



THE CHULALONGKORN JOURNAL OF
BUDDHIST STUDIES

Volume 6, 2012 ❖ ISSN 2229-1229

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PUBLISHED BY

CENTRE FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

Chulalongkorn University

Bangkok, Thailand

THE CHULALONGKORN JOURNAL OF BUDDHIST STUDIES

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The Chulalongkorn Journal of Buddhist Studies is devoted to the academic study of Buddhism. It is published annually by the Chulalongkorn Center for Buddhist Studies, Boromrajakumari Building, Floor 13, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok 10330, Thailand.

The *Journal* welcomes all kinds of academic studies of Buddhism and Buddhist teachings, such as philosophical, doctrinal, and empirical. Although our *Center* is mainly dedicated to the studies of Theravada Buddhism, contributions on Mahayana Buddhism are also welcome. For publication consideration, please submit an electronic copy of your paper to the editor at the above email address.



Price: 40.00 Baht

The Study of Buddhism in Thai School Curricula*

*Danai Preechapermpasit***

This paper analyzes the study of Buddhism in Thai School curricula between 1892 - 2001 in three aspects: (1) the proportion of time allocated to the subject; (2) the subject's contents and purposes; and (3) related factors. In the following, all three aspects are simultaneously discussed in the contexts of the study of Buddhism in school curricula from different periods.

1. Thai School Curricula between 1892 - 1909

In the Thai educational system between 1892 - 1909, which was during in the reign of King Rama V, purposes of each individual subject in the school curricula were indicated, but not the objectives or the purposes of the curricula themselves. They can, however, be summarized as follows. In 1892, King Rama V wished that the people benefit from education in occupational terms. In 1895, his goal was to promote the learning of academic subjects. In 1905, it was to advance students' knowledge, and, in 1909, to promote access to education with a focus on occupational opportunities for the people¹. According to historical facts, one of the most

* The study was funded by Buddhist Studies Centre, Chulalongkorn University, 2008.

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¹ Pornpen Pathoomsiri. Evolution of Elementary Curricula. (Elementary Curricular Development Division, Curricular Development Center, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development), (Unpublished Manuscript).

significant factors during this period was the threat of colonization from Western superpowers, France and Britain. Thailand lost parts of its territory six times altogether. In 1888, the towns of Sibsong Chuthai and Huapan Tangha Tanghok were lost to France; in 1892, the Shan States were lost to Britain; in the crisis of 1893, the territory on the left bank of the Mekong was lost to France, and that on the right was later lost to the superpower in 1903. In 1906, the territories of Siamrat, Phra Tabong and Srisophon were lost to France; and in 1908, the four Malay Sultanates were lost to Britain². It can be said, then, that the main goal of education during this period, apart from equipping people with occupational knowledge, was to create security for the country to fight against the threats posed by the superpowers. According to Wuttichai Mulasilp:

“The opinion among the royalties and civil servants was that, to protect the country, civil servants must have knowledge in mathematics and written language as their basics, and also have good behavior.”

However, from 1892 onward, even though the main goal of education was to protect the country from colonization, emphasis on the subject of Buddhism - known as the subject of ‘Dhammacari’ (Dhamma follower) - was found to have increased. The subject occupied 7.27% of the curricular contents in 1892, 3.7% in 1895, 15.04% in 1905, and a rather high percentage of 15.04% in 1909. Between 1892 - 1905, the contents and purposes of Dhammacari clearly showed the influence of traditional Buddhism. This includes teachings about Buddhakhuna (Buddha’s virtues), Dhamma (Buddhist teachings) for laity, Kusalakammapha (the Tenfold Ways of Good Action), Pancasila (the Five Precepts), Pancadhamma (the Five Ennobling Virtues), and conduct. In 1909, the Buddhist subject curriculum was changed. Although in the earlier period the curriculum contained the teaching of traditional doctrines, they were of basic ones such as Sadha (faith) and Sila (precepts). The reason for this was because the main actor in Thai education of that period was the Venerable

² Thanakit, *Biographies of Nine Kings and Queens*. (Bangkok: Suwiriyasan, 1999), p. 221.

Vajirananavarorasa, and the Sangha (Monastic Order) contributed to the national education between 1898 - 1902. To save budgets on location and personel, King Rama V's policy was to have temples function as schools, according to the following declaration:

“His Majesty the king was of the opinion that, as all the temples used to be places for learning, they should be given support [in this respect] to improve and become well-established. Consequently, his younger brother, Prince Vajirananavarorasa, was invited to be in charge of having education provided in all temples in the main towns all over the kingdom. The abbots in these temples must report to him and obey all of his orders, whatever they are. The king also assigned his younger brother, Prince Damrongrajanuphab, the Minister of Internal Affairs, to provide facilitation so that education in the main towns will thrive throughout the country. Declared on the 11th of November, 117th year of Ratanakosin, the 10958th day in the present reign.”³

In fact, the Venerable Vajirananavarorasa played a major role in Buddhist education from the year 1892 onward, as can be seen from the fact that the book he composed was mainly used in Dhammacari in 1892. It was stated that:

“To teach Dhammacari, teachers should be careful and explain the Buddha's virtues with simple truths that they see fit for children to understand; and teach Singarovada Sutta and Upasaka Patipati that the King's younger brother, Prince Vajirananavarorasa, had composed.”⁴

³ History of Mahamakut Buddhist University under the Royal Patronage. (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 1978), p.p. 97-99.

⁴ Drafted Rule No. 1: Educational Requirements of General Pre-elementary Curriculum in School. The Minister of Religious Affairs, 1892. (Unpublished Manucrypt).

He and the Sangha, therefore, had a significant part in the management of curricula, especially of Buddhism, so much that King Rama V felt the need to express his apology as follows:

“As he had a thorough observation and became so very pleased, he made known his apology for the contempt he had held in mind. It was not the contempt for the Buddha, the Dhamma that the Buddha disclosed, and the Sangha who attained the purity. It was directed only to those ordinary monks who studied Ganthadhura/Vipassanadhura (Scripture/Meditation), repeated chanting and pursued only their self-interest. Those who studied Ganthadhura aimed to know only for themselves. When they gained knowledge, they never devoted themselves to imparting it for the benefits of others. It was enough for them to pursue it on the basis of self-interest. Those who studied Vipassanadhura were worse. They repeated the main chanting. Despite this contempt in his mind, now that he had witnessed the full performance of their abilities, he ascertained that all the monks who form the commission were free of the features he detested. His Majesty the King therefore expressed his apology. Their performance contributed to Buddhism and thus the dignity of King Monkut, and also to the public community extending from His Majesty the King onward. May the monks enjoy longevity and carry on the tasks!”⁵

Apart from the Sangha’s major role in education, King Rama V himself also considered the subject of Buddhism to be important, as expressed in the letter he wrote to the Venerable Vajirananavarorasa:

“As for the educational affairs, please assist with your serious consideration to the root of it. Please do not confine yourself to monastic affairs. Another matter is that the teaching of religion should increase in schools both in the capital and

⁵ History of Mahamakut Buddhist University under the Royal Patronage, pp. 65-66.

the main towns. Be concerned that later generations will be drifting away from the religion, and an increasing number of them will be lacking morality in their hearts. If so, it would no longer be correct to say in the future as we do today that, of the large number of the ignorant, those who receive education will behave better than those who do not. Most people unguided by morality turn to dishonesty. If they have little knowledge, they cannot cheat a lot and cannot do so neatly. If they have more knowledge, they can cheat a lot more and in a sophisticated manner. Training in literacy does not at the same time train people to be good or bad. It is only instrumental to learning about good and bad. I therefore see that, if there is a new and easy book about basic [moral] conduct that is compulsory for every school to use, such book will be very beneficial. A book that contains Dhammacakkhu (the Eye of Wisdom) would still be too complicated. It must be very simple...and it will be useful if questions are provided for teachers to ask students – questions such as what are the first, the second elements, etc. in Pancasila.”⁶

Because of the Venerable Vajiranavarorasa’s major role in educational provision, it followed that the standard contents of Dhammacari showed an influence of the Dhammayuttika Sect. According to Venerable Paisal Wisalo:

“The author therefore did not see that it was necessary to know things beyond the temporal. Perhaps, it is because of this that important doctrines, such as Trilakkhana (the Three Characteristics) or Ariyasacca (the Four Noble Truths) were not mentioned in the textbook of morality that he composed for schools to use. Paticcasamuppada or Itappaccayata (the Dependent Origination) cannot even be expected. Only Pancasila and Pancadhamma were emphasized. This can be observed in the curriculum for Wat Bavaranives Vihara School,

⁶ Ibid., pp. 88-89.

the model for other schools affiliated to Mahamakut Buddhist University. In the Religion Section, only codes of conduct are taught, i.e. Gihipatipatti (Codes of Morality for Laity), and Dhammacariya (Righteous Conduct) is confined to Pancasila.⁷

Consequently, the subject of Buddhism taught in this period only contained matters related to Pancasila and Pancadhamma. Moreover, the Venerable Vajirananavarorasa's Buddhist world view was under the influence of King Rama IV, who faced the surge of modern science into the country. This certainly affected the contents of Buddhism. Venerable Paisal Wisalo stated his views:

“...In the time of the Venerable Vajirananavarorasa, rationalist Buddhism (under modern scientific world view) initiated by King Rama IV spread as never before...The influence of rationalism that reduced Buddhism to the teachings about mundane reality or the temporal welfare can be observed in his writings, and also in the curricula and textbooks. The prominent example is the book *Navakovada* (Advice to the Neophyte), especially in the Gihipatipatti Section...In this book, the teaching about Paramattha (the highest good) was omitted. Only the teachings about Ditthadhammikatha (the good to be won in this life; temporal welfare) and Samparayikatha (the good to be won in the life to come) were retained.”⁸

Although the curricula in this period are focused to the basic teachings such as Pancasila and Pancadhamma, and emphasized Ditthadhammikatha, they were still in the spirit of traditional Buddhism and helped maintain Buddhism as part of the national educational system, including its influence on Thai society. King Rama V's reform of the country to face the threat of colonization had an impact on the educational system as well. An important

⁷ Venerable Paisal Wisalo, *Thai Buddhism in the Future: Trend and Crisis Solution*. (Bangkok: Sodsri-Saritwong Foundation, 2003), p. 28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

mission of the ruler in such time was to build a strong educational system in the nation. The objectives and contents of the study of Buddhism, therefore, serve to teach students to be humble and obedient, which were considered the appropriate characteristics of subjects of the nation. This led to the conception of good citizenship as formulated during the reign of King Rama V. Wit Wisadaves expressed his view on this point as follows:

“If we examine the curricula and textbooks, we will find that the government required that many subjects be taught to train the youth’s mind and attitudes to be a good member in the present regime, i.e. the monarchy, and to be a strong basis for the creation of solidarity for the formation of a nation state. The important attitudes that the government wanted to inculcate in the students were patriotism, consciousness of Thai nationality, discipline, sacrifice, obedience, and loyalty to the King.”⁹

The conception becomes clearer in the reign of King Rama VI who, unlike in the past, focused on loyalty to the nation state, rather than on the religious teachings such as Sadha or Sila. From 1909 until the reign of King Rama VI, the contents of the curriculum of Buddhist studies were adapted to fit the State’s ideology that included loyalty to the King, patriotism, etc. This will be discussed in the next section.

2. Thai School Curricula between 1911 - 1921

It needs to be remarked that the objectives of the curricula between 1911 - 1921 were not clearly indicated either. However, it can be summarized that, in 1911, the goal was for every citizen to have at least pre-elementary education that gave them knowledge sufficient for subsistence and occupation after school. The curriculum of 1913 aimed to undo the popularity of desk jobs and to raise awareness of the significance of special subjects that people could master and apply to their local occupation. In 1921, the focus was on

⁹ Wit Wisadaves, Thai Philosophy of Education 1868 - 1932. (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2001), p. 33.

vocational education.¹⁰ In 1911, the subject of Morality (or Moral Studies) occupied 8% of all studies in the pre-elementary level; 4.85% in the elementary level; and 4.46% in the secondary level. In 1913, it occupied 4.5% of all studies in the elementary level; 4.66% in the lower secondary level; and 2.83% in the middle and higher secondary level. The decline of the subject's proportion in relation to other subjects is due to an increasing focus on studies that would contribute to the country's progress rather than on the study of Morality. King Rama VI stated:

“...the Education Department overlooked the essential point and misunderstood that it was sufficient to teach students to be literate, able to calculate and keep accounts. Indeed, our ancestors taught that speaking skill is primary, calculating skill secondary, writing skill tertiary, while good and bad are stamps. This implies that good and bad cannot enter the comparative scale and must be considered as stamps. That is, whoever does good or bad things are stamped as being so. Whenever they are so stamped, nothing can ever be undone. The stamps appear as they are. This is essential. Therefore, people should be properly trained when very young. The Department of Education is now aware of this fact, and consequently is considering giving more instruction on morality. The results should gradually become visible.”¹¹

In spite of the King's statement, the statistics showing the declining percentage of morality instruction suggest that the Department of Education focused on subjects that are more relevant to livelihood. Meanwhile, the subject of Buddhism or Morality was re-conceived as a subject that suits

¹⁰ Pornpen Pathoomsiri, Evolution of Elementary Curricula. (Elementary Curricular Development Division, Curricular Development Center, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development), (Unpublished Manuscript).

¹¹ Chamuen Darunarak (Cham Sunthorawet), Important Royal Missions of King Rama VI. (Bangkok: Business Organization of the Teachers' Council, 2513), pp. 104-105, cited by Wuttichai Mulasilp, In the Beginning of Educational Reform: From King Rama V-VII. (Bangkok: Love and Live Printing, 2541), p. 155.

the promotion of nationalism during the reign of King Rama VI in its emphasis on loyalty to monarchy. In the curriculum of 1911, the subject of Morality, therefore, aimed to teach students to be good subjects who love the nation and are loyal to the King through the teaching of gratitude, gentleness, politeness, obedience, etc. This can be seen in the following quotation from the textbook on morality in 1914:

“Apart from our household and school, which are tiny, we have something greater to love. It is our country that we call, “the Thai country” or “the Nation of Siam.” Bear in mind that it is the Thai country. Never forget. This is because it is our homeland. We have to love it devotedly, much more than the house we live in, more than the school we study in. Apart from our relatives and friends who are but small people, there are others who require our greater devotion. They are our king and our fellow Thais or, in other words, our nation. This is because we are born as Thais; we are fellows; we are of the same nation; we speak the same language. How can it be possible that we love and help each other less than we do people from other nations, who are foreign and speak different languages? If anyone accuses us of untruth to our faces that the Thai country is not good in this or that respect, or that our king is not good in this or that respect, we absolutely cannot remain silent because the accusation will stab at our hearts as if with a real knife. It will give us extreme resentment and soreness.”¹²

In 1911, a critical incident that is to influence Thai education – a rebellion led by Captain Khun Tuayhanpitak (Dr. Leng Srichan) – took place. This group of rebels was dissatisfied with, and wanted to overthrow, the existing regime in order to change to democracy with constitution as the highest law, and to a system of parliamentary government. However, its

¹² Phraya Thammasak Montri and Phra Anukitwithun, Dhammacariya, Vol. 2. (Bangkok: Aksaranit Press, 1914), pp. 95-96.

plan failed because of a leak of secret information into Prince Chakrabongse Bhuvanath's ears, and all rebels were consequently arrested.¹³ In this year, King Rama VI issued a royal command to establish the "Wild Tiger Corps" to train civil servants to be patriotic, humane and devoted. Apart from personnel development, the Wild Tiger Corps also served to defend the country's territory. Basic warring tactics were taught and drills were conducted in Nakorn Pathom and Rajburi on a regular basis.¹⁴ The incident inevitably affected the curriculum of 1911 which strongly emphasizes loyalty to the monarchy. The establishment of the Wild Tiger Corps was to serve in building citizens loyal to the nation and the King. Buddhist doctrines in this curriculum were accordingly interpreted in line with the nationalist conception of loyalty to the country and the King. A major contribution was made by the Venerable Vajirananavarorasa, then the Supreme Patriarch, who played a significant role in explicating the doctrines for the purpose of cultivating the senses of nationalism and loyalty to the monarchy. Consider the following quotation:

"The country is analogous to our body. The head is analogous to the King. It is indispensable, necessary, because we all need direction. Next are the heart, lungs and liver analogous to ministers, intendants and governors respectively. The hairs and nails are analogous to subjects."¹⁵

In 1913, the doctrines taught in the subject of Morality were revised and became more nationalist. In particular, the objective of the subject was to inculcate the Wild Tiger's qualifications through scout training. Students were to have real-life practice, to self-regulate as a group, to be rewarded with golden sheets and punished with dog's skins, and to be stimulated through religion and royal instruction to arouse the Wild Tiger's spirit. The contents of the subject were not traditionally Buddhist. Bravery

¹³ Thanakit, Biographies of Nine Kings and Queens, p. 259.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

¹⁵ Venerable Vajirananavarorasa, Thoughts and Words about Religion. (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2537), p. 63.

and thrift, for instance, were given more emphasis. Some doctrines were therefore reinterpreted and reconceived to suit the State's policy. For example, the teaching about gratitude was extended to include parents, teachers, the King, country-fellows and the nation, as appeared in the morality textbook:

“When children grow up and acquire more knowledge, they become aware that people deserving their gratitude, apart from their parents, include also our King. Now, it is sufficient to know that His Majesty sustains our religion and sustains us Thais, our well-being. He should therefore be regarded as the great benefactor...When you learn that the King, parents and teachers are our great benefactors, I therefore remind you to always think of their beneficence. When you grow up, you will see by yourself how you can express your gratefulness. When you are still young, bow, pay them respect, and always hold in mind their favors. Thereby, you are known as a grateful child, and so take a step towards being a good child.”¹⁶

The instruction of thrift – a matter considered insignificant or rare in the Pali Canons - was given emphasis in the subject of Morality in the curricula of 1913 and 1921. The motive is understood to stem from the economic crisis starting around the end of the reign of King Rama V until early in the reign of King Rama VI when the country was repeatedly plagued by droughts and floods. In 1908 and 1911, there were major flood; in 1910 a drought; in 1917 another big flood; and between 1918 and 1920, another drought. A crisis in rice production followed in 1919. The government, as a result, barred rice exports in 1920, which led to a deficit of 81 million Baht. The country used to have a surplus of 40 million Baht in normal times. International reserves were consequently reduced. This crisis lasted until the reign of King Rama VII.¹⁷

¹⁶ Phraya Thammasak Montri and Phra Anukitwithun, Dhammacariya, Vol. 2. (Bangkok: Aksaranit Press, 1914), pp. 74-76.

¹⁷ Thanakit, Biographies of Nine Kings and Queens, p. 274.

The subject of Morality in the 1921 curriculum was comprised of similar contents and objectives to the one in the curriculum of 1913. This should be due to the fact that the country participated with the Allies in World War I on April 6, and declared war with Germany and Austria-Hungary on July 22, 1917. It is believed that this factor contributed to the curricular contents aimed at creating patriotism and the Wild Tiger's qualities, such as bravery and commitment to collective interest over self-interest. They were taught in King Rama VI's "Wild Tiger Instruction" that was incorporated as part of the curriculum, and included Buddhist doctrines, and soldiership, fighting for the country, etc.

“Those who participate in warring, some say, cannot be on the righteous path because their direct responsibility is killing, which surely is a violation of the first Precept in Buddhism. Therefore, soldiers cannot observe the Precepts. This point is usually raised by those with superficial knowledge in Buddhism, and we, who identify ourselves as Buddhists, merely nod in agreement. Indeed, our Buddha very well understood that the defense of the country is necessary, and those who have the duty in this respect are not regarded as having a wrong occupation. Sufficient evidence can be raised to show that warring for the sake of defending the country is by no means prohibited by the Buddha...The true intention of the Buddha in forbidding the taking of life was his wish to bar physical infliction on or killing of people who commit offense. It was not extended so far as to include the defense of ourselves or the country. Thus, those who understand that soldiership excludes one from Buddhism are gravely wrong. Morality can get along with soldiership.”¹⁸

The reinterpretation of the Buddhist doctrines to suit nationalism such as the moral justification of the country's defense was not only the

¹⁸ King Rama VI, Wild Tiger Instruction. (Bangkok: Aksorn Chareon Thus, 1999), pp. 58-59.

policy of King Rama VI, but also of the Venerable Vajiranavarorasa, who gave various religious instructions on serving the country as being an activity sanctioned by Buddhism.

“Commanders and soldiers numbering 1,600 altogether were present in the middle of the field. [The Venerable] gave instructions to encourage soldiership and humaneness, tolerance, diligence, bravery. He referred to the Buddha before his enlightenment as a model, and advised them to observe the military rules, be mindful, wise and cautious. The latter is vital. He showed that, in the war, a moment of carelessness could lead to a disaster. In the end, he explained that the soldiers needed to follow the religious teachings but should learn to adjust them to suit their situation. They could thereby succeed as wished.”¹⁹

The Venerable Vajiranavarorasa’s idea about nationalism appeared in many other sources. In his letter to Phra Rachamuni dated January 29, 1913, for instance, he wrote: “The remark about the instruction for people to love the nation, the religion, the king and the country is right. Religious instruction must benefit the country too.”²⁰ Besides, the Venerable Vajiranavarorasa thought that for the nation to remain strong, religion and state should be in agreement. Thus, it was required that Buddhism be adjusted to the ideology of the country, as appears in his letter to the Venerable Sawanwithiwisuth Udomkanachan, the Chief Monk of Nakorn Sawan:

“In the Administrative Section, Items 11 and 12 – which indicate that novices who reach the age to be conscripted and are without exemption document should be submitted, and that men who stay in temples and reach the age to be levied should pay – are properly included. Religion must be in agreement with the State. Otherwise, both will be in trouble.

¹⁹ Venerable Vajiranavarorasa, Thoughts and Words about Religion, p. 54.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Monks who lack prudence tend to their own benefits. That you conducted so is agreeable to me.”²¹

It can thus be seen that the ideas of King Rama VI and the Venerable Vajiranavarorasa – the head of the State and the head of religion – concerning Buddhism and nationalism had great impacts on the Thai school curricula, especially the contents of the subject of Morality, which served the nationalist ideology.

3. Thai School Curricula between 1928 - 1937

The curriculum of 1928 was the last before Thailand’s political revolution. Significant events during this period include, for instance, the publication of *The King of Siam’s Edition of the Pali Tipitaka* in 1925; in 1928, the increase of moral education in the school curriculum by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1928; and the launch of a Buddhist textbook contest by the Royal Institute in 1929.²² Moreover, in early 1926, King Rama VII had the Department of Religious Affairs transferred back to the Ministry of Education, and changed the title of the latter to “Ministry of Religious Affairs”, citing as the reason that “Education should not be separated from the temple.”²³ Prince Pittayalappruetthiyakorn was assigned the position of Minister of Religious Affairs. The King was of the idea that since foreign civilizations were spreading to the Thai people, and since Buddhist values need to be safeguarded, education cannot be separated from the temple. Buddhism would provide morale to Buddhists.²⁴ This idea later led to the intertwinement between the subjects of Morality and Buddhism.

²¹ Venerable Vajiranavarorasa, Preference in Sangha Administration. (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2533), pp. 71-72.

²² Siriwat Kamwansa, History of Buddhism in Thailand. (Bangkok: Charansanitwong Printing, 1999), pp. 110-111.

²³ Pin Malakul, About Education. (Bangkok: Printing House of the Teachers’ Council (Ladprao), 1973), p. 25.

²⁴ Thanakit, Biographies of Nine Kings and Queens, pp. 340-341.

In the curriculum of 1928, the subject of Morality occupied 3.7% of the contents. Although not very high, the percentage was still higher than that in the curricula of 1913 and 1921, for instance, which had no place for the subject in the higher secondary level. However, the aforementioned events, which should have affected the status of the Buddhist Studies subject, did not bring about any changes in terms of its contents and objectives. Still, no clear objective of the subject was given, and no particular doctrines were given emphasis in the contents. Only a general statement could be found that it was to be taught in accordance with the Buddhist Studies subject offered in the Military Cadet School. The teachers were left to their own devices and had to decide on their own which sections or chapters of the textbook should be taught, and in what order, to students in the 7th or 8th year of the secondary level. Buddhist students were required to participate in chanting prayers and listening to a sermon at least once a week. These activities were highly encouraged by authorities to be undertaken in temples outside school hours. This requirement, however, did not apply to non-Buddhist students.

Such curriculum, on the one hand, showed flexibility. On the other hand, it implied a lack of regulation, standard, and development amidst the dynamism of Buddhism at the time. One of the reasons for this may be due to the economic crisis that started late in the reign of King Rama VI. Although the Elementary Education Act was announced, only 3.6% of the budget was allocated to the Ministry of Education, which was very low in comparison to the Ministries of Defense and Metropolis, which received 24% and 16% respectively.²⁵ This rendered Prince Thaninivati, the then Minister of Education, incapable of initiating significant changes. Wuttichai Mulasilp commented on this as follows:

“His terms as the Minister of Education seem to be the most unfortunate period in the history of Thai education. If one likens it to a tree just planted into the soil, one could probably

²⁵ Wuttichai Mulasilp, The Beginning of Educational Reform: From King Rama V-VII, p. 172.

say, “No rain!” It was deemed sufficient for him to carry on and maybe make some minor improvements. It would be very hard for him, however, to start new projects. But he gave it his best efforts as far as the situation allowed.”²⁶

Buddhist education during this period is revealed through textbooks such as “*Sasana Khuna*” (Religious Virtues) that won the first prize in the annual contest of 1929. Composed by Her Serene Highness Poonpisamai Disakul, it consists of seven chapters on the virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha; the Five Precepts of Buddhism; the virtues of parents, religion and the King. The contents focused mainly on loyalty to the monarchy.

“His Majesty the King graciously allowed members of the royal family and young children of civil servants to have an audience with him on the occasion of Visakha Puja day in order to follow in his virtuous path. He benevolently gave dolls to children who were too young to understand the teachings in order to give them the impression that we have the virtuous Buddha as role model. He also had books on Buddhism containing explanations that are easy to comprehend published and distributed to Thai children to aid them in the understanding of Buddhism. The beneficence His Majesty the King showed to children demonstrates his wish that we be good in the future. We have to recall his great favor, and do more and more good deeds to render us worthy of his kindness. In this way, we are the ones truly grateful to him...Almost all children sing or hear the Royal Anthem. It is sung to remind ourselves of his great beneficence in bestowing on us the well-being under his rulership. When we appreciate his merit, we bless him and wish him the same happiness he has provided us.”²⁷

²⁶ Ibid., p. 175.

²⁷ Her Serene Highness Poonpisamai Disakul, Ministry of Education’s Textbook: Buddhist Instruction for Children on “Virtue of Religion”. (Bangkok: Printing House of the Teachers’ Council, 1957), pp. 32-33.

Instructions of Buddhism in Thai schools have a long history of serving the state's goal in inculcating loyalty to the monarchy. The political revolution in 1932 led by the People's Party, however, brought about a change from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy. The contents and objectives of the Buddhist Studies subject were altered and adapted in response to the new political regime. The curriculum of 1937 was the first after the revolution. It strongly emphasized general and vocational education, as well as the three elements of education, i.e., Buddhist, Moral and Physical Education.²⁸ Such curriculum came into existence only after completion of the Second National Educational Plans of 1932 and 1936 that focused mainly on morality.²⁹

The subject of Buddhism, formerly known as the subject of Morality, became known under a new title, "Citizens' Duties and Morality." It occupied 3.57% of the contents for the elementary school level, and 3.33% for the secondary school level. The contents related to Citizens' Duties included obligations towards family, groups, the nation, the religion, the king, the constitution, and the state. Those related to Morality were adapted to fit the new regime, and consequently covered teachings about honesty, generosity, sportsmanship, politeness, gratefulness, and solidarity. The teachings on morality were reconceived and taught with respect to one's self, one's groups, one's superiors, the Nation, the Religion, the King, and the Constitution. However, this reconception was not in keeping with the original Buddhism. Buddhism seems to have been used as an instrument to disseminate the constitutional ideology which was new to the society. Many historical anecdotes seem to support this understanding. Some people of that time did not understand the term "Constitution." Some believed it was the name of General Phraya Phahon Pholphayuhasena's son who would bring great fortune to the country and the people. Claiming constitutional

²⁸ Pornpen Pathoomsiri, Evolution of Elementary Curricula. (Elementary Curricular Development Division, Curricular Development Center, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development), (Unpublished Manuscript).

²⁹ Ministry of Education, Mr. Lieng Chayakan, Ministry of Education and National Educational Plans. (Bangkok: Printing House of the Teachers' Council (Ladprao), 1986), pp. 35-41.

rights and freedom, some monk attendants refused to serve the monks. Some youths neither went to school nor obey their teachers in the exercise of their liberty.³⁰

The instructions on citizens' duties went hand in hand with the instructions on morality so as to impart knowledge about the Constitution and other elements in the new regime, e.g. parliament, Cabinet, court, rights and duties, and election. Instructions on morality acquired new contents, such as elements supporting the new regime – honesty, generosity, gratefulness for the party, and solidarity of the party. The term “party” was supposed to be taken from the “People’s Party,” who brought about the revolution. The People’s Party used other methods to link Buddhism to the new regime. For instance, in 1945, Marshal Por Piboonsongkram, then a major, proposed in the Cabinet meeting on September 18, 1940, to build the Sri Maha Dhatu Temple as a monument of democratic regime so as to praise Buddhism together alongside the Nation. At first, the temple was named “Wat Prachadhipateyya” (Temple of Democracy). It was only after the acquisitions of banyan shoots from the Sri Maha Bodhi, soil from the Holy Grounds of Buddhism, and the Buddha’s relics discovered at Maha Stupa Dhamma Rajika in India, that the government re-named the temple as “Sri Maha Dhatu Temple.”³¹ This clearly shows an attempt to link Buddhism to the system of government.

Many reasons can be raised to explain this phenomenon. For instance, the revolution brought with it political turbulence. In 1933, Colonel Phraya Phahon Pholphayuhasena, Lieutenant Colonel Piboonsongkram, and Navy Commander Luang Supachalasai staged a coup against the government led by Phraya Manopakorn Nititada. In the same year, a rebel group under the leadership of Prince Bavaredej and General Phraya Srisidhisongkram (Din Tharap) attempted to overthrow the government. The group disagreed with the People’s Party’s ideology and

³⁰ Thanakit, *Biographies of Thai Prime Ministers*. (Bangkok: Pyramid, 2002), p. 32.

³¹ Kanuengnit Chantabut, *Movement of the First Generation of Young Monks: 1934-1941*. (Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 2528), p. 162.

its conduct of affairs. For example, the Cabinet did not take cases of *lèse-majesté* seriously. The government brought back Luang Praditmanutham (Pridi Phanomyong) to implement a communist regime. The political turbulence led to King Rama VII's decision to abdicate in 1934. In the following year, the Non-commissioned Officers' Rebel took place. It was the first time that a rebel – Sergeant Sawas Mahamad – who refused to confess was sentenced to death.³²

The turbulence affected the stability of the state. General Phraya Pahon Pholphayuhasena, the highest authority then, felt he needed to steer the country back to a lasting normal condition. One of the most effective methods was to inculcate new consciousness through education. People were instructed about the new regime, which made them easier to govern in the democratic system. Education again became an effective instrument utilized by the state to govern the people, according to Wit Wisadaves:

“In the modern world (and in some places in the ancient world), education has a significant political role in preparing people for a desirable system of government. If the government sees that the present regime is suitable, they will train the youth to have characteristics in accordance with that regime. If the government wants to change the regime, they will again train the people accordingly. In cases where the state has absolute authority in educational provision, this role is evident.”³³

As a result, the original Buddhist teachings were combined with the additional contents to accord with the new regime, and were widely used in the 1937 curriculum. The most distinctive aim of the curriculum was to facilitate the government in their effort to establish as stable and normal a state as possible.

³² Ibid., pp. 41-59.

³³ Wit Wisadaves, Thai Philosophy of Education 1868-1932, pp. 32-33.

4. Thai School Curricula between 1948 - 1955

The curriculum of 1948 had as its general goal education for quick literacy and subsistence.³⁴ In it, the subject of Morality was separated from that of Citizens' Duties, occupying 3.57% of the curriculum's contents. The subject's aim was to promote faith in Buddhism, participation in rites and ceremonies, and to develop appropriate manners and moral characters. Its contents covered Ratanattaya (the Three Gems), Pancasila, and Pancadhamma, which were the focus of the original teachings. Nevertheless, it is noted that emphasis was also given to manners in assembly, reverence, obedience, punctuality, precision in work, commitment to common interest over self-interest, all of which were new and different from the original teachings. Although some could be classified as part of the original teachings, they were not principal. The rather limited basis was elaborated into teachings about manners.

This indicates that the subject of Buddhist studies was used to serve the State's policy of the time as well. Between 1938 and 1944, the policy of the government led by Marshal Po Piboonsongkram was to build the nation's economy through the nationalist framework. The practice known as "The State's Convention" was prescribed for the people to follow, and was enforced through the Conservation-of-National-Culture Act in 1940 and Gazette on Culture the Thai People Must Observe in 1941. The aim of the convention was to reorganize the way of life of the Thai people so that it conformed to that of civilized nations. Twelve conventions of the State were declared during 1939 and 1942 to make known the cultural practices Thai people should observe, such as table manners (using utensils rather than bare hands, etc.) and the prohibition of betel chewing. There was also a gazette prescribing public appearance. For example, Thai men were requested to follow the Western dress code rather than wearing silk pants in public. Rather than a *jong-kraben* (loincloth), women were requested to

³⁴ Pornpen Pathoomsiri, Evolution of Elementary Curricula. (Elementary Curricular Development Division, Curricular Development Center, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development), (Unpublished Manuscript).

wear a sarong together with shoes and a hat. According to a well-known motto of the day, “The hat leads Thailand into being a superpower.”³⁵

The cultural reform had great impacts on the Thai society and required very extensive campaigning. In 1948, Marshal Po Piboonsongkram returned to premiership and remained in the post until 1957. The reform had, therefore, sustained implementations. The curricula between 1948 and 1950 shared the same goal of teaching manners and conventions through the subject of Morality. Once more, this reflects having education serve Marshal Po Piboonsongkram’s policy of “the State’s Convention” to train people and reform the culture.

An important lesson on obedience in the curricula was evidently also in keeping with the government’s policy. On May 16, 1944, the Office of the Prime Minister declared Viradhamma (Doctrines of Braveness) of the Thai Nation on the basis of the nationalist ideology. It included seventeen items characteristically nationalist, e.g. “Thais love their nation more than their lives,” and “Thailand speaks in one voice and follows the leader.” In addition, the Six Maxims of Thais followed suit with “Our death is better than the nation’s death.” and “We agree with the wishes of the group.”³⁶ Moreover, the media effectively disseminated the conventions of the State and the National Cultural Council’s regulations, including marches, mottos, speeches, and other nationalist ideas. Newspapers such as *Pramuan Wan* then headlined mottos such as “Believe in the Leader, and the Nation will be safe,” whereas Thai Rasadorn announced “Believe in Piboonsongkram and the Nation will be One.”³⁷

In 1950, the curriculum gave 3.33% of its contents to the subject of Morality both in the lower and higher secondary levels. The subject was composed of three parts, i.e. Buddhism, Dhammacariya, and Gihipatipatti. The contents of the Buddhism part were apparently increased. They now included the Buddha’s biography, Pancasila, Pancadhamma, the Buddha’s

³⁵ Thanakit, *Biographies of Thai Prime Ministers*, pp. 73-78.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

admonition, the holy days, and the Buddhists' daily practices. The part of Dhammacariya covered gratefulness, loving-kindness, and politeness. In the higher secondary level, more original teachings were found such as Sati (mindfulness), Sampajanna (clear comprehension), Hiri (moral shame), Ottappa (moral fear), Akusalamula (roots of evil), Sappurisadhamma (virtue of the righteous), Vesarajjakarana-dhamma (qualities making for intrepidity), Aprihaniyadhamma (conditions of welfare). The part of Gihipatipatti comprised Gharavasa-dhamma (virtues for a good household life), Laity happiness, Ditthadhammikattha, Gahapatidhamma (virtues of landholder), noble etiquette and social manners, etc.

The interesting feature of the subject of Morality in the 1950 curriculum was Gihipatipatti (e.g. Gahapatidhamma, Self-management, Wealth management, Causes of disgrace to family, Laity happiness). It was revived after appearing in the curricula during the reigns of King Rama V and King Rama VI, and, apart from its focus on temporal welfare, was elaborated in order to teach one about economic status through the instruction about Gahapatidhamma, Wealth management, Laity happiness. It was, therefore, in accordance with Marshal Po Piboonsongkram's policy to economically build the Nation.

The political situation was rather turbulent during the time, as there were repeated uprisings. In 1948, the Chiefs-of-Staff Rebel, or the Generals' Rebel, was conducted by a group of high-ranking military officials such as Major General Somboon Saranuchit and Major General Net Khemayothin. Mr. Fong Sittitham was accused of rebelling to separate the Northeastern region in order to set up a new state. In 1949, the Wang Luang Rebel was launched by a group of navies, ex-politicians, ex-Free-Thai members and supporters of Pridi Phanomyong. In 1951, the Manhattan Rebel took place.³⁸ These uprisings greatly impacted the stability of the government and the country because the rebels were subdued only after violent fights.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 98-105.

As a result, to ensure further peace in the country, the teachings - e.g. of gratefulness, politeness and obedience - that facilitate ruling were given much emphasis in the curriculum. The threats were not only internal but also external through the rise of communism. Kowit Wongsurawat described Marshal Po Piboonsongkram's policy as follows:

“The nationalist political policy during Marshal Po Piboonsongkram's second term of premiership was absolutely different from his policy in the first term. That is, the nationalist sentiment was raised through animosity, not towards the West (especially USA), but towards communism instead...Therefore, when Thailand decided to ally themselves with the capitalist democracy, it was unavoidable to stir up a hostile sense toward communism. The propaganda was not only in response to the global situation but also contributed to the nationalist sentiment.”³⁹

Marshal Po Piboonsongkram's anti-communist policy led to the Anti-communist Act in 1952.⁴⁰ The teaching of Buddhism in schools had to be readjusted to the situation and it very soon became the State's instrument to ward off communism. Buddhist teachings and monks' roles consequently incorporated the anti-communist element as the Venerable Paisal Wisalo remarked:

“In the past four decades, the Sangha became one with the State in the sense of being subservient, so much so that they can be said to be the State's extension. They provided various services to the State's policies. First, serving the anti-communist policy, monks became the government's mouthpiece. They went so far as to allow a senior monk to teach without reserve that “Killing communists is not

³⁹ Kowit Wongsurawat, Thai Politics and Administration: Multi-dimensions. (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2004), pp. 76-77.

⁴⁰ Thanakit, Biographies of Thai Prime Ministers, p. 115.

immoral.” It came as no surprise that the Sangha did not reprimand him. Meanwhile, a project of Buddhist mission, Dhammacarika, was set up to bring hill-tribe people into the religion instead of letting them join [communism].”⁴¹

Buddhism in this period became the symbol of Thainess employed in the fight against communism. Although this adaptation benefited the country and raised the role and status of Buddhism in the society, it clearly showed that Buddhism was subservient to nationalism, as Phra Pisal Wisalo stated:

“A project of Buddhist mission, Dhammadhuta, targeted people in the rural areas within the scope of communist pervasion. The project Dhammacarika targeted hill-tribe people with the aim of converting them into Buddhism. It was believed that becoming Buddhists would guarantee that they would never become communists, since communists were not ‘Thais’ according to the government’s nationalist definition.”⁴²

When Buddhism became the State’s instrument in fighting against the spread of communism, it was no surprise that the contents of the subject of Buddhist Studies in the curricula during this period were in keeping with this policy. Apart from the addition of teachings to create obedient citizens, other elements were included to promote Buddhishood as the symbol of Thainess. Suwanna Wongwisayawan gave the following comments:

“Moral education for the youth focused on gratefulness, discipline, and loyalty to the Nation, the Religion, and the King. Expectations in terms of morality from the perspective of the Thai State did not change much after the modernization period. More emphasis was given to the role of monks in every region to preach and protect the nation’s interests and

⁴¹ Venerable Paisal Wisalo, Thai Buddhism in the Future: Trend and Crisis Solution, p. 87.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

the King, and also to lead social development and perform strict meditation practice to win people's faith. It can be said that the Ratanattaya - the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha - was elaborated to serve the ideology of the Thai nation."⁴³

It turned out that the elementary curriculum of 1955 did not contain a subject of Morality, but subjects of citizen's duties, health, geography and history, physical education, handicraft, music and singing, etc., all of which were included in the Social Studies course. The teaching proportion of each subject was not indicated. However, the following statement on the curriculum of 1955 appeared in the document of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development:

“It is the most advanced curriculum. That is, it contains clear curricular and course objectives. Contents are integrated and categorized as courses. It has also changed from Subject Curriculum to Broad-fields Curriculum with the aim of contributing to children's physical, intellectual, social and emotional development through the four elements of education, i.e. Moral Education, Buddhist Education, Physical Education, and Craft Education.”⁴⁴

The change of curricular structure that led to its integration in the Social Studies course left it unclear what the exact proportion and contents of the subject of Morality were. However, the twenty-first Objective of the elementary curriculum indicated the promotion of children's of physical, intellectual, social and emotional development in order to prepare them for democratic citizenship. This was in accordance with the National Educational Plan of 1951, which declared that the State will provide its people with education sufficient for their subsistence and for them to

⁴³ Suwanna Wongwisayawan, Buddha-dhamma in Thai State: Social and Epistemological Considerations. (Bangkok: Institute of Thai Studies, Thammasat University, 1986), pp. 68-69.

⁴⁴ Pornpen Pathoomsiri, Evolution of Elementary Curricula. (Elementary Curricular Development Division, Curricular Development Center, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development), (Unpublished Manuscript).

develop into good and healthy citizens equipped with occupational knowledge and democratic spirit.⁴⁵ From the curriculum of 1955 onward, the contents of the Buddhist Studies subject were changed again in response to the State's policy of raising democratic consciousness. This brought on significant consequences as well.

5. Thai School Curricula between 1960 - 1981

The curriculum of 1960 fell under the National Educational Plan of 1960, whose goal was to train students to be moral and cultured, have Hiri-Ottappa and commitment to common good over self-interest.⁴⁶ The goal of the curriculum itself was to provide citizens with education sufficient for subsistence and for development into good citizens equipped with occupational knowledge, skills, and commitment to contribute to the country's growth. Special emphasis was given to moral, physical, Buddhist, and craft education with the goal of developing children into good citizens in the democratic country through training in self-development, human relations, occupational skills, and responsibility for one's duties.⁴⁷ Wittichai Mulasilp criticized the curriculum of 1960 as follows:

“The idea of preserving national identity is significant, but people in general, including the authorities in education [provision], did not give it much consideration until recently. The aim of education was not different. The policy of “reaping the fruits others have sowed” was apparent. For example, the curricular goals indicated in the National Educational Plan of 1960 were all copied from the educational plans in the USA. Moreover, they were written in such formal language that even

⁴⁵ Ministry of Education, Mr. Lieng Chayakan, Ministry of Education and National Educational Plans, p. 44.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁴⁷ Pornpen Pathoomsiri, Evolution of Elementary Curricula. (Elementary Curricular Development Division, Curricular Development Center, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development), (Unpublished Manuscript).

teachers could barely decipher them, let alone laypersons. They were therefore not very practical. The problems of ambiguity and misunderstanding about the goal of education have continued to today.⁴⁸

In the lower elementary level, no subject related to Buddhism could be found in the Social Studies course. Conventions, morality, and culture were broadly described without clear identification with any religious values. In the higher elementary level, the proportion of morality instruction was indicated in the contents of the Social Studies course. The Buddha's biography, Pancasila, Pancadhamma, noble etiquettes and social manners were covered. In localities where the majority had faith other than Buddhism, it was noted in the curriculum that other doctrines could be instructed, on the condition that the syllabus was approved on a semester basis by an inspector of the Ministry of Education. This was the first time that non-Buddhist doctrines could be taught in the subject of Morality. The reason for this was probably to maintain consistency with democratic principles, which were especially focused on in this curriculum.

The proportion of the subject of Buddhist Studies in the elementary curricular contents was therefore only 0.74%, the lowest percentage since 1892. In the lower secondary level, morality was taught as part of the Social Studies course and occupied 3.33% of its contents. It covered the Disciples' biographies, Buddhists' duties, and other doctrines such as Ditthadhammikatha, Apayamukha (ways of squandering wealth), Laity happiness, and Gharavasa-dhamma. In the higher secondary level, morality was also taught in the Social Studies (A) course, and occupied 1.66% of its contents. It covered moral principles, the Buddha's biography, merit-making, etc. Pali and Arabic were offered as elective courses. It was the first revival of Pali after its long absence in Thai school curricula.

A significant event during this period was the celebration of the 25th Buddhist century. The occasion was thought to be so important that the

⁴⁸ Wuttichai Mulasilp, The Beginning of Educational Reform: From King Rama V-VII, p. 175.

government announced three special public holidays. The celebration lasted from May 12 - 18, and a royal decree was announced that Sanam Luang (the public square in front of the Royal Palace) be dedicated to the Sangha for the occasion.⁴⁹ Although this event should have raised awareness and interest in Buddhism, neither proportion nor contents of the subject of Buddhist Studies showed any increase in the curricula.

Social needs were also important factors in determining the reinterpretation of Buddhist doctrines. Thailand was then under the premiership of Field Marshal Sarit Dhanarajata whose policy was to prioritize national economic development. This was evident in the National Economic Plan I, 1961 - 1966. The Buddhist teachings were adapted again accordingly. The Venerable Paisal Wisalo gave the following comments:

“In Thailand where Buddhism used to be the mainstream, nationalism now stood out and took over its influential role, after having developed its own stability under the shade of the religion. The nation and religion seemed to be one. Yet, the nation’s interests, or the government’s interests, were superior to those of Buddhism. If the latter’s teachings were not in keeping with the government’s interest, compromises were made by method of ‘concealment.’ For instance, the teaching of Santosa (satisfaction with what one has) was erased from the Sangha’s teaching following the request of Field Marshal Sarit Dhanarajata who was implementing his National Economic Plan.”⁵⁰

The teachings related to economy since the time of Marshal Po Piboonsongkram – teachings about thrift, diligence, and Laity happiness – were retained, as they were consistent with many of the curricular objectives, e.g. to teach students wise use of wealth, time, and energy; to instruct them

⁴⁹ Chamnong Thongprasert, Maha Chula in the Past. (Bangkok: Maha Chulalongkorn Buddhist University Press, 1989), pp. 128-129.

⁵⁰ Venerable Paisal Wisalo, Thai Buddhism in the Future: Trend and Crisis Solution, p. 115.

about ways to support their family's economic conditions and ways to earn a living; to raise awareness about supporting Thai businesses and products as ways to contribute to the nation's economy. After the coup in 1958, Field Marshal Sarit Dhanarajata announced that only 10% of the country was developed, while the rest were in need of serious interventions, thereby justifying his and the following governments in carrying out their missions of development. It is evident that Field Marshal Sarit Dhanarajata's government considered Thai people's equal prosperity to be its main mission.⁵¹

The curriculum of 1975 for higher secondary school level contained eight courses that have Buddhism as part of the subject matter, i.e. Social Studies 3 (S 503), Social Studies 4 (S 504), Global Religions (S 031 and S 041), and Buddhism in Thailand (S 042). Buddhism occupied on average 10% of the contents, and covered topics such as the Buddha's biography, Mangala (blessings) in Buddhism, knowledge about global religions, and Buddhism in Thailand, which includes religious rites and Thai manners. The course objectives were for students to appreciate the value of religion, to apply the teachings for both personal and common good, and to perform religious rites with consideration for one's economic status, and with an aim to preserve culture. According to the curricular objectives, students were to become decent and able citizens who are aware of their rights and duties, are capable of finding methods of peaceful conflict resolutions and justice building in the democratic society, and value and sustain the stability of the Nation, the Religion, the King, and Thai culture.

The curriculum and the subject of Buddhist Studies included topics of personal and social peace because of, firstly, the bloodshed event of October 14, 1973, which greatly impacted the nation's stability; and secondly, the rising democratic atmosphere after the fall of the dictatorship. Kowit Wongsurawat gave the following remarks:

⁵¹ Kowit Wongsurawat, Thai Politics and Administration: Multi-dimensions, p. 98.

“The October 14 incident led to the fall of military dictatorship after its fifteen-year domination over Thailand, including the end of Thanom-Prapas-Narong group of power. This did not only allow other groups to accumulate power, but also was a key to democracy. Moreover, after this incident, the roles of university students and lecturers – ‘the intellectuals’ – increased while the military and the police suffered a deep decline in credibility.”⁵²

In their anti-government movement, university students played a significant role in campaigning for democracy. The government inevitably was made aware of the youth’s behavior, values, and attitudes. As the students’ roles became more visible, the government’s authority became increasingly threatened, and it therefore had to take caution to prevent possible future resistance. The subject of Buddhist Studies, especially in the higher secondary level of the 1975 curriculum, focused on social peace and democracy to encourage students who were about to enter universities to maintain social peace, which is the role desired by the government. The curriculum of 1978 expressed the national goal of providing education to all citizens to benefit their life and develop society. The curricular objective was for students to become good persons with quality, knowledge, abilities, peace in life, and good citizens of society.⁵³ The curriculum was under the National Educational Plan of 1977, which aimed to develop citizens’ quality so that they could support themselves and contribute to the growth of society. The plan emphasized Thai social safety, stability and well-being, and also specific purposes such as understanding in and enthusiasm for participation in the democratic regime with the King as the head of the State, and of commitment to the Nation, the Religion, and the King.⁵⁴ These were in

⁵² Ibid., p. 115.

⁵³ Pornpen Pathoomsiri, *Evolution of Elementary Curricula*. (Elementary Curricular Development Division, Curricular Development Center, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development), (Unpublished Manuscript).

⁵⁴ Ministry of Education, *Mr. Lieng Chayakan, Ministry of Education and National Educational Plans*, p. 55.

accordance with the Fourth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977 - 1981) which included a section related specifically to educational development, improvement of curricula and learning process in response to the national educational policy under the democratic regime with the King as the head of the State, and with commitment to the Nation, the Religion and the King.⁵⁵

In the curriculum of 1978, the elementary level contained 25% of studies of Buddhism, which made up 2.66% of the contents in Life-experience Development course and 22.33% in Character Development course. The latter contained elements of morality, but it was not specified from which religion they were derived. Most, however, seemed to belong to Buddhism, such as Metta (loving-kindness), Karuna (compassion), Mudita (sympathetic joy), Upekkha (equanimity), gratefulness, meditation method, community life, cultured character, loyalty to the Nation, the Religion, and the King. The Life-experience Development course covered the Buddha's biography, Pancasila, Pancadhamma, Iddhipada (path of accomplishment), the holy days, Buddhamamaka (Buddhist) vow, Buddhabhasita (the Buddha's sayings), and religious rites. Apart from the Character Development course that contained the subject of Morality without any specific reference to a particular religion, Buddhist studies comprised 2.66% in the curriculum.

Some tension seems to exist between the spirit of nationalism and democracy, and the content of the subject of Buddhist Studies seems to reflect this. At the elementary level, for instance, it was commonly taught that "Buddhism is Thailand's national religion." At the same time, however, it is affirmed that "since every religion teaches everyone to do good deeds to live happily, one has the liberty to put one's faith in any religion," and also "The king sponsors every religion." Moreover, it was included in the curricular objectives that students should be able to explain why Thais accepted Buddhism as their national religion, and also be able to describe

⁵⁵ Office of National Economic and Social Development Commission, Office of Prime Minister, The 4th National Economic and Social Plan 1977 - 1981. (Bangkok: Reungsaeng Printing, 1977), p. 270.

Buddhist doctrines, components of Buddhism, religious rites, etc. These objectives were extended to cover all religions. Students should, for example, be able to give brief descriptions about the merits and contributions of every religion. This extension seems to be the result of the curricular focus on democratic principles.

Since the curriculum's goal was to develop students into good citizens in a democratic system with the King as the head of the State, it comprised educational principles for the sake of building national solidarity with peace as a shared goal, and of allowing local communities partial curricular management to fit their needs. The democratic principles at the heart of this curriculum affected the objectives and percentage of religious study. That is, in the contents of the subject of Morality, no clear reference was made to any religion. Local communities were permitted to teach the majority's religion. Involved parties then requested that the contents and percentage of Buddhist Studies be clearly indicated, which prompted the Ministry of Education to give additional descriptions on the subject of Buddhist Studies in the curriculum of 1978 (Revised in 1990). This will be discussed in the next section.

The percentage of the subject of Buddhist Studies in the lower secondary level was 1.19. It was offered as part of the Social Studies course (S 101) and Our-Country course (S 102), both exclusively offered to students of the seventh Grade. The contents covered the history of Buddhism, Dhamma, rites and ways of life based on Buddhist and other religious teachings. Meanwhile, no elective course in the Social Studies category was related to Buddhism. Although there were religious courses in the curriculum (such as Religious Prescriptions, Religious History, Morality), they were mostly about Islam. For instance, in the course Religious Prescriptions, Islamic practices were taught such as Namaz, fasting, rules of Zakat, and Fitrah. The Religious History included Tawrat, Muhammad's

biography, etc.⁵⁶ The Ministry of Education added five elective courses in the Social Studies category, i.e. Oneness, Qur'an, Religious Prescriptions, Religious History and Morality.⁵⁷ There was no elective course on Buddhism. Apart from the list of elective courses in the Social Studies category, Pali disappeared from the list of elective courses in the Foreign Languages category despite its presence in the previous curricula. It may be due to the fact that foreign languages such as Pali are closely tied to courses in other categories. Since Pali is closely related to Buddhism, when the latter was excluded from the list of electives, so was the former. Meanwhile, a course on the Arabic language was still present because courses on Islamic Studies not only remained, but increased, in the curriculum.

The objectives of the lower secondary curriculum of 1978 included, for instance, to teach students to know their rights and duties; to know how to work as a team; to maintain unity and to sacrifice for the common good; to solve conflicts through peaceful, rational and principled means; to be proud of being Thai, and to be loyal to the Nation, the Religion and the King; to know about and have faith in democracy with the King as the head of the State; to participate in the maintenance of national safety and security; and to promote good understanding among humanity and coexist peacefully. It can be seen that the inculcation of loyalty to the Nation, the Religion, and the King, remained. The new objective about peaceful conflict resolution was introduced after the unrests of October 14, 1973 and October 6, 1976. In these incidents, university students were considered as the cause of social uprising and violence, and also as wanting to destroy the Nation, the Religion, and the King. Thus, the addition is by no means a surprise. Kowit Wongsurawat gave the following comments:

“On October 6, 1976, university students and people gathered at Sanam Luang. A drama was played by Thammasat University's Thai Dance and Drama Club to re-enact the

⁵⁶ Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, Ministry of Education, Lower Secondary Curriculum, 1978. (Bangkok:Printing House of the Teachers' Council (Ladprao), 1982), pp. 81-83.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 228-229.

incident in which Electricity Authorities employees had been hanged. The Armored Cavalry's Radio Station broadcasted a news report that a puppet of Prince Vajiralongkorn was used in the drama. On the next day, two newspapers, *Dao Siam* and the *Bangkok Post*, published pictures of the drama in which the university students imitated the hanging. Their headlines suggested that these students committed 'lèse-majesté' Meanwhile, the Seri Radio Club broadcasted attacks on the students. It was claimed that their requests to expel the monk Thanom and to bring justice to the case of the Electricity Authorities employees were just pretexts to stage the uprising, and that their true goal was to destroy the Nation, the Religion, and the King. The radio club also demanded the government to swiftly put an end to the gathering in order to prevent bloodshed."⁵⁸

The instruction of peace-building through democratic means was not only in keeping with the then National Economic and Social Plan, but also with the government's policy. General Kriengsak Chamanan, the Prime Minister, invited Professor Kasem Suwanakul, the President of Chulalongkorn University, to be the Minister of University Affairs to reduce the tension between the higher education institutions and the government. University lecturers and students then had difficult relationship with the previous government, especially due to the bloodshed of October 6, 1976. Moreover, to restore harmony in the country, an amnesty was granted to everyone involved in the gathering at Thammasat University during October 4-6, 1976.⁵⁹ The higher secondary curriculum of 1981 shared some objectives with that of 1978, e.g. to teach students to respect the rights and liberty of others; to know one's own and others' duties; to exercise one's rights constructively on the basis of laws, morality, and religion; to be aware of the shared Thainess; to sacrifice for the common good; to love the Nation and democracy; to secure the Nation, the Religion, and the King

⁵⁸ Kowit Wongsurawat, *Thai Politics and Administration: Multi-dimensions*, p. 119.

⁵⁹ Thanakit, *Biographies of Thai Prime Ministers*, p. 303.

through clever means; to understand political, economic, social conditions and problems of the country and the world; to have a sense of belonging to humanity; to be able to arrive at peaceful and rational means of conflict resolution. The objective of peaceful conflict resolution remained since 1978. Those students who studied in the lower elementary level under the curriculum of 1978 were the same as those who studied in the higher secondary level under the curriculum of 1981. The attitude building was therefore continuous.

The percentage of the subject of Buddhist Studies was 6.65% and included in S 402-Social Studies course and S 606-Social Studies course, both of which were compulsory for Grades 10 and 12 students respectively. Elective courses included History of Thai Society and Culture (S 0210), Buddhism in Thailand (S 041), and Buddha Images and Buddhist Arts in Thailand (S 042). Each course had a different objective. S 402 was supposed to teach students to learn to make their mind calm, firm, swift and ready to study and work effectively. S 606 was supposed to create good understanding among followers of different faiths; S 0210 to make students aware of the unity of Thainess through the Nation, the Religion, and the King, and that Thainess was molded by common cultures, traditions, customs, and arts. S 041 was supposed to provide knowledge and understanding about the origin of Buddhism in Thailand and about the King's roles with regard to Buddhism; and S 042 about histories and meanings of important Buddha images in Thailand.

This curriculum also retained some objectives from the previous curricula, e.g. peaceful conflict resolution; good understanding among followers of different faiths; awareness in the significance of the Nation, the Religion, and the King. In addition, the inculcation of attitudes that facilitated the building of Thai nationality was also clearly indicated. Courses related to Thainess were thus included in this curriculum. Courses about Buddhism – Buddhism in Thailand, History of Thai Society and Culture, Buddha Images and Buddhist Arts in Thailand – were now linked to Thainess.

One of the reasons for the emphasis on Thainess is probably related to the 200th anniversary of Ratanakosin, celebrated between April 4-21, 1982.⁶⁰ The educational curriculum was adjusted so that it takes into account the long history of the Thai nationality. The common feature of curricular objectives and contents was the linking of the subject of Buddhist Studies to Thai society, Thainess, or, to be more precise, the Thai State. They were related in such a way that the subject was to build good people, who were no different from the good citizens from the State's perspective, as Suwanna Wongwaisayawan commented:

“Consideration of the Venerable Vajirananavarorasa’s recommendations on the relationship between Buddha-dhamma and the Thai State since the reign of King Rama V – ones which continued to develop in the form of the subject of Morality in the curricula from 1905 - 1978 and 1981 – shows that the learning of morality in the Thai State is basically the learning of Buddhism, which covered the Buddha’s biography, auspicious virtues, religious rites, and Buddhist holy days. It can be said that consideration of the moral contents mainly explained from the State’s perspective indicates that the development of a “good person” is not separable from that of a “good citizen”...It is remarkable that the explanation of the Buddha-dhamma as the nation’s morality was highly continuous.”⁶¹

The subject of Buddhist Studies in the curriculum, consequently, focused on democratic principles, e.g. respect for others’ rights and liberty; awareness of one’s own and others’ duties; constructive exercises of rights on the basis of laws, morality and religion; common awareness of Thainess; sacrifice for the common good; love for the Nation and democracy. The objectives seemed to be influenced by many political factors. That is,

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 315.

⁶¹ Suwanna Wongwaisayawan, Buddha-dhamma in Thai State: Social and Epistemological Considerations, p. 51.

during General Prem Tinasulanon's premiership, one of the important accomplishments was the suppression of the communist terrorists through the politics-led-military policy known as Decree 66/2523, which allowed communist collaborators to submit themselves, and consequently weakened and terminated the Communist Party.⁶² However, on April 1, 1981, a group of military personnel led by General San Chitarapatima, together with a group of young military officers known as "Young Turks" (e.g., Colonel Manoon Roopkachon, Colonel Prachak Swangchit and Colonel Panlop Pinmanee) staged a rebel by seizing television stations, main roads, and important military headquarters. However, they failed.⁶³ Although communism and the rebel were not related, both were threats to democracy. They seem to have prompted the government to employ educational curricula and the subject of Buddhist Studies to inculcate faith in democracy. During this time, the government tried to improve the political system to make it as democratic as possible. After the incident of October 6, 1976, the governments between 1976 - 1988 were called "half-democratic" since the military was still in control in spite of the Constitution, political parties, and elections.⁶⁴ Democratization was therefore one of the leading policies that General Prem Tinasulanon prioritized during his premiership. This was evident in his farewell statement on August 5, 1988:

"Thank you, colleagues in every Cabinet that used to work with me. Thank you, political parties that have invited me to continue my terms as Prime Minister. I informed the leaders of these parties that it has been sufficient for me because I have worked for a considerable time and have had an opportunity to sustain democracy, develop politics in the democratic regime, so that it is lasting and uninterrupted. During my terms, I also had opportunities to understand politics, to get to know political parties and politicians, whether they worked with me or not. I have known them well enough to

⁶² Thanakit, Biographies of Thai Prime Ministers, p. 313.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.p. 313-314.

⁶⁴ Kowit Wongsurawat, Thai Politics and Administration: Multi-dimensions, p. 122.

say that the experience was not easy to come by. I therefore think it is time, and ask you to take care and develop the politics in our democratic regime so that it is progressive and secured.”⁶⁵

The government implemented its democratic policy through the curricula for all students in the country. By doing so, their ideas, ideology, and policies were most effectively imparted to the people and put to practice. Buddhist Studies was one of many subjects that could respond to the government’s goals, and this method has always proven to be successful.

6. Thai School Curricula between 1990 - 2001

The curriculum of 1990 was a revision of the 1978 one, and was aptly called “Curriculum of 1978 (Revised in 1990).” For the sake of clarity, it is here referred to as the curriculum of 1990. Its principles were the same as those in the curriculum of 1978, e.g. to provide education to aid in building unity in the nation under the shared main goals, and also to allow local communities to develop parts of the curriculum to fit their conditions and needs. The curricular objective for the elementary level was to develop students so that they could advance their quality of life, and consequently become prepared to contribute to society according to their roles and duties as good citizens under the democratic regime with the King as the head of the State.

The proportion of the subject of Buddhist Studies in the elementary level was 5.1%. The subject was incorporated in two courses – Life-experience Development and Character Development. It occupied 11.42% in the lower secondary level and was taught in the six courses on Buddhism, i.e. S 018 and S 0113. The subject occupied 12.12% of the contents in the higher secondary level and was a part of six courses on Buddhism, i.e. S 048 and S 0413. For the first time, these courses – formerly known under the title of “Dhammacari,” “Dhammacariya,” “Cariya,” “Citizens’ Duties,” “Morality,” and “Social Studies” – became known with a new official title of “Buddhism”. In the previous curricula, the percentage of the subject of

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 127.

Buddhist Studies was in decline until the year 1990. Upon receiving complaints from many parties, the Ministry of Education provided a clarification about the contents and percentage of the subject, and issued an additional handbook exclusively for the Buddhist Studies curriculum. According to the Ministry, when the percentage of instruction on Buddhism increased, schools faced the following difficulties:

“In the lower secondary curriculum of 1978 and the higher secondary curriculum of 1981, problems were found in the required Social Studies courses because subjects were not as clearly identified as in the previous curricula. An attempt has been made to integrate them. In the process, the subject of Morality disappeared from the curricula, yet its contents still exist and are integrated into both required and elective courses. Requests, complaints, and criticisms were heard from organizations and individuals that the subject of Buddhism or Buddhist Studies was not given proper consideration in the curricular design. The Ministry of Education, as a result, announces an addition of contents in the Social Studies courses in the secondary curricula. It will be applied in 1983 for the lower secondary level, and in 1984 in the category of elective courses for the higher secondary level.”⁶⁶

The Ministry of Education’s clarification about the integration accounted for the disappearance of the subject of Buddhist Studies, especially from the elementary curricula from 1960 to 1978. However, it did not provide clarifications about subjects concerning other religions. The elective courses in the Islamic Studies category, for instance, were not integrated and did not disappear from the curriculum. Instead, such courses increased in number, and the details of their contents were clearly indicated.

⁶⁶ Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, Ministry of Education, Handbook for Buddhist Subject Curriculum in the Lower Secondary Curriculum of 1978 (Revised in 1990). (Bangkok: Printing House of the Teachers’ Council (Ladprao), 2536), p. 2.

It was remarked by many that this was quite different from the case of Buddhist Studies. The Venerable Payutto commented on the integration of religious subjects as follows.

“To combine religious principles, we have the concept of integration in mind. When it is applied, what we get is a new religion not based on real experience. So, when integration is intended to combine religious principles, it turns out that we destroy the religion’s integrity. Certainly, the religion loses its integrity. And, when we say we are universalizing morality, it instead becomes a doctrine, a dogma newly molded. When it is taught to children, it becomes indoctrination leading to dogmatism. So, even though the aim is to flee from indoctrination, it becomes indoctrination itself.”⁶⁷

There is yet another reason why the Ministry of Education did not give clear identification of the subject of Buddhist Studies in the curricula until 1978, which led to the decline in the percentage of Buddhism instruction, and why some of their courses, e.g. Character Development, focused on universal morality instead. In keeping with Thailand’s democratic spirit, the Ministry included moral elements of every religion in the curricula, and provided the following explanation:

“In 1902, the Ministry of Religious Affairs added the subject of ‘Cariya’ for the first time in the curricula for every level, and gave it a high priority with the aim of training children’s character. The priority remained until 1932 when the country became democratic after the revolution. People were then given more rights and liberty, and curricula were revised. The subject of Cariya was also revised and expanded into Citizens’ Duties and Morality. In response to the democratic principles, the Morality subject contained ethical elements

⁶⁷ Venerable Payutto, *Educational Reform: Where will Buddhism be?* (Bangkok: Thammasarn, 2001), pp. 67-68.

common to every religion. However, in later curricular revisions, the contents of the subject were adapted because the youth were found to have increasing moral and ethical problems.”⁶⁸

It can be seen that in accounting for the universalization of morality among different religions, a justification related to democratic principles was raised, which was in accordance with objectives in the previous curricula that focused on unity through education. The Ministry realized that if special emphasis was given to a particular religion, democracy would be undermined and social peace might be obstructed, possibly leading to disunity in the country. On this issue, the Venerable Payutto stated the following:

“The important point is that, in the Thai background, there is no issue of religious liberty, but harmony among religions. Therefore, Thais do not have a suspicious attitude. Neither are they always alert to secure their rights and protect themselves [in this regard]. When Buddhism is mentioned, just do so straightforwardly. Neither aggrandizement nor discrimination is implied. As for those Thais clinging to the Western idea of negative liberty, when they hear the mention of Buddhism and not other religions, they become suspicious or deem it is discriminatorily. They are stuck with that and are blinded to the problems to solve on a factual basis.”⁶⁹

According to the Ministry of Education, more consideration to the subject of Morality was given due to the youth’s problem, and more courses on religions were included. Examples included Jesus’ Teaching, Christian Kingdom of God, Qur’an, and Commandments, elements of which were

⁶⁸ Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, Ministry of Education, Handbook for Buddhist Subject Curriculum in the Lower Secondary Curriculum of 1978 (Revised in 1990), pp. 1-2.

⁶⁹ Venerable Payutto, Setting up Ministry of Buddhism – What are the true reasons? (Bangkok: Buddha-dhamma Foundation, 2002), p. 26.

present since the curriculum of 1960. It can be said that the curriculum of 1990 was much more open to religious courses. However, the percentage of the instruction of Buddhist Studies decreased in the elementary level, which led to complaints from many parties as described above. When the contents about other religions were added, contents about Buddhism were consequently decreased, so that the curricular structures were not disturbed, as indicated in the explanation from the Ministry of Education:

“Even though the announcement to add more Buddhist contents was based on many parties’ good will, the supervision, follow-up, and evaluation of its application showed that problems were found both in practice and instruction. That is, schools had to find extra hours, because the contents were increased, but not the study hours. Most teachers lacked adequate understanding of Buddhist doctrines. Schools lacked teachers with proper knowledge in Buddhism. The instructions just replicated the textbooks. Rote learning was adopted rather than analytical and applicative methods. Moreover, neither teachers nor people in the society were good models for students both in behavioral and practical terms.”⁷⁰

Despite the explanation, the Ministry of Education’s mistakes can be detected. Why did the Ministry not solve the problems in its follow-up and evaluation of the curricular application? For example, teachers could have been trained to have better knowledge and behavior. It was possible that the main problem was not in the curriculum itself but in the quality of teachers. Ineffective instruction might be due to ineffective teachers, not the inappropriate curricula. If the solution had been implemented without any improvements, the Ministry may have had to reconsider their own system.

⁷⁰ Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, Ministry of Education, Handbook for Buddhist Subject Curriculum in the Lower Secondary Curriculum of 1978 (Revised in 1990), pp. 1-2.

The contents of the subject of Buddhist Studies in the elementary level consisted of nine parts, i.e. 1) the history and significance of Buddhism; 2) biographies of both male and female disciples of the Buddha, including the model Buddhists; 3) monks and appropriate conduct towards them; 4) Buddhists' duties; 5) Buddhist holy days; 6) Buddhist teachings; 7) Buddhist proverbs; 8) mental exercise and wisdom cultivation; 9) religious rites. The objectives were for students to develop faith in Buddhism and awareness of its significance; to know, understand, and appreciate the virtue of Ratanattaya; to have knowledge and understanding about Buddhism and its teachings; to develop thinking skills and behave in accordance with Buddhist teachings; and to know and perform the Buddhists' duties.

The contents of the subject of Buddhist Studies in the lower secondary level consisted of eight parts. They included 1) the history and significance of Buddhism; 2) biographies of both male and female disciples of the Buddha, including model Buddhists; 3) Buddhist teachings; 4) monks and appropriate conduct towards them; 5) Tipitaka, Buddhist proverbs, Pali and Buddhist terms; 6) Buddhists' duties; 7) mental exercise and wisdom cultivation; and 8) Buddhists' manners, religious rites, and Buddhist holy days. The objectives were for students to develop faith in Buddhism and awareness of its significance; to know, understand, and appreciate the virtue of Ratanattaya; to know and understand the Buddha's biography and Buddhist teachings; to develop thinking skills, behave in accordance with Buddhist teachings, choose and apply the appropriate teachings to develop oneself and society; to be good Buddhists and perform Buddhists' duties; and to know, understand, and perform in religious rites properly.

In the higher secondary level, the contents of the subject of Buddhist Studies included all eight parts of the lower secondary curriculum, but prioritized differently. They were 1) the history and significance of Buddhism; 2) biographies of both male and female disciples of the Buddha, including model Buddhists; 3) Buddhist teachings for life and society; 4) monks and appropriate conduct towards them; 5) Buddhists' duties; 6) Tipitaka, Buddhist proverbs, Pali and Buddhist terms; 7) mental exercise and wisdom cultivation; and 8) Buddhists' manners, religious rites, and Buddhist

holy days. The objectives were for students to develop faith, appreciation, and consciousness of Buddhism's significance and Ratanattayya's virtue; to know, understand, and be able to analyze Buddhism and its teachings appropriately; to take into account different ideas and judge them with Buddhist rational principles; to develop thinking skills, behave in accordance with Buddhist teachings, and apply the teachings to develop oneself and society; and to be good Buddhists and perform Buddhists' duties.

The above information shows that the categorization of contents in the curricula was standardized. That is, in the elementary level, the contents were categorized into nine parts. Students in every elementary grade had to study these parts with the contents and details proper to their level. Similarly, in the lower and higher secondary levels, the contents were categorized into eight parts, and the difficulty adjusted to suit each grade. Although the categorization into either nine or eight parts is considered to be comprehensive, it gave rise to problems. Firstly, since the contents overlapped among categories, they could not be easily arranged, and sometimes contents and objectives could recur. For instance, when studying about Buddhist holy days, the variation or depth of content do not extend beyond Dhammassavana Day, Magha Puja Day, Visakha Puja day, and Asalha Puja Day, and were repeated in the teachings for every grade. Similarly, in the mental exercise and wisdom cultivation part, elementary students studied the rising-falling method of meditation, while lower secondary students studied breath-counting, and higher secondary students studied Anussati (the Ten Reflections). Although the methods differed from one level to another, the doctrines related to them are one and the same.

Secondly, there was a problem in doctrinal arrangements. Some doctrines were broken down and their components were taught to different grades. Examples of them were Disa (the Six Directions), Bhrama Vihara (the Four Divine States of Mind), and Mangala (the Thirty-eight Blessings). Even Ariyasacca, the heart of Buddhism, was parceled out for instruction in different grades as the teachers saw fit. Therefore, only slices of the Buddhist doctrines were taught to each grade. The Ministry of Education gave the following explanation:

“By breaking down of the Buddhist teachings covered in the Character Development category, it can be seen that each grade is taught only some parts, and not all of the doctrines. However, all will eventually be taught when students reach higher grades. Consideration is given to difficulty of contents relative to children’s development. For example, of the Disa, only four items (Respect for Parents, Respect for Teachers, Respect for Seniors, Love for and Unity among Siblings) are taught in the Second Grade. One more, i.e. Love for and Unity among Friends, is taught in the Fourth Grade. When students reach the Sixth Grade, they are taught every aspect of the issue.”⁷¹

Although the method of breaking down the contents of Buddhism was useful in that it allowed adjustment to fit students, it lacked continuity and completeness because some doctrines in the curricula were not entirely taught. For instance, of Attha (Welfare), only one item, i.e. Ditthadhammikatta, was taught, and the other two were left out. The Venerable Payutto gave the following comments:

“The Buddha never taught only Metta. This was the reason why he taught the entire set for us to practice. If we break them down, it will be dangerous. In our society, even in education, people like to teach only some items. Metta is singled out from its set. So is Karuna. Finally, it is not known what set they belong to. The reason why the Buddha taught in sets is because all items in the sets form the whole, and all must be practiced to perfection. If not, it can lead to danger. Metta and Karuna, if not practiced together with the rest of the items in their set, can be harmful.”⁷²

⁷¹ Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, Ministry of Education, Handbook for Buddhist Subject Curriculum in the Elementary Curriculum of 1978 (Revised in 1990). (Bangkok: Printing House of the Teachers’ Council (Ladprao), 2536), Preface.

⁷² Venerable Payutto, Pilgrimage and Dhamma Writings. (Bangkok: Sahathammik, 2543), p. 101.

Meanwhile, Buddhism was explained in relation to the democratic perspective as before. For instance, in the S 048-Buddhism course, it was stated that:

“Emphasis is given to Indian society in the Buddha’s time to show that ruling based on the caste system led to social injustice, and did not allow human potentials to flourish. It was a factor that gave rise to Buddhism at that time, and is the foundation of democracy today.”⁷³

The linking of Buddhism in the Buddha’s time to Thailand’s democracy showed that the subject of Buddhist Studies was adjusted in response to the government system. One of the reasons the curriculum of 1990 still focused on democracy was that the democratic regime remained unstable. After Thailand experienced “full-democracy” for the first time during General Chatchai Choonhawan’s premiership, Thai politics became unstable again when a coup was launched by the National Peace Keeping Council (NPKC).⁷⁴ Moreover, in the Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1987 - 1991), it was indicated in the section of Moral and Cultural Development Plan that development of democratic consciousness should be conducted through educational curricula. In the plan, measures were given such as training and integration of moral development and values. The training was meant to be offered in both formal and non-formal educational curricula, and was also offered to educational administrators to foster discipline, respect for laws, and observance of duties towards the Nation, the Religion, and the King.⁷⁵ The use of education curricula to mold good citizenship as defined by the governments can be observed continuously, and was clearly indicated in

⁷³ Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, Ministry of Education, Handbook for Buddhist Subject Curriculum in the Higher Secondary Curriculum of 1978 (Revised in 1990). (Bangkok: Printing House of the Teachers’ Council (Ladprao), 2541), p. 12.

⁷⁴ Kowitz Wongsurawat, Thai Politics and Administration: Multi-dimensions, p. 122.

⁷⁵ Office of National Economic and Social Development Commission, Office of Prime Ministry, The 6th National Economic and Social Plan 1987 - 1991. (Bangkok: United Production, 1987), pp. 91-93.

the above National Economic and Social Development Plan. The subject of Buddhist Studies was highly flexible and could be adjusted to meet every government's policies, and this will continue to be the case.

The curriculum of 2001 is used in the present time. In its overall structure, no course detail is specified, which should be due to the principle of student-centered life-long learning and self-development to allow students to flourish fully and naturally according to their potentials. The curriculum is flexible in terms of contents, time, and learning arrangements. It allows every form of educational provision to meet every target group, and supports credit transfer and accumulation system. Under this principle, no specification is given to courses in different categories. For instance, the proportion of time that should be allocated to each course category is not specified. It is left for each school to decide as they see fit which course categories should be taught to which grade and to what extent. However, the high flexibility can lead to confusion in practice. When each school is relatively at liberty in their educational provision, different standards both in qualitative and quantitative terms are almost unavoidable.

Objectives of this curriculum are for students to realize their self-worth, have self-discipline, observe the teaching of Buddhism or the religion of their faith, uphold morality, virtues, and desirable social values. According to the Learning Standard S 1.1, students are to understand the history, significance, and teaching of Buddhism or the religion of their faith, and put them into practice as a basis for living together. According to the Learning Standard S 1.2, students are to adhere to morality, do good deeds, uphold desirable social values, and have faith in Buddhism or their religion of choice. According to the Learning Standard S 1.3, students are to follow the teachings and rites of Buddhism or of the religion of their faith as well as desirable social values, and apply them in order to self-develop and contribute to the good of society, environment, and peaceful coexistence. It is noted that, according to these learning standards, the subject of Buddhism is not required. It is simply mentioned. That other religions are not specifically mentioned was meant to show the curriculum's flexibility. This, however, gave rise to complaints from involved parties, especially

from Buddhist groups, who gathered on April 10, 2001 and announced their demand to the government.⁷⁶

To sum up, five thousand Buddhists from thirty-four organizations assembled and made five requests. One of them demanded that Buddhism be contained in the core curriculum for basic education, and taught with the same standard all over the country. Moreover, it was also requested that Buddhism be a required course for every Buddhist, and have credits and proportion of time no less than those specified in the present curriculum. Due to education reform, the Ministry of University Affairs and the National Educational Commission were merged into the Ministry of Education. This impacted the structure of Buddhist affairs, e.g. the Sangha's administrative system, management of religious monuments, and the significance of the subject of Buddhist Studies in the school. Moreover, participation of representatives from other religions in the administration of Buddhist affairs left some monks and Buddhists uncomfortable. The Sangha and the Buddhist organizations consequently demanded that the Office of Education Reform include the subject of Buddhist Studies in curricula of all levels, and withdraw representatives from other religions from the Commission on Religion and Culture, or set up an independent organization for Buddhist affairs.⁷⁷

On April 11, 2001, a newspaper reported that Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra accepted the requests from these organizations and called for a brainstorming meeting to solve the problems.⁷⁸ It was also reported that the Prime Minister closely observed the structural problem of the new ministry. Insisting he was one-thousand per cent Buddhist, the Prime Minister promised to give urgent consideration to the requests and to solve the problems in the way the majority preferred. At the same time, Mr. Kasem Wattanachai, the Minister of Education, stated that teaching Buddhism in schools and declaring Buddhism as the national religion were not a problem because

⁷⁶ Thairath (2001, April 10):1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷⁸ Thairath (2001, April 11):1.

they were in keeping with the government's policies. However, he said that good understanding with other religions should be fostered because good Buddhists follow the Buddhist teachings, do not discriminate against other religions, and can live peacefully with people of different faiths.⁷⁹ On 23 January 23, 2002, the Ministry of Education appointed a commission to set up detailed contents of the subject of Buddhist Studies for the curricula of the twelve-year basic education. The commission had sixty-three members, such as the Venerable Payutto, Dr. Sirikorn Maneerin, Professor Chamnong Thongprasert, with the Venerable Prayoon and the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education as the advisor.⁸⁰ When the Buddhist Studies core curriculum was completed, the Venerable Prayoon gave the following explanation:

“A remark about the basic education curriculum of 2001 is that this curriculum mentions contents and learning standards in general only, and does not provide details of the course categories. That is because the basic education curriculum of 2001 allows each school to work on the details by themselves. In this curriculum, Buddhism instruction is described in ten lines only. Buddhists are concerned. Buddhism is a sensitive matter. If each school is allowed to design their own course contents, there is a fear that this may lead to schisms. The disunity in the religion will certainly impact the harmony of people in the country. Therefore, it is requested that a core curriculum be set up for the Buddhist Studies course categories for every school to commonly use.”⁸¹

Thus, the curriculum that makes no specific mention of any religion was revised so that the phrase, “Buddhism or the religion of their faith,” was included. The reason no religion was specifically mentioned was to

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 19.

⁸⁰ Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, Ministry of Education, Provision of Buddhist Contents. (Bangkok: Printing House of the Teachers' Council (Ladprao), 2002), p. e.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. c.

allow practical flexibility. As has been shown, such practical flexibility unfortunately led to practical confusion. Although “Buddhism” was later added in the curriculum, it does not necessarily have to be taught to non-Buddhist students in largely non-Buddhist communities. A problem that follows is how to handle students in communities with mixed faiths. To solve this, the Director-General of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development issued a document No. MOE 0607/4389 with the following details.

“In the provision of Strand 1: Religion, Morality, Ethics in the part related to Buddhism, the school should arrange for Buddhist students to study [Buddhism] 2 hours or 2 periods per week (50-minute period), or as the school sees fit. A focus should be on teaching them to be good persons. Hours should be allocated to other courses in the Social Studies categories.”⁸²

The Venerable Prayoon offers the following criticism: “The Director-General’s document is an explanation, not an order. Thus, we cannot be certain that schools will conform. We need to follow up on this issue.”⁸³ It may be said that the ambiguity in the curriculum is caused by the practitioners or the policy makers, that is, the Ministry of Education itself. Meanwhile, protests were heard from people who took part in setting up the Social Studies Strand. For instance, Mr. Vinai Sama-oon, who was responsible for drafting the contents for Islamic Studies, sent a letter dated February 1, 2003 to Mr. Praparpong Senarit, the then Director-General of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development. In the letter was a collection of criticisms from Muslim organizations regarding the contents for Buddhist Studies that contained the statement, “Buddhism is the national religion.” The conclusion was that the statement contradicts the Constitution and historical facts.

⁸² Ibid., p. j.

⁸³ Ibid., p. F.

“The phrase ‘national religion’ is not present in the Constitution. Curricular contents should be in keeping with the Constitution. This is because the contents are part of the curriculum and the latter is approved by the authority of Education Act, which is in turn approved by the authority of the Constitution. Since the Constitution does not identify a national religion, its addition in the contents should therefore be deemed contradictory with the Constitution...The term, ‘national,’ according to historical and present facts, cannot be confined to a particular religion since the Thai people have many faiths, and Thailand now officially recognizes five religions, i.e. Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, and Brahmanic Hinduism. They are all ‘national.’ The Constitution does not require faith in any particular religion, so there is no room to interpret that a particular religion is the national religion. Faith is an individual’s right as specified in Section 38 of the Constitution, no matter in what religion.”⁸⁴

Whether or not Buddhism is the national religion was a major concern of the commission that was responsible for setting up the detailed contents of the Buddhist Studies subject. The following explanation was therefore given in the Buddhist Studies subject curriculum:

“Historically, the background of Thai nationals was intertwined with Buddhism. Since the time before Thais had a clear history, they have continuously had faith in Buddhism. Therefore, it can be asserted that the history of Thailand is the history of the nationals with faith in Buddhism...That makes it surely right that Buddhism is the national religion. When Thais around the country listened to His Majesty the King’s speech given to Pope John Paul II, the head of Roman Catholics, who came to have an audience with him at the Chakri Maha

⁸⁴ Vinai Sama-oon, Letter dated 1 February 2003 (to the Director-General, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development. Mr. Praparpong Senarit)

Prasat Throne Hall on May 10, 1984, they heard this particular part of his statements: ‘Thais are good religion-followers. Most of them have faith in Buddhism, the national religion.’⁸⁵

This reflects the fact that the curricular flexibility often led to ambiguity and confusion both in theoretical and practical terms. Each party could use this flexibility to support their faith. It should be noted that it did not serve the educational goal of knowledge development. Rather, it was to serve each party’s identity agenda. It also reflects the significant relationship between politics, education, and religion in the Thai society.

The percentage of the Buddhist Studies subject in the Social Studies, Religion and Culture course category is 8% in the elementary level, and 6.66% in the lower and higher secondary levels. The contents are comprised of seven parts, i.e. 1) the history and significance of Buddhism; 2) Buddhist teachings; 3) biographies of both male and female disciples of the Buddha; 4) Buddhists’ duties; 5) mental exercise and wisdom cultivation; 6) Buddhist holy days; and 7) seminar on Buddhism, problem-solving and development. The last one is excluded for the elementary level. It can be seen that these seven parts are similar to those in the curriculum of 1990. As a result, both curricula face similar problems. The advantage now is that the contents are standardized and systematized. However, they still overlap and doctrines are broken down for learning.

The complexity of the contents in each part varies from one level to another, which is advantageous in that it shows the profundity of the doctrines. However, this method cannot avoid the overlap of contents, and often requires the unnecessary breaking-down of doctrines. For instance, Mangala Sutta, Disa, Trisikkha (Threefold Training), Trilakkhana, Sangahavatthu (Principles of Kindly Treatment) are parceled out for instruction over different grades. Of Mangala, students in the Seventh-Grade study items 1 - 3, while those in the Eighth- Grade study items 4 - 6, for

⁸⁵ Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, Ministry of Education, Provision of Buddhist Contents. (Bangkok: Printing House of the Teachers’ Council (Ladprao), 2002), p. 1.

example. The breaking-down deprives the students, and even the instructors, of comprehensive understanding and may also lead to inaccurate understanding and wrong application. Moreover, the order in which each item is taught is not in accordance with that in their set. For instance, items higher in the order of Mangala are taught before the lower ones. Even if the ordering does not have to be taken so seriously, the shuffle can still confuse students.

Regarding the instruction about model Buddhists, many well-known Buddhists, both laity and monks, are raised as exemplars. Many of the previous kings - King Ramkamhaeng, King Narai, King Taksin, King Rama V, etc. - are included, although they contributed to the country in many aspects other than religious. The instruction on interesting issues from the Tipitaka focuses on good citizenship.⁸⁶ This reflects the relationship between the Religion, the Nation and the King, and is in accordance with Section 7 in the National Education Act (1999), which states that the learning process must include inculcation of political conscience in democracy with the King as the head of the State, of pride in Thainess, and of the will to protect common good and national interests.⁸⁷ Therefore, the contents of Buddhism is continuously adjusted and closely tied to the Nation-Religion-King institution.

The subject of Buddhist Studies is also adjusted in response to needs in the modern Thai society. For instance, the seminar on Buddhism, problem-solving, and development is meant to link Buddhism with community development and social regulation, to sufficiency economy, and to sustainable development. The part of mental and wisdom exercise is adjusted to include a study the role of local wisdom in applying Buddhist teachings to daily life.⁸⁸ The adjustment of the Buddhist Studies subject is in response to the

⁸⁶ Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, Ministry of Education, Provision of Buddhism Learning Contents, p. 157.

⁸⁷ Office of National Educational Commission, Office of Prime Minister, National Education Act 1999. (Bangkok: Prikwan Graphic, 1999), pp. 5-6.

⁸⁸ Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, Ministry of Education, Provision of Buddhism Learning Contents, pp. 134-161.

9th National Economic and Social Development Plan, which aims for “sustainable development and Thai people’s well-being,” including shared values. According to the Plan, Thais should be aware of the country’s crisis and the need to change mentality, attitude, and working process by adopting as guidance the “Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy,” which may support a change to effectiveness-oriented administration of the country. It also aims for the majority of Thai people to receive education, to life-long learning, to be good persons with virtues and honesty, to live in the society of knowledge and learning, to be able to conserve local wisdom and maintain valuable cultures and customs.⁸⁹

The adjustment makes the Buddhist Studies subject relative to society. Therefore, after the economic crisis in 1997, it was not a surprise that the subject of Buddhist Studies was again adjusted in response to the economic situation. The curriculum of 2001 was set up during Thaksin Shinawatra’s premiership when the country had just suffered the economic crisis. The 9th National Economic and Social Plan (2002 - 2006) contained a vision of the desirable Thai society with focus on opportunities and equality given to all Thais so that they can develop their potentials and become good and competent persons who possess virtues, morality, ethics, discipline, respect for laws, responsibility and public mind, and are equipped with the ability to think for and rely on themselves. The plan aimed to develop sustainable and competitive economy and a stable economic system that is ready to advance on the basis of well-rounded knowledge.⁹⁰ These aims in the National Economic and Social Plan were results of painful lessons Thais learned in the economic crisis, including the lesson that the making and implementation of policies must be based on well-rounded knowledge about global situations.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Office of National Economic and Social Development Commission, Office of Prime Ministry, The 9th National Economic and Social Plan 2002 - 2006. (Bangkok: Printing House of the Teachers’ Council (Ladprao), 2001), pp. 13-15.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹¹ Kowit Wongsurawat, Thai Politics and Administration: Multi-dimensions, p. 156.

The government then gave much consideration to the instruction of Buddhism, and consequently set up “Buddhist schools” as suggested by Prof. Dr. Chai-anan Samutawanich. He proposed to set up pilot Buddhist schools with teachers as Buddhist models, and with a Buddhist instructional process. The Ministry of Education supported such establishment in the hope that it would be a turning point that brings the immense value of Buddhist teachings to Thai society. It was deemed highly suitable for the country whose population is 95% Buddhist. The Buddhist schools are not different from normal schools except that Buddhist teachings are applied in the school administration and student development. Special focus is given to the integration of Trisikkha framework.⁹² Although the definition of Buddhist school can be further studied from the Document for Provision of Buddhist Contents, 2002, by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development,⁹³ the Buddhist schools still use the same contents in order to be in line with the curriculum of 2001. This means that they may also suffer from the ambiguity of the curriculum, and are in fact not altogether too different from other schools. Any school without a clear curriculum, without a clear guideline and standard, cannot provide effective education.

An examination of the Buddhist school’s curriculum reveals that the curriculum is still ambiguous because no clear amount of academic credits or contents are indicated. The percentage of Buddhism instruction is not different from that in the normal curriculum because the curricula are basically the same. In the Buddhist school’s curriculum, extra-curricular activities are added such as Buddhist-vow ceremony, Buddhist manners contest, Buddhist children camp, morning time activities (such as commemoration of the Nation, the Religion, and the King, chanting, well-wishing to others), and activities of good deeds during the day (such as mindful walking to the canteen).⁹⁴ Although these activities show integration of Buddhism into daily life, it is not integration of Buddhism into other course categories.

⁹² Ministry of Education, Guideline for Buddhist School. (Bangkok: Express Transportation Organization of Thailand, 2003), pp. Preface-3.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

These activities used to be performed in schools in the past. It may then be said that Buddhist schools are simply schools that bring back atmospheres of old times. According to a policy, two pilot schools were to be set up in each province in 2003. In 2003, eighty-nine schools participated in the project. In 2004, there were fifteen-thousand Buddhist schools around the country.⁹⁵

Although the number of Buddhist schools has increased, many questions can still be raised, especially in terms of their quality and the consistency of the percentage, contents, and methods of Buddhist instruction in the curriculum. It seems that Buddhist schools are Buddhist mainly in style, and not sufficient consideration is given to the contents and instructional methods. However, the concept of a Buddhist school is interesting in terms of education, especially Buddhist education, because it shows a trend of using Buddhist teachings as the core of education for the nation's citizens. This is in keeping with the past, in which the country's education was totally dependent on Buddhism. It should be further studied whether the 'Buddhist school' provides an educational system that allows access to the true Buddhishood, or whether it is simply another instance of Buddhist education in the shadow of the government's ideas and policies, as it has continuously been for more than a hundred years.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 29.

The Yodhājiva Suttas

*Dion Peoples**

Introduction:

As a former intelligence analyst in the United States Air Force, one of the most interesting discourses of the Buddha in my mind is the Yodhājiva Sutta, from the Saṃyutta-Nikāya – because it speaks directly to the mind of the militant-minded.

There are of course other discourses elsewhere with similar titles – but the content differs. As I plan to write this article, I ponder if at one time the piece-meal discourses were one unified body, and over time became disconnected and placed into different nikayas, because of the diverse nature of the contents. Obviously, this cannot exactly be proven, when only speculation predominates. The possibility exists that the Buddha met several warrior-headmen during the course of his forty-five years of ministering Dhamma to the people. Many students of Buddhism perceive the various ‘discourses’ as different episodes, few (none) seem to see them as broken pieces of a singular discourse – there is a reason for this: the Saṃyutta-Nikāya’s version takes place in Rājagaha, and the Anguttara-Nikāya’s versions all take place in Sāvattihī – the locations differ. The question could be raised: are the Anguttara-Nikāya’s assortment of Yodhājiva Suttas a singular or multiple events? It’s a difficult question to answer.

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The Yodhājīva Suttas:

There seems to be five occurrences of the discourse: one inside the Saṃyutta-Nikāya and four occasions in the Anguttara-Nikāya. Although it might be beneficial to provide the discourses, for the sake of brevity, the five shall not be reproduced. Here are the locations of the discourses, to examine at a later occasion:

Location	Brief Summarization
SN IV 308-309 ¹	Yodhājīva is misled by authority to fight for unrealistic effort
AN I 284-285 ²	A fighting-man's qualities as a shooter
AN II 170 ³	Same as above but with an additional quality
AN III 87-93(a) ⁴	Five kinds of warriors & persons, like warriors, among monks; and jhānas
AN III 94-100(b) ⁵	Five kinds of warriors; and jhānas

In these translated editions, none of the translated discourses begin with the standard: 'Thus I have heard' introduction. The Saṃyutta-Nikāya's GāmaGisaCyutta (Connected Discourses to Headmen) gives the location

¹ Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.): The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the Saṃyutta-Nikāya, Vol. II (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), pp. 1334-1335; and for the Pali version, see: <http://www.metta.lk/tipitaka/2Sutta-Pitaka/3Samyutta-Nikaya/Samyutta4/41-Gamini-Samyutta/01-Gamanivaggo-p.html> - accessed on 9 December 2011

² F. L. Woodward (trans.): The Book of the Gradual Sayings – Anuttara-Nikāya, Vol. I (London: Pali Text Society, 1970), pp. 263-264.

³ F. L. Woodward (trans.): The Book of the Gradual Sayings – Anuttara-Nikāya, Vol. II (London: Pali Text Society, 1970), pp. 177-178.

⁴ E. M. Hare (trans.): The Book of the Gradual Sayings – Anuttara-Nikāya Vol. III (London: Pali Text Society, 1970), pp. 72-77.

⁵ E. M. Hare (trans.): The Book of the Gradual Sayings – Anuttara-Nikāya Vol. III (London: Pali Text Society, 1970), pp. 77-81.

of the discourse given to Yodhājīvaas Rājagaha in the Squirrel Sanctuary. However, the Yodhājīva Sutta begins or resumes with the words ‘then’, as if something occurred before it, and therefore it would seem that the discourse is connected to the previous lesson, which is also at Rājagaha. This comprehension is subsumed. The discourses in the Anguttara-Nikāya do not allow this thought to arise, as they begin with addressing just the bhikkhus in the translations.

Anguttara-Nikāya	Title and Location in the Pali-versions of the Discourses
AN I 284-285 ⁶	Mentions “Yodhājīvavaggo” and the location as Sāvattthī
AN II 170 ⁷	Mentions “Brahmaṇavaggo” and the location as Sāvattthī
AN III 87-93(a) ⁸	Mentions “Paṭhamayodhājīvūpama suttaṃ” and the location as Sāvattthī
AN III 94-100(b) ⁹	Mentions “Dutiyayodhājīvūpama suttaṃ” and the location as Sāvattthī

Above we see that the chapter or discourse headings in the Anguttara-Nikāya differ from the presentation in the Saṃyutta-Nikāya.

There are several discourses in the Majjhima-Nikāya for instance which begin with the Buddha talking to a certain person, but then the

⁶ <http://www.metta.lk/tipitaka/2Sutta-Pitaka/4Anguttara-Nikaya/Anguttara1/3-tikanipata/014-yodhajivavaggo-p.html> - accessed on 9 December 2011

⁷ <http://www.metta.lk/tipitaka/2Sutta-Pitaka/4Anguttara-Nikaya/Anguttara2/4-catukkanipata/019-brahmanavaggo-p.html> - accessed on 9 December 2011

⁸ <http://www.metta.lk/tipitaka/2Sutta-Pitaka/4Anguttara-Nikaya/Anguttara3/5-pancakanipata/008-anagatabhayavaggo-p.html> - accessed on 9 December 2011

⁹ <http://www.metta.lk/tipitaka/2Sutta-Pitaka/4Anguttara-Nikaya/Anguttara3/5-pancakanipata/008-anagatabhayavaggo-p.html> - accessed on 9 December 2011

lesson turns to become an exposition for the assembled bhikkhus; for example: The Madhupiṇḍika Sutta begins with Daṇḍapāni speaking to the Buddha, but later the discourse turns to a certain bhikkhu talking to the Buddha, and continues to have Mahā Kaccāna explain in length what was mentioned in brief by the Buddha, and concludes with Ānanda praising what was heard, and concludes with a statement by the Buddha.¹⁰ This is just one mere example of the possibilities of a discourse addressing various people at different stages in the teaching. The relevance of the preceding to the Yodhājīva Suttas is that while each Yodhājīva Sutta speaks to a specified singular person or the monks, it could be possible that there is a connection - as a sort of turn-of-events. The contrived situation would suggest first that the Buddha discussed matters with Yodhājīva, and then turned the discussion towards the Bhikkhus, to further emphasize additional points. This possibility exists, although it is never mentioned, and may be speculation. A concession asserts that the point is irrelevant or unimportant. If the format of the Madhupiṇḍika Suttas followed as a standard situation: the Buddha allows the guest's question to serve as the foundation for an additional lesson to the bhikkhus – this is a satisfying plausibility.

The Samyutta-Nikaya's Yodhājīva Sutta:

Yodhājīva, a mercenary, approached the Buddha with full courtesy and asked his question (my paraphrasing): We are taught in our mercenary-culture to believe that when we strive and exert ourselves in Battle, if we die in the process of battling, then we will be reborn in a heaven where other battle-slain devas reside. What do you think about that? Then the Buddha responds, to the effect: Enough, stop – don't ask me that. Finally, after a third time asking (this is an important aspect of the discourse), the Buddha stated, to the effect: Obviously, I am not getting through to you (signifying that the Buddha has changed his mind in a conversation – and

¹⁰ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.): The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the Majjhima-Nikāya (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), pp. 201-206.

such a question does not fall within the realm of the questions that the Buddha would refuse to answer, as it does not deal with the duration of the world, the links between the soul and the body, or what happens to a Tathagata after death). You should have figured out when I said ‘Enough...’ that I didn’t want to answer – but fine, I’ll tell you: ...basically, you are really going to go to hell, because of your wrong views, and because of the wrong view, there are two options for rebirth (demonstrating a misunderstanding or deviance from the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence) after death: hell or an animal realm. Yodhājīva breaks out in tears, and the Buddha plods: So I did not get through to you when I did not want to answer. Yodhājīva reveals the rationale behind his tears, against the assumption (demonstrating that he is not omniscient) of the Buddha: “I’ve been tricked, cheated, and deceived for a long time by this militarized-culture...”, and then begs the Buddha for refuge (towards what, we cannot be certain: the Triple-Gem or just the Buddha?) as a lay-disciple.

Presentation of the Anguttara-Nikaya’s Yodhājīva Suttas:

These four discourses all begin with the address to the monks. The discourses with the three and four qualities are similar and are examined together; then the discourses with the five qualities are examined further below; shown below - numerically relevant to the pertinent volume:

Qualities of the Fighting Man – Addressed to the Monks:	
Three Qualities: AN I 284-285 ¹¹	Four Qualities: AN II 170 ¹²
Worthy of a rājāh; is a royal Possession; reckoned an asset (or attribute) to a rājāh:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a far-shooter; • a shooter like lightening; • a piercer of huge objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled in the points of vantage; • is a far-shooter; • a shooter like lightening; • a piercer of huge objects
<p>In a like manner, monks, possessed of three qualities (or four qualities in that case) a monk is worthy of respect, of offerings and gifts, of being saluted with clasped hands upraised, a field of merit unsurpassed for the world... What are [these]?</p>	
	<p>Now in what way is a monk skilled in points of vantage? In this case a monk is virtuous, he dwells restrained with the restraint of the Obligations; perfect in the practice of right conduct he sees danger in the slightest faults; he takes up and trains himself in the rules of morality. Thus is a monk skilled in points of vantage.</p>
<p>Now in what way is a monk a far-shooter? Herein, whatsoever object, be it past, future or present, personal (of the self) or external to (the) self, be it gross or subtle, mean or exalted, far or near – every object (in short) that he beholds, he sees it (looks upon it) as it really is by right insight (wisdom), thus: this is not mine. This am I not, This is not for me the Self. Whatsoever feeling, be it past, future, or present... he feels, he sees it as it really is in like manner by right insight. Whatsoever perception, whatsoever activity... whatsoever consciousness he has, be it past, present or future, personal or external to self, be it gross or subtle, mean or exalted, far or near – everything in short of which he is conscious – he sees it as it really is by right insight (wisdom), thus: this is not mine, this am I not, this is not for me the Self. That is how a monk is a far-shooter.</p>	
<p>And how is a monk a shooter like lightening? Herein, a monk understands as it really is: this is Ill, this is the arising of Ill, This is the ending of Ill, this is the practice of leaning to the ending of Ill. Thus is he a shooter like lightening.</p>	
<p>And how is a monk a piercer of huge objects? Herein a monk pierces through the huge mass of nescience (ignorance, or the absence of knowledge). That is how he is a piercer of huge objects...</p>	

In the initial stages of the two discourses above we have some things being aimed towards or are transposed as what he can see, like in a mirror, for himself (level of adherence to the monastic-code of discipline and noble-attainment status) – his virtue; the proper perspective of the self is often one that is very distant from the minds of individual; comprehending the truths of the course of suffering is an illuminating circumstance; and it appears that the largest of all concepts to eliminate is ignorance. Above, we should have the monk maintaining his monastic vows, knowing that the five aggregates are not of the self in any of the three times, and can distinguish matters through the Four Noble Truths, and can contemplate on Dependent Origination. For a revisualization, this discourse suggests for the bhikkhu to:

- Keep the prescriptions for wholesome morality (Patimokkha) – this is his obligation
- Comprehend the five aggregates as not-self through any of the three times
- Comprehend matters through the four noble truths
- Penetrate matters more profoundly through dependent-origination

In a sense, the above is the basic prescription for bhikkhus, in a perhaps very overly-simplified matter. To elaborate briefly, a popular slogan amongst military people is: adapt and overcome. In the context of Buddhism, this would imply adapting to the regulations and overcomeing the obstacles, which often or nor not deal with one's mental-issues. These ideals are well within the realm and concerns of the militarized individual. It must be recalled that Siddhatta Gotama originates from the warrior-class of culture. This is a lifestyle that is very familiar to the Buddha. Therefore, rather than speaking out against the engagements of the warriors, the Buddha speaks to the monks as if they perhaps already have the background of being a Ksatriya, by transposing the life of a person to that

¹¹ <http://www.metta.lk/tipitaka/2Sutta-Pitaka/4Anguttara-Nikaya/Anguttara1/3-tikanipata/014-yodhajivavaggo-p.html> - accessed on 9 December 2011

¹² <http://www.metta.lk/tipitaka/2Sutta-Pitaka/4Anguttara-Nikaya/Anguttara2/4-catukkanipata/019-brahmanavaggo-p.html> - accessed on 9 December 2011

of a warrior, and monk – so that the monks, perhaps, would not think that their lives were unworthy – sensing that they still have battles that have yet to be won. They are living by a code of discipline just as the soldier is, and with the proper vision or ideology to adhere and contemplate upon, as revisualized above.

If we take the prescriptive matters that have been revisualized, along with the advice given to Yodhājīva above, we comprehend that we should not look for some sort of rebirth into another realm, because there is no-self found in either the past, future or present. We know how we can eradicate suffering, and discover true knowledge through the eradication of ignorance – when we have learned which of the chains within dependent-origination are easiest to break.

(a): Five Qualities of the Fighting Man – Addressed to the Monks - AN III 87-93(a)¹³:	
Five kinds of warriors are found in the world:	Five kinds of persons, like warriors, are found among monks:
What five?	
<p>In one case, there is the warrior who, just at the sight of the cloud of dust (from the battle-elephants or horses) loses heart and falters and stiffens not, nor is able to go down to battle. Monks [this] is the first kind of warrior.</p>	<p>In the case of the monk who on seeing the dust-cloud loses heart and falters and stiffens not, nor is able to stay the course (cannot provide against uninterruptedly living) of the godly life – he declares his weakness, gives up the training and returns to the lower life. And what for him is the dust-cloud? Monks, that monk hears: ‘it is said in such and such village or town there are women and girls, passing fair to look upon, lovely, with a wondrous lotus-like beauty; and when he hears this, he loses heart and falters and stiffens not, nor is able to stay the course of the godly life, but declares his weakness, gives up the training and returns to the lower-life. This for him is the dust-cloud. ...Monks [this] is the first kind of person, like a warrior, found among monks.</p>

<p>Again, though another endures (the sight of) the dust-cloud, just on seeing a standard lifted up (ex.: a riding seat or a chariot), loses heart and falters and stiffens not, nor is able to go down to battle. Monks [this] is the second kind of warrior.</p>	<p>Again, though another endures the dust-cloud, but at the sight of the standard loses heart... and returns to the low(er) life. And what for him is the standard? In this case the monk does not merely hear that in such and such a village or town there are some lovely women and girls, passing fair to look upon, with wondrous lotus-like beauty – but he sees it for himself; and at the sight loses heart... and returns to the low(er) life. This for him is the standard. Monks, just as the warrior endures the dust cloud, but at the sight of the standard loses heart... like that... Monks [this] is the second kind of person like a warrior, found among monks.</p>
<p>Again, though another endures the dust-cloud and the standard, at the sound of tumult (the noise or rumble of the war animals) he loses heart and falters and stiffens not, nor is able to go down to battle. Monks [this] is the third kind of warrior.</p>	<p>Again, monks, a monk endures the dust-cloud and the standard, but at the sound of tumult... and returns to the low(er) life. And what for him is the tumult? In this case, monks, some woman comes along, when he has gone to the forest, tree-root or lonely (empty) place, and laughs him to scorn, rails (abuses) on him, snaps her fingers at him (to be observed), and mocks him, and being so treated by a woman he loses heart... and returns to the low(er) life. This for him is the tumult. ...Monks [this] is the third kind of person, like a warrior, found among monks.</p>
<p>Though another endure the dust-cloud, the standard and the tumult, when struck in conflict he fails. Monks [this] is the fourth kind of warrior.</p>	<p>Again, monks, there is the monk who endures the dust-cloud, the standard, the tumult and the conflict; victorious in battle, winning the fight, he continues at the heat of the battle. And what to him is victory in battle? Herein monks, some women come along, when the monk has gone to the forest, tree-root, or some lonely place, and sits down close beside him, lies down close beside him and cuddles up to him; and being treated thus by a woman, without giving up the training, without declaring his weakness, he gives himself over to fornication. This to him is the conflict. ...Just as the warrior endures the dust-cloud, standard and tumult, but when struck in conflict, fails; like that, monks, I say is this person, the [fourth¹⁴] kind of person, like a warrior, found among monks.</p>

<p>Then there is one who endures the dust-cloud, the standard, the tumult, and the conflict; victorious in battle, winning the fight, he continues at the head of the battle. Monks [this] is the fifth kind of warrior found in the world.</p>	<p>Again monks, there is the monk who endures the dust-cloud, the standard, the tumult and the conflict; victorious in battle, winning the fight, he continues at the head of the battle. And what to him is victory in battle? Herein also, monks, some woman comes along, when the monk has gone to the forest, tree-root or some lonely place, and sits down close beside him, lies down close beside him and cuddles up to him; but being treated thus by a woman, he disentangles and frees himself and goes off whithersoever he will. And he resorts to come secluded spot: forest, tree-root, mountain, glen, rock-cave, cemetery, wooded upland, open space, or heap of straw; and come to forest, tree-root or empty hut, he sits cross-legged, with body erect, sitting mindfulness in front of him. Putting away all hankering (desire/craving), he abides with heart free therefrom; he cleanses his mind of hankering: putting away ill-will and hatred, he abides with heart free therefrom; kindly and compassionate to all creatures, he cleanses his mind of ill-will and hatred; putting away sloth and torpor, he abides free therefrom; conscious of light, mindful and self-possessed, he cleanses his mind of sloth and torpor; putting away flurry and worry, he abides poised; with heart serene within, he cleanses his mind of flurry and worry; putting away doubt, he abides with doubt passed by; no more he questions Why? – of right things; he cleanses his mind of doubt. Putting away these five hindrances, then the mind’s corruptions are weakened by insight, aloof from sensuous appetites... he enters and abides in the [first, second, third, then fourth-jhāna¹⁵]....</p>
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¹³ <http://www.metta.lk/tipitaka/2Sutta-Pitaka/4Anguttara-Nikaya/Anguttara3/5-pancakanipata/008-anagatabhayavaggo-p.html> - accessed on 9 December 2011

¹⁴ Indeed, the E.M. Hare edition reads ‘third’, but this can’t be so, given the format of numerically-successive teachings – oddly skipping over the mention of a fourth-criteria. So this must be an error that I have spotted. (See, p. 75, in the Hare edition.)

¹⁵ Abbreviated here, because the four jhanas are well-explained in other places – no need to recall them for my purposes here.

	<p>With the heart this serene, purified, cleansed, spotless, devoid of defilement, supple, ready to act, firm and imperturbable, he bends the mind to know the destruction of the cankers. As it really is, he understands: This is Ill – as it really is; he understands: this is the origin of Ill – as it really is, he understands: this is the ending of Ill – as it really is; he understands: this is the way leading to the ending of Ill. As it really is, he understands the thought: these are the cankers – this is the origin of the cankers – this is the ending of the cankers – this is the way leading to the ending of the cankers.</p>
	<p>Knowing this, seeing this, his heart is free from the canker of lust, free from the canker of becoming, free from the canker of ignorance, and in the freedom that comes knowledge of that freedom, and he knows: birth is destroyed; lived is the godly life; done is what had to be done; there is no more of this state. This to him is victory in battle.</p>
	<p>Monks, just as the warrior endures the dust-cloud, the standard, the tumult and the conflict; and, victorious in battle, winning the fight, continues even at the head of the battle; like that, monks, I say, is this person. Monks, there is here this sort of person. This, monks, is the fifth kind of person, like a warrior, found among monks. These, monks, are the five kinds of persons...</p>

The correlations are listed from the soldiers on the left, to the monks on the right, demonstrated through both needing to maintain their heart, or willpower. What do we have – when we should also consider that people of fighting age are younger men, with more raging hormones?

- A bhikkhu declares his weakness (disrobing) owing to the mere rumor (the catalyst of his failure) of beautiful women being around in the nearby vicinity.
- Moving beyond such speculative rumors, he actually validates the existence of these women for himself, and disrobes

- A monk has gone to a secluded place for meditation but is disrupted by a rude woman. Something triggers his disrobing. This is perhaps very vague or even off the theme – this encounter with a disturbed woman weighs heavily upon him.
- The bhikkhu resides for meditation in a secluded location but is met with a charming woman, and falls under her spells and they engage in sexual endeavors, which by doctrine suggests that he can no longer be a bhikkhu, having failed in the monastic life.
- Here, the woman has confronted him with her charms, but he has the capacity to free himself from her disturbances, and wanders off to some other location. With his mind unhindered, he is able to achieve jhānas.

Afterwards he is able to comprehend suffering through the noble truths and can become liberated through using dependent origination to destroy any remaining menacing views. In the next discourse, another instance is shown:

(b): Five Kinds of Warriors found in the World – Addressed to the Monks - AN III 94-100(b)¹⁶:	
Five kinds of warriors found in the world:	Five kinds of persons, like warriors, found in the world:
<p>Monks, in one case a warrior, grasping his sword and shield, binding on his bow and quiver, goes down into the thick of the fight; and there he dares and strives; but others strike him as he dares and strives and overpower him. Monks, there is here this sort of warrior. This is the first kind of warrior found in the world.</p>	<p>Monks, take the case of a monk who lives dependent on some village or town – while it is yet early, he robes himself and with bowl and cloak enters that village or town for alms, just with his body under no restraint, with speech unrestrained, with mind unrestrained, without mindfulness being set up, with his faculties uncontrolled: and there he sees a woman with dress disordered or not properly dressed, and at the sight passion overwhelms his mind; in that state of weakness, he gives himself over to fornication. Monks, just as the warrior, grasping sword and shield, binding on bow and quiver, goes down into the thick of the fight and there dares and strives; but the enemy strike and overpower him, like that monks, I say, is this person. This, monks, is the first kind of person, like a warrior, found among monks.</p>
<p>Again, another, arming himself in like manner, goes down to the fight ; and as he dares and strives the enemy wound him; and they bear him away (carry him out on a stretcher) to bring him to his relations; but while he is being carried away by his kinsmen, ere he arrives, he dies on the way to his relations. Monks, there is here this sort of warrior. This, monks, is the second kind.</p>	<p>Again, in like circumstances, another sees the same sight... and passion overwhelms his mind; in that state he burns in body, he burns in mind; and the thought comes to him: “What if I go to the park and say to the monks: Good Sirs, I burn with passion; I am overcome by passion; I cannot stay the course of the godly life; I declare my weakness and give up the training; I will return to the lower life.” As he goes to the park, ere he arrives, even on the way to the park, he declares his weakness, gives up the training, and returns to the lower-life. Monks, just as the warrior... wounded by the enemy, is carried to his relations, but dies on the way; like that, monks, I say is this person. Monks, there is here this sort of person. This, monks, is the second kind.</p>

¹⁶ <http://www.metta.lk/tipitaka/2Sutta-Pitaka/4Anguttara-Nikaya/Anguttara3/5-pancakanipata/008-anagatabhayavaggo-p.html> - accessed on 9 December 2011

<p>Another... wounded by the enemy, is carried away to his relations and they nurse him and care for him, but he dies of that hurt. Monks, there is here this sort of warrior. This, monks, is the third kind.</p>	<p>Again, in like circumstances... another thinks to tell the monks similarly, and actually does... then they who live the godly life admonish him and warn him, saying: Good Sir, the Exalted One has said: “But little satisfying is this lust, fraught as it is with ill and tribulation, with perils worse to follow. Like a piece of bone is lust, fraught as it is with ill and tribulation, with perils worse to follow, life a lump of meat is lust... like a fire-stick made of grass... like a pit of glowing embers... like a passing dream... like some borrowed bravery is lust... like ripe fruit on a broken branch... like a chopper in the shambles... like a spear and javelin... like a hooded snake is lust, fraught as it is with ill and tribulation, with perils worse to follow – so the Exalted One has said. Find your delight, reverend sir, in the godly life; declare not your weakness, reverend sir, nor give up the training nor return to the lower life! And he thus admonished, thus warned, by those who live the godly life, replies thus: ‘Good Sirs, although the Exalted One has said lust is but little satisfying, fraught as it is with ill and tribulation, with perils worse to follow; yet I am not able to stay the course of the godly life, but I will declare my weakness, give up the training, and return to the lower life.’ Monks, just as the warrior... wounded by the enemy, is carried off to his relations and they nurse him and care for him, but he dies of that hurt: like that, monks, I say, is this person. Monks, there is here this sort of person. This monks is the third kind.</p>
<p>Another... wounded by the enemy... nursed and cared for by his relations, is cured of that hurt. Monks, there is here this sort of warrior.</p>	<p>Again, in like circumstances... they who live the godly life speak to another in the same way... and he thus admonished, thus warned, replies: “Good Sirs, I will dare and strive; I will find my delight in the godly life; not now will I declare my weakness, nor give up the training, nor return to the lower life.’ Monks, just as the warrior... wounded by the enemy... is nursed and cared for by his relations and cured of that hurt; like that, monks, I say, is this person. Monks, there is here this sort of person. This monks is the fourth kind.</p>

<p>Then, monks, there is the soldier who grasping sword and shield, binding on bow and quiver, goes down into the thick of the fight; victorious in battle, winning the fight, he continues at the head of the battle. Monks, there is here this sort of warrior. This, monks, is the fifth kind of warrior found in the world. Monks, these are the five kinds</p>	<p>Then, monks, there is the monk who lives dependent on some village or town. While it is yet early, he robes himself and with bowl and cloak enters the village or town for alms with his body, speech and mind restrained, with mindfulness set up, with his faculties under control: and on seeing some form with his eye, he is not entranced with its appearance nor with any detail of it; since by abiding uncontrolled in the sense of sight, covetousness, dejection, wicked and evil states would flow in over him, he sets himself to control that sense; he restrains that sense and wins mastery over it. So to of the sense of hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and in respect of ideas that pass through his mind; since by abiding uncontrolled in any way... covetousness, dejection and wicked and evil states would flow over him, he sets himself to control each sense; and he restrains each sense and wins mastery over it. And on his return from alms-gathering, when his meal is over, he goes off to some secluded spot: forest, tree-root, mountains, and so forth... and comes there, sets up mindfulness... cleanses his mind of the five hindrances... enters and abides [in the first, second, third & fourth jhānas]... bends his mind to know the destruction of the cankers... understands Ill as it really is... and knows birth is destroyed; lived is the godly-life; done is what had to be done; there is no more of this state. Monks, just as the warrior, grasping sword and shield, binding on bow and quiver, goes down into the thick of the fight and is victorious in battle, winning the fight; like that, monks, I say is this person This, monks, is the fifth kind of person, like a warrior, found among monks. Monks these are the five kinds of persons...</p>
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Even a well-armed soldier or Bhikkhu can fall victim to one's relevant antagonist: a foe for a soldier is a member of the opposing army, but a foe for the ordained is a member of the opposite-attractive sex. The discourse maneuvers across the various options available for the situation it is describing: a bhikkhu's encounter with an attractive woman (one that is

necessarily attracted to him) is the most difficult situation for him to encounter, certainly if he is alone. But what is it that we can pull out from the discourse?

- Through lack of mindfulness (of being a bhikkhu – and all that this implies), he engaged in sexual endeavors with a woman. There is no suggestion that he has returned to the monastery, and it doesn't matter, because he is already defeated at this point and according to doctrine, he can no longer be a bhikkhu.
- He did not engage in sexual endeavors with the woman, but he is very much overwhelmed with the situation that he thinks to disrobe, and on his way to announce his defeat, he bothers not even to return, and reverts before his arrival.
- The lust-filled bhikkhu admits his passion and is dutifully admonished, but decides to follow his heart, and disrobes.
- The lust-filled bhikkhu admits his passion and is dutifully admonished, but decides to strive and remain as a bhikkhu.
- The bhikkhu actually remains with sense-doors restrained and sensually-mindful – not grasping sense-objects – in order to conquer unwholesome menacing-potentialities. Unhindered, he can attain jhānas, comprehends reality through the four noble truths and any other linkages though dependent-origination – becoming liberated.

Even through reading these responses, each measured situation allows for the reader to determine, as if one is judging, the bhikkhu's actions as either wholesome or unwholesome aspects of behavior. What is also present in this discourse is the favorable response of the bhikkhu conquering sensual-objects, attaining jhanās, comprehending reality through the four noble truths and any other linkages though dependent-origination – to become eventually, if properly understood, liberated.

Summarization:

It might not be odd to suggest that there is a very popular movie, seen internationally, called: 'Star Wars' – which features a militarized group

of warriors, one whose name is: ‘Yoda’. He is famous for his profound statements, and serves as a sort of wise figure. It would not be a stretch to suggest that the writer/director of the movie knew of the character Yodhājīva, or knew the root-words, because it is no coincidence of just mere names and occupations.

In the discourse directed at Yodhājīva, there is no sort of doctrinal advice given to this man by the Buddha, who eventually answers the looming question. Only a bad result is achieved through militarized-thought. Today, this can have social or even political implications: we could discuss issues of nationalism, or the existence of many realms – expressions of which are instrumental for the control of society.

The early discourses from the Anguttara Nikaya express beginning qualities, such as preparatory advice. This is seen from the presentation of aims, advice on how a bhikkhu should strive. The later discourses from the Anguttara Nikaya express the characteristics of instruction to someone already knowing, with perhaps an intermediate level of knowledge. There is no meditation advice in the earlier discourses, but the later discourses give the detailed standard observational stages for jhānas (omitted for the purpose of this article). There is no advanced level of instruction, specifically dealing with an elaboration of dependent-origination – either these monks receiving the advice know it already or were not in the stage yet to gradually receive that instruction.

It can be seen that when Yodhājīva asked the Buddha his question pertaining to his next-birth into a subhuman realm, this is due to the warrior’s downfall – owing to his acceptance and acquisition of wrong view. We could ask, then, what would be the proper view regarding these matters? Later the implication becomes or suggests that we should not look for some sort of rebirth into another realm, because there is no self found in either the past, future or present. This suggests that there is only one life that we need to concern ourselves with, rather than some form of successive chain of lives. This fits with the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence. Anything longer than this current life seems to be expressive of an eternalistic doctrine, which is against Buddhist principles. If someone thinks I am taking the idea to a ‘logical-extreme’, then I am very content with the idea gained from the Yodhājīva-suttas.

In the other Yodhājīva-suttas we see that the prime antagonist for a bhikkhu is a female (but it can be equally expressive to include just some member of the ‘attractive-sex’ – though I will maintain the conventions from the discourse) – certainly one that is daring enough to venture into a lonely forest and sexually confront a bhikkhu (saying nothing about his/her psychology). The discourses relating material for the jhānas would have the bhikkhu being alone at the root of a tree or some other isolated place. But then he is approached by her in some manner. It is quite possible that during the time of the Buddha, people were not too certain what they were seeing when they approached a bhikkhu. But in today’s Buddhist and non-Buddhist societies, a Buddhist monk is rather easily recognizable. However, owing to the times, Buddhist monks are likely constrained to monasteries, rather than wandering the forests, which are certainly fewer, thinner, and far away. Had not the sounds of her approaching footsteps alerted the bhikkhu prior to her unwelcomed assault upon him? The only way in which a bhikkhu would be able to maintain his monastic vows would be if he was raped by a woman, against his will. But what are the chances of this, when men are generally the stronger or larger of the human-sexes? We are to believe, then, just as a soldier faces a foe, the bhikkhu faces the woman. He has been taught the proper vantage-points, and the three other criteria for penetrating difficulties. He has been taught to strive.

I think these Yodhajiva-suttas are very important to propagate, because we have many yōng bhikkhus in our universities or around here in Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, China, Korea, Japan, Mongolia, and even in places like Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, and elsewhere, where Buddhism is found. These young bhikkhus may gain a lot through learning to control themselves better – they must have greater discipline in terms of the Bhikkhu-Patimokka, and exhibit greater control over their senses. Far too many young bhikkhus, for instance, have Facebook profiles, and fill their friend list with cute young ladies – certainly a distraction for many of them; some bhikkhus even have blog-sites that feature links with sexually-suggestive material. As a mentor to these young bhikkhus at my university, I have been keen to enforce adherence to the Vinaya or equally morally-appropriate advice – as if I have never left

the military. Buddhist monks have a great tradition to uphold, and it even takes lay people to assist these young bhikkhus with their moral behavior. We are all responsible to assist each other.

To conclude matters, these Yodhājīva suttas suggest, once compiled and analyzed, that bhikkhus should keep to their prescriptions for wholesome morality (Patimokkha). This is their obligation to society that rewards them with almsfood. If a bhikkhu lapses, he may fall into some immoral circumstance and must terminate his monastic status. Disruptive (pleasant or aggressive) disturbances from other people may burden or weigh heavily in the mind of the bhikkhu, suggesting that there is some ethical or moral implications in terms of monastic status. For instance, if a monk has gone to a secluded place for meditation but is disrupted by some rude or charming woman, and from this encounter remains unmindful from her approach, remaining mentally conflicted, he either disrobes willingly and never returns to the monastery, or can no longer be a bhikkhu after he fails in the monastic life once there was an engagement in sexual endeavors. Bhikkhus are taught to reside or remain with sense-doors restrained and to be sensually vigilant - not grasping onto sense-objects – in order to conquer unwholesome menacing potentialities. Unhindered, rejecting disruptions, he can attain jhānas; comprehend the five aggregates as not-self through any of the three times; comprehend matters or reality through the four noble truths; penetrate matters more profoundly through dependent-origination – and become liberated.

I am not certain if these discourses are one part of a complete discourse. Those given at Sāvattihī could be either of a singular event or on multiple occasions. Certainly, given the amount of time that the Buddha had spent there, ample opportunity to address the topic was available. Here I have taken a look at all of the Yodhājīva Suttas, and have concluded the analysis, suggesting again that from being unhindered from rejectable disruptions, someone can attain jhānas; comprehend the five aggregates as not-self through any of the three times; comprehend matters or reality through the four noble truths; and penetrate matters more profoundly through dependent-origination. When all of this is exercised, it is possible to become liberated.

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The Concept of Bodhisatta*

*Reiichi Hori***

Introduction

In Buddhism, before a person becomes a Buddha, he has to go through the stage of being and practicing as a *bodhi-satta* (P,¹ *bodhi-sattva*, Skt). *Bodhi* of *bodhisatta* means enlightenment, and *satta*, a living or being.

Most non-scholars of Buddhism have a common misunderstanding that the teachings of Theravāda and non-Theravāda Buddhism, especially Mahāyāna, are essentially different. In fact, however, both teachings are based on that of the Buddha. For instance, in comparing the Noble Eight-fold Path (*ariya-aṭṭhangika-magga*) of the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*), the heart of the Buddha's teaching, and the Six Perfections (*ṣaḍ-pāramita*, Skt), a practice required of bodhisattvas in Mahāyāna Buddhism in order to attain Buddhahood, it becomes apparent that Theravāda and Mahāyāna have a lot in common with each other.

The Four Noble Truths consist of the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the way to the extinction of suffering. The fourth of these Truths is the

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¹ Buddhist terms that adopt Pali spelling are indicated with 'P'. Sanskrit variations are indicated with 'Skt'.

Noble Eight-fold Path. It is also known as the “Middle Path” (*majjhimā Paṭipadā*) because it avoids two extremes: one is the search for happiness through the pleasures of the senses, a common and unprofitable practice, and the other is the search for happiness through self-mortification in different forms of asceticism, again a painful and unprofitable practice. Having himself first tried these two extremes, and having found them to be useless, the Buddha discovered through personal experience the Middle Path. It is composed of eight categories or divisions: namely, <1> Right Understanding (*sammā-diṭṭhi*), <2> Right Thought (*sammā-saṅkappa*), <3> Right Speech (*sammā-vācā*), <4> Right Action (*Sammā-kammanta*), <5> Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*), <6> Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*), <7> Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*), and <8> Right Concentration (*sammā-Samādhi*).

The Six Perfections, or the six practices required of Mahāyāna bodhisattvas in order to attain Buddhahood, include ① Almsgiving (*dāna-pāramita*, Skt), which includes material almsgiving, almsgiving of the Law, and almsgiving of fearlessness (removing fear and giving relief); ② Obeying and practicing the precepts (*śīla-pāramita*, Skt); ③ Forbearance (*ksānti pāramita*, Skt), or to endure patiently and continue one’s Buddhist practice under all circumstances and hardships; ④ Assiduousness (*vīrya-pāramita*, Skt); ⑤ Meditation (*dhyāna-pāramita*, Skt); and ⑥ Wisdom (*prajñā-pāramita*, Skt), which enables one to perceive the true nature of all things.

The correspondence between the Noble Eight-fold Path and the Six Perfections can be seen as follows:

<1> Right Understanding and <2> Right Thought ————— ⑥ Wisdom
 <3> Right Speech, <4> Right Action and
 <5> Right Livelihood ————— ② Practicing the precepts
 <6> Right Effort ————— ④ Assiduousness
 <7> Right Mindfulness and <8> Right Concentration — ⑤ Meditation

The Six Perfections not only encompass all the practices of the Noble Eight-fold Path, but also add two practices, ① Almsgiving and ③

Forbearance, both of which have social dimensions.² They are characteristic of the Mahāyāna concern for altruistic practice. The Noble Eight-fold Path, on the other hand, includes only practices for self-perfection, which are considered insufficient for altruistic practice.³

The vow of Sakyamuni Bodhisatta in His Lifetime

The story of Sakyamuni as a Bodhisatta starts from the prophecy given by the *Dīpaṅkara Buddha* (Fixed Light Buddha, also known as Burning Torch Buddha). He is called Sakyamuni *Bodhisatta* at the time when he is said to have followed the way of a *bodhisatta* in his previous life.

According to the Sutta of the Buddha's Marvelous Deeds in Previous Lifetime, *Sumedha* (P, the name of Sakyamuni at that time) happened to hear that a Buddha named *Dipaṅkara Buddha*, was present in the world. Delighted at this news, *Sumedha* set out for the country where the Buddha lived. At last he reached the village where *Dipaṅkara Buddha* was meeting with five hundred religious practioners and was expounding His teaching to them. They were delighted to receive this teaching, and each gave the Buddha one silver coin upon His departure from the village. *Sumedha* then traveled on to a city that was decorated as though for festivity and was told that the Buddha would soon arrive there.

² Pali Buddhism compiled its own list of Ten Perfections (*dasa-parāmi*) which consists of almsgiving (*dāna-pārami*), following the precepts [morality] (*sīla-pārami*), release from the world of delusion (*nekkhamma-pārami*), wisdom (*pañña-pārami*), assiduousness (*virīya-pārami*), forbearance (*khanti-pārami*), truth (*sacca-pārami*), determination (*adhiṭṭhāna-pārami*), benevolence (*mettā-pārami*), and equanimity (*upekkhā-pārami*). As can be seen, the practices with social dimensions – ① almsgiving and ③ forbearance – are included in the list.

³ When the bodhisattva first resolves to follow the Buddhist practice, he or she takes the four universal vows. They are (1) to save innumerable living beings, (2) to eradicate countless earthly desires, (3) to master immeasurable Buddhist teachings, and (4) to attain supreme enlightenment. The first vow is concerned with altruistic practice. The bodhisattva's primary concern is to bring others to enlightenment even if his or her own practice remains unperfected.

In the street, Sumedha passed a woman named Gopī who was carrying seven lotus blossoms. So eager was he to make an offering to the Buddha that he offered her five hundred silver coins in exchange for just five blossoms. Upon learning that Sumedha wanted these five blossoms as an offering to the Buddha, Gopī was deeply moved and asked Sumedha to make her his wife in their next existence. She then gave him her remaining two lotus blossoms. When Dipaṅkara Buddha reached the city, the king and his ministers all bowed and reverently strewed flowers on the ground before the Buddha as an offering. The five lotus blossoms offered by Sumedha, however, remained floated in the air, while the other two offered by Gopī came to rest on the Buddha's shoulders. Sumedha spread his deerskin cloak and his own hair over marshy ground for the Buddha to walk upon. According to *Buddhavaṇsa*, right before he received the prophecy from Dipaṅkara Buddha, Sumedha had the following thought:

Should I so wish, having burnt up all the defilements and being newly ordained in the Order, I could enter Ramma city. But having burnt up my defilements while I am unknown is not a function for one attaining nibbana. Suppose now that I, like Dipaṅkara, Him of the Ten Powers, having attained the utmost full Self-Awakening, embarking in the ship of Dhamma and pulling out the populace from the sea of saṃsāra, afterwards should attain parinibbāna myself. This would be suitable in me. (*Sutta of the Buddha's Marvelous Deeds in Previous Lifetime*, emphasis added.)

As indicated in the underlined part, Sumedha vowed to first relieve people in the world from sufferings, then to attain Buddhahood. This point is remarkable because the practice for the sake of others is put before rather than after his attainment of Buddhahood, while it is generally believed that one needs to relieve one's suffering before helping others.

To return to the story, Dipaṅkara Buddha then perceived the sincere faith (a vow of 'seeking enlightenment above' and 'transforming sentient beings below') of Sumedha and Gopī, and predicted that Sumedha would, in the distant future, attain enlightenment as Sakyamuni Buddha. Gopī would

be reborn as *Yasodharā*, the wife of Sakyamuni before he renounced secular life, and the mother of *Rāhula*. Yasodhara converted to following Sakyamuni Buddha's teaching and became a Buddhist nun. The thirteenth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* (on "Encouraging Devotion") states that she will become a Buddha named 'Endowed with a Thousand Glowing Marks Thus Come One'.

Sakyamuni Bodhisatta is said to have practiced as a bodhisatta, lifetime after lifetime for countless *kappas* (P; kalpa, Skt) before he attained Buddhahood. There are two major views concerning that duration of the bodhisatta's practice prior to attaining Buddhahood that pertain to Sakyamuni's case in point. General traditions except Pāli Buddhism believe that it takes a bodhisatta three *asaṅkheyyas* and one hundred great *kappas* to perfect the practice, while Pāli Buddhism holds that a bodhisatta needs four *asaṅkheyyas* and one hundred thousand *kappas* to perfect the task. The details of the duration, however, were described differently elsewhere. For instance, some suttas mention ninety or ninety-one *kappas*, rather than a hundred major *kappas*, while a commentary on the *Jataka*, *Nidānakathā*, indicates four *asaṅkheyyas* and one hundred thousand *kappas*.

According to *Mahā-vastu* of *Lokuttaravāda* in *Mahāsaṅghika*, Sakyamuni Bodhisatta served over four billion Buddhas, and the text of *Sabbatthivāda* of *Theravāda* says that while Sakyamuni practiced as a bodhisatta, he served seventy-five thousand Buddhas in the first *asaṅkheyya* kappa of practice, seventy-six thousand in the second, seventy-seven thousand in the third, and six in the final major *kappas*.

A *kappa* is an extremely long period of time in ancient Indian cosmology. There are various views on the length of a *kappa*. According to *The Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom*, a *kappa* is longer than the time required to wear away a cube of rock forty Ri long (one Ri being about 450 meters) on each side, by brushing it with a piece of cloth once every hundred years. *The Great Perfection of Wisdom* also defines a *kalpa* as being longer than the time needed to remove all the mustard seeds that fill a city with an area of forty square Ri, if one takes away one seed every hundred years.

Asaṅkheyya is a numerical unit of ancient India used to indicate an exceedingly large number. One source has it equal to 10 to the power of 59, while another describes it as 10 to the power of 51, or as 10 to the power of 140, and another text says that one hundred major kappas multiplied by an asaṅkheyya is an asaṅkheyya kappa.

During these long periods, Sakyamuni Bodhisatva served numerous Buddhas and practiced bodhisattva austerities. The *Jātaka* depicts many scenes in which Sakyamuni Bodhisatta treated all living things equally without discrimination, and in which he is often referred to “as the *Bodhisatta*.” The Pāli commentary contains a collection of 547 stories. These stories depict the good acts carried out by Sakyamuni in previous lifetimes that enabled him to be reborn as the Buddha in India.

The belief that one’s good deeds enable one to be reborn as a Buddha can be found in ‘The Treasure-store Discourse’ (*Nidhikaṇḍasutta*) of The Minor Reading (*Khuddakapāṭha*) in Khuddaka-nikāya, which expresses the success of those who have made merit. Some examples are given below:

Yassa dānena sīlena, saññāmena damena ca; Nidhī sunihito hoti, itthiya purisassa vā. (Nidhikaṇḍasutta 4)

(But when a woman or a man shall have with gifts; / Shall have with gifts or virtuousness; / Or with refraining or constraint, / A store or merit well laid by.)

Asādhāraṇaṅ aññesaṅ acorāharaṇo nidhi; Kayirātha dhīro puññāni, yo nidhi anugāmiko. (Nidhikaṇḍasutta 9)

(No other have a share in it, / And robbers cannot steal this store; / So let the steadfast merit make, / The store that is their followers.)

Esa devamanussānaṅ sabbakāmadado nidhi; Yaṅ yad evābhipatthanti, sabbāṅ etena labbhati. (Nidhikaṇḍasutta 10)

(This is a store that can satisfy. / every desire of gods and men; / No matter what they aspire to have / All that they get by merit’s grace.)

Mānussikā ca sampatti [devaloke ca yā rati; Yā ca nibbānasampatti: sabban labbhati] (Nidhikaṇḍasutta 13)

(And every human excellence, / [Any delight in a godly world, / Even existence's excellence: / All that is got by merit's grace.]

Paṭisambhidā vimokkhā ca [yā ca sāvakaṇḍasutta; Paccekabodhi buddhabhūmi: sabban etena labbhati] (Nidhikaṇḍasutta 15)

(Discriminations, liberations, [Perfection of disciples [savaka] too, And enlightenment of Cause-awakened one, state of enlightenment of Buddha, All that is got by merit's grace].

Paramatthajotikā by *Buddhaghosa* states that the excellence of merit that consists in giving, virtue, etc. was mentioned in the *Treasure-Store*. Loving-kindness is helpful to that excellence of merit, since when loving-kindness is practiced towards creatures, it becomes very fruitful and capable of bringing and advancing the practice right up to the plane of Enlightenment. In addition, the Loving-Kindness Discourse (*Metta-Sutta*) is placed next to the *Treasure-Store Discourse*. It seems that there is a thread of connection between the teaching of the Loving-Kindness Discourse and the practice of the Bodhisatta. (The Loving Kindness Discourse is adopted in the *Sutta-Nipāta*).

One who practices towards Buddhahood is a Bodhisatta. During the era of primitive Buddhism, there was only one – Sakyamuni Bodhisatta.

Transition in the conception of the Bodhisatta

About a century after Sakyamuni's death, the Buddhist Order (*saṅgha*) was formed as a result of the first split due to controversies over the interpretation of doctrines and monastic regulations. A progressive group, the *Mahāsaṅghika* (Great Assembly), challenged the formalized traditionalism of the conservatives, known as the *Theravāda* (Those Supporting the Teaching of the Elders).

As Buddhism spread throughout India, communication among local Orders and among groups weakened, and a spirit of independence developed. Two or three hundred years later, Buddhism was divided into

eighteen (or twenty) schools. The sectarianism following the first schism is termed *Abhidhamma* Buddhism. Each school developed an *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*, a compendium of doctrinal commentary, which was also included in its canon. With the completion of the *Abhidamma-piṭakas*, the three divisions of the canon, or *Ti-piṭaka* (Three Baskets), were complete. The *Sutta* and *Vinaya-piṭaka*, dating to the period of primitive Buddhism, are on the whole fairly similar from school to school, but the *Abhidhamma-piṭakas*, having been completed independently, offer the clearest exposition of differences among the schools.

Theravāda Buddhism had been taught by the past seven Buddhas in the *Mahāpadāna Sutta* of *Dīgha-nikāya*, the past twenty-five and twenty-eight Buddhas in the *Buddhavaṅsa* of *Khuddaka-nikāya*.

Some schools of *Mahāsaṅghika*, however, insisted that there are innumerable Buddhas of the present and future in addition to the Buddhas of the Past. Furthermore, there are many worlds other than this world. The one in which Sakyamuni Buddha appeared exists in the ten directions and Buddhas can appear simultaneously in all of them.

During the *Abhidhamma* era, the *Mahāsaṅghika* expounded the innumerable Buddhas of the ten directions and three existences, and called anyone in practice for attainment of Buddhahood as the bodhisatta. As a result, the concept of the bodhisatta became more generalized.

The ten directions are the eight directions of the compass – north, south, east, west, northwest, northeast, southeast, and southwest – including above and below. The scriptures refer to the existence of Buddha lands in all directions throughout the universe, each with its own Buddha. The expression “the Buddhas of the ten directions” in the *sūtras* (Skt) indicates these Buddhas. The ten directions often appear with the three existences – past, present, and future. The phrase “the Buddhas of the ten directions and three existences” thus refers to all Buddhas throughout space and time.

Mahāsaṅghika allowed for the existence of many bodhisattvas, accompanying the innumerable Buddhas. That is, because there are many bodhisattvas who aspire to attain enlightenment and Buddhahood, so many

Buddhas are able to appear. The concept of the bodhisattva was broadened to include any being (*sattva*), monk (*nun*), or layperson, who aspires to attain enlightenment (*bodhi*). A bodhisattva is a Buddha-to-be, one who walks the path of enlightenment.

As time passed, each school tended towards monastic lifestyle that was increasingly reclusive, devoting themselves to the practice of precepts and the writing of doctrinal exegesis. This tendency, paradoxically, called for the Buddha's original spirit of working among the people for their salvation. This is the Mahāyāna movement that arose around the end of the first century B.C.E.⁴

Mahāyāna indicates that a teaching that can serve as a vehicle to carry a great number of people to the level of enlightenment equals that of the Buddha.

The Mahāyāna movement may have originated with the popular practice of *stūpa* (Skt) worship – revering the relics of the Buddha – that spread throughout India during the reign of King *Asoka*. In any event, it seems to have arisen at least in part as a popular reform movement involving laypersons as well as clergy.

Mahāyāna combines self-perfection with the enlightenment of others. Karmic retribution, that is, to attain perfection (Buddhahood) oneself and thus win release from *saṁsāra* (P, Skt), the cycle of birth and death, is worth nothing for the Bodhisattva, unless others are guided to enlightenment and liberated as well.

Saṁsāra, or transmigration or rebirth, refers to the cycle of birth and death that ordinary people undergo in the world of illusion and suffering. In India, the theory of transmigration first appeared in Upaniṣad philosophy

⁴ The point of note, however, is that *Sāvaka* seek only their own enlightenment and takes no thought for the world around them, but that some of them, through perfecting themselves by means of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, must be considered ready to act for the sake of others. They should not be thought of as self-righteous people striving merely for their own welfare but as individuals who teach others and guide them.

before the rise of Buddhism in the eighth or seventh century B.C.E. Buddhism holds that ordinary people undergo unending cycle of birth and death within the threefold world (the worlds of desire, form, and formlessness) and among the six paths (the realm of hell, hungry spirits, animals, *asūras*, human beings, and heavenly beings). This repeated cycle of birth and death in the realms of illusions and suffering is referred to as “transmigration in the six paths.” Unenlightened beings are born into one of the six paths in accordance with their actions in their previous existence. When the present life is over, they are reborn in the same or another of the six paths, repeating this process so long as they fail to free themselves from it. The Buddhist concept of emancipation (*vimokkha*, P) means liberation from this repeated cycle of birth and death in the realms of illusion and suffering.

Freeing oneself from transmigration in the six paths was considered the goal of Buddhist practice. The causes for such transmigration were ignorance of the true nature of life and selfish craving. Liberation from them required awakening to the truth and eliminating selfish craving, and was considered to lead to the attainment of Nibbān (*Nirvāṇa*, Skt) or emancipation. Abhidhamma Buddhism considered it the condition of the highest enlightenment.

Mahāyāna Buddhism developed the idea of the Bodhisattva even further. *Bodhisattva* came to refer to anyone who aspires to enlightenment and Buddhahood and carries out altruistic practice. Mahāyāna practitioners used it to refer to themselves, thus expressing the conviction that they would one day attain Buddhahood. Mahāyāna sets forth the ideal of bodhisattva who seeks enlightenment both for self and others, even postponing one’s entry into nirvāṇa in order to lead others to that goal. The predominant characteristic of a bodhisattva is, therefore, compassion.

Mahāyāna bodhisattvas take four great vows when he or she first resolves to embark upon the Buddhist practice. The four great vows of Mahayana Buddhism seem to connect with primitive Buddhism. The four universal vows are expounded in the “Great Concentration and Insight”,

one of T'ien-t'ai's⁵ three major works that combines the four universal vows with the Four Noble Truths.

According to page 304 of the *Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary* (佛教辭典, 1999), the four universal vows of bodhisattva-hood combine with the Four Noble Truths of primitive Buddhism as follows: “In regard to the four great vows of bodhisattva-hood, two kinds are known. One is as follows: ‘However innumerable sentient beings are, I vow to save them; however inexhaustible the passions are, I vow to extinguish them; however limitless the *dharma*s are, I vow to study them; however infinite the Buddha-truth is, I vow to attain it.’” The above four are, respectively, combined with the four items of the four noble truths. The other runs: “I will save those who are yet to be saved; I will make those who are frightened feel secure; I will help enlighten those who are yet to attain enlightenment; I will cause those who are not in *nirvāṇa* to be in *nirvāṇa*.”

In short, the four Universal vows are (1) to save innumerable living beings (衆生無辺請願度 in Chinese), (2) to eradicate countless earthly desires (煩惱無量請願度), (3) to master immeasurable Buddhist teachings (法門無尽請願度), and (4) to attain supreme enlightenment (仏道無上請願度)

Sakyamuni Bodhisatta in this lifetime

The stories of the Sakyamuni Bodhisatta in this lifetime are depicted in the “*Nālaka*” (*Nālakasutta*, P) at the time of birth, and in “Going-forth” at the time he renounced his dwelling, and in “Striving” (*Padhānasutta*) at the time of his battle against the devil of “The Great Chapter” (*Mahāvagga*) in *The Group of Discourses* (*Sutta-Nipāta*).

In the “*Nālaka*”, it is described that the seer *Asita* saw in their resting place a very joyful group of the thirty gods and asked them, “Why is the group of devas exceedingly happy?”, “having seen what marvel are the

⁵ T'ien-t'ai (538-597) = 天台; pinyin Tiantai; Japanese Tendai, also known as Chih-i, is the founder and the great teacher of the T'ient'ai school of Buddhism in China.

gods delighted?” and so on. The gods replied, “The *Bodhisatta*, excellent jewel, incomparable, has been born in the world of men for their benefit and happiness. Therefore, we are exultant and exceedingly happy.”⁶

Having heard that utterance, the seer *Asita* descended quickly from heaven and went to King *Suddhodana*’s dwelling. Having sat down, he said this to the *Sakyans*: “Where is the young prince? I too wish to see him.” Then to the one called *Asita* the *Sakyans* showed the child, the young prince.

The seer *Asita*, with joyful mind, cheerfully took hold of him. *Asita* uttered: “This one, unsurpassed, is supreme among two-legged men.” Then remembering his own impending departure, he was unhappy, and shed tears. Seeing the seer *Asita* wailing, the *Shakayans* said that “surely there will not be any obstacle to the young prince?”

The seer *Asita* said: “This young prince will reach the highest point of awakening. Seeing what is supremely purified, having sympathy for the benefit of the great majority, he will turn the wheel of the doctrine. His holy living will be famed far and wide. But not much of my life here remains, and there will be death for me before then. I shall not hear the doctrine of the peerless one; therefore I am afflicted, overwhelmed by disaster, miserable.” He took pity on his nephew named *Nālaka* and urged him towards the doctrine of the peerless one. “When you hear from another the words “Buddha” or “awakening”, go there, ask about his doctrine, and practice the holy life in the presence of that Blessed One.”

The following passage is concerned with *Sakyamuni*’s going-forth:

Seeing that this dwelling was constricted and polluted and that going-forth offered an open-air life, He went forth. Having gone forth, He avoided evil deeds with the body, abandoned bad conduct in word, and purified His mode of living. He went to *Rājagaha* and betook himself to *Giribbaja*⁷ of the *Magadhans* for alms, being endowed with the excellent

⁶ In this part, the word “Bodhisatta” is used.

⁷ a name for *Rajagaha*.

marks. Standing in the palace, King *Bimbisāra* (the king of *Magadha*) saw Him endowed with the marks and said this: “Look at this one; He is handsome, large, pure, and endowed with good demeanour, and he looks ahead a yoke’s length only. With downturned eyes, possessing mindfulness, this one is not as though from a lowly family. Let the royal messengers run out to find where the *bhikkhu* will go.”

Those royal messengers followed behind Him wondering, “Where will the *bhikkhu* go? Where will His dwelling be?”

Going on an uninterrupted begging round, with sense-doors guarded, well-restrained, He quickly filled his bowl, being attentive and mindful. The sage, having made his alms-round and left the city, betook Himself to *Paṇḍava*⁸, thinking “Here will be my dwelling.” Having seen him go to his dwelling, the messengers then sat down, but one messenger came back and informed the king. “That *bhikkhu*, great king, is seated on the Eastern side of *Paṇḍava*, like a tiger or bull, like a lion in a mountain cave.”

Hearing the messenger’s report, King *Bimbisāra* went hurrying in the state vehicle to Mount *Paṇḍava*. The king took the vehicle as far as the ground would allow him, then descended from the vehicle and went up to Him on foot. Having sat down, the king exchanged the customary friendly greeting and said: “You are young and tender, in your first youth, a stripling, endowed with good complexion and statue, like a *khattiya* of good birth, making beautiful the van of the army, at the head of a group of elephant. I shall give you objects of enjoyment; enjoy them. But tell me Your birth, when asked.”

Sakyamuni said, “Strait on (in that direction) there is a people, King, living on the flank of *Himavat*, endowed with wealth and energy, belonging to one who is indigenous among the *Kosalans*. They are *Adicca* (the sun) by clan, *Sakya* by birth. From that family I went forth, King, not desiring sensuous pleasures. Having seen the peril in sensual pleasures, having

⁸ the name of a mountain near Rajagaha.

seen going-forth as safety, I shall go in order to strive. In that my mind delights.”⁹

It is worth noticing that Sakyamuni Bodhisatta went straight to Magadha, the most powerful state, the center of a new culture and the most advanced technology as well as the most productive place.

The following is Sakyamuni’s retrospection of the battle against the devil (*Māra*, P, Skt) that tried to hinder His enlightenment. It is titled “Striving” (*Padhānasuttaṅ*). The devil (*Māra*) is a personification of evil and, generally, means killing, death, pestilence or obstacle. The devil is described as the great evil enemy of Sakyamuni and His teaching. When Sakyamuni entered into meditation under the *Bodhi* tree, the devil attempted to prevent Him from attaining enlightenment but failed.¹⁰ Here, we can read the temptation by the devil with the words of flattery and blandishment.

“While I was meditating for the attainment of rest-from-exertion, with myself intent upon striving, near the river Nerañjarā, having made a great effort, Namuci (the name of *Māra*) approached me, uttering compassionate words: ‘You are thin, of bad complexion; death is near you. There are one thousand parts of death; only one part of you is life. Live, sir, life is better. If you live, you will perform merits. Much merit will be heaped up by you practicing the holy life and sacrificing the *aggihutta* [sacrifice]. What do you want with striving? The road to striving is hard to travel, hard to perform, hard to achieve.’” Saying these verses *Māra* stood near the Buddha.

The blessed One said this to that *Māra*: “Kinsman of the negligent, evil one, you have come here for your own purpose. I do not have even the

⁹ The expression “with down-turned eyes, possessing mindfulness” means the mindful protection of any living thing in one’s path. That “He quickly filled his bowl” proves sakyamuni gained devotion from the general public. “*Adicca* (the sun) by clan” shows the vestige of ‘sun-worship’. In India during the middle ages, some royal households called themselves descendants from the sun and some from the moon.

¹⁰ In addition, the devil also tried to induce the Buddha to abandon His intention to preach, but this part will not be discussed here.

slightest need of merit, but mara ought to speak to those who have need of merits. There is faith, and energy, and wisdom is found in me. Why do you ask me about life even though my self is intent upon striving?”

Further, “This wind would dry up even the streams of the rivers; and why should my blood not be dried up when myself is intent upon striving? When my blood is being dried up, then the bile and phlegm are dried up. When the flesh wastes away, the mind becomes clearer, and all the more my mindfulness and wisdom and concentration stand firm. While I dwell thus, having reached the highest sensation, my mind has no regard for sensual pleasure. See a being’s pure state.”¹¹

Revealing the original form of the Māra, Sakyamuni says, “Sensual pleasures are your first army; discontent is your second; your third is hunger and thirst; the fourth is called craving. Sloth and torpor are your fifth; the sixth is called fear; your seventh is doubt; hypocrisy and obstinacy are your eighth. Gain, renown, honour, and whatever fame is falsely received, and whoever both extols himself and disparages others, that is your army, Namuci. That is the striking force of *kaiha* (black, that is, black devil. It refers to the devil Namuci). One who is not a hero cannot conquer it, but having conquered it one obtains happiness.”

This passage contains very important teachings. When we see through temptations by the devil, we can easily defeat the devil in our own mind. We are able to understand that the most powerful enemy is not outside, but inside ourselves.

Sakyamuni says, “Should I wear *muñja* grass? Death in battle is better for me than I should be conquered and live. Plunged into this battle some ascetics and *brahmans* are not seen, and they do not know the road by which those with good vows go. Seeing the army arrayed all round, and *Māra* with his elephant, I shall go forth to battle. May he not move me from my place! That army of yours which the world together with the devas cannot overcome, that army of yours I shall break with wisdom, as if

¹¹ This should be our determination when we wish to accomplish some purpose.

breaking an unfired pot with a stone. Having brought my thoughts under control, and making my mindfulness well-established, I shall wander from kingdom to kingdom, training many disciples. They, vigilant, and with selves intent, performers of my teaching, will go despite you, where having gone they will grieve.”¹²

The devil said, “For seven years I have followed the Blessed one step by step. I have not obtained an opportunity against the fully-awakened one who possesses mindfulness. A bird circled a stone which looked like fat, thinking ‘Perhaps we shall find something soft here; perhaps there may be [something] sweet.’ Not obtaining [anything] sweet, the bird went away from there. Like a crow attacking a rock and becoming despondent, we attacking Gotama and becoming despondent, will go away.” The *vīṇa* (P, Skt, a kind of musical instrument) fell from the armpit of the one overcome by grief. This discouraged the *yakkha* (here referring to the devil) who disappeared from that very spot.

According to *Sutta-Nipāta*, Sakyamuni’s practice of continual striving and struggle against temptation lasted seven years. According to the biographical story of the Buddha, Sakyamuni can be said to have become a Buddha by defeating the devil’s temptation.

Fifty-two stages of Bodhisattva practice in Mahāyāna Buddhism

Bodhisattva Practice Jeweled Necklace Sutra (Skt) focuses on the process by which a Bodhisattva becomes a Buddha and sets forth fifty-two stages of Bodhisattva practice in Mahāyāna Buddhism. These practices include ten stages of faith, ten stages of security, ten stages of practice, ten stages of devotion, ten stages of development, the stage of near-perfect enlightenment, and the stage of perfect enlightenment. It may be useful to consider the details of each of these stages in order to fully appreciate the practice of the Bodhisattva of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

¹² The first part of underlined text means, in Pali Buddhism, a sign of no surrender. In the second underlined part, Sakyamuni, before attaining enlightenment, declares to propagate Buddhism from country to country.

The ten stages of faith are arousing (1) pure faith, (2) ever-mindfulness, (3) assiduousness, (4) concentration, (5) wisdom, (6) following the precepts, (7) directing previously acquired good fortune towards attaining enlightenment, (8) guarding the mind against earthly desires, (9) discarding attachments, and (10) making efforts to fulfill one's vows.¹³

The ten stages of security are (11) arousing the aspiration for buddhahood, (12) contemplating the non-substantiality of things, (13) performing all possible good deeds, (14) clearly understanding that because phenomena exist only in relationship to other phenomena, they have no permanent and unchangeable substance of their own, (15) applying all good deeds as a means to developing one's perception of the non-substantiality of things, (16) perfecting the wisdom to perceive the non-substantiality of things, (17) never retrogressing from the realization of the truth of the non-substantiality of things, (18) never harboring false views or losing the aspiration for enlightenment, (19) deeply understanding the Buddha's teachings to the point where one is assured of attaining Buddhahood in the future, and (20) obtaining the wisdom to perceive that because all things are without substance, there is nothing that is actually born or dies.

In the ten stages of practice mentioned below, one devotes oneself to altruistic deeds.

The ten stages of practice are (21) the stage of joyful service in which one awakens to the nonsubstantiality of all things and phenomena and causes others to rejoice by offering them all of one's possessions, (22) the stage of beneficial practice in which one always instructs and benefits others, (23) the stage of never offending in which one engages in the practice of forbearance and frees oneself from anger, not offending others (it is also called the practice of never resenting), (24) the stage of limitless assiduousness, in which one continues earnest practice in order to lead others to enlightenment, no matter what hardships are involved, (25) the stage of nonconfusion in which one is not hindered by illusion or ignorance, (26) the stage of appearance in the Buddha land in which one is

¹³ There are differing descriptions of the content and order of the ten stages of faith.

always born, (27) the stage of non-attachment in which one perceives all things and phenomena as non-substantial and frees oneself from attachment to them, (28) the stage of attaining perfection in cultivating virtues, which is difficult to accomplish (it is also called the stage of praising in which one praises and promotes the *pāramitas* [Skt], or Bodhisattva practices for perfection among the people), (29) the stages of being a model in the preaching of the Law in which one's practice of preaching and protecting the Law becomes a model for all others, (30) the stage of realizing the truth in which one is awakened to the truth of the Middle Way.

In the following ten stages of devotion, one directs one's blessings toward other people:

The ten stages of devotion are (31) the stage of saving all people and freeing oneself from the characteristics of a common mortal (in this stage while practicing the six paramitas among the beings of the six paths, one makes efforts to save all of them and at the same time liberates oneself from the characteristics of a common mortal), (32) the stage of indestructibility in which with indestructible faith in the three treasures of Buddhism, one penetrates the true nature of all phenomena, realizing their non-substantiality, (33) the stage of impartial devotion to all Buddhas, in which one practices, in successive lives, under all the Buddhas of the three existences (in this stage, one increases all kinds of good roots and transfers their benefit to all beings impartially), (34) the stage of transferring one's benefits to all lands (in this stage, one transfers one's benefits to the Buddhas in all lands, serving and making offerings to them and to all other beings), (35) the stage of obtaining limitless blessing, in which one directs all of one's good fortune to the practice of Buddhism, thereby obtaining limitless good fortune and benefit, (36) the stage of impartial benefit, in which one benefits all beings equally, (37) the stage of observing the nature of all people, in which one perceives the coexistence of good and evil inherent in people's lives, (38) the stage of realizing the true aspect of all phenomena, one transfers the benefits one obtains through the realization to others, (39) the stage of freedom from all attachment – here, one perceives all phenomena from the standpoints of both difference and equality and frees oneself from all attachments, thereafter leading others to emancipation, (40) the stage of

perceiving all phenomena with infinite wisdom. At this level, one regards all phenomena as manifestations of the Middle Way and, while performing a variety of meritorious acts, uses the resultant benefits for the sake of others.

Moreover, the ten stages of development are the stages through which the practitioner conquers progressively deeper levels of darkness and advances in Buddhist practice. Though the system of the fifty-two stages of Bodhisattva practice is set forth in the *Jeweled Necklace Sutra*, there are several different sets of “ten stages of development” listed in different scriptures. The *Ten Stage Sutra* lists them as follows:

(41) The stage of joy, in which one rejoices at realizing a partial aspect of the truth, (42) the stage of freedom from defilement, in which one is free from all defilement, (43) the stage of the emission of light, in which one radiates the light of wisdom, (44) the stage of glowing wisdom, in which the flame of wisdom burns away earthly desires, (45) the stage of overcoming final illusion, in which one surmounts the illusion of darkness, or ignorance of the Middle Way.

Generally, the Middle Way or Path is the way that transcends polar extremes. It also indicates the true nature of all things, which cannot be defined by the absolutes of existence or nonexistence. It transcends the extremes of polar and opposing views, in other words, all duality. However, interpretations of this concept vary considerably from one text or school to another. The three major interpretations of the Middle Way or Path are as follows:

(1) According to Theravada teachings, it is the way leading to the Cessation of *Dukkha*. It avoids two extremes: one extreme being the search for happiness through the pleasures of the senses, which is low, common, unprofitable, and way of the ordinary people, and the other being the search for happiness through self-mortification in different forms of asceticism, which is painful, unworthy, and unprofitable. Having tried these two extremes and found them to be useless, the Buddha discovered through personal experience the Middle Path which gives vision and knowledge

leading to calm, insight, enlightenment, Nirvāṇa (Skt). This Middle Path is generally referred to as the Noble Eightfold Path (Rāhula, 1974).

(2) According to *Nagārjuna's Treatise on the Middle Way*, the true nature of all things is that they are neither born nor die and cannot be defined by either of the two extremes of existence or nonexistence. This true nature of things is non-substantiality, also referred to as the Middle Way. The *Treatise on the Middle Way* begins thus: "Neither birth nor extinction, neither cessation nor permanence, neither uniformity nor diversity, neither coming nor going..." This passage is termed the eight negations or the middle path of the eight negations and is intended to clarify the concept of the Middle Way.

(3) In T'ien-t'ai's doctrine of the three truths, the truths of the Middle Way means that the true nature of all things is neither nonsubstantiality nor temporary existence but exhibits the characteristics of both.

The ten stages of development continue as follows: (46) The stage of the sign of supreme wisdom, in which the supreme wisdom begins to appear, (47) the stage of progression, in which one rises above the paths of the two vehicles *Śrāvaka* (Skt, voice-hearers) and *Pratyekabuddha* (Skt, cause-awakened), (48) the stage of the all-penetrating wisdom, in which one dwells firmly in the truth of the Middle Way and cannot be perturbed by anything, (49) the stage of the all-penetrating wisdom, in which one preaches the Law freely and without restriction, and (50) the stage of the *Dharma* (Skt) cloud, in which one benefits all sentient beings with the *Dharma* or Law, just as a cloud sends down rain impartially upon all things.

(51) The stage of near-perfect enlightenment. It is the highest stage of Bodhisattva.

(52) The stage of perfect enlightenment. It is the unsurpassed enlightenment of a Buddha.

In reference to (52), the stage of perfect enlightenment, the plane of enlightenment (*Buddhabhūmi*) in the *Khuddakathā*, it is explained that the plane of enlightenment (*buddhabhūmi* in the *Khuddakathā*) establishes

supremacy over all creatures. In the *Pali-English Dictionary* (Davis and Stede, 1972: 490), *buddhabhūmi* is translated as “the ground of Buddhahood”.

The virtues of a Buddha are described as follows:

A Buddha is distinguished by extraordinary virtues. A large number of virtues are essential to a Buddha. They are the Eighteen Unique Virtues (or the Eighteen Unshared Properties), i.e. ① the Ten Powers, ② the Four kinds of Fearlessness, ③ the Three Types of Equanimity (Tranquility), ④ Great Compassion (or Great Pity). ⑤ the Ten Epithets (Ten honorable titles) of a Buddha that can be used when referring to a Buddha. The details of these virtues are as follows:

① The Ten Powers (*dasa-bala*): In the Great Commentary on the *Abhidhamma* and other treatises, they include (1) the power of knowing what is true and what is not; (2) the power of knowing karmic causality at work in the lives of all beings throughout past, present, and future; (3) the power of knowing all stages of concentration, emancipation, and meditation; (4) the power of knowing the conditions of life of all people; (5) the power of judging all people’s level of understanding; (6) the power of discerning the superiority or inferiority of all people’s actions; (7) the power of knowing the effects of all people’s action; (8) the power of remembering past lifetimes; (9) the power of knowing when each person will be born and will die, and in what realm that person will be reborn; (10) the power of eradicating all illusions.¹⁴

② The Four Kind of Fearlessness (*cattāri-vesarajjāni*): They are four types of confidence possessed by Buddhas – (1) fearlessness in declaring oneself to be enlightened to the truth of all phenomena, (2) fearlessness in proclaiming oneself to have extinguished all desires and illusions, (3) fearlessness in proclaiming oneself to have elucidated the obstacles to Buddhist practice and enlightenment, and (4) fearlessness in declaring oneself to have clarified the way of liberation from the world of suffering, and thus the way of attaining emancipation.

¹⁴ Some explanations of the ten powers give a different order or differ slightly in content.

③ The Three Types Equanimity (Tranquility): (1) A Buddha does not rejoice in the veneration of believers, (2) he does not grieve over others' lack of belief; (3) he neither rejoices in nor grieves over others' belief or slander.

④ Great Compassion (*mahā-karuṇa*): It is altruistic action that seeks to relieve living beings from their sufferings, and give ease and delight to them. A Buddha is revered as one who shares in the torments of all living beings and strives to release all beings from suffering and lead them to happiness. The *Compassionate White Lotus Flower Sutra* says that Sakyamuni, out of His immeasurable compassion, was born not in a pure land but in the troubled *saha* world to save the people. Therefore, He is compared to the most beautiful of all flowers, the white lotus flower, described in the sutra as a symbol of great compassion, and the other Buddhas in their respective pure lands are compared to lesser flowers. Both the Sanskrit text and its Tibetan translation are also extant.

⑤ Ten epithets (or Ten honorable titles) of a Buddha: They are expressions of such qualities as power, wisdom, virtue, and compassion. They include:

(1) Thus Come One (*tathāgata*, P and Skt): One who has come from the world of truth. A Buddha embodies the fundamental truth of all phenomena and grasps the law of causality that permeates past, present, and future.

(2) Worthy of Offerings (*arahant*): One who has come is qualified to receive offering from human and heavenly beings. The original meaning of *arahant* is “worthy of respect or veneration.” By offering such a one clothing, food, and accomodation, the donor can expect the merit of donation to return a hundredfold. One epithet of an *arahant* is “field for planting merit” (*puñña-khetta*). Just as seeds planted in such a field give high yields, that which is given the *arahant* will return, multiplied, as a great harvest of merit. It is in this sense that *arahant* is used as an epithet of a Buddha.

Other terms used to describe an *arahant* are *asekha* who has no more to learn, and *khīṇāsava* who has extinguished all delusions. *Arahant* has also been translated as “killer of bandits,” that is, one who has vanquished the

bandit of delusion. In addition, the sixteen arahants are important disciples of Sakyamuni, named *Piṇḍolabhāradvāja*, *Kanakavatsa*, *Kanakaparidhvaja*, *Subinda*, *Nakula*, *Bhadra*, *Kālika*, *Vajraputra*, *Śvapāka*, *Panthaka*, *Rāhula*, *Nāgasena*, *Aṅgada*, *Vanavāsi*, *Ajita*, and *Cūlapanthaka*. They were designated by Sakyamuni Buddha to protect His teaching for the benefit of the people after His death (法住記 Hōjū-ki: The Record of Ensuring the Abiding of the Law). The five hundred *arahants* are the five hundred monks said to have attended the First Council at *Rājagaha* after the Buddha's death. This usage of *arahant* should not be confused with that of arahant of a Buddha.

(3) Right and Universal knowledge (*sammā-sambuddha*): One with a correct and perfect understanding of all phenomena, or “one who is perfectly enlightened.” This is used to distinguish a Buddha's enlightenment from that of a *savaka* (voice-hearer) or a *paccekabuddha* (self-awakened one). It is frequently prefixed by the word *anuttara* (P, Skt), or supreme. Thus a Buddha's enlightenment is often referred to as *anuttara-sammā-sambodhi*.

(4) Perfect Clarity and Conduct (*vijjācāraṇa-sampanna*): One who understands eternity, or the past, present, and future existences, and who is a perfect performer of good deeds. Buddhist theory is rational, ethical, and religious, and is the basis of the practice of the Buddhist faith. All theory is related to practice. Both theory and practice are perfectly integrated in the person of a Buddha.

(5) Well Attained (*sugata*): also Well Gone – One who has gone over to the world of enlightenment: A Buddha is called Well Attained for four reasons: he treads the holy way of goodness and purity, He can attain immortal *nirvāṇa* (Skt. *amata-nibbāna*, P), He is able to achieve supreme enlightenment through mastery of the perfections, and His words are always appropriate to the occasion.

(6) Understanding the World (*lokavidū*): One who understands all secular and religious affairs by grasping the law of cause and effect. The world (*loka*, P, Skt) refers both to the “vessel (or) receptacle world” (*bhājanaloka*) and to the world of sentient beings (*sattaloka*). In this case, the World (*loka*) refers to the world of sentient beings or to sentient beings themselves. Having complete understanding of the thought, character, and capabilities of all beings, a Buddha helps sentient beings achieve release

from delusion by teaching them appropriate means and by knowing the nature of their suffering, its cause, the possibility of its eradication, and the means of bringing sentient beings to happiness. By understanding the world, a Buddha is able to teach sentient beings.

(7) Unexcelled Worth (*anuttara*, P, Skt): One who stands supreme among all living beings. No one can compare with him in the practice of morality, concentration, and wisdom, or in His emancipation and His perfect knowledge of the state of emancipation.

(8) Trainer of people (*purisadama-sārathi*): One who trains and leads all people to faith and to enlightenment. He guides people according to their individual condition, at times using gentleness, at times strictness, and at times a combination of the two.

(9) Teacher of heavenly and human beings (*sathā devamanussānaṅ*): One who can teach and educate all human and heavenly beings.

(10) Buddha, World-honored One (*bhagavat*): An awakened one, endowed with perfect wisdom and virtue, who wins the respect of all people.

Let us mention here the importance of faith. In the ten stages of faith and ten stages of security mentioned above, one aims at personal development. From this view, generally, faith is regarded as the practice for beginners. The reason is that faith is cited first because it is the starting point for all Buddhist practice.

Faith is a basic attitude emphasized in both primitive Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism. It constitutes the first of the five roots, or the five elements of practice conducive to enlightenment – faith, exertion, memory, meditation, and wisdom – and five powers, which are the five attributes obtained by the practice of the five roots.

Theragāthā (the elders' verses) mentions that *Sāriputta* believed in the Buddha and the teaching of the Buddha and was able to reach the goal as follows:

The blessed one, the Buddha, the one with vision, taught the doctrine to another; while the doctrine was being taught, being desirous of it I turned an attentive ear.

My listening was not in vain; I am released without *āsavas* (to eradicate illusion and earthly desire). Not for knowledge of former habitation, nor even for the deva-eye, nor for supernormal power of knowledge of passing away and rebirth, nor for purity of the ear-element was there any resolve of mine.¹⁵

The latter part of the “Simile and Parable” (third) chapter in the *Lotus Sūtra* (Skt) emphasizes the importance of faith, pointing out that even *Śāriputra* (Skt), known as foremost in wisdom, could “gain entrance through faith alone” and not through his own wisdom or understanding, as follows:

“Even you, *Śāriputra* (Skt), in the case of this *sūtra* (Skt), were able to gain entrance through faith alone. How much more so, than the other voice-hearers. / Those other voice-hearers – it is because they have faith in the Buddha’s word that they can comply with this *sūtra*, not because of any wisdom of their own.” (emphasis added)

The phrase “gaining entrance through faith alone” mentioned above became a famous Buddhist term in the *Lotus Sutra*.

The term “substituting faith for wisdom” means the principle that faith is the true cause for gaining supreme wisdom and that faith alone leads to enlightenment. In general, Buddhism describes supreme wisdom as the cause of enlightenment. The *Buddha-avataṅsaka-nāma-mahāvaiipūlyasūtra*¹⁶ (Skt) says, “Faith is the basis of the way and the mother of blessings.” The *Mahā-parinirvāṇa* (Skt) of Mahāyāna says, “Although there are innumerable practices that lead to enlightenment, if one teaches faith, then that includes all those practice.” The Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom attributed to *Nāgarjuna* reads, “The great ocean of Buddhism can be entered through faith.”

¹⁵ In this description, the power to be anywhere at will is missing from *chal-abhiñña* (six transcendental powers). It is thinkable that, at that period, the system of six transcendental powers was not introduced yet.

¹⁶ also known as the *Avataṅsaka Sutra = Flower Garland Sutra*

The faith mentioned above means *Śraddhā* in Sanskrit, and another Sanskrit word for faith is *Adhimukti*, which means faith based on understanding. It also means to first take faith in the Buddha's teaching and then to understand it. *Adhimukti* is the Sanskrit title of the "belief and Understanding" (fourth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra translated by Kumārajīva (Skt). The "Distinctions in Benefits" (seventeenth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra says, "*Ajita*¹⁷ (Skt), if there are living beings who, on hearing that the lifespan of the Buddha is of such long duration, are able to believe and understand it even for a moment, the benefits they gain thereby will be without limit or measure." (emphasis added)

In addition, in Mahāyāna Buddhism, as faith is the most fundamental for the attainment of Buddhahood, it gives rise to practice and study, and practice and study in turn serve to deepen faith. Nichiren great sage (1222-1282 in Japan) states, "Be sure to strengthen your faith, and receive the protection of Śākyamuni (Skt), Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions. Exert yourself in the two ways of practice and study. Without practice and study, there can be no Buddhism. You must not only persevere yourself; you must also teach others. Both practice and study arise from faith. Teach others to the best of your ability, even if it is only a single sentence or phrase."

Six stages of practice

The six stages in the practice of the Lotus Sutra were formulated by T'ien-t'ai in *Great Concentration and Insight*. They are as follows:

(1) The stage of being a Buddha in theory. At this stage one has not yet heard the correct teaching and is ignorant of Buddhism. Nevertheless, a single moment of life is in itself identical to the truth of the matrix of the Thus Come One; in other words, one is a potential Buddha.

(2) The stage of hearing the name and words of truth. At this stage through the spoken or written word one comes to an intellectual

¹⁷ another name for *Bodhisattva Maitreya* (Skt)

understanding that one has the Buddha nature and that all phenomena are manifestations of the Buddhist Law. This may take place through reading or hearing the words of the sutras.

(3) The stage of perception and action. Here one perceives the truth (of the Buddha nature) within oneself through practice. The truth and wisdom to perceive are in accord with each other, and one's words match one's actions.

(4) The stage of resemblance to enlightenment. At this stage, one eliminates the first two or three categories of illusion and attains purification of the six sense organs. Having advanced this far, one's wisdom resembles that of a Buddha. In terms of the fifty-two stages of practice, this stage corresponds to the first stages, the ten stages of faith.

(5) The stage of progressive awakening. This is the stage at which one eradicates all illusions except fundamental darkness and awakens progressively to the truth of one's Buddha nature. In terms of the fifty-two stages, it corresponds to the eleventh (the first stage of security) through the fifty-first (the stage of near-perfect enlightenment).

(6) The stage of ultimate enlightenment or the highest stage of practice. At this stage, one finally eliminates fundamental darkness and fully manifests the Buddha nature. This corresponds to the stage of perfect enlightenment, the last of the fifty-two stages.

T'ien-t'ai taught that all people at whatever stage of practice are equally endowed with the potential for Buddhahood. In this way he prevented his disciples from falling into the error of self-deprecation or becoming discouraged.

On the other hand, possessing Buddha nature is not the same as attaining Buddhahood. T'ien-t'ai therefore divided practice into six progressive stages to prevent his disciples from falling into the error of arrogance and thus relaxing in their effort. In the *Great Concentration and Insight*, he states: "if one lacks faith, one will object that it pertains to the lofty realm of the sages, something far beyond the capacity of one's own wisdom to understand. If one lacks wisdom, one will become puffed up with arrogance and will claim to be the equal of the Buddha."

Bodhisattvas in the *Lotus Sutra*

Some important Bodhisattvas in the *Lotus Sutra* include the following:

Mañjuśrī (Skt): The Bodhisattva appears in the sutra as the leader of the bodhisattva and is regarded as symbolic of the perfection of wisdom. In the introduction of the *Lotus Sutra*, Mañjuśrī answered Bodhisattva Maitreya's question why two categories of six auspicious happenings occurred during the time the Buddha entered into *Samādhi* (P, Skt). These are the six auspicious happenings occurring in this world and those occurring in other worlds.

The six auspicious happenings in this world are as follows: (1) the Buddha preaches the Immeasurable Meaning of Sutra, an introductory teaching to the *Lotus Sutra*; (2) He enters a profound meditation called the samadhi of the origin of immeasurable meanings; (3) four kinds of exquisite flowers rain down from the heavens; (4) the earth trembles in six different ways; (5) seeing these portents, the whole assembly rejoice and, placing their palms together, single-mindedly behold the Buddha; and (6) the Buddha emits a beam of light from the tuft of white hair between His eyebrows, illuminating eighteen thousand worlds to the east.

The six auspicious happenings occurring in other worlds are: (1) the light emitted by the Buddha reaches as high as the Akanishtha Heaven and as deep as the Avichi hell, so that the living beings of the six paths in all the illuminated worlds are clearly visible to those at the assembly of the sutra; (2) the Buddhas present in other worlds can be seen; (3) the preaching of these Buddhas can be heard; (4) the four kinds of believers – monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen – who have carried out Buddhist practices and attained the way can be seen; (5) bodhisattva practicing the bodhisattva way can be seen; and (6) it can be seen that, after the Buddha has entered nirvana, towers adorned with the seven kinds of treasures are built to house the Buddhas' relics.

Mañjuśrī said that after Sakyamuni arises from His samādhi He would preach "the Lotus of the Wonderful Law". From Mañjuśrī's own experience,

they include ① the last Sun Moon Bright Buddha among twenty thousand same named Buddhas in the past preached the Lotus of the Wonderful Law after the same auspicious portent as this, and ② at that time Mañjuśrī heard the *Lotus Sutra* as a bodhisattva named Wonderfully Bright who had eight hundred disciples, and ③ after the Buddha entered *nirvāṇa* of no reminder and had passed away, the Bodhisattva Wonderfully Bright taught the eight sons of the Buddha Sun Moon Bright, whose father had not yet left family life, had eight princely sons, and dignity and virtue came easily to eight sons, and each presided over a four continent realm. When these princes heard that their father had left family life and had gained anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, they all cast aside their princely positions and followed their father by leaving family life. ④ The eight sons all were able to achieve the Buddha way. The last to become a Buddha was one named Burning Torch. ⑤ Among the eight hundred disciples of wonderfully Bright was one named Seeker of Fame. He was greedy for gain and support, and though he read and recited numerous sutras, he could not understand them but for the most part forgot them. Bodhisattva Seeker of Fame was Maitreya. In addition, the Burning Torch Buddha is the first Buddha of twenty-five Buddhas of the past and is very famous as the Buddha who predicted enlightenment in the future (the prophecy of future) to Sakyamuni Buddha.

In the “Devadatta” (twelfth) chapter, the eight-year-old daughter of *Sāgara* (Skt) – one of the eight great dragon kings – conceived the desire for enlightenment when she heard Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva preach the *Lotus Sutra* in the dragon king’s palace. When Mañjuśrī asserted that she is capable of quickly attaining the Buddha wisdom, Bodhisattva Widom Accumulated challenges him, saying that even Śākyamuni (Skt) attained enlightenment only after fulfilling the bodhisatta practice for many kalpas and that she cannot become a Buddha so easily.

Before Widom Accumulated has even finished stating his disbelief, the dragon girl herself suddenly appears in front of the assembly and praises Śākyamuni Buddha by reciting these verses of praise. The last two stanzas of these verses are as follows:

And having heard His teachings, I have attained *bodhi* (P and Skt) – the Buddha alone can bear witness to this. / I unfold the doctrines of the Great Vehicle to rescue living beings from suffering.

Śāriputra voices doubt after hearing the dragon girl's determination (last two verses).

There are two reasons for Śāriputra's disbelief. In the first place, Śāriputra, like Wisdom Accumulated, has the false notion that the Buddha's enlightenment can only be attained by carrying out painful practices over an extremely long period of time. The second reason relates to the "five obstacles" that a woman cannot become a Brahma, a Śakra (Skt), a devil king, a wheel-turning king, or a Buddha.

At that moment, she offers a jewel to the Buddha. The Buddha immediately accepted it. The dragon girl said to Wisdom Accumulated and Śāriputra, "I presented the precious jewel and the World-Honored One accepted it – was that not quickly done?" They replied, "Very quickly!" The girl said, "Employ your supernatural powers and watch me attain Buddhahood. It will be even quicker than that!"

She then transforms herself into a male and instantaneously perfects the bodhisatta practice. She then appears in a land to the south called Spotless World and manifests the state of Buddhahood without changing her dragon form. With the thirty-two features and eighty characteristics of a Buddha, she preaches the *Lotus Sutra* to all living there.

The dragon girl's enlightenment has important implications. First, it refutes the idea of the time that women could never attain enlightenment, including the commonly held view of the doctrine of the five obstacles. Second, it reveals that the power of the *Lotus Sutra* enables all people equally to attain Buddhahood in their present form, without undergoing kalpas of austere practices.¹⁸

¹⁸ Furthermore, in this chapter, the attainment of Buddhahood by evil persons, that is, the principle that even evil persons have the potential for enlightenment, is expounded through the story between Śākyamuni and Devadatta. Śākyamuni reveals that He, in some past existence, learned the *Lotus Sutra* from a seer named Asita and that this seer was the present Devadatta.

In the “Peaceful Practice” (fourteen) chapter, Mañjuśrī asks Śākyamuni Buddha how bodhisatta should practice Buddhism in the evil age after Śākyamuni Buddha’s death. The Buddha expounds four rules or peaceful practices to be observed.

In “The Bodhisatta Wonderful Sound” (twenty-fourth) chapter, appearing last in the *Lotus Sutra* for Mañjuśrī and being called Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva prince of Dharma with a Superb Title, Mañjuśrī said to the Buddha: “What good roots has this bodhisattva planted, what benefits has he cultivated, that he can exercise such great transcendental powers as this? What samādhi does he carry out? I beg you to explain for us the name of this samādhi, for we too would like to apply ourselves diligently to its practice.” Mañjuśrī burns with inquiring mind. The sincere attitude of Mañjuśrī may be regarded as one of the classic examples.

Sutras depict Mañjuśrī as one of the two bodhisattvas who attended to Śākyamuni Buddha, the other being Samantabhadra (Skt, Universal Worthy). Mañjuśrī is generally shown in Buddhist art riding a lion at the Buddha’s left, and presents the virtues of wisdom and enlightenment. In *Suraṅgama-Samādhi Sutra* (Skt, The Heroic Valour Samādhi Sutra), Mañjuśrī appears as a Buddha of the past.¹⁹

Samantabhadra (Bodhisattva Universal Worthy): This Bodhisattva is regarded as symbolic of the virtue of truth and practice. In various sutras, he is depicted as one of the two leading bodhisattva who attended to Śākyamuni Buddha, the other being Mañjuśrī. He is usually shown on the Buddha’s right riding a white elephant with six tusks. In the “Universal Worth” (twenty-eighth) chapter, he vows to protect the *Lotus Sutra* and its votaries, saying to the Buddha: “In the evil and corrupt age of the last five-hundred-year period, if there is someone who accepts and upholds this sutra, I will guard and protect him, free him from decline and harm, see that he attains peace and tranquillity that no one can spy out and take advantage

¹⁹ The name Manchuria is said to derive from Mañjuśrī. It is a mountainous region forming the northeastern portion of China, now comprising the provinces of Juirin, Lianing, and Heilongjiang

of his shortcomings.” In this chapter, he also takes a vow before the Buddha, saying: “I now therefore employ my transcendental powers to guard and protect this *sutra*. And after the Thus Come One has entered extinction, I will cause it to be widely propagated throughout Jambudvīpa and will see that it never comes to an end.”

Bodhisatta Bhaiṣajyarāja (Medicine King): In “The Teacher of the Law” (tenth) chapter, Śākyamuni Buddha addressed Bodhisattva Medicine King and, through him, the eighty thousand Bodhisattvas. Bodhisattva Medicine King was in attendance of the great Assembly of the Lotus Sutra of Wonderful Law since the “introduction” (first) chapter. The teachings indicate the characteristic of the Bodhisattva in the *Lotus Sutra*. They are as follows:

<Five kinds of practice and practitioners’ vow and mission are described.>

<The importance of “for a moment thinking of the *Lotus Sutra* with joy” is stressed.>

<These persons (who read and recite the *Lotus Sutra*) in a latter-day existence are certain to attain Buddhahood.>

<These persons (the same mentioned above) are the great bodhisattvas who, while capable of being born into pure lands if they so desired, choose to be born into impure worlds so that they can expound the *sutra* to help the suffering. This is called the principle of “deliberately creating the appropriate karma.”>

<These persons (the same) are the envoys of the Thus Come One.>

<It is suggested that the identity of the teacher of the Law transcends distinctions between clerics and lay people.>

<The *Lotus Sutra* is the most difficult to believe and understand. Hatred and jealousy toward this *sutra* abound.>

<The three rules of preaching are robe, seat, and room after the Buddha’s death.>

It is preached that “The ‘Thus Come One’s room’ is the state of mind that shows great pity and compassion toward all living beings. The ‘Thus Come One’s robe’ is the mind that is gentle and forbearing. The ‘Thus Come One’s seat’ is the emptiness of all phenomena.”

Bodhisattva Maitreya: This Bodhisattva is predicted to succeed Śākyamuni as a future Buddha. The Sanskrit word Maitreya means friendly, benevolent, affectionate, or amicable. Also he is known as *Ajita*, meaning invincible. He is said to have been reborn in the Tusita Heaven and to reside in the inner court of this heaven, where he now teaches the heavenly beings. According to the advent of *Maitreya Sutra*, he is to reappear in the world 5,670 million years after Śākyamuni's death, attain Buddhahood, and save the people in Śākyamuni's stead. For this reason, he is also sometimes called *Maitreya Buddha*. In the "Emerging from the Earth" (fifteenth) chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, each of the Buddhas, who were emanations of Śākyamuni Buddha and had arrived from immeasurable thousands, ten thousands, millions of lands in other directions, spoke to his attendants, saying: "There is a bodhisattva and mahāsattva named Maitreya who has received a prophecy from Śākyamuni Buddha that he will be the next hereafter to become a Buddha." In the *Lotus Sutra*, Maitreya is a person who asks the question to Śāriputra in the Introduction (first) chapter. Also, he asks the important questions to the Buddha and is addressed by the Buddha in the "Emerging from the Earth" (fifteenth) chapter. In this chapter, the Buddha praises the question of Maitreya in the "Emerging from the Earth" (fifteenth) chapter, saying "Excellent, excellent, *Ajita*, that you should question the Buddha about the great affair."

Bodhisattvas of the Earth: An innumerable host of Bodhisattvas emerge from beneath the earth. They are called 'Bodhisattvas of the Earth' and are described in the "Emerging from the Earth" (fifteenth) chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. In this chapter, countless Bodhisattvas from other worlds ask for permission to propagate the *Sutra* in the *Saha* world after the Buddha's death, but Śākyamuni refuses, saying that Bodhisattvas who will carry out that task already exist in the *Saha* world. At that time, the earth trembles and splits open. And a host of Bodhisattvas emerge from within it. Their bodies are golden and they possess the thirty-two features that characterize a Buddha.

Bodhisattva Maitreya, on behalf of the assembly who were surprised, made the inquiry to the Buddha. At that time, The Buddha praised the question of Bodhisattva Maitreya, saying "Excellent, excellent....", as

mentioned above. The Buddha replies that they, Bodhisattvas of the Earth, are His original disciples whom He has been teaching since long ago. Bodhisattva Maitreya again asks how, in the mere forty-odd years since His awakening, Śākyamuni Buddha has managed to teach so many countless Bodhisattvas. He beseeches Śākyamuni Buddha to explain further, especially for the sake of people in the future who may wonder about this point. The “Emerging from the Earth” chapter ends here. To answer Maitreya’s question, Śākyamuni reveals in the next chapter, “The Life Span of the Thus Come One” (sixteenth) chapter, that in reality countless *kalpas* have passed since he first attained enlightenment.

In the “Supernatural Powers of the Thus Come One” (twenty-first) chapter, Śākyamuni transfers the essence of the *Lotus Sutra* to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, entrusting them with the mission of propagating it after his death, specifically in the latter day of the Law.

Bodhisattva Never Disparaging: In the “Bodhisattva Never Disparaging” (twentieth) chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, Śākyamuni Buddha illustrates the story of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. The chapter describes this bodhisattva as having lived in the Middle Day of the Law after the death of a Buddha named Awesome Sound Kings (Bhīṣma-garjita-svara-rāja Buddha, Skt). According to this chapter, this Buddha appeared in the remote past and expounded the four noble truths for persons seeking to become voice-hearers, the teaching of the twelve-linked chain of causation for persons seeking to become pratyeka-buddhas (pacceka-buddha, P), and the teaching of the Six Paramitas for Bodhisattvas, so that they could gain their respective benefits. After the death of this Buddha, Buddhas bearing the same name, Awesome Sound King, appeared one after another, numbering “Twenty thousand million” in all.

Bodhisattva Never Disparaging appeared during the Middle Day of the Law after the original Awesome Sound King Buddha. He bowed to any and all people he happened to meet, showing respect for their inherent Buddha nature. Never Disparaging venerated all people, repeating the phrase “I have profound reverence for you. I would never dare treat you with disparagement or arrogance. Why? Because you are all practicing the

Bodhisattva and are certain to attain Buddhahood.” Arrogant and conceited, however, they ridiculed, vilified, stoned and beat the Bodhisattva with staves.

Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, however, persevered in his practice and achieved purification of his six senses through the benefit of the *Lotus Sutra*. When arrogant people who had treated Bodhisattva Never Disparaging with ridicule and contempt heard his preaching and saw that he had purified his senses, they all took faith in him and became his followers. But due to their past offenses of treating him with animosity, they did not encounter a Buddha, hear of the law, or see the community of monks for two hundred million kalpas. For a thousand kalpas, they underwent great suffering in the Avichi (Skt. Avici, P) hell. After they had finished paying for their offenses, they again encountered Bodhisattva Never Disparaging and received instruction from him to attain supreme perfect enlightenment.

This story illustrates the principle of attaining enlightenment through a reverse relationship, or the connection established with the correct teaching through rejecting or slandering it.

Śākyamuni Buddha identifies Bodhisattva Never Disparaging as himself in a past existence and reveals that those who disparaged him are present in the assembly of the *Lotus Sutra*. Śākyamuni Buddha further states that these people are now at the stage of practice where they will never regress in their pursuit of supreme perfect enlightenment. He then urges that the *Lotus Sutra* be single-mindedly embraced and propagated after His death.

The reason why the arrogant and conceited ridiculed, vilified, stoned and beat the Bodhisattva with staves is shown in the Bodhisattva Never Disparaging’s teaching, “you are all practicing the Bodhisattva and are certain to attain Buddhahood.” In the chapter, those who gave way to anger, their minds lacking in purity, spoke ill of him and cursed him, saying, ‘This ignorant monk – where does he come from, presuming to declare that he does not disparage us and bestow on us a prediction that we will attain Buddhahood? We have no use for such vain and irresponsible predictions!’ They could not understand their own Buddha-nature.

Buddha-nature (*Buddhatva*, Skt and *Buddhatta*, P) is the internal cause or potential for attaining Buddhahood. Mahayana Buddhism generally holds that all people possess the innate Buddha, though its existence is obscured by illusion and evil karma. The history of Buddhism has witnessed doctrinal arguments concerning the Buddha nature, especially with regard to whether all people possess it.

Buddha-nature is also explained in the Pali-canon. Innately pure mind or innate purity of one's essential nature (*Pakatiparisuddhacitta*, P) and buddha-nature (*buddhatta*, P) or the Matrix of the Thus Come One (*Tathāgata-gabbha*, P) is the theme in this part.

In Chapter VI, "The One of the Book of the Gradual Sayings" (More-numbered Sutta, *Āṅguttara-Nikāya*) Vol. I, § The 1-10, the finger-snap says the following:

Thus have I heard: on a certain occasion the Exalted One was staying near *Savatthi*, at *Jeta* Grove, in *Anathapiṇḍika*'s Park. Then the Exalted One addressed the monks.

'This mind, monks, is luminous (*pabhassara*, P), but it is defiled by taints that come from without (*āgantukehi upakkilesehi*, P). But this the uneducated manyfolk understands not as it really is. Wherefore for the uneducated manyfolk there is no cultivation of the mind, I declare.'

'That mind, monks, is luminous, but it is cleansed (*vippamutta*, P) of taints that come from without. This the educated Ariyan disciple understands as it really is. Wherefore for the educated Ariyan disciple there is cultivation of the mind, I declare.' (emphases added)

In chapter 5 On Flowers, The Middle Fifty, Kindred Sayings on Elements, The Khanda Book (*Khandha-vagga*) of The Book of the Kindred Sayings (Grouped Suttas, *Saṅyutta-Nikāya*), § 100 (8), The Leash (ii) says and gives concrete details as follows:

At *Sāvatti*. ... Then the Exalted One said—:

'Incalculable, brethren, is this round of rebirth. No beginning is made known of being wrapt in ignorance, fettered by craving, who run on, who fare on the round rebirth.

Wherefore, brethren, again and again must one regard one's own mind thus: "For a long, long time this mind has been tainted by lust, by hatred, by illusion." By a tainted mind (*cittasamkilesa*, P), brethren, beings are tainted. By purity of mind (*cittavodāna*, P) beings are made pure.

Brethren, have ye (P) ever seen a picture which they call "a show-piece?"

'Yes, Lord.'

'Well, brethren, this so-called show-piece is thought out by mind. Wherefore, brethren, mind is even more diverse than that show-piece.

Wherefore, brethren, again and again must one regard one's own mind thus: "For a long time this mind must have been tainted by lust, by hatred, by illusion." By a tainted mind (*cittasamkilesa*, P), brethren, beings are tainted. By purity of mind (*cittavodāna*, P) beings are made pure.'

These sentences of Anguttara-Nikāya and Sanyutta-Nikāya, especially the underlined parts, are quoted as the source for the aspiration to enlightenment (*bodhicitta*, P) and the buddha-nature (*buddhatta*, P) or tathāgatā embryo (*tathāgata-gabbha*, P) – that is, the potential for attaining buddhahood inherent in all sentient beings – as the source of this aspiration in Mahayana-Buddhism.

Lastly, the following are the phrases of the Group of Discourses (Sutta-Nipāta) from "1.8. Loving-kindness" and the *Lotus Sutra* from "the Life Span of the Thus Come One" (sixteenth) chapter:

(From "1.8. Loving-kindness" of the Group of Discourses (Sutta-Nipāta)

145. Let all creatures indeed be happy (and) secure; let them be happy-minded.
146. Whatever living creatures there are, moving or still without exception, whichever are long or large, or middle-sized or short, small or great,
147. Whichever are seen or unseen, whichever live far or near, whether they already exist or are going to be, let all creatures be happy-minded.

From “the Life Span of the Thus Come One” (sixteenth) chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*:

At all times I think to myself:

How can I cause living beings to gain entry into the unsurpassed way, and quickly acquire the body of a Buddha?

These are the messages of greatest value from the Buddha to all people. All people should set their mind’s eyes toward the Buddha for their own and others’ happiness.

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