

The Buddhist Model for Renewal:
An Examination of
Contemporary Buddhist
Sangha in Asia

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Introduction

The Buddhist model for renewal presupposes the need for examining what Byron Earhart refers to as "the spiritual and transcendental dimensions of human experience,"¹ in counter-distinction to historical factors that shape religious thought. This is particularly so because Buddhism, like any other religion, is subject to the processes of "fossilization and renewal." Fossilization takes place when Buddhism fails to provide the transcendental insight to interpret historical realities. It is renewed when it provides this insight. The historical continuity of the Buddhist tradition depends on the constant cyclic feedback between the transcendental and the historical. The two are not unrelated. In Buddhist terms this feedback between the transcendental and the historical specifically refers to the feedback between the Buddha-Dharma and the Sangha.² The feedback formula will be applied to examine two specific subjects: the relationships between monks and the laity and between church and state.

This paper is divided into three sections: (1) the three jewels as a model for renewal; (2) the relationship between monks and the laity; and (3) the relationship between church and state. In passing, it might be pointed out that though Mahāyāna³ presupposes universal enlightenment,⁴ Theravāda, too, is capable of providing the "spiritual and transcendental dimensions of human experience." The theme that the Buddhist model for renewal is found in its own tradition, which this paper intends to call attention to, is articulated by critically examining both the Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions.

The Three Jewels: The Buddhist Model for Renewal

The three jewels are the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. The Buddha is the object of faith; the Dharma is the object of understanding; the Sangha is the fellowship of men devoted to that faith and understanding, which are manifested through the practice of compassion (*karuṇā*). Faith and understanding transcend the bounds of established institutions. The Sangha is an ecclesiastical institution that relates itself to established social institutions through practice. In order to respond creatively to historical changes, Buddhism depends on the constant cyclic feedback between the Buddha-Dharma and the Sangha. This means that the Buddha-Dharma is the spiritual source of the Sangha. It also means that though the Buddha-Dharma transcends the bounds of established institutions, Buddhists must reassess the Buddha-Dharma with reference to historical changes, because the Buddha-Dharma has its meaning only with reference to the Sangha. Reassessment does not undermine the religious value of Buddhism; on the contrary, it is a means to prevent the fossilization of the Buddha-Dharma. The feedback between the Buddha-Dharma and the Sangha is the formula for Buddhists to contribute creatively to the development of their own culture and to articulate the religious value of Buddhism in contemporary society.

According to early texts,⁵ the Buddha, in his first sermon at Deer Park, proclaimed, "I am the Tathāgata." Tathāgata is one of the many designations assigned to the Buddha, the enlightened one. Conze says: "Tathāgata can only be understood as tathā-gata or thathā-āgata, 'thus gone' or 'thus come,' 'thus' meaning traditionally 'as the previous Buddhas' have come or gone."⁶ Yamaguchi analyzes Thathāgata into "thathā-gata" (one who has gone to the realm of nirvāṇa) and "thathā-āgata" (one who has returned to the realm of *samsāra*, that is, transmigration).⁷ The term Tathāgata is frequently employed as a modifier for the three jewels.⁸ The notion of Tathāgata, though not necessarily originating with Buddhists,⁹ probably was an attempt on the part of the early Buddhists to identify the Buddha with a long tradition, but among the Mahāyāna followers there might have been a conscious attempt to identify that term with the notion of the union of *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra*, as Yamaguchi seems to imply.¹⁰ In Tantric Buddhism, union is realized through *adhishthāna*, which refers to a function, practice, or action (sometimes a ritual) designed to bring about the merging

of the Buddha's compassion with man's faith and understanding of the Buddha and Dharma. The Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, also referred to as the Nine Assembly Maṇḍala (one of the two basic forms of the Japanese Shingon Maṇḍala), is a graphic representation of the interchange between *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra*. The path to *nirvāṇa* is the cultivation of wisdom (*prajñā*); the path to *samsāra* is the cultivation of *karuṇā*.¹¹ In Mahāyāna, enlightenment consists of involvement in both *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra*. More specifically, the identity of *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra* presupposes that the vitality for involvement in *samsāra* is derived from *nirvāṇa*, while *nirvāṇa* maintains its validity only insofar as *samsāra* remains an issue of historical reality. Oldenberg therefore defines Tathāgata as "der Vollendete."¹²

The Bodhisattva¹³—literally, a universal savior—plays a prominent role in Mahāyāna literature, such as in the *Prajñā-Pāramitā*, *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka*, *Sukhāvā-tīvyūha*, and other *sūtras*. A Mahāyāna Bodhisattva is a mortal who has renounced his own immediate enlightenment to carry on the role of a universal savior in the world of *samsāra*: he is the ideal mankind; he lives in the world of *samsāra* but derives the vitality for worldly involvement from the Buddha-Dharma. The *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka Sūtra*¹⁴ presents a lively scene, where the Buddha, who is about to go into extinction, calls forth the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Arhats in order to delegate the mission of spreading the Lotus Dharma to those who qualify. He delegates that mission not to the "enlightened ones" but to those living in the "world beneath the earth," meaning, probably, the persecuted ones who live in the experience of human sufferings.

The Buddhist model for renewal is involvement in worldly, historical reality, and its vitality for this involvement is derived from the transcendental Buddha-Dharma, which may be identified as *nirvāṇa*, *tathā-gata*, or *prajñā*. The message of this model for renewal is the identity of *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra*, *tathā-gata* and *tathā-āgata*, *prajñā* and *karuṇā*. A Bodhisattva is a personality that is directed to the path of *tathā-āgata* and derives his vitality from *tathā-gata*.

Monks and the Laity

Sākyamuni first converted the five *śrāmaṇa* (mendicants) in Śārnath. He then preached in Rājagṛha, Srāvastī, Vaiśālī, and

other places in the central Ganges valley, where he probably gained a significant number of converts. These early converts became, for the most part, monks, not laymen. The early Sangha was a fellowship of monks.¹⁶ Sākyamuni's early disciples were men of good families (*grihapati*), which implies that Sākyamuni recognized that the survival of the monastic Sangha depended on establishing a rapport with wealthy sponsors. The early Sangha was a community of monks isolated from the lay community, though laymen were urged to take part in the lay *uposatha*¹⁸ (confession) meetings, which were generally held six times a month and presided over by monks. But by rule, monasteries were recognized as the precinct of monks. They were supported by the lay community, which presented offerings as a means to accumulate merit, a deeply rooted tradition in ancient India. The tradition that monasteries depended on the laity, without the loss of their rights as independent social entities, was probably possible in areas in which such a tradition already existed or in countries in which Indian influence had been dominant, such as Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia. The establishment of such monasteries in China and Japan, where Confucian ethics predominated and where alms-begging was not received sympathetically, required radical change.

The rule of morality distinguished the monks from the laity. Morality in Buddhism is referred to as *sīla* or *vinaya*.¹⁷ *Sīla* originally referred to a quality, trend, or action brought about by a habit; it later became known as "wholesome action" or "good ethical conduct."¹⁸ Buddhist literature frequently refers to *sīla* as that which removes the impurities (*kleśa*) of body, speech, and mind and restrains "unwholesome conduct." *Sīla* is, then, a personal restraint and the standard of personal conduct. Inasmuch as it is a personal matter, details of *sīla* vary among monks, nuns, novices, and the laity, and even among schools and sects. But the basis of *sīla* consists of five or, at most, ten items: abstention from (1) taking life, (2) taking what is not given, (3) sexual misconduct, (4) wrong speech, (5) fermented liquor, (6) eating after noon, (7) theatrical arts, (8) adorning the body, (9) sleeping on a high bed, and (10) taking money. Monks, novices, and nuns were required to observe all ten; the laity, the first five. The third—sexual misconduct—was rigidly enforced upon monks, novices, and nuns, but was relaxed to allow sexual relations between husband and wife. Inasmuch as *sīla* is a personal restraint and is not imposed externally, a

monk was expected to be his own judge and to suffer the agony of his own conscience if he transgressed any one of the items.

Vinaya originally meant instruction or discipline; it eventually came to mean the instruction designed to maintain the discipline of the Sangha (of monks).¹⁹ Items taught by the Buddha to maintain the discipline of the Sangha were organized as the *Vinaya-piṭaka*, and eventually some two hundred, or even over three hundred, items were added on.²⁰ *Vinaya* therefore refers to a rule of conduct imposed upon an individual externally by the Sangha. It is restricted to disciplining monks, novices, and nuns, but not the laity. As a matter of fact, the laity was not allowed a knowledge of the *vinaya*. Gradually, the *vinaya* was expanded to include *śīla*, and thereafter the distinction between *śīla* and *vinaya* became obscure.

The fact that the *vinaya* constituted the rule of conduct for monks alone means that a clear functional distinction was made between monks and the laity with regard to enlightenment in primitive Buddhism. Nagao says that the *stūpa* at Sanchi symbolically illustrates the difference: the central mount, projecting the notions of simplicity, serenity, and stability, represents the ideal image of monks; the fence surrounding it, showing the bodies of women, children, wealth, *nāgas*, and *devas*, represents the ideal secular life.²¹ The function of monks was to set a model for enlightenment; that of the laity was to support monks as a means to realize secular benefits and favorable rebirth.

It might be of some interest to point out here that the second Buddhist Council was allegedly held at Vaisāli, where commerce thrived. Since monks such as Vajjiputtaka, who favored the practice of accepting gold and silver and fermented liquor as offerings, were condemned, the council evidently favored orthodoxy. The Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese Buddhists hardly seem to take the *vinaya* literally. If they did in the past, that tradition has not survived. The early Chinese Buddhist catalogue²² tells that Kumārajīva (c. 350-409), a learned monk from Central Asia, was forced by the King of Kuccha into marriage to a princess. He came to Chang-an in about 401 and translated many Buddhist texts into Chinese. While in Chang-an, he did not live in a monastery but in a splendid mansion where he was surrounded by ten beautiful women offered to him by the Chinese emperor. Kumārajīva evidently was above cultivating the discipline for sexual abstinence, and he undoubtedly directed his energy to more productive enterprises. The Japanese

Shinran (1172-1262) married, perhaps more than once. He produced the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*,²³ a Buddhist text that commands much respect in Japan. Transgression against orthodox *vinaya* is not a conviction of moral corruption, but adherence to the *vinaya* provides the possibility of fossilizing Buddhism. Transgression provides a new dimension for the reexamination of Buddhism and its renewal, as the studies of Kumārajīva, Shinran, and other prominent personalities in Buddhist history seem to indicate.

Ch'an Buddhism in China no longer depended on the offerings of the laity, and it established an economically independent monastic order. The "Commentary on the Sayings of Huai-hai" (720-814) says, "a day without work is a day without food."²⁴ Saichō (766-822) of Japan rebelled against the orthodox *vinaya* and established an independent platform of ordination and an educational curriculum, including such secular enterprises as road-building, shipbuilding, agriculture, well-digging, irrigation, and so forth,²⁵ at his Mount Hiei monastery, activities that monks and nuns in India were prohibited from being involved in.

These examples show that the Buddhist model for renewal in China and Japan favored lay orientation over orthodox monasticism, an orientation that involved a radical reinterpretation of the orthodox *vinaya*. This does not say that Kumārajīva, Huai-hai, Saichō, and others succeeded in establishing a lay Sangha; however, they did provide the moral strength to challenge orthodoxy, particularly the *vinaya*, and laid the groundwork for the development of a lay-oriented Sangha. Lay orientation is the crucial issue that Buddhism now confronts.

Maeda reports the inability of the Ceylonese Buddhists to involve themselves in active economic enterprises, such as fishing, primarily because of their insistence on adhering to the orthodox *vinaya*.²⁶ (The same can be said of the Cambodians, who are favored with Tonle Sap, one of the world's greatest fresh-water fishing grounds. The Tamils in Ceylon and the Vietnamese and Chinese in Cambodia form the source of manpower for the lucrative fishing industry.) Because of their monastic orientation, the Ceylonese Sangha is an exclusive body: "Rights to the headship of a temple, the inheritance of temple property, and kinship ties combine to make the ordination lineage the major institution of the Buddhist order of monks in Central Ceylon," according to Hans-Dieter Evers.²⁷ He con-

tinues, "If no property rights or only insignificant ones are involved, either the monks cannot attract any pupils at all, in which case the lineage will not be continued, or they may ordain pupils who are not related to them."²⁸ Wriggins says that a new caste system based on the degree of English comprehension is in the process of formation in Ceylon.²⁹ In this respect Christian-sponsored schools are favored insofar as secular education designed for developing a "New Nation" is concerned, according to Ikeda.³⁰ Badgley states that secular British colonial rule, rather than the traditional monarchical rule based on a Buddhist cosmology, contributed in bringing about administrative unity in Burma.³¹ *The Annual Reports of the Department of Religious Affairs*, Thailand, contain interesting data. In 1926, there were about 210,000 monks; the figure for 1959 was 250,000. Though there was an increase of 40,000 in thirty-three years, the population of Thailand more than doubled during that period. The 1964 figure, inclusive of monks, nuns, and novices, was 240,517. Even disregarding allowance for population growth, the number of professional members of the Sangha shows a definite decrease between 1959 and 1964. The Thais may be devout Buddhists, but very few of them are willing to commit themselves as monks. Japan's new religions are quite successful inasmuch as lay orientation is concerned, but what they propose is nothing short of a restatement of a feudalistic ethics.³² The Buddhist Sangha in Korea and Taiwan is split between the home-departed (celibate) monks and the home-based (non-celibate) monks. Noncelibate monks are institutional products of the period of Japanese colonial rule in these two countries. Ironically, noncelibate monks, though they may be less inclined to observe traditional discipline, are generally better learned in Buddhological issues, primarily because they are less resistant than the celibate monks to expose themselves to the products of contemporary Japanese Buddhist studies. Whether they will be able to actively promote Buddhism in their respective countries is beside the point, however.

Lay orientation is a decisive factor that contributes to the process of the democratization of the Sangha, but even in the basically lay-oriented Sangha of Japan, Buddhists have not yet formulated creative and concrete means to relate traditional religious values to the solution of contemporary issues. Functional division between monks and the laity is maintained in the Sangha of other countries.

Church and State

Legend has it that at the time of the birth of Siddhārta, a holy man descended from the Himalayas to prophesy that this child had one of two choices that would shape his destiny: to become a king and rule over the kingdom of the Sākya or to become a Buddha and enlighten the people of the world. An ideal king, in the Indian tradition, is the *cakra-pravartana-rāja*, the king of the chariot wheel with which enemies are crushed. Buddha means one who exercises infinite wisdom and compassion. Siddhārta could not choose to become both. His choice to become a *śramaṇa* and eventually the Buddha meant that he had to renounce all forms of worldly desire. The Buddha followed this line of thought throughout his life and paid the price of his choice: he passively witnessed the conquering of Kapilavastu by the Kosalans and the massacre of the members of the Sākya clan. Ironically, the Buddhist councils—from the first one allegedly held at Rājagriha following the death of the Buddha to the one allegedly held in Kashmir in the second century A.D.—were traditionally sponsored by kings. This tradition was observed even as late as the nineteenth century.²³ It identified a king as the "Head of the Church and the Defender of the Faith."

Furthermore, Buddhism in Southeast Asia absorbed native folk deities—the *nats* of Burma, the *phi* of Thailand, the *neak-ta* of Cambodia—as well as *devas*, *nāgas*, the *linga*, and other Indian deities and cult practices. Folk deities are fertility deities, earth deities, and ancestral spirits, all wrapped up in one. They provide identity among the members of what Emile Durkheim referred to as "segmentary society," a self-sufficient, rice-farming, village community. The natives, who practiced fertility cults, were receptive to the Buddhist doctrine of *ḥarma*—physical transmigration and reincarnation. Religious syncretism and belief in *ḥarma* provided the psychological ground for the co-existence of church and temporal authority: Buddhism embraced local folk deities; kings embraced Buddhism, identified themselves as Buddha-rājas, and exercised control over all deities and people who worshiped them.

The principle of coexistence between church and temporal authority resulted in the assumption of church power by secular authority. Buddhism in Southeast Asia influenced the temporal power by supporting temporal authority, and temporal authority

employed Buddhism as an instrument to unify the people: Buddhism permeated the masses by coalescing with folk religion; it gained the support of the state by subordinating itself to the state; and it prevented itself from becoming the apparatus for critical thinking among its devotees by involving itself in both enterprises. It molded itself into a system of doctrine to be accepted without questioning; it glorified the nation, sanctified the ruler, and promoted conservative loyalty. Kitagawa says, "More often than not, Buddhism accepted uncritically its assigned role, upholding the *status quo*, even serving as a spiritual tranquilizer for the oppressed by promising happiness in the world to come."⁹⁴

Modern Thai Buddhism offers a good example of church subordination to state power. The June 1932 coup d'état led by a group of young military officers and civilian officials, most of whom were trained in France, overthrew the Thai monarchy and, in its place, established a constitutional monarchy. Buddhism was employed as the instrument to foster Thai tradition and pride: the tricolor Thai national flag represents the Thai race, the monarchy, and Buddhism. Monks willingly adapted themselves to the new political climate, a matter clearly demonstrated when some two thousand monks petitioned Premier Phrayao Phahon in February 1935 to place the Thai Sangha under state control in order to bring it in line with the democratic regime. The Buddhist Order Act of 1941 reorganized the Thai Sangha: under the Supreme Patriarch, appointed by the king for life, were the Assembly, the Cabinet, and the Court—the Sangha's legislative, executive, and judiciary bodies. The Assembly was composed of forty-five members appointed for life by the Supreme Patriarch. The executive branch consisted of the central administration, comprising four departments, and the local administration, comprising regional, provincial, county, village, and individual *wat* (temple) units, one administering the other in hierarchical order. The judiciary consisted of three courts, each with its head and ministers appointed from among the members of the Assembly by the Supreme Patriarch. Though the Sangha managed to function in orderly fashion for over a decade, sectarian disputes eventually developed. The Mahayut, the major sect, controlled over 90 percent of the country's temples and monasteries; but the Thammayut, the minor sect, managed to control half of the seats in the executive cabinet, prob-

ably due to its close relationship with the royal family. (The founder of the Thammayut was a member of the royalty.)

Marshal Sarit led a coup in September 1957. He had no patience with democratic processes; he felt that democratic processes would be ineffective for achieving national development. Sarit gained control of all facets of government and carried out drastic policies aimed at attaining his goals. He intervened in ecclesiastical matters. The Buddhist Order Act of 1962 centralized ecclesiastical power under the Supreme Patriarch. A note attached to the Acts on the Administration of the Buddhist Order says:

The reason for enactment of this Act is that the administration of the Buddhist Church is not a matter to be based upon the principle of separation of powers for the sake of balance among them as is the case under the current law. Such a system is an obstacle to effective administration. It is therefore appropriate to amend the existing law so that the Supreme Patriarch, head of the ecclesiastical community, can command the order through the Council of Elders in accordance with both the civil law and the Buddhist disciplines, thereby, promoting the progress and prosperity of Buddhism.⁴⁵

Sarit believed that national unity was necessary for national development. He appealed to Thai traditional values—monarchy and Buddhism—to realize it. The Sangha was reorganized to help foster national unity. A highly centralized administrative order of the Sangha, subordinated to the central government, was established: The Supreme Patriarch, appointed by the king, was empowered to issue commands; the assembly was abolished; below the Supreme Patriarch was the Council of Elders, consisting of some four to ten members appointed by the Supreme Patriarch, who in turn was the Council's president *ex officio*, while the Director General of the Department of Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Education became the Council's Secretary General *ex officio*; and administrative hierarchy, from the regional to the individual *wat* level, was brought under the control of the Council. The Council was empowered to disrobe any monk whom it considered undesirable. The present Thai Sangha is hierarchical, is modeled upon the Thai government bureaucracy, and is placed under it. The principle of the separation of church and state in the Thai context means that monks

are deprived of their political rights, among them the right to criticize government policy.

The predominantly Mahāyāna Vietnam Sangha offers a direct contrast to the Thai Sangha, though belief in karma and religious syncretism pervade Vietnamese Buddhism as well.⁸⁶ The Vietnamese have an illustrious history of public dissent and revolt, perhaps because their country was under Chinese occupation for centuries. But during that occupation, the Vietnamese had mastered the Chinese art of bureaucracy; had domesticated the Chinese literary tradition, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism; and had developed a social organization and a culture which were in no way inferior to those of the French, who entered Vietnam in the 1860's. Though Vietnam had produced no Buddha-rājas, Vietnamese emperors frequently employed monks as court advisors, such as Ngo Chan Luu, who served Emperor Dinh Bo Lanh (968-980); Van Hanh Thuyen-su, who tutored Emperor Ly Thai To (1010-1028) and whose name is now employed to designate the Buddhist University in Saigon, established in 1964; and Thuyen Lao To-su, the spiritual master of Emperor Ly Thai Ton (1028-1054). The Tran Dynasty (1225-1400) was the most glorious period of Buddhism in Vietnamese history. Based on this strong Buddhist tradition, Vietnamese monks challenged the status quo in the 1960's, though it must be added that the modern Buddhist revival in Vietnam can be traced back to the early twentieth century.

The problem of individual dissent against state power is an old one. Socrates defended his conviction about the supremacy of the individual conscience and the value of free discussion in the court of Athens, and he abided by the decision of that court. The alternative to death was exile, if he were to uphold his conviction; but exile would have disqualified him from being a socially and politically committed citizen. The dilemma that Socrates faced has yet to be resolved. The issue of individual dissent against state power was dramatically demonstrated by the self-immolation of Vietnamese monks, which was an effective religious demonstration but not an effective political one. The note left by Thich Quang Duc, the first monk to burn himself to death in the crisis of the 1960's, said: "I vow to sacrifice myself on the altar of the Buddha and by its merits to realize the perpetuation of the Dharma, the peace of Vietnam and of the world, and the well being of mankind. Homage to Amitābha."⁸⁷

The glorious moments of Buddhism in Japanese history

were the Nara (710-781), Heian (781-1180), and Kamakura (1180-1331) periods. Buddhism permeated the masses during the one-hundred-year war following the Ōnin Rebellion (1467-1477), during which time the combined forces of the samurai and the peasants overthrew the aristocratically oriented political, economic, social, and religious structure. However, Buddhism succumbed to the powers of medieval *daimyōs* (military lords) in the late sixteenth century. It passed through the period of Meiji nationalism (1868-1912) without eliminating the feudalistic elements of the Sangha, such as the *dankā* system established during the Tokugawa period (1600-1868). The *dankā* is a legal ecclesiastical unit of families committed to a given temple, in which funerals and religious services are held, the deceased are buried, and annual festivals are observed and which, in return, requires its members to assume financial responsibilities for the maintenance of that temple. The Tokugawas conceived of the *dankā* not only as a parish system but also as an administrative unit under its bureaucracy for keeping control of its feudal subjects. All subjects under Tokugawa Japan were assigned to a *dankā* temple. A monk in charge of a *dankā* temple possessed the right to issue certificates of identification (birth, marriage, death, family composition, place of residence, occupation, travel permit, and so forth), and he frequently usurped his position as an overseer of the citizens to act as a watchdog for the Tokugawas. The present *dankā* temples, though they no longer represent an institution of watchdogs, nevertheless maintain the feudalistic mood and outlook of the Tokugawa period. For example, even today a Japanese seldom selects a faith of his own choice; he is committed by virtue of his family's tradition to a *dankā* temple. As such, a *dankā* temple today is merely an instrument for transmitting the religious tradition developed under the feudalistic mood of the Tokugawas. Its major activity is funeral services.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the facts that organized Buddhism in Japan allied itself with conservative elements in suppressing the labor movement, the peace movement, and parliamentary practices in the 1920's and supported aggressive war in the 1930's and the 1940's cannot be overlooked.⁸⁹ The defeat of Japan in 1945 produced confusion among the Buddhists, for the very idea that organized Buddhism had endorsed as a means to enable Japan to rise as a world power was discredited.

The rise of the new religions, particularly after World War II, poses a challenge to established Buddhism. The new religions

of Japan are unique because they identify with the masses. However, the new religions cannot (and do not desire to) deal death-blows to the established religions, just as Kamakura Buddhism could not eliminate Nara-Heian Buddhism. The new religions will affect the established religions to such a degree that further simplification of the established doctrine and practice will be necessary to satisfy the common needs. How the new religions or the established religions will fare in the future will depend largely on their ability to relate traditional religious values to contemporary issues and to provide insight into the relation of the individual to his cultural and religious heritage in the face of intense industrialization and urbanization.

Conclusion

The Thai Sangha represents a case of church subordination to state power. It requires a critical examination of the *vinaya* and the church-state relationship. The Vietnamese Sangha (particularly the militant An Quang faction led by Thich Tri Quang) represents a case of the church challenging state power. In both the Thai and Vietnamese Sanghas, Buddhism is identified with nationalism; in both, *vinaya* is taken seriously. In Japan, *vinaya* has not been a serious issue since the twelfth century, generally speaking. Monks generally abrogated it. Nor is the matter of church-state relationship a serious issue today, as it was prior to 1945. The problem for Buddhism in Japan today is to identify itself with the masses and to contribute creatively to the solution of human alienation and anxiety. It must explain the meaning of human existence in an industrialized urban society, and it must point out the destiny of the Japanese with respect to their nation and to the rest of the world as Japan assumes an increasingly important role in international affairs and as Japanese ideological interest gradually turns outside their small island empire.

However, Buddhism, whether Theravāda or Mahāyāna, relates itself to existing socio-political institutions from a soteriological point of view. It has not yet developed a social and political philosophy. Specific requirements for the Buddhist renewal in Asia today therefore include a serious consideration for a creative and concrete proposal to solve the problems of human suffering (*dukkha*) based on the awareness that in its own tradition Buddhism offers a model for renewal, which is contingent on examining the "spiritual and transcendental dimensions of

human experience" as the basis of religious change. The feedback between the Buddha-Dharma and the Sangha, the model for renewal, provides for the diversity of expression in individual countries, each expression representing a means (*upāya*) to realize the essence of the Buddha-Dharma. In Buddhism, the means is as important as the essence. The means is compassion; the essence is wisdom. Compassion is the means through which wisdom is manifested. The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* goes as far as to say that "means is the ultimate."⁴⁰ The means in the *Sukāvativyūha-upadesa* is defined as the "transferring of merits one has accumulated for the benefit of others."⁴¹

The Tathāgata is the rational basis of Buddhist humanism; the Bodhisattva is the ideal Buddhist personality. The feedback formula requires a perceptive insight into what these two terms mean in contemporary society. The three jewels then become meaningful to modern Asian Buddhists, because the foremost concern of Buddhist Asia is not so much in molding itself to patterns of Western civilization but in preserving its own cultural and religious heritage and thereby contributing creatively and positively to world civilization.

NOTES

1. Byron Earhart, "The Interpretation of the 'New Religions' of Japan as Historical Phenomena," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 37.3:248 (Sept. 1969).

2. Sangha is a Buddhist ecclesiastical order. Buddha-Dharma means the content of enlightenment.

3. The sixth century B.C. in India was the period of the development of agriculture and of the rise of the merchant class, monarchy, and criticism of the Vedic authority in the central Ganges valley. Within this social, economic, and cultural background emerged Śākyamuni. The generally accepted periodization of the history of Indian Buddhism is as follows: Primitive (the period when the Dharma as thought by Śākyamuni and his immediate disciples was observed and practiced), Abhidharma (the period of the commentaries and sectarian schisms), Mahāyāna, and Tantric Buddhism. Primitive Buddhism, which emphasized adherence to the rule of morality (*dharma*) as a condition to the practice leading to liberation (*nirvāṇa*), evolved into sophisticated Abhidharma academism; Abhidharma masters produced the *Abhidharma-mahā-śāstra*, *Abhidharma-kośa*, *Abhidharma-śāstra*, and other *śāstras* (commentaries) and contributed to the development of the Abhidharma elite; Mahāyāna rebels challenged the Abhidharma elite, emphasized universal enlightenment, and composed the *Vimalakīrti-nirvāṇa*, *Lotus (Saddharma-pundarikā)*, *Sukāvā-*

śrāvaka, and other *sūtras*. The Abhidharma tradition, in the form of Theravāda, is dominant in present-day Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia; Chinese Mahāyāna exercises a dominant influence in present-day China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam.

4. The Sino-Japanese Buddhist tradition (as well as those of the Koreans and the Vietnamese) holds that *kalpa* (eons of time) *āra* (the rule of morality), and stages of practices are not necessary requirements for enlightenment. It advances, in turn, theories of abrupt or instant enlightenment. Enlightenment in this traditional context is not necessarily a process requiring time and (ascetic) practices but constitutes the simple awareness of the inherent state of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*). The Chinese Hua-yen and T'ien-t'ai schools speak of abrupt enlightenment, theoretically; actually, however, they adhere to the traditional stages of *bodhisattva* practices, which number some fifty-two or fifty-three. It is in Zen and Shingon that abrupt and instant enlightenment is stressed most emphatically. Abrupt versus gradual enlightenment is a subject that has been argued for centuries among the Buddhists in Asia. Enlightenment is conceived of as abrupt from the standpoint of enlightenment per se, i.e., from one who has realized *bodhicitta*. Awareness of *bodhicitta*, however, may be gradual. The logic of abrupt enlightenment flows from the "whole" to the "part"; that of the gradual, from the "part" to the "whole." Thus, Zen claims that "the mortal mind, just as it is, is that of the Buddha." Shingon goes a step further and claims that "the mortal body, just as it is, is that of the Buddha." T'ien-t'ai claims that the ten worlds—of hell, hungry ghosts, beasts, fighting spirits, heaven, man, *śrāvaka* (Buddha's immediate disciples), *pratyeksbuddha* (self-enlightened ones), *bodhisattva*, and Buddha—are coinvolved and are of the mind. Hua-yen conceives of the world in terms of the law of coexistence and mutual identity of various elements of existence.

5. *Majjhima-nikāya*, I, 171 f.; *Suttanipāta*, 1114; *Theragāthā*, 1205, etc.

6. Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India* (London, 1962), p. 172n.

7. Susumu Yamaguchi, Enichi Ōchō, Toshio Andō, and Issai Furuhashi, *Buḱkyōgaku jōsetsu* (Introduction to Buddhism; Kyoto, 1961), pp. 154-55. The italics are mine.

8. "Tathāgatam . . . Buddhān namassāma; Tathāgatam . . . Dhammān namassāma; Tathāgatam . . . Saṅghān namassāma" (*Samyutta-nikāya*, pp. 236, 237, 238).

9. The line "dvijam drstvā tathāgatam" (having seen a person who is twice born) is found in the Mahābhārata. Cf. *Mahābhārata, with the Commentary of Nīlakaṇṭha* (Poona, 1929), XII, 146, l. 26. The Jains employ the term "tathāgaya." Cf. *Sūyagadama*, I, 13, l. 2.

10. Yamaguchi, *Buḱkyōgaku jōsetsu*.

11. Minoru Kiyota, "Shingon Mikkyō Mandala," *History of Religions*, 8.1:39-49 (Aug. 1968).

12. H. von Oldenberg, *Buddha: Sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde* (Berlin, 1881), p. 312.

13. The term *Bodhisattva* employed in the *Jātaḱa* refers to the title of the Buddha prior to his enlightenment. The term takes on a different meaning in Mahāyāna literature. For its Mahāyāna meaning, cf. Edward Conze, "Buddhist Saviors," reprinted from *The Savior God*, ed. S. G. F. Brandon (Manchester, England, 1963), pp. 67-82.

14. See the *Taiśō Tripitaka* (hereafter abbreviated as T.), Vol. IX, bks. 262, 263, 264, chap. 10.

15. For details, cf. Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: Their History and Contribution to Indian Culture* (New York, 1962), pp. 58-97.

16. *Upasatha* is the day of confession, or self-criticism. In primitive Buddhism, it was held two or four times monthly, depending on sites, usually on the days of the full and new moon (about the fifteenth and the thirtieth of each month, but sometimes on the fourteenth and the twenty-ninth as well). The lay *uposatha* was held six times monthly: on the eighth, fourteenth, fifteenth, twenty-third, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth.

17. Mochizuki gives a wide range of texts containing information on the rules of *śīla*. Cf. *Mochizuki bukkyō daijiten* (Mochizuki Buddhist encyclopedia), Vol. I (new ed.; Tokyo, 1954), pp. 902b-903c. See also Akira Hirakawa, *Ritsuzō no kenkyū* (Studies on the *Vinaya-pitaka*; Tokyo, 1960), pp. 278-88. For details on the *śīlasa*, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 291-324. In English, cf. E. Frauwallner, *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*, Serie Orientale Roma, Vol. VIII (Rome, 1956).

18. *Shih-sung lu*, T., 23.1435:2a.

19. *Pi-mo-yeh*, T., 24.1464:852c.

20. Hirakawa, *Ritsuzō no kenkyū*, pp. 58-113, outlines sources for investigating the *Vinaya-pitaka*.

21. Gadjin Nagao, "Bukkyō kyōdan to bunka katsudō" (The Buddhist Sangha and its cultural activities), *Seisaku no bunshū*, Vol. III: *Indo-Aen* (World culture, Vol. III: *India*), ed. Teruo Ueno (Tokyo, 1965), pp. 86-87.

22. "Ch'u san-tsang ch'i-chi," chap. 10; cf. T., 55.2145. Also see "Kao-seng-chuang," T., 50.2059:330 f.

23. T., 83.2646:589-644.

24. "Pai-chang hui-hai sh'an-shih kung-lu." Cf. *Zōkuro-kyō*, Vol. II, bk. 24, p. 5.

25. *Kenkaei-ron*, T., 74.2376.

26. Egaku Maeda, "Seiron bukkyō gakujūto chōsa chūkan hōtoku" (An interim report on the investigation of Ceylonese Buddhism), *Kanagawa Festschrift* (Tokyo, 1966), pp. 360-61.

27. Hans-Dieter Evers, "Kinship and Property Rights in a Buddhist Monastery in Central Ceylon," *American Anthropologist*, 69.6:709 (Dec. 1967).

28. *Ibid.*

29. W. Howard Wiggins, *Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation* (Princeton, N.J., 1960), pp. 202-3.

30. Chōsaborō Ikeda, "Mareisha no seiron in okeru etosu no hendō" (The changing character of ethos in Malaysia and Ceylon), *Asiya kindo-ka no kenkyū* (Modernization of Asia; Tokyo, 1969), p. 384.

31. John H. Badgley, "The Theravada Policy of Burma." *Tōnan asiya kenkyū* (Journal of Southeast Asian studies), 2.4:75 (Mar. 1965).

32. Minoru Kiyota, "Buddhism in Postwar Japan," *Monumenta Nipponica*, 24.1-2:136 (1969).

33. During the period 1868-1871, Mindon-min (1853-1878), the ninth Alaungphaya king, assembled eminent monks of Burma, who selected "authoritative" Buddhist texts and had their contents inscribed on the Kuthodaw, the now-renowned 729 stone *mūpas*, an event occasioned by the fear of British encroachment. The Burmese considered this occasion as the fifth Buddhist Council. The sixth, sponsored by U Nu, was held in Rangoon in 1954.

34. Joseph M. Kitagawa, "Buddhism and Asian Politics," *Asian Survey*, 2.5:4 (July 1962).

35. As quoted by Yoneo Ishii, in "Thailand: Church and State," *Asian Survey*, 8.10:869-70 (Oct. 1968).

36. Indian *dhyāna* was introduced to Vietnam by Vinitaruci in 580; Chinese Ch'an, by Vo-Ngon-Thong in 820. Pure Land (Sukhāvatī) took sectarian shape in China soon after T'an-luan (476-542) produced the *Saṅghāvāsa śūtra* Commentary, popularly known as *Lan-chu*. Pure Land became popular in Vietnam in the late sixth century. Ch'an merged with Pure Land, with the latter playing a more dominant role by the sixteenth century. Pure Land devotionalism paved the way for incorporating Taoist practices of incantation and magic, in direct contrast to the Japanese Pure Land tradition. The merging of Pure Land, Ch'an, and Taoism was complete by the eighteenth century.

37. The note was observed by and translated for this author at Vien Hoa Dan, Saigon, in July 1965. At that time, a small pot of cactus with white ashes sprinkled on its soil was enshrined at the side of the main altar. The ashes were the remains of Quang Duc and symbolized his spirit, which, the Vietnamese Buddhists claimed, is like a cactus: neither can be destroyed by fire. The pot serves as a constant reminder to the Buddhists of the mission that needs to be carried on—the preservation of the Dharma at all cost in the face of government persecution.

38. Cf. Taijo Tamamuro, *Sōshiki bukkyō* (Funeral Buddhism; Tokyo, 1964).

39. Munenori, Suzuki, "Bukkyō kyōdan no kiso kōzō" (Basic structure of Japanese Buddhist organization), *Nihon shūkyōshi kōza* (Essays on the history of Japanese religion), Vol. IV, ed. Saburō Ienaga, Ichii Oguchi, Mochiyuki Kawasaki, and Akio Saki (Tokyo, 1959), pp. 172-84; Taijō Tamamuro, "Nihon bukkyōshi gaisetsu" (Survey of the history of Japanese Buddhism), *Gendai bukkyō meicho senjū* (Collection of modern Buddhist works), Vol. VIII, ed. Hajime Nakamura, Bun'yu Masutani, and Joseph M. Kitagawa (Tokyo, 1960), pp. 226-37; Kyūchi Yoshida, *Nihon kindai bukkyō shakairi kenkyū* (Studies on the history of modern Japanese Buddhism; Tokyo, 1964), are the standard works on modern Japanese Buddhism composed from the historical and social perspective. Unfortunately, they do not cover the period after the 1920's. Saburō Ienaga, "Nihon no kindaika to bukkyō" (Japan's modernization and Buddhism), *Kōza: Kindai bukkyō* (Modern Buddhism), Vol. II (Tokyo, 1961), pp. 7-35, is an interesting essay written with a Marxist slant.

40. T., 18.848, p. 1a.

41. T., 47.1963, p. 231b.