

SEEDS OF PEACE

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THE VISION OF BHIKKHU BUDDHADASA
CHRISTIANITY IN THE REFLECTION OF BUDDHISM
THE PALI LANGUAGE AND SCRIPTURES
BUDDHIST PERCEPTIONS OF DESIRABLE SOCIETIES



Seeds of Peace

is published thrice annually in January, May and September, in order to promote the aim and objectives of the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD). For subscriptions and further information, please contact the Commission 4753/5 Soi Watthong Noppakun, Somdej Chaophya Road, Klongsan, Thonburi, Bangkok 10600, Thailand. Tel. 437-9445. Suggested minimum donation US\$ 10 per annum, postage included.

Objectives of TICD

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.

Editorial Staff

Anant Wiriyaphinit
Nibond Chaemduang

Cover

Angkarn Kalyanapong



**THAI INTER-RELIGIOUS
COMMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT**
GPOBOX 1960
BANGKOK 10501 THAILAND

THE VEDCHHI STATEMENT

Peace Brigades International, established in 1981, to undertake peace keeping, peacemaking and peace building initiatives under a discipline of nonviolence and humanitarian service, is now enriched with insights gained from experiences, particularly from its courageous and prudent activities in Central America. Based on this experience, we the Council members and the invitees at Vedchhi reaffirm that:

Our faith in peace and justice is strengthened when we witness the darkness of structural and organized violence and unorganized violence around us.

Truth, justice and peace attained through nonviolent means are fundamental to our commitment.

We believe that a nonpartisan attitude is important, but not fundamental to nonviolent functioning. Nonpartisanship in certain situations where a PBI team could be a third party, would include the following principles:

- a. Dealing with all parties with an open mind;
- b. Reporting as objectively as possible;
- c. Refraining from judgmental responses;
- d. Voicing our concerns to those responsible.

PBI intends to continue to support and protect nonviolent groups.

We respect the humanness of every person and are convinced that conflicts between and within nations can and should be resolved by active nonviolent methods. We are dedicated to the defense of human rights and would strive to place unarmed peace teams at local, regional and international levels. We believe that all conflicts are within the purview of the Peace Brigades, despite the present human and material limits of the organization.

Approved by PBI Council in session Vedchhi, India, January 11, 1986.

Editorial Note

The International Year of Peace as proclaimed by UN General Assembly had a good beginning, with the War Resisters' International XVIII Triennial at Swaraj Ashram, Vedchhi, India, which was followed by Peace Brigades International Council Meeting, at Institute for Total Revolution of the same village. Our representative from TICD attended both meetings. It was very appropriate that the events took place in rural Gujarat, where Gandhian spirit of peace and Satyagraha still prevail. Although India is no longer Buddhist, the Buddha's influence could be found meaningfully in many aspects of Indian culture.

Here, it is regarded as a Buddhist Kingdom—the last on earth perhaps. Yet, we need to apply more Buddhadhamma to be the light and the guide of our contemporary society, which means that we must be broad-minded towards other religious beliefs. We must also be more serious on our spiritual growth and ethical conducts, rather than making use of Buddhist ceremonies for our material manifestation, stressing on economic and technological development, which could lead to more violence and natural destruction.

The one who has done more than any Thai in raising our consciousness on peace and social justice in the Dhammic way is Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, who will celebrate his 80th birthday anniversary on 27th May. We therefore wish to dedicate this issue of our publication as a humble token of our respect and admiration to the Servant of the Buddha, who is much admired by many Thai Christians and Muslims. Unfortunately some reactionary Buddhists find him too progressive or too lenient to those of other living faiths and ideologies. However, there are two other books in English about him and by him coming out at this time. Let those non-Thai who wish to know him and his work, beyond our publication, read them. They are **Buddhadasa and the Reform of Theravada Buddhism** by Peter Jackson and **Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's Dhammic Socialism** edited and translated by Donald K. Swearer.

Our sister organization, the Coordinating Group for Religion and Society, also celebrated its tenth anniversary in April. We wish them well and hope to collaborate with them as with other organizations for peace, non violence and better understanding between different religions.

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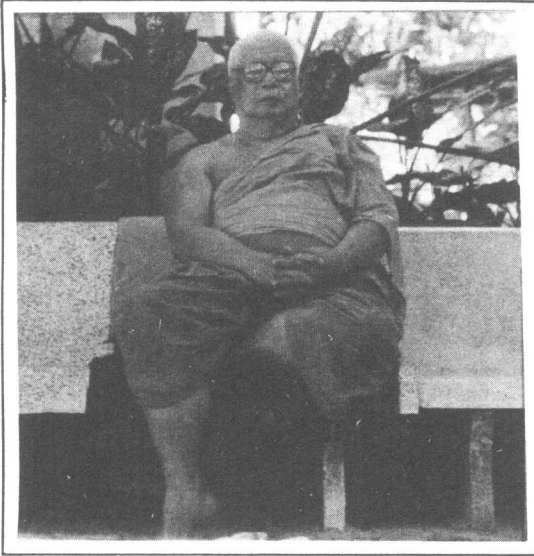
THE VISION OF BHIKKHU BUDDHADASA



WITH PROF. GENE SHARP, FROM HAWARD UNIVERSITY

In February 1986/2529 I made my third pilgrimage to Wat Suan Mokh (The Garden of Liberation) to visit Acharn Buddhadasa Bhikkhu in honor of his 80th birthday. Since I first visited Suan Mokh twenty years ago many changes have taken place. Sounds from trucks hurtling along the southern superhighway disturb the quiet of this forested retreat. Two decades ago relatively few lay devotees found their way to this

remote hermitage seven kilometers along a dirt road outside of the small, forgettable town of Chaiya. Today the grounds of Suan Mokh harbour several guest houses to accommodate the 800 people who are often there at any one time, a total of nearly 100,000 visitors a year. A special meditation retreat during the first ten days of every month has been established for the increasing numbers of foreigners coming to Suan



Mokh, and ground has been broken for a meditation center to be known as Suan Mokh International. Over 1000 trainees a year receive instruction from Acharn Buddhadasa and Acharn Bodhi, the assistant abbot, who has been at Suan Mokh for 22 years. Furthermore, the small collection of books written by Bhikkhu Buddhadasa given to me by students at Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University 30 years ago has been dwarfed by what has become the largest corpus of thought ever published by a single Theravada thinker in the entire history of the tradition. For years to come students of Thai Buddhism will be summarizing, distilling, and interpreting Buddhadasa's contribution to Buddhist Thought. History may well judge him as the most seminal Theravada thinker since Buddhagosa, and may evaluate Buddhadasa's role within the Buddhist tradition to be on a par with such great Indian Buddhist thinkers as Nāgārjuna with whom he has been compared.

Buddhadasa's place in Thai Buddhism has certainly been assured, but the nature and extent of his contribution will continue to be clarified and developed for years to come. Like many original thinkers, Buddhadasa has been criticized from several fronts—by meditation practioners for the prolixity of his writing, by traditional Abhidhamma philosophers for the unorthodoxy of his thought, by political activists

for his social idealism, and so on. In particular, because he has chosen to teach from Suan Mokh, a forest hermitage removed from the hustle and bustle of modern urban life, Buddhadasa has been misperceived as one who epitomizes an otherworldly Buddhism, or as one who advocates a practice aiming at personal rather than social transformation. Nothing could be further from the truth. To be sure, Buddhadasa emphasizes the importance of right understanding and individual practice, but Suan Mokh, itself, represents an ideal **community** rather than an individualistic retreat from the world. There monk and laity, men and women, young and elderly, humans and all kinds of animals and plants live together in harmonious balance. Buddhadasa teaches under the trees surrounded by attentive listeners, sleeping dogs and pecking chickens. Accommodations are adequate but not excessive. The simplicity of Suan Mokh represents an ideal balance (**prakati**), not a return to primitiveness but a state of Nature (**dhammajāti**) in which all sentient beings recognizing their common humanity act out of mutual concern and respect for the good of whole. Buddhadasa calls such a community a dhammic socialism (**dhammika sanghaniyama**).

It seems appropriate in this day and age when the superpowers threaten the world with nuclear holocaust that in honor of Buddhadasa's 80th year his political philosophy be given special emphasis and attention. To be sure, his view of dhammic socialism cannot be divorced from the seminal themes of Buddhadasa's thought which emphasize, in particular, the overcoming of attachment to self, to "me and mine" (Thai: **tua kū khong kū**). In the most profound sense both personal and social wellbeing stem from a transformation of self-attachment and self-love to selflessness and love of others. A socialist society is a community based on a fundamental sense of the equality of all beings. Such a view does not deny the existence of differences but all, regardless of position and status, recognize their place within the economy of the whole. Thus, the man of wealth should not be a 'capitalist'

who hoards for his own pleasure but a **śreshi**, one whose high position enables him to be a benefactor to laborers, workers and common folk.

Buddhadasa's vision of the good and just society coincides with his view of an original state of nature or an original human condition, one of mutual interdependence, harmony and balance. By its very nature this state of nature is selfless—individuals are not attached to self for its own sake. But with the loss of this state of innocence individuals are subject to the bondage of attachment (**upadana**) and unquenchable thirst (**tanha**). Consequently, sentient beings need to find ways to return or restore this condition of mutual interdependence and harmony, love and respect. On the personal level the attainment or wisdom (**bodhi**) through the methods of awareness (**sati**), continuous attention (**sampajana**) and focused concentration (**samadhi**) serve to break through the conditions of greed, ignorance and lust (**kilesa**); while on the social level those in positions of power promote economic and political policies which after meeting basic physical needs promote a balanced development in which matters of spirit (**citta**) assume their rightful dominance.

Buddhadasa's notion of a truly human community is a universal vision shared by all religions. This socialistic society is one governed by love (**metta**). In the language of Buddhist millenarian expectations, it is the age of the Buddha Maitreya. But Buddhadasa's teachings regarding Buddhist Socialism cannot be consigned to an other-worldly messianism. His vision serves as a critique of Western political theories of capitalism and communism, and provides the basic principles for a political philosophy with the potential to guide not only Thailand in the coming years, but all societies struggling to create a just and equitable social, political and economic order.

During my two day visit to Suan Mokh Acharn Buddhadasa was giving special lectures to a group of students from the Teachers College in Bangkok on the theme, A New Life (Thai: **Chiwit Mai**). Upon the conclusion of his last lecture the head of the

group prepared to approach Buddhadasa with the traditional Thai expression of respect and gratitude to the wise teacher. Buddhadasa interrupted her in midsentence saying, "No, don't thank me, let me thank you for your sacrifice of time and money to come to Suan Mokh to share this instruction in the **dhamma**. I hope you will go forth to be lamps to this truth." I, among thousands of others representing the several world religions, have been deeply influenced by Buddhadasa's message. He challenges us to respond not by becoming attached to him, but by going forth to help humankind strive toward its rightful condition of mutual love and respect, harmony and balance, a **dhammika sanghaniyama**.

Donald K. Swearer
Dept. of Religion
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, PA. U.S.A.

PEACE 86

The "Peace 85" group will be continuing its activities as part of the 1986 International Year of Peace. You may remember that last year's events included a film festival, two concerts for peace, seminars, a fast for Peace, exhibitions on Peace and Religion, and on the Nuclear Arms Race. Via the grapevine, we have heard of some exciting plans for 1986, more of the details when we hear them!

In the meantime, Peace 86 would like examples of media resources available from different countries, such as booklets, posters, badges, slides etc that could be used to stage exhibitions in schools, universities and for the general public. Peace 86 has pamphlets and posters that they could exchange. Please contact:

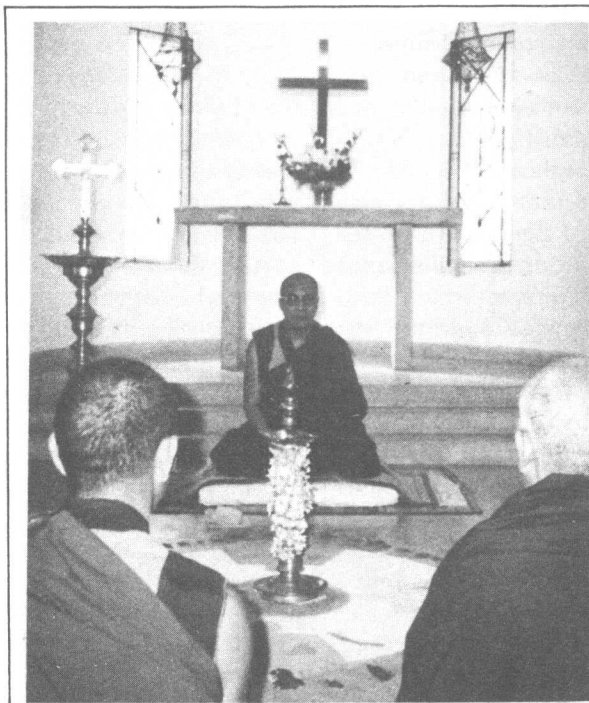
Peace 86,
c/o TIGD,
4753/5 Soi Watthongnoppakun, Somdej
Chaophya Road, Klongsan, Bangkok 10600
Thailand.

by Editorial Staff, TDSC.

Christianity in the Reflection of Buddhism

S. SIVARAKSA

*From Concilium Revue Internationale de
Théologie (Holland) February 1986.*



The Dalai lama leading meditation practice at a Christian Chapel in Madras, India.

When the first missionary went to Tibet to propagate the Gospel, the Tibetan Buddhist monks heard about God, Salvation, Liberation, suffering, Eternal Life and the like. They concluded that the teaching of Christ was similar to that of the Buddha.

The strength and weakness of Buddhism is that it tends to find similarity with other religions.

Hence it finds no difficulty to coexist with Hinduism and Animism. The differences are not stressed. The argument is that for the majority, if they find any religious rites and

rituals helpful to them, they should practice them. For instance, Shrines, Images and Gods could be refuges to those who are in need of spiritual protection or security, at least temporarily. Once one develops oneself more maturely, one will have inner strength to solve one's own difficulty, to be really one with oneself, as well as with all beings and with the ultimate reality. For those who wish to develop further towards Selflessness in order to get to the state of Oneness, or Nothingness, then they can take the Buddha's Middle Path seriously. Yet Buddhism does not claim that it is the only

one that knows the answer to the problem of suffering and how to overcome it — to reach the final Liberation or Nirvana.

Unlike the Hindus, the Christians found it difficult to admit that Buddhism could also be a true religion. The missionary in Tibet told the Lamas frankly that Buddhism was a false religion or the religion of the demons, and only by following Jesus Christ could one be saved or attain a blissful state of the eternal life.

Unfortunately this kind of belief is still widespread in many Christian circles. Despite Vatican Council II, some documents from the Secretariat for the Non-Christians still make many Buddhists believe that the official Vatican policy towards Buddhism is still not clear. There is an implication that now Christians should learn more about Buddhism and show outward sign of respect to Buddhist ceremony in order to understand Buddhist teaching and culture, which will perhaps be easier to convert Buddhists to Christianity, or to Christianize Buddhism as St. Thomas Aquinas had Christianized Aristotle.

At least in Siam, the leading Catholic seminary still publishes articles saying that the Buddha was at best a prophet, pointing the way to Jesus Christ, or that Buddhism was dead historically as soon as Christ was born 543 years after the Buddha had passed away.

This kind of assertion or accusation may annoy many uneducated Buddhists. But for those who practise Buddhism seriously, they take no interest in ignorant utterance from anyone: why should one quarrel over misunderstanding or propaganda. Indeed there are so many lofty ideas in Christianity that Buddhism could reflect upon.

God is obviously the utmost important issue in Christianity. If the Buddhists look at the word God unsympathetically, they will automatically deny His existence. They may even go further as to say that blind faith in the Unknown which equates to the Ultimate Reality is in fact Ignorance (AVIJJĀ) — the root cause of all evils. Especially the incarnation of God the Father, through human history in his begotten Son would be beyond any Buddhist imagination — not to mention

the Holy Spirit, or the doctrine of the Trinity.

At best the Buddhists will say God as expressed in Christianity has no role in Buddhism. We are not interested in Monotheism, Polytheism or Atheism. Yet, Buddhism is not Agnosticism. If the Buddhists are concerned about the ultimate reality or Noble Truth (ARIYA SACCA) the righteous law which control or operates the Universe (SADA DHAMMA) which means that whatever one does, one will reap the fruit of one's action (KAMMA), then we must reflect upon this in the light of the Christian concept of God also.

The Christians explain about God from the Hebraic historical perspective of a tribe, so God becomes so personal to them. He was even conceived as a God of anger. This was purely human interpretation. Only in the New Testament could we conceive HIM as the God of love, and he was for all mankind — beyond the Jewish people. As Meister Eckhart said any definition or understanding of God is bound to fail, unless you have experienced Him.

In Buddhism, we could not explain or define NIRVANA either. We can give some negative indications that NIRVANA is not this, is not that, and we can give some positive indications that NIRVANA is the perfect state of peace and happiness. Yet it is also a state beyond happiness.

When Gautama became Buddha, he was enlightened. Although he still remained man, but he already united with the Ultimate Reality—God, so the Buddha is God—not in the personification sense but in a normative sense. Hence the ultimate reality in Buddhism is Buddha Dhamma — not merely Dharma in the traditional Brahministic sense of the word. Indeed in the Mahayana tradition, the concept of Adi Buddha or Dhyani Buddha is really the creator of the universe and the universal law.

From the Buddhist perspective, only Sakayamuni Buddha or Gautama Buddha is the only one which could be verified by history as we understand it, for he was born about 6th to 7th century B.C. Other Buddhas before him could not be verified by history and Dhyani Buddha is even beyond history. Is

Dyani Buddha a myth or a reality? Only those who are enlightened or those with religious experience with God or Buddha Dhamma could really answer this.

Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, a well-known Thai monk, helps us, who have no religious experience to understand this problem by pointing out that in any religion, Buddhism included, there are always two kinds of language (1) the religious or Dhammic language and (2) the ordinary or worldly language. We tend to mix these two kinds of language and make so much misunderstanding unnecessarily. If the Christians hear that the Buddhists claim that their Buddha equals to the Christian God, they become angry. The Buddhists likewise feel that his Buddha must be superior to Jesus Christ. This is childish and tribal; it is a misuse of Dhammic language. In fact there is no equality nor superiority or inferiority among different religions. We are different but we ought to respect the others and try to understand the essential concept of our friends' religions as sympathetically and as respectfully as we can. Even so, we may make mistakes. Then we should ask for forgiveness.

It is difficult enough to understand our own religion clearly and thoroughly. Yet in this day and age, we must admit the limitation of our own religious tradition, and try to understand other religions in the light of our understanding of our own religion. A Buddhist could only reflect on Christianity from a Buddhist perspective, he could do no more. If the Buddhists understand that the Christian love of God makes him love his neighbours, his submission to God makes him selfless and is compassionate to all beings — human or otherwise, (like St. Francis of Assisi for instance) his understanding will make him reflect that to him the Buddha is indeed the Compassionate One and the Enlightened One. By following the Buddha's foot-step, could he understand himself and the society as well as the natural phenomena around him. His understanding in fact arises from his non-exploitation of himself and others. The more selfless he is, the more compassionate he is.

The more he sees that others are suffering, the more he would like to share their suffering and together with them to eliminate the cause of suffering. By so doing, he takes a Bodhisattva vow to be compassionate like the past Buddhas or the Buddha-to-be.

If he has encounters with Christianity, he sees the cross as a sign that will strengthen him to share suffering — not only with his Christian friends but also with all God's creatures. Being a Buddhist, he will want to find the cause of suffering in order to get rid of it for his own liberation as well as the liberation of all others.

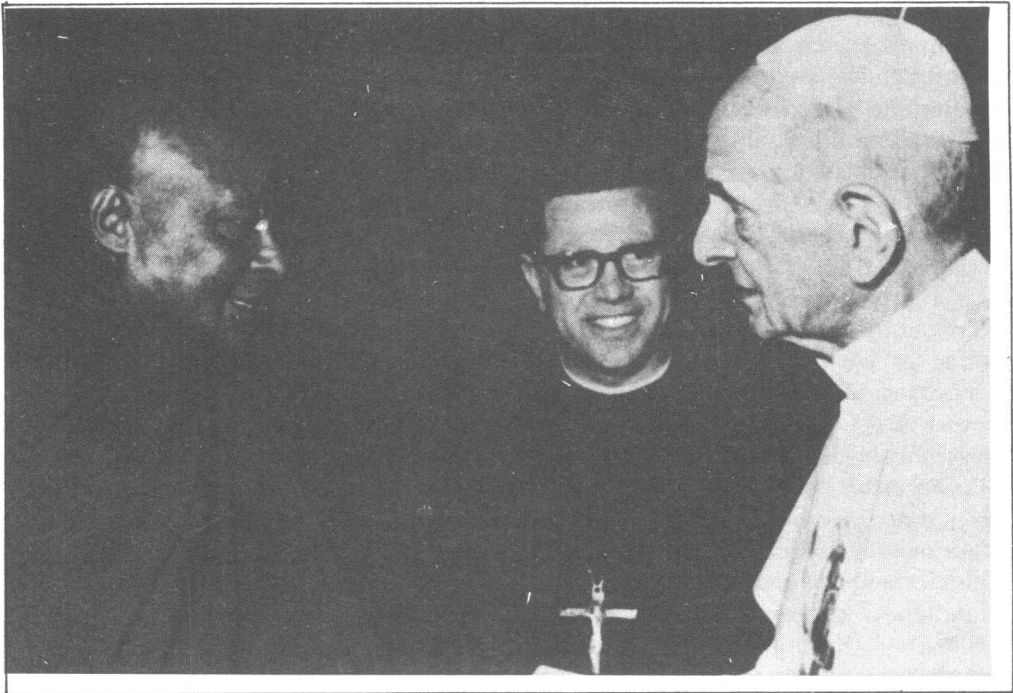
When the Buddhist reflects on Christian teaching or suffering, salvation and liberation, he finds all these meaningful from his Buddhist context. His Christian friends may seek salvation through Jesus Christ, but being Buddhist he finds Christ's teachings, especially the sermon on the Mount, and Christ's livelihood in obeying God the Father and serving God's people very meaningful. This meaning he gets through his understanding of the Dhammic language, which is obviously different from the Orthodox Christian interpretation. The Buddhist therefore feels that once a Christian fulfills his duty by firmly believing in God as he understands Him and acts according to God's commandments by loving his neighbours, sharing suffering with them and try to overcome the cause of that suffering, he will surely be liberated. For the Buddhist that state of liberation will be without hatred, greed and delusion — in other words it is a state of enlightenment.

The Christian may call this an eternal life. The Buddhist would not quarrel with the use of terminology, whether there is a permanent soul or not is left to the worldly language to tackle. If eternal life means perfect happiness, beyond word or description, it may also mean NIRVANA.

This is my personal reflection which is not scholarly. We need more serious research than an article of this nature warrants in order to develop deeply into the Buddhist reflection on Christianity — a fascinating subject.

“Thoughts from a Christian in Thailand”

Michael G. Fonner
Mahidol University



Pope Paul 6 and Ven. Saddhatissa Maha Thera

For the Christian, the Good News of God revealed in Jesus Christ is unchanging. The truth of this statement is something to which the Bible and the tradition of the Church bear witness. Equally, it is the source of great hope as Christians are impelled and drawn into the future. Another way of saying the same might be: the Kingdom of God in which Jesus lived and for which he died is unquestionably central to the convictions

which Christians live and proclaim. This was true yesterday; it is true today; and it will be true tomorrow.

At the same time, the manner in which Christians understand this truth and articulate it does change. The gospel takes on the flesh and blood of everyday life as Christians go through their days—in towns and cities and rural areas; in offices and homes and schools; in countries far and wide—and

in these different settings, Christians prayerfully seek to understand how the Kingdom of God revealed in and through Jesus Christ is to be lived and proclaimed. The Christian farmer in a rural area, the Christian office worker in the city and the Christian academic in the university all are witnessing to the same Kingdom and yet the words and actions will differ. St. Paul, I suspect, had precisely this in mind when he spoke of the many gifts but the one body (I Corinthians 12). According to where God has placed us, we each exercise our own gifts.

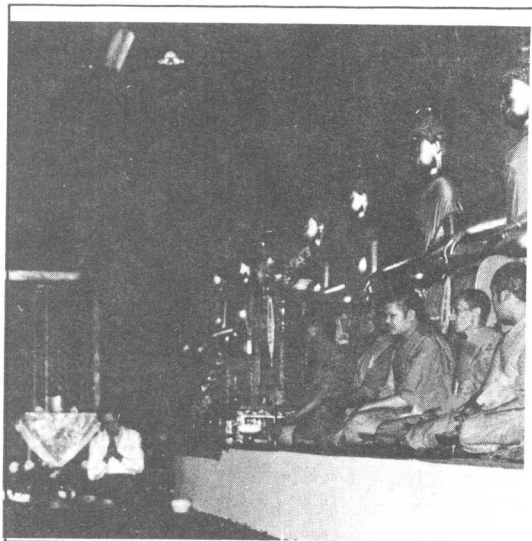
I came to Thailand two years ago. To be a Christian here, I am finding to my great enthusiasm, is to live the life of a religious minority. I know in making that observation that I am not saying anything new or startling to the reader of such a journal as this. The beautiful and profound signs of Buddhism are virtually everywhere: stunning wats nestled among Bangkok sky-scrapers and among verdant rice fields, orange-robed bhikkhus silently walking through streets and lanes each morning as dawn breaks, and the sacred space of "*hông phrá*" in the homes of many fine people. I revel in the many manifestations of another religious tradition which have come to fill my days with rich meaning and new insights.

Similarly, the homes of Christians here are many in number which I have visited in which some piece of art or statue or article of Buddhist origin has been on open display. Just as the number of Christians, both residents and visitors to this land, are many who enjoy a visit to a wat or participation in a cremation ceremony or just an early morning walk to observe the humble beauty of Thai Buddhists offering gifts of food and flowers to bare-footed monks.

And yet, I wonder how many Christians ever stop to consider the questions which Buddhism ought to raise in their lives. After all, Jesus in John's gospel proclaims unambiguously about himself, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me.*" These are words which are drilled into the minds of Christians since early childhood with no degree of uncertainty. Or to go even further, to how

we view the Church, the "*People of God*", do we not generally, as with a finely sharpened knife, carve out a special place for ourselves in terms of salvation and relationship with God and truth? And do we not, perhaps unintentionally, in doing so, exclude or cut away and separate those outside the Church? At times it is not all that unintentional but done with a vigor and gusto and zest for the gospel which, in my estimation, wreaks of nothing more than a religious fanaticism and sense of imperialism which is both theologically unsound and morally reprehensible.

Since coming to Thailand, I have worshipped in many different churches. To my chagrin, a common thrust of much of the preaching which I have heard has been anti-Buddhist. I have heard criticisms of Buddhist teachings, rituals, daily practices, even though these have manifested love and compassion toward others. As one who hears the voice of the Lord commanding me to love my brother and sister and to be an instrument of peace and reconciliation, I have been saddened many times. Why, I ask, must Christians lift up their truth by putting down the beliefs and lives of others? Is the criticism of persons of other religious traditions an unavoidable part of the Christian proclamation? What I have found, in other words, is that in this place, as a Christian among many Buddhists, I have been impel



eed to seek new understandings and ways of proclaiming the central, unchanging truth of the Kingdom of God.

I think Christians often forget that there is no Buddhism apart from Buddhists, that is, apart from other persons. If you take the Buddhists out of Buddhism just as if you take the Christians out of Christianity or Muslims out of Islam, it collapses. There will be nothing there. So a comment made with a less than generous heart about Buddhism is nothing more nor nothing less than a comment made with a less than generous heart about Buddhists. For most if not all Christians in Thailand, these are the persons with whom we work and play, with whom we share friendship, perhaps the person with whom we will share our next meal. So I ask: can we, as Christians, afford morally to make such statements about Buddhism? It seems to me that to live the Christian life here in the context of another religious tradition, we are summoned to seek new understandings of God, of the Church, and of our own selves which promote nothing less than honest love and integrity toward all of God's children.

A true story is told about an exchange between the great 20th century Swiss theologian, Karl Barth, and the ecumenical leader, D.T.Niles. Barth's theology was based on the unwavering conviction that God has made himself known in Jesus Christ-period. We encounter God, Barth says, we find God only in and through Christ. As a consequence, his attitude toward other religious traditions was not very sympathetic. He branded them "unbelief." D.T.Niles, a Christian from Sri Lanka, in conversation with Barth, once asked him how he knew that Hinduism was unbelief if he, Barth, had never known a Hindu. Barth replied, "*A priori*." In other words, it has to be! If God is known in Christ and in the Church then God cannot be known apart from Christ and outside the Church. The logic of Barth's argument, and I think we can also say, the logic of most of the Christian thinking which we have inherited necessitates our condemnation or at least a second class rating to other religious traditions.

I would question this on at least two

grounds. First, theologically, that is, how we understand God. Do we have a God who creates some of his children only to then relegate them to some darkness where their knowledge of Him is inadequate or even non-existent? Is that the Christian idea of God? But in a more practical way: Does not the integrity of other religious traditions—Buddhism after all is over 2500 years old and never has an ounce of blood been shed in its name—and especially the integrity of the individual lives of Buddhists merit a positive appraisal of the claims by which they live? I submit to you that this city and this country are filled with persons who live lives of charity and compassion and justice and love and hope, all those virtues by which Christians understand wholeness and authentic existence and salvation in the here-and-now. Christians have no corner on that market.

So we come to the question: how are Christians to understand their own faith, and the proclamations and understandings which grow out of it? Do we discard our tradition and begin all over again? No, I think not. Rather I would propose at least for a beginner that we seek to understand how we speak as persons of religious faith. Our question should be, I think: how does what we say and think as Christians find its meaning and purpose? I think herein will lie the beginning of an answer. Let me explain using an example.

An afternoon not long ago, I had reason to say to my wife that she is the most wonderful of mothers and indeed the most beautiful of women in all the world. I meant what I said, every word of it. But in saying that, I most certainly did not mean the implications which they have for other mothers and other women. For me to say that my wife is the most wonderful of mothers is not a comment on any other mothers; and to say that she is the most beautiful of women is not a comment on any other woman's beauty or lack thereof. It would be silly to think otherwise. To proclaim that Christ is Lord over all of creation and to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is coming which Christians far and wide are beholden to do, likewise, does not need to have within it anything

negative or perjorative about our Buddhist neighbor and the claims by which he or she lives. Stated otherwise, truth to be truth and to have meaning does not necessarily need to be exclusive. The Christian conviction that God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ does not need to mean that God is not known elsewhere. The ways in which God leads people in paths of truth and wholeness are, I suspect, innumerable rich and many, just as is his love. Surely we do not think that our finite minds can comprehend all the ways of God. What we say and proclaim ought to reflect this.

I often think that the legacy which much of the Church has inherited in emphasizing our faith as a key to salvation has hidden within it a danger. Much of Christian teachings have us saying that our faith is integral in saving us more so than our good actions or deeds. And yet in stressing faith, we still, I believe, stress something which is too human-centered. What we ought to say is that our God in whom we have our faith, he saves us.

A story is told of an aging woman in a small rural village known for some distance of her fervent Christian trust and hope in the Lord. Another woman, much younger in age and troubled with many problems in her life, goes to this old woman to seek counsel and assurance. Upon meeting her for the first time, the younger woman asks, "Are you the woman with the great faith?" "No," the older one replied, "I am not the

woman with the great faith. But I am the woman with the small faith in the great God."

Is this not the point of the Christian scriptures and the point of the Church's witness and the point of the life and death of Jesus Christ? It is not us or anything we have or do which saves us. It is God, God alone. He saves us. I think we often miss that.

Christians are Christian only inasmuch as Christ claims their lives and impels them in his footsteps to serve the Father. And we serve him humbly, searchingly, in lives of peace with and reconciliation among all of God's creation. In this way, we live as his instruments in the mystery of fashioning the Kingdom for which the Son died.

This brief essay is, I am well aware, more interested in raising issues and questions than it is providing answers. I know that. I know of no Christian person either here in Thailand or in my homeland who knows all the answers all the time. Yet I do know many Christian persons whose lives are claimed by Jesus Christ and who experience a deep commitment to bear witness to the Kingdom in ways according to God's loving will. This call for prayer, for honest seeking and for an openness to the leading of the One in whose footsteps we are called to follow. In this fine land, this call means to walk humbly before all persons, to seek understanding, to promote love and peace, to foster reconciliation, and indeed to see in that Buddhist another child of God. It is here that the Kingdom is to be found.

I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, try the following expedient:

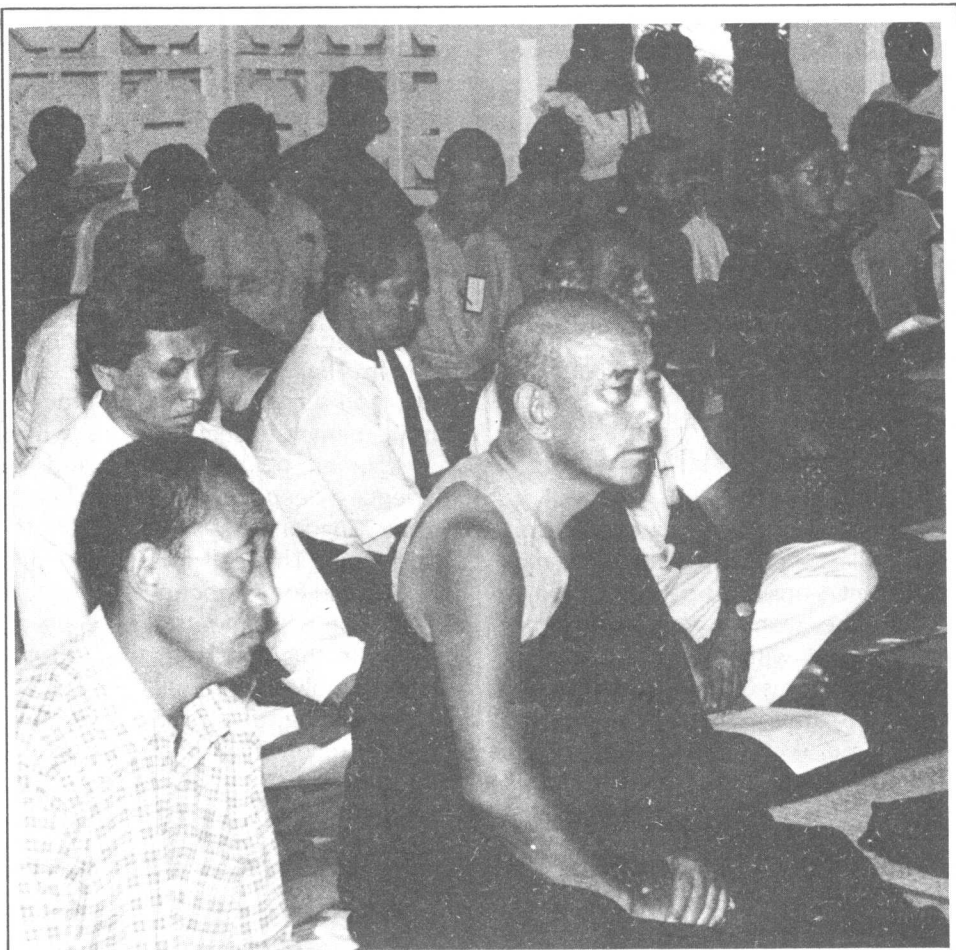
Recall the face of the poorest and the most helpless man whom you may have seen and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he be able to gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj or self rule for the hungry and also spiritually starved millions of your countrymen?

Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away.

M.K. GANDHI

NON-VIOLENCE ACTION TRAINING SEMINAR

MS Laddawan Tantivitayapitak



"Go unto all lands and preach this gospel. Tell them that the poor and the lowly, the rich and the high, all are one, and that all castes unite in this religion as do the rivers of the sea."

Buddha revealed the universal scope of his compassion.

In challenging the value of violence, He taught that hatreds are not quenched by hatred but by love, and defined a *"truth-finder"* as one who lays aside the sword, *"lives a life of innocence and mercy... heals divisions and cements friendship...for in peace is his delight"*.

Non-violence, according to Jean-Hildegard Goss-Mayr, former secretary of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation for which is an ecumenical peace movement, is defined as the force of truth, of love and justice. They consider the life of man as the highest created value which must not be destroyed. IFOR's aim is to produce justice and the possibility for fraternal relationships and reconciliation. It aims at liberating the oppressed and the oppressor through persuasion, moral pressure and manifold forms of non-violent resistance.

Jean-Hildegard Goss came to Thailand through the invitation of CGRS, (Coordinating Group for Religion in Society), an organization working actively towards a just and peaceful society through the belief in religion and non-violent mission. CGRS organized this training workshop on non-violence with its attention to expand the ideas of authentic non-violent action and to give inclusive training to the young generation. There were 12 Buddhist monks, 1 novice, and 17 laymen and women participating in the workshop which was held at Wat Plankma i glai, Nakorn Pathom province on 23-26 January, 1986.

The training process was practical in the sense that it started from the actual nature of human beings. It was an experienced learning process since it signified the being of persons through the process of bringing out the violence and non-violence within each person without judgement. One and a half days out of four days were given for self-sharing to let one open up their mind and bring out their non-violent value through the way of realization, understanding an absolute respect of herself/himself in body and in spirit. In bringing up these attitudes, the non-violence was conceptualized by the sharing of Jean Goss on his life spent in the prison where he gave himself following the word of Jesus by prov-

ing to himself his real love to his fellow-men. *"It's only truth and love in yourself that can bring you to the belief that there are no separations in human beings despite race, religions, nationality, etc., for human is universe. It's only this that you can give up your life even for your enemies, for there are no enemies, only the ones whom you love."*

Phra Paisal Visalo, Phra Pracha Pasana-dhammo, Arjan Sulak Sivaraksa and Arjan Chaiwat Sta-ana also enriched the workshop in conceptualizing the non-violent perspective in the Thai vision.

The last two essential parts of the seminar were the method of non-violent action. The non-violent methods were clearly elaborating by Hildegard's impressive analysis through the case of Alagamar, a non-violent land struggle in Brazil where the peasants bore in their mind the five principles of struggling. *"First, never kill; Second, never hurt; Third, commit yourself incessantly and with perseverance; Fourth, remain always united; Fifth, disobey the orders of the authorities that violate or destroy us."*

Together with this example, Hildegard explained the peasant's struggling by dividing it into two parts ie.

I. Preparation

- a. analysis of the conflict
- b. preparation of groups (education process)
- c. development of strategy

II. Methods of NVA.

- a. dialogue (negotiation)
- b. direct action
- c. non-cooperation and civil disobedience
- e. fasting and hunger strike
- f. constructive programme

The participants ended up the training programme by presenting non-violent role-plays and set up plan for further non-violent training.

To wipe up this reflection as one participant said after the training that monk as its role should be encouraged to take a leading role in reconciling conflict-confrontation or in other words, why depend on human illusions in making decision.

The Pali Language and Scriptures



Pali Scriptures written on palm leaves.

1. Introduction

Although there is considerable doubt about the meaning of a somewhat cryptic phrase which the Buddha used when giving permission to his followers to recite his teachings, it is generally agreed that the Buddha did not teach in Sanskrit, but preferred to use the vernaculars of the common people, presumably using the dialect or language of the area in which he found himself on any particular occasion.

We may assume that his sermons and utterances were remembered by his followers and audiences as they heard them, and were repeated to other followers. That the memorising of sermons in this way was not restricted to ordained monks is shown by the fact that the Buddha himself spoke of the possibility of a layman inviting the monks to come and learn a sermon from him before it was lost at his death.

2. The early councils

All the sects of Buddhism agree that there was a council held immediately after the Buddha's death. According to what is probably the oldest account we have of this, 500 monks came together, and in their presence the senior elder asked the elder who knew about the rules of discipline when the various rules were laid down, in what circumstances, etc. He then asked the elder who knew about the doctrine about the sermons preached by the Buddha, going right through the collections of long, middle length and short sermons. As two experts expounded these matters, the other elders repeated their words after them.

Although we may have reservations about the texts which were dealt with at this first council, and in particular may doubt whether these collections were already in the form which they held in later centuries, nevertheless there is no reason to doubt the general

way in which the council was held. The chosen expert in each section of the Buddha's teachings recited what he could remember, and when it had been approved as a genuine utterance of the Buddha, the assembly as a whole confirmed their approval of it by repeating it together. The later commentaries state that the words "Thus have I heard" which come at the beginning of each sermon in the collections are the words which the elder reciting them, used at the council to introduce his recitation. Because the tradition was handed down by the elders in this way it gained the name "Teaching of the elders" (the *theras*), i.e. Theravāda.

The account goes on to relate how, following a dispute over certain points of discipline 100 years after the death of the Buddha, a second council was held. In the presence of 700 monks the expert in the discipline at that time was consulted about the problems which had arisen, and, as at the first council, the whole collection of texts on the discipline and the doctrine was recited in its entirety.

At some time after this second council, the dissident monks split off from the Theravadins and held their own "great council" as a result of which they were called the "great councillors" (*Mahāsaṅgītikas* or *Mahāsaṅghikas*).

The Theravadin sources, but not those of the other Buddhist traditions (who presumably were by that time no longer in contact with them) state that a third council was held during the reign of king Aśoka in the middle of the 3rd century B.C., after the expulsion of certain heretics from the Order (*sangha*). This time, the recitation of the texts took place in the presence of 1000 monks.

Although the lack of supporting evidence in the other traditions casts doubt upon the precise nature of this third council, it is not unreasonable to suppose that whenever the Theravadin tradition had been rent by schism there would be gatherings at which recitations of the texts would take place, the validity of the Theravadin tradition upheld, and the approval of the Order bestowed upon the texts which had been recited.

3. The schools of reciters

The account which we have of the first council states that when it was finished the rules of discipline were entrusted to one elder and his pupils for safe keeping the collection of long sermons to another elder, the middle length sermons to a third, and so on. Although we may have doubts, as I mentioned earlier, that these collections were already in this form, it seems very likely that the task of collecting the Buddha's sermons together was begun during his lifetime and continued after his death. We know from inscriptions that the collections had received their names by the 2nd century B.C., and it is therefore probable that from the earliest period, of Buddhism the collecting was carried out on the basis of length, and that text were handed over to different groups of monks for remembering and transmitting to their followers. This was the beginning of the system of schools of reciters (*bhānakas*).

It sometimes happens that one and the same sermon or utterance appears in more than one collection. Sometimes they are identical when they are repeated in this way, but from the fact that sometimes they vary we can deduce that the reciters who were responsible for the transmission of each text were quite independent, and were not influenced by the traditions of the reciters of other collections. The existence of varying versions does not, of course, necessarily mean that one school of reciters had in some way a more authentic tradition than another. It is possible that the accounts of events handed down by different schools of reciters were incomplete, and some schools had information not available to others. When an elder's verses, as recorded in one collection, differ from the version in another, it is possible that he recited his verses, in different ways, on more than one occasion.

The views of the reciters were not confined to the form of the texts for which they were responsible. They also had their own ideas about details of the Buddha's life, or the early history of Buddhism. We read, for example, that different schools had varying opinions as to whether the Buddha before his enlightenment saw the four signs which

led him to renounce the world, on one and the same day, or on four different days.

4. The early language of the Theravadins

If it is correct to assume that the Buddha used local dialects when he taught, then it is probable that from the very beginning of Buddhism the corpus of Buddhist sermons was in several dialects.

In the centuries after the death of the Buddha, translations of his sermons must have been made as the need arose, either because the collections were being taken into areas where different dialects were spoken, or because (as time went by) the collections became more difficult to understand as their language became more archaic.

As Buddhism became established in various parts of North India, presumably centred around monasteries, there must have been attempts made to render all the holdings of any particular monastery roughly homogeneous in language, at least to the extent that they were made intelligible to all the monks in the monastery. The recitation of texts at the various councils must also have imposed a certain amount of normalisation of language upon them.

We have no direct knowledge of the precise features of the dialects and languages of North India before the 3rd century B.C., and there is not sufficient evidence available to make deductions about the languages used by Buddhist sects other than the Theravadins. By extrapolation from the language of the Theravadin texts in later years, we can deduce that by the time of Aśoka, those texts were in a mixed language, which represented an incomplete translation into a western dialect from an Eastern dialect which we might expect to have been spoken round and about the area of Magadha (modern Bihar) where the Buddha spent much of his preaching life. There are also, however, traces of other dialects, which probably represent the remnants of dialects through

which the teachings had been translated at an earlier stage, as well as what we call "hyper-forms," the product of an incorrect translation system, whereby a translator over-compensates for a dialect peculiarity.

5. The influence of Sanskrit

At some unknown date, probably around the end of the reign of Aśoka, the importance of Sanskrit, which had been in eclipse, began to rise again, and as can be paralleled from the progressive Sanskritisation which is attested in inscriptions during the centuries after Aśoka, an attempt was made to translate the texts into Sanskrit from the non-Sanskrit dialects of Indo-Aryan, the so-called Middle Indo-Aryan dialects, in which the early Buddhist texts had been remembered and handed down. It is probably that this was done in a haphazard way at first, perhaps depending upon the translating abilities of each individual monk as he recited a text, but later the use of Sanskritised forms probably became more standardised.

6. The introduction of Buddhism to Ceylon and the writing down of the canon

The Sinhalese chronicles, written in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. but based on earlier materials, tell how during the reign of Aśoka missionaries introduced Buddhism into Ceylon. During the 1st century B.C. the monks there who had previously recited the texts and the commentaries upon them orally, wrote them down in books. The reason for this was doubtless the threat posed by famine, war, and the growing power of a dissident sect of Buddhism in Ceylon which enjoyed the king's favour. The number of Theravadin monks had clearly dropped to so small a number that the old system of reciters could no longer continue. We read for example, that one text was known to one monk alone. If he died, then all knowledge of "his" text would die with him. The early chronicles merely state that the texts were written

down. The later chronicles state that this committing to writing was the result of the holding of another council, to which some sources allocate the number "fourth".

Either at the time it was written down, or perhaps already at an earlier date, the corpus of Theravadin texts was called *pali*, which means "canon", and the language of the texts was called **pali-bhasa** ("the language of the canon"). It seems likely that the increasing Sanskritisation of this canon, which had already begun in North India before the introduction of the texts into Ceylon, was virtually fixed at the stage which it had reached at the time of writing the canon down, and except for any changes made later for the sake of consistency by the scribes who were now responsible for the accurate transmission of the texts, no further progress was made with the fairly limited introduction of Sanskrit features into the language of the Theravadin canon.

The consistency and accuracy of this Sanskritisation depended entirely upon the degree to which the monks who introduced the changes understood the language of the canon, as they had inherited it. This, in turn, depended upon the accuracy of the reciters' tradition which had preserved the form of the texts, and upon the value of whatever commentarial tradition had accompanied them. The phonological structure of the Middle Indo-Aryan dialects was such that many words which were clearly distinct in Sanskrit looked the same ("were homonyms") in Middle Indo-Aryan. Many forms were, therefore, ambiguous, and the way in which they were Sanskritised was not always consistent and, moreover, not always correct.

7. The language of the Theravadin canon

The Theravadins' own tradition is that the language of the Buddha was Magadhi, the language of Magadha, where the Buddha did much of his preaching. It is clear that the commentators assumed that the language of the canon, as they had inherited it, was also Magadhi. What we know about that dialect tells us that that cannot be so, although it is

possible that some of the Eastern features found in the canon do go back to Magadhi. The reason for the commentators' belief is not clear. Since the Buddha preached some of his sermons in Magadha, he probably preached them in the form of Magadhi current at that time. This might have led to the idea that all his teachings had been, and still were, in that dialect. Alternatively, it is possible that the growing prestige of the Magadhi dialect as the administrative language of the Mauryan empire led to the name being taken over by the Theravadins and applied to their language for reasons of prestige, although the two dialects were quite dissimilar. A third possibility, perhaps the most likely, is that the dialect of this by the Theravadins was known as Magadhi before it was taken to Ceylon simply because it developed in an area somewhere around the region of Magadha.

A number of modern scholars have tried to identify the language of the Theravadin canon, as we have it, with various dialects of North India for which we have epigraphical evidence from the 3rd or 2nd centuries B.C.

Nevertheless, the heterogeneous nature of the features, which I have already mentioned as being found in that canon make it very unlikely that a genuine spoken language could have existed with precisely those features. Much of the restoration of Sanskrit forms seems to have been done in an entirely mechanical way, and I do not believe that the canonical language can be regarded as coinciding with any historical language or dialect.

It is not clear what label we should give to this canonical language. Some call it "artificial", and certainly there are artificial features, such as the incorrect Sanskritisations which I have mentioned. The English language, however, has similar artificial features, such as the spelling of the word ISLAND with an S, or SOVEREIGN with G, but no one regards English as an artificial language because of that preferring to reserve the term for such invented languages as Esperanto. Others call the language "Literary", and certainly it is the language of

a literature, although it is not literary in the sense that it represents the refined form of a popular dialect. Other language used for Buddhist purposes which represent the restoration of a number of Sanskrit features into a dialect of Middle Indo-Aryan are usually referred to as "Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit", and it is perhaps most appropriate to regard the language of the Theravadin canon as a dialect of that type of Sanskrit.

8. The later history of the canon in Ceylon

Once the Theravadin canon had been committed to writing in Ceylon, it seems that very little further change was made to it. The language shows little sign of any borrowings from the Sinhalese language being inserted into it, and most of the borrowings which some have thought than could see, can be explained otherwise. Nevertheless, the explanations given by the commentaries in later centuries show that the canon was not fixed absolutely by the process of writing down. The system of reciting and approving the form of the sermons at councils should have resulted in the elimination of all variant readings, but it is clear from those recorded by the commentators that somehow the tradition kept alive readings which had presumably not been approved, possibly because scribes remembered older "unapproved" readings which they retained in the commentarial tradition, or even introduced into the cononical texts in the course of copying them out.

Sometimes we find a variant reading quoted in the later commentaries which shows all the signs of being old. Although such variants may not be found in the canonical texts or the earlier commentaries, we can deduce that they are not late inventions made up in Ceylon but are identifiably North Indian in form, perhaps even introduced from India when the canonical texts were introduced. They simply did not gain canonical status.

Despite the geographical separation of the Sinhalese Buddhists from the home territory of Buddhism in North India, it seems that literary material continued to reach

Ceylon from the mainland, but there is no evidence for the addition of any text to the canon after it had been written down in the 1st century B.C. An origin in North India is postulated for several texts which were highly regarded by commentators in Ceylon, but not counted as canonical. It would seem that they arrived in Ceylon too late to be admitted to the canon, but were nevertheless early enough to have some sort of semi-canonical status, and some, in fact, are said to be regarded as canonical in Burma. Their post-canonical arrival is confirmed by the fact that several of them contain verses and other utterances ascribed either to the Buddha or to various eminent elders, which do not occur in the canon. Nevertheless, no attempt was made to insert them there, although there are several texts to which they could have been added without difficulty.

Although the chronicles state that the canon and the commentaries were all written down together in the 1st century B.C., it is clear that the commentaries were not closed in the way in which the canon was. There are references in them to elders who can be shown to have lived as late as the 1st century A.D., and it is therefore obvious that material continued to be added to the commentaries at least until that date. It is, in fact, quite likely that the commentarial material continued to be reworked and added to until the time of the great commentators in the 5th and 6th centuries. They took over all the material available to them, assimilated together and translated from the Sinhalese dialect into the canonical language. The commentaries were then fixed in this translated form, and the older Sinhalese commentaries (upon which they had been based) fell into disuse and disappeared. The fixing of the form of the commentaries also had the result of fixing the form of the texts on which they commented. The canon as we have it now is essentially that commented upon in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D.

9. The Theravadin tradition in South-East Asia

The same chronicles which tell us of

the missionaries going to Ceylon, state that at the same time other missionaries went to Burma. There is no direct evidence to support this statement, but there is evidence of the existence of Buddhism in both Burma and Thailand by the 7th century A.D., and a number of Buddhist texts were certainly known in Burma by the 8th century, although it is not certain whether the whole of the Theravadin canon was known there at that time. A later Burmese Chronicle tells of a king in the 11th century establishing Buddhism after gaining a victory there and having the canonical texts brought from Ceylon to compare with those available in Burma. In return he sent monks to Ceylon to re-establish the Buddhist ordination there, since there were so few monks in Ceylon that they were unable to carry out the ceremonies unaided.

As the Theravadin tradition was taken by missionaries to South-East Asia, the language of the canon and commentaries might have been expected to change under the influence of the various indigenous languages but except for a number of orthographical features, continued to be transmitted in much the same form as in Ceylon. The influence of the underlying languages is more easily seen, however, in the following centuries texts written in Ceylon, Burma and Thailand, where quite considerable changes in orthography, grammar and syntax are to be observed.

10. The influence of the grammarians

Although the chances of **major** changes being made to the language of the Theravadin canon must have been reduced, once the texts had been written down, nevertheless, a certain amount of minor emendation did take place during the course of the centuries-long scribal tradition. Under the influence of the Sanskrit grammarians, Theravadin grammarians began to describe and classify the features of the canonical language, and their writings inevitably had an effect upon the scribes who were responsible for copying out the manuscripts. It is likely that, in origin, the grammars were intended to describe the forms which **occurred**, but before long they

were regarded, by some scribes at least, as decreeing the forms which **should** occur. There was consequently a tendency to "correct" readings in the light of the grammarians' rules.

The fact that the canonical language had been partially Sanskritised, when it was written down, led to a situation where scribes who knew Sanskrit thought that the non-Sanskrit forms which remained were errors, and a powerful Sanskritising force began to operate, to such an extent that some grammarians actually stated that certain forms were permissible in the canon simply because they were Sanskrit. There is evidence that sometimes the **explanations** put forward by commentators were sometimes inserted into the texts in place of the readings they were explaining. We know that some of the commentators knew Sanskrit, and it is possible that their knowledge of Sanskrit led in a comparable way to the insertion of Sanskrit forms. It has been stated (with some justification) that the language of the Theravada canon, as we have it, is a direct reflection of its form in the 12th century, when the influence of the grammarians was at its highest.

11. The later councils

We read in the later chronicles, written in Ceylon, Burma and Thailand, that as a result of disputes among the various sections of the Buddhist Order in those countries, councils were held from time to time at which the canon was cleansed of scribal errors, and comparisons were made with versions of the canon from other countries. When the numbers of ordained monks fell, it became necessary to invite monks from elsewhere to re-establish the ordination, and such visiting monks often brought books with them which were not available in the country they were visiting.

Towards the end of the 19th century, King Min-don of Burma convened a fifth council (1868-71), at which eminent monks and teachers read or recited the canonical texts to establish the best readings. The complete text of the canon as approved at this council was engraved on 729 stone slabs

around the Kuthodaw Pagoda in Mandalay. These slabs were re-inked and copied for the sixth council which was held in Rangoon in 1954-56, to mark the 2,500th anniversary of the death of the Buddha (by the oriental system of dating). A draft edition of the canon, based on the fifth council edition, which had been revised after comparison with editions from other countries, was prepared by a body of scholars. After checking and re-editing by a board of Burmese, Sinhalese and Thai monks, the final version, recited and formally confirmed during the two years of the council, was printed and published.

12. The "Pāli" language

The modern usage of the word "Pāli" as the name of the **language** of the Theravadin canon, rather than (as originally) the canon itself, is probably due to a misunderstanding, which would seem to be at least several centuries old. In his **Dictionary of the Pali Language**, published in 1875, Childers stated that the English usage was taken from the Sinhalese, who used the word in the same way. This probably accounts for the adoption of the name by other European scholars, earlier than Childers, who based their work on Sinhalese sources. The French scholar Burnouf, however, in his survey of early Pāli studies published in 1826 pointed out that the first person known to him to mention Pāli by name was Simon de La Loubère, who visited Thailand in 1687-88 and published a description of the kingdom of Siam in 1691, which was translated into English in 1693.

It is clear from his account that in Thailand in the late 17th century the name "Pāli" (spelt "Balie" or "Baly") was already used in the language of the Theravadin canonical texts. This is now confirmed by a slightly earlier reference which has recently become known. A contemporary French account of the work of their missionaries states that in 1672 M. Laneau studied Siamese and Baly and wrote a dictionary and grammar of both languages, now unfortunately lost. The work of these early French missionaries did much to make the Pāli language known in the West, and there were Pāli MSS in French libraries by 1739.

There is also a reference to Pāli in a late 19th century Burmese chronicle, in a context where it seems to be the name of a language, and it is likely that this text is merely repeating a statement found in an earlier work, so that the usage in Burma is probably older than might appear. It seems improbable that the error whereby the compound **pāli-bhasa** was understood to mean "Pāli language", rather than "language of the canon", could have arisen independently in all three countries, but in the present state of our knowledge it does not seem possible to determine where the misunderstanding first took place.

13. The development of Western scholarship

The knowledge and study of Pāli continued to grow in Europe in the early 19th century, helped to some extent by the growing interest in the newly discovered field of Indo European philology. Texts began to be published, and by 1870 there were enough of these to enable Childers to publish his dictionary in 1875, as I have already stated. In 1881 Rhys Davids founded the Pāli Text Society with the aim of publishing all the Pāli texts which were lying unedited in the libraries of the Orient and the West.

Meanwhile in 1837 B.H. Hodgson had begun to send Sanskrit Buddhist Manuscripts back to Europe from Nepal. This brought European scholars for the first time into contact with Sanskrit works belonging to the "Great Vehicle division of Buddhism—the Theravadins belonging to the "Little Vehicle" division. Burnouf, whom I have already mentioned as an early student of Pāli, was of the opinion that a true picture of Buddhism could only emerge from the comparative study of Pali and Sanskrit. Unfortunately he died after completing his study of the Sanskrit material available to him. His failure to deal with the Pāli works seems to have led to an idea upon the Continent of Europe that only Sanskrit sources mattered for the study of Buddhism.

Consequently, the early days of Buddhist studies in Europe were bedevilled by quarrels about the relative merits of Pali ver-

sus Sanskrit, the more miraculous elements of the latter being held by some, mostly British, scholars who upheld the merits of Pāli, to invalidate the more factual parts. Claims were made for the Pāli canon that "it must always remain our most reliable authority" There are still adherents to this view. Quite recently the Theravada principles have been declared to contain "... all that we can know of the authentic doctrine laid down by Gotama himself"

14. Variations in the Theravadin tradition

The early European editors of Pāli texts soon discovered that there was no one Pāli tradition. They found that each Theravadin country had its own tradition of canonical texts (or perhaps we should say sub-tradition of the main Theravadin tradition) and although the differences between their versions of the texts were for the most part of no great consequence, there were sometimes significant differences between them, which involved the editors in the task of choosing between the readings transmitted in the various versions.

It is not, in fact, inappropriate to talk of a Burmese or Siamese or Sinhalese tradition (or sub-tradition) for the transmission of a particular text, and we must assume that the differences which can be seen between the readings in the MSS which belong to these different traditions go back to the various councils which have been held from time to time in these different countries. The value to be placed upon the readings handed down by each tradition will depend upon the care with which the evidence for each reading was sifted, and upon the criteria which were adopted as the basis for the decisions which were made. There is, of course, no way of discovering this for the earlier councils. The way in which the preliminary work for the sixth council was carried out, should have resulted in an elective edition of the canon and commentaries, incorporating what were thought to be the best readings from all the oriental editions. It is, however, probable that the Sixth Council edition is based predominantly upon the Burmese fifth

Council edition, but it is not possible to be certain about this, without carrying out a detail comparison between the two editions.

The way in which the ordination was re-introduced from one Buddhist country to another, and books were brought by visiting monks, led to a situation where the sub-traditions of each country became to some extent interwoven, and the ease of communication in more recent years has led to the versions of canonical texts in one country becoming influenced by the forms found in another, so that they are no longer truly representative of the tradition of that country. It is nevertheless possible that MSS are still extant in libraries in Ceylon, Burma and Thailand which are based upon a tradition which pre-dates, and therefore perhaps contains readings which are older than more recent councils and editions.

15. Non-Theravadin traditions

The discovery within the last 100 years of Sanskrit texts which belonged to the (mainly) Little Vehicle sects of Buddhism which were wiped out by the invading Muslims in Central Asia and North India a millennium or so ago, has shown clearly that at one time there existed in Chinese Turkestan, Afghanistan and Kashmir canons belonging to other Buddhist traditions which were the direct parallels of the Pāli canon which had been thought to be so superior. Careful examination of these Sanskrit texts has shown that neither the Sanskrit nor the Pāli version can be held to be consistently superior to the other and, as Burnouf stated many years ago, any attempt to establish an "original" text must take account of both Pāli and Sanskrit source material.

Such examinations as have been made, reveal that the relationship between Pāli and Sanskrit versions of the same text is sometimes very complex. It is clear that just as the Theravadin canon is based upon material translated from various dialects of Middle Indo-Aryan, so all the other "Little Vehicle" canonical texts also show signs of being based upon earlier versions in similar dialects.

Although not as well documented as the Theravada tradition, it must be assumed that the other traditions followed a similar pattern of recitation, and validation as canonical, by assemblies of monks, and there is no reason to doubt that the transmission system must have been much the same for all sects.

16. Theravadin and non-Theravadin traditions

I have already mentioned the differences which are found in the various branches of the Theravadin tradition. They probably arose as the result of faulty or varying memory, but having been recited and confirmed by a particular council they were accepted as canonical by the various branches. Such differences may be nothing more than a variation in vocabulary, but sometimes they are found in respect of historical matters, such as the precise form of the Buddha's death, or the details about the disposal of his relics.

A survey of the other traditions shows that they too have their own versions of such events, and the differences between them are also due, in all probability, to some form of system of reciters. When the varying Theravadin tradition is placed beside the varying non-Theravadin tradition, the resultant diversity of views is sometimes so great that it is impossible to deduce what the original state of affairs might have been. If, for example, we examine the various versions of the first words uttered by the Buddha after his enlightenment, we find that the Theravadin canon gives two different versions, while various Sanskrit texts give another four.

Sometimes, however, the Sanskrit version agrees with one Pāli version as opposed to another, and sometimes the commentarial tradition of one sect agrees with the canonical tradition of another. This suggests that, in some cases at least, both the commentarial and the canonical readings are of great antiquity, both perhaps going back to the earlier period of Buddhism. This may mean that in the early Buddhist community both readings were of



A bookcase for Pāli Scriptures

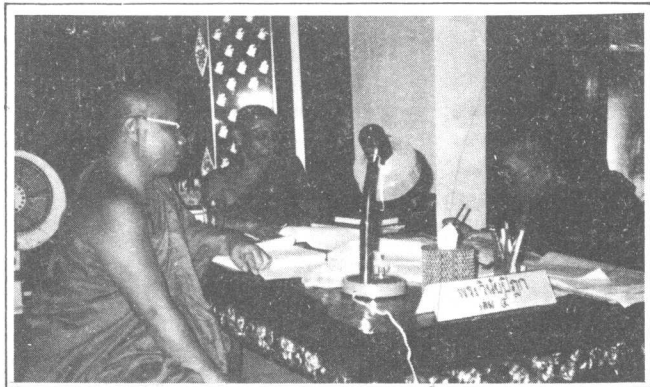
equal validity, so that it was a matter of chance which sect or school chose which reading as their canonical reading.

17. Pāli studies in Europe

For the most part the aim of the Theravadin reciters, grammarians and commentators was to ensure that the texts they had received from their predecessors were handed on to their successors in as correct a form as possible, together with the traditional explanation of their meaning. The aim of Western scholars, however, has been more than this. They have tried to search back through all the inherited material to find the earliest form of the teaching.

As part of this attempt, recent work by Western scholars in the field of Pāli studies has included the examination of the teachings of the grammarians and commentators, in an attempt to assess and remove any changes introduced into the canon as a result of that teaching; some have tried to use metrical criteria to correct corrupt passages; there have been comparative studies with parallel Sanskrit texts, to decide between varying Theravadin sub-traditions, or to correct the Pāli in the light of the Sanskrit; some have

Thai monks editing Pali Scriptures in 1986 at Wat Mahadhatu, Bangkok, where the 9th Council took place 200 years ago.



succeeded in identifying, by philological means, archaic nominal and verbal forms which were not recognised by the scribes, and were consequently corrupted in the course of transmission; comparative studies have been made with Jain and brahmanical texts, in which parallel verses and common terminology are sometimes found.

Conclusions

We are now in a position to define terms more clearly. If **pāli** originally meant "canon" and **pali-bhasā** meant "the language of the canon", then, if we talk about the Pali language and scriptures, we are talking about the Theravadin canon and the language in which it was written down, probably in the 1st century B.C.

We can now, within limits, define the influence which the later commentators and grammarians had upon the language of that canon, and we can remove many of the features which their teachings imposed upon that language. This should enable us to identify the form of the canon which was commented upon by the great commentators of the 5th and 6th centuries, which was clearly, in some places, already corrupt. We must now aim at gaining the necessary ability to penetrate behind their form of the texts and identify an earlier form of the language.

The first editors of the Critical Pali Dictionary stated that their aim was confined to the "lower criticism", in as much as they were working exclusively with the pali canon and the younger books pertaining to it. They were providing verified material for that higher criticism which could check the

Theravadin canon with the documents left by other Buddhist sects, as well as the deeper strata of Jain lore. More recently scholars have begun to make use of that material in the comparative studies I have mentioned, and as a result of their comparisons of the Theravadin canon with other Buddhist canons, or with Jain texts, they have been able to give some idea of what those texts must have looked like in their pre-Pāli form. It is not too far-fetched to say that certain aspects of the Theravadin canon have only become clear, after more than 2,000 years of obscurity, as a result of such work.

Whether this means that we now know the form in which the texts under examination were composed, and whether this represents the authentic word of the Buddha, are questions which we are not yet in a position to answer. Whether such methods can be applied to the whole of the Theravadin canon is even more difficult to say.

K.R. Norman
President
The Pali Text Society

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**A summary note on the
proceedings of the planning
meeting for the UNU Subproject on
Buddhist Perceptions of Desirable
Societies 20-22 March, 1985**

Wat Thong Noppakhun Bangkok, Thailand

by
Kathleen Newland



1. The planning meeting was held on March 20, 21 and 22 at Wat Thong Noppakhun, a Buddhist temple across the Chao Praya river from the central area of Bangkok. There were fifteen participants from eight countries, in addition to Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa, the sub-project co-ordinator, and Rector Soedjatmoko and Kathleen Newland of the United Nations University. Five of the participants were Buddhist monks. Staff members of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD), the Thai Khadi Research Institute and the Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development; several of the monks from Wat Thong Noppakhun and five other observers also attended parts of the meeting

2. The meeting opened with a brief service conducted by the Abbot of Wat Thong, who then welcomed the participants and expressed his great regret that because he could not speak English he could not join the discussions. Mr. Sivaraksa interpreted his remarks for the participants.

3. Short speeches of welcome were also given by Mr. Sivaraksa, Prof. Saneh Chamarik of the Thai Khadi Institute (which assisted in arranging the meeting), and Rector Soedjatmoko. All the participants then introduced themselves and said a few words about their own areas of expertise and experience.

4. Rector Soedjatmoko initiated the substantive discussion by describing the background and the concept of the overall project on Perceptions of Desirable Societies, and explaining what he hoped the outcome of this meeting would be. The general purpose of the project is to examine how religious thinkers and activists perceive the human predicament of our time. It operates within a three-part framework, the first part being a diagnosis of current problems, the second an examination of specifically Buddhist responses to these problems, and the third a projection of how it might be possible to progress from the contemporary situation toward a more desirable society consistent with Buddhist principles. In this kind of study, it is

necessary to deal with religion on two levels: the level of faith, principles and ideas on the one hand; and the level of historical experience and social expression on the other.

5. Sulak Sivaraksa introduced the paper he had written as a framework for the Buddhist segment of the project, which was very much the product of a social-activist orientation. He was critical of the Thai Buddhist establishment for distancing itself from the real concerns of ordinary people and from its own tradition of asceticism; he was equally critical of Thai society in general for turning away from its own endogenous sources of inspiration (such as Buddhism) and looking elsewhere, particularly to the West, for its goals and values.

He asserted that no present-day society can truly call itself a Buddhist society. Part of the fault lies in Westernization, with both positive and negative effects on non-Western societies. Modern science and technology, in particular, have encouraged humans to see themselves as god-like, able to dominate and control nature and other people. He also pointed to the erosion of Buddhist lay society, for example through the secularization of education. Contradictions of the basic precepts of Buddhism abound.

The response from Buddhists, in his opinion, should be an attempt to build up awareness, and to break what he saw as a false segregation of religion and politics. Simply stated, the Buddhist should attempt to see the suffering that is part of social reality, to look for the causes of this suffering, and then seek the cure for it. He pointed out that there has never been an attempt to develop a Buddhist politics.

6. Mr. Nelson Foster commented on Sulak's presentation, making reference to a discussion paper that he had prepared. He gave particular emphasis to the Buddhist teachings on non-violence, and what these implied for the relationship between humanity and nature.

7. Ven. Rajavaramuni spoke about the basic Buddhist outlook on life. It regards all beings, not just human beings, as friends, because all are subject to the same laws of nature. But friends can be good or evil

friends. A Buddhist concept of a desirable society is of a society of good friends. The achievement of such a society is a matter of development, which if it is of the right kind, brings freedom in four dimensions:

- 1) Physical freedom (freedom from want and deprivation)
- 2) Social freedom (freedom from oppression, persecution, and exploitation)
- 3) Mental freedom (freedom from fear)
- 4) Freedom of spirit (freedom from illusion)

Buddhism gives some guidelines for the achievement of these freedoms, both in the individual, spiritual sphere and in the social, concrete sphere.

8. Sumendho Bhikkhu identified apathy, confusion, and selfishness as the roots of people's hopelessness, and pointed out that these three were not explicitly related to religion. He recalled the slogans of the French Revolution: liberty, equality, fraternity. Why did the Buddha not preach these instead of the four Noble Truths? The three slogans are idealistic, but Buddha taught people to come to terms with and surmount the reality of human existence—the existential problems of pain, loss, suffering, sickness and death. He felt that this approach, of Theravada Buddhism, has a great deal to offer contemporary society.

9. Dr. Paliawadana commented on Sulak's introductory paper, noting that it pointed a strong accusing finger at Western technology. Yet this technology was not entirely thrust upon the non-Western countries. It has brought great benefits as well as damage, and its damaging affects have also been felt in the West. The rejection of technology is not a necessary precept for a Buddhist desirable society; rather, the imperative is to humanize technology.

He also drew attention to the fact that in his country, Sri Lanka, there has been a massive outbreak of ethnic violence every 200-300 years. Why has the Buddhist teaching of compassion and non-violence failed to be absorbed? The Sinhalese Buddhists have adopted a nationalist ideology based on a racial concept, despite the fact

that the Buddha explicitly rejected the division of humanity into separate races. The traditional terms of reference and categories of thought in Buddhism have not been translated into modern language and ways of thinking. The Buddha himself was a strong critic of Brahmin society in his time, but this aspect of his thinking has not been enshrined in those parts of the canon that are endlessly repeated and taught. Both the clergy and the laity have failed to bring out the social implications of Buddhist teachings.

10. Mr. Foster noted several points of agreement that had emerged in the discussion up to this point: that modern society is in some way sick, and that a Buddhist diagnosis of its disease is not so different from that made by clear-sighted people from other faiths. Each person has to work for the improvement of his own understanding and compassion.

He also noted some points of contention. To what degree is our own search for perfection an adequate response to the problems of the world? Are we obligated to go beyond the strictly religious sphere of action, into political and social action? How much should we be concerned with non-human beings and the inanimate environment, and why—because they are instrumental to the continuation and quality of human life, or rather because they have an independent claim on our consciousness? Is technology a source of evil in itself, or evil only to the extent that it magnifies the weaknesses and flaws that exist in humans? What is the religious importance of political power and the rule of law, since they do not change people's hearts and minds but only, sometimes, their behavior?

11. Bancroft asserted that many individuals in the West have lost the sense that there is any meaning in life, and have lost with it the sense of higher responsibility. She welcomed the prospect of Buddhists becoming more socially active, though not necessarily in a sectarian way.

12. Prof. Saeng recalled Buddhism's emphasis on the laws of causation: if a condition exists, there is a reason behind it.

13. Dr. Somboon noted that in the

villages of Thailand, one finds many monks who are helping the people. They help people to identify the causes of their mundane suffering, and to overcome their suffering. The monks see that the main cause of suffering in most cases is poverty, lack of education or vocational training, lack of health care, and so forth. Their methods are often very simple, and rely on the Buddha's teachings. They advise people to form cooperatives, to refrain from drinking and gambling, and to take other measures that build self-confidence. In building a desirable society, the monkhood can be a real resource. This is consistent with the Buddha's teaching that the role of the monk is to help pave the people's way to salvation.

14. Mr. Sivaraksa pointed out that only two kinds of monks are mentioned in Thai tradition: village monks and forest monks. He wondered about the role of city monks. In today's large and cosmopolitan cities, the *sangha* does not know what to do or how to operate in a more complex and international setting. He urged the monkhood to be more self-critical and humble.

15. On the morning of March 21, the participants attended the morning service of the monks of Wat Thong. Mr. Sivaraksa had thoughtfully provided a guide to the service and a translation of the scriptures that were recited. Afterward, the Ven. Sumedho Bhikkhu, an American monk from a monastery in England, and an acknowledged meditation master with a considerable following in Thailand, conducted a meditation service in English for the UNU group.

16. Rector Soedjatmoko noted that the previous day's discussion had had a strong Theravada orientation, and asked the participants from Mahayana countries to speak from their own perspectives in order to bring out both differences and common concerns.

17. Dr. Xu spoke about the development of Chinese Buddhism from an historical perspective, and about the state of the religion in contemporary China and the attitude of the authorities toward it. He reminded the group that Buddhism was only one part of the Chinese cultural heritage, which also had been influenced by Taoism,

Confucianism and other religions.

In the last century, the study of the philosophy of religion had been consolidated, he noted. In Buddhist philosophy, human misery is held to the everlasting. There are two approaches to misery: one is to remove the cause of suffering, and the other is to relieve the pain of those who suffer. The second approach is that of Mahayana Buddhism. It holds that the Buddha was not concerned with sociological analysis, but with the relief of suffering. Ignorance is the major cause of suffering, but education alone is not the cure for ignorance. So far, education has utterly failed to transform human nature.

18. Mr. Sivaraksa queried how Buddhism survives in the modern socialist state. In Vietnam, he noted, there are two distinct streams: official Buddhism which receives the sponsorship and approval of the state, and independent Buddhism which is severely repressed. He pointed to the need to challenge both capitalist and socialist models from a Buddhist perspective.

19. Dr. Xu responded that China is in a period of sweeping change. In the contemporary socialist society, however, Buddhism remains very much alive. Chinese academics, with official approval, are engaged in a great search through the Buddhist literature of all ages. He was sure that the great religions of China cannot be destroyed. The truth exists, and on that score the future gives room for optimism.

20. Dr. Shim spoke about the differences in social attitudes found among adherents of different religions in South Korea today. He noted that in relation to other religions, Buddhism was declining in popularity, and seemed to have little influence on social issues. He ascribed this trend to a tendency toward formalism and obscurantism among the monks, and an uncritical endorsement of government actions and policies by the clergy. He felt that there is room, however, for the clergy to take a more active role in social and charitable works, and to provide more spiritual and moral guidance to the people.

21. Jamgon Kongtrul Rimpoche then spoke at considerable length, through his interpreter, about Tibetan Buddhism, giving an extremely thoughtful and illuminating presentation of its attitudes toward material vs. spiritual well-being, science and technology, the involvement of religion in politics, cultural relativism as opposed to immutable truths, and the weaknesses of Buddhism especially in the face of temporal misery and violence. He identified one obstacle to the implementation of religious principles as being the mixing of religion and culture. Of course, religion is a major influence on culture, but when culture influences religion or is equated with religion the result is often sectarianism, leading to violence and killing in the name of religion. Literalism and idolatry in religion are also the products of cultural influences.

Religion itself has no permanence of form. The principles are unchanging, but the practice must evolve. In teaching Buddhism in the West, for example, he would not dream of establishing Tibetan Buddhism as it existed in Tibet. But one can still teach Buddhism, of course. He did not mean to say that culture should be rejected, but that it should be carefully distinguished from religion. The Thai, for example, should cling to their own culture, but they should not expect others who want to come to Buddhism to adopt Thai culture too.

Western science and technology, in the Rimpoche's view, are not necessarily detrimental to religion, but religion must be able to influence them. Science and technology are concerned with material matters, and therefore have limitations. The Mahayana tradition teaches that there are two kinds of truth: relative and absolute. The first is the science of material things, the truth of things that can be observed. But in reality, there is no permanence, no absolute existence of things in the material world. Western science has progressed enormously in understanding the material world, but has made little contribution beyond that. The science of absolute truth is religion.

The Buddha never said that people must throw away or reject material things.

He taught, rather, that one should not form attachments to them. Being inanimate objects, they will not form attachments to one! What must be renounced is the desire to own and hold onto things—not the things themselves.

He identified three factors that may in part account for Buddhism's failure to come forward as a major force in various world crises, such as famines, wars, etc. One is a lack of capacity owing to the absence of a single hierarchy and "church" organization. A second is the preoccupation of religious Buddhists with their own enlightenment. A third is the fear on the part of the clergy that engagement with worldly problems would involve them in politics, along with the feeling that politics and religion are incompatible in their basic premises and cannot go together. Religion is universal; politics is concerned with what is mine or ours—that is, with protecting possession and keeping others at bay. If politics is mixed with religion, religion cannot then be a refuge from the woes of the material world. He emphasized, however, the importance of communication between the monks and the lay people. Without this communication, an erosion of religious values sets in.

22. The Rector invited interventions from two participants who were not identified with either of the two major Buddhist traditions, but were rather involved with a more syncretic study and practice. The Ven. U Rewata Dhamma, a Burmese monk now teaching from a base in England, was conversant with all three traditions discussed thus far (the Mahayana, the Theravada and the Tibetan), as well as with western religious traditions. He had been asked by the Pope, for example, to teach meditation in a Catholic monastery. He argued that the basic truths of Buddhism are immutable, and virtually independent of any profession of the religion as such. He felt that religion is not just for individuals, but should also form the moral basis of society; since this is also a concern of politics, politics and religion are not entirely separate.

23. Mrs. Bancroft, a Buddhist layperson from England with a Zen orientation, raised



the question of whether Buddhism has any place for the development of a "liberation theology" in the Catholic sense. She also called attention to the need for an elaboration of Buddhist institutions (colleges, policy institutes, etc) to develop the application of Buddhist values to modern problems. She felt personal insight must be cultivated, but seen within the perspective of the whole giving life of the Buddha. She was critical of Buddhist organizations in England that were so rigorously non-political that they refused, for example, to get involved with the peace movement.

24. Sumedho Bhikku gave an account of his own spiritual development in the Northeast of Thailand, which was very much in the monastic tradition of separation from the affairs of the world. He felt that religion's contribution to solving worldly problems should be an ethical and moral standard that can be widely shared between the people and their leaders. Thus, ethics could be religion's major offering to the problems of the world.

25. One of the observers of the meeting, a young Thai monk named Pasanadhammo, took exception to the rather other-worldly orientation of some of the

monks who had spoken, particularly to the argument that while religion should offer a set of moral values, the religious establishment should not be directly involved in politics. Speaking from a Thai perspective, he said that morality for the individual and morality for the society cannot be separated, and that both are a proper concern for political activists. Professor Saneh added that Buddhism has become too much confined to the clergy and the monkhood (the **sangha**), and needs to become more pluralistic, secularized and decentralized.

26. As the afternoon session drew to a close, Ms. Newland asked the participants to take another look at the three-part objective of the meeting that was presented in the letter of invitation to this meeting: the diagnosis of current ills from a Buddhist perspective, the Buddhist response to these ills, and a notion of some course of action to bring society closer to a state consistent with the values that inform Buddhism.

27. On the morning of March 22, Jamgon Kongtrul Rimpoché conducted a Tibetan puja ceremony for the monks of Wat Thong and the members of the meeting. Ven. Rewata Dhamma followed it with a short meditation practice.

28. Reconvening the meeting, Rector Soedjatmoko drew attention to the need to channel the discussion toward the organization of a volume of essays on Buddhist perceptions of desirable societies.

29. Prof. Saneh pointed out that Buddhist studies tend to be separated between the Buddhist scholars and the social scientists. In the UNU study of Perceptions of Desirable Societies, there should be collaboration between them. He suggested that it might be useful to conduct some case studies of lessons learned from Buddhism's responses to its environment, in the West as well as the Third World.

30. Prof. Palihawadana took up the question of Buddhism's relation to the scientific enterprise, where he saw no essential conflict. He also discussed the relationship with politics and secular ideologies, contrasting the ends-means justification found in, for example, Marxism, with the absolute morality of Buddhism. He also identified four precepts that in his mind belong to the core of Buddhist teaching: mercy, the impermissibility of the use of force, equality among people, and intellectual liberty (since truth can only be sought and grasped personally).

31. Mr. Foster asked what was meant by politics, especially Buddhist politics. He defined it as socially purposive action leading to an end. In this sense, almost every act is political. He also questioned the degree of responsibility the moral individual must accept in order to practice Buddhist teachings. In the practice of **ahimsa**, for example, is it enough to refrain from killing personally, or does one have an obligation to try to prevent others from killing?

32. Dr. Shim proposed three different issues for analysis: the perception of human nature, the assessment of Buddhism's interaction with other religions and ideologies, and alternative ways of developing society.

33. Mrs. Bancroft asked how Buddhism can help to restore the sense of human dignity, worth and responsibility in all individuals, so that they can exercise a sense of respect for themselves and the other beings of the world. The teaching of Buddhism now is

a rather leisurely affair, she said, whereas the problems of the world are urgent. How can this incompatibility be resolved?

34. Ms. Kapilasingh asserted that in Thailand, there is no consensus on spiritual goals, even among the Buddhists.

35. Prof. Saeng noted that Buddhism is more than a religion, it is really a philosophy of life. To such questions as 1) what is life?, 2) what is man's place in the universe?, 3) what is the ultimate goal of life?, and 4) what is the right way to the ultimate goal?, Buddhism has given elaborate answers. But to what extent are the truths of Buddhism instilled in the minds of the people? He thought that the Thai people had some basic understanding of Buddhism, but that the gap between understanding and practice was a large one.

Noting that Communist ideology does present a vision of a desirable society, and that this is one of its great strengths, he questioned whether there is such a vision in Buddhism. What would the role of the state be in a Buddhist desirable society, for example, and what would be the role of the **sangha**?

36. The Rimpoche expressed the concern that Buddhists today are more interested in attaining enlightenment for themselves rather than in helping others toward enlightenment. One of the biggest problems in the world today is, for example, disease and ill health. Buddha's teachings include much about medicine and other things relevant to modern ills. And in Tibet, medicine is very much a part of religious practice. But Buddhists have not done research and devised technologies to develop this teaching. Buddha himself said that his followers should not just blindly follow his teachings but should search for their meaning. Failure to pursue this injunction through science and other forms of learning is one of Buddhism's weaknesses, he felt.

He also reiterated his own view that religion and politics are fundamentally incompatible. Politics is grasping, concerned with power over others, and even implies the willingness to take life, which is against Buddhism. He had been shocked to hear

one of the Thai monks earlier say that monks do engage directly in political activity in Thailand.

37. Ven. Rewata Dhamma endorsed the need for extensive research on Buddhist responses to science and technology, stressing the emphasis in Buddhism on coming to grips with reality. The search for enlightenment in Buddhism is an attempt to understand one's own real nature. It does bring bliss and liberation to the individual, but this is not mysticism, he insisted. Rather it is the reality experienced by the individual as he/she progresses in understanding.

On the question of Buddhism and politics, he felt that Buddhist philosophy can and should pervade political positions, giving moral guidance to political action.

38. Sumedho Bhikkhu saw no obstacle to religion and science working together. The intellectual and the spiritual, the empirical and the mythical or symbolic appeal to different aspects of human nature. They should not be seen as contradictory.

On the sociopolitical question, he felt that Buddhism can offer an alternative vision to either capitalism or communism. The cosmology of Buddhism assists our understanding of hierarchy in nature. Buddhism helps people to operate in society in a mindful way, rather than reacting in a prejudiced or hostile way. Buddhist concepts can operate through politics, economics, science, technology, the mass media, and so forth. It instructs us to think in terms of the human family rather than in terms of attachment to the nation, sect, school of thought, or set of symbols. The differences among such things lose their meaning as one approaches true understanding.

39. Ven. Khemapali pointed out that discussion alone cannot solve problems. The important thing is to put the right principles into practice. Technologies themselves are nothing—a thing is just a thing. What is important is the person who controls the technologies. He or she will determine whether the thing is put to good or bad use.

40. The Ven. Rajavaramuni said that we do not have a very clear notion of development. It is usually understood to

imply movement toward a better state. But in the last 20-30 years, during which Thailand has ceased to be an "underdeveloped country", many undesirable factors have sprung up or have been strengthened. It is important to distinguish between development of the mind and the human being (internal development) and development of the environment and the society (external development). The latter should be carried out in a way that is conducive to the former, but in reality it must arise out of the former.

He referred to the Pali terms that indicate 1) physical development, 2) moral development (in the social sense, that is in relation to other people), 3) mental development and 4) the development of wisdom, or the knowledge of things as they really are. The first of these does not mean merely bodily health, but also the development of the whole relationship between man and nature. If we understand our relationship with food, then we understand why we eat: to live, to work, to be healthy. But many people eat for another reason—for indulgence—and this is to have a bad relationship with food, one that is wasteful and adds to poverty. The same logic applies to other necessities of life. The **sangha** sets up an order of proper relationships between humankind and its environment, and should also provide an example of proper relationships.

The idea of the righteous state and the righteous ruler is to see that the **dhamma** or the code of Buddhist principles is put into practice in society. If we accept the Rimpoche's view that religion and politics should be separate, then it must follow at least that the politicians must be a primary concern of the monks, for if the rulers are not righteous, they will not order the state in a way that is conducive to the development of the people.

Tolerance is a primary concern of moral development. People differ; even the **arhats** (perfected beings) differ among themselves. Buddhism has both the principles and a long history of toleration. It would be well for Buddhists to study this great tradition of their



own. So, for that matter, should adherents of other religions.

Ven. Rajavaramuni agreed with Prof. Nakamura's paper in that every effort should be made to avert war. But even without war, he pointed out, there is much killing. What should a Buddhist say in response to this fact? Killing is always evil; one should never speak of a just war, much less a holy war. But nonetheless, there will sometimes be wars of necessity. The Buddhist should recognize that war is still evil even when it is necessary. We may decide that we must kill, but we should understand that making such a decision means sacrificing ourselves to suffer in hell for the evil that we do. The Buddhist, in his opinion, cannot accept the idea that it is good to kill an enemy, even an enemy of Buddhism.

41. Pasanadhammo noted that in the past (in Thailand), religious people have avoided social activism, and that as a result activism has suffered from confusion, lack of focus, lack of coherent values. Spiritual leadership is needed by the activists. He also pointed out that without bringing his special training into play, the activist monk is no different from other political activists, who may act out of hatred or envy or greed rather than out of compassion.

42. Dr. Suwanne suggested that it would be worthwhile to investigate the status of Buddhism in specific countries. In each national setting, relationships among the **sangha**, the state and the people are different. Before trying to construct an ideal model, one should learn about the actual

situation in specific settings.

43. Mr. Sivaraksa called for an interdisciplinary approach to basic Buddhist concepts, and for the development of a Buddhist methodology. He suggested that one must look at the **sangha** seriously in order to have a proper notion of Buddhism in the modern world. By this he did not mean only the monkhood, but the lay society as well.

44. Mrs. Bancroft suggested that a study of Buddhism should take up the issue of corruption in Buddhist society, and explore the meaning of the Buddhist notion of corruption. Mr. Sivaraksa differed slightly in thinking that the issue was not necessarily corruption in society but rather corruption of the religion, while Mr. Soedjatmoko felt that corruption was not peculiar to Buddhism in this sense but was a universal indication of the gap between aspiration and reality.

45. Sumedho Bhikkhu spoke about the need to define and clarify terms. He felt that the traditional Pali terms were perhaps too much revered, and that their real meanings needed to be worked out and communicated. Buddhism, he said, works from observed reality, not from speculation. Realization must progress from the microcosm of the self to the macrocosm of the universal.

46. Dr. Palihawadana suggested several topics for inclusion in a study of a Buddhist "desirable society". They included:

- Buddhism in a multireligious society
- The role of women in Buddhist society
- Communicating Buddhism to the modern world
- War and violence
- Buddhism and the spirit of science
- Buddhism and culture

Mr. Foster suggested adding to this list:

- Buddhist theories of social change.

47. Mr. Soedjatmoko posed a number of questions about the possible qualities of a "desirable society" as envisioned by Buddhists. Would it be a semi-monastic society? Would it be one of sufficiency rather than affluence and growth? Of cooperative sharing rather than competition? Of course, even within Buddhism there is not just a single vi-



sion of a desirable society. How would studies of economics, politics, psychology, technology and so forth from a Buddhist perspective relate to existing studies of these subjects? In other words, what would characterize them as distinctively Buddhist?

He identified the heart of the problem with science and technology as having two aspects: the humanization of science and the link with transcendence. Too much emphasis on human control of science and technology is a limited approach. How can Buddhists respond to the new ethical questions arising from the enormous extension of human capabilities? These questions are very complex. Does Buddhism have a contribution to make to the humanization of science and technology, as opposed to the humanization of the scientist? Can Buddhism relink science and spirituality? This would require loosening the bonds between the desire for knowledge and the thirst for power and destructive capability, and forging or strengthening the link between the desire for knowledge and the longing for truth.

Soedjatmoko also raised the question of transcendence. What is the significance of

meditative practices in the modern world? From where would leadership come that could lead people back (or onward) to their transcendent nature?

Soedjatmoko explained that the UNU project on "Perceptions of Desirable Societies" and the volumes that will be published of its observations, are only the beginning of a process. That process, he hoped, would be one of revitalization of the major religions and their re-engagement with the major social issues of the day. The purpose of the UNU project is to trigger new reflection and thought within religions, across sectarian and cultural lines.

Why, he asked, is the study of Buddhism so important in this context now? Buddhism has, perhaps uniquely, counterposed the stubborn realities of the historical process to eternal truths. How to deal constructively with the former while continuing to strive for the latter is one of the central questions of human existence.

48. The planning meeting closed with a prayer service conducted by the Abbot of Wat Thong Noppakhun, in the main hall of worship of the temple.

Reflections on Sulak Sivarakasa's Working Paper

(As appeared in *Seeds of Peace* Vol II No.1)

The World Fellowship of Buddhists is structurally crippled. It cannot express a progressive Buddhist vision because it is mainly representative of Asian political and economic elites, in particular the Thai royal family and ruling circle, and the Sri Lankan Buddhist nationalist "old boys". Its representatives from communist countries are hand-picked by the Party, and its representatives from the West are not even representative of the Asian Buddhist communities there, much less the much more active converted Buddhists. The reform of the closed nature of the WFB and/or the creation of new international Buddhist organizations, such as the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, is indeed necessary if Buddhists are to address the problems of the modern world. This is inevitable as the body of Buddhist intellectuals, and Buddhist higher education, grows in the world. The number of Buddhist intellectuals has always been small compared to the rich West with its Christian thinkers in and out of seminaries.

Buddhist scholars would indeed do well to learn from the critical trends in Christian theological study. One trend has been the redefinition of scriptural mythology to understand the underlying message it had for the people of that time, examining the state of mind Buddhist teachings were trying to create

rather than what the literal meaning of the message was itself tying the intellectual history of Buddhism to their social roots. Linguistic analysis should be tied to questions such as "Why did Buddhist philosophers in that time and place choose these images to express the Dharma?" or "Can certain Buddhist texts in the Pali canon be shown to have been added later for particular sectarian reasons?". The contradictions and schisms in Buddhist philosophy are rooted in social reality.

Based on the central insight of Buddhism of *paticca-samuppada* it doesn't seem correct to say that Buddhist social ethics posits that "everyone should strive for their own individual liberation and this will naturally create a better world". The environment of our practices is just as important as our individual efforts. Buddhist practice should be redefined to express the fact that inner change

doesn't automatically create outer change, and vice versa: true Buddhist practice strives to create an enlightened world **at the same time** as an enlightened mind. Indeed our bodhisattva work for other beings is a necessary part of our individual practices.

The more I practice as a socially-aware Buddhist, the more clear the subversive nature of the precepts become. Only through continual practice and re-examination can the social dimensions of Buddhism be rediscovered and expressed.

James J. Hughes

The official Xinhua press agency reported the attendance of more than 10,000 people at the opening of a traditional Tibetan Buddhist prayer ceremony in Lhasa, held for the first time in 20 years. The ceremony had been banned during the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, when mosques, temples, synagogues and churches were closed.

From index April 1986.

*Peace is the essence of happiness
and that essence is the true nature of all beings.*

*May the absolute truth, the Dhamma
radiate the blessing of happiness to this
universe and all the ten directions through out all time.*

*May all beings be free from ignorance
passion and anger;*

*May all beings live in the limitless light
of loving kindness and compassion, joy
and universal oneness.*

*May you receive the blessings of the
Buddha, the teacher of gods and men;*

*May you receive the blessings of the
Dhamma, the universal truth;*

*May you receive the blessings of the
Sangha, the perfect spiritual companions.*

BOOK REVIEWS

Thailand's Muslims

Islam and Malay Nationalism: a case study of the Malay-Muslims in Southern Thailand

by Surin Pitsuwan. *Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University, Bangkok, 1985. Baht 150 (paper)*

For a long time Thailand has been viewed as a homogeneous society with a pervasive Thai-Buddhist culture which has successfully assimilated and absorbed other non-Thai cultures. The case of the Chinese minority in Thailand is all too often cited to uphold this premise. Yet, during the past decade, several works by social scientists on this and related issues, previously neglected, have revealed the extent of the dissent and resistance—at times even rebellions—by peoples of different cultures and values against the central government, and the threat to the national integrity by the resulting instability. Surin's *Islam and Malay Nationalism* is precisely such a work that addresses itself to these issues.

The focal point of his investigation is the search, or rather the 'struggle', for 'political and cultural autonomy' of the Malay-Muslims in southern Thailand. Surin believes that, in their resistance against the Thais, the Malay-Muslims have relied on Islam and ethnicity, the style and form of both of which have changed in parallel with the various stages of Thai political transformation. However, to the author, the root of the conflict goes deeper than the superficial cultural differences

between the two peoples; rather it originates from the 'differences of perception of the role of the religious leadership in the state, the ultimate origin of the law, and the role and authority of the state in the affairs of the religious hierarchies in the Buddhist and Islamic societies'. What needs to be explored, therefore, is the 'deeper dimension of the theoretical and cosmological foundations of the two societies'. To this aim Surin combines the theoretical approaches of Clifford Geertz's work on Morocco and Indonesia and S.J. Tambiah's work on Thailand. His resulting thesis is that while the secular power in a Theravada Buddhist society such as that of Thailand 'always wins over' the support of the Sangha (the Buddhist clergy) and creates a 'high degree of social and political harmony', the same polity, in trying to encroach on the Malay-Muslims, meets with persistent revolts. On the Muslim side, Islamic purification leads to the need for political consciousness prior to such opposition, which has resulted in Malay ethnic nationalism.

In tracing the historical background of the Malay-Muslims—72% of the population of the former 'Patani region', the four southern Thai provinces adjacent to the Malaysian border—the author stresses the cultural identity of the people, related to their view of the historical role of Patani as the 'cradle of Islam', and to their shared sense of community with the rest of the Muslim world. This identity, together with the *ulamas* (religious

leaders), the nobilities and the royal families, have continued to serve as symbols of independence for Thailand from the time of incorporation in 1901. In essence, according to Surin, the core of the problem between the Malay-Muslims and the Thai people is an ethnic one.

Resistance to incorporation

From incorporation into the Thai state in 1901 onwards, the Malay-Muslims' response has varied from sporadic revolts, through demands for limited autonomy and 'restrained' political participation, to overt rebellions and subversive separatist movements. The leaderships of these groups and movements have also changed, from the former rulers and their distant descendants, through the *ulamas*, to the younger, modern and more educated students. While one could argue with the author's interpretation of Thai policy towards the Malay-Muslims during the reigns of Rama V and VI, and with the reliability of his selected sources, it is true that forced assimilationist policies under the autocratic Thai government before the Second World War did taint the trust that the Malay-Muslims had towards the Thais.

The resulting *Ulamas' Rebellion* (1947-48) ended in the birth of a range of separatist movements, which in the beginning found few sympathizers in British Malaya, though later they became associated with the pan-Islamic bond which united them to the emerging Malay na-

tionalism in Malaya and Indonesia, and the 'Patani issue' subsequently came to the fore internationally. At present there is a whole spectrum of separatist movements of varying natures and ideologies, ranging from the armed separatist movements, such as the BNPP and the PULO, to the Islamic fundamentalist and militant groups. Present day Thailand is thus confronted with both internal subversive activities and international campaigns from these dissident Malay-Muslims, at times threatening the country's national integrity.

The book was originally a doctoral dissertation, yet it is extraordinarily eloquent and rhetorical in style. It is easy, though, for the reader to become overwhelmed by the tone of fervent religious sentiment. Many of the facts quoted seem dubious, and there is inadequate substantiation of statements put forward. For example, writing on the Islamic courts and legal autonomy in the reigns of Rama V and VI, the author states that 'efforts have been made to promote more access to education for the Malay-Muslims who have shown their loyalty and affiliation with the Thai state.' With his fixed interpretation of Thai policies, and his branding of them as 'political attempts' at 'Muslim integration', the writer uncompromisingly rejects all the political experiments that have been attempted to date, short of any full autonomy.

State and religion

However, the book is to be given credit for its insight into the Islamic view of the relations between state and religion. One would like, though, to know

more on how local Malay intellectuals and religious leaders in Patani itself feel on this matter, rather than have abstract theories quoted from the *Cambridge History of Islam*. As Geertz has noted in *Islam Observed*, 'religious faith, even when it is fed from a common source, is as much a particularizing force as a generalizing one.' Furthermore, 'in Indonesia Islam has taken many forms, not all of them Koranic, and whatever it brought to the sprawling archipelago, it was not uniformity.' Lacking any tangible local substantiation, how can one analyse, least of all lay claim to, any general beliefs or practices in Patani?

There are also problems posed by the author's interpretation and application of the theoretical framework of the Malay-Muslim context and these raise questions as to the validity of some of the work. The 'Islamic purification' issue is vague, ambiguous and loosely analysed. At times it is not even clear whether it is Thai purification of Islam, or Malay religious self-purification which is being discussed, the latter being presumably the source of Malay political consciousness against Thai authority. On the other hand, the Sarekat Islam, considered by Geertz as the first mass nationalist organization, clearly expressed religious self-purification as well as political self-assertion. The Malay-Muslim case in Thailand has very similar aspects.

As regards the relations between the Thai polity and the Buddhist Sangha, the author fails to take into account the observation of Tambiah regarding the difference between the normative

formulation of the relation and that which pertains in abnormal circumstances. By over-generalizing that Thai secular society 'always (sic) won over the support of the church and achieved a high degree of social and political harmony', Surin evades the fundamental question of legitimacy underlying Thai polity which is related to the aegis of a Dharma-practising Buddhist king, or 'righteous monarch'. He also ignores some of the major historical conflicts between state and Sangha that occurred when such a legitimacy was not available.

In the final analysis, the theoretical approach of the book can not be applied in the case of the Malay-Muslims in Satun, since they have played too little part in the whole struggle. Nor can the limitation of the framework explain the different course taken there. More research to account for the deeper socio-political and cross-cultural differences among the Malay-Muslims themselves in the locality will be needed before a clearer picture of the Malay-Muslim minority can be achieved. All the same, this book is an interesting and provocative work on the minority in southern Thailand, and it deserves serious attention.

Ms. Phan-ngam Gothamasan

from *INSIDE ASIA*

A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society :

S. Sivaraksa

pp.243: 1st printing 1981;
2nd printing 1986. Bahts
120.00 Tienwan Publishing
House Part. Ltd.

(collected articles by a concerned
Thai intellectual)

*Coming out of Thai back-*ground the title of the book may at first glance sound anomalous as it announces the concern for renewing **society** which Theravada Buddhists are exhorted to **cast behind**. First published in 1981 by Thai Watana Press, the Thai version came out two years later. The Japanese translation is presently in progress. The limited number of copies printed at the outset was clearly insufficient to meet the desire of those who wanted to get acquainted with the author's thinking.

The articles were written or the speeches delivered over the past decade in various countries and were grouped under four general topics dealing with the concern for renewing Thai society. The chapters covered themes such as: the role of a critic; the issues of national development; religion and social justice; and future goals; all as envisioned by Acharn Sulak.

In addition to these the publication is enriched by his English translation of valuable documented presentations of three leading Buddhist monks on special occasions. Further, an appreciation of the author by W.L. Bradley, the president of Hazen Foundation in U.S.A., and an introduction by D.W. Chappell of the Department of Religion, University of Hawaii, who helped as editor, as well as brief introductory remarks for each chapter served as useful contextual material to understand the background and thrust of each article.

In dealing with the need for intellectual and cultural freedom in Thai society the author at the outset referred to three kinds of

grouping within the small intelligentsia. He identified them as conservative Royal Traditionalists; liberal Social Technician; **and** culturally conservative yet socially progressive intellectuals. He saw the contribution of the intellectual in terms of not joining the establishment but pointing out to it the failure to serve the moral, material and social needs of the general population.

Remembering that the author had to stay outside his country to avoid being muzzled and incarcerated he managed to speak to the existential issues his nation was then facing. Of course some of the issues which the Thai people faced due to the U.S. presence in his country are not there **now** in those forms. But the basic questions raised about the **integrity** of Thai society are still relevant for due reflection and action.

The contents of the book deal with understanding of Buddhism, of Development, and of Justice. In all these three important themes there will surely be agreements as well as differences of interpretation. On Theravada Buddhism there are obviously different understandings even among Buddhist scholars themselves. The scope of Acharn Sulak's interpretation becomes evident when interestingly enough he disagreed with the Buddhism as explained by the Asian interpreter T.R.V. Murti (p.161-162) and endorsed its understanding by Trevor Ling, an English Christian! (p.163)

Similarly in his challenge to the usual concept of 'development' in terms of quantity and the failure to take into account the importance of 'quality',

many planners of national development will rise up to protest that their national development plans surely reckon with the dangers being pointed out. Others will support the analysis he had made. Ironically, according to his analysis, he sees the danger of capitalistic values beginning to flourish in a Buddhist society such as the Thai while he advised his readers or audience to consider the non-acquisitive society such as that of Burma, though under a socialist system. He argued that the egalitarian nature of Burmese society is due to the continuation of Burma's Buddhist culture. (p.196). Again there is much material for patient and sustained dialogue in his presentations.

He also turned to the issue of social justice specially in reflecting on the goals and means of achieving it. His concern for non-violence on the one hand and his passion for social justice could be appreciated as we examine his views. For the youth he possibly was often both an inspiration and an enigma (or even a disappointment?) on occasions. They may be impatient to achieve immediate results while he may, out of his convictions, eschew short-cuts which could involve violence.

On all these three concerns his thinking will prove to be stimulating as one thumbs through the pages of this publication. He is a patriot but also an internationalist. He is a proponent yet a critic of Buddhism at the same time. He is a traditionalist but also a reformist. He is for development but also voices protest where distributive justice is not forthcoming.

Though the statements col-

lected in this volume are related to happenings spread over the past decade the basic premises can still be relevant for continuing issues of similar nature in Thai as well as neighbouring societies. The publication carries the title "A Buddhist vision for renewing society". But it is not a classical religious stereotype he was propagating. He made his statements out of the experience or his dialogue with Christian friends as well as fellow Buddhists. He shared insights arising out of his risky involvement with concerns facing his nation. As such, people of different faiths specially Buddhists and Christians, political as well as social scientists, and young people as well as the older folk will find much in this book to reflect on, and also to engage in creative dialogue regarding the contents of the various articles of this collection.

For western readers the present price of the book fixed at the equivalent of U.S.\$ 6.00 is a rare bargain.

Prof. Kyaw Than
Mahidol University

A GUIDE TO WALKING MEDITATION by *Thich Nhat Hanh* £4 incl p&p from BPF Publications.

An excellent introduction by Robert Aitken Roshi precedes this profound and beautiful booklet on the way of walking meditating. Thich Nhat Hanh has drawn on fifteen years of practising this particular way to describe its technique, which is simplicity itself. Its basis is to coordinate one's steps with one's breath, and to learn to smile. All

of us walk every day, but here it is suggested we set aside a time when we can be alone and experience to the full "walking on the green planet", becoming aware of what one's foot is doing, and seeing "the great sphere upon which it rests"

Thich Nhat Hanh's easy to follow instructions are given to us in the personal context of his own reflections and memories. He believes that we should be happy; that we should shake away our self-absorption and self-pity like raindrops off a coat. To be happy is to make others happy and this brings benefit to animals and all living things—happiness is an ecological necessity.

But happiness is not the goal (as it is in the hedonistic West). It is a method, a way. Perhaps the real goal cannot be put into words. But one aspect of it—equal to being happy—is to suffer. For when we are unhappy, we can truly realise what suffering is and learn how to be compassionate—and for this activity the world is an ideal place! But it is easy to escape from suffering into a mindless unawareness. Then we may look to "nirvana" for an ultimate happiness, which is yet another escape. It is necessary, says Thich Nhat Hanh, to accept our greed, hatred and ignorance and "this samsaric world is the best training ground for our practice." Everything in this world is touched by suffering as well as by joy and beauty. If we wake up to our own suffering, we wake up to everybody else's and then "every path in the world is your walking meditation path"

To become 'a sensitive conscious being' (the Chinese translation of Bodhisattva) is to enter

the path of the 'invincible Bodhisattvas' and walking meditation is the way of taking the first steps.

Anne Bancroft.

"THE PATH OF COMPASSION":

CONTEMPORARY WRITINGS ON ENGAGED BUDDHISM edited by **Fred Eppsteiner and Dennis Maloney**. £5.50 incl. p&p from BPF Publications, 36, Victoria Parade, Ashton, Nr Preston, Lancs

The Path of Compassion is a collection of contemporary writings on the engagement of Buddhism and Buddhists in the social, political, and economic affairs of society. Included are pieces by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on political action and social progress, Thich Nhat Hanh on mindfulness in activity, Robert Aitken Roshi on ecology and Gary Snyder on planetary culture. Robert Thurmond writes on historical events and contemporary guidelines for Buddhist social action, Joanna Macy on empowerment in the face of the threat of nuclear war, and Jack Kornfield on compassion and social action. Other selections describe the relevance of the Buddhist Jataka Tales to modern life, a Vietnamese nun's response to the war and conflict in Southeast Asia, and a Buddhist woman's response to rape.

To the non-Buddhist who believes that all Buddhists feel the worldly arena is to be shunned, *The Path of Compassion* offers explanation and clarity. To the Buddhist who feels unclear about the interpersonal and social implications of the Buddha's teaching, these writings offer guidance and inspiration.