. The temple is virtually the only locale where they may organise these performances in relative degree of freedom, without having to consider the sensitivities of their Malay neighbours and various bureaucratic regulations regarding entertainments and gaming activity. However, this does not mean that Malays are excluded entirely from temple fairs and celebrations. Indeed a considerable number of local Malays are attracted by the entertainment provided. In fact, it has always been the tradition that during such celebrations Malays from surrounding villages form a significant part of the audience of whatever shows may be staged, although no Malays are known to participate in merit-making ceremonies or other relig-

iously oriented activities. Where tickets are sold, the presence of Malays in the crowd helps to increase the gate. However, the fact that these entertainments are taking place within the temple compound reminds the Malays that they are merely spectators whose freedom of acccess to Siamese territory is well-tolerated.

Dedicatory celebrations also bring together Siamese from all over Kelantan and many parts of southern Thailand. Invitations are extended to as many people as possible. This the temple committee does by word of mouth, particularly during previous temple functions held at other places, and also through specially printed leaflets (batchoen) which announce the forthcoming event at the temple.

Invitations are extended without fail to all known Siamese settlements in Kelantan and the southern part of Thailand. Without fail, too, members of the laity and monks from these villages make a point of sending at least one or two people as representatives, particularly if such functions are held in far away places and if transportation proves to be a major problem. From villages more accessible by good roads, busloads of people arrive to take part in the celebration. Some villages are known to send to the host village an advance party of monks, men and women to help with preparations for the celebration. Nor it is uncommon to see monks from distant places, including Thailand, arriving two or three days ahead of the appointed day to give whatever assistance they can render or to give advice on matters concerning the organisation of the function.

When people from distant villages are not able to attend the celebrations in person because of various reasons, they normally make merit by means of "absentee contributions", that is by sending money, ranging from two to five dollars, to the host temple through fellow villagers who are able to attend the function. Normally at least one or two people from every Siamese village in the Kelantan region will attend such ceremony, often the *sangkhārī* members of these settlements.

Apart from the Siamese, Chinese from towns and other Chinese settlements in the state are also invited. Various kinship ties that exist between these Chinese and the Siamese residents of the village concerned ensure that the former are invited to participate in merit-making ceremonies and other celebrations at the temple. Influential Chinese, particularly those who operate various business in the towns and have a wide range of social contacts, are often invited to sit on the temple working committees specially set up to organise such celebrations. The reason for this is quite pragmatic: the usual rule is that it is always good politics to include the Chinese because many of the building

projects, which are the focus of these celebrations in the first place, are built in significant part from the money they have contributed. In addition most temples also receive other indirect benefits from many Chinese business establishments in Kelantan. For instance, building materials are bought, usually at heavy discounts, from Chinese shops whose owners are well-known to the temple and the monastic community. These occasions, therefore, generate a sense of pride among the Chinese since such celebrations also mean the recognition of Chinese temple patronage.

Conclusion

An interesting point about the adaptive nature of Buddhism in Kelantan is that it receives its patronage from a Muslim ruler who, by tradition, is also the head of the Islamic religion. Although the patronage given by the king to Theravada Buddhism is symbolic, this nevertheless places the religion in a special position, since apart from Islam, which is the official religion of the state, Buddhism is the only religion which enjoys royal patronage.

Two main points regarding the persistence and survival of Buddhism in Kelantan could be noted here. First, Theravada Buddhism serves to emphasise the basis of Siamese ethnicity in the context of Malaysian pluralistic society. Theravada Buddhism is *sine qua non* of being Siamese. For this reason the Siamese do place a different emphasis on the importance of Buddhist rituals and ceremonies, in contrast to other non-Siamese Buddhists. For instance, while ordination into monkhood is considered crucial by the Siamese, this is not necessarily so for the Chinese. Attendance at temple rituals also indicates that the Siamese are more committed to the religion than other non-Siamese Buddhists.

Second, it is the Siamese who play the crucial role in most Buddhist religious affairs. Hence, Siamese constitute almost the entire membership of the Kelantanese Order of Monks. Yet there exists a close relationship between the Chinese and the Siamese who are mutually dependent on each other with regard to temple organisation. Whereas the Chinese are noted for their generosity in sponsoring various temple ceremonies and in providing material support to the temple, it is the Siamese who provide the personnel to serve as monks and manage the monastic institution.

Another important point regarding Buddhism in Kelantan is that the religion provides no competition to Islam, the religion of the dominant Malays, which is the official religion of the state. Followers of Buddhism are drawn quite exclusively from non-Malay ethnic groups, mainly the Siamese and Chinese. While there have been a few cases of Siamese and Chinese converting to Islam, there have been no known cases of Muslims converting to Buddhism.

Mohamed Yusoff Ismail

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia ,43600 Bangi Selangor, Malaysia.

ENDNOTES :

1. The official religion of the state, like that of the whole nation, is Islam. The Malays, who are mainly Muslim, constitute the majority of population in Kelantan; the second largest ethnic groups are Chinese followed by Siamese and Indians. The Siamese, together with other non-Siamese Buddhists, constitute the second largest religious group after the Muslim. According to the 1980 census, the number of Malays in Kelantan was 798,761 (93.1%), Chinese 44,967 (5.2%), Siamese 7,557 (0.9%), Indians 6,122 (0.7%) and others 784 (0.1%). Of the 7,557 Siamese, 6,820 (90.2%) are rural dwellers.
2. See Ismail 1987a,1987c and 1987c. I have mentioned Theravada school because in Kelantan there are no Mahayana Buddhist temples as such. The latter temples may be found in other parts of Malaysia and Singapore, especially in association with Chinese temples, but none, staffed by fulltime monks, are known to exist in Kelantan. In general, the Chinese identify with either school of Buddhism. The Siamese of Kelantan identify exclusively with the Theravada tradition.
3. For further argument on this, see Roger Kershaw (1969: 166). The need to belong to a particular ethnic group and to be identified with it has always been a salient feature of Malaysian society. Ethnicity is of such an importance in Malaysia that it virtually underlies nearly every aspect of its social, political and economic life. In fact, most Malaysians see themselves first as either Chinese, Malays or Indians, and secondarily only as "Malaysians". As a matter of prime consideration the ideology of multi-ethnic society makes it "...virtually impossible to be ethnically 'neutral' by claiming no intervening ethnic status at all" Nagata (1974: 333). On this, see also Strauch (1984: 245).
4. Many Chinese, especially youths, have gone through the process of monastic ordination, but the majority of them do not stay long in the Sangha since their ordination is mainly for the purpose of fulfilling certain vows. Hence, this type of ordination is also known as *buad bon.*
5. On the relevance of this concept to the structure of relationship between Buddhism and the state see discussion in Ishii (1986:38-39).
6. Bunnag (1973:61) mentions that the *nitayaphat* allowance is an essential part of the state support of the Sangha in the sense that it provides a regular financial allowance to monks who are too tied up to official duties to go on the morning round of collecting alms food *(pajbinthabat)* ; see also Ishii (1986: 75).
7. Temples no. 5 and no. 12 in Table 1 were "inactive" in 1983, in the sense that there were no monks residing in them for a sustained period of time. Temple no. 12 was closed down in 1976 because the number of monks available did not justify its continued maintenance. However, it was active again in 1978 when 5 resident monks and two novices moved in. But from 1982 onwards it was closed down for the next few years.
8. Particularly on the day preceding the lent period, i.e. on *wan asalahabucha,* on the first two days of the lent, and also on the last day of the lent retreat sending food to the temple helps alleviate two major problems concerning the work schedules and religious obligations of the laity, as explained by the villagers themselves: more immediately, people can now leave early for work without having to wait for the monks to come by first. Further, if all households were to contribute

food every day, the amount collected would be excessive even if each household gave only a little. There would be too much for the temple residents alone to consume. Waste aside, it would be too cumbersome and not worth the effort for individual household to get up early every morning to prepare food for the monks knowing full well that only a small portion of it will end up as alms.

9. The preparation and sending of food on a roster system is also practised in some parts of Thailand. In the village studied by De Young the practice is known as *"hua muad song kow" (sic)* – literally: "head section send rice" – and appears to be a strictly northern innovation (De Young 1966: 116). Kershaw (1981: 93) says the roster system is known as *niran*. Although he does not elaborate on the origin of the term, I suggest it is derived perhaps from *nirandon*, meaning "perpetuity", a term which signifies the never ending nature of the roster. I have not heard *niran* being used in the village where I did my fieldwork; the terms *yok khaw* and *yok ahan*, meaning "taking rice, taking food (to the temple)" are used instead.
10. On the concept of *phuak wat*, see Bunnag (1973: 65, 81, 82, and 100).
11. In most cases a temple may end up collecting from this kind of functions a sum of money substantially greater than the actual cost of building the structures which are being dedicated, the *raison d'être* of the whole monastic venture. For example, the total amount of money contributed by members of the congregation during a celebration to dedicate an archway and a fence in a temple in Bachok district in 1987 was more than enough to pay for the construction of its new kitchen building.

BUDDHIST MUSIC
THE MALAYSIAN - SINGAPOREAN EXPERIENCE

(1) Music, Song, Performing Arts

One of our Buddhist heritages that is fast gaining popularity amongst the masses, encouraged by the evangelist challenge, is that of Buddhist music, songs and the performing arts. Buddhist music and song are found in all traditional Buddhist communities. In the case of contemporary Buddhism in Sri Lanka, there is an interesting development in the rise of *bhakti-gi* or devotional song. This is obviously, but not merely, a feature of Sinhalese "Protestant" Buddhism, ie a popular response to the evangelist challenge.

Some of these Sinhalese songs are sung to the tune of Christian hymns! (Silva, 1980: 77 f). This arose probably for any or all of these reasons: those involved are ex-Christians or are influenced (consciously or unconsciously) by the evangelists, or are making a conscious effort at "answering the evangelists" in their own coins. From the study of new religions and movements, one can safely say that this is merely a temporary aberration symptomatic of a nascent modern Sinhalese Buddhist musical tradition. For true Buddhist music must be directly inspired by the Three Jewels.

Here, however, we shall restrict ourselves mainly to a discussion of local Buddhist songs and hymns (in connection with Buddhist prayer), for such songs and hymns form the largest growing single area of popular Buddhism and reflects the works of some of our most creative local talents, especially the young. Furthermore, in the overture of our local music history, it is good that we are aware of the spirit and basic principles of Buddhist music so that we will create Dharma-based music and songs, and not just popular pieces.

Most of our earliest English Buddhist hymns came about three decades ago from the Japanese Amidists [Amitabha devotees] of the USA. Most of them are rather sedate and stately hymns specially written by Western musicians and lyricists for a Western (and Christian-dominated) society. Over the last two decades our young local talents have been producing their own Buddhist

songs and hymns (in BM, Mandarin and English). Some of the better known local Buddhist music groups are the Awakeners (Singapore), the Wayfarers (KL, PJ, Melaka), and the Awakening (Pulau Pinang) – they have all produced their own Buddhist music tapes. Most, if not all, such efforts are very inspiring and are especially popular in the campus Buddhist Societies and generally well-received by the public.

(2) Dharma Ensemble I

By the time "The Puja Book" (1990) of the Dharmafarers was completed, the Dharmafarers had already held two Dharma Ensembles or DEs (May 1989, May 1990), which are Buddhist music camps specially geared towards the discovery, development and refinement of local Buddhist music and the formulation of its basic principles. The Ensembles emphasize on a Dharma-based and local interpretation of music as a part of our cultural fabric.

The Dharma Ensemble series further aims to collect, edit, interpret and perform ancient chants and hymns, and to compose and promote new Dharma-based hymns and songs. On a social level, the Ensemble plans, in due course, to hold regular matinees and soirees not to entertain but to educate Buddhist Stewards and Friends, and promote fellowship in the family.

The First Dharma Ensemble (6-10 May 1989) was the first of its kind here in that its main aim was to work out the basic principles for a local Buddhist musical tradition. The Ensemble's immediate objectives were to work with some suitable hymns and songs, and to produce new Buddhist compositions that reflect a local Buddhist culture. One of the most important results of the Dharma Ensemble is the definition of a Buddhist "hymn".

(3) What is a Hymn ?

A hymn is basically a song of praise or a reflection on a subject of spirituality. An anthem, like hymn, has an especially joyful theme and a noble aspiration, or whose words are taken directly from the Scriptures.

The following basic guidelines will be helpful in distinguishing between Buddhist hymns and Buddhist songs. A Buddhist Hymn should have the following basic features:

1. Its lyrics should be scriptural or should reflect clear and universal themes and moods related to the three Jewels.

2. It should be inspiring, reflective and dignified (even when sung cantus planus, ie unaccompanied).
3. Its melody should be simple enough(ie, it should not have too many variations within a short piece); in longer pieces, however, there may be more variety of tonal and harmonic textures reflective of one's experience and inspiration.
4. Its tempo should preferably not be slower than largo (slow) nor faster than andante (at a walking pace), and be consistent with the words and spirit of the hymn.
5. It should be appropriate for singing, either individually or congregationally.

In the case of longer pieces of Buddhist sacred music, however, when they are performed, they may be set among compositions of other tempo and dynamics to provide interest and variety to their performance and general effect.

All Buddhist hymns should ideally have all these five features; but any Buddhist lyrical pieces, in so far as they are Buddhist, but which lack any or all of these criteria might still be regarded, during the appropriate occasion, as being hymns though they would better serve as Buddhist songs.

(4) Proper Use of Hymns

In a Buddhist song, the reference to the Dharma may not be so explicit, but its message is well above the advertisement jingle or "pop" music. Buddhist songs, though not usually used in a formal puja, should delightfully present the Dharma in a simple but universal message to fill a Buddhist youth gathering with the Dharma spirit. Above all, they should instil wholesome thoughts in the listener's mind.

It is important that the Buddhist hymn or song is appropriate to the occasion. Hymns like "Consecrated Lord to Thee" are specially meant for marriage ceremonies and should not be sung at every Sunday Puja; but "Buddha Lord in Thine Embrace" (which has the same tune) is appropriate for such occasions. Yet hymns like "Life Never Dies", though appropriate for funerals, could also be sung during Pujas (but not many people might choose to have it sung for their birthdays!).

(5) Hymns or Songs ?

For the sake of a mature spiritual culture, Buddhists have to be aware of and correctly apply the principles of *hymnology* (the rules and writing of hymns) and of *hymnody* (the proper use of hymns for different occasions, eg Puja). In the Khuddaka-pãtha Commentary on the Ten Precepts, discussing

the 7th Precept, Buddhaghosa states that "the adapting of the Dharma to music [or song] is not allowed, but the adapting of music [or song] to the Dharma is allowed"*(dhammūpasañhitaṁ vā'pi c'ettha gītaṁ na vaṭṭati , gītūpasañhito pana dhammo vaṭṭati, KhA 36)*. For convenience of reference, let us call this principle "Buddhaghosa's Rule of Music".

According to Buddhaghosa, the Dharma should not be adapted to music : this music that one should not change the Dharma or obscure it when presenting it in music or song. When singing about impermanence, for example, the words and music should reflect that truth. The lyrics of Buddhist hymns should be carefully written and should not suggest any unbuddhist (especially evangelist) notion or influence. The hymn music should not be too "trendy", eg sound like Country and Western, which is not relevant to our local culture.

The second part of Buddhaghosa's Rule says that one might adapt music to the Dharma: this means that one could put to music chosen Scriptural passages or even write suitable new Dharma-spirited lyrics and set them the appropriate music. For some of their hymns, the Dharmafarers have, for example, applied Asian tunes (especially Indian, Sinhalese and Siamese), both ancient and modern, to the Mangala Sutta and selected Dhammapada verses.

(6) New Hymns

Besides discussing and defining some principles of Buddhist music and its local expression, the Dharmafarers produced three new hymns at the First Dharma Ensemble (1989) (DE 1). Inspired by D. Hunt's "Arise, arise", I wrote new lyrics to the title , and Mt Vajrapani rearranged the music. As we were rather new, we started on familiar ground, and made it the Dharmafarer anthem, but later (1990) it became the anthem of the Society (ie the Friends of Buddhism). In 1990, it was incorporated into the Dharmafarer Sung Puja as one of its two opening anthems.

Mt Vajrapani wrote new music for "Buddha's Law of Love and Light" (the lyrics were by Shinkaku). This new hymn has a soothing and inspiring melody with a local accent. "Path to Purity", a totally new hymn by Mt Vajrapani, has an even more distinct Oriental flavour with a lively tempo. With a suitable translation, it can be sung in Chinese.

During the DE 1, the main instrument was the piano, but an attempt was also made to combine a variety of simple instruments: the recorder, and percussion like castanets, tambourine and the wooden fish. The Ensemble, the first effort in the direction of indigenous Buddhist music, climaxed with a

public musical presentation of the new compositions and other Buddhist hymns.

(7) Dharma Ensemble II

The Second Dharma Ensemble (13-18 May 1990) was an even more interesting and important development from DE 1. The main aims of this Ensemble were to appreciate the musical value of Pali and to introduce Buddhist plainsong as a daily office and a permanent style of Dharmafarer liturgy. Besides the usual workshops on Buddhist music, I held classes in Pali orthography and pronunciation, and basic Pali prosody and Buddhist plainsong in English.

Pali, like Sanskrit, is a naturally phonetic language – the words are spelt as they are pronounced. It has a definite system of long and short vowels and syllables, without any diphthongs. Long vowels and syllables, conjunct consonants and pure nasals are counted as two beats (a minim), ie a heavy beat; a short vowel or syllable, one beat (a crotchet), or a light one.

Participants of the Second Dharma Ensemble first learnt to scan Pali passages using the traditional "la – ga" scansion system (la=*lahu,* "light" ; ga = *garu,* "heavy"). Then they were taught how to recognize long and short syllables, and the glottal stop in Pali words using the Dharmafarer scansion scheme (DSS), where a "." stands for a short vowel (1 mora), " : "means a long vowel (2 morae), and " / ", a glottal stop (2 morae) or a caesura, for example, "Buddham saranam *gacchāmi* ". is scanned as [bud/ dhang sa. ra. nang: gac/cha: mi]. All this formed a basic working knowledge of Buddhist prosody (which is a complicated but interesting discipline in itself).

1. [For Pali scansion, see Prolegomenon (A) I in the "General Guide to Buddhist Studies" vol 1, (c) FORM, 1989h.]

While the DE 1 was attended only by Dharmacaris and Mitras, ie the committed Dharmafarers, the DE 2 was opened to the talented and the interested, and it revealed some youthful talents ! Mt Vajrapani composed a new anthem called "Dharmafarers True" based on my lyrics, which became the Dharmafarer Anthem and "Arise, Arise", the Society Anthem. Mt Vajrapani then put the last three verses of the Metta Sutta to music and called it "The Boundless Heart of Lovingkindness", cheerful in melody and moderate in tempo.

There were some interesting developments in the instrumental section. A piano, two violins, recorder, and percussion (cymbals and wooden fishes) conjured up a new and more colourful combination of sounds, especially with more musicians than in DE 1. The Ensemble finale was in the form of a public

presentation of all the Dharmafarer hymns and two Mandarin ones.

(8) Liturgy

The most important achievement of the Second Dharma Ensemble is in its experiments in Buddhist liturgy, especially plainsong, ie reciting Puja in English (with Pali where necessary). Liturgy refers to a rite or body of rites prescribed for public worship. Thus it indicates either the religious ceremonies to be observed on a specific occasion (eg Poshadha) or the whole of the religious ceremonies of one Buddhist group (or a religious group) as distinguished from another.

The Dharmafarers are fortunate here to have a precedent to follow: the chanting tape and "Chanting Book" of the Chithurst Buddhist Monastery and Amaravati Buddhist Centre (both of England under the leadership of perhaps the best known living Theravada master, Ven. Sumedho), which the Buddhist society of Western Australia generously presented to them. For over a decade I have dreamed of introducing an English puja with similar, if not equal "musical" beauty as Pali chanting. That dream has finally become reality with the help of my spiritual brothers and sisters. We now have local Buddhist plainsong in English. [In due course, we will experiment with Bahasa Malaysia plainsong, which would perhaps be even easier, as BM has deep roots in Sanskrit which is akin to Pali.]

(9) Buddhist Musical Training

The year 1989 officially marks the beginning of local Buddhist effort at working out a philosophy of indigenous Buddhist music and liturgy. As we are not short of local Buddhist musical talents, it is only a matter of time before we have a truly rich and delightful musical tradition in its own right. If the tradition is Dharma-based, then it will create a spiritually inspiring musical tradition.

The spiritual training of a Buddhist music composer or performer is basically the same as that of any Dharmabased Buddhist. One has to be ecoculturally aware – Buddhist music should celebrate the joy of life, lovingkindness towards fellow beings and the cherishing of nature. Buddhist music is, in other words, variations on themes by the Buddha.

The best music is not in the musical instrument but in the heart of the

musician. The more inspired the musician, the more inspiring his music is. Inspiration comes from living experience and spiritual meditation. A musician or performer who meditates brings forth into the world music that soothes the ear and uplifts the mind.

Music is one of the easiest subjects for reflection on impermanence and the law of conditionality. A musician who is truly immersed in his music might attain dhyanic ecstasy comparable to the initial stages of Calmness Meditation. Being happy oneself, one easily brings happiness to others. As such, Buddhist music should start off with the overture of *moral themes,* leading into symphonic developments of *mental cultivation,* and close with the grand finale of *insight wisdom* accentuated by the cadenza of Enlightenment.

(10) Drama, Music and Song

While the Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions have a rich musical tradition of their own, and even a drama tradition in the Tibetan Buddhism, drama, music and song have always been controversial topics for most traditional Theravadins (especially the monks). In the Puta (or Tālaputa) Sutta, Talāputa, the stage-manager, asks the Buddha whether it is true that "a performer who on the stage or in the arena makes people laugh and delights them by his counterfeiting of truth, when the body breaks up, after death is reborn in the host of Laughing Devas". Reluctantly, the Buddha answers that this is not so. On the contrary, they would be reborn in the "laughing hell" *(pahāsa niraya)* (S 4: 307).

The reason for this, explains the Buddha, is that those who are still bound with passion *(rāga),* hate *(dosa)* and delusion *(moha),* by performing brings about passionate, hating or deluded states of mind, cause their audience to become more passionate, more hateful or more deluded, so that they become even more intoxicated with delusion and further accumulate deluded mental states *(ye dhammā mohaniyā te upasaṁharati bhiyyo – somattāya samohāya,* ib). The Buddha further declares that "for one who has wrong view, there are only two paths of destiny open, that is, either hell*(niraya)* or the animal kingdom" (S 4:307 = M 1:388, cf Kvu 14:8).

One may be tempted to interpret this passage as referring to actors, dancers and performers – and one may well be right – but the point here is not the profession as the *mental state* and intention of that person. The ideas of the modern German poet, playwright and theatrical reformer Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) are helpful here. He argued that the theatre should not seek to make its audience believe in the presence of the characters on the stage. The audience should not identify with the actors, but should rather follow the

method of the epic poet's art, which is to realize that what it sees on the stage is merely an account of past events that it should watch with critical detachment. The spectator, according to Brecht's philosophy, should be reminded that he is being presented with a demonstration of human behaviour in a scientific spirit rather than with an illusion of reality. In short, the theatre is only a theatre, not the world itself. (Ency Brit 1983, Macro 3:153gh)

For a Buddhist, any performance should be an offering *(pūjā)* to the three Jewels. With this attitude and intention, the Buddhist performer can only have a wholesome mental state as he goes through the motions of the performance. Music, drama and the performing arts can be the Buddhist artist's vehicle for the expression of his appreciation of the virtues of the Three Jewels. In this way for the laity at least, the stage becomes a shrine.

(11) Dancing, Music and Singing

The Ten Precepts forbid one from "dancing, music, and singing" (V 1 : 83). The Eight Precepts (for Poshadha) have the same rule. In terms of the Vinaya, it is a "wrong action" *(dukkata)* for an Order member to watch dancing, singing, or musical performance (V 2 : 108). A similar rule applies to nuns (Pacittiya 10, V 4 : 267).

In the Vinaya (V 2 : 108) and the Aṅguttara (A 3 : 251) it is recorded that an Order member should not sing Dharma in "a long-drawn singing style" *(āyatakena gīta.s-sarena)* for the following five reasons :

(1) One is pleased with oneself in regard to that sound [and defilements would arise].
(2) Others are pleased in regard to that sound [and defilements would arise].
(3) Householders look down upon the Order member, saying, "Even as we sing, so do these recluses, sons of the Sakyan, sing the Dharma in a long-drawn singing style!" [In other words, the Order members are behaving just like lay people.]
(4) While one is striving for the accuracy in sound *(sara-kutti)*, one's concentration is disrupted.
(5) Later generations will fall into wrong view. [The Commentary says that the people who come after will say "our teachers and preceptors sang it thus," and they will sing it in the same way (VA 1202). In other words, a precedent has been set. Cf A 3 : 108 256, S 2 : 203.]

(12) Plainsong

The "long-drawn singing" *(āyataka gītassara)* probably refers to the

Indian style of secular singing (which would include modern songs). E.M. Hare (1934) translated the expression as "a long-drawn, plain-song voice" and I.B. Horner (1952) rendered it as "a long-drawn plainsong sound".

Traditional Indian singing is often "long drawn" which probably refers to *melismata* [sg melisma] – but is not likely to be plainsong, which is actually a style of chanting, not singing. Moreover, plainsong is not always "long drawn". What the Buddha is probably saying here is that the Order members should not sing in the secular or worldly style.

Furthermore, the Buddha allows the style of chanting known as *sara-bhañña* (lit. "chanting voice") which Horner translated as "intonation", a rather general term. A more likely translation would be "plainsong", of which the Vinaya Commentary says that there are 32 modes *(vatta)*, eg wave-like mode *(taraṅga-vatta)*, milking mode *(doha-vatta)*, dripping mode *(galita-vatta)*, and so on (VA 1202). The Commentary adds that the Sutras, the Jatakas and the Gathas each have their own mode of chanting (ib). One must, however, add a cautious note that early Buddhist chanting (as represented by the Pali chanting style of SE Asia) is a monophonic plainsong with some monotone.

(13) Buddhist Plainsong

The term plainchant or plainsong is derived from the 13th-century Latin term *cantus planus* ("plain song"), which referred to the unmeasured rhythm and monophony (single line of melody) of Gregorian chant, as distinguished from the measured rhythm of polyphonic (multipart) music, which was called *cantus mensuratus* ("measured" song – implying the regularity of rhythm associated with harmonic music) or cantus figuratus ("florid" song implying a counterpoint added to the traditional melody).

A speaker or reader (especially in a large hall) tends to utter his words on one note, with some dropping of the voice at the end of the sentences or verses. Plainsong rhythm is the free rhythm of speech, ie the beats fall irregularly, not as in poetry. It is a prose rhythm, which arises from the unmetrical character of the words to be recited ("The Oxford Companion to Music", 1970:813). The plainsong is complete in itself. It is pure melody and needs no instrumental accompaniment, for it belongs to a pre-harmonic age of music.

Buddhist plainsong is especially useful in the expression of Buddhist reflection and devotion in English, which, unlike Sanskrit and Pali, is not usually metrical. In character, plainsong falls into two essentially distinct groups – the responsorial (developed from recitation of gathas round a

"dominant"), and antiphonal (developed as pure melody).

The simple plainsong tone will usually have to start with an intonation (an opening note or two), leading to a monotone ("reciting tone"), which is retained for some time and then merge into a cadence, here called mediation. The monotone is then resumed and another cadence, called the ending, closes the verse.

Some plainsong pieces (eg some mantras and traditional hymns) tend to vary or circle round and then drop to a cadence in some sort of florid figure. Such settings vary from a neume (two to five notes a syllable) to a melisma (pl "melismata"), which latter refers to any decorative passage in which the music is spun out with many notes to a syllable.

The power of plainsong lies in its simplicity and immediacy : *simple* because it is cantus planus (unaccompanied) and immediate because one can recite it any time. As such it is an effective vehicle for prayer.

(14) Chanting

Buddhist chanting, especially the Pali tradition of southeast Asia, follows the tradition of early Buddhist chanting and is monophonic plainsong with some monotone. As such it is a simple form of plainsong with very little melodic variation. The variation would mainly depend on whether the text recited is prose or verse.

In Mahayana chanting (eg in the Chinese or Vietnamese tradition), chanting is done in two ways : as recitation in a low voice, as a cantillation (sung, inflected recitation) following the tones of the chanter's language, and as chant accompanied by an orchestra of drums, bells, gong, cymbals and fiddles.

(15) Styles of Chanting

In chants that serve as recitations, such as gathas, lessons, or prayers, the music is secondary to a clear projection of the text. These settings are predominantly syllabic (ie, only one note a syllable) and use relatively few pitches. Some are used for auspicious *(mangala)* occasions, some for inauspicious *(avamangala)* ones.

Magadha [Siamese, Makhod]. This is the Indian style of chanting mostly

followed by the Sinhalese Buddhists and the Dhammayuttika Order of Siam. It tends to follow the phrasing of the text, ie the chant is done in phrases. The Siamese Morning and Evening Chantings follow the Magadha (or "Makhod") style. This form is used for auspicious occasions.

Samiyoga[Siamese, Sang: yo: g] ("combined" method). This is a rather low-pitched, slow and somewhat staccato but sustained style of chanting. The textual phrasing is not followed except pausing for breath (while others are continuing the chant). This is the most common method used in the Paritta recitation. This form is used for auspicious occasions.

Sarabhañña [Siamese, Sa. ra. phan: ya/] or plainsong is close to the Dharmafarer plainsong. The Siamese plainsong, however, employs a higher pitch of voice and slows down the speed of chanting, breaking it into phrases. This form is usually for chanting allowed by the Buddha (v 1:196 2:108 316, J 2:109, DhA 1:154 2:95). "Plainsong" here generally refers to a whole collection of chanting styles or cantillation, of which, says the Vinaya Commentary, there are 32 modes (VA 1202). This form of chanting is used for both auspicious and inauspicious occasions, depending on the chants used.

Sangaha [Siamese, Sang. kha. ha/] which literally means "convocation" or "council", referring to group chanting. The chanting here is somewhat lengthened. The slow tempo of this style suits it for inauspicious occasions, but is also used for auspicious occasions.

(16) Reasons for Chanting

We shall here discuss the purposes of chanting under the following headings: historical, memoric, religious, social, personal, and ceremonial.

1. **HISTORICAL.** Buddhist chanting is as old as the Sangha itself. One of the earliest uses of chanting is found in the Ordination by Going to the Three Refuges *(tisarana-gamana upasampadā)* introduced by the Buddha Himself. The candidate's hair and beard were shaved. Then he donned the saffron garment, putting the upper garment over one shoulder. Having done so, he prostrated before the officiating monk's feet, sat down on his haunches and with joined palms in salutation recited the Three Refuges (V 1:21 f).

Later on, the Ordination by Going to the Three Refuges was used only for admitting novices (V 1:79) and was introduced on account of 7-year-old Rahula (MA 2: 635) when he became a novice. This procedure is today still known as the Going Forth *(pabbajjā)*. Monks were then, and still are today,

admitted into the Order by a Sangha act *(kamma)* which calls for a motion thrice announced with the resolution as the "fourth" announcement (*ñatti-catuttha-kamma upasampadā*, V 1: 55 f, VA 1195 1395).

The text of the ordination procedure – and any other Sangha act *(kamma)* – is known as the "formal text of the act" *(kamma-vācā)* , and it is always chanted. It is interesting to note that Buddhist chanting started not so much as a "protective" device but as an administrative procedure of the Sangha. Around the same time – in the Buddha's own lifetime, anyway – chanting was also used by the monks, especially those dwelling in the forest. Chanting as a safeguard can be said to be historically the second application of chanting by the early Sangha.

Sona Kutikanna. The third important application of chanting in the early Sangha – that of education – also arose in the Buddha's own time. A famous example is that of Sona Kutikanna who learnt from Maha Kaccana the whole of the Atthaka Vagga (The Chapter of Eights) [which later forms the fourth chapter of the *Sutta Nipāta*]. At the Buddha's invitation that he recite the Dharma, Sona recited the whole of the Atthaka Vagga.

The Buddha applauded him and granted him a boon. Sona asked for the institution of the "Ordination by a group of five monks with a Vinaya expert as the fifth" *(vinaya-dhara-pañcama-gaṇena upsampadā)* for candidates in the outlying districts [instead of a quorum of 10 qualified monks as in the Middle Country (V 1:58) – the Buddha gave His consent (V 1:194 ff, cf U v:6).

Sāriputta. Another interesting piece of evidence of chanting during the Buddha's time is found, among others, in two important sutras – the *Saṅgīti Sutta*(D 23) and the Das'uttara Sutta (D 24) – both attributed to Sāriputta (the Buddha's right hand disciple). Both these sutras are a list of doctrines serving as a thematic Index or as a summary to be memorized by the Order members.

The *Saṅgīti Sutta* classifies Dharma in an ascending numerical order, a system followed by the *Anguttara Nikāya.* The *Das'uttara Sutta* follows a similar order of doctrinal classification but in sets of ten (ie a set of 10 single doctrines, a set of 10 twin doctrines, and so on , up to a set of 10 tenfold doctrines). All this goes to show that chanting must have been a very popular practice and an important educational method for the Order members during the Buddha's own life time.

Buddhist Councils. Three months after the Buddha passed away, Mahā Kasspa convened the First Buddhist Council *(pathama saṅgīti).* A *saṅgīti* [*saṁ*, "together" + *gīti* "singing"] is not so much a "council", as it is a "communal recital" of the Sangha. The main purpose of such a recital is, in the Theravada

at least, to redact the Pali texts of errors, ascertain variant readings and canonize the text as they are being accepted by the whole assembly. The Cullavagga (chs 11 & 12) of the Vinaya records the proceedings of the first two councils or recitals. Over the centuries, a number of other recitals were held, the latest, being the one – the so-called "Sixth" Council – held in Rangoon in 1956.

2. **MEMORIC.** It is therefore clearly evident from the discussion so far that chanting plays a central role in the Sangha. Furthermore, in an age when writing was not commonly used for religious purposes, no one was in a position to record or reproduce the Buddha's discourses as He uttered them. Regarding how the Buddha's Teaching was probably transmitted, Gombrich posits the following:

> The texts preserved did not just drop from his [the Buddha's] lips; they must be products of deliberate composition – in fact, they were composed to be memorized. This inevitably introduces a certain formalization: such features as versification; numbered lists, repetition and stock formulas are all aids to memory.
>
> [Quoted by Piyasilo 1989h: Prolegomenon (B) iv.]

The memoric system is the backbone of the Oral Tradition which transmitted the Pali Canon for some five centuries after the Buddha passed away.

3. **RELIGIOUS.** The Commentaries give numerous clear indications that chanting is a very important part of an Order member's religious training and livelihood. This is evident from the Vinaya Commentary's listing of the duties of the three kinds of scholar monks *(bahussuta)* : the graduate monk, the senior monk, and the teacher of nuns.

A graduate monk is one who has completed his basic 5 years of monastic tutelage, and is therefore independent of that tutelage *(nissaya-muccanaka)* (VA 788 f). In order to become "a universal scholar, able to live under his own mastery wherever he likes", he should master these six skills:

1) He should at least master and memorize the two Summaries *(dve mātikā)*, ie the headings of the Training Rules of Monks and of the Nuns.
2) He should learn the Four Recitals *(cattāro bhānavāro)* from the Sutta Pitaka for announcing the Teaching on Poshadha days.
3) He should learn a method of exposition *(kathā-maggo)* , such as that of the Andhakavinda Sutta (A 3:138 ff) [on the training of new monks], the Mahā Rāhulovāda Sutta (M 1:420 ff) [on teaching meditation] or the Ambattha Sutta (D 1:87 ff) [on how to discuss religion with non-Buddhists], so that

he would be able to speak Dharma for those who visit him.

(4)He should learn three kinds of verses of thanksgiving *(anumodanā)*,ie for community meals, for auspicious occasions [discourses, paritta ceremonies], and for inauspicious occasions [eg funerals].

(5) He should learn how to determine whether a Sangha act *(kamma)* is valid or not, as in the case of an Uposatha (the fortnightly recital of the Monastic Rules) or a *Pavāraṇā*(Invitation to point out one's faults).

(6) He should take up a meditation subject *(kammaṭṭhāna)*, by way of concentration or by way of insight, as his religious practice that ultimately leads to Arhathood.

Of these six items, it will be noticed that items 1, 2 and 4 are directly connected with chanting.

A senior monk is one who has spent at least ten years (or "rains", ie has observed the rains-retreat) of monkhood. To be a monk attended by a lay supporter *(puris' upatthaka*,VA 789), he should have the following skills:

1) He should master and memorize the two divisions *(vibhaṅga)*,ie the Division of Monk's Rules, and that of the Nun's Rules, so that he will at least be able to give advice in matters connected with monastic discipline *(abhivinaya)*.

If he is unable to do this, then he should go about with three other monks. He should learn how to determine the validity of a Sangha act, and learn the monastic duties given in the monastic duties given in the Khandhakas (V 1 & 2).

2) If he were to advise and discipline others in matters concerning the Dharma *(abhidhamma)* [or "Abhidharma"], he should master as follows:

(a) if he is Reciter of the Middle-length Texts *(majjhima-bhānaka)*, he shoud learn the sutras of the Chapter of the Middle Fifty *(mula-paññāska);*

(b) if he is a Reciter of the Long Texts *(dīgha-bhānaka)*,he should learn the sutras of the Great Chapter *(mahāvagga);*

(c) if he is a Reciter of the Kindred Texts *(saṁyuttabhānaka)*, he should learn the sutras of the first three chapters or the Great Chapter *(mahāvagga);*

(d) if he is a Reciter of the Gradual [lit "One-more"] Texts *(aṅguttara-bhāṇaka)*,he should learn half of the Collection; if not, he should at least learn the first three chapters (ie up to *tika-nipāta*) . [The *Mahā Paccarī* (an early Commentary) says that one might also learn just one chapter, such as the Chapter of Fours or the Chapter of Fives.]

(e) if he is a Jātaka Reciter, he should learn the Jataka verses together with their Commentary.

One should not learn less than this; but the *Mahā Paccarī* says that one might also learn the *Dhammapada* and its Commentary.

It is interesting here to note the mention of Reciters *(bhānaka)* who were lineages of Order members headed by a Dharma master. They would memorize, recite and transmit whole Collections *(nikāya)* of texts from teacher to pupil through the Oral Tradition *(mukha-pātha).*

The monk who is an instructor of nuns *(bhikkhunī ovādaka),* says the Vinaya Commentary, should master all the three Baskets *(piṭaka)* – ie the Vinaya, Sutta or the Abhidharma – along with their Commentaries. If not, he should at least master the Commentary of one of the four Collections. In this way, he should be able to answer problems relating to any of the other three Collections.

Or, of the seven texts *(pakaraṇa)* of the Abhidharma, he need only learn four of their Commentaries. This should enable him to answer problems relating to the other Abhidharma texts. Where the Vinaya Pitaka is concerned, however, he should master both the Vinaya itself and Vinaya Commentary – that is, if he is to become an Instructor of Nuns. (VA 790)

4. **SOCIAL** The most social expression of chanting is found in the worship service (*pūjā,* lit. "offering). It is probably not known in the Buddha's time; for then the word *pūjā* meant "honour", as in the Mangala Sutta (Sn 259). It is difficult to be certain when the *pūjā* was first publicly instituted, especially as a daily office.

By the 4th century, however, some kind of *pūjā* was probably common. We know this from the *Dipavamsa,* where a "shrine pūjā " *(cetiyam pūjam)* was mentioned (Dipv 7:12). The *Saddhammopāyana* (c13th century) mentions pūjā a number of times, but they all meant "honour" (Sdhp 213 230 542 551). It is however probable that some sort of daily routine *(vatta)* – not called *pūjā* – was practised in the early monasteries. This common practice in due course evolved into the modern pūjā, especially the Morning Chanting and the Evening Chanting.

The pūjā today takes the form of congregational chanting, and is especially popular with the laity. It serves as a communal expression of faith, as well as a spiritually fulfilling exercise. The modern pūjā is also an occasion for Buddhist fellowship. For when the pūjā is over, the participants would mingle and socialize.

5. **PERSONAL.** Pūjā as a personal expression of faith is another common private or domestic practice for both the ordained and the lay. In Siam, there is a tradition of the "Buddha of the Day" and His special paritta, invoked during a special ceremony known as "sa.do/ phra/ kro/ " (averting evil

planetary influences). A simplified list follows [where an asterisk (*) denotes that it is the preamble to the paritta, not the paritta itself]:

Sunday - Buddha gazing at the Bodhi tree:
Mora Paritta x 6
Monday - Buddha Stilling the waters or Pacifying the relatives (Rohini incident):
Canda Paritta *(Yandunnimittaṁ...)* x 15
Tuesday - Buddha in reclining posture (Mahaparinirvana):
Dhajagga Paritta *(Yassânussaraṇenâpi...)* * x 8
Wednesday - Buddha holding an almsbowl :
Khandha Paritta *(Sabbâsīvisa-jātinaṁ...)* * x 17
[For Wednesday night, there is the Buddha in the Parileyyaka Forest, attended by an elephant and a monkey.]
Thursday - Buddha in meditating posture:
Vaṭṭaka Paritta x 19
Friday - Buddha recollecting His past merit:
Aṭānāṭiya Paritta *(Appasannehi nāthassa)* * x 21
Saturday - Buddha sheltered by the naga Mucalinda:
Aṅgulimāla Paritta x 10

The Parittas are to be recited daily the number of times that is regarded as auspicious, preferably before an image of the Buddha of the day. For the non-intellectual and busy, such a practice helps them cope with life and maintains some sort of link with the Buddha Dharma. The teacher should take special care to explain the spiritual significance of such practices and avoid introducing or promoting any superstition.

A humble, Precept-observing Buddhist who practises daily pūjā (even to the Buddha of the day) is more Dharma-spirited than a self-righteous "Abhidharma" fanatic or conceited "Vipasnā" sectarian. Better still is one who calms one's mind, applies the Three Characteristics to one's daily life, and makes the Dharma known.

6. **CEREMONIAL.** On a social level, chanting is most significant in that it forms a main part of the rites of passage (such as birth, first tonsure, marriage, house warming, death). A greater significance of chanting can be seen in the text of the pūjā (and their translation) as a means of spiritual reflection. Above all, it is one of the noblest expression of the human voice.

Bhikkhu Piyasilo
Friends of Buddhism
Jalan Sultan, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.

BUDDHIST MONASTICISM IN EUROPEAN CULTURE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FRANCE

Having been invited to give a talk on "Buddhist Monasticism in European Culture", at the outset I have to say a few words justifying the extension of the title of this talk by adding "with Special Reference to France". In the English-speaking world a much read book in the 50s was C. Humphrey's *Buddhism* (London 1951 ff.). Discussing Buddhism in Europe, he deals with the Buddha-Dhamma in France in no more than 128 words (*op. cit.*, p.228), mentioning a.) the French Buddhist society "Les amis du Bouddhisme" founded by Constant Lounsbery in 1929, and its quarterly – by and large Theravāda-orientated – *La pensée bouddhique* ; b.) the famous French Tibetologist Alexandra David-Neel. Perhaps the most attractive publication in recent years of a well-nigh encyclopedic order is *The World of Buddhism* (London 1984), edited by H. Bechert and R. Gombrich. In the last chapter of this work the "Buddhist Revival in East and West" is treated. On p.274 the French scholar Eugene Burnouf is credited with having initiated "a detailed academic research" on Buddhism through his publication of *Introduction a l'histoire du bouddhisme indien* which appeared in 1845. Apart from mentioning the founder of Buddhology, in this chapter Buddhism in France has not been taken into account – certainly due to the fact that, excepting most brilliant research work on Buddhism carried out by French-speaking scholars ever since Burnouf, Buddhism as a way of life practised by Buddhists was almost conspicuous by its absence in this country until the midsixties of this century. Since, as far as I know,even in recent years accounts of Buddhism in France are comparatively scarce when considering all that has appeared in print on Buddhism in English-speaking countries, I may be permitted in my dealing with Buddhist monasticism in European culture to focus on the Buddha-Dhamma in France. Moreover, myself being a member of a monastic Buddhist community in that country, it must be left to Sangha members or to those in close contact with them resident in other European countries, first of all in Great Britain, to offer their contributions to Buddhist monasticism in their respective countries such as UK,

Germany or Italy.

In the following I am going to talk about four subjects, the first two of which will be put in a nutshell whilst the others will have to be set out in some detail: a.) about early contacts of France with South-East Asian religious culture and French-speaking scholars preparing the ground for receiving the Buddha-Dhamma in the West; b.) about French-born members of the Sangha and decisive factors for the formation of Buddhist monasticism in Europe, viz. the repercussions of political events in Central and South-East Asia during the 60 s and 70s; c.) about the recent setting up of Theravadin and Mahayana monastic establishments with special reference to l'Association bouddhique Linh-Son (Gijjhakūta Buddhist Society) and its activities; d.) some reflections on the impact, if any, of Buddhist monasticism on European culture at present and in future.

Extremely useful is J.W. de Jong's *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America* (2nd ed., Delhi 1987) in which is found the following on a publication by the father of Buddhology and his colleague: "The first Pali grammar to be published in Europe was written by Burnouf (1801-1852) and Lassen (1800-1876) : E. Burnouf et Chr. Lassen : *Essai sur le Pali ou langue sacrée de la presqu'île au-dela du Gange*, Paris, 1826....According to Burnouf the first to mention Pali was Simon de La Loubere who visited Siam in 1687-1688 as envoy of King Louis XIV. In 1691 he published a *Description du royaume de Siam* . La Loubere's book contains a translation of the life of Devadatta (La vie de Thevetat, le frere de Sommona-Codom, traduite du Bali, t.II, pp. 35-37).[1] De Jong refers to Burnouf as the "dominating figure"[2] in the first period of academic research on Buddhism (1826-1877) who, besides his vast knowledge of Sanskrit, Tibetan, Avestan and Pehlevi texts, his acquaintance with modern Indian languages such as Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati, in connection with his Pali studies consulted Sinhalese, Burmese and Siamese translations and commentaries.[3] "The amount of work done by Burnouf in the last fifteen years of his life," writes de Jong, "is staggering."[4] The huge amount of Buddhological research, lexicography and translations of works pertaining to Indian, Central Asian and Far Eastern Buddhism that has been done so far and is being done by scholars from all over the world is really impressive, and it is largely due to French-speaking scholars that the soil for appreciating and receiving Buddhism in western countries has been well prepared. Complete information on contributions to Buddhist Studies in French can be gathered from de Jong's above-named *History*. Suffice it here to cite just a few names standing for impeccable and inspiring scholarship: Sylvain Lévi, L. de La Vallée

Poussin, P. Demiéville, É. Lamotte, A. Bareau. Although there exists nothing that could not be improved upon (albeit just a tiny little bit in the case of really great works), their as well as other eminent scholars' publications in the field of Buddhist Studies will continue to be works of *aprameyaḥ punyaskandhaḥ*, meaningfully challenging many generations of future students of the Buddha-Dhamma.

As far as I know, the first Frenchman to don the yellow robe was Bhikkhu Āryadeva who was among the first batch of students at the newly established Nālandā Pāli Institute (founded in 1951). In the 60s Āryadeva had shifted to the Mithila Institute at Darbhanga where he taught modern European languages. In his studies he had by that time developed a preference for Sanskrit and Vajrayana. The last few years of his life he spent in France where in the second half of the 70s he was associated with "Les amis du Bouddhisme", the oldest Buddhist society in France. The second French-born monk, whose life as a bhikṣu roughly coincided with that of Āryadeva, was a Mahayana monk whose main sphere of activities was Sweden.

There is no denying the fact that in 1956 the jubilee of the 2500th anniversary of Buddhism celebrated on a grand scale in Asian countries, also affected, predominantly on a cultural level, western countries. The mass media reported not only on political events in connection with the jubilee; I remember a radio broadcast in French in which the translation of a discourse from the Pali canon was read; at some places even in the countryside you could attend lectures on Buddhism and visit exhibitions of Buddhist art. Public interest in Buddhism did not ebb away in subsequent years. On the contrary, it was strengthened, thanks to the efforts of a number of Buddhist scholars, parts of whose works in English, French and German were made accessible in popular paperback series.

All these factors, besides strictly personal considerations, may in the 60s and 70s have prevailed upon young Frenchmen to leave home for the East where they spent several years in the Sangha. I know of some Frenchmen who underwent Zen monastic training in the Far East, and two of them, after taking orders according to the Geluk ordination procedure, made remarkable headway in their Dharma studies through the medium of Tibetan.

Nevertheless, it was not these western monks or later on also western nuns who managed to initiate – on however humble a scale –Buddhist monasticism in France or other western countries. The annexation of Tibet by the People's Republic and the raging war in Indochina caused so many Tibetans,

Vietnamese, Laotians and Khmers to flee their respective countries. Considerable numbers of Buddhists hailing from those countries that formerly were under French rule, took refuge in France where – it must be stressed – municipal and county authorities have always been well disposed towards Asian Buddhists organizing themselves anew, founding Buddhist associations or establishing "temples" called by them "pagodes".

In the late 60s the Ven. Thích Thiện-Châu, besides his specializing in Pudgalavāda Buddhism, his subject of research at the Sorbonne, headed a Vietnamese Buddhist Students' Organization, and in due course he became the spiritual director of the Association des bouddhistes Vietnamiens en France.[5] Eventually, by dint of his and his followers' indefatigable efforts the largest and most beautiful Vietnamese-style temple in France was erected near the southern outskirts of Paris. As abbot of Chua Trúc-Lâm (Veluvana Temple) Ven. Thiện-Châu has been doing invaluable Dhammadūta work for many years both in France and Southern Germany. What is so remarkable with respect to his activities is the fact that he has actually been implementing the resolutions of the Buddhist National Congress held in 1963 in Saigon when the 'history-making unification' of Vietnamese Theravadins and Mahayana Buddhists was achieved.[6] What then does his own way of implementing those resolutions look like? While soft-pedalling typical Mahayana doctrines regarding, for instance, Bodhisattva vows or Amidism, he tries his best to revive the indigenous Dhyāna/Zen tradition of ancient Vietnam (pupils of the 3rd Chinese Zen patriarch already propagated Ch'an Buddhism in Vietnam). For accomplishing this, besides his having translated Pali texts into Vietnamese, for example the *Dhammapada*, he makes use of all those elements in Pali Buddhism concerning meditational practice.

Now what about monastic beginnings in France pertaining to Theravada Buddhism proper? There are, in fact, a few French Theravada-orientated groups without, however, any bhikkhus. The most influential of these Buddhist circles, I suppose, has its seat at Gretz in a calm rural area about one hour by car south-east of Paris. M. Jolly, alias Anagarika Prajñānanda, the president of this Theravadin study group, offers meditation classes *(ānāpānasati)*, translates and publishes key Pali texts in French. In the 80s interest in Theravada Buddhism has grown in France significantly – surely due to the increasing number of Asian bhikkhus staying in and around Paris. Thus, nowadays you can find "vihāras", i.e. flats or villas converted into "vihāras", with small groups of resident monks from the following countries: Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. Some bhikkhus from Sri Lanka and Thailand are stay-

ing in Paris, *inter alia*, to study French and pursue higher studies so as to acquaint themselves with scientific methods for their Dhamma studies. All these vihāras are supported by lay Buddhists from Asian countries, but there are also some French people who have been joining the Asian Theravadin communities as upāsakas and upāsikās.

So far in Theravadin communities the majority of members have always been Asian Buddhists, whereas the opposite holds true of Zen and Tibetan Buddhist groups in Paris and elsewhere in France: Zen and Tibetan Dharma centres are to a great extent run by western Buddhists; however, as a rule, they originate with the presence and powerful teachings of strong personalities such as the Soto Zen master Deshimaru, Kalu Rinpoche, Thubten Yeshe or the Geshes Lobsang Tengya and Champa Thekchog. Deshimaru Roshi's Paris Zazen centre must have been rather influential, because some ten years ago I met western disciples of his who mentioned affiliated Soto Zen groups in other places in France and Germany. Some fine publications are also due to the efforts of the Paris Soto centre. Another French-born Rinzai Zen master, a disciple of the famous Mumon Yamada Roshi of Kyoto, had founded a retreat-centre in the late 70s in the mountains of l'Ardeche in Southern France. Most attractive for French people, it seems, have proved Tibetan forms of Buddhism. Throughout the country there exist retreat-cum-study centres of all the major Tibetan schools of Buddhist practice: Nyingma, Kagyü, Sakya and Geluk centres. Owing to the rural exodus observable in France, landed property including old manor-houses or even small castles are comparatively cheap to purchase. Furthermore, in the case of historically important buildings, the French government used to grant financial aid towards their maintenance or restoration. So Tibetan masters assisted by their western disciples and well-wishers made use of this occasion to create the material prerequisites to western Buddhist monasticism. I have personally visited two Geluk monastic centres about 30 km to the east of Toulouse in Southern France. At Marzens, Château d'En Clausade near Lavaur there exists Institut Vajra Yogini opened by the well-known Tibetan Lamas Thubten Yeshe and Thubten Zopa Rinpoche in 1979 and ever since under the spiritual directorship of Geshe Lobsang Tengya. Attached to Institut Vajra Yogini is a nunnery with resident Tibetan-style nuns *(ani-la)* coming from France, Germany, New Zealand, Spain and USA. A few kilometres off Chateau d'En Clausade you can visit "Nālandā", a bhikṣu *(gelong)* training centre directed by Geshe Champa Thekchog. The monks studying at Nālandā are from Australia, England, France, Germany, Spain and USA, altogether about twenty in number. High-ranking Tibetan monks from India, Nepal or other countries that have granted them asylum, have regularly been visiting the Tibetan monastic establishments in France in order to give courses, ordinations or

initiations.

The doubtless largest contribution to the formation of Buddhist monasticism in France can be ascribed to the vigorous activities of the Ven. Thích Huyên-Vi, abbot of Monastere bouddhique Linh-Son and director of both l'Association bouddhique and Institut de recherche bouddhique Linh-Son, and to the unstinted co-operation of the members of these institutions. To substantiate this statement, a brief history of this Gijjhakūta-Vihāra (Linh-Son) movement has to be sketched out.

Already in his native country Ven. Huyên-Vi was a well-known preacher in charge of higher education of Sangha members. Before a short tenure of professorship at Vanh Hanh Buddhist University in Saigon and before his settling in France, he stayed in India for 13 years, where he graduated from Nalanda and Magadh University in Pali and English, completed a doctoral thesis on the "Life and Works of Sariputta Thera" according to Pali, Sanskrit and Chinese sources, and was a lecturer in ancient and modern Chinese. Endowed with vast experience in handling Sangha affairs, he shifted to Joinville-le-Pont (Paris) where, in 1975, he was invited to found the Linh-Son Buddhist Association. Within a relatively short period – despite obligatory 'samsāric' ups and downs – he succeeded in laying the foundation of an astonishingly efficient ordination and training centre for Buddhist monks and nuns.[7] Due to the continual exodus of Vietnamese refugees particularly to France, to USA and to many other countries, throughout the 80s the Linh-Son Sangha's tasks – as understood according to the Vietnamese Mahayana tradition – of meeting the spiritual needs of great numbers of South-East Asian Buddhists have been overwhelming. Hardly had Monastere bouddhique Linh-Son been opened when its abbot was invited to visit practically all countries where Vietnamese refugees had found new homes and had organized into Buddhist groups. The corollary of these Dhammadūta tours has been that Linh-Son at Joinville-le-Pont has had to be developed into the headquarters of Linh-Son branch temples and associations on all continents. Thus in the 80s Linh-Son branches were established at quite a few places in France, in UK, Canada, USA (including Hawaii), India, Taiwan, Belgium, Switzerland, Australia and Zaire. (This latter centre in Kinshasa, though, is entirely run by Linh-Son-trained Africans.) The making of qualified and responsible incumbents for all these branch temples has always been one of the main objectives of the director of Linh-Son headquarters in France. Here too, as in Buddhist countries, *vassāvāsa*, observing the rains retreat (in Europe summer retreat) as a special period of intensive monastic training plays a very important role. Moreover, since for the most part the vacation-time of lay followers synchronizes with the monastic rains retreat,

many lay members of the association regularly weekend at the headquarters. A particular feature with Vietnamese Mahayana Buddhists are upāsaka/upāsikā ordinations, i.e. ceremonies of solemnly giving Dhamma-names to those who have devoted much time to Dhamma practice and study. Because of the urgent need to raise the standards of training monks and nuns, Ven. Huyen-Vi has also initiated a Buddhist Research Institute in which – to start with – he as director and other graduate Sangha members teach, respectively, meditation, Buddhist doctrine in Vietnamese or French, and Pali (grammar, Suttas and Abhidhamma). This is not the place to go on enumerating all the manifold activities of Linh-Son headquarters. One more point, all the same, may be well worth mentioning as an example of characteristic monastic activity: Linh-Son has printing facilities, and as a result numerous brochures, booklets, and voluminous books (some also in French and English) have been published so far.[8] Of vital importance are anastatic reprints of rare Buddhist books in Vietnamese that have already appeared in no small numbers. The printing section of the Linh-Son community – and of other Vietnamese communities in the West, too– have thus been doing, according to Buddhist thought, inestimable service for the perpetuation of Buddhist literature in Vietnamese.

Although Linh-Son headquarters is situated, strictly speaking, in a suburban district of Paris without factories and heavy air pollution, it is by no means a calm place as required of all those intent on prolonged meditation. In addition, the ever expanding activities of Linh-Son soon made the centre into a rather congested place. So it was a matter of much relief when the abbot succeeded, with the help and advice of UNESCO, in acquiring 30 hectares of grounds about 350 km south of Paris and 40 km north of Limoges, situated in charming and peaceful surroundings. The landed property acquired for the Linh-Son community includes a hamlet which, nearly completely deserted and ramshackle some years ago, is being converted, thanks to the enthusiastic and devoted co-operation of members of Linh-Son Buddhist youth organizations and lay followers of various Buddhist associations with Sangha members, into what has been named Dhammaville, Centre cultural bouddhique international Linh-Son or Tung Lâm in Vietnamese. When Dhammaville was inaugurated in August 1987, an impressive Buddha-hall, monks' quarters, a nunnery, accomodation for as yet a limited number of guests, a library building and a refectory had been completed. At present a building designed as a meditation centre is under construction. Plenty of farm land surrounding Dhammaville is utilized so that nowadays Tung Lâm and Linh-Son headquarters are self-sufficient in horticultural products.[9]

In conclusion, some random thought may be given to the impact, if any,

of Buddhist monasticism on European culture at present and in future. As a matter of fact, the Linh-Son communities in France include some 30 Sangha members or slightly more – thus being the numerically strongest Sangha in this country – and their as well as other Buddhist communities' efforts in practising the Dhamma, more often than not, are untiring. Buddhist monasticism in Europe, none-the-less, can squarely be compared to a fragile raft – and similarly, native Christian monasticism perhaps to a big ocean-going ship more or less in distress – in the turbulent waters of secularism, commercialism or materialism daily enhancing the dangers of global self-destruction. On the whole, the majority of 'up-to-date' Europeans seem to consider monasticism an anachronism and Buddhist monasticism an exotic anachronism. For Asian Buddhists, as long as they live in the West, their vihāras are most important institutions for preserving their religio-cultural identity. For Asian Sangha members and likewise western Buddhist monks and nuns staying in Europe, vihāras in the West are places of refuge. Simultaneously their vihāras are bases whence they can survey western modes of thought and the state of affairs in modern life, trying to develop their "skill in means" *(upāya-kusala)* in order to survive and help survive into the next millennium as genuine Buddhists – but hopefully not oblivious of what this proverb implies: "The fly that plays too long in the candle, singes his wings at last." Nobody can tell whether Buddhist monasticism will actually be one facet of the religio-cultural life in a pluralistic, multi-cultural and unified Europe, (although nowadays European politicians are very fond of using such words as 'pluralism', 'democracy' and 'unification of Europe'). In spite of a large number of Asians staying in Europe, an absolute minimum of the population here takes interest in things Buddhist, although among the intelligentsia, notably among university students, a certain receptivity and open-mindedness can be observed, even the willingness to sit down from time to time and try to practise the 'development of recollection' *(satipaṭṭhāna)*. It may be a fact, occasionally even documented in the western mass media, that the miracle of contemporary Japanese efficiency in high technology and global economics can to some extent be attributed to the spiritual/meditational training in Japan received at the hands of Zen monks and other Buddhist priests. So also in Europe monasteries, preferably in the countryside, with meditation-centres attached to them, might after some time be in no small demand when the common scatterbrainedness, owing to the steadily increasing complexity of modern life, will have brought matters to a climax. The Udenarājavatthu in the *Cullavagga* (Vin. II, 290) may remind us of another positive aspect of monasticism (like the above aspect of introspection more or less found in all monastic traditions): Ānanda, after having been presented with an apparent surplus of five hundred robes by King Udena's harem, successfully convinces Udena of the scrupulousness with which the Sangha makes use of

everything offered without wasting anything whatsoever. Udena, greatly pleased with Ānanda's statement, offers him another five hundred robes all of which are then distributed among the Sangha. To date ,after all, many a Buddhist monastery in Asia still is in this respect a shining model of healthy frugality, in which 'not a single drop of water or a single grain of rice' must go to waste. Especially in the West, monastic institutions , if succeeding , as of yore, in holding frugality, fewness of wishes and, above all, non-violence *(ahimsā)* in great esteem should, I think, be allowed to exert some wholesome influence on our largely glutted societies, which are irresponsibly spending, wasting, exploiting and gradually destroying the very basis of all life on this planet. A good number of people in the West definitely know what is really going on. Rhetoricians among them discuss endlessly what should be done in this awkward predicament; others have become altogether pessimistic. Is there any reason for being pessimistic regarding the all too limited possibilities in Buddhist monasticism in Europe? In this connection, Ven. Thích Huyên-Vi, director of Dhammaville ,has often quoted SN II, 25 :*uppādā vā Tathāgatānaṁ anuppādā vā Tathāgatānaṁ // vā sā dhātu dhammaṭṭhitatā dhammaniyāmatā idappaccayatā //* -" ...whether... there be an arising of Tathagatas, or whether there be no such arising, this nature of things just stands, this causal status, this causal orderliness, the relatedness of this to that."[10] And H. Bechert in his contribution to *H. Küng's Christianity and the World Religions*(New York 1986), p. 408, has nicely put it thus: "The Buddhists do not think that the world has any meaning (outside itself), but they believe that an order prevails in it that is valid above and beyond the existence of the individual. This conviction has, it seems to me, given them the strength to endure suffering in this world. After all, they always have the hope of arriving, on some distant day, at the end of suffering in a future existence." Finally let me quote a typical traditional Buddhist viewpoint, *sub specie aeternitatis,* concerning Dhamma activities, however insignificant they may appear. The following is a citation from the *Mahākarunāpuṇḍarīkasūtra*occurring in the *Sutrasamuccaya* (which the Tibetans ascribe to Nāgarjuna) : "Look, Ananda, how forcible are the [results of] offering one's veneration to Lord Buddha and how forcible [the results when] one's mind is pure and filled with trust. Saying the words 'homage to the Buddha', Ānanda, one should be aware of the following: the sound 'Lord Buddha', that is to say when reciting 'homage to the Buddha', is pregnant with meaning. However insignificant one's planting 'roots of merit' in respect of *tathagatas* may be, everything will bear due fruit. Even letting arise just one thought [-moment of] pure faith - all that will finally culminate in *nirvana*."[11]

Bhikkhu Pāsādiko
Heliostrig 4 , Arolsem, Germany.

ENDNOTES:

1. J.W. de Jong, *op. cit*, p.13f.
2. *Op. cit.*, p.2.
3. *Ibid*, p. 20.
4. *Ibid*
5. On his and other leading Vietnamese monks' scholarly activities ,sec R. Webb, "Vietnamese Buddhist Literature: An Introduction", in ***Buddhist Studies Review*** I, 1 (London 1983-84), p. 29f.
6. On the "Unified Buddhist Congregation of Vietnam" (with references) see Bh. Pāsādika, "Traditional Buddhist Chronological Systems: Vietnamese Traditions", in H. Bechert (ed.), ***The Date of the Historical Buddha and the Importance of its Determination for Historiography and World History*** (Göttingen, in the press), note 34.
7. Cf. ***Thanh Quy Tụ-Viện Linh-Son, Reglement du monastere Linh- Son, Rules of Linh-Son Monastery,*** Joinville-le-Pont 1985.
8. Linh-Son publications just a few of which can be cited here, are listed in the catalogues of the oriental bookshop and publishing house Thanh-Long, Éditions/Librairie (34 rue Dekens, 1040 Bruxelles, Belgium);
   a.) Thích Huệ-Hung, ***Kinh Duy Ma Cật*** (Vietnamese transl. of the Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra, anastatic reprint of the 1951 Saigon ed.), Joinville-le-Pont 1984;
   b.) Thích Huyên-Vi, *Sūtrasamuccaya,Luận Về Các Nghĩa Thiết Yếu Quý Báo Cua-Dai Thua,**L'Essentiel du Bouddhisme*** (Vietnamese and French transl. of the Chinese version of Nāgārjuna's Sūtrasamuccaya), Joinville-le-Pont 1986;
   c.) Thích Huyên-Vi, ***Buddhist Doctrine, Dhamma Talk*** (including in the appendix an English transl. of liturgical texts regularly chanted in all Linh-Son centres), Linh-Son Monastery Detroit, 1983;
   d.) Thích Huyên-Vi, ***The Four Abhidhammic Reals,*** (Buddhist Philosophy and Psychology), Institut de recherche bouddhique Linh-Son, Joinville-le-Pont 1982;
   e.) ***Linh-Son*** - *publication d'études bouddhologiques*,Nos. 1-20 (a quarterly carrying articles, reviews and translations of Buddhological interest), Joinville-le-Pont 1977-1982.
9. Apart from what French mass media have reported on Tung Lâm and its activities, the following brochures and articles/notes have been published:

a.) ***Tung-Lâm Linh-Son*** (in Vietnamese and French on the historical significance of the name Tung-Lâm Linh-Son, objectives, programmes, etc.), Châteauponsac 1987;

b.) "Tung Lâm Linh-Son International" in ***Buddhist Studies Review*** V, 2 (London 1988), p. 145f ;

c.) ***Dhammaville (Tung Lâm)*** (Un appel aux Bouddhistes a travers le monde), Châteauponsac 1987;

d.) "La Pagode du Limousin" (le plus grand temple bouddhiste d'Europé en voie de construction) in ***sudestasie,*** Nos 55-56 (Paris 1989), p. 72f.

10. C.A.F. Rhys Davids, F.H. Woodward, ***Kindred Sayings*** II, 21 (London 1922 ff.).

11. Cf. Bh. Pāsādika, "The Sūtrasamuccaya – Nāgārjuna's Anthology of [Quotations from] Discourses", English translation (XI),in ***Linh-Son*** - *publication d'études bouddhologiques,*No.12 (Joinville-le-Pont 1980), p. 34f.

WESTERN SOCIETY AND BUDDHISM

The recent (November, 1988) meeting of the World Fellowship of Buddhists in Los Angeles is a symbol of the fact that Buddhism is now firmly based in Western countries. It is about a hundred years now since the seminal work of such scholars as T.W. Rhys Davids, the pioneering ventures of the Theosophical Society, the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago (in 1893) and the publication of Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* (1879) – all of which helped to create a wider interest among occidentals in Buddhism as a religion and as a worldview. In Europe and especially in Britain, there has been greater interest in the Theravada, partly because of the fact that Britain's empire had included Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Burma, and France's Laos and Cambodia (Kampuchea). In North America there has always been greater interest in the Mahayana, because of the transpacific relations of the U.S.A. Moreover, California has also been the scene of migration – in early days by Chinese and Japanese, to work in mines, on railroads and above all in agriculture. More recently, migrations have occurred because of political persecution at home – hence many Vietnamese, Laotians, Cambodians and Tibetans have come to the West, bringing Buddhist values with them. The most famous of all Buddhist refugees, the Dalai Lama, has become the chief spokesperson for Buddhism in the West. Increased contacts between Eastern Buddhists and Westerners have been nourished by travel and by the presence of large numbers of students from Buddhist countries in Western nations.

We should also mention that particularly since the 1960's courses on Buddhism and other non-Western religions have played an increased role in humanities curricula in Western universities. The sixties saw something of a "cultural revolution " in academia. Large numbers of students became concerned with alternatives to Western values. The work of such writers as Aldous Huxley, with his *The Perennial Philosophy,* Alan Watts, with *The Way of Zen,* and D. T. Suzuki were in vogue. The foundation of departments of Religious Studies in Western universities – as opposed to work in Theology from a Christian or Jewish perspective – was significant, e.g. at Lancaster in England (1967), Santa Barbara (1964), and Queensland (1977) in Australia, among many others. Buddhist doctoral programs appeared, in Berkeley and at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Though many of these developments were

of a somewhat intellectual character they had a wider meaning in creating a relatively large number of people who had knowledge about Buddhism. Meanwhile Buddhist organizations on the ground, staffed by people largely drawn from Eastern countries, helped to give a deeper flavor of Buddhist meditation and religious practice. By now, therefore, Buddhism among Westerners is well-entrenched, still on a very modest scale, but nevertheless as a significant ingredient in the newly emerging pluralist Western civilization.

It should be noted too that there is some loosening of restraints upon Buddhism in Marxist countries. The Marxist bloc, stretching from the Elbe to Beijing and from Ho Chi Minh City to Archangel, has not been kind to Buddhism, which has over a long period been largely suppressed in China and the Soviet Union and in the various other Marxist states. Sometimes bloody repression has occurred in Tibet. In Cambodia the Pol Pot regime slaughtered most monks. These tragedies of persecution mean that Buddhism is only second to Judaism in its terrible vicissitudes during the 20th Century. It is still too early to say what the future of Buddhism will be in any of the Marxist countries. Since some of them are Western (largely White in culture), we ought to include them in any sketch of Buddhism in the Western world : and we should remember that under Marxism the future may not be as rosy for Buddhist values as the rest of the West.

Considering that there are such large divergences between Western religious values as traditionally expressed and the teachings and practices of Buddhism, it may be a surprise that Buddhism has so successfully established itself in the Occident. Let me briefly sketch some of those differences, and then make some observations on the reason for Buddhism's appeal to at least an articulate minority of Westerners.

First, it is worth contrasting the Theravadin teachings and those of historic Christianity. The most obvious one is that the Theravada does not center on belief in a Creator : far from it, Brahma as supposed creator is made a figure of irony. He wrongly thinks that he makes the beings that come after him, wrongly inferring that "after me" implies "because of me." Basically, the Theravada is atheistic, but this Western term is perhaps a bit misleading, since it suggests an anti-spiritual stance. Moreover, in the West the denial of God implies the denial of gods. But there is no such denial in the Theravada. Not only does the Pali canon include many references to the gods – from Brahma and Sakka (Indra) downwards; but in practice Sri Lankan Buddhism accommodates Hindu-style gods in its temple complexes. One of the most important pilgrimage places on the island is Kataragama (Skanda), where the god can dispense various this-worldly blessings. But there is no Creator: nor can features of the universe be traced back to some personal Agency. Rather the ultimate value is not God but nirvana, seen as the goal of liberation. By contrast, Christianity is a non-nirvanistic religion.

A second contrast between the Theravada and Christianity is seen in the doctrine of rebirth. Though there have been occasional attempts to incorporate the belief into Christian faith, the overwhelming Christian emphasis is against it, but rather looks to resurrection and everlasting life close to God in heaven.

Third, the Theravada relies on self-help ("Be lights unto yourselves" commanded the dying Buddha). Christianity emphasizes God's grace – his loving action in reaching out to save the individual. Moreover, this act is often seen in the living context of ritual – through the sacramental presence of Christ in his Church and in the Mass (or Liturgy or Eucharist or Communion). Sacramental ritual is just not important in the Theravada, though it does make its appearance at the other end of Buddhism, in Tibetan Tantra.

So though there are some analogies between Christianity and Buddhism in its Mahayana manifestation, these are not there in the Theravada. Why is it, then, that the Theravada makes some appeal to Westerners, and especially in Britain? We shall address this question after looking briefly at the way the Mahayana differs from Western theism.

There are elements of the Greater Vehicle which, of course, chime in with Christian faith – notably the Pure Land schools. The piety and warmth of Honen and Shinran have echoes in Luther and Wesley. The aspiration to heavenly existence and communion with the Lord can be seen, too, in the devotionalism of the Pure Land. But though such Amida Buddhism has strong affinities to Christianity – so much so that St. Francis Xavier remarked on his arrival in Japan that Luther had got there before him – other aspects of Mahayana philosophy are far removed from traditional Western ideas. The concept of substance, so vital in the way so much Western theology has been articulated, often looking back to Aristotle, is after all exploded by Nagarjuna. The very notion (if it is a notion) of Emptiness is foreign to much in Christian writing and thinking. Other systems of philosophy, such as the Vijñānavada, are distant, too, from mainline Western thought (though some have seen affinities with the ideas of C.G. Jung). The whole atmosphere of many Buddhas is contrary to the spirit of uniqueness in Christian claims about Christ. Though Buddhism's mystic emphasis, as exhibited in the life of meditation, chimes in with Catholic and Orthodox monasticism and Neoplatonic inwardness, it is not something which is typically of great interest to Protestant churches, which on the whole are much more bhakti-oriented: what is dhyana to them? Moreover, Buddhism, with its imaginative beliefs in many Bodhisattvas and Buddhas seems blithely indifferent to historicity, so vital to Christianity.

Why, then, the appeal of forms of Buddhism? First, there is undoubtedly an attraction in the life of contemplation. The stress on mental training and the purification of consciousness could appeal greatly to Westerners, especially

in the Sixties. The new questing of that period and the search for alternative lifestyles was partly a revolt against the fruits of material success during the Eisenhower era. The Fifties had seen unparalleled prosperity, though in a rather controlled and religiously conservative mode. The liberal Protestant churches were strong, as also the more Biblically based and fundamentalist groups. But neither the social ethics of liberal Protestantism nor the Biblical emphasis continued to have their old magic. Neither offered much in the way of spiritual nourishment and practical training. It was a period of, on the one hand, the death of God (with such thinkers to the fore as Paul van Buren and T. J. J. Altizer) and of situation ethics (as with Joseph Fletcher). Harvey Cox praised the Secular City. Just when many people were beginning to search for new religion, Christian thinkers were starting to turn their backs on religiosity. The Eastern religions had great vogue as alternatives : they often propounded disciplined and inward ways of cultivating spirituality. It was an age in which Alan Watts, Aldous Huxley and D. T. Suzuki could acquire wide audiences. For those who were alienated from mainstream religion, there appeared two paths – one leading away from religion altogether, into politics (sometimes Marxist) and the other into Eastern meditation and other kinds of meditation. Sometimes this latter quest was mixed up with drugs, such were the confusions of the times. They were heady days: but they could underline a major attraction of the East.

All this latched on to an older Western discovery, which drew the attention of a handful of intellectuals, but which had a wider ultimate attraction. This was the realization that it was indeed possible to have religion without God. One could aspire indeed to salvation without God. Those who were deeply uneasy about Western theism had another place to go. Here was a mysticism without God, and a strong ethical sense. There had for long, in the West, been a countervailing tendency to theistic orthodoxy. Theism caused uneasiness in a number of ways: its apparent puritanism, its tendency to a kind of cosmic moralism, its anthropomorphism, its entanglement, via the Bible, in forces which opposed some of the major insights of modern science, its necessary failure to resolve the problem of evil. In a bright new period of scientific progress it was perhaps something which should be discarded. Some of these problems did not apply to Buddhism, which though moral needed not be interpreted in a puritanical way, but offered a discipline of self training: especially as it appeared "cleaned up" by Buddhist modernists, who regarded the mythology of the Pali canon as something added to the "original Gospel" of Buddhism. Such modernism could present Buddhism as empirical, scientific, and at the same time spiritual. Certainly the problems of accepting the outlines of Buddhism were in some ways less than accepting the entanglements of a Christianity in the toils of Biblical and doctrinal complications.

If such remarks could apply to the Theravada, they could even more

strongly apply to Zen. The work of D. T. Suzuki in bringing a form of Zen to the attention of Westerners was prodigious. Zen preserved the essentials of Buddhist meditation, was practically oriented, and was iconoclastic in relation to theories. This meant that a whole slew of intellectual objections could be sidetracked. The connections to martial and creative arts was also attractive. Alan Watts ' work, though often criticized by scholars and regarded by home-grown Zen adherents in Japan with some scepticism, nevertheless was important in bringing together the elements of a Western style of Buddhism. Ultimately, as Buddhism has become indigenous in China, Korea, and Japan, it needs to indigenize in the West.

Parallel with concern for meditation was Western interest in the life of bhakti or meditation. This perhaps more widely expressed itself through Hindu forms, particularly in the movement known as Hare Krishna (the International Society for Krishna Consciousness). But some of the movements within Buddhism expressing more "theistic" elements have made progress in the West – such as the Soka Gakkai. A factor here is the way in which Buddhism has modernized its methods and forms.

One aspect of Buddhist belief has also a curious background in the West. While the idea of rebirth has not at all been part of the Christian heritage, it seems to have a perennial appeal. A surprising number of Westerners believe in some form of it. There are, it is true, some modern scientific problems about it – how to weld it to the picture supplied by modern genetics, for example; and the work of Dr. David Gosling in probing the beliefs of both scientifically trained Buddhists and Hindus suggests that among traditionalists there is some falling off of belief in rebirth. But it is something which, as I have said, retains a perennial attraction for a significant number of Westerners. Many people, too, have become disillusioned with traditional Christian teachings on heaven and hell (particularly hell). Rebirth seems a more down-to-earth way of conceiving continued existence, and does not need to hold a retributive theory of punishment. It also chimes in with the idea that after death one can continue to make progress. The sharp either-or of Christian traditional ideas about the judgment of the dead seems too simple to many people.

I have no doubt that Buddhism is in the West to stay. The countries of South and East Asia have had to absorb a lot of Western ideas: and the reverse is happening as Buddhism becomes domesticated on the western scene. As indicated at the beginning, there is not just the Buddhism of occidental, but also that of oriental populations who have migrated into the United States. The two groups should be able to work together in harmony.

There is also the wider question of the absorption of Buddhist notions into wider Western thinking. A notable example was the influence of Buddhism

on the economist Schumacher in his influential book ***Small is Beautiful.*** It has also permeated the environmental movement, in conjunction with cognate Taoist values (Zen, of course, combines both Buddhist and Taoist motifs). Buddhist accents on non-violence have had some impact, though the unfortunate involvement of Buddhists in Sinhala nationalism and the present conflict in Sri Lanka remind Western onlookers that every tradition has some trouble living up to its ideals.

Can we discern any trends for the future in the establishment of Western Buddhism? First, it will from now on probably be that most Buddhist scholarship will occur in the West. For many of the main areas of traditional scholarship, particularly Tibet, are now under Marxist domination. Of course, Japanese and Sri Lankan, together with Thai and perhaps Burmese, scholarship will remain vital: but the last twenty years has seen a great growth in both material and human resources in the West devoted to elucidating the immense store of Buddhist texts and writing up the various lines of Buddhist history. It represents a vigorous enterprise among scholars, many of whom are themselves practicing Buddhists, while the rest are undoubtedly sympathetic to the religion.

Second, there still remains to be worked out the patterns of symbiosis between Western values and Buddhist ones. In countries such as Sri Lanka there are the gods, the devales, the practices of exorcism and a number of other "popular" features of ordinary folks' religion which are incorporated into the main structure of Buddhism, though subordinated to the higher message and the purer cults of self training and mindfulness. So far the West has helped to produce a kind of Buddhist modernism, which in turn has had an important impact on indigenous varieties of Buddhism, as in the writings of such figures as K. N. Jayatilleke and Padmasiri de Silva in Sri Lanka. This emphasizes the scientific character of Buddhism and its empiricist philosophy. A similar Western synthesis is no doubt called for. But at the popular level there is no doubt a call to integrate Western artistic and musical forms into the ceremonial of Buddhism, and to show ways in which the Buddha transcends also the "gods" of the West. But who are these gods? Perhaps they are the television and sports stars, or may be those strange gurus, like Freud and Milton Friedman, whom Western intellectuals are often so intent on following.

Third, we shall undoubtedly see a still greater integration between Occidental and immigrant Buddhists, in which a synthesis of the differing forms of Buddhism will emerge. Already the modern world has seen the coming into being of ecumenical Buddhism, from the time of the Mahabodhi Society onwards. Westerners will no doubt play their role in promoting this.

Finally, one may anticipate greater dialogue, already started, between

Buddhism and traditional Western religions, notably Christianity and Judaism. I do not personally think that it is possible, as some thinkers have rather blithely argued, to postulate a transcendental unity of all religions, and in particular of Buddhism and Christianity. There is no need for such a unity. I think that increasingly Christianity and Buddhism will come to see one another as complementary religions: containing mutual contradictions, but correcting each other (hopefully in a friendly way). They will help to stimuate self-criticism in one another, and the determination to persist in practical, rather than theoretical, harmony. We live in one world now. Tensions between religions can be dangerous: and humans should respect one another. So we may hope for a more federating aspect of our thinking about religions. From this standpoint, in the foreseeable future, Buddhism will continue to grow in the West and add its contribution to the pursuit of human harmony and enlightenment. For this the U.S. doctrine of the separation of Church and State provides a useful framework.

In speaking of Buddhism and Christianity as being complementary I am thinking of the vital role in all human contexts of friendly criticism. We have made advances in human knowledge and behavior not by conformism – though that may in some degree be important in the peaceful ordering of society – but through critiquing traditional positions and through subjecting our values and theories to continual testing. This means that the modern world can go through a very creative adventure. For each different culture and tradition can bring something of a critique to the others. While Buddhism is rapidly becoming part of the indigenous scene in the West its roots are sufficiently non-Western for it to be able to present alternative views to those which prevail or have prevailed in the West. Let me list some challenges which Buddhism presents to Western values. First, its espousal of an event based ontology is profoundly significant in stimulating a new way of looking at the world. The West has been slow in moving beyond a substance ontology which is surely now outmoded. Second, Buddhist attitudes towards other living beings represents a profound alternative to the lordly Western views of human rights over animals. Third, the fact that Buddhism is, to use a Pali term, an *ehipassiko* kind of religion – a "come-and-see-One" – foreshadows a more empirical way of considering religious and other existential experience. Fourth, the Buddhist analysis of human problems as being due to hatred, greed, and confusion could be used as a basis for a new and moralistic search for the impulses which underlie the tragedies of human violence and cruelty. Perhaps we are on the verge of a new and richer human psychology.

These, then, are some reflections upon the way Buddhism has come into the West and how it will maintain itself as a significant force into the future, at a very vital time in the development of human civilization. It should, of course, be borne in mind that as Buddhism is getting established in the Western context

so are other non-Western religious traditions. This will render the developments of a new civilization even more complex. But there can be no doubt, not only that Buddhism is in the West to stay, but that it has the power deeply to affect Western life, in due course. So what the West calls the Enlightenment will meet Buddhist Enlightenment. May both together drive away human darkness!

Ninian Smart
University of California, Santa Barbara, U.S.A.

V

Interreligious dialogue toward human development

SIX BUDDHIST ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHER RELIGIONS

In the last half of the 20th century, the two striking features of religion have been (1) the increased cooperation between different religious groups, such as in the World Fellowship of Buddhism, the Christian ecumenical movement, and dialogue for peace among world religions,[1] and (2) the opposite tendency of religious conflict that provoked rebellion and war in Ireland, the Middle East, and in Iran. This paper will explore how traditional Buddhism relates to the issue of religious conflict or cooperation in the modern world.

Even though in 1989 the Dalai Lama received the Nobel Peace Prize, and even though Buddhism has a reputation for peace, recent headlines from Sri Lanka,[2] SE Asia, and Ladhak[3] show Buddhists involved in various forms of religious intolerance and war. Perhaps the most Buddhist state in the world, Burma, is now involved in armed conflict that has racial and religious overtones.[4] On the other hand, the positive and peaceful relations of Buddhism to Taoism and Confucianism in China, and with Shinto in Japan, have been noted as striking model of interreligious cooperation[5] among the major religions.

Never before have we been able to see the diverse forms of Buddhism in such detail and depth, not just in terms of individual practice and ideas, but especially in terms of Buddhist institutions and cultural variations. There is pluralism outside Buddhism, but also pluralism within Buddhism. Thus, today Buddhists face the question not only of how to relate to other religions, but also how to relate to other forms of Buddhism from different traditions.

This paper will give an overview of six methods that Buddhists have used to deal with religious differences as a way to clarify the range of options that contemporary Buddhists have to choose from.

There have been at least six different Buddhist attitudes toward other religious traditions:

1. separate and superior to other religions
2. compassionately engaged with other religions
3. other religions are early stages of development
4. Buddhism and other religions are complementary

5. all religions are historically relative and limited
6. Buddhism and other religions share the same essence

1. Separate and Superior Attitude

There is some justification to the argument that Gotama Buddha was not interested in other religions, and considered his teachings to be the exclusive way to salvation. In the popular *Mahā-Satipatthāna Sutta* the goal of the Buddha was for:

> the purification of beings,
> for the overcoming of sorrow and distress,
> for the disappearance of pain and sadness,
> for the gaining of the right path, for the realisation of Nibbana..[6]

This is then called the *ekayāno maggo*, which can be translated as "the one and only way," or it can be given a very different meaning as "the path that goes only one way." Maurice Walshe comments that the term is ambiguous since it literally means "one-going", and he observes that the oldest commentary, the *Sumangalavilāsinī* by Buddhaghosa, "offers a number of possibilities, thus showing that the old commentators were not entirely sure of the exact meaning."[7]

I have met a Burmese meditation master[8] who recited this *sutta* daily as a basis of his practice. He refused to discuss other religions, or the relation of Buddhism to other religions, because , as he said, such a question and its discussion was not conducive to overcoming suffering.[9] This interpretation of the phrase *ekayāno maggo* leads one to an EXCLUSIVISTIC or TRIUMPHALIST view of religion in which Buddhism is the only true way, everyone else is in error and destined for a bad end, and Buddhists not only do not need to learn from other religions, but will be in danger of being distracted from their goal by engaging the ideas and practices of other religions.

More recently, in the Taking Refuge ceremony practiced in 1989 by the INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST PROGRESS SOCIETY, the American branch of Fo-kuang Shan, Taiwan, initiates are asked the following questions: "Can you respect the Buddha as your teacher life after life and not take refuge in other religions, devas or demons?" "Can you respect the *Sangha* as your teacher life after life without taking refuge in other religious followers?"[10]

Although the English text of these vows is explicitly exclusivistic, the Chinese text uses the terms *wai-tao* (outside path) as the classic Buddhist phrase for conduct and ideas contrary to the path leading to enlightenment. Does

being an "outside path" refer to paths"outside of the Buddhist community" or "contrary to the Buddhist community"? It can be argued that there are many ideas and practices of other religions that are "on/in the path" *(nei-tao)* even though they are not part of Buddhist history. Accordingly, there is ambiguity in the term *wai-tao,* and it has not always been used in such an exclusivistic sense as implied by the English translation of the INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST PROGRESS SOCIETY.

2. Compassionately Engaged Attitude

In contrast to this exclusivism, it is interesting to see the model of practice offered by the enlightened one, Sakyamuni Buddha,[11] which I will call ENGAGED BUDDHISM (to echo the name of a contemporary movement[12]). First of all, because of the Buddha's concern to clarify perception and to remove falsely substantialized dogmas as a prime source of spiritual suffering, it was natural that he urged his followers to avoid religious controversy and debate based on particular ideologies and dogma. This is a major theme in one of the earliest Buddhist scriptures, the Suttanipata, where the Buddha urged his followers not to be attached to their own point of view, and not to degrade the views of others.[13] Furthermore, when a prominent pillar of society named Upali wished to become a follower of the Buddha, he was advised by the Buddha not to cease being a supporter of Jainism.[14] As it is reported in the *Suttanipāta,* "I do not say that all recluses and brahmins are involved in decay and death."[15]

When the Buddha was confronted with a contentious religious question, he often avoided answering directly but instead offered an alternate teaching of his own. In addition, he sometimes would take the themes of the question and reinterpret them in terms of his own understanding. Very often this meant taking ideas and practices about the external world and reinterpreting them as internal attitudes and virtues. For example, when asked about proper ritual sacrifice, he re-interpreted these external actions into methods of self-control and mindfulness. Indeed, the core teaching of Sakyamuni often is expressed as "being a true Brahmin." Instead of making sacrifices to the gods to gain their favour, the Buddha advised cultivating the qualities and virtues of the gods in order to win their company. Rather than excluding or rejecting the inherited religious tradition of India, Sakyamuni used the tradition but redefined it in terms of his own vision.[16]

The motivation for this outreach toward others is given by the Buddha to his disciples when he sent them forth as missionaries:

> Take steps and go forth for the benefit of the people, for the tranquility of the people, out of love for the people of the world, for the benefit and tranquility of men and deva....There are beings in this world

> whose eyes of mind are covered with a minimum of dust, they are corrupt simply because they have not heard the Dharma.[17]

Based on this model, Buddhists could accept the inherited religious traditions of others, but would actively redefine their key concepts in a way that would be consistent with the vision of the Buddha.

Lily De Silva reminds us, however, that the early texts are not uncritical of other religions. In the *Sandakasutta* Ananda enumerates four pseudo-religions (materialistic and amoral religions) and four unsatisfactory religions (in which the teacher claims omniscience, or is based on revelation, or mere logic, or skepticism).[18] Also, in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta* and the *Dhammapada* the Buddha says that there are no saints or perfected beings outside the Noble Eightfold Path. "Any religion is true and efficacious to the extent to which it contains aspects of the Nobel Eightfold Path,"[19] observes Prof. De Silva. Nevertheless, in spite of the positive virtues of other traditions, apparently no other religion has completely taught the Eightfold Path since the four levels of Buddhist saints[20] are not found in other religions. Instead, followers of other groups are still prone to greed, false views, hatred, obsessive habits, and egotism.[21] Thus, the superiority of the Buddhist community is clearly proclaimed.

In brief, even though other religions do not have the higher levels of religious attainment, they are not rejected by the Buddha, but based on their content they are selectively supported at some times, and constructively reinterpreted at other times.

3. Developmental Attitude

In China, Buddhism became clearly defined over against Chinese traditions of spiritual practice because of the radical new social institution of the monastic life. Nevertheless, China also had a cultural tradition enabled Buddhism eventually to be placed on a par with Taoism and Confucianism in the famous slogan that "the three religions are one" *(san-chiao ho-i)*.

Instead of parity among the three religions of China, Chinese Buddhists were more likely to follow the pattern that becomes fully articulated by Tsung-mi (780-841) in which there is a hierarchy of practices. Other paths such as Confucianism and Taoism have some validity as preliminary stages of spiritual development and should be practiced as religiousness suitable for rebirth as "gods and men." However, Confucianism and Taoism are only "provisional" teachings, whereas Buddhism is both "provisional" and "ultimate". As people grow

spiritually it is expected that they will move beyond the limited provisional practices based on morality and merit and will advance to higher stages found only in Buddhism.[22]

This can be called the FULFILLMENT or DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL regarding other traditions, since some validity is given to them on their own grounds without redefining them. Finally, however, the other traditions are fulfilled in Buddhism. This is very similar to the approach used by Thomas Aquinas in relating to Greek philosophy, and later adopted by many Roman Catholics in their approach to other religions. According to Aquinas, all other traditions were based upon human reason. While they could be good and true, they were not yet sufficient for salvation, but needed to be completed by divine revelation as found in the Bible. This distinction between reason and revelation allowed other religions to be honored as good but incomplete.

4. Complementary Attitude

In China and Japan, another model of interreligious relationship arose, namely, a COMPLEMENTARY relation. In this attitude, each tradition has its unique place, but serves different functions. Confucianism provides social ethics and a guide to success, Taoism provides health and a balance with natural forces and spirits, whereas Buddhism provides a source of transcendence in the face of life and death. As is said in Japan, "Shintoism deals with life, and Buddhism deals with death." The different religions are not ranked, but are seen as "separate and equal."

A major proponent of this view of parity and cooperation of Buddhism with other religions based on their different social functions was the Indian Buddhist monarch Asoka (r.c. 269-235). Although he was a Buddhist, his stone edicts always praise the practice of morality and religion generically, without singling out Buddhism for special praise. Similarly, the Chinese Buddhist historian Tsan-ning (919-1001) in his *Seng-shih lueh* (Compendium on Monastic History)[23] advocates the equality of the "three religions" (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism) based on their different social roles. It is important to remember, however, that Tsan-ning was one of the rare Buddhist monks who was appointed to a position in the government, and his attitude reflects his ability to understand Buddhism from a political view: that is, to stand outside of it and to view it in terms of its social role. Thus, teaching the equality of Buddhism and other traditions is a method of supporting public harmony and stability rather than as a method for final salvation.

5. Relativity of All Religious Traditions

Etienne Lamotte has pointed out that even though the Buddha's teaching

of causal relationships is considered to be unchanging *(paramartha),* how it is taught, learned, and followed by people is part of the world of change *(samvrti).* As a consequence, Buddhism as a community, a tradition, and a practice was also subject to the universal principle of causality and change: the Buddhist tradition within society and history was relative. Accordingly, it is not surprising that early in Buddhist thought there developed the idea that Buddhism itself would one day decline and disappear.[24] This idea became dramatically reflected in the Buddhist theories of *mo-fa* which predict the decline and disappearance of the True Dharma of Buddhism from the world.[25]

Another powerful basis for objectifying the Buddhist tradition and seeing it as relative was the structure of many Buddhist meditations. In order to free people from attachment to the idea of an ego, the Buddha taught his followers to objectify their body, their feelings, their perceptions, their sensations, their understanding, their reactions, and their consciousness. For example, well-known meditation methods showing this approach are the analysis of everything into the five *skandha,* or into the eighteen *dhātu* (organized in terms of our six senses), or into the fourfold mindfulness *(Satipatthāna Sutta).* It is only natural that sooner or later, this same method of objectification of our personal realms should also be applied to aspects of Buddhism itself. Just as our feelings and thoughts and ideas arise, abide, and pass away, so also do elements of Buddhism. And just as we should develop non-attachment to all other contingent things, so also we should learn non-attachment to Buddhism. This is one of the most unique features of Buddhism, and is summed up by the illustration of Buddhism as the raft that is left behind once one reaches the other shore of enlightenment.

From these perspectives of practice, there is a solid basis within Buddhism to view it from outside and as relative. I would also argue, however, that the experience of confronting other religions and recognizing that there are other ways of practice is a useful modern method of helping us to become (a) less attached to Buddhism as a relative, worldly phenomena, and (b) more alert to the Dharma that is beyond the world of change and circumstance. Furthermore, facing "the other" helps to free us from the natural tendency to develop false ingroups and a false Buddhist egotism. Thus, engaging other religions can be a modern form of going to the cemetary and looking at various states of decay of physical bodies. That is to say, we can look at other religions and realize that their imperfect practices, their culturally influenced forms, their historical changes, are also what Buddhism is. This could be called the practice of viewing other religions in order to realize non-ego. The experiences of other religions in history offer valuable lessons to help Buddhists develop insight and non-attachment regarding developments in their own community. In any event, this approach of objectifying and relativizing all religions including Buddhism, brings down the wall between Buddhism and other religions.

A very different variation on this theme occurs when the conditioned nature of religion dissolves into an awakening to the emptiness of everything, including religion. Because this approach to other religions does not actively respond to the particularities of other religions, I have not included it as an "approach" or "view" toward other religions. Instead, this perception of other religions is indistinguishable from an approach or view toward everything else in the universe, and therefore is better classified as wisdom about life, not a view toward other religions.[26]

6. Buddhism and Other Religions Share the Same Essence

Among the attitudes discussed above, the first approach advocated that other religions be abandoned, the second approach required that other religions be changed, whereas the third, fourth and fifth approaches accepted the validity of other religions in their own emphasis and context but as only a limited and temporary development. The last approach toward other religions proposes that all religion have two levels, a mundane and a transcendent, a secondary and a primary. Whereas religions are differentiated at their mundane, secondary level (approaches three, four and five), they are unified at their primary or transcendent level. According to this view, the effort of the Buddha (the second appraoch) was always to try to lead people from the mundane level of religion to the transcendent level. From this point of view, the separation and conflict between religions shown by the first approach is to be expected since the people who represent this approach are stuck at the mudane level of their religion, and have not been liberated by experiencing the transcendent essence of their religion. According to this view, once people reach the primary level they can see the essential unity of all religions.

This sixth approach acknowledges that all religions have different functions and manifestations, but affirms a shared essence, an underlying oneness of all religion. This is like the perennial philosophy insofar as it expresses an inconceivable but tangible oneness at the heart of all religions. However, it does not blend all religions together, but takes into account the particular histories and functions of each particular religion. Nevertheless, it clearly subordinates the mundane, historical forms of religions by proposing that it may be necessary to change and even abandon the external, conventional forms in order to come to the final and liberating truth.

It has been common in Mahayana, especially in the Perfection of Wisdom *(prajñā-pāramita)* tradition to emphasise the emptiness of all conventional distinctions, and even to affirm the non-duality of all things because they

are all fundamentally empty. This insight was expressed best by the Hua-yen slogan of *shih-shih wu-ai* (non-obstruction among phenomena). Having removed our own false mental distinctions *(nirvikalpa)* that divide ourselves and other traditions, this non-dual attitude affirms non-difference among world religions. This Buddhist idea of non-duality does not gloss over differences but acknowledges them, but then affirms that their true nature is the shared mark of emptiness *(sūnyatā)*. This tradition is on the fringe of the sixth approach, but finally restrains itself from making any positive claim about the unity of all religions. Even to acknowledge other religions, or to name a shared essence is to go too far. Rather, it just affirms that any and all things, religions, people, ideas, and apples, bear the shared mark of emptiness. Thus, the basic claim of this tradition is not just the unity of all religions, but the unity of everything. Accordingly, this cannot be used as a Buddhist approach to other religions since it is not restricted to religion. Rather, it is a Buddhist approach to all particulars, to all experiences in life. This non-dual approach is not like the claim of the "perennial philosophy" that there is a "shared essence" among the great religions of the world. It only says that all particulars at their heart are empty and therefore non-dual. Accordingly, this affirmation of a positive, unifying dimension among all religions is a new development beyond the more restrained affirmation of the non-dual, shared *sūnyatā* , and non-ego teaching of Buddhism.

Buddhism has frequently cooperated with other religions in Asian cultures. In China there was the slogan that the "three religions return to the one" *(san-chiao kuei-i)* that referred to the common basis of Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. One of the leading advocates for this position was Ta-hui Tsung-kao (1089-1163):

> Earlier when I was discussing...about the Three Teachings, Sakyamuni, Confucius and Li Lao [Lao-tzu], I said, "They see with one eye, they hear with one ear, they smell with one nose, they taste with one tongue, they touch with one body, they think with one mind."[27]

The conceptual device that Ta-hui used to express how the Three Religions could be the same in their source, but so different in their worldly expression was the formula first used by Wang-pi (226-249), namely, the distinction between substance and function *(t'iand yung)*. [28] While the functions and manifestations of the Three Religions are different, their inner substance or essence was the same: "For they are the same in principle but different in manifestation."[29]

> Once you have succeeded in understanding the teachings of this school [of mine], then you will know that the laws taught by the sages of the Three Teachings are different roads that lead to the same place. Today's ordinary men look at appearances, they come out of different doors and call one

> another good and evil. Taoists, not believing in the Buddha, say that Buddhism is annihilation. The disciples of the Buddha don't admit [that there is truth in] Taoist teaching. When there is this attitude, a competitive debate ensues. Where there is competitive debate, the Way has been departed from. Why? In the Way there originally is no conflict.[30]

The major Ta-hui scholar in the West, Miriam Levering, has observed that Ta-hui faced squarely "the dilemma of there being three separate traditions all making claim to insight into truth." Nevertheless, while acknowledging their mundane difference, he was convinced that their ultimate realization could not be different from that which he had experienced in his own enlightenment.

> He did not, however, make an effort to think objectively about the phenomena of other traditions, nor about what their symbols might mean to their adherents. He rather used his own understanding of the meaning of Confucian and Taoist symbols as the sole reference point. He ignored half of the Confucian tradition in order to stress the truth of the other half, and never gave the practitioners of Taoist "techniques" a chance to speak for themselves.[31]

Levering criticizes Ta-hui for not dealing with Confucianism and Taoism in terms of their own self-understanding, and therefore that he was not a good phenomenologist or historian of religion. Instead, she proposes that he is better understood as a "theologian, a person whose job it is to determine how his own tradition can respond to the truth claims of others." In particular, he "based his understanding of the meaning of Confucian and Taoist classics on his own experiential religious insight....He leaped, of course, to the conclusion that what [the Confucian sage] Mencius' words meant to Ta-hui must be close to what they meant to Mencius himself," which Levering observes is "a dangerous conclusion"[32] since it "led Ta-hui to be blind to possible religious meanings not consonant with his own experience."

A Buddhist thinker who avoids this pitfall is the eminent Buddhist leader in Thailand, Bhikkhu Buddhadasa. In his writings, Buddhadasa has noted that Buddhism recognizes two ways of using language, namely, (1) dharma language and (2) ordinary conventional language. Using this distinction Buddhadasa identified the labels of the different religions as conventional language[33] and not the standpoint of ultimate, enlightened practice. That is to say, differences between religious people are real and it is common to speak this way. However, there is a higher truth that all religions refer to, and it is in this higher truth that all religions are united.

> The ordinary, ignorant worldling is under the impression that there are many religions and that they are all different to the extent of being

> hostile and opposed. Thus one considers Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism as incompatible and even bitter enemies. Such is the conception of the common person who speaks according to the impressions held by common people....If, however, a person has penetrated to the fundamental nature (dhamma) of religion, he will regard all religions as essentially similar. Although he may say there is Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and so on, he will also say that essentially they are all the same. If he should go to a deeper understanding of dhamma until finally he realizes the absolute truth, he would discover that there is no such thing called religion – that there is no Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam.[34]

The advantage of this formulation by Buddhadasa of two levels of language is that he does not deny that members of other religions will hold views that conflict with his own, and which may set up barriers between different religions. Instead, he acknowledges this actuality, but then argues that religions have different levels of truth, and that the unity he affirms is at a different level of understanding. Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and so on have a more primary level of truth than many of their adherents may realize. Indeed, Buddhadasa then goes on to suggest that there is a further level of religious life in which religion itself disappears.

It is interesting that Buddhadasa uses the example of water. First there are many kinds of water: rainwater, ditchwater, sewer water, which ordinary people can and should distinguish. However, at another level, when the pollutants are removed, fundamentally these waters have the same substance. Nevertheless, there is yet a third level of perception in which water itself disappears when we divide it into hydrogen and oxygen. Based on this simile and his earlier remarks, we can see that there are really three levels outlined by Buddhadasa: conventional distinctions, shared essence, and voidness. The traditional Buddhist doctrine of emptiness and non-duality eliminates reli gion, as in Buddhadasa's third point. What separates Buddhadasa from those non-dualists is the second level that Buddhadasa proposes, namely, a lower level of dhammic language that moves beyond conventional distinctions, but which is not yet at the highest level that proclaims "No religion!"

It is this intermediate stage between conventional truth and the highest truth that is Buddhadasa's contribution to our quest for a Buddhist attitude toward other religions. At this level, the distinctions between religions are seen as temporary, partial, and secondary in comparison to the more important understanding of the kinship between different religious people. This provides the most complete approach to other religions ever articulated by a Buddhist, and provides a basis for differentiation, for parity and collaboration, and for transcendence. Accordingly, we who work in the field of interreligious study and dialogue are deeply indebted to Venerable Bhikkhu Buddhadasa for his clear

leadership in our new world of religious pluralism.

Concluding Reflections

Although Buddhists regularly affirm a cluster of ideals based on compassion and non-dual wisdom, their practice has often been based on a feeling of satisfaction with their own tradition that has inhibited Buddhists from learning about other religions. Thus, the issues of religious pluralism have been rather neglected by Buddhists. Nevertheless, our heightened consciousness of living together in one world community increasingly demands that all religions face the task of trying to define some universal principles of interaction (such as in Stages Four, Five and Six above).

While Buddhism can be deservably proud for having a history that is less violent and more harmonious than many other world religions, still it has not developed a set of educational programs to recognize and interact with other religions on an equal basis. This has allowed Buddhists to remain ignorant of and isolated from other religions, and has sometimes fostered open conflict and even violence.

A notable example of a modern Buddhist who actively works with other religions is the Dalai Lama. In particular, he usually approaches other religions and opposing political powers with the declaration: "All human beings are seeking happiness." This assertion immediately provides a common ground between himself and others. Furthermore, he implies that the practices of others, even though they may conflict with his own wishes, still they have some positive value since they must somehow be related to providing happiness to their followers.

At other times, the Dalai Lama has argued for the value and importance of having a variety of religious practices by comparing them to food: Just as you need to eat more than rice all the time, so people need religious diversity. This idea (similar to the Fourth Approach above) implies that we can learn and grow better when we have the added richness provided from religious perspectives different from our own.

For many years the University of Chicago Divinity School had a professor of Buddhist Studies (Joseph Kitagawa), and five years ago the Divinity School at Harvard University appointed its own professor of Buddhist Studies (E. David Eckel). Even though it is not uncommon for modern Christian thinkers to study Buddhism (such as Gordon Kaufman and Harvey Cox at

Harvard, and Langdon Gilkey and David Tracy at Chicago), the inclusion of Buddhism as part of the religious education of Christian ministers and teachers implies that Christians could benefit from learning about Buddhism. In Taiwan several Christian professors have studied Buddhism (such as Prof. Ingram Seah and Prof. Ching-fen Hisiao who did doctoral studies on Pure Land Buddhism at Princeton Theological Seminary). However, to my knowledge no Buddhist courses are taught in Taiwan Christian seminaries, nor are courses on other world religions taught in Buddhist colleges. In contrast, a number of Japanese Buddhist thinkers have formally studied Christianity, such as Masao Abe who is very active in teaching Buddhism in America. Moreover, in the past Confucianism and Taoism were taught within Buddhist temples, but in the modern world Chinese Buddhism has been silent about its relationship to other religions.

Religious pluralism is a major issue in modern society, both intellectually and morally. Based upon the Buddhist commitment to compassion and wisdom, I would argue that it would be unBuddhist to attack other religions, and also unBuddhist to ignore other religions. If we are to move beyond conventional morality, some educational programs are necessary. Based on the analysis of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, it is important to transcend conventional views of religious differences and to affirm the highest Buddhist truth of non-duality by acting to affirm unity among all people and all religious groups.

The radical difference between conventional wisdom and Buddhist dhammic morality can be illustrated by quoting a poem by the exiled Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hanh. His poem was written in response to hearing of a "young girl on a small boat who was raped by a Thai pirate. She was only twelve, and she jumped into the ocean and drowned herself."

> When you first learn of something like that, you get angry at the pirate, you naturally take the side of the girl. As you look more deeply you will see it differently. If you take the side of the little girl, then it is easy. You only have to take a gun and shoot the pirate. But we cannot do that. In my meditation I saw that if I had been born in that village of the pirate and raised in the same conditions as he was, I am now the pirate. There is a great likelihood that I would become a pirate. I cannot condemn myself so easily. In my meditation, I saw that many babies are born along the Gulf of Siam, hundreds every day, and if we educators, social workers, politicians, and others do not do something about the situation, in 25 years a number of them will be come sea pirates....If you take a gun and shoot the pirate, you shoot all of us, because all of us are to some extent responsible for the state of affairs.

As a consequence of this meditation, Thich Nhat Hanh wrote a poem entitled

'Please Call Me By My True Names':

Do not say that I'll depart tomorrow
because even today I still arrive.

Look deeply: I arrive in every second
to be a bud on a spring branch,
to be a tiny bird, with wings still fragile,
learning to sing in my new nest,
to be a caterpillar in the heart of flower,
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive in order to laugh and to cry,
in order to fear and to hope,
the rhythm of my heart is the birth and
death of all that are alive...

I am the 12-year-old girl, refugee
on a small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean after
being raped by a sea pirate,
and I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable
of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the politburo, with
plenty of power in my hands,
and I am the man who has to pay his
"debt of blood" to my people,
dying slowly in a forced labor camp.

My joy is like spring, so warm it makes
flowers bloom in all walks of life.
My pain is like a river of tears, so full it
fills up the four oceans.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can hear all my cries and my laughs
at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can wake up,
and so the door of my heart can be left open,
the door of compassion.[35]

Accordingly, in seeking a Buddhist response to the pluralism of world religions, we must ask who we are. Are we one with others or separate from them? Are we brown or white, are we young or old, are we Asian or Western, are we Buddhist or Muslim? Are we trapped in conventional labels?

Or are we all pieces of sunlight, are we all members of one human family, are we all musical notes in a cosmic symphony? Are we one or many? And given these universal perspectives, how should Buddhists act?

The multi-dimensioned nature of traditional Buddhism means that it has many different attitudes toward other religions depending on our level of understanding. However, for those of us who wish to conform to the highest wisdom and the most universal virtue, we may well suggest that the names of the different world religions are not the truest names, they are not the dhamma names. Before we exclude each other because of religious labels and differences, we must make sure of our shared human and religious unity, and then ask: "Please call me by my true name."

David W. Chappell

University of Hawaii at Manoa,
Department of Religion, Honolulu, Hawaii.

ENDNOTES :

1. Perhaps this is best demonstrated by the interfaith organization called the WORLD CONFERENCE ON RELIGION AND PEACE that held its fifth international assembly in 1989 in Melbourne with over 650 participants representing mainly Christians, Buddhists, Islam and Hindus, plus a wide variety of other religions. Its address is WCRP/International, 14 chemin Auguste-Vilbert, 1218 Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland. Other interfaith events sponsored by particular religions were the peace gathering at Assisi in 1985 organized by the Catholic Church and the peace gathering on Mt. Hiei in Japan in 1987 organized by various Buddhist groups headed by Venerable Yamada of Tendaishu.
2. See Mark Juergensmeyer, "What the Bhikkhu Said: Reflections on the Rise of Militant Religious Nationalism", ***Religion*** 19 (1989).
3. See the report from the ***New York Times***, September 13, 1989 and the paper by John Crook entitled "Buddhist Ethics and the Problem of Ethnic Minorities: The Case of Ladakh."
4. In 1989 the Burmese government exercised political discrimination and armed suppression against the Muslim Shan minority.
5. See Wing-tsit Chan, "The Historic Chinese Contribution to Religious Pluralism and World Community", in Edward J. Jurji, ed., ***Religious Pluralism and World Community*** (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), pp.115-123.
6. From the Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta, trans. by Maurice Walshe, ***Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha*** (London: Wisdom Publications, 1987), p.335
7. Ibid., p.589, n.626.
8. These remarks were made in the discussion following a Dharma talk at the Koko An Zendo in Hawaii.
9. The Burmese meditation master was giving a Dharma Talk at the Koko-an Zendo of the Diamond Sangha in Honolulu in the early 1980's.
10. ***Refuge Ceremony,*** International Buddhist Progress Society, 3456 S. Glenmark Drive, Hacienda Heights, California, U.S.A. 91745.
11. The best studies of the relationship of Gotama Buddha to persons of other religious groups has been done by Lily De Silva, "The Buddha, the Eightfold Path and the Other Religions", ***Dialogue, New Series,*** Vol.XV, Nos.1-3 (1988) : 84-100; and Padmasiri de Silva's article in John Hick's volume on ***Religious Pluralism.***
12. The INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF ENGAGED BUDDHISTS is a movement started in Thailand by Sulak Sivaraksa. See ***Seeds of Peace*** (1989).
13. *Suttanipāta* 798.
14. *Upalisutta*, Majjhimanikāya i.371-387.
15. *Suttanipāta* 1082.
16. See the *Vasetthasutta*, Majjhima-nikaya I (a).
17. *Vinaya, Mahāvaga I*, p.10, translated in Nakamura Hajime, ***Gotama Buddha*** (Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1977), p.83.
18. *Majjhimanikāya* i, 154.
19. Lily De Silva, "The Buddha, the Eightfold Path and the Other Religions", ***Dialogue, New Series,*** Vol. XV, Nos. 1-3 (1988), pp.92-93.

20. The four levels of spiritual attainment according to the early Buddhist tradition are the *sotāpanna* (stream enterer), *sakādāgāma* (the once returner), *anāgāma* (the non-returner) and the *arahant* (the Noble One).
21. *Calasahanadasutta*, *Majjhimanikāya* i, 63-66. I am indebted to Lily De Silva for this citation, as well as for the reference to the ***Mahadukkhakkhandhasutta***, ***Majjhimanikāya*** i, 83-90, that makes a similar claim that only Buddhists can adequately understand the nature of pleasure, form, and sensations so as to be free from them.
22. The classic presentation of this developmental model of Tsung-mi is in his ***Yuan-jen lun***, T 45. 708-710.
23. T. 54:234-255.
24. See my article on "Early Forebodings of the Death of Buddhism", ***Numen*** XXVII.1 (Summer, 1980), pp.122-154.
25. See Jan Nattier, Buddhist Prophecies of the End of Buddhism: ***Studies in the Candragarbha Sutra*** (forthcoming).
26. See the Appendix for a fuller explanation.
27. Zokuzokyo I.31.5, p.473 a-b, translated by Miriam Levering, Buddhism in Sung Culture: The Ch'an Master Ta-hui Tsung-kao, unpublished ms., p.175.
28. See Wang Pi, ***Commentary on the "Lao Tzu"***, tr. by Ariane Rump with Wing-tsit Chan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1979), p.112. This distinction became very popular in later Chinese Buddhism. Fro example, it is used in the ***Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch***, tr. by Philip Yampolsky (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), Section 14.
29. Ibid., p.182. Wang Pi first developed these terms in his commentary on Lao-tzu.
30. Zokuzokyo I.31.5, p.461a, translated by Miriam Levering, ***Buddhism in Sung Culture***, p.176.
31. Ibid., p.190.
32. Ibid.
33. See Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, ***Buddhism and Christianity***, fifth Sinclaire Thompson Memorial Lecture Series, 1967 (Bangkok: Sublime Life Mission, 5/1 Atsadang Road, n.d.).
34. Donald Swearer, ed., ***Me and Mine: Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa*** (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1989), p.146
35. Thich Nhat Hanh, ***Being Peace*** (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 1987), pp.61-64.

BUDDHIST CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO SOCIAL LIBERATION

Liberation from Religion

Both Buddhism and Christianity have sets of doctrine dealing with the social dimension of life. The message of Buddha and Jesus was originally lived and witnessed in community. It was, however, not rules or precepts, but rather the "spirit" that kept the followers together in the form of a movement. Individual and social were two sides of the same reality. They belonged together and were inseparable.

As time passed, both religions became institutionalized. Spirit was overshadowed by rules, movement by institution, socialism by individualism. The emphasis on "authority" suppressed "personal conscience" and freedom, individual conversion suppressed social change. There is only one way to liberation, that is the "authorized" one, the one shown by the authority, who alone has the legitimacy claimed to be bestowed by the founder or God respectively. There is only "individual sin" committed by each person. The classic statement concerning the society has always been and is that by personal conversion one will contribute to the social change.

The religious paradox is clear. Sangha means community of monks in Buddhism, yet one talks of going to Nirvana alone. Trinity means the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in Christian religion, and prayer taught by Jesus is "Our Father" and not "My Father", yet the churches preach almost exclusively personal and individual salvation.

Forty years ago Buddhadasa gave a lecture called "The Mountain of the Buddha Dhamma Path". He shocked most people by stating that Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha were hindrances (mountain lying on the way) to attainment of Nirvana. They are means compared to a raft to cross a river. They are not an end to be stuck to.

Four years ago Buddhadasa repeated the statement in another way. He

said that the great obstacle to practise religion and to attain Dhamma was the "authority".

The message of Buddhadasa is relevant to all religions. The first liberation to be made is to liberate from "religion", here meaning "institution" and "authority". This is the stepping stone of religious freedom. There is a need to liberate from fundamentalism, dogmatism, absolutism, and triumphalism. It is indispensable to liberate from intellectual and metaphysical captivity. It is the time to recognize diversity and plurality of truth, conscience and freedom of each person, of the community, of the society, and to recognize the changing situation of the world.

Up to the 16th century only priests and authorized persons could read the Bible. Formation of Protestant churches made the Holy Scripture accessible and readable to the public by translating it into "ordinary" languages. Only two hundred years after the French revolution and social changes in Europe the Catholic Church convened the Second Vatican Council to recognize the "truth" in other religions and "outside the Church", and to "authorize" the use of local languages in liturgy. It requires hundreds of years for religious institutions to follow the changes of the world.

Buddhadasa was the first monk who gave sermons with ordinary speaking language after the second world war. Phra Phayom, one of his disciples, goes further by using the most common language of common people talking about Dhamma.

Liberation means first of all recognition of the value of common sense, common language, and common people. They are ways that lead to the common goal.

Liberation from Theology

It was during the late 1950s that theology of liberation was being formed. The spirit of the Vatican Council II enhanced its evolution. It was the systematic formulation of the reflection of peasants, workers, and students in Peru, and then in Latin American countries. The common people claimed their right in "doing theology" , reflecting their faith in the face of the oppressive situation of their society. They took seriously the social dimension in the life and teaching of Jesus. There are social sins as well as personal sins. Personal conversion is necessary, but there must be also social conversion for a real liberation. That is the social and structural change of the unjust society.

Theology of liberation has influenced not only the countries in which it

took shape, but also other countries all over the world. The 1970s were decade of revolution and political change and unrest in many countries. It was the decade the oppressed and unpriviledged claimed their rights and dignity, violently or peacefully. Religion played an important role. It came about not from the "authority" or "institution" but from the common people, the grassroots, assisted by some religious leaders and theologians. Examples are Black theology in North America and South America, Feminist theology in North America and in Europe, African theology in Africa, Peasant theology in the Philippines, and Minjung theology in South Korea.

The characteristic elements of these "theologies" are the awareness of freedom and human rights on the one hand, and from the awareness of self-criticism on the other. Marxism is one of the frames for social analysis. However, not all theologies of liberation could be associated to Marxism. Minjung theology claims itself free from the Marxist class struggle frame. They refer to the spirit of struggle for liberation from Japanese oppression in the Korean history as the roots and frame for analysis and criticism of actual social structure.

Theology of liberation departs from the liberation of theology. Theology used to be a study of sets of dogma transmitted through the history of the churches. For theology of liberation, "Theology is reflection, a critical attitude." "Theology must be man's critical reflection on himself, on his own basic principle." Furthermore, "Theological reflection would then necessarily be a criticism of society and the Church insofar as they are called and addressed by the Word of God; it would be a critical theory, worked out in the light of the Word accepted in faith and inspired by practical purpose – and therefore indissolubly linked to historical praxis." (TL. p.11)

Theology of liberation liberates itself from "theological captivity" which implies fundamentalism and dogmatism.

> "As critical reflection on society and the Church, theology is an understanding which both grows and, in certain sense, changes. If the commitment of the Christian community in fact takes different forms throughout history, the understanding which accompanies the vicissitude of this commitment will be constantly renewed and will take untrodden paths. A theology which has its reference only in "truths" which have been established once and for all – and not the Truth which is also the Way – can be only static and, in the long run, sterile. In this sense the often quoted and misinterpreted word of Bouillard take on new validity: 'A theology which is not up-to-date is a false theology.'" (TL. p.13)

To be an up-to-date critical reflection, theology, according to the

theology of liberation, does not exclude the functions of theology as wisdom and rational knowledge. However, it is not a "juxtaposition" of the new and the old formula. "The critical function of theology leads to redefinition of these other two tasks. Henceforth, wisdom and rational knowledge will more explicitly have eccesial praxis as their point of departure and their context." (TL. p.14)

An up-to-date theology has its stand on the present, is rooted in the past, and views for the future. It has to be a critical appraisal of historical praxis. It has to face the challenge of the present world in transformation. It has to be a theology of hope that inspires man along the path to the future. For this, theology has to have the prophetic function interpreting historical events, revealing and proclaiming their profound meaning. In order to discover the profound meaning a Christian "will be someone personally and vitally engaged where nations, classes, people struggle to free themselves from domination and oppression by other nations, classes, and people." (TL. p.13)

Besides the concept of theology, theology of liberation critically examines the concept of development taken today as purely economic. It has become a new theory of "developmentalism" that is in practice only a reformism and modernization. Development should be "a total process, which includes economic, social, political, and cultural aspects." (TL. p.26) Furthermore, "development must attack the root causes of the problems and among them the deepest is economic, social, political, and cultural dependence of some countries upon others – an expression of the domination of some social classes over others." (TL. p.26) Theology of liberation requests " radical change" of the society.

In its historical evolution, theology has always been supported by or associated to a particular philosophy. Greek philosophy was the main one. It was tranformed then into "philosophia perennis" of Aquinas in the middle ages that lasts at least up to the Vatican Council II for the Catholic Church, and up to the 19th century with the German philosophy of enlightenment for the Protestant Churches. Theology of liberation accepts the influence of Marxism in its frame of social analysis. Critical attitude towards the history, the focus on historical context and praxis, critics of oppressive social structure and class struggle derive from Marxist philosophy. However, theology of liberation is not a "Marxist theology", as one cannot say that the traditional theology is a "Greek theology". "Doing theology" is not only a process of going "back to the source" but also "down to earth", to the context of space and time. This is the common ground of all other "theologies" of liberation.

Liberation from European Theology

Third World theologies follow the path paved by theology of liberation. In Asia the term "contextualization" is used to stress the critical reflection of

the Christians. They have to reflect their faith within the Asian culture. Minjung theology is one example. Minjung means "people". The minjung are "those who are oppressed politically, exploited economically, alienated sociologically, and kept uneducated in cultural and intellectual matters." (MT. p.XVII)

> "Minjung theology is more than a rejection of European theology; it is an affirmation of Korean culture and history as the context in which Koreans must do theology. Korean theologians begin with the particularity of their own situation as defined by poor people's attempt to overcome their suffering....Minjung theology is Korean theology; it is a theology that is accountable to the liberating history and culture of poor people in Korea." (MT. p.IX)

Minjung theology is a typical "Asian" theology that stresses more on culture than other aspects. The affirmation of culture separates Asian theology from theology of liberation, which stresses on Marxist class analysis. Kim Yong-bock, a Korean theologian distinguishes Minjung Theology from Theology of Liberation, the minjung from the proletariat.

> "The difference between the minjung and the proletariat entails different view of history. Minjung history has a strong transcendental or transcending dimension – a beyond history – which is often expressed in religious form. There is close relationship between religion and the minjung's perception of history. Even if minjung history does not involve religious elements in an explicit manner, its folklore or cultural elements play a transcending function similar to religion in the perception of history."(MT. p.XV)

A Japanese peasant movement leader made an observation after many participations in the demonstrations along the streets of Seoul and other cities of Korea, that the whole atmosphere was more than political demonstration, it was a "religious festival" that touched your heart. He felt the religious spirit beneath the political struggle.

The history of the Protestant Church in Korea, in which Minjung theology is developed, goes back to the end of the 19th century. It was the Church of the poor and the oppressed during the Japanese occupation. The liberation movement started already since that period. Christian religion has been playing a unifying force for the movement since then up to today.

Korean minjung theology has its paradigm in the analysis of the minjung in the Korean history. Suh Nam-dong summarizes the historical development of minjung :

> "First, for a long time, the minjung were the objects of the ruling

power. Second, the minjung did not attempt to become the ruling power through a revolutionary process, but prepared the way to bring about a historical transformation. Third, step by step, they prepared the ground to become the ruling power.

This is a meaningful paradigm for minjung theology which shows that the minjung gradually liberate themselves from the position of being a historical object and become a historical subject. Minjung history and theology testify to the fact that the minjung overcome with their own power the external conditions which determine and confine them and become the subjects who determine their own social situation and destiny." (MT. p.169)

The Christians in Asia form only a very small minority. Theological reflection in this culturally rich continent varies in scale and approaches. Many are suspected by other religions as cripto-proselitism, or a readjusted strategy to absorb other religions. This happens more among intellectuals than among social activists. This is understandable if a Christian theologian or philosopher superficially tries to "apply" some elements in Buddhism, Hinduism, or other Asian religions, to Christianity without taking into account the whole historical, socio-cultural, and religious context of these religions. It is less complicated but dangerous to take only textual concepts of other religions. The Christian Council of Asia has clearly expressed its concern, and called attention to reality of Asia.

"The wealth of Asia is in its people. Over half of the world's population is in Asia. The wealth of people is not in numbers alone. People in Asia have a long history and a rich culture which spans thousands of years. Many of the world's greatest religious movements started in Asia. Many of the finest expressions of the creative human spirit are in Asia.

The discovery of the wealth of people is in many ways new. Up to now people have been taken for granted. The abundance of their tradition and culture has often been ignored. The reason for this is that we tend to see the people through the eyes of the rulers and the empire builders. History is often written from the perspective of the rulers and their boastful claims to fame.

We seldom realise that it is the work of the people that has made it possible for rulers to do things they claim. Time and again the traditions and the wealth of the people are used by the rulers for their own purposes. There is the need to discover people in their own terms.

A new mood is emerging in Asia – an awakening of the people themselves. A new history is being written in our time. No longer are

the victories and exploits of the powerful the central points for an understanding of history. Now the deep movements of human spirit and the growing solidarity of the people are the reference points for a perception of history. Empires rise and fall, kingdoms come and go, but the people remain as the permanent reality of the history." (MT. p.8)

Thai Context

Though with many similarities, Thailand is not Latin America, not the Philippines, and not Korea. It has its own historical, economic, political, and socio-cultural context. Buddhism has practically been the "national religion" of the country, which has been uninterruptedly under absolute monarchy since the thirteenth century up to 1932, when it was changed to constitutional monarchy. The country has never been colonized, which does not mean that it has never been otherwise exploited and oppressed by other nations.

During the past thirty years, Thailand has been advancing toward being a newly industrialized country. The industrial sector is being rapidly developed at the expense of the agricultural sector which is neglected. The majority of Thai people are farmers. They have become, in the name of development, poorer than before. This is certified by research of Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation, a government associated agency. Consequently more and more people from the rural areas pour into large urban centres. After harvest, most Thai villages are deserted. Only old women and children remain at home. Villagers have to find all possible ways to earn their living and to pay their debts. The environment is deteriorated to the extent that it is almost impossible to rely on as it used to be in the past. Very little or no more forest remains in which villagers can find food. Natural water resources become shallow, dried up, or polluted. Land becomes poorer, as villagers started growing mono crops three decades ago. Jute, cassava, maize, rubber trees were promoted for export. Farmers today cannot grow anything without chemical fertilizer and pesticide. A market-oriented mode of production has gradually replaced the subsistence economy.

Although village structure remains unchanged, community life is being shaken. Changes are taking place also in the villages. Consumerism does not spare even the most remote areas. Cultural life is changing. Traditional values are challenged.

Amidst this changing situation, Buddhism, impacted also by the changes, is making efforts to readjust its role. Among intellectuals and educated groups, Buddhadasa's message has been giving new light and inspiration. Dhamma Kaya

offers answers to urban middle class who seek peace of mind from the chaotic life of Bangkok. They go to the centre for meditation on week-end and special festivities. Santi Asoke offers an alternative for those who seek puritanism. Emphasis on strict practice of Sīla draws attention of those who are not happy with traditional institutional Buddhism. Dr.Prawase Wasi, a leading lay Buddhist, compares the three movements as putting emphasis on Paññā (wisdom), Samādhi (concentration), and Sīla (precepts) respectively. It could be said that they concern mostly urban people. In the rural areas, a good number of monks have become, during the past two decades, socially engaged. They assist the villagers not only in ceremonial matters, but also in their economic and social welfare. The number of "development monks" is constantly in creasing.

In political scene, external oberservers may expect more roles for Buddhist monks and lay leaders as they once saw during the period from 1973 to 1976. During those so-called flourishing democratic years, a group of young monks joined students, peasants, and workers demonstrating along the streets of Bangkok demanding human rights and justice. These observers may refer also to rebel leaders along the history of this country, most of whom were former monks and used Buddhist ideology to legitimize their actions against the rulers. However, these observations seem to be projections of the wishes of those who only look for public "events". One should pay attention also to facts of every day life that lie behind or beneath the struggles of the Buddhists in this country. Then one may see many forms of resistance of ordinary people, the poor, the grassroots, the unpriviledged who form the majority of this society, against oppressions, on their turn, which may not appear that evil. These, rather, are experiences that needed a more serious consideration, reflection, and elaboration.

Buddhadasa has paved this new way for more than 50 years. His critical reflections are the most important elements for the renewal of Buddhism in this age. His criticism has been directed not only towards traditional and institutional Buddhism, ordinary and folk Buddhism as such, but also towards secular society. His way of thinking is a most appropriate framework for analysis.

What will be interesting should be the further reflection and application of this framework to the micro experiences of monks and lay Buddhists, who in various ways present their liberative experiences. Phra Rajavaramuni's *Thai Philosophy of Education* (TPE), Sulak Sivaraksa's *Religion and Development* (RD), and Dr.Prawase Wasi's *Buddhist Agriculture* (BA) and other works of these authors are examples of this critical reflection.

Dr.Prawase Wasi's reflection is based on the assumption that the basis of Thai society are "(1) Farmers who are the majority of the population. (2)

Buddhism" (BA. p.17) He states that, from Buddhist perspective, the five pillars of society are " (1) Spirit, mind or soul (2) Production patterns (3) A natural environmental balance, (4) Economic self-reliance (5) Community or social life." (BA. p.31) For him, the greatest resources in rural development are the monks, village wisdom, and local resources. These have been neglected by the government. Village intellectuals are not recognized of their potentiality. If they are given their due role, they will become "subjects" of development and not "objects" as they are today.

Buddhist agriculture, for Dr.Prawase, "is a way to solve problems from below...There is a range of benefits, economic, spiritual, organizational, social and environmental.." (p.35) It is a "holistic" approach in development. The insight of this has to come from concrete experiences of those who practise it in their life. In his introduction to *Religion in Changing Society, Buddhism, Reform and Role of Monks in Community Development in Thailand,* he wrote:

> "Isolated materialistic development is disastrous. Human development has to come first. Spiritual development must have a place higher than purely materialistic development. Dhamma has to be spread in all its aspects...Buddhist Agriculture is used to describe ways of life based on spirituality, integrated farming, ecology and conservation, economic self-reliance and developing a community culture of mutual support. This leads to peaceful living, both within individual selves and peaceful coexistence in society and with the environment. The small scale successes of the Buddhist development described in this book are real. The new trend is small but is extremely relevant for world development...Buddhist Development is a new thinking for survival of humanity." (RCS. p.2)

The quotations are made as examples of critical reflection of a Buddhist in the Thai context today. Dr.Prawase, a medical doctor, but actively engaged in education and development, keeps on his contact with the grassroots, with whom he continues his reflection.

There are many relevant themes that are in actuality today that need further reflection. They are, for example, human rights, justice, development, education, children, women, and environment. The "loci" of these reflections should be the "praxis" or the lived experiences of the Buddhists in their actual context. This should not replace the body of Dhamma, but rather it presupposes and needs Dhamma. However, to be a critical reflection, there is a need to redefine Dhamma as Buddhadasa himself has done.

Ideologically, the world has become more and more united. However, it is "secular" ideology that dominates and unites the world. "Materialism",

embodied in economic and political ideologies is the principal one. The Buddhists, the Christians, and all religions must be united, learn from one another, and cooperate, if their message is to be meaningful and liberative for men and women in the world of constant transformation today.

Seri Phongphit

Thai Institute for Rural Development, Bangkok.

Abbreviations

TL ***Theology of Liberation,***
History, Politics, and Salvation
by Gustavo Gutierrez, Orbis Book, Maryknoll, New York, 1973.

MT ***Minjung Theology***
People as the Subjects of History
edited bythe Commission on Theological Concerns of the
Christian Conference of Asia, Zed Press, London, 1983.

TPE ***Thai Philosophy of Education*** (in Thai Language)
Phra Rajavaramuni,
Kledthai, Bangkok, first edition March 1975.

RD ***Religion and Development*** (in English)
Sulak Sivaraksa, first edition, Church of Christ in Thailand, 1976.

BA "Buddhist Agriculture", by Prawase Wasi, in
Turning Point of Thai Farmers.
edited by Seri Phongphit and Robert Bennoun,
Mooban Press, Bangkok, 1988.

RCS ***Religion in Changing Society***
Buddhism, Reform and the Role of Monks
in Community Development in Thailand
Seri Phongphit, Arena Press, Hong Kong, 1988.

ON REINTERPRETING THE DHAMMA : TOWARDS AN ADEQUATE THAI SOCIAL ETHICS

If Siam stands eternal,
We Thai will al- so live;
But if Siam falls, how can Thai be?
It's all as if Thai name perished. [1]

The above poem expresses the ultimate concern for the Thai as Thai. As the ultimate concern, it aspires to articulate the Thai Ideal of nationhood or national identity. For King Wachirawudth, the author of the poem, the identity of the Thai nation involved the total unity of three symbols: *chat* (nation: the land and the people), *sasana* (religion: Buddhism), and *phra maha kasat* (king). For him this threefold identity was the ultimate reality for which all true and partiotic Thais must be willing and proud to sacrifice even their lives in its defense, protection, and support. Defending and supporting this Ideal of Thainess was conceived of as the only source for lasting peace and honor. Because of its ultimate claim and power, commanding total allegiance and devotion from all Thai, the *chat-sasana-phra maha kasat* trinity takes on a religious character. It is precisely this kind of "religion" that has served to constitute the Thai nationhood, to unite the Thai people, and to provide the Thai people with a sense of destiny. It is this reality that scholars such as Robert Bellah have called "civil religion."[2] And it is this reality which is meant here by "Thai Dhammocracy." And finally, it is this "Thai Dhammocracy" which we are attempting to retrieve and reconstruct in this article.

First, I shall briefly describe and evaluate a "typical" attempt to deal with the problem. This is the celebrated seminar on "Buddhism in Contemporary Thai Society" in Bangkok in August, 1969, under the joint sponsorship of the Siam Society and the Buddhist Association of Thailand. Second, I seek to retrieve and reconstruct the fundamental structure and intentionality of the traditional Thai Buddhist ideal social order, especially the *anachak* (temporal) dimension. This is in fact a retrieval of the fundamental intentionality of the ideal Buddhist kingship, since that was precisely the symbol of the Thai order throughout her long history. And in performing this task of hermeneutical reconstruction, I shall draw on the insights and accumulated wisdom of certain selected scholars as well as undertake a fresh reinterpretation of the sacred texts and religious and political symbols. Then finally, I shall conclude

the article with a discussion of the significance of kingship in the Thai traditional ideal social order.

"Buddhism in Contemporary Thai Society": a monastic approach

Moved by a deep concern for the viability of Buddhism in modern Thailand, two of the staunchest supporters of Thai Buddhism, the Siam Society and the Buddhist Association of Thailand, jointly sponsored a three-day seminar in August of 1969. Participating in that occasion were official and unofficial representatives of the king, the government, the Buddhist monastic order *(sangha)*, and the general public. A member of the Privy Council, the Minister of Education, the President of the Buddhist Association, the President of the Siam Society, high ranking monks, editors, professors, authors, students, and foreigners were among those present. It was a grand assembly, well publicized and well regarded. That the event was of great importance is beyond doubt. Simply perusing the published volume of its Minutes gives one a sense of the enormous public attention given to that seminar.[3]

On a deeper level, the basic intention of this seminar was well formulated by Buddhadasa in this introduction to the published volume. "A seminar", he says, "is rooted in the human fear of the encroaching danger and on his struggle to escape from it in order to save himself."[4] "But we often do not get that far in most of our seminars", he goes on to complain, "because we tend to use the occasion for intellectual assault on the other or for exhibiting our own intellectual arrogance and verbal sharpness, often with an eye to gain publicity....A true seminar should focus on how to get out of the heap of suffering. It should involve the real victims, not just the dilettantes as we usually see. A true seminar should be like a major surgery, getting at the root cause of all problems which we have called suffering."[5] In Buddhadasa's view, that particular seminar did not adequately deal with the heart of the matter, the Buddha Dhamma, giving more time to things periphery and instrumental. In order to get at the heart of the matter, he suggests, we must transcend the outer garb, the literary interpretation, and get down to "the fundamental intention" of the Lord Buddha's Teaching.

As an example of this radical reinterpretation, Buddhadasa deals with the five precepts which are required of all Buddhists. Instead of the traditionally bland recital of (1) do not kill, (2) do not steal, (3) do not commit adultery, (4) do not tell a lie, and (5) do not drink intoxicants, he unites all five precepts under the theme of non-violence. For Buddhadasa, the five precepts require their adherents to abstain from doing violence to (1) the life and body of man or animal and other living things, (2) other people's property, (3) that which

is dearly loved by others, (4) other people's rights and identities, and (5) one's own conscience and intellect.

For Buddhadasa, only this kind of radical reinterpretation is adequate to combat the great danger at hand. He calls the great danger "materialism", which has taken the upper hand in Thailand only recently. For him there is only one sure way to deal with this pressing problem: all Buddhists must know exactly what it means to be a Buddhist. That is the principle of Dhamma, which may be simply stated as the dread of doing evil and the courage to do the meritorious *(kliad baap and kla bun)*. Finally, Buddhadasa concludes that the Thai people, laymen and monks alike, have fallen victims to this dreadful materialism, leading us astray from caring for that which is truly Dhammic. To save our souls we have to return to the root and to the real intention of the Buddha Dhamma; nothing else is adequate.

A careful reading of the minutes of this famous seminar reveals the "monastic" approach and presuppositions of the whole event. By that I mean the approach which presupposes that the continued existence and lumination of the Buddhist monasteries, populated by dedicated monks, is essential to the viability of Thai society. To the organizers and the participants in that seminar, the problem at hand was conceived in these terms. As one participant remarked:

> the important fact was that society has changed; if religion remained unchanged, it would be a dead or non-living thing. If Buddhism could not keep up with society, no young men would volunteer to enter the monkhood in the future. The new generation would lose faith in it. Nowadays it is already difficult to find monks at the abbot rank in provincial temples. The Buddhist Church and the Kingdom must co-operate, otherwise the future would be very dark indeed. Faithlessness and paganism would come to take the place of the true religion.[6]

Furthermore, the monastic approach assumes that it is the monks' duty to teach the Buddha Dhamma to the people. And in light of the fact that Thai society has greatly changed, the monks must know how to choose the true Teaching and to apply it according to the times and the new requirements of the society. In short, the monks must know how to interpret the Dhamma to suit the needs of the times. As a young monk intellectual puts it, this reinterpretation is justified because, "the teaching of the Buddha, handed down long ago, must now be contained in much thicker clothing and is now much more difficult to penetrate....Therefore, the monks must try to peel off the thick clothing so that the people of the modern society can see the core."[7] Otherwise both Buddhism and the kingdom face a real danger.

This monastic approach is typical of the contemporary discussion of "religion" and "politics" in Thailand. Basic to this approach is the sharp distinction between the *thang lok* (worldly way) and *thang tham* (spiritual way) and their separate domains – *anachak* and *sasanachak*. In this context, *karnmuang* ("politics") refers to the struggle for power and only in the *anachak* realm. In this sense, there should be no *karnmuang* in the *sasanachak* realm. For, according to this view, *karnmuang* is full of dirty tricks and greed. In order to help lessen such greed and tricks, it is the individual's own responsibility to "seek out" *sasana* ("religion" or the spiritual realm). The Buddhist monastic order as the institutional expression of the *sasana*, symbolized by the yellow robe, is normally the place where one can "find" *sasana*. And the primary function of the monastic order is to be ascetically pure and available to those who take the trouble to seek them out. The *sasana*, in short, has no business with *karnmuang*, except very indirectly. That is to say, a man of *karnmuang* may "apply" some of the teachings of the *sasana* which he, in his private capacity such as his listening to the sermons on Buddhist holy days, may still remember. The *sasana* at best serves *karnmuang* as restraint when man of *karnmuang* may go overboard. A man of *sasana* would, in this connection avoid entering *karnmuang*. This is the monastic approach to "religion" and "politics". As shown below, such an approach is inadequate.

Although the monastic view was dominant in this seminar, there were also a few participants who held a modified version of this monastic view. Let us call this view "modern Buddhist". The modern Buddhist subscribes to the basic distinction between the "spiritual" and the "worldly" ways and all its derivatives. The point of departure for him is his willingness to "reinterpret" the essential meaning of the Buddha's Teaching. As the passage quoted earlier suggests, the modern Buddhist must try his best to peel the outer garb from the core of Buddhism, so that the real Dhamma will be brought to light. On this reinterpretation, many of the modern Buddhists present in the seminar strongly recommended a more active role for Buddhist monks, such as visiting the sick and the poor, a role never sanctioned by orthodox Theravada Buddhism. Moreover, they were willing to allow Buddhist monks access to the "modern way of life" such as cars, televisions, and refrigerators, within the basic Buddhist *vinaya* (discipline) that these things are handled for them by the *vaiyavachakorn* (layman in attendance). The intention behind these modern Buddhist modifications, however, is the voluntary adaptation of the Buddhist ways so that the "real Dhamma" of Buddhism would speak to contemporary men.

There are at least two basic problems with both the monastic and the modern Buddhist approach to the discussion of social order (in their terms, *sasanachak* and *anachak*). The first is their tendency towards institutional conservatism, and the second is an inadequate and misleading dichotomy between the "spiritual" and the "worldly" ways. First of all institutional

conservatism has been often used as a justification for maintaining the status quo, at the expense of the dynamics of historical and circumstantial reality, in the fulfillment of human needs. On top of this, or perhaps more accurately behind it, the sharp dichotomy between "religion" and "politics" has led to the moralistic condemnation of political power and material concern as inherently inferior if not entirely evil. At the same time, it has led those who cannot accept this monastic view to forsake or ignore the monastic realm altogether and turn instead to embrace uncritically the Western idea of Progress, or "Democracy", or even Communism as their new religion. This is the state in which we live today.

Finally, as a consequence of both institutional conservatism and misleading dichotomy, much time, energy, and resources have been wasted on secondary issues. In the judgment of the most astute observer among their ranks, the Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, that seminar "missed the heart of the matter", the central conception of the Buddhist Dhamma, "focusing instead on the external, the trivial, and the instrumental."[8] In short, the typical monastic approach to the problem of *sasanachak* ("religion") and *anachak* ("politics") leaves much to be desired. A new and more viable approach is sorely needed.

Fundamental intentionality of the Thai tradition

In the following pages, I shall attempt to retrieve or reconstruct the fundamental intentionality of the Thai tradition. It is both an embodiment of a hermeneutical method in search of the self-understanding and self-discovery by way of a critical and interpretive analysis of the Thai religious and political symbols. And since this paper focuses on the *anachak* (temporal) dimension of the Thai Dhamma, it follows that the texts chosen for our purpose be those which deal primarily with the temporal matters. Therefore, the texts chosen deal with the idealized past of the Thai people rather than with the Buddhist Pali Canon. Written by monk and court scholars as well as by literary kings and princes, these non-canonical yet idealized texts were unmistakably inspired by the spirit of Buddhism and borrowed liberally, from both canonical and post-canonical sources. As far as government and administration were concerned, these texts had more influence on the kings and rulers than the Pali Canon. Nonetheless, it cannot be overemphasized that the authority of these texts rests on their appeal to the Buddha Dhamma, articulating it in modes and contexts appropriate for the kings and rulers. In this connection, it should be noted that in post-1932 Thai history, these texts have been almost entirely ignored by the modern power elite and scholars. It is my contention that if the authentic Thai tradition is to be properly understood, these texts must be taken

seriously.

Analyzing these texts is precisely the intent of this article. As a first step, let us note some basic tenets of Buddhism, internalized by all good Thai Buddhist from birth.

(a) ***A doctrinal statement of the Buddhist point of view.*** – Doctrinally speaking, the Buddhist point of view begins with the phenomenal world, and deals primarily with the nature of existence. A Buddhist experiences something because he is in relationship with it. This "something" is life, conditioned *(dukkha)*, ever-changing *(aniccang)*, and not-yet-fully-known *(anatta)*. But in Buddhism life is meant to be rightly comprehended and fully realized as freedom in the state of *nibbāna* or perfect existence. To achieve this goal, the Buddha taught four essential principles of life which he discovered from his own experience and meditation. Known as the Four Noble Truths *(Ariya Satya Si)*, they include:

(1) ***Dukkha*** refers to the nature of existence which is characteristically imperfect. There are three aspects or states of existence: (a) ordinary suffering, the state of physical pain and mental anguish; (b) the state caused by changes for the worse; and (c) that state of conditionedness or not being free. It is the Buddhist position that this conditioned phenomenal existence *(dukkhata)* is to be transcended.

(2) ***Dukkha-smudaya*** refers to the nature of causation affecting imperfect existence. This principle posits that if *dukkha* or conditioned existence is to be transcended *(nirodha)* and if perfect freedom *(nib- bana)* is to be realized, then the nature of causation must be rightly understood and its operative principles mastered. Generally speaking, in Buddhism the process of conditioned life is viewed as one stage of the continual phenomenal changes *(samsāra)*caused primarily by greeds *(lobha)*, anger *(dosa)*, and misconception *(moha)*. This principle of causation has been classically expressed in terms of the law of kamma which, in the words of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, may be stated as follows:

> Happiness and suffering are the results of their own causes, that is, the person's deeds. The results of any person's action must fall on that person with certainty and justice... All creatures have their own *kamma*, and their lives turn in response to their former *kamma*, interacting as both cause and effect, without a break. We call this interrelationship *samsāra*.[9]

(3) ***Dukkha-nirodha*** refers to the ultimate freedom in perfect existence or transcendence. This principle concerns the ending of causa-

tion (second principle) and thus the disappearance of *dukkha* (first principle) whereupon freedom in perfect existence *(nibbāna)* may be attained. This twofold dimension of *nirodha,* stopping and realizing, is achievable by the practice of the fourth and final principle of life, *magga.*

(4) ***Magga*** refers to the Middle Way or the Eightfold Path, the principle whose actualization results in the fulfillment of the first three principles. Discerned in meditation, the Middle Way is the way between two extremes; between, for example, devotion to sensual pleasures and devotion to ascetic self-mortification. As the elaboration of the Middle Way, the Eightfold Path consists of the following: right understanding, right thinking, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right attention, and right concentration.

By emphasizing the rightness of these eight life activities, Buddhism recognizes that they may be done imperfectly or even be distorted. Such an imperfection or distortion is what is meant by the *bap* ("sin") in the Thai language. Imperfection or distortion of the truth or purity of life leads to suffering and evil in Buddhism. In the world of everyday life, this implies the perfectability or progress from the phenomenal and conditioned existence toward the state of perfect freedom. In this connection, Buddhism provides a fourfold principle, called *brahma-vihāra* or the four sublime states, which has come to be taken by the Thai people as both descriptive and prescriptive of the Buddhist ideal of human life.

Remembered by heart by most Thai, including those who are non-Buddhists, this principle of four sublime states includes: (a) *mettā* ("loving kindness"), (b) *karunā* ("compassion"), (c) *muditā* ("celebration"), and (d) *upekkhā* ("equanimity"). *Mettā* or "loving kindness" means the promotion of the welfare and well-being of all, friends and enemies alike – goodwill toward all and vengeance toward none. It is in the same category as *agape* in the Christian theology. *Karunā* or "compassion" means taking care not to inflict any harm, unhappiness, or suffering on others and helping to abolish or alleviate cruelty and sorrow of fellow human beings. *Muditā* or "celebration" in Buddhism means gladness in other's success and achievement, subduing personal envy and jealousy, but producing joyfullness and merriment instead. And finally, *upekkhā* or "equanimity" aims at promoting a sense of detachment or neutrality particularly in the face of tragedy or sorrow. It encourages an appreciation of things for what they are, so that resentment or approval is not expanded into a distortion of reality or unjust practice.

This is a brief account of the common core of Dhamma which has for many centuries constituted the basic content of moral and ethical instruction in the Thai social order. Before the establishment of modern schools around the

turn of the century, the Buddhist temples *(wat)* were primarily responsible for this instruction. Today the public as well as the private school systems are charged with the responsibility, generally without any meaningful cooperation from the Buddhist monks. However, for the village folk, who comprise the overwhelming majority of the Thai people, the *wat* and the monks continue to be their primary source of moral and spiritual guidance. In terms of scholarship, these matters have been, by and large, under the influence of the conservative monastic approach. As such, it is doctrinally oriented. Nevertheless, it has served the Thai order well, providing the order with doctrinal and psychological security, particularly on the personal level. But in light of the present crisis of the Thai order, it is highly doubtful that this monastic approach to Dhamma will be adequate. For it is a long jump from these doctrinal statements and their monastic instruction to a Buddhist understanding of government and politics. When the Thai kings enjoyed "absolute" power, this approach to Dhamma was more or less adequate, for according to tradition, the kings had to undergo many other elaborate and involved processes of training and education in addition to this monastic Buddhist education. But when the Thai constitution drastically changed in 1932, a reinterpretation of Dhamma as the vision of the new Thai order is called for. Let us begin with the question: What is Dhamma?

(b) ***The meaning of Dhamma.*** – Dhamma or *Tham* in Thai is, in the judgment of a historian of religions, "one of the richest categories in all history of religions, Thai or otherwise."[10] According to the Pali-English Dictionary, Dhamma refers to "that which the Buddha preached... the order of the universe, immanent, eternal, uncreated, not as interpreted by him only, much less invented or decreed by him, but intelligible to the mind of his range."[11] More specifically, Dhamma in the earliest Buddhist traditions refers primarily to the sacred reality which the Buddha discovered at the point of his Enlightenment. For him and his followers, that sacred experience is the ultimate discovery of the Dhamma, the Truth which serves as the source of order in the world and salvation from it.[12]

Particularly in the Thai context, Buddhadasa's discussion of the meaning of Dhamma is typical. For the learned monk-scholar, there are two levels of meanings of Dhamma, the literal and the interpretive. Literally, Dhamma means "to stay by itself or support itself, that is, to exist... Dhamma means everything without exception, from the finest speck of dust... up to things most valuable, and things abstract, such as spirit, thought, feelings, action or *kamma,* and the result of *kamma,* the highest of which is the attainment of *Nirvana.*"[13] Interpretively, Dhamma means for Buddhadasa certain things in certain contexts. In this regard, he distinguishes four meanings of Dhamma. The first refers to Dhamma as the Cosmic Order and its laws. Dhamma in this sense, the Bhikkhu points out, corresponds to Form or Forma in Latin. The

second meaning of Dhamma refers to Doctrine or Religion. That is, it refers to "a system of study or observation or action... conceived and undertaken in order to unite men and the highest,which means God or the extincition of suffering – *Nirvana* – whatever the case may be."[14] The meaning of Dhamma in the third sense refers to the realm of virtue, moral quality, righteousness, ideal, and duty. Dhamma in this sense refers to goodness in human character and fairness in human relationships. The fourth meaning of Dhamma refers to the regulative power behind the motion of all beings. This is the equitable power that rights all wrongs, the ground of justice and equity. Dhamma in this last sense constitutes a Buddhist political ethics.

The Buddhist Emperor Asoka (ca. 274-232 B.C.), who became a kind of paradigmatic model for later Buddhist kings, also summed up his religious and political teaching in this single word, Dhamma.[15] Dhamma for Asoka refers to the basic order of the universe and the truth discerned in that order. It is the bond uniting people in various forms of community. It provides a guide and a ground for human action. Self-realization and happiness are based on it. In the words of Richard McKeon, Dhamma "is achieved by action, advanced by instruction, and protected by sanctions; and in turn it provides a basis for policy, education and justice."[16] This leads us to consider Dhammic action.

(c) ***Dhamma and time.*** – According to the Indian mythology of time, which has been effectively transmitted to the traditional Thai consciousness along with Buddhism, the Universal Dhamma finds its expressions or dispensations in endless cosmic cycles. According to this tradition, each cosmic or world cycle is subdivided into four *yugas* or world ages.[17] Comparable to the Greco-Roman tradition, these *yugas* decline in moral excellence as the age proceeds. Briefly, these four *yugas* may be described as follows: The first, the *Krita yuga,* is the perfect beginning when the moral order of the world is firm on its four legs, like the sacred cow, 100 per cent effective as an all-pervading element in the organism of the universe. During this *yuga* men and women are born virtuous. They devote their lives to the fulfillment of Dhamma. As the life-process of the world-organism gains momentum, however, order loses ground. Holy Dhamma vanishes quarter by quarter, leg by leg, while its converse gains the field. Thus, in the second *yuga,* the *Treta,* the universal body as well as the human society is sustained by only three-fourths of its total virtue. Worse yet is the third *yuga* when the cow of ethical order, instead of firmly standing on four legs, now balances on two. The ideal destroyed, the knowledge of the revealed hierarchy of values is lost. And finally, in the *Kali yuga* or Dark Age, the world subsists miserably on 25 per cent of the full strength of Dhamma. Such moral and social degradation is characterized in a passage of the Vishnu Purana: "When society reaches a stage, where property confers rank, wealth becomes the only source of virtue, passion the sole bond of union between husband and wife, falsehood, the source of success in life, sex

the only means of enjoyment, and outer trappings are confused with inner religion..." Then we are in the *Kali yuga,* that is, the world of today.[18] (No wonder, the world today is in such a mess!)

The question for us here is the relation of the Universal Dhamma to these four degenerating *yugas*. What, really, degenerates? If Dhamma degenerates, how can it be universal? Or is it the capacity of human beings to actualize the Dhamma that degenerates? What, in short, is the meaning of the above myth of time? For a guide at this point, let us turn to Robert Lingat, a noted authority on Indology. In his article, "Time and Dharma"[19], Lingat interprets Verses 85 and 86 of Book I of Manu, one of the Indian classics:

85. Otherwise are the dharmas in the *kritā* age, otherwise in the *treta* age and the *dvapara* age, otherwise in the *kali* age because of the debasement of these ages.

86. Essential in the *kritā* age is austerity *(tapas)*, in the *treta* age knowledge *(jhāna)*, in the *dvapara* age sacrifice *(yājna)*, in the *kali* age the gift only *(dāna)*.

In his interpretation, Lingat points out two contradictory tendencies in the history of the interpretation of these two verses. On the one hand, modern Indian commentators seek to claim that these texts signify "a gradual improvement of manners and a continuous progress of institutions."[20] On the other hand, traditional Indian jurists see in them a reflection of regression, not of the Dhamma itself but in "man's growing weakness and the dimming of his moral sense."[21]

Having noted these tendencies which he thinks misleading, Lingat posits "for the Buddhist, the Good Law, the Dhamma, represents undoubtedly an eternal truth, and even if it should sink into oblivion, would nonetheless endure. Man's ignorance and sins alone stand in the way of its recognition and prevent it from being enforced, as it were, on earth as in heaven."[22] Furthermore, he says,

> When Manu declares that the Dhamma bull has lost, in the course of time, three of its feet, his statement must be taken as meaning that the Dhamma needs to be upheld, that is to say, not only taught and propagated – which was not needed in the *kritā* age – but also applied according to each man's capacity, in the contexts of the customs and opinions of the age. This is where the interpreter has his say. But it constitutes above all the mission of the King. Indeed it behooves him to restore the Dhamma bull.... The King, through his statecraft, founds the rule of Dhamma.... He is the author of time, ... not of the chronological time which is but an abstraction, but of the time which ripens the actions of men.[23]

To support this interpretation, Lingat quotes Manu himself who identifies the conduct of the king with the ages of the world: "Asleep he is in the *kali* age, awake the *dvapara* age, about to act the *treta* age, and in action the *krita* age" (Book IX, verses 301-302).

Thus we see that Dhamma in relation to time means action, particularly the action of the King whose significance will be further examined below. But in the process of moving toward that, let us next discuss Dhamma in relation to space.

(d) ***Dhamma and space.*** – In the world of Southeast Asian kingdoms, the conceptions of the ideal social order were cosmologically grounded, with the king as the magic center of the empire. Patterned after the cosmological conception of the universe, the empire or the kingdom becomes a microcosm, with the king representing Indra. Like Indra who rules over the gods and angels in Dusita Heaven, the earthly king is the pivot and the prime mover within his realm. He must know the cosmological principle of motion, the universal Dhamma, and attune himself and his actions to it. As Heine-Geldren puts it, this cosmological principle of motion says:

> Humanity is constantly under the influence of forces emanating from the directions of the compass and from the stars and planets. These forces may produce welfare and prosperity or work havoc, according to whether or not individuals and social groups, above all the state, succeed in bringing their lives and activities in harmony with the universe. Individuals may attain such harmony by following the indications offered by astrology, the lore of lucky and unlucky days and many other rules. Harmony between the empire and the universe is achieved by organizing the former as an image of the latter, as a universe on a smaller scale.[25]

Heine-Geldren's interpretation follows the spatial understanding of Dhamma as the foundational principle of traditional state and kingship, that is, Buddhist social and political order. He summarizes both the Brahmanic and the Buddhist doctrines of the world, which in his understanding are symbolically the same. Particularly with regard to the Buddhist system, Mount Meru forms the center of the universe. It is the center of the seven concentric mountain ranges separated from each other by seven annular seas. Beyond the last of these mountain chains extends the ocean and in it lie four continents, one in each of the cardinal directions. The continent south of Mount Meru is Jambudvipa, the abode of men. And after the Great Ocean, the universe is surrounded by an enormous wall of rocks, the Chakravala range. On the slopes of Mount Meru lies the lowest of the paradises, that of the four guardians of the world; on its summit the second paradise, that of the thirty-three gods, including Indra who rules and reigns as king, having his magnificent palace in the city called Sudarsana.

Above Mount Meru tower one above the other are the rest of the heavenly abodes.

This is a spatial interpretation of Dhamma as universal order. Its significance for the human order is precisely the parallelism between macrocosmos and microcosmos, between the universe and the world of men. That is, the traditional social order in Southeast Asia was conceived and organized as a replica of the cosmological structure of the universe. More specifically, Dhamma in relation to space means hierarchy, center and periphery, and – when integrated with temporal fullness – charisma. The capital and the palace is the magic center of the whole country, and the king who rules over the capital and occupies the palace is the axis and the apex of the empire. He typifies the entire people and links his empire with the universe. In the final analysis, Dhamma in relation to space means man living in harmony with his world with the king as his charismatic leader.

Thus far our discussion of Dhamma in relation of time and space has demonstrated a commanding significance of kingship as the symbol which, as an ideal, integrates the fullness of time in action and the sacredness of space as the center and the apex of the kingdom. I am suggesting here that it is precisely such a spatio-temporal integration that gives the king his charisma, the quality which legitimizes his rule and fulfills it. Such would be the rule of Dhamma.

The Conception and Significance of Kingship in the Thai Tradition

To discuss kingship in the context of Thai history, let us examine the original, classic and direct treatment found in the *Trai Phum* ("The Three Worlds") written by King Lithai, the grandson of King Ramkhamhaeng.[26] In addition to examining this text, appropriate references will also be made to other texts which deal less directly but no less importantly with the ideal of kingship.

Written by the scholar prince and ruler for the purpose of the moral instruction of his people, the *Trai Phum* drew from at least thirty-two books and commentaries on the Buddhist tradition. Completed in 1345, it ranks as one of the oldest and richest documents created on the Thai soil by a Thai genius. According to the judgment of the late Phya Anuman Rajadhon, the *Trai Phum's* world view and symbolism have come to pervade all aspects of the Thai consciousness and memory, arts and literature, religion and politics.[27] As such it served for many centuries as one of the major sources of the Thai traditional order. Its force began to decline when the modern Buddhist school of thought

emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century under the leadership of Mongkut. As the original Thai creation and as an unexcelled Thai Buddhist cosmology, it must be taken seriously in any consideration of the Thai tradition. For our present purpose, we shall touch only one aspect, the discussion of the "Phya Chakrapati Raj" or the ideal kingship.

Although three types of Buddhist kingship (the dhammaraja, the chakravartin, and the Buddha Metreya) are mentioned in the *Trai Phum,* the chakravartin ideal clearly dominates. Incorporated into the chapter on the "world of the human beings", King Lithai's discussion of kingship proceeds as follows. First, he describes in detail the four continents of the world, beginning with *Chomphutaweep* where the Thais live and which is situated in the south, and continuing to the eastern continent *(Burapawithe),* the northern continent *(Uttarakuru),* and the western continent *(Amorakayana).* Among the inhabitants of these continents, those who live in *Uttarakuru* are the most pure and beautiful and those who live in *Chomphutaweep* are most unstable. Their ages go up and down due to their moral fluctuations. Yet, people with great merit such as the Buddhas, the *arahants* (saints devoid of sins), future Buddhas, the *bhodhisatvas,* and Phya Chakrapatiraj (that is, *chakravar-tin),* are born only in *Chomphutaweep* and no where else.

After positing this world of *Comphutaweep,* over against the semi-mythical world of the other three continents, as the real stage of the human drama, King Lithai discusses at great length the *ideal* conception of the *chakravartin,* which he calls the ordinary *charkravartin.* Second, he discusses King Sridhammasokaraj as a prototype of the second and lesser category of *chakravartin.* This is the type which was identified above as dhammaraja. Third, he points out the third type, referring to a mythical king by the name of Mantaturaj who, according to the brief account in the *Trai Phum,* is greater than the first two types in merit, glory, and wealth, and who reigns over the four continents and the Chatumaharachika and the Dawadungsa levels of heavens. As such, his merit is beyond description. Finally, Lithai describes two actual kings, one good the other bad, together with all the implications involved.

As for the purely idealized *chakravartin,* this is what Lithai has to say:

> This is how Phya Chakrapatiraj comes to be. Those who make merit by worshipping the three Gems (the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha), by giving to others, and by keeping the precepts and meditating, when they die will be reborn either in heavens or in this world as kings or rulers with great titles and dignity and great numbers of people under them. As the Chakrapatiraj, he conquers the whole universe... His words and orders are in accordance with the moral rules... He enjoys

> listening to sermons from the monks and Brahmans and other religious leaders. He keeps the five precepts everyday and the eight precepts every holy day... He sits on the golden earth decorated with gems and is filled with glory like that of the sun. The golden earth has silk and gold pillows on it and is situated in glorious gem palace... He concentrates on the Dhamma and on his passion. With the power of such merit he conquers the whole universe.[28]

Because of his great merit, the *chakravartin* (or the Phra Maha Chakrapatiraj) commands the seven possessions called the seven gems, all of which arise independently but with the unique destiny of being at the service of the *chakravartin*. The first and most important is the Chakra Ratana, a gem wheel of 1,000 spokes, exceedingly beautiful, and located at the bottom of the ocean. This gem wheel is the symbol which binds the people in the four lands to the *chakravartin*. The mere sight of it commands the allegiance of all the people and brings about the feeling of joy, peace and happiness among those who see it. It serves as the vehicle for the *chakravartin* as he goes to the various lands claiming authority over them and preaching to their kings the moral precepts and the Dhamma. He also preaches to them the duties of a good king, although only a few of them are capable to follow his teachings. The possession of the Chakra Ratana gives to the *chakravartin* compassion and the knowledge of virtue and Dhamma, which gives him the same authority enjoyed by the Buddha himself. In addition to the five moral precepts and the ten kingly virtues, the preaching of Phra Maha Chakrapatiraj includes the duty of the rulers toward their subjects regarding taxation, loans, and so on; strict justice and thoroughness in their judgments; support of the priests, learned men and those who know the Dhamma; appropriate recognition, reward and punishment. Then the ideal king concludes his preaching thus:

> When the rulers observe the moral rules, the people will enjoy happiness and prosperity because of the power of his merit. The grain, the water, fish and food, precious ornaments, silk, and satin will be plentiful. The rain will fall in the right season in the right amount, not too much and not too little. The grain in the field and the fish in the water will not suffer from any lack of rain. The days, nights, months and years will be clearly defined. The Thewada who are guardians of the home and city will take good care just as though they fear the rulers who are righteous.
>
> For the rulers who are not righteous the rain and water will go wrong. The plowing and planting will be ruined for lack of rain. The fruits and plants which grow on earth which used to have a good and delicious taste will lose their delicious taste, because they will sink down into the ground... The sun, the wind, the rain, the moon and the

> stars will not regulate the seasons as usual. This is because the rulers do not follow the Dhamma. The Thewada will dislike the unrighteous rulers and they will not set eye on them.

After a lengthy and elaborate discussion of the Chakra Ratana or the gem wheel, and the performance of the *chakravartin's* duty, Lithai enumerates the other six possessions of the ideal king. They include the gem elephant, the gem horse, the gem Mani Ratana, the gem woman, the gem treasurer, and the gem general. A careful examination of the accounts of all these possessions reveals that they all came into being independent of each other and of the Phra Maha Chakrapatiraj, but they all rise to his service on account of his great merit. As the moral ground for rulership, the idea of merit is in turn based on Buddhist religious faithfulness. And finally, that religious faithfulness is the ultimate ground for the harmonious social order and its fulfillment.

In addition to the purely idealized kingship, Lithai also idealizes a historical king, Sri Thammasokaraj or Ashoka. He is described as a lesser *chakravartin* for, in spite of his great merit and power, he still has some difficulties with his queen. Although they were able to settle their conflicts, Lithai's discussion of it clearly showed that he took serious account of women in his treatment of the ideal kingship. The point here is that in the ideal social order, conflicts must be reconciled in peace. Thus after the reconciliation, Sri Thammasokaraj said to his queen, Asanthamitta:

> "Asanthamitta, my noble gem woman, from this day forward the royal household, the elephants, the horses, the subjects, the servants, the gold and silver, the precious possessions, and my sixteen thousand concubines are given to you to rule over. And also from now on you can do anything you wish. I will allow you to do anything you choose."

Although having that permission, Queen Asanthamitta continued to serve as the king's attendant and did not disobey her husband in the least. Therefore, we can see that in addition to reconciliation, the renewed relationship should be characterized by trust, openness, freedom, and devotion.

To illustrate the theme set forth earlier, that most rulers of the smaller lands do not have the capacity to follow the preachings of the chakravartin, Lithai discusses at length two examples of actual historical kingship – King Bhimbhisar of Rajakreuha and his son, King Achatsatru who killed his own father for the throne. The account of these two kings relates their respective relationships with Chotika, the millionaire of the city. While the father is able to resist the temptation to covet Chotika's wealth and property, the son is not. Urged by his bad advisor, Thewathat, King Achatsatru attempted to take over Chotika's wealth by force. Being a man of great merit himself, Chotika was able

to withstand the king's attempt without much difficulty. Later on he was able to argue with the ruler who falsely accused him of claiming the rulership:

> "I am not the lord and ruler, but I believe in my own merit. Even one thousand great rulers like yourself cannot take away my property which I do not give. It can be taken only when it is given. If your Majesty does not believe in my own merit which I earned in previous times, I will prove it..."

After having proved his merit, Chotika was filled with compassion and said to the king, "I would take my leave and enter the monastery; I will transfer my merit to you. Grant me that, and let me enter the monastery." Chotika became a Buddhist monk and attained the Arahant status, while his worldly possessions disappeared, leaving the greedy king bewildered. This last account is a vivid reminder that not all kings are good. Good or bad, in the last analysis, is a matter of merit, a matter of Buddhist religious obedience is first and foremost the responsibility of the king.

From the foregoing reinterpretation of the Dhamma, we may draw the following conclusions with regard to the significance of kingship in the context of Thailand:

(1) Kingship was and has been identified with the Thai nationhood. Without kingship and what it symbolizes, Thailand would lose her historical identity.

(2) The religious ground of the Thai kingship has interwoven the three religious elements, namely, the phii or spirit, the Brahmanic, and the Buddhist. The last element is all-inclusive and all-encompassing.

(3) Thai kingship is the spatial center and temporal prime mover of the Thai order. In other words, the king is both the source and context of national unity and order on the one hand and the primary authority that moves the Thai order toward national prosperity and the people's happiness on the other. That is, toward destiny and fulfillment.

(4) This charismatic quality (the integration of spatial center and temporal prime mover) of the Thai kingship is accomplished only if and when the king rules in accordance with the Buddha Dhamma. That is to say, the ideal Thai king is both religiously devout and politically wise.

Inconclusive conclusion

The above treatment is only a partial formulation of one of the three

dimensions required for a full treatise on Thai social ethics. For a comprehensive treatment of all the three dimensions, the reader is referred to my Ph.D. dissertation, ***Dhamocracy in Thailand: a study of social ethics as a hermeneutic of Dhamma***, the University of Chicago, 1973.

Briefly, the first dimension deals with the retrieval of the traditional genius, made imperative by the contemporary societal crisis which must be clearly discerned and articulated (second dimension). Based on these, a resolute commitment to public policy and action in the direction of justice constitutes the third dimension.

I believe that the Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu would at least support this method of doing social ethics. Therefore, it is my humble joy to dedicate this small contribution in his honour.

Koson Srisang

Contours, P.O.Box 24, Jorakhe Bua, Bangkok 10230.

ENDNOTES :

1. From the Sayamanutsati or "the Siamese Conscience", a collection of nationalistic poems composed by King Wachirawudth, 1910-1925; my own translation.
2. Although the term "civil religion" seems to have been coined by Jean Jacques Rousseau in the eighteenth century, it gained prominence in the late 1960's when Robert Bellah used it as a central category in his article, "Civil Religion in America", published in his ***Beyond Belief*** (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp.168-189. Then in 1970 John Coleman discussed it again in his article, "Civil Religion" which appears in ***Sociological Analysis*** , XXXI, No.2 (Spring, 1970), 67-77. Moreover, David Apter also addresses this same theme in his earlier article, "Political Religion in the New States", published in Clifford Geertz, ed., ***Old Societies and New States*** (Glencoe: Free Press, 1967). For specific discussions of the Thai civil religion see Frank Reynolds' article, "Sasana khong phonlamuang nai prawatsat Thai" (Civil Religion in Thai History), Fall, 1971.
3. Siam Society, Minutes of the Seminar on Buddhism and Thai Society (Bangkok: Siam Society, 1970), 337 pp.
4. Ibid., p. (c).
5. Ibid., p. (d).
6. Ibid., p. 324.
7. Ibid., pp. 325-326.
8. Ibid., p. (e).
9. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, "Buddhism in Fifteen Minutes" (unpublished paper translated by H. G. Grether, and distributed by the Department of Christian Education, The Church of Christ in Thailand, Bangkok 1965).
10. Reynolds, "Sasana khong phonlamuang...", p. 58.
11. Pali-English Dictionary, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede(London: Pali Text Society, 1921), p. 171.
12. Frank Reynolds contributes an excellent discussion of the "Two Wheels of Dhamma" from the perspective of a man's search for order and salvation in Bardwell Smith, ed., ***The Two Wheels of Dhamma: Essays on the Theravada Tradition in India and Ceylon*** (American Academy of Religious Studies in Religion, No.3; Chambersburg, Pennsylvania: American Academy of Religion, 1972), pp. 6-30.
13. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, Dhamma – the World Savior (Bangkok: Buddhist Association of Thailand, 1963), p. 8.
14. Ibid.
15. The Edicts of Asoka, ed. and trans. N. A. Nikam and Richard McKeon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. I-XXXI, 1-69.
16. Ibid.
17. Cf. Heinrich Zimmer, ***Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization,*** ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: Harper and Row, 1946). According to Zimmer, we live today in the Kali yuga, the last and the morally worst, which is computed as having begun, Friday, February 18, 3102 B.C. (p. 15).
18. The Vishnu Purana is a classic source of Hindu mythology and religion, dating from the first millennium of our era. It was translated by H.H. Wilson, London, 1840.

The above text is a condensation of a long descriptive passage in Book IV, chapter XXIV, quoted in Zimmer, ***Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization***, p. 15.

In one of the classical Thai texts, ***Mulabot Banpakit***, which was for a century used as the primary readings for the Thai youth up until the 1930's, the same theme was classically composed. It is still remembered by those over fifty today. It is interesting to note that this passage from the ***Mulabot*** is being quoted more and more often nowadays by a wide range of contemporary publication in Thailand.

19. Robert Lingat, "Time and Dhamma", ***Contributions to Indian Sociology,*** VI (December, 1962), pp. 7-16. This volume is edited by Louis Dumont and D. Pocock.
20. Ibid., p. 10.
21. Ibid.,
22. Ibid., p. 12.
23. Ibid., pp. 14-15.
25. Robert Heine-Geldren, ***Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia*** (Cornell Data Paper No.18; Ithaca: Cornell University Press,1965), p. 1.
26. The translation of this text into the English language has been completed by Professor Frank Reynolds and his wife, Mani, of the University of Chicago.
27. Phya Anuman Rajadhon, ***Lao Ruang Trai Phum Phra Ruang*** (Relating to the Story of the ***Trai Phum*** of Phra Ruang) (Bangkok: N.P., 1955).
28. All quotations from the ***Trai Phum*** are used with permission from the Reynolds' translation, published as the Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series 4 under the title, ***The Three Worlds According to King Ruang,*** 1982.

(Adapted from Chapter VIII of the author's Ph.D. dissertation)

"SELF" AS A PROBLEM IN ISLAM : A READING OF ABDUL QADIR GILANI'S DISCOURSE

In the name of God, the Magnificient, the Merciful

A scholar recently remarked, "no serious study of the interpretation of Buddhist doctrine in contemporary Thailand can omit a consideration of Buddhadasa's views without being left deficient and inadequate."[1] Buddhadsa's significance to Buddhism in Thai society is evident, but the extent to which his teachings contribute to a better understanding of other religions has yet to be properly examined. Suffice it to suggest that in his effort to interpret Buddhism from a universalistic perspective, he maintains the commonality of all religious teachings by emphasizing the two levels of language used. They are "phasa khon -phasa tham" or everyday language and dhamma language. The latter is the language spoken "by people who have gained a deep insight into the truth."[2] In order to gain such a deep insight, a person's mind has to attain "emptiness". Such attainment is possible only if the "attachment to the self" is seen as its major obstacle. It is interesting to point out that Buddhism as understood by Buddhadasa is not alone in focussing on "self" as a hindrance to enlightenment. Islam also views "self" as the major impediment blocking spiritual enlightenment.

This article is *not* an attempt to examine Buddhadasa's thoughts. Nor is it an effort to compare his thoughts to Islamic teachings. But it seeks to elucidate a lesser known knowledge in Thai society, among both Buddhists and Muslims alike, that "self" is indeed a problem in Islam. I will try to do this by focussing on a section of *Futuh al-Ghaib* (The Revelations of the Unseen), a famous religious text written by a major Muslim saint in the eleventh century, Abdul Qadir Gilani, which specifically considers "the self" as a hindrance to an Islamic desirable state of being.

This article will first begin with a brief sketch of Abdul Qadir Gilani's life. Then his idea concerning the self as written in the "Tenth Discourse" of *Futuh al-Ghaib* will be examined. It is hoped that the discussion of the self as a problem in Islam would suggest a congenial platform in relation to Buddhism. Finally, I will also try to show that such a commonality is possible mainly because of the "radical monotheistic" nature of Islam.[3]

Abdul Qadir Gilani : A brief sketch of his life

When I was 10 years old, my father took me to Baghdad. The main purpose of our trip was to pay a visit to the tomb of a Muslim saint. I can still recall the many nights we spent there at his tomb as I watched perplexingly at hundreds of people coming to his tomb. Most came to recite the holy *Qur'an.* Many pressed their heads against the silvery enclosure surrounding his mausoleum. Little did I then know that it was the tomb of a Sufi saint who has been known for the past eight centuries as "the Sultan of the Saints." In fact, it is said that after the Prophet's tomb in Medina and those of certain members of his family, Abdul Qadir Gilani's is the most visited and venerated tomb in Islam.[4] In a recent book titled: *Hundred Great Muslims,* he is referred to as "This greatest of all divines and mystic saints of Islam..."[5]

Abdul Qadir Gilani was born in Naif, a district of Gilan in Persia in the month of Ramadan in the year 1077. His father, Abu Salih, was a direct descendant of Imam Hasan, the eldest son of Ali, the Prophet's son - in - law. His mother was a direct descendant of Imam Hussain, Ali's younger son.

On the course of his first journey to Baghdad, the centre of learning in those days, the caravan he travelled with encountered a band of robbers. After looting all other members in the caravan, a robber saw a simple looking boy sitting quietly so he asked whether the boy had anything with him. Before embarking on this journey, Abdul Qadir Gilani's mother sewed some gold coins inside his coat as a provision against hard time. The boy then answered the robber in the affirmative. He was searched and the robber could find nothing so he was taken to see the chief who asked the boy where the money were. Abdul Qadir Gilani then tore open his coat and gave the money to the surprised robbers. When asked why he told them the truth since he could have avoided losing his money quite easily, the saint related that his mother's parting advice was that he should not speak an untruth at any cost whatsoever. The chief of robbers was so moved by the boy's truthfulness. Tears rolled down his eyes as he thought that, "This boy is so obedient to his mother, while I am disobedient even to my Creator."[6] It is reported that after he repented all his past sins, he became Abdul Qadir Gilani's first disciple.

Abdul Qadir Gilani studied different branches of learning in Baghdad for 8 years. Due to his poverty, he sometimes had to go without food for days during this time but he never begged from anyone. Then he set out to acquire spiritual training. In the course of his search, he came across Hazrat Hammad, a vendor of syrups but a great saint of his time who later bacame a spiritual tutor to Abdul Qadir Gilani.

He later began to deny himself all the needs and comforts of life excepting the barest minimum that would sustain life. He would spend most of

his time in prolonged prayers and in the reading of the Qur'an. During this period, he avoided all contacts with people and would not meet or talk to anyone. He roamed about in the desert and came to stay at a place far away from Baghdad. For eleven years he shut himself out from the world. The end of this period marked the end of his training. There were then stories of temptation which can be considered his trials. He overcame the temptation of both pride in his own knowledge and wealth by maintaining his supreme submission to God's Will.

In 1118 he saw a vision. As if he were walking along a street in Baghdad, a sick and emaciated man lying on the roadside greeted him with an Islamic salutation. When Abdul Qadir Gilani answered the salutation, the man asked to be helped to sit straight. Suddenly he grew miraculously. Seeing the learned man frightened by this phenomenon, the stranger said: " I am the religion of your grandfather, I became diseased and miserable, but God has revived me through your help."[7] After this incident, he spent another 11 years living in solitude in a corner of the city before he began his teaching career.

He delivered three public sermons in a week. His sermons attracted large gatherings, numbering 70,000 to 80,000 at a time. Those who attended his public sermons were both Muslims and non-Muslims.[8] Everyday in the morning and afternoon he gave lessons on the commentary of the ***Qur'an***, Hadith (Traditions of the Prophet), principles of Islamic law, among others. After midday prayers he would give *fatwa* (verdicts) on legal questions submitted to him. Every evening before *maghrib* (sunset prayer), he would distribute bread among the poor. After the prayer, he sat for dinner which served as his fastbreaking meal because he fasted throughout the year. Before such meals he would proclaim that anybody who needed food in the neighborhood could come and join him for dinner. After *Isha*, the last compulsory prayer of the day, he retired to his chamber and spent the greater part of the night in the worship of God. He continued to live this way until his death in 1166 at the age of 91.

His time was that of conflict between the exponents of *Shariat* (tenets) and *Tariqat* (spiritual ways). There were people who subscribed to extreme rationalism in matters of religious significance *(Mutazellites)* and thus tended to ignore the mystical appeal Islam provides. Abdul Qadir Gilani's significance lies in his ability to strike a middle course between the two extremes, among other things. He is therefore regarded as *Mohu-ud-Din* or "the reviver of the faith". His *Futuh al-Ghaib*, a remarkable book on mysticism, is considered his most important teaching. The book has eighty "discourses" dealing with his teachings on spiritualism. The length of each discourse differs. The "Tenth Discourse" is selected as an example of his teachings because it deals directly with the problem of human attachment to self. In addition, Abdul Qadir Gilani also discusses the relationship between absolute detachment from the self and the significance of human effort. However before examining the "Tenth

Discourse", a note on "reading" this text is in order.

A Note on "Reading"

According to Paul Ricoeur, there are two ways of reading. First, readers can remain "in the suspense of the text" which implies treating it as a worldless and authorless object. Meanings of the text are explained in terms of its internal relations. But, second, readers can also lift the suspense and restore it to "living communication". Ricoeur argues that the latter is "the real aim of reading"[9] because reading is an interaction between the reader and the text. In fact, for reading to be possible at all, the text needs to be open out onto other things. To read, then, is to conjoin the reader's discourse to that of the text. This conjunction of discourses thus reveals "an original capacity for renewal which is its open character."[10]

In the course of reading, meanings emerge from the conjunction of discourses and not solely from the text. The reader is not petrified by the text but rather invited to follow the path of thought "opened up by the text, to place oneself *en route* towards the *orient* of the text."[11]

In attempting to read *Futuh al-Ghaib* as a religious text, I am aware of the enormous gulf between the knowledge and spiritual level of its writer and myself, not to mention different historical contexts. As a result, I cannot claim to understand the text as its author does. The process of conjunction of discourses means that the text will become open so that I will be able to comprehend it from my own limited perspective.

The Tenth Discourse

The Tenth Discourse begins with differentiating between God and the human self. Abdul Qadir Gilani states that"the self of man is opposed to God."[12] It is so because it entertains presumptions which give rise to such things as "false hopes", "passions", and "sensual pleasure".[13] They are opposite to God because they underscore human attachment to that which is considered "untrue" while God is Truth. Human beings should try to readjust their conception about their places in relation to the Divine. According to Abdul Qadir Gilani, human beings should realize the Truth that, similar to other creations, they are God's possession. Thus their will should be surrendered to their Master's. To overemphasize the significance of human beings is therefore false. As a result, a higher spiritual state can only be obtained by freeing one's self from such "untruth". The saint categorically states, "So if you ally your self with truth by opposing your self and becoming hostile to it you will belong to

God and become inimical to your self."[14]

It is important to stress the fact that in a profound sense Islam means a submission of human's will to God's. Hence, it is believed that human beings must serve God. But Abdul Qadir Gilani adds an enlightening angle to such an understanding.

He cites God's command to the Prophet David when He says, "O, David, I am your unavoidable resort, so hold firmly to this resort; true servitude consists in your becoming inimical to your own self for My sake."[15] But then he adds, "It is then that your friendliness towards God and servitude of Him will become a proved fact."[16] What is important here is his use of the terms "friendliness" and "servitude". Common understanding assumes an egalitarian notion of friendship. But that seems to apply well with human relationship not with the relationship between the Divine and human beings where truth is its cornerstone. For the latter type, at the end of serving the Divine, the Truth, friendship between God and man, emerges. It is not accidental that in Islam, the saint is commonly known as *awali (awliya* in plural). The root meaning of this word is "nearness", "next of kin", or "friend".[17]

Abdul Qadir Gilani reaffirms the significance of detachment by pointing out that God Almighty said: "Do not follow your low desires because they will lead you astray from the path of God."[18] The path of God is the Path of Truth. Human beings cannot continue along this Path with falsehood, namely servitude to human's desires. Another incident was used as an example. A learned man saw God Almighty in his dream and asked, "How is one to get to You?" God replied, "Discard yourself and come to me." The man then said, "I got out of my self as a snake gets out of its slough."[19]

Abdul Qadir Gilani concludes that "all good lies in fighting one's self in everything and in all conditions of life."[20] The state of "fighting one's own self" is called "state of piety" which can be achieved by distancing oneself from the forbidden things of the people, from their acts of help, from depending on them and putting any reliance on them or from fearing them or from coveting what they possess of the vanities of the world. In fact, the saint advises the Muslims *not* to expect or depend on anything or anyone. Instead, the searcher should "free your self from all concern about the means of the world in all their various aspects ..."[21]

This line of thought is a clear statement of human beings free from all things created by God, including their own selves. They should be aware of the fact that except for God, all things are His creation. He is permanent and they are not. In this sense, He is the only thing that is real and therefore worthwhile to depend on. But is such thinking dangerously close to the creed of *Jabariyya*

(fatalism)?

The saint prudently admonishes the people not to forget the position of "human efforts". He tries to strike a balance between the beliefs that human beings have absolute control over the origin as well as the cause of actions and that they have no responsibilities whatsoever in the world. Abdul Qadir Gilani points out that "actions belong to God in points of *creation* and to men in points of *effort*..."[22] In accordance with Islamic traditions, such an understanding would make possible the notions of rewards and punishment.

Although human effort is highlighted, the course of action taken for the Muslims should be carefully chosen by consulting God's Guidelines. Abdul Qadir Gilani writes: "Do not be the judge yourself" because "our being with them (people) is a decree of God and this decree is in darkness, so enter this darkness with a lamp which is also the judge and this is the Book of God and the practice of His Prophet."[23] Encountering dubious situation, it is advisable to abstain from wishes which show signs of attachment to the self and its desires. But facing a situation which the human mind cannot comprehend, then exercise patience because "you should by no means be in any hurry about the matter because you do not know the sequel of the matter and the ultimate purpose of the affair, nor are you aware of where lies a trial and a path of ruin, and a subtle planning contrived by God and an examination for you."[24]

Patience as a virtue is significant if human beings know that there are so much they do not know in their lives. The road of life is full of trials and unseen corners. Knowing their own limitation, wisdom dictates that humility, and not the sinful pride, is preciously essential if one is to walk the Path of Truth. "So you should be patient till God Himself becomes the doer of the thing in you."[25] If detachment from the self is accomplished at a time of trial then "God the Exalted will not chastise you for an action which is His Own..."[26]

Once the "state of piety" is attained, then one approaches the "state of reality" or the "state of Wilayat" (saintliness). At this level, human beings are advised to stand opposed to their passions and fully obey God's commandments. There are two kinds of obedience. The first kind of obedience results from God's commandment as stipulated in religious injunctions. Following this, humans can take their means of subsistence from the world to the extent that is considered their just demands. But they should avoid indulging in sensual pleasures while trying to ward off sins, both open and secret. At the same time, they must carry on their duties.

But the second kind of obedience relates to God's Hidden Commandment where He either enjoins human beings to do or forbids them from doing anything. This kind of Commandment applies to things permissible and God's servants have complete freedom to act. Yet, they will refrain from taking any

human initiative and wait for Divine order. Abdul Qadir Gilani writes, "When he receives an order he obeys it. Thus all his movements and restful conditions become dedicated to God."[27]

The final paragraph of the Tenth Discourse carries the readers from the world of obedience to commandments, both open and hidden, to the beyond. Abdul Qadir Gilani writes:

"And where there is not (even) this hidden commandment, and is just an act of God, it entails a state of resignation. And if you have attained to the truth of truth which is otherwise called the state of immersion *(mahw)* or annihilation *(fana)* it is the state of the *Abdal* – who are broken-hearted on account of Him, a state belonging to pure monotheists..."[28]

The state of annihilation of the self is crucial for wanderers along the Path of God. But within this state of *fana* there are different stages, aspects and meanings. Three significant phases mark the distinctive features of *fana*. First, there must be a moral transformation of the soul which results from the extinction of all its passions and desires. Second, a mental abstraction of the mind will follow. Through concentration upon the thought of God, all objects of perception, thoughts, actions and feelings will disappear. The thought of God signifies contemplation of the Divine attributes. Third, the highest stage of *fana* is reached when even the consciousness of *fana* attainment vanishes. It is the cessation of all conscious thought. The person who attains this stage is finally rapt in contemplation of the divine essence.[29] Annihilation of the self is attained from ultimate obedience which means "...to go against your own self and to be free from reliance on any ability and power and to be absolutely devoid of all will and purpose with regard to anything of this world and the hereafter."[30] For Islam, freedom from the yoke of the self is essential if absolute obedience to God is to be attained.

Conclusion: a Baby, a Dead Body, and an Unconscious Patient

According to Abdul Qadir Gilani's Tenth Discourse, the human self is a major obstacle preventing human beings from approaching Truth. Detachment from the human self can assume different states beginning from that of piety by following moral codes stipulated in accordance with relgious doctrines to that of annihilation where nothing but God exists. What people of the Path are searching is, in short, *fana* (extinction) of the created in the Uncreated, of the temporal in the Eternal, of the finite in the Infinite.[31] This is how one can construe the Prophet's well-known saying: "Die before ye die."[32]

The last portion of the Tenth Discourse of *Futuh al-Ghaib* explains the purpose of metaphysical death in the following words:

"Thus you will become the servant of the King, and not of the Kingdom, of Divine commandment and not of the desires of the flesh and will become like a baby in the care of nature and a dead body at the time of funeral wash in the hands of the washer and an unconscious patient lying before the physician."[33]

To attain servitude towards the Divine commandment, one has to become like a baby, a dead body and an unconscious patient. These three conditions signify cessation of active self in different forms. At birth, the self of a baby is not an active participant. With the gift of innocence, attachment to self has yet to take place. In the care of nature, he or she is both clean and healthy. Facing serious sickness and becoming an unconscious patient, there is a temporary cessation of a person's self. Without consciousness, attachment to self in the past will stop. In the care of the physician, the patient is able to detach from his or her own self. Facing death, the body meets with permanent cessation of action and it is the hands of the Washer who turns the body. In His care, the body can be carefully washed and cleaned again.

If these three conditions are considered as a journey, then it certainly reflects the beginning, a stop and the end. Human beings need to be reminded that attachment to self does not exist at the very beginning when the eyes of innocence are able to appreciate the care of Nature freely. In the end, when death arrives and the eyes closed, attachment to self will also stop. The point, however, is not to wait for death nor to return to the time of birth in order that attachment to self will cease. But to live a life as though one were a baby, an unconscious patient or a dead body.

Buddhadasa has repeatedly said that he has three wishes: to create inter-religious understanding, to help everyone attain his or her own religious core, and to free everyone from the desires of the flesh.[34] In "reading" Abdul Qadir Gilani's "Tenth Discourse", a Muslim is able to see his own self as a hindrance from Allah. One of Allah's attributes is Haqq or Truth.[35] As such attachment to self will hinder approachment to Truth. And if surrendering to the Will of Allah is the core of Islam, then attachment to self needs to be overcome. This understanding of Islam inspired by Abdul Qadir Gilani's teaching provides a congenial platform for inter-religious understanding, especially between Islam and Buddhism. This congenisality is, among other things, a result of the fact that Islam is radically monotheistic by nature. When at the root of things only Allah exists, attachment to everything else, especially the human self, will not be conducive to spiritual enlightenment.

Chaiwat Satha-Anand
Thammasat University, Bangkok.

ENDNOTES :

1] Peter Jackson, ***Buddhadasa : A Buddhist Thinker for the Modern World*** (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1988), p. 15.
2] Buddhadasa, "Phasa Khon - Phasa Dhamma," In Pinij Rattanakul, (ed.) ***A Collection of Religious Articles*** (Bangkok: Thammasat University Printing House, 1973), p.1 (in Thai).
3] I am using the term "radical" in its original sense which means to grasp things by their roots. I believe that the title of this book, ***Radical Conservatism***, is chosen for the very same meaning.
4] Even in far off Morocco the notion of "my lord Baghdad" or ***Sidi Baghdad*** refers to none other than Abdul Qadir Gilani. See Martin Lings, ***What is Sufism?*** (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), pp.119-120, fn.45.
5] Jamil Ahmad, ***Hundred Great Muslims*** (Lahore: Ferozsons (Pvt.) Ltd., 1984), p.122.
6] ***Ibid.***, p.119.
7] This story is narrated in "A Life Sketch of Ghauth A1-Azam Mohy-ud-din Sayyid Abdul Qadir Gilani," in Hazrat Shaikh Muhyuddin Abdul Qadir Gilani, ***Futuh Al-Ghaib*** (The Revelations of the Unseen) M.Aftab-Ud-Din Ahmad, Trans. (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1982), p.8.
8] Jamil Ahmad, Hundred Great Muslims, p.121.
9] Paul Ricoeur, ***Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences***, John B. Thompson (ed. and trans.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 158.
10] ***Ibid.***
11] ***Ibid.***, p.162.
12] Abdul Qadir Gilani, ***Futuh al-Ghaib***, p. 39.
13] ***Ibid.***
14] ***Ibid.***
15] ***Ibid.***, p. 40.
16] ***Ibid.***
17] Reynold A. Nicholson, ***The Mystics of Islam*** (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), p.122. (First published in 1914.)
18] Abdul Qadir Gilani, ***Futuh al-Ghaib***, p.40.
19] ***Ibid.***, pp.40-41.
20] ***Ibid.***, p.41.
21] ***Ibid.***
22] ***Ibid.***, p.42.
23] ***Ibid.***
24] ***Ibid.***
25] ***Ibid.***
26] ***Ibid.***, p.44.
27] ***Ibid.***
28] ***Ibid.***, p.45.
29] Nicholson, ***The Mystics of Islam***, pp.60-61.
30] Abdul Qadir Gilani, ***Futuh al-Ghaib***, p.45.

31] Lings, ***What is Sufism?***, p.25.

32] See Laleh Bakhtiar, ***Sufi: Expression of the Mystic Quest*** (Singapore: Thames and Hudson, 1979), p. 52. It is interesting to compare this famous teaching of the Prophet with the notion of death from the self in order that he or she can be one with God as explained by the Buddhadasa. See his ***Buddhism-Christianity According to Buddhadasa*** (Bangkok: Tienwan, 1984), p.65. (In Thai)

33] Abdul Qadir Gilani, ***Futuh al-Ghaib***, p.45.

34] Buddhadasa, ***Buddhism-Christianity According to Buddhadasa***, p.4.

35] Lings, ***What is Sufism?***, p.64.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS AS A BUDDHIST SPIRITUALITY OF ENGAGEMENT

The message of Buddhism, especially as it has been presented in Western countries, has been understood as an individual- centered way of deliverance from human suffering, notably the sufferings related to the fourfold human cycle of birth, disease, old age, and death. It has been taken largely as a spirituality of detachment, a way of non-involvement with the world and human affairs as a way to attaining peace of mind.

A reexamination of its basic message in the context of the age in which it arose and its impact on its time, as well as its further development in the various periods of its history, however, is being undertaken by different groups of Buddhists, with a view to retrieving the social impact of Gotama's Gospel on his own age, as well as for reconsidering its possibilities for our own. The need for this reexamination has come to be felt as Buddhists in different parts of the globe attempt to tackle social issues and ongoing human concerns in those areas and look into their tradition for resources with which to face these concerns.

(The work and personality of the Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu is a noteworthy example in this regard, and it is to him, on the occasion of his eighty-fourth birthday, that these pages are dedicated. Also, for other attempts, see for example Ken Jones, ed., *The Social Message of Buddhism ;* Sulak Sivaraksa , *A Socially Engaged Buddhism;* Joanna Macy, *Dharma and Development;* S. Ariyaratne, *Collected Works*, 2 vols., etc. In Japan, followers of Shinran, Dogen, and Nichiren, founders of the major Buddhist sects influential in Japanese society, meeting in small study and action groups, are questioning the established interpretations of their respective institutions and are also engaged in recovering the social message of these founders.)

Looking at another religious tradition as a point of reference, Christianity presents a message of salvation to human beings understood as liberation from the bondage of sin. Here the grasp of the meaning of "sin", as that from which we humans need to be liberated, thus becomes a crucial factor for the understanding of the particular implications of the Christian message on our

concrete human situation. For example, "sin" has been understood as referring primarily to the personal or individual level, but further reflection on the human situation enables us likewise to understand it as a very definite social reality that binds human beings in situations of mutual alienation, oppression, violence, etc.

In particular, theologies of liberation conceived and developed in Latin America and other third world countries, and which have now gone beyond these geograpical boundaries, challenge not only Christians but also those of other faiths to reexamine the basic message of their own religious traditions. These have inspired fresh approaches among Christians on the very enterprise of theologizing itself, i.e. the endeavor towards understanding the meaning and implications of the Christian message. This theological approach stresses the centrality of *praxis* that comes from a commitment to be on the side of the poor and the oppressed, in a common struggle for liberation from all that prevents us from realizing our full human potential: the Christian Gospel is seen precisely as a message of liberation that calls for a response of faith, which involves an engagement of oneself in the tasks of liberation as one entrusts one's whole being to the God of history.

A common thrust of the various theologies of liberation is in that the basic message of Christianity is presented as one of an integral salvation that does not, or cannot ignore the basic social, economic, and political realities in which human beings are situated. The Christian Gospel is a message that precisely is directed at the concrete situation of human beings as in-need-of-salvation, not only on the individual or personal plane involving the basic human existential questions as finitude, guilt, death, etc., but likewise on the social level relating to the different manifestations of oppression, violence, dehumanization, etc. (Cf. for example Luke 4:16-31 as a key passage cited in this context.)

This renewed understanding of the implications of the Christian Gospel, from the distorted view of an individual-centered salvation to a powerful and liberating social message which has taken place in the latter half of this century, is in great part due to the experience of the poor and oppressed, especially in the Third World countries, an experience which cannot but present a weighty challenge to the rest of the inhabitants of the globe. Such a challenge is posed likewise upon the adherents of the different religious traditions, to reexamine the concrete role of these religious traditions and the institutions which are being felt more and more on a global scale: the hunger and poverty of the multitudes, the continuing military violence in many areas, the deprivation of basic human rights of so many, the threats on the environment, etc.

In the light of these global human concerns, the different religious tra-

ditions can no longer go about their own separate ways taken up solely with internal issues and with questions of self-propagation. As they come in contact with and interact with one another, adherents of these traditions are able to challenge one another, and are all called upon to take a fresh look at their own fundamental religious message to see if there is anything that can bear on the present human condition, that can provide some light on our common global concerns.

Unfortunately, religion has often served as a means of escape from the real world and its concerns, to a realm of the "spiritual" that is detached from or set in opposition to this concrete world of human affairs. What is called for is a retrieval of the original dynamism that underlies the various religious traditions, a recovery of the liberative message that brought them to existence in the first place.

This recovery of the liberative message in the different religious traditions would also bring with it the retrieval of the term *spirituality*, from a term used in opposition to "worldly human concerns" and which denotes an individualistic as well as dualistic attitude to life, to one which envelops the field of human and worldly concerns with a power that is more than just human, leading to a harnessing of this power towards creative and integrative directions. Such is what we may term a *spirituality of engagement*, that means a way of seeing and of being that is empowered by a religious vision committed to the tasks of liberation (in all the facets and dimensions this would imply).

Christian theologians of liberation have set the pace in this endeavor, learning from the experience of the poor and the oppressed as they tread the path and tackle the concrete tasks involved in their liberation from oppressive structures and ways of being. (See for example Gustavo Gutierrez, *We Drink From Our Own Wells*; Jon Sobrino, *Spirituality and Liberation*; Donal Dorr, *Spirituality and justice*, all published by NY: Orbis; and also the works of Segundo Galilea, Matthew Fox, Richard Rohr, etc).

Inspired by such endeavors, this paper will examine the Four Noble Truths in Buddhist teaching for its implications for the question of human liberation. The hope is to be able to pave further ground in the search for concrete areas of mutual cooperation between Buddhists and Christians and members of other faiths in our contemporary situation in the global tasks facing humankind as a whole.

1. The Four Noble Truths as Healing Message

The "content" of the enlightenment of the Buddha is expressed in

Buddhist scriptures in manifold ways, and the Four Noble Truths is one of these classic expressions, summed up in the first sermon after his enlightenment. These are the Truth of Suffering, the Truth of its Cause or Origin, the Truth of its Cessation, and of the Way to the cessation of this human suffering through the eightfold Noble Path.

The doctrine of the Four Noble Truths is said to be originally inspired by ancient Indian medical practices, whereby the skilled physician first examines the patient, looking at the alleged ailment in its various manifestations and symptoms. Upon such an examination of symptoms, or "marks" of the disease, the physician then attempts a diagnosis, inquiring into the various possible causes of the disease. With the understanding of the causes of the disease, the physician is then able to set forth a cure, based on a vision of the goal, that is, a state of health and well-being freed from the disease and its symptoms and then prescribes the concrete steps or the actual medicine that will bring about this state, based upon an eradication of the root causes of the disease itself.

With this medicinal analogy in mind, the Buddha is also called *Vaidyarāja* or Physician-king (cf. for example *Lalitavistara*, pp. 4, 107, etc.), as well as *Bhisakko* or Healer (Cf. *Anguttara - Nikāya* IV, p.340), pointing to the dynamic healing power of Buddhist teaching. (On this, cf. G.C. Pande, *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism,* Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1957, pp.398-399.)

2. The Truth of Suffering

We are called upon to engage in an existential examination of our own situation in order to grasp what is concretely implied in the Truth of suffering.

A perusal of the various and numerous accounts in Buddhist literature throughout the ages, from the terse locutions in the earlier suttas to the voluminous scholastic tomes of the Abhidhamma, will enable us to attain an understanding of how this doctrine was understood by the Buddha's followers through the ages. Buddhist scholarship in fact is concerned with this task of tracing the various levels of development in the understanding of basic doctrine, with philological, historical, critical and other methods, through the perusal of texts left to us from the past.

But what we are concerned with is not just to be able to map out various ways of understanding Buddhist teachings in the past, i.e. not just in the past

as past, but to *uncover the underlying truth from texts of a past age as it addresses us in the present.* In reading Buddhist texts we are not merely attempting an archaeological enterprise of uncovering the past as past, but are concerned with understanding: *understanding* the text as it bears on our present situation, and our present situation as it throws light on the text. In other words,we are faced with a hermeneutical task of letting the text throw light on our present, and vice versa, our present to bear on the text. (On the various presuppositions and implications of such an approach to texts, see J. Croatto, *Biblical Hermeneutics,* NY: Orbis Books.)

How then are we called to approach, or better, to grasp the Truth of Suffering? The mere "objective" analysis and dissection and systematic arrangement of what the Buddhist scholastic treatises have to say will not be enough to lead us to an actual and existential grasp of its meaning. We are called, as it were, to "put on the mind of the Buddha," to "see things with the Buddha's eye," viz. to take a straightforward look at our present human situation.

Here we are called to look at the world not simply as disinterested observers, but "from the side of" the subject (or victim!) of suffering, i.e. to grasp the actual content of suffering from this vantage point of its subject. This calls to mind the hermeneutical principle wherein one is called to make explicit the standpoint from which one perceives things, i.e. not as an "objective" and "outside onlooker" but as "participant-observer" whose very initial attempt to perceive (something, anything) *already* presupposes an interrelatedness with, and inevitably affects, what is perceived. The explicitation of this stance, i.e. not as "objective onlooker" merely describing or analyzing something in an impersonal and disinterested way, but as a participant-observer already interrelated and concerned with the subject at issue, defines the *praxis*-based quality of the stance.

The parable of the poisoned arrow in early Buddhist scriptures elucidates this praxis-based stance rather clearly. This is the well-known parable about a man who is pierced by a poisoned arrow : for such a man, already writhing in pain and in danger of death from the poison, questions as "what kind of bow was used to shoot the arrow?" "to what ethnic group does the person who shot the arrow belong?" "what was the color of the person's skin?" "at what speed did the arrow travel?" etc., are entirely beside the point. Here the issue is to remove the arrow from the body and enable healing to take place. This is the message of the first of the Four Noble Truths, that is, to awaken us to the fact that we are already pierced by a poisoned arrow that needs to be pulled out of our system. That is to say, the one pierced by the arrow: that thou art!

A look at our human situation will enable us to see the basic existential state we are placed in as concrete human *individual,* e.g., as being-toward-

death, as finite being yet with an inescapable yearning for the infinite, as being with many contradictory desires and attachments, delusions, etc. This aspect of our human-existence-as-suffering (i.e. as individual being) has been touched upon in Buddhist texts and developed by commentators throughout the ages, and remains as a basic Buddhist contribution to human self-understanding.

However, without diminishing the significance of the above, our grasp of this Truth is enhanced as we open our eyes to the concrete kinds of pain and suffering being experienced by our fellow human beings in this world of ours, i.e. as we look at the social realities of our concrete world as this impinges upon us and many of our fellow humans, in the realities of hunger, poverty and exploitation of multitudes of human beings, especially in the Third World, in the trampling down upon of basic human rights in various forms throughout various countries in the name of differing ideologies, in the continuing military violence going on in many parts of the globe (and this despite the so-called East-West thaw and the developments in Eastern Europe), in the continuing destruction of our natural living environment due not only to the widespread cutting down of forest resources but also due to the increasing amount of toxic and unassimilable material thrown into the atmosphere, onto the earth, into the seas. And so on.

A way of being opened to this dimension of the concrete suffering of our fellow human beings is through what is called "exposure programs," a practice introduced by grassroots groups in local communities in Third World countries. Here participants in the program who come from other areas or other countries are taken in to live for a short time with families in rural or urban poor areas, sharing in their daily schedule, etc., and are allowed to experience their situation "from within." In such a way, persons who come from middle or upper-middle class backgrounds are "adopted" into a local family as a member, and sharing the life of that family, are thereby "exposed" (in many cases for the first time) to a situation of hunger and poverty and disease, etc., that are the common lot of many of those who live in Third World Countries. One such "exposure" experience can truly open a person's eyes to the reality of hunger and poverty and disease and death, and enable one to grasp this reality no longer simply as an abstract idea but as one who is able to share the reality from within. The suffering of one's fellow human beings placed in situations of hunger, poverty, disease, etc., becomes one's very own: in other words, one realizes that the poisoned arrow also pierces one's own body as well.

Gotama's own awakening to the fact of human suffering is attributed to his "exposure" to persons plagued by disease, old age and death, and his having come to realize that he shared in this very lot as one vulnerable to disease, old age, and death. In other words, he saw these concrete facets of human suffer-

ing no longer from the outside as an abstract idea, but right from within, as a *subject* of that very suffering.

Such an experience of being exposed to the concrete sufferings of our fellow human beings likewise awakens in us that dimension that we are one in this lot, sharers not only in a common being as vulnerable to suffering, but more so in the very *actuality* of suffering itself as experienced by our fellow humans in a very concrete way in this given place and time in the world today. Being opened to this dimension thus draws out the dynamism seeking for its solution: how can the arrow be pulled out?

In other words, the Buddhist Truth of Suffering calls us to open our eyes to the reality of the world around us as just precisely that, a world of suffering, which now has come to a point where the very survival of humankind is threatened. This is a "disease", a "sickness unto death," with its manifold symptoms and manifestations, that calls for a radical kind of healing.

These symptoms and manifestations of the human situation in our contemporary world call for a diligent diagnosis of their basic causes, and with this we are led to a consideration of the Secound Noble Truth.

3. The Truth of the Cause of Suffering

This second of the Four Noble Truths urges us to delve into the various phenomena in our world today and examine the root causes of these phenomena characterized as suffering. And this examination into the causes of human suffering in our contemporary situation is not a mere disinterested academic venture. With the hermeneutical guideline pointed out above, i.e., elucidating one's stance as *participant*-observer, the need for a social analysis of the causes of suffering from the vantage point of the subject of suffering, or in other words from the standpoint of the victims of the situation of suffering is manifest. (See for example Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis*, NY: Orbis Books.)

In traditional Buddhist teaching, egocentric craving *(tanhā)* is traced as the root of suffering. This egocentric craving has been analyzed in Buddhist tradition as comprising the set of "three poisons" of greed *(rāga)*, anger *(dosa)*, and ignorance *(moha)*.

Greed is that inordinate desire to possess goods, material and otherwise, seeking to accumulate one's own stock of possessions. This is simply the tendency to expand the ego or the seat of all selfish desires, with a flagrant disregard of others and their inherent rights. Anger is the expression of

discontent or dissatisfaction at not having one's own way, not seldom giving vent to violence and destructiveness. Again it arises out of the inordinate attachment to and sense of pride in one's own ego. Ignorance is literally the absence of vision, the inability to perceive things as they are, as one is blinded by one's ego-centered way of being. This ignorance causes one to act in ways which disregard the destructive effect of one's attitudes and actions upon others.

In these "three poisons" then, is traced the cause of human suffering, both of oneself as egocentered being, and of others as the victims of one's thoughts, words and actions that are based on greed, anger and ignorance. And the causes of the actual sufferings of living beings placed in actual situations of hunger and poverty and oppression and ecological destruction and military violence, etc., can likewise be traced to the "ego-centric way of being" in its various social and corporate manifestations, as such as class or other vested interests, ethnocentric attitudes, insular or exclusivistic policies and ways of deciding and acting, the narrow interests of one's economic class or corporate entity based on the profit-motive, etc.

In other words, a key to the understanding of the roots of the very real suffering of countless human beings in our contemporary world is provided by the Second Noble Truth, the Truth of the Cause of Suffering: the ego-centered way of being of individuals as well as corporate entities such as ethnic groupings, nation-states, multinational corporations, regional alliances, etc. etc. But again it is not enough to point to these things on an abstract level: there is need for a concrete investigation into the various activities and dealings of individuals and corporate entities that cause the suffering of others.

Taking the pattern of the "exposure program" mentioned above, the participants from other areas and other countries are also called to sit together after their exposure experience, to reflect on and analyze the realities they were opened to: the realities of hunger and disease and poverty, etc. They are led to ask questions as, "what is the cause of the poverty of the dwellers of this village?" and to look into the various factors involved.

For example, they may be led to see how a particular area in question, say a village in northern Philippines, may be naturally blessed with arable land, forest resources, favorable conditions for livelihood, etc., but yet the fact is that the children are undernourished and are susceptible to various diseases from childhood, the villagers remain poor though they put in their share of hard work in the fields and forests, etc. Then the question comes: where do the natural resources and the product of their labor go? And the exposure-participants are made aware, for example, that the land which the farmers till actually belong to an absentee landlord-family to whom they must give a great part of their produce, or that the forest resources are being exploited by big concessionaires who take the products in big trucks away for export, leaving the villagers who

are employed as day-laborers with sub-human wages, etc.

A look at the situation of poverty in a local Third World community will lead to further questions, such as "why is the land owned not by the villagers and tillers of the soil, but by a few individuals who live in towns and cities and who take the bulk of the profit from the produce of the land?" Or, "where do the forest products taken from these areas end up, and who are the ones who profit from this whole venture?" etc. Such questions of course will lead the participants right into issues of economics and politics and social relations, etc., and will be able to see how the real world runs on networks of interrelationships of individuals and corporate entities all operating under principles of egocentered self-preservation and self-interest. In other words, to make a long story short, the three "poisons" of greed, anger and ignorance manifest themselves in very concrete forms in these networks of interrelationships that make up the real world in which we live, and we can see how egocentered craving *(tanhā)* continues to be the operating principle in all this.

4. The Cessation of Suffering: a Vision of Liberation

What then is the situation characterized by the state of cessation of suffering as perceived in the light of the first two Noble Truths? This leading question will be the guiding principle towards the formation of a ***vision of liberation*** based not on abstract metaphysical ideas but on a possible and (at least, theoretically) attainable state of affairs, wherein the root cause of suffering is eradicated.

Such a vision is what was behind the formation of the early Buddhist *sangha*, a society of equals in a common endeavor to free themselves from their ego-attachment and walk the way of the Enlightened One. The early *sangha* then can be seen as an example of a way of life of a community of human beings walking the path of liberation. As such, the social, political, and economic aspects of such a way of life, in addition to the presupposed conditions on the individual level, i.e. the freedom and willingness to enter such a community and walk on its path together, can serve as hints for possible models of a state of affairs reflecting the Third Noble Truth, and deserve closer examination in this regard.

In this connection, the early Christian community that arose in the first century, living a communal life centered on Jesus' message and sharing everything that they had with one another in a spirit of fellowship (see Acts 2:42 and ff.) is also referred to as a possible model of a liberated way of life in

community. Unfortunately, it is a reemergence of the human ego and its attachments that comes to disrupt such an idealized state of affairs (Acts 5:1 ff).

Perhaps one can only present such a state of affairs in utopic terms, as a negation of the present realities experienced in our concrete world, as an idealized situation where the hunger and poverty of the multitudes are no more, where human beings do not exploit each other but live in mutual respect and harmony, where structures and institutions of violence are dismantled to pave way for structures and institutions founded on and promoting peace and justice. Perhaps one can only *dream* of a world where economic enterprises that encompass activities of production, distribution and consumption are maintained and operated in ways that do not damage the ecological cycle but remain within limits of tolerance of the natural environment, where the big and strong do not exploit the small and weak, where individuals and groups do not trample upon each other for power, etc.

But one might also say, following Martin Luther King, that it is of our human lot at least to be able to dream, and being inspired by that *dream,* to assume ways of seeing and of being and of interrelating with each other that will lead us closer to the realization of such dreams.

A vision of liberation as such may be no more than an impossible dream in this sense, perhaps in the same way as the complete realization of *nibbāna* (as the complete annihilation of one's egocentric attachments, that brings about perfect peace and perfect freedom) was seen as almost an unattainable goal. But nevertheless it is the kind of dream that keeps inspiring us human beings to set our footsteps in its direction.

Such a dream is given a very concrete and powerful expression in a line from the *Mettā-sutta* (On Friendliness/ Compassion), frequently recited by Buddhist followers young and old throughout Sri Lanka, Burma, and Thailand: *Sabbesattā bhavantu sukhitatta* (May all living beings attain perfect happiness!). Such a prayer and wish for the happiness of all living beings, implying the eradication of all that stands in the way of such happiness, is a positive expression of what is promised in the Third Noble Truth, the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. In the recitation of this *sutta*, the Buddhist follower assumes the mind of the Enlightened One whose mode of being is dedicated to leading all to this state of perfect happiness. Such a mode of being in turn assures that the Third Noble Truth is not seen as an ideal to be sought for oneself alone (which would be a contradiction in terms!) but is a goal shared with all living beings.

The Third Noble Truth then, can continue to inspire us human beings,

to keep before us a vision of liberation, laying these out in particular terms, with their implications for social, political, economic life, and so on, as possible scenarios for a more viable world (similar perhaps to the projects undertaken by groups such as the Club of Rome, or the erstwhile Brandt Commission, on ways of managing the earth,etc.). It keeps calling on us to lay down such scenarios on various levels, local, national, regional, as well as global, and to keep on correlating such scenarios with one another, continuing to revise them along the way as they are tested in actual praxis.

The foundation of the vision of liberation however, can only be a fundamental attitude that each individual is called upon to assume, a way of seeing and of being that most aptly fits the term *spirituality* : a spirituality of selfless engagement in the tasks of human liberation. We can seek the elements of such a spirituality in the Eightfold Path of the Fourth Noble Truth.

5. A Spirituality of Engagement: The Eightfold Path

Traditionally, Buddhism has been understood as a spirituality of detachment, a prescription for the eradication of suffering by a way of non-attachment to the things of the world. The great pitfall in such a view however is that it is taken to mean an attitude of non-involvement, a stance which seems to imply that the faithful Buddhist follower must be indifferent to things of the world, including the very sufferings of one's fellow human beings.

An understanding of the Third Noble Truth as a goal set not for oneself alone but as one which includes all living beings in its scope already precludes such a view (i.e. implying an indifference to the sufferings of others). Likewise, the understanding of the First Noble Truth of Suffering presupposes our solidarity with all living beings in such a situation of suffering, and implies that its solution can never be simply on an individual level: this means that as long as there exist living beings who are suffering in this real world of ours, it cannot but be a concern of mine, as I understand myself to be in solidarity with all living beings.

Such an understanding of solidarity with all living beings in suffering would seem to be included in the first of the Eightfold Path, which is Right View. This Right View involves a way of seeing things *as they are*, and not from an egocentered perspective which blurs my vision of things.

If we are to follow up the implications of this first of the Eightfold Path we can see how it already contains the other, as it serves as the basis for the rest. Right View enables me to overcome my selfish viewpoint and see things as they are : I am enabled to look at my fellow living-beings not from an egocentered perspective, but *as they are*, in their pains and sufferings as well as joys and

hopes, etc., and am enabled to share these as my very own.

The accomplishment of this first of the Eightfold Path enables me to be open and sensitive to the sufferings of my fellow living-beings. Such openness and sensitivity in turn call upon me to take the following steps in consonance with what I perceive. Thus, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Endeavor, and Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration all follow based upon the world that is opened to me by my Right View. As I am able to see things as they are and open my being to all living-beings as they are, in solidarity with their joys and hopes and pains and sufferings, all my thoughts, words, actions, etc., will follow in accordance with this sensitivity of mine to their joys and hopes and pains and sufferings, etc. And my whole way of seeing and way of being will unfold based upon my sensitivity to this world opened to me by the Right View.

Such a way of seeing and way of being is what we mean by a *spirituality of engagement,* which is founded on the overcoming of my egocentered orientation as I realize myself in solidarity with all living-beings in their joys and hopes, pains and sufferings, etc. In other words, my whole being is given over to the particular demands and tasks that this realization of solidarity implies. I place myself and my whole being, in all that it includes, on the path that would lead to the realization of that aspiration: *sabbesattā bhavantu sukhitattā!*

The particular elements of the other steps on the Eightfold Path can be given further elaboration, but their content follows from the understanding of the first step, as indicated above: each step will be taken as a further stage in the realization of the vision of liberation.

The final (eight) step, Right Concentration *(samādhi)* deserves a few comments at this point. Here the traditional Buddhist practice of meditation takes on particular significance in the whole context of this spirituality of engagement which our consideration of the Four Noble Truths opens for us. Instead of being seen as an individualistic exercise that accentuates only *my* peace of mind and *my* state of equanimity in the face of worldly events, thus tending to separate me from the rest of the other living-beings, it is precisely the ability to enter the state of *samādhi* which enables me to realize, right at the core of my being, with every breath, with every pulse, at every moment, that I am interconnected with every other being in this universe, that there is no "I" except for this fact of interconnectedness with every other being!

Right Concentration enables me precisely to be centered at the core of my being, that is, at that point of interconnectedness with every other being in this universe, and reinforces me in my vision of solidarity in the joys and

hopes, pains and sufferings of others.

The practice of meditation, which for Gotama was the direct way to that powerful experience of enlightenment wherein he realized his inter- connectedness (*pratitya-samutpāda*, "dependent origination") with every other being in the universe, thus assumes a key place in the spirituality of engagement. Instead of leading one to be suspended halfway in an attitude of detachment from or non-involvement in worldly affairs and concerns, *samādhi* opens me to the world of oneness with all beings and enables me to be more fully engaged in the concerns towards the liberation of all my fellow beings. Such a detachment will of course have its place, as it liberates me from my egocentered tendencies and attitudes and enables me to see things in proper light. But this detachment from the ego and its vain pursuits is precisely what empowers me to be fully given to the tasks toward the liberation of all.

Further, *samādhi* grounds my vision of solidarity with my fellow beings in the concrete affairs of daily life and in the particular encounters with every individual living-being: the members of my immediate family, the persons I work with, the persons I meet casually along the way, etc. With Right Concentration, I am constantly brought back to the here and now of my concrete day to day existence and enabled to give myself fully to the tasks therein, as the field wherein I am called to place my whole being towards the realization of that aspiration for the happiness of all.

6. Concluding Remarks

A look at the role of various religious traditions in human history will reveal an ambivalent picture. On the one hand, one sees the creative and liberative power manifested by different religious traditions at their origins, which brought about revolutionary changes in the societies and cultures in which they arose. On the other, one also cannot help but point out how such creative and liberative power present at their early stages somehow gave way to institutional forms and practices that militated against, and even stifled that original power.

Buddhism and Christianity are two noteworthy examples exhibiting such ambivalent roles in history. There is no need to go into detail on this here, beyond pointing out that the revolutionary impact of the original message of these two traditions as seen in their early history somehow gave way to spiritualities of other worldliness, and as corollary to this, to situations of being co-opted by the political, social and economic powers-that-be in the different

areas and stages of their historical development and propagation.

As mentioned above, the experience of grassroots communities in countries as Latin America and the Philippines have spurred Christians toward the recovery of the dynamic and liberative social message of the Gospels. Likewise, grassroots communities in Sri Lanka and Thailand have been led to reexamine the basic message of their Buddhist faith in the light of their situations of suffering brought about by poverty and oppression and institutional violence. Such a process of reexamination is still underway, and it is in such a process that Christians and Buddhists can challenge and inspire one another in living out the implications of a *spirituality of engagement* grounded on their respective religious traditions, as they interact and cooperate in common tasks and concerns.

Ruben L.F. Habito
Perkins School of Theology,
Southern Methodist University, Dallas TX 75275-0133 U.S.A.

VI

Bibliographies

I

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BUDDHADASA'S TRANSLATED WORKS

arranged by Louis Gabaude
Membre de I'Ecole Française d'Extrême-orient

The following list is an updated and differently arranged excerpt of the **"Bibliographie de Buddhadasa"** published in my ***Une herméneutique bouddbique contemporaine de Thaïlande: Buddhadasa Bhikkhu,*** Ecole Française d'Extreme-orient, Paris, 1988.pp. 581-587.

Of course, the present list is by no means complete. Those who have published other translations or who know of them – as well as those who are aware of titles concerning Buddhadasa – please be very kind to inform me for future updates and new publications. Please send the informations – or a copy with a bill – to: **Louis Gabaude, c/o Alliance Française, 138 Charoeun Prathet Road,Chiang Mai 50000, Thailand.**

Anyone who is interested in, or has begun, translating any of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's work into any language, please contact **Bhikkhu Santikaro , c/o Suan Mokkh, Chaiya, Surat Thani 84110, Thailand.**

SUMMARY:

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1. TRANSLATIONS IN CHINESE

1.1 佛法廿四角觀：佛使法師講演

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ສີລ ແລະພອນ ຄື ຜົລຂອງການປະຕິບັຕດີ (ອົບຣົມຄູ່ວິວາຫ໌), ๑๑ ຫນ້າ

ທໍາບຸນສາມຫນ, ອະທິບັນທະນາການຈາກຄນະເຜີຍແຜ່ພຸທທັມ ເນ່ື່ອງໃນງານ ບຸນນະມັສສະການພຣະທາດຫຼວງ, ພ.ສ. ๒๕๑๔, ๔๗ ຫນ້າ

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[2] The Books published by The Dhamma & Practice Group and/or the Vuddhidhamma Fund may be ordered at: Mr. NITI ISSARANITHITHAM, **309/49 Moo 2, Vibhavadi Rangsit Road, Tung Song Hong, Bangkhen,** BANGKOK 10210, THAILAND.

[3] THE BUDDHADASA FOUNDATION, **Wat Cholaprathan Rangsit, Pak Kret,** NONTHABURI 1120, THAILAND.

[4] ***Evolution/Liberation*** is a Newsletter published by Suan Mokkh and distributed free of charge to foreigners. It succeeded ***Suan Mokkh International Newsletter.*** The current editor (1990) is Santikaro Bhikkhu who will send it to those who apply (**Evolution/ Liberation c/o** SANTIKARO Bhikkhu, **Suan Mokkh, Chaiya,** SURAT THANI 84110, THAILAND). Contributions can be made in the name of "SUAN MOKKHABALARAMA".

[5] See Note 4.

[6] See Note 4.

[7] THE BENEDICTINE PRIORY, **1475 Pine Avenue, West Montreal** QC, CANADA H36 1B3), N° 19,1990.

[8] ***Suan Mokkh International Newsletter*** was published by Suan Mokkh for foreigners. Only one issue appeared in July 1986 which was followed by ***Evolution/Liberation.*** See note 2.

[9] See Note 4.

[10] See Note 8.

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[12] The review published by the Dhammadana Foundation in Chaiya of which Dhammadasa, Buddhadasa's brother, has been in charge so far.

[13] See note 8.

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[17] **BODHI BAUM, Octopusverlag Erich Skrleter, Fleischmarkt. 16, A-1010 WIEN, AUSTRIA.**

[18] See Note 17.

II

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arranged by Louis Gabaude

Membre de l'Ecole Française d'Extreme-orient

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APPENDICES

THAI INTER-RELIGIOUS COMMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Under the patronage of Ven. Bhikkhu Buddhadasa

Background

Originally, religious cooperation for development existed before the setting up of the Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development (T.I.C.D.). But the coordination was at individual levels and not systematic in that religious agencies for development tended to be self-centred, thus not sharing their experiences and lacking cooperation.

On February 8, 1980, there was a meeting among agencies dealing with religion and development, as well as non-religious agencies dealing with development, plus interested individuals. The meeting unanimously agreed to set up the Inter-religious Commission on Development, which will coordinate activities dealing with religions and development.

Objectives

1. To coordinate work among individuals, groups of individuals and various agencies dealing with religions and development in course of working together.
2. To share experience in and knowledge of religions and development as well as exploring ways and means of working together.
3. To offer training and secure resources in terms of man-power and materials to support and enhance the agencies that need help.

Thai Society Versus Development Problems

After World War II Siam hastened to implement its development plans in accordance with the models of Western countries, thus causing enormous expansion of urban areas. At the same time, the people in suburban areas were made poorer ; forests that used to be evergreen and natural resources that used to be abundant were destroyed for the sake of urban propriety and progress. Even forest-reserved areas that used to be utilized with care were ruined by

commercial crops cultivation to gain sufficient foreign exchange for urban development.

The development that is designed to boost our gross national production (GNP) has made to boost our people poorer, instead of boosting their welfare and well-being. At the same time, this negligent development has destroyed our ecological systems that once used to provide all of us with prosperity and happiness.

We are also poorer in regard to culture, for we look down upon our talent and turn to admire Western-style talent. Our lack of self-respect makes us crazy about Western culture. Instead of boosting our moral standard development has done the opposite ; that is, the majority of the people are by no means richer and have also lost their meaningful ways of life. We are thus poorer, both materially and spiritually.

Stand-points

We are thus of the opinion that:

1. Our past development emphasized only economic considerations and was thus quantity-oriented. Correct development should also take into consideration quality. And this will inevitably involve religious principles.
2. Development must aim at eradicating the exploitation of the rich against the poor, of urban areas against the rural areas, and of developed countries against countries that have been made underdeveloped.
3. Development must bring into harmony modern technology from the West and our own cultural foundations.
4. Development must take into consideration ecological systems which may have impact on our future generations.

Roles

TICD. coordinates and promotes the creation of work that is in accordance with its stand-points and objectives, emphasizing work between different religions. It will be only an agency among the various agencies that cooperate in arranging various activities. Some activities that have been overlooked by other agencies will first be dealt with by TICD alone so that they will attract the attention of other agencies later on.

Activities and Work Plans

TICD 's activities and work plans for the 1981-1989 period were as follows :

1. Conduct a project on holding seminars to train monks who were local leaders so that they understood the roles of the change agent who was capable of directing local residents to solve their own problems. These seminars included learning and understanding the society in its wider context as well as know ledge and know-how at the level that benefited local monks, such as basic knowledge of public health and medical care, appropriate technology and preservation of art heritage.
2. Promoted and supported village development projects conducted by local religious leaders. TICD supported the projects that required low expenditures. As for development projects requiring high expenditures, TICD. acted as a go-between in soliciting support from other agencies.
3. Coordinated work on evaluating results of all seminar projects conducted by various agencies, including TICD itself, for local religious leaders in the past so as to summarize development lessons, and to seek new forms and new directions for the future training seminars.

Of late TICD has been involved in helping Burmese and Sri Lankans in particular, because of political turmoils in these two countries. We work side by side with Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute and International Network of Engaged Buddhists.

The Religious and Cultural Data Center

In order to strengthen and extend the liberative potential within all religious and cultural traditions in Siam and to link her with the Asia-Pacific region to help those concerned groups within these religions and cultures to renew them, making them more relevant to the modern world and its problems.

To promote exchange and learning between adherents of different religious traditions and cultures in order that they can cooperate meaningfuly in a commom struggle against the oppressive social forces that cause suffering.

To enable peasants, fishermen, industrial workers and women and all oppressed sections in Siam to discover their faith and the roots of their culture and draw inspiration and sustenance from it.

TICD has established the Religious and Cultural Data Center for Education and Development.

1. To collect relevant documents and / or data and to field research related to religio-cultural issues in both Thai and English languages.

2. To analyse the available studies in order to draw the issues which are significant for policy implementation.

3. To disseminate the processed information to the concerned organizations and individuals both governmental and non-governmental.

The Data Center will cooperate with other information networks in mutally exchanging and suggesting data sources.

For more information contact the office at :

Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development (T.I.C.D.)
124 (4753/5) Soi Wat Thongnoppakun, Somdejchaophya Rd., Bangkok 10600.

THE ASHRAM FOR LIFE AND SOCIETY PROJECT

Under the patronage of Ven. Bhikkhu Buddhadasa

The Basic Ideas

Despite the fact that great efforts have been made by both governmental organizations to promote "development" in Thai society in the past few decades, many old problems (e.g. poverty) are still unresolved. Some of these have ever been augmented in scale and degree of seriousness such as social injustice. New problems are constantly created : ecological destruction, structural violence, individualist materialism and so on. These problems have in turn led the degradation of human spiritual growth and the destruction of human creativity. All this is fairly well-known to any conscious person in Thai society. To resolve these problems definitely requires wisdom, time and the conscious efforts of all concerned individuals.

The Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, a very small non-gevernmental organization named after the pen-names of the late Thai scholars, Phya Anuman Rajadhon and Phra Saraprasert has, with full awareness of the abovementioned problems, initiated the project called the Ashram for Life and Society with the primary aim of providing a serene place for socially-concerned individuals to undertake their tasks which may not be done else-

where. At the Ashram, necessary facilities will be prepared to help the guests in such a way that they are able to undertake the tasks they wish to accomplish. Small contributions may be asked from the guests to cover the maintenance costs.

Since Siam is a Buddhist society and Buddhism has much to contribute to the creation of peace, human enlightenment, social development and ecological balance, it is conceived that its ethics and approach (i.e. the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path and so on) will be utilized in the activities carried out at the Ashram. Other ethics and approaches from Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and the like are also encouraged to incorperate in the activities. It is our sincere hope that with a tranquil atmosphere and well-planned activities, a genuine contribution to minimize, if not totally resolved, the global and local problems which are facing us today, will be made at this Ashram.

Present Status of the Project

Approximately 13 acres of land in the province of Nakorn Nayoke (about 70 kms northeast of Bangkok) was donated to the Foundation in 1984. This piece of land has been developed somewhat in the past few years, but the major part of land is not in use yet. The Foundation is now planning to construct the buildings for housing the guests and for organizing activities. However, the Foundation has thus far not been able to secure sufficient funding to cover the relatively high cost of the construction. It is expected that with the contributions from concerned and generous individuals and organizations, the buildings and necessary facilities will be completed in 1990. At this point approximately US$ 100,000 is still needed to complete the construction and for landscape architecture.

Plan and Activities

It is envisaged that in the first three years the activities along the following lines will be encouraged and promoted at the Ashram.

1. Workshops and Seminars on issues related to both global and local problems.
2. Providing a retreat corner for writers, artists, thinkers, and the like to spend time reflecting upon their lives and works as well as create more creative works.
3. Providing a place for individuals to practise alternative life-styles.

4. Providing a place for organizing genuine Buddhist education and meditation.
5. A place for the promotion of community organized Research for Development Alternatives.

In a way, we hope the Ashram will help people there to grow intellectually and spiritually, from selfishness to selflessness, and to understand Thai society clearly in order to use their potential to serve the society in a meaningful way towards justice and peace in a proper environmental atmosphere and with due regard to Siamese culture and tradition in a fast changing time. Estimated cost for these activities annually would be approximately US$ 50,000.

For future information please contact :
Ashram Wong Sanit
20/5 Mo 3. Tombol Klong Yai
Amphor Aungkharak , Nakorn Nayoke 26120,
Siam

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF ENGAGED BUDDHISTS

Under the patronage of
Ven. Bhikkhu Buddhadasa
Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh
H.H. The XIV th Dalai Lama

Background

At the first Engaged Buddhist Conference, held from 24-27 February 1989, there were many Buddhists, both monks and lay people gathered together discussing about the problems in Buddhist communities challenging us now in the society which require international cooperation if they are to be solved. One of the hindrances facing concerned Buddhist groups has been the lack of an international network or forum to facilitate cooperation, coordination and support for action on various pressing issues.

Consequently, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) was formed to link concerned organizations and individuals, with the following objectives :-

1. To promote understanding between Buddhist countries and various Buddhist sects.
2. To facilitate and engage in solving problems in various countries.
3. To help bring the perspective of engaged Buddhists to bear in working on these problems.
4. To act as a clearing house of information on existing engaged Buddhist

(and relevant non-Buddhist) groups and activities, and work in the coordination efforts wherever possible.

Office of *INEB*
127 Soi Santipap, Nares Road,
Bangkok 10500, Siam.
Tel. 233-2382, 233-2792
Fax 662-236-7783

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THE MIRACLE OF BEING AWAKE by Thich Nhat Hanh , 143 pp., Bht 120 locally.

MONUMENTS OF THE BUDDHA IN SIAM by H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab. Translated by S.Sivaraksa and A.B. Griswold. , 60 pp., Bht 70 locally (abroad US$ 4 post free).

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THE KING OF THE WHITE ELEPHANT by Pridi Banomyong 170 pp., Bht 200 locally (aboard US$10).

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LIFE AND WORK OF BUDDHADASA BHIKKHU : Documentary English language video presenting an interesting and informative account of the history and thought of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, the prominent Thai Theravada thinkers.Bht 500 locally (aboard US$ 20 for PAL, US$30 for NTSC post free).

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This kingdom was known as Siam until 1939, when it was changed to Thailand. Then it reverted to the original name in 1946. Two years after the *coup d'état* of 1947 it was decreed that the country would be called Thailand, and it remains so officially. Ironically the kingdom has since been ruled by one dictator after another with very brief liberal democratic intervals. The name, Thailand, signifies the crisis of traditional Siamese Buddhist values. Removing from the nation the name it has carried all its life is in fact the first step in the psychic dehumanization of its citizens, especially when its original name is replaced by a hybrid, Anglicized word. This new name also implies chauvinism and irredentism.

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It is this courage to confront directly and without illusion the problems of the modern world which sets the tone for this collection of essays, prepared in honor of the 84th birthday anniversary of Buddhadasa. Authors include: Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese monk and peace activist ; Phra Debvedi, noted Thai monk and scholar; John McConnell, English peace worker and researcher; Louis Gabaude, French Buddhist scholar and expert on Buddhadasa; Sumedho Bhikkhu, American Therevada monk and current Abbot of the Amaravati Buddhist Centre,U.K.; Gabriel Lafitte, secretary of the Buddhist Council of Victoria,Australia; Chatsumarn Kabilsingh and Pataraporn Sirikanchana, female activists toward Women's Rights; Bhikkhu Rewata Dhamma, noted Burmese scholar residing in England; Prawase Wasi, Thai scholar and development activist; Jeffrey Hopkins, Tibetologist and official interpreter to the Dalai Lama; Peter Schalk, expert on Sinhala and Tamil Buddhist culture at Uppsala University, Sweden; Bhikkhu Pasadiko, German monk and scholar; Ruben L.F. Habito, former Jesuit from the Phillipines; David W. Chappell, Canadian scholar on Chinese Buddhism, active in inter-religious dialogue; Donald K. Swearer, American scholar of Thai Buddhism.....

.... If we hold fast to Buddhism we shall have a socialist disposition in our flesh and blood. We shall see our fellow humans as friends in suffering-in birth, old age, sickness and death-and hence, we cannot abandon them ... This is the ideal of pure socialism which must be acted out, not just talked about for political purposes or for selfish, devious gain.

(What is needed) ... is an approach that emphasizes not taking more than is needed and at the same time is in accordance with the laws of Nature, for then people would share whatever extra they had out of metta-karuna--compassion and loving kindness. People would set aside for themselves only what they needed ; anything in excess of that would be left for society.

Our ancestors knew this. Thus, they taught that we should do what we can to promote the co-existence of all beings, and that we should be kind to one another according to the law of nature. If nature lacked this character we would all die. Those who know this principle hold fast to it. Even their rice paddies are planted for the benefit of wild animals who feed on it as well as for their own consumption. They grow as much as they can to share with all forms of living beings.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's
Dhammic Socialism