Contents

Preface

Buddhism is deeply ingrained among its adherents in Asia. Taking different forms in different lands, Buddhism permeates the multitude of cultures that make up Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and in all other countries of Asia.
As in every religion, the basic concept of Buddhism lies within compassion and love; as in every religion, the root meaning of Buddhism is that which-binds men together - and which binds the loose ends of impulses, desires and various other processes of each individual. Buddhism comes out of life and can never be divorced from it. The Buddhist emphasis on moderation, justice, patience and kindness, its essentially human qualities, are revealing clues to behavior in Asia. A contrast between Mainland and Insular Southeast Asia appears clearly in the field of religion. The mainland peoples are largely Buddhist in faith while those of the islands are Muslim and Christian.

There are also resemblances: deference, politeness, the desire for agreement, are profoundly embedded in cultures as superficially different as Buddhist Thailand, the Christian Philippines and Muslim Indonesia. And throughout the whole of the area there has always been a tendency to blending. Later religions diffused through earlier faiths. Examples are the syncretism’s of Siva-Buddha

in the Khmer Empire and Indonesia, and the more recent (and more complex!) Vietnamese syncretism of the Caodai, which combines elements of Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Confucianism and animism.

In Southeast Asia, syncretism is the attempt to sink differences and effect union between religions, or philosophical schools. In other words, effecting union is the higher goal, for which it can be worth sacrificing principle and dogma. Moreover, in the process of development in Southeast Asia, religions have attenuated much of their dogmatism.

What is Buddhism? According to the teachers, there are two ways to define it. There is a way to define Buddhism as The Teachings of the Buddha. These teachings cover a wide variety of subjects, contained in the sermons of the Buddha, preached over a period of forty-five years. In the beginning Buddhism was essentially a Hindu reform movement, and its philosophy owes much to Hindu notions of *maya\ which is the illusory nature of existence, and **moksha** enlightenment. The big difference is that the Buddha avoided the Hindu polytheism and the caste system. Buddhism was initially a practical, moral philosophy free from the priestly Brahman hierarchy. The eventual message of the Buddha is that suffering can be ended by realizing the ultimate reality ending up with Nirvana.

There is also a way to define Buddhism as 'The True State of the Nature of the World', which is consisting of
1. Mind, which can be described as mental states (citta) which are composed of mental properties 'cetasika';
2. Matter or form, which is called **xrupa** and
3. Nirvana, which is the annihilation of greed, aversion and delusion.

These three factors,

- citta/cetasika,
- rupa and
- Nirvana, are ultimate reality.

This is Buddhism. Buddhism has a commitment to a life of spiritual culture, issuing into an all-pervasive pattern of behaviour. Like other religions, it is occupied with the task of living and adjustment to the various demands of life and society. Buddhism offers no deity, no concept of divine revelation, no dogma to be taken on faith. In Buddhism, there are no such things like views, because when analyzed, views are all found to be onesided obsession rooted in some strong and often unseen emotion. Instead, there must be right understanding of things as they really are.

Dhamma is a difficult word to translate into English: the Law, the Teaching; the Truth Within Us; the Doctrine, have all been used. Dhamma is a fusing of rational and ethical elements. Dhamma is that which ought to be done, that which is established as necessary. The Whole Duty of Man1 is a good phrase to express its comprehensive meaning . Dhamma comes very close to St. Paul's

inward law, to conscience. Dhamma is almost an inner light. "Make what is right become", is what the Buddha said about this. Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha together form the Triple Gem. When going to a temple, Buddhists recite (in Pali) passages and verses venerating and praising the Triple Gem. Pali is the ancient language which the Buddha spoke.

Buddhists dedicate themselves to follow, understand and realize inwardly the meaning of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, because they see therein the marks of supreme and fearless Truth. Buddhism includes the most exalted philosophy yet achieved by man, combined with a psychology from which the West is only slowly beginning to learn.

Buddhism appreciates and cultivates important human capabilities such as

- kindness,
- generosity,
- patience,
- tolerance,
- cooperation and
- compassion.

These are all the qualities one might wish for in one's family and friends, Modern society must be very careful not to undervalue these qualities, otherwise people are reduced to a sum of the jobs they do plus the things they consume.

There is nothing which a Buddhist is forbidden to question. As a Buddhist, I am free to question any part of the Buddha's teachings: indeed my Teachers have encouraged me to do so. There is no teaching about which a Buddhist must just close his mind and blindly believe. This is because faith, in the Buddhist way, is not a blind quality but is combined with wisdom. My Teachers stressed that Buddhism has no philosophy which is divorced from either its practice or its realization. Buddhist philosophy must have a secure basis in virtue, collectedness and wisdom, with an attitude of respect towards any other religion. Like every religion, Buddhism emphasizes the spiritual goal as the real end of life and its activities. My Teachers try to live their philosophy to the full in every situation of life, and have always expected their students to strive to do likewise.

"Complications do not exist in Buddhism", said a Laotian monk to me, "the complications which exist in men's religious belief are the result of the complications in their own hearts". "If one would find Buddhism difficult to understand, then it is because of the difficulties which are found in oneself,

Acknowledgements

This book originally was written in the ‘80’s while traveling in Asia was limited and discovering or even uncovering things was still difficult. Peter Gutter was a good friend at that time and he was very interested in Buddhism in

all its particular aspects especially in context to the political situation in Southeast Asia. In the original version he did profound research of the position of Buddhist in connection to different Governments.

In this book I will use still a part of his work as even for today it still stands. His interest in the organization of the Sangha and the ordination of monks gives a clear view of what has and often is still going on in the organizations of the diffent directions.

To me organizations have always been a far distance call as the Buddha did need to organize people to promote his vision to the people and needed to organize the followers, but he only reached the enlightment due to his individual practice and not because of being organized.

A book about Buddhism is not complete without a good historical and organizational overview but it is information to provide you with possibilities in life. Buddhism is based on your own individual actions. Your own actions will be followed by re-actions. With other words to put youself inside an organization will never relieve you from duties nor responsibilities. To organize yourself will bring more duties and responsibilities.

In our modern society we are all organized, willingly or unwillingly. We are organized in cities, villages, communities and families. Like the Buddhist Sangha it brings duties and responsibilities. If we do not enter the Sangha to become a part of that we will need to take the same responsibilities for our family and friends, our organization is where we live and work.

In my past I worked mainly with people who had severe problems as addiction, aggesion disorders, mental illness and often were considered asocial. At my everyday work I have tried to give them a place, make them share my live and teached them responsibilities. It is often hard to discover that when we are trying to help the mind is out of our control. I lost my best friends during the process. Chris Troch chose suicide as his last resort after he suffered severely from a life of depression. When his girlfriend killed herself by hanging in his own bedroom his mind could no longer cope with it and he became from bad to worse. The Western society could only offer him talks and medicine but no mental help. The result was an escape to death, Chris only reached 43 years of age.

Fred Bierlee was side by side with me everyday for over 15 years. His efforts went way pass by a friendship as he became a second father of my youngest child. He had a schizophrenic disorder and heard voices in his head all day. At some days it was good but at other days he was terrified. Training did help him. The more painful and harder a training the softer the voices in his head. The only person who really could help him was my daughter. As a child she accepted him for who he was, a giant man with a small heart. But when the child became a woman he felt that he lost the battle. He needed to search other

ways and found them in the use of medicines to enhance his training and more. It all made him lose his personality. The fear of aging and the lack of real friends did the rest. He died at age 53 giving up hope to live.

Living is never considered easy. Above I only gave a few samples of recent past. To survive this life we need to find stability in mind and body. Often people talk about balance, personally I do not agree with the word. Balance is an equal position where all movement or motion is cancelled, there is no progress nor change. Live is movement, change, a constant look for stability. Krisnamurti mentioned once that there is yet but one constant factor in life ; change. No moment is the same, no action is repeated exactly the same way. Science wish to prove that they ae exact when copying a test in the same way and consider it prove when it happens. But according to the saying of Krisnamurti there is always change, so we need to expect other outcome.

In this book we go to search stability in our life, we search the ways we are able to use and comply to and every day situation. As I did learn from the most difficult moments the value opf a positive action oriented life I want to share with you the knowledge it gave me.

This book is written to share life with you and in honor of life I devote the sales turnover of this book to a charity that will be chosen by the participants, readers and writers of this book.

Thankfulness and gratitude

About the writer

Arnaud van der Veere is born in the Netherlands in 1960. The sixties are know for the turbulent changes of the Western world. The changes were numerous ;
- political changes, people demanded a more social lifestyle and work for all
- morally, woman demanded their rights to be equal to men and make their own decisions
- ‘freedom’ such as the free use of all kind of drug, free sex
- changes in education and lifestyle
- changes in religions

And so many more changes.

I was born under the Asian light my parents always told me. Since I was a child my interest in Asia was strong. The birth was not easy, upin birth I had a heavy form of Asthma and between birth and my eleventh I often did face death in the eyes. Due to my inborn asthma I had to train sport and needed a controlled regular lifestyle. Since birth I

- never did smoke
- never took alcohol in any way
- never did use drugs

- never did gamble
- never made use of prostituetes

nor had addictive habits else than sport, cause I needed sport for my health and survival.

From the age of 4 I developed a passion for Martial arts. At that time Judo was the only way to train them. From age 8 I discovered the art of Muay Thai and was fascinated by the elegant but also very hard way of fighting as a real warrior. Being a warrior in the ring was to me an ideal that I reached soon after. Through regious training in Thailand I became a known fighter. But fighting alone never seemed to satisfy me. I was always looking on the other side of the coin. Physical exhaustion brought only a part of the satisfaction and at some times I felt empty and in need of a mental and moral support.

Growing up in the Netherlands implied directly going to church and learn the Christian believe. I studied the bible and many related scriptures but saw and felt more often that the people used religion as a tool to gain something and not follow the words of the scriptures. To most the words were spoken in the church and forgotten when the door closed behind them. Christians seem to be lieve that their deeds where forgotten as soon as the prayers ended. In my vision that was impossible as why should Jezus die for the sins of others when they never did learn from his words ? That was a question that still goes unanswered.

Buddhism came in my life at age 12 as it was introduced to me by Peter Bacas, my Aikido teacher. He teached us meditation and concentration but forgot to point us more to the role of scriptures and teachings of the Buddha. I guess he did forgot to do so on purpose as he was proabably afraid of our Christian parents. Peter Bacas was of Indonesian origin he died in his 60’s, much to young.

In 1975 I visited Thailand for the first time. It was a true eye opener. The temples, the monks and all the training made me aware of another world an other perception of life.

How to use this book

Chapter 1

The Life of the Buddha
Most chronologies state that the Buddha lived probably from 563 to 483 B.C., but some place his birth three years earlier. The Buddhafs life spanned the Babylonian captivity of the Jews, and his contemporaries included Confucius (551-479 B.C.) and the Hebrew prophet Zachariah. The child who was to become the Buddha elected to be bom among the Sakiyas, who lived in a kingdom in what is now Nepal. His father, King Suddhodhana, was the elected ruler of the Sakiyas. It is recorded that at the time of birth of the King's son,

various unusual occurrences took place which showed that the newborn child was indeed a very extraordinary being. The wise men who had been called in by the King, foretold that the infant Prince Siddhattha had two possible careers. He could become a mighty emperor ruling vast dominions; or otherwise leave the household life to gain supreme enlightenment by meditating alone.

Enlightenment would enable the Prince to show the Way to countless other beings for their welfare and happiness, this being the prediction of one seer. The King, of the warrior caste, of course liked the idea of the former career and certainly did not approve of the latter. The King made every effort to distract the young Prince from thoughts of renunciation. The King determined to keep Siddhattha well-amused within three palaces, one each for the hot, wet and cold seasons.

In particular, the King wanted to make sure that his son would never see

- a sick person,
- one grown old,
- a dead body or
- a wandering monk

since it had been predicted that if he did, they would be the cause of his leaving the household life. Therefore, anything was done so that the young Prince might remain content with worldly pleasures.

But the King had left out of his reckoning one factor about which he could do nothing, namely that the Prince was really a Bodhisattva: someone who, ages ago, had dedicated himself to supreme enlightenment.
The stories of the previous lives of the Buddha are called 'Jatakam1. There are five-hundred of these stories corresponding to five-hundred of his former existences.

A person who is a Bodhisattva cannot be deceived into accepting the decidedly inferior pleasu-res with which sense-desire is associated. A Bodhisattva strives to become perfect in virtues such as patience, wisdom, generosity, morality, kindness, purity, compassion and concentration. According to Buddhist faith, the accumulated merits and the liberating wisdom develop through a series of lives, indeed over vast periods of time.

One day, when he was nearly thirty, Prince Siddhattha requested his father that he might view his future realm outside the palaces, which he had never seen. His father gave in to this request and then ordered a hasty cleaning of the city. The people had instructions that the Prince should not on any account see a sick person, one grown old, a dead body or a wandering monk. However, one by one these sights appeared to Siddhattha anyway, and upon seeing the wandering monk, the Prince thought:f'Maybe that way of life may enable me to find out how to relieve mankind from their sufferings".

And though he was married and even had a son, Siddhattha gave up his wealth

and left his palaces. Legend offers a touching picture of the young Prince, his mind set on a life of renunciation, getting up in the middle of the night to kiss his sleeping wife and little son farewell. Then he took a yellow robe, the sign of a religious man, and went into the forest in order to gain knowledge from religious teachers. There were a lot of religious men of all kinds in India at that time. The Hindus and Brahmins were already among them. Although Siddhattha studied with them and practised up to the high meditative levels which they had attained, he was not entirely satisfied, for the answers he sought to the questions about the world, birth and death, were not yet clear to him. It seemed as if something besides meditation was needed, so Siddhattha applied a method still popular as a religious discipline in India: that of extreme asceticism.

The lonely Gotama, for such Siddhattha must now be called, went to live in a forest and sat under a wild fig tree which is now known as the Bodhi tree. Bodhi means tree of wisdom. Gotama systematically starved himself until his body resembled a skeleton, and he refused to wash. In such a way he has taught us that those who aspire for Enlightenment must be ready to sacrifice everything. The severe practice he tried for six years, and then he found that this was only exterior renunciation: only the renunciation of bodily comfort. Gotama discovered that by giving pain to the body, the mind was not quietened. He perceived that at least some bodily strength was necessary to meditate successfully, and so cope with the lack of inner renunciation of desires. He learned about the 'Middle Way; perhaps this is more accurately translated as the Middle Path of Practice, avoiding all extremes.

Then Gotama took a bath in the river, had a meal of rice pudding, and went to the famous Bodhi tree at the place now called Bodh-Gaya. Gotama sought not merely to abandon the remaining subtle tendencies to false views and evil conduct, but also to break free from the bonds of conventional goodness. Having made goodness a strong part of one's character, and weakened evil, one has eventually to relinquish even attachment to the good, for perfect Enlightenment lies beyond all attachments. Gotama passed beyond the bonds of human nature, when he discovered the Infinite.

As he reviewed his spiritual progress, he thought about the common belief that man's spirit was continually living, dying, and being reborn again, in human or other forms. The way out lay in the ancient Vedic belief that the world and man's personal existence in it were just illusions.

Gotama saw for himself that people are always looking for trouble for themselves, this being the origin of human suffering. The trouble consists in the continual desire to possess, to have, to taste, to obtain more and more; what people consider pleasant are already the causes of their own suffering. And if man could somehow shatter his illusion of personal existence, he could escape from **Sctmsara** which is the cycle of rebirth, the cycle of suffering: and enter Nirvana. Gotama practiced meditation under the Bodhi tree in Bodh-Gaya,

south of Patna on the Ganges. And with a mind calm and settled, he arrived successively at three great knowledges.

- The first was knowledge of past lives.
- The second was about the arising and passing-away of beings according to their volitional actions (kamma or 'karma').
- The third was knowledge that the prison of unknowing must be shattered before the excellence of Buddhahood can be found.

Gotama thought over Dependent Origination Qpaticcasamuppadd) both forward and back. A description of such in detail can be found in the section of this essay about the Teachings of the Buddha.

And one early morning Gotama felt the most profound insight anyone could ever have. He called his experience Enlightenment, and ever afterwards he was known by the title Buddha, or Enlightened One.
Then the Buddha thought of his five **erstwhile** meditation companions and perceiving that they were staying in the Deer Park at Benares, he went to them. He taught his First Discourse, the famous "Setting in Motion of the Wheel of Truth". The five ascetics then became the first five Buddhist monks; they later attained Nirvana as well. The Order of Buddhist Monks, or Sangha, was established and rules were gradually formed for its internal administration. Likewise an Order of Nuns was established at the request of Buddha's aunt Mahapajapati. Many of the Buddha's relatives chose to ordain as monks and nuns (his own wife and son ordained as respective nun and monk also after some time). The Orders are still open for monks and nuns who wish to devote their total energies to Buddhism.

Gotama was thirty-five at the time of his enlightenment and for forty-five years thereafter gave the Dhamma to all who wished to hear.

Chapter 2

The Teachings of the Buddha
The spiritual training of a Buddhist is divided into three parts, known respectively as

- morality,
- meditation and
- wisdom.

A morally blameless or virtuous life is the basis of all other achieve-ments. All Buddhists, whether Theravada or Mahayana, subscribe to the Four Noble Truths.

The Four Noble Truths represent a linked chain of reasoning leading from spiritual bondage to freedom:

- I All forms of existence are subject to 'dukkha (unsatisfactoriness, suffering, disease, imperfectness);
- II. Dukkha is caused by desire or craving yanha
- III. The extinction of tanha results in the extinction of dukkha (this

state of extinction is the annihilation of greed, aversion and delusion: called Nirvana);

- IV. Nirvana is attained by following the Noble Eightfold Path (atthangika-magga).

The Eightfold Path may be called the Middle Way, since ideally it avoids both extreme austerity and extreme sensuality. When you practise the Eightfold Path you realize the Four Noble Truths - and thus Enlightenment. Numerous interpretations of Nirvana have been proposed, but the scriptures, in the absence of a precise explanation from the Buddha, throw little light on the subject. One point is certain: Nirvana is the end of suffering. Some teachers claim that Nirvana is a state of sublime selflessness, the ultimate reality, eternal serenity. Other teachers state that Enlightenment is not exactly the same as Nirvana, but that it even goes beyond Nirvana: one should eventually have to leave the bliss of Nirvana to proceed to Enlightenment. When the Buddhist has fully experienced, realized, the Four Noble Truths, he casts off not only all desire to live, but also all desire not to live. Thus the circuit of rebirths is severed. The Eightfold Path, properly followed, destroys defilements that are the cause of suffering.

"Defilements can only be destroyed with wisdom. The practice of the Eightfold Path develops wisdom. Wisdom is the key to enlightenment", my Teacher said. The Noble Eightfold Path consists of:

1. Right Understanding (called samma-ditt in Pali language);
2. Right Mindedness, also called: Right Thought ('samma-sati');
3. Right Speech ('samma-vaca) ;
4. Right Action ('samma-kammanta);
5. Right Livelihood ('samma-ajiva);
6. Right Effort (samma-vayama)\
7. Right Awareness, also called: Right Attentiveness (samma-sankappa)\
8. Right Meditation, also called: Right Concentration (samma-samada).

These eight tenets belong to the three parts of Buddhist spiritual training, namely morality ('sila) 3 to 6; meditation ('samadhi') 7 and 8; and wisdom ('panna') 1 and 2.

What is Right Understanding?

In Buddhism, it is the ability to understand that there is a common purpose of life, and that there exists a natural principle known as skamma to govern. In the context of Buddhism, kamma is defined as * action based on intention'. Actions free of intention are not considered to be kamma in the Buddha's teaching. Kamma is a word from the Pali language, and has the same meaning as the often used 'karma which is the Sanskrit spelling. A life of unsatiable fancies and desires defies the laws of kamma. Such a life is therefore bound to samsara, cycle of birth and death, which means repeated sufferings.

Since the delusion of being a permanent self or dealing with permanent things is held to be the root cause of all our grasping and craving, and hence of all human bondage and suffering, the denial of the self-belief is in some respects the central teaching of Buddhism. The Buddha thought over Dependent Origination (**paticcasamiippa**) both forward and back:

- on ignorance depend intellectual differentiations;
- on intellectual differentiations depends consciousness;
- on consciousness depend name and form;
- on name and form depend the six organs of sense;
- on the six organs of sense depends contact;
- on contact depends sensation;
- on sensation depends desire (in Buddhism, desire means blind want, the want by means of ignorance);
- on desire depends attachment; on attachment depends existence, which is suffering;
- on existence depends birth;
- on birth depend old age, sickness, sorrow, grief, misery and death; thus does this entire aggregation of misery arise.

But, otherwise,

- on the complete fading out and cessation of ignorance, cease all intellectual differentiations;
- on the cessation of intellectual differentiations ceases consciousness;
- on the cessation of consciousness cease name and form;
- on the cessation of name and form cease the six organs of sense;
- on the cessation of the six organs of sense ceases contact;
- on the cessation of contact ceases sensation;
- on the cessation of sensation ceases desire;
- on the cessation of desire ceases attachment;
- on the cessation of attachment ceases existence;
- on the cessation of existence ceases birth;
- on the cessation of birth, there will be no such things as old age, sickness, sorrow, grief, misery and death any longer; thus does this entire aggregation of misery cease.

The aggregation of misery is samsara, the cycle of birth and death. When enlightenment, or Nirvana, is experienced, samsara has come to an end. Nirvana, the annihilation of greed, aver-sion and delusion, eventually leads to the ultimate end of all corporeal existence. The Buddha emphasized that human life is the main stage in the universal process and is the only stage from which enlightenment can be reached. As the duration of the present life is so uncertain, it is time that man should give thought to the fact that a life in which the lower instincts are permitted to destroy its natural harmony, will not lead to enlightenment. The common purpose of life is to strive for enlightenment.

My Teacher said: "One should realise that being born a human being is a rare

and not a common occurrence. One should thus be grateful to one's parents: not only for their tender care, but also for having given one an op¬portunity to fulfil one's supreme duty and free oneself forever from suffering. Should the opportunity afforded in our present lives be unheeded and lost, millions of years may pass before we find ourselves once more born into the human state".

What is Right Mindedness?

In Buddhism, it is also called Right Thought. It means that one should not judge but must try to take an objective attitude. Good and bad are equal if the perspective of the viewer is changed in another direction. Often we do not have enough information to be able to judge and do we take an emotional point of view on which we base our judgement. It is important to take an objective position when encountering a situation. Do not be led by emotions as greed, hate, love, needs or information of third party.

What is Right Speech?

In Buddhism, it means that one avoids lying and abstains from it. One is devoted to the truth and also speaks the truth. One avoids vain talk, tale-bearing and harsh language. One speaks with moderation at the right time what is useful, in accordance with facts.

What is Right Action?

The Buddhist observance of the Five Precepts ("pancasila") results in Right Action. The fourth precept of the pancasila could also be placed under the tenet of Right Speech. A Buddhist monk proceeds to chant the Five Precepts in Pali language, whereupon each one of which the laypeople repeat after him:

I. "Panatipata veramani sikJdiapadam samadiyami"
("I undertake the rule of training to refrain from destroying life");
II. "Adinnadana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami"
("I undertake the rule of training to refrain from taking what is not given") ;
III. "Kamesu micchacara veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami"
("I undertake the rule of training to refrain from wrong-doing in sexual desires");
IV. "Musavada veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami"
("I undertake the rule of training to refrain from false speech");
V. "Sura-meraya-majja-pamadatthana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami"
("I undertake the rule of training to refrain from distilled and fermented intoxicants which cause heedlessness").

These Five Precepts are also the first five rules of the Patimokkha, the 227 fundamental rules of a Buddhist monk.

Although the pancasila system of the Five Precepts is technically a Buddhist

concept, it is universal in implications. It can be found in all ancient and modern morality. For example, **Pancavratd** in Jainism and **'Pancayamd** in Hinduism which deal with five principles of non-violence, truth, non-stealing, non-possession and no adultery are very similar to the Buddhist Five Precepts. It also appears in the Ten Commandments upheld by the followers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

What is Right Livelihood?

In Buddhism, it means that one should follow a trade compatible with the first four tenets of the Eightfold Path: for example, one should not be a butcher or an armourer. One should attend to one's cost of living in a fair and honest way.

What is Right Effort?

In Buddhism, it is making the moral effort to remove all evil from one's mind and prevent new evil from entering. One must develop one's good qualities, which demands effort.

What is Right Awareness?

In Buddhism, it is also called Right Attentiveness. One should always be aware of the Three Characteristics, the realization that any and all mental and physical phenomena are impermanent ('anicca1), unsatisfactory (fdukkhaf) and insubstantial e.g. non-self ('anatta1). Right Awareness also points at mindfulness with regard to the Seal of the Three Laws:

1.Everything is Impermanent;
2. Everything is Dependent;
3. Nirvana is Peace.

What is Right Meditation?

In Buddhism, it is also called Right Concentration. As a matter of fact, meditation is a rather inadequate rendering of several more precise terms in Pali. Equivalents to some of these in English are mental development, one-pointedness, collectedness or absorbed concentration. The practice of meditation removes the mental hindrances, such as sense-desire, restlessness, scepticism, sloth, torpor, ill-will and worry. Meditation is characterized by a vastly increased power of mindfulness, and it is not making the mind blank, since the meditative mind always has one object.

My Teachers agree that there are two basic types of Buddhist meditation:

- samatha and
- vipassana .

The word samatha is derived from the Pali word 'samadhi1 which means concentration. This type of meditation is considered preparatory in the sense that one practices samatha to establish mental calmness and a ba level of

concentration, with which to proceed to vipassana.

Vipassana is considered the more important of the two practices. Anapanasati, which is contemplation of the breath, is a very commonly taught samatha technique in Southeast Asia.

Samatha has been defined by Teacher Prasert in this way: "It means firmly placing, the act of putting or placing the mind and mental Sanctions evenly and properly on one object". My Teacher in Burma stated that "mind is not a solid or permanent whole, but just a series of states of consciousness occurring one at a time at rapidly falling away. When the mind is seen this way, illusion is less likely to prevail". If you follow the Eightfold Path, you follow the Middle Way; and with the practice of Buddhist meditation it is the same. My Teachers in Thailand explained that one-pointedness in carrying on noble activities is the highest meditation.

Anapanasati, the contemplation of the breath, has four foundations upon which to set the mind while breathing in and breathing out:

- the body,
- the feelings,
- the mind and
- the mind-objects.

Anapanasati is a type of meditation which is based on mindfulness. It has been described by the Buddha in the Satipatthana Sutta. The Buddha explained that mindfulness is the only way for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow, for the destruction of pain and grief, for reaching the right path; for realization of Nirvana. Vipassana is actually the result (insight) from Satipatthana. Vipassana is insight meditation. It is mental cultivation leading to seeing clearly into reality.

Vipassana refers to the personal realization of the Three Characteristics:
every mental and physical phenomenon is

- anicca (impermanent),
- dukkha (unsatisfactory) and
- anatta (insubstantial e.g. non-self).

Usually dukkha is listed as the second of the three, but this order seems more traditional than logical, for suffering is essentially the emotional result or living manifestation of the qualities of impermanence and insubstantiality of all beings. One is taught not to do anything absent-mindedly and to be in the present moment as much as possible. Samatha and vipassana are meditation types mainly from the Theravada tradition. In the context of this essay, these are Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. Vietnam, on the other hand, is part of the Mahayana tradition. There are various Zen sects in Vietnam.

Although Theravada disciplines and traditions continue to exert their influence

in the daily activities of Vietnamese Buddhists, Zen comes closest to expressing the Vietnamese character, and as such their attitude towards life can be described as a Zen outlook. Thien (Vietnamese for Zen) is by far the most important sect. The practice of Thien is by no means easy. It requires a profound and powerful inner life, long and persistent training and a strong, firm will. The attitude of Thien towards the search for truth (and its view on the problem of living in this world) are extremely liberal. Thien does not recognize any dogma or belief that would hold back one's progress in meditation or in daily life. Thien differs from orthodox religions in that it is not conditioned by anything, not even by the original teachings of the Buddha in many situations.

Vietnamese Zen is an attitude or a method for arriving at knowledge and action. For Zen the techniques of right eating and drinking, of right breathing and right concentration and meditation, are far more important than mere beliefs. Someone practising Zen meditation does not have to rely on beliefs in Nirvana, rebirth or causality. The Zen meditator has only to rely on the reality of his body, his psychology and the instructions of Zen masters who taught him. The Zen Buddhist's aim is to attain, to see. Once he has attained satori (insight) his action will conform by itself to reality.

Ten far reaching attitudes

Mainly in Mahayana the ten far reaching attitutes are practiced amongst bodhisatvas and not by shravakas. The reason is that it is considered only possible to be practiced when a person has reached a state of perfection or bodchitta. In Theravada it is considered that no matter who you are you can study and practice the ten far reaching attitudes. Due to this the list also slightly differs.

Mahayana

- generosity
- ethical self –discipline
- patience
- joyful perserverance
- mental stability
- discriminating awareness
- skill in means
- aspirational prayer
- strengthening
- deep awareness

Theravada list omits mental stability, skill in means, aspirational prayer, strengthening and deep awareness. It adds in their places

- renunciation
- being true to one’s world
- resolution

- love
- equanimity

Whether Theravada or Mahayana, one has to see the truth in oneself first, then the truth in everything else will be seen. "You must do the practice yourselves, the Buddha only points the Way", was written in the Dhammapada. I may note in passing that for Buddhism truth and reality are the same, especially in their ultimate natures. This is implied in Buddhist teaching that truth is to be realized, not merely known about, and that realization of the truth makes a difference in the realizer: for a truth which cannot be thought about by words, but must be felt-thought, is one which has a kind of perceptible reality about it. Those who have the strange illusion that Buddhism would be a religion of careless meditative isolation offering society no special benefits, should understand that according to Buddhism society can only be changed for the better; and with this change, the Buddhist should start working on himself. The Buddhist call is therefore first to gain peace in one's own heart, when will follow quite naturally peace in the world around.

Trying to obtain peace in the opposite direction will not be practical and won't produce a lasting peace, because in that case the roots of greed, aversion and delusion are still in the hearts of people.
One day a student asked my Teacher: "Isn't Buddhism rather pessimistic?" My Teacher smiled: "Pessimistic?" "Yes, the Three Characteristics that Buddhists talk about, namely that everything is impermanent, suffering and without self, sound pessimistic", the student said. My Teacher replied in a friendly voice: "It is the truth. We are always suffering. When we are eating food we are curing suffering; even if we blink our eyes we are curing suffering. Salvation in Buddhism must be aided by a balanced understanding of life in this world and for this, notice has to be taken of suffering. It is the Truth". My Teacher smiled again, and continued: "People who have never seen, or do not want to see Dukkha, will not be interested in Buddhism and cannot practise it. Those who know something of dukkha will understand. It is realism. It is the Truth. So, if facing the truth is pessimistic, well, Buddhism is pessimistic but it is the Truth". If people find suffering in life, Buddhism offers an answer to this. Realizing the Three Characteristics, pessimistic or not, provides the answer. Those who take up the cultivation of mindfulness will find out for themselves how it helps to solve life's problems.

Chapter 3

Theravada (formerly also called Hinayana) and Mahayana,
The real advance of Buddhism across Asia owed a great deal to a remarkable man, Asoka Maurya (7273-232 B.C.). Asoka was the ruler of an empire that spanned the Buddhist heart-land of northern India.

In the eighth year of his reign, during his conquest against the ruler of Orissa,

Asoka's army killed no less than 100,000 men. Although he won the battle, the sight of so much bloodshed disgusted Asoka. Appalled by the suffering he had caused, Asoka renounced the use offeree and turned to Buddhism. He took his new faith seriously. Inscribed stone pillars from that time mention not so much that under Asoka India was unified for the first time as that he desired to assist in the salvation of his subjects through the Dhamma, the Moral Law: "To govern according to Dhamma, to administer according to Dhamma, to protect according to the Dhamma". Asoka devoted virtually all the resources of his empire to improving the lives of his people. Asoka's inscriptions do not mention Nirvana and hardly mention the name Buddhism as such. The only inscription containing purely Buddhist concepts (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha) is also the only one in which he calls himself friend of the gods.

It confirms the Buddhist ideal of his welfare state. Such a definition is justified by the welfare character of the public works Asoka mentions. He founded lots of hospitals and monasteries. He asked to be kept informed of his subjects1 welfare at all times, and granted religious freedom to them. New and going far beyond the existing religions of that time, and Asoka's original contribution to the history of the Buddhist oriented states, were welfare measures of the government as means to permit men to rise towards the overcoming of their suffering, the aim of Buddhism: "On the roads have I planted banyan trees. They will offer shade to man and beast. I have grown mango-trees. I have caused wells to be dug; and I have had rest houses built. I have made waiting sheds at different places. Mankind has been blessed with as many such blessings by the previous kings as by me. But I have done this with the intent that man may practise practices of Dhamma". According to tradition, Asoka equipped some of his most able monks to go to other countries as missionaries.

Some of them brought Buddhism to southern India during Asoka's reign, and probably to Sri Lanka as well. It is often heard that the Buddha himself paid no less than three visits to Sri Lanka, although this is very unlikely, since the Buddha always travelled on foot and mostly traversed the northern area of India which is presently covered by the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Asoka himself is said to have established Buddhism in Nepal. Out of his remorse for the bloodshed that had brought about his previous conquests, Asoka resolved to engage in further conquest not by military force but only through the power of Buddhist ethics. In the pursuit of this 'conquest by Dhamma', the Buddhist Messengers of the Teaching even sent the Buddhist message to the Hellenistic third century kings of Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, Epirus and Macedonia. There was even a Buddhist population in Alexandria, although this far-separated group could not thrive for very long. Other missionaries went to China, Burma and Siam. The missionaries set up inscribed stone pillars, with Buddhist texts, almost everywhere they went. Such pillars have been found at many sites, for example in India, Nepal, Kashmir and Afghanistan. One pil-lar quotes Asoka's words: "If my independent neighbours ask what indeed is my desire towards the neighbours, the reply is: they should understand that Asoka,

the Beloved of the Gods, de-sires that they should be confident towards me, they should trust me, and that they would receive from me happiness, not misery. They should follow Dhamma for my sake in order that they might gain this world and the next" (Asoka used these words to express his desire of welfare and happiness in this world and in the next).

A realization that the state can contribute towards the liberation of man from suffering, by providing its citizens with leisure opportunities for meditation, may be behind the following regretful words of Asoka: "I am never satisfied with exertions or with dispatch of business. For the welfare of the whole world is an esteemed duty with me. And the root of that, again, is this, namely exertion and dispatch of business. There is no higher duty than the welfare of the whole world. And what little effort I make is from debt to all beings. I work for their happiness in this life, that in the next world they may gain heaven" (*Savralokahitend , Pillar Edict VI). In the twentieth century Asoka has again become a symbol of political self-conception of non-violence and ethics of international relationships. Asoka has been called one of humanity's greatest figures. Asoka is different from many other emperors in that he founded no state church, engaged in no forced conversions and did not conduct holy wars. Asoka's Buddhism spread also along the sea trade routes to Southeast Asia. The impact of India on Southeast Asia has always been enormous. Indian scripts were introduced and now form the basis of Burmese, Thai, Cambodian and Laotian scripts. India's commercial and cultural contacts with Southeast Asia provided for the introduction of religion. After Asoka's death, Buddhism divided slowly into two great schools, namely Theravada and Mahayana.

Strictly speaking, Theravada refers to the earliest forms of Buddhism practised during the Asokan and post-Asokan periods in Southeast Asia. Theravada literally means "The Teaching of the Elders", by reason of its having been rehearsed by five-hundred Theras (or Elders) immediately after the Buddha's death. During the seminal meetings, the Buddha's oral teachings were codified as the Pali Canon. These recitations were first written down in Sri Lanka during the first century B.C. In establishing the Pali Canon, the Theravada monks were separating themselves from other Buddhist groups who had added their own opinions to the original oral tradition. Later the non-Theravada began referring to themselves as Mahayana, or 'Great Vehicle' Buddhism. They derisively dubbed Theravada the 'Lesser Vehicle' or Hinayana. Theravada Buddhism was also called the 'southern school1 since it spread southeast from India to Sri Lanka, Burma, Siam (Thailand), Khmer Empire (Cambodia) and Laos.

In contrast, Mahayana Buddhism diffused north through Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, Mongolia, Japan, Korea and China; and the Chinese carried it down to Vietnam. (Tibetan Buddhism and Japanese/Vietnamese Zen have been directly derived from Mahayana). Those who profess Theravada or Mahayana Buddhism are all Buddhists. Although there are differences in their external practices such as ceremonies and rituals and festivals, both Theravada and Mahayana equally deserve the label 'Buddhism' and followers of these

traditions are called 'Buddhists'. This is because the main teachings of the Buddha are still practised in both these schools.

The following seven are main Teachings maintained by both schools of Buddhism:

- I. The faith in the Triple Gem, i.e. Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha;
- II. The Three Characteristics, of Impermanence, Suffering and Insubstantiality;
- III. Dependent Origination ('paticcasamuppada');
- IV. Kamma and rebirth;
- V. No belief in a Creator-God, however with an attitude of sympathy and respect towards other religions in the world (through the years, I have met so many Buddhist monks who have no problems at all with the idea of a Creator-God. They generally say that you can't prove whether it is true or not, it's a matter of belief, which must be respected);
- VI. The Four Virtues, viz. Faith {saddha\ Morality (sila\ Generosity (caga) and Wisdom (pannd). This means Faith in the Triple Gem, Morally good behaviour resulting from the observance of at least Five Precepts, Willingness to help other people, not as a master or slave but as a friend; and Insight into the true nature of things through the practice of meditation;
- VII. The Four Noble Truths, and hence, the Eightfold Path.

These basic seven Teachings are regarded as common features which mark the identity between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.

My Teachers have singled out five topics which seem to them particularly important as to considering the difference between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism:

- ❖ The first is referring to the great division between Mahayana and Theravada. Phra Bounxay, a teacher from Laos, said: "It seems very likely that Theravada was Buddhism as originally taught, and that Mahayana was a product of development and conventionalisation". Theravada generally react to the Mahayana by silence, and their writings practically never mention it. Mahayana, on the other hand, were under the charge of innovation, and so they wrote much as to justify their position. They began referring to themselves as 'Great Vehicle* Buddhism. One of the holiest books of the Mahayana is the "Lotus of the Good Law", also called the "Threefold Lotus Sutra", which contains the 'Parable of the Burning House'. For reasons which will become apparent from a perusal of this parable, Buddhist methods are referred to as 'vehicles'. Later Mahayana derisively dubbed Theravada the 'Lesser vehicle' or Hinayana. There is also the often-quoted instance in which the Buddha likens the little he has told his disciples, when compared to all that he knows, to the few leaves of a tree that a man can hold in his hand when compared to the multitude of leaves in the forest. Mahayana has, somewhat invidiously, compared the few leaves to the "narrow"

Theravada tradition, and the forest of knowledge to their own revelation with even many secret teachings. Theravada counters by quoting the Buddha to the effect that he is no closed-fist teacher who keeps back any secret teachings, but gives the full truth to all alike.

- II. The second is concerning the fundament of Buddhist thinking, the assertion that there is no 'self. Within the Theravada school some Teachers maintain that in addition to impersonal events there is still a 'person' to be reckoned with. This aspect has ever since been object of polemics on the part of orthodox Mahayana Buddhists, i.e. the personalist controversy. "It is only when all outward appearances are gone that there is left that one principle of life which exists independently of all external phenomena. It is the fire that burns in the eternal light, when the fuel is expended and the flame is extinguished; for that fire is neither in the flame nor in the fuel, nor yet inside either of the two, but above, beneath and everywhere" (from the Parinirvana Sutra). In this magnificent passage is the Mahayana teaching on Self, on Nirvana and, by inference, its application of the Theravada tenet Anatta (non-self). On the other hand, many Theravada Buddhists state that Mahayana has reintroduced a positive self. The Venerable Thich The Tinh said to me: "Meanwhile we live in a world of duality, the reality of which is falsely imagined. The Mahayana holds a middle position regarding the nature of the world. It is neither real nor unreal. It affirms that it actually exists, but denies its absolute reality".

- III. The third is about vegetarianism. In the Theravada tradition, it is permissible for a Buddhist monk to eat fish and meat, provided that it must be "Pure on Three Counts": which means that an animal should have not been seen, heard, or even suspected to have been killed to provide food especially for a Buddhist monk. Hence in Theravada it is not obligatory for a Buddhist monk to be a vegetarian (in some monasteries it is encouraged to be a vegetarian, for those who wish to be). According to a Sayadaw whom I met in Burma, the particular phrase that non-killing is the highest religion (ahimsa-pammo dhamma) occurs in Mahabharata. Mahabharata is an epic of the Hindus, and it does not occur in any Buddhist scripture, according to that Sayadaw. In Mahayana texts, taking of meat is totally condemned. Since Vietnamese Buddhist monks are living according to Mahayana texts, they are strict vegetarians, although the average Vietnamese citizen would eat anything. As far as the explanation of a non-vegetarian diet being "Pure on Three Counts" is concerned, is it hardly tenable in the modern world, since all animals slaughtered by machines in big slaughterhouses are generally not slaughtered for particular individuals. The meat is packed and exported to consumers all over the world. Although much can be said against non-vegetarianism, according to Theravada nobody who eats meat that way can individually be held responsible for the slaughtering of these animals. A Theravada monk is, in accordance with the Vinaya, not

allowed to request or specify any particular dish. He must accept whatever food is being put into his alms-bowl by the laypeople. No monk who has been given meat this way, can be held responsible for the slaughtering of the animal. I met a Buddhist monk at Chua Quang Dong Pagoda in Hue, Vietnam. He told me that some Mahayana monks in Vietnam eat fish, and no meat. Upon my question how that could be possible, the monk answered: "Fish is cheaper". Then he laughed: "Oh, don't worry, I am only joking. The reason is that a fish swims voluntarily into the net, but no cattle walk voluntarily into the slaughterhouse. We are making jokes about that, saying that fish is cheaper".

- IV. The fourth is about the question whether there can be more than one Buddha at a time. Theravada states that there is one historical Buddha, and my Teachers in Burma, Thailand and Laos said that it would be unsuitable for two Buddhas to appear at the same moment, for if they did, disputes might arise between their respective followers. It would lead to the for mation of two rival factions. Mahayana states that one Buddha alone cannot possibly save all beings. There must therefore also be others. As a matter of fact, beings are countless and their sufferings are measureless. According to Mahayana, countless Buddhas are therefore necessary to lead all beings to salvation.

- V.The fifth results from the Tibetan Concile in Lhasa, in the year 800 A.D. Monks from India described the progress to enlightenment as a slow and gradual process, which had to pass precisely defined stages. Monks from China taught a 'sudden' enlightenment. The Chinese (Mahayana) monks preferred the approach whereby the emphasis was laid on the Self to be attained rather than the Not-Self to be stamped out.

The Venerable Thich The Tinh said: "An accurate symbol for Theravada and Mahayana would be two concentric circles, the Theravada forming the compact and well-defined inner circle; and the Mahayana forming a more nebulous ring about it. Mahayana is not so much a school as a collection of schools, all of which, compared with Theravada, are rather speculative, I have to admit that". He added that Mahayana, unlike Theravada, has no wish to escape from Samsara, the cycle of rebirths, but claims to find salvation within it.

Many Mahayana teachers advise their followers to give up attempting self-enlightenment, and to leave all to the Buddha, whereas Zen advises its followers to fsee directly into the heart of man1. Vietnamese monks said to me: "Samsara and Nirvana are, at the gates of Enlightenment, found to be one; there is nothing dualistic about that". Mahayana accepted yoga, which taught that man could achieve union with the universe through psychological and physical training. Yoga prepared the way for Tantra, which later took a place among the basic teachings of Tibetan Buddhism. In many cases, Mahayana emphasized enlightenment in a single lifetime, but the method of gaining it was usually left up to the individual. Tantra claimed to offer a shorter path to enlightenment in

stead of the lifetimes of moral effort required by Theravada. The most striking feature of Tantra is the technique of occult visualization. As the student visualizes the deity which is given by the tantric master, he tries to become what he sees: in tantric thinking, by visualizing an enlightened being, you can become one yourself.

Under the stimulus of tantra, Mahayana Buddhism in Tibet further multiplied its Buddhas and Bodhisattvas by assigning female consorts to them all. This made eventually many schools of Mahayana very complex. The scriptures of Theravada are tidy and complete while the Mahayana equivalent appears in four languages and is immensely broad. Only in Vietnam there were already six different Zen Schools: the Ty-Ni-Da-Lu'u-Chi, the Vo-Ngon-Thong, the Thao-Duong, the True-Lam, the Ngiiyen-Thieu, and the Lieu-Quan (a branch of Lin-chi Zen). But still the basic principles of Theravada Buddhism are common to nearly all sects of the Mahayana tradition.

Tantrayana (or Vajrayana)

This part is a more complicated matter as it involves many speculations and assumptions. Tantrayana is considered a mixture of Mahayana and Bon. As I have explained most of the Mahayana already in this chapter I want to go deeper into the origin of Tantrayana as far as possible is known and verified.

According to Buddhist legends before the Shakyamini, or original first Buddha, there were manifestations of other Buddhas. It is considered that Tompa Shenrab Miwoche from Zhangzhung (West of Tibet) founded Yungdrung Bon.

Bon may be distinguished by certain characteristics of the Tantric Mahayana traditions ;:

The origin of the Bonpo lineage is traced to ‘Buddha’ Tönpa Shenrab rather than to Buddha Shakyamuni.

Bonpos circumambulate chortens or other venerated structures counter-clockwise (i.e., with the left shoulder toward the object), rather than clockwise (as Buddhists do with right shoulder to the object).

Bonpos use the yungdrung (g.yung-drung or sauvastika) instead of the dorje (rdo-rje, vajra) as a symbol and ritual implement.

Instead of a bell, in their rituals Bonpos use the shang, a cymbal-like instrument with a "clapper" usually made of animal horn.

A nine-way path is described in Bon. It is distinct from the nine-yana (-vehicle) system of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. Bonpos consider Bon to be a superset of Buddhist paths. (The Bonpos divide their teachings in a mostly familiar way: a Causal Vehicle, Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen).

The Bonpo textual canon includes rites to pacify spirits, influence the weather, heal people through spiritual means and other shamanic practices.

While many of these practices are also common in some form to Tibetan Buddhism they are actually included within the recognized Bon canon, rather than in Buddhist texts.

Bonpos have some sacred texts, of neither Sanskrit nor Tibetan origin, which include some sections written in the ancient Zhangzhung language.

The Bonpo mythic universe includes the Mountain of Nine sauvastikas and the Tagzig Olmo Lung Ring paradise.

A follower of Bon is called Bon-po or pa, a female follower –ma or –mo. The main target is to cultivate a heart-mind connection. This is to purify and silence the noise of the mindstream within the body-mind, and reveal rigpa — a transcendent natural state of body-mind.

Bonpos resemble folk Taoism which connection can be found in the five elemental processes of earth, water, fire, air and space which are the essential elements of all existent phenomena or skandhas the most subtle enumeration of which are known as the five pure lights.

IN Bon practice the elements are considered :

- earth is solidity
- water is cohesion
- fire is temperature
- air is motion
- space is the spatial dimension that accommodates the other four active elements, this is the only inconsistent part with the Chinese elemental chart used in medicine were wood is considered number five.

The elements are connected to different emotions, temperaments, directions, colors, tastes, body types, illnesses, thinking styles, and character.

From the five elements arise the five senses and the five fields of sensual experience; the five negative emotions and the five wisdoms; and the five extensions of the body. They are the five primary pranas or vital energies.

In many scripture we also find references to the “chakra’s “ which are the six centers of the “prana” the sources of enegy streaming around the body. In Traditional Chinese Medicine we see them back in the accupunture.

The county (or even country) Zhangzhung must have been situated on the silk road as evidence has been found that Bonpo stupa's were build Afghanistan. In the 6th century Khosrau of Persia did order the translation of Buddhist jataka works into the Persiona language.

In the 7th century the Tibetean king Songtsen Gampo assassinated king Ligmicha of Zhangzhung and took the kingdom over. To establish better relationships withb his neighbors he decided to marry
- 632, the Nepalise princess Bhrikuti, she was a devoted Buddhist
- in 641, princess Wencheng, daughter of emperor Tang Taizong of the Tang Dynasty also a devoted Buddhist
To celebrate this last marriage a Buddhist temple was build in Tibet to accommodate the Buddha statue that was brought over as a wedding gift.

It is considered that Bon and Mahayana were in some kind of religious battle for the favor of royalty as in these times religion and state could not be separated. The religion carried by the state was considered the countries religion. This is the reason why King Trisong Detsen (742-797) held a debate contest between Bon priests and Buddhist. He decided to convert to Buddhism and invited some great teachers from India. In 779 the teacher Padmasambhawa came to Tibet and is considered to have brought Tantric Buddhism to the region. From this point on Tantric Buddhism became the permanent religion of the state. Bon was persecuted and most masters had to escape the country or hide out in obsecure villages. In 842, upon the collapse of the Tibetan empire, Bonpo reoccurred and a revival of Bon came to existence.

We make a jump in time.
The Sakya timeline came primarily from the Indian master Virupa. From him, comes the teachings known as Lamdray, "the paths and their results," the main Sakya teaching combining sutra and tantra. The Sakya school developed through a line of five masters, all belonging to the same family. One of them, Chogyal Pagpa, was given the political regency of Tibet in the thirteenth century by the Mongol Emperor Kublai Khan. This step reestablished political unity in Tibet for the first time during the new translation period.

The Kadam timeline derives from the Indian master Atisha. One of the features of this tradition were the lojong teachings. Lojong is translated as "mind training," .This timeline split into three, then was reunified and reformed by Tsongkhapa in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries to become the Gelug tradition. Tsongkhapa read almost all available Buddhist literature and started to compare them. From this comperation he re-wrote most of the works and added a rather scientific study to them with reasoning, his work became the foundation of the Gelug school. Tsongkhapa had many followers. One of them was later called "The

First Dalai Lama," although the name "Dalai Lama" was not used until the third incarnation.

The Third Dalai Lama was given the name by the Mongols, so the origin of the words is not really from Tibet. It was the Fifth Dalai Lama, in the middle of the seventeenth century, who gained political rule of Tibet, given to him also by the Mongols. The Mongols did this to end the 150-year-long Tibetan civil war and to create stability in the land. The Dalai Lamas then became the protectors of all traditions in Tibet, not just Gelug. The Fifth Dalai Lama's main teacher became known as "The First Panchen Lama."

Chapter 4

Sangha, The Buddhist Order

In accordance with the last words of the Buddha, the Dhamma is to be the monk's sole guide. Every monk has direct access to the Dhamma. The rules and regulations of the monastic life as given in the Pali Canon are considered final and cannot be altered. The organization of the Sangha in the Buddha's lifetime was not merely born out of necessity. The Triratna was clearly conceived as a unit. The Buddha said in terms that after his passing the Dhamma was to be the Teacher, and the Sangha was founded as a missionary enterprise within a few weeks of the Enlightenment. The great practical achievement of Buddhism was to found this religious order which has lasted to the present day. It is chiefly to the Sangha that the permanence of Buddhism is due.

The function of the Buddhist Sangha is twofold:

- to provide the best possible conditions for individual development,
- and to teach the Dhamma to mankind.

Authority in the Sangha is strictly administrative according to seniority and official appointment. After ten years as a Bhikkhu\ a monk is considered a xTherd ("elder") and after twenty years he is &Mahathera ("great elder"), also called a Sayadaw* in Burma. Sayadaw is often used in titles, with the place name of the monastery of which the monk is the abbot. Seniority of years in the Sangha is recognized whenever monks are together, and only those of Them rank and above are qualified to ordain others.

As the early followers of the Buddha began to take up a settled life in monasteries it became necessary for them to formulate regulations ordering the life of monks and novices living together. These regulations are embodied in the Patimokkha of the Vinaya texts. As the monk's life generally gives many occasions for contact with laypeople, except for the monk engaged in

meditation practice, and as erring monks were not absent from the Sangha even in the days of the Buddha, there is quite a large body of legislation relating to these occasions/Because of the wrong conduct of various monks, the Buddha had to lay down large numbers of training rules which, if infringed, would become offences for the guilty monk.

All these rules fall into seven classes according to the seriousness of the offence involved when they are broken. These seven classes with some of their characteristics are as follows:

I. Parajikd (Defeat). When a monk breaks one of the first four training-rules, they become offences by which the monk is defeated. He is then no longer able to live in a monastery with other monks and never able in the present life to be a monk again, being no longer "a son of the Buddha". He should disrobe immediately. These four offences are sexual intercourse of any description, stealing, depriving purposely a human being of life and falsely claiming super human states of attainment.

II. 'Sanghadisesd (Formal Meeting). These are the 'heavy offences', the second group in the Patimokkha. For the commission of these there is a special disciplinary procedure for purifying the offender, who must first confess being guilty, as with all other offences. The heavy offences for a Buddhist monk are engaging in bodily contact with a woman with lustful intent, addres sing a woman with lewd words, speaking to a woman in praise of sexual intercourse, telling a man's intentions to a woman about marriage, exceeding the prescribed measurements for a hut which is constructed by the monk, intentional emission of semen (except in a dream), attemptting to cause a schism of the Sangha, or corrupting families (by gifts of flowers etc.) and being of bad behaviour. These offences entail initial and subsequent meeting of the Sangha.

III. Thullaccayct (Grave Offences). These are numerous but not found in any part of the Vinaya. Sometimes these are the types of offence resulting from partial commissions of acts which, if completed, would entail Defeat or Formal Meeting. They may, in common with the other classes of offences below, be cleared up by making a confession to another monk who has not committed the same offence.

IV. Tacittiyd (Expiation) and 'Nissaggiya-pacittiyd (Expiation with Forfeiture). There are 92 of these training rules, which are all found in the Patimokkha: a section on Cloths, on Rugs and on Bowls; and sections on False Speech, Plants, Exhortation, Food, Naked Ascetics, Drinking Liquor, Living Beings, Treasures; and a section According with Dhamma. Some examples: should any monk sleep for more than two nights along with one not fully admitted (under the same roof), this entails expiation. Should any monk keep fine foods, like honey or fresh butter, for more than seven days, it entails expiation with forfeiture.

V. Tatidesamyd (To be Confessed). These are four rules in the

> Patimokkha which find little application today. One example: "should any monk living in a dangerous forest (on account of robbers etc.) proceed without first having announced this fact, accept in his own monastery foods, thereby endangering the laypeople who bring the food to him, it should be confessed by the monk" (sic).

Ajaan Houm Pheng translated this from a Laotian booklet which was published by the Sangha. ("Rules for Buddhist Monks", Vientiane, 1977. Mimeographed).

> VI. Dukkata (Wrong-doing). A very numerous category; for the avoidance of breaking these, care is needed. These are 75 trainings, or sekhiya. Examples: the monk shall wear his robes correctly, the monk shall go well-covered in inhabited areas, etc. Phra Cholvit told me that about only fifty years ago, when people in Thailand went somewhere, even for an audience with the King, they wore only a loincloth, leaving the legs and feet and top part of the body bare. At that time no one thought it shameful or impolite. In the early times of the Buddha, monks would go to the houses for alms-collecting wearing only the loincloth. This was one of the very few regulations which was altered about fifty years ago: nowadays the monk should try to hold the robe carefully in order to cover the body well, when walking in inhabited areas.
>
> VII *Dubbhasita (Wrong Speech). While there are numbers of cases for offences in the above classes, there is only one here. It includes the use of coarse words uttered in jest.

The pancasila, the Five Precepts, are the first five rules of the 227 fundamental (training) rules of a Buddhist monk. The seven classes mentioned above together form roughly the structure of the 227-rule system. They may also be called precepts. The number of 227 all at the same time may seem hard to keep at first, but it is in fact very helpful in guiding monks toward a contemplative attitude: by encouraging one to examine moment-to-moment behavi¬our more closely, which is a key component in vipassana meditation, and by limiting the choice of activities in which one may safely participate without fear of disciplinary transgressions.

In founding his monastic order called Sangha, the Buddha adopted the name as well as the constitutional form of the political Sangha of the Sakiyas. Although the Buddha renounced a possible future government position, he remained throughout his life an adviser to neighbouring states and founded his monastic organization upon existing political practices. The Buddhist Sangha was copied from the political Sangha of the various republics of India.

The canonic rules of organization of the Buddhist monastic order give a nice system of democracy which was already in vogue among the Sakiyas, from which were largely drawn the members of the Buddhist Order in the lifetime of the Buddha. Beyond the statement of the Buddha about the desirability of full

and frequent public assemblies, the organization of political authority was not textually expounded further in the Buddhist scriptures. On the occasion of the fortnightly hiposatha ceremony, Sangha affairs were settled initially by the joint unanimous vote of all monks and towards the later part of the life of the Buddha by majority vote. (Uposatha is the building in a monastery where monastic ordination takes place).

If a matter was exceedingly complicated and the discussion deviated from the point, the question could be referred to a smaller committee. If that committee were unable to reach a decision, it would hand the matter back to the Sangha assembly to be settled by the majority vote. Unanimous consensus or majority vote of the Sangha assembly also settled the course of action to be taken on monks who violated its regulations. Resolutions were moved and procedure decided usually by the eldest monk, but if he was ignorant, by the most learned and competent one (this regulation according to the Mahavagga II). In this sense the monastic regulations of the Vinaya made the seating hierarchy within the Sangha dependent upon the length of service only. All who became monks were equally entitled to participate and vote. Dr U Than Naung told me about a King from India, whose name was Baladitya.

According to tradition, that king would ordain as a Buddhist monk temporarily. Baladitya is reported to have been dissatisfied with his low position within the monastic community as he was a new member. But no exceptions could be made in his favour, even though he was a king. "Such Buddhist values of the monastic Vinaya code have remained not without bearing on lay life in Burma", said U Than Naung, "in Burma we even had a Vinaya element in state law codes". While the Buddha lived he was Head of the Order. When he died there was no one to succeed him, and to the present day there is no pope. There is not even a special body of men with power to declare what is and is not Buddhism.

Both Theravada and Mahayana, and later each monastery within, elected its own head, who was however never more than first among equals. Each monastery had the same interior discipline. A monk would be expelled for one of the four great 'parajikd offences. All lesser breaches of the Rules were solemnly confessed, either by the monks to each other or in council, and a penalty might be imposed according to their gravity. But not even the abbot of a monastery would presume to forgive (in the sense of remitting the consequences of an act); absolution, in the Roman Catholic sense, has ever been unknown. As the purpose of entering the Sangha was to destroy the fetters of desire and thereby to attain Enlightenment, some measure of self-imposed asceticism was necessary. This needs tremendous effort consistently applied, but it is useless to assuage the fires of hatred, lust and illusion if the senses are ever providing more fuel for the flames.

Hence the advisability of a calm, sequestered life, avoiding, for example, contact with women. Poverty is a fact, for the monk owns but his

- three robes an

- alms-bowl,
- a razor,
- a loincloth,
- a needle and
- a water filtering cloth;

these are the Eight Requisites (parikkhard). The abbot of the richest monastery will live as simply as the humblest novice.

Another major austerity relates to dietary practice: monks should take no nourishment after midday. The first meal is taken around seven a.m., after the monk has collected his food from the laypeople. In some monasteries, breakfast is at five a.m. Thammayut monks eat only once a day, but Mahanikai monks have their second meal timed to finish just before noon. After this time he is allowed to drink water or tea. In practice this often means that the monk takes liquid to which he has not himself added either sugar or milk.
The monk should not handle or own worldly things, in particular money. "Here we may have a basic conflict in the monk's position", said Dr U Than Naung, "the resolution of which is the integrating factor in monk-layman relations. Monks must be very circumspect in their dealing with worldly possessions: they are obliged to accept them since in so doing they confer merit on the giver, but the monks themselves must maintain a distance, whenever possible sharing the benefits of goods received by making them common property of the monastery".

Both Theravada and Mahayana have their respective Sanghas. Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia have Theravada Sanghas, whereas Vietnam has, more or less, a Mahayana Sangha. Before 1975, there were six major Buddhist associations in Vietnam: the Vietnamese Buddhist Association and the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha in North Vietnam; the Central Viet¬nam Buddhist Association and Central Vietnam Buddhist Sangha; and the Southern Vietnam Buddhist Study Society and the South Vietnam Buddhist Sangha. On May 6, 1951, a national congress was held in Hue with the view of unifying the Vietnamese Buddhist Sanghas. At the conclusion of the congress, delegates from the Sanghas issued a Declaration on the unification of their organizations and announced the establishment of the Tong Hoi Phat-Giao.

The declaration, named Toward National Buddhism1, stated:
"Vietnamese Buddhism is not merely a religious belief that limits itself, everywhere and at all times, to its mission as a faith. On the contrary: everywhere it spreads, Buddhism adapts itself to the customs, cultural climate and human elements of the land, influencing the local population's way of life. This is also true of Vietnam, where Buddhism has blended with and assimilated our national characteristics and has made common cause with the people in building an independent national culture".

"According to the glorious history of our people, the Vietnamese have always desired to create their independent culture in order to resist the oppressive

threat from the north. In this great and noble task of creating a national culture, Vietnamese Buddhism played an impor¬tant part. This is proved by the great achievements of Buddhism under the dynasties of Dinh Le, Tran and Ly. The truth is that Vietnamese Buddhism is a national religion. In the mind and heart of the Vietnamese people there is already the seed of Buddhism. For nearly two thousand years, the destiny of the nation and Buddhism have been intertwined. Let us join hands in culti¬vating Buddhism in order to bring peace and happiness to our nation".

Since 1975, the Vietnamese Sanghas and the followers of both Mahayana and Theravada have been given the chance to cooperate in the United Buddhist Church of Vietnam, despite the fact that the communist regime recognized the importance of Buddhism to the people. In comparison with the other countries in mainland Southeast Asia, Vietnam has never had a well-organized and solid-structured Sangha, this being an illustration of the negative reactions to Buddhism in Confucian circles. The Confucianists had anticlerical arguments, directed against the nature and claims of Buddhism as a monastic institution. In general, we can recognize three types of anticlerical argumentation: moral, utilitarian and political-economic. The moral argument contended that by its rejection of family duties, the monastic life of the Sangha meant an unnatural violation of the sacred canons of Vietnamese social behaviour.

From a utilitarian point of view, the monk's life is condemned as unproductive and useless for the community. Finally, the Sangha's claim to form an autonomous body is for Confiicianists politically unacceptable, and also dangerous. Monasteries could be wealthy, and the government of Vietnam has always seen this as undermining the economic basis of the state. The Confucianist accusations were fundamental and threatening, because they questioned the Sangha's very right to exist. When a man is becoming a monk, he is leaving the household life'; one example of this can be found in the section of this essay about the Life of the Buddha. One of the characteristics of Theravada Buddhism is its dual structure of monks and laymen, each with distinct roles and functions. In Thailand, for example, a monk is some-times called 'banphachi , a derivative of the Pali verb 'pabbajat, meaning "to leave home and wander about as mendicant", "leave the household life" or "to give up the world". To know the etymology of this word is useful in order to understand the economically unproductive nature of the Sangha. Nobody in Vietnam, in contrast, could deny that the monk by joining the Sangha, or 'leaving the household' as is said even more explicitly in Chinese, indeed severed his family ties, and thereby deviated from the most basic principle of Chinese/Vietnamese traditional ethics.

The Vietnamese Buddhists countered by proving in analysis that there was no contradiction between Buddhist and Confucianist teachings, as both aimed at the perfection of man. The immense karmic merit gathered by the Sangha was of benefit to society as a whole, and therefore indirectly helped to maintain the moral order. The attack on utilitarian grounds was much stronger and more

easily countered: the monastic life is not useless, even if the fruits of spirituality are not of this world. Confucius has said himself that man should strive for virtue, and not for profit! And as a standard answer to the equally stereotyped political and economic charges, the Buddhists stated that the monks are loyal and law-abiding; in fact, their Sangha assists the ruler in maintaining peace and prosperity. Tu Van Dung said: "Of course, there always will be occasional abuses of power and wealth, but the Sangha as a whole cannot be blamed for the misconduct of a few of its members. Eventually the Confiicianists seemed to understand that".

The variation of the Mahayana Sangha from the Theravada equivalent was soon considerable, although the fundamental nature and purpose of the Order never changed. It was a long time before permission to found a Vietnamese Sangha was given. Today the Mahayana monk re-sembles the European parish priest in two particulars unknown to the Theravada school. He may marry, and he is responsible for a parish in the sense of the families who from long usage support a particular temple. The resemblance to the Christian priest is however purely super-ficial. Vietnamese monks have no sacraments, nor do they baptise or marry their laypeople. They do not pray to a god, nor intercede with any power, although the Thao-Dudng Zen school moves nearer to the Church of Rome in this respect than any other Buddhist school. The various Zen Schools of Vietnam are permeated throughout the Vietnamese Sanghas within the United Buddhist Church. Many Mahayana monks work in the fields, whereas Theravada monks never do so; except during the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia.

At that time Cambodian Buddhist monks worked in the ricefields as hard as everybody else. During the rainy season, the time of their annual retreat, the monks had to work as usual even though the **Vinqya** forbids all monks to leave their monasteries.The communist authorities made the following statement: "Performing the rains retreat won't make the rice grow". Fortunately, since 1979 the Cambodian monks are again able to spend the rainy season in their monasteries, not only for rest and meditation, but in order that the principles of the Dhamma itself may be recited and studied collectively.

In the Theravada tradition, the standard time commitment for fulfilling one's obligations of ordination is three months, usually during the rainy season. In Thailand, like in Burma, that is roughly July to October, but the reasons for choosing this period vary. My Teachers in Burma say that these three months mark the period of Buddha's meditation prior to his enlightenment. My friends in Laos said that there is another reason: only by rains retreat, when for hundreds of years the Rules and the Dhamma were handed down by memory, could the importance of the one and the purity of the other be maintained. But my Teachers in Thailand say that these months are chosen because it is the most opportune time in the yearly agricultural cycle for men to be away from the fields: between planting and harvest.

The monks remain in their monasteries, and Phra Cholvit said: "We think the

original motivation behind this custom was that the monks wouldnft trample growing crops in their wanderings". In Cambodia, monks said that rains retreat is "a period of special encouragement for the monks to study and meditate, a period of intensified religious activity, and the monks must spend every night in their monasteries if they are to count that season towards their seniority in the Order".

Who are those monks? In the Theravada tradition of mainland Southeast Asia, any male twenty years of age or over may request ordination as a monk, provided that he is well-behaved and law-abiding, that he has a means of earning his livelihood already, that he is not physically ill or unfit, that he is not in debt, that he is exempt from government service (military service), that he is not involved in any crime, that he is able to read and write, and that he has been permitted by his parents to ordain in the Sangha. Every young man is more or less expected to spend at least a few months in the Sangha, to make merit for himself and for his parents. Marriage and career are usually held off until the man can successfully complete an interval in a monastery. When this is not possible, a man will postpone becoming a monk until later in life, optimally while his parents are still alive, since the taking of robes is thought to transfer merit upon one's family. Employers will usually grant leaves of absense to men who want to become monks temporarily, so that their jobs are waiting when they disrobe. It is certainly difficult for the non-native of mainland Southeast Asia to understand the unique status of the monks in their societies. Ordination as a monk means 'the birth of a new being1, an asexual being. Henceforth he must as long as he remains a monk be addressed or spoken about in a specially honorific language.

Ajaan Houm Pheng gave me a few examples: "The laypeople in Laos feat rice1 but the monks performing the same action are said to 'glorify the alms food’. Laypeople 'walk' and 'sleep', but monks 'proceed’ and 'remain in a state of repose. Less than 40 percent of those who become monks or novices remain in the Sangha for life. Such a large turnover does not signify lack of popular support for the Sangha. In Theravada Southeast Asia joining the Sangha for a (sometimes rather short) time is the proper and preferred means of achieving recognition as a mature male. Phra Cholvit said: "Those Thai men failing to ordain, if only temporarily, are considered *dip*, not mature. But after completing his monastic obligation he is *suk* which means ripe". Also in Burma almost every Buddhist male will spend some period of his life in the monastic order. Burmese government statistics showed that all males in the villages of Pegu District spend some time as novices in the Sangha. Throughout Theravada Southeast Asia, there are many villages in which 75 to 85% of the male population over twenty years of age are or have been monks.

Ordination is one of the most important occasions of village life. The entire village participates in the affair and at considerable expense of time and money to the boy's parents and sponsor. Often, especially in Burma, more than one young man is ordained at the same time. An effort of several families at once

may serve to reduce the expense to each of the families involved or it may simply provide the means for an even more lavish celebration. In Burma, Thailand and Cambodia, some laymen have formed associations called 'merit-societies' for free assistance to those undertaking an ordination or another of the elaborate celebrations of the Theravada tradition. Also women come to the Buddhist Order.

Already more than twenty-five centuries ago, women claimed to be admitted to a female branch of the Order. An Order of Nuns within the Sangha was established at the request of Buddha's aunt Mahapajapati. According to U Kyi Win, the Buddha is reported to have said that the admission of women would materially shorten the life of the Buddhist religion; "we see this as his sense of humour", U Kyi Win added. He gave me another delicious example of the Buddha's sense of humour. "How should the monks conduct themselves with regard to womankind?" This very question was asked by Venerable Ananda (a cousin of the Buddha), to which the Buddha is on record to have replied:
"Do not see them, Ananda".
"But if we should see them, what are we to do?"
"No talking, Ananda".
"But, Lord, if there is an occasion to talk, what are we to do?"
"Keep wide awake, Ananda!"

For hundreds of years the nuns Bhikkhnnis*) lived and worked in their nunneries in the same way as the men, but always subservient to them in rank and observance. By the time of Asoka, however, the female Sangha had declined, and today there are only very few women members of the Order. But the value of some of these is considerable. They are still living as Bhikkhuni, they lead austere and useful lives, and particularly in Thailand and Burma are pioneers in social service. At one time the nuns observed even more precepts than did monks: 311 precepts in all. But today nuns keep only eight precepts; novices take the Ten Precepts and monks still keep 227 (Theravada); in Mahayana monasteries in Vietnam the monks and nuns keep more precepts. Like the monks and novices, the nuns shave their heads and take vows in an ordination pro-cedure similar to that undergone by monks.

It should be pointed out that in mainland Southeast Asia, generally speaking, being a nun is not as prestigious as being a monk. The average Bud-dhist makes a great show of offering new robes to the monks at their local temple, but pays much less attention to the nuns. This is mainly due to the fact that nuns generally don't perform ceremonies on behalf of laypeople, so there is often less incentive for self-interested laypeople to make offerings to them. And many people equate the number of precepts observed with the total Buddhist merit achieved. Therefore, nunhood is seen as less meritorious than monkhood. But the reality is still that monasteries which draw sizeable contingents of nuns are highly res-pected, since women don't choose temples for reasons of clerical status. When more than a few nuns reside at one temple, it is usually a sign that the teachings there are particularly strong. In Cambodia at the present time

there are no fully-ordained Buddhist nuns; in Laos and Thailand there are only very few, but another line of nun-ordination does however survive in Vietnam , Korea and Taiwan within the Mahayana tradition. Nuns, monks, laymen and laywomen in Vietnam are ordained according to the traditions of Theravada Buddhism, even though they will be ordai-ned in a Mahayana Sangha. In Vietnam, a nun is called a **'Ty-kheo-nf** and a monk is a **xTy-kheo**\ (These are derivatives of the Pali word Bhikkhu). For a Vietnamese Buddhist monk the pre-cepts amount to 250, while a Vietnamese nun must observe a total of 348 rules of conduct.

The fact that the Sangha is a community means that it needs standards and procedures for keeping the communal life of its members harmonious and in line with its goal. Among these standards and procedures are the patterns followed in ordination: the act of accepting new members into the community as monks. Since the Theravada school uses the original Pali for the ceremonies **oVpabbajja** (Going-Forth) and **hipasampadd** (Acceptance), as well as for the formal acts and duties performed after one's ordination, this means that candidates for or-dination must memorize these Pali passages knowing the meaning. When the Buddha's fol-lowing began to grow large, he sent the members their separate ways to spread the Teaching. As others then became inspired with the desire to ordain, the original followers would take them to the Buddha to be admitted as monks in line with the original pattern. The Buddha, seeing the difficulties this caused for his followers and the new candidates (since roads in India were very bad), gave permission for his followers to admit new members on their own.

At the same time he made the procedure more explicit than before. The candidate for admission was to shave his head and beard, put on the yellow robes and announce that he was going for refuge in the Triple Gem with an attitude of deep respect. This was all that was needed for him to be admitted into the Sangha as a monk. This was called tisarana-gaman Upasampada: the Going to the Triple Refuge admittance.

While the religion gradually spread and attracted a large following, the Buddha handed over the authority in governing the Sangha to the Sangha itself. A Sangha (group of monks) qualified to carry out a particular type of act must consist of a minimum number of members. For most acts, the minimum is four (called 'catuvagga'). Some ceremonies require minimums of five ('pancavagga' ten **dasavagga**) or twenty monks **visativagga**). The minimum number of monks together giving someone admittance was ten in areas where monks were common. In Buddha's time this meant the Ganges valley.

In areas where Buddhist monks were scarce, five monks were enough to perform the ceremony. This form of admittance through the authority of a Sangha has continued in practice up to the present day. Before giving upasampada, the Sangha must question the candidate to make sure that he is qualified. The questions included in the ceremony, though, do not touch on all

the possible disqualifications. This may be because only the most common factors were chosen for inclusion. The candidate must find a monk to act as his guarantor, called an **Hipajjhayda**. The upajjhaya must be a senior monk capable of training the candidate after his acceptance, and must make sure that the candidate has a full set of basic requisites: a bowl and a set of three robes.

If any of these are lacking, the duty falls to the upajjhaya to make up the lack. To make sure that all of these matters are taken care of, the Sangha chooses one or two of its members to question the candidate. And since upasampada is to be given only to a person who applies for it (it cannot be forced on anyone, the one exception to this being King Souligna Vongsa of Laos, 1637-1694, who forced one of his older brothers to enter the Sangha; this eliminated any challenge to his position) the custom is that the candidate makes a formal request. All such activities, called 'ptibbakiccd or preliminary duties, must be completed before the announcement of the act. If any of them, except for absolute disqualifications, are skipped over, they do not invalidate the act but count as a breach of custom.

They are called 'anagarika' and novices generally wear brown or orange robes like the monks. In the olden days monks in Thailand and Indochina had yellow robes but this changed during the first half of this century. Novices follow ten precepts, basically the same as eight precepts except no money can be possessed, and have 75 training rules.
"Samanerasikkha - The Novice's Training", compiled from Pali texts and commentaries by His Royal Highness the late Sangha-raja of Siam, Prince Jinavarasirivaddhana.

Only when all preliminary factors are complete does the time come to announce the acceptance of the candidate into the Sangha as a monk. This is the duty of anyone of the monks present who is in rank capable of making the announcement to the Sangha. The announcement is traditionally made four times. The first time is a motion, called a **natti** asking formally to accept the candidate. The remaining three announcements give the opportunity for discussion within the Sangha to decide whether or not to accept the candidate. This section is called the **anusavana** or consultation. If during this part any member of the Sangha objects to accepting the candidate, the proceedings are halted and the candidate is rejected. If however all monks remain silent during the anusavana, it is taken as a sign that all willingly accept him. After that, a final announcement is made, saying that the Sangha has accepted the candidate, and that the monk making the announcement will remember him as having been properly accepted.

Sometimes one is first accepted as a **'naga\ an** applicant for ordination, but there are also abbots who feel that a shortterm ordination is worthwhile and readily grant permission. Length of training before ordination can be one month or even less at some monasteries; at other monasteries the abbot might expect an applicant to spend at least nine months as a layman and novice before higher

ordination. Throughout Southeast Asia, abbots generally have the authority to decide on these matters. All of this is termed **kammavaca-sampatti**\ a valid announcement of the act.

Then the candidate, carrying a set of the three robes on his forearms and joining his hands in the gesture of respect, enters the main hall of the monastery and pays homage to the Triple Gem. Laying the robes down to his left, he takes a tray of offerings placed on his right, pre-sents it to his 'upajjhaya', his guarantor, and prostrates himself three times with his forehead, two forearms and two knees touching the floor. Then, as he continues to kneel, he again places the robes on his forearms, joins his hands in respect and by saying Pali passages requests the 'pabbajj' or Going-Forth. (During the ordination ceremony, as practised in the Vietnamese Mahayana tradition, the candidate who wishes to become a monk is required to burn one or two small spots on his body in taking the vow to observe the 250 rules of the **Ty-kheo**** to live the life of a monk and to attain enlightenment, devoting his life to the salvation of all beings). The upajjhaya then takes the **xamsd** (the shoulder cloth worn across the left shoulder) out of the set of robes, puts it over the applicant's head, covering his left shoulder, and hands him back the rest of the robes, teaching him how they are to be worn. After this he tells the applicant to go out of the main hall to put the robes on.

When he has put on the robes, he goes to another place in the ordination hall where the abbot or one of the Teachers is sitting, waiting to give him the "Going to the Three Refuges" and the Ten Precepts. After telling the applicant to make a mental commitment to the Triple Gem as his refuge, the abbot chants Pali verses with the applicant repeating these. The abbot or teacher informs the applicant that he is now a samanera. Again Pali passages are recited, with the new samanera repeating them clause by clause. In some monasteries the last sentence of these is stated three times; in others, only once. This completes the ordination procedure for a amanera or novice.

The new samanera prostrates himself three times. If he wants to be ordained as a monk, he then takes the alms-bowl (offered to him by laysupporters) to his upajjhaya. Putting the bowl down on his left side, he gives a tray with some offerings to the upajjhaya and, again, prostrates three times. Kneeling before the upajjhaya, with hands joined in the gesture of respect, he chants the **nissaya**\ requesting dependence. When the upajjhaya says either 'sadhu' (it is well; Thailand/Laos), or flahuf (it is convenient; Cambodia), or 'pasadikena sampadehi1 (make an effort with friendliness; Burma), the samanera responds each time: 'sadhu bhante', Yes, Venerable Sir1. Then the samanera says three times: "From this day onward the Thera will be my responsibility; I shall be the responsibility of the Thera". The upajjhaya then tells the samanera that the time has come for the Sangha to ordain him as a 'bhikkhu', or monk, in the Dhamma and Vinaya of the Buddha. The upajjhaya tells the samanera the Pali name that he will have when he is a Buddhist monk.

The abbot or teacher who will make the formal announcement puts the sling of the alms-bowl crosswise on the samanera's left shoulder in such a way that the bowl hangs behind the samanera. He recites the Pali names of the three robes and the alms-bowl. After this there is an examination of the applicant in Pali language. These are usually standard phrases which have to be memorized. From the conclusion of these the abbot accepts the applicant as a monk who has communion (samvasa) with the Sangha. The abbot takes the bowl from him, whereupon the new monk prostrates three times and sits in his place within the assembly of Buddhist monks.

If a Buddhist monk, for personal reasons, wishes to return to lay-life, he should go through the following procedure for that purpose. On the appointed day, when the monks who are to witness the disrobing have assembled, the monk who will disrobe should first rid himself of any remorse by confessing offences, if there are any, to another monk. Then he should place his outer robe ('sanghati') over his left shoulder, make the five-point prostration three times, join his hands in the gesture of respect and chant in Pali the passage revering the Buddha. Then he recites the recollection after using the eight requisites in the presence of the assembled monks. If there are several monks who will disrobe at the same time, they may chant this together, whereupon in Pali and in the own language is said: "I give up the Training, may you regard me as a layman". If two or more are disrobing they should state this particular passage separately. The former monk then prostrates three times and goes out of the main hall to change his cloths; throughout Southeast Asia, one then wears civilian cloths but in Cambodia the former monk dresses in a white **pha nimg*** (lower robe). Upon his return to the main hall, he bows three times with palms of hands together and declares his trust in the Three Refuges - an act which shows that he is a layman now.

In Cambodia and Laos the abbot may say: "The Five Precepts lead people to happiness, they lead to Nirvana: therefore, keep the Precepts in purity". In Burma and Thailand the abbot usually says: "These five rules of training should be well maintained as constant precepts". The new layman replies: "Yes, Venerable Sir". The monks and the layman then go outside where the layman will be doused by each monk in turn. Lastly the abbot pours consecrated water over the new layman's head. If this ceremony takes place during the morning, the layman may offer a meal and other offerings to the monks; if during the afternoon or evening, he may present them with whatever offerings are allowable at that time, which completes the ceremony. Unlike the other countries in mainland Southeast Asia, in Cambodia the former monk must wear white for eight days after leaving the Sangha.

To become a monk or nun requires conviction; to remain it requires understanding and lots of patience. These can certainly be cultivated and will arise naturally with the development of meditation. The life of a Buddhist monk or nun requires constant effort. With the right attitude and insight of one's emotional changes, one will learn from the difficulties that arise and gain

understanding and wisdom.

Practical application

How to use this part

Do not read all of the chapters at once. Take a chapter a day. Try to apply what you read. Some chapters look very contradictive but that is all on purpose. Life is full of contradictions. In contradictions we find organization. To organize our mind we need to go through many conflicting situations.

Practical application

The teachings of Buddhism can be used in strictly theoretical sense and in a practical way. I my daily life and work I prefer to use a practical approach. We are no longer able to go for a long period of retreat in a forest or monastery, at least not for most of us. Choosing a spiritual life in the care of the monastery or a lonely retreat to a spiritual inspiring place is for most people an impossible act in life. Buddha also did understand that the majority of people will never be able to give up the day to day life for a devoted spiritual life. This part of the book is written to be a guide line for daily activities in the most practical way.

How did I found these practical road to a better spiritual life ? The most simple explanation is that I combined sport, study and work in a daily practice. In my daily life I also had the care of a family with children, a housekeeping, shops and employee. As to all sometimes the situation became so tensed that I had to find a way to escape for reality of the day. My sport is Muay Thai and this has always guided me to a new reality. The hard training of the sport, the hours of daily practice and the needed discipline in training and teaching have been my guide to a better spiritual life.

In Buddhism we all condemn violence. For the outsider Muay Thai is very extreme and practical violence. Especially in the Western world where I grew up it was seen as a criminal linked, hard and merciless sport. In fact Muay Thai teaches compassion, respect, tolerance and gives a road to a higher spiritual lifestyle. The opposite what has been shown by the display of kicks, punches and other fighting by the outsider. As we all will learn from this book what we see is not the reality of all. Most of what we see is illusion, made up by our brain of thoughts and memories. Hitting and kicking is often connected with violence to the innocent. Originally Muay Thai was only designed for the warrior, the soldier. A soldier in peacetime had to be well trained to come into action in a time of war. Muay Thai is developed as a method of proper exercise and test for the individual.

A test for the individual as we undergo every day. We all are tested every single day in our lives. In a city environment even more than on the country side. Today more than yesterday or the ancient centuries in which the Buddha lived. Through the centuries there have been wars and crime always. But due to the amount of people it was less possible to become a victim than in the current day. Our society has changed and we all have come under a constant treat. No longer of a visible enemy, most of the dangers come from hidden places, from places we cannot see, feel or touch. We fight with unseen enemies that are threatening our daily lives.

Who are these enemies ?
First of all we can consider the things we see as our best friends : our computers, the internet, our social networks , taxes, duties, schooling, examinations and so many more realistic but untouchable enemies. Most do feel threatened by them. For some they are the source of daily sorrow and even fear. Yes our friends are the worst enemies in reality and thoughts. The question we will need to answer in this book is how we will deal with these enemies.

Who are our friends ?
We feel bounded to some people in our live. These people we consider friends. But the word “friend” did get other dimensions in the current time of internet. People no longer really know how to define real friendship, most even cannot even define a real relationship. Our friends are all people who are in our mind, people we feel really connected with. Most friends will support you in good and bad times, they share your life. But some friends are on a distance, they are there but you do not often or ever see them. The cyber life has changed our ability to make friends and even our emotional binding to friends.

Buddhism is the way of the middle. As you see I mention enemies and friends in separate chapters but in fact they are the same. In our mind we make a strong distinguish of who we like and want and who we prefer or not. This is all based on our emotional connection with people. We want friends and by discriminating people we also get enemies. We will never ask for enemies but get them anyway in live. People who do not like us from the size of our shoes or the color of our hair or skin. Our target in Buddhism is to learn how to find a way to love even our enemies. It is easy to love our friends but being positive or even neutral of our enemies is one of the most difficult tasks in life.

When we look back at the warrior in this case symbolized by Muay Thai we can see that no matter who we will fight against in the competition of life, we will need to fight, friend or enemy alike. We will need to show the same respect and have the mentality while fighting. We fight not to let our emotions take the upper hand but to control them in all means because the warrior knows that when the emotions take over he/she will lose the fight always.

5.1 What is the meaning of the teachings in our daily life

Before his onset to become the Gautama , the Buddha searched for all ways to reach enlightment. He went through different stages of extremity to test the human body and mind. He found that only the Middle Path could lead to a better life and enlightment. To us this is important. Our daily life consist often

extreme happenings. Most of us are under extreme pressure every day. Work, school, private life, commercial standards, official duties, name them and you understand what I say.

The Middle Path is a way to find stability in life, to find a way to survive and to reach a healthier mental state. Yes, I do not mention any more than just a healthy mind in a healthy body, that is the beginning. We all need to make a beginning, the first steps are the most important.

We need to create time to get space in our life to evaluate the teachings and pay time to meditate. In the beginning we must try to combine a physical and mental exercise together for the best result. The best way is to use a short Sutra as a way to focus on exercise and mental awareness. Mindfulness is an important step remember the 8 fold path of wisdom and you discover the Right Mindedness, also called: Right Thought ('samma-sati');. To be aware of what we do and how we do it. This exercises help you in the struggle for daily sorrows, you will become aware of the faintness of them.

The most important part to know when you study the teachings is what you personally can do with them. Most books and teachers will refer to a more spiritual setting of the teachings but Buddha was also a very practical man. He was in a house that did offer him everything, a future that was set and ready for all things in life and jet he choose to leave all behind to find his way. This is not so ideological as most people will think, it is very practical. He KNEW that when he stayed in the castle he would never reach peace of mind, stability of his senses and surely never would have the space to explore extremities of life. That would never been allowed by his environment. So he choose to leave. This is a first step to be practical. Know where you are, know your environment.

After you read this, look around you. Is this the place you want to grow old, is this the place that will allow you to reach a higher state of mind ? Look at who you are , your responsibilities, your ambitions in life and most of all toward the satisfaction of the current life. Are you satisfied, are you able to grow here ?

I am sure that most readers will think that they do not have a choice in life. Maybe that is true, but a little doubt can bring thoughts and ideas of how to change your life, how to create space for mental development. In the pure form of Buddhism we can find the solutions for the everyday problems as you will discover in this book.

5.1.1 Opening and closing the daily door of life

When we are young our responsibilities are to school and parents. It is a very practical way of life. We need to study hard to get the right result and everybody seems to be happy. The better the marks the more satisfied the people are. It seems all simple till the moment we get into a down period. Our performance goes down. Marks are no longer high and people start to be inpatient and sometimes even angry. You do not know what is happening cause the harder your study, the more time you spend on the homework the lower the marks become. This is something nearly everybody encounters some day in life.

Our body and mind are no longer stabile. We have lost the stability in work / learning ability / performance. Something happened that made us lose control. The urgent question is what. Most of the time the young person becomes frustrated and is trying to find ways to break the 'spell' . Parents and school also try different ways, pity enough most use 'force ' as a way to improve results.

Force is considered a negative emotion toward a person. It takes away the free will and choice and throw a person into a vicious cycle leading to an emotional struggle for results and understanding. Numerous prove is delivered by now that force leads to destruction and hardly ever to positive results. We can see this everyday around us. Only the real strong survive it. Most will be harmed and damaged for life. Is that all worth it ?

The best way to help a person in distress is to teach mindfulness in a positive way. We all know the task of the child going to school. Yes, it is clear that "we" know it but does the child know it ? In our society pressure seems to be needed for everything. This pressure is building up over the years and for many people slowly start to play a major role in their life. Often I refer to it as a house with only open doors. The ability to close down a door is gone.

- The truth of suffering (*dukkha*)
- The truth of the cause of suffering (*samudaya*)
- The truth of the end of suffering (*nirhodha*)
- The truth of the path that frees us from suffering (*magga*)

In the 4 noble truth we find the first is dhukka. Dhukka is the fact that we all undergo suffering, in past text all is referring to what we do to each other. In fact we are all the cause of suffering (samudya). But we all think to know how we can end this suffering (nirhodha) by postponing the salvation into the future. We press each other to get better and better because in the future we will have a better life. But the fact is that along the way we have destroyed so much of our inner self, lost so much stability that there will be no end to suffering.

We all search for the path to end suffering (magga) but even while walking on it we are unable to see it as we are so occupied with what will possibly be in the future. Our eyes are all directed to the benefit that may come in the future. Like looking through the house with all these open doors. But we forget that the house with open doors can cause severe danger to catch cold, is hardly possible to heat or cool and is never private. A house with open doors can never solve a problem.

Our first step is to start closing doors in our life to create a better living space. When we close the door of a room we are able to control the heat or cold, and can feel more comfortable. With all doors closed we can see the walls and shape of the room better. A certain control start to exist. To gain control over our life we need to find first the cause of our suffering. Most psychologist will start to discuss this and analyze the reasons of suffering first. In Buddhism we teach to become an observer, a person on distance, to become disconnected too the problem.

When we become observer we can start to see our own suffering but also what we do to others, our demands on others, our pressure system and most of all what this hunting for fame and fortune actually is doing to us and others. We become able to even the review the “house” with open doors, discover the loss in energy and take action.

5.5 Dealing with Love

Love is often symbolized by mutual relationship, by a giving and returning of loving favors. We deal with love like it is something we own. Most of us consider giving love an option, a choice that we make. But seldom we consider that we have no choice to receive love. If we give love it is unfair to expect a

return. If you give something to get a return we borrow it to somewhat and expect to get it back with a bonus or interest. This implies that when we give love as a child to our parents we will get it back later on in life with an incredible bonus. Or did we ever realize that when our parents give us love they also will need to get it back with a bonus ? Maybe their bonus will be even higher than ours.

Parental love should be endless and without any wish for returns. In Buddhism we regard the giving of love as something we do without expectation. How many readers can say in all honesty that they do not feel guilty when they think of their parents. What are you feeling when you think of your parents getting older and older, do you feel a real love to help them or a need, a duty to do so ? Consider this carefully and you know if their love was true and honest or it was a given love waiting for returns.

If you have children how do you give them love ? Do you give it with an open heart and mind and never to expect a return or are you already busy preparing your child for the future to take care of you ? Yes, we all need a caretaker and if possible even more than one but the time not only is changing rapidly also the ego of the people is changing, the individualistic state of mind of most people is increasing. Giving your children love will no longer be a guarantee that they will take care of you when you are at old age. Do not have that expectation any longer.

6.1 Burma

6.1.1 History of Burmese Buddhism

Asoka, the great Indian emperor who was a devout Buddhist, sent missions during the third century B.C. to many countries, including Suvannabhumi ("The Golden Land") which is taken to be Burma. The manuscripts which give descriptions of the missions are the first official records of the establishment of Buddhism in Southeast Asia.

Initially the Buddhism that developed in central Burma was a blend of Mahayana, Theravada and spirit-worship. When King Anawratha (1044-1077 A.D.) of Pagan conquered the southern Mon state of Thaton, Theravada Buddhism became Burma's dominant school. It has remained that way ever since. Anawratha discouraged Mahayana Buddhism but it was not actually eli-minated. Burmese monastic historiography compared his conversion to that of Asoka.

Anawratha was the first king to unite under his own control virtually the whole of Burma, other than the Shan State, as we now know it. Anawratha incorporated Thaton into his domi-nions, but he was not only a man of war. In his desire to glorify Buddhism, and perhaps also himself, he built temples and pagodas in his capital. In this way he initiated an architectural period of two centuries, during which Pagan was progressively beautified by incomparably the finest pagodas in Burma. Anawratha brought from Thaton thirty-two elephant-loads of Buddhist scriptures in Pali. These represented a form of Buddhism which, if not pure, was without doubt a great deal less corrupt than the Buddhism previously current in the north.

The Mons of southern Burma adopted Theravada Buddhism at an early date, and thereafter in-fluenced the religious history of Thailand as well. The Mons invaded the central valley of the Menam Chao Phya and set up the Kingdom of Dvaravati, which lasted from the third to the se-venth century A.D., and which left a distinctive style of Buddhism. After the conquest of Tha-ton, Theravada Buddhism in Thailand was even further strengthened because Anawratha sent lots of missionary monks along with his conquests in northern Thailand. Great emphasis was laid on learning about Buddhism in Pagan. It is said that even a village girl could recite and discuss points of philosophy with learned monks, and that even a poor widow could build a pagoda. Kings and commoners together spent their wealth honouring Buddha. They built more than 5,000 pagodas (averaging almost two a month!) Most of the Pagan pa¬godas were built between 1057 A.D. and 1284 A.D. during the reigns of Anawratha, Kyanzit-tha, Alaungsithu, Narapatisithu and Tayokpyemin. Kyanzittha built the Ananda Pagoda, the finest of the Pagan temples, and one of the few still fblly used as a place of worship. Ananda Pagoda was reproduced after the plan of

Nandamula Cave in the Himalayas. The temple is said to represent the endless wisdom of the Buddha. The highest temple in Pagan is the Thatbyin-nyii Temple which rises to 61 metres and was built by Alaungsithu, around the mid-12th cen¬tury. The structure consists of two huge cubes: the lower one merges into the upper with three diminishing terraces. North-east of this temple stands a small pagoda, which was built of one brick for every 10,000 bricks used in the main temple. Alaungsithu's reign marked the end of Mon cultural dominance in the emergence of a truly Burmese style. The Thatbyinnyu Temple is the key monument of this transitional phase. Whereas the Mon-style temples rarely have more than one storey, the Thatbyinnyu has no fewer than four. The two lowest served as cells for the monks, the third and main floor houses the chief cult image, raised high within the building mass, the fourth floor housed the library, and above this is a pagoda with relics. Strictly speaking, the building is a combination oVstupd and temple. Externally the roofs are flat, a practical expedient providing usable terraces, but far less effective visually than the sweeping continuity afforded by the sloping roofs of the Ananda Pagoda. Narapatisithu's reign saw the final triumph of the Burmese style in architecture in such monu¬ments as the Sulamani Temple. (It stands beyond the Dhammayangyi Temple). The temple has two storeys and small stupas at the corner of each terrace. Buddha images face the four direc¬tions from the ground floor. A characteristic of the Pagan temples is their extremely architecto¬nic quality. This was already remarked upon by the orientalist Sir Henry Yule. He was an offi¬cer with the British Army in Burma in the middle of the 19th century. He was the first Europe¬an visitor to appreciate the importance of Pagan. He later made a careful study of the main mo¬numents, including measured drawings which are still today the standard references.

By the middle of the thirteenth century, the Mongols under Kublai Khan had annexed Yunnan. When the Burmese refused to acknowledge the Khanfs supremacy they were invaded from the north. In this period Burma had already become the main stronghold of Theravada Buddhism on the Indochdnese peninsula. Simultaneously with the Mongols, the Shans attacked from the east (as a matter of fact they were accelerated by the Mongol conquest of southern China in 1253). In 1284 A.D., Tayokpyemin dismantled 5,000 old pagodas to build a huge fort, but this could not prevent the Pagan empire from collapsing. Kublai Khan too was a Buddhist. The king of Pagan fled, so no battle was fought here. Kublai Khan ordered his troops to respect the temples. Pagan didn't end with his victory. Pagan's enemies were time, negligence and ignorance". The two and a half centuries that followed were a chaotic period in the history of Burmese Buddhism. Burma broke up into a number of succession states. In this time the Shans, and possibly other Thai peoples, like the Siamese and Laotians, adopted Theravada Buddhism. For the second time Burma was unified into an empire by Tabinshwehti (1531-1551) and his dynas-ty of Toungoo. Bayinnaung came to power in 1551. He was the most remarkable leader pro-duced by Burma. He was a man of religion, and during his reign there was a great revival of Buddhism. Bayinnaung was in Burmese eyes a model king, making offerings to pagodas, founding monasteries and hospitals,

feeding monks and undertaking many other works of reli-gious merit. Bayinnaung made Burma the strongest military power east of India and south of China. "Costly offerings to pagodas may have been this monarch's attempts to atone for his power struggles of blood and iron", said U Maung Maung Kywe. However, Bayinnaung's successors relapsed into their tribal homeland of Upper Burma. During the 17th century Burma again broke up into rival succession states. Its ephemeral domination by the Mons (1740-1752) was interrupted by the military conquests and renewed unification of Burma under the third and last Burmese Empire. Burmese kings made a retrograde step and surrendered to traditio-nalism: cut off from contact with the outside world, Burmese rulers came truly to believe that their palace was the centre of the universe, and that building pagodas and raiding their neigh-bours for white elephants was the essence of kingship. Under Alaungpaya (1753-1760) was compiled the Manii-Kyay Dhammathat Code in which a comparatively humane Buddhist and ethical approach occupied the place of the Brahmanic ritualistic rules. Alaungpaya's name is a designation of the Future Buddha, but he died while attempting to conquer Siam. His conquests were continued by his successors. Among them was king Bodawpaya (1781-1819), who extended the Burmese borders to the farthest limits they ever reached. By the Sangharaja of the monastic order of Burma, Nanabhivamsa, the ruthless Bodawpaya was con¬fronted with the example of Asoka, the ideal Buddhist emperor and unifier of India of more than two millennia earlier, confronted with the morality of the narratives about the Buddha's previous lives and the subsequent Buddha's discourses on the ethics and duties of kings. Nana¬bhivamsa contributed much to the stimulation which Burmese Buddhism gave to Southeast Asia. The Buddhist culture of 19th century Burma under the Alaungpaya Dynasty attempted to resume the traditions of the Pagan period. But the chief ingredient in the eventual failure of the Burmese kingdom was not western imperialism, but the xenophobia which radiated from the court.

From this aspect also stem the reproaches often leveled at the Burmese Sangha, that they caused an almost completely parochial situation without any concession to modern develop-ments, immured behind the walls of a changeless tradition. Fact remains that under these circumstances, the Buddhist meditational tradition has remained stronger in Burma than any-where else, and even remained to some extent religiously tolerant. The Buddhist religion has been a powerful restraint upon the waywardness of the Burmese kings. Buddhist tenets were, and still are, so widely and unquestioningly accepted as to create an atmosphere of opinion that also effectively restricted the King's power of choice in many directions (accepted and recog-nized by king, sangha and people alike).

In this regard Burmese Buddhism owed its most important subsequent reform to King Dham-maceti (1472-1492), who came from the country of the Mons and had been a monk for a long time. He left the monastic order but worked for its thorough reform when he became king. Dhammaceti prided himself in following the example of Asoka. Self-comparisons with Asoka's exemplary monastery and pagoda building were cultivated by Burmese royalty. For example, they also appear in an inscription of King Hsinpyushin (1774) and in

the reports of Bodaw¬paya. However, unlike Asoka but like many other rulers who prided themselves on compari¬sons with this ideal Buddhist peace emperor, Hsinpyushin and Bodawpaya persevered in cruel conquests. But still the very fact that precisely such rulers found it necessary to make professions of Buddhist social values, presupposes the existence of a Buddhist ethos. This po¬litical Asokan Buddhism of Burmese historical rulers is less widely known than the philosophi¬cal canonic Buddhism of the monastic order.
The first and second Anglo-Burmese wars, those of 1824-1826 and 1852, ended Burma's mi-litary dominance east of India. Thereby Burma suffered decisive territorial losses. Despite of the big economic losses arising from this, Burma's King Mindon (1853-1878) utilized the re-duced means of the country to become the Convener of the Fifth Buddhist Concile at Mandalay in 1871. Mindon followed the example of Asoka's concile. But Mindon's successor Thibaw (1878-1885) resumed methods in the spirit of Hindu traditions of power politics. When Thibaw attempted at a pragmatic forein policy of counterbalancing British pressure by plans for coope-ration with France (so successful in the case of Siam!), and jeopardized the concession of a British teak enterprise, the British invaded and annexed what remained of Burma. It became a province of British India.
The British withdrew the state patronage from Buddhism. While most of Burma's secular elite became culturally anglicized, its rural majority tended to cling to the folk traditions of medieval Buddhism. Monastic jurisdiction, however, was virtually destroyed when a secular British judge overruled it in 1891. Such policy in British Burma contrasted with the situation in French Laos: on the whole, the hand of France rested lightly on Laos. Under the French, it is true that the Sangha lost its monopoly over education, but there were no actions to wilfully destroy the Lao Sangha, unlike the British mastery in Burma. Even worse was that the social balance stabi-lizing pre-British Burma, with its Buddhistic equalitarian character of society, was upset by the colonial system.

When Burma concluded a military alliance with Japan in 1943, Ba Maw described this as the opportunity for which the Burmese people had been waiting ever since their country had been annexed by the British in 1886. However, the farmers in Burma did not fall upon them: many Englishmen fled, on foot, making their way out for hundreds of miles, unarmed; receiving anything but kindness. (This is clearly the result of the strong impact of Buddhism on Burmese culture through the centuries). The Japanese were initially accepted and even welcomed as li-berators, but soon disappointment followed, as the Japanese offended Burmese Buddhist sensibilities. Aung San established contact with the Allied Command. The Burmese turned a-gainst the Japanese in 1944 and restored to guerrilla warfare. British-Indian forces reoccupied Burma, but it was soon clear that the Burma of pre-war colonial days could not be restored. Even during the period 1945-1947 Aung San's guerrilla forces refused to hand over their arms and continued their military actions, receiving support from many Burmese Buddhists as well. As the independence of India had become a certainty by this time, soldiers from India

could no longer be available for a colonial war against Aung San's army. For the first time since 1824, British forces in Asia had no decisive military superiority over the Burmese. In January 1948 the British handed over power to General Aung San. In his inaugural address at the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League Convention, January 1946, Aung San had asked that Buddhism give its message, to the people, not only of Burma but of the world; one of love and brotherhood; the message that the world also needed to hear and heed increasingly. In this time, there were many Buddhists in Burma who saw the Buddhist Middle Way as an inter-mediate position between Capitalism and Communism. More information about this can be found in the chapter of this essay about Buddhism and Socialism. Aung San's charismatic personality had helped to unite the divergent components of the AFPFL and the non-Burman ethnic groups, whereas the charisma of UNu, who succeeded him, sprang to a large extent from the didactic emphasis of his speeches. Aung San and his cabinet were murdered by as¬sassins sent by U Saw, former prime minister of Burma, who had hoped to regain the position in this way. Like King Mindon, U Nu took seriously Buddhist prohibitions against doing harm. The personal popularity of U Nu was in great measure due to the justified belief that he was a good Buddhist. Under his government there was a considerable revival of interest in Bud¬dhism. U Nu attempted to establish a Buddhist Socialism whose objective was "Social Nirva¬na", the perfect society. The Sixth Great Buddhist Council was held in Rangoon from 1954 to 1962, and Burma was on the way to becoming the acknowledged centre of the Buddhist world (in 1961 Buddhism was declared the state religion) but in 1962 things changed.

The socialist doctrine of the new, military government under General Ne Win had no room for religion. It is remarkable that in Ne Win's "Burmese Way to Socialism" there is no mention of Buddhism (unprecedented in Burma) and in the new constitution the military did not even mention either Buddhism or religion. The Revolutionary Council issued a 21-point basic po¬licy statement on the Burmese Way to Socialism, outlining long-range goals. The demands of minority leaders for federalism, and the fact that U Nu had made Buddhism the state religion, were perceived by the military as a threat to the union's very existence. Speaking as "we, the working people of the national races of the Union of Burma", the Revolutionary Council ex-pressed its commitment to creating a new nation.

Popular reaction to the coup d'etat had been one of passive compliance, with a sense of relief that the military had seemingly stopped the deterioration of national unity that had occurred during the last days of the U Nu government. Despite his reliance on Buddhist concepts and his rejection of Marxist dialectics, General Ne Win was secular in outlook He believed that the government ought not to favour any particular religious community. The military did not support the recognition of Buddhism as the state religion and sought to distance itself from religious af-fairs. This proved extremely difficult because of the traditional closeness of state and sangha. The Burmese army and its officers followed the less religious line in public, but many of the officers are in

fact very devout, typically Burmese, and observe the customs of Buddhism in their own homes. Within the Sangha, however, it was feared that the Revolutionary Council's program of nationalization of the economy would make it impossible for people to donate funds for the support of monastic communities. In April 1964, the government ordered all Sangha groups to register with the government. This measure was taken in order to purge it of 'political monks' (for example, a monk named Sayadaw U Kethaya, a leader of the pro-AFPFL "Young Monks' Association", began preaching against the military in 1963. The government was afraid of the Sangha so dared not arrest him). After 1965 there have been no serious con-frontations, as if an uneasy truce existed between the military government and the monks.

In comparison with the Sangha in Thailand, a hierarchical pattern within the Burmese Sangha was never fully developed. The most important reason is that the political history of Burma has been more chaotic than that of Thailand. Burma never had a long-enduring succession of mo-narchs from one well-established dynasty. In this way the Burmese royal house could not be invested with the Buddha-to-be sanctity like in Thailand.
Since the proper operation of the hierarchical system within the Burmese Sangha depended on the effectiveness of the power of the government, it broke down completely with the annexa-tion of Burma by the British. Outside the capital there had always been great variety and lack of uniformity within the Burmese Sangha. The country was divided into districts, some of which were almost sub-kingdoms. The district head monk (if there was any) was appointed by the King, but below this level the Sangha officials were local men and the roots of Sangha ad-ministration ran down into the villages. And each village managed its own affairs. Burmese Buddhism owes important reforms to King Dhammaceti, and such was much needed in Burma in those days, since many monks had contravened the rules of the Order (for example by amassing wealth for themselves). Since King Dhammaceti had belonged to the Sinhalese

Sangha, it was natural for him to combine the revival of monastic discipline with the introduc-tion of ordination traditions from Ceylon. An ordination hall, called skalyanisimd after the Sinhalese river, was erected in Pegu and the native monks were invited to submit themselves to re-ordination. The validity of a Buddhist monk's ordination depends on an uninterrupted line of valid ordinations going back to the Buddha himself. Since serious transgressions against the monastic rule incur automatic expulsion from the Order, the validity of the succession can only be assured if the way of life of the monks who belong to the Order is morally irreproachable. This explains why the formalities of the re-ordination were so important as a prerequisite for the general reform of the Burmese Sangha. The reform initiated by Dhammaceti was success¬fully carried out in all parts of Burma, and all present-day Burmese monks trace back their ordination to the Kalyanisima tradition.
A serious dispute divided the Burmese Sangha in the eighteenth century, when a group of monks maintained that covering both shoulders (^parnpand) with the monk's robe outside the monastery was in accordance with the original laws,

while the rest of the monks wanted to cover only one shoulder Qekamsikd). The dispute was not settled until 1784. In that year an assembly of Buddhist monks, under supervision of the king decided in favour of covering both shoulders (which, from a historical point of view, is wrong). To this day this way of wearing the monk's robe is characteristic of Burmese monks.

Such events show to what an extent the Burmese kings had brought the Sangha under their control. They exercised this control through a central clerical administration headed by the Thathanabaing, who has appointed by the king, on whose death or overthrow the validity of his appointment would cease.
Soon after the attainment of Independence of Burma, January 1948, the Burmese Government began planning to hold a *Sanghayantf in Rangoon: the Sixth Great Buddhist Council. Four other Theravada countries should be participating: Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos. The council was held because of an increasing demand for a new and thorough reform of the Sangha. U Nu's attempt between 1950 and 1959 to attain this objective by once more setting up ecclesiastical jurisdiction, registration of monks, the election of a Sangha parliament, to mention just a few aspects, came in the end to nothing. For prior consultations with regard to the preparations of the Buddhist Council, the Burmese Government sent a mission to Thailand and Cambodia. This mission was composed of Nyaungyan, Mahasi Sayadaw and two laymen. The mission successfully discussed the plan with the Supreme Patriarchs of Thailand and Cam-bodia.
The Sixth Great Buddhist Council was inaugurated on May 17, 1954, in a huge conference hall near the Kaba-Aye Pagoda in Rangoon. The primary task of this Buddhist synod was the cere-monial recitation and formal confirmation of the re-edited Tripitaka texts by the monks. The entire Pali canon was recited and confirmed in five sessions over a two-year period between 1955 and 1957. The first session completed the recitation of the five Vinaya Pitakas compri¬sing five books of 2,260 pages. The first and part of the second sessions were presided over by the most eminent elder of the Burmese Sangha, the much-revered Nyaungyan Sayadaw, who died in the midst of his labours. The first part of the third session was presided over by the Sangharaja of Cambodia and the second part by the Sangharaja of Laos. The fourth session was chaired by the Sanghanayaka of Thailand, and the fifth by the Head of the Malwatte school of the Siam sect of Ceylon. While the vast majority of the monks who participated in the Coun¬cil were Burmese, recognition was thus given to all five Theravada Buddhist countries in its leadership.
The Sixth Great Buddhist Council, commemorating the 2,500th anniversary of the Buddha's attainment of Nirvana, eventually led to the crucial proposal to make Buddhism officially Burma's state religion, reporting on U Nu's address to the monks at the last session of the Council on February 18, 1962 (few people seem to realize how long the Sixth Council really lasted).

6.2 Thailand

6.2.1 History of Thai Buddhism

It is very unfortunate that the oldest form of Thai Buddhism cannot be presented in its historical development. Although it is known that two missionaries were sent by emperor Asoka to Nakorn Pathom, further details are unavailable since the written records of the early Mon and Khmer kingdoms in Thailand are lost. Efforts to reconstruct the record of Thai his¬tory have been made, but these have resulted in little more than fragmentary accounts of the military exploits and lines of succession of the Kings.

The Thais migrated from the south of China to Nakorn Pathom in the 13th century, when they conquered the country from the Khmers and the Mons. King Anawratha of Burma sent lots of missionary monks along with his conquests in northern Thailand. Later as the Thais moved south from Yunnan, they came in contact with this form of -Theravada- Buddhism. When they set up the Kingdom of Sukhotai in 1238 A.D., it was with Theravada Buddhism as the state religion. Buddhism seems to have been the more popular and widespread, although portrayals of the Hindu gods Brahma, Vishnu, Ganesha and Indra have also been found. This is an indi-cation that, maybe, aspects of Vaisnavism and Saivism flourished in Thailand as well. About 1260 A.D., the Kingdom of Sukhotai freed itself from Khmer rule. In the reign of King Suryavarman of Angkor, 1010-1050 A.D., the plains of central Siam came under Cambodian domination. This situation lasted for about two and a half centuries. From this we can explain the Mahayana and Hindu influences in the religion of that time; Buddhist temples and statues found in Lopburi and in other western provinces of (then) Cambodia make this very clear. King Rama Khamhaeng (71275-1317) of Sukhotai had a learned monk invited from Sri Lanka, so that he could help Rama to teach his people the religion of Buddhism. The Thais themselves frequently call their religion Lankavamsa Buddhism, the Sinhalese lineage, because of the Sri Lanka Buddhist influence during the Sukhotai period. Since that period, Thailand has main-tained an unbroken canonical tradition and pure monastic ordination lineage, the only country among the Theravada to do so. All other countries within Theravada have, at one time or another, relied upon the Thai Sangha to revive or expand the teachings in their respective so-cieties. In most instances, this assistance became necessary, because of war or colonial pres¬sures in Southeast Asia. Thailand, fortunately, never fought with or was colonized by a Euro¬pean power. King Rama's stone inscription of 1292 A.D. is the oldest document written in the Thai script. His grandson Lii Thai again invited Buddhist monks famous for their learning and austerity from Sri Lanka, some of them coming through lower Burma, to strengthen the purity of the Thai Sangha.

The Kingdom of Sukhotai gave place to the rise of another Thai kingdom in the south, namely Ayutthaya, which existed from 1350 until 1767. The Kings of Ayutthaya continued to encou-rage Buddhism. During that time, Cambodia became a dependency of the Thai kings, but the Thais themselves were deeply influenced by Khmer culture. A great part of the customs and rituals later labelled Court Brahminism dates back to the reign of King Tilokaraya (1442-1487), who reorganized his kingdom's administration on the model of Angkor, in this way succeeding in holding sway over most of the area that is now northern Thailand. Other kings of Ayutthaya also concerned themselves with

affairs of the Sangha. King Songdharm (1610-1628) was interested in improvement of the purity of the Buddhist Canon and made a royal edition of the Tripitaka. He also built near Saraburi a pagoda to the footprints of the Buddha which still draws both monk and lay pilgrims. By 1750, Ayutthaya must have accumulated great quantities of sacred writings and valuable chronicles connected with the Monastic Order. During the reign of Maha Dhammaraja II (1733-1758) Buddhism in Ayutthaya seems to have flowered, producing a bloom the fame of which reached even Sri Lanka. The Sinhalese king Kirti Sri sent three missions to Ayutthaya around 1750 to bring Thai monks to his kingdom, to give ordination to Ceylonese monks. Of these three missions only the last was successful. Maha Dhammaraja II sent a delegation of monks to Sri Lanka under Phra Upali. The monks remained in Sri Lanka for three years and in 1753 ordained monks who formed the commencement of the school known as the Siyam Nikaya. (This name was derived from %Siam\ the old name of Thailand). There were also monks in Sri Lanka who didn't agree with the Thai influence, and they formed the nucleus of the Amarapura Nikaya and Ramanna Nikaya, the two branches of the Sangha of Sri Lanka which are based on Burmese tradition.

In 1767 the city and kingdom of Ayutthaya were destroyed during the notorious Burmese invasion. Ayutthaya fell after a siege of fourteen months during which fires and epidemics ravaged the city. Thailand was then a city-state and the fall of the capital meant the loss of most of its culture. After the sack of Ayutthaya, the Sangha entered the nineteenth century depleted in numbers and hardly supplied with religious or historical documents. Buddhism declined through the lack of discipline as well. The new kings of Thonburi and Bangkok tried to revive Buddhism by collecting the scattered books together, by purifying the conduct of monks and by promoting a big campaign of building temples. King Taksin (1767-1782) of Thonburi restored Thailand's independence. He was however dethroned by the first king of the present Chakri dynasty, Rama I (1782-1809) who moved the capital across the river to Bang-kok. Both these rulers initiated reforms of the Sangha and they caused a collection of the scriptures to be made. Several generations of Thai kings have adopted the title Rama, derived from the Ramayana which is an epic of the Hindus. Here again we see the Hindu influences. Buddhist monks from Laos wrote the 'Pommachak, an adaptation of the Ramayana story for Buddhist religious purposes. Here the story is treated as a previous life of the Buddha ('Rama is no other than the Buddha himself). Rama I also issued regulations for rituals in order to ensure that such practices would not contravene Buddhist tenets.

The greatest reformer of Thai Buddhism was however King Rama IV, also called Mongkut. During the third reign of the present dynasty, Prince Mongkut who had been temporarily or-dained according to Thai practice for one rainy-season, found that he could not gain success in the meditation exercises to which he devoted himself at first. He began to suspect that practice as well as conduct and scholarship were insufficient in the Thai Sangha. First the Prince con-templated returning to lay-life, disheartened as he was by the uninspiring state of the Sangha since the sack of Ayutthaya. But just at that crucial time, Prince Mongkut met a senior monk from the Mon tradition who impressed him

very greatly as he practised the Vinaya strictly and was well-learned in the Dhamma. Prince Mongkut then took re-ordination into the Mon tradi-tion and having become proficient in Pali language, he was appointed abbot of the new temple Wat Bovoranives by order of his half-brother, King Rama III (1824-1851). From his grasp of the principles taught in the original texts and by strict practice of those prin¬ciples, Prince Mongkut gathered around him monks who appreciated this close adherence to the original teachings of the Buddha. This group, having a different ordination lineage, became known as Thammayiit. This title has been derived from the Pali words *Dhammayuttika-nikayd which means Those who adhere to Dhamma1. When Prince Mongkut eventually became King Rama IV in 1851, he had been a monk for 27 years. Subsequently, the original Thai Buddhist Order of Mahanikai made strong efforts to purify it-self and to relinquish unworthy practices. In present-day Thailand, Mahanikai monks are found in the ratio of thirty-seven to one with regard to Thammayut monks. According to my Teacher Phra Cholvit Jearajit who is a Mahanikai monk, Thammayut temples insist on care and attention to even small points in the monks' training while such is not always the case in Mahanikai. Thammayut monks eat only once a day, before noon and must eat only what is in their alms-bowls, whereas Mahanikai monks eat twice before noon and may accept side dishes. Another aspect is that Thammayut monks are expected to attain proficiency in meditation as well as scripture study and Pali language, whereas the Mahanikai monks mostly specialise in one or the other (although this is not always the fact). The title Mahanikai is derived from the Pali term %Maha-Nikayci or 'Great Division1. Mahanikai strives to honour the old Thai ordination tradi-tion stemming from the Lankavamsa. Usually it is not possible to distinguish monks of Maha-nikai and Thammayut by their dress, although in temples adhering to the original Thai tradi¬tions, called the Old Mahanikai, there is a special way of wearing the upper robe. Between all Buddhist monks in Thailand there is harmony. Most laypeople have no attachment to a parti-cular group, so that it is not right to speak of 'sects1: the differences that exist in strictness of practice are matters for monks alone.

Recommended reading: "A History of Siam" by W.A. Wood. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1926. Also: "The Kingdom and People of Siam" by Sir John Bowring (2 vols.). London: John W. Parker & Son, 1857. And: "A History of Buddhism in Siam" by H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, Kromamun Bidyalabb; reprint from "The Encyclopaedia of Buddhism" of the Government of Ceylon. Bang¬kok: Prachandra Press, 1960.

6.3 Laos

6.3.1 History of Laotian Buddhism

The Laotians, like the Thais, were originally animists. They were considered followers of earth spirit cults, who took on Theravada Buddhism as their main religion in the region of Vientiane in the eighth century, and not much later also in Luang Prabang. Though archaeologists have found in Laos the remains of Buddha images from the twelfth century, the earliest historical record of Buddhism dates from 1356 A.D., when the monastery of Wat Keo was built in

Muang Sawa which is today known as Luang Prabang.
Buddhism was introduced into Laos by Mon Buddhist monks. The legend that it was intro-duced by Khmer monks invited from Cambodia at this time is (according to Ajaan Houm Pheng) erroneous, though it may record the arrival of a new sect, or the replacement of Mon by Khmer influence within Laotian Buddhism. Until the thirteenth century, there were several small, independent Thai principalities in what is today Laos and the northern part of Thailand. King Rama Khamhaeng of Sukhotai supported the principalities of Chiangmai and Phayao in the formation of Lan Na Thai, which name means 'Million Thai Rice Fields'. Sometimes the name of that country was written simply as Lanna. The country of Lanna extended across north-central Thailand to the principality of Wieng Chan (Vientiane). In the fourteenth century, Wieng Chan was taken from Lanna by ruler Fa Ngum of Muang Sawa. Fa Ngum conquered Wieng Chan with the assistance from the Khmers, as he was brought up at the Khmer Court of Angkor and was married to a Khmer princess. Eventually he conquered all of the small states that constitute present-day Laos, as well as much of the Khorat Plateau in northeastern Thai-land. In 1353 A.D., Fa Ngum united these territories into the Lao kingdom of Lan Xang, which means literally 'Million Elephants'.
It is said that Khmer King Jayavarman Paramesvara (1327-71353), in whose time Cambodia had come under the influence of Thai monks, exhorted his son-in-law Fa Ngum to rule his kingdom according to Buddhist principles. Fa Ngum received from his royal Khmer father-in-law the Prabang Buddha, one of the most famous Buddha images of the Theravada commu¬nity, which reputedly had been given at a much earlier date to the Khmer royal house by a king of Sri Lanka. The Prabang became a talisman symbol for the sovereignty of the Lao kingdom of Lan Xang. In 1356, Fa Ngum built Wat Keo in Muang Sawa, to house the Prabang Buddha, which is how the city's name later became changed to Luang Prabang, Great Prabang. Fa Ngum was the first king of Laos to declare Buddhism the state religion. The consolidation of Laos under a truly Laotian head in the person of Fa Ngum, meant that the Buddhist civilization and culture, through Mon/Thai influences which had hardly reached farther than Wieng Chan, now spread over the upper Mekong regions as well. Buddhism itself, however, was fairly slow in spreading throughout Laos, even among the lowland peoples, who were reluctant to accept the faith instead of (or even alongside) the %pM earth spirit cult. Fa Ngum, also called The Conqueror1, continued to expand Lan Xang's territory, in this way exhausting his people which finally caused his ministers to drive him into exile in 1373. Fa Ngumfs successor was King Sam Sene Thai, who was a devout Buddhist, building many wats and schools. Under his rule the Buddhist monk began to assume in Laos' communities the place of honour that was traditional in other Buddhist countries. Sam Sene Thai developed the wat into the centre of community life and social gathering as well as a Buddhist place of wor-ship. Some of these forms of worship were still based on the old traditional Vedic rites from India. In the context of this comparative essay, Laos can be said to be an outpost on the Indian cultural periphery in Indo-China; with Cambodia to its south, it rightly forms an important element of the "Indo" part of the Indo-

China.
On the other hand, we can see the influences of Thailand and Burma very clearly. Already du-ring the reign of Sam Sene Thai, Lan Xang grew large and became embroiled in struggles with these states, a continuing feature of Laotian history.
In 1520, King Phothisarath succeeded to the throne of Lan Xang and moved the capital to Wieng Chan. He was notable for his devotion to Buddhism, the construction of many wats du-ring his reign and his attempt at suppression of the cult oVphf. Phothisarath strengthened the official position of Theravada Buddhism, but the Laotians were as much spirit worshippers as they were Buddhists. Early Buddhism in Laos differs from its Burmese and Thai counterparts in such a way that it was, in fact, an ancient and pervasive animism, a belief that certain spirits or %phi% with great power over the destinies of men are present throughout both material and immaterial universe. Despite the sporadic attempts at suppression by the Laotian government, beginning with King Phothisarath's decree in 1527, the cult of the %phf is found today in some form everywhere in Laos, even among the highest levels of the Buddhist clergy. In comparison, the Thai sphit cult seems extremely moderate. In Burma, the JVaMvorship plays an important role within Buddhism (like in Laos the culture of %pM) though the Burmese Sangha is very likely to be more orthodox than in Laos or Thailand. King Phothisarath entered the Sangha in 1525, at the age of 24, for the traditional rainy season retreat where he took instruction from the Supreme Patriarch at Wat Visun in Luang Prabang. His famous decree from 1527 was a result of this experience.
In 1545, Phothisarath obtained the throne of Lanna for his son Set-thathirath. The son inherited the throne of Lan Xang in 1547, returning to Muang Sawa/Luang Prabang (to which the Laotian capital had again been moved) taking with him the important religious statue known as the Emerald Buddha. We know from the section of this essay about Thailand the Emerald Buddha being the talisman of the Thai Kingdom; indeed, Setthathirath took this very image with him to Muang Sawa. Laotian invaders had taken the image from Chiangmai in the mid-16th century. Partly as a de-fensive measure against Burmese invasion, Setthathirath again transferred the Laotian capital to Wieng Chan in 1560. When the notorious Thai King Taksin (1767-1782) waged war against Laos, the Emerald Buddha was taken back from Wieng Chan to the Thai capital of Thonburi by General Chakri. Chakri would later succeed Taksin as Rama I, founder of the Thai Chakri dynasty. I refer to Literature Note 45 (Camille Notton) of this essay, for more details about the Emerald Buddha.
Setthathirath built a large stupa in characteristically Lao style, called 'thai Luang*. That Luang was constructed originally in gardens a kilometer east of the city walls of Wieng Chan, but is now situated within the Vientiane city limits. That Luang was built on the site of a former Buddhist shrine which its founding legend ascribed to Emperor Asoka. The That Luang is today the most sacred Buddhist monument in Laos, and the focus for the most important annual festival held in the country.
Another defensive strategy against the Burmese was that Setthathirath entered into an alliance with King Chakkraphat of Ayutthaya. The alliance was signed

on 7 July 1560, and commemo-rated by construction of a stupa on the frontier between the kingdoms of Lan Xang and Ayut-thaya. Setthathirath attempted to make Vientiane a regional Buddhist centre, but it was not un-til the reign of King Souligna Vongsa (1637-1694) that Buddhism began to be taught in Lao schools. Upon his enthronement, Souligna Vongsa forced one of his older brothers into exile in Vietnam and the other to enter the Monastic Order. This eliminated any challenge to his posi-tion, and enabled him to rule in peace for 54 years, the longest reign in the history of Lan Xang.

There are some good publications which describe Buddhism in Laos in this period. For readers of French, Paul Levy wrote "Les Royaumes Lao du Mekong" (in: "Cahiers de V Ecole Franqaise d'Extreme-Orient" Volume 25, Paris, 1940) and also "Les traces de 1'introduction du Bouddhisme a Luang Prabang'1 (in: "Bulletin de VEcole Franqaise d'Extreme-Orient" Volume 40,1940). For readers of German, it is worthwhile to have a look at "Die Geschichte von Laos. Von den Anfengen bis zum Beginn der neunzi-ger Jahre" by Michael Schultze (Hamburg, 1995) as it gives a clear description of Laotian history.
Soullgna Vongsa established the first official schools of the Buddhist faith in Laos. He estab-lished friendly relations with neighbouring states including Vietnam. Souligna Vongsa was a devoted Buddhist: it was from the Laos of his days that India's religious expansion was exten-ded to Vietnam. Laos accepted the cultural influences of India at a much earlier date, blending them into a typically Laotian whole, and having inherited this culture, defended it against Chi-nese-Vietnamese culture. The social structure of Laos, and the exercise of authority within, were legitimized through a combination of Lao and Indian Buddhist notions. These formed a single socio-religious world view, in which Lao concepts (establishing both territorial claims and social origins) were set within the framework of Buddhist conceptions of Kingship, Merit, and the moral destiny of Kamma. Together, these diverse elements provided not only justifica¬tion for the exercise of monarchical authority, but also legitimized the relative standing of all social classes, including the Sangha, in Laos.
Theravada Buddhism, in the Laotian way through its tolerance and flexibility, came to provide the broader context within which a whole range of mythic folk beliefs could be integrated. In the traditional Laotian ritual context, the whole process of establishment of order in the world took place within a Buddhist setting. The legitimizing role of Buddhism in reinforcing state authority used to be symbolically re-iterated in the New Year Ceremonies, of March/April, in Luang Prabang. The ceremonies centred upon the sacred Prabang Buddha in Wat Keo; the image was the palladium of the dynasty and also the symbol of the authority and standing of the Buddhist Order. By his submission to the Dhamma, the King of Laos claimed his right to rule, but only through the power and on behalf of the Triple Gem i.e. Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.
By the time the political oath of allegiance in a Buddhist temple was first required by royal decree in 1824, Lan Xang was already permanently divided when first Luang Prabang and then Champassak declared themselves independent kingdoms.

The submission to the Dhamma and the right to rule were recognized in the oath of loyalty taken by the notables of the realm immediately following the King's act of obeisance. The King had built Wat Sisaketin Vientiane between 1818 and 1825, and it was there that all Laotian notables had to take an annual oath of allegiance. Also this was an aspect of the royal decree of 1824. Thus, the hierarchical ordering of the Laotian realm was confirmed by placing it within a religious context which re-emphasized the monarch's primacy. Like my Teachers in Thailand pointed out very clearly, the Thai concept of a King is that he will become a Buddha in his next, or a very proximate, rebirth. According to Ajaan Houm Pheng, it was the same case in Laos: the King's recognition of a higher spiritual power reinforced his own temporal power, by making him the means by which that higher Truth was transmitted from the spiritual to the mundane sphere for the benefit of Laos.

King Chao Anou, also called Anuvong (1804-1828) of Vientiane, knew King Rama II of Siam personally. We can see clearly the Thai influence of Buddhism from that period, but the distinc-tion between the Laotian royal clan and Lao aristocracy was defined by tracing the royal lineage back to Khun Borom, mythical first Laotian ruler and taken to be the progenitor of the ruling Laotian dynasty. As ancestor he naturally required that the ritual worship in his honour be performed by his direct descendent, i.e. by the King alone. This was different from Thai concepts of kingship, but it did not differ in the sense that only the King could ensure the wel-fare of the country. The Lao king's position was further enhanced in the eyes of his subjects through the concepts of merit and kamma. As explained before, in the Buddhist way of thinking the accumulation of merit led to rebirth under conditions which would favour ad-vancement towards enlightenment or Buddhahood. Accumulation of merit would lead to a better rebirth in terms of social position and standing within the community. It was therefore believed that the King must have accumulated so much merit through previous existences that he was king by spiritual as well as hereditary right. The King of Laos and the King of Cambo-dia, like the King of Thailand, owed their positions primarily to the immutable natural law of kamma. Kamma holds each person accountable for the moral effects of his or her actions and intentions. Similar beliefs attached to the status of the nobility include what my Teachers in Thailand mentioned earlier in this essay: ca wealthy man ... will not evoke envy in the mind of the plowing rice farmer ... because it is believed that the wealthy deserve it on account of much %bitri from previous lives'. Buddhism, though in Laos more than in Thailand and a lot more than in Burma, thus stood in support of the established social order. The relationship between the King of Laos and the Laotian Sangha was, however, a reciprocal one. In return for the legitimation provided by the Sangha, the King of Laos was expected to demonstrate his religious commitment by donating generously to the upkeep of the monastic order, and by further extending the Dhamma throughout his realm. By virtue of its presence in almost every lowland Lao village, the Sangha acted as a force for unity within the state. Its monopoly over education ensured the propagation of an acceptable belief-system which effec¬tively maintained the existing social distinctions.

Historically the division of Laos into three principalities, after the reign of Souligna Vongsa, seriously undermined any universalist pretensions the Laotian kings might have had, at least in so far as they might hope to govern all ethnic Lao. The imposition on mainland Southeast Asia of the European system of nation-states within fixed boundaries, in place of the shifting fron-tiers of the previous principalities, preserved what remained of the Lao principalities in a single French-created Laotian state. In becoming the border of French Indochina, the Mekong lost its potential of serving as the central artery of a pan-Lao state; the previous Laotian kings did have aspirations into that direction. French intervention had the effect both of saving Laos from extinction at the hands of its more powerful neighbours, and of permanently reducing it to the status of a dependent and minor power in Southeast Asia. Before French intervention, Laos was unstable to the extent that ambitious princes might set themselves up as alternative focusses of both power and authority. The 'kammd of a provincial lord might lead him to expand his domain. In the end, every Lao prince saw himself as poten-tially a universal ruler. In practice, this meant extending rule, first over all of Laos, then, if possible, over its neighbours. A rationale for ambition always existed, posing a potential threat to the stability of the state. Luang Prabang ended up guarding a tenuous independence. Vien-tiane however, found itself first under Vietnamese and then under Thai suzerainty. And Cham-passak, in the south, owed allegiance to the Thai court.

Each were domains of subordinate rulers bound to the king by ritually reinforced ties of alle-giance, in a hierarchy of dependent territorial units. French colonialism farther weakened the position of the ruling dynasties in the remaining Lao states of Luang Prabang and Champassak. The Royal Family of Vientiane had been destroyed by the Thais. Though the French tried to conserve the traditional order by administering Laos where possible through the existing aristocracy, the choice of Vientiane as the seat of colonial administration divorced actual political authority from the supposed source of traditional authority in the person of the King in Luang Prabang. French colonialism destroyed the legiti-mizing ftinction of myth (Khun Borom) and religion (kamma and Triple Gem) because it usurped political authority. The King of Laos ruled only because the French allowed him to. As a result, Buddhist rituals began to lose their sacred character and were devalued to the level of entertainment in the eyes of the Laotian provincial nobility. The nobility were eager to share in the economic benefits of French rule! Under the French, the Sangha of Laos lost both its legiti-mizing function and its monopoly over education. But while its traditional authority was undermined in the towns, Buddhism remained very strong in the villages. In the towns, the French offered the Lao elite the benefit of a French secular education, with its promise of access to the new power structure. The Lao elite eagerly accepted the new educa¬tion. Phra Bounxay called this to my attention: "Together with the new education, the Lao elite accepted the French philosophical tradition with its distinction between temporal and spiritual powers. As a result, the connection between the political and the religious order was destroyed for the ruling class in Laos. Many Laotians lost faith in their own traditional form of

govern¬ment". This weakening of traditional authority was not reversed in the post-colonial period, despite the fact that the new constitution established Laos as a constitutional monarchy, and restored Buddhism to the position of official state religion.

For the French, Laos remained an economic backwater. Communications remained poor, and there have never been any railways. Virtually no attempt was made to develop the agriculture of Laos, with the exception of some coffee grown on the Bolovens Plateau. The only mineral deposit exploited, was tin in Khammouane Province. (Actually the most profitable economic resource during the French period was opium growing!) On the whole, the hand of France rested lightly on Laos. The Laotians caused the French little trouble. Although French colonial rule in Laos started in May 1893 (by military occupation of Lao territories east of the Mekong) and ended in October 1953 (because of the first Indochina war), the use of French military force did not involve Laos.

Even during the Second World War, life in Laos went on much as usual. During this period, Buddhism was left with no clear political or ideological role to play in Laos. Rather than strengthening Buddhism as an independent source of legitimation of government, its traditional role, government policy had the effect of compromising the independence of the Sangha. The Buddhist hierarchy reluctantly permitted monks to get involved in government-sponsored development programs. This was a move which only led to intense debate within the Sangha. It also led to a corresponding increase in divisive political activism on the part of young monks on both the political right and left. Both the authority and prestige of the Laotian Sangha suf¬fered from this compromising fall from its traditional position of religious detachment. After 1953, Buddhism as the state religion provided for inclusion in the Lao social order only those few tribes, such as the Lu and some Tai groups, which had previously been converted to Buddhism. For the rest, Buddhism stood only for ethnic Lao cultural superiority. From the 4.6 million inhabitants of today's Laos, (which is a country larger than Great Britain!), only 58.7% are Theravada Buddhists.

6.4 Cambodia

6.4.1 History of Cambodian Buddhism

Theravada Buddhism was introduced to Cambodia between the 13th and 14th centuries and was the state religion until 1975. During the 13th century, Cambodia abandoned its adherence to Hinduism which had coexisted with Mahayana Buddhism since the 9th century. Mahayana may have reached Cambodia by way of Indonesia and Funan where it was practised in the fifth century. By the seventh century, cults from animism, Brahmanism, Hinduism and Bud-dhism were synthesized. The coexistence of these different principles has always been a unique aspect of religious practice in Cambodia.

In Cambodia one belief or another always dominated, but the supremacy varied and it was rarely at the exclusion of others. According to legend, Cambodia was born from the union of the daughter of the king of the seven-headed Naga serpents, and an Indian prince. This is a clear sign of the cultural importance of

India on the ancient Khmer civilization, although the Khmers eventually assimilated it into a unique culture of their own. Buddhism in Cambodia was influenced by Hindu cult practices and also absorbed images of animistic spirits into its doctrines. The use of Sanskrit in Cambodia ended however by the early 14th century, and it was replaced as a sacred language by Pali upon the introduction of Theravada. While Cambo-dian Buddhism rejected some of the doctrines of Brahmanism, it borrowed a few of the Hindu deities. Some legends depicted on the temples of Angkor, for example, incorporate aspects of both Hinduism and Buddhism. The fact is that in Cambodia diverse beliefs coexist not merely side by side, but right in people's minds. San said: "The Cambodian may very well believe it all. In Cambodia someone can be a one hundred-percent Buddhist, one hundred-percent Hindu and one hundred-percent believer in spirits all at the same time, and feel completely sincere and comfortable about it". I pointed out that such a mixture would add up to three hundred per-cent, which is impossible, but San did not understand what I was talking about and advised me not to worry so much about mathematics.

In the eight century, the expansion of the Srivijaya empire of Sumatra into Malaya increased the influence of Mahayana Buddhism in central Thailand and Cambodia. Gradually this form of Buddhism was carried by Khmer forces and settlers into what is now eastern Thailand. When Chou Ta-Kuan visited Cambodia in 1296 A.D., he found that Theravada had already largely supplanted the Mahayana. The Thais invaded Cambodia and captured Angkor four times, in 1352, 1393, 1431 and 1460, and as a result there followed something of a religious entente. While Cambodian monks studied Buddhism in Thailand, the Thais in turn inscribed on palm leaves their own sacred texts in Cambodian script.

The syncretism of the worships of the Shivaic Mahesvara and the Mahayana Bodhisattva (Lokesvara), which forms such an interesting chapter in the later history of Buddhism in Indo-China, seemed to be in its early stages during the Funan period. This period lasted from the first century A.D. to ca. 550. In spite of the royal cult of Mahesvara and the dedications to Vishnuism, the Funan period seems to have been a strong centre of Buddhism. This was especially so during the reign of Jayavarman, who ruled from 478 or earlier to 514. It was du-ring this period that two Cambodian monks went to China to translate Buddhist documents. Their translations are said to be still found in the Chinese tripitaka. One of the monks was called Sanghapala. He knew many languages, and having heard of China, went there on a junk. Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty ordered him to translate Buddhist books. The other Cambodian monk who went to China at this time to translate Buddhist texts was named Mandrasena. Emperor Wu ordered him to work with Sanghapala.

At the same time, the Cambodian King Jayavarman sent an embassy to offer as tribute a coral image of the Buddha and products of the country. The Chinese emperor seemed delighted and decided to give to Jayavarman the title "General of the Pacified South, King of Funan". A Sanskrit inscription at Ta Prohm of Bati, in the Province of Takeo in southern Cambodia, be-gins with a pean of praise to the Buddha and mentions both Jayavarman and his son Rudravar-man

as Kings (the latter of whom seems to have been reigning at the time the inscription was made). Although Rudravarman appears to have been a Buddhist, he was careful to maintain the state-worship of Shiva. From the remains and traces, it seems that the Cambodian religious edifices were mostly of wood, with brick foundation. Even to the end of its architectural great-ness, except for walls, gates and towers, Cambodia used stone and brick for religious construc-tions only. This was because their architects did not know the principle of the true arch and used the 'false arch1, also known as overlapping: from opposite sides, each succeeding pair of stones projected over the opening to be vaulted until the gap was small enough to be closed by a single brick or stone. Such an arch requires heavy walls and can vault only narrow spaces. It could not be used for large palaces, assembly halls, etc., which to the end were made of wood. Another point to be borne in mind is that the temple was exclusively the dwelling place of the god. The multitude remained outside, probably in open courts. The early temples contained only one opening, with no ventilation nor extra lighting, except sometimes niches in the walls for candles or torches.

The early Buddhists probably built pagodas, at least, they made images of them in ivory; but no traces of their full-sized pagodas have survived.

The Chenla period started can A.D. 550 and lasted till 802. There is some reason to think that the appearance of India's religions in this period took place before the arrival of the Khmers and that the early Khmers got the first Indian religions from the Chams. The chief deity of the region seems to have been Bhadresvara, whereas the inscriptions of the Chenla period were all Shivaite. The worship of Shiva flourished under Isanavarman I. The suffix *-varmcm\ attached to a name having a religious and/or political significance to form the name of a king or person of high rank, appeared during the Funan period. %Varmari in Sanskrit means 'armour', and used in the names of Cambodian kings can probably be translated as 'protector*. In the reign of Isa-navarman I, Buddhism seemed almost to have disappeared, but two inscriptions at Wat Prey-Vier dated 664-665 relate the transmission of the property or use of a religious domain. This was believed by Auguste Barth to have been the first Buddhistic inscription of Cambodia and the first one not beginning with an invocation to the Brahmanic gods.

However, another Buddhist inscription, undated, may be older than that of Wat Prey-Vier. This is the Khmer inscription of Wat Prasat, also in the Province of Ba Phnom, which records three bodhisattvas: Shasta, Maitreya and Avalokitesvara. They were given the same titles as the Hindu divinities, namely ' Vrah Kamratan-an' (lords, gods). This inscription is believed by Etienne Aymonier to be of the sixth or early seventh century.

The Kambitja, ox Angkor, period lasted from 802 to 1432, a year after the Thais invaded Cam-bodia for the third time. Jayavarman II established his capital on Mount Mahendra and de-clared his independence of Java in 802. Then for more than six hundred years, the capital of the independent Khmer empire was around the present Angkor. A peculiar form of ancestor-wor¬ship,

of which traces were found at Sambhupura during the Chenla period, appears to have become fixed during the Angkor period.
The six famous temples of Preah Ko sheltered images of ancestors of the Cambodian king. During the first years of his reign, King Yasovarman I (ruled 889-7901) founded monasteries for the devotees of Brahma, Vishnu and the Buddha. The charters of foundation of all these monasteries have been found, but since the buildings themselves were undoubtedly of wood, they have wholly disappeared. In contrast, the Temple of Preah Vihear, apparently built a-bout A.D. 893, has survived till the present day. French archaeologists whom I met during my visit to the Temple, claimed it to be constructed in the reign of Suryavarman I (ruled 1002-1049). In spite of its distance from the capital and its inaccessibility, the Cambodians found what is probably the most remarkable site in the country for the location of a temple. Originally meant as a Shivaite monument, Preah Vihear gradually changed into a Buddhist sanctuary. In 1949, Thailand occupied a portion of Cambodian territory, situated in the province of Kom-pong Thorn where Preah Vihear is located. Cambodia brought the matter before the Interna¬tional Court of Justice in the Peace-Palace, The Hague, in 1959. The Court found that the Temple of Preah Vihear was indeed situated in territory under the sovereignty of Cambodia. In consequence, Thailand was under an obligation to withdraw its military forces. (I refer to the section of this essay about "Preah Vihear Temple: Cambodia versus Thailand11). Although the worship of the devaraja was the state form of religion, other forms of Brahmanic worship, as well as Mahayana Buddhism, were tolerated and protected during the reign of Yasovarman I. The stone inscriptions from that period praised many gods; it would be difficult to find, in all Khmer history, a reign in which tribute was paid to more deities than during that of Yasovarman I. During the period of the next reigns, it seemed as if the Buddha was entirely neglected.

Although he was a Shivaite, as his name indicates, King Rajendravarman II (944-968) was very tolerant of Buddhism. In his life he seems to have made a deep study of Buddhism and to have decided to remain a Shivaite, although he appointed as one of his chief ministers a Buddhist named Kavindrarimathana. This minister made many Buddhist foundations, as well as many works dedicated to Shiva, while supervising the construction of the capital of Angkor and its public buildings. A vast irrigation system was constructed, that made possible the intensive cultivation of nearby lands. This and later irrigation projects allowed the Khmers to maintain a densely populated and highly centralized state in a relatively small area. The famous temples of Angkor constitute one of humankind's most magnificent architectural achievements. It is very interesting to depict the political geography of Cambodia for the year 960, the year of the beginning of the Sung dynasty in China. Kambuja and its dependencies comprised all of what is now Cambodia, Cochin China and Laos, nearly all of Siam and parts of what are now Anham, China and Burma.
Like his father, King Jayavarman V (ruled 968-1001) fostered Buddhism. An inscription of Srei Santhor, an undated wall-inscription of Phnom Banteay Neang, on the east side of the Mekong, contained Buddhist instructions of

Jayavarman V. These were promulgated by his Buddhist minister, Kirtipandita, in support of Buddhistic practises. The inscriptions relate the strong efforts for the establishment of Buddhism, and say that the King brought "from foreign lands a great many books on philosophy, treatises and commentaries on Mahayana Buddhism". The inscriptions directed that on festival days people should bathe the Buddha image and recite Buddhist chantings. Another inscription, at PrasatPra Dak, Angkor, begins with an invocation to three Buddhist ratnas - Buddha, Dharma and Sangha - and gives a genealogy of kings from Jayavarman II to Jayavarman V, who seems to have been the author of the inscription. Also the worship of Vishnu was common. The Khmer King called on all the officials to come to the royal palace and to take the oath of allegiance to him. Eight inscriptions in Khmer, containing the oath, are found on the pillars of Angkor. There is a striking parallel between this oath and the one taken by Cambodian officials at Phnom Penh today. The main difference is in the sub¬stitution of Buddhist for Brahmanic forms.

From the sixth to the twelfth century, there was no school of Buddhist sculpture in Cambodia. Images of the Buddha from that era, standing or seated, were apparently of South Indian in-fluence and appeared in the tenth century. Jewelled Buddhas appeared with the twelfth centu-ry. A sample from Preah Khan of Kompong Svai shows the earliest standing jewelled Buddha found in Cambodia. The early development of the jewelled Buddha came in a period of intense Vishnuism! This was the reign of Suryavarman II (1112-1152, but some archaeologists say 1113-1150). It was then that the Khmers started building Angkor Wat, the largest religious edifice ever built by man. It contained vast open spaces, unroofed, that were part of the sanctuary. Khmer temples were not designed to hold the audience between walls and under roofs. The bas-reliefs of Angkor Wat offer the greatest continuous expanse to be found in any existing monument. (Those oiBorobudur cover more space, but on several terraces). Reliefs of the outer gallery measure over 800 metres, and those of other parts of the temple amount to nearly as much more. Most of the subjects are drawn from India's epics and sacred books: Ra-mayana, Mahabharata, Harivamsa, Puranas, and portray legendary scenes from the lives of Ra-ma and Krishna.

The Buddha images which can be found in Angkor Wat, reflect a chain of profound changes begun in the late 12th century. The Chams, sometime vassals of the Khmer empire, came from the east and sacked Angkor in 1177. It was a fateful shock; eventually King Jayavarman VII took his revenge, and then turned to rebuilding Angkor. The Hindu gods had failed as protec-tors. Jayavarman VII did not abolish their worship, but he dedicated his new capital to a new protector, also from India: the Buddha.

The temples of Angkor embodied an integrated concept of the universe rooted in myth and deep religious belief, and hence a combination of physical and spiritual grandeur found else-where only in ancient Greece and Egypt, as well as among the Maya and Aztecs. Angkor Wat has become a national symbol for all Cambodian regimes; the flag of the Phnom Penh govern-ment is a white, three-tower outline of Angkor in the middle of a blue-red-blue field. Before, there were other flags but they all had Angkor in the middle. The flag of the Khmer Rouge years had a yellow, three-tower outline of Angkor on a red field.

When the Pol Pot regime was overthrown in 1979, their flag was replaced by one consisting of a five-tower outline of Angkor.

Jayavarman VII was Buddhist, unlike most of his predecessors. And he seemed to have a pas-sion for his people that none of his predecessors had displayed. The 102 hospitals he built give excellent example. On the foundation inscriptions appear these words: "He suffered from the ills of his subjects more than from his own; for it is the grief of the people that causes the grief of kings, and not their own grief. The King erected resthouses at frequent intervals along the all-season roads he established throughout the kingdom. He built the Bayon upon the foundations of some earlier structure, and it may not be the best Khmer art (certainly its architecture is flawed by hasty construction) but this shrine is a remarkable outpouring of spirit. Where Angkor Wat is formal, its carvings precise, its figures drawn from legend, the Bayon is inti¬mate and almost warmly human. Eight golden Buddhas were placed at the base of the stone chambers. The Bayonfs walls show kings and monks in ceremony, but they also show how the people lived. The four faces on the numerous towers and gateways repeat Lokesvara's facial characteristics.

Lokesvara was a holy bodhisattva who stayed on earth to do good works, but the portraits of the Bayon are almost surely stylized portraits of Jayavarman himself. The Bayon is second in size only to Angkor Wat.

During the first period of the Style of the Bayon, a smiling Buddha image appeared, which became one of the most striking, artistic and characteristic motifs in Khmer sculpture. This type of the Buddha is thought to have had its origin in the old kingdom of Dvaravati, where there was a blending of Mon and Khmer forms. This afterwards returned to exercise an in¬fluence over the Khmer sculpture of the Bayon period. The Buddhas which appear in the Angkor region at this period have most of those characteristics, especially the half-closed eyes and the enigmatic smile. The standing Buddhas of the type discovered at Preah Khan of Ang¬kor wear a robe never before found in Khmer art. Many Chinese authors from that period wrote that Pou-kam (i.e. Pagan, capital of Burma) was at this time a dependency of Cambo¬dia. French archaeologists thought that Pou-kam meant Pegu, a Mon city of the border, which had been annexed by Pagan only about a century and a half earlier. A Cambodian inscription of this reign, found at Prasat Tor, speaks vaguely of the conquest of a king in the west. The French historians think this must be the king of Burma. At first glance, a conquest of Pagan seems unreasonable, as Burma was at that time a comparatively powerful kingdom, ruled by an able king - Narapatisithu (1172-1210). The Burmese chronicles make no mention of any war with Cambodia at this period. While Chinese documents may have confused Pegu and Pagan, the listing of the latter as a dependency of Cambodia may have some basis in fact. It is not probable that the Cambodians captured the city of Pagan, so far from their border, but the incessant border warfare and the many threats of war may have led the Burmese king to pay tribute to Cambodia, just as Chinese historians think Cambodia paid tribute to Champa under the weak predecessors of Jayavarman VII. The only mentions of Cambodia in Burmese history during this period have to do with the relations of these two countries with Ceylon. During the troubled period which preceded

the accession of Jayavarman VII, Ceylon sent a naval and military expedition against Burma in A.D. 1180. One of the causes of the expedition was that the Burmese kidnapped a Singhalese princess who was sent by the King of Ceylon to the King of Cambodia.

About the middle of the 12th century, Theravada Buddhism was forced to yield to Brahmanism in southern India. As a result, Ceylon became the refuge and stronghold of Theravada. The king reformed some Buddhist practices, particularly the ceremony of ordination. Theravada monks from Indo-China (and Burmese from Pagan) began to make pilgrimages to Ceylon to study the new system. In 1180, a Talaing monk who was Head of the Theravada in Burma, made a pilgrimage to Ceylon. There he met four other monks, one a son of the King of Cam¬bodia. These five monks returned to Pagan in 1190 and built the Chapata Pagoda, of Singha¬lese design; in 1192 they organized there a chapter and caused a schism in the Theravada worship in Burma. King Narapati favoured the new sect. It soon succeeded the old system which had been introduced into Pagan from Thaton in the middle of the preceding century, but it does not seem to have reached Cambodia. On the death of the queen, Jayavarman VII chose as chief queen her elder sister, who had been the leading teacher of Buddhist doctrine of three schools, including among her pupils the other wives of the king.

An inscription found at Phimeanakas, undated but certainly after 1190 (an event of which date it mentions), said to be a masterpiece of Sanskrit, is notable for three reasons. First, it shows that Uatakam' were put into drama and represented in the Buddhist schools. Second, it shows that the foundations of Jayavarman VII and his two queens were about equally divided bet-ween Buddhist and Shivaite. And third, it shows that a woman became a leading teacher of the Buddhist doctrine. There are several inscriptions from the reign of Jayavarman VII, found in one of the galleries of Ta Prohm, that indicate the end of the Cambodian Mahayana period a-round 1190. Ta Prohm was the funerary temple of the mother of Jayavarman VII, under the traits of Prajnaparamita, mystic mother of the Buddhas.

Thus was completed at Angkor the Buddhist triad: Lokesvara at Preah Khan, Prajnaparamita at Ta Prohm and the Buddha, in his proper place in the centre, at the Bayon. The Buddha images of this period are represented under the traits of a Buddhic divinity, principally Lo¬kesvara for the men and Tara or Prajnaparamita for the women. Lokesvara is usually represen¬ted as standing in the chalice of a lotus flower. In the ancient Khmer empire, he was the god of compassion. The ancient Khmers saw him as a compensation for the doctrine of transmigra¬tion. Like Shiva, Lokesvara is often represented with four arms and sometimes with four faces, looking toward the four cardinal points. Shivaism had its counterpart to the doctrine of the compassionate Lokesvara in the cult of Mahesvara. These two cults became very similar. The (partial) syncretism of these two cults is one of the engaging facts of the history of religions in Southeast Asia. It even extended to the personality and attributes of the two deities. Lokesvara is pictured at Angkor with four faces and sometimes with the trident and even the frontal eye of Shiva. There is no doubt that the great Buddha found in 1933 under the central tower of the Bayon, is the Buddhist

substitute for the devaraja. It must have been near the beginning of his reign that Jayavarman VII began to consider himself as the living Buddha. He himself is clearly identified with the Buddha in the inscription of Preah Khan of 1191. The name 'Jayabuddhd among these texts is clearly Jayavarman VII apotheosized as the Buddha. And yMahanathd, which means fthe great saviour1, is an epithet which could be applied to no one better than to Jayavarman VII, who won his country back from the Chams and drove them out of it. The development of the idea of the Buddharaja, or Buddha-King, does not seem to have taken form until well along in the reign of this king, after the face-towers had been erected and the Bayon had apparently been dedicated to Lokesvara. Suryavarman II may have given him a precedent in the substitution of a Vishnuraja at Angkor Wat. Perhaps, even, Suryavarman I had forecast a Buddharaja. The masses however, continued their animism and ancestor worship common to all monsoon Asia, sometimes conforming by adopting the forms of Hinduism. Physically powerful, Jayavarman VII lived well into his 90's, using his years to expand the Khmer Empire to its broadest extent. He thus could well say to his people these words, found on a temple wall: "The good works that I have accomplished you should protect, for they are yours also11. But as the causes of the decline of the Angkor civilization are becoming better known, Jayavarman VII looms up as contributing more to that decline than any other Khmer monarch.

It was during the reign of Jayavarman VIII that the Thais completed the conquest of most of what is now Thailand. About 1260 A.D., the Kingdom of Sukhotai freed itself from Khmer rule. A short time afterwards, a combined force of Khmers and Chams was defeated by the Annamites of North-Vietnam, whereupon Cambodia withdrew her army of occupation, lea¬ving the Chams to contend as best they might with their aggressive northern neighbour. Seve¬ral hypotheses have been put forward to explain the enigma of the fall of the Khmer Empire: that Jayavarman VII so overtaxed the resources and drained the energy of the nation, that eventually it was unable to withstand the onslaught of the Thais. Or that some natural calamity initially disrupted the irrigation system, that the population then turned to the dry method in the cultivation of rice and that this caused laterization of the sub-soil, a rare chemical reaction which rendered the land unfertile. Cambodia, though prosperous, lacked the labour supply, as well as the revenue, to carry on an intensive campaign of construction. Or that the gentle creed of Buddhism, which, in its extremely pacifist Theravada form became dominant after 1300, was responsible.

The Cambodian people became dissatisfied with the greedy gods for whom they must continu-ously toil and fight and give. And while they probably did not realize it and were incapable of starting such a movement from within, they were ripe for a new religion or philosophy of life. This discontent must have begun to be felt at least from the beginning of the thirteenth century, probably earlier. Theravada Buddhism was a democratic religion, which appealed directly to the people, without the intervention of an elaborate, expensive and burdensome hierarchy of priests and deities. Theravada monks embraced poverty and occupied themselves with teaching and good works, in direct contact with the people. Theravada was brought into Cambodia by Mons of

Louvo (Dvaravati, between Thailand and Cambodia) and by Thais of the north. Just at what period, the kings, more directly dependent on the masses, began to accept this religion, is difficult to determine. The kings were more or less bound to the old faith as a part of the state religion. There are still Brahmanic factors in the state ceremonies of Cambodia. There is reason to assume that Indravarman III (1296-1307) was a Theravadin. The history of Lan Xang tells us that Fa Ngum, first independent king of the Laotians, was baptised into Therava¬da at the Court of Khmer king Jayavarman Paramesvara around 1353. Thus it seems that the conversion of Cambodia to Theravada Buddhism, probably of the Singhalese sect, took place between the middle of the thirteenth and the middle of the fourteenth centuries. Theravada Buddhism, in its emphasis on renunciation and detachment from the affairs of an 'illusory1 world, might so have undermined the authority of the God-King that he could no longer command the implicit allegiance and unremitting toil of the populace, so essential to maintain the complex irrigation network on which the Khmer Empire depended. And with the rise of a new and even more aggressive Thai dynasty centered around Ayutthaya (which exis¬ted from 1350 until 1767), within striking distance of Angkor, her days were numbered. But even then, the final debacle was long deferred: only in 1431 was Angkor sacked by the Thais, evacuated soon after, briefly reoccupied and finally abandoned. The Khmer court moved its capital eastward to a site near Phnom Penh. At this time, Theravada Buddhist monks took over and preserved Angkor Wat, which before long became one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in Southeast Asia. The tropical jungle engulfed the ruins, and apart from re-ports by sixteenth-century Jesuit missionaries of great buildings buried in the heart of the Cam-bodian jungle, the very memory of Angkor faded into oblivion.

A number of superb books on Angkor have been published through the years. I would like to recommend especially "Angkor: An Introduction" by George Coedes, translated and edited by Emily Floyd Gardiner (Oxford University Press, 1963). The third edition of "Angkor, Guide Henri Parmentier", published in both English and French (Phnom Penh, 1959/1960) is probably the best guidebook to Angkor ever written.

Buddhism and Hinduism continued their coexistence in Cambodia long after the rulers of Ang-kor. There were presumed standards to which a senior official aspired. King Norodom I wrote of his expectation that a high official within the kingdom would be a man of learning in both the earthly laws of the kingdom and in the cosmic laws of the universe; he would be a man with an awareness of the recondite elements of Buddhism and Hinduism. The importance of Buddhist learning for an official is a reminder that within the traditional Cambodian society, particularly from the fall of Angkor onwards, no institution had more need of study than the Buddhist one. Whatever the Buddha intended, the philosophy that he expounded has been followed as a religion in Cambodia, occupying a major place in a pantheon which still preserves important Brahmanic beliefs and, even more important, for the rural population a devotion to animism.

Buddhism and the Cambodian state became indissolubly linked. The religion

was supported by the state, with the King, who at some stage in his life would have ordained as a monk himself, as its chief lay patron. The promotion of education and learning was in the hands of the Bud-dhist monks, whose most senior religious officials held responsibilities that were social as well as spiritual. Upon the death of a Cambodian king, the Buddhist Sangha was represented among the select group which met to determine who should be the next King. Outside Phnom Penh, the Buddhist monks in the villages played a unifying role. When Cambodia changed rapidly du¬ring the 1950s and 1960s, Prince Sihanouk sought to mobilize all elements which could ad-vance his policies, and paid careful attention to the benefits which could be gained through the goodwill of the Buddhist Sangha.

6.5 Vietnam

6.5.1 History of Vietnamese Buddhism

Vietnam is the major exception to the dominance of Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia. Nearly a thousand years of Chinese control resulted in the 'sinicisation1 of Vietnamese culture, and in the religious field this expressed itself in the increasing domination of what may, for want of a better description, be called the 'Chinese Religion1.

The culture of Vietnam and, as a result, Vietnamese religion, have always been influenced by the Chinese in a very large manner. The period at which history records the introduction of Buddhism in China is in the early Han dynasty (first century A.D.). When it reached China, Buddhism was already an old religion. The split between the two branches of Buddhism, The-ravada and Mahayana, had already occurred before the introduction of Mahayana Buddhism to China. In China the great importance of Buddhism is that it was, until quite recently, the only impor-tant foreign influence. Its growth was slow, however. It was nearly four hundred years after the official introduction of Buddhism in China before it became a really widespread popular re-ligion. One reason for this was the fact that to understand Buddhism, its sacred books, written in Pali, had to be translated into Chinese. This was a very difficult task. At first no Chinese scholars knew any foreign language, and nobody from India knew Chinese. Both sides had to learn to read a foreign language which used an entirely different script from their own. The structure of Pali and Chinese is quite unlike and the sounds of the two languages are very dif-ferent. Consequently the elementary task of rendering the Buddhist names, or the scriptures themselves, presented great problems. In the end the Chinese versions of these names and words is either a translation, or a very free approximation to the Indian name ^Maitreya\ for example, became %Mi Lo').

Several centuries passed before the whole body of Buddhist scripture was translated into Chi-nese. Buddhism was therefore at first confined to scholars. In time it spread to the lesser edu-cated, and ultimately to the mass of people, but as they could not read the sacred books, their understanding of Buddhism was imperfect and in this way it was much transformed. And since the hazards and length of the journey to India were daunting to most people, the introduction of Buddhism to China was a long slow process which gave plenty of time for Buddhism to un¬dergo changes which made it more acceptable to

Chinese ways of thought. The educated class in China were Confucians, but not entirely so. The Taoist teaching was also followed by very many.
But when a man was Taoist he also respected and accepted Confucian doctrine, and the opposite direction from Confucians to Taoists was equally respectful. When Buddhism was introduced, the Chinese tended to treat it in the same way. People studied and accepted Buddhism, but they did not on that account give up all their old beliefs, even when these were quite contrary to important Buddhist teachings. Some Chinese have been troubled by these contradictions, for example, the ancestor worship which is important in Confucianism or Taoism, is meaningless to a Buddhist. Strong Confucians denounced Buddhism for this reason. Buddhists usually seem to have ignored the problem, possibly because it was always dangerous and unwise to attack Confucianism openly. Confucianism remained the philosophy of the government; it was officially taught in schools, and it was established in the civil service. Buddhist monks and Taoist priests performed ceremonies at weddings and funerals together. From the Chinese point of view there were three ways to one goal: Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. The goal was the good life on earth, virtuous conduct, happiness and long life. It was in this mutual equivalence that Chinese Buddhism was carried down to Vietnam.
Chinese rule in Vietnam actually started around 111 B.C. and lasted till 938 A.D. The Vietnamese were introduced to Confucianism and Taoism by Chinese scholars who came to Vietnam as administrators. People from India sailing eastward brought Theravada Buddhism to the Red River delta, while simultaneously Chinese travelers introduced Mahayana Buddhism. Buddhist monks carried with them the scientific and medical knowledge of the civilizations of India and China. As a result, Vietnamese Buddhists soon counted among their own great scholars and doctors. The mixture produced a culture which sometimes appears to be Chinese on the surface, but which is an amalgamation of the more crude elements of civilization from China with the uninhibited atavism of the original Khmer and Cham. In Vietnam elaborate Chinese forms were used, there being an emperor, mandarin-style civil service and ancestor worship. But the strong elements of animism, mysticism, and perhaps of climate and the blessings of a fruitful land, had their mark on traditional Chinese culture: the Vietnamese began to develop their own particular way of doing things.
This led, somewhat naturally, to a certain amount of bitterness in being forced to continue payment of tribute to the court at Peking, or to whichever Chinese warlord happened to assert his authority over the Red River valley. The Vietnamese, though, were never an easy people to subjugate. Numerous uprisings and rebellions, some of great national significance even today, were testimony to their strong resistance to sinicization and the imposition of a centralized political and administrative system. This is also one of the reasons a centralized Sangha never developed in Vietnam. The Chinese never came to grips with present-day Vietnam's central re-gions and southern delta lands. Both had been heavily influenced by Indiafs culture as it perco-lated in from the sea-trade routes. The Chams lived in central Vietnam around Hue and Da-nang. They were highly indianized (an influence clearly visible in the ancient Cham

towers still standing around Danang). Mahayana Buddhism, called Bac Tong, is predominant in northern Vietnam and however its influence is also considerable in southern Vietnam, Theravada Bud-dhism is practised mainly in the Mekong Delta region, mostly by ethnic-Khmers. The most im-portant Theravada influence in Vietnam is the disciplinary school ofLuat Tong. In the reign of the Cambodian King Jayavarman VII, the Khmers moved on to southern Viet¬nam, whereupon in the course of the centuries the Vietnamese came from the north, destroyed the Cham Kingdom and pushed back the Khmers. But the Mekong Delta regions were not an¬nexed to Vietnam until the eighteenth century, and large groups of Khmers who follow Thera¬vada Buddhism still live there. This population has undoubtedly contributed to the Buddhist reform movement in South Vietnam in later years.

From the second to the tenth century A.D., two popular schools among the population of North Vietnam (then called Giao-Chau) were the 'Agamd and the xThieri. Gradually the 'Thieri school became the most important and later gave rise to other Vietnamese schools and sub-sects. The word Thien is the Vietnamese corruption of the Sanskrit word *Dhyana\ which is the same as xChari in Chinese and xZeri in Japanese. The first major school of Buddhism es-tablished in Vietnam descends from the Zen of Bodhidharma through the third Patriarch of Zen in China, who was called Seng-Tsan in Vietnamese manuscripts, and the name of this school was Ty-Ni-Da-Lu *n-Chi. According to Vietnamese historical publications, Ty-Ni-Da-Lu'u-Chi was a monk from India who travelled a lot, studying Buddhism with different monks. He sought however further enlightenment, and therefore travelled to Chang-an, the old Chinese capital. Ty-Ni-Da-Lu'u-Chi arrived there in 574 A.D., the same year that Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou dynasty (557-581) ordered complete suppression of all religious activities. As a result he did not stay long and left for Ye-tu in Honan Province, where he met Seng-Tsan. After a period of practice with this master, Ty-Ni-Da-Lu'u-Chi travelled through China, meanwhile translating important Sanskrit works into Chinese. In 580 A.D., he crossed the Chinese border and installed himself in Phap-Van Temple, Ha-D6ng Province, North Vietnam. It has there that he founded a school of Buddhism, the first teaching of Dhamma in Annam (594 A.D.). This has also the beginning of what may be called a Vietnamese 'Sangha', with Phap-Hien as the first patriarch. Phap-Hien was a Buddhist monk from Son-Tay Province in North Vietnam, formerly a student of Ty-Ni-Da-Lu'u-Chi. The school vanished as long ago as the thirteenth century, passing through twenty-eight patriarchs or nineteen generations. In a museum in Hanoi are still the historical documents which note that the Venerable Phap-Thuan (914-990), of the tenth generation of the Ty-Ni-Da-Lu'u-Chi Zen school, was a famous teach¬er. His intelligence and wisdom came to the attention of King Le-Dai-Hanh, who ruled from 980 to 1005. The king frequently invited Phap-Thuan to the palace to give advice on domestic and foreign matters.

The fate of vanishing also befell the second Vietnamese Zen school, the Vo-Ngon-Thong, founded in 820. This school was named after its founder, the Venerable V6-Ngon-Thong, who came from the province of Kuang-chou in China. Although he was born in a wealthy family, Vo-Ngon-Thong was not

attracted to that way of life. When he became old enough, he re-nounced the world and began practising Buddhism at Shuang-Lin Temple in the province of Che-Kiang. From there he went to Kiang-si to study with the greatest master of that era, Ma-tsu. V6-Ngon-Thong remained in Kiang-si for thirty-two years, studying Chinese Buddhism, before his departure for Vietnam. He established his first temple, the Kien-So, in the village of Phu-Dong in the north. After searching for a good term to convey the essence of his Zen teaching, he chose two Chinese characters not generally conjoined in usage and created the compound word *pi-kuan% (pf meaning 'wall1 and %kuari 'observing'). This was an ancient Zen meditational technique, described by Chinese masters as the "face to the wall in meditation" or "wall-contemplation". V6-Ngon-Thong wrote about this: "The noble truth of self-realization instantly shines out when the false, dualistic views of existence and non-existence are discar-ded".
And the third Vietnamese Zen school, Thao-Duong, which dates from the year 1072, has not completely disappeared but exists only as a very small sect today. Before considering this school, may we survey Vietnamese Buddhism from the Dinh dynasty (969-981) to the Tran dynasty (1225-1400). It was in this period that Buddhism developed from only a small religion to a national movement, before merging with aspects of Taoism and Confucianism in Vietnam. Monarch Dinh-B6-Linh of the Dinh dynasty established a Vietnamese Sangha somewhat ac-cording to the model of Ty-Ni-Da-Lu'u-Chi four centuries earlier. Dinh-B6-Linh initiated the practice of appointing eminent monks to serve as royal advisors on political, domestic and religious matters. The Le dynasty continued this custom in addition to obtaining from China the complete Chinese Tripitaka. At the same time, Vietnamese Buddhism adjusted itself to local practices. The appointment of learned monks to advisory positions in the government, like Phap-Thuan, provided a basis for the merging of religious and national interests charac¬teristic of the early Trdn dynasty. The first official recognition of a Buddhist school in Vietnam occurred under the third king of the Ly dynasty, Ly-Thanh-T6n, who ruled from 1054 to 1072. This was a great period for Buddhism in the rest of mainland Southeast Asia as well. The rising Buddhist church in Vietnam led to a basis for an indigenous state; this new form of state was, to my mind, quite similar to those of its contemporaries in Southeast Asia (Angkor in Cambo-dia, Pagan in Burma). The result of the centuries of Chinese domination was not to transform the Vietnamese into Chinese but, as Tu Van Dung has so well described, to transform Vietna-mese consciousness. The culmination of this consciousness came in the eleventh century: the
Ly state was aristocratic, Mahayana Buddhist, and indirect in its control of the countryside. In 1069, Vietnam was at war with the kingdom of Champa, whose frequent incursions into Viet-namese territory caused great alarm. The Vietnamese returned from an expedition against Champa with a number of prisoners of war, among them the Chinese monk Thao-Duong. He had been temporarily in Champa teaching the unified Zen/Pure Land practice with fellow Chi-nese Buddhists. 'Pure Land1 was according to Zen meditation masters the land to which all true believers would, with sufficient faith, be transferred at their physical passing. As soon as Thao-Duong arrived in Vietnam, he was assigned by Ly-Thanh-T6n to assist the %Tang~luc\ Viet¬nam's Royal Head

Monk. One day when the Tang-luc was out on a visit, Thao-Duong took the record of the teachings of great Buddhist monks and made corrections in the text. After King Ly-Thanh-T6n heard of this, he sent for the monk-prisoner to test his understanding of Buddhism. The King himself had been a student in the V6-Ngon-Thong tradition! Thao-Duong then explained the teachings of numerous Buddhist texts and answered questions with penetra¬ting insight, thoroughly convincing the king of his extraordinary abilities. The king asked him what he had been doing in Champa, and upon learning of Thao-Duong's teaching activities in Champa at the time of his capture, he admitted him to the Vietnamese Sangha with the title Quoc-Sii (National Teacher). Thao-Duong was placed in charge of teaching Zen practice and Buddhist philosophy in the royal palace; thereafter he stayed at Khai-Qiioc Temple in the capital city of Thang-Long (which is Hanoi today). With the king as his earnest supporter, Thao-Duong's fame spread quickly to the surrounding countryside. Hearing of his residence at Khai-Quoc, Buddhists from both China and Vietnam went there to benefit from his teachings. Although Chinese characters were introduced to Vietnam from the first centuries A.D., Confu¬cianism established itself as an institution not before the eleventh century. The adaptation of Chinese characters to official court literature began in the tenth century. The Vietnamese Bud¬dhists were aware that Chinese characters and Confucianism were needed for building the na¬tion, so they helped establish the teaching of both. In 1070, king Ly-Thanh-T6n built the 'Tem¬ple of Literature1 in Thang-Long, for the teaching of Chinese characters and Confucianism; the first teachers were Zen monks who were masters in the knowledge of Confucianism. Eventual¬ly there were three types of Confucians in Vietnam. First, the Hien-nho Confucians who suc¬ceeded in examinations and became mandarins, having position and authority. Second, the An-nho, who also had talent and wisdom but were not willing to hold office, secluding them¬selves instead for the enjoyment of leisure and peace. And third, the Han-nho who, after pas¬sing their examinations, took teaching jobs or practised medicine. The development of Confu¬cianism in Vietnam came about largely as a result of the institution of competitive examinations for selecting mandarins. In the first stage of this development, there were no indications of conflict between the Confucians and Buddhists. The monarch of the Trdn dynasty realized that while Buddhism contained a powerful inner life, Confucianism had developed a political philo¬sophy (and a code of conduct) necessary for the development of the state. The King's plan to combine the two doctrines, Buddhism and Confucianism, met with a posi¬tive response from the Buddhist monks. The great King-Monk, Tran-Thai-Tong, wrote a book named 'Thien Tong Chi Nam' ('Guide to Zen') in which he described the notion of 'cooperative division of labour' (That Toan Phan Cong Hop Tai') between Buddhism and Confucianism. Here the king expressed his intention to give Confucianism the heavy task of translating the sublime spiritual wealth of Buddhism into concrete achievement. Confucianism depended on the Buddhist monks not for political support, but the king realized that the monks' talents and knowledge were vital to the growth of the country. The Confucians too venerated the Bud¬dha's teachings. In later years, many Vietnamese kings and emperors relinquished the throne in favour of ordaining

as a Buddhist monk, engaged in teaching and writing.

But when the Confucians had consolidated their position in politics and at court, they started to be intolerant toward the Buddhist monks. The Buddhist monks always kept to the simple monastic life, even though they had the king's esteem and confidence. As soon as the Buddhist monks became aware of the competitive feelings of the Confucians, the monks simply ceased their visits to the court and remained in the monasteries. In this way Buddhism gradually ceded its influence in national politics to Confucianism. And as the younger generations showed their predilection for the academic education of Confucianism, the study of Buddhism became limi¬ted to the monks. However, high official posts were still filled by Buddhists. Buddhism found strength in the amalgamated role it came to play with Taoism. While the development of Bud¬dhism in conjunction with nationalism typified the Ly dynasty, its merger with the principles of Confucianism and the freedom of Taoism characterized the Trdn dynasty. By aligning Buddhism and Confucianism, King Tran-Nhan-Ton (1258-1308), who founded the Truc-Ldm Buddhist school, created a practical humanism which served both the concerns of state and the needs of religion. With the vision that Buddhism is not to be practised separately from the society, the king joined the insight of Buddhism with Confucian provisions for human conduct. The king demonstrated through his life that the merger of these two religions (so of¬ten held to be irreconcilable!) could indeed become a living reality in accord with the Tao. The Venerable Thich The Tinh said: "If one would ask a Vietnamese about his religion, he would probably call himself a Buddhist, but it is wise not to insist on labels for this is very misleading. The belief of the majority of the Vietnamese is a prescription of many ingredients. First, take Confucianism, teaching us how to behave correctly, toward our parents, teachers, authorities, everyone. The cult of our ancestors, and the cult of the memory of our national heroes as our protectors - that is the Confucianist element. Second, Taoism: teaching how to stay in harmony with the forces of nature, and with the supernatural, with the spirits. Finally, Buddhism: teaching compassion, self-denial, and universal love11. All three of these religions were imported from China. The Vietnamese were however not entirely converted to the Chinese point of view. The Vietnamese accepted the Chinese format and put it into the content of their own inheritance. This characteristic attitude of the Vietna¬mese toward assimilating cultural aspects foreign to their own, is nowhere better demonstrated than through the national Zen school of Trite-Lam.

Tran-Nhan-Ton's practical humanism in the Tnic-Lam lent vitality to the scope and purport of Zen meditation; the fusing of Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism in the integral experience of meditation. This served both the inner needs of man and the external affairs of state in a functional way, thoroughly Vietnamese in application. The more dogmatic elements among Confucianists did not reciprocate the goodwill of the Buddhists. Taoism on the other hand, poorly understood and imperfectly practised by the common people, came to embrace the employment of magical powers, so that the exchange of Buddhism with Taoism on the popular level is different in

character from the exchange of Zen with Taoist scholars. Because of the recruiting examination instituted by royal decree to select the mandarins, Confucianism flourished and held an important position for many generations. But in the nineteenth century the young intellectuals abandoned it for a Western educational system installed by the French.

The pagodas built for the Tnic-Lam school by the Vietnamese kings were not only dedicated to the Buddha, as the custom was in the rest of mainland Southeast Asia. Several of these Bud-dhist pagodas were purely commemorative, enshrining memories of some illustrious figures of Vietnamese history. For example, there were Buddhist pagodas built to the memory of General Tran-Hu'ng-Dao, the Vietnamese hero who beat back the invading Mongolians in 1287. The Venerable Thich The Tinh said: "This practice did not detract from the sacred character of the pagoda. In the Buddhist canon a %stnpd is allowed to be built not to the memory of the Buddha alone, but also to commemorate prominent people whose memories are held sacred. National heroes such as Tran-Hu'ng-Dao were raised to the status of gods attributed with certain divine powers. This phenomenon was called 'Noi-dad and can more or less be compared with several of the 'Nats' in Burma as well11. The spirit of Tran-Hu'ng-Dao is believed to be the divine killer of evil spirits; one Buddhist temple built for his cult was built at Van-Kiep in Hai-Duf6ng Pro¬vince (North Vietnam). Another temple was built near Hanoi for the cult of Tru'ng-Nhi and Trufng-Trac who headed an uprising against the Chinese oppressors under the Chinese Han dynasty.

And then there was the Ngiiyen-Thieu Zen school, a sect of the Lin-chi tradition, contempora¬ry with Japanese Obaku Zen. A famous Chinese monk, the Venerable Nguygn-Thigu, travelled all the way from Kuangtung Province in China to Binh-Dinh Province in central Vietnam, where he opened his school of Buddhist studies in the temple of Thdp-Thdp Di-Dd. Today the Nguyen-Thieu is spread mainly throughout southern and central Vietnam, whereas the pagodas of the Tnic-Lam and the Lieu-Quan schools can be found in all parts of the country. At the re-quest of King Anh-T6n (1687-1691), Nguyen-Thieu later went back to China to gather Bud-dhist sutras. Many Chinese Zen monks accompanied him on his return journey to Vietnam. The Vietnamese king asked several of these monks to remain as head monks in Vietnamese tem¬ples. The Nguyen-Thieu tradition was thus a largely Chinese affair and an interesting new de-velopment: Nguyen-Thieu monks studied extensively in addition to realizing the content of their studies through meditation. This was indeed common during the Chinese Ming dynasty, the attempts to harmonize meditation and scriptural studies. The manuscripts from the Nguyen-Thieu school were quite in line with the Chinese Chan tradition, which prefers making the point with as few words as possible. Vietnamese monks called to my attention that "within these few words, though, a whole world of Buddhist experience may be contained". Whereas the Nguyen-Thieu school was founded by a Chinese Buddhist monk, the Lieu-Quan Zen school (also of the Lin-chi tradition) was founded by a Vietnamese. Introduction of Lin-chi, called Ldm-Te in Vietnamese, rekindled the spirit of Vietnamese Buddhism and gave new life to its Buddhist community, when it reached Vietnam in 1710. The Venerable

Lieu-Quan was formerly the head monk of the Nguyen-Thieu school, who with understanding of the character of Vietnamese Buddhism, adapted the teachings to merge with local practices and traditions. Here we find the roots of the Lieu-Quan school with firm ground for its develop¬ment in Vietnam. The Venerable Lieu-Quan was born as Le-Thiet-Dieu in Phu-Yen Province in Central Vietnam. His mother died when he was only six years old, so his father entrusted him to the care of the Hoi-Tan Temple. After that period he went to Hue to study at the Bdo-Quoc Temple. However, then he received news that his father was ill. Lieu-Quan went back to his home village and cared lovingly for his father until the latter's death four years later. Lieu-Quan still wanted to become a monk so he set out once more to Hue. He arrived at Linh-Mu Temple and requested initiation as a %Sa-di\ the Vietnamese word for novice, derived from the Pali 'samanerd. It is interesting to note that however the Mahayana tradition is strong in Vietnam, most of its terms have been derived from (Theravada) Pali. It was in this period that Lieu-Quan realized that "meditation is not a method for attaining realization, but is enlighten¬ment itself1.

Still being supported by his masters from the Nguyen-Thieu school, Lieu-Quan started his own school. Of the still extant Zen schools, two are mainly in North Vietnam: the TaoDong, intro-duced from China at the end of the 16th century, and the Lien-Ton sect which was founded in Ha-Dong Province in 1696. The pagodas of the Triic-Ldm and of the Thiet-Dieu Lieu-Qiidn, (a sub-school of the Lieu-Quan which was founded in Hue in 1742) can be found all over Vietnam. In addition to these larger schools there exist some more recent sects of the traditional sort, e.g. the Long-Hoa-Tong, founded in Long Xuyen, South Vietnam, in 1945. The 'Pure Land' schools contrast with the monastic schools of meditation by being from its beginning predominantly a lay movement. 'Pure Land' spread especially in Vietnam in times when suffi-ciently educated Thien monks were lacking.

Except for the pure Thien monasteries in Vietnam, pagodas today practise a particular syn¬thesis of Thien and Tinh-do Buddhism, which traces its teachings to the Chinese monk Yun-si Ho-chang (1532-1612), 'Van-The H6a-Thuong' being the Vietnamese transcription of his name. It is also represented by a group of laymen, called 'cu-sf in Vietnamese, who have a function in the religious life of Vietnam similar to that of the upasakas in the modern Theravada countries of Thailand and Burma.

While Vietnam was under Chinese rule, Buddhism became the dominant religion in Vietnamese society, and when the country restored its independence in the tenth century, Vietnamese mo-narchs declared Buddhism the official religion of the state. But under the Le dynasty (1428-1788), Confucianism gradually replaced Buddhism as the leading ideology in Vietnam. Bud-dhism remained popular among the local population, but Confucian doctrine became dominant among the ruling class. Confucianism became the sole subject of study for the civil service exa-minations used for entry into the imperial bureaucracy. This happened during the reign of Viet-namese Emperor Le-Thanh Tong (1460-1497); from that point it permeated the entire educa¬ted class of Vietnam. Confucian ethics and social values, emphasizing the virtues of hierarchy, obedience, filial piety and human heartedness, gradually reached

village life and the minds of the Vietnamese people.
My friends from Vietnam stated that the question of how much Confucian values affected the lives of the average Vietnamese, remains a matter of debate. Confucianism always shared in-fluence with Buddhism and Taoism, the so-called 'tarn giad or 'Three Religions'. Mahayana Buddhism dominated the intellectual life of Vietnam at the most critical period of its history, the struggle for independence in the tenth century. After the successful conclusion of that struggle the Vietnamese emperors recognized Buddhism as one of the 'Three Religions', but the Confucian state in its periods of greatest strength suppressed the pagodas and forbade the circulation of Buddhist texts. Buddhism after the eleventh century descended to the intellectual level of the village, where, blending in with the more or less competing strains of animism, Taoism and Confucianism, it became a part of the popular religion; a tonality, a series of be¬liefs, rather than a pure, isolated discipline.
Buddhism did not reappear again as an intellectual force until the seventeenth century, and then in the worst period of civil wars under the declining Le dynasty. Tu Van Dung said to me: "The Vietnamese are Confucians in peacetime, Buddhists in times of trouble". This statement has an historical basis in fact, for the Buddhist pagodas would reappear throughout the country each time the Confucian state went into decline. When the hierarchical pyramid of Confucian society crumbled, the Buddhist monks would return as if to fill the vacuum. Tu Van Dung stated that "the Buddhist monks returned to give the country a stable moral and intellectual centre apart from the state and the official religion".
It may seem strange, but even the popular quasi-Buddhist magicians often played the same role; during the decline of dynasties, or the struggle between warlords, 'Buddhist' sorcerers rose up from the underground of the villages to lead small peasant rebellions against the anarchy and violence of a weak ruler. In the period of nationalist resurgence against the French, both forms of Buddhism re-emerged: popular Buddhism in the HoaHao and intel¬lectual Buddhism in the city brotherhoods. In this regard I refer to Literature Note 25 of this essay: Paul Mus, the scholar of Asian religions, had indicated just why Buddhism should play such a part in Vietnamese history. The early brotherhoods that carried Buddhism from India to China and Vietnam had of necessity made a very particular accommodation with Confucian society. They accepted the 'universal empire1 as a political system and a social structure, but they also maintained their claims to a greater universality. Mr. Nguyen Dinh An said: "Con-fucianism was a social order defined by culture and history; Buddhism was a faith relevant to all times and to all men, no matter their circumstances. Buddhism lived within the system and beyond it. It was not just a civilization, not just a means of living in the world. It was a way for all people to transcend the limitations of society and the self, to reach a higher Truth". Buddhists consider themselves brothers and sisters in a realm above race and culture. They were not, as in Confucianism, fathers and sons, officers and men, kings and subjects, but e-quals; equals in moral responsibility, equals in their capacity for attaining Nirvana. For the Vietnamese, Buddhism showed a way out beyond the binding net ropes of the Confucian world as incorporated into

the Vietnamese folk religion. Mr, Nguyen Dinh An said that "Buddhism offered the Vietnamese, in peacetime, an internal life: a soul, a personal identity, outside the conventions of society. In times of tyranny, Buddhism indicated a morality that lay beyond loyalty to existing authorities". The Buddhist brotherhoods, for an organized Sangha like in Thailand or Burma or Laos never really existed in Vietnam, were alternate forms of community that provided a basis for opposition to an oppressive regime. The Vietnamese Buddhist brot¬herhoods did not themselves incorporate an alternate design for a separate state or society within the world, but they provided means of reconciliation and showed the way back into Confucian society.

As for Taoism, it was introduced into Vietnam at about the same time as Confucianism, but it does not have schools and systems like in China. In Vietnam, the essence of Lao Tse's and Tchang Tsefs philosophy is expressed only in the thought and conduct of educated persons of both Buddhist and Confucianist faiths. There were no Taoist clergy as such in Vietnam. A-mong the people there were however a number of Taoist practitioners who knew little doc¬trine, but made a living from their supposed magical powers. Although such practices have had a considerable impact on the lives of the villagers prone to popular superstitions, and have led many people to misunderstand Taoism's important points of doctrine, they do not reflect the lofty spirit and thought of real Taoism. In general, however, Buddhism exercised more influ-ence than did Taoism, for it adapted more to the national characteristics of.Vietnam. Of course, Vietnamese Buddhist rituals too were conducted for the most part in the Chinese language.

As stated in the section of this essay about 'Sangha, The Buddhist Order', there were numerous reasons for the strict control of monastic institutions by the state. The most important was the fact that Buddhist monks were specialists in the ritual area. As such they could exercise a great deal of influence on social institutions. In the rural areas of Vietnam, Buddhist monasteries not seldom became the centre of peasant revolts.

Three other anti-Sangha arguments have been described, there being the moral, utilitarian and political-economic. Eventually the Vietnamese emperors required monks to pass examinations, pay taxes and fees to the state and to appear personally at the imperial court in order to pursue petitions. But on the other hand, the influence of the hierarchy within the monastic order was relatively weak and the control over the keeping of monastic vows rather superficial.

After the fifteenth century Buddhism was being thinned out by Confucianism in such a thorough way, that at the beginning of the 20th century it seemed as if Vietnamese Buddhism had almost died out. But then, around 1920, arose a new, vital renewing movement, turning itself away from the French Cultural imperialism1, from Catholicism and, last but not least, also from the rigid Chinese traditions.

From 1884 until 1945, Vietnam consisted of the French protectorates of Tonkin and Annam, and the colony of Cochin-China. The establishment of Western educational and examination systems gradually eliminated the political and

religious role of Confucianism in Vietnamese society. There are only a few associations of Confiicianist studies extant nowadays, seeking to preserve the influence of Confucius' thought in a society of rapid change. Although the anni-versary of Confucius is celebrated in Vietnam every year, it has become simply a memorial ser-vice and does not have the religious character of the Buddhist holidays. Although the move-ment for the revival of Confucianism started at the same time as the movement for the Bud-dhist revival in the 1920s, the Buddhist study societies were quickly brought into the Buddhist Church while the Confucian study associations remained unchanged. In this way the religious character of Confucianism has gradually disappeared, and Confiicianist conduct can be recog¬nized only as it partakes of the local culture. The Confucian ideas as those of loyalty and filial piety, humaneness, kindness, gratitude, courtesy, honesty and wisdom have been taken over and assimilated by Buddhism, combined with their parallels in Buddhist philosophy. For exam¬ple, the Confucian notion of kindness has been merged with the Buddhist notion of compassion or loving kindness, 'metta\ According to Mrs. Hue Hanh, the process of assimilation has gone so far that at the present time Confucianism has lost all of its religious character.

A new strain of Buddhism developed after the fall of the Manchus in China, and arrived in Vietnam in the 1920s. This new Buddhism was adopted by southern Vietnamese sects. In the 1950s, the Chua Tu Dam pagoda in Hue was the centre of these reformed Vietnamese Buddhists. The Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Association was founded here, whose objectives were to modernize Vietnamese Buddhism and spread the Teachings through international conferences. An important conference was held here in May 1951 (see Chapter 4 of this essay). The Chua Tu Dam Pagoda was the scene of many political protests. On 3 May 1963, in spite of Ngo Dinh Diem's ban on Buddhist activities, the monks of the pagoda displayed banners in celebration of the 2527th anniversary of the Buddha's birth. The military junta swiftly retaliated and in August destroyed a large statue of the Buddha. This inspired a national rebellion which led to an attack on Ngo Dinh Diem's family on 1 November 1963. Strengthened by their success, the monks continued their protests calling for a reform of Vietnamese political institutions, with the Chua Tu Dam Pagoda as the centre of the movement. The monks' outspoken behaviour and insurgent activity was also directed against American involvement, whom they blamed for Vietnam's moral and economic collapse. Martial law was declared in June 1966 to enable the army to moniter the monks' activities. The North Vietnamese Tet offensive, six months later, effectively silenced the monks, however. The Chua Tu Dam Pagoda's militant role was replaced in late 1973 by the An Quang Pagoda in Saigon. As in Burma and Ceylon, Buddhist monks in Vietnam were active from the end of the 19th century in the movement to gain independence from the colonial power. And during the 1960s, in the long and bloody struggle between governments in North and South Vietnam, the monks inspired an historic campaign of mass nonviolence for a ' third way\ for a neutral Vietnam which would cherish its own cultural identity (1967 Programme of the Buddhist Socialist Bloc). The Buddhist movement sought allies in people of other faiths and beliefs who were willing to work for peace

and independence, and, in particular, large numbers of Catholics made common cause with the Buddhists. When, on 16 May 1967, a young Buddhist named Nhat Chi Mai, made of herself "a torch in the dark night", it was the leading Catholic intellectual, Father Nguyen Ngoc Lan, who undertook the dangerous work of publishing her letters and poems. The movement for peace, characterized by some monks as "transcendental radicalism", was linked with action for social justice and social revolution. The monks stressed that "the struggle of the Vietnamese people is not only for peace and independence. The struggle of the Vietnamese people is to remain Vietnamese".

The religion Caodai was founded in 1919 by Ngo Van Chieu. He was a low-ranking functio-nary in the French colonial government. The Caodai combined elements of Buddhism, Confu-cianism, Taoism, Christianity and animism. Caodaism achieved rapid success among the popu-lation of Cochin-China. By 1940 it had a membership of several hundred thousand. During the Second World War the Caodai collaborated with Japanese occupation forces, and after the war it became entangled in the struggle between the French and the Vietminh. Mrs. Hue Hanh said: "To the Vietnamese it is clear that Confucius was not taking an existential or exemplary position, he was actually changing the situation. Possessed of neither godlike nor prophetic authority, he moved an entire kingdom by virtue of his sensitivity to the will of Heaven as re-flected in the 'eyes and ears of the people'. Confucius is often seen as executor for the people by clarifying their wishes and signalling the coming, or the return, of the way that would bring harmony. For the Caodai, that in the twentieth century still believed in this magical sympathy of heaven and earth, political change did not depend entirely on human effort. Even the lea-ders of the Caodai believed that if they, like Confucius, had taken the 'correct position', that accorded with the will of Heaven, all Vietnamese would eventually adopt the same Way".

Mrs. Hue Hanh recommended for further reading Gabriel Gobron's "Histoire et philosophic du Caodaisme: Bouddhisme renove,
spiritisme vietnamien, religion nouvelle en Eurasie" (Paris, 1949), earlier edited publication under title "Histoire du Caodaisme".

The miraculous growth of the Caodai church showed to what extent the French colonial pre-sence had disturbed the traditional society of the countryside. The Vietnamese farmers, once almost self-sufficient, had come to depend on the landowners, the Chinese merchants, the French administrators and the fluctuations of the international rice market. Some of the farmers had left the land to become civil servants, but the village governments were unable to deal with the distant and incomprehensible forces at work in society, they had lost much of their hold over the people, as had the whole system of beliefs that supported their authority. Many Vietnamese asked themselves why they should worship ancestors when they demonstrably had no power over the future.

The Caodai, and its cousin sect, the Hoa Hao, offered alternatives. They offered first a means of re-establishing the spiritual communion between man, earth and heaven that the French (with their abstract finances and their secular bureaucracy) had swept away. Caodaism en-hanced its largely traditional format with certain ideas associated with the European power over man and nature. Caodai promised to renew the old sense of communal identity by

welding together a new and larger community from the remainders of the villages. With its elaborate rites, its pyramidical hierarchy and its multiplicity of spirits, the Caodai filled much the same space that the Confucian state had occupied. The Hoa Hao, on the other hand, was still new to Vietnam. Unlike the Caodai, mentioned by Vietnamese government reports as "a syncretic Buddhist-Catholic religion", the Hoa Hao is according to the government "an offshoot of Buddhism". It was founded by Huynh Phu So, whom the French called the "mad monk", in 1939. Hoa Hao represented a synthesis of reformed Buddhism, folk religion and social atti¬tudes among Vietnamese farmers in the Mekong delta. The Hoa Hao movement spread rapidly in the 1940s and 1950s among the rural population in the provinces of Long Xuyen, Bac Lieu, Rach Gia and Chau Doc, for whom it served not only as a religion but as a means of political and social organization.

Huynh Phu So preached of his revelation about the Enlightened Sage who, after the departure of the French, would come to rule the Vietnamese in the brotherhood of the Three Religions. Hoa Hao showed the way to a reformed Buddhism based on the common people, expressed through internal faith rather than elaborate ritual. Hoa Hao required no pagodas and no ex-pensive ceremonies for birth and death such as the Confucian ancestral cult demanded. The Hoa Hao doctrine was both progressive and democratic by contrast with the traditional beliefs of many people in southern Vietnam. Within a milieu of poor farmers oppressed by high rents and taxes, it seemed to point to a revolutionary social movement.

The French hostility to both Caodai and Hoa Hao arose out of the suspicion that they were subversive organizations intent upon raising a peasant rebellion against colonial rule, but this suspicion was largely unfounded. The main achievement of the sects was to fill in the traditio-nal social and religious gaps the French had left open in substituting their colonial administra-tion and economic system for that of the old empire. Many Vietnamese did not intend to take on the French directly by force. They were merely waiting for the will of Heaven to change, at which point, so they were convinced, the French would disappear and all the Vietnamese would become Caodai or Hoa Hao. Here we may find a parallel with regard to a document, issued by the Vietnamese Buddhist Church in 1995, which stated that "although many local cults continue to exist, there seems to be a trend, at least in the southern part of the country, toward regarding Buddhism as the generally accepted national religion and abandoning the idea of the fusion of the Three Religions as handed down from the period of Chinese influence. Reports from Vietnamese villages indicate that all those who are neither Christians nor Confu-cianists usually call themselves Buddhists, while others assume that sooner or later all Vietna¬mese will become Caodai or Hoa Hao". The Hoa Hao relations with the French and the vari¬ous Vietnamese governments that followed were uneasy, as the Hoa Hao attempted to main¬tain political autonomy in Hoa Hao areas in order to maintain their specific way of life. After the Geneva Conference in 1954, the leaders of the Caodai unsuccessfully resisted the attempt by Ngo Dinh Diem to consolidate his authority over South Vietnam. During the Vietnam War the Caodai cooperated reluctantly with the South Vietnamese government against

the commu¬nists.

The communist seizure of South Vietnam in 1975 brought problems to the Hoa Hao. The new revolutionary government forced the Hoa Hao organization to disband. Several of the Hoa Hao leaders were arrested, although private worship has always been permitted. However, the communist distrust of the Hoa Hao was in a way justified. Many followers of the sect have en-gaged in resistance activities against the North Vietnamese government. The Caodai, on the ot-her hand, has been permitted since 1975 to function, although it has been purged of elements suspected of hostility to the revolution. The Caodai no longer possess the autonomy it exerted under the Saigon regime.