



Commemorative Book

**Buddhist Contributions  
to World Peace  
and Sustainable Development**

**2006**











## Preface

The people and the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Thailand, in general, and Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, in particular, have been very honored to have successively and successfully organized for three years the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations in Thailand.

The Third International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations of 2006/2549 was held on a bigger scale because the people of the whole Kingdom of Thailand wanted to show gratitude towards their beloved ruler, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, on His 60th Anniversary of Accession to the Throne.

So much understanding and cooperation between different Buddhist traditions have been achieved through the recognition by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1999 of Vesak as an internationally important day. And, since 2005/2548 when the representatives of the Buddhists from different nations to the International Vesak in Bangkok agreed to make Thailand the hub of the Buddhist world, we, the Buddhists in Thailand, with the blessing of the Sangha Supreme Council, have been working tirelessly to maintain that understanding and cooperation.

Amongst the many achievements of 2006/2549 celebrations, I am grateful for the trust placed by the International Organizing Committee (IOC) upon Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University making it the International Secretariat of the IOC. We are confident that we will be able to repay your trust with the kind of dedication and activeness, evident in the services this university has offered to the Buddhist world for the last three years.

Last, I wish to offer my sincere thanks to the leaders of the Sangha, scholars, artists, performers and all the participants from the 46 countries for making the 2006/2549 celebrations a great success. It is my earnest wish that we build on this success for the better of the whole world.



(The Most Ven. Prof. Dr. Phra Dharmakosajarn)  
Rector, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University  
Chairman, International Organizing Committee  
for the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations

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**IOC Ad-hoc Committee**

**IOC International Secretariat**



**His Holiness Somdet Phra Phutthacharn,  
Chairman of the Executive Committee for His Holiness  
the Supreme Patriarch, Delivering a Speech**



**His Holiness Somdet Phra Maharatchamongkhalachan  
Member of the Thai Sangha Supreme Council, Offering the Buddha Statue to  
Her Royal Highness Princess Siravannavari Nariratana**



### Press Conference at the Government House before the Events











**Most Ven. Dr. Xue Cheng, Vice - Chairman, Buddhist Association of China,  
Delivering a Speech**





**Most Ven. Prof Dr. Dharmakosajarn with Distinguished Guests**











## Opening Ceremony at UNESCAP Hall











**Chanting before the Commencement of Each Session**











### Conference in Progress





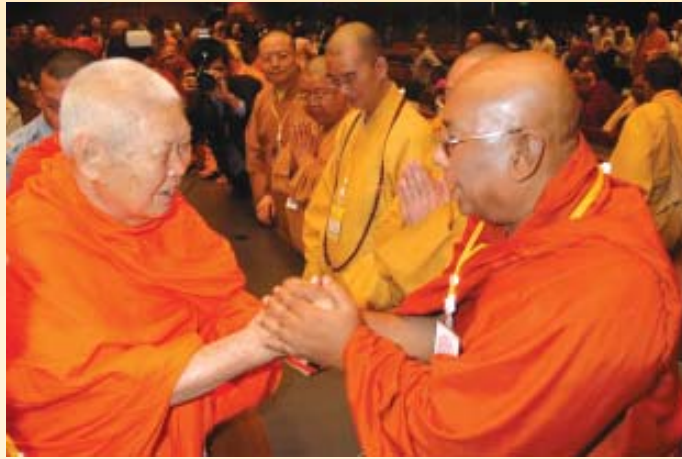


















### Keynote Speech



### Panel Discussion







### Celebrations of HM the King of Thailand 60th Year Accession to the Throne at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha







### Cultural Performances at Buddhamthon

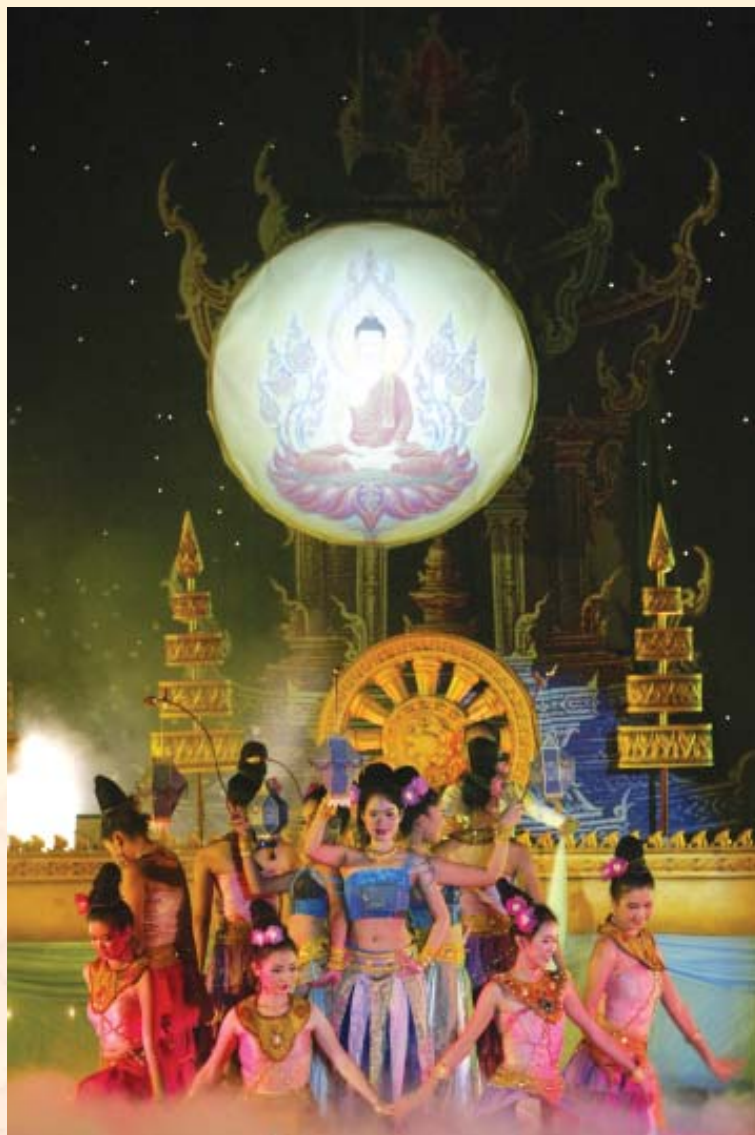














### Exchanges of Souvenirs





### Signing the Declaration







**Candle-Lit Procession at Buddhamonthon**





### IOC Members at Work











Volunteers









United Nations



***The Most Ven. Prof. Dr. Phra Dharmakosajarn***

*Rector, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University*

*Chairman, International Organizing Committee*

*for the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations*

## Introduction

### **The Great Events for the Buddhist World and the Righteous King of Thailand**

The Third International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations was successfully held in Bangkok on 7-10 May 2006/2549. The events were much bigger than any previous ones. This was for two reasons. First, the gathering has progressed from strength to strength in bringing Buddhists of different schools and nations together; second, the 2006/2549 events coincided with the 60th Anniversary of the accession to the throne of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand. Buddhist leaders, scholars, artists and performers from 46 countries, with a record number of 2,310, traveled to the Kingdom of Thailand for the four-day conference and for the celebrations of the 60th Year of great reign. Many delegations were led by the supreme patriarch, “Sangharaja”, from their country.

The events - all reflecting those two foremost themes - consisted of three major activities: Buddhists cultural performances from various countries; religious ceremonies from different Buddhist traditions; and an international academic conference.

Cultural troupes from China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Thailand staged wonderful performances at Buddhamonthon. While the presentations were rooted in their unique national characteristics, all of them at the same time relate one way or another to a shared heritage: the Buddhist message of peace and harmony. “The 60th Celebration of Visakhapurnmi by the Righteous King”, a special tribute to His Majesty the King of Thailand was completed by all other shows. All attracted a big audience, not least the performance by the Shaolin monks from China.

Among the many religious ceremonies, two stood out. A blessing ceremony, the first ever to have taken place in the Kingdom, was the chanting by both the Theravada and Mahayana tradition, at the Emerald Buddha Temple, presided over by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, to invoke the blessing of the Lord Buddha upon His Majesty the King on His 60th Coronation Anniversary. Then, there was, on the last day, a candle-lit procession by the devout Buddhists of over forty nationalities at Buddhamonthon led by His Holiness Somdet Phra Phutthacharn, Chairman of the Executive Council for the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand.



On the academic side, the overarching theme was Buddhist contribution to sustainable development. It set a frame of reference for the topics of many other workshops at the conference. In other words, the conference reaffirmed the path it adopted in the previous year: socially engaged Buddhism. Under this theme, various issues such as Sufficiency Economy put forward by His Majesty the King, women and sustainable development in Buddhism, electronic library and Buddhist education for the public including international travelers were discussed. These were well reflected in 13 points in the Joint Communique.

And, this international Buddhist conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations, in its third year, has acquired an organizational feature: the participants unanimously agreed to set up an international secretariat at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University as a coordination centre.

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## News & Events

### **This Year's Visakha Puja Festival Coinciding with His Majesty's 60th Year on the Throne**

Thailand is celebrating the Visakha Puja Festival on a grand scale to mark the holiest day in Buddhism, which this year falls on May 12. Since the country is also celebrating the 60th anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's accession to the throne, the Visakha Puja Festival is meant to honor His Majesty on this auspicious occasion as well. Religious ceremonies have been arranged to offer best wishes to His Majesty.

A devout Buddhist, His Majesty is a model of Dhammaraja, or the king of righteousness, strictly upholding Buddhist principles. Throughout the 60 years of his reign, he has adhered to the "Ten Guiding Principles," which are defined as the virtues of a righteous ruler. The first principle advises giving help to those who need help. The second principle calls on the people to refrain from doing evil things. The third one is that people should give up something of lesser use for something of greater use.

The fourth principle teaches people to be honest, while the fifth one is that people should be polite in action as well as speech. The sixth principle advises self-control and the seventh one advises non-anger. The eighth principle advises non-violence. The ninth principle involves endurance or patience, while the tenth one advises conformity to the rule of law.

His Majesty also suggested that Thai people follow the "Middle Way," as found in the philosophy of "Sufficiency Economy", initiated by His Majesty. The Middle Way is one of the main ideas of Buddhism. Those who follow it avoid the two extremes of sensual indulgence and self-mortification, and live in a balanced life in which material welfare and spiritual being go hand in hand and are complementary to each other. Sufficiency Economy suggests an appropriate model for conduct in every aspect of life without extravagance and destruction of the environment.

Visakha Puja, or the Day of Vesak, has been celebrated internationally as a significant event after the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly in December 1999. As part of the Visakha Puja Festival this year, Thailand is hosting the third International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak from May 7-10 at the United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok.

The opening ceremony took place on May 7 at Buddhamonthon in Nakhon Pathom, with Her Royal Highness Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana presiding over the ceremony. More than 1,000 Buddhist leaders from over 40 countries are attending the conference. This event is aimed at promoting Dhamma practice for world peace and disseminating the proper teachings of the Buddha. It is also intended to boost cooperation and unity among Buddhists all over the world through various activities, such as discussions, religious ceremonies, and the community lifestyle.

### **Buddhist Leaders Acclaim HM the King's Royal Commitments for Humanity**

Buddhist leaders and scholars at the International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak have praised His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej for his royal efforts and successes for the world community. They have also highly regarded His Majesty the King as the role model for the monarchs in this modern world. His Majesty the King has initiated over 3,000 royal projects for human development.

The most venerable Professor Dr. Phra Dharmakosajarn, the rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and the chairperson of the committee, stated that the United Nations and the ideals of Buddhism are sharing the same objective, which is to bring world peace. As for the sustainable development issue, he commented that beside from concentrating on economic and social developments, humanity has to keep the environmental factors in mind.



### **Next Year's International Buddhist Conference Coinciding with the 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary of HM the King of Thailand**

The Chairman of the Joint International Organizing Committee for the United Nations Day of Vesak, the Most Venerable Professor Phra Dharmakosajarn, said that the Fourth International Buddhist Conference next year would be held in Bangkok to coincide with the auspicious occasion of the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand.

Phra Dharmakosajarn, who is also the Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya, said that participants in the Third International Buddhist Conference showed keen interest in taking part in this conference again next year.

Talking about the third conference, which was concluded on May 10 at the United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok, he said that Thai people had witnessed the enthusiastic cooperation and contributions of all participants from 46 countries. The participants were also very glad to learn that this conference had received strong support from the Thai government.

Meanwhile, the Chief of Information Services, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, (UNESCAP), Mr. David Lazarus, said that one of the major reasons why the United Nations recognizes the Day of Vesak is that it considers international recognition of the Day would constitute acknowledgement of the contribution that Buddhism, one of the oldest religions in the world, has made for over two and half millennia. He said that Buddhism contributes to world peace and religions and continues to make a spiritual contribution to people around the world and to humanity.



### **“Sufficiency Economy” Concept Blends Well with Buddhist Principles**

The philosophy of “Sufficiency Economy,” initiated by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, blends very well with Buddhist principles.

In his guest lecture at the Third International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak on May 9, Mr. Suphachai Chearavanont, Chairman of True Company of Thailand, said that Sufficiency Economy begins with moderation and then reasonableness, which reflect the “Middle Way” in Buddhism.

The Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, the Most Venerable Professor Phra Dharmakosajarn, summarized the guest lecture by Mr. Suphachai to the press.

Mr. Suphachai explained that “economy” in general terms focuses on productivity and Gross Domestic Product, or GDP. But the Sufficiency Economy concept looks at other dimensions as well, such as cultural and spiritual aspects.

In a holistic view, he said, economy is a matter of “value,” which involves happiness, culture, spirituality, and religion, thus leading to sustainable development.

Phra Dharmakosajarn said that the philosophy of Sufficiency Economy was discussed at a group workshop on May 9. In the discussion, participants learned more about His Majesty’s royally initiated projects to help ease Thailand’s economic crisis.



### **Buddhist Leaders Call for Greater Practice in Buddhist Teachings to Create World Peace**

Buddhist leaders from around the world today called upon laymen worldwide to apply more Buddhist principles in daily life in order to create global peace.

As the International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak is drawing to a close, participating Buddhist leaders underscored practical use of the Buddhist teachings. A leading Korean Buddhist member, Miss Aung Kin Jeon told the conference being held at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok that in the globalization era, the Internet should be brought in to help disseminate Lord Buddha's teaching. She proposed that Buddhist principles be taught in the elementary schools and that the world Buddhist Centre of Buddhamonthon be the site to train Buddhist missionaries who will be sent out to propagate the teachings. She stressed that only Buddhist monks with thorough understanding of the Buddha's words will be successful in their mission.

Representatives of the World Peace Group reported to the meeting that in the current world of conflicts, peace could be materialized through reconciliation among the Buddhists around the world while Buddha's teachings must be widely observed in daily life. The group also proposed that the Day of Vesak, or Visakha Puja Day be designated as the Peace Day for all Buddhists to provide an opportunity for them to raise conflicts or obstacles for joint discussion.





### A Call for Wider Distribution of Buddhist Scriptures

The Third International Buddhist Conference of the United Nations Day of Vesak has supported the idea of distributing Tipitaka, or Buddhist scriptures, more widely, especially to various hotels all over the world.

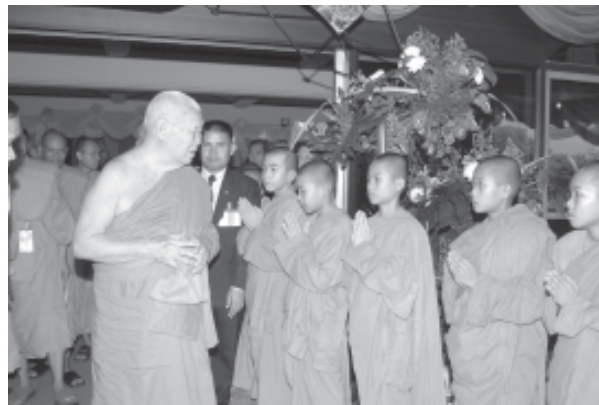
The idea was raised by Mr. Egil Lothe, President of the Buddhist Federation of Norway during the conference on May 9 at the United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok. Chairman of the Joint International Organizing Committee of the UN Day of Vesak, the Most Venerable Professor Phra Dharmakosajarn, said that the idea came after Mr. Lothe had noticed that Buddhist teachings in the form of Tripitaka were not available, unlike the Bible, in various hotels in Thailand and Sri Lanka, where the majority of people are Buddhists. Mr. Lothe proposed that the conference form a committee to select interesting and concise Buddhist teachings to be printed in the form of international Tripitaka and distributed to various hotels.

He called for the production of more teaching aids and materials for Buddhist study among young people worldwide. Another proposal was that greater attention should be put on taking care of prisoners with Buddhist teachings, so that they would no longer take to a life of crime. In this proposal, Buddhist monks should go to see prisoners more frequently to give them sermons and offer Dhamma teachings.

The President of the Buddhist Federation of Norway also called for the stepping up of public relations campaigns for the International Buddhist Conference. He proposed that such a conference be held on a continual basis but the scope should be scaled down, so that particular topics, such as Buddhist study or dissemination of Buddhism, would be discussed more deeply for concrete results.

Meanwhile, Venerable Dr. Jin Wol Young H. Lee, President of the United Religious Initiative of South Korea, called on Buddhists to exchange dialogues with people of other faiths. Phra Dharmakosajarn quoted Dr. Lee as saying that there would be no peace in the world without peace among religions. He said that, in order to achieve world peace, people of any faiths must seek to understand the essence of their religions first and have no prejudice against others.

Phra Dharmakosajarn said that Luang Pho Panya of Wat Chonlaphathan in Nonthaburi Province, expressed his support for the idea of distributing more widely international Tripitaka, as proposed by the President of the Buddhist Federation of Norway. Speaking at the conference, Luang Pho Panya also called for publishing more books written in English by the late Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, who is recognized as one of the world's great personalities by UNESCO. He said that Buddhadasa urged people to free themselves from materialism and not to be greedy. Buddhadasa believed that materialism and greed would hinder sustainable development.



### Recapitulation of Speeches of Buddhist Leaders and Scholars

**Samameri Agganyani (Christa Bentencierder)**, Council Member German Buddhist Union, Germany says:

*“Buddhism has spread into Germany about a century ago, however the German Buddhist Union has been founded only ten years ago. Right now, the country is hoping to open up a school that will teach Buddhist philosophy.”*

**Dr. Patricia Gaden**, Former President Buddhist Union, France tells the audience:

*“Humanity is currently suffering from pain and other vices, but the teaching of the Lord Buddha will be able to brush away the suffering. Dr. Gaden hopes the conference will be a successful one and be able to bring peace to the world”.*

**Most Ven. Thich Tri Quang**, Vice President of All Vietnam Buddhist Sangha Executive Council reports:

*“The conference this year has shown that Buddhist ideals are being applied in all corners of the globe. Knowledge and ideas on dharma are being exchanged and carried out. This is a special occasion where Buddhists can come together and offer optimal benefits to the world with the principles of Buddhism”.*

**Most Ven. Ching Hsin**, Rector of Ching Chueh Buddhist Sangha University, China Taipei discusses:

*“The world today is full of violence and conflicts, and the outcome is catastrophic as there will be losses of many lives. It is clear that war is abominable and cruel. This conference will enable Buddhism to be the starting point for bringing peace back to the world.”*

**Most Ven. Bhikshu Jnanapurnik**, Vice President of All Nepal Bhikkhu Association, Nepal rejoices:

*“This is an auspicious occasion to celebrate the 60th anniversary of His Majesty the King’s Accession to the Throne. Everyone can follow and carry out the teaching of Buddhism, and they can unite and bring peace”.*

**Most Ven. Zhing Liang**, President of the Buddhist Association of China, China Taipei, emphasizing world peace, points out:

*“The goal of Buddhism is to create peace and unity. The religion encourages compassion and sympathy. The world will be peaceful if people are compassionate, caring and merciful.”*



**Most Ven. Khamba Lama Dambajav Ch**, Khamba Lama, Dashichoilling Monastery, Ulaan Baatar, also, echoes:

*“The teaching of Buddhism aims at bringing peace to the world. Currently, the world has many problems, and people must work together and be sympathetic to solve these problems, with the Buddhist principles in mind”.*

**Phra Ratchamethaphon**, Acting Rector, Mahamakut Buddhist University Bangkok, Thailand, supports the venerable leaders from China and Mongolia, by restating the university of Buddhism, when he says:

*“The Day of Vesak is an important day for Buddhism, as it is the day the Lord Buddha was born, enlightened and passed away. The Lord Buddha was not selective in preaching to any group of people. The Buddhist society is a peaceful society, and therefore, the UN has declared that Visakha Puja Day is an international day of peace”.*

### **Promoting Buddhist Activities Marking Visakha Puja Festival**

Around 1,400 Buddhist leaders, monks, and scholars from 46 countries and regions are joining 3,000 Thai counterparts in an International Buddhist Conference at the United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok from May 7 to 10. The conference is among the activities being held in Thailand as part of the Visakha Puja Festival, which is recognized as an international event.

The Cabinet, during its meeting on May 2, acknowledged a report by the Prime Minister’s Office on the organizing of various activities to commemorate the United Nations Day of Vesak, or Visakha Puja. According to the report, since the year 2006 marks an auspicious occasion when Thailand celebrates His Majesty the King’s 60<sup>th</sup> year on the throne, the Sangha Supreme Council, or Mahathera Samakhom, has proposed Visakha Puja activities to the National Commission on the Sixtieth Anniversary Celebrations of His Majesty’s Accession to the Throne. The Cabinet on March 14 approved a budget of 69 million baht for the activities and considers them as part of the celebrations.

Besides the United Nations Conference Center, other venues for the activities are Sanam Luang ceremonial site, Buddhamonthon, and Utthayan Road. The activities include exhibitions, candle processions (wian thian), merit making, and international cultural shows. The Buddha's relics from Sri Lanka are enshrined temporarily at the Buddhamonthon religious center for people to pay homage to during this period. Buddhists from various countries will join a cultural exchange program at Buddhamonthon as well.

Thailand has chosen Buddhamonthon as a focal point for the Visakha Puja celebrations, because this religious site is recognized as a Center of World Buddhism. Mahayana Buddhist leaders at the 2005 International Buddhist Conference made the proposal for the Center of World Buddhism to be located at Buddhamonthon. The reason is that Buddhamonthon is equipped with sufficient facilities for such a center. The Buddhist leaders want to see a World Buddhist University be located at Buddhamonthon as well, so that various cultural activities and training could be arranged there.

Buddhamonthon was built in celebration of the 2,500 years of Buddhism, which fell on Visakha Puja Day, May 13, B.E. 2500, or 1957. To commemorate this occasion, the Thai government and people agreed that a great Buddhist monument should be constructed. The government allocated an area of 2,500 rai, or 1,000 acres, in Salaya Subdistrict, Nakhon Chai Si District, Nakhon Pathom Province, as the construction site. His Majesty the King presided over the cornerstone laying ceremony in 1955.

Thailand intends to promote unity and solidarity among Buddhists through various activities and the message of peace based on the Buddha's teachings.



## **Buddhism and the United Nations Share the Goals for Sustainable Development and World Peace**

The Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, the Most Venerable Professor Phra Dharmakosajarn, said that Buddhism and the United Nations shared the goals for both sustainable development and world peace.

Speaking at the third International Buddhist Conference at the United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok on 8 May 2006, Phra Dharmakosajarn said that the conference commended His Majesty the King of Thailand as a role model for the success in sustainable development. His Majesty has initiated more than 3,000 development projects to help ease people's problems and improve their quality of life. Phra Dharmakosajarn, who is also Chairman of the Joint International Organizing Committee of the UN Day of Vesak, pointed out that sustainable development involves not only economic and social conditions, but also the environment. He said that, because of His Majesty's great contributions to sustainable development, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) would present him with the UNDP Award for Human Development. The United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, was scheduled to have an audience with His Majesty on May 26 to present the award.

Concerning world peace, Phra Dharmakosajarn said that the conference discussed a proposal for the formation of a Buddhist Security Council to serve as a central body for various religions to settle global conflicts and help maintain peace and security. Another proposal was that religious diplomacy should be introduced to deal with conflicts relating to religions. It is believed that this kind of diplomacy will help the United Nations in its work to promote peace and better understanding of various cultures.

He also quoted the Most Venerable Phra Raj Sumedhajarn, or Sumedho Bhikkhu, as saying that mindfulness is one of the most important ideas of Buddhism. Phra Raj Sumedhajarn delivered the keynote speech at the conference on the topic "The Buddhist Contribution to World Peace and Sustainable Development." He said that if a person was mindful, he or she would not blame others, but would, instead, look into himself or herself for inner peace. As a result, that person would not want to hurt others. He said that, aware of the value of mindfulness, psychiatrists in Western countries were starting to treat mental illness through this way of seeking inner peace.



Phra Raj Sumedhajarn said that Thai society is a model for a compassionate, peaceful society, where people live in harmony and help one another. He explained that Buddhist teachings on “giving” and morality would make people value dedication above all else. Dedicated persons would respect themselves and this would lead to harmonious and peaceful co-existence of all people.



## **Panel Discussion: “Perspectives on Buddhist Strategy for World Peace and Sustainable Development”**

The moderator, Venerable T Dhammaratana (France) commenced the session by introducing members of the Panel and a brief introduction of the topic for discussion. He called for a “blueprint” or “Buddhist road-map” for world peace to counter the global problems such as terrorism, poverty, hunger, discrimination.

### **Bhikshuni Yi Fa**

The first speaker of the Panel was Venerable Bhikshuni Yi Fa. In light of the approaching 5th anniversary of 11 September and the lack of a coherent Buddhist voice in the post September 11 world, Venerable Yi Fa presents an outlined in five areas as she has presented them in her book *Safeguarding the Heart: A Buddhist Response to Suffering and September 11th*:

#### **1. There was Confusion & How did this happen?**

From a Buddhist perspective September 11 was not an isolated event but the result of the society’s karmic accumulation from the past and the cause of subsequent events such as the U.S. military attack on the Taliban in Afghanistan and Iraq. This interpretation is also in-line with Kofi Annan’s assessment that September 11 is not an isolated event;

#### **2. Post September 11**

How can this vicious circle of cause and effect, of abused become abuser, or “eye-for-an-eye makes the whole world blind”, be avoided? The basic problem is that actions are being taken in a state of confusion which, in turn, generates another circle of suffering;

### 3. High-tech military and low-tech uncivilized means have lead to two kinds of religion:

- (a) Religion of violence; and
- (b) Religion of non-violence; e.g., Buddhism

### 4. Evil as a concept

They used the above to justify revenge; this is unacceptable from a Buddhist point of view which separates the agent from the action. This means good people can take wrong actions and bad people can take right actions. Problem of post September 11 was a lack of self-criticism from faiths, traditions or government, such as, the Americans on foreign policy or a more critical Muslim voice;

### 5. Healthy Religious Education

This is what is needed today. Young people have developed an aversion to religion or religious phobia and this has led them to question whether religion really matters in the world today. Is religion really necessary? We must always bear in mind an important distinction between stereological goals of religion and the history of religions. The Buddha, upon his enlightenment, did not set-out to start a religion called Buddhism but resolved himself to addressing the problem of suffering. This means, from a Buddhist point of view, the goal of religion is to solve the suffering of all sentient beings and not engage in conflict in the name of religion.

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## Geoffrey Bamford

### Mr. Geoffrey Bamford spoke on Buddha as a Model

The goal of world peace and sustainable development begins inside. Conflict starts inside us. We all agree. But where do we go from there? It starts from a calm center. The Buddha, as a model for defusing conflict, never responded by saying “No, you’re wrong” rather he would affirm the good he saw in people’s views, “Yes, and...” go on to explain in such a way as to enable the person to see the error of their way and discover a new a more powerful understanding that defused the potential for conflict. Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh calls this “deep listening”, without reacting, without judging, without blaming. This technique is an actual Buddhist contribution to making peace. Response is important but the larger issue is prevention—get to the root of



greed, hatred, and delusion that leads to conflict. For example, if there are floods and storms and food is short and populations are moving, well then there's going to be conflict. If there is international collaboration and it's effective and it's fair then there is going to be less conflict. The same applies to the economy. If benefits of the economy are spread widely then there is less conflict.

### Textual Resources

If there's one thing you could say about the Buddha, he was a very pragmatic man. Take the Kutadanda Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya) which is about the problems of governance. The Buddha says governments get the people they deserve. The way you get better behavior in society is if you govern for the welfare of the many. Or take the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta, (Dīgha Nikāya) where he says that the very reasons for government are to protect and provide support for the weak. These are all very pragmatic things, very Buddhist things, areas of concern to this conference.

### The Problem of Prapancha

How can we work towards sustainability and fair governments in a Buddhist sense? The quality of our experience depends on the way we use our minds. We have created perhaps a false experience out of our concepts or prapancha [i.e., the proliferation of conceptual thought that leads to wrong view]. The assumption today is that only matter is real. What is regarded as real is what's 'out there', that which you can touch, feel, count, produce, consume, that's what's real – not what's inside. This Buddhist analysis can help resolve this ideological problem that assumes we can break things down and examine them according to set of rules.

### The Solution is Introspection

The Buddhist contribution [to peace and sustainability] is the tradition of introspection because it can show people who are 'in the world' how they can be better at what they are doing. It's not a question of making them into Buddhists but giving them the tools to be more effective no matter what tradition they're coming from.

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### Kakuhan Enami

I come from Japan, a country where many religions co-exist peacefully – Buddhism, Shintoism, Islam, Christianity, etc.

At this conference we should focus on the three precepts:

1. Non-violence (ahimsa);
2. Mercy; and
3. To live in Buddha-nature.

We live in a 'bio-crazy' (paticca-samutpada).

The World Federation movement held its first conference in 1947. The World Summit was held at Mt. Hiei in Kyoto last year. Since the beginning till today what we have been seeking is unity in accordance with the six principles formulated in the Montreux Declaration (23 August 1947):

1. Universal membership: The world federal government must be open to all peoples and nations;
2. Limitation of national sovereignty, and the transfer to the world federal government of such legislative, executive and judicial powers as relate to the world affairs;
3. Enforcement of world law directly on the individual whoever or wherever he may be, within the jurisdiction of the world federal government: guarantee of the rights of man and suppression of all attempts against the security of the federation;
4. Creation of supranational armed forces capable of guaranteeing the security of the world federal government and of its member states. Disarmament of member nations to the level of their internal policing requirements;
5. Ownership and control by the world federal government of atomic development and of other scientific discoveries capable of mass destruction; and
6. Power to raise adequate revenues directly and independently of state taxes.

The Federation was formed to save human beings from the scourge of war.

Today Hiroshima and Nagasaki are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

**Ven. Khammai Dhammasami**

Already many efforts are underway for world peace and sustainable development. This effort is a process that involves both participation and non-participation of the sangha. Focus on education of the sangha.

Sufficient economy initiated by H.M. the King of Thailand is a holistic approach to remove the hindrances to world peace and sustainable development. He developed this approach long before the economic crisis of 1997 – H.M. first introduced the idea of a self-sufficient economy in 1974. The notion of a sufficient economy is based on two factors:

1. Education; and
2. Moral Guidance.

These are the two very important pillars of society. Monastic education [must] modernize. E.g., the syllabus for monastic education in Burma is 150 years old. The syllabus for Thai monastic education is 90 years old.

Proposes all schools of Buddhism meet to have a brain-storming session on modernizing monastic education. By updating syllabi monks can make a larger contribution to the two important pillars of society—education and moral guidance.

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**P.D. Premasiri**

From the Buddhist point of view, both the threat to world peace and the lack of sustainable development are due to the same reason: unskillful thinking and unwholesome patterns of behavior.

One might ask, how reasonable it is that one might reach the goal of enlightenment? Can we expect that everyone of us can reach enlightenment?

What the Buddha taught us is how to overcome dukkha, which is highly relevant to the world's problems. So the point that the Buddha makes is that we have to transform ourselves [first] if we want to make peace in the world.



The Buddha says that conflict comes from two opposing tendencies in society [he discusses one – the problem of envy – but does not name or describe the other]:

One is called envy – our happiness depends on desiring the possessions of others. Those who lack want what the others have; those who have want to preserve and protect the possessions they have. The solution is to transform ourselves both at the level of emotions and at the level of cognition.

We must educate the minds of world leaders. Simile: cattle follows leader. If the leader walks crooked, everyone else walks crooked and if the leading bull walks straight then everyone else walks straight. So there has to be an education of the people who are the example for the rest of society. Therefore, the quickest way of changing the world is to change [the mind's of] the leadership. This starts with molding the minds from childhood. But Buddhism teaches that the minds of adults can be de-conditioned by education.

In the modern world there is a tendency to think that the only way to stop war is to prepare for war. If we are going to solve the problem of peace than we have to say not “might is right” but make what is right might.

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### Shi Ming Yi

Focuses on two points:

1. Social welfare/community work; and
2. Unifying all Buddhists.

Before world peace and sustainable development we have to look inside.

As Buddhists, we cannot bear to see people suffer. We tend to take pity on them. How do we help? We know the problem. How can we help? We want peace. We want a Pure Land on Earth. However, Buddhists have built hospitals, homes, schools.

But do we achieve the purpose of trying to educate their minds? Peace starts with the mind. Harmony starts with the mind.

We have been talking about unity but are we really very united? Are we really working as one? Sometimes within the same school of thought we see that people are not working as one.

QBQ: Question before the question. Instead of asking why are all these things happening [conflict and lack of sustainability?] we should ask, 'How should I change all these things to make it positive?'

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### Anurut Vongvanij

First Point: Traditional Approach – Inner Peace

The only way we can achieve a truly sustainable world peace is through developing inner peace. The solution lies within our self. The solution to world piece is through inner peace. But if we know inner peace is the solution then how do we achieve this world peace? We have more than 6 billion people in the world, of which we have maybe 500 million Buddhists. [What is the implication of this statistic with regard to the topic?]

Best way to market Buddhism: to sell Buddhism as a religion of peace, wisdom, and compassion to the world. But we must show the world that Buddhism is a religion of peace and harmony by resolving conflicts within our representative communities – this is our first homework assignment.

MTV: Mahay?na, Therav?da, and Vajrayana: We are all sons and daughters of the same Lord Buddha.

We must do a better job of educating....to study thoroughly about each other and teach each other.

Second point: Non-traditional/alternative approach – No more “ism”

People are fed-up with “ism” – this leads to religious exclusivism and fanaticism.

How to market Buddhism to non-Buddhists?

What does the modern world want?

People need to practice more and more the Buddha-dhamma but they don't have to become Buddhists. If we cannot take the whole world with us to nirvana than perhaps we can be very hard working for ourselves and our own community and work very hard at practicing the Buddha-dhamma.

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## Report of the Conference

### 1. Introduction

Under the courtesy and sponsorship of the Royal Thai Government and the leadership of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, the Third International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak was successfully held in Bangkok, Thailand from May 7 – 11, 2006/2049.

The celebrations were much larger in scale, extending the programs, in addition to the usual ones, to include Buddhist cultural performances and rituals, and from the three-day celebration of last year to a four-day event. There was also an increase in the participation of both the Leaders and representatives from overseas as well as from Thailand. From overseas, there was a record of 1415 representatives (75 VIPs, 494 delegates and 846 observers) with a slightly higher number from the host country and they came from 46 different countries and regions as compared to 41 at the Second Conference in 2005/2548. Overall, there was an improvement in the organization of the celebration as well as the program of the conference, although there is still room for improvement for future conferences.

This report is arranged more or less according to the programs during the celebrations. Comments for each item are attached to each section of the report so that both the event and the comment for it could be viewed together. Following those day to day reports are the overall remarks and suggestions for the International Organizing Committee (IOC) to consider.

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### 2. International Organizing Committee

All the preparations that were accomplished the Third International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak were carried out by mostly the 2005 (Joint) International Organizing Committee. The confirmation of their status as the 2006 (joint) International Organizing Committee was made by Most Ven. Prof. Phra Dharmakosajarn, Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Chairman of the Joint International Organizing Committee on the U.N Day of Vesak. The announcement to that effect was made on May 7, B.E. 2549 (2006). Please refer to Attachment ( ) for the Announcement.

### **3. Arrival in the Kingdom of Thailand**

#### **3.1. Preparations**

As in the previous years, the preparations for the Third International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak were made principally by Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU) led by the Rector, Prof. Dr. Phra Dharmakosajarn who is also chairman of the International Organizing Committee (IOC). It took months of effort to organize a gathering of an international level such as this. It was MCU who organized two preparatory meetings in September 2005 and March 2006 to iron out details of programs for the Third International Buddhist Conference on the U.N Day of vesak.

As the dates for the celebrations drew closer, members of the International Organizing Committee began arriving at MCU, joining in the preparation. On 6 May 2006 at 15:00 the IOC had a meeting at MCU to discuss the organizing and management of the program. At the meeting, three working committees were formed: Steering Committee, Joint Communiqu? Drafting Committee, Programs Coordination Committee. The setting-up by the IOC of such sub-committees had never been done before and was proposed by the Chairman to enhance the cooperation among the members.

Immediately after the meeting, these committees went into action by holding meetings and discussions to finalize the upcoming program.

#### **3.2 The Arrival of the Delegates from Overseas**

The excitement started on May 6, 2006 where most of the foreign participants started to arrive at Bangkok International Airport at the very early hours. The MCU staff and 80 odd members of volunteers were working very hard to ensure the visitors were all well received, taken care of and check into the hotels assigned.

#### **3.3 Hotel Accommodation**

Accommodations were very comfortable and in central locations thanks to the generosity of the Royal Government of Thailand and the hard work of MCU.

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#### 4. The Celebrations and the Conference

##### 4.1 The First Day Celebrations at Buddhamonthon on May 7, 2549/2006

The celebration started off with the blessing and opening ceremony at the Buddhamonthon Auditorium, Nakhonpathom. In the morning, His Holiness Somdet Phra Phutthacharn, President of the Executive Committee for the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand, blessed the conference and delivered a speech; and in the afternoon at 1.45 pm, the opening ceremony of the International Buddhist Conference was performed by Her Royal Highness Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana. Both ceremonies were well organized and managed according to plan and program.

##### 4.2 Speeches and Messages

According to the program, there were five sessions for the Speeches and Messages from leaders of the Mahasangha and Buddhist Organizations and they were:

\* May 7, B.E. 2549 (2006) at Buddhamonthon. At 9:45 – 11:30 am: 12 speakers; and at 3:20 – 5:00 pm: 11 speakers. A total number of speakers for the day were 23 speakers.

\* May 8, B.E. 2549 (2006) at the UNSCAP Conference Centre. At 10:00 – 10:45 am: 4 speakers; and at 01:00 – 1:30 pm: 4 speakers. A total number of speakers for the day were 8 speakers.

\* May 9, B.E. 2549 (2006) at the UNSCAP Conference Centre. At 08:50 – 10 30 am: 16 speakers.

##### 4.3 Speech by Head of States and Governments at the UNEXSCAP Conference Centre on May 8, 2549/2006

The messages from H.E. the Prime Minister of Royal Kingdom of Thailand, H.E. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of United Nations, H.E. Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO were read at the Opening session. At this Session, H.E. MR. Suwat Liptapanlop, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, and H.E. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary, UNSCAP addressed the gathering. The program went on smoothly.



#### 4.4 Keynote Speech on May 8, 2549/2006

The Most Venerable Phra Raj Sumedhajarn (Sumedho Bhikkhu), the most senior western Theravada bhikkhu in Europe and the abbot of the Amaravati Buddhist Monastery, England delivered a forty minutes keynote speech (2006) entitled “The Buddhist Contribution to World Peace and Sustainable Development”. From the feedback, the Talk was well received.

#### 4.5 Panel Discussion on May 8, 2549/2006

The Panel Discussion on the topic Perspective on Buddhist Strategy for World Peace and Sustainable Development chaired by Ven. Dr. T Dhammaratana of UNESCO, France was an improvement compared to last year. Total time allotted was 3? hours. The panelists were:

1. Ven. Dr. Ven. Dr. Bhikshuni Yi Fa, PhD (Yales), West University, USA,
2. Prof. P.D. Premasiri, PhD (Hawaii), Peradeniya University, Sri Lanka,
3. Mr. Anurut Vongvanij, President of the World Fellowship of Buddhist Youth, Thailand,
4. Venerable Kakuhan Enami, President, Japan Buddhist Conference for World Federation,
5. Geoffrey Bamford, MA (Oxon) Chief Executive Director, Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies, UK,
6. Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxon), Trustee, Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies, UK
7. Ven. Dr. Shi Ming Yi (Singapore/Hong Kong)

#### 4.6 Cultural Performance on 8 May 2549/2006/ – 7:00 PM

On the positive side, the event, a new and wonderful addition for this year, was good and exciting for many. Especially catching the imagination of the audience are The 60th Vesak Celebrations, a cultural show in honor of His Majesty the King on the 60th Anniversary Celebrations of His Accession to the Throne, the Shaolin Martial arts performance and some cultural performances from South and Southeast Asian Buddhist nations.

#### 4.7 Workshops on May 9, 2549/2006

There were altogether 7 workshops, one more than last year. In view of the large number of papers to be discussed, Workshop of Buddhist Education and Dissemination of Buddhism started in the morning, held simultaneously with the Speeches and

Messages of the Leaders of the Mahasangha and Buddhist organization. The other Workshops were held in the afternoon, after lunch. The workshops were as follows:

1. World Peace (Moderator: Ms Carmellia Darmawan, Indonesia) (Meeting Room H: MR-H / 1st Floor)
2. Buddhist Education (Moderator: Ven. Dr. Anil Sugandho, MBU, Bangkok) (Conference Room 1:CR-1 / 2nd Floor) (Continuation from the morning session)
3. Dissemination of Buddhism (Moderator: Ms. Ong Kin Suan, Teacher's Training College, Malaysia) (Conference Room 3: CR-3 / 1st Floor) (Cont. from the morning session)
4. Protection of Buddhist Culture (Moderator: Dr. G.A. Somaratne, Peradeniya University, Sri Lanka) (Meeting Room A: MR-A / 1st Floor)
5. Sustainable Development (Moderator: Ms. Nampet Panichpant-Michelsen, USA) (Meeting G: MR-G / 1st Floor)
6. Buddhist Women and sustainable Development (Moderator: Dr. Pawadee Tonguthal, Thai Women Watch, Thailand. Question coordinator: Asst. Prof. Malee Prukpongawalee, Thammasat University, Bangkok) ( CR-2/ 2nd Floor)
7. Buddhist Collaboration (Moderator: Thich Quang Ba, Australia) (UNESCAP Hall / 2nd Floor)

The discussion from the Workshops and the Joint Communiqu? of 2004, 2005 and 2006 will be formulated or translated into an Action Plan and will be presented in a separate document.

#### **4.8 Blessing Ceremony for HM the King on May 9, 2549/2006 – 5.15 pm**

This special celebration of chanting of Most Venerable members of the Mahasangha from the Theravada and Mahayana tradition from 46 countries present at the celebration was held at the Chapel of the Temple of Emerald Buddha to invoke the blessings of the Noble Triple Gems upon His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej on the 60th Anniversary Celebrations of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne. Besides the Leaders and delegates of the International Buddhist Conference of the United Nations Day of Vesak, there was a large congregation of Buddhists from the host country the Royal Kingdom of Thailand. The ceremony was presided over by H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

#### **4.9 Plenary Session on May 10, 2549/2006**

The Plenary Session where the Reports from the Workshops were presented saw an improvement where we saw the smooth flow of questions received by the Chairman/Moderator. Only two hours were given to this session and were well used. The use of Workshop Format in PowerPoint presentation was very useful. This format shall be maintained. From my observations, it should be noted for future sessions that delegates who have already raised a question previously should be allowed to do so again if there are no other questions raised. Observations on other issues should also be encouraged besides the topics from the Workshop. More time should be allocated for this session as it is a very important forum.

#### **4.10 Guest Speakers**

There were four guest speakers at this conference spread over two sessions in two days – May 9 & 10, B.E. 2549 (2006). They were:

1. Mr. Suphachai Chearavanont, Chairman, True Company Ltd., Thailand
2. Ven. Dr. Lama Dobvoo Tulku, Director, Tibet House, New Delhi, India
3. Prof. Dr. Lee Manh That, Acting Rector, Vietnam Buddhist University, Vietnam
4. Prof. Richard Gombrich, Oxford University, UK

#### **4.11 Chanting**

It is a good practice and everyone was happy that all traditions were given a chance to conduct chanting and blessings for world peace before the start of each session. It began on the 2nd day of the celebration, that was on May 8 B.E. 2549 (2006) until the conclusion of the Celebration. This practice should continue which I believe will create harmony among us.

#### **4.12 The Declaration of a Joint Communiqué on May 10, 2549/2006**

The Joint Communiqué was drafted by the Joint Communiqué Committee, who met every evening at Twin Tower Hotel. Several discussions and compromises among IOC members as well as the leaders took place, the last one on 10th May at UNESCAP, until a few hours before the closing ceremony. The Joint Communiqué was presented to the conference by the Most Ven. Prof. Phra Dharmakosajarn, Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Chairman of the International Organizing Committee on the United Nations Day of Vesak at 2.30 pm just before the closing ceremony. The Venerable Chairman also presented the Joint Communiqué to the media afterward. For detail, please refer to Attachment I attached.



#### 4.13 Closing Ceremony on May 10, 2549/2006

The Closing Ceremony was like that of last year presided over by Somdet Phra Buddhacharya, President of the Executive Committee for the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand at 3:00 pm. The ceremony was meaningful and sacred. Somdet Phra Buddhacharya, President of the Executive Committee for the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand and Most Ven. Prof. Phra Dharmakosajarn, Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Chairman of the Joint International Organizing Committee on the U.N Day of Vesak, spoke at the ceremony.

With ceremony concluded with Somdet Phra Buddhacharya accompanied by Most Ven. Prof. Phra Dharmakosajarn, went down from the stage to extend his best wishes to the Most Venerable members of the Mahasangha sitting at the front rows.

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## **Joint Communiqué**

### **The Third International Buddhist Conference on the UN Day of Vesak**

The participants from 46 countries and regions of the International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak at Buddhamonthon, Nakhon Pathom and at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok from May 7-10 2006 (B.E. 2549), gratefully acknowledging that the Conference has been generously supported by the Royal Government of Thailand and the Supreme Sangha Council of Thailand when the entire Kingdom of Thailand is joyfully celebrating the 60th Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Accession to the Throne, have unanimously resolved the following:

With full reference to the resolution approved on 15th December 1999 at the General Assembly of the United Nations, Session No. 54, Agenda Item 174, a joint proposal by representatives from 34 countries, that Vesak, which falls on the Full Moon day in the month of May, be internationally recognized and observed at the United Nations Headquarters and its Regional Offices from the Year 2000 onwards, the United Nations Day of Vesak will be jointly celebrated by all Buddhist traditions;

Furthermore, to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation amongst all Buddhist traditions, organizations and individuals through ongoing dialogue between Buddhist leaders and scholars,

It has been decided to disseminate the following message of peace based on the Buddha's teaching of wisdom and compassion.

Having explored the issues concerning Buddhism and the World, the Conference has agreed upon the following:

1. to further increase and enhance cooperation between all schools of Buddhism to promote unity and solidarity among Buddhists,

2. to promote socially engaged actions to create dharmic societies through the emphasis of the central role of inner peace development, and by addressing

3. to set up more Buddhist meditation centers throughout the world and for that purpose to nurture more meditation teachers,

4. to promote the creation of consistent and easily usable educational materials for children, adolescents and adults through the establishment of an e-library as the central repository of Buddhist content in electronic medium, initially as a partnership between Buddha Dharma Education and BuddhaNet and Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University,

5. to compile and publish an informed work on Buddhism to be freely distributed to hotels worldwide as part of the effort to disseminate Buddhism and, in order to facilitate that, to form a sub-committee of the Joint International Organizing Committee to carry on the work,

6. to create an international body to deal with public relations for Buddhism,

7. to urge all parties, the United Nations, UNESCO and concerned governments and agencies to preserve both the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Buddhists,

8. to promote practices that transform the inner being, manifesting themselves in qualities of self-discipline, volunteerism, simplicity and skilful consumption as well as proactive efforts contributing to social activism and partnering in the development of new economic paradigms,

9. to encourage a holistic approach to sustainable development, based on the Buddhist central teaching of the Middle Way, which is exemplified in the philosophy of Sufficiency Economy put forward by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand,

10. to acknowledge the urgency of improving gender status in order to bring to an end the detriment to individuals, communities and ecology of inequitable and unbalanced development, and to redirect our efforts towards sustainable development based on the inter-dependent integration of economic and ecological concerns and towards peace and security,



the motivations that drive feelings/thought, speech and action that creates discord,

11. to record the success of the First World Buddhist Forum held in April in Zhou Shan, China, the convening of which was supported in the 2005 International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak in Bangkok, Thailand, and to affirm that Falungong is not in accordance with the fundamental teachings of Buddhism,

12. to encourage other countries and districts to hold International Buddhist Conferences, and to hold the Fourth International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations in Thailand in 2007 (B.E 2550) in honor of the 80th Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, and

13. to continue to entrust Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University with responsibility for coordinating the International Secretariat of the Joint International Organizing Committee in order to facilitate necessary follow-up actions and for the Fourth International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak

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*Part One:*  
*Buddhism and World Peace*



## **“The Buddhist Contribution to World Peace and Sustainable Development”**

**(An Outline of the Keynote Speech)**

*Ven. Phra Rajasumedhajahn*

*The Amaravati Buddhist Monastery - Hemel Hempstead, England*

### **1. World Peace**

- A. The Buddha’s view of the world as samsara, the inexorable changing conditions that are recreated through ignorance.
- B. The way to world peace is through understanding the world and being at peace with it.
- C. The way to live in the world is through being generous and morally responsible.
- D. The way to free oneself of ignorance is through mindfulness

### **2. The essential teaching of the Buddha**

- A. The essential teaching is called “The Four Noble Truths”.
- B. This is based on the common human experience of suffering
- C. By understanding one’s own experience of discontentment, resentment, fear, anger, greed and jealousy, one realizes the Dhamma (The Ultimate Truth and Reality)
- D. We awaken and live our lives with wisdom, unconditional love and compassion rather than selfishness and fear.

### **3. The Buddhist contribution to World Peace at the present time.**

- A. There is now a growing worldwide interest in Buddhist meditation.
- B. There is recognition of the importance of mindfulness for resolving personal problems and stress.
- C. Buddha-Dhamma can be considered as both religion and science.



- D. The development of mindfulness and wisdom is the only way to resolve conflict both in one's own mind and in the society.
- E. The Dhamma can also be translated as "Natural Law" which when realized allows us to live in harmony and at peace with nature.

**4. Sustainable Development.**

- A. What is it in human experience that is sustainable?
- B. Being content and knowing the difference between need and greed helps to prevent the greedy and obsessive exploitation of the environment.
- C. Knowing the reality of oneness and unity helps to resolve the endless struggles between individual, classes, races, nations and religions.

**5. The fulfillment of human life.**

- A. The freeing oneself of selfishness and ignorance of the Ultimate Reality.
  - B. The joy of sharing what we have with others.
  - C. The self-respect and confidence that is the result of taking responsibility for our actions and speech.
  - D. The sustainable development of mindfulness and wisdom in our daily lives.
  - E. The enlightened human consciousness that realizes oneness where all duality and conflicts cease.
- 





## Buddhist Contribution to World Peace and Sustainable Development

*Ven. Dr. T. Dhammaratana  
UNESCO Consultant, Paris, France*

In this study, what the Buddha said about peace, justice, and freedom – is important to learn, especially in the context of our much-plagued modern world. The concept of peace is central to Buddhism. Therefore, the Buddha is called the “Santiraja” ‘king of peace. Leading a Buddhist way of life, is to maintain harmonious, untroubled good life, which consists of “samacariya”, which literally means, a harmonious life or a peaceful way of living with one’s fellow beings. It is this doctrine, which gives ‘inward peace’ that allows externally to lead a harmonious or a righteous living’ (Dhammacariya). This is what the Buddha, for the first time in human history, made known to the entire world, when he set up the ‘kingdom of righteousness’(dhamma cakkam) literally the rule of righteousness.

The Buddha, with great compassion for the world, required his followers to practice the four boundless states (appamanna) of loving kindness (metta), of compassion (karuna), of sympathetic joy (mudita), and of equanimity (upekkha). This practice of ‘metta’ or universal love, begins by suffusing ones own mind with universal love (metta) and then pervading it to one’s family, then to the neighbors, then to the village, country and the four corners of the Universe.

The concept of peace is expressed with the word “Santi” in both the ancient and modern languages of India. As Santi is described as the ideal state of man in Buddhist literature, we can say that Buddhism has aimed at peace in its long history. Sakyamuni Gotama, the Buddha deplored that the peaceful life of common people was seriously damaged owing to the conflicts of various states, which occurred during the rising of Buddhism. In the Majjhimanikaya: people seek riches, and kings want to expand their territories (Majjhimanikaya, Vol.II. p.72). Elsewhere mentioned, is the desire for kings to begin war, and bring trouble to the common people with disasters and damage.

### A. How Buddhist Teachings contribute to Peace Negotiation and World Peace:

Today, the nations of the world face many problems, especially in the areas of human security and peace. After World War II, nations agreed to create the United Nations to establish peace and solidarity among different nations to avoid war, terror, aggression and invasion. But unfortunately, such a noble objective still has not become true, as many parts of the world still continue terrible war, territorial disputes, religious, ethnic and political conflicts etc. Because of these unfortunate situations, peace-loving people, including political and religious leaders, look for urgent and effective solutions to establish peace for the planet. In this work, we find out some positive guidelines for world peace in the light of Buddhist teachings. In the Samyuttanikaya (Vol. I, p.26) and in the Chinese version of Samyuktagama (Vol.39. Taisho, Vol.II, p.88c), it clearly notes that the secular world advocates the ideal of realizing peace and politics should be advanced: “without killing, without hurting, without conquering, without becoming sad, without making sadness, only complying with the Law of Dhamma. Early Buddhists made efforts so that wars would not occur, and persuaded other monarchs to that effect. When Ajatasattu, the King of Magadha wanted to attack the Vajjis neighboring country, and sought out the opinion of Sakyamuni, the Buddha through his wise minister Vassakara, the Buddha admonished him not to go for a war (Mahaparinibbana-suttanta). The ideal of benevolence was emphasized in Buddhism and pacifism or peaceful environment was always advocated. In Buddhism, the ideal ruler should govern his country with modern policies and maintain peace without invading other countries. This idea was repeated in the Chinese Tripitaka (Taisho, vol.13, p.733a), mentioning that “ A king should fulfil the duties of a king, which have been observed by his ancestors, cherish all the subjects in his country, guard his own country and not invade territories of others. The same Tripitaka gives additional information concerning the Cakravartin or Universal monarch and how one should conduct his policy vis-a-vis neighboring countries and rulers. The text says that Cakravartin, does not threaten people with force, gives up weapons, and does not hurt people. Then, people and rulers under his power do not move from heir own abodes. As a result of that, all countries surrender to him without being forced by means of weapons. In some other place, there is a record stating that a pious and wise king should conquer the four quarters with virtues, and fulfill his duties. The Buddhacarita (Taisho, Vol. 17. p. 515a), notes that the King Suddhodana, father of Sakyamuni, is lauded as having defeated his enemies by good deeds, without war. To avoid engaging in war, a technique from the Dharmasamuccayasutra, proposes: ‘even if an army of another country should invade and plunder, a king should know first whether his soldiers are brave or cowardly, and then conclude peace by means of expediency’.

When maintaining peaceful negotiations between two territories, there is always something to work out. Such ideals need to be realized to some extent. An Indian monk known as Gunavarman visited China in the early days – a Chinese king asked him: When foreign armies are going to invade my country, what should I do? If we fight, there must be many casualties. If we do not repulse them, my country will be imperiled. O’ master, please tell me what to do? The monk answered: just entertain a compassionate mind, do not have hurtful mind”. The king applied his advice. When the banners were going to be hoisted and the drums beaten, the enemies retreated (Taisho, vol.50, p. 340b). The above mentioned passage teaches us not to fight against enemies. They do not teach us to repulse them deliberately. But, when enemies invade into the country what should we do? A king should observe the duty of protecting the country. Otherwise, the enemies take advantage of the peaceful attitude of the king. His subject may rebel. The same text clearly explains the necessary expediency in details. It is the duty of a king to protect his country; he must repel invading enemies. The text explains how to carry on a battle to save the people and the kingdom as follows: in the first place if the enemy is as powerful as his own army, the warfare will inflict damage for both armies. There is no benefit for any one, but may lose many human lives. If the enemy is more powerful than his army, then the army should abandon war and the king should look for a peace settlement through negotiations with good enemy officers; then, avoiding a possible war and the killing of innocent people. Secondly, in such cases, he should try to solve the conflict by showing generosity and giving anything the enemy required, then violence would be prevented. Thirdly, if the enemy seems to be more powerful, and his force is less powerful, he should try to solve the conflict by arousing astonishment in the mind of the enemy king by pretending his own army is a more powerful force. If these three ways fail, then he is allowed to take up arms, keeping the following thoughts: on account of the lack of mercy on the part of enemy, we engage in war and the killing of living beings. However, we hope that we will kill as few as possible. In the above three circumstances Buddhist teachings advise not to go to war but to negotiation to bring peace upon both parties.

### **B. A Buddhist Road Map for Sustainable Development of World Peace:**

According to Buddhism, conflict, intolerance and disharmony arises out of desires, hatred and ignorance. To develop confidence, tolerance, and harmony it is extremely important to cultivate common values or universal ethics. Therefore, promotion of education, dialogue, social and economic development would lead for sustainable development of peace in the world. The Buddha welcomed teachers of other religions, but he never attempted to convert any or urged any one to change their beliefs, traditions or teachers. In this regards,



we find evidence throughout the Pali Canon where wandering ascetics, sophists and philosophers come to meet the Buddha and discussed or exchanged their different views concerning the way of spiritual practice and liberation. In the Brahmajalasutta the Buddha summarizes the main ideas of his contemporary teachers by saying the following words:

*“You may remember this exposition as the ‘net of aim’, the ‘net of doctrines’, the ‘supreme net’ ‘ the net of religious–philosophic theories’ and the ‘glorious victory’ in the war of ideologies” (Dighanikaya, Brahmajalasutta).*

Today, it has become an urgent necessity to provide avenues to build world peace through understanding different cultures and religions; because, the causes of religious and ethnic conflict in the world today have their roots in the misunderstanding religious beliefs and misinterpretation of sacred texts. Therefore, it is important to apply the wisdom of the Buddha to extend understanding through learning the religious beliefs of others through direct contact and dialogue. This approach in the modern world requires tolerance in a deeper understanding that all religions may have common

ground on which bridges could be built to establish trust and acceptance, and therefore peace and harmony.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its 161st session of the Executive Board in 2001 examined a resolution on dialogue among civilizations, which states as follows:

*“Only dialogue ends war, and the dialogue of peace is very much a cultural dialogue as well. Many nations and peoples nurse memories of historic grievances and cultural slights. Dialogue alone brings these clearly into the open, where they may be assessed with full intellectual honesty and deep concern for one another’s merits. Only then can past wrongs be finally laid to rest. Cultural dialogue thus helps dispel the germs of war, and sows the seeds of peace - and any chance for lasting, harmonious development. UNESCO is one of the world’s forums for such dialogue. The dialogue fostered is predicated upon universal acceptance and observance of basic human rights, as enshrined by the Universal Declaration of 1948, to which all the organizations’ members are committed. Within this broad moral framework, each culture knows that its voice is heard, weighed, and respected”.*

*“Per chance His Majesty might think, I will soon put a stop to these scoundrels’ game by degradation and punishment, and fines and imprisonment and execution”. But the criminal actions of bandits who pillage villages and towns and make roads unsafe cannot be satisfactorily put to a stop. The criminals left unpunished would still go on harassing the realm. Now there is one method to adopt to put a thorough end to this disorder; to those who keep cattle and cultivate farms, let the king give fodder and seed-corn. To those who trade, let the king give wages and food. Then these people, following each one’s own business, will no longer harass the realm. The king’s revenue will go up and the realm will be quite and at peace. The populace, pleased with one another and happy, dancing with their children in their arms, will dwell with open doors”.*

Though, the Buddha took no interest in shaping political situations, he was directly involved with politically active people. He took advantage of every occasion to admonish such people to maintain moral standards, to act with responsibility and to work for peace within the country, and with the neighboring countries. The Mahaparinibbana Sutta provides an example of the Buddha’s idea on statecraft, and even his sympathy for a republic-form of government.

It is important to note that the Buddha’s struggle was to establish a society, where all human beings could live with dignity, irrespective of their birth, caste, class, sex, and religion. Therefore, the Buddha repeatedly stood against unequal treatment of any human being. He wanted a society free from: violence, discrimination of ethnic, and with religious and professional opportunity. His vision for society, which existed in the 6th century BCE, is still valid to our modern society in the modern world. Whether deliberately or unknowingly, the United Nations is forging ahead with its noble mission - to work for the betterment of humanity, with the same theme and same solutions that the Compassionate Buddha thought out during his time, 2500 years ago.

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## Buddhist Contributions to World Peace



*The Most Ven. Master Ching Hsing  
Ching Chueh Buddhist Sangha University, Taiwan*

Over the years, I had opportunities to join in the grand celebrations of Vesak Day held by Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University in May. It is a great honor to me that this year I, leading the students from Ching Chueh Buddhist Sangha University and Ching Chueh Buddhist Institute, am invited again to visit here to attend the 2006 United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations as well as His Majesty King Bhumiphol's 60th Year of Coronation of Thailand and that once again, I have an opportunity to deliver a speech here.

Since ancient times, hostilities between countries keep breaking out owing to territory scramble or the powerful bullying weak nations. Within a country, the different dynasties came into power one after another brought by political power fighting, and they did not hesitate to use arms to overturn the old political power, then building the new one. In addition, conflicts between religions were brought about from consequence the wrestling of religious influences, even though it was often seen that the holy wars occurred between different denominations belonging to the same religion. Therefore, in retracing the history of mankind, there are records of conflict and hostilities.

Look back to the middle of the 20th century, two world wars took place. World War I broke out in 1914, ending in 1918; and the death toll was estimated to be 10 million with 21 million people wounded and 7.7 million people missing or held in captivity. World War II raged from 1939 to 1945. The estimation of death toll was 35 to 60 million among whom 6 million people were Jews who were killed in the concentration camps. In Europe and Southeast Asia, millions of people were injured and homeless. The damage was awfully severe. Besides the two world wars, other small-or-large-scaled hostilities occurred. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was an era that was full of wars and terror.

Through the miserable and bitter lessons from those two world wars and with the technological advancement, nuclear weapons are made more and more lethal. The leaders of powerful nations realize the gravity of war's destruction, caused by the advanced weapons, so they negotiate and reconcile with each other to avoid wars. However, battles between nations are still waging in the world. Due to the racial or religious conflicts within a country as well as the territory expansion or energy resources grabbing, the extensive relationship exists among many countries. The possibility to provoke a nuclear war is very terrifying and would bring disastrous destruction if the situation got out of control. At this very moment, when the whole world is in turmoil - this Conference, with the topic of "Buddhist Contribution to World Peace and Sustainable Development", puts emphasis on the importance of world peace. It conforms to the Buddhist spirit of peace-loving and thus is a significant event.

All wars or conflict arise from greedy demands or hatred; that the opposite side are joyful generous, forgiving and peaceful. From the past until now, wars and conflict keep taking place in nearly every corner of the world. People are frequently forced to be in a state of terror or uneasiness. Consequently, people on earth aspire towards peace. Moreover, Buddhism is a religion that promotes and practices peace. In the biography of the Buddha, it is recorded that the Buddha mediated between the Koliya and Sakya people for the dispute over water. One summer, the sunshine was so dazzling every day, water in the fields ran short; thus crops would wither soon; and because the Koliya and Sakya people used water coming from the same dam – a dispute arose over water-rights. Just before hostilities were about to erupt, the Buddha appeared alone, sitting solemnly, right above the river. As the Sakya and Koliya people saw the Buddha's solemn expression, all of them dropped the weapons and made obeisance to him. Then the Buddha asked them, "Water and human being, which one is more important?" They replied, "Humans are more important than water!" Hence, the Buddha enlightened them with the following words, "To sacrifice people's precious lives in order to fight for water, it is incorrect. If I did not show up today, the result would have been very bloody. What you are doing is wrong. You lead your lives with hatred, but I live without hate." Then he continued, "As others feel hatred towards us, we must live peacefully without hate..." The Buddha also described that in his past lives, when he practiced the Bodhisattva path, he bore all disgraces and insults without hatred while others insulted him, even hurt him or endangered his life.

On the basis of compassion as well as the rule of cause and effect, the Buddha advocates forbearance, forgiveness and peace. The scriptures record the enlightened words of the Buddha, "Educate Buddhist practitioners to practice good deeds of mercy



and do not take upon weapons to kill beings.” This fully demonstrates the compassionate spirit of the Buddha. He also said, “One will be hit back if hitting others, will get hatred in return if hating others, will be scolded back if scolding others, will get wrath if irritating others.” This explains the unavoidable law of nature - retribution from cause and effect.

On one occasion, the Buddha was meditating outside a village about 200 miles away from Rajagraha, in complete mental and physical stillness, with such subtle breathing for seven days that the villagers thought that he had passed away, so they carried and lit firewood to cremate him. However, it was unusual, that after the firewood on fire burnt into ashes; the fire did no damage to the Buddha. After performing various kinds of psychic power, he still returned to sit at the base of the same tree. As the villagers witnessed the situation, feeling amazed and scared, they offered their apology to the Buddha and asked him if he was in pain, hungry or worried. The Buddha said, “I have attained peace and joy, so I will not complain about others. Even though others feel hatred towards me, I will not feel the same for I have eliminated hatred from the mind.” This illustrates that the Buddha has thoroughly eradicated the hatred and anger from the mind, gaining concentrative powers, so deeply, that he will not argue with others.

According to Mahayana scriptures, the Buddha was once, Sadaparibhuta Bodhisattva – who, would not slight others. As he met people, he would say, “I dare not slight you for you all will become Buddha!” Then he bowed before them. The Buddha believes that everyone has Buddha nature, that everyone will become Buddha. Therefore, he would bow to people as he met them. This is to make reverence to future Buddha and at the same time, to respect the human nature. If taking all of others as future Buddha, one shows respect and reverence. How then would irreverence insult or harm, come into being? If really doing so, this world will be the peaceful pure-land in the world of mortals.

From the Buddhist literature, the Buddha is the promoter and practitioner of peace. Because our founder is peace-loving and against violence, the compassionate teachings have an impact on all Buddhists. For more than 2500 years, no religious hostilities occurred amongst the Buddhists. For that reason, Buddhists have great contribution to world peace.

Though Buddhists promote peace, a Buddhist community is only the civil organization that believes in the Buddha Dharma - with neither political power nor weapons - so they cannot stop wars from occurring by means of power or force. What we can do is to disseminate the Buddha Dharma zealously and cultivate more people to believe in Buddhism, and study the Buddhist teachings - making more people realize and carry out the great Buddhist spirit of compassion, forgiveness and respect for human nature.

Around the 10th century, Muslim people invaded India, as a result: Buddhism, Brahmanism and Jainism were destroyed. Buddhism, only recently, has been revived. Afghanistan was once a nation where Buddhism prevailed, but not only did it become an Islamic nation – recently, two huge stone Buddha statues were totally ruined a few years ago. Furthermore, Borobudur Temple located in Indonesia, one of the Eight Wonders of the World, was built eight-hundred years ago, so it is obvious that Buddhism flourished in Indonesia during that period, but now it is also an Islamic nation. The area around Xinjiang and Gansu in China used to be a place where Buddhism was blooming with many Buddhist vestiges left, but it also became abode for Islam. The reason why I mention these facts is not to oppose or incur hatred towards Islam, but to recall historical lessons – to work hard to maintain the existing domain and religious influence of Buddhism as well as to disseminate Buddha Dharma vigorously, to let Buddhism shine and grow in every part of the world. If peace-loving Buddhism is wiped out, peaceful days would disappear from the world. Only when Buddhism shines compassionately all over the world would humans obtain peace, comfort and joy.

We learn from the news that Buddhists in the southern part of Thailand are being killed by Muslims. We also hear that heretics in Sri Lanka use money and material fulfillments to buy-off poor Buddhists – forcing conversions to their heretic beliefs – thereby expanding their domain. It not only deserves all Buddhists' attention and vigilance but also we have to provide effective strategies at once to prevent Buddhist territory on earth from shrinking, wearing down the religious influence.

We, in addition to getting along with others peacefully, have to be at peace with the Earth. We all know that owing to human beings' pursuit of material satisfaction with desperate economic development, the energy resources on earth are overused and the natural environment is destroyed, leading to greenhouse effect and bringing forth many natural calamities. The various phenomena confirm that human beings are greedy, arrogant and

egotistic - unconscious of the crisis over future survival and without any abstinence. We cannot just “talk” about environmental protection; we have to take action to decrease the material satisfaction, reserving the limited energy resources on earth for the generations to come; or else it will leads to self-destruction.

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## World Peace and Sustainable Development

*Dr. Daboom Tulku*

I am deeply grateful to Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University as well as the joint international organizing committee of the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations for the honor they have done me, in inviting me to this conference being held to commemorate a day that is of great significance in the hallowed heritage of humanity. As is well known, it is a day that is associated with the Birth, the Enlightenment and the Mahaparibhana, or the Passing of the Lord Buddha.

The Sakyamuni's spiritual journey commenced from compassion, the Great Compassion that arose in him for the suffering that sentient beings were undergoing, and his great desire to find the knowledge or the path that could enable sentient beings to free themselves from suffering and the causes of suffering. It was not to speculate on God or the conundrums of creation that Gautama renounced the pursuit of pleasure and power and retreated to the penance groves. It was not the allurements of a life in Heaven that motivated him. What motivated his search for light, the knowledge, the way of life that would lead us out of suffering was his determination to discover what sentient beings, particularly human beings could do – should do – here and now, in this world, in this life to end suffering forever, by ending the contemporary states of suffering as well as the causes of suffering that pursued human beings or sentient beings from one life to another. As followers of the Buddha we are therefore concerned with suffering, all manifestations of suffering everywhere, and in the life of all sentient beings, and the motive of our endeavors has to be to find and cling to what can lead to the end of suffering.

Two of the major causes of suffering in our world today arise from poverty, deprivation, absence of access to the basic material requirements of life, and from the attitudes of mind that lead us to resort to the use of force, violence and war in our anxiety to pursue our material interests and aspirations, and sometimes even to pursue objectives



that are justified in the name of religion or ideologies or other aggregates that can invoke fierce loyalties in us. The whole of humanity today is therefore deeply concerned with what we do or do not do to end the poverty that causes deep suffering to millions of our fellow human beings; and to end the current propensity to resort to the use of force to settle disputes or assert rights or secure recognition for identities or protect the projected interests of identities. In other words, threats to peace and the goals and strategies of development have become the urgent and universal concerns of humanity. Any religion or religious community or social aggregate that is concerned with human suffering and the elimination of the causes of suffering has therefore to acknowledge peace and development as matters of urgent concern, and has to identify the contribution that it can make to the realization of these goals.

It is therefore extremely appropriate that this conference is devoting itself to a discussion of Peace and Sustainable Development. To identify and accelerate the contribution that we, as Buddhists, can make to the achievement of sustainable development and peace, we have to first clarify our minds pertaining to the concept of development or our perception of development. The pattern of development that we see today in most countries of the world is the pattern that emerged in the West as a result of the Industrial Revolution. It is true that since the Industrial Revolution the world has witnessed the rise and vicissitudes of the capitalist, communist or socialist systems, and variants of systems that based themselves on the philosophy of a welfare state - a state that intervenes without asserting the monopoly of powers and responsibility, and yet uses power to operate a regime of equity and protection of the weak. Even so all these systems follow a pattern of industrialization that emerged from the capitalist system. If one is to judge from the results that these have yielded, the pattern of development that they accepted has not led to the abolition of poverty or misery. It has not led to the elimination or control of disparities, to narrowing the appalling gulf between the affluent few and the millions who live under the poverty line, without the means necessary to meet the basic requirements of life, like food, clothing, shelter, education in skills and medical attention. Millions, in different parts of the world continue to live in poverty, disease, deprivation and illiteracy. Their life is steeped in misery and uncertainty, and the present pattern of development has not helped these millions to overcome their misery and suffering. The pattern has not only led to the persistence of poverty and deprivation, but also led to increase in disparities and inequality that incite jealousy, indignation and readiness to resort to violence to alter situations. Those who are the victims of the system continue to face suffering; and those who are the beneficiaries of

the system face the risks that arise from the indignation of those who feel deprived and exploited.

Buddhism cannot be happy with any system that ignores or increases the suffering of some – many in this case – and alleviates the suffering of a few others. It cannot discriminate between one sentient being and another, one human being and another, and adopt systems and strategies that ignore some, and countenance strategies that result in affluence for some at the cost of increasing misery for others. It believes in the need to end the suffering of all human beings – all sentient beings. A Buddhist perspective on the goals of development as well as the strategies of development must therefore flow from, and be consistent with, the fundamental perceptions of Buddhism, including:

- \* Compassion: loving-compassion for all sentient beings.
- \* The interdependence of all phenomena and all animate beings and all aspects of the life of all sentient beings.
- \* The inexorability of the law of cause and effect.
- \* Utility as a means that can lead to the alleviation and elimination of suffering, the identification and elimination of the causes of suffering.
- \* Avoidance of all attitudes and actions that can create the causes of suffering in the present or in the near or distant future.

Perhaps we should begin with our motivation. What is the thought that motivates us to seek development? Is it the desire to maximize the benefits and profits of a few, or is it the desire to end misery and suffering for all? For a Buddhist, compassion or loving compassion has to be the primary motivation for development. Every human being has an equal right to live and seek freedom from suffering, and therefore, the goals and strategies of development must have as their object this desire to assure the fruits of development to all.

Secondly, development is based on the utilization of natural resources and human skills and human endeavor. Since many of these natural resources are limited, and cannot be replenished by human effort when depleted or exhausted, it will be illogical to believe that there can be unlimited growth in production. If there are limits to production, there have to be limits to consumption, as well as equity in access to what are needed to sustain life and make life meaningful. If it is accepted that there are limits to what is available for consumption, it has to be accepted that multiplication of wants and an attitude that looks upon multiplication of possessions as the hallmark of culture and

civilization are untenable, and can be maintained only at the cost of denying essentials to others. A system that denies essentials to many can be maintained only with violent means and suppression, which in turn may result in danger to the system and those who support the system. Dependence on natural resources and dependence on partners in production are consequences of the paradigms of interdependence that characterize the world. Development cannot ignore these paradigms. It has therefore to take place within regimes of ecological responsibility and social responsibility. Ecological responsibility includes the responsibility to preserve the eco system on which all life depends, to abstain from polluting and poisoning the air, water and earth which sustain life, to minimize depletion and to maximize the efforts to replenish. Only such a pattern of development can be sustainable.

Thirdly, as we have stated earlier, development should not lead to, or depend on an attitude that looks upon the number and variety of one's possessions as the index of growth or civilization or social status. Such an attitude will only lead to acquisitiveness, covetousness, and the restiveness of mind that comes from endless desires. Desires do not disappear with satiation. They only make the mind restless, and make one suffer. Desire becomes the cause of suffering. Development that was conceived of as a means to end suffering should not result in the aggravation of suffering and in planting the seeds of incurable suffering. The desire for development should not land one in the coils of consumerism, which is a manifestation of insatiable desire and covetousness, of Trishna, which cannot lead to freedom from suffering, which in fact can only lead to suffering.

Whatever I have said up to now is enough to underline the relation between the need for development, the perceptions of development that we adopt the strategies of development that we pursue or are forced to pursue, and the conditions on which a genuine and enduring regime of peace can be built in the world. Uncertainty and hunger cannot produce peace. Avarice and acquisitiveness cannot produce peace, either in one's mind or in the society in which one lives. Obsession with material possessions cannot produce peace. Yet these are not the only factors that affect peace. There are other contributory causes and factors that are as important, and from one point of view, even more powerful and crucial. These relate to the desire or ambition to dominate, to have power over the lives and minds of other human beings, attitudes of intolerance to differences in customs or culture or views and perceptions of interest. This raises the crucial question of one's perception of the means that one should employ to deal with differences. The nature of the human mind is such that all human beings do not

think alike, or feel alike or react alike. This being so, human beings have to learn to live with differences and find ways of resolving differences without annihilating one who is different or one who holds a different view. It is essential for humanity therefore to find a way of resolving differences without violence, which is used to intimidate or overpower the body or the mind, and to compel one human being or group or nation to submit to the will or views of the other, even when the victim does not accept that the views that are forced on him are logical or just. Physical force or its magnification that is manifested in sophisticated arms and weapons cannot establish truth or justice. Yet, we have got caught in the vicious cycle of violence and vengeance, because we cling to the belief that violence can lead to the solution of disputes or incipient conflicts. It is a pity, an irony, which we are willing to ignore the testimony of many centuries and the lessons that many wars and arms races hold for us, and still cling to the belief that war or violence and its variants can solve problems.

The variety and colossal destructive power of the weapons that science and technology have placed at our disposal have brought humanity to the brink of self-destruction. Nuclear and biological weapons and other weapons of mass destruction have made all human kind, and the eco system on which life depends, universally vulnerable. Terrorism has also raised the threat of indiscriminate destruction, and increased universal vulnerability. Security has become a mirage or dream. Yet we don't seem to realize that all this is our own creation; all this is the outcome of our faith in violence, our readiness to hurt, destroy or annihilate others in the pursuit of our self interest, forgetting the fact that in an interdependent world we cannot harm others without harming ourselves - whether our attacks are with economic weapons or the destructive weapons of warfare or the tactics of terrorism.

The seeds of these two beliefs – one in the use of violence, and the other in the sacrosanctness of unbridled self-interest – can be found in our minds and in many of our institutions, or systems under which we live. We cannot hope to build regimes of peace unless we weed out these seeds from our minds and institutions, and substitute them with beliefs that are consistent with compassion and interdependence. One cannot be compassionate and yet cause suffering; yet engage in violence and destruction. One cannot ignore the consequences of interdependence, and believe that one can prosper by hurting others on whom one depends for one's prosperity and existence. One cannot destroy the eco system in the name of development, and yet hope that life, including human life will survive. One cannot swear by equal human rights and intensify disparity and deprivation.



Thus, it can be seen that the antidotes to the problems and paradoxes that we face in the field of development and peace lie in compassion and awareness of interdependence. It is precisely these values or imperatives that Buddha Dharma places before us, and of which, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been exhorting us to follow. The spread of the values and ethics of Buddha Dharma will undoubtedly be an effective contribution to the cause of world peace and sustainable development.

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## Inner Peace – World Peace - The Buddhist Contribution

*Philip Henry*

### Introduction

The Buddhist contribution to peace in the world is regularly discussed by scholars and practitioners alike. In the face of globalized conflict and increased militarism - does Buddhism, either as a guiding philosophical principle, or a lived spirituality, actually have a role to play in creating a peaceful worldview? Or is discussion about its stabilizing influence only to be understood at the level of the individual practitioner, within whom an 'other-worldly' soteriology is the goal, and the wider implications for our world are but a series of karmic consequences of that individual quest?

This paper sets out to briefly address this question and to develop a view that the sociological implications of individual 'inner-peace', can and does have a marked effect on wider societies and nations, so much so that world peace (at least from the Buddhist perspective) could be a reality and not a mere fantasy. How then is the leap from individual soteriology, born out of moral virtue, to be understood in terms of wider groups, societies or nations? Is there a real case for suggesting that inner (peaceful), individual development, translates into a commonality within humanity? Perhaps that is to simplistic a question given cultural, historical and socio-religious backgrounds, but one nonetheless that this paper will make preliminary efforts to explore.

### The Universality of Wholesome Action

The Buddha set out to develop an individual method of action by which to live one's life, the focus of which is on the development of wholesome mental states as presented with the famous injunction of the Dhammapada 183

*“Not to do any evil,  
To cultivate what is wholesome,  
To purify one’s mind:  
This is the teaching of the Buddhas.” (Dhp 183)*

Harvey (2000: 40-43) discusses in detail the nature of wholesome actions developed out of Kusala action which he describes as “a blameless one which is wise or skilful in producing an uplifting mental state and spiritual progress in the doer.” The implications for the development of the term Kusala are, by the time of the later Buddhist and Jain sources, generalized to mean something like wholesome or good (ibid: 43). This is confirmed by Cousins (1996:156) who sees the development of such states as leading to awakening, and carrying the perception often found in the Canonical Abhidhamma as meaning ‘blameless’ (1996: 137).

The relationship between action (mental, physical or verbal) and the results of action are to be understood in terms of the somewhat ambiguous designation of ‘Karmic Fruitfulness’. The nature of karma is discussed at length in the Canonical literature. The Nirvana experience in the life of the Arahant is described by Harvey (op.cit: 43) as “the destruction of attachment, hatred and delusion.” The Arahant no longer has the capability of unwholesome action, and therefore fails to produce Karmic fruit. Unwholesome and wholesome moral conduct (sila) are said to have stopped (M.II. 26-7), wrong conduct has been replaced with right conduct, the non-attachment to actions is as the result of perfecting moral virtue culminating in the perfection of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. He/she is not constrained by ideas of what he/she ought to do, acting virtuously without attachment to virtue. As Harvey (ibid: 45) suggests “he is non-violent because of his destruction of attachment, hatred and delusion, not because of grasping at precepts and vows (Vin. I.184).” What then of the distinction between the ‘Noble’ and the ‘ordinary’, as in right view? The limitations placed on the followers of the path are essentially mental limitations, holding the mind back from Nirvana in the latter, and in the former they are described as wisdom or direct insight - noble, cankerless and transcendent (ibid :45).

The distinctions are not to be misunderstood, they are not to be seen as radically different actions between the ‘ordinary’ and the ‘Noble’, but rather as Keown (1992: 8–14) suggests, there is a false dichotomy if seen as actions oriented to Karmic fruitfulness as the path of the laity, and actions of the Noble path as oriented towards monastics. Both types of action are to be practiced with the former sustaining and supporting the latter. Moral virtue and deep insight are, as Harvey (op.cit 46) suggests, fundamental to

the goal of Buddhism, for perfection of the Noble Eightfold Path covers moral virtue and meditation as well as wisdom. All humanity is capable of aspiring to such a goal, by adopting the criteria for differentiating good and bad actions. The development of wholesome mental states is an essential aspect of that aspiration, despite non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion being phrased as negative aspects, they are, as the Kalama Sutta implies, beneficial, as in order to practice wholesome action, one must understand the harmfulness of the unwholesome roots.

It is to the frailties of the human condition that the Buddha speaks. Greed, hatred and delusion are both individually and collectively debilitating for the human psyche and the effects on 'lived experience' of these unwholesome roots can be seen all around us in the world today. The crux of this discussion is in realizing that an action of body, speech or mind requires reflection, before, during and after the act, in order to consider the likely harm to oneself, others or both. If it is unwholesome it will result in dukkha. The consequences of dukkha being, the karmically deadening unwholesome states, of greed, hatred and delusion, which result in experiences of unsatisfactoriness/suffering, agitation, stress and anxiety in this present life. (A. I.202).

Such harm can be spiritual or material, and self-hatred is included in this regard. The rising of unwholesome states further diminishes the wholesome ones and leads to further unwholesome activity. That which is wholesome or unwholesome is, according to Harvey (ibid: 48), "beyond the purely moral-immoral to include states of mind which, may have no direct effect on other people." The nature of unwholesome acts of body and speech are understood in English, by the use of the term 'morality' or 'ethics', and these actions will undoubtedly affect others, and include a number of unwholesome actions. The Majjhima Nikaya (M. I.147) lists them as: (1) an onslaught on living beings, (2) taking what is not given, (3) sensual misconduct, (4) lying speech, (5) divisive speech, (6) harsh speech, (7) gossip, (8) covetousness, (9) ill-will and (10) wrong view. Conversely, the opposite of these is considered wholesome which does not result in harm to self and others.

There are therefore a number of crucial elements to consider in the nature of Buddhist practice towards the wholesome mental states described earlier. Good actions are good because the motivation and intention is wholesome and the fact that the result is happy karmic fruit is one factor to consider when talking of wholesome action, based on the agent's intention and motivation. Actions rooted in non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion can be seen as good, whether one is Buddhist or not. It is that universal



principle that allows us to consider, the possibility of ways in which Buddhism can, through the ‘individual- to-society’ nexus of wholesome mental states (in addition to body and speech), offer “peace in oneself and peace in the world,” to use a famous phrase from Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh.

### **Buddhist Solutions or Impossible Rhetoric**

The Venerable Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto; 1986:41) in his book *Buddhist Solutions for the Twenty-First Century*, remarks “Truly, we have developed all kinds of things in the name of civilization, including science and technology, but we have paid too little attention to the development of ourselves.” This short phrase sums up much of the discussion above, which for the reason he outlines concentrates on the development of non-violent peace loving individuals and societies based on the basic tenants of Buddhist understanding of mind, body and speech.

He is not alone in addressing the issue of peace in the world from a Buddhist perspective. Such is the human outpouring of sadness and despair at the conflicts which beset the world, both in terms of war and the nature of exploitation through selfish desire for pleasure and acquisition. Such is the degradation of the human condition and that of the planet that unless fundamental and radical social change takes place, we may already be looking at the accelerated decline of the human race. This is an issue the Venerable Ajahn Sumedho (1990: 3-12) contemplated at the end of the ‘Cold War’, when he suggested the *rajadhammas* (virtues and duties of a wise ruler), as a way to view society. He made an important point at the time, explaining what is fundamental to change in society is in the way, in which, we as individuals, and collectives understand transcendence as (ibid: 4-5) “living within all the sensory conditions for a lifetime within the human form, but no longer being deluded by them.”

Buddhism is capable, as we have heard, of identifying the human frailties that lie at the heart of conflict, an area addressed by the Venerable Dhammapitaka (ibid: 42) twenty years ago when he wrote:

*“All forms of war, conflict, rivalry and quarrel, whether between individuals, groups or nations, whether current or in the distant past, can be traced to the same three categories of self-centred motives or tendencies, which are:*

1. *Selfish desire for pleasures and possessions (tanha)*
2. *Egotistical lust for dominance and power (mana)*
3. *Clinging to view, faith or ideology (ditthi)*

*If not refined, wisely channeled or replaced by wholesome mental qualities, these three self-centered tendencies grow in people's minds, making their behavior a danger to society."*

How then is it possible for Buddhism to affect worldviews where conflict and violence, anger and fear are the norm, where societies and individuals know only oppression and disadvantage, where corruption is a necessary part of existing? Is there in fact a Buddhist solution, or indeed a solution at all? What is apparent in my own research and that of others around the world is a growing movement of socially engaged Buddhists who may act as individuals or groups to promote the wholesome nature of Buddhist practice, in ways that engage with the social and political, the mundane and the transcendent. They are committed to the notion of developing 'inner-peace', which is seen as the catalyst to world peace. In other words, their individual wholesome mental states and actions are seen as a precursor to, and prerequisite of, a sustainable peace in the world. The movement is not a worldwide uniform entity but retains a number of Buddhist values that suggest in practical terms a ground swell of Buddhist practitioners in Asia and the West (in developing and developed nations), that hold to the maxim that the development of 'inner peace' is the only solution to an outwardly effective world peace.

This brings us back to the injunction of the Venerable Dhammapitaka of twenty years ago, when he counselled three areas of self-centeredness that were adding to the conflict in the world (as outlined above). These same areas of selfish desire for pleasure and possessions, egotistical lust for power and clinging to view, faith or ideology have been addressed by Kraft (1992), Loy (2002), Jones (2003), King (2005) and Henry (2006), to name but a few. All are advocates of a socially engaged Buddhism, and whereas the activity for social change formed a prominent part of the Venerable Dhammapitaka's (1986) work *On Peace*, there were at the time few, outside Buddhist Asia who were prepared to devote their lives to social change from the Buddhist perspective. There is however, in 2006, a growing sense of the usefulness and positive effects, those Buddhists engaged in social change for the benefit of the many can have. The influence of the Bodhisattva in the world is for many a living reality.

This phenomenon is not a new idea born out of a combination of Asian traditional practice and Western political thought, nor is it a traditionalist vision of Buddhism as other-worldly or world denying, but rather it should be seen as a 'reflexive tradition', suggested by Walliss (2002) and Mellor (1993) who advocate the necessity for religions to move away from the dichotomous debates, where tradition is seen as polemical to modernity. There is, in discussing the distinctions, no need to see tradition verses modernity as binary opposites, but rather as reflexive traditions where the nature of the post modern or late modern society is only applicable to the twenty-first century practitioner, because it necessitates recourse to tradition as fundamental to understanding itself in late modernity. In that sense, it has the validity and authenticity necessary to offer practical solutions for change, albeit they are a radical departure from other forms of social and political endeavor. Ajahn Sumedho (1990) pointed out in his description of a rajadhammas society, where the virtues in leadership at any level, individual or state, would be seen as a far cry from globalized, capitalist, market driven systems that the world has become used too.

Both the Venerable Dhammapitaka and Sumedho now (unlike twenty years ago), have an activist Buddhist audience with which to express their views, and if the strength of a Buddhist socially engaged movement is to be taken seriously, they will find Buddhists around the globe taking positive action towards the development of 'inner-peace' clearly with the intention of using wholesome action as the founding principle, of what Jones (2003) refers to as the 'inner-work', in order to strive relentlessly for peace in the world.

Many would argue that the task is greater than any one religion or social group, and most would agree. However the engaged Buddhist view is that the acceptance of the way it is, the suchness, or thusness (as it is described in the Zen and Ch'an traditions), develops a sense of 'empowerment through acceptance'. With the efforts of a committed Buddhist, intent on inner peace and personal and social transformation many may see the 'underdeveloped self' develop in ways that are beneficial to world peace, at a personal and collective level, through the practical application of Buddhadhamma.

The essential message is not that all Buddhists should be socially engaged, for what is that but another label. It is however a useful designation in striving for change, in a world where movements often are heard and individuals largely, are not. Not all Buddhists however, would want to overtly take up the activist route for the cause of peace in the world. That is not at issue here, but rather that there are those who are, and for them, like the Arahant - who dwells in virtue but does not identify with it, they dwell in

the ideals of a peaceful world, but are not attached to it - seeing it as not-self like everything else. The universality of Buddhist practice in developing the wholesome nature of humanity is based on the ability of Buddhists to develop the inner peaceful world, with which one can wisely deal with the outer physical world. Success in this endeavor as human beings will become apparent, as those with inner peace generate happiness in the human condition. Living in peace generates peaceful aspects in all causal conditions, as they live in peace with all sentient life.

The Venerable Dhammapitaka asserted in 1986 that education for the promotion of peace, was, and is fundamental to developing a peaceful world. It begins with the individual, in whom suffering and enjoyment go hand in glove. If inner-peace equals world peace, solutions of great importance to humanity can be found. The shift from 1986 to today is in the realization of many in the world that there is no longer time to talk of developing peace, but time to act, and those who are acting grow stronger each day. Only time will reflect if it were too few too late, but for the vast numbers in Western societies, coming to learn and understand meditation as a tool for personal freedom and change, the signs, at least in my own part of the world are encouraging.

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## Contribution of Buddhists to World Peace

*Rev. Enami Kakuhan*

*Japan Buddhist Conference for the World Federation*

As one of the Japanese Buddhists, I am greatly honored to be invited here to address you, the virtuous Buddhists gathering from all over the world, on the United Nations Day of Vesak. I wish to express my deep appreciation to His Majesty, the King of Thailand, Phra Dhammakosajarn, Rector of Mahachulalongkorn University and Chairman of Joint International Organizing Committee of UN Day of Vesak, and other participants, who welcomed me with warmth and friendship.

First of all, I would like to acquaint you with the three precepts which Japanese Buddhists, including young Buddhists who are to forge the future of Japan, always bear in mind. In Sanskrit, they may be called Ahimsa, Amitabha and Ayus respectively. The first of them is “nonviolence”. The second is “mercy”, and the third — “to live in Buddha-nature, which is an eternal life”. Through these words, we ask ourselves what to do and what we should be today, at this moment. These precepts indicate our intention that, confronting violence and advancing shared security, we aim at creation of the peaceful world where all living things can live in a biocracy, which may be called “Samutpada” in Sanskrit.

St. Saicho, the founder of Mount Hiei, which is one of the main temples of Japanese Buddhism, said, “The highest expression of compassion is in the act for the benefit of others without thinking of his own”. And after these words, he preached, “A person of firm faith shall be called a national treasure. Lighting up a small corner is exactly the national treasure”. And we have been keeping his “light of Buddhism” on for over 1,200 years, without extinguishing it for even a moment.



In August last year, on top of the very mountain, we held the 18th “Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei”, and had a forum discussion with Asian Buddhists in the city of Kyoto.

As representatives of Thailand, Mr. Phan Wannamethee, president of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, and Mr. Phaisan Vongvoravisit, a member of the National Reconciliation Commission, took part in the meeting. From Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Taiwan, India, Korea and Sri Lanka, the representatives of the respective countries participated.

A Japanese proverb says, “Continuation is a power”. I keenly feel the importance of continuous endeavor to build a bridge to peace.

In Japan there are many religions, such as Shinto, Sect Shinto, Buddhism, new religions, Christianity and Islam, each of which has its own organization. But believers of these various religions sometimes get together, under the motto of: “All religions are one” - to pray and work together with a will to achieve peace.

*“We must not wage war”. Everyone knows it. It can be said that all the human beings know it. People are against war, no one wants war to happen. Nevertheless, we haven’t managed to abolish war up until now. Why is this the case? It is because we haven’t managed to build the system of the world in which we won’t, or we can’t, wage war.*

I was introduced at the beginning as a representative of The Japan Buddhist Conference for The World Federation).

When we, Japanese religious people, are taking initiative in promoting the World Federalist Movement (WFM), we are trying to build the ultimate system to prevent war. Our ardent wish is to unite “the world as one” in the 21st century.

Dr. Albert Einstein said: “The objective of avoiding total destruction must have priority any other objective”, and established the major principle of the World Federalist Movement and advanced it himself.

In August 1947, the first congress was held in Montreux, Switzerland. Representatives of 23 countries came together, and issued the Montreux Declaration.

### **MONTREUX DECLARATION (Six Principles for the World Federation)**

1. The world federal government must be open to all peoples and nations.
2. Limitation of national sovereignty, and the transfer to the world federal government of such legislative, executive and judicial powers as relate to the world affairs.
3. Enforcement of world law directly on the individual whoever or wherever he may be, within the jurisdiction of the world federal government.
4. Creation of supranational armed forces. Disarmament of member nations.
5. Ownership and control by the world federal government of atomic power.
6. Power to raise adequate revenues directly and independently of state taxes.

Still now, these six principles form the basis of the World Federalist Movement.

As you know, in the closing days of World War II, the United Nations was founded in order to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. But, just a few weeks after that, atomic bombs were dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was a huge holocaust – the horrors of which humanity had never known before. Unexpectedly, in many countries of the world, an international public opinion was formed which demanded that a world federation organization should be founded in order to save human beings from the destruction by nuclear weapons.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been designated now as World Heritage Sites. And there, we Japanese religious people have been conducting memorial ceremonies as our duty without cease, praying deeper and deeper.

Moreover, annually we hold Conferences for Peace of World Federation of Religious People, calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons, limitation of arms and eradication of international terrorism.

Last year, on the 60th anniversary of founding of the United Nations and of the dropping of the atomic bombs, the Japanese Government, making an oath to contribute toward the establishment of international peace, adopted a resolution as a national policy, which said, “Under the ideal of permanent peace advocated by Japan’s Constitution, the Government of Japan, as the only country that suffered atomic bombings, should make its utmost efforts to work hand in hand with all the other peoples of the world, and pave the way for the future and the sustainable development of human beings to live in harmony; that is, the abolishment of nuclear and other weapons, elimination of all kinds

of war, and the pursuit of ways to create a World Federation.”

Today, the international movement which promotes the World Federation is developing in more than 20 countries, such as the United States, Britain, France, Russia, India and Japan. These countries have their own domestic organization, with their global headquarters located in New York.

The European Union can be regarded as the model of the World Federation, and the number of its member countries became 25 in 2004. The elected members of the EU Assembly are working toward the establishment of the EU constitution. Once I asked a Czechoslovak friend of mine, “Is Europe going to be united into a single country?” Though the friend is a fervent patriot and a Christian, he gave me a clear answer, “That’s right. Europe is sure to be one.” He believes firmly that a great union is going to be formed beyond the border of his own country.

Furthermore, the African Union (AU) has been established. This is a birth of a law-abiding union of 53 countries with a population of 800 million.

Taking a glance at Asia, in which we live, what is the current situation?

The process seems to be slow, but, in 2003, the ASEAN-Japan summit was held in Tokyo, and then Japan announced its intent to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), which is the basic treaty of ASEAN. This promoted the establishment of the East Asian Union in large scale, including 10 countries of ASEAN, China, Korea, Australia and New Zealand. I also hear that, one step farther, the East Asian Charter is being drafted, and that the “road map” plan for peace in Asia and the whole world is being prepared based on a global perspective.

Okakura Kakuzo, also known as Okakura Tenshin, was a famous writer in Japan, and he also had a high reputation as a great thinker. When young, he studied in the West, and later, having made a tour of the East, he published an English book titled “Ideals of the East”. The text of this book begins with this phrase: “Asia is One”. It is admired for its truly honest expression. It represents a prayer for something great, something sacred, beyond the power of human beings, which Asian people share in the depth of their mind; and an everlasting feeling of awe toward Nature, adoration of Nature, or a sense of unity with Nature.

Looking back at the history, Buddhism and sutras were brought into Japan in 538 AD, through the Silk Road and Baekje, today's Korea, governed by King Seong. Based on these sutras, Shotoku Taishi, who is admired as the Lord Buddha of Japan, established the Constitution of 17 Articles. Article 1 stipulated, "Consider Harmony as the most valuable", and Article 2 said, "Respect the three treasures sincerely. The three treasures are Buddha, the Buddhist teachings, and the Buddhist priests".

This is thought to be a flower which was grown from the meeting of the Japanese traditional culture of "musubi" with the Buddhistic philosophy of "Pratitya-samutpada" [which means "dependent origination"]. I hear that this Japanese word of "musubi" [, which means "connection".] is used as a new international word in the United States and Europe.

Finally, I want to express our appreciation for providing this hall of the United Nations. And I would like to tell you a short episode we had when we Japanese Buddhists met U Thant, the third Secretary- General of the United Nations, who was from Myanmar, and express our sincere thanks to him for his encouraging words.

Secretary-General U Thant visited Japan several times, and in his later years he said to us, religious people of Japan, in a calm voice, "It is said that the religion of the world began in Asia and comes back to Asia. Asia has to be the light of the world." Then he made a donation to contribute to the foundation of the United Nations University in Tokyo and the completion of Lumbini Park, a sacred Buddhist location. I still have fond memories of his amiable character with humility and strength, which is peculiar to Asian people.

Through my humble proposals, I would like you to understand what we Japanese Buddhists often suggest, that is, "Human beings are one. Saving an individual leads to saving all the human beings. Unless all the human beings are saved, an individual is not to be saved completely." Taking this wonderful Day of Vesak as a good opportunity, we want to work hand in hand with all the Buddhists of the world, walk the path toward world peace and the firm light of Asia, and further carry out the missions of Japanese Buddhists.

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## Buddhism and Non-violence

*Prof. Richard Gombrich  
Oxford, UK*



It is truly a great honor to have been invited to address you. I am going to speak about Buddhism and non-violence in public life.

We all know that the Buddha recommended that one should not say [anything] unless it is both true and pleasant, and that is surely an admirable principle for private life. In public life, however, it is sometimes necessary to say things that may not be welcome. We should not and do not admire politicians or other leaders of public institutions who try to conceal unpleasant facts from the public. This is a public occasion, and I hope you will forgive me if not everything I say is pleasant and reassuring.

My first theme, therefore, has to be the relation between Buddhism and public life. I shall argue that Buddhism has a clear and cogent vision of the relation between religion and politics, and that the Sangha and politicians have quite different parts to play; but that to say simply that Buddhism must be kept out of politics is dangerous and absurd.

I shall then go on to argue that public life, all over the world, is in desperate need of the Buddha's wisdom. I believe that while we who are here today must be individually grateful that we have had the good fortune to learn about the Buddha's teaching, there is no room for self-congratulation: the impact of Buddhism on public life in the world as a whole is close-to-zero, and this is a scandal and a tragedy which we must set out to remedy. I shall therefore explain how, in my view, Buddhist principles of peace and love have to be applied in a state's internal affairs on the one hand and in foreign policy on the other.

So I begin with the relation between religion and politics. In ancient India, even before the time of the Buddha, a tradition became established concerning the relations between what we would now call church and state. A noble ruled, and wielded the real power; but he was not recognized as the legitimate ruler unless he had been consecrated by a brahmin. The brahmin priest then became the king's chief adviser, his prime minister. Brahmins were the hereditary bearers and transmitters of wisdom and learning. In theory, at least, brahmins did not become kings, and kings could not become brahmins. The brahmin and the king complemented each other: the brahmin knew, at least in principle, what should be done and the king carried it out. Although this theory did not, of course, always represent what actually happened, it has represented the publicly acknowledged ideal in Hindu kingdoms for perhaps three thousand years.

The Buddha criticized the brahmins and their theories in many ways. The religious practice of brahmins centered on ritual and they were society's main ritual specialists. The Buddha substituted ethics for ritual. In fact, the commonest word for ritual in brahminism, karma, came in Buddhism to denote any action with an ethical value, good or bad, right or wrong. The path towards salvation, nibbana, began not with rituals but with ethical understanding and behavior. Those who cared most about their own spiritual progress were supposed to join the Sangha, to become monks or nuns. Buddhist monks and nuns are thus the religious specialists in Buddhist societies, and in those societies, they occupy a position closely analogous to that occupied by brahmins in Hindu societies. The ruler is supposed to turn to them for advice on matters of principle, since as bearers of the Buddhist tradition they have special expertise in ethics. It is up to the expertise of others then to put those ethical principles into practice. The ruler has the duty to support the Sangha, since that is the first practical step towards supporting Buddhism. On the other hand, if the king does his duty towards Buddhism, the Sangha should reciprocate by lending him their active support.

As we all know, the Buddha preached what is first and foremost a way for each individual to make spiritual progress. The path to the goal of nibbana consists of ethics, meditation and understanding. What counts towards this goal can only go on in the individual mind. Moreover, every adult is free to devote their life exclusively to this goal, which they should do by becoming a monk or nun. Joining the Sangha will give them the opportunity to devote all their time and effort to ethics, meditation, and realization of the highest truth.

But we also know that the Buddha never envisaged that everyone, or even the majority, would join the Sangha. Indeed, the Sangha could not survive physically without the material support of the laity. Every time the Buddha lays down a Vinaya rule, he says that this is done for reasons which prominently include enlisting the support of the laity. Buddhist laity in fact have the same duty as a Buddhist ruler, only on the more modest scale appropriate to their position. They are to support the Sangha; and they are to do their best to follow the Buddhist rules of morality, which are summarized not only in the five rules of self-restraint which they are supposed to repeat every day, the paṅca sīla [five precepts], but also in the positive principles of generosity and kindness – dāna and mettā. There is only one Buddhist path, but the laity and the Sangha have complementary roles, much like the brahmin and the Hindu king. It was not envisaged in traditional village society that a layperson would have the chance to do much meditation and thus to acquire the subtle understanding that meditation could bring. Ethics, however, apply to all: they are the very foundation of the Buddha's teaching.

Certain well-known texts in the Pali Canon illustrate the above points. How the Buddhist [layperson] is to apply ethics [into] daily life is spelt out in the most detail in the Singālovāda Sutta. Most relevant for my theme today, however, is the advice that the Buddha gives to rulers. The general ethical principle is stated in the Dhammapada<sup>1</sup>: “Never in this world is hostility appeased by hostility; it is appeased by lack of hostility.” In the Kūṭadanta Sutta this is memorably applied to politics. A great king of former times tells his brahmin priest and prime minister (who is later revealed to have been the future Buddha in a former life) that he wants to perform a great sacrifice. This will require him to raise taxes. His wise prime minister warns him that the country is full of crime. He says: “Your Majesty may think that he can root out all crime by killing the criminals, imprisonment, fines, censure or exile. But this will never succeed completely: there will always be survivors, who will go on harassing your kingdom. Here is the only system which will eradicate crime. Your Majesty should supply seed and fodder to those who work in agriculture or animal husbandry; he should supply capital to those who work in commerce; he should organize food and wages for those who work in his service. Then those people will concentrate on their work and not harass the countryside. Your Majesty will acquire a great pile. The countryside will be secure, free from public enemies. People will be happy, and dandling their children in their laps will live, I think, with open doors.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All References to Pali texts are to the editions of the Pali Text Society: 1 Verse 5.

<sup>2</sup> Dīgha Nikaya 1, 135.

Those who claim that Buddhism has no place in politics have apparently forgotten the great Indian emperor Asoka, who ruled almost the entire subcontinent for over thirty years in the middle of the third century BC, and whose edicts show that he drew all his principles from the Buddha's teaching. I shall return to Asoka very soon. But first I want to answer anyone who says that Asoka is all very well, but that was long ago, and it is the conditions of the modern world which demand that religion keep out of politics. Let us glance, then, at the modern western world. In many European states one of the main parties calls itself Christian Democrat or Christian Socialist. In fact, as a great reaction to Fascism at the end of the Second World War both Germany and Italy elected Christian Democrat governments; in Italy the Christian Democrats held power (with various coalitions) for 44 years, and in Germany the present government is again headed by a Christian Democrat. But perhaps the most interesting case is the United States, which so rigidly separates Church and State that its constitution forbids the state to favor any religion at all. This has many radical effects, such as making religious worship and religious instruction illegal in state schools. And yet there are few countries in the world where Christian values and even doctrines, some of them extremely specific, play such a large part in politics, because those are things many people feel deeply about, and a democracy cannot keep people from expressing their opinions by campaigning and voting on what they consider important. In America abortion is a good example of an ethical issue which plays a huge part in politics.

Those who say that they want to keep religion out of politics often mean that they do not want to accept the moral values proposed by a religion, but prefer other values, such as those of communism or nationalism. One of the most famous sayings in the literature of the western world is the line of poetry by the Roman poet Horace, published in 23 BC: "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country."<sup>3</sup> Politicians usually prefer that sentiment to the anti-war views held by some of the great religious traditions.

Let me make one other point about ethics. The great religious traditions all teach that people should love each other, be kind and compassionate. By this, they mean that one should love everybody, not just those whom it is easy to love. Loving someone who is always kind to you is no more than most animals do by instinct. Love becomes an ethical accomplishment when it is directed to our enemies, or others whom it is hard to love.

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<sup>3</sup> Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.



So what part can Buddhism, which professes non-violence and love for all, play in public life? For me to make my main point, I need look no further than the first precept: not to take life. More than half the countries in the world have abolished capital punishment, which means that the state does not take life. Yet in the list of those which have no capital punishment figure only two Buddhist states, Bhutan and Cambodia. This despite the fact that there have been numerous studies of whether capital punishment lowers the crime rate by acting as a deterrent, all of which have concluded that it does not. So there is not even a pragmatic argument for retaining capital punishment: it is there only to satisfy the desire for revenge.

Should that desire for revenge be satisfied? Capital punishment usually follows a terrible crime such as murder, and such crimes are certainly detestable. That is why treating those criminals humanely really puts to the test whether we are sincere about our principles of love and non-violence. Of course, if someone murders a person dear to me, it is too much to expect me ever to love that murderer. That is why we have a judicial system, rather than allowing everyone to take the law into their own hands. But if I am a sincere Buddhist, how can I ask the state to kill on my behalf? Buddhism says that anyone who has done an evil deed will have to suffer for it: that is the law of karma and retribution. Why multiply the violence by making judge and executioner also commit murder? In the Cakkavatti Sihānada Sutta the Buddha describes how a king has a thief executed, but this only begins a vicious circle of violence.<sup>4</sup> In the *ḡamiya Jāṭaka*<sup>5</sup> the Buddha is born as a king's heir apparent. He is taken to his father while the latter is on his judgment seat sentencing criminals to violent punishments, including death. There is no suggestion that these sentences are improper: the king is only doing what is expected of him. But the baby future Buddha remembers that in a former life he too was a king who sentenced people to death, and that as a consequence he had to undergo torment in hell for eighty thousand years.<sup>6</sup>

If we seek a model of non-violent Buddhist rule, we have one to hand in the emperor Asoka. I would like every school system in every country to teach its pupils not only something about the Buddha's teachings, but also about how Asoka put many of

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<sup>4</sup> Dīgha Nikāya III, 67-8.

<sup>5</sup> Also known as the *Mūgapakkha Jāṭaka*.

<sup>6</sup> *Jāṭaka* VI, 3-4.

them into practice. The inscriptions he left recorded how much he curtailed the use of violence against both men and animals. Sometimes his language is difficult for us, and early European scholars believed that the fourth pillar edict showed that he retained the death penalty; but Prof K.R. Norman of Cambridge University showed, some thirty years ago, this is a mistake, and the word which had been taken to refer to execution refers only to flogging.<sup>7</sup> So Asoka is the first [known] ruler in history recorded to have abolished the death penalty.

Make no mistake: the state that uses the death penalty is to that extent corrupting its citizens and going against the Buddha's teaching.

If it is wrong, by Buddhist standards, to kill people who have been found guilty after a trial, what can one say of killing suspected criminals who have not been brought to trial? One context in which this happens, as we regularly read in the newspapers, is when a whole segment of the population is at odds with the government. Violence seems to be the way to deal with such an uprising. Yet the Buddha's advice which I have already quoted from the KUTadanta Sutta teaches us that this meeting hostility with hostility is not only unethical but likely to make matters worse. If we feel that the rebels do not deserve our kindness, we may have to grit our teeth in order to show self-restraint, but that is a small price to pay for saving so many lives and so much suffering in the longer run.

Note that I am not arguing for pacifism. This is where the difference between the public and the private sphere becomes crucial. If someone attacks me, I may decide not to respond, even – in the words of Jesus Christ – to turn the other cheek. But if a population has elected me to look after their interests, and they are attacked or threatened with attack, the situation is different: I have a responsibility to protect them. Countries need defense forces to deter attack, and potential aggressors need to know that those forces may be used. There is all the difference between aggression and defense, between initiating violence and responding to it. Here we return to the greatest Buddhist ruler, the emperor Asoka. In his thirteenth major rock edict he told the world how much he regretted having waged war on the people of Kalinga. He hoped never to have to do such a thing again. But he also warned his neighbors that while he would “tolerate what could be tolerated” (his words), they should not provoke him. That surely is the right way for a government to minimize violence.

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<sup>7</sup> “Asoka and Capital Punishment”, **Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society** 1975, 1, pp.16-24.

Though the first responsibility of a ruler is towards his own people, that cannot excuse callous disregard for the lives of others, let alone policies which needlessly bring death to foreigners. In these respects I fear some Buddhist governments have disgraced themselves. In the late 1950s, for example, the ostentatiously Buddhist government of Sri Lanka refused to join in any criticism of the killing of monks and destruction of monasteries in Tibet, and Sri Lankan Buddhist governments have continued to deny support to the Dalai Lama, even suggesting that he is the wrong kind of Buddhist, as if the lives and welfare of Mahayana Buddhists had no call on the concern or sympathy of Theravadins. Equally distressing things continue to happen even now. In Britain we have recently seen for ourselves on the BBC news how in Myanmar, not far from the Thai border, large numbers of men, women and children are being killed and their homes and property destroyed to clear land for hydro-electric power schemes in order to sell cheap electricity to Thailand. This murder of innocent Buddhist citizens may well be going on even as I am talking to you.

There is a story that Mahatma Gandhi was once asked what he thought of British civilization. He replied, "I think it would be a good idea." I venture to suggest that Buddhist non-violence too would be a good idea. We cannot pretend that we do not know what is going on next door. If anyone in this assembly has any influence, let them use it.

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## World Peace through Buddhist Education

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Education means enlightenment of potentialities already in men. The aim of education is to make man perfect, pious and successful. The aim of Buddhism is also for perfection of man. There is no difference between Buddhist Studies and Buddhist Education. Education must precede Buddhist Studies and Buddhist Studies must precede Buddhist Education. Buddhist Education should aim at producing well for the Buddhists and also benefit for the people of the world. Buddhist studies include books of Tripitakas on the basis of Buddha's Teachings and are glorified with Buddha's message.

Buddhism is a religion of peace, harmony, social welfare, social justice, love, compassion, amity, friendship, brotherhood, morality, non-violence, tolerance and dedication. Hence it is a religion of mankind, their benefit and happiness. Buddhism has a respect for all living beings and approaches them with loving kindness. Buddha was born to dispel and darkness of ignorance and to show the world the path of peace and the path to be free from sufferings. The Buddha's way is a way to enlightenment, in knowledge and education. His message enabled man to think freely and wisely. His teachings is still today influencing the destinies of humanity and illuminating the world with loving kindness.

Buddha was a great teacher. He taught men for inspiring love and for establishing peace. He was unique among religious teachers of all time. The teachings of the Buddha inspired the blossoming of a whole civilization. Buddhist thought, education and philosophy became a great civilizing force that moved through the history for may a culture and nation. Buddhism is an effective vehicle and a religion of humanity. The appeal of Buddhism is that it is a realistic religion; it is a message of peace, loving-kindness. This message of peace radiated in all directions and the millions of followers found a new way of life. Though Buddha the savior of mankind is no more in the world yet, the sweet fragrance of His message of peace still remains with us. Buddhism captured the hearts of the millions is because it spread by love and compassion for humanity.



Buddha's messages are the salient matter of Buddhist Education. These messages have been depicted in the Tripitaka. In every books of Tripitaka there is a clear direction for mankind which led them to emancipation and peace. Buddha's teachings are the Buddhist Education. This Education was introduced in order to educate the society and civilized the people to live in peace and harmony. This Education asserted that true greatness springs from love, not hatred.

Buddha realized that people are suffering; he wanted to find out the real happiness. He renounced the world and invented Noble Eight Fold Path, through which one can conquer sufferings. The middle way is the path of self-conquest, which leads man to real happiness and peace.

The code of life, the precepts which were enunciated by Buddha, is the basic strength of Buddhist Education. The present world is threatened with arms-dealing. The manufacture and sale of arms and ammunitions is largely responsible for all killings and violence in the world and also for all terrorist activities in every corner of the globe. Buddha in his Eight Fold Path discarded it [right or correct livelihood] and alerted people to the dangers and evil effects. Buddhist codes also directed people to keep themselves away from drugs. At present drug abuse has become the major problem in the world. The manufacturing and selling of alcohol and drugs are greatly responsible for crimes in every society. Buddhist Education laid great stress on the abstention from liquor and drugs.

Environment pollution has creating disturbance in the globe because we are not protecting the nature. In Buddhism we can get clear idea in this direction. Buddha's whole life is deeply connected with forests and trees. He was born in a garden, achieved the Enlightenment under a tree, preached the First Sermon in a forest, and expired in a forest. Jetvan Vihar and Benuvana Vihar were established in a forest. Buddha loved forest, trees and gardens. He directed his disciples not to cut any trees or plant but instructed them to plant trees. These teachings and ideas have to be disseminated throughout the world. Protection of all life is a Buddhist vow: "I shall abstain from destroying life."

From going though Buddhist Scriptures, we learn: He who serves the sick and feeds the hungry serves the Buddha and the Dhamma. It means by keeping people hungry, peace cannot be established in the world. Buddha's appeal to the people that he should fight against poverty and stand beside the sick. This poverty is the cause of theft,

terrorism and discontent in the society which is the main hindrance to progress, prosperity and peace. We find unthinkable examples of Buddhist Education in Asokan rock edicts. Asoka said – “Sabba manusa mama paja” – All people are my children. Therefore, the time has come to preach the message of the Buddha in order to establish world peace.

What can we learn from Buddhism? We learn that - victory begets enmity, victims pass through life frustrated. Happy people are neither the victor nor victim. Everybody should conquer one's own mind rather than conquering thousands of enemies in the world. Self-victory [or victory over the 'self'], is the best victory. Buddha discarded war. Therefore we should control our minds and refrain from greed, hatred and violence.

Buddhism is a religion of moral code; it is a philosophy of life. Buddhism is a scientific religion and not based on dogma. Karl Marx said: 'If by religion is meant a way of life, perfection of life, [or] a system of deliverance from the ills of life, then Buddhism tops the list of all religion. Buddhism did not puzzle man with magical power but proved that man is the architect of his own fortune. Man is the master of his own mind and future. Buddhism appeals to the modern mind because it is scientific.' [no source]

Therefore in order to establish peace in the world we need to follow the ideal of non-violence, amity and compassion. We should nurse the sick, feed the hungry, and love the poor – only then will poverty be eradicated. Eradication of poverty means a society without violence. We must protect nature, should not be indulgent in drugs, should maintain chastity, refrain from telling lies, and committing theft - above all we should love all living beings and should not kill or strike any creature. This is the main concepts behind Buddhist Education.

The main subject-headings for Buddhist Education, are: Five Precepts, Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Noble Path, and Dependent Origination. Therefore, we should shape our lives according to those principles and paths. We should encourage people to study Buddha's path: the path of salvation, equality, amity, loving kindness, non-violence, friendship and harmony; then the world will be rich, civilization will be glorified, people will be prosperous, mankind will be happier. In this way we can establish peace in the world.

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## No Enmity

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Terrorism has come into being ever-since men had likes and dislikes. Hatred has been propagandized and disseminated under various forms. It grows very rapidly when nourished by all kinds of conflicts - ideological, political, philosophical and religious as well as the conflict in the individual self. From the Buddhist point of view, whenever and wherever hatred has not been removed, suffering, peril and terrorism appear.

I would like to share with you the Buddhist method of conciliation with hatred. It is considered as an important remedy for the process of emotional health and recovery of healthy state. This process will bring about peace and happiness, upon which everybody who loves life, peace and human happiness - should take notice.

After a Dhamma talk about the elimination of hatred, a Dharma master asked his audience:

- Among you, who has already abolished hatred?

An old man of eighty years old stood up to express his idea voluntarily:

- Master, I have no more hatred.

- Well, what method did you follow to practice?

- Those who devastated me, harmed me or wanted to kill me have been strangulated by the King of hell already!

This almost ridiculous reply reflects a philosophy which Buddhism calls hatred hidden under a form of an emotional flow called “drowsiness,” a latently mental state like sleeping. Ordinarily, we do not see manifestations of hatred, but once hearing somebody evoke past suffering, it begins to grow and be provoked.

Latency is manifested as a swelling state of bubbles. Our mental bubble is swelled out with these “latents” to an extent that it can explode into pieces. Hatred in human consciousness is also dangerous like that. Latency makes man follow an inertia which is nourished by sophism of custom and habit, and cultural tradition. For instance, we think we have to return an injury, or to avenge those who have caused suffering to us, so now we have to cause them to suffer, it is tit for tat. And of course, patriotism and national spirit are all based on such hatred. Buddhism also teaches us: “drinking water, remember its source; love our country, our people, love what has vitality, environment and nature.” [no citation]

In Anguttara Nikaya, the Buddha talked about four causes by which hatred is nourished and it is difficult to eliminate from the human mind.

1. Firstly, is the attitude considering “my self” as the measure of value, happiness, human life and longevity, etc. “Mine” is all; whoever or whichever doctrine, alliance, partner harms the role, position and happiness of “my self” is treated as opponent “mine.”

2.. Secondly, the psychological attitude appears under the form that we consider as the “mine” all those who are related to us: husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and friends, relatives, fellow men, etc. Harming the “mine” means harming “my self.” Therefore, such attitude also creates detestable feelings.

Among the two situations mentioned above, the Buddha said that sometimes the foes who harm us may be forgiven easier than when they cause harm to the “mine” because our suffering can fade away gradually; but each time seeing our kindred’ s suffering, we can’t control our feeling, and our suffering increases our hatred.

3. Thirdly, it is a situation of psychological complexes. When thinking or knowing that someone is giving support to those we do not like, we feel unpleasant and dislike persons who have relation with him. Therefore we never feel joyful to know others’ success or happiness. This situation is latent in fine forms like envy, competition and rivalry.

4. Finally is another complex situation in which those we like are taken care of by others. Then, a feeling of jealousy emerges and we want to turn only those we like into our personal property. Thus the emotional flow of possessing can become hatred.

The four situations above make man behave according to two opposite extremes: friend or foe, favorable or unfavorable, like or dislike, acceptance or unacceptance, and if we gain the other has to lose.



That leads us to a tendency of an extreme life, not accepting others but only accepting ourselves and that only we ourselves are true, and are representatives of the right. Hitler, dictator of the Nazis, did not like Israelis because if the latter exist, his intelligence will be nothing compared to theirs. Sometimes due to fearfulness, we become extremist forbidding the democracy and the right of free speech. We can see this happening frequently in human history. Wherever the self is multiplied and turned to be the master, there is overwhelmed suffering.

Seeing the scene of two WTO sky-scraper buildings of USA collapsing in just a few minutes, the whole world was terrified, and fear began to rise in everyone. They dared not go to public places, nor appear in crowds, nor using transportation where incidents of suicide bomb' explosion could take place. Terrorism makes human beings victims, and suffering increases, hatred begins to emerge.

Buddhism teaches us to analyze the nature of life as a law which functions according to a cycle of three different periods: birth, change and death. That is also the cosmic law. Nothing escapes from this rule. So, can the human fear for death help men pass the crisis of terrorism? If the answer is no, is it meaningful for us to concentrate all our feeling on it? Therefore, we'd better concentrate on the improvement of our virtuous, wise, honest and valuable life in order to develop all meritorious forces necessary to life. These forces themselves are a firm fence to support our life and longevity, according to a Chinese saying: "great virtue frightens spirits and gods." Our virtue will help us overcome all events of common kamma.

Understanding so, we would work, live, trade, transport and move everywhere without fear for anything happening to us; that attitude may overcome the risky ones. There are those who can forget hatred in only about several days, someone in several years and others in decades, and there are also those who bring it with them during the course of this very life, and hereafter they will have a complex of hatred to someone without understanding the reason for it.

The Buddha confirms that the lifespan of a hateful feeling depends much on our attitude of living and behavior psychology through an event. Therefore, in order to have a peaceful and relaxed state of mind, the Buddha taught that we'd better concentrate on detachment and if we want to reduce the lifespan of resentment, we have to nourish detachment in a conscious and artistic manner.

The detachment may be compared to the way we tear a debenture between us and those who bring suffering to us. When an action of hatred is established, a debt is disposed. If we are bold to unbind and tear its debenture, our mind will be relaxed; otherwise, we seem to keep a fire in the house and it can burn firstly not our foe but our off springs and relatives. Buddhism says that is the way we create the alliance, the feeling of suffering and hatred, and we hand down this feeling to flow to our closest relatives and it's hard for us to unbind it to live happily.

In Great Jeweled Accumulation Sutra, the Buddha gave a very deep simile – about a march and its victim. The monkey fell into the marsh – but fought like a tiger to escape from the marsh – but the more it fought, the deeper the monkey sank, until it was unable to fight. Finally, the grim-reaper came. The Buddha said suffering and hatred are the same.

When we are shot by an arrow of hatred through the body, we fight like a tiger in pain. The Buddha said there is an art to reduce the pain; that is “we’d better cut off the arrow at the first end with bravery, and then hold the last end and try to draw it from the body. We may be in pain a little, but the wound could be cured.”

If we want to manifest all our suffering to the agent who creates it, we make ourselves become the victim for the second time; and if hatred appears we become the victim for the third time, the fourth... until finally we pass away at what time we do not know ourselves.

The Buddha taught that in situations of suffering - the wise man is not one who asks for taking reprisals against the agent, but is the one who thinks of the way to be taken to hospital for the removal of the arrow. Only after that, does he trace the agent causing his suffering. Thus, the consciousness about the agent causing suffering is one of great obstacles against abolishing resentment. Buddhism teaches that in order to abolish hatred effectively, we have to contemplate on “no man causing suffering,” ie there is no agent who intentionally creates suffering with arrangements, means, instruments, modes, etc.

We should contemplate like that in order not to disseminate hatred, not to lead to internal suffering. That method of contemplation is a way of recognizing that there is not an immutable real substance in the five aggregates of personality composing of five

elements. Contemplating on “no enemy” from this angle of the doctrine of no-self, the Buddha taught us to contemplate the truth that there is no agent creating suffering and not an ego feeling suffering. He wanted to use psychological method to appease suffering which is like dregs in the glass of water; the more we stir the water, the more we can’t drink it because dregs will never sink to the bottom of the glass. We can’t drink, nor can our relatives.

Contemplating on no-receiver means thinking that there is no person, no subject who endures suffering caused by another one, there is not a self-existing for bearing the injustice, pain, anger, resentment, etc. Then, suffering feeling begins to be calmed down, and none suffers those things. When we contemplate like that, though the suffering is as large as Mount Sumeru, it still can be shortened. However, this method of contemplation is only used by the victim or his/her relatives. If those who have caused suffering and hatred thought that there is no agent causing suffering, meaning “though I kill other, still I am not the agent,” so it’s clear that they lack virtuous responsibility for their bad actions done to others.

Therefore, we should know that those who take advantage of this doctrine to justify their evil actions are cunning sophists. They are persons whom the Buddha blames for “taking advantage of the emptiness doctrine to defend their criminal act to cause more criminal ones.” A story in a Buddhist country narrates that there was a rich man who did business in the stock market, and he was rich mostly due to his cheating. When he went on trial for his cheating, his lawyer argued: “According to Buddhism, there is no man committing cheating. Thus, you are wrong when you say that my client robbed.” The judge replied: “I am also a Buddhist, so I know that rule. Your client is not the agent who committed the act of cheating, but his hands did the act of cheating. So, instead of putting your client into jail for three years, I will now decide to cut off his criminal hand and put it into prison for three years.” Hearing so, both lawyer and his client had their heart in their mouth because he’d prefer being put into jail for three years than let his hand be cut off.

Next, we contemplate the process of separating the flow of feelings from the functioning of the body. If we separate these two, the life will not exist any more. The Buddha said that all suffering or happiness is present because it is being based on feeling flow; what is feeling is suffering. So now, if we want to separate suffering from the physical body, it is necessary for us to contemplate that this feeling flow and our physical body are not one; suffering for being robbed is at mental level and sufferings for being beaten

is at physical. Thus, these sufferings have no place to attach. The Buddha said: “Imagine the trunk of banana tree, we misunderstand it is a tree, but when we open every layer of its trunk, we can’t see any thing called duramen. Human life with the form of physical body also functions like trunk of banana tree. The Buddha said “separating the feeling flow from physical body” resulted in the fact that though something is present as reality but it does not affect on us, meaning it can not oppress or depress us. Fear increases suffering. So psychologically, detaching feelings from our physical body is one of the effective methods of achieving the contemplation on no receiver, i.e. we ourselves are not victims.

When Most Venerable Dalai-Lama and his Tibetan community organized the forty-year exile celebration from Chinese Government, he used words which I think are favorites to me, they are “forty years of greatly turning the wheel of Dhamma.” He did not use words “forty years of the danger to Dhamma.” If he used the latter, he had accepted that he was a victim, a receiver of feeling; while morality in Buddhism teaches us to contemplate on four objects of no-self is: there is no idea of a man as a subject, no idea of other person as a subject, no idea of “my self” and no idea of feeling flow as subjects that are suffering. That is the spirit of the Diamond Sutra. If we can contemplate like that, our suffering will be abolished quickly.

His words are very suitable to the morality of Buddhism, because through that event, the Tibetan Buddhism took its appearance in India, receiving the English culture and education, and above all, informational exchange relations in English language made Tibet Buddhism known around the world.

That is a psychological art, which the Buddha taught us, if we believe in it and follow it, our hatred for others would be abolished easily. Of course, it requires our detachment attitude. We do not pay attention to those who had created our suffering, but only see it as it is and not let our feeling flow rise high; even to our relatives we should not excite or console them by such words as “I will kill him for you, I will take reprisals against him, etc.” If we say so, their suffering feeling will increase; both we and they will fall in an impasse. Therefore, do not pour oil on the flames of hatred, for our psychological state will always burn and the situation will result in a life without peaceful and happy feeling flow.



In the Sutra of the Great Decease, the Buddha taught us a technique as follows: “Never multiply suffering, never let our suffering infect others.” We have to limit suffering feeling like medicine put forth the vaccination, injecting drug into our physical body, creating an antibody area to isolate utterly strange microbes harmful to us. We also limit feeling of hatred in order not to spread it to our relatives. If not, we will extend the boundary of feeling, and then not only ourselves but also our relatives suffer.

Sometimes we can console ourselves by thinking: “maybe in one of our past lives, we had created difficult circumstances for others without repentance, following a wrong doctrine and being proud of it; so in this very life though we are very honest ones following a right theory, but still endure suffering. Therefore, the Buddha said in the Dhammapada: “Hatred exterminating hatred from an angle of an agent will never come to an end; only compassion and forgiving can put an end to it eternally. If you do not believe it, please try on; then you will see that it is the law for all times.”

The thought of agent is one of the modes making men fall in the impasse. The contemplation on no agent aims at seeing that the enemy of human being or causes of suffering are just the bottomless cupidity, delusion, extreme doctrine, tendencies lacking in democratic spirit, human right, independence, happiness, and freedom; and man only is an instrument that acts as a fall-guy according to those ideologies. Buddhism teaches that in order to abolish hatred and prevent it from disseminating suffering, we’d better change those dogmatic ideologies into completely free, respectful and open ones like the indefinite space. The view of considering psychological attitude as the main agent causing suffering makes men forgive easily, and in this case the transformation does not result in side effects in which we can become victims for the second time.

Consoling ourselves with the doctrine of past action can help us let go hatred to a certain extent; however, if we attribute all responsibility to the past action, we will become extremely pessimistic. Therefore, according to Buddhism, we should believe in cause and effect law, but at the same time we have to know clearly that what we had sown in the past would exist under the form of a power which functions according to inertia of habits and can control partly our life, thought, consciousness; and the rest part depends on our consciousness, thought, action, speech, behavior, etc. in this very life.

In the story of the girl named Magadida, when Ananda told the Buddha to turn to another way, the Buddha said that it was not a good solution; according to the Buddha, we have to face adversity with bravery. The art of abolishing suffering in Buddhism is facing the reality, seeing suffering as a fact and looking at it, observing how it is functioning, understanding its source and lifespan. We have to see clearly so that we could seek opportunity to overcome it. Escaping or facing like a dud is not a proper solution.

Seeing things is merely seeing, hearing the sound of curse with bad language is merely hearing sound without thinking about curse, praise, agreement or disagreement. If contemplating like that, we realize the likeness of things, the real nature of phenomena. Then, feeling flow of favorable and unfavorable, of supporting or opposing will be disintegrated.

To conciliate is one of such great necessities that if we do not do like that, we will be at a standstill like the monkey who is fighting like a tiger in the marsh of suffering feeling. Instead of fighting so fiercely in the marsh, we should endure with all our might to seek a way for escaping, such as a stick, a strand, a board, etc. as means to help us.

If we are in a standstill, we should not fight against the situation because the fight will shorten the rest lifespan. We should be calm to suppress the fearfulness, which begins to appear, then the state of fearlessness will appear. The conciliation of hatred needs a great process of understanding. At first, our mind is so tranquil, not pouring oil on flames, analyzing clearly subjective and objective, far and near causes, misunderstanding, common kamma of an era, a historical period, a common unfortunate fate of a community. After seeing clearly their causes, Buddhism taught us to improve according to the way we can. Cursing the dark does not make it become light. Only when we light a lamp, or create torchlight, then we begin to live in new light.

Buddhism teaches if the impasse is of the dark, we should direct our mind to the sun; if it is of suffering, we should direct our mind to happiness; if it is of the break, of inferior hatred, we should direct our mind to infinite space. When we have such an empty mind, resentments will have nothing to attach. The gravitational force of earth in situation of hatred is just hatred, envy, anger, unsafe state, angry reaction, an attitude of reprisal; and if we omit all of them, their gravity will come to an end and we will exist in the state of emptiness, not attaching to suffering nor unfortunate situation. Then Buddhism says we should know how to love and think of ourselves, respect our feelings, which will result in positive attitude in life.

If we are so unfortunate as to be born in a cultural tradition like that of Islam, we won't have such care for feelings, and we were injected with a religious extremism, that is, "the more they kill enemy the more they have chances to go to paradise." This fanaticism made them throw themselves in suffering, creating a situation in which they feel delighted.

According to Buddhism, there is never a war called noble one. All war result in suffering and main victims are innocent people. Therefore a conception of a holy war is wrong; war is not holy. They turn war into a religious truth by multiplying it. This has made many people unfortunate, and that unfortunate turns into a magnetic circle of resentment. When those soldiers pass away with hatred, they will continue to have such psychological state of hatred towards others in the next life according to those conception, ideology, tendency in life. They will go from life to life with that state of mind and that's a very dangerous thing. The Buddha taught us many methods to solve those impasses: We can contemplate on feelings of gratitude, that is, seeking positive values in those who caused suffering to help us not fall into ungrateful state. For instance, in Tam Quoc Chi, though Quan Van Truong is not a Buddhist, and knew Tao Thao was a Machiavellian, he still sought positive values of Tao Thao in order to remove his resentment to the latter. He remembered when being poor, Tao Thao still respected and favored him. Although knowing Tao Thao was very wrong, and he had to kill him, but he would kill him in the name of justice not due to hatred.

In Majjhima-Nikaya, there is a very profound philosophy written in only two lines: "If somebody argues that happiness originate from suffering, he must be wrong because we can't make happiness from suffering." It is the popular misconception of Indian culture with many variant religions that austerity by mortifying one's body, by standing with a leg bent, by not bathing in the whole year round, lying on spikes and thorns in order that sexual feeling has not chance to exist. Then, final happy state will begin to appear.

It's basically wrong to think that suffering will pave the way for happiness. However, the Buddha said we can use suffering as an instrument, a reference to rise up in life. The Buddha told us not to fall in that wrong state but sow the causes of happiness in order that we could harvest peace and joy. Knowing how to contemplate on cause and effect, kamma, conditions and circumstances, and try one's best to practice it tirelessly, and not impute the blame to others, and we will have chance to renovate what they think we couldn't. Thus, there are two tendencies resulting in two completely contrary corollaries

According to Buddhism, if we vindicate by showing anger, then this anger will be increased; justifying by bullets the injustices will last. Only when we do justice by water drop from sprig of willow, that is to say, with compassion, forgiveness, correct attitude or by contemplating on the gratitude of men, we hope to escape from deadlock of our feeling life. Another method of abolishing hatred is the detachment of our injustice, especially in case of death.

The Litany of Luong Hoang Sam was originated from the story of the monk named Ngo Dat, master of the king, who had caused an injustice to an honest man in one of his past lives. It is a very interesting Buddhist book for confessing sins, pointing out that only when we act out of compassion, our repentance brings about happiness to us and others.

Another good thing we have to disseminate is the broad and generous heart, contemplating on the great and solid nature of earth, living without discrimination.

The Sutra of Contemplating on the Ground of Mind, Ksitigarbha Sutra and Avatamsaka Sutra of Mahayana Buddhism teach us to contemplate on ourselves as the broad and generous earth which can contain all sufferings, like and dislike, positive and negative treatments of others towards us, and let them abolished naturally. We can even create a system of eliminating all psychological dirt by multiplying our broad-mindedness in a manner, which we can compare it to infinite space.

When thinking that our broad-mindedness is infinite and endless, then our sufferings become very tiny like a fragment of certain planet falling into this infinite space. Such a conception is a positive conduct to remove suffering. The dramatic story of the descent of Sakyamuni Buddha has taken place because His grandfather considered Kapilavatthu country as inferior than the Sakya. They married one of their beautiful maidservants to the king of Kapilavatthu in order that this descent will be inferior forever. After knowing the truth, king Kapilavatthu felt offended and hated Sakya. Until the time of the Buddha, the Sakya took revenge. The Buddha had come forward and dissuaded but in vain; so bloody war between the two countries took place, and King Kapilavatthu barbarously massacred the Sakya.



The Buddha said that it's not because He was incapable, but due to craving, hatred and delusion which had operated to its highest extent, then all things belonging to truth, virtues and loving-kindness and compassion became in vain. The Buddha said that He can save numerous beings, but can't save those who have no conditions for being saved. He can save too many people but can't save those who have profound prejudice in thinking and judgment. Prejudice is the closed door which prevents you to look outdoors; it is the fence between you and the truth; when you catch sight of the truth, it's prejudice that makes you turn against and not accept it.

Another method is the practice of loving-kindness and compassion. Buddhism teaches before going to bed we should contemplate on loving-kindness and compassion towards everybody in order to forgive them easily. The nutriment of forgiveness makes others develop and feel delighted, light, cheerful and be in high spirits. Generally, there are two points of time at which one become easy to forgive, they are: when one is in the state of deepest suffering and secondly, when they become extremely happy.

In Vietnamese Buddhist history of Ly Dynasty, there was the famous king named Ly Nhan Tong. Due to the efficient help of General Ly Thuong Kiet, Vietnam had won victory over Chinese at that time; however, the king understood Buddhist morality, clearly - and out of his Bodhisattva behavior, instead of keeping the opposite attitude against great China, the king had suggested to draw a peace-treaty. We see the peace treaty has to be established out of a broad and generous mind, but not out of a skill or art of war. Here, King Ly Nhan Tong's thought originated out of the affection for people of the two countries, fearing the battle will bring about suffering and death; so his behavior will not make the great Chinese angry, resentful and will not provoke their great revenge in order that people of the two countries could live peacefully and happily. That is a magnanimous deed, which only one with the great nature of compassion, wisdom and bravery dares to think and dare to act. Only a true peace based on love and generous mind can help people remove impasses of life; otherwise, suffering will infect, spread and both sides only reach deadlock.

There are many men who punish themselves as means of expiate their crime. They think this hand has robbed so it has to be cut off, this tongue tells a lie or says words of deception so now it has to be dumb or suffer something like that. Or somebody thinks he/she has caused death to another now he/she has to commit suicide for expiating, etc. All those solutions are wrong. For instance, the suicide case of Hitler: his

death cannot pay the debt owed to six-million Jewish people who were killed by the Nazis; firstly because he killed himself – others did not kill him; secondly the six million people killed were mostly innocents, or intellectuals – those who had opposed him or suggested he repay through his blood-debt. If they have no detachment or forgiving-behavior, then their rebirth and that of cruel people like Hitler will be bad because they have no chance for a happy life with hatred and evil mind. Therefore, by all means, all conditions, all chances, we should try to sow seeds of loving-kindness and compassion better; because when we forgive others, we can forgive ourselves. Having good friends, we feel happy; but that happiness is nothing compared to the dread caused by one terrorist. Even a single terrorist can lead many of us in this world come to a crisis. The number of terrorists is much fewer than the total number of men on earth; however, a single terrorist act can make so many people fearful. Therefore, the spirit of forgiveness broadens our consciousness and establishes bonds of sympathy between opponents – increasing the number of friends and reducing our number of opponents.

We can't accept others because of prejudice, ideology, old and new, inside and outside, good and bad, that and this, you and I, right and wrong, friend and foe, etc. These pairs of opposites are obstacles on our course of progress. Those obstacles may be physical, psychological or both, and so long as we still establish those walls, it's quite clear that we are isolating ourselves. So, compassion requires us to sow seeds of forgiveness; these two elements are like "twins." Where there is compassion, there is forgiveness. Where there is forgiveness, seeds of compassion will multiply. If we resolve hatred by using greater violence to punish the smaller terrorist force, the latter can die temporarily, but it will grow strongly in future. Therefore, using a strong force to compel a small terrorist group is not a good solution. Of course, at first we have to use current law to deal with them and not to drop bombs on each other, we have to ask the other side to be responsible for their deed according to cause and effect law. After that, we should use morality and human love to remove and transform them. Naturally, the process of mental transformation is long-term and not simple; however, we hope that through the gradual transformation the other side could change their idea.

Only sympathy and forgiveness can establish a peaceful and happy environment of life. That is what we think we can reach, for once men love each other, they will unite with each other easily, and if they know how to practice the teaching of the Buddha "contemplating that all strangers have ever been our relatives or close friends, we have ever been fathers, mothers and off springs of each other," we will never kill them; moreover we will never

turn ourselves into victims of a bomb and at the same time kill others as well.

In Great Jeweled Accumulation Sutra, the Buddha told us a story about a man who played tricks by using big bones and a large cross-bow to shoot dogs running after bait. He disliked these dogs because he had been very much annoyed at their barking. Then he took revenge on them by shooting big bones into them.

A dog, being stabbed by the bone, reacted fiercely; the whole pack of dogs gathered, barking more loudly; they rushed at the bone, fighting against each other to tear it. This reaction made them suffer more because of toothache. The Buddha said in this case, the reaction of lions is completely contrary. If a lion is stabbed, it does not react like that. Firstly, it will direct its eyes to the departure point of the bone and knows that the main agent of its suffering is not the bone but it's the one who holds the cross-bow.

The Buddha said Buddhists should study the reaction of lions, not that of dogs because dogs only mimic nature: a dog barks, the other dogs will imitate it. The world of dogs is one of boundary, they live limitedly. A dog coming from another region will be isolated and attacked. If it is not strong enough to resist against the pack dogs, it has to leave this region forever. The dog attitude is imitation which is one of the reactions that makes suffering infect into others. The more they live in that environment the more their suffering becomes multiplied.

The Buddha continued to tell that after the dogs thought the bone was main agent causing their suffering, they bit the bone. However, the story did not simply stop there, because after biting the bone, they realized that it had a good flavor. So, they turned to fight each other for possessing the bone. The impasse of hatred leads to impasse of craving, because all dogs want to be possessor of the bone! Thus, many want to sacrifice their whole life to the happiness of their relatives by being a suicide bomber! This wrong idea turns them into victims who fall once more in the complete impasse. The Buddha told us to learn the behavior of lions that do not hate the bone, not taking reprisals against the bone, but seeking main causes. The behavior of dogs is so superficial and unwise. The bone is not the main agent, so seeing the main agent is a way of removing suffering effectively.

Buddhism teaches us not to conceive the agent causing suffering as human being, but as craving, hatred, delusion, wrong behavior, selfish attitude, large self, collision of ideology, etc. All those create sufferings. Understanding so, we become very calm and will act according to the way of lions.

The changing rules of universe take place according to its private mode which we can't force them to satisfy our intention; thus Buddhism teaches us to contemplate on impermanence of life, universe, and all phenomena in order not to be carried away by suffering. Believing in impermanence means believing in a positive thing; we believe that due to the fall of yellow leaves in autumn and winter, we will see green leaves in spring and the new life will begin to exist, the sunlight will begin to shine bright; the hope of removing resentment will make us happier, it's a very important requirement in life. And all sufferings are like pebbles dropped down into the tranquil lake; of course falling pebbles will create circles of small waves spreading gradually until finally they disappear, and we can't see them any more. Thus, the suffering also ends in this way. Although pebbles still exist, but the fluctuation of the surface of water in the lake has stopped long ago.

Terrorists have created suffering to the allies of the USA, among which England is an important partner. Of course, from the angle of innocent people with heavy damages, we feel extremely indignant at those who had caused suffering according to the wrong of religious fanatics. However, if we show the same hatred as the world of English who are taught according to the Bible, rooted in the Middle-eastern region - we will fall into another impasse which is never removed in the long run.

We still condemn fanatics; we still condemn terrorism in order that we can find a solution of loving-kindness and compassion, and only this resolution can bring true peace to the world. Contrarily, if we state that by justice and by our powerful strength we will gain victory over the weaker force, it's quite clear that our strength also is of hatred - thus it's not a long-term resolution, either.

We also see suffering of those who created that suffering. They are just sufferings of ignorant people, of fanatics, of those in an impasse. It's only in Buddhism such criminal persons can find a new promised land where they can change and improve the rest of their life. And it's for this reason, Bodhisattavas always vow to go down to the hell to save painful beings there. If there are not these Bodhisattavas, maybe this world is still



worse, because sinful persons will think it is the end of their life, and again throw themselves in criminal deeds. The world must have those who think and act like Bodhisattavas in order that they could come nearer to sinful men, sharing suffering with them, understanding why terrorists do like that, why they are so ignorant and so fanatic, etc.

The prison or hell is neither a long-term resolution. If the prison is conceived as a punishment, that's really a great mistake because punishment will again make prisoners rebel against the truth. If the prison is considered as an instrument, a means to educate, then the education must be begun with the transformation of their inner mind.

If we do not know, that in former lives, we had made mistakes or evil-deeds which brought suffering to others - today we should follow the vows of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to expiate crimes and not to relapse into them. And if we have ever been a victim of a crime, we should be determined to forgive those who had caused harm and suffering to us, in order that all debts from previous life could be removed in this very life.

Now we should make use of chance now, when we can remove all suffering, wisely.

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## Buddhist Contribution to World Peace

*Ven. Suddhananda Mahathero*

*President, Bangladesh Bouddha Kristi Prachar Sangha*

It is indeed a great pleasure and privilege to be present here today at this grand occasion and at the outset, I wish to convey my sincere thanks and gratitude to the organizers of this gathering for inviting and sponsoring me and giving me an opportunity of speaking a few words on contribution of Buddhists in world peace in the midst of such scholastic Forum. At the advent of the Holy Vesak, please allow me to convey my sincere greetings in Dhamma to you all.

You may agree with me that there is one value, one ideal and one common dream to all of us and it is peace. We consider peace is to be utmost importance all over the world. We cherish peace with great affection. We cherish peace as one of the basic human rights. The people of the world have various faiths and follow different religions. The doctrine of all the religions gave ample emphasis on peace and from the viewpoint of each religion, the followers have made their efforts to contribute peace in their own way. But in the present day context the pertinent issue is that on how the followers of Buddhism are putting their contribution in establishing peace in the world.

The Buddha in his first step of propagation of his new concepts to the five disciples presented the Turning the Wheel of Dhamma Discourse, in which he mentioned the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Noble Path. This concept is the brightest example of peace and contrasts to conflict and disharmony.

The Buddhist Monks vow to uphold 10 precepts [Ed.: 227?] and lay Buddhists vow to uphold five precepts on their daily lives. There is no other faith that has wished for the happiness of all beings. Individual and whole-hearted well-wisher of happiness for all beings may ultimately contribute in establishing peace and harmony.

In my consideration every true Buddhist, by dint of his true livelihood contributes in establishing compassion and the collective adhesion to cementing the process of non-violence lead the establishment of world peace.

Three principles of Universality taught by Buddhism are safeguards for peace. These are universality of humanness, universality of law and universality of love. Firstly, the law of cause and effect applies equally to everyone everywhere. Everyone experience the result of what he or she does. All beings are equal before the law of nature without any supernatural intervention. Secondly, all people are fellow-beings, their birth occurred in this natural world-order - equally subject to birth, aging, suffering and death. So there is no room for any harm or abuse against any being. Thirdly, all fellow-beings are friends, co-dwellers within the natural laws. So there is love, compassion and nonviolence. World peace is guaranteed in the teaching of the Buddha.

In the present context of the world situation, may I take the opportunity to proudly mention that the International Buddhist Organizations are pioneers of crying loudly for establishing world peace? They continuously give their aspirations and prayers for welfare and prosperity of all sentient beings as well as world peace. The countries of the world having majority population of followers of Buddhism are mostly accustomed with co-existence for which reason there are no conflicts among those countries. From the time of King Dhammapala of the 8th century, almost all benign governments and people of Buddhist majority countries have been relentlessly struggling for world peace. Side by side, the Buddhist lay organizations are making their efforts in world-wide campaigning for world peace. Needless to say, it was an Asian in the top post of the United Nations, a follower of Buddhism hailing from Myanmar. *The current head of the United Nations comes from South Korea, another nation that has strong Buddhist connections.*

In synopsis, I should say that the seeds of war are born in the mind of men, out of the roots of hate, greed and ignorance. Regrettably, many of the world's cultures do not know the underlying causes of war and peace. Buddhists are the pioneers of understanding these issues, meticulously. Buddhists Monks and laypeople always remember: once the Buddha prevented a war over a dispute with water rights by getting the parties to agree that since human blood is more precious than water, it is not sane to spill blood to get water.

In concluding my remarks, I whole-heartedly wish to see more contributions of Buddhists towards world peace so that the world of the next generations will be a land of paradise and communal stability. Venerable Chairman, my attendance in this occasion will be most fruitful upon listening to the candid remarks of the other learned speakers. I thank you all for your patience hearing; and may all beings be happy.

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## A Search for New Dimension of Universal Brotherhood

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On this significant sacred day I would like to put forward certain proposals and suggestions to promote universal brotherhood. Before that I would like to elucidate some fundamental principles of Buddhism. We are human beings with extraordinary potentialities. Noble virtues and criminal nature are latent in our minds, spirits and hearts. These may arise in our lives at any time without any interference from external or any supernatural power. These are dormant within us in various degrees. Within our minds we find a treasure house of virtue and rubbish heap of wickedness. With the flourishing of these characteristics, we may become either a blessing or a curse to humanity. If we want to engage ourselves in the noble service of humanity we must endeavor our best to uproot the latent evils by sowing the dormant seeds of noble virtues. To discover the invaluable treasures latent within us, patience and persistent effort are unavoidably needed. Even the poorest people can perform this task. Thus, wealth and power are not essential pre-conditions and pre-requisites to the accumulation of human values.

The most destructive element within us is anger. The constructive virtue of loving-kindness can eliminate evil forces and ennoble us. The cruelty is another vice which is solely responsible for horrors and atrocities prevalent in the world today. Compassion is its antidote. Jealousy is another vice that destroys the inner system of our minds. The ruinous jealousy leads to deadly rivalries and bloody competitions. The most efficacious remedy for this evil propensity is appreciative joy and affection. The other characteristics, which upset the mental faculty of human beings, are attachment to the pleasurable things and aversion to the unpleasurable things. The equanimity can eliminate these two contending opposite forces. These four powerful virtues must be cultivated.

The living-kindness softens our hearts and minds. Instead of providing military aid, we should give pure loving-kindness to of all humanity without making distinction between man and man or between man and women. "As mother protects her only child even at the risk of her own life, in the same way we should extend boundless loving kindness towards all living beings". This is the assertion of the Buddha. Therefore, loving kindness is not the passionate love of mother towards her child. Our love towards this universe must be a sincere wish and pure love for the durable peace and all round welfare of the world. We should extend the boundless universal brotherhood, sisterhood and spirit of embracing all nations, all races, all classes, and all countries irrespective of differences of political views.

The loving kindness and sincere wish for the ever-lasting peace and welfare of the world are not political or racial or national or even a religious matter. Brotherhood is a universal concept. Political brotherhood is confined only to those who share similar political views. Racial brotherhood and national brotherhood are restricted only to those of same race and nation. Very often to assert their racial or political superiority, they resort to brutal warfare and killing of people by mercilessly bombing. The pathetic incidents of the Second World War are striking, unforgettable examples. Human violence and terrorism should be denounced once-and-for-all and harmonious relations should be established and developed among the people of different faiths.

The Buddha said, "Hatred never ceases through hatred, but hatred ceases by love alone. This is the eternal law". As loving kindness is a constructive peaceful force, which has the power to counteract destructive, unwanted influences, just as hateful thoughts can produce unhealthy, unsound mental and physical effects. The Buddha emphatically stated the importance of morality as a trust to overcome tensions, chaos, confusions and sufferings. Selflessness, loving kindness and harmlessness or nonviolence is invaluable.

Today's world is full of miseries, war-weariness and violence. The world is suffering a lot. Human lives are in danger and frightened by the arms race. These weapons are always ready to kill many human lives in the twinkling of an eye. In fact, the world is absolutely in need of this universal loving-kindness, unbounded compassion, intense joy, great forbearance and right vision in order to live in one world in perfect peace and harmony in the sense of brothers and sisters. We should generate purest sincere love to eliminate the enemies of the world. We should develop invaluable compassion to remove

the woes of nations, which in a sense is cruelty. We should enhance overwhelming joy to protect us from the persons of jealousy. We should develop the mental status of man to eliminate attachment to and aversion towards unpleasurable situations. On the contrary, in the world today, from the materialistic point of view: all technology, industry, machinery are well-developed.

The Buddha stated: 'Come and see' what I say and if you find something acceptable, you can accept gladly; and if you do not find something valuable, you can leave without hesitation.' There is no compulsion in the Buddha's religion – and the Buddha's explanation demonstrates non-compulsion. However, I feel the young generation of today must be brought within the light of Buddha's teachings - under some compulsion, that is: under compulsory religious education. They must be inspired, encouraged and geared up for the practice and propagation of Buddhism. The Islamic community of the world has already introduced compulsory prayers and compulsory religious activities. We must follow instances of Islamic compulsory religious activities. The teachers and learners of Buddhism must be spiritually enhanced. They must be highly educated in the subject of Buddhism. The young people are lacking loving kindness, compassion and noble feelings. They are making material progress in the age of science and technology. But mental progress is very much needed for them. Through seminars all religious leaders, thinkers and spiritual teachers should stand united under the religious flag and start drawing the attention of all the Buddhist countries of the world – eliminating the risk of nuclear war, enabling real peace, security and harmony to be restored. We must dedicate our lives to the welfare of all humanity. We should live healthy and contented lives. We should devote more time and energy towards the welfare of the world at large.

In a strict sense we must adopt these suggested steps for the promotion and propagation of Buddhism:

1. Dedication of our life to the welfare of all sentient beings, working for peace, disarmament and in ternational brotherhood.
2. Living frugal, healthy and contented life, so as to devote more time, more energy for peace and for the welfare of all living beings.
3. Abstinence from any action leading to disputes and wars. Performance of any action leading to peace, harmony and international understanding.
4. Respect for the life of all sentient beings, respect for the life of our planet, for the purity of our environment.
5. Peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding and cooperation in the spirit of international harmony.

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5. Peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding and cooperation in the spirit of international harmony.

There are several important ways by which Buddhist education can be promoted:

1. To educate youths to lead virtuous lives and to propagate the sublime doctrines of Buddha through lectures, books, periodicals and magazines and newspapers.
2. To establish schools, universities and orphanages.
3. To form study centers at the Buddhist monasteries and other socio-cultural organizations.
4. To print Buddhist publications either monthly, quarterly or annually.
5. Deserving students from poor Buddhist countries should be given all opportunities in connection with higher studies in the institutions of developed Buddhist Countries. These steps will promote unity, solidarity and universal brotherhood among Buddhists.

Some additional suggestions and proposals follow:

1. Sound education and proper methods of practice are necessary to spread Buddhism around the world
2. Buddhist monks must be well-trained in the fundamental teaching of the Lord Buddha.
3. A World Body of the Buddhists must be formed to supervise and guide world-wide Buddhist activities.
4. A Central Monetary Fund under the World Body of Buddhists should be created to meet the expenses in materializing all aims and objectives.
5. Arrangements to help materially poor Buddhists but rich in Buddhist cultural heritage be made through the World Body.



6. Developed Buddhist countries like Japan, China, Korea etc. are requested to come forward to this end.
7. The students of poor Buddhist countries should be assisted materially for higher education.
8. Plans must be prepared to protect Buddhist heritages of any country.
9. Bhikkhu Training Centers should be established in suitable places.
10. Books and Treaties on Buddhism including Tipitaka in English to cope with modern thinking must be written and published profusely for the public.
11. Whenever injustice stands in the way of human rights of Buddhist people, protest should be voiced unanimously from appropriate forums. At present alarming situation prevails in Nepal, where the government has discriminately disapproved the establishment of a Buddhist University in the birth-place of the Buddha, the great advocate of peace. It is time to stand by the concerned people and persuade the government concerned to co-operate with the noble cause of the Buddhists of Nepal.
12. Arrangements for pilgrimage to holy places in India, Myanmar and other Buddhist countries should be made officially and thereby friendly ties and mutual understanding be enhanced.
13. Buddhist Universities and other Technical Colleges must be established for the development of Buddhists in suitable places.

Bangladesh was an integral part of Vanga or ancient Bengal. Based on the Pali text records, one of the foremost disciples of the Buddha. Vangisa was hailed from this region. Buddhism was flourishing in Bangladesh during the period of Emperor Asoka (3rd Century B.C.). But the Nagarjuna inscriptions of Asoka dating from 3rd century A.D proved that this faith was followed in Bangladesh under Asoka's rule. The name of Vanga was mentioned in these inscriptions where many Ceylonese monks had been found propagating Buddhism in this region.

My proposals and suggestions can be implemented in Bangladesh as well as in other Buddhist and non-Buddhist countries towards the restoration and regaining of the glorious tradition and cultural heritage of Buddhism. These will also go a long way in promoting universal brotherhood which we are looking forward to achieve.

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*Part Two:*  
*Miscelleneus*

## **Buddhism for Sustainable Thinking - The Role of Religion in Protecting Environment without Abandoning Science and Technology in the Development Process**

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We are in an ecological crisis. What is happening all across the globe shows that we, human beings and the natural environment, are in crisis - due to the lack of some careful and forward thinking. Environmental scientists have shown that the globe is in crisis now: ice is melting in Iceland and the ozone-layer is damaged. Recent activities such as Kyoto protocol direct us to take effective measures to overcome global crisis. Plenty of signs in natural disasters demonstrate that earthly resources are also limited and the development process in many developing nations that aims at eliminating poverty from the globe can move smoothly only to a limited extent. When the planet is in crisis, we are obligated and forced to rethink our actions in the past and present and take creative precautions to prevent the imminent disaster.

From the experience of observable facts around us, we know that the environmental crisis challenges all of humanity and the eco-system. This imminent vulnerability forces us to be more responsible and accountable in whatever we do, either in agricultural activities or in over-consumption of earthly resources. This may be the reason that we are forced, individually, collectively, nationally and internationally, to discuss today on the significance of cultural values and religious ethos that are conducive to sustainable development projects and making people aware of using such resources in daily life to prevent the imminent danger. From every corner, whether developed or undeveloped, ecological sustainability has become an important issue both academically and in practical terms in conducting our daily lives.



The catastrophic Tsunami on 26 December 2004 in South and Southeast Asia brutally embraced thirteen diverse nations with different religious and cultural ideologies. We are now more alarmed of natural disasters, though the Tsunami itself was triggered initially by a natural earthquake – this had a significant negative impact of unimaginable scale. Until that tragic event, tropical Theravada Buddhist countries in the region, such as Sri Lanka with treasure-sandy beaches for the tourist industry - had incubated a quite comfortable attitude among its followers. It was unimaginable that natural disasters of that scale could take the lives of nearly 40,000 people and displace several million – this could never happen, because of Sri Lanka's precious location on the globe! Before the Tsunami, the majority of Sinhalese who lived along the coast of Southern Sri Lanka never imagined that their friendly ocean, a sight of comfort and livelihood, would wipe them out from the surface of earth, one day. Most Sri Lankans, including academics, sarcastically referred to the episodes of ocean floods that resulted the journey of Duttagamani's mother to Rohana, recorded in the sixth century CE Mahavamsa as false or as fabricated accounts of religious nature - rather than historical, objective, narratives in the western sense of historiography. Noting the significance of such natural disasters and constantly reflecting upon the ecological crisis at hand around the globe, this paper briefly examines some concerns raised by some Theravada Buddhists, and some of the religious and cultural resources found in the Buddhist practices, which can educate us in the preservation and the posterity of the globe and environment.

Over the centuries, Buddhism as a religion has shaped society, social customs, practices and way of thinking in many nations in Asia. In shaping morals and ethical concerns of these nations, Buddhism has contributed substantially. The rapid growth of science and technology, trends of secularization, individual and profit driven capitalism, increasing influence of consumerism are gradually challenging the values and ethos of Buddhist civilization and lives. The global environmental crisis also has brought about criticisms in general on the role of religion and posed challenges in Asian and Western civilizations. How contemporary Buddhists and Buddhist institutions respond to nature, environment and environmental crisis need to be examined.

Questioning the contribution of science to human welfare and preservation of nature, in recent decades, as a religion, Christianity has been accused as being the dominant religion shaping the context and cultural ethos in countries in which modern science gradually developed from the sixteenth century onwards. Environmentalists as well as progressive theologians such as Lynn White have blamed Christianity and its biblical teachings for allowing and sanctioning humans to have dominion over the natural world. It is often the religious scriptures that are widely known in the West, which shape human thinking and attitudes in the context of the emerging sciences that are blamed for sanctioning exploitation of the natural environment and its resources with an increasingly influential and damaging anthropocentric perspective.

Today religious leaders, environmentalists, policy makers, government officers, scientists and politicians lament on the environmental crisis. The roots of environmental crisis lie in industrialization, rapid population growth, expanding capitalism, and consumerism. A serious worry is the planet is being raped of all of its natural resources to cope with the explosion of the population growth. The developing countries face serious challenges on environment degradation and pollution.

Market forces have also contributed to the environmental crisis. Multi-national companies and corporations of the developed world have exploited the developing countries - fuelled by greed, materialism and wealth. They have expanded the need to consume more. Consumerism, which encourages satisfaction and happiness dominate people's lives alienating them from religious and cultural values of simplicity. It is often accused that multi-national companies and human beings who are in position of abusive power have exploited the planet of its natural resources. Today there are many environmental problems, such as: deforestation, pollution, nuclear waste dumping, land degradation, water depletion, the extinction of animal and plant life, loss of biodiversity, climate change, produce of green house gasses, the depletion of the earth's ozone layer. Today a significant number of people of the globe suffers from poverty and are subject to war and violence. Diseases such as AIDS are spreading and natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes are quite common; and today, humanity witnesses catastrophic signs of 'global warming' and 'environmental crisis.'

The damage over-consumption does to the environment is rather astonishing. Concerning a recent report about the consumption of paper: a web-site commented that McDonalds alone “needs 800 square miles of trees to make the amount of paper” needed “for a year’s supply of packaging.”<sup>1</sup> What can Buddhism do to sustain environmental resources?

In environmental circles, the Buddhist tradition has often been viewed in a more positive light compared to other religious traditions. The attitude to nature and environment in the Buddhist traditions significantly varies from South Asian Theravada Buddhism to East Asian Mahayana Buddhism. In mixing with the native traditions of those countries that Buddhism spread into – through cultural interaction - Buddhism has produced rather creative responses and activities in using nature for its teachings and practices. Buddhism is often characterized as a religious philosophy, very much in tune with nature and environment. Now, I plan to discuss some Theravada Buddhist ideas in relation to environment and sustainability.

On the topic of environment and Buddhism, one can find both romantic and critical works. Several scholars produce some important academic publications on the subject: Ian Harris, Padmasiri de Silva, Peter Harvey and Damien Keown. The areas of research on Buddhism and ecology are becoming popular. It is not uncommon now that Buddhist groups hold conferences on this theme as witnessed in the Buddhist Ecology and Critique of the Modern Society (2005) the international conference held at School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.<sup>2</sup> Highlighting the significance of religious teachings on the ecology, recently an Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature has been produced by drawing attention to ecological concerns.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever people might say about Buddhist teachings and contemporary practices in Buddhist societies, there is no doubt that the Buddha was very much concerned with nature and Buddhist attitudes towards it. There are several occasions, from the Pali

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<sup>1</sup> Jocelyn Stock Andy Rochen, “The Choice: Doomsday or Arbor Day,” <http://www.umich.edu/qs265/society/deforestation.htm> (accessed on 18 April 2006).

<sup>2</sup> The conference was held on 17-18 February 2005. It was sponsored by University of London and Dongguk University, a Buddhist university in Seoul, South Korea.

<sup>3</sup> Encyclopedias of Religion and Nature, Ed. B. Taylor (London: Continuum International, 2005).

canon, were the Buddha advises people not to pollute the environment. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Buddha was the first recycler among the world's religious teachers. The directions that he gave to his disciples for using robes are rather astonishing.

Buddha's doctrine of economic development is very much a balanced way of life. He advised to use resources efficiently without being a slave to desires and attachments. The foremost challenge for a Buddhist scholar today is presenting the teachings of the Buddha without misinterpretation, to meet the needs and thinking of the contemporary world. Today, one of the most urgent problems is searching for resources to remedy environmental degradation. Environmental protection is an issue both in primarily Buddhist countries as well as in the western world. Humanity, today, faces many kinds of environmental problems, pollution of natural resources, and noise. The Buddha shows ways to gain peace and happiness if we learn to love and respect nature.

Buddhist across the world are now realizing the necessity of interpreting the teachings of the Buddha on human relationships with nature and environment and identifying sustainable ways of life and finding ways to enhance one's physical as well as spiritual wellbeing while consuming earthly resources.

Non-violence is a fundamental tenet in Buddhism. Ahimsa (non-violence) promotes non-harming attitudes to fellow human beings and eco system. Reverence for all forms of life is a crucial practical virtue in this tenet. Gentleness in all actions of body, speech and mind creates a healthy cultural and religious value that celebrates sustainable environment.

Some recent Buddhist concepts such as 'interbeing' which based on classical ideas of 'dependent origination' attempts to capture the creative imagination of the environmentalist by proposing that nothing can exist by itself. Over the centuries, Buddhists have maintained that all things around us exist only as part of an interconnected totality. For some Buddhists, all the things in the environment such as trees, rivers, animals, water, streams, plants, mountains, soil, rocks and landscapes are sacred. They are conducive to spiritual growth and human existence. They strongly believe that the things in the nature have a significant impact on human livelihoods. At the same time, human life style itself has a significant impact on the nature itself.



### **Buddhists in the Preservation of Nature - Contemporary Responses:**

There are many environmental groups who adopt activism on a global scale to protect the planet from unwanted destruction and prevent the depletion of its natural resources. Buddhists who are self-conscious about their engaging in protecting the environment and other similar socially important issues are nowadays, commonly identified as: Engaged Buddhists.

This term itself is rather new. Its origin is attributed to a quite persuasive Asian Buddhist-thinker, the Vietnamese Buddhist monk-activist Thich Nhat Hanh. This monk poet invented this useful term in 1963.<sup>4</sup> The term has expanded nowadays to “socially engaged Buddhism.” These Buddhists engage in social activities. Engaged Buddhists are concerned with social, political and economic problems; and they are involved in non-violent and direct action to eliminate poverty, war, disease, exploitation and oppression. They practice the dharma, and mindful and compassionate actions, to alleviate the dukkha caused by social and economic problems.

The environmental crisis is a threatening one. Partly, it is a result of social, political and economic problems. Some of these are understood as resulting from ignorance. No doubt some of these are direct results of insatiable desire and boundless greed. Modern Buddhists are concerned with the environmental crisis and use spirituality to heal the earth and humanity to overcome environmental crisis. Saving planet has become an important enterprise for most of them.

Some forms of Buddhism are known to be otherworldly, emphasizing transcendence. Modern thinkers, however, use traditional teachings such as the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, virtue of loving-kindness and compassion to heal human minds and the earth by lessening suffering - thereby, positively affecting the world.

We can look at a few contemporary Buddhist responses to some of the problems that we face with regard to nature. For example, in Thailand, there is a generation of monks who are actively involved in preserving nature. Kerry Brown (1992: 87) records the impact of environmental crisis in primarily Buddhist Thailand as follows:

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Freeman Yarnall, (2000) “Engaged Buddhism: New and Improved! (?) Made in the U. S. A. Of Asian Materials,” **Journal of Buddhist Ethics** 7 (2000): <http://jbe.gold.ac.uk/7/yamall001.html>

The land boom is nation-wide. As agri-business sweeps in, the price of land soars out of reach...villagers are being priced off the land and forced to clear national forest reserve illegally...Almost 80 per cent of the jungle which once blanketed Thailand has disappeared in less than 25 years, stripped away to feed the world market...the land was eroding, the air was hotter, the rainy season was shorter and when it did come, the whole place flooded.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1990s, several Thai monks were involved in environmental preservation as a spiritual exercise. Their actions were motivated by the apparent environmental crisis in their own neighborhood. They noted that modern Thailand had faced a dangerous environmental crisis. Within three decades, Thailand had lost 80% of its forest.

When we can see the crisis through our own eyes, we are now eager to build a sustainable future for the planet and for our future generations. We are thinking more now in interdependent terms. As peoples, nations, countries, we are not anymore isolated individuals. All of our actions impact another; another's behavior will one day have an impact on me. We think more now to act and become aware of our responsibilities. What can we do in the future? What can we do to keep harmony? We are forced to do many things to minimize dangers.

There are many things that concern us when we want to explore the issues of sustainability. A Little Book of Hope<sup>6</sup> identifies twelve items that need our attention: (i) transport, (ii) habitat, (iii) energy, (iv) water, (v) economics, (vi) biodiversity, (vii) organization, (viii) food, (ix) health, (x) oceans, (xi) peace, and (xii) education. For all these concerns, cultural values are useful and insightful both in understanding their value and in preserving them without harming them and without exploiting them with selfish motives.

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<sup>5</sup> "In the water there were fish and the fields were full of rice: reawakening the lost harmony of Thailand," edited talks and interviews with Ajahn Pongsak, compiled by Kerry Brown, in Martine Batchelor and Kerry Brown, **Buddhism and Ecology** (London: Cassell, 1992), pp. 87-88.

<sup>6</sup> Rory Spowers and Tim Willmott, **A Little Book of Hope** (Hopsters, 2003), p. 7

Poverty is often closely associated with the exploitation of earth and its resources, in particular, the forest. Some issues are: how can we eliminate poverty? What is the individual responsibility in it? Can debt relief make a significant improvement in developing countries? All these require cooperation between nations and multinational companies and each individual who considers this planet one's home.

Past is gloomy and unpleasant. There has been a great destruction of planet's resources. They are results of human ignorance and selfish motives. There is a necessity to reflect on them from an ethical perspective. Humans have both responsibility to protect and potentiality and capability to adopt healthy lifestyles that foster earthly resources. Safeguarding resources is an important concern of modern world.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Broadly speaking, religions encourage us to cultivate healthy attitudes; develop good qualities that benefit others. Virtues cultivated in human minds generate new awareness and care that is essential to overcome during planetary crisis. By these means we can minimize our negative impact on earth resources. We can prevent certain dangers. By protecting the natural environment, we respect the natural right to life of all of earth's living things. Our challenge is to reduce the degradation of the planet. Sustainable earth is our challenge.

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## Buddhist Education in Britain

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Let me begin by thanking the venerable organizers of this conference for doing me the honor of inviting me to talk to you on the subject of Buddhist Education in Britain.

First of all I should say that it is not so many years since I spoke here in Bangkok on this very subject. In 1997 a conference was held here to survey the state of Buddhist studies internationally over the previous 25 years; it was organized by the Center for Buddhist Studies of Chulalongkorn University under Dr. Wit Wisadavet, Director of the Center. A scholar was invited from each of some fifteen countries in which Buddhist studies could be presumed to flourish – which is more or less the same as saying, where the subject could be studied at university level.

Once the conference had begun, it became clear to me that what the organizers really wanted to know was how the rest of the world saw “engaged Buddhism”. Were Buddhist studies being pursued only in an entirely detached spirit, or was Buddhism being used to offer values and insights in other academic areas, such as politics or ecology? I suspect that they were rather disappointed at finding themselves alone in this concern; and this may largely explain the somewhat unsatisfactory aftermath of the conference. A volume containing versions (some radically revised) of ten of the papers, plus an introduction, finally appeared in 2000.<sup>1</sup> Thus material which was in any case doomed to obsolescence appeared in print only when approaching its sell-by date. Each contribution was now equipped with a bibliography, but – perhaps through some misguided notion of fairness – this included

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<sup>1</sup> Donald K. Swearer and Somparn Promta, ed., **The State of Buddhist Studies in the World 1972-1997**, Center for Buddhist Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 2000.



only books, not articles, so that much of the material some of us had gone to great pains to assemble was wasted.<sup>2</sup> And misprints abounded. I wonder how many of you have even seen, let alone read, this volume. I suspect very few.

The title I was assigned on that occasion was “Buddhist Studies in Britain”; and though that obviously overlaps considerably with “Buddhist Education in Britain”, it is perhaps not quite the same. “Buddhist Studies in Britain” is obviously about work which is strictly academic. Buddhist education, on the other hand, is a broader concept. In fact, “Buddhist Education in Britain” has a slightly strange ring to it. I must begin by considering why this should be so.

All the world’s great religions have venerable traditions of studying their own scriptures, traditions which indeed lie at the heart of the academic tradition in most of the countries where one or another of those religions is established. On the whole, however, that study of the religious tradition into which one has been born has not been undertaken in any kind of critical spirit, but has been a matter of learning the received wisdom in order to benefit from it in one’s own life and pass it on to future generations.

The study of the history of religion as a part of the history of mankind is an aspect of secularization. It has its roots in the European enlightenment of the 18th century. The principles of the enlightenment informed the American constitution, which separated church from state so effectively that to this day the public education system in America is prohibited by law from inculcating any religion – and this despite the fact that the vast majority of Americans have from that day to this been practicing Christians. With the growth of the social sciences in the 20th century, the subject hitherto most widely known as “comparative religion” or “history of religions” is now most commonly known as “religious studies”; and it should come as no surprise that, whether one looks at the subject of “religious studies” in terms of teachers, students, institutional backing or publications, most of it, probably over 90%, goes on in North America.

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<sup>2</sup> It may however be useful if I reproduce from Donald Swearer’s introduction his first footnote: “For earlier assessments of the state of Buddhist studies, see Edward Conze, ‘Recent Progress in Buddhist Studies’, **Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies** (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968); J.W. de Jong, *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America* (Tokyo, Kosei Publishing Company, 1997); Hajime Nakamura, **Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes** (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1987).” Swearer and Promta, p.viii.

Britain, like Thailand, has for many centuries had an established religion in the technical sense of a religion recognized as that of the state: here Theravada Buddhism, in Britain Anglican Christianity. In both cases this has meant that until quite recently the only religion to form part of the syllabus in the state educational system at any level has been the local established religion, and that has generally been studied not so much in a spirit of enquiry as in that of handing down a tradition – a tradition which of course is considered fundamental for the proper conduct of both public and, especially, private life.

It was largely British contact with the wider world, brought about by its colonial empire, that prompted a few outstanding individuals to take an interest in religions other than Christianity. The great scholar T.W. Rhys Davids acquired most of his knowledge of Buddhism as a young man when he was a colonial civil servant in Sri Lanka. His well informed sympathy for the religion led him to found the Pali Text Society in London in 1881. The finance needed to launch this society were provided by a few Sinhalese Buddhists and an anonymous donor who was probably Rhys Davids himself. The Pali Text Society was the first institution in the world to begin to print the Pali canon, though shortage of both money and workers (who donated their services) meant that long before the Canon could be completed a complete version had been published here in Thailand in the 1890s under the patronage of HM Rama V. However, the Thai version was of course printed in Thai characters, which meant that it could have virtually no impact overseas. The Pali Text Society, by contrast, following the tradition that Pali should everywhere been written in the local script, printed Pali only in roman characters, and was thus responsible for the first worldwide diffusion of Pali texts. The Pali Text Society also set out publishing English translations of the canon and some other Pali texts, and it has published dictionaries, grammars, and other works ancillary to Pali studies. The fact that it publishes Pali in Roman letters and uses English as its secondary medium has meant that it is really the Pali Text Society which must take the credit for bringing Pali studies to the wider world.

However, even while the PTS was doing this magnificent job, Buddhism was not mentioned during the education of the average British citizen. The first chair of comparative religion in Britain was founded at Manchester University in 1903 and held by T.W. Rhys Davids. Progress was however extremely slow. I am now talking specifically about Buddhism, but concerning other major religions, such as Islam and Hinduism, the story was at that stage much the same. When I came up to the University of Oxford as a student in 1957, the University employed no one to teach Buddhism at all, and I don't

think it figured on any syllabus, undergraduate or postgraduate. I believe the same was true of Cambridge. When I took up my first post, in 1965, as Lecturer in Sanskrit and Pali at Oxford, there was not a single post in the British university system dedicated to the study of Buddhism; and I believe that my post, then newly created, was the only one to include Pali in its title.

The establishment of Religious Studies in the British university system must stand largely to the credit of another Buddhologist, Ninian Smart; he first occupied the chair in this subject at Lancaster University, where he set up a department in 1967. In its early days Ninian Smart's department at Lancaster had two or even three post-holders in Buddhism; but when I wrote for Dr. Wisadavet in 1997 the only center for Buddhist studies which existed in Britain had recently been founded at Bristol University under the leadership of Paul Williams. In my contribution to that Chulalongkorn survey I published a table headed "British institutions offering teaching in Buddhism at undergraduate and/ or postgraduate level" (pp.176-8). It is only slightly out of date; but I am pleased to report that there are now two other centers of Buddhist studies, one at SOAS and the other at Oxford. We at Oxford are proud and honored to have the patronage of HRH Princess Mahachakri Sirindhorn, who visited us recently. However, our financial base is still extremely insecure, and both I, as Academic Director, and my friend Geoff Bamford, as Executive Director, not only donate our services but are still obliged to use our own money to keep the Center afloat – a situation which obviously cannot go on for ever.

The great expansion in the study of non-Christian religions in the 1960s and 1970s in Britain must be linked to the fortunes of faith communities in the wider population, for they provide both demand and supply. When what is now called the British Association for the Study of Religions was formed in 1954, it was natural to make it primarily an association for the study of the history of religions, i.e., of their past, because their living presence was not a salient feature of the local landscape. Immigration sharply increased around that time, and the consequent rise in the population from non-Christian religious traditions, began to make it reasonable to regard Britain as a multi-cultural society. The impact was not immediate; but as the non-Christian immigrants began to send their children to school, it became necessary to cater for them in primary and secondary education. Here too, Ninian Smart was a pioneer: in 1969 he played a leading part in creating the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education. This small body of volunteers tried to offer the school system – and to some extent also other public services such as hospitals and the police, plus any inquirers from the general

public – at least a minimum of accurate and not unsympathetic information about the various religious traditions now found in Britain. The Shap Working Party has annually published and distributed both a calendar of religious festivals and a compilation (known as the “Shap Mailing”), aimed specially at schoolteachers, which takes a new theme each year and contains articles on that theme applied to various religions.

Once these religious traditions were taught in schools, it became necessary to train teachers, and even in due course school inspectors, who knew something about them. This in turn meant jobs for some graduates of university departments of Religious Studies. This then led to a rise in standards and to formal examinations, so that it became possible to take “Advanced level” school certificate examinations in Religious Studies with papers devoted to specific non-Christian religions.

Because of the pattern of immigration, Buddhism benefited less from these developments than did Islam, Hinduism and even Sikhism. When I first joined the Shap Working Party, an extremely well-meaning senior figure, who was I believe responsible for the teaching of non-Christian religions throughout the Birmingham area, told me that Buddhism was not suitable for children! By that he meant that it was too intellectual and abstruse. It was Peggy Morgan who coined the response “Buddhists have children too”, and who began producing materials to help schoolteachers teach Buddhism in secondary schools; Anil Goonewardene followed with materials for younger children.

It is worth pausing to reflect at this point that one could argue that the relation between religious education and the wider society has not changed. Earlier the society was Christian, so it was Christianity that was taught in the educational system; now society includes communities adhering to other religions, so they are catered for by the educational system in the same way. So has anything changed? Well yes, it has. Earlier, Christianity could only be taught by believing Christians, and the assumption was that the pupils were believing Christians too. In fact, if a family was not Christian, parents could have their children excused from the religious classes at school. But the teaching of “religious studies” is quite unlike that. Teachers usually have to teach more than one religion, so obviously they cannot be required to be adherents of the religion they teach. By the same token, pupils are not required to believe anything, merely to be informed about the religious beliefs and practices of their fellow citizens. This distinction which I have just pointed out between traditional religious instruction and modern religious studies is so sharp that in Britain many Muslims object to having Islam taught by non-Muslims



and prefer it not to be taught in the state system at all. I am glad to say that I have never come across this attitude among Buddhists.

Immigration into Britain is not the only impact that geo-politics has had on the study of religion. In higher education, Buddhism has benefited from a tragedy and a success. The tragedy has been the Chinese invasion of Tibet. In particular, the conquest of Lhasa and the flight to India in 1959 of the Dalai Lama have had massive consequences for the spread of Tibetan Buddhism across the world and the academic study of Tibet. The Tibetan exodus was initially into India, where the majority of the Tibetan Sangha have stayed, but significant numbers have gone on to North America and, secondarily, to Europe.

Fifty years ago I don't think there was a department of Tibetan studies at any university in the world, and there was certainly no international organization for the subject. Now many universities, including Oxford and SOAS, teach the Tibetan language and Tibetan studies; and the recent international conferences of the International Association for Tibetan Studies have been better attended than the corresponding meetings of the International Association for Sanskrit Studies. Tibetan studies are of course not all about Buddhism, but surely well over half of them are.

The success to which I have just alluded is the Japanese economic miracle. Japanese efforts to export their culture have not been in proportion to their economic clout – and one could say the same, later, of the Koreans. Nevertheless, some Japanese Buddhist organizations have been generous in supporting the study of Buddhism abroad, not least in Britain. The most notable donor has been the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai, The Society for the Advancement of Buddhist Understanding, also known among us as the Numata Foundation, after its founder. In the 1980s Mr Yehan Numata, from his base in Tokyo, began to found chairs in Buddhist studies in the western world. There was some variation, but the general pattern was for a university to have a visiting scholar to teach each year, paid for by the BDK; and extra money was also paid, with the intention of building up the endowment of a permanent chair. Though Mr Numata himself was an adherent of Jodo Shinshu, the Pure Land Buddhist tradition founded by Shinran, the BDK has wisely and nobly supported Buddhist studies in general. Oxford was the first British university to benefit: an annual visiting fellowship, attached to Balliol College, began in 1989. Later SOAS and Cambridge received benefactions from the same source. Following my retirement, the Numata Foundation have most generously and far-sightedly agreed to convert the visiting position at Oxford into a permanently endowed chair, as Mr Numata originally

envisaged. It is hoped that the money for this will be available in time for the chair to be filled in October 2007. This would be the first endowed chair in Buddhist studies not merely at Oxford but at any British university.

I trust that it has not escaped the notice of this audience that both of these developments, the Tibetan tragedy and the economic success of Japan and Korea, concern Mahayana Buddhists, and have consequently favored the study of Mahayana. Sadly, there has been no comparable impetus to the study of the Theravada in Britain, or indeed anywhere else in the West. In Britain there are indeed a few indigenous sympathizers, such as myself, who ask how one can possibly study Buddhism without paying due attention to the words of its founder. Moreover, I have founded the Oxford Center for Buddhist Studies with this idea very much in mind. When I retired in 2004 the study of both Pali and Theravada Buddhism could have ground to a halt in Oxford, but I was determined that after all my efforts over 40 years this should not happen. I have since devoted most of my time and effort to teaching and organizing the teaching of the Pali tradition; but I do hope that at last there may be some help forthcoming from the contemporary upholders of that tradition, notably the Buddhists of Thailand.

I am absolutely convinced that the Buddhist tradition has so much to offer the world that some knowledge of it should be part of the education of every citizen in every country. I think that the best way forward in Britain would be to try to get Buddhism out of what is still a kind of minority ghetto, the subject labeled “Religious Studies”, and have both the Buddha himself and the Emperor Asoka figure in courses on world history and civilization, alongside thinkers like Plato and Aristotle and rulers like Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar.

While I am convinced that this is an entirely reasonable proposal, I cannot see that it is likely to be adopted in the near future. Perhaps the best use I can make of the few minutes remaining to me is to consider why.

If I put myself in the shoes of a British educationalist who is asked to ensure that both schoolchildren and university students are taught about the Buddha, I am sure that I would begin by asking what Buddhist education is like in the rest of the world. And I would not, frankly, be much encouraged by the answer. Modern educationalists take it for granted that the primary aim of education is to get the pupils to think for themselves. In this they are of course doing no more than following the advice of the Buddha in his

famous sermon to the Kalamas<sup>3</sup>, in which he urged every one of them not to accept the words of any teacher, himself included<sup>4</sup>, merely out of respect for authority or tradition, but to find things out for themselves, relying on their own experience. In the same spirit, pupils in the modern West are encouraged above all to ask questions, to test the logic of arguments, to demand empirical evidence and to judge for themselves whether that evidence is sufficient to support the alleged conclusions.

Is that how Buddhism is taught in Buddhist countries today? Not always, I think. Much emphasis is still being placed on memorizing facts. In an oral culture, as when the Buddha preached in the 5th century BCE, that was entirely necessary. Writing made it slightly less important; printing still less so. Now the computer has become so widely available that almost every schoolchild can “google” and find the information they need on the internet. But that, of course, does nothing to help them evaluate the information.

An important part of evaluating information is evaluating sources. What are our sources for the words of the Buddha? You will probably answer: the texts of the Pali Canon. But they were only committed to writing centuries after the Buddha’s death, and in fact we have very few Pali manuscripts more than 500 years old. Moreover, when you look closely it turns out that some of the texts in the Pali Canon contradict each other. But how many people who learn about Buddhism even know that or give it a thought?

Many years ago I published a short article called “Three Souls, one or None: the Vagaries of a Pali Periscope.”<sup>5</sup> It concerns an expression, a set of phrases nine words long, which occurs in five texts in the Pali Canon. In only one of these does it make perfectly good sense – a text<sup>6</sup> in which a brahmin is criticizing Buddhists. Once lifted out of that original context, the expression looks very strange, as it seems to suggest that ascetics can “blow out” a self – whereas the Buddhist position is that one has no such “self” in the first place. Not only do the commentaries on this expression in its secondary contexts have trouble in explaining it: their explanations are themselves discrepant. This seems to be an undeniable case in which neither the Canon nor the body of commentaries ascribed to Buddhaghosa can be made to agree; in other words,

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<sup>3</sup> Anguttara Nikāya I, 188-193.

<sup>4</sup> Vimansaka Sutta, majjhima I, 317-20.

<sup>5</sup> Journal of the Pali Text Society, vol. 11, 1987, pp. 73-8.

<sup>6</sup> Anguttara Nikāya I, 168ff.

people who did not fully understand the expression have used it in the creation of canonical texts, and other people who did not understand it have given more than one interpretation of it in the commentaries.

This matters enormously, because this one example is enough to show that if we want to be sure what the Buddha preached we cannot simply rely on the authority of an unanimous tradition. Why? Because there is no such thing.

I can see no reason whatsoever why this should impair our faith in Buddhism or make Buddhism less worthy of study. My message is the opposite: that there is a vast, immeasurable amount still to be studied in Buddhism, and that the teaching of Buddhism urgently needs to recognize that fact.

Another thing that we all need to take to heart is that modern technology has in no way diminished the need to learn languages. That for the purpose of serious study original sources must be read in the original language is well appreciated in Thailand, where the study of Buddhism does normally involve the study of Pali. Here the problem is perhaps rather that the Pali must be intelligently taught, so as to bring home to students how the Pali sentences would be expressed in today's idiom. In Britain, alas, hardly anyone studies Pali, and this is mainly because people think it must be terribly difficult. In my view that is nonsense. I have been teaching an intensive 9-day course for complete beginners, promising that after the course pupils will be able to read Pali texts on their own with the aid of the normal resources, such as dictionaries and grammars. It seems to work.

Of course, no one expects schoolchildren in Britain to learn Pali; and it is far better for anyone to read the Buddha's words, or Asoka's inscriptions, in a decent translation than not to read them at all. But at university level it seems to me that anyone who wants to acquire detailed knowledge of the Buddha's teaching should be able to consult the original text; and when it comes to research, some knowledge of both Sanskrit and Middle Indo-Aryan in general is necessary.

In Thailand the boot is rather on the other foot. To study Buddhism at a respectable academic standard, one needs to be able to read what the rest of the world has had to say, and this requires fluent English. I believe that a sound knowledge of English is no less necessary for studying Buddhism than it is for any other subject, from micro-biology to computer science.



Am I then saying that the study of Buddhism is just like the study of any other subject? No. But it is alike in one crucial respect: that whereas once upon a time memorization played a huge part in study, in the modern world it should play hardly any part at all, and what matters is understanding and the active use of the mind. As usual, we need only follow the Buddha's advice. At AN II, 135 he classifies people who hear his teachings into four types, putting the best first.<sup>7</sup> The first type (Ugghatitaññū) understands the teaching as soon as it is uttered; the second (Vipacitaññū) understands on mature reflection; the third (neyya) is 'leadable': he understands it when he has worked at it, thought about it and cultivated wise friends. The fourth is called pada-parama, 'putting the words first'; he is defined as one who though he hears much, preaches much, remembers much and recites much does not come within this life to understand the teaching. One could hardly ask for a clearer condemnation of what so often passes for education.

If properly done, Buddhist education can however transcend the purely academic realm. This brings me full circle, back to Dr Wisadavet's symposium. Of course Buddhism offers principles and insights which can and should be used in the whole of life, whether in Thailand, Britain, or any other country. I take "engaged Buddhism" to stand for that position, urging us to apply Buddhism in both public and private affairs. I applaud. Let me just issue a note of warning: that in our haste to apply Buddhism, we should not forget that first we must study it thoroughly and satisfy ourselves that we really do understand it.

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<sup>7</sup> The terms are explained at Puggala-paññatti IV, 5 (= p.41). I follow the reading at Anguttara Nikāya II, 135 and give it my own interpretation. Puggala-paññatti 41 reads vipaccita; the commentary on the latter also reads vipaccita, but with a variant vipaccita, and glosses it as vitthlrita, so that the second type becomes one who understands the teaching when it has been expanded. This latter interpretation is found in other postcanonical sources which read vipaccita.

## The Buddhist Attitude to Other Religions

*The Most Ven. Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda*

Today because of the atrocities that have been done and are still continuing in the name of religion, many people have become disillusioned at the mention of the very word, 'religion'. Materialism, hypocrisy and fanaticism covered under the guise of religion have caused the greatest disaster in the history of mankind.

The true religious values are rapidly disappearing from the minds of men as they run in search of the occult and the mystical. The established great religions of the world are breaking into discrimination of forms and some people are even going all out to ridicule religion. The time has come for religionists of today to get together to introduce religious values in their proper perspective, instead of merely arguing and quarrelling over the differences of religious ideologies and mythologies.

The aim of this article therefore is to assist in promoting a better understanding of the purpose of religion and religious tolerance from the Buddhist point of view. Hopefully through this we can show how Buddhism regards other religions and guide Buddhists on how to behave towards their followers. Hopefully non-Buddhists will also gain a better understanding of what the Buddha taught on this subject.

The deep underlying purpose of all religions should be to encourage their followers to uphold and respect their own religion without in any way being disrespectful towards other religions. To this end, all enlightened and like minded fellow religionists must unite and must establish mutual understanding, mutual co-operation and tolerance amongst ourselves in order to achieve religious harmony.

It is fashionable nowadays to talk of religious tolerance and its importance but few, if any, ever pin-point a practical way to achieve it. It is to be hoped that in reading this article, the reader would be able not only to obtain a clearer picture of religious tolerance but also attempt to promote it sincerely. The first step towards developing this attitude is to eradicate a sense of superiority about one's own religion, to eliminate mutual suspicion, religious prejudices and selfish motives, for the common good and upliftment of our respective religions. But before we go any further we should pause and reflect on this word "tolerance" which is used very loosely nowadays. Tolerance implies 'putting up with' something we may dislike. An attitude like this can be very dangerous because it can lead to hypocrisy and a degree of religious chauvinism.

We cannot simply tolerate another religion and maintain our superior attitude with regard to our own. We must be able to deeply respect another view although we may not agree with it. It may be useful to recall the famous words of Lord Acton who said, "I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend to the death, your right to say it." What this means is that mere tolerance is not enough. What we need most urgently for our society today is for everyone to acknowledge the right of every individual to believe what he or she wants to believe without any hindrances from any quarter. This goes far beyond mere tolerances. It involves a deep respect for the beliefs of others.

This respect can only come about when we are prepared to study the beliefs of others and try to understand why they believe what they believe. It is only by studying other ways of thinking that we can strengthen our own beliefs.

The purpose of a religion is to give human beings a sense of self worth, to recognize the right of each individual to enjoy both spiritual and worldly happiness. Religion aims to help people not only live a meaningful life in this world, but also to prepare one for a life after death. All fellow-religionists are working to achieve this common cause of human emancipation and enlightenment. The search for emancipation and enlightenment is the search for Truth.

Unfortunately, in our very midst, there are many religious practices and beliefs, which are depicted or passed off as the Truth, when in fact they are far from being the Truth. Many practices have their origins in our remote past and have very little relevance to modern ways of thinking and living. As true religious followers we must have the courage and conviction to admit what is evidently a misconception and try to rectify it to

conform to science and reasoning to meet the requirements of Truth. We would be failing in our duty if we try to cling on to something, which we know is not the Truth. We are even wrong, if in the practice of our religious tolerance, we tolerate it without pointing out its failings, which do not conform to Truth.

In seeking Truth we should discard our competitive attitudes and unite to work hand-in-hand to achieve our noble aim of religious harmony for the well being of mankind. In the very first sermon that he delivered after his Enlightenment, the Buddha said that one should abandon the belief that the mere observance of rites and rituals could lead one to liberation from the problems of human existence. In doing so the Buddha warned followers against relying on devotional religious observances - but he did not say that such practices were altogether bad. What he meant was that religious practices must not be used merely as a means to an end. Practices should prepare a person to carry out the important spiritual task: eliminating the mind of the defilements, which are the cause of our suffering, namely delusion, craving and ill-will.

However although the Buddha pointed out that there was no religious value in many of the practices in India during his time, he was careful to advise his followers to support the Brahmins and other monks irrespective of their beliefs provided of course they were sincere and harmless religious people.

The Buddha advised his followers not to hurt or to cause injury to a Sramana (monk) or a Brahmin. Here he has recognized monks and Brahmins as religious people. Again the Buddha said that when a person deceives a Brahmin or a monk or pauper, by telling a lie, this is a cause of the downfall of the person. Thus in advising his followers in this manner the Buddha has treated people of all methods without any discrimination. Today we must extend our courtesy and respect to every holy man who sincerely tries to follow his religion to the best of his understanding.

The aim of Buddhism is to guide everyone to lead a noble life without harming anyone, to cultivate humane qualities in order to maintain human dignity, to radiate all-embracing kindness without any discrimination, and to train the mind to avoid evil and to purify the mind to gain peace and happiness.

Buddhism is a religion, which teaches people to 'live and let live'. In the history of the world, there is no evidence to show that Buddhists have interfered or done any



damage to any other religion in any part of the world for the purpose of propagating their religion. Buddhists do not regard the existence of other religions as a hindrance to worldly progress and peace.

We need to point out that this attitude contrast to the behavior of some religious followers who ridicule and condemn the practice and beliefs of others without bothering to study these other beliefs and what they really mean beyond the external appearances. Condemning others out of ignorance is hardly the mark of civilized behavior and is certainly out of place in this age where information on every subject is readily available. The Buddhist attitude is to allow others to follow their beliefs in peace, to recognize the rights of others to freedom of thought.

In Buddhism there are no religious laws, commandments and religious punishments but only advice given by the Buddha prohibits the use of any divine or supernatural power. The Buddha repeatedly declared that he was not interested in telling people to reach heaven. His aim was to explain suffering its cause, the extinction of suffering and the Path which leads to that extinction.

This approach does not require faith, but understanding and effort. Therefore, in Buddhism there are no divinely ordained laws and there is also no concept of sin and punishment. The immediate goal in following the path is to develop a noble human being who understands the benefits of personal discipline and mental culture.

Buddhists do not follow any religious principles not because of fear of the Buddha, punishment or reward but by knowing and experiencing the negative effects of bad actions and positive result of good ones. When they follow this method as a natural way of life they allow others to live peacefully and happily.

Buddhism does not create fear and temptation for people to practice a religion because it does not believe in punishment in hell or reward in heaven. The Buddha's message was an invitation to all to join the fold of universal brotherhood to work in harmony for the welfare and happiness of mankind. He had no chosen people, and he did not regard himself as a chosen one.

The Buddha's first missionaries were Arahants - the Perfect and Holy Ones. They were noble human beings who by the sheer effort of their renunciation and mental

training had gained perfection. By perfection we mean that state when all delusion, greed and hatred has been eradicated from the mind and there is not even the slightest tendency to experience negative states like anger, jealousy, fear, worry, doubt, restlessness and so on. In short Arahants experience 'divine' states not in heaven after their deaths, but in this life itself. Before sending out the first perfected-disciples, he advised them in the following manner:

*'Go ye, O Bhikkhus, and wander forth for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world; for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of gods and men. Proclaim, O Bhikkhus, the sublime doctrine, preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure.'*

The Buddha was only concerned about showing the path to ultimate happiness. He was not concerned with founding a religion in his name. The Buddha wanted to show the people the difference between good and evil; he wanted to teach humans how to lead a happy, peaceful and righteous way of life. He never advised his disciples to convert people from one religion to another. His idea of conversion was to introduce a righteous, noble and religious way of life. In fact he said that the greatest miracle one could perform was to convert a wicked person into a virtuous one.

The Buddha did not criticize or condemn any religion. He only wanted to enlighten the people by showing them the futility of going into the extremes of self-mortification (or self-torture) and self-indulgence (or sensuality) and to avoid superstitious and meaningless practices in the name of religion. He wanted human beings to behave decently after seeing things as they really are. There may be certain age-old traditions and customs maintained by people incorporating with their religions but some of them are out of date and not appreciated by intellectuals.

One of the cornerstones of Buddhism is the Buddha's Teachings on the Reality of Change. Nothing in this universe is permanent and suffering occurs when we resist this inevitable law of change; we must grow old, fall sick, lose loved ones, die. No one can stop this. Science is an agent of this change, so science is not intrinsically evil. What is evil is when we use the development of science to create more sufferings for our fellow human beings like for example in the indiscriminate use of weapons of mass destruction to safeguard our power over others.

In the same way ideas are subjected to constant change and what was considered acceptable only a decade ago may become ridiculously out of date tomorrow. If we want to avoid causing suffering to ourselves and others we must adapt to changing ideas and changing circumstances.

### **The True Religion**

On the question of what constitutes a true religion, the Buddha has given a liberal answer, stating that wherever the teachings of the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path could be found, and where one can find genuine followers who have gained spiritual development, therein lies the true religion. He did not say that Buddhism is the only true religion in this world, but encourage people to accept and respect truth wherever truth was to be found. This means that we need not ignore the reasonable teachings of the other religions. Such an attitude clearly shows that the Buddha never had any prejudice towards other religions, nor did he try to monopolize religious truth.

He wanted to point out only one thing - the Truths and all his teachings are based on the Four Noble Truths - that of Suffering or unsatisfactoriness, it's Cause, its Cessation and the Way leading to its cessation. The Truths are a reality, which exists wherever there are human beings.

Whenever the Buddha advised his disciples to do or keep away from something, he always asked them to do so, not only for their own welfare and happiness, but also for the welfare and happiness of others. He said, 'if it is good for you and others, then do it; on the other hand, if it is bad for you and for others, do not do it.' Also if it only benefits one party then such an action must be avoided.

As a social reformer, the Buddha discovered the deepest causes of human suffering: Greed, Hatred and Delusion, which are deeply rooted in the mind. Therefore it is only through mind that true reform can be affected. Reforms imposed upon the external world by compulsion or fear can only last for a short while, but those that spring from transforming the person's inner consciousness and understanding are more durable.

The evil tendencies towards Greed, Hatred and Delusion must eventually be overcome and replaced by the forces of generosity, loving-kindness and wisdom. It is only through such mental purification that peace and happiness can be effectively brought

human beings like for example in the indiscriminate use of weapons of mass destruction to safeguard our power over others about through religion. And to do this one must exert oneself mindfully: mere prayer and ritual based on blind faith are not enough.

Buddhism became the first missionary religion the world has seen. Nearly two thousand three hundred years ago, Buddhism expanded beyond India through the noble efforts of Indian Emperor Asoka. The historian, H.G.Wells, inspired by the greatness of Asoka, says: 'amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarch that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousness and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines, and almost alone, a star.'

This great Buddhist Emperor who ruled India (268 B.C.- 305 B.C.) renounced the sword of violence at the height of his thirst for worldly power and devoted much of his time for the upliftment of a culture of benevolence and compassion extending even into the animal world. He banned any form of animal slaughter. He sent out Buddhist missionaries, including his own son and daughter throughout the length and breadth of the then known world, to convey the peace message of the Buddha. True to the noble tradition of the Buddha, he clearly advised these missionaries not to condemn or to run down any other religion while they preached Buddhism. This advice was engraved on an Asoka pillar in Brahmin characters - the ruins of which can still be seen today at Sarnath, Benares in India. Part of an edict read like this:

*'One should not honor only one's own religion and condemn the religions of others, but one should honor others' religion for this or that reason. In so doing, one helps one's own religion to grow and renders service to the religions of others too. In acting otherwise one digs the grave of one's own religion and also does harm to other religions.'*

*Whosoever honors his own religions and condemns other religions does so indeed through devotion to his own religions, thinking 'I will glorify my own religion,' but on the contrary, in so doing he injures his own religion more gravely. So concord is good: 'Let all listen and be willing to listen to the doctrines professed by others.'*



### Religious Harmony

Religious principles are intended for the whole of mankind. If any particular section of humanity does not follow the great virtues taught by religion - such as kindness, patience, tolerance and understanding, it would be difficult for others to live peacefully. For some reason, religion has constantly been blamed for a great deal of humanity's problems.

Religions have been blamed for war, racialism, discrimination of women, persecution and so on. But this is not really fair because we must clearly distinguish between the religious principles taught by the founders and the interpretation of these principles by certain religious leaders to further their own ends. Sometimes these unscrupulous people even turn against the followers of their own religion because they entertain different opinions from theirs.

What is important is for the people in their own religions to speak up against wrong doing and misinterpretation especially if these interpretations condone terrorism and the slaughter of innocents. Often these religious leaders ally themselves to powerful political figures who have no hesitation to kill and incite hatred just to get what they want.

It is quite natural for cunning and cruel people to take advantage of any kind of virtue, but let us - religionists of today, bear in mind that those who fight and shed blood in the name of religion, do not follow religious principles and do not serve the cause of humanity. They fight for their own personal gain or power by using the name of a religion. Those who truly practice a religion have no grounds to fight. They should settle their problems in a peaceful manner.

Followers must know that a true religion never encourages any form of violence under any circumstances. At the same time, racial discrimination should not arise when we practice our respective religions. Buddhists can live and work with other religionists without any discrimination. Although Buddhists were divided into different sects nearly 2000 years ago, so far they never had any sectarian violence or discrimination amongst themselves in any part of the world. Buddhism is the only religion that didn't declare war to introduce religion.

Each person has three natures: the Animal, the Human and the Divine. The purpose of religion is to help human beings realize their divine nature. Ever since the beginning of time man has moved through various stages of evolution.

At first he was merely concerned with his basic survival needs to find food, shelter and to ensure that there were children who would continue the line of descendants. But the nature of the human being was such that the satisfactions of mere survival need were not enough. Going through various stages from creating a sense of belonging, seeking knowledge, developing the arts he finally arrived at the ultimate questions about existence.

Man's longing for answers to the three questions who am I, am I needed and what am I doing here gave rise to various answers which eventually led to the development of religion. That is the purpose of every religion; to explain the workings of the universe and man's place in that universe.

Unfortunately these noble aims were forgotten and religion simply became a jumble of rituals and superstitious practices in the hands of unscrupulous leaders who gained power over the people by exploiting their superstition and ignorance. The time has come for religion to serve its original purpose of providing answers to the problems regarding our existence.

Government should not use religion to gain political power. At the same time religion should not use political power to introduce religion. Different religions may have different beliefs and views regarding the beginning and the end of life, as well as different interpretations regarding the nature of ultimate salvation. But we should not bring forward such attitude to create conflict, confrontation, clashes to create misunderstanding.

There are many common virtues for religionists to introduce in theory and practice in the name of religion, so that people may lead a righteous, peaceful and cultured way of life. There is no need for us to belittle one another. If we do so, we would only pave the way for the anti-religious groups who are waiting to ridicule and condemn all religions. We should not behave in such a way as to show our hostile attitude to our co-religionists. If we do so, people will say that religions encourage mankind to be divided.

Buddhists are not forbidden to give due respect to other religious teachers, nor are they restricted from visiting places of worship and attending religious services, other than Buddhism. They can show their full respect for other belief systems while maintaining their basic Buddhist principles.

Buddhism encourages co-operation and understanding amongst the various religious denominations. From the Buddhist point of view, religious labels are not the most important aspects for people to be considered religious, but any person leading a respectable and harmless way of life can be regarded as religious.

Those who find faults and criticize Buddhism can only do so at a very superficial level. They may criticize the traditional practices, the manners and customs but not the teachings as established by the Buddha, as these principles are good for all time. They can be tried out by anyone who wishes to test them.

The methods used to introduce the teachings of the Buddha are rational and reasonable. The Buddha made his appeal through reason and experience. The teachings were presented with clear and impressive simplicity and yet kept free from religious and national narrowness and fanaticism. They have produced clear and sober-minded people. This method of presentation cleared doubts and removed superstitious beliefs. Thus did the teachings of the Buddha enlightened the hearts and minds of the earnest seekers of Truth.

The Buddhist attitude of tolerance and understanding convinced many great thinkers, philosophers, rationalists, freethinkers and even agnostics to appreciate Buddhism as a peaceful way of life devoid of fear and superstition. If we, the religionists of today cannot get together to work in harmony without discrimination or hostility towards one another, the peace that we talk of would only remain as a dream.

As sincere and true co-religionists, let us join hands to consolidate our efforts to eradicate all that, which are controversial and discriminatory in our teachings and do our utmost to introduce spiritual values, which are common in our respective religions for the good and well being of all mankind, irrespective of race or creed. We should all remember that religion exists for the good of mankind and that it should not be misused fanatically in any way for personal gain or self-glorification.

### Unite Together

Let all religionists unite to condemn religious aggression.

Let them unite to stop all brutality and manslaughter in the name of promoting peace.

Let us unite to give freedom to every individual to follow his or her beliefs according to his or her own conviction.

Let us unite to give up religious monopoly.

Let us agree not to use religion in the market place to convert others by adopting questionable methods.

Let us unite to respect the other person's religious beliefs and practices as long as these beliefs and practices are harmless and do not lead to violence.

Let us unite to wipe out the challenging attitude of unhealthy religious competition.

Let all religionists unite to eliminate the various vices and immoral practices that are common in our modern society.

Let us also unite to introduce the moderate way of life amongst our followers and advise them not to go to extremes.

Dr. L.M. Joshi of Punjab University says: 'the unity among the religions of mankind, if and when achieved, will be one of the greatest blessings on this earth. Certainly we cannot bring about this unity by misinterpreting their differences in origins and doctrines. We can perhaps contribute towards achieving harmony among the followers of different faiths by impartially and respectfully studying their doctrines, beliefs and practices.'

Like the bee gathering honey from different flowers, without harming them, the wise one sees only the good in all religions and accepts the essence of the truth of the different teachings.

For example:

Buddhism says, "Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful."

Taoism says, "Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss."

Christianity says, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Confucius says, "Do unto others what you want done for yourself."

Islam says, "Do unto all men as you would they should do unto you and reject for



others what you would reject for yourself.”

Hinduism says, “Let no one do to others what he would not have done to himself.”

The founders of each religion had as their basic aim the unity of mankind – to foster harmony, goodwill and understanding among all the people in the world. Following in their footsteps various religious leaders have also sought to develop this deep respect for the beliefs of other people. Unfortunately, however, certain followers of every religion, for their own selfish reasons and due to their intolerance and narrow-mindedness, have gone against the real essence of Religion and have created chaos, discrimination, hostility and misunderstanding.

We earnestly hope that by realizing these facts, mankind will one day unite as religious brothers to work for the well being of all. In the final analysis, let us remember that respect for the religion of another person springs from the confidence one has in the intrinsic strength of his or her own religion. Instead of converting others into Buddhism, Buddhists can encourage others to practice their religion if their practices are harmless.

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## Sufficiency Economy is Real Sustainable Development: Summary of H.M the King's Plan

*Ven. Thitadhammo*

Aiming to become a self-sufficient economy in the midst of revolutionizing itself by embracing industrialization, Thailand was faced with a need for a set of guidelines to ensure its populace would not be affected by the drastic changes that is about to take place. His Majesty King Bhumipol suggests guiding the country's development along the lines of Moderation in the speech given on July 18, 1974, His Majesty suggested: "The Development of the nation must be carried out in stages, starting with the laying of the foundation by ensuring the majority of the people have their basic necessities through the use of economical means and equipment in accordance with theoretical principles. Once a reasonably firm foundation has been laid and in effect, higher levels of economic growth and development should be promoted. If we were to concentrate only on fast economic progress without allowing the plan of operation to harmonize with the conditions of the country and people, an imbalance in various aspects would be caused and may bring about failure in the end, as witness the serious economic crises currently faced by many a developed country."

By then Thailand was fast becoming one of the New Industrialized Countries or NIC. This renowned Fifth Tiger of Asia accelerated its economy by expanding and opening up to the free trade system subjecting Thailand to the fluidity of the world market mechanism. This causes huge movements in both trade and capital between Thailand and other countries in the form of long- and short-term investments. However, when investments concentrated mainly on short-term trends, the Thai economy was turned into a "bubble" economy. Complicated further by the floating of the Baht resulting in a recession of exports, bringing about the collapsed of the economy and crises enthuse. The Baht fell more than 40 percent, public debts and loans soared to record highs

becoming a burden to the economy. Thailand was forced to take drastic measures to restructure the country under International Monetary Fund or IMF guidelines. What turned out to be a blessing is now a disaster of immense proportion, unbalanced expansion processes and lack of holistic approach to deal with problems, create a situation where other aspects of the economy could not keep pace with the acquisition of material wealth. All these led to this thought, “Good economy, Problematic society and Unsustainable development”.

During this time, His Majesty the King gave spiritual leadership and support to direct the country towards “Sufficiency Economy” and in December 4, 1997, his royal speech gave a broader definition to the meaning of the original phrase “having enough to eat and to live” into: “ a self-sufficient economy does not mean that each family must produce its own food, weave and sew its own clothes. This is going too far, but I mean that each village or each district must have relative self-sufficiency. Things that are produced in surplus can be sold, but should be sold in the same region, not too far so that the transportation cost is minimized.” From His Majesty speech sparked a collaborative work between the Office of National Economic and Social Development Board or NESDB and experts in their own fields to further work on synthesizing the royal remarks on sufficiency.

After a thoroughly thought out process, His Majesty gave the final revision and the royal approval in November 21, 1999 the guidelines towards a “Sufficiency Economy” as well as for the general public:

*“Sufficiency Economy” is a philosophy that stresses the middle path as the overriding principle for appropriate conduct and way of life of the entire populace. It applies to conduct and way of life at individual, family and community levels. At the national level, the philosophy is consistent with a balanced development strategy that would reduce the vulnerability of the nation to shocks and excesses that may arise as a result of globalization. “Sufficiency” means moderation and due consideration to all modes of conduct, and incorporates the need for sufficient protection from internal and external shocks. To achieve this, the prudent application of knowledge is essential. In particular, great care is needed in the application of theories and technical know-how and in planning and implementation. At the same time, it is essential to strengthen the moral fiber of the nation so that everyone,*

*particularly public officials, academics, business people and financiers adhere primarily to the principles of honesty and integrity. A balanced approach combining patience, perseverance, diligence, wisdom and prudence is indispensable to cope appropriately with critical challenges arising from extensive and rapid socio-economic, environmental and cultural change occurring as a result of globalization”.*

**In short, the above philosophy entails three key guiding principles:**

1. **Moderation:** This is judgment exercise to take into account our limitations. When we learn of our limitation, we learn too of our capacity and potential. This is the best way to balance our life and such conduct will surely prove us to be harmless towards others.

2. **Reasonableness or Rationality:** Using our own judgment and rationality to choose the best way to conduct ourselves and live our lives without blindly following after irrational trends of globalization, such as extravagance and over-consumption. By choosing our own model of living, we are making rational judgment of what best fit our life.

3. **Self-immunity or Precaution:** We must also be prepared to accept and face the impacts change brings about. Whether it’s for the current, future or internal or external to our surroundings, we have to create sufficient savings and learn to become self-reliant without depending on the assistance of others.

In short, it is not just about having “the ability to be self-reliant” with “moderation and precaution” in our lives. It is about being unselfishness, not extravagance and to tread “the Middle Path”. This is how we can “immunize” ourselves from the crises caused by external factors that is striking Thailand. In another except of his speech, His Majesty stated: “... *to be a tiger is not important. The important thing for us is to have a self-supporting economy. A self-supporting economy means to have enough to survive.*”

Thus, the development of sufficiency extends not only to oneself, but to families, communities as well as to the nation. His Majesty stressed that development must be done in step by step basis starting from building a good foundation for the people to better enable themselves having enough to live on and eat before they can become self-reliant. The initiative as vaulted by His Majesty was applied when NESDB incorporated it into the Ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan that covers from 2002 to 2006.



The plan is based on developing a balanced framework in the following aspects: Human, Social, Economic and Environmental. The middle path is practiced as the main guiding principle to help free the country from crises and to ensure security, balance and sustainability in development.

**The application of sufficiency economy is as follows:**

1. **At the family or individual level:** Each individual must have conscience in their daily conduct and leading a happy, joyful and moderate life. One should carry out a simple life, engaging in proper career to raise oneself and family at a level of sufficiency and to refrain from taking advantage of others but be generous to them instead.

2. **At the community level:** People must cooperate and participate in the decision-making process of the community, developing a mutual learning process as well as the appropriate application of technology in developing the community. Applied knowledge and know-how must be economical, simple and locally available. The important point is in the application of what is available in that region to solve the region's problem without relying on high investment or the use of complicated technology.

3. **At the national level:** Balance is sought through the application of holistic development processes. Social, economic and resources capitals should be taken into consideration. That which is to be produced must be analyzed against the country's domestic factors, so as to ensure proper guidelines as to what form of merchandizing is appropriate. More importantly, all merchandizes should first meet internal needs before exporting to others. This management strategy lowers the risks and over-investment is strongly discouraged as this will lead to the accumulation of debts beyond the capacity to repay.

With careful planning while keeping abreast of changes and development in the world and through careful management of natural resources and conserving and preserving of the environment to develop the country's capability in creating innovation and technology, social capitals such as education system should be relied on to help reduce imports of technology and dependence on other countries as stated in the following speech:

*"In creating things to develop the country and the people's livelihood, we should observe our work implementation. Apart from great and advanced technology for use in huge productions which require tremendous outputs,*

*each individual should also take into account and discover simple technology in order that business with low capitals can conveniently and practically apply it.” [Ed.: no source]*

Lastly, to develop a state of self-reliance at every level, the development patterns should be inline with the socio-economic, cultural and topological conditions of the community while ensuring continuity and sustainability. This forms the important foundation for the overall development of the country. With respect to such visions, Royal Development Study Centers were established to help bring His Majesty visions into practical application, with the first center established in 1997. The objectives of the centers are as follows: “The purpose of the Royal Development Study Centers is to develop farmer’s land by means of land developments, water resources development, forest rehabilitation and application of production techniques in agriculture and animal husbandry and to use the donated funds as the operating cost of the center. The centers will also serve as a central office to conduct development activities to improve the well-being of the people in the surrounding areas. Once the farmers have upgraded their living standard, they might consider setting up a rice mill and rice bank in each village to get an opportunity to train themselves, to finally become self-supporting ...”

**In all, six Royal Development Study Centers were established in the major regions of Thailand. The characteristics of these centers are:**

1. **Model of Success:** The centers conduct studies and experiments into the area’s conditions and using simple, appropriate and economical technology to ensure successful development. With these success models, guidelines are published for the benefit of the public. In retrospect, that which is deemed as failures will serve as caution or could be modified to provide new alternatives.

2. **Living Natural Museums:** These centers will also serve as an information center for the region’s physical, economic and socio-cultural conditions. The purpose is to help others wanting to study and understand the situation from real life perspective. This will help to improve the quality of life as well as the local wisdom of the people in that region. The museum is continuously updated to show it as a “Living Natural Museum”.

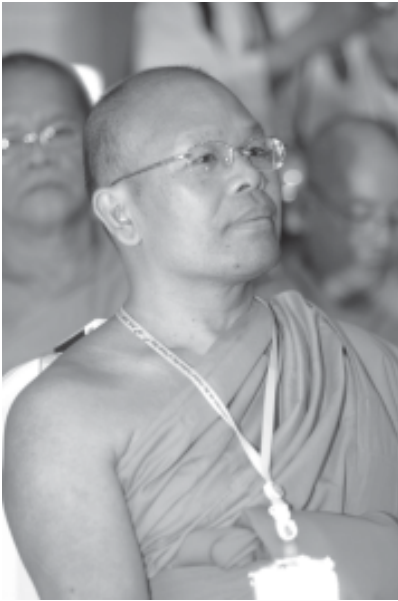
3. **One-Stop Service:** Since each center involves representatives from different government agencies such as the Royal Irrigation Department, the Land Department,

the Department of Livestock Development and the Department of Agricultural Extension, these centers are more than capable to help coordinate with the various agencies to provide the people with a center for “one-stop service”. This will help to reduce significantly the complications of the people seeking the assistance and services from these governmental agencies.

**4. Innovation of Administration and Management:** Since such projects consist of many interrelated elements such as water, land, plants, animals, fish as well as marketing, the implementation of such projects must be holistic or done in an integrated manner. These centers have applied this theory into their management. It mobilizes the officials from the various public sector agencies, private and non-governmental sectors to come and work together. Meanwhile the Chaipattana Foundation and the Office of the Royal Development Projects Board acts as the coordinating agency. This is the innovation of the country’s administration and management and it straddles horizontally between the various agencies. This truly targets at the effectiveness of implementing work that is not supported by the country’s traditional bureaucratic system.

In conclusion, Sufficiency Economy is not about complicity or resource deluge. It is about the creating of a system that really helps people and any system that helps people must be spearheaded by research and development. Moreover, it has to maintain synergy between the various centers of economies, i.e. the household, business and governmental agencies. What is truly amazing is the application of the Buddha’s Middle Path by His Majesty throughout the entire process of leading his people from poverty to sufficiency.

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## Dissemination of Buddhism: Opportunities and Challenges

*Ven. Dr. Phramaha Laow Panyasiri*

Before beginning to consider the question of dissemination of Buddhism in the twenty-first century, let us remind ourselves why we should want to disseminate it. The Buddha said:

*“Go forth for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the good and the happiness of gods and men. Let no two of you go in the same direction. Teach the Dhamma which is beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle and beautiful at the end. Proclaim both the letter and the spirit of the holy life completely fulfilled and perfectly pure.”*

It is an important part of Buddhism that it does not try to conquer hearts and minds, to convert others in order to prove that it is better than other teachings. It looks first at the person who is being introduced to the teaching. It is up to that person to listen, and to decide whether this teaching has anything to give them. The lessons of the Dhamma are offered to them. They can take them or leave them just as they please.

In a world with much violence and trickery, this may seem like a weakness, but just as in the Buddha’s time it in fact gives great strength. Immediate results, in terms of numbers of converts, may be greater for those who use violence and trickery, but in the longer term their achievements will be short-lived and their teachings will not be found to be helpful.



The Buddha had advice on how the Dhamma should be disseminated:

*“I shall not die until the monks, the nuns, the laymen and the laywomen have become deeply learned, wise and well-trained, remembering the teachings, proficient in the lesser and greater doctrines, and virtuous; until, having learned the teachings themselves, they are able to tell them to others, teach them, make them known, establish them, open them up, explain them and make them clear; until they are able to refute false doctrines taught by others and are able to spread the convincing and liberating truth abroad. I shall not die until the holy life has become successful, prosperous, undespised and popular; until it has become well proclaimed among both gods and men.*

Let us bear these principles in mind as we go on to consider the historical propagation of Buddhism, the current global situation, and what we should do in order to continue propagating Buddhism, globally.

Buddhism is a teaching based not on faith and belief, but on experience and understanding. This gives it the self-confidence to meet and talk to other teachings and religions, which are by no means necessarily ‘false’ themselves, to listen, to debate, to teach and to learn. This is a great strength in today’s world, where geographical distance is much less important than it used to be, and very different cultural traditions come face to face, perhaps for the first time.

We can see that, in many ways, good things can arise unexpectedly from bad situations. An unknown German poet wrote: ‘power ... which wills forever evil, yet does forever good’. This was how the European empires spread, particularly in the last two hundred years – bringing Buddhism from Asia to Europe and then later to the United States, where it has found a warm welcome. In the process, European scholarship has contributed to strengthening the Asian understanding of the teaching of the Buddha. Scholars in England, France and Germany, particularly, collected, analyzed and translated manuscripts and other materials which have helped to purify our understanding of the teaching. The Chinese invasion of Tibet, in itself an undoubted evil, had the good effect for the rest of the world of spreading the teaching of Tibetan lamas all over the globe. The spread of Buddhism in recent times has been closely dependent on the increased ease of traveling.

After the Buddha passed away, councils were held from time to time to systematize and agree on what his teachings really were. This was necessary before they could be spread effectively and in a pure form. It is perhaps time now, with the spread of the Internet, for the three main schools of Buddhism to come together to consider what they can contribute to each other. These revolutions in communication invariably have a powerful effect on discussion and the growth of scholarship.

The Internet is a revolution almost as dramatic as the invention of a new technique of printing in Europe nearly six hundred years ago. A result of that was that scholars had to be sure that what they were disseminating was the most accurate possible version of the Christian bible. There was a great growth of scholarship and much discussion which challenged existing ideas.

The Internet has also produced many challenges to traditional authorities, and it is important that those entrusted with protecting and disseminating the teaching of the Dhamma should watch closely what is being said, and be ready to question those whose reasons for spreading their own version of the Dhamma may not be completely pure and altruistic. There are some who see Buddhism as an easy way to make money, or to gain power over others. We need to be aware of what is going on, and ready to dispute untrue teachings by those who have not learned the teachings themselves until 'they are able to tell them to others, teach them, make them known, establish them, open them up, explain them and make them clear'. We need to be 'able to refute false doctrines taught by others and ... able to spread the convincing and liberating truth abroad'.

It is interesting to note the presence on the Internet of the different religions: Islam has 98.7 million references [Google]; Christianity has 42.2 million [Google]; Buddhism has 17.3 million [Google]; and Hinduism has 7.5 million [Google] – these are the updated numbers from searching the internet on 3 May 2007. Of course, these are not all websites promoting the particular teaching, but just places where they are mentioned, whether in a positive or in a negative way.

The Buddhist community should also keep itself informed of negative ideas about Buddhism, which arises from ignorance or, occasionally, ill-will, and be ready to argue against these in appropriate ways. The Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya has said that it is important to take part fully in inter-faith forums and to have a presence in national mass media and to seek representation at government level, which are a valuable way of doing this.

The Internet is a particularly appropriate way of disseminating Buddhism, because it cannot force people to believe what is said, and it is not expensive: you do not have to be rich in petro-dollars or US dollars in order to offer the teaching of the Dhamma to those who want to seek it out. At the same time, having an effective presence on the Internet requires an understanding of various technical matters, like how search-engines work, and the principles of web design. Many Buddhists are already highly knowledgeable about these matters, and will no doubt be willing to share their knowledge freely.

There is no need to re-invent the wheel. We need to look closely at the huge amount of excellent work which is already being done to disseminate Buddhism over the Internet, to see how we can supplement and support this, and to consider what the contribution of our own Sanghas and committed laypeople can be to spreading awareness of the Dhamma throughout the world.

There is an excellent Australian website, [www.buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net), which gives easy access to the teachings of all the schools, as well as offering free materials for personal study at various levels. I recommend that you visit this website, which is also happy to provide links to other serious Buddhist websites. There is another valuable site called [www.dharmanet.org](http://www.dharmanet.org) which covers all traditions. A very extensive American Theravada website is John Bullitt's excellent [www.accesstoinight.org](http://www.accesstoinight.org), which brings together a library of more than nine hundred suttas in English-language translations, and several hundred articles and books. [www.palikanon.com](http://www.palikanon.com) offers German language translations.

We need also, of course, to be active within our own countries in spreading the teaching in our own local languages, not only to the international public through the medium of the English language. I hope the Thai Sangha will consider how this work can be organized, perhaps by setting up a specialist section for Dhammaduta work within Thailand. I hope this can be combined with reaching out to the millions of tourists who come to Thailand each year, many hundreds of thousands of whom are interested in finding out more about Buddhism. Western tourist companies often provide a one-hour talk on all aspects of Thai culture, including Buddhism. We should be able to offer something much more meaningful than this. We could develop Buddhamonthon into a center for outsiders with a serious interest in Buddhism, but perhaps also it could offer something much simpler, perhaps just a one- or two-day introduction to Buddhism and meditation for tourists.

Let us open our door in a way that suits the outsider, to let Christians and Muslims see what aspects of Buddhism can benefit them, without causing any damage to their belief in their own religion. There will be some who will be very hostile and maybe angry at this suggestion, but we cannot allow people with closed minds always to decide what is allowed to be done.

From the other point of view, the Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya has said that we, as Buddhists, should also study and try to understand the basic teachings of other religions. I have changed my mind about this. In the past I told myself that if we have a good thing in our life (Buddhism), why should we bother about what other religions teach? I was sure Buddhism is the best religion in the world, so why should I bother to study or find out about the other religions? This is how I thought when I was young and narrow-minded, but after some years passed by, I found it is very important for monks to learn and know about the other world religions, and not only Buddhism. It would be very helpful if monks could study and understand the other religions better. It will give us a new understanding and appreciation of Buddhism, as well as giving us a more positive attitude towards other religions.

I hope that the future will see more, not less, contact between Buddhists and those who follow other religions. I hope the Rector's suggestion will bear fruit and that we will develop an element of comparative religious study in our courses for monks.

In conclusion, then, I believe it is important that the three schools of Buddhism, Mahayana, Theravada and Vajirayana, should strengthen their links and not fall into the trap of trying to compete with each other in order to capture a greater share of the 'Buddhism market'. Let us find ways of staying closely in touch, and build on the good work which has already been done to make full use of the new opportunities for communication. Perhaps the World Buddhist University is the right place to do this work. Together we shall be a stronger force for good in the world.

So let us now, 2,500 years after receiving the Buddha's teaching, go forth again to make sure that the Dhamma is 'well proclaimed among both gods and men'.

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## Buddhist Meditation Practices in the West

*Dr. Sarah Shaw*

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In 1962 *The Middle Way* listed five Buddhist provincial groups.<sup>1</sup> The Buddhist Directory of 2004–6, published by the Buddhist Society, now lists 432 in the UK, many, if not most involved in the teaching and practice of meditation: Buddhist groups flower in the most unexpected places.<sup>2</sup> In this paper I will focus on Theravada Buddhism in Britain, and lay meditation in particular, tracing its historical evolution. I will also indicate those aspects of Buddhist meditative practice which are proving particularly attractive.

I should say at the outset how revolutionary the idea of meditation has been to me and to many of my contemporaries. I was part of the hippy generation, looking for the meaning of life in Eastern philosophy. I was happily surprised by my introduction to the practice of breathing mindfulness in a Thai samatha form in the 1970s, because it was not only mysterious but practical too. I had never considered that watching the breath could be instrumental in changing a mental state or that the condition of my mind could be reflected in the simple process of breathing in and out of the body. The ancient lineage of teaching, which explored this relationship to an understanding of the world, provided an intellectual and emotional background utterly unlike any psychological system my generation had encountered. I sometimes meet Asians in Britain who are mystified by the appeal of Buddhist meditation in the West. For a long time the British have been fascinated with the East; meditation has shown us something down to earth we can do with this in the ehipassiko path and the chance to ‘do it yourself’.

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<sup>1</sup>See L.S.Cousins, ‘Theravada Buddhism in England’, **Buddhism into the year 2000**, Bangkok: International Conference Proceedings, Dhammakaya Foundation (1994) (141–150), 147.

<sup>2</sup>Martin Murray and R.B.Parsons ed., **Buddhist Directory: Buddhist Centers and Groups and Related Organizations in the United Kingdom and Ireland**, ninth edition (London: Buddhist Society Publications 2003).

A quick questionnaire amongst some fellow practitioners last week, of different ethnic groups and ages, elicited plenty of factors influencing our attraction: a sense of mystery, an inspiring philosophical tradition, applicability to modern circumstances, scientific verifiability, practicality, an antidote to English gloom, and the fact that Buddhists make plenty of jokes all came into the equation!<sup>3</sup> Most importantly, they all felt the wish for happiness – but, paradoxically, mentioned adventure too: the Buddhist system of meditation means that any event or day in one’s life, however apparently insignificant, can be filled with meaning. Mindfulness is always appropriate: a chance to discuss and practice its development imbues any moment with possibility. These are varied reasons, but a sense of exploration and a close link between practical observation and philosophy explain the great modern appeal that Buddhist meditation has had on the British, particularly, but not exclusively, amongst the more highly educated: perhaps they feel the need for it more. Before we investigate modern meditation practice, we should look a little into the history of Buddhist influence in Britain, which has affected its evolution.

### History of Buddhist practice in Britain

The roots of British interest in Southeast Asian thought date from what we must acknowledge as the highly adventurous intellectual and geographical explorations of the nineteenth century. Britain’s historical links with countries such as Myanmar and Sri Lanka have not always been happy or worthy of pride. Despite the negative connotations of Victorian-orientalism it becomes clear from reading the scholarly material that consideration of Buddhism, and, because of historical links, Theravada Buddhism in particular, was inspired at that time as much by a sense of real intellectual search as by the desire to change what was found.

Buddhism’s impact on Britain had begun in the early Victorian period, when the term was applied to the geographically wide-ranging religious and philosophical traditions associated with the Buddha image as the focus of personal practice.<sup>4</sup> Philological and philosophical research was making available some Buddhist thought in the West in translation. Although this work was often undertaken on the assumption that Buddhists should be commended mainly for the proximity of their tradition to Christianity, in practice many translators came to a profound appreciation of the philosophies of Theravada

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<sup>3</sup> Meditators at the Samatha Center, Llangunllo, Wales.

<sup>4</sup> See Cousins, *ibid.*, 141–3.

Buddhism, acknowledging the challenge they placed to modern Western thought.<sup>5</sup> Rhys Davids' translations of the Dighanikaya are, a hundred years later, unsurpassed. He was struck by the 'light in his eyes' of the bhikkhu who preferred to teach him Buddhism rather than Pali.<sup>6</sup> Rhys Davids' introductions exhibit a breadth of literary and philosophical humanism, combined with an inherent sensitivity to the language and music of the traditional text, that have rarely been approached since. In the introduction to *The Dialogues of the Buddha* he enjoins us to bring to mind the atmosphere of teaching at the time of the Buddha, to note other occurrences of terms in the canon and to avoid glib translation of technical terms.<sup>7</sup> One commentator observed recently that Oriental Studies was one of the first fields in Europe to overcome prejudice and 'open the Western mind to the whole of humanity.'<sup>8</sup> Certainly Rhys Davids' passion has withstood the test of time: the three volumes of his translation have remained the bestseller of the Pali Text Society for a century, constantly reread by British meditators.

The world of fiction and poetry also unlocked a sense of imaginative and philosophical exploration of a kind which the British writer who had traveled to the East might not consider for his own practice. Late Victorianism is renowned for its appreciation of the simple art of storytelling and for its experimentation with narrative forms – as evinced, for instance, by the Pali Text Society's decision to translate the entire collection of Jatakas into English.<sup>9</sup> The publication of *The Light of Asia* (1879) by Sir Edwin Arnold established Buddhism in Britain and the West as a separate religious and philosophical tradition. It is the first sympathetic literary depiction in Britain of a figure practicing

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<sup>5</sup> The statements of the early transactions of the Pali Text Society, formed in 1881, are evidence for this. For their underlying Christianity see, for instance, Charles Allen, *The Buddha and the Sahibs; the Men who Discovered India's Lost Religion*, (London: John Murray Ltd., 2002) 242.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Allen, *ibid*, 240.

<sup>7</sup> T.W. Rhys Davids, *The Dialogues of the Buddha*, 3 vols., (Oxford: PTS Society, 1899/1995), 1: xxi–xxiii.

<sup>8</sup> Keith Windschuttle, citing from *The New Criterion* (January 1999) Vol.17, no.5.

<sup>9</sup> There are seven volumes of Jataka translations published under the editorship of E.W.Cowell by Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1895–1913. Also see: Ros Ballaster, ***Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England 1662–1785*** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Allen 2002 and Dr Alex Wynne, 'Why I am an Orientalist,' unpublished paper delivered at St. John's College, Oxford, 2005.

meditation, the Buddha himself. The poem suggests, courageously for the time, that Buddhist meditation could offer visions of the world not available through conventional Christian practice. Arnold describes part of the process of enlightenment in the following way:

Also, Buddha saw:  
 How new life reaps what the old life did sow:  
 How where its march breaks off its march begins;  
 Holding the gain and answering for the loss;  
 And how in each life good begets more good,  
 Evil fresh evil; Death but casting up  
 Debit or credit, whereupon th' account  
 In merits or demerits stamps itself  
 By sure arithmetic — where no tittle drops —  
 Certain and just, on some new-springing life  
 Wherein are packed and scored past thoughts and deeds,  
 Strivings and triumphs, memories and marks  
 Of lives foregone<sup>10</sup>

As even this short extract shows the poem is notable for some depth of feeling, richness of language and sympathy towards Buddhist ideas. It became a best seller, thus ensuring the dissemination of ideas such as karma and reincarnation to a wide reading public in Britain, a phenomenon reinforced by a series of popular articles and books on related subjects.<sup>11</sup> Other literary works indicate the extent of popular interest in Buddhism and its associated doctrines: Kipling's depiction of a Buddhist monk, in *Kim* (1901), the only successful literary rendition of a Buddhist monk in Western literature, has been continuously in print since its publication. A man of his time, Kipling could not subscribe to Buddhism, but he opens *Kim* with the invitation to 'be gentle' to those that 'pray' to 'Ananda's Lord, the Bodhisat, The Buddha of Kamakura'. Buddhist ideas affected narrative form: a novel by Arnold's son, Edwin Lester Arnold, *Phra the Phoenician*

<sup>10</sup> **The Light of Asia, or the Great Renunciation**, (London, 1884), VI (also at <http://www.theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/books/lightasi/asia-hp.htm>). Also: Allen, *ibid*, 242–4.

<sup>11</sup> See R.H Patterson, 'The Religions of India', Blackwoods (1857), LXXXII, 743–767, E.V. Neale 'Buddha and Buddhism', Macmillan's (1860), I, 434–448 and A.P. Sinnett, *Esoteric Buddhism* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1883).



(1890), depicts the successive lives of a single European hero. On the evidence of Edwin Arnold's preface it is possibly the first British novel explicitly influenced by Buddhism.<sup>12</sup> The sense of intellectual exploration that animates these pioneer works is unfortunately forgotten in the often politically focused criticism instigated by commentators such as Said – and prevents us from acknowledging the effect Asian thought had on Britain over a century ago.<sup>13</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century Buddhism had inspired in Britain poetic and narrative experimentation amongst mainstream authors of a kind which has not

Of lives foregone<sup>10</sup> been emulated in Britain since. The only comparable undertaking to Arnold's poem that I know of is Professor Grevel Lindop's account of the life of the Buddha in verse, *Touching the Earth*, now popular amongst practicing Western Buddhists around the world.<sup>14</sup>

For a long time this spirit of adventure did not extend to personal practice. In the social milieu of Victorian Britain, the idea of trying out meditation did not really arise. Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott took the five precepts in 1880 and were roundly condemned.<sup>15</sup> But Britain's link with Asian countries, and Theravada countries in particular, did soon bear fruit. The first British man to become a monk was Gordon Douglas, who died in 1900. The first British meditator for whom we have good evidence, is Allan Bennett (1872–1923), who ordained in Burma in 1902 as Ananda Metteyya, a step which led on his return to the formation of the Buddhist Society in 1907. In 1915 Bennett gives the first subjective description I have found of a British person conducting a Buddhist meditative exercise. He delineates the means by which the mind may be trained to the recollection of past lives. At the culmination of his account, described in minute experiential detail, he gives sound advice: that such recollections are not in themselves a goal but a by-product of investigation of the path itself.

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<sup>12</sup> Arnold's introduction to *Phra the Phoenician* appeared as 'An Informal Introduction', in *The Windsor Magazine* (1898), IX, 58–60 and was used as a preface to the 1913 edition of the novel. A number of late Victorian stories employed the motif of reincarnation, such as Kipling's 'The Finest Story in the World' *Many Inventions*, Pocket Macmillan Series (1893/London 1907), 95–135, a powerful study of the metaphoric implications of the idea of 'past lives' acting in the present.

<sup>13</sup> See Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, (1978/paper back London: Penguin, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Grevel Lindop, ***Touching the Earth: a Poem on the Life of the Buddha***, Books 1-4, Sanghaloka Forest Hermitage, Callista, Australia (2001).

<sup>15</sup> See Allen, *ibid*, 246

Finally I would wish to impress upon you that you must not confuse progress into the more active stages of consciousness with progress on the path that leads to peace. Samadhi, rightly directed to the transitoriness and so forth, may indeed bring us that higher wisdom which constitutes progress on the path; but the direction, as it were, of the path lies not in the plane of our own life at all – it is as though at right angles to it; a new direction altogether.<sup>16</sup>

The First World War effectively delayed further exploration, perhaps for a whole generation. Ven Metteyya disrobed due to ill health and interest waned. The effects of his work and the foundation of the Buddhist Society were profound, however, and the society was revived after the war. Although interest increased in the inter-war period there was still only a handful of Buddhists in Britain. The 1960s saw the real resurgence of interest. Cousins has identified a variety of groups likely to have become associated with Buddhism in this period. The largest group is those converted through reading; others are ex-colonials, scholars, esotericists, ritual magicians, kabbalists, universalists and the straightforwardly curious.<sup>17</sup> This social mix is of course natural to Britain, where some eccentricity is considered rather the norm, and hybrid variations still color many of local lay groups around the country. It is also, interestingly and importantly, oddly in line with the Buddha's own ability to appeal to a diverse range of people.

### Variety of Buddhist Groups

The situation has changed dramatically over the past forty years. Of the groups I mentioned at the beginning, there are small numbers associated with the traditions of Korea, Nepal, Agon Shu and Chinese Ch'An. There are 7 Nichiren groups of various kinds, 8 Pure Land, 2 Vietnamese. The major groupings are 63 Chinese True Buddha Groups, 62 Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, 88 Tibetan Buddhist groups, 84 Zen groups and 104 Theravada groups. We cannot take the number of societies as indicative of numbers of practicing Buddhists. Many small groups may be listed under one heading. It suggests however, something of the balance and weight of organized Buddhist interest in Britain. To modify this statement I ought to add that many of those who call themselves Buddhist – the 2001 census gives this as 0.3 of the population — do not subscribe to any organization, in my experience another characteristic of British Buddhist meditative interest.

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<sup>16</sup> 'Buddhist Self Culture', **The Buddhist Review** (1915),146.

<sup>17</sup> The mix of groups is identified in Cousins, *ibid*,143-4.

Within these parameters, the strongest group is the Theravada tradition. This is a trend which may be traced in part through Britain's historical links, though in the last forty years a number of additional, sometimes associated features have come into play. The first is the establishment of temples by ethnic groups from Thailand, Burma and Sri Lanka, including students, visiting workers and immigrants. These viharas often act as cultural and social centers as well, though they usually attract some British lay practitioners. By and large the British tend to be interested in meditation and philosophy, the ethnic groups more so in devotional practices, but there are exceptions in both groups: particularly when they see the effects of each on the others. The second is the great impact of the followers of Ajahn Chah, whose monastic orders have founded temples throughout Britain for monks and nuns. This Theravada movement has a large lay following too. Ven Sumedho, who established the first monastery along with Ven Viradhamma at Chithurst in 1979, was an ex-GI who turned to Buddhist meditation after reluctant participation in the Vietnamese War. The emphasis of practice is vipassana, supplemented by some traditional samatha practices such as the brahmaviharas and the recollection of the Triple Gem. The group is particularly notable for the joie de vivre of their vinaya practice and the way they transform it into a kind of meditation practice: their newsletter for instance includes many accounts of dutanga walks through the British countryside. Two nuns have just completed one of these; another nun, Sister Candasiri, has now been a siladhara for twenty-five years. These groups are predominantly Western.

Another characteristic of British Theravada practice is the popularity of lay meditative organizations, working in local groups. The Samatha Association, my own tradition, is probably the largest of these. Its teaching was initiated by Nai Boonman Poonyathiro, who introduced Samatha meditation through breathing mindfulness in 1963. Paul Dennison, our present chairman was a monk in Thailand for several years. L.S. Cousins, our ex-chairman, is a distinguished academic in Buddhist Studies. We have groups of meditators around the country, a busy center in Manchester and a rural center in 88 acres of Welsh hillside. We have been fortunate to receive, uniquely for a lay organization, relics of the Buddha from the Thai people and are deeply grateful for this; a large Buddha-rupa, Phra Buddha Dhammacakra, sponsored by the King of Thailand, together with a further set of relics from the Thai Sangharaja, was specially commissioned for our center in Wales. Tan Suvit (Phra Sriyansobhon), from Rama IX temple has donated a Buddha-rupa to three of our centers. The meditation is breathing mindfulness but its practice is diverse and, again like British plant life, subject to local variations. It often combines traditional forms with experimentation. Our group is unusual in placing considerable emphasis on meditation

reports and the idea of the kalyanamitta at the heart of the practice. Within this there is some variety: some meditators prefer the abhidhamma and suttas, some enjoy cultivating sati through physical work, such as building our shrine hall, some do more chanting. The group here in Bangkok, chants the Mahasamaya Sutta with Ven Maha Laow - is one such offshoot. Some groups report to one another on their meditation within a small local lay sangha. Recent courses in Britain have included work on kasinas with Ven Sudhiro, on the brahamaviharas and last year, a course for more experienced meditators on formless meditation, given by Nai Boonman. This is possibly the first time the arupa jhanas have been taught in the British Isles.

As I hope to have indicated, Theravada lay practice in Britain is thriving, though in a small and unobtrusive way. The British take a long time to accept unfamiliar institutions and ideas, but once these are longstanding and have proved themselves through friendly links to the community they are favorably and even protectively well disposed towards them. Buddha images are very popular amongst British non-Buddhists. I know for Asians this is strange, but it does indicate a real subliminal appreciation of Buddhism. This has been reinforced by, for instance, widely publicized scientific research showing that Buddhist meditation increases happiness amongst practitioners.<sup>18</sup>

### Lay practice historically

Lay practice of an experimental kind seems to me to be the hallmark of British meditation practice. Ven Khammai Dhammasami once told me that it was the duty of the lay people to be happy as it supports the sangha better when they are. But lay meditators are sometimes criticized on the grounds that such a mode of practice is a modern phenomenon and that the picture presented, say in the Pali canon, gives an idealized version of events that cannot be applied historically to the practice of Buddhism. On the principle of the more difficult reading, whereby anomalies are regarded as more likely to be authentic, such instances as we find in the canon should then be taken very seriously.<sup>19</sup> The Buddha lists many lay men and women as possessing particular

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<sup>18</sup> Research conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which appeared in *New Scientist* in an article by Professor Flanagan in May 2003. It was recorded in the front pages of most national newspapers in America and Britain, on 22–24th May, 2003.

<sup>19</sup> A notable passage is M I 340. For the attainments of the householder Citta see S IV 301.



excellences, often in the field of meditation.<sup>20</sup> In the suttas he suggests a number of meditation practices to lay people, even those who claim to be very busy!<sup>21</sup> In modern Thailand there are of course many lay meditation teachers, some of whom are women, such as Ajahn Nisa, whom I met last year in Bangkok. In Britain this is the case too. On several occasions lay men and women are described as attaining jhanas in the canon: the pattern in the canon is for the monastic ideal to be that of the arahat, that of the laity as the never returner, such as Citta or Visakha. The historical perspective is less easy to assess but two factors should be considered. The first is the ancient Indian pattern of four periods of life, in which the last is given to meditation. This expectation is still prevalent in Southeast Asian countries and presumably exerted some influence historically. The other is the tradition of grown men becoming monks for extended periods in Thailand and Burma. In modern Thailand many ex-monks take an important part in rituals and have special honorific titles. It seems likely that there were historically in Theravada countries lay practitioners – royalty included – and perhaps even lay teachers who had spent periods in the sangha, who continued their practice of meditation in the lay life.

It is also sometimes said that modern meditative practice, with its lay emphasis, is an invented tradition. I suspect that the Buddha would have responded to this as he did to other intended insults and been delighted at the accusation.<sup>22</sup> He approved similes that were apubbasutta? and encouraged his own practitioners to find them. Many of the therigAthA and theragAthA represent the poetic creativity of men and women who have become newly enlightened, and discovered their own formulations of the process.

Other lay groups in Britain are predominantly vipassana, and include those that follow the methods of Ven Kapilavaddho, Mahasi Sayadaw and U Ba Khin. In this regard I would like to mention in particular the Buddhist Society of Manchester, which was formed in 1951 by a group of meditators influenced by Ven. Kapilavaddho. The president, Russell Williams, one of the early members, was a welder before he retired. This group has met twice weekly for meditation, teaching and debating for over half a century. Group discussion and an experimental, investigative atmosphere characterize their attitude to meditation. Many of these lay groups have also now followed traditional practice and found rural settings and parkland for meditation centers. This means we can have huts

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<sup>20</sup> See A I 23–6.

<sup>21</sup> See A V 332, A I 206–211.

<sup>22</sup> See J I 389 and M I 68.

around the grounds. At my own center, we have woodland projects, meadowlands, cascades and a bird sanctuary. All of these features give such groups as ours chances to develop mindfulness through activities like hedging, land maintenance and carpentry as well as interactions with the local community and work with local councils on *the environment and maintaining the land*.

Global factors have influenced this great increase in Buddhist groups. Travel and the practice of the ‘gap year’ has meant that many young people visit Buddhist countries, perhaps hear some chanting or meet someone who impresses them and, on their return to Britain, become interested in the practice of meditation. The internet and the possibility of reading Buddhist texts or finding local groups through the web has changed society dramatically. Many British people still love reading and discover Buddhism in this way: our historic love of the East is now sometimes translated into personal practice. Two institutions should be mentioned which have, by their continued presence, helped to sustain Buddhist practitioners over the last century. The Buddhist Society remains a center for Buddhist groups, holding regular talks and meditation classes in a number of traditions, as well as selling books, tapes and CDs. Another legacy of nineteenth-century interest in Southeast Asia is the Pali Text Society, whose past presidents have included Rhys Davids, I.B.Horner, Professor Roy Norman, Professor Richard Gombrich and L.S. Cousins. The King of Thailand subsidized its first publications; the society has since then made available the whole [Ed.: most, not all] of the Pali Canon in translation to the international community.

British Theravada meditation practice is still young, diverse and with plenty of local variation and experimentation. We like asking questions. With our weather we need to cultivate a lot of cheerful happiness too, as we can get a bit short on internal sunshine! Britain is a genuinely multi-cultural society and old East-West divides do not really apply: many Thais and Sri Lankans are now living in Britain, and vice versa. All sorts of ethnic and cultural mixes are occurring. It has been demonstrated that in a natural environment the richness of the oxygen depends on the greatest variety of plants and tree life: health lies in diversity.<sup>23</sup> Just as over systematic farming techniques can crush wild and new flowers, who need time and space to settle in their own environment, we need a few generations to allow Buddhist meditation practices in Britain to settle down in their own particular way.

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<sup>23</sup> The thesis is propounded by the Harvard entomologist Edward O. Wilson, in *The Diversity of Life*, (New York: W.W.Norton and Co., 1999).

## A View from America: Buddhist Paradigms for the New Millennium

*Phra Videsdhammakavi  
Wat Buddhanusorn*



The birth of Dolly [the sheep], in 2003, the first successfully cloned mammal from a single somatic cell and the destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 - are just two recent events that challenge Buddhists to re-examine their doctrines, sharpen their interpretative insights, and expand their moral imaginations. During the next few minutes, I want to briefly reflect on the Chinese Huayen (Avatamsaka) articulation of PratityasamutpAda (dependent co-arising; independence) as a paradigm for thinking about the advances of biomedicine and how different faith traditions should relate to each other. This insight holds creative possibilities for scientific and “ethical” thinking. Specifically, I focus on 1) shifting centers and 2) ambiguity illuminated by dharmakAya pratityasamutpAda (fajieyuanqi; Jpn. hokkai engi setsu).

According to the AvatamsakasUtra Siddhartha Gautama realized in deep meditation pratityasamutpAda, the truth that all things and all beings arise concomitantly and are thus mutually related and dependent, and became the Buddha, the Enlightened One. Since its initial articulation, Buddhist thinkers explored in great detail the every changing temporal, spatial, and relationships of dharmas (things, beings, and events). Fazang (643-712), for one, investigated the identity and interfusion of concomitant dharmas that constitute the dharmakAya (the realm of dharmas in their totality). He reasoned that in a mutually supportive and dependent world, when a single dharma is arbitrarily singled out for special consideration it becomes the principal dharma and the remaining dharmas assume secondary roles. Yet at the next instant when another dharma assumes the central role, the once principal dharma is relegated to a supporting role. This is true for every other dharma. These shifts can be seen in our conversation with friends. When one friend is speaking, our attention is focused on that person; but the moment a second friend enters the conversation with a rejoinder or objection, our attention is redirected.

A conversation among friends almost never remains focused on a single person, nor focused on a single topic.

### **Shifting Centers (Perspectives)**

Like a conversation among friends, the Buddhist vision of a concomitant and interdependent world consists of multiple and shifting centers, and by ambiguity, which characterizes our collective impressions of the world and events. Multiple centers affirm the validity of varying viewpoints and allows for an openness to other perspectives and new insights. The most obvious value of varying viewpoints is evident in the investigation of physical phenomenon. Just to cite one example, the chemist and the physicist looking at a helium atom from their respective disciplines are interested in and see different aspects of the same phenomena. To the chemist the helium is a molecule because it behaves as a gas; to the physicist, on the other hand, it is not a molecule, because it does not display a molecular spectrum (Kuhn, 50-51). The chemist's view does not discount the physicist's understanding; both contribute to our knowledge of this simple atom. The atomic scientist, on the other hand, is interested in harnessing the energy that is produced when hydrogen atoms fuse to produce helium. A specific discipline, in short, illuminates a limited aspect of physical reality. In the search for a more comprehensive understanding, scientists search for alternative perspectives to examine the world. It is unlikely that we will exhaust our understanding of even a single phenomenon or event; and our knowledge will always remain incomplete and ambiguous.

While I believe there is universal assent to investigating the physical world from multiple disciplines, spiritual traditions have exhibited great reluctance to consider ideas that deviate from their respective "truths." Such traditions as Christianity, Islam or other ideologies that posit a single center or perspective in the form of an Origin, a Truth, an Essence, an Ideal Form, an Immovable Mover, a God or a Creator that guarantees all meaning and values by which all actions and beliefs should be judged are reluctant to acknowledge the validity of other insights. Single centered traditions ignore, repress, and marginalize ideas that are inconsistent with their respective worldviews. In cultures where Christ is the central icon, Christianity is central, and Buddhists, Jews, Muslims, shamanic devotees—anyone different—are on the margins. Patriarchal societies, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, males are central and females the marginalized other. Buddhist ideology makes no absolute claims. In the Kalamas-sutta – the Kalama people are cautioned by the Buddha to judge for themselves the validity of the Buddhadharma. There after all other spiritual paths that may be more suit for his temperament and needs.



The vision of an interdependent and multi-centered world allows for openness to alternative avenues of thinking and other visions of reality.

### Ambiguity

Multiple and shifting centers eschews a single absolute center and tends to epistemological ambiguity. In addition to differing from person to person, our respective perceptions are conditioned moment by moment by our moods and temperament, and our physical environment. Werner Heisenberg (1901-1976) through his uncertainty principle concluded that our knowledge of the world is fluid. We are unable to know simultaneously and with precision the velocity and position of a sub atomic entity. Moreover according to the uncertainty principle the observer changes the very nature of the “reality” that is being observed and quantified. Heisenberg’s “discovery” challenges the scientific method, a paradigm, which presumes an unchanging observer and unchanging phenomenal reality. In a world of constant flux, not only does an observer continually change; in world of multiple and shifting centers different observers will observe the same phenomena differently. Our perceptions determine the way objects and events exist and relate to each other. Taking their cue from such documents as the AvatamsakasUtra and PrajGAsAmadhi sUtra, Maitreya (ca. 270-350), Asanga (ca. 310-390) and Vasubandu (ca. 350-400) and other YogAcArins have long argued that the reality we perceive and know are simply transformations of different phases of the cognitive process.

### Moral Imagination

Anomalies, that is ideas and events that we cannot explain with our current conceptual paradigms, are often the catalyst for reevaluating and thus revolutionizing our thinking. Thomas S. Kuhn’s influential *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* explains that a change in the perception and evaluation of familiar data lead to new ways of thinking about physical phenomena. Similarly, doctrinal developments that have expanded the Buddha’s original insight of praTityasamutpAda emerged from the need to respond to critique from other faith traditions and from unprecedented challenges. Dolly’s birth in 1996 immediately give rise to speculation that, in due time, a human child could be created; and human clones would be created for spare body organs; and that an individual may be able to extend his or her existence beyond a single lifetime. Such questions urge Buddhists to reassess the Buddhadharma, whose continued viability will depend on what new historical lessons can be recovered and/or what new doctrinal insights can be extrapolated that will respond to current and future challenges to its notions of humanity, the natural world, and other critical issues.

Since change is the nature of reality, the questions are: how to accommodate change and expand our moral imaginations? Change pushes the boundaries of what we once considered to be the norm. We no longer think, for example, it strange or unusual for a child to be conceived through artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization. We no longer think a child conceived in a Petri-dish to be less than human, even though in vitro fertilization bypasses the usual method of human reproduction. Medical technology has expanded our moral horizons. The birth of Dolly and the possibility of cloning of human beings, like the use of artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization, offer the opportunity for expanding our notions of humanity and our moral reasoning.

Perhaps more than any recent single event, 9/11 highlights the danger of ideological centers. Since the seventh-century Islam and Christianity have competed with each other across the Mediterranean and elsewhere. While both Islam and Christianity share a common origin and parallel aspirations, both traditions insist that each alone is the custodian of God's final revelation and accuse each other of being infidels (Lewis 2002, 410-420). Monotheistic apologists may be unwilling to give up the centrality of their truth and acknowledge the validity of other faith traditions, but the plurality of spiritual traditions is an ever-present reality in modern societies. Spiritual traditions can claim to be absolute and perfect within the confines of their own systems, but they cannot ignore other systems. One task, it seems, is to explain how absolute ideologies relate to each other and recognize the equal validity of other traditions. Another task is to examine cultural diffusion occurring at the peripheries of communities for clues as to how closed systems can be persuaded to let in some confusion.

The Buddhist vision of an interdependent world wherein we are irrevocably intertwined with the destinies of the world and all beings provides a conceptual paradigm for understanding how competing ideologies relate to each other. In an interdependent world no one person or community or viewpoint commands absolute truth or value. An interdependent world honors competing points of view, respects shifting centers, and acknowledges all elements of suffering. By affirming the faith our neighbors, we give credence to the Buddhism's insight of an interdependent world. By looking through and turning the kaleidoscope of diverse perspectives, we can seek to meet the mind of the most adamant exclusivist, the open-minded believer, as well as the person independent of any specific tradition.

### Concluding Remarks

Thank you for your patience. My remarks have been highly abstract; I have not touched on the practical implications of shifting centers and ambiguity. Cloning, genetic engineering, and any number of new discoveries and technological advances and their attendant problems have thrust us into intellectual and moral borderlands, where we struggle to accommodate unprecedented events and new discoveries. In this ambiguous borderland we must be open to alternative ways of thinking. Those ideas that can successfully respond to the new challenges will flourish; those that cannot will be bypassed and forgotten. The urgent task for Buddhists in these early years of this new millennium is to seek new insights and formulate new applications of *prāTīyasamutpAda* and other insights. While this intent is obvious and admirable, it is far from easy. Our thinking is often trapped in old paradigms.

When faced with a totally new situation, we tend always to attach ourselves to the objects, to the flavor of the most recent past. We look at the present through a rear-view mirror. We march backwards into the future (McLuhan, 74-75).

Shifting moral and intellectual perspectives introduce us to differing and often conflicting visions of reality, and a rich and diverse repertoire for alternative possibilities. In an interdependent world we must continually find creative ways to accommodate differing worldviews. The Buddhist vision of reality crystallized in the notion of *prāTīyasamutpAda* provides conceptual pathways along which our thinking can proceed.

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## Some Experiences of the Protection of the Buddhist Culture in Vietnam



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Since Tran Van Giap published his serious study on Vietnamese Buddhism from the origin to 13th century in 1932, relying mainly on Thien Uyen Tap Anh - other works on the history of Vietnamese Buddhism usually complained about the scarcity of materials relating to Vietnam. This is quite understandable, if we only look into those books or catalogues on Buddhism from the ancient days of Vietnam like those of Le Quy Don and Phan Huy Chu as well as those 20th century bibliographic studies on Vietnam. So, the task of any researcher on Vietnamese Buddhism should be to find out if there exist any new materials written by Vietnamese Buddhist authors which are still extant. This is what I have done when I embarked upon my study of Vietnamese Buddhism. In the September of 1974, just coming back from the United States, I started out on a field trip to Central Vietnam from Quang Tri to Binh Thuan and focused on two areas which were likely to have these kinds of materials, i.e. Hue and Binh Dinh-Phu Yen.

Through that trip, the results were quite encouraging. At least, nearly forty authors have been discovered with approximately hundreds of manuscripts and books found the first time known to us. The way of how we go about finding out those works and manuscripts is quite interesting and necessary. First of all, we went to those temples which are known to be the places where famous Zen-masters had been living. Some of them did give us precious manuscripts and works, but some did not. Instead, in some temples located in the faraway rural areas, we unexpectedly found out some old printed copies and manuscripts. Secondly, we came to those families famous for their role played in the history of Vietnam. The same case occurred. Some did give us some new materials and others did not.

After collecting those manuscripts and works, we brought them back to Van Hanh University and carried out researches on the authorship as well as the authenticity of the materials in order to multiply them through publication. Among those authors in the above list, up to present day, we have published seven of them, i.e., Kim Son, Tran Thai Tong, Tran Nhan Tong, Minh Chau Huong Hai, Chan Nguyen Tue Dang, Toan Nhat Quang Dai, Phap Lien and Chan Dao Chinh Thong. Others will be published soon. So, here are some experiences of our works in protecting the Buddhist cultural heritage of Vietnam in relation to manuscripts and printed works, using Chinese and demotic characters.

From these experiences, we are thinking about broadening the area of investigation. We know that many Buddhist materials were destroyed during Pol Pot regime. When the Royal Government of Cambodia was established they went to Vietnam, held discussions with the Vietnamese government and asked the Vietnamese Government to help find Cambodian Buddhist materials existing in Khmer-Buddhist temples. They did find a number of these materials existing in those temples, which they are planning to publish in the near future. This is a case of protecting the Buddhist cultural heritage in Cambodia on a regional scale.

Beside Vietnam and Cambodia, Buddhism is still a living part of the cultural life in many other Southeast Asia countries such as Laos, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. Therefore, in any Buddhist strategy for world peace and sustainable development, we think culture plays an important role. That is why the need of protecting the Buddhist cultural heritage in each country is quite a prominent issue. We believe that like in the case of Vietnam and Cambodia, these countries in Southeast Asia may still possess materials related to Buddhism which are still scattered around and which are in need to be surveyed and collected so that the study of Buddhism and other cultural and historical subjects in these countries could be carried out with fruitful results.

In order to undertake this kind of work, we propose that the UNESCO could lend a helpful hand by establishing, organizing and financing a regional committee of investigation on Buddhist legacy in Southeast Asia. We trust that such a committee would make a great contribution to the protection of Buddhist cultural heritage by finding out and cataloguing Buddhist materials, which still exist in the form of manuscripts and old printed books.

This kind of work could not only make available materials to national and international researchers on the subject of Buddhism and other related areas such as history, culture, linguistics etc... of the country in concern, but also make those materials last longer and have bigger public interest which otherwise would have a shorter life and limited circulation. So, we earnestly hope that UNESCO and the governments of Southeast Asian countries through their higher learning institutions would be in close cooperation with each other in order that such a project could come to life soon.

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## The Continuous Presence of Lord Buddha Within Us

*The Most Ven. Dr. Thích Trí Quang  
Vice-President of the Central Governing Council of the  
Vietnam Buddhist Church*

This year's Vesak marks an important event for global Buddhist followers. Indeed, this is the first time the United Nations together with the government of Thailand and several other nations solemnly and splendidly commemorate Lord Buddha's Birth in the capital city of Bangkok. This event illuminates the important role of Buddhism in today's world as well as the way of harmonious coexistence, growth, and peace that Lord Buddha has taught us. The teachings continue to hold values and practicality for the global community.

The purpose of this Buddhist gathering is to offer a valuable opportunity for Buddhist leaders from 14 countries whose organizations are participating in the worldwide dissemination of Buddhism to: meet together, exchange ideas, and reflect on the exalted life of our great and compassionate founder, Sakyamuni Buddha. Additionally significant: this important gathering of the world of Buddhism offers a precious opportunity for Buddhist practitioners from different traditions and lifestyles to present, share, and learn from each other their understanding of the Dharma - transmitted from and entrusted to us by our beloved Master. We also share with each other the spiritual transformation in our Dharma practice as well as valuable experience that each of us cultivate on our path of self-improvement and altruism.

In my particular situation, having been studying and practicing the Dharma according to the spirit of the Lotus Sutra for the past 50 years, I have internalized the essences of the Lotus Sutra in my mind. These essences have guided my actions and given me positive outcomes. Being deeply inspired and touched by the spirit of the Lotus Sutra, I wholeheartedly commemorate Lord Buddha's Birth by reflecting on Chapter 11 of the Lotus Sutra, titled "Beholding the Precious Stupa". This chapter contains some



significant meanings revealed to us by Lord Buddha. It teaches that Lord Buddha is still continuously present within us, still lightens our way, transforms our conduct, and transcends our wisdom in this very world.

The Stupa of the Buddha Abundant Treasures abiding in the sky suggests that those practitioners who are encountering with Buddha Dharma need to purify and uplift their minds to utmost cleanliness and emptiness in order to see Buddha. In other words, Lord Buddha only appears when our minds are completely still, free from all worldly preoccupations and disturbance as well as when our mind is pure and tranquil. We hope that all the minds of all participants present here in this Vesak celebration are also pure and tranquil in order for us to receive the presence of Lord Buddha in our hearts.

In the past, we often assumed that Sakyamuni Buddha was the only Buddha existing in India more than 25 centuries ago. With the phenomenon of the Precious Stupa's appearance, Lord Buddha revealed that He has many mutation-bodies in the ten directions. This implies that in order to achieve Buddhahood and tame sentient beings according to their types in different realms, Sakyamuni Buddha has been present with different manifestations, which Sutras often depicts as a hundred thousands Buddha bodies preaching in the ten directions. Only Pratyeka or Paccekabuddha has one body of manifestation.

Lord Buddha understands sentient beings' diversified karma, personalities, life situations, capabilities...and teaches both good and evil people, who have karmic connection with Him, in a skillful and beautiful manner. This symbolizes clearly the mutation - body of the Buddha. The mutation-body of the Buddha has utilized numerous Dharma practice fitting for each type of sentient beings, even to each individual and situation.

And to this day, the span of Lord Buddha's teaching realm clearly still deeply and strongly influenced humankind in the five continents. An example is today's gathering of ten of thousands Sangha members and lay practitioners from many nations to celebrate Lord Buddha's Birth in this capital city as well as many, many more from all over the world, who turn their mind to Lord Buddha and commemorate His Birth. All of us, in spite of differences in races, are Sakyamuni Buddha's disciples; we willingly aspire to live accordingly to the spirit of His teachings. The hearts and minds of countless Buddha's disciples in general and all of us present here in particular all submit to the All Enlightened One, Sakyamuni Buddha. This proves that the mutation-bodies of Lord

Buddha are still present here and everywhere, creating an eternal Dharma- body in this world throughout more than two thousand five hundred years.

All of us, each with a different Dharma practice, with different realizations, represent the part of the essence of the Buddha's Dharma or presence of the manifestation of Buddha body. One individual cannot completely grasp Buddha Dharma and cannot perfectly fulfill the task of saving all sentient being, but with the gathering and meeting together in this week of Vesak, symbolizing the integration of all Buddha bodies to synthesize all the understandings and realizations of what Lord Buddha has taught us, gathering all the fruits of spirituality and practical applications of practice on our path of disseminating the teachings to benefit sentient beings. Synthesizing the goodness of those who personally realize Buddha Dharma definitely will have the common ground about the lofty and valuable image and conduct of Lord Buddha. This idea in the spirit of the Lotus Sutra means we are able to open the Precious Stupa, able to see the treasures of wonderful and delicate Dharma that Lord Buddha has entrusted to us. Recognizing the lofty Buddha Dharma, our mind automatically become calm, happy, and liberating. That is the meaning of transforming Svaha into Pure-land for our fellow Buddhists.

In this atmosphere of utmost solemn and magnificence of the 2549B.E.– 2006 C.E. Vesak, all of us, with purified, harmonious, solitary minds, join together and set the direction for Buddhism to implement many beneficial activities for humankind in this modern age. That is the most accurate depiction of the continuously and eternally present Buddha in this world, in all of us, in our thoughts and actions.

In the case of our country Vietnam, Buddhism has penetrated deeply in the soul of our people, deeply influenced many different fields of the nation throughout the spans of our history of thousands of years. The wonderful essence of Buddhism guided Kings and aristocrats in their successful effort to establish, sustaining, and developing the nation. Buddhism helped bring peace, prosperity, happiness to all. The way of Bodhisatva with the spirit of altruism and forgiveness had brighten the way for Vietnamese Sangha members and lay Buddhists from the beginning to now in the path of alleviating suffering and granting happiness, understanding to all, glorifying Buddhism.

Reminiscing 25 centuries ago, Lord Buddha came to this earth in the garden of Lumbini. This is the manifestation of Sakya Buddha on this earth, which we often called the “body subject to birth and death” (mortal body). Since life on earth is influenced by

the cycle of life and death, Lord Buddha without doubt bore the limited body of the mortals as a necessary means to teach and save sentient beings in this mortal world. The main goal of Lord Buddha when manifesting in this world, however, to point to us the immortal world. According to Lord Buddha, this immortal world is not from faraway, but it is the existence of Buddha Dharma in our very lives.

Yes, indeed according to the spirit of Lord Buddha's teachings, His Dharma exists endlessly in the flow of human life. Although the physical body (Nirmanakaya) of Lord Buddha has been absent in this world, i.e. His mortal manifestation had been extinct, His Dharma-body (Dharmakaya) then started to develop. The immortal world begin to open wider to help us develop the vision toward the immortal body of Lord Buddha. And wonderfully, the immortal body of Lord Buddha grow larger as time goes; the longer the time, the greater the Dharma-body.

This essence is depicted in the Lotus Sutra as "constantly abiding characteristics of the world", which means Lord Buddha is constantly dwelling in the world, existing in our thought habit, way of life as the major factor. Lord Buddha confirms that He attains Buddhahood in the world with the name of Sakyamuni, but when He teaches at other realms, he will have different names. This help us recognize of the quality of "no birth, just manifestation" of Lord Buddha. This means that there is only one immortal body of Lord Buddha, but he appeared as many manifestation, in different worlds, with different names to awaken all to recognize the immortality quality of Lord Buddha as well as to recognize the inherence of this immortality quality in each of us.

According to Lord Buddha's teachings, we inherently have the quality of immortality like Buddha. We, however, did not develop that quality of immortality completely as Buddha did. Therefore, we has not been able to utilize that immortality. Lord Buddha had fully developed His quality of immortality, His Dharma Body and was able to designate and utilize His Dharma Body effortlessly on His mission to teach and save sentient beings.

It is possible to assert that even though the human body of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha had entered Nirvana, nowadays, we still see that in five continents and four seas, nowhere is without the influence of Buddha's Dharma-body. Specifically there are numerous sutras left from Lord Buddha expounding His golden teachings. There are countless people interpreted His transcending thoughts. There are countless people take refuge in Lord Buddha. There are many people who aspire to live accordingly to the teachings of Lord Buddha in order to

develop insightful intellect and moral conduct. There are numerous Buddhist organizations engaging in charitable work to benefit society in the spirit of Buddha's teachings.

The mind of each Buddhist disciple who follow His footstep is always shined by the torch of wisdom and compassion manifesting in words, conducts This torch brings peace and happiness for the many. All the achievement of many generations of Buddha's disciples in the five continents has painted an image of the Buddha's Dharma- body with vastness and wonder transcending time and space in this mortal world.

Recognizing the eternal importance of Buddhism, seeing the strong presence of Lord Buddha among humankind, together with the fruit of valuable practice by Buddhist disciples everywhere, we and the United Nations conduct the ceremony to commemorate the Vesak to share and build the vision of Buddhism fitting and benefiting the human community in the new century.

We pray that all of us present in this grand ceremony of Vesak receive all the best that Lord Buddha has granted to us so that we could advance on the holy path and build the common house for humankind filled with compassion, tranquility, harmony, peace, and prosperity.

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## Four Essential Requirements for Protection, Promotion and Propagation of the Buddha's Teaching

*The Most Ven. Dr. Ashin Nyanissara  
Mahadhammakathika bahujanahitadhara  
Aggamahasaddhammajotikadhaja  
Aggamahapandita Chancellor  
Sitagu International Buddhist Academy  
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Your Holinesses, Your Most Venerable Mahetheras, Distinguish Guests, Friends in Dhamma, and Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, I would like to convey my wish that auspiciousness comes to all of the Buddhist Leaders from many nations. I am deeply honored to deliver a speech on this occasion.

Undoubtedly, Buddhist Leaders are sending powerful Buddhist message of tolerance and compassion to a turbulent world where the strong rules over the weak and the rich are reluctant to share with the poor. We must try our best until every body in the world practices loving kindness and compassion. We need to fight poverty, disease, and other physical disasters.

Though humans are rational-beings: when fear, craving and imagination running wild and moving beyond rational limits - he creates a religion in which he tries to look for protection - to satisfy craving with prayers and often forgetting his own ability.

The Buddha's Dhamma does not follow this line of thinking. According to the Buddha, the problems of human life can be found in the human body. Fear, worry, dissatisfaction and suffering all happen in the human body. Therefore, the solution to the problems is also to be found in the human body. The Buddha's Dhamma urges to

control and purify the mind so that the bodily and verbal actions also become peaceful and pure. If the Dhamma is to be practiced by every individual, peace will be achieved individually. Individual peace is the starting point to move forward to world peace.

Although different Buddhists practice different traditions, there is a common ground for all Buddhists: the Noble Eightfold Path has been universally accepted by all sons and daughters of the Buddha. Thanks to the great endeavor of our teachers, brothers and sisters, we still have the Buddha's Dispensation in its pristine purity. We are responsible for carrying this teaching to the next generation. In order to complete this responsibility, we must carry out four main tasks effectively. They are the followings:

1. To preserve Buddhism as the original teaching and to keep its pristine purity;
- 2..To disseminate the original teaching of the Buddha effectively;
- 3.To apply modern method and technique in preservation, teaching, learning, and research of Buddha teaching; and
- 4.To protect Buddhist historical sites, ancient pagodas, Buddha images, Buddhist literature and cultural heritage from natural disaster and destruction by opposition forces.

There are four essential requirements for protection, promotion, propagation of the Buddha's teaching. They are as follows: (1) man power; (2) money power; (3) material power, and (4) mind power.

When we talk about manpower, we need to mobilize the power of monks, government, educate persons, technicians and people from all walks of life for the promotion of Buddhism. All schools of Buddhism should unite with the spirit of friendship, understanding, forgiveness, patience, virtue and wisdom. Just as different nations with different political outlooks united in forming the United Nations, we Buddhists should try to unite our Buddhist nations and form United Buddhist Nations. I believe the present conference will contribute a great deal to friendship and mutual understanding among Buddhist leaders.

Money power also is another important requisite in protecting, promoting, and propagating of the teaching. Without money power, we cannot undertake great religious projects effectively. Through out the history of Buddhism, there were people like the Emperor Asoka who supported Buddhist propagation with money power. Due to their

generosity, the teaching was well promoted and propagated through out the world.

The same is true to material power. Modern technology is of a great use in this aspect. Audio-visual system, computers, internet facility, mobile phones, transmission equipments, electrical appliances and printing press have to be installed and use.

Perhaps, the most important prerequisite for the protection, promotion and propagation of Buddhism is mind power. However much money, material and man-power we have, without character, moral and virtue, we cannot implement any plan effectively. Virtue means disciplining of mind, body, and speech. We should store virtue of patience, loving kindness and compassion and spirit of universal brotherhood in our heart.

By using these four essential powers judiciously, Emperor Asoka had done a great service to Buddhism. Since his time in history, these four powers were not combined well and used - the Indian continent, the land of the birth of the Dhamma became the land of the death of the Dhamma. Temples and monasteries donated by Emperor Asoka and other generous people became heaps of broken bricks. Therefore, I would like to urge my brothers and sisters to safeguard maintain and disseminate Buddhism to the best of their ability.

All instabilities around the world start with unstable state of each individual. The individual un-fulfillment of desires paves the way for tensions and wars. The individuals are burning with the fire of dissatisfaction, lust, hate, and delusion. The world with its natural beauty is defaced by factories which produce weapons for death and destruction. The earth which is full of precious gems became a graveyard as result of continuous wars. All these problems can be traced back to their root, craving and desire. If we know the cause of illness, we can find out the medicine to cure the illness. The Noble Dhamma is the most effective medicine for illness of the world. It is our prime responsibility to deliver this medicine to the world of illness.

In many World Buddhist Conferences, the World Buddhist leaders have tried every possible effort to bring Buddhist unity and cooperation. Still, we need to take further steps towards drawing a concrete plan to translate our words into actions. In this future plan we should do more networking with each other. We should especially form linkages between universities, monasteries and exchange scholars. We should communicate with love, understanding, patience and forgiveness to each other. I would like to suggest some future plans to this conference. We should establish a center where we can publish more publications, set up a powerful website through which the Dhamma is

taught by many means, ran a broadcasting service center such as the World Buddhist Broadcasting Center (WBBC), ran a Buddhist university where all sects of Buddhism are taught and train monks and nuns. This task should be done by Mahayana and Theravada holding each other's hands.

I would like to strongly urge all our Dhamma friends here in this conference to work harder for the preservation and protection of Buddhism. It is very important for both Mahayana and Theravada to preserve and protect the Buddhist heritage sites, historical monuments. According to the history, after the Buddha's demise, the relics were enshrined in the stupas in eight countries. But these stupas had already been destroyed by the time of the Emperor Asoka. Again the Emperor Asoka gathered those relics and enshrined in the 84,000 stupas. Among that many stupas, only Sanchi stupa remain in its original form. Many had been destroyed and it is hard to find out the place of those stupas. During the 2500 years history, the Bodhi Tree was cut down to the ground twice. Symbols of other religions such as Shiva Linga can be disgracefully seen in the Mahabodhi Temple. Due to the great courageous effort of Sasana hero, Anagarika Dharmapala, Buddhists regained the Mahabodhi Temple from another's hand. Following the example of this great personality, we, all brothers and sisters of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism, should work together establishing an organization such as the United Buddhist Organization or the World Buddhist United Nations. I, on behalf of 400,000 Buddhist monks in Myanmar, would like to suggest that this Organization should be based in Bangkok, Thailand and, for this purpose the World Buddhist Fund should be established as soon as possible.

Although Buddhist leaders are different in outward appearance, tradition, and culture, inside their heart, there is unity in cherishing the value of loving kindness, forbearance, compassion and wisdom. The Eightfold Noble Path laid down by the Buddha is the common path we will have to take together. The Noble Truth of Cessation of Dukkha is our common destination. Therefore, let us walk together on the common path with common values towards our common destination.

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## Toward Universal Principles in Humanitarian Crisis: Buddhist Narrative Ethics and International Law

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In an effort to secure global peace an emerging consensus is building around the notion that the international community bears a collective responsibility to provide aid and relief to people suffering from a humanitarian crisis or to protectively rescue people who are faced with the threat of large-scale violence and human rights abuses. Since the fulfillment of this responsibility may entail the use of military force, the United Nations has called upon the world community to adopt criteria it has proposed for establishing legitimate and universal principles upon which intervention can be based. In the spirit of advancing the moral justifications for endorsing the UN's criteria, this paper explores Buddhist narrative ethics as a potential source of enrichment for the international community's emerging framework for when and how force can be used.

At first glance, it would seem there is little if any potential for Buddhism to contribute toward universalizing principles that may, in actuality, result in the taking of life since this would constitute a violation of the first precept. But as this paper shows, neither the precept against killing nor any form of pacifism are invoked in matters of grave human concern but rather, it is to stories the Buddha turns for legitimizing a moral position in times of war and violent conflict. In narrative traditions widely known throughout the Buddhist world we find that the most appalling 'crimes against humanity' were crimes that shocked the consciousness of early India as much as they do the global community today. We know, for example, from canonical tales such as the *jātakas* that the Buddha bore witness to such crimes and was himself a survivor of genocide. There is also evidence, as we shall soon see, of the Buddha's peacekeeping skills in negotiating a cease-fire in the very field of battle. In still another case we learn of how the threat of terrorism was skillfully obverted by the Buddha during his bodhisattva career. It is in

consideration of just such narrative contexts, I am arguing, that Buddhism may prove resourceful in the international effort to develop legitimate and universal principles upon which humanitarian intervention could be based.

### The UN's Five Criteria for Humanitarian Intervention

Let us begin with a consideration of the recently proposed criteria of legitimacy for authorizing or endorsing the use of military force which the UN has asked the international community to adopt by imagining how a Buddhist might respond given these rich narrative resources. The five criteria are as follows:

1. Seriousness of threat. Is the threatened harm to State or human security of a kind, and sufficiently clear and serious, to justify *prima facie* the use of military force? In the case of internal threats, does it involve genocide and other large-scale killing, ethnic cleansing or serious violations of international humanitarian law, actual or imminently apprehended?

2. Proper purpose. Is it clear that the primary purpose of the proposed military action is to halt or avert the threat in question, whatever other purposes or motives may be involved?

3. Last resort. Has every non-military option for meeting the threat in question been explored, with reasonable grounds for believing that other measures will not succeed?

4. Proportional means. Are the scale, duration and intensity of the proposed military action the minimum necessary to meet the threat in question?

5. Balance of consequences. Is there a reasonable chance of the military action being successful in meeting the threat in question, with the consequences of action not likely to be worse than the consequences of inaction?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These criteria were outlined by the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in their 2004 report, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, which can be viewed on-line at: <http://www.un.org/secureworld/>.

In taking up these criteria, we want to know whether or not a globally diverse Buddhist community could find these morally compelling to the point of achieving the consensus which the UN Secretary-General has called for on the question of intervention? Or do the moral sentiments of Buddhists, generally speaking, give ascent to a form of pacifism so absolute that any endorsement of such criteria would necessarily be regarded as an objectionable innovation and therefore a betrayal of the Buddha's teaching? If the failure of peaceful and equitable methods for defusing violence and resolving conflict necessitates the use of military force, on what Buddhist principles, if any, might such responsibility be legitimized – particularly in extreme situations where coercive action is presumably the only means for preventing or halting the progress of large-scale carnage? What practical answer can modern Buddhists offer for how nations should respond when a state fails to prevent or actually instigates an avoidable catastrophe – including wide-spread and uncontrolled domestic violence, mass murder, rape, genocide, ethnic cleansing, deliberate starvation, and exposure to disease? With the rise of terrorism as transnational force, these questions have taken on a greater sense of urgency in recent years making new demands for more effective cooperation at the international level. Do lay persons have a different set of obligations from monks regarding this question of the collective responsibility to protect and secure global peace? With these questions in mind, let us now explore three well-known Buddhist narratives that can be brought fruitfully to bear on the debate over intervention: Vidūdabha's vengeance on the Sākya clan, the River Rohini incident, and the story of Captain Great Compassionate.

### Vidūdabha's Revenge

Perhaps the most momentous event in the Buddha's later years was the near total annihilation of his own Sākya clan by the army of the Kosalan king Vidūdabha.<sup>2</sup> The tradition holds that as a youth Vidūdabha had been insulted by the Sākya, and had sworn an oath to seek revenge. Later, after having succeeded to the throne he set out with his army of four divisions intending to annihilate the entire Sākya clan. Knowing where Vidūdabha would pass, the Buddha seated himself beneath a tree of "scanty shade" in Sākya territory just across the border from Vidūdabha's realm where stood a large and shady banyan tree. Coming upon the Buddha, Vidūdabha saluted him and asked, "Why, Sir, are you sitting under so thin a tree in all this heat? Sit beneath this

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<sup>2</sup> q.v., Burlingame, op cit., (Pt. II, Bks 3-12, pp. 30-48) and Cowell, op. cit., Jātaka No. 465 (Bk. XII – Dvādasa-Nipāta, pp. 91-98).

shady banyan, Sir.” The Buddha replied, “Let it be, O king! the shade of my kindred keeps me cool.” Vidūdabha interpreted this to mean that the Buddha had come to protect his clansmen. So paying homage to the Buddha, he temporarily abandoned his malevolent plans. But he soon returned and encountered the Buddha a second time and, then again, a third time in precisely the same fashion as before.<sup>3</sup> But it was on the king’s fourth attempt that the Buddha recognized it was no longer possible to avert an attack and so he refrained from going to their aid again. The Sākya, because of their religious scruples, offered Vidūdabha and his retinue only token resistance, so that nearly all were massacred, “beginning with babes at the breast.” Vidūdabha fulfilled his vow to wash the seat of his throne with the blood of their throats. The Sākya were uprooted and all but exterminated.

The slaughter of the Sākya clan stands as a spectacular example of what happens when the decision is made not to intervene to prevent what, by international standards today, would fall under the legal categories of crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Three times the Buddha managed to dissuade King Vidūdabha from taking revenge against the Sākya. By virtue of his presence alone, he effectively shielded the Sākya clan from danger, performing a function analogous to UN peacekeeping missions which operate in hostile situations under a similar principle of nonuse of force. But in the end the Buddha withdrew and Vidūdabha invaded.

Just as the Rwandan genocide shocked and shamed the consciousness of the international community, so with the slaughter of the Sākya clan we find terrible confirmation of the consequences of non-action. Both events evoke similar feelings of anger and frustration at the appalling failure to act in the face of clear signs that genocide was about to take place. In both cases, there is credible evidence that genocide is being planned, diplomatic avenues to avert genocide have been fully exhausted, and the decision to withdraw peacekeepers at the very moment when the escalating crisis erupts proves catastrophic. It also appears that the two most important criteria set forth by the UN for justifying intervention – seriousness of threat and last resort – have been met

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<sup>3</sup> In the Dictionary of Pāṭi Proper Names, Malasekera notes in his entry on Vidūdabha that this exposure to the sun gave the Buddha a headache which lasted throughout his life (which could not have been long since this tragedy presumably occurred within the last year of his life); vol. II, p. 876.



since both cases involve “large-scale killing” with genocidal intent and the failure of non-military means to avert catastrophe.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that the Buddha eventually withdrew his presence – effectively signaling to King Vidūdabha that he and his forces could proceed with the genocide – does not mean that the proper Buddhist response to an immanent humanitarian crisis is one of withdrawal and non-engagement. It is, nonetheless, in keeping with the rules governing the monastic life in Buddhism. According to one prominent interpreter of the Buddhist monastic code, “if a monk sits idle when seeing a flood sweep a person downstream, he commits no offense [i.e., against the rule of the monks] regardless of his feelings about the person’s death – even if the person then drowns.”<sup>5</sup> Buddhist kings, on the other hand, are governed by a completely different set of expectations for responding to such situations. One sutta repeatedly warns against the dangers of inaction and reminds state leaders that they have a responsibility to suppress and “impose restraint on evil-doers in conformity with their crime.” The text goes on to assert that should they fail to carry out this duty there will “arise in abundance very terrible evils,” “wicked acts,” and lawlessness in the land.<sup>6</sup>

### The River Rohini Incident

A second strategy would be to invoke the River Rohini incident in which violent conflict over environmental resources is successfully averted through skillful diplomacy.<sup>7</sup> This episode finds the Koliyans and Sākyans on the brink of war. A severe drought has triggered a dispute over who has the right to divert the rapidly diminishing waters of the Rohini into their respective fields. Since the volume of water in the river’s flow is insufficient to irrigate the crops of both kingdoms an agreement must be brokered. But neither the Koliyans nor the Sākyans are willing to relinquish their claim nor do they show any willingness to cooperate on a compromise plan. It is the fervor of such bellicose activity that captures the attention of the Buddha and his appearance at the very

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<sup>4</sup> The remaining three criteria – proper purpose, proportional means, and balance of consequences – are triggered by the first two and are therefore essentially a function of diplomacy, statecraft, and military intelligence.

<sup>5</sup> Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

<sup>6</sup> See the *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra* (The Sūtra of Golden Light) translated by R.E. Emmerick, pp.61-4.

<sup>7</sup> See note 9.

center of the field of battle has a disarming effect. His kinsmen, the Sākyans, immediately capitulate and the Koliyans likewise drop their weapons. Having established a ceasefire, the Buddha inquires into the nature of the conflict. After learning that the dispute is over water, he asks both sides which is more precious, water for irrigating crops or the lives of the warriors who serve their armies? Both parties agree that a warrior is beyond price. The Buddha then rebukes them, “It is not fitting that because of a little water you should destroy warriors who are beyond price” and shames them into silence: “Great kings, why do you act in this manner? Were I not present today, you would have set flowing a river of blood.”

This rational image of the Buddha as brokering a nonviolent resolution to conflict has been celebrated as paradigmatic of a more activist form of Buddhist pacifism.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to the dispirited image of passive withdrawal in the previous narrative, here we find the Buddha personally engaged on the very field of battle articulating a diplomatic principle of intervention that successfully averts disaster. Significantly, it is not war per se the Buddha condemns but the lack of a just cause for war. Furthermore, no one, least of all the Buddha, suggests that armies should be disbanded in the name of peace or pacifism. Warriors are valued “beyond price” precisely for the services they provide in protecting the interests of the clan and, if necessary, engaging in combat to defend those interests. The story is, at the same time, a searing indictment, not of war, but of the foolishness that would squander illegitimately so precious a resource as the life of a warrior.

Whereas in the former story, the Buddha defends his decision to withdraw his peacekeeping presence and allow the war to commence on the grounds that King Vidudabha’s cause was “entirely just,” in the latter story, when the Buddha discovers that the feuding parties lack a credible reason for engaging their troops in combat, he chooses to intervene by using his mediating skills to defuse the hostilities. In other words, there is only a moral contradiction here if we uncritically assume a position which the Buddha does not: that extreme pacifism is required of all Buddhists in all situations. Such absolutism simply cannot be supported by these narratives. For it is neither the maintenance

<sup>8</sup> q.v., Sulak Sivaraksa, *Conflict, Culture, and Change*, p. 5; David W. Chappell’s concluding essay “Buddhist Peace Principles” in *Buddhist Peacemaking* which he edited (1999), p. 203; John A. McConnell’s essay “The Rohini Conflict and the Buddha’s Intervention” in *Radical Conservatism: Buddhism in the Contemporary World, Articles in Honor of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa’s 84th Birthday Anniversary*, n.a. Bangkok: Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, 1990, pp. 200-208.

nor the deployment of military forces that so troubles the Buddha; rather, it is the hasty and irrational decision to commitment troops to a combat situation which lacks a just cause. In the Kunūla Jātaka, which contains the fuller account of this tale, we are told:

*At that time the Blessed One was dwelling at Savātthi, and at dawn of day while contemplating the world he beheld them setting out to the fight, and on seeing them he wondered whether if he were to go there the quarrel would cease, and he made up his mind and thought, "I will go there and, to quell this feud, I will relate three Birth Stories [Jātakas], and after that the quarrelling will cease. Then after telling two Birth Stories, to illustrate the blessings of union, I will teach them the Attadanda Sutta and after hearing my sermon the people of the two cities will each of them bring into my presence two hundred and fifty youths, and I shall admit them to holy orders and there will be a huge gathering." Thus after performing his toilet, he went his rounds in Svatthi for alms, and on his return, after taking his meal, at eventide he issued forth from his Perfumed Chamber and without saying a word to any man he took his bowl and robe and went by himself and sat cross-legged in the air between the two hosts.<sup>9</sup>*

This passage helps remind us that when Buddhists need a medium in which to resolve conflict or think through a particular moral problem it is to the power of narratives (and in particular Jātakas or stories of the Buddha's previous births) they turn for inspiration. That many have felt the force of these texts is evident throughout the widely dispersed cultures of the Buddhist world regardless of the school, monastic lineage, or particular orientation of the lay community. Such stories were not only highly influential vehicles for mediating the dharma from the monks through sermons to the laity but they also played a significant role in motivating people to build temples, paint murals, make offerings, perform dramas, and copy manuscripts, among other things. We have, then, a strong historical and trans-cultural testament to their universal appeal.

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<sup>9</sup> Kunūla Jātaka (No. 536) in Cowell, op. cit., p. 219-220.

### Captain Great Compassionate

The Upāyakausalya contains a famous story structured along the lines of Buddhist Jātaka literature concerning a dilemma faced by a ship's captain.<sup>10</sup> On board the ship were five hundred merchants and among them was a man who is described as "treacherous," "remorseless," "a doer of evil deeds" and "well-trained in the art of weaponry."<sup>11</sup> As the story goes, the captain of the ship wanted to take a nap so he put the navigation of the ship on automatic pilot. While sleeping, he has a dream in which it is revealed to him that on board his ship is a "wicked man," "of a certain physique [...and...] complexion dressed in such and such garb" who had a plan to kill all on board and take their possessions. It is further revealed that the five hundred merchants are all bodhisattvas, that is, they are all progressing toward full awakening. If the hijacker should succeed in killing these five hundred merchants, the "evil karma" he would acquire would cause him to burn in the great hells. At the end of the dream, the captain is reminded that as their leader he is charged with the duty of devising a "skillful means" to save the lives of the five hundred merchants while also preventing the hijacker from falling into the great hells.

Seven days pass with a wind averse to sailing. During this time the ship's captain carefully considers the means by which he could protect both the merchants and the hijacker. Because of the paucity of alternatives, he comes to the conclusion that "there is no means to prevent this man from slaying the merchants and going to the great hells but to kill him." And he thought:

"If I tell these five hundred people about him, they will hate this wicked man and kill him themselves, and then they will fall to the miserable planes of existence."

Then he thought, "I should kill him myself. Though I may fall to the miserable plane of hell and undergo sufferings for hundreds of thousands of kalpas because of killing him, I am willing to bear those sufferings, but I will not let this wicked man kill these five hundred Bodhisattvas and suffer in hell for that evil karma."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Tatz, (1994), op. cit. Another account of this story is also found in the Mahāratnakūta Sūtra which has been made available in English translation by Gama C. C. Chang, gen. ed., A Treasury of Mahayāna Sūtras, University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983, pp. 456-7.

<sup>11</sup> We shall call him, henceforth, a hijacker.

<sup>12</sup> Chang, op. cit., p. 456.



Accordingly, the captain's great compassion protected those five hundred merchants and protected that person from going to the great hells by deliberately stabbing and slaying that person...with a spear, with great compassion and skill in means.

We learn, at the end of the story, that the captain of the ship was none other than the Buddha in a former birth. The story, then, raises an important ethical question for us: if the Buddha himself, during his bodhisattva career, could transgress the precept against the taking of life in larger concern for the welfare of all, might Buddhists today find similar justification for the taking of life in analogous circumstances?

The first thing to note about this story is that neither pacifism nor inaction is factored into the moral calculus of the bodhisattva. What is most apparent for the modern humanitarian reader, however, is how closely it corresponds to the five salient criteria adduced by the UN to legitimize military action insofar as it (1) involves a 'threat of large-scale killing' that is both sufficiently serious and imminently apprehended; (2) has a 'proper purpose' – saving the lives of five hundred merchants and preventing the lone hijacker from going to the great hells; (3) is a 'last resort' as the story clearly states there were no other means for averting the catastrophe; (4) meets the criteria for 'proportional means' since stabbing and killing the hijacker is the minimum action necessary for attenuating the threat; and (5) satisfies the 'balance of consequences' since taking the life of one man of little virtue far outweighs the consequences of inaction that would otherwise result in the death of five hundred men of great virtue. If Buddhism is to contribute a practicable perspective toward universalizing the principles upon which humanitarian intervention could legitimately be based, this story offers the international community a compelling ethical resource for enriching international law.

While the taking of a life must always be a last resort, entered into when there is no other way of preventing still greater suffering and loss of life, and even then only when the prospects for success are reasonably good, it cannot ipso facto be ruled out from a perspective of Buddhist ethics merely by invoking an absolutist interpretation of the first precept against killing. To be sure, the first precept applies always and in all situations, most especially for monastics regardless of their intentions, for "Whether [a monk] is motivated by compassion, hatred, or indifference is irrelevant as far as the offense is concerned."<sup>13</sup> But in the story of the ship's captain we have also seen that the precept

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<sup>13</sup> Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

against killing can and sometimes must be transgressed by non-monastics in certain rare and exceptional circumstances with the caveat that the intention to do so be motivated by compassion. The implication here is that when Buddhists judge an action as opposed to an agent, it is what motivates the intention of the actor that is subject to moral scrutiny.

At the same time, it is not difficult to imagine how a principle of killing in the name of compassion could be misappropriated by a state or leader of a state whose motives lack the moral integrity of a being so advanced in virtue as a bodhisattva or a buddha. Yet this risk must be weighed against the prospect of supporting interventions that have as their primary purpose the protection of civilians “whatever other purposes or motives may be involved” as the criteria laid out by the UN clearly states. This is a point often underscored in the literature on humanitarian intervention: “The need to halt the horrors of genocide or to address the effects of civil war and internal armed conflict on civilians has been accepted as sufficient justification for intervention, even if other motives may be involved.”<sup>14</sup> This poses a certain challenge to Buddhist ethics since in order for an intervention to be humanitarian it need not have humanitarian motives.

### Conclusion

Judge Christopher G. Weeramantry, of the International Court of Justice at The Hague, believes that the best way for strengthening international law is to draw moral inspiration from the texts and teachings of the world’s religions. This is necessary and possible, he argues, because peace is the one concept that is central not only to international law but is also the very point at which all the religions of the world converge. Moreover, he notes, religious texts command the respect of over four billion of the world’s population.<sup>15</sup> In exploring the ethical dilemmas which humanitarian crises pose from the standpoint of popular narrative traditions I have argued that Buddhists can make an important contribution to the international effort aimed at advancing the legal and moral justifications for the use of force when peaceful prevention fails.

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<sup>14</sup> Anne Orford, **Reading Humanitarian Intervention**, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Weeramantry, 2004, p. 368. He cites the 1999 Britannica Book of the Year which lists the total number of followers in of each of the world’s major religious traditions and notes that they constitute 71.24% of the total global population.

Significantly, a number of United Nations World Heritage Sites today concern Buddhist temple complexes where narratives such as the J?taka tales are preserved in murals, sculptures and architecture. As such, they offer the international community an important historical resource for universalizing the principles of international law. Even more, a careful consideration of their moral content can help expand the aims and imagination of the international community's conception of ethical responsibility since the UN is charged only with protecting "individual human beings, not those who abuse them"<sup>16</sup> while Buddhist narratives suggest that, in fact, we have an obligation to protect all beings; even perpetrators of crimes against humanity cannot be disassociated from the broad range of beings who are the object of Buddhist concern and compassion

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<sup>16</sup> Annan (1999), op. cit.

## Buddhist Women and Sustainable Development

*Assoc. Prof. Dr. Suchitra Onkom*

There was much discrimination against women before and even during the Buddha's time in the land of India, just like in many other parts of the world. Upon marrying, an Indian woman had to leave her own home to serve her husband and his parents in their house. The social status of women in Brahmin India was no better than their counterparts in ancient China where women also suffered unfair treatment. Thus, the fact that the Buddha, after initial refusals, had allowed Mahapajapati Gotami to be ordained as a nun or Bhikkhuni, was a revolutionary act indeed especially when one were to take into consideration that no religious teachers of India during those days would ever allow female ordination. In Buddhism the highest aim in life is to attain the Ultimate Truth or Nibbana, that is: to reach a state in which the mind can no longer be held under the influence and control of the urges of nature. Nibbana is something that can really be attained during one's own lifetime.

When Ananda pleaded on behalf of Mahapajapati for women's ordination, he asked the Buddha whether women could achieve enlightenment or not. The Buddha replied that both men and women could gain the nature of bodhi or enlightenment in the same manner. He clearly did not see gender as an obstacle in humankind's strive for true spiritual freedom. Men and women are equal in their rights and duties and a woman who strives for true spiritual independence is in no way less able or subordinate to man. However the India of the Buddha's time was not yet ready to permit the flourishing of a totally independent community of nuns. Therefore the Buddha established the eight special rules for nuns, binding them to the order of monks. It was not to be taken as a discriminative measure against women; in fact the rules were meant to be a safe shelter and moral help to the nuns in a land where women were much discriminated on the biological and social ground. Therefore the Buddha could be considered as the pioneer of raising the status of women by recognizing their ability to attain enlightenment and of permitting the founding of an order of nuns.



Buddhist women in early Buddhism enjoyed a higher position than their later counterparts. Though the order of Bhikkhuni has been extinct for many centuries, Buddhist women all over the world continue to work to promote Buddhism in many different ways. Some of them are ordinary laywomen while many are Buddhist nuns. Madame Blavatsky or Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) was born in the Ukraine to an aristocratic family. She arrived in New York in 1873 and together with Henry Steel Olcott, she founded the Theosophical society. Her contact with Asian teachers led her to the beliefs that the modern interpret of Buddhism had deviated from the original essence; thus she spent much of her time expounding the true teaching of Buddhism, which she called 'Esoteric Buddhism'. However she became fascinated with Tibetan Buddhism later and wrote her famous book 'The Voice of the Silence'.

An active Buddhist nun who was internationally well known was Jewish in origin. She was called Ayya Kema. Born in Berlin but escaped from Germany in 1938, Ayya Kema was brought to Glasgow Scotland. Later she went to join her parents who were in Shanghai, China during the outbreak of the war. After the war, she emigrated to the U.S.. It was during her travel to Asia between 1960-1964 where she visited SriLanka and the Himalayan countries that she began to learn meditation. In 1979 she became a nun in SriLanka.

Ayya Kema established in Colombo an International Buddhist Women's Centre as a training centre for SriLankan nuns. She also helped to set up a Buddhist monastery in the Theravada tradition, the Wat Buddha Dhamma near Sidney Australia in 1978. In 1989 she became the spiritual director of Buddha-Haus in Germany. By June 1987, she inaugurated the first Buddhist forest monastery in Germany-'The Metta Vihara' and the first ordination in German language took place.

Her pioneering spirit had driven her to assume a role in the co-ordination of the first international conference of Buddhist nuns in Bodhgaya in 1987. It was a significant historic event during which problems encountered by Buddhist nuns and laywomen were being put on focus. His Holiness the Dalai Lama delivered the inaugural speech attended by more than 1500 people. The result of the conference led to creation of Sakyadhita International Association for Buddhist women. The word 'Sakyadhita' means 'daughters of the Buddha'. The association aims to promote world peace through the practice of Buddhism, to create a network of communication for Buddhist women throughout the world,

to promote harmony and understanding among the various Buddhist traditions, to encourage and help educate women as teachers of Buddhist Dhamma, to provide improved facilities for women to study and practise the teachings and to help establishing the Order of Nuns (fully ordained) where it does not currently exist.

Ayya Kema went to deliver a speech in May 1987 at the United Nations on the topic of Buddhism and World Peace, the first Buddha nun to address the world organization. She also won the Christmas Humphrey's Memorial Award for her book titled 'Being Nobody, Going Nowhere'. She passed away after a brief illness on November 2, 1997 at Buddha Haus, Mittleberg; Ultenbull in Germany, at the age 74.

There are yet many more Buddhist nuns who have been very active in their work of dhamma propagation and meditation teaching or training. Some engage themselves in social work such as running orphanage or building hospital. Many Tibetan nuns too are busy with work of their own such as those nuns from Kachoe Ghakyil Nunnery in Kathmandu who strive to keep alive the cultural life and spiritual beliefs of the Tibetan people. Meanwhile the Hartridge Buddhist Monastery in Honiton, Devon, is meant solely for the nuns, who have to undergo a two-year training programme. It is the first Theravadan community of western nuns in England established in the Forest Tradition of Ajahn Chaa-a well known meditation teacher in Thailand.

Cambodia had been a war-torn country and decades of wars had damaged its health care infrastructure; so in 1996, with the help of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the government formed the Reproductive and Child Health Alliance (RACHA) to improve health care. Buddhist nuns and laywomen (and even monks) are trained to instruct the country folks on health matters. While people may not trust the government fully after having gone through all those war years, they have better faith in the nuns. The follow-up surveys show a great improvement with regard to rural folks' breast-feeding habits and other health matter.

Now, from the above examples, we can sense a sincere effort by the Buddhist nuns to help developing human society. Almost every international organization 'hangs the label' of promoting peace or developing human society. The topic for today's talk is 'Buddhist Women and Sustainable Development' and the significant point here is 'development'. Without right knowledge, right education and right view, meaningful and

beneficial development will not be possible. Therefore those Buddhist nuns or women who busy themselves with promoting peace and developing society may have gone the wrong path if they still lack the right concepts of what development should actually be.

Right development is the only long-term answer to our human problems. We must therefore think in the right way in order to have right development; but our own human thinking process can be very much unsystematic especially when confronted with some external stimulating factors and internal tendencies. Science is a subject that demands systematic thinking. The 'what', the 'why' and the 'how' of science requires us to provide answers which can systematically clear the doubts lingering in the mind. To give the answers, we need to examine the question or the matter in concern step by step and answer them in that order too. This means we have to train ourselves to think systematically; but as soon as we have answered the questions, we begin to return to think randomly again, and very often even negatively too. For example, we may ask the question: What is Uranium? What can it be used for? How? How is the procedure like? The third and the fourth questions demand a systematic explanation, and from here the thinking may go negative: How can I turn uranium into a nuclear bomb to annihilate my enemies? So, human thinking can turn dangerously negative and destructive, and there is always a tendency for it to be so. Dangerous thinking will lead to dangerous development. A corrupted mind will naturally lead to corrupted practices. This is where religion or Dhamma should step in to help.

Apparently we need to be trained to think in a positive way; in other words, our thinking must be based on ethics and moral values. Instead of thinking of enriching the uranium in order to turn it into a nuclear bomb, we can ask ourselves: 'How can this uranium be used to benefit the world which is plagued by energy shortage?' To think in this way will be constructive instead of destructive. Hence ethical and moral factors must be the base of our thinking process. It is when we are being ethically and morally right, then only will we be able to conceive of a right kind of sustainable development. When right view arises, right action follows and we will be on the path to right development.

The development of human progress in all aspects of life must be based on right view, otherwise we will be paving the way to our own doom. Our political, economic, agricultural and social policies must not be independent of ethical or moral considerations if truly right development toward human happiness and peace were to be

achieved. In fact in the entire process of human development, we should be able to discern or perceive the most subtle and intricate balance between our inner or personal world and the outer, or physical world. To achieve the right kind of development in any of our human activities at all, depends very much on our ability to understand and realize the subtle relationship between these two domains of our inner mind and the outer physical world. We should learn about not only their capabilities, but also their limitations. We certainly cannot afford to tilt the balance. Already so much very serious damage has been done to the world's ecological system, definitely we cannot afford to create more damage.

In the last century, we had ruthlessly exploited so much of the world's natural resources and caused so much damage to this planet that in this twenty-first century, we will be reaping the fruits of the seeds of destruction that we had sown in the previous century. From heat waves to Tsunami to earthquake to hurricane Katrina to cyclone Larry to flood to wild fire and to glacial melting, the global climate is crashing around us. It is what exactly scientists and environmentalists, who are not, luckily, on the pay roll of big energy companies, have been warning us for a long time. For years, those environmentalists and cooperate lawyers have been shouting at one another over global warning, CO2 emission and other environmental issues, with one side proclaiming the severity of the problem while the other still dismissing it as wild speculation, but, 'things are happening a lot faster than anyone predicted', says Bill Chameides , chief scientist for the advocacy group Environmental Defense and a former professor of atmospheric chemistry. The ice in the polar regions melts faster than they normally should. Analyzed data from the Canada and European satellites shows that Greenland ice is melting twice as fast, with 220 cu.km. draining away into the sea last year alone, compared with 90 cu.km. in 1996. A cubic kilometer of water is 25 percent more than the entire city of Los Angeles used in a year. With so much water dumped into the sea, just imagine how perilous it will be in the years to come.

While melting ice is raising the sea level, global warming is having an even more instant effect on the surface of the earth. Many regions in various parts of the world have been 'baked, by the scorching sun into dry , hard earth 'cakes'. Some countries in Africa such as Sudan has not seen rain for three years. In Asia too, water is becoming an increasingly scarce commodity. Hot, dry land provide ideal conditions for wild fire and it seems Australia experiences it quite many times if not every year. With habitats burned and destroyed, animals that used to dwell around move to new places if they are lucky



enough to find any suitable one. Some simply disappear, like the harlequin frogs in Central and South America or the 'golden toad' of Costa Rica which moved up the mountain until 'home' disappeared entirely.

Global warming is causing severe ecological damage and human activity is behind it. Politicians and businessmen who are more sensitive to vote and profit fluctuation than climatic changes, are beginning to pay some attention, but the U.S. , which produces 25 % of the world's carbon dioxide emission, is not even in the list of Kyoto Protocol Treaty. Making money is, of course, more important than the disappearance of the harlequin frogs.

The Buddha discovered the truth through his observation of nature (his own body). He saw in nature the truth of life—that all natural forces combine to work harmoniously to bring about a natural world that we see. In region where natural factors such as water, soil, weather are in harmony, lives abound and it becomes the land of abundance. In region where there are the extremes of climatic conditions such as the arid deserts or polar regions, only living beings which can adapt manage to survive. So there must be some kind of harmony and moderation, then only will survival be fairly possible. Thus human development should include 'harmony' as a vital factor which deserves much consideration. When too many trees are cut down too quickly, the consequences will take some time to manifest. Rapid deforestation causes erosion of soil and land slides as well as the drying up of streams.

Apparently we humankind are now experiencing the results of our own destructive action. Is it too late to stop the environmental deterioration? There is yet no absolutely clear answer to this question. Terry Chapin, a biologist and professor of ecology at the university of Alaska says that the ecosystems are usually able to maintain themselves, but eventually they are pushed to the limit of tolerance. So, action results in reaction-and a disastrous reaction it will be.

Buddhist teaching emphasizes the need to avoid the extremes and that we should always try to tread the Middle Path. So far what we have been doing to our habitat amounts to senseless exploitation spurred on by our shameless greed. As Buddhists, we are jolly well aware of the vital need of harmony in life, some sort of a balance. Buddhist women, be they nuns or laywomen, need to bear this in mind in their attempts to develop the society to promote peace. They must make sure that they have rightly embarked on

a truly right track of sustainable development. When it is truly right, it should be sustained by all means.

The most prominent Buddhist woman in pursuing a successful policy of sustainable development is no other than Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand who has launched a number of projects to protect the forests, wild lives and mountain streams of the kingdom of Thailand, while at the same time not forgetting to promote right livelihood by setting up centres in various provinces of the kingdom to train craftsmen and artisans.

On the 13th January 2001, Her Majesty the Queen made a trip to the forested region of Doi Pha Hom in the district of Mae Aye, Chiangmai. Later she also visited the hill regions of Chiangrai province. Having surveyed those areas, and realizing how fragile the ecological system can be, and that if no proper measures are taken to prevent the wasteful use of land and forest, serious environmental damages would be the inevitable consequence, Her Majesty thus decided to launch her project of 'Little House in the Vast Forest' based on the following reasons:

1. The area adjacent to Mae Sau River is a suitable site for the implementation of the royal project 'Ban Lek Nai Pa Yai' or 'Little House in the Vast Forest'.

2. It is to be an experiment in which people are allowed to dwell in the forest by seeking proper ways to ensure that their existence does not threaten the survival of the forest; and it is also an attempt to promote the use of herbal vegetation from the forest as a source of food and medicine.

3. There is a need for forest dwellers to join the royal project which will encourage them to take up the duty of protecting the forest and planting new trees to create even more forested areas which can be of benefit to the community.

4. If there were no forests, water in the underground would diminish and eventually dry up. Streams and rivers would dry up too. So there is a dire need to protect, preserve and rebuild the forests in the kingdom.

5. Plant trees whose wood can be used as fuels for family consumption.

The purpose of the project is to allow the four hill tribes namely the Akha (or ekoh), the Karen, the Lisu and the Musa tribes all of whom possess a separate language and culture of their own, to live harmoniously and peacefully in a sustainable natural environment. Her Majesty the Queen, prior to the launching of her royal project, had

discovered that the water level in the streams and rivers of those forested regions, have gone down to an alarming degree, especially the water level of Mae Sau River and Mae Kok river. Thus centre for the development of highland agriculture at Doi Kiak is being set up to give the local people some proper knowledge of agriculture that will not cause any harm to natural habitat and forest while the Foundation for the Vocational Training of Art and Craftwork has undertaken the task of training the local people in art and craft. The aim is to enable the local people to secure a better quality of life, to promote highland agriculture, to instil in them the awareness of the need to conserve natural environment, resources and to revive a much depleted natural wealth that could be found in nature. Another important aim not to be overlooked is the eradication of addictive drugs and poppy cultivation, and to turn the area into an eco-tourists' region. So far the persistent efforts by Her Majesty to help her subjects have met with considerable success.

In fact many female members of the royal family have embarked on the right trend of sustainable development of human and natural resources of this country and their efforts have yielded satisfactory results. The hill tribes of the north have practically abandoned the cultivation of poppies and switch to profitable highland agriculture, and their quality of life has improved impressively. Her Majesty the Queen has set the most admirable example of a Buddhist woman who has exercised her great compassion to protect and conserve nature and to promote a harmonious existence between humankind and nature. In her attempts to grow more trees, Her Majesty the Queen is attempting to give back to Mother Nature what we have taken away from her. For humankind to be healthy, nature must also be healthy. All things in nature are interrelated. So we must see ourselves not as the conquerors or masters of nature, or the planet, but as part of the entire interrelated natural world. We have to recognize that changes in nature will somehow produce an impact or have an effect on us. We simply cannot afford to ignore it and give the excuse that the ecosystem will somehow take care of itself. In our treatment of nature, we must take into account the widest range of repercussion that might be incurred, and direct our action into the right path to render it beneficial to all parties concerned, including nature.

In sum, it must be reiterated that development in the human world must be truly sound, healthy and ethical in essence. We must not aim at just preserving the world by holding on stubbornly to our concepts of materialism, competitive economic activities, restraint nature and even human rights. We need more than that. We need more than

compromise or restraint or tolerance. We need true understanding, true compassion, true love and most important of all, true freedom which surpasses physical freedom because it comes from within - from the depth of our mind and soul, and it sets us free from the binding claws of craving and desire - the desire to have or not to have, to be or not to be and to do or not to do for examples. In short it is freedom in the ultimate sense.

Her Majesty the Queen's project of 'Little House in the Vast Forest' enables us to perceive the delicate and intricate relation between humankind and nature. While nature nurtures us, provides us with all that we need to survive, it is only right, or proper, or decent that we should respect, treasure and add no more damage to it. While we can replace the depleted forest with newly planted trees, we cannot replace the crude oil that we extract from the underground, and we extract millions and millions of barrels a day. So it will not be too long before the oil wells dry up.

Once a species of animals becomes extinct, it is extinct forever, unless our scientists are so clever as to be able to re-create it. That leaves us with the stark reality that the ecological system is being so badly damaged by us that it is time for us to collect our senses and be sober. Stop getting too engrossed in the indulgence in material comforts at the expense of the well being of nature. If there were to be material development, let it be accompanied by spiritual development at the same time. In the busy bustles of our daily life, between sunrise and sunset and yet another sunrise, let us pause to ask ourselves: Have we lost the way in the entire process of human development ?

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## The Perception of Women in Buddhism

Bhikkhuni Dr. Yifa

### Abstract:

Since the early inception of the Buddhist sangha, women have sought, along with their male counterparts, to practice and propagate Buddhist wisdom and values. While women's inclusion in the sangha marked a significant step it was not without its difficulties and growing pains. Overcoming the general perception of the female body as inferior to the male, in both secular and spiritual endeavors, was not only a major obstacle in the past, but is a task still in progress today.

Only in the last century could we truly list significant strides toward the acceptance of women in areas previously off limits to them, based purely on gender. While occasional examples of exceptional women in positions of secular power have been known to occur throughout history, this is not the norm. Additionally, opportunities for leadership roles for women in the major religious traditions have been extremely rare, even to the point of being impossible. Males have had an almost exclusive dominance over the doctrinal and organizational aspects of all major religious institutions.

Even in Buddhism the inclusion of women in the sangha was originally met with opposition by the Buddha himself. A compromise, in the form of eight special rules, was made that allowed women into the order. The details surrounding this compromise, along with the development of many additional Vinaya regulations for nuns, have been of particular concern to modern scholars. Through these 'extra rules' women were placed in a subordinate position to the monks. In light of the current

social and academic climate that actively seeks gender equity, particularly in the West, the Buddhist perception of women has come under scrutiny.

In order to overcome any notions that have led to the perception that the inferiority of women is an accepted component of Buddhism, it is important for us to contextualize, first, the terms of the eight special rules. The subordinate role these rules placed on the nuns within the sangha was not without its parallel in the societies where Buddhism evolved.

Thus, these rules should be examined in the light of mutual interpenetration. Just as the Buddha's teachings were propagated by the sangha to influence society, society also was bound to influence the men and women that sought refuge in the sangha.

Buddhism was already engaged in challenging the social conventions of its time, through abandonment of caste-recognition in the sangha. The additional inclusion of women presented another set of challenges that had the potential to bring about obstacles and opposition to the budding movement. Thus, while women were offered the ability to participate in the sangha, they did so with the caveat of remaining subordinate to even the most junior monk.

Logistically of course, the very fact of bringing men and women together in a communal structure creates a variety of concerns if the practice of celibacy is to be maintained. Additionally, the protection of women from outsiders necessitated a reliance on the male members of the sangha. Reasons such as these called for additional rules governing the activities of women. As we investigate the special rules for women in more detail it may become clear that they have more to do with assuring the harmony and longevity of the sangha than simply as a misogynistic response to women.

Additionally, we must weigh the passages in early Buddhist literature that speak of women as inherently unable to achieve enlightenment, against those that clearly offer a view of women as equals in the soteriological goals of Buddhism. While women clearly have been cast in the role of temptress and hindrance to men's spiritual progress, their image has also been utilized to exemplify compassion and wisdom.

The skillful means utilized in Buddhist teachings can create contradictions for those who have yet to achieve the intended awakening. When we arrive at the conclusion that all dharmas are indeed empty, as the goddess pointed out to Sariputra in the Vimalakirti Sutra, we come to realize that gender concerns are superficial and part of conventional truth only.

Finally, we must examine the role of educational opportunities for women. Historically, women's unequal access to education has been one of the primary factors in their subordinate status, not only in the secular arena but also pertaining to positions of

authority and administration in Buddhist orders. The social norm of withholding access to higher education for women has only, in the past century, been remedied. Yet, this remedy has been far from global.

When women have access to educational opportunities they are able to confidently take on responsibilities that had previously been available only to men. The achievements of women in my own order, the Fo Guang Shan, exemplify this idea. Our Humanistic Buddhist movement places emphasis on this world, this life, and this human being. Thus, through educational opportunities our members, both male and female, are able to access a variety of socially engaged career paths that enable them to be of service to all sentient beings, and help relieve suffering.

My own ability to speak with you today is due to the opportunities provided to me through our order's dedication to education. Our nuns in Taiwan and elsewhere across the globe are realizing success academically, professionally, and spiritually due to the open access to higher education. Our women have taken on leadership roles in temple administration, translation projects, education, publishing, charity foundations and many others endeavors.

Our tradition has also maintained a lineage of full ordination for women, which allows our nuns to achieve parity of status with our monks, as respected teachers of the dharma. However, the career paths open for women through our order is not limited to only those who seek full ordination. Our Grand Master, Hsing Yun, has made available opportunities for women in a semi-monastic capacity and through lay-organizations. By granting these women educational opportunities and various outlets for them to participate in socially engaged Buddhism our order is providing proof that women are not perceived as inferior in Buddhism.

Just as Buddhism of the early sangha reflected the social context of the past, modern Buddhism is now reflecting the social context of the present. Thus, to remain relevant in today's world, Buddhists must exercise the skillful means to overcome outdated conventions concerning women. The flaw of perceiving women negatively is not a flaw in Buddhism, but rather, it is a flaw in the human condition that can be overcome through the cultivation and propagation of wisdom.

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## Buddhist Women's Participation in Social Development

*Dr. Chirayu Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya*

It is a great honour for me to be invited to speak to you today to celebrate the day of Vesaka. For us Buddhists, the Lord Buddha and his enlightenment are the heart of our religion – therefore to commemorate his birth, enlightenment and his nirvana on the same day worldwide together adds strength to all our lives.

Before I start on my main theme for today, - the role of Buddhist women and sustainable development, - I would like to make the observation that in Thailand Buddhists live together peacefully with other Thais belonging to other religions. I think that there are two main reasons to explain this phenomenon. The first is that Buddhist teachings extend peace and goodwill to all. The second main reason is that our Head of State, His Majesty the King, is the Protector and Promoter of all religions. Therefore, under normal and natural conditions, differences in religions do not have any divisive effects in the development of Thailand.

Having made this observation, I would now like to propose that Buddhism has played a very strong and positive role in the development of Thailand. Thailand is predominantly Buddhist and rural in nature - over 80% of Thais are Buddhists and live in rural villages. The centre in most of these rural villages are the Buddhist temples which serve the communities surrounding them. The abbot, who is knowledgeable about the Lord Buddha's teachings, is a highly respected person and a leader of the community. At this point, I would also like to make the further observation that the women in these villages are generally more devout Buddhists than the men. Alcohol, gambling and other temptations seem to be able to lure the men away from the Lord Buddha's teachings more than the women. Therefore the Buddhist women have to play a very prominent stabilizing role by linking the temples and family lives in Thai villages.

In these villages, the greatest dangers which threaten the livelihood of the people are floods and droughts, agricultural failures, low prices for agricultural products, poor infrastructural facilities and shortcomings in health and education opportunities. It is



under these circumstances that Their Majesties the King and Queen and successive governments have for over 50 years tried to lift the Thai people out of the vicious circle of poverty.

His Majesty the King has developed a development philosophy which most Thais now know which is called “The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy”. The essence of the Philosophy comprises 3 main elements namely moderation, knowledge and resilience against uncertainties. Practising these 3 elements in your life guided by the Buddhist values of integrity, honesty, perseverance and sharing with your community can make your life becoming better step by step in a sustainable way.

Travelling constantly all over the country year after year, His Majesty the King would advise the government mainly on water and matters relating to agricultural projects. Her Majesty the Queen would concentrate on family matters such as health, education and supplementary incomes.

Due to the time limitation today, I would now like to concentrate my presentation to Her Majesty the Queen’s role in supporting His Majesty’s development philosophy. Her Majesty has been able to work through the Buddhist women and the Buddhist temples with strong cooperation from government agencies and her own Support Foundation.

In each Buddhist village she visits, she would visit the local Buddhist temple to make merits and converse with the abbot. (Show pictures) The volunteer doctors would be treating the patients – referring the serious ones to provincial, regional or even Bangkok Hospitals. (Show pictures)

On supplementary incomes, Her Majesty would always be on the look-out for cottage products and crafts which the local people are good at or if there are appropriate local raw materials. Then she would be thinking how to produce them using the local talent and yet be good enough to market where there is purchasing power. This process culminated in 1976 in the creation of the Support Foundation (The Foundation for the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit) which now has twenty-six lines of products. (Pictures of products shown and described)

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate how honoured I feel as a lay Buddhist to be asked to come and speak today to celebrate the United Nations Day of Vesaka. It is a

great joy to celebrate Vesaka in the year of His Majesty's 60 year reign, the longest reign of any living monarch in the world. For over 50 years, Their Majesties the King and Queen have travelled to visit every corner of the country to help their people towards sustainable development. The Buddhist women, - I hope I have managed to demonstrate – have played their strong part under the leadership and support of Her Majesty the Queen within the overall development effort. It is very gratifying that The United Nation has decided to offer the Special Lifetime Award to His Majesty the King for his extraordinary contribution to human development later this month. This will expose the world to much more information than I have been able to present today in this very limited time. I hope all of you will keep up your interest in this subject matter in the future.

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## Buddhist Women and Social Work

*Dr. Suteera Vichitranonda*

Taking the true spirit of Buddhism as the foundation of our work at the Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women (APSW), we cherish the practice of compassion, extending our ways of mindfulness to the extent possible to alleviate the sufferings of women and children who come to us through our social work programs.

The Association for the Promotion of the Status for Women (APSW), since its establishment over 25 years ago, has provided assistance to about 50,000 women and children. The problems that women who have sought help from our Emergency Home include physical, emotional and sexual abuses including abandonment, unplanned pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, forced prostitution and rapes. On any single day, there are on average 120-130 women and children staying with us. They may be referred to us by the police, other NGOs or government agencies, hospitals or they come on their own knowing that we always welcome them. The length of their stay varies and very much so depend on their readiness.

The Emergency Home of the APSW provides temporary shelter, food, health care, rehabilitation as well as counseling services for the clients. It also facilitates the empowerment of women through provision of education, life skill and vocational skill training so that once the women leave the Emergency Home, they could be more economically independent and self-reliant and fit well in the society. Our services are free of charge and we operate one a 24 hour basis

Our approach in the caring system centers on the empowerment process and is woman-centered. The Four Virtues of loving kindness, compassion, joy in the joy of others and equanimity have been the principles that our social workers and psychologists abide by in their work. Adapted for use interactively in our social context, they help us to see each other more truly and experience the depths of our interconnections. In working with women who confront life crisis and feel that they have no way out, the Buddha's teaching as expressed in the Four Noble Truths – suffering, the cause of suffering, cessation of suffering and the way to the cessation of suffering which cover the eightfold path, has served as the underlying foundation of our approach. However, we

\* President of the Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women, President of Gender and Development Research Institute Foundation, and President of Mahapajapati Buddhist College Foundation

have also extended the process in scope to include a focus on systemic suffering, with a particular reference to the institutionalized caused of gender oppression. Our experiences have indicated that being aware of the systemic suffering helps expedite that cessation of suffering at the individual level. Through our late founder who was the Buddhist nun during the last 10 years of her life, we have had opportunities to have nuns teach and lead meditation for the women at the Emergency Home. We believe that meditation can assist in personal transformation.

For us at the APSW, the services of enduring love and concern are performed quietly inconspicuously and privately for over two decades. We have provided support and solace to many who could find no place in the rigid patriarchal family system of the society.

In another aspect of our work at APSW, the Gender and Development Research Institute, which is its research arm, mandated to promote the status of women and gender equality through action research and policy advocacy, has been working on the overall status of the nuns in Thailand. Noting that the status has been ill-defined, we have taken as our task to campaign for the clarification and to ensure that the space for Thai Buddhist nuns has been appropriately demarcated. May I just be somewhat more specific here. The interpretations of the status of the nuns are different among government agencies. While the Ministry of Education, which was responsible for the religious affairs at the time we made an inquiry, regarded nuns as “upasika” or lay persons, the Ministry of Interior regards nuns as “nakbuat” or those religious practitioners, non-lay persons. Hence, they are denied political rights, yet they are not entitled to any privileges such as free public transportation or education as they are regarded as lay persons.

This is the point at which the APSW has been closely linked with nuns and could see the great potential where principles of socially engaged Buddhism could be well applied.

The APSW has also been actively involved with the Nuns College, or Mahapajapati Buddhist College. This was through the late Venerable Maechee Khunying Kanitha Wichiencharoen, the founder of APSW. She devoted her last years to promote Buddhism education for nuns. The APSW has been involved from the very first step when the Nuns



College was being established. It has been granted the status of a campus of Mahamongkut Rajawittayalai. During the first three years of operation, the teaching was conducted at the facilities of the Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women in Bangkok before the College site at Pakthongchai District, Nakorn Rajasima Province was ready in 2003.

After having been fully established in Pakthongchai District, the close linkages between the College and the Association still remain through today. Support is provided to the extent possible, including administrative support, provision of scholarships for the students, practical training site for students prior to their graduation, facilitation for short term training and provision of training instructors among others.

Through observations of the practices of the students of Mahapajapati Buddhist College, one can clearly see that the great contribution of “women in religion” could lessen the suffering of other women or to help in the prevention of such sufferings

Situated in Pakthongchai District of Nakorn Rajasima Province, the College has an area of about 37 rai or about 17 acres. At present, the campus is well equipped. The College has produced two classes of graduates already. Currently, for the four years of undergraduate program, there are about 80 students altogether. We have seen a very positive progress as years go by. Apart from the academic program that the students have to take as required, the College has taken a very positive step when they provide services to the communities. The students take the leading roles together with their leading administrators who are nuns and instructors. Some of the programs or activities organized for the communities include the following:

1. Sunday Buddhist classes are organized for children.
2. Buddhabutre camps for students from the nearby schools are periodically organized. Students spend a few nights at the College and during daytime activities were organized for them. Meditation and religion sessions are included in the program but they are conducted in such a way that the students are happily engaged.
3. Some vocational skills training courses have been offered to people in the communities.
4. Counseling services have been provided by the nun instructors/ administrators to the villagers who confront domestic violence.

Looking at the very last activity of providing counseling services to the women in the community, we are given a reminder that for women who face crisis such as family

crisis, there is almost no one to turn to. Our way of life is that religious leaders have been and still are our soothers for many, if not all our problems we face in life. For some women, they may find difficulties in relating some issues to the monks. If there are female religious practitioners / leaders whether they be Bhikkunis or nuns, women will no longer be left alone to solve their problems.

These are some of the examples of the socially engaged activities that the nuns and the students of the Nuns College are conducting for the communities. We could very well see that their responsible situation is not only to help people practice spirituality or the transformation or the lives of individual Buddhists but in addressing other needs of the communities as well.

The extracurricular work of the students of the Nuns College and the work that the APSW through its Emergency Home including other socially responsible organizations, are not different in the rationale at all. Such work is an extension of mindfulness practice into relationships, into the society.

Therefore, The explanation of the Vietnamese Zen Master of engaged Buddhism is very much relevant here. He says :

“Mindfulness is the capacity of being present in the here and the now, living deeply each moment of your life. If you are really there, you understand the suffering of the people around you, and you will be able to do something in order to remove their suffering. You will be able to refrain from doing something that can create suffering”.

Women do have potential and being Buddhists, our frame of thoughts and minds are firmly rooted in compassion, in kindness. Some of us may not be monastic centered, yet they demonstrate a decent moral living, extending their care to those less fortunate. They do practice mindfulness in their daily living and that is the heart of the matter.

In conclusion, women could play instrumental role in bringing mindful living into society. Particularly if they are “women in religion” as bhikkunis or nuns, they are in the best position to fill up the gaps for women. The practice of mindfulness brings the capacity to understand and be compassionate. It will greatly reduce the amount of suffering in the heart and in our society.

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## FORMATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE & INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

The members of the United Nations Vesak Joint International Organizing Committee met at MCU, Bangkok on July 29 – 30, 2006.

At the meeting, a decision was made that the United Nations Vesak Joint International Organizing Committee (JIOC) be known as United Nations Vesak International Organizing Committee (IOC) and the committee also expanded.

Under the IOC, two committees were formed namely, IOC (Ad Hoc Committee) and the International Secretariat which is the Working Committee. The details of the Committees are as below:

### International Organizing Committee

No.	Name	Country	Positions
01	Most Ven. Prof. Dr. Dharmakosarjarn	Thailand	Chairperson
02	Ven. Dr. T Dhammaratana	France	Vice Chairperson I
03	Ven. Dr. Shih Ming Yi	Singapore	Vice Chairperson II
04	Ven. Dr. Phra Wisutthiphattharathada	Thailand	Vice Chairperson III
05	Ven. Dr. Phra Suthivorayan	Thailand	Secretary
06	Ven. Thitadhammo	Singapore	Assistant Secretary
07	Ven. Phrakhrupalad Suvathanavachirakhun	Thailand	Assistant Secretary
08	Mr. Henry Deng	Australia	Members
09	Ven. Thich Quang	BaAustralia	Members
10	Dr. Yon Ten	Bhutan	Members
11	Ven. Hiek Sopheap, Preah Tepmoly	Cambodia	Members
12	Ven. Noeuth Ven (Siladharo)	Cambodia	Members

No.	Name	Country	Positions
13	Ven. Thich Thien Tam	Canada	Members
14	Ven. Thich Nhu Dien	Germany	Members
15	Ven. Dr. Satyapala	India	Members
16	Mr. Satish Modi	India	Members
17	Ven. Sanghasena Mahathera	India	Members
18	Ven. Pannyavaro	Indonesia	Members
19	Ven. Sik Hui Siong	Indonesia	Members
20	Mr. Nobuo Toyoda	Japan	Members
21	Dr. Hu Sung Hyun	Korea	Members
22	Ven. Bhikkhuni Dr. Myung Seong	Korea	Members
23	Ven. Dr. Jinwol Lee	Korea	Members
24	Ven. Sayadej Vongsopha	Lao	Members
25	Mr. Goh Seng Chai	Malaysia	Members
26	Ven. Dr. Ashin Nyanissara	Myanmar	Members
27	Ven. Rahula	Nepal	Members
28	Mr. Egil Lothe	Norway	Members
29	Ven. Dr. Phra Chatree Hemapandha	Russia	Members
30	Ven. Zorigto Gomboev	Russia	Members
31	Ven. Seck Kwang Phing	Singapore	Members
32	Ven. Akuratiye Nanda Nayaka Thero	Sri Lanka	Members
33	Ven. Narampanawe Ananda Thero	Sri Lanka	Members
34	Ven. Rassagala Seewali Thera	Sri Lanka	Members
35	Ven. Bhikhuni WuxingKoa-Hsiong		Members
36	Most Ven. Phramahakanacharyacheendharmasamadhivatra	Thailand	Members
37	Most Ven. Phramahakananamdhammapanyathiwat	Thailand	Members
38	Most Ven. Phra Theppariyattivimol	Thailand	Members
39	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phramaha Somjin Sammapanyo	Thailand	Members
40	Ven. Asst. Prof. Dr. Phra Suthithammanuwat	Thailand	Members
41	Ven. Dr. Phrakhrupalat Sampiphatmethajarn	Thailand	Members
42	Ven. Dr. Phra Anil Sakya Sugandho	Thailand	Members
43	Ven. Dr. Phra Srisittimuni	Thailand	Members



No.	Name	Country	Positions
44	Ven. Phra Sithawatchamethi	Thailand	Members
45	Meachee Sansanee Sathiarasut	Thailand	Members
46	Mr. Phallop Thaiarry	Thailand	Members
47	Mr. Anurut Vongvanij	Thailand	Members
48	Mr. Pisit Jarernsuk	Thailand	Members
49	Ms. Jularat Punyakorn	Thailand	Members
50	Dr. Boontawee Sujikul	Thailand	Members
51	Dr. Preecha Kanthiya	Thailand	Members
52	Ven. Dr. K. Dhammasami	UK	Members
53	Ven. Dr. Phramaha Laow Pannyasiri	UK	Members
54	Phra Videsdhamakavee	USA	Members
55	Rev. Sean Thompson	USA	Members
56	Ven. Chao Chu	USA	Members
57	Most Ven. Thich Thien Tam	Vietnam	Members
58	Ven. Prof. Dr. Le Manh That	Vietnam	Members
59	Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu	Vietnam	Members

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## IOC Ad-hoc Committee

No.	Name	Country	Positions
01	Most Ven. Prof. Dr. Dharmakosarjarn	Thailand	Chairperson
02	Ven. Dr. T Dhammaratana	France	Vice-Chairperson I
03	Ven. Dr. Shih Ming Yi	Singapore	Vice-Chairperson II
04	Ven. Dr. Phra Wisutthiphatharathada	Thailand	Vice Chairperson III
05	Ven. Dr. Phra Suthivorayan	Thailand	Secretary
06	Ven. Thitadhammo	Singapore	Assistant Secretary
07	Ven. Phrakhrupalad Suvathanavachirakhun	Assistant	Secretary
08	Ven. Thich Quang Ba	Australia	Members
09	Mr. Nobuo Toyoda	Japan	Members
10	Mr. Goh Seng Chai	Malaysia	Members
11	Ven. Dr. Ashin Nyanissara	Myanmar	Members
12	Ven. Dr Akuratiye Nanda Nayaka Thero	Sri Lanka	Members
13	Ven. Dr. K. Dhammasami	UK	Members
14	Prof. Dr. Le Manh That	Vietnam	Members
15	Ven. Chao Chu	USA	Members
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18	Most Ven. Phra Theppariyattivimol	Thailand	Members
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20	Ven. Asst. Prof. Dr. Phra Suthithammanuwat	Thailand	Members
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22	Ven. Dr. Phra Anil Sakya Sugandho	Thailand	Members
23	Ven. Dr. Phra Srisittimuni	Thailand	Members
24	Ven. Phra Sithawatchamethi	Thailand	Members
25	Meachee Sansanee Sathiarasut	Thailand	Members
26	Mr. Phallop Thaiarry	Thailand	Members
27	Mr. Anurut Vongvanij	Thailand	Members
28	Mr. Pisit Jarernsuk	Thailand	Members

No.	Name	Country	Positions
29	Ms. Jularat Punyakorn	Thailand	Members
30	Dr. Boontawee Sujikul	Thailand	Members
31	Dr. Preecha Kanthiya	Thailand	Members
32	Ven. Dr. Phra Chatree Hemapandha	Russia	Members

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03	Ven Thich Nhat Tu	Vietnam	Vice-Chairperson II
04	Ven Thitadhammo	Singapore	Secretary
05	Mr Goh Seng Chai	Malaysia	Assistant Secretary
06	Ven Dr Phramaha Hansa	Thailand	Assistant SecretaryMembers
07	Ven. Dr. Phra Chatree Hemapandha	Russia	Members
08	Ven. Dr. Phra Anil Sakya Sugandho	Thailand	Members
09	Ven. Phrakhrupalad Suvathanavachirakhun	Thailand	Members
10	Ven. Phra Sithawatchamethi	Thailand	Members
11	Ven. Dr Akuratiye Nanda Nayaka Thero	Sri Lanka	Members
12	Mr. Phallop Thaiarry	Thailand	Members
13	Prof Dr Kim Hong Koo	Korea	Members
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16	Dr. Patraporn Sirikarnchana	Thailand	Members

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  2. Ven Thitadhammo
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