

NEW LIGHT FROM AN OLD LAMP

A Strategic Analysis of Buddhism

(Documented researches) 5 lectures by Tan Beng Sin, Piyasilo

THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

A study of strategic patterns in global Buddhist growth
(Piya Tan)

SYLLABUS

- (1) Buddhism and mission.
- (2) Levels & development of Buddhism.
- (3) Buddhism in Sri Lanka: traditions & contradictions.
- (4) Buddhism in south-east Asia: kingship; Indianization.
- (5) Buddhism in east Asia: politics, persecutions & syncretism.
- (6) Lay Buddhism: Responses, utopias & cults.
- (7) Buddhism: the West & Oceania.
- (8) Buddhist studies.
- (9) Buddhist responses to external challenges.
- (10) Buddhism today.

2. BUDDHISM AS A MISSIONARY RELIGION

After about 1,500 years in India, Buddhism had abruptly and virtually disappeared from the subcontinent by 1203 when Vikramaśilā University was destroyed by the Muslim hordes. (Nālandā was destroyed earlier in 1197.) What Buddhism lost in India, it got back in bigger ways outside India.

Ironically, Muslim violence in India at the end of the 12th -13th centuries marked the beginning of the end of its Golden Age (which was the 9th to the 13th centuries).

The Tibetan diaspora beginning in 1959 as a result of the Chinese invasion parallels **the Indian Buddhist diaspora** during the Muslim invasion of India. From the smouldering ashes at the devastated epicenter, not one but innumerable phoenixes arose and spread in different directions in a rebirth of wisdom and beauty. Indeed, we today have greatly benefitted from such Buddhist diasporas.

Missionary ideal

In the verse section of the **Dūta Sutta**, the Buddha lists the five qualities of an ideal missionary (*dūta*) as follows:

Before an assembly, he is not nervous;
He is not at a loss for words;
He hides not the message;
He speaks without doubtfulness; [alt. tr.: “He can speak views not his own” (Peṭk:Ñ 115)]
He is not agitated when questioned—
That monk is worthy to go on a mission. (V 2:201f = A 4:196)

In other words, a Dharma missionary or Buddhist worker should be confident before a crowd, a good and clear speaker, full of faith (even if representing the views of another), and calm and compassionate when questioned.

The Great Commission

From the very beginning—from the moment the Buddha delivered the First Discourse to the Five Monks and their subsequent enlightenment—Buddhism has been a **missionary religion**. In fact, Buddhism is the world's first missionary religion.

The Buddha's **Great Commission** (admonition to go out and teach the Dharma) was recorded over 2,500 years ago in the Vinaya account, where the Buddha himself sent out the first 60 enlightened disciples, shortly after the First Discourse:

Go forth, O monks, for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world; for the good, the gain and the welfare of gods and men.

Let not two go the same way. Teach, O monks, the Dharma, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the ending. Declare the Holy Life, altogether complete, altogether pure, both in the spirit and in the letter.

There are beings with little dust in their eyes, who not hearing the Dharma, would fall away. There will be those who will understand the Dharma.

I, too, O monks, will go to Uruvilva in Senāni, nigama, to expound the Dharma.

(V 1:20 f.; cf D 3:219, M 3:280)

The **missionary spirit** of early Buddhism is further reflected in the work of the Arhats converting individuals and groups in various regions of India and beyond: Mahā Katyāyana in Mathurā; Ānanda's disciple, Madhyāntika, in the northwest; Mahendra in Sri Lanka; Gavāmpati in Burma; the "500 Arhats" in Kashmir and so on.

Factors favouring the spread of Buddhism

In his paper "The Movement of Buddhist Texts from India to China and the Construction of the Chinese Buddhist Canon" (1993b:518 ff.), Prof. Lewis Lancaster, summarizes **the factors favouring the spread of Buddhism** (especially outside India):

1. **Holy persons** who could travel freely without being polluted.
2. **Sacred relics** of the Buddha and other esteemed dead that could impart power to whatever site they were placed.
3. **Images** of the Buddha in sculpture and paintings that could be freely moved from place to place.
4. **Teachings**, presented in oral and written form, that retained their importance in translation.

The four factors all point to the fact that Buddhism is a **religion of portable sanctity**. These four factors of portable sanctity are embodied, for example, in the Chinese pilgrims who went to India from China, bringing back with them religious relics, Buddha images and Buddhist texts.

Portable religion

If Buddhism is the world's first missionary religion, it follows that it is also the world's **first "portable" religion**. Unlike Buddhism, Brahmanism (and Hinduism that followed) is an example of fixed sanctity "since out of caste people cannot be a part of it, holy men cannot travel long distances without becoming ritually impure" (Lancaster, 1993a: 41).

Portable religions are characterized by **freedom from pollution fears**, especially the pollution of the dead. Again, we can look at Hinduism, where pollution can be associated with ritual purity, or it can occur with corpse contact or in other cases result from the mixing of castes and through intermarriage. The Buddha had no fear of the dead: in fact, he went to the charnel grounds and picked up pieces of rags and shrouds from corpses and so clad himself with the clothing of the dead. He had disciples who came from all the castes of ancient India. Without fear of pollution, Buddhism spread far and wide without any loss of sanctity. (Lancaster, 1993a: 42 f.)

Canons and translations

Once the Buddhist texts were **canonized**, Buddhism became even more “portable”. The missionary activities were accompanied by the propagation of texts, both orally and, later, in writing (especially after the rise of Mahayana).

One of the key reasons for Buddhist growth beyond the “middle country” of India, indeed, outside India itself, was the Buddha’s injunction that his Teaching should be taught and learnt in “**one’s own language**” (*sakāya niruttyā*, V 2:139), without any preference of a “sacred language”.

The middle of the 2nd century marked the “**linguistic breakthrough**” in the history of Buddhism, when

...for the first time scriptures had to be translated into a language totally unrelated to any Indian tongue, instead of being “transposed” from one Prakrit to another, or from Prakrit to Sanskrit, a process that allowed for an almost word-by-word transposition without any appreciable loss as regards content and way of expression. (Zurcher, 1993: 9)

As we shall later see, this change from transposition to “restatement through translation” was to have far-reaching consequences following the spread of Buddhism in China, Korea and Japan.

3. LIFE-CYCLE OF BUDDHIST SOCIAL GROWTH

The “life-cycle” of Buddhism in its social growth can be analyzed as being fourfold:

1. **Assimilation:** Formative period.
2. **Indigenization:** Developmental period.
3. **Legimitization:** Formalistic period.
4. **Rejuvenation:** Revival and Growth.

[See, for example, Edward Conze, 1980; cf. Michael Pye, 1969.]

When Buddhism first arrived in a new country, it also brought along the culture of the society from which it came. In the case of **south Asia**, it would be Indian culture; in the case of **east Asia**, it would be Chinese culture, and in the case of Japan, both Korean and Chinese cultures.

Except for **China**, which was already very culturally advanced when Buddhism arrived, the other countries in the rest of Asia were generally culturally and technologically less advanced. As such, Buddhism and the culture it brought along were assimilated wholesale during this **formative period**, which would last for at least a few centuries.

In due course, especially after more local people had joined the Buddhist Order, these local monastics would select various aspects of Buddhism and **indigenize** them to suit their local needs and harmonize with local conditions. Some new ideas and practices might also be introduced during this **developmental period** of the growth of Buddhism in that society. This is the period during which Buddhism would be adopted on a larger scale, especially amongst the common people.

In all the Asian countries where Buddhism arrived, the elite used Buddhism to legitimize their position and power as lords and rulers of the country. This **legitimation** may occur early in local Buddhist history, but certainly within a few centuries of its arrival. This legitimization process often entailed the regulation of the Buddhist clerics by instituting Buddhism as **the state religion**. In this case, the “purity” of Buddhism was defined by the ruling powers during this **formalistic period**.

Once Buddhism became the state religion, it meant that the monastics would enjoy great wealth and power from it, and sometimes even attained to the level of rulers themselves (as in the case of Tibet and Korea). As a rule, once Buddhism gained empowerment as the **state religion** or enjoyed royal patronage, its decline slowly but surely began as the monastics became more materialistic, secular and political (as in the case of Sri Lanka and Japan).

When this cycle touches the lowest point, Buddhism begins a new cycle of **rejuvenation**, usually through the efforts of the less privileged Buddhists in the outer or lower margins of society. There is, however, the unique case of Thailand, where we see the ruling class itself taking the initiative to introduce Buddhist reforms that have lasted to this day. In Japan, on the other hand, we see the rise of the New Religions, of new “Buddhisms”, during this period of **revival and renewal**, due to preceding political and social conditions.

4. TWO LEVELS OF BUDDHISM

Two-tier model

1. **Elite Buddhism.**
2. **Folk Buddhism.**

In the study of religion, it is useful, even vital, to distinguish between the religious elite (specialized professional group of elders or clerics) and the laity or folk practitioners. This **two-tier model** was introduced by **Peter Brown** who used it in his examination of the rise and function of the cult of saints in Latin Christianity (*The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Chicago, 1981).

Gregory Schopen has made reference to the applicability of this model to Buddhism (“On Monks, Nuns, and ‘Vulgar’ Practices: The Introduction of the Image Cult in Indian Buddhism”. *Artibus Asiae* 49, nos. 1/2, 1988: 153-168).

Lewis Lancaster relates Brown’s two-tier model to Buddhism in a way different from Schopen’s (“Elite and Folk: Comments on the Two-Tiered Theory” in *Religion and the Family in East Asia*, ed. George A. De Vos and Takao Sofue. Berkeley, 1984: 87-95).

Reginald A. Ray discusses further application of Brown’s model to the Buddha and Buddhist saints (*Buddhist Saints in India: A Study of Buddhist Values and Orientations*, NY: OUP, 1994: ch. 1).

[See also Day, 1987; Earhart 1987: 64-66; Gualtieri, 1993: 112.]

In India, where Buddhism arose and in all societies to which Buddhism spread, two levels of Buddhism can be distinguished: elite religion and folk religion. Buddhism usually arrived gradually and undramatically in a society outside India, then it received a quantum boost once the **social elite** embraced it, thus empowering it usually as a state religion. At this point, this **elite Buddhism** was usually practised only by the elite, usually the royal courts.

The lower rungs of society usually continued to practise their **folk religions**. In due course, however, as Buddhism indigenized, it seeped down into the lives of the commoners, becoming **folk Buddhism**. We can still see this pattern even in our contemporary society. (Gualtieri, 1993)

In Burma, Siam, Laos, and Cambodia, **Theravada** thoroughly permeates the fabric of society, where monks are the public educators and personal counsellors. Almost every village has its monastery or monastic quarters, however small, and to them village children go for their lessons. Understandably, countries like Burma and Thailand today are **the most literate** in Asia.

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Literate</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1980				
Sri Lanka	16.1 M (1985)	Over 15		86.1% (Male 90.8%; Female 81.2%)
Myanmar	37.7 M (1985)	Over 15	13.7 M	65.9% (Male 75.0%; Female 56.3%)
Thailand	51.3 M (1985)	Over 10	29.8 M	88.8% (Male 92.4%; Female 85.3%)

[Encyclopaedia Britannica 1986 Yearbook]

Indigenous beliefs

Finally, Buddhism often emerged as **the official religion** of the country, to such an extent that Burmese monasticism and sanctuaries still have a powerful attraction to many Buddhists, including pilgrims from abroad.

Despite the status of Buddhism as the “elite tradition” (centralized system with well-developed organization and doctrine), it co-exists with Hinduism and popular superstitions in a two-tier system [32]. In Sri Lanka, for example, while affirming the overarching supremacy of the Buddha and his saints, the traditional Sinhalese would turn to **the folk tradition**—a myriad of local deities (usually Hindu) and indigenous spirits in times of need and emergency.

This two-tier religious structure pervades the Buddhist societies of south and south-east Asia. The Sinhalese Buddhists believe in **deva**, for whom they build the *devāle* (deva-house) that often stands beside or behind the Buddhist shrine. The Burmese turn to a wide range of **nat** (of which 37 are the most important) for spiritual assistance. Every traditional Thai house has a *sālchao* or “spirit house” for the tutelary deity to pacify or keep away the *phī* or demons.

Before the arrival of Buddhism, such folk traditions and other superstitions ruled the lives of the people. The village monasteries are agents of a two-way process of cultural interpenetration between Buddhism and local indigenous beliefs. This process has not corrupted Buddhist values, but rather **the Buddhist presence has a civilizing influence** on what was formerly barbaric (Ling 1966: 57 f).

Buddhists remain tolerant of the indigenous deities, spirits and traditions insofar as they provide certain well-defined temporal benefits in a secular context. This harmonious coexistence results from the gradual permeation of Buddhism into the whole cultural system.

In a similar way many Christians who believe in God nevertheless also visit the doctor from time to time. The latter may or may not be a Christian; he may be an atheist or a Marxist, but Christians see nothing religiously incongruous in thus seeking a temporal benefit from a non-Christian source. Nor does the villager of Ceylon in following a similar procedure.

(Ling 1968: 310)

Tibetan Buddhism

Buddhism arrived in Tibet around 650. The person who made the first attempt to bring Buddhism to Tibet was **Śāntirakṣita** (fl. 8th century) on the invitation of king Thī-srong-detsan (r. 740-786). Even though Śāntirakṣita was a scholar of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra, he failed in his missionary efforts. In fact, he was forced to flee to Nepal after adherents of **the nativistic Bon religion** blamed him for the outbreak of an epidemic.

On his return to Tibet, Śāntirakṣita urged the king to invite the Indian Buddhist teacher **Padmasambhava** to help him. Where Śāntirakṣita’s rationalistic approach failed, Padmasambhava’s mystical attainments were successful in subduing the demons of Tibet and converting them to Buddhism. By **mysticism** here is meant Buddhist meditation and mythology that assimilated the Bon ways and gods into the Buddhist system to become uniquely Tibetan.

<MAP>

5. ASOKA’S MISSIONS

The Sinhalese chronicles say that **Aśoka** (r. c.268-239 BCE) sent various monks to spread Buddhism throughout India and abroad. Buddhism spread into southern India and lasted there longer than in the north. We hear of a Theravada monk being invited from Kāncī (Conjeeveram) in Tamilnadu to **Sri Lanka**

[On the technical conventions used here, please refer to Piyasilo, *Guide to Buddhist Studies*, 1990 (unpublished MSS).]

as late as the 14th century, over a century after the Muslims gave the deathblow to Buddhism by destroying the monastic universities of north India.

The Buddhists used the two main routes out of India: the overland route through the Hindu Kush (NW India) and by sea from its long coastline of 3,535 miles (5689 km).

By land, Buddhism spread first into eastern Iran and Central Asia, and then along the caravan route into China. Striking evidence showing that Buddhism early moved **west** through the Hindu Kush out of India is found in the Aśokan inscriptions in Greek and Aramaic found at Kandahar (now in Afghanistan). The Phra Pathom Chedi in Thailand also belongs to this period.

By sea, Buddhism spread from the east coast, in the middle of the first millennium CE, to **continental south-east Asia and Indonesia**. Some of the greatest Buddhist monuments, notably the Borobudur in Java and the temples of Angkor in Kampuchea, arose from this seaborne expansion.

The Buddhist missionaries introduced aspects of **Indian culture**—notably the first system of writing using the Indian script in one form or another—to parts of Central Asia and most of south-east Asia.

Some scholars (such as Herbert Plaeschke 1970:41-45) think that it is possible to find traces of Buddhist influences in **the Essenes and the Therapeutae**, two heterodox Hebrew sects, as well as on Christianity. [39]

BUDDHISM IN SRI LANKA

<MAP>

6. EARLY HISTORY

Arrival of Buddhism

According to Sinhalese tradition, **the Buddha visited Sri Lanka three times** (Mahv 1:12 ff, 77; Dīpv 1:45 ff, 2:1 ff.). She was also visited by two past Buddhas (VA 1:86; Mahv 15:63, 131 f; Dīpv 15:38, 17:14, 32). The Burmese claim that the Buddha visited Burma and went to the Lohita, candana Vihāra, presented by the brothers Mahāpuṇṇa and Cūlapuṇṇa of Vāṇijagāma (*Indian Antiquities*, xxii; Sāsana, -vaṃsa 36 f.).

When Aśoka was reigning in India, king **Tissa** (250-210 BCE = 236-276 AB) ruled in Sri Lanka from his capital at **Anurādhapura**. After his coronation in 250 BCE (236 AB), Tissa sent valuable gifts to Aśoka, both of whom were friends. This event was in the same year the 3rd Council (Pāṭalīputra) which had just concluded.

In return, Aśoka sent royal regalia for **a second coronation** and the title of *Devānampiya* (“beloved of the gods”), which was also Aśoka’s title. Henceforth, the Sinhalese king came to known as **Devānampiya Tissa**, Sri Lanka’s first historical king.

Later that same year, according to legend, one of Aśoka’s sons, **Mahinda**, who was himself a monk and Arhat, together with six companions landed in **Mihintale** (8 miles north of the capital), meeting the king and his hunting party. This momentous meeting traditionally marked the arrival of Buddhism on the island.

Later, one of Aśoka’s daughters, **Saṅghamittā**, a nun, was said to have brought a sapling of the original **Bodhi tree** to Sri Lanka. It was planted in Anuradhapura and still stands today as **a living tree (or living thing) with the longest history**. She also started the Order of Nuns in Sri Lanka. [11]

Mahāvihāra

Of the construction projects initiated by Devānampiya Tissa, the most significant was the **Mahāvihāra** (“the great monastery”), established in the royal park near Anurādhapura as a residence for Mahinda and his companion monks. It is said that while he was residing there, Mahinda wrote **commentaries on the Theravada canon**. (The Canon was finally closed at the Council of Pāṭaliputra around this period).

During the reign of **Mahānāma** (r. 409-431), an Indian monk from Buddha Gayā by the name of **Buddhaghosa** (fl. early 5th cent.) came to Anurādhapura, where he translated the Sinhalese Commentaries into Pali. That is, only after he had completed his own classic work, **the Visuddhi, magga** (“The Path of Purity”), an encyclopaedic introduction to the Theravada Buddhism.

Such events, together with the events affecting Buddhism during colonial rule [9, 34], understandably made Sri Lanka the **world centre for Theravada Buddhism**.

7. TAMIL INVASIONS

During the 1st century BCE, Sri Lanka was invaded by south Indians. Two Sinhalese kings were important during this period: **Duṭṭhagāmaṇī** and **Vaṭṭagāmaṇī**.

Duṭṭhagāmaṇī (r. 161-137 BCE) is more of a national hero to Sri Lankans than an exemplary Buddhist. He went so far as to place a Buddha relic in his battle lance and call for a company of 500 monks to escort his troops into battle! (Greenwald 1978:13). After liberating his land from the *Damīlas*, he constructed famous monuments which are still the glory of Sri Lanka today: the *Maricavaṭi Thūpa* (*Mirisaveṭi Dāgaba*), the *Brazen Palace* (*Lohapāsada*), and especially the *Mahāthūpa* (*Ruvanveli Dāgaba*).

After defeating the south Indian invaders, **Vaṭṭagāmaṇī** (r. 89-77 BCE) became king at Anurādhapura. His reign was marked by two important events in Buddhist history: the founding of the *thūpa* and *vihāra* of *Abhayagiri* and the written compilation of the Pali Canon. **Vaṭṭagāmaṇī**, wary of the immense power and wealth of the *Mahāvihāra* monastery, attempted to counter it by founding a second grand monastery, the **Abhayagiri**. He named **Mahā Tissa** as its abbot as a reward to him for maintaining the loyalty of **Vaṭṭagāmaṇī**’s generals during the military campaigns.

Written canon

In **Vaṭṭagāmaṇī**’s time, Sri Lanka had just suffered 12 years of famine, and the *Mahāvihāra* had lost royal patronage (mostly because of its meddling in palace intrigues). Fearing for the survival of the Buddha’s Teaching—and their own existence—the *Mahāvihāra* monks initiated a novel move: they parted ways with the oral tradition (for fear of lack of competent reciters) and **committed the Pali canon to writing** on *ola* (talipot palm) leaves at the **Alu Vihāra**, in a central province remote from Anurādhapura. This was also around the time that the early Mahayana texts were written on the continent.

8. ORDINATION LINEAGE

The authenticity and religiosity of a monastic order lies in its link with its founder. A properly ordained monk or nun would be able to trace **his or her lineage** (*paramparā*) through the preceptor back to the Buddha himself. The ordination itself is a corporate act (*kamma, vācā*) that must be conducted in a consecrated area (*sīmā*) by a quorum of properly ordained senior monks who would recite the act which, if no objection is raised by anyone in the assembly, would raise the status of the candidate to that of an ordained monastic.

The Sinhalese monks faced both **internal threats** (from the political caprice of their kings) and **external dangers** (from Tamil invasions). When Vattagāmaṇi founded the Abhayagiri, the Mahāvihāra monks expelled Mahā Tissa from their ranks, and so effecting a schism. The Abhayagiri monks came to be associated with scriptural and doctrinal innovations originating in India, becoming some sort of Mahayana school in Sri Lanka. In due course, Sri Lankan kings would support either the Mahāvihāra or the Abhayagiri, depending on their political agenda.

In a new effort to neutralize the power of the Mahāvihāra, King **Mahāsena** (r. 334-361) seized its lands and set up a third monastic order, the **Jetavana Vihāra**. In due course, **Parākrama Bāhu I** (r. 1153-86), ruling from **Polonnaruwa**, reformed the Sinhalese Sangha by abolishing both the Abhayagiri and the Jetavana Vihāra, not so much for religious as for political expediency of centralized control. The **Mahāvihāra** finally became the supreme Theravada authority in Sri Lanka under royal patronage.

During the 11th century, the Paṇḍu and Chola kingdoms of south Indian launched new attacks on Sri Lanka. Around 1070, king **Vijaya Bāhu I** (r. 1055-1110), with substantial assistance from king Anuruddha (Anawrahta) of Burma, managed to throw off Chola domination. Vijaya Bāhu made his capital at **Polonnaruwa**, the erstwhile Chola capital.

Alliances with Burma

Chola persecution of the Sinhalese Buddhists had been so bad that Vijaya Bāhu had to invite a contingent of Mon monks from Burma in order to hold a **proper ordination** and to transact the affairs of the Sangha (Cuvs ch. 60 ll 4-8). Apparently, the Order of Nuns had lapsed by this time, but no efforts were made to revive it.

King Anuruddha of Burma was a Mahayanist, but his territory included the Mon (Talaing) people of Lower Burma (a delegation of whose monks he had sent to Sri Lanka). Since south-east Asia had no complete canon of its own at that time, the Burmese delegation that went to Sri Lanka stayed on for several years to make a complete copy of **the Pali Canon**, the first such copy ever to leave Sri Lanka and to arrive in south-east Asia.

Burmese ordination

Parākrama Bāhu I established a unified Sangha (the Mahāvihāra) regulated by the state. It was during his reign that a **Burmese delegation** came to Sri Lanka seeking reordination in the Mahāvihāra lineage. The development marked the complete transplantation of the Sinhalese Theravada into south-east Asia. In subsequent centuries, after the Sinhalese Theravada tradition had spread through Burma and beyond, Sri Lanka and other southeast Asian states would **support one another to keep the monastic lineage unbroken**.

When **the Portuguese** conquered coastal Sri Lanka, it heralded the darkest times for Sinhalese Buddhism. In their determination to establish Christianity on the island, the Portuguese ruthlessly persecuted the Buddhists. To aggravate matters, the Sinhalese king **Rājasinha I** (1581-1592) who ruled from Sitiawaka was a tyrant. Although he was a gallant leader who opposed the Portuguese, he was a ruthless parricide who turned to Saivism and persecuted the Buddhists.

By the Dutch period in Sri Lanka, the situation was so bad that during the reign of **Kīrti Śrī Rājasinha** (1747-1779), although there were numerous *sāmaṇera* (novices) and white-robed lay monastery-holders (*gaṇinnāṇse*), not a single fully-ordained monk could be found on the island. The island was anomic (lacking in social norms and values) where people resorted to astrology, magical healing and devil-worship. The older novices initiated the sons of relatives so that they could retain the vast wealth that generations of kings and ministers had dedicated to the service of the Sangha.

9. CASTE BUDDHISM

During the 18th century, when Sinhalese Buddhism was at its lowest ebb, a reformist movement developed within the order, largely through the initiative of one person, **Vālavīṭa Saraṇaṅkara** (1698-1778). He joined the Order at 16 as a pupil of Sūriyagoḍa Rājasundara (who had received *upasampadā* or higher ordination from the Arakan monks of Burma in 1697). In 1715, Rājasundara was executed on a charge of treason. Left on his own, Saraṇaṅkara retired to the mountains where he continued his monastic studies and attracted a growing group of dedicated and pious followers.

Saraṇaṅkara soon became a powerful inspiration for the revival of Sinhalese and Pali literature, but his greatest desire was to **re-establish *upasampadā*** in Sri Lanka. After two failed attempts to send envoys to Siam, a third delegation was sent in 1750 by king Kīrti Śrī Rājasinha with the aid of a Dutch vessel. The delegation was received by king **Dhammika of Ayutthaya** (central Siam) who favourably responded by sending a party of 25 monks led by **Upāli Thera** to Sri Lanka.

Kaṭika, vatta enforcing caste system

The Siamese delegation arrived in Trincolamee in **1753**, and proceeded to Kandy, where they established two **consecrated chapter houses** (*sīma*), one at Malvatta Vihāra and the other at Asgiriya Vihāra, where ordinations could be performed. These new generation of Sinhalese monks formed the core of what came to be called the **Siyam Nikāya**, the only order recognized by the Kandyan king, who proclaimed for them **a code of conduct (*kaṭikā, vatta*)** that would become a national and religious embarrassment to Buddhists in modern times.

According to the *kaṭikā, vatta*, only a **govi** (landed cultivator), who form the Goyigama caste, may ordain into the Siyam Nikāya. In the Kandyan temples, the situation was more restrictive: **ordination was further limited only to the aristocratic Radaḷa**, the highest sub-caste of the Goyigama. [Piyasilo 1992a: 6-9]

This tragic anomaly of Sinhalese Buddhism—**caste Buddhism**—was instituted by the royal decree of Kīrti Śrī Rājasinha, whose personal religiosity remains doubtful despite flowing tributes paid to him by all the contemporary Sinhalese documents. At any rate, he persisted in Śaivite practices, such as applying ash on his forehead. (Malalgoda 1976: 58-69)

New nikāyas

During the British period, Sinhalese Buddhism made significant progress. New monastic lineages were founded by and for the lower castes of Sri Lanka. In 1799, a Sinhalese delegation, headed by the novice **Ambagahapitiya Ñāṇavimalatissa**, left for Burma. They were from the lower castes that predominated in the coastal regions of the island. The king of Burma himself received them in the capital, **Amarapura**, where they were ordained. They returned to Sri Lanka in 1803. In 1807, three more delegations, representing other castes, also journeyed to Burma to receive ordination. Together, these monks established the **Amarapura Nikāya**.

In 1863, another delegation from yet lower castes, headed by **Ambagahawatte Srī Saraṇaṅkara Thera**, traveled to Burma for ordination and formed the **Rāmañña Nikāya**, named after the Burmese city where they were ordained.

These three caste-bound Nikāyas exist to this day “**in blatant contradiction of, and with little apparent concern for, the historical Buddha’s repudiation of the caste system.**” (Reat, 1994: 96). Even today, not only is ordination restricted by caste, but even responsibilities to the laity are divided among the three Nikāyas according to caste divisions. The Siyam Nikāya services the upper castes, and the Amarapura and the Rāmañña Nikāyas service the middle and lower castes. While all this is objection-

able in the spirit of Buddhism, it does at least allow all levels of Sinhalese society direct access to the Sangha, instead of very limited access to the official tradition of the nobility and high castes.

10. RELICS RULE

When the Chinese pilgrim **Faxian** (340?-420?) visited Sri Lanka in the 5th century, he reported that both the Mahāvihāra and the Abhayagiri were flourishing. From his accounts, however, it is clear that the Abhayagiri was the larger and more influential monastery of the two (1971:101-107). In the 7th century, the Chinese pilgrim **Xuanzang** (c. 596-664) noted that the Mahāvihāra was Theravadin, while the Abhayagiri practised both Mahayana and Theravada (1884 2:247).

Both pilgrims also mentioned regarding what had become of the most important relic in Sri Lanka—**the Buddha's eye tooth**—that was brought to the island during the reign of king **Meghavanna** (r. 352-379). This symbol of religious and political authority was in the custodianship of the Abhayagiri. Apparently, the situation was not very good for the politically ambitious Mahāvihāra, which the king saw as not conducive to his own political plans. (It was at this crucial juncture that Buddhaghosa [6] arrived in the Mahāvihāra.)

Legend has it that during the visit of Mon monks to Sri Lanka [8], Vijaya Bāhu miraculously produced **a copy of the eye-tooth relic of the Buddha** which was presented to Anuruddha, who in turn installed it in the **Shwezigon Stupa** in Pagan. This gift of Buddha relic would become a popular diplomatic gesture from the Sinhalese.

Sri Lanka

By the end of the 13th century, it was customary that every ruler of Sri Lanka must have **the Buddha's eye-tooth relic** in his custody to legitimize his reign. After Parākrama Bāhu I, no Sinhalese king ever actually regained control of the whole island, but the tooth accompanied the recognized king to various strongholds and refuges. Towards the end of the 13th century, the inevitable happened: the tooth relic (or its replica, some claimed) was captured and brought to **the Paṇḍu kingdom** in South India.

During the 13th century, **Kublai Khan**, the Mongol emperor of China, sent an envoy to Sri Lanka demanding or requesting that the tooth relic be sent to him. The reigning king having obliged by sending not one, but two tooth relics, which Kublai received with great pomp and ceremony. Having become well known throughout the Eastern world as the possessor of the Buddha's eye tooth, the Sinhalese king apparently exploited this reputation in a diplomatic manner by trading freely in dubious Buddha relics. The real tooth remained jealously guarded.

Finally, in the 17th century, the tooth relic was enshrined in the famous **Dalada Maligawa** or Temple of the Tooth in the mountain capital of Kandy. On at least two other occasions, the Buddha relic was spirited into the mountainous jungles around Kandy in order to preserve it from capture by foreign powers, this time the Portuguese and the Dutch. **The British**, however, succeeded in taking possession of the tooth relic, but later surrendered it voluntarily to its monastic custodians in Kandy after having conquered the island.

The Buddha's eye-tooth has become the **palladium of the nation**. Apparently, when the tooth was taken into hiding or was in foreign hands, the island itself had suffered period of instability and hardship. Even in modern Sri Lanka, as a token of legitimacy of the elected government, the prime minister holds one of the three keys to the enclosure in which the tooth relic is enshrined. (Reynolds 1978:175-193; Tambiah 1984:214 f, 217 ff.)

Laos

During the time when **Khmer** power had declined and **Siam** (modern Thailand) was undergoing a political shift, **Fa Ngum** seized the opportunity to establish an independent Laotian kingdom along the upper reaches of the Mekong River. Fa Ngum's coronation at **Luang Phrabang** in 1353 marked the birth of the Lao kingdom, modelled along the empire of the Khmer, to whom the Lao were racially related.

Fa Ngum invited his teacher, a Theravada monk at the Khmer court, to act as his advisor and head monk. Under this monk's influence, the kingdom of Laos became firmly **Theravadin**, as it has remained so to this day, despite its avowed Marxist state ideology. This Theravada master brought with him a Buddha image known as "**Phra Bang**", which accounts for the capital's name and, like the Sinhalese tooth relic, became the palladium of the kingdom.

In 1178, Siam conquered the southern kingdom of **Vieng Chan** (Vientiane), asserted control over the northern kingdom of Luang Phrabang, and removed both the **Phra Bang** and **Phra Kaeow** Buddha images to Siam. In 1782, the Siamese restored the Vietnamese dynasty as a puppet regime in Vieng Chan and returned the Phra Bang.

During the reign of **Tiloka** (r. 1442-87), the Phra Kaeow was adopted as the **national palladium**, and has remained permanently so in Siam ever since. Today, it is enshrined in **Wat Phra Kaeow**, the royal chapel. This image is popularly called "the Emerald Buddha". However, the stone is probably jasper, a semi-precious stone.

S.E. ASIA & CHINA

11. INDIANIZATION

Early Khmer kingdoms

According to Chinese records, the most important source of information concerning the early history of south-east Asia, the earliest historical state to arise in the region was **Funan**. A proto-Khmer kingdom, Funan, comprising the territory surrounding the Mekong River delta, arose in the 1st century, that is, about the time that Indian influence, mostly through traders (Buddhist and later brahmin), began to spread in the region.

By the 3rd century, of all the south-east Asian states, only Funan had established relations with China, probably because it was recognized as the supreme power in the region. In the 4th century, in what was regarded as the "**second Indianization of Funan**", the kingdom was taken over by an Indian or Iranian ruler, possibly a displaced member of the Kushan dynasty that had collapsed in India.

Relationships between Funan and China continued right up to the 6th century. Chinese records of these relationships show that the state religion was **Śaivite Hinduism** but that Buddhism, probably Mahayana, was common. The greatest king of Funan was **Jayavarman I** (6th century), its last powerful ruler.

When Jayavarman I died in 514, a conflict over succession to the throne ended in the collapse of the kingdom. By the 7th century, Funan was overshadowed by its former vassal, the inland Khmer kingdom of **Chenla**, whose royal line was probably linked to that of Funan. Chenla, however, remained weak and divided until the rise of the Khmer kingdom of **Angkor** in the 9th century.

Gunavarman of Kashmir (367-432)

As for Buddhism in **Java**, it was the Kashmiri monk **Gunavarman** (367-432) who introduced Nikāya Buddhism there (but, later in China, he disseminated Mahayana). **Faxian** reached Java from Sri Lanka in

413 or 414, and from his records, we are told that there was no Buddhism in Java then. Guṇavarman was a very successful Buddhist missionary, who probably converted **P'o-to-chia (Vadhaka?)**, the king of Java and his mother to Buddhism, and they undertook the Five Precepts.

The King of Java went on express **his desire to renounce the world**. Because of the strong opposition of his court, he finally relented, that is, only if they fulfilled these four conditions:

- (1) That all his subjects showed respect to Guṇavarman.
- (2) That all his subjects completely stopped killing living beings.
- (3) That the accumulated wealth in the royal treasury be distributed among the sick and the poor.

In due course, the king built a vihara for Guṇavarman.

Liang Wudi (464-549)

A similar story of royal renunciation was that of Liang emperor **Wudi** (Wu Ti) (464-549), who proclaimed himself first emperor of the **Liang dynasty** in 502. Chinese Buddhism saw its highest flowering during this period. A devout Buddhist, Wudi diligently promoted Buddhism, lavishly patronized the Sangha, and decreed the compilation of the first Chinese **Tripitaka**.

In his religious and political zeal, Wudi ruthlessly **persecuted Taoism**, at the same time ordering all members of his court to become Buddhists. In 527 and again in 529 he renounced the world and lived in a monastery. He was persuaded to resume office only with great difficulty. In 549, the capital was captured by a “barbarian” general, and Wudi died of starvation in a monastery.

Similarly, in **the North**, the Buddhist clergy became closely connected with secular government. The lavish treatment of the monastics was, however, counterbalanced by repeated attempts at government control of the Sangha. The North, however, remained open to influence brought by travelling monks from Central Asia, and an enormous amount of Indian Buddhist texts of all schools and periods was translated.

Guṇavarman in China

It is interesting that **Guṇavarman** was one of the few Kashmiri teachers who took the sea route to China. When news of his missionary activities in Java reached China sometime before 424 CE, **Huiguan** (Hui Kuan) requested the emperor to invite Guṇavarman to China. The Liu emperor **Wudi** (Wu-ti) of the **Former Sung** (424-452) sent a delegation headed by Fazang (Fa-zhang) to invite Guṇavarman to China.

However, Guṇavarman was already on his voyage to a small country. Coincidentally, the seasonal winds blew his vessel to the shores of Canton in southern China. He only reached the capital Nanjing in 431. In China, he translated over 10 works of which these 5 are extant:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) Upāli,paripṛcchā Sūtra | (Nanjio no. 1109) |
| (2) Upāsaka Pañcasīla,rūpa Sūtra | (Nanjio no. 1114) |
| (3) Dharmaguptaka Bhikṣuṇī Karma | (Nanjio no. 1129) |
| (4) Śramaṇera Karmavācā | (Nanjio no. 1164) |
| (5) Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva Suhrillekha | (Nanjio no. 1464). |

Guṇavarman's most important contribution to Chinese Buddhism was to validate the **Chinese Order of Nuns** by performing the “double ordination” (before the Assemblies of Monks and of Nuns). Through his efforts, the proper quorum was finally found when enough **Sinhalese nuns** [4] finally arrived by sea from Sri Lanka. Sadly, this occurred just after he had passed away. (Pachow, 1960).

Śrīvijaya

From about 600 to 800 CE, the predominantly Buddhist kingdom of **Śrīvijaya** ruled much of south-east Asia. It comprised several states that developed on the Malay peninsula and the islands of Sumatra and Java. The coastal regions of this kingdom served as important trade and diplomatic links between India and China.

Little is known about Śrīvijaya before the visits of the Chinese pilgrims like **Yijing** (671-695). In 671, Yijing stopped over in **Sumatra** for 6 months on his way to India. After spending some 13 years in India, he returned to Sumatra in 685 and stayed near the modern site of **Palembang** until 695, working on his translations. The fact that this important Buddhist pilgrim chose to spend such a long time in Sumatra indicated the importance of the area as **a centre of Buddhist learning**. In fact, according to Yijing, both Nikāya Buddhism and Mahayana flourished in the region.

Śrīvijaya had many rival kingdoms, but they were all minor states scattered in the north. By the 6th century, there were **Langkasuka** (in Pattani), **Ch'ih-t'u**, the “Red-earth Land” (probably located in Kelantan, Malaysia), and **Tan-Tan** (which some scholars thought was on the east coast of peninsular Malaysia probably in or around Terengganu).

All these kingdoms were well known in China as **Buddhist centres** (especially Langkasuka, which was visited by Buddhist pilgrims in the late 7th century). These small states maintained their stability and sovereignty through their paying **annual tribute** to China. Śrīvijaya, too, maintained contact with China. (Andaya & Andaya, 1982: ch. 1, esp. pp. 20-23)

<Slide>Borobudur

In the island of **Java**, Śaivite Hindus vied with Buddhists for supremacy. In the 8th century, the Buddhist **Śailendra** (Kings of the Mountains) dynasty established itself and immortalized itself by building the **Borobudur** (c. Java, end of 8th cent.-early 9th cent.), one of the largest religious monuments ever built. The Borobudur is actually a series of carved stone terraces built on a natural hill and culminating in a huge stupa that originally stood over 60 feet tall (18 m) and the top of its terraces rose nearly 150 feet (46 m) above the surrounding plain.

The entire length of the four galleries spiralling to the top of the stupa totals about a mile (1.6 km), past some 400 Buddha images (originally 504) and thousands of **bas-reliefs** depicting events from the Jātakas and the Mahayana sutras.

Angkor Wat

The Khmer kings appeared to have been deeply impressed by the Śailendras, the kings of the mountains. **Jayavarman II**, the founder of the kingdom of Angkor, who ascended the throne around 800 CE, visited Java. He built a “temple mountain” to consecrate his reign.

The greatest of these temple mountains, the **Angkor Wat**, was built under **Sūryavarman II** (r. 1113-50), the most powerful of the Khmer kings, who dedicated it to the Hindu god, Vishnu. The entire temple complex is almost a square mile. The central shrine rises 140 feet (42.7 m) from a square colonnaded pediment measuring about 100 yards (91.4 m) from each side, which in turn stands on another colonnaded pediment of about 200 yards (182.9 m) square, surrounded by yet another enclosure about half a mile (804.7 m) on each side. All this is surrounded by a moat over 200 yards (182.9 m) wide. From the grand western entrance to the central shrine is a half-mile (804.7 m) walk along a broad causeway and up tier after tier of steep staircase. (Reat 1994: 104)

12. CAMBODIA

Khmer empire

The Khmer dream of an empire was only realized in the reign of **Jayavarman VII** (r. 1181-1218), a fervent Mahayanist. In response to Angkor, he built nearby, on a smaller scale, a Buddhist temple mountain known as the **Bayon**. It is not certain why he converted to Buddhism. His inscriptions indicate that his father before him had converted to Buddhism, and that Jayavarman himself was anxious to win the support of his subjects.

Perhaps the Khmer kings wished to distinguish themselves from their traditional Śaivite enemies, the Cham, who were finally subdued by Jayavarman VII. Perhaps he felt that **the identification of the king as a loving Bodhisattva** would be more appealing than one as an exalted but distant god.

One of Jayavarman VII's sons is believed to have been ordained into the Theravada order in Sri Lanka (Coedès 1975:178). **The first Theravada king of Angkor**, however, was **Indravarman III**, a usurper. After him, the royal Khmer inscriptions were in **Pali** rather than Sanskrit. During his reign, temple construction abruptly ceased. It is possible here that there was a general rebellion against the burden of costly and exhausting construction projects of the Hindu and Mahayana kings.

Another factor for the Khmer conversion to Theravada is probably that of the growing power of **the Siamese**, who were beginning to invade Angkor in the early 13th century, shortly after the reign of Jayavarman VII. Cambodia remained a powerful and prosperous Theravada kingdom for several centuries. Throughout the 16th century, however, the Siamese remained the enemies of the Khmer.

In the 17th century, **the Vietnamese** annexed Cambodia's south-eastern coast all the way down to the Mekong delta. By the mid-18th century, Vietnam occupied more of Cambodia, resulting in roughly the current border between the two countries.

Modern Kampuchea

In the northwest, **the Siamese** gradually controlled more and more of Cambodia's territory. The Siamese justified their incursions into Cambodia **to protect Theravada from the Mahayanist Vietnamese**. In a way, this was true because in the territories occupied by the Vietnamese, Theravada was totally wiped out. In 1842, a bloody rebellion, probably organized by the Theravada Sangha of Cambodia, finally drove out the Vietnamese.

The Cambodian king, in 1863-64, negotiated a treaty with **France**, which annexed Cambodia. As a result, Cambodia was finally free from invasion by Siam or Vietnam. The worst is yet to come, this time from within the country. Cambodia gained independence in 1953. In 1970, **Gen. Lon Nol** usurped power in a coup backed by the United States (during the infamous Vietnam War period).

In 1975, when the US finally withdrew from Vietnam, the communist **Khmer Rouge** under Gen. Pol Pot seized power in **Kampuchea** (her new name since 1979) and so began a terrible **genocide** that uprooted Khmer culture in its effort to return Kampuchea to **"year zero"**, free from all foreign influence so that the old glory of Angkor could be re-established.

Just as the Muslim hordes gave the deathblow to Buddhism in India, the Khmer Rouge exterminated the Buddhists and "intellectuals" (anyone who looked educated) in Kampuchea since **Pol Pot** did not tolerate any potential rival for the allegiance of the Khmer people. In 1981, **only some 600 monks** had survived the holocaust. Even today, Kampuchea is still recovering from the holocaust, working slowly to regain its economy and culture.

13. EARLY ROOTS

Early disciples

The emperor Aśoka is believed to have sent missionaries to *Suvaṇṇa,bhūmi*, “the land of gold” (which the Burmese claim is **Thaton**, Mon state, Lower Burma), around 250 BCE. However, according to Burmese tradition, its Buddhist history goes back right to the Buddha’s time. The Burmese believe that the Buddha’s first two lay disciples taking the Twofold (*dvevācika*) Refuges, **Tapussa and Bhallika**, were from Ukkāla, variously identified as Okkalapa near Yangon or modern Orissa (Utkala) on the east coast of India.

After offering alms to the Buddha, they requested from him an object of worship. The Buddha presented them with **eight hair relics**. On returning to Burma, it is said that they enshrined these relics in a stupa (said to have been 8.2 m or 27 ft high) which is now the **Shwedagon Pagoda** (over 112.8m or 370 ft high) in Yangon.

According to the Sāsana,vaṃsa (“History of the Religion” introd. p. ix), the region of **Aparānta** or Sunāparānta (whose inhabitants were fierce and violent) mentioned in the **Puṇṇovāda Sutta** (M 3:68; S 4:61 f.; Tha 70; ThaA 1:156 ff.) was situated on the west shore of the Irrawaddy at the latitude of Magwe. The Burmese chronicles say that **Puṇṇa**, in the course of his mission in ancient Burma, invited the Buddha to visit Burma. The Sāsana,vaṃsa says that the Buddha stayed in Burma for 7 weeks.

Probably it was the **Mon** or Talaing people of the eastern delta region of Burma who first historically adopted Buddhism through Aśoka’s missions. However, the Buddhism of the Mon was mixed with belief in various spirits (*nat*). It was the Mon people who introduced **Pali** into Burma.

Beyond Burma

The pattern of Buddhist development in Burma is very similar to those in Siam and Cambodia. Beginning in the 13th century, the Siamese of **Sukhothai** (NW Thailand), the first independent Siamese state, adopted Burmese Theravada, and in the 14th century, helped pass it on to Laos and Cambodia.

In the early 14th century, Sinhalese Theravada was introduced into **Nakhon Si Thammarat** (on the east coast of the peninsula beside the Gulf of Thailand), one of Thailand’s oldest cities. (The kingdom was often called Ligor until the 13th century.) This forest tradition, which came to be known as the **Laṅkā,vaṃsa**, soon reached Sukhothai (1257-1350) where it became the state religion. (Payutto 1985:19 f.; Ishii 1986:60)

In due course, Theravada completely replaced the local Mahayana in Siam. Similarly, in **Cambodia**, as a result of Siamese influence, Tantric Buddhism that had been there since the 11th century, was replaced by Theravada.

14. KINGSHIP

Unlike the sinicized Buddhism of East Asia that for centuries remained only the religion of the elite, **the indianized Buddhism of south-east Asia** was a religion of the people as well as that of the ruling elite. As such, the Theravada of south-east Asia has been a stable and stabilizing influence in the region.

Just kingship

An important common characteristic of **Buddhist kingship** in south-east Asia—that is, Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia—is that they adhered (and still adhere in the case of Thailand) to the notion of

kingship as expounded in the early Buddhist texts. This is the notion of the “just monarch” (*dhammika-raja*) as exemplified by emperor Aśoka in the Buddhist chronicles.

Even though the king enjoyed an extremely exalted status at the centre of the *maṇḍala* or Buddhist universe, he ruled by a **social contract** between the ruler and the people (Sarkiyansz 1965:15, 107; Holt 1991:189 f). However, insofar as the Sangha was concerned, the king had the inferior status of a layman and, as such, he was required to accept the moral guidance of the monks, and frequently did. (Phra Rajavaramuni, in Sizemore & Swearer, 1990: 36-40; Piyasilo 1992a:93-98)

When a king was disposed to rule despotically and violently, **the monks would intervene to promote justice and save lives**. E. Sarkiyansz, on the basis of his intensive and authoritative study of mediaeval Buddhism in Burma, considers that

Burma's Buddhist monkhood went further in the protection of human life than did the historical Churches of Christendom who have hardly resisted and on the whole tacitly recognized the claims of temporal powers to inflict death. (Sarkiyansz 1965: 76)

The Roman Catholic missionary, **Sangermano**, who was in Burma at the end of the 18th and the start of the 19th centuries, commented on the curious behaviour of the monks in saving even “the lives of criminals” (quoted by Ling, 1968: 311).

Siamese monarchy

The stability of **the Siamese monarchy** (like the present Chakri dynasty) has been achieved by a political process that goes back to the emperor Aśoka himself. The whole system is like a snake, or rather three snakes, each biting the other's tail in a circular fashion, or like a triangle of forces: the king patronizes the Sangha; the Sangha is respected by the people; hence, the king's position is legitimized by both Sangha and people. In reality, the situation is, of course, more complex. (Piyasilo 1992a: 96-98)

The people respect the Sangha as a religious institution and the monks as spiritual exemplars. Except for the Buddhist virtuosi (especially the forest monks), the religiosity and future of the Sangha is traditionally dependent on **state patronage**. *The Sangha meditates on its belly*. For this reason, it is often the case that when the monarchy falls in the midst of widespread chaos, the Sangha as a social institution usually disintegrates, too. In such a situation, the more scrupulous monks would probably disrobe, while others would resort to more worldly means of sustaining a living.

Sinhalese & east Asian kings

The great Buddhist kings of ancient Sri Lanka—such as Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, Vaṭṭagāmaṇī, Parākrama Bāhu and Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha (with perhaps the exception of Devānampiya Tissa, her first historical king)—are more comparable to **the emperors and rulers of east Asia** than to the Buddhist kings of South-east Asia, for the simple fact that they were all **absolute monarchs**, ruling over, at times even punishing, the Sangha itself.

Like the emperors and kings of east Asia, the Sinhalese monarchs promoted the Sangha only when it had a place in their political agenda. The installation of Saraṇāṅkara as the *saṅgha,rāja* of the Siyam Nikāya parallels the appointment of the East Asian **National Preceptor**—the Chinese *guoshi* and the Korean *kuksa*—by the lord of the realm. In all these cases, the appointment was an integral part of the court's bureaucracy. The case of Thailand, however, is unique. Although the **Saṅgharāja** is appointed by the king, the former is not a part of the royal court. Indeed, the king shows public deference to him and the Sangha.

On the other hand, the ancient Sinhalese monks' general conduct towards the ruler closely paralleled that of the powerful clerics of the Nara period in Japan. In both cases, they were wealthy **landholders** (or, "monastic landlords" to use Max Weber's term, 1958a:257): the Sinhalese monks with their *vihāra,gam* and the Nara clergy with their *shoen*. While the Sinhalese monks have retained their *vihāra,gam* to this day, the Buddhist clergy of Japan have lost most of their *shoen*.

There are two kinds of monastic succession in Sinhalese Buddhism: the consanguine succession and the pupillary succession. The **landed monks** of the Siyam Nikāya maintain the consanguine succession, usually by ordaining the abbot's nephew who would train to be the future abbot so that the *vihāra,gam* and temple wealth remain within the family (Gothóni 1986:13-29). This practice is similar to that of the married clergy of Japan, especially of the Pure Land school, who maintain their own temples.

The Amarapura and the Rāmañña Nikāyas, on the other hand, maintain their abbacy and lineages through the **pupillary succession**. The south-east Asian monasteries have never adopted the consanguine succession. The abbacy of a monastery is either appointed by the king or automatically falls upon the seniormost able resident monk, or in the absence of one, a suitable elder from elsewhere would be selected by the monastic community. [Piyasilo 1992a: 9-16]

15. ROYAL REFORMS

Mindon Min (r. 1853-1878)

King Mindon was forced to accept British annexation of a large part of Burma, but his reign was notable both for its reforms and as a period of cultural flowering before British colonial rule. During this golden age, in 1857, the capital was moved from Ava to newly-built **Mandalay**, with palaces and monasteries that are masterpieces of traditional Burmese architecture.

Mandalay was the venue of **the 5th Council** convened by Mindon in 1871 to recite and purify the Pali canon. The revised Pali canon was then engraved on 729 marble slabs and installed in the Kuthodaw Temple that he had built in Mandalay.

Mindon's reign compares favourably with that of king **Mongkut** of Siam. While Mongkut founded the reformed **Thammayuttika Nikāya**, the second branch of Siamese Buddhism alongside the ancient and larger Mahānikāya, Mindon introduced the reformed **Shwegon Nikāya** as an alternative to the larger and older Sudhamma Nikāya. Both reforms, however, were not in point of doctrine, but in terms of a more conservative approach to the Vinaya. Mindon was succeeded by **Thibaw** (r. 1878-85), the last king of Burma. The Siamese monarchy, however, has lasted to this very day.

Mongkut (r. 1851-68)

King Mongkut (Rama IV) of Siam opened his country to western influence and initiated reforms and modern development. Although he was designated *chaofa mongkut* (crown prince), he entered monkhood in 1824 when his elder brother, Phra Nang Klao, seized the throne. During **the 27-year monkhood**, he freed himself from traditional isolation of the Siamese royal family by going on pilgrimages in the country to see for himself the living conditions of the people and to preach to them in the Siamese vernacular rather than in Pali.

Religiously tolerant, Mongkut was **schooled by western missionaries**, particularly the **French** bishop Pallegoix, who taught him mathematics, astronomy and Latin, and by **Americans**, who taught him English. When he ascended the throne in 1851, Mongkut invited foreign teachers and advisers to help him begin the reorganization of the country's social, political and military institutions, carried forward successfully by his son and successor, **Chulalongkorn** (1853-1910). Through his patient diplomacy,

rather than the xenophobia and isolationism of his neighbours, Mongkut managed to keep Siam as a buffer state between Burma (absorbed by the British) and Indochina (controlled by France).

King Mongkut standardized the procedures and standards of the **monastic examinations** (the 3-year *nak tham* and the 9-year Pali *parien* studies). He also saw through the completion of the revision of the 45-volume Siamese **Pali Canon** that had been in progress since the time of Rama I. The whole set was subsequently translated volume-for-volume into Thai.

As in contemporary Sri Lanka and Burma, Mongkut's Siamese reforms were **inspired by the annoyance at the Christian missionary triumphalism as much as by western rationalism**. All at the same time, as it were, the Theravada Buddhists of Sri Lanka, Burma and Siam recognized that their "heathen" religion, in its canonical roots, was more compatible to a **rational, scientific worldview** than was the Christianity of the missionaries (Reat 1994: 125). Mongkut's tolerance and admiration of western civilization made him the central character in the western parody entitled "Anna and the King", featured in at least two full-scale movies

BUDDHISM IN CENTRAL ASIA

16. THE SILK ROAD

The Silk Road was in the most part a linear network of oasis towns in Central Asia stretching from Eastern Iran to Dunhuang. It is a major missing piece in our knowledge of the evolution of Buddhist civilization. [Xinru Lu, 1988.]

Despite the welter of Central Asian languages and cultures, Buddhism in Central Asia appears to have been transmitted exclusively in **Indian languages** prior to the 6th century. The subsequent flourishing of Buddhist vernacular literature in the eastern parts of this region—but not in the west—may well have occurred under Chinese influence. From this, **Jan Nattier** argues, we can draw two conclusions:

- (1) That the "language policy" followed by Buddhist believers has been far from monolithic, but rather varied from place to place and from time to time, according to differing local cultural conditions.
- (2) That while China did indeed play a receptive role with respect to Buddhists from Central Asia during the early centuries of the 1st millennium, its role shifted to a far more active one after the beginning of the 6th century.

[“Church Language and Vernacular Language in Central Asian Buddhism”, *Numen* 37 no. 2 1990: 195-219.]

Indeed, it might be fair to say that by the 8th century for at least some Central Asian believers—most notably the Sogdians and the Uighurs—the centre of gravity of the Buddhist world had shifted from India to **China**. This shift from the “middle country” (*mādhya,deśa*) of India to the “middle kingdom” of China would last until the advent of the Muslims.

[For a general introduction to Buddhism in Central Asia (up to the 15th century), see Richard C. Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road*, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1999. The book is not always accurate, but it has good source references.]

EAST ASIA

17. SYNCRETISM

Korean syncretism

When Buddhism arrived in Korea, the country was largely **tribal** (exemplified by tribal worship) with a deep belief in **shamanism**, a belief system centring on the occult, psychic transformation and healing powers believed to be possessed by a particular religious person called a **mudang** (shamaness) or **paksu** (shaman), who performed the **kut** or shamanistic seance.

Traditional Korean society had not yet developed the **concept of the whole**. The concept of the whole is a philosophical view that enables a systematic structure, e.g. social or religious, to be built. The early Koreans held to **a system of appendages**, as in parts of the body, that allowed for a **syncretism** that was rich and vital. Thus, shamanism has often intermingled with Buddhism in Korea and has withstood social changes, preserving many of its quaint customs of the folk culture. This gives Korean society and religion its second characteristic: the desire and tendency **to syncretize discordant parts into a harmonious whole**.

Buddhism helped the Koreans **to see existence as an interconnected whole**, for example, through its cosmology. Moreover, during much of Korea's early history, she was threatened by foreign invasions, especially from China. As such, the Koreans were motivated to seek some kind of national consensus, as it were, through a syncretic Buddhism, as exemplified by the **unitarian vision** of the monk **Wŏnhyo** (617-687) [22], whose personality and beliefs combined the ideas of Zen, Tantra, Huayan and Pure Land Buddhism.

Won Buddhism

During the Japanese occupation, various sectarian movements arose in Korea. After the Second World War, more than 170 new religious sects emerged. They were **syncretic** (accommodating various religious ideas and practices), messianic (looking for a saviour in the hope of establishing a spiritual kingdom here and now), and shamanistic.

One of the most prominent new Korean Buddhist sect was **Won** (more fully, Wonbulgyo) or "Round" Buddhism, founded in 1916 by Pak Chung-bin (1891-1943). It is a reformed, simplified school that combines Buddhism with a disparate variety of elements drawn from Confucianism, Daoism, Tonghak (anti-western, anti-Catholic movement), and even Christianity.

Japanese syncretism

During the Heian period (794-1185), a similar syncretism was found in Japan with the **Sannō Ichi-jitsu Shintō** (Mountain-king One Truth Shintō), also simply known as Ichi-jitsu Shintō or Tendai Shintō. **Sannō** is the name of the Shintō mountain god who resides on Mt. Hiei (HQ of the Tendai Buddhist school) and who is considered by members of the Sannō Ichi-jitsu Shintō to be a manifestation of **Sakyamuni** and also identical with the chief Shintō divinity, the sun goddess **Amaterasu**.

The name of the school further refers to the Tendai teaching that there is **only one absolute reality** (*ichi-jitsu*) behind the universe. This is interpreted to mean that the Shintō *kami* (gods or sacred powers) are historical manifestation in Japan of Buddhist divinities, all of whom are ultimately one reality.

18. PROTECTION OF THE COUNTRY

The sutra against the sword

Like the Japanese Buddhists of the **Kamakura period** (1185-1333), the Koreans of the **Koryŏ period** (935-1392), looked up to Buddhism as an apotropaic or magical means of warding foreign invasion, especially the Mongols from China. During the Koryŏ period, **the Koreans** suffered six Mongol invasions (between 1231 and 1258). In their desperation to ward off the Mongols, the Koreans piously printed at least two editions of the Mahayana canon, that came to be known as **the Koryŏ editions**, but they were destroyed by the Mongols.

During this same period, the Koreans produced a new print of the Mahayana canon which is today known as the **Tripiṭaka Koreana**, and which became the basis for the authoritative **Taishō Shinshu Dai-zōkyō** of Japan. The Japanese efforts, however, were made rather late by the scholars of the Taishō period (1912-1926), that is, academics who were inspired by western learning. [33]

Prayers for national safety

Buddhism was officially introduced into Japan from **Korea** in the middle of the 6th century. Between 550 and 600, various Korean kings sent **Buddha images and Buddhist texts** to the Japanese imperial court. Some Korean monks were already resident in Japan. Following the traditional chronicles of Japan, the formal date would be **552 or 538**. However, it is likely that Buddhist influence and presence might have been earlier.

The early Japanese (whose society was still in a **formative stage**), in their ignorance of Buddhism, had the idea that worshipping the Buddha, **a foreign “deity”**, would bring good luck to the nation and at first judged the new religion on an entirely short-term pragmatic consequences. When a plague broke out, the Buddha images were dumped into the moat, and the first temple burnt down. When another plague occurred later, images were again thrown into the moat and nuns were defrocked. When the plague continued, the fearful emperor then permitted the Buddhist cult to be practised freely.

<Slide> **Guardian kings, Todai-ji.**

Sutra of the Golden Light

The devout prince **Shotoku** (573-621), was considered the real founder and first great patron of Buddhism in Japan. It was during his time that **Japan first became a centralized nation**. Shotoku based his nation-building specifically on the **Konkomyō-kyō** or *Suvarṇa,prabhāsōttama Sūtra**. Familiar with this sutra, Prince Shotoku built the **Shitennō-ji** (Temple of the Four Guardian Kings) in 593 CE.

[**Suvarṇa,prabhāsōttama Sūtra*, Eng. tr. R.E. Emmerick, *The Sutra of Golden Light*, London: Luzac, 1970.]

Chapter 6 of the sutra is called **“The Four Great Kings”** or “The Four Heavenly Kings”, featuring the guardian deities of the four cardinal points. In Japan, they go by various names, some of which are merely translations of their functions, others are translations of their Sanskrit names. Collectively, they are known **Shitennō**, “the Four Heavenly Kings”:

East	Dhṛtarāṣṭra	Jikoku-ten, “protector of the land; Hoppoten, “god of the north”.
South	Virūḍhaka	Zōchō-ten, “one who gains power”.
West	Virūpākṣa	Kōmoku-ten, “wide-eyes”.
North	Vaiśravaṇa or Kuvera	Tamon-ten, Bishamon-ten, “much-hearing”.

The Konkomyo-kyo says that the Shitennō pay honour to the Buddha and promise that they will, first of all, **protect any monk who recites this sutra**. Furthermore, they will **protect the king who protects such a monk**. A human king who acts in this manner is assured that whenever a foreign power moves against him the Four Heavenly Kings will fight with their heavenly armies to keep out the invaders. Conversely, any country, having heard of this sutra, neglects to honour through reciting it, would be deserted by the Heavenly Kings and left open to invasion.

For the blessing of the country, Shotoku built no less than 40 Buddhist temples throughout the kingdom. Later, during the Heian period (710-784), when **Nara** became the first permanent capital Japan, emperor **Shomu** (701-756), in 741, went on to establish **two state temples (*kokubun-ji*)** in every province (a monastery and a convent). They were supported by the state as long as the residents make the recitation of the Konkomyo-kyo as a major part of their daily routine to bring divine protection and blessing upon the whole country.

A network of Buddhist temples grew up in the provinces with the **Todai-ji** (710-784) at Nara as the central cathedral. Its principal image (*honzon*) is the 16 m (53 ft) tall gilt-bronze image of Birushana (Vairocana) (752), called the Nara Daibutsu (Great Buddha of Nara).

By the Meiji period (1868-1911), this principle had become enshrined in the slogan ***goho-gokoku***, “When Buddhism is protected, the country is protected.” When Japan lost the Second World War in 1945, the Soka Gakkai, echoing Nichiren, claimed that it was because the Shitennō deserted Japan when the Lotus Sutra was neglected. (Corless 58 f.)

19. PERSECUTION OF BUDDHISM

Buddhism in East Asia—China, Korea and Japan—at one time or another enjoyed the status of being the **state religion**, which brought the Buddhist clergy great wealth and power. The monks, **because of their education and diplomacy**, often served as royal advisors and envoys to other royal courts, and were often involved in political intrigues.

Above all, the fate of the Buddhist clergy and Buddhism was, as such, tied to that of their patrons. When a new dynasty replaced the one that patronized Buddhism, the new ruler would often adopt a new religion, usually Confucianism. During the Tang dynasty (618-907) in China and the Yi dynasty (1392-1910) in Korea, **the Confucian advisors** pressured the rulers to persecute the Buddhists.

The position of National Preceptor was abolished. Monastery land and property were confiscated and monastic serfs drafted into the army. The Yi persecution of Buddhism was very severe. Not only were the monks deprived of their wealth and power, but were banned from entering the large cities of Korea. In due course, all ordination was banned and monasteries destroyed during the period.

Japanese occupation

The fall of the Yi dynasty was followed by the Japanese occupation of Korea (1910-1915). In their effort to implement their colonial policy, the Japanese issued a decree that **all Korean monks should marry**. After independence in 1945, Korean Buddhism was badly split into two irreconcilable sects. The **T’aego-chong**, a liberal sect of married monks, had flourished under Japanese patronage and was based principally in the cities where it ministered to the lay Buddhists.

The **Chogyee-chong** was a smaller, religiously conservative order of monastics who managed to maintain their celibacy during the long years of Japanese occupation. The main concern of the Chogyee-chong was to restore the contemplative, scholastic and disciplinary orientations of traditional Korean Buddhism. After some years of intense conflict, the Chogyee-chong in 1954 finally won government support for its

position. While litigation continued between the two sects, all of the major monasteries have reverted to its control.

20. POLITICAL BUDDHISM

Power, worldly and other-worldly

Politics and religion are generically similar—former is **worldly power**, the latter **other-worldly power**—and mixing them invariably leads to explosive consequences, exemplified by the mediaeval Catholic church that crowned kings, ruled kingdoms and sent Crusades to exterminate the “infidels”.

While Islam apparently presents an interesting case of **the identity of religion and politics**, it only works well in the hands of a righteous ruler with the support of an enlightened elite (such as the Mu’tazilites). However, as the recent terrorist violence (especially the 11 September 2001 devastation of the World Trade Center in New York) have shown, this potent mixture, when in the wrong hands can have extremely grave consequences for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Legitimation of power

Similar examples can be found in Buddhism where religion and politics mix, such as in the case of the **Nara clergy** (8th century) and **Sri Lanka today**. At one time or another, Buddhism in Asia has been used by the rulers and politicians to **legitimize their power** and even start wars. The Siamese invasion of Cambodia under the pretext of defending Theravada Buddhism from attack by the Mahayanist Vietnamese in the mid-18th century in a case in point [10].

Defending the country

On the other hand, it is understandable that a country has to defend itself against external dangers and prevent internal strife. If a Buddhist country (or a secular state where there are significant number of Buddhists) were attacked and conquered by non-Buddhists, the Dharma might be exterminated (as in the case of India in the 13th century). If the Dharma were lost, so would be the opportunity for liberation of sentient beings, or at least that liberation would be long delayed.

As such, Buddhists would rather opt for **committing a lesser evil of defeating the enemy** rather than standing by to watch the Dharma being wiped out. In preserving Buddhist humans or good people, the Dharma is preserved and also the opportunity for the liberation of sentient beings. This is **the rationale for lay Buddhists serving in the defence of the country**.

21. VIETNAM

Religion of the oppressed

Buddhism is used by not only rulers to legitimize their **power, position and plans**. Colonized or oppressed people have also used it when they rose in revolt, as were the case in Burma (Sarkiyansz, 1965), Sri Lanka (Goonetilleke, 1978), and Vietnam (Thich Nhat Hanh, 1967).

Vietnam received Theravada Buddhism around the 1st century CE and Chinese Mahayana, in various forms, between the 6th and the 17th centuries. Theravada monasticism formed the foundation on which were built both forms of Mahayana, lay and monastic. Vietnamese Mahayana is mainly a combination of Zen (Vietnamese *Thien*) and Pure Land, especially in the distinctive Vietnamese lineage of 11th-century Thao-duong.

In 1963, all lineages merged to form **the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam** (*Viet-Nam Phat-Giao Thong-Nhat Giao-Hoi*). Vietnamese Buddhism has been a strong ally in revolts against foreign dominations and persecutions, first by China, then the Roman Catholic regime of the **Ngo Dinh Diem**, and more recently by the US.

The Buddhist community in Vietnam were not politically activated until it was mistreated by the excessively partisan Roman Catholic and anti-Buddhist Ngo Dinh family. In 1963, the government forbade the flying of the Buddhist flag on Vesak Day (8 May), though the Roman Catholics were allowed to fly their flag. The riot that erupted because of this order was put down by well-armed government troops. Understandably, the coup against the Ngo Dinh Diem regime on 1st November, 1963, was actively supported by militant Buddhists.

Usually claiming to be politically neutral, the Buddhist call for peace was treated by the Saigon government as weakness in the face of Communism. During the Ngo Dinh Diem regime, over 30 monks and nuns **peacefully self-immolated** in South Vietnam in protest against the ruin of their country, including the imprisonment and killing of hundreds of Buddhists (suspected to be communists). Such events finally persuaded the US to withdraw its support. Diem was assassinated by his own generals during a *coup d'état*.

[On the Buddhist attitude towards war and peace, see Harvey 2000: ch 6. On a Theravada viewpoint of self-cremation, see Rahula, 1978: ch 11.]

22. BUDDHIST UTOPIA

Countries with a significant population of Buddhists such as China, Korea, Japan and Tibet all have been invaded at various times by foreign powers. The Buddhist communities in these countries have also suffered persecution from the ruling powers usually at the instigation of rival religions. To compound the problem, at time one or another, Buddhism is troubled by internal politics and dissension. Under such circumstances, it is understandable that such Buddhists would long for a world free from such sufferings, persecutions and insecurities. The idea of a **utopia** is common to all such societies.

Sukhāvatī

One of the most remarkable new developments in Buddhism was the conception of **the Buddha-field** (*buddha,kṣetra*) that came to be called *chingtu* or “pure land” in China. This conception probably arose in India around the 1st century with the rise of the Mahayana in response to Iranian religions, especially Manichaeism (that regarded light as the embodiment of good).

The most popular of these Pure Lands or Paradises (found in all directions of the universe) is that of **Amitābha**, the Buddha of the West. The Western Paradise, properly called **Sukhāvatī** or Happy Realm, is especially popular in China and Japan partly because of their geographical location. The west is not only the direction of the setting sun (signifying death) but also the direction of the Buddhist holy land (as exemplified in the class “Journey West” of Wu Ch’eng-en).

Western Paradise is the Buddhist utopia in the sense that it is totally free of suffering and attended by wholesome beauty of the senses (beautiful music, precious stones, purifying water, level land). At the centre of this utopia sits Amitābha Buddha, teaching the Dharma, surrounded by a host of Bodhisattvas and Saints. The faithful devotee needs only to piously recite Amitabha’s name and upon dying would be reborn in this wonderful paradise, which is really a **worldly hypostatis of Nirvana**.

Hwarangdo

Not all Buddhists envision utopia as out of this world. Indeed, there were movements in Korea and Japan that regarded their respective countries as a Buddha Land, or the centre of a Buddha Land that they hope to build. In Korea, this vision was expressed through the **Hwarangdo** (Order of the Flower Boys) and in Japan it was an idea that supported the political ambitions of **the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere** of the 1930s and 1940s with Japan as its centre.

One of the most prominent institutions of Buddhism of the Three Kingdoms (c. 57-668 CE) was the **Hwarangdo**, the Order of Flower Boys. According to the *Samguk sagi*, this chivalric order was instituted by king Chinhŭng of Silla. It comprised younger male members of the nobility, who were drilled in ethical virtues and refined culture, centring around mystical experience of the native cult of shamanesses, military skills, and comradeship, and fused with **the messianic faith in the Bodhisattva Maitreya**, the coming Buddha.

This fusion of chivalric code and messianic faith generated an unexpected zeal to **transform Korea into a Buddha land of the world** and established the impetus for unification of Korea under Silla. As such, the formation of the Hwarangdo is considered to have been part of the expansionist policies of the Silla court. A later Silla writer related that the Hwarang boys were trained in Confucian filial piety and patriotism, Daoist quietism, and Buddhist morality. As such, it is not a paramilitary organization, as is popularly misunderstood.

Dancing in the streets

Pure Land Buddhism is popular because it only demands faith in **the saving grace of Amida**. There was another reason for its popularity: the efforts of evangelists like **Kūya**. He was the best example of the prototype of the *hijiri*, charismatic itinerant “holy men”.

Kūya (903-973), also known as Kōya, is best known for his popularization of Pure Land Buddhism, dancing in the streets, singing simple Japanese hymns about Amida. He organized **self-help projects** for the common people, and even spread the Amidist gospel among the indigenous Ainu in the remote north.

Following a period of evangelization in the far northwestern provinces of Mutsu (now Fukushima, Miyagi, Iwate and Aomori prefectures) and Dewa (now Akita and Yamagata prefectures), he returned to Kyōto in 938 and took up the role of **a mendicant monk**, distributing the alms he received among the poor and the sick. He came to be known as **Ichī no Shōnin** (Saint of the Marketplace) or Ichī no Hijiri (Holy Man of the Marketplace).

Korean Buddhism produced a similarly remarkable free-spirited evangelist. **Wŏnhyo** (617-687) [17], a “married monk” who founded the **Pŏpsŏng** (*dharmatā*) school, which taught an syncretic, even ecumenical, form of Buddhism that included all schools and branches. He used music, literature and dance to express the meaning of Buddhism. He attempted to remove the barrier between the sacred and the secular, asserting that all beings had inherent and eventual Buddhahood: their difference, he proclaimed, was a matter of degree in development.

Dharma-ending age

[On an important remark regarding the Dharma-ending age, see Miln 130 f.; Pater Masefield, 1986:163 f.]

Pure Land Buddhism became very popular during the middle of the Heian times (794-1185). The reason for this was the Mahayana idea of **mappō or Dharma-ending age**, the concept that the Dharma would go through three stages after the Final Nirvana of the Buddha: 500 years of prosperity, 1000 years of decline, and finally its disappearance in the Dharma-ending age.

[See for example, Jan Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991.]

During the Kamakura period (1185-1333), it was believed that three calamities and seven disasters would plague the people one after the other. The three calamities were of two categories—the lesser and the greater. **The lesser calamities** were inflation (especially because of shortage of food), war and pestilence. **The greater calamities** were fires, floods and storms, one of which would cause the destruction of the universe at the end of the world-period.

During the years 1253-60, east Japan was struck by **a series of natural disasters**. From 1256 onwards, torrential rains and floods hit Kamakura. There were some major earthquakes, the worst being that of 1257. In the provinces there were heavy rains accompanied by typhoons and epidemics. The bad weather caused widespread crop destruction that led to famines. Growing gangs of brigands roamed the land and pirates infested the high seas.

Once *mappō* began, widely believed in Japan to have been in 1052, it would be extremely difficult to attain enlightenment or spiritual liberation through self-effort, as traditional Buddhist schools taught. The only hope was **faith in the saving grace of Amida**. Thus, the court nobles and ladies chanted the *nem-but* with fervour and built Amida halls within their residences to show their faith.

“Shambhala” of the Tibetans

The most positive conception of a utopia probably came from the Tibetan mind. The Tibetan myth of **Shambhala** comes from the *Kālacakra Tantra* (the Wheel of Time system) that gives them the resources **to understand the historical tragedy they are suffering**. Shambhala is a magical country somewhere in the polar regions, shielded from the world by a force-field of invisibility. [“Shangri-la”, probably a corruption of Shambhala, is a fictional name invented in *The Lost Horizon*, a 1933 novel, made into a movie by Frank Capra in 1937.]

The agents of Shambhala are invisible, working for the welfare of humanity, reincarnating where needed, but the nation as a whole remains hidden until the barbaric impulse for war and destruction had abated and the whole world becomes one global community. After this, true decentralization becomes possible within a global moral and legal framework, and **a new golden age** begins. The Tibetans expect all this to happen after about three more centuries.

Such a prophecy helps the Tibetans understand the holocaust precipitated by the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet beginning in 1959 **as part of the agonizing process of the unification of the world**. Like all thinking Buddhists, they hold that the inner workings of the individual’s heart is capable of preventing mutual and global destruction by manifesting enlightened principles in life.

They regard **technology** as being basically useful, but only as good as the wisdom and compassion of those who wield it. Most importantly, they see this planet as having a positive destiny, not as a mere stepping-stone for a heavenly ascent, nor as a mere accident in a galactic chemical ocean.

They see this world as an emerging Buddha Land, a land of enlightenment and compassion, in which it is crucial that those who can see through the sometimes horrific surface appearances work to help others see that it is only fear and hatred that cause sufferings, and not some fundamental inadequacy of life and its environment. And they readily acknowledge that ultimately some higher power must intervene, when people’s hearts and minds are ready. Their optimism is amazing, and they are rarely discouraged in their small individual efforts, however hopelessly insufficient they may appear to be. (R.F. Thurman, *Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism*, n.d.: 32)

23. CULTS

Nichiren (1222-1282)

As a result of the fears of the Dharma-ending age, palpably suggested by the various national disasters hitting Japan [22], the people desperately invested their faith in Amidism. The Buddhist prophet **Nichiren** (1222-1282), however, viewed all these calamities as the result of the people giving themselves up to “false” teachings, especially caused by the rising popularity of Honen's *nembutsu* movement. Nichiren prophesied that the wellbeing of the nation would only be assured if the Pure Land sect was banned, and the true belief in the Lotus Sutra promoted.

Nichiren is unique in the history of Buddhism in that he was **totally uncompromising in his vision of the Buddhist utopia**. Nichiren's ideas drew the most enthusiasm from the warrior class. Although a failure in his own lifetime, his sect continued to grow during the violent years of the latter half of the 15th century and most of the 16th, up to the Tokugawa period. In modern times, the Nichiren sect finds its most radical expression in the **Nichiren-shōshū** and the lay organization, **Sōka Gakkai**, which in Singapore is known as Singapore Sōka Association. [Piyasilo 1988d: 137]

Komeitō

The **Komeitō** or Clean Government Party is a Japanese political party formed by the Sōka Gakkai. Its rapid growth in the 1960s alarmed traditional parties of both right and left. After the 1962 elections of the 250-seat upper house of the Japanese Diet, **Sōka Gakkai** held 15 seats and replaced the Democratic Socialists as Japan's third party.

The Komeitō was founded in **1964**, and in July 1965 its representation in the upper house increased to 20. In the elections of January 1967, 25 Komeitō candidates won seats in the 486-seat lower house. Their representation grew to 47 seats in 1969, and by 1979 Komeitō members held 57 seats in the lower house.

In late 1970, members of the Sōka Gakkai and Komeitō became concerned at charges that they hoped to introduce a fascist regime in Japan and to impose Nichiren-shōshū as the state religion. As a result, the party **renounced any formal ties to the Sōka Gakkai**, although a relationship remains.

Singapore Soka Association

In recent times, mainly through the efforts of its president, Daisaku Ikeda, the Soka Gakkai has matured into a more open organization in its growing involvement in social projects and greater dialogue with other Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. This new development was regarded by the Nichiren monks (Nichiren Shōshū) as **a betrayal of Nichiren's original struggle and ideas**. The situation reached a point when in the early 1990s the Nichiren Shōshū **actually excommunicated the Sōka Gakkai**, which as such became an independent organization.

With the impending presence of the **Nichiren Shōshū** in Singapore, **the Singapore Soka Association** has stepped up its attempt at dialogue with mainstream Buddhists. The main stumbling-block to this dialogue however remains the same: the Soka Nichirenists are still **unwilling to allow their members to be open to the ideas and activities of mainstream Buddhists**; they only welcome outsiders to participate in their own public activities.

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

This exclusivist policy of the Soka Nichirenists is not unique in Buddhist history as it is also the policy of **the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO)**, founded by Sangharakshita in 1967.

Although generally rejected by mainstream Buddhists (which often bears the brunt of FWBO criticism), the FWBO is often accepted by more open-minded Buddhists. However, the FWBO (certainly in its formative days in the 1970s and 1980s) has a tacit ban on “outside” teachers giving teachings to the FWBO.

Like the Jōdo Shin founder, **Shinran** (1173-1263), the first Buddhist priest to public marry and declare himself to be **hisohizoku** (“neither monk or layman”), Sangharakshita (who has remained single, living in a men’s community since founding his Order) regards himself and his Order Members as “neither lay nor ordained”.

Was the Buddha a *bhikkhu*?

In 1993, Sangharakshita, wrote *Forty-Three Years Ago: Reflections on my Bhikkhu Ordination on the Occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Western Buddhist Order*, in which he basically (consciously or unconsciously) tries to resolve his non-celibate lifestyle with his monkhood by attempting to make **a distinction between a “Vinaya-style” monasticism and a “Sūtra-style” monasticism** (1995: 12). By the latter, he means “a full time spiritual life defined by commitment and practice rather than technical status, and to recognize, even, that a ‘bad’ monk might be the better Buddhist than a good one”! (1995:10).

Only **Ajahn Brahmavamso** (from the Thai forest tradition) [38] responded to this challenge by proving, on the basis of his knowledge of and training in the Vinaya, that Sangharakshita actually had received a valid ordination, albeit for a short period of time. In 1995, Sangharakshita replied Brahmavamso in a small book entitled *Was the Buddha a Bhikkhu?*, an aggressive attack on the Theravada establishment, in particular on Ajahn Brahmavamso.

In this second book, Sangharakshita attempts to establish that **the Buddha himself did not receive an ordination** and was therefore of the same non-ordained status as himself! The Buddha, however, led a **totally celibate** life but Sangharakshita did not; above all, the Buddha was **the first and only fully enlightened one** in this part of our history. (*Golden Drum* Oct 1987 No. 6: 12; *Shabda* October 1988:91; Harvey 2000: 429.)

The Buddha was a *bhikkhu*

The Buddha was clearly a *bhikkhu*, in more ways than one, that is, by recognition from others (Bimbisāra, Sn 405-424; Sela Sn 551 = Tha 821) and by his own enlightenment (Sn 87 f., 513 f.). When king Milinda asked the question “Was the Buddha ordained?” Nāgasena answered:

Great king, when the Buddha attained omniscience at the foot of the Bodhi tree, that was for him his ordination. There was no conferring of ordination upon him by others by the way that he has laid down for his disciples. (Miln 76)

The Paṭisambhidā, magga and the Niddesa, however, speak of three kinds of *bhikkhu*: the good worldling (*kalyāṇaputhujjana*), the learner (*sekha*) and the Arhat (Pm 1:176; Nm 465 = Nc 477b). A “good or noble worldling” (*kalyāṇa, puthujjana*) is an ordinary person, “**layman or monk** who is still possessed of all the 10 fetters (*saṃyojana*)* binding [him] to the round of rebirths, and therefore has not yet reached any of the four stages of holiness” but who has “knowledge conforming to the Truths” (*saccānulomika ñāṇa*)* “and earnestly strives to understand and practise the Teaching” (*Buddhist Dictionary*: “*puthujjana*”; see DhsA:PR 451 & Commentaries to D no 1, M no. 1).

[The PED is in error in saying that the “good worldling” in defining it only as “a layman of good character” and only mentioning two types of *bhikkhu*, omitting the Arhat (see “*bhikkhu*”, PED 504).]

[***Ten fetters**: self-view, doubt, adherence to rites and rituals, sensual lust, repulsion, attachment to form-existence, attachment to formless-existence, conceit, restlessness, ignorance (S 5:61, A 5:13, Vbh 377). On **saccānulomika ñāṇa**, see *Buddhist Dictionary*, under “*Visuddhi* (9)”.]

Sangharakshita might have a case for becoming a “Sutra-type bhikkhu” or a “lay monk” or “one neither lay nor ordained”—the first to do so, to boot—on the strength of the Paṭisambhidā and Niddesa passages (that he failed to mention). On the other hand, to oversimplify matters, Sangharakshita’s ordination would not have been problematic if he had (upon realizing its technical “invalidity”) officially renounced it and continue his Buddhist work as a “good” layperson. Then again, perhaps he was hoping to have **the benefit of both worlds**, to have his cake and eat it.

Apotheosis

Nichiren, towards the latter part of his life, in 1271, when exiled to Sado island, came to regard himself as **the embodiment of the Jogyo Bosatsu** (Viśiṣṭacāritra Bodhisattva), who is mentioned in the chapter 15 [ch. 14 of Sanskrit ed.] of the Lotus Sutra as the leader of a vast army of Bodhisattvas who emerge from below the earth, signifying for Nichiren, the release of the lowly from injustice. By this incarnation, Nichirenists believe that Nichiren contains the “life-force of the true Buddha...proving himself to be the original Buddha of Supreme Wisdom” (Piyasilo 1988d: 93f.)

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In another radical move, Sangharakshita recently wrote **his own sādhana** (visualization exercise for guru pūjā) based on a Refuge Tree with Sakyamuni at the centre and Sangharakshita himself sitting prominently right up front, surrounded by Bodhisattvas, lineage gurus and divine beings (Vessantara 1998:320 f). He has also prefixed his Sanskrit name with the toponym, *Urgyen*, the birthplace of Padma-sambhava, with whom he apparently identifies himself, perhaps even of whom he regards himself as an incarnation. Sangharakshita, in his sunset years, is now **Urgyen Sangharakshita**. [Traditionally, such a toponym identifies the bearer’s birthplace or ordination place (commonly used in Sinhalese monks’ names).]

<Slide> The Buddha’s teaching against cults

In the **Lohicca Sutta** (D no. 12), the Buddha makes an important remark against cults. The Buddha lists three kinds of monastic teachers (that is those who have renounced the world) who are **blameworthy**:

- (1) one who has gone forth, but has not gained the goal of asceticism (sainthood); but his pupils neither listen to nor practise what he teaches;
- (2) **one who has gone forth, but has not gained the goal of asceticism; but his pupils listen to and practise what he teaches, “they rouse the thought of enlightenment, and the teacher’s instructions are not flouted”;**
- (3) one who has gone forth, and who has gained the goal of asceticism; but his pupils neither listen to nor practices what he teaches. (D 1:233)

The second teacher concerns us here, as he is the equivalent of what today is a **cult leader**. The Buddha declares that it is as if such a teacher, “leaving his own field, were to think that another’s field needs weeding” (D 1:233).

An important implication of this passage is that a renunciate (monk or nun) should not teach Dharma unless he has at least attained Stream-winning. Interestingly, the sutta is silent with regards to **the laity teaching the Dharma**.

BUDDHISM BEYOND ASIA

24. THE WEST: EARLY BUDDHIST CONTACTS

When Buddhism spread westward in modern times, it first reached Europe before going to the Americas. European contacts with Buddhism went back to ancient times and later on as an important result of **European colonialism** in the East. However, there were important historical factors in Europe itself that favoured the planting of Buddhism.

Hellenistic expansion

Long before Alexander, there was mutual influence, for indirect contact between Greece and India by the trade routes. In the form in which they are known the Greek fables, for example, are older, but “this may be an accident of transmission” (Angus Stewart Fletcher, *Ency. Brit.* 15th ed. 1983 7:138f). The fable was apparently **first used in India as a vehicle of Buddhist instruction**. Some of the Jātakas or birth stories of the Buddha, which relate some of his experiences in previous incarnations mostly as animals, resemble Greek fables and are used to point to a moral.

The Indian expedition of **Alexander the Great** (327-325 BCE) opened up the “land of the philosophers” to the West, which competed with ancient Egypt as a source of Gnosis, spiritual wisdom. Contact continued along the trade routes, along which the **aretologies** (miraculous stories of gods and heroes) of both worlds traveled and mingled. Some of these myths can be found in the Bodhisattva legends. There are also scattered references to *Boutta* in the ancient Greek texts.

Christian crusades

Jerusalem, sacred to all the Abrahamic religions, was captured by the Arabs in 637, and fell to the Seljuk Turks in 1071, stopping Christian pilgrimages there and threatening Christendom itself. This led to the eight **Crusades** (1096-1270). At the same time, there was a legend of **Prestor John**, believed to be a priest-king ruling in over a Christian state in India. It is likely that this legend was based on certain Biblical and Patristic passages, and the observed similarity of Tibetan and Catholic religions.

All this motivated Europeans to go the East where they encountered eastern religions. We have factual accounts like *The Journey of William of Rubruck* (1220-1293), who visited **Kublai Khan** in China, as did Marco Polo (1271-1295). Kublai was a powerful patron of Buddhism and one of his court advisors was the Tibetan Sakya abbot, **Phags-pa** (1235-80). (Almond 1986:91-101.)

Islamic (especially Persian) literature contain many tales with Indian themes. Most, if not all, of the stories of the *Kitāb Kalīlah wa Dimna*, a work translated by the Persian Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (d. 760), for example, can be traced to the Indian *Panca,tantra* (the “Five Chapters”, known as “Tales of Bidpai” in Europe) and other Indian sources. Through their Crusades, western Christians encountered such oriental stories through the Muslims.

The legend of **Saints Barlaam and Josaphat**, commemorated on 27 November (that is, until the recent “revision” of the Catholic hagiography) by the Catholic church, is derived from the Buddha story. “Josaphat” is the corruption of “Bodhisattva”.

Exploration and missions

On 22 November 1497, the Portuguese navigator **Vasco da Gama** (c. 1460-1524) rounded the Cape of Good Hope (the southern tip of Africa) and successfully reached India, and so opened the sea-route to the Far East in the European quest for “gospel, glory and gold”. Discovering the East to be “heathen”, the Catholic Church, through their various monastic orders, tried to convert it.

Various **Catholic missionaries** sailed east: Francis Xavier (1506-1552) to India, Malacca, China and Japan; Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) to China, and Ippolito Desideri (1684-1733) to Tibet. For various

reasons, mostly through infighting and the human weaknesses of their own church leaders, they had very limited success.

Nevertheless, there were some **mutual influences**, for example, Japanese aristocrats influenced Portuguese dress and the Chinese calendar was revised under Jesuit influence, while the West gained grammars and dictionaries of Eastern languages and **Latin versions of Buddhist texts**.

25. FACTORS FAVOURING BUDDHISM IN THE WEST

European enlightenment

Beginning in the 17th century and climaxing in the 18th century, **the European Enlightenment** looked up more to **reason and science** rather than the Bible for explanations of life and the universe. Many people, such as the Scottish philosopher and historian **David Hume** (1171-76) saw that there was a “natural religion” held in common by people of all cultures, albeit best expressed in Christianity.

In the 19th century advances in **geology** (the history of the earth is longer than Biblical scholars claimed) and **Biblical studies** itself led to a weakening in Biblical literalism. Darwin’s **theory of evolution** further seriously cast doubt on the “revealed” Biblical account of creation as history.

Modernist and “scientific” religion?

This atmosphere of doubt, discovery and freedom culminated in the last two decades of the 19th century, when Buddhism in a **modernist form** was fashionable amongst the middle class in Britain, Germany and America.

Like Christianity, Buddhism has a **noble ethical system**, but Buddhism teaches **self-help** without dependence on God or priests, as in Christianity. Like science, Buddhism was **based on experience**, saw the universe as ruled by a **cosmic law** (or a personal creator), and did not regard humans and animals as radically distinct. Yet Buddhism provided a **human-centred mysticism** which cold science totally lacked.

In 1975, **Fritjof Capra** published his ground-breaking book entitled *The Tao of Physics: an exploration of the parallels between modern physics and eastern mysticism* (Boulder: Shambhala, 1975), which was followed by various works in a similar tone by other scientists, and other more exploitative titles on the “Tao” of almost everything. The highlight of the book is chapter 14 entitled “Emptiness and Form”, where Capra declares that “the distinction between matter and empty space finally had to be abandoned” and then quoting the Heart Sutra: “Form is emptiness, and emptiness is indeed form” (1975:222 f.).

Buddhism is not science, nor science Buddhism

The 1980s might be said to be a high point when modernist Buddhists piously delighted in **identifying Buddhism with modern science**, a trend that began probably with Protestant Buddhism in Sri Lanka [34]. For good reason, scientists who are Buddhists or influenced by Buddhism have a more sober outlook against the modernist claim of a “scientific” Buddhism.

After all, scientist **Ken Wilber** writes, “the physicist is looking at *nothing but a set of highly abstract differential equations*—not at “reality” itself, but at mathematical symbols of reality” (1985:8) but

...in mystical consciousness, **Reality is apprehended directly and immediately**, meaning without any mediation, any symbolic elaboration, any conceptualization, or any abstractions; subject and object become one in a timeless and spaceless act that is beyond any and all forms of mediation...beyond words, symbols, names, thoughts, images. (Ken Wilber 1985:7)

Wilber takes pain to point out (echoing the Buddha's admonition in the Chapter on the Fool, A 1:59, regarding those who misrepresent him) that

...to even claim that there are direct and central similarities between the findings of physics and mysticism is necessarily to claim that the latter is fundamentally merely a symbolic abstraction, because it is absolutely true that the former is exactly that. At the very least, **it represents a profound confusion of absolute and relative truth**...this is what repelled the physicists in this volume [his book *Quantum Questions*]. (Ken Wilber 1985:8)

What attracts scientists like **Albert Einstein** to Buddhism is, in his own words, “**a cosmic religious feeling...which knows no dogma and no God conceived in man's image**” (Wilber, 1985:102). For this reason, Einstein has declared and been quoted *ad nauseum*:

The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. It should transcend a personal God and avoid dogmas and theology. Covering both the natural and the spiritual, it should be based on a religious sense arising from the experience of all things, natural and spiritual, as a meaningful unity. Buddhism answers this description. (Einstein, *Los Angeles Times*, 1954)

26. BUDDHIST INFLUENCES ON WESTERN CULTURE

The early non-Buddhist Westerner usually did not distinguish Buddhism from other Oriental systems. In this mixed form of monolithic Buddhism, certain Buddhist ideas have influenced Western intellectuals and truth-seekers.

The German philosopher **Arthur Schopenhauer** (1788-1860) adopted some Buddhist ideas in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1818; “The World as Will and Idea, 1883-86). He in turn influenced **Richard Wagner** (1813-83) in the composition of the opera *Tristan und Isolde* (1865). Wagner also attempted an opera on the Buddha but never completed it.

Both Schopenhauer and Wagner influenced **Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche** (1844-1900), who developed the **Übermensch** (Superman) theory, expressed particularly in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-92). This superior man is not the product of evolution, but rather, would emerge when any man with superior potential completely masters himself and strikes off conventional Christian “herd morality” to create his own values, which are completely rooted on this earth.

The lecturer, poet and essayist **Ralph Waldo Emerson** (1803-82) and the philosopher, poet and activist **Henry David Thoreau** (1817-62), both New England Transcendentalists, incorporated elements of Buddhism into their theory and practice. **Transcendentalism** is an idealistic system of thought based on a belief in the essential unity of all creation, the innate goodness of man, and the supremacy of insight over logic and experience for the revelation of the deepest truths.

The novels of **Herman Hesse** (1877-1962), especially *Siddhartha* (1922), a lyrical novel based on the early life of the Buddha, remain popular. Hesse won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1946.

The German philosopher **Oswald Spengler** (1880-1936) presents his two-volume *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918; “Decline of the West”, 1926-28), a major contribution to social theory, in a Buddhist manner. This study on a philosophy of history contends that most civilizations must pass through a life cycle of creativity followed by decline, and the cycle resumes.

Many openly soteriological organizations (that seek spiritual truth and salvation) have been influenced by Buddhist ideas. The **Theosophical Society** was founded by Col. Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907) and Blavatsky (née Helene Hahn von Rottenstern, 1831-91) in 1875. Although unlike Buddhism in many

ways, Theosophy highly regarded Buddhism, which encouraged interest in Buddhism amongst many American and Europeans. In many books of the period, Theosophy was called “Esoteric Buddhism”.

27. BUDDHISM IN THE AMERICAS

The United States

The US is a melting pot of cultures and religions. In recent times, all the Buddhist traditions and lineages are found in this open society. An American Buddhist, **Rick Fields**, has written a comprehensive book on Buddhism in America, entitled *How the Swans Came to the Lake* (Shambhala, 2nd ed. 1986).

Buddhism entered the US in two main ways: through the culture of **Asian immigrants** and through invitation. In the 1860s and 1870s, hundreds of thousands of Chinese immigrants came to the West Coast (mostly California) of the US and Canada to work in gold mines and on the railroads. After 1882, Japanese labourers followed.

From 1868, significant numbers of Japanese and Chinese immigrants came to work on the sugar plantations of **Hawaii**, which was annexed by the US in 1898. Asian migration to **California** was halted in 1902, but continued in Hawaii, which thus became an important centre for the transmission of Buddhism to America.

Chinese religion kept a low profile in North America, though a Pure Land mission was active among the Chinese. Most Chinese religions are **Shenist**, that is, the traditional syncretic folk religion, mostly a mixture of ancestor worship, Daoism and Buddhism. However, since 1950 the Shenist temples began to decline as their members age and die.

The Buddhist Churches of America

Japanese immigrants were more active in religious matters, especially the Jōdo Shin school. In 1889, the priest Sōryū Kagahi from the **Honpa Honganji** sub-sect arrived in Hawaii and established the first Japanese temple there. This sub-sect was for a long time the largest Buddhist denomination in Hawaii and North America. In 1889, Sokei Sonada came to San Francisco and established the Honpa Honganji as the **North American Buddhist Mission**.

The Second World War was a painful period for Japanese Americans who were interned in prison camps in the US since she was at war with Japan. During this period, to show where their hearts were, the American Japanese re-organized the Mission as **the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA)**, and became independent of its Japanese parent body. We have here a good example where Buddhism is used as a **social cement** to keep the Japanese Buddhist community together in the US.

To help pass on its traditions, the BCA organized a **Young Men's Buddhist Association** (1900), Sunday Schools, Buddhist women's societies and educational programme. Such westernized activities had also developed in Japan itself. The BCA consciously adopted **Christian terminology** so as to be identified as part of the dominant culture of America. Besides calling themselves a “Church”, they also adopted Christian-style religious services held on Sundays, used organs and sang hymns such as “Buddha, lover of my soul...”

After the War, two **institutes of training priests** were established. One of the Church's members was an astronaut killed in the 1986 Challenger space shuttle disaster. In 1987, the US Defence Department allowed the Church to commission **Buddhist chaplains** to work in the military. In that same year, the Church claimed 170,000 adherents with 66 clergy and 63 churches in the US. Most adherents are of Japanese descent.

Other parts of America

In **Canada**, in 1985, the **Buddhist Churches of Canada** had 18 member churches and a membership of around 10,000. Japanese immigration to **Brazil** began in 1909. By 1990, there were around 500,000 people of Japanese descent in Brazil. Various sects of Buddhism are found there: Zen, Jōdo Shin, Jōdo, Shingon, Tendai, Nichiren and Brazilian Buddhists, numbering between 100,000 and 200,000, mainly of Japanese descent.

28. OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

Australia

Buddhism probably first arrived in **Australia** in 1882 with a small group of immigrants from Sri Lanka. Most Australian Buddhists, however, are from the Asian continent, mostly from **Chinese immigration**. Chinese migration to Australia had been concentrated in two periods: the latter half of the 19th century and the three decades since the 1960s, coinciding with the major watersheds in Australian history.

In the first period, Australia's population grew rapidly and the associated development of **nationalism** culminated in the federation of the six former British colonies into the Australian nation in **1901**. In the second period, **multiculturalism** replaced assimilation as the official policy on inter-ethnic relations.

In the 19th century, despite the transitory nature of their sojourn, **the Chinese** built joss houses or temples, sponsored often by local associations. These places of worship accommodated not only the ancestral tablets and bodies of the deceased awaiting repatriation to China, but also new arrivals, the elderly and the indigent.

As the Chinese population grew, so too did the Buddhist congregations. The older Chinese joss houses were renovated, sometimes by non-Chinese heritage groups. Figures for the breakdown of **Chinese by religious affiliation** are as follows:

1986

Christian	33 %	
Non-Christian	17 %	
No religion	50 %	(including ambiguous affiliation)

Of the 1986 "Non-Christian" category, nearly half were Buddhists from Vietnam, while a fifth were Buddhists from Malaysia and Brunei.

1991

Christian	25.0%	
Buddhist	12.5 %	(31.3% Vietnamese; 28.6 Chinese)
No religion	50.0 %	
No response	12.5 %	

In the **1991** figures, over a third of the Vietnamese-born Chinese were Buddhists, less than 10% of those from the PRC were Buddhist. A quarter of the Malaysian Chinese described themselves as Buddhists, a rate that was even higher than among the Taiwan-born.

The arrival of Vietnamese refugees was a watershed in the expansion of Buddhism, now **the fastest growing religion in Australia**, increasing 300% between 1981 and 1991. Large cities like Melbourne and Sydney have their own Buddhist temples, from such like the Bright Moon temples supported by local Vietnamese Chinese community, to more lavish ones built with international support from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The **Foguangshan missions** have their own temples in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. The largest Buddhist temple in the southern hemisphere is their **Nantian temple** (1995) at Wollongong, 75 km south of Sydney. Their activities include educational, cultural and religious programmes serving Chinese and non-Chinese alike.

Other places

In **Africa**, the first Buddhist society was started probably in 1917. During the 1920s and 1930s, low-caste Indians who were indentured labourers in South Africa, mainly Natal, faced growing discrimination through the apartheid policy. As such, some of them westernized, while some turned to Buddhism, attracted by what they saw as **a liberating teaching free of caste and superstition**.

A Buddhist monastery was established in Tanzania in 1927 by immigrant labourers from Sri Lanka. Sinhalese migrants also started Maha Bodhi Societies in Ghana and Zaire, and a Buddhist society in Zambia, where the indigenous population are showing growing interest in Buddhism.

In recent times, however, a growing number of white South Africans are becoming interested in Buddhism. The Foguang San has also set up the first Buddhist monastery in South Africa, the **Nan Hua Monastery**, complete with black Sangha members.

BUDDHISM AND THE WEST

29. EARLY BUDDHIST GROUPS

The first Buddhist groups established for the practice of Buddhism in the West were **often independent of academic societies and without any contact with Asia**. As such, early Western Buddhism often held **misconceptions** such as a monolithic idea of Buddhism, that all Buddhism was the same in doctrine and practice, and was non-sectarian.

Many articles in the Buddhist societies's journals clearly show that they were thus avoiding the errors of traditional sectarian Christianity. They might have been **implicitly influenced by the Christian Ecumenical Movement**, began in 1900. Buddhists in present-day Europe and North America, however, are in **close contact with Buddhist scholars and traditional practitioners both locally and from Asia**.

France

In 1929, **Les Amis du Bouddhisme** was founded in Paris by a remarkable Chinese monk, **T'ai-hsü** (1889-1947) and G. Constance Lounsberry. T'ai-hsü was the force behind the reformist "humanistic Buddhism" in Asia [35]. The magazine *La pensée bouddhique* ("Buddhist Thought") begun in 1939 with some contacts with Tibet, Cambodia, Siam and Vietnam.

United Kingdom

The Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland was founded in London in 1907 by T.W. Rhys Davids [30]. *The Buddhist Review* was published from 1909 to 1922. **The Buddhist Lodge** of the Theo-

sophical Society was founded in 1924 by Travers Christmas Humphreys. It published *Buddhism in England* from 1926-43. In 1943, the Lodge was renamed **the Buddhist Society** and the periodical *the Middle Way*, which is still in circulation.

A **Sinhalese vihara** opened in London in 1954. The Tibet Society was formed in London in 1959. In 1967, Chogyam Trungpa Rimpoché founded the **Samye Ling** (the first and largest Tibetan centre in the West) at Eskaldamuir, a village in isolated SW Scotland. Trungpa himself moved to the US in 1970.

The English Sangha Trust was formed in 1962 [39]. A **Thai wat** opened in Wimbledon, outside London, in 1966.

<Slide> **Pelliot. Max Müller. Rhys Davids.**

30. EARLY BUDDHIST STUDIES

The first Buddhist texts in Europe were Sanskrit and Tibetan ones (mostly Mahayana) from Nepal, collected by the British Resident **B.H. Hodgson** (1800-94). The French scholar, **Eugène Burnouf** (1801-52) used these Sanskrit texts for his *Introduction à l'histoire du bouddhisme indien* (1845; "Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism") and a translation to the Lotus Sutra (1852). He also wrote *Essai sur le Pali...* (1826; "Essay on Pali...")

In Sri Lanka, **Christian missionaries** began to study Buddhism, even Pali, but their accounts tended to be distorted because of their evangelical agenda, presenting Buddhism as a pessimistic pseudo-religion. From around 1800, this distortion was rectified by the work of various European scholars.

Thus Protestant Britain holding Ceylon, looked for the pure Gospel of Buddha and found the Pali Tipiṭaka, while Catholic France, holding Indo-China, looked for scholastic *Summae* and found the great Sanskrit commentaries. (Roger Corless in Prebish 1975: 249)

Denmark

Viktor Fausbøll published the **Dhammapada**, with copious extracts from its Commentary (1855). From 1858 on, he published many of the Jātakas, and in 1877 began his monumental edition of the **Jātaka** book.

[**Carl Wilhelm**] **V. Trenckner** (1824-1891) produced an edition of the **Milinda,pañha**, a model of editorial workmanship. During his 35 years of academic work, he initiated the **Critical Pali Dictionary**, first published in 1924 but has since been taken over by an international team of scholars. However, due to its monumental scope, so far only 3 volumes have been completed, covering only about a third of the Pali alphabet. [40]

France

Besides Burnouf, there were other famous French explorers and scholars who brought Europe into closer contact with Buddhism. **Paul Pelliot** (1878-1945) of the *École Française d'Extrême-Orient* [French School of the Far East], Hanoi (later Saigon, then Paris) collected manuscripts from Central Asia and published *La Mission Pelliot en Asie Centrale* in 1924.

Louis de la Vallée Poussin (1859-1938) worked on the Abhidharma and Mahayana, publishing *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu* (1923-31), *Nirvana* (1925) and *La Siddhi de Hiuen-tsang* (Vijñapti, -mātratā, siddhi) (1928-48).

Russia

Fedor Ippolitovich Shcherbatskoi (Th. Stcherbatsky) (1866-1942), an awesome Russian aristocrat, worked on epistemology and logic, and produced *Buddhist Logic* (1930). Stcherbatsky wrote *The Conception of the Buddhist Nirvana* (Leningrad, 1927) as a response to Poussin's *Nirvana*.

Stcherbatsky's *Conception of the Buddhist Nirvana* contains his interpretation of Nagarjuna's thought, in response to Poussin's views on Madhyamaka, serving as a landmark in the great ongoing Russo-Belgian debate. It was also Stcherbatsky's major contribution to the theory of Nirvana and represents an important study in the evolution of the conception of Nirvana in Europe.

Britain

Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900), German-British, edited the *Sacred Books of the East* translation series (1880-1910), among which are many Buddhist works (such as the Lotus Sutra).

Thomas William Rhys Davids (1843-1922), after completing Foreign Service in Sri Lanka, founded the **Pali Text Society** (PTS) in 1881, overseeing the editing (in roman characters) and translating of the Pali Canon, and the compilation of the *Pali-English Dictionary* (1921-25, 738 pp) with 160,000 citations, including etymologies. (The work was completed by William Stede.) [32]

His wife, **Caroline Augusta Foley Rhys Davids** (1858-42) succeeded him as president of the Pali Text Society, continuing to oversee the *Sacred Books of the East* series (begun in 1895) and arguing for a "positive" original Buddhism antedating the "negative" accretions of Abhidhamma.

Mark Aurel Stein (1862-1943), Hungarian-British, followed the route of Alexander the Great and published *Serindia* (1921) and *Innermost Asia* (1928). To Stein and Pelliot, we owe the rediscovery of Dunhuang (Tun-huang).

Germany

German academic interest centred mainly on Indology and linguistics, but **Herman Oldenburg** (1854-1920) produced important studies of "**Urbuddhismus**" (original Buddhism) in *Buddha: Sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde* (1881; "Buddha: His life, his Teaching, his Work") and *Die Lehre der Upanishaden und die Anfänge des Buddhismus* (1915; "The Teaching of the Upanishads and the Origin of Buddhism").

Transylvania

Körösi Csoma Sándor (1784-1842) of Transylvania (in eastern Europe) travelled to Tibet in search of the original Hungarians. He compiled a *Tibetan-English Dictionary* and *Grammar* (1834).

USA

Henry Clarke Warren (1854-1899) of Cambridge, MA, overcame a crippling physical deformity due to a spinal injury to produce *Buddhism in Translations* (1896), a still unsurpassed anthology from the Pali Canon. Together with **Charles Rockwell Lanman**, he launched the **Harvard Oriental Series** in 1891. The most popular in the series are volumes 28, 29 and 30, *Buddhist Legends* (translation of the stories of the Dhammapada Commentary) by **Eugene Watson Burlingame**, Pali lecturer (1917-18) in Yale University.

31. ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENTS TODAY

Christian scholars

Surprisingly, **Roman Catholic priests** are amongst the top-notch scholars who have made groundbreaking and major contributions to Buddhist studies.

The Belgian Thomist priest, **Etienne Lamotte** (1903-93), gained indisputable international recognition by editing, translating and commenting on some of the most significant works of Mahayana Buddhism (such as the *Suraṅgama, samādhi Sūtra* (1936) and the *Mahāyāna, saṅgraha* of Asaṅga (1938-39). His *magnum opus* is the voluminous *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien, des origines à l'ère Saka* (1958), translated as *History of Indian Buddhism, From the Origins to the Saka Era* (1988). For his erudite and open-minded scholarship, he was declared “Expert in Buddhist Scriptures” a few weeks before his death.

Another famous Christian scholar of Buddhism is the Jesuit priest **Heinrich Dumoulin** (1944-), who is one of the world’s foremost Zen scholars. He wrote on Zen for the *Encyclopedia of Religion* (Macmillan). His *magnum opus* is the acclaimed two-volume *Zen Buddhism: A History* (1959 in German; 1963 English translation; 1988 revised English translation).

The Trappist monk and mystic, **Thomas Merton** (1915-1968), is well known for his dialogue with Buddhism. The Trappist Order is famous for its vow of silence. For Father Merton, his experience of Zen meditation, besides making him an authority in that Buddhist tradition, has also enriched his own Christian roots. In fact, he has written 29 books, such as *Mystics and Zen Masters* (NY: Dell Publishing, 1961), inspired by his quest for “trans-Christian ecumenism through religious experimentation” (Ency. Brit. 12:342h).

Since the late 20th century, we see a growing number of Christian scholars whose open-minded scholarship, especially in comparative religion and religious dialogue, is of such a high standard of learning and honesty that they could be used as textbooks in any faith (that is equally open-minded, of course). Such scholars include illustrious names like **Hans Küng** (Germany) and **John Hick** (Britain) [40], whose remarkable works can be found in the bookshops and libraries of Singapore.

Chairs in Buddhist Studies

Buddhism is found in many university curricula in Asia, Australia, Europe and N. America, usually as a branch of Comparative Religion or Asian Studies. In 1988, **Robert Thurman** was appointed to the first endowed chair in the United States in the field of Tibetan Buddhism. He is the **Jey Tsong Khapa Professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies** at Columbia University, New York, USA.

In 1995, **Peter Harvey** was appointed the first professor of “Buddhist Studies” (University of Sunderland) in the UK. He is also a practising Theravada Buddhist and teaches meditation. He has an interest in **cross-cultural development of religion**.

Integrated Buddhist Studies programmes are now growing, such as the one at the University of Wisconsin (1961) under **Richard Hugh Robinson** (1926-70). A similar programme is being offered in the University of Sunderland, UK, under the leadership of Peter Harvey (www.sunderland.ac.uk).

Unlike the colonial days, when Buddhism was a curiosity or something to be exploited for political reasons, more non-Asian scholars and enthusiasts are becoming practising Buddhists and the number of Buddhist centres and groups are growing the beyond Asia.

32. INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENTS

<Slide>Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Partly because of the Internet explosion, and for various historical and technical reasons **English is now the global language**. Understandably, many informed Buddhist scholars, especially in countries

whose predominant language is not English (like Thailand and Japan) realize that if they were to reach out to a wider audience, they need to use English. Or, if they think and write best in their native tongue, then their works need to be translated into English.

One of the greatest contemporary Buddhist minds is the monk-intellectual and meditation teacher **Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu** (1906-63), who from his forest monastery in south Thailand, away from the centres of power, was able to influence many educated professionals in Thailand, including judges, teachers, educators and doctors. His approach is generally this-worldly, such as his **interpretation of rebirth** as referring to a series of mental states within this life itself. However, one should aim to be “reborn” into a new kind of selfless, Nibbanic living, beyond the birth and death of ego-thoughts. Such a “**theology**” (rational inquiry into religious questions) of Buddhism [40] easily gains acceptance amongst the scientists and scientific-minded intellectuals of Thailand.

Buddhadasa’s appreciation of some Mahayana ideas has led him to translate some of its sutras into Thai. The **art** he uses for spiritual education is drawn from various traditions and religions. He teaches that **both Dhamma and God**, properly understood, refer to a reality beyond concepts. Although his philosophical approach is this-worldly, he is critical of monks who are involved in development projects, which he regards as inappropriate.

<Slide>Phra Prayudh Payutto

Thailand’s leading monk-scholar is **Ven. Prayudh Payutto** who, despite holding a high ecclesiastical rank, maintains his original ordination name in his writings. This idiosyncrasy reflects two important ideas he holds vital: the need to bring the deeper teachings of Buddhism within reach of the common people and the need to address contemporary problems.

His *magnum opus* written in Thai, entitled ***Buddha, dharm*** (Bangkok: Dharmasatharn, 1982), reveals his comprehensive command of Buddhist doctrines which he expresses in clear contemporary language. Sections of this work have been translated (by Bruce Evans) as *Good, Evil and Beyond...Kamma in the Buddha’s Teachings* (1992) and *Dependent Origination, the Buddhist Law of Conditionality* (1994), two of the clearest expositions of the subject in the English language.

Another excellent work by Payutto is his ***Dictionary of Buddhism*** in Thai and English (Bangkok, 1985) which was published for free distribution. This work awaits translation since it would greatly benefit those who are interested in Theravada doctrines from the primary sources. Its special usefulness is that Payutto gives his sources both from the Royal Siamese Tipiṭaka and the Canon of the Pali Text Society [30].

Payutto’s socially engaged side is found in his vision of human-centred economics, as expressed in his ***Buddhist Economics: A middle way for the Market place*** (1994). He advocates ethical considerations in economic behaviour. For example, he criticizes the reluctance of investors to invest where there is social disorder, which ironically needs economic growth the most (1994: 24).

Payutto distinguishes between “right consumption” (to satisfy the desire for true well-being) and “wrong consumption (for pleasing sensations and ego-gratification) (1994: 41). Such ideas are also found in the works of **E.F. Schumacher**, such as *Small is Beautiful: A study of economics as if people mattered* (1973), similarly inspired by Buddhist economics.

Buddhist psychology

In the West, especially in the US, there is a great preoccupation with **psychotherapy and self-help groups** partly because of the pressures of urban living and partly because of the alienation of the First World urbanized life. Since Buddhism deals directly with the mind, it is able to offer mind-healing and

self-help services. When Buddhism is offered to Westerners as a **therapy** rather than as a religion it seems to gain wider acceptance.

Similarly, when Buddhism first arrived in **Korea and Japan**, it was looked up to as an **apotropaic** (magical and healing) system. A majority of the Buddhists in Asia today (as in the past) belong to the **folk tradition** of Buddhism [4], taking Buddhism for the spiritual security and support it offers to get through one's daily life.

<Slide> Joy Manné

Westerners generally would meditate so that they can handle stress, a practice that is fast catching on in the East as well with the growing popularity of **lay meditation teachers and groups**. A growing number of psychologists and psychotherapists are studying Buddhism and merging it with their practice into a cross-discipline with greater efficacy of service for their clients. The Buddhist scholar and psychotherapist **Joy Manné**, for example, calls her method **Breathwork**, and has formed an international network centring around Breathwork, which blends traditional breath meditation and modern psychotherapy.

James H. Austin is a trained neurologist with a thorough knowledge of anatomy, physiology and chemistry of the brain, and a Zen practitioner, fully familiar with meditation. His book, ***Zen and the Brain: Towards an understanding of meditation and consciousness*** (1998. xxiv + 844 pp) went through its 5th printing in 2000 within only 2 years of publication. In his book has become a classic on the working of the brain and the effects of meditation on the human personality.

Electronic Buddhism

The Internet today serves as **the Buddha's "long tongue"** (Amitabha Sūtra). Almost every conceivable aspect of Buddhism can be found on the Net. One can easily locate sutras, texts, or any other Buddhist information, or learn Pali, through the various freely available search engines. Informative Buddhist websites are often interconnected like **Indra's Net of Jewels**. Once you browse one site, you are immediately linked up to a mind-boggling maze of Buddhist information and addresses. You only need, for example, to start with www.dharma.per.sg, the author's website and check out the "Links" button.

In the late 1980s, **Prof. Lewis Lancaster** of the University of Berkeley at California, USA, started **the Electronic Buddhist Texts Initiative** (EBTI) to look into the digitization of the Korean Tripiṭaka. Since then he has pioneered or participated in various other initiatives to digitize other Buddhist canons, especially those of East Asian (which entail special problems regarding Asian characters). His current project is the **Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative** (ECAI) (<http://www.ecai.org>)

The whole Pali Canon and its ancillary texts can now be found in compact discs (CDs), through the effort of the **Vipassana Research Institute**, under the spiritual leadership of the meditation teacher Goenka. The Burmese 6th Council Pali Canon—the **Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā CD (CSCD)**, as it is called—is freely available. The text is given in seven alternative scripts: roman, Sinhalese, Burmese, Thai, Khmer, Devanagari, and Mongolian, with an internal search engine.

On the occasion of the Thai king's 60th birthday (1987), a project to put the whole **Siamese Tipiṭaka** was launched. In due course, not only all the 45 volumes of the Siamese Canon was digitalized, but also the 70 volumes of Commentaries and other ancillary texts, totally 115 texts. This compilation also gives the Pali Text Society (PTS) cross-references and the Thai translations. This project, done by the Mahidol University and known as the **Buddhist Scriptures Information** Retrieval or BUDSIR, is today found in some 400 libraries around the world.

The BUDSIR is available on the Net at <http://www.budsir.org/program/> for free browsing. The PTS ***Pali-English Dictionary*** [30] has been put on the Web as part of a program being run in Chicago by

Dr. James Nye (<http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/pali/>). Besides Pali, this Unicode-based website—Digital Dictionaries of South Asia—includes dictionaries of Prakrit, Sanskrit and many other South Asian languages.

Anyone can now easily create a page of Pali in **roman text** and include any other Indian or south-east Asian characters if necessary. This is made possible through the free availability of various **Indian fonts** (Devanagari and roman) and **south and south-east Asian fonts** (Sinhalese, Burmese, Thai, and Khmer). One of the most popular of such fonts is the Times Norman, which K.R. Norman, a Cambridge scholar and a past president of the Pali Text Society, has devised especially for the Pali texts. A helpful and comprehensive site to browse on the subject of **Pali** is <http://members.home.net/j-andrew-shaw/> run by Andy Shaw.

33. JAPANESE SCHOLARSHIP

Buddhism's open secret today is **Japanese Buddhist scholarship**. Anyone who has referred to the works of **Hajime Nakamura** (1912-99), especially his *Indian Buddhism* (Osaka 1980) would notice the wealth of Japanese sources he quotes in his notes and bibliography but which remains untranslated.

Sources of inspiration

The Japanese Buddhist genius ironically was re-awakened as a result of **widespread persecution** that began in the Tokugawa period (1600-1867) and peaked in the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) and modern period (1912-1945). The **reaction to Christianity** also fuelled the Buddhist revival of 1877-1889.

One of the most important Buddhist responses to the persecution and disestablishment of Buddhism in modern Japan was **the effort to modernize Buddhism**, especially by way of westernized scholarship. The Japanese Buddhists founded schools, reorganized their old temple schools and transformed them into universities, even founding new ones. Their spirited response was reflected in the rise of numerous **Buddhist universities**:

- 1882 — Komazawa University, Tokyo (Soto Zen) [founded as a temple in 1759].
- 1905 — Otani University, Kyoto (Jodo Shin-shu) [founded in 1655 as a study centre].
- 1922 — Ryokoku University, Kyoto (Jodo Shin-shu) [started as a temple in 1639].

Other examples include Hana-zono University (Rinzai Zen), Bukkyo University (Jodo Shin-shu), Shuchiin University (Shingon), Koyasan University (Shingon), Rissho University (Nichiren), Taisho University (serving the Jodo Shin, Tendai and Shingon sects), and the Kyoto Women's University (Jodo Shin-shu).

The number of **research institutes** specializing in Buddhism and oriental studies is also growing, e.g. the Nippon Buddhist Research Association and the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies (Indogaku-bukkyogaku-kai). The Japanese Buddhists found **the compatibility of Buddhism with the theories and discoveries of modern science** a redeeming inspiration. They became better equipped to ride the waves of Westernization and modernism and to ward off Christian influence.

Early efforts

In 1876, the eminent Japanese Buddhologist and Sanskrit scholar, **Bun'yū Nanjō** (1849-1927), a priest of the Ōtani branch of the Jōdo Shin sect, went to England to study English and Sanskrit, and to research Buddhist texts in Europe. In the course of his studies, he discovered that *The Buddhist Tripitaka* (1876), Samuel Beal's English-language catalogue of all sutras in the Obaku Edition, was full with errors. Nanjō

corrected Beal's errors and in 1883 published *Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka*, commonly known as *Nanjio's Catalogue*.

The most significant contribution of Japanese scholarship during the Taishō period (1912-26) was the publication of the Japanese Buddhist canons. The first of these Japanese Tripitaka editions was the **Dai Nippon Kōtei Daizōkyō**, popularly known as the Shukusatsu-zōkyō, or Small-type Canon (1880-1885). The second was the **Dai Nippon Kōtei Zōkyō**, generally called the Manji-zōkyō, or Fylfot-letter Tripitaka (1902-1905). The third was the **Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō**, generally called the Taishō Daizōkyō, or Taishō Edition of the Tripiṭaka (1924-1934). Each of these Canons was an enlargement of its predecessors.

The best known of these is the **Taishō Edition**, published through the effort and sacrifices of **Junjirō Takakusu** (1866-1945), a pioneer Japanese Buddhologist. Unlike the other Canons that followed the traditional arrangement of sutras according to whether they were Nikāya Buddhism or Mahayana, the Taishō Edition organized the sutras chronologically, according to the historical development of their teachings.

Modern methods

Most of the modern Japanese Buddhist scholars belong to one of the traditional Buddhist orders of Japan. They responded in a positive manner to the challenges thrown at them by the disestablishment of Buddhism by which their temples lost state patronage. In response to such challenges, they have shifted from their traditional temple-centred traditions to **westernized and modernized education-centred systems** focusing around Buddhist studies.

International scholarly cooperation has provided two positive results on Japanese Buddhist scholarship. Where formerly Japanese knowledge of Buddhism was filtered through Chinese Buddhism, concerned Buddhists hoping for reform now have **a direct knowledge of early Indian Buddhism**.

A second positive feature of Japanese scholarship is its confident application of **western methods of critical scholarship and western philosophy**. Scholars like **Nishida Kitaro** (1870-1945) have brought Japanese Buddhist philosophy to international standards.

Openness and honesty

A third remarkable feature of modern Japanese Buddhist scholarship is its **openness and honesty**. This is clearly evident, for example, in Hajime Nakamura's *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India, China, Tibet, Japan* (1964), where he makes such candid remarks as: "the Japanese frequently misinterpreted the original Chinese texts" (1964:348).

Such openness is more the rule than the exception in modern Japanese scholarship. One of the latest trends in Buddhist scholarship has been called "**Critical Buddhism**" (Hubbard & Swanson, edd. *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The storm over critical Buddhism*, 1997), where one of the scholars, Hakamaya Noriaki, declares: "**Criticism alone is Buddhism**" (1997:vii).

Hakamaya Noriaki and Matsumoto Shirō examine what Buddhism is and it most definitely is not. "Why They Say Zen is Not Buddhism", says the first article; "The Doctrine of *Tathāgata-garbha* is Not Buddhist", says the first article in Part 2 of the book. Such **honesty** is possible mainly because the background is Japan and the critics are Japanese scholars. Japan being a Buddhist nation, Japanese Buddhist scholars always have **a more public voice** than their Western counterparts. These scholars are also **heads of Buddhist temples**, roles which are ancient and important, giving them "sectarian, institutional, political, community, and pastoral roles and voices." (1997:xi)

Being **critical** (that is, seeking the truth through cause and effect reasoning) began with the Buddha himself and has been rooted in Buddhism all the while. We are re-discovering this vital spirit of Buddh-

ism: **the spirit of inquiry and sharing the truth**. In no small way is Japan today **the real stronghold of modern Buddhism**.

As the number of excellent works of the Japanese scholars are translated into English and published, their impact on global Buddhist scholarship and Buddhism in general is being positively felt. It is a matter of time when we will have the full benefit of Japanese Buddhist scholarship as we now have from Western and Australian scholarly progress.

BUDDHISM TODAY

34. BUDDHIST REVIVAL IN SRI LANKA

Protestant Buddhism

However selfish and senseless Christian triumphalism may be, it only reaffirms the superiority of Buddhist openness and wisdom. In Sri Lanka, the efforts of Anglican evangelists were returned in kind by the Sinhalese Buddhists. In response to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Buddhists started their own **The Society for the Propagation of Buddhism** (1862), which printed and distributed Buddhist tracts.

The most exciting exchange between the Anglicans and the Buddhists in Sri Lanka began when the over-confident Anglican Seminary, in 1865, challenged the monks of the local temple to a **public debate**. To their greater surprise, nearly 50 monks, led by **Hikkaḍuve Sumaṅgala** (1826-1911) of the Siyam Nikāya and **Mohottivatte Guṇānanda** (1823-90) of the Amarapura Nikāya, turned up, and so did about 2000 lay Buddhists.

This first debate was followed by a series of five, in most of which Guṇānanda played the major role. The most important debate in which he took part was held at **Panadura**, south of Colombo, in 1873, with Rev. David de Silva as his principal opponent. It was a two-day debate, the first day of which was attended by 5,000, and swelled to 10,000 on the second day. With such undivided support, the missionaries realized they had underestimated the Buddhists, and ceased to issue challenges.

The text of the whole debate was published in the newspapers, both in Sinhalese and English. The English version then appeared in book form, which reached Col. Henry Steele Olcott [26], co-founder of the Theosophical Society which far-reaching consequences.

The success of the Sinhalese Buddhists against the Christians was to answer the latter in their own coins. Guṇānanda, for example, adopted **the Christian style of preaching** (while traditional monks would as a rule preach seated and observing proper decorum). The Buddhists have rendered unto Caesar what was due to him. (Malalgoda 1976: ch. VI)

It was in the face of such missionary threats that the Sinhalese Buddhists, especially the English-educated middle class, were motivated to present Buddhism **as a scientific, rational and modern teaching**, and not as a “religion” and with greater involvement of lay Buddhists. This is what some scholars have termed “**Protestant Buddhism**” (Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988: ch. 6; Gombrich 1988: ch. 7).

Buddhist education

Sinhalese Buddhist culture survived the Western onslaught for centuries. The reform of Sangha initiated by the Saṅgharāja Saraṇāṅkara in the 18th century and the foundation of reformist orders (the Amarapura Nikāya and the Rāmañña Nikāya) during the 19th century showed the vitality of the Buddhist tradition on the island.

In 1845, the monk Valāṇē Siddhārtha founded the first *pirivena* (monastic college), the **Parama Dhamma Cetiya Pirivena** at Ratmalane, a few miles south of Colombo. In due course, two other great centers of Buddhist learning, the **Vidyodaya Pirivena** (1873) was founded by H. Sumaṅgala in Colombo and the **Vidyālaṅkāra Pirivena** (1875) by Ratmalāṇē Dhammāloka at Kelaniya near Colombo. They are now full-fledged universities.

The Vidyālaṅkāra University is now called the **University of Kelaniya**. The **Buddhist Library**, Singapore, houses the **Buddhist Graduate School** (2001), accredited to this university through link programmes.

35. AGAINST THE CURRENTS

China

During the modern period, especially after the Chinese Revolution of 1911, Buddhism in China was characterized by **revival and reform**. It was during this period that there arose a remarkable Chinese Buddhist monk, named **T'ai-hsü** (1889-1947) [29], who succeeded in initiating a "**humanistic Buddhism**" to carry out a series of Buddhist reforms (Chan Wing-tsit 1953:56; Bapat 1956:397 f.). In 1929, he organized the **Chinese Buddhist Society**, which by 1947 had over 4½ million members.

T'ai-hsü emphasized the **international character of Buddhism** and initiated contacts between Chinese Buddhists and those of other Asian countries, especially of Sri Lanka, Thailand and Japan. Institutes for the training of large number of Buddhist leaders were set up in various parts of China, with the aim of reforming the Sangha (Ch'en 1964:456 f.).

Buddhist texts were studied in a way that had not happened for a very long time. A notable feature of T'ai-hsü's revival movement was the appearance of an increasing number of **Buddhist periodicals** devoted mainly to **hermeneutics** (the exposition of Buddhist thought) and **apologetics** (the rebuttal of criticisms against Buddhism). Between 1920 and 1935, there were a total of **58** such periodicals. Mainly as a result of the efforts of T'ai-hsü and his followers to popularize Buddhism, in the 1930s, between 60-70% of China's lay Buddhists were **Pure Land Buddhists** (Ch'en 1964: 460).

Malaysia

In the face of common problems, **inter-religious cooperation** often provides disadvantaged religions vital advantage for survival and mutual growth. In **Malaysia**, various government restriction on the religious use of land to build churches and language (ban on the use of certain Arabic words in non-Muslim worship) especially affecting the Christians have intensified non-Muslim's sense of religious persecution and increased their awareness that they should stand together to protect their rights.

Non-Muslims sitting on the National Unity Board, feeling that their presence was merely cosmetic, decided in 1983 to form their own interreligious organization, known officially as the **Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism (MCCBCHS)**.

Since its formation, the MCCBCHS has made several public statements concerning the threat of Islamization to non-Muslims, but its role seems to be limited to that of organizing seminars and releasing press statements. In the 1990s, when there were proposals to introduce **Hudud law** on a national level, the MCCBCHS's unified objection was strongly voiced and the matter was judiciously left aside.

The more difficult tasks of negotiating with the government authorities over land and language issues continue to fall on the shoulders of the non-Malay politicians and organizations representing specific

religions. Despite such problems, the MCCBCHS is the only inter-religious body of non-Muslims in Malaysia that provides **a united non-Muslim front against Islamic domination**.

Indonesia

As for **Indonesia**, despite the importance of Buddhism amongst the Chinese today, little literature exists about either their Buddhist history or practice. In the 1930s, however, the Peranakan writer **Kwee Tek Hoay** published a 10-volume work on Buddhism, and a Buddhist revival of sorts followed.

Most Chinese temples in Indonesia contain Buddhist and other religious figures, often juxtaposed. For example, the images of Guandi and Guanyin would be found together on the same shrine. Kwee himself promoted a syncretism of the three Chinese religions, **Sam Kauw** (*sanjiao*)—Daoism, Confucianism and Buddhism—or “Tri Dharma”, as it is now called.

In 1965, as a result of an attempted Communist coup, the Indonesia government outlawed all organizations that doubted or denied **the existence of God** through their national ideology called **Pancasila** (“Five Principles”), which ironically is a Buddhist term. This was a problem for “non-theistic” Theravada Buddhism. A senior Indonesian monk, Ashin Jinarakkhita, proposed that the Buddhist “God” was the **Ādi-Buddha**, the primordial Buddha of Mantrayāna that had existed in the region.

The more orthodox Theravadins, however, claimed that **Nirvana**, the “unborn, uncreated, unconditioned”, was their “God”. Another response, personally conveyed to me, was the interpretation of *Tuhan* (“God”) as **Ketuhanan (Godliness)**, which was more acceptable to Buddhists since it reflected a quality rather than a being, such as the Divine Abodes (*brahma, vihāra*).

36. BUDDHISM IN SINGAPORE

Singapore is unique in that it is the only country outside China and Taiwan with **a majority of Chinese as the citizenry**. In the 1990 census of 3 million, over 2.1 million (77.7%) are Chinese, with Malays 14.1% and Indians 7.1%. In 2000, the population rose to 4 million, with a slight increase in percentage of Indians and “Others”. (In 1824, only 31% of the population was Chinese.)

The high percentage of Buddhists in Singapore is due to a number of factors. First and foremost, Singapore is a **secular society**, that is, it has no state religion, but there is religious freedom. Buddhist missions from a growing number of traditions have been active here ever since the early years of Singapore (founded in 1819).

Buddhist Studies

The introduction of **Buddhist Studies** in the 1980s as part of the Ministry of Education’s Religious Studies for Secondary Schools project gave Buddhism a phenomenal boost, especially in a subsequent rise in the younger population of Buddhists who populated the tertiary educational institutions’ Buddhist societies.

The main reason for the success of Buddhist Studies—the most popular of the four electives of Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism—was the introduction of **a well-written set of textbooks and teacher’s guides** in simple language and approach that the teachers and students received favourably. I had the privilege of being involved as **regular consultant and lecturer** in this project under the directorship of **Dr. Ang Beng Choo**.

Inter-religious cooperation

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Buddhism is a member of the **Inter-Religious Organization, Singapore** (1949), run by a Council of 29 members representing the 9 major religions in Singapore: Hindu, Jewish, Zoroastrian, Buddhist, Taoist, Christian, Muslim, Sikh and Bahai. This organization reflects the freedom and vitality of religious life in Singapore, which is a **secular state**.

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In June 2001, the **Metta Welfare Association**, a Buddhist-affiliated charity, teamed up with the Salvation Army, a Christian organization, to collect old clothes for the benefit of the underprivileged in Papua New Guinea. The event was highlighted by a charity walk and a whole-day family carnival at the National Stadium. This is only one good example of Buddhist initiatives in Singapore at social work and responding to the needs of the unfortunate and needy not only in Singapore and also overseas.

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On 16 June 2001, 25 undergraduates from the **National University of Singapore Buddhist Society** began their one-week humanitarian Myanmar mission, codenamed “The Song of the Apsaras”. The project, initiated by the **Buddhist Fellowship**, provided needy children in Myanmar with 260 hearing aids, two hearing testers, old clothes, medicine and other assistance. The project, co-ordinated by Dr. Ng Yee Kong was funded by the Buddhist Fellowship (non-sectarian), the Burmese Buddhist Temple, the Palelai Buddhist Temple (Thai) and the Phor Kark See Monastery (Chinese Mahayana). This is a good example of intra-Buddhist interdenominational cooperation involving young Buddhists and academia.

Buddhist growth

In the latest census (2000), the population of Buddhists in Singapore has risen to **42.5%**, from only 31.2% in 1990. In the 2001 general elections, at least two practising Buddhists made it to Parliament (Ong Seh Hong and Khor Boon Wan). Meantime, the new generation of Singaporean Buddhists have shown remarkable vision in their mission by emphasizing **educational and right livelihood projects** besides the traditional practices such as meditation.

Religion	1970	1980	1990	2000
Resident Population Aged 15 Years & Over by Religion (%)				
Buddhism	..	27.0	31.2	42.5
Taoism	..	30.0	22.4	8.5
Islam	..	15.7	15.3	14.9
Christianity	..	10.1	12.7	14.6
Hinduism	..	3.6	3.7	4.0
Other Religions	..	0.5	0.6	0.6
No Religion	..	13.0	14.1	14.8

Religion in Singapore.

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Various national courses (such as the Buddhist Youth Leadership Training Camps) and global conferences (like the Y2000 Global Conference on Buddhism) are being held on a regular basis. The follow-up Y2002 Global Conference will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The *For You Information*, a monthly publication of Buddhist activities in Singapore has a permanent list of **at least 120 Buddhist temples and groups** in Singapore.

37. THE ŚREṢṬHĪ

In my previous lecture entitled “Buddhism in India”, I briefly mentioned the **religious virtuoso** or “religious specialist” as a person who is perceived as having a vital grasp of Buddhist doctrine and spirit by **sheer personality and social status**. In terms of salvation, each of the four periods of Buddhist history in India differs in the conception of its religious virtuoso or ideal.

We shall now extend this framework of the four periods of Buddhist history, lasting roughly 500 years each (except the last), to **the global development of Buddhism**.

1st period—the liberated saint or **Arhat**, in whom all cravings are extinguished and who will no more be reborn.

2nd period—the **Bodhisattva**, the hypostasis (or embodiment) of compassion, that is, a being (human or otherwise) who wishes to save other beings, even at the cost of postponing his own enlightenment.

3rd period—the **Siddha**, the holy man or religious adept who is totally in harmony with his environment that he is under no constraint whatsoever and as a free agent is able to manipulate the cosmic forces both inside and outside himself.

4th period—the **Śreṣṭhī**, a secular professional or executive, a person of means, whose charisma and social success are regarded as blessings of past good karma, as such, worthy of emulation and respect as a teacher. [The traditional definition of *seṭṭhi* is given in the PED as “foreman of a guild, treasurer, banker, “City man”, wealthy merchant, V 1:15 f, 271 f, 2:110 f, 157, S 1:89...etc.”]

In this typology, only **the Arhat** is the true ideal of early Buddhism. Each of the other three types are the “ideal Buddhist” as envisioned in later times. Each of these types appears to be a quantum leap from the original Arhat ideal. However, we should view them as “social ideals” reflecting the religious needs of contemporary society.

These ideals are not mutually exclusive, but overlap as concentric circles emanating from the Arhat ideal at the centre. **The Arhat ideal actually underlies all the other three social ideals** since as long as the Noble Eightfold Path exists, it is possible to gain enlightenment.

Buddhism in modern Singapore

An interesting feature of current Buddhist work in Singapore is **the strong involvement of lay Buddhists**, especially successful professionals and corporate leaders—**the Śreṣṭhī**—as exemplified in the highly successful **Buddhist Fellowship** (and also the Buddhist Gem Fellowship in Malaysia). Such lay workers also organize overseas missions (for example, to Burma) to help the less fortunate. If this goes on in a larger and more sustained manner, we can happily say that affluent Singapore would become the true “heart of Buddhist south-east Asia”.

An interesting development in lay Buddhism in Singapore is the promotion of the notion of **Buddhism as corporate success**—that Buddhism in urban Singapore is effectively run by successful lay pro-

professionals. The success—academic, social and economic—of a lay Buddhist teacher or leader is regarded as his or her “good karma”, and such a person serves as a model or ideal for other lay Buddhists.

According to the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* [by Max Weber, 1930], Calvinist belief in predestination encouraged what became an irresistible need to determine whether one was among the chosen; such predestination made sacraments unnecessary and led to devaluation of the sacred; in its place, economic success in this world came to be accepted as the demonstration of God’s favour; this created the psychological and sociological conditions for importing ascetic values from the monastery into worldly vocations, as one labored to prove oneself saved by reinvesting any surplus rather than consuming it. Gradually this original goal became attenuated, yet inner-worldly asceticism did not disappear as God became more distant and heaven less relevant. (David Loy, 1998: 19)

Such a development is almost reflective of a Buddhist version of **the Protestant work ethic** of the West (Max Weber, 1930), which expresses the theory that modern capitalism arose out of an association of a Calvinistic concern for moral obligation and economic success—except that in the Singapore case, the ethic is less ascetic and more pragmatic.

38. DISENGAGEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Buddhism and violence

Although we are living in a technically advanced world with high-speed global connections, we have seen that the year 2001 was **a religiously violent one**, especially with the total destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha image in Afghanistan and the 11th September (911) bombings of the World Trade Centre in New York by Muslim terrorists. Religious violence, too, gave Buddhism the deathblow in **India** during the 13th century. We also witnessed how hatred was answered by hatred, an-eye-for-an-eye violence, with the US bombing of Afghanistan. 2001 was indeed **a year of religious and political terrorism**.

Buddhism has launched no crusades nor hurled any dharmacakras against those who violated against them. **Some may think that Buddhism is politically weak**, but history has witnessed otherwise, as in the cases of mediaeval Japan [20] and of modern Vietnam [21], where Buddhists acted politically in their own interests. In the case of Japan, it was for selfish end; in Vietnam, it was against persecution.

Buddhists may not be outwardly violent, but if non-violence is a spiritual virtue, then Buddhists should not, by holding on to a certain view (be it Abhidhamma or the teachings of a Lama), condemn other views as wrong. This is a violence of another kind—that of **intolerance**. No matter how convinced one is about a doctrine, there must be room for **doubt, understanding and openness**. This space for doubt, understanding and openness is beholden to all unenlightened beings.

Otherwise, we would only prove the secular scholars right—that religion may not be about war but it is certainly not about peace, that **“every religion is about absolute belief in its own superiority and the divine right to impose itself upon others”**. (Pervex Amirali Hoodbhoy, “Getting on the right path”, *Sunday Times*, 6 January 2002)

[Recommended reading: Chappell, *Buddhist Peacework*, Boston: Wisdom, 1999.]

Roots of fanaticism

Like politics, religion deals with power: **politics** is the search for this-worldly power, **religion** is about other-worldly power. When the two paths cross in violence, the other-worldly power often triumphs, usually at great human cost: the Crusades, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 which ended the Pahlavi

dynasty, and the self-immolating monks of Vietnam who toppled the Diem regime. These are extreme cases, of course, the climax of protracted tension between two diverse social orders.

Buddhism, like any religion, has a **dark side**, the Jungian “shadow”, that continually lurks in the shadows of the Bodhi tree. There are often those who feel they have finally attained some penetrative insight into the Buddha’s “secrets”, perhaps through the Abhidharma, Tantra or meditation; or they have finally found that guru who is perceived as being enlightened or a saint. In their hearts, **they fervently think that what they have found is right**—the “only way”, all else is “wrong view”. These are the “Buddhist” fanatics and cult leaders; but their kind is found in all religions.

[On the shadow in Buddhism, see, for example, Katy Butler, “Encountering the Shadow in Buddhist America” in Abrams & Zweig, ed. 1991:137-147. There are current “cult” cases detailed in the “FWBO Files”, see www.fwbo-files.com.]

In his instructive even if jingoistic book, *Fighting for the Future: Will America Triumph?* (1999), Ralph Peters identifies **five social pools** that exist in some form in all significant cultures, from which today’s and tomorrow’s warriors (and zealots) may emerge. Of these five, two apply to Buddhist zealots:

- (1) **The entrepreneurs of conflict** form the most dangerous pool, because in their cultural context, they generally possess the best and most varied intelligence networks of all warrior groups. Touched by a dark genius, they are masters of timing and surprise. They have the makings of merciless warlords who can take control of cities, regions and countries.
- (2) **The underclass males**, losers who have little or no education, no skills, no abiding attractiveness to women, and no future. For them, the end of fighting means the end of good times.
(Quoted by Richard Lim, “From terrified to terrorising”, Sunday Times 30 Sep 2001.)

From these two pools, one may expect Buddhist zealots to arise. The best teachings of Buddhism do not permit the birth of religious warriors in its ranks, but these zealot would be violent in their own way, finding lost causes to draw attention and followers.

If these zealots are **identified early and exposed**, they would be taken less seriously. Then, surely Buddhists would be spared much pain and would not contribute to social hardship. **Proper Buddhist education and social welfare services** are vital to keep people to the wisdom and compassion of the Middle Way.

The fundamentalists can only hold on to power when people are totally wretched and uneducated and can be kept in complete ignorance or simply occupied by a desperate struggle for existence. (George M. Spencer, “Why government must remain secular”, ST 15 Nov 2001)

The new world religion

In his lectures and writings, **David Loy** often jokes that the new world religion as “**moneytheism**”, “the religion of the market” (1998), but the joke is on us, he declares, “For more and more people, the value-system of money is supplanting traditional religions, as part of a profound secular conversion we only dimly understand.” (“Buddhism and Money” in Fu & Wawrytko, 1991: 297, 306)

The Buddhist attitude towards wealth is a positive one, in the sense that **what is well-earned should be well-enjoyed** (A 2:67 f, 3:44-46, 3:76-78; S 1:89-91). From these Buddhist texts, it is clear that Buddhists have a **utilitarian view of wealth**: money is what money does. One’s wealth is for “making merit”, for accumulating good karma for a better life here and hereafter, while waiting for Nirvana.

Good karma cannot arise if one is all alone without other beings. One gains good karma in one's wholesome interaction with others, primarily by **giving (dāna)** to others. **Wealth**, in other words, **is to be shared**. To Buddhists, there is **the joy of sharing**: "By means of wealth thus acquired [through wholesome self-effort], I both enjoy my wealth and do meritorious deeds." Thinking thus, joy comes to him, satisfaction comes to him (A 2:68).

In a remarkable passage in the **Cakkavatti, sīhanāda Sutta**, the Buddha using mythical language tells an ancient story of how

...from not giving of wealth to the needy, poverty became rife; from the rise in poverty, stealing increased; from the rise in theft, the use of weapons increased; from the rise in use of weapons, the taking of life increased—from the taking of life, people's life-span decreased, their beauty decreased. (D 3:68)

[For a discussion on this passage, see M.L. Fenn, "Two Notions of Poverty in the Pali Canon", *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 3 1996: 98-125.]

But not all crimes are committed by the dispossessed; not all terrorist acts are those of the oppressed. **Greed, hatred and delusion** are the religion of all alike, religious and secular.

While we await the coming of the one world, the global village, "we should know that of the world's 100 largest economies, 51 are not countries but **corporations**. There is a lot of poverty out there." (Richard Lim, "How the New War will be fought", Sunday Times, 30 Sep 2001)

The arrogance of the secularists led to a civil war between two power groupings, capitalism and communism, that divided the world, which was asked to believe that the victor would have the Truth....

Most important of all, secularists have to admit that there are fundamentalists amongst them, too, including those who couch their faiths in terms of sovereign nationalist interests or insist that only their claim of universalism is valid and all others must conform to their standards.

Without sufficient attention to spiritual needs, especially of people in the poorer nations of the world, secularism does not deserve the respect it has had so far.

(Wang Gangwu, "Limits of secularism", Sunday Times 25 November 2001)

[Recommended reading: Peter Harvey, 2000: ch. 5 (Economic ethics).]

Engaged Buddhism

Although Buddhism began as **an other-worldly monastic system**, the Buddha gave **social teachings** such as those found in the Sigālovāda Sutta (D 3:180-193) and the Ādiya Sutta (A 3:44 f.). One remarkable contemporary monk who sees Buddhism as radically "socially engaged" is **Thich Nhat Hanh**, Vietnamese Zen master, poet and peace activist.

On the invitation of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, in 1966, at the beginning of the Vietnam War (1965-75), he left Vietnam for the West where he has lived and worked ever since. In 1967, he was nominated by Martin Luther King for the Nobel Peace Prize. Unable to return to Vietnam, he received asylum in France, where he currently lives in Plum Village, a small community he founded.

His philosophy and teachings have inspired many Buddhist activists such as the Siamese Buddhist **Sulaks Sivaraksa**, who formed the **International Network of Engaged Buddhists**, whose headquarters are in Bangkok (Harvey, 2000: 218-224). The **Buddhist Peace Fellowship** in Berkeley, USA, works along the same lines. Modern Buddhist academics and practitioners like **David Chappell** and **David Loy** are giving socially-engaged Buddhism a powerful voice today.

Buddhist drug therapy

One of the most dramatic and successful stories of Buddhist social engagement is that of **the herbal drug therapy of Phra Chamroon** (1926-1999) of Wat Tham Krabok, a forest temple in Saraburi, 125 km north of Bangkok. The centre started over 20 years ago. Phra Chamroon claims that his radical therapy—using only homegrown herbs and Buddhist spirituality—cures 70% of addicts and has treated Thais as well as foreigners, including wealthy businessmen, Italian fashion designers, rock stars, senior Muslim politicians, Asian politicians, and children of the rich and famous.

According to Phra Gordon Baltimore, an ex-mercenary, who has now found peace at Wat Tham Krabok,

One American drug company came here and offered us millions of dollars for our secret. Even President Bush sent people here to study what we do. What these people don't understand is that it's not just the *yaa* ["medicine"] that cures an addict. If you take the *yaa* out of this sacred place it will lose its power—everything here is sacred. The hills, the stones, the plants and trees.

Phra Chamroon has received the **Ramon Magsaysay Prize for Public Service** in 1970 and other awards in recognition of his humanitarian work. Phra Chamroon's work is being carried on by his brother Phra Charoen. This website http://www2.gol.com/users/isett/features/pages/drug_temple.html provides not only update on his work, but a feature on **Wat Prabat Nampoo** in Lopburi province, a hospice for the AIDS stricken.

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39. THE FOREST TRADITION OUTSIDE ASIA

Christian monasticism

There are two parallel traditions of **contemplative monasticism** in the world today: the Buddhist forest tradition and the Catholic contemplative orders. It is possible that Buddhism or Buddhist monasticism was known to the early Christians especially at **Alexandria** that housed the ancient world's most famous library. The library was started by Alexander the Great, and flourished under the royal patronage of the first two book-loving Ptolemies (4th-3rd centuries BCE), and survived until Roman times in the 3rd century CE. (The new US\$200 million hi-tech **Bibliotheca Alexandrina**, located very near the original ancient library, is due to be inaugurated on 23 April 2002.)

Hesychasm, a type of Eastern Christian monastic life, bears interesting parallels with Buddhist contemplative monasticism. The Hesychasts aimed to attain divine quietness (Greek *hēsychia*) through the contemplation of God in an uninterrupted manner. **St. John Climacus** (c. 579-c. 649), one of the greatest Hesychast writers produced a very precise "method of prayer", advising novices to fix their eyes during prayer on the "middle of the body", in order to "attach the prayer to their breathing". Anti-Hesychasts attacked the Hesychasts, calling them *omphalopsuchoi*, or people having their souls in their navels!

St. Pachomius (c. 290-346) founded **Christian coenobitical (communal) monasticism**, which was "theologically bolstered by Basil the Great, passed on to the Latin West by John Cassan, and exemplified for all of Western monasticism in Benedict of Nursia and the Benedictine Rule, can also be found in Buddhism (and in Qumran)." (Küng 1993: 346)

The essential elements of **Christian coenobitic life** are: "(1) Common quarters for living, working, and praying; (2) uniformity in dress, diet, and ascetical bearing; (3) safeguarding of the community by means of a written rule based on obedience" (K. Baus, "Kionobitenum" in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* 6:368). Despite differences in background and many modifications (such as no vow of obedience), "this pattern is also characteristic of the Buddha—but not of Jesus, the Christ of the Christians." (Küng 1993:346)

Buddhist-Christian dialogue

If the Church's current vigil of Buddhism by way of **dialogue** and its growing assimilation of **Buddhist meditation** is anything to go by, it would not be surprising that it had done the same in the past. In that case, both religions have a common contemplative tradition going back to the Buddha himself.

The Buddhist-Christian dialogue that began in academic circles is building up, increasingly involving more practitioners from both sides. In 1987, a conference entitled "Buddhist-Christian Dialogue: Toward the Human Future", held in Berkeley, California, was attended by over 750 people from 19 countries and 34 states. From this conference **The Society for Buddhist-Christian Dialogue** was formed

The first such Buddhist-Christian conference was first held in Honolulu in 1980, bringing together a core group of practitioners and scholars for a significant exchange of views. It resulted in the formation of **the North American Theological Encounter Group**, led by Professors Masao Abe and John B. Cobb, Jr., which has been meeting regularly every since. The Society also publishes a scholarly journal called the ***Buddhist-Christian Studies***.

A growing number of Buddhist monks and nuns are becoming more involved in Buddhist-Christian dialogue on a personal basis. **Santikaro Bhikkhu**, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's pupil and translator, for example, has conducted retreats for Catholic religious in Thailand and the Philippines. For many years, he has been a special friend of **the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM)**. In 2001, he came to Singapore on invitation of the Catholics to conduct talks and meditation at local churches.

In June 2001, at the invitation of Perth's Dean, John Shepherd, **Ajahn Brahmavamso**, a teacher from the Cittaviveka Order, of the Thai forest contemplative tradition, became the first Buddhist to preach at a Eucharist ("thanksgiving", the most sacred of the Anglican liturgies) in St. George's Anglican Cathedral, Perth, Western Australia. In *The West Australian* newspaper, which reported the event, Dr. Shepherd said that the Mass celebrated "creation in all its diversity" and that "Christianity needed to move away from the idea that it was the only way to God".

The Cittaviveka Order

The Roman Catholics have been showing great interest in **Buddhist meditation**. This is evident in their growing dialogue and affinity with the Cittaviveka Order—the forest tradition of Ajahns Chah, Sumedho, Brahmavamso and their lineage—wherever they have their monasteries.

One of the most important turning-points in Buddhism in the West began in **1997**, when, on the invitation of the English Sangha Trust [29], **Ajahn Sumedho** accompanied his teacher Ajahn Cha on a visit to England and then stayed behind to establish a successful **Theravada forest Sangha**.

In 1979, the 108-acre Chithurst Buddhist Monastery or **Cittaviveka** was founded in west Sussex. In 1984, a large training centre, **Amaravati Buddhist Monastery**, was established just outside the village of Great Gaddesden near Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire. In 1985, two monks were sent to establish a branch monastery in **New Zealand**. Another branch monastery was also set up in **Switzerland**.

Australia

In 1972, the **Buddhist Society of Western Australia** for formed with its headquarters at the Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre in Nollamara, near Perth. In 1983, the **Bodhinyana Monastery** was esta-

blished at Serpentine, 60 km south-east of Perth, co-founded by Ajahn Jagaro (now a layman) and Ajahn Brahmavamso. In 1998, the **Dhammasara Nuns' Monastery** was established on a large property at Gidgegannup, 45 km northeast of Perth, with Sister Vayāmā as head.

By fully keeping to the letter and spirit of the Vinaya, the Cittaviveka Order has been receiving massive lay patronage and respect from co-religionists. It has clearly proven the relevance, indeed necessity, of traditional monasticism in today's society. As long as people **wish to change themselves for the better rather than to change Buddhism to suit themselves**, the Buddha Dharma is alive to them. This is the rationale behind Buddhist monasticism—that **spirituality need not be updated**. Lay Buddhism, being the way of the world, however, is a different matter.

40. A FUTURE VISION

Learning from others

Before we close, let us look ahead a bit to see what Buddhism might face in the immediate future, say for the next generation. There was a time, especially from the 1950s at the height of the influence of **Protestant Buddhism** from Sri Lanka, when Buddhists (in Malaysia and Singapore at least) regarded terms like “religion”, “church”, “faith”, etc. as being “unbuddhist” since they were common Christian terms or terms (like “religion”) that the evangelists condemned.

Consciously or unconsciously, many English-educated Buddhists, especially in former colonies (like Malaysia and Singapore) **have taken evangelical Christianity as their standard**. This “religious peg-ing” is obvious in the popularity of Buddhist music and “hymns”, and even the Buddhist liturgy (partly due to the influence of the Buddhist Churches of America), as in the responsive prayers. Such Buddhist responses however have been common ever since the rise of Mahayana in the 1st century BCE.

Obviously, Westerners and those familiar with Christianity who turn to Buddhism are not as much attracted to Christian doctrines as they are to Buddhism. Much less do they approve of Christian evangelical marketing and biblical packaging. Buddhists generally, albeit tacitly, admire most Christians for their **faith** in their religion and for their **textual discipline** centring around the Bible.

While the Christians are openly attracted to Buddhist meditation and Christianizing it, many Buddhist workers are returning the compliment by studying and converting **Christian methods of education and preaching**. This propensity for learning from each other is what makes them **living world religions** — because they are willing to learn from challenges and adapt to social conditions in the contemporary free market of faiths.

Buddhist theology

Scholars of religions, too, have made important contributions to giving new life to the Buddhism as a religion. Only last year, for example, a group of academics discussed the notion of a Buddhist “theology” and published their thoughts in ***Buddhist Theology: Critical Reflections by Contemporary Buddhist Scholars*** (ed. Jackson & Makransky 2000).

Understandably, the concept of “**theology**” has broadened from being specifically “the study of the nature of God and religious truth” to being “a rational inquiry into religious questions”. Even before the advent of such helpful technical terms, Buddhist theology had existed in practice, in terms of (1) explaining the Teaching for the benefit of the masses (**homiletics**); (2) commentarial gloss on difficult passages (**hermeneutics**); and (3) clarification of apparent contradictions in doctrine and defence of dialectical attacks from others (**apologetics**). [We shall look at these a little more closely in “Teaching Methods of the Buddha”.]

Although Buddhism today still emphasizes a direct transmission of the Dharma through the oral tradition between teacher and pupil, the religion is even more popularly transmitted as a **written tradition** to people who either are new to the Buddhism or do not wish to be identified by the Buddhist label. As such, it is vital to have a broad base of textual discipline so that Buddhism can benefit the greatest number of beings.

Buddhist text translations

The Buddhist texts are so extensive—the Pali Canon itself is estimated to be **over 11 times the Bible**—that it takes great faith, patience and some bookish sense to be able to effectively digest them even in an abridged translation. Moreover, only recently have we more authoritative translations of Buddhist texts done by practising Buddhists themselves. Such important translations include:

- **the Long Discourses of the Buddha** (Dīgha tr. Maurice Walshe, Kandy: BPS, 1995),
- **the Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha** (Majjhima tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, Boston: Wisdom, 1995) and
- **the Connected Discourses of the Buddha** (Saṃyutta tr. Bhikkhu Bodhi, Boston, 2000).

Unfinished symphonies

Of the Pali Canon, only the Aṅguttara Nikāya now awaits a new authoritative translation, and with its completion, **the four Nikāyas**, embodying the early teachings of the Buddha would be complete. Sadly, there are a number of other major “Unfinished Symphonies” in Buddhist academia today. One such unfinished masterpiece is the **Critical Pali Dictionary** (CPD) [30], begun in 1924.

The Pali Tipiṭakam Concordance (PTC) started in 1950 under the editorship of Edward Miles Hare and was published by the Pali Text Society. After his death in 1958, work on the Concordance was painfully slow. To date (after more than 40 years) the PTC has only reached Vol. III (P-Bārāṇaseyyaka, 1993). This Concordance is useful because it lists (according to the Indian word order) all the occurrences of a Pali word or phrase in the Pali Canon so that they could be located easily.

Another unfinished work is **the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism**, begun in 1955 Sri Lanka as part of the Buddha Jayanti (Buddhist Era 2500), of which only the first few volumes have been completed to date.

The PTS has begun publishing a new Pali-English dictionary, entitled **A Pāli Dictionary**, Part I (A-Kh) by Margaret Cone (2001).

Universality of Emptiness

Let me close on an open note. As I have mentioned earlier, I envision that Buddhism, at least its spirit, would be **at the core of peaceful and engaged religions of the future**. As religions have better information, experience and understanding of one another, it is easier to find a common ground on which all religions can agree.

Buddhism is unique in that it **rejects the idea of a creator God and yet is a religion**, teaching Nirvana as the ultimate reality. Buddhism has been called a **non-theistic religion**. John Hick [31] proposes the Buddhist term *śūnyatā*, “emptiness” (that is, something that transcends conceptualization) as the ultimate reality, the Real. This ultimate reality manifests itself in Buddhism in the doctrine of Interdependent Origination:

Let us humour Hick by regarding *śūnyatā* as **the ultimate reality**, in itself physically inexperienceable and beyond the scope of human conceptuality (1993:114). It can be directly experienced in a range

of different ways, however, made possible by the different spiritual disciplines and systems of religious thought:

There are Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Hindu and other theistic experiences of *sunyata* as a personal deity. There is the advaitic Hindu experience of *sunyata* as Brahman. And there is the Mahayana Buddhist experience of *sunyata* as the world-process, *pratitya-samutpada*.

(Hick, 1993:114)

Of course, Hick adds, this is not the only authentic mode of experience of the ultimate, but there is a range of it.

Religious dialogue

While it is unbuddhist to attack other religions, it is also unbuddhist to ignore them. **The middle way** is to have open and wholesome **dialogue** amongst thinkers and practitioners, between Buddhist and the non-Buddhist alike.

The task of reasoning from within a tradition and between traditions cannot be left only to believers of a religion but must engage people from different traditions in a larger public and international environment that is hospitable to open and honest debate.

(Kwok Kian Woon, “The worlds of the war”, Straits Times 31 Dec 2001)

[On religious pluralism, see Yagi & Swidler, 1988; John Hick, 1985 & 1993: Sect. C.; Chappell 1991.]

In closing, I would like to return to the present, and let my professor, **Lewis Lancaster**, a rare humble man of great learning who is truly a friend to all Buddhists, have the last word:

Buddhism has always been characterized by a willingness and ability to adapt to new locations and to allow for the presence of other meta-narratives within its sphere. Taoism, Confucianism, *shamanism, and popular cults have all served the religious life and practices of Buddhism. This rare ability to accept the value of other narratives may turn out to be Buddhism’s greatest contribution to our contemporary situation. (Lewis Lancaster in Fu & Wawrytko, 1991: 352)

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ABBREVIATIONS

[For other abbreviations and textual conventions, please refer to Piyasilo, *Guide to Buddhist Studies*, 1990 (unpublished MSS).]

AA	Āṅguttara Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā = Commentary to the Numerical Sayings (volume: page).
DA	Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā = Commentary to the Long Sayings (volume: page).
DhsA:PR	<i>The Expositor</i> , 2 vols. [Attha,sālinī, Commentary to the Dhamma,saṅgaṇī] tr. Pe Maung Tin & Mrs. Rhys Davids, London: PTS, 1920-21. 2 vols.
JPTS	Journal of the Pali Text Society, London.
MA	Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā = Commentary to the Middle Length Sayings (volume: page).
Peṭk:Ñ	<i>The Peṭaka-disclosure, Peṭakopadesa</i> . Tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli. PTS Translation Series 35. London: Luzac, 1964.
PTS	The Pali Text Society (1881).
SA	Saṃyutta Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā = Commentary to the Connected Length Sayings (volume: page).

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Piya Tan can be contacted at:

Email: libris@singnet.com.sg

Website: www.dharma.per.sg