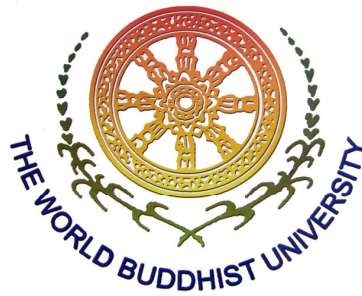


# **The World Buddhist University**

## **E – Journal**



**Volume 7 No. 2**

**July – December 2011**

## **Introduction**

In this Volume, all readers are invited to take a close look to important roles of Buddhist studies in both the academic realm and in our daily lives. As we know, Buddhism is not only a world religion but also culture and life of Buddhists in Buddhist and non – Buddhist countries. To be a true Buddhist is to know the Buddhist teachings and to be able to accomplish the Buddhist practices. Buddhist Studies are therefore crucial for all Buddhists and also good for non-Buddhists who may enjoy a close contact with Buddhists.

I hope that the three articles in this Volume will present you some ideas concerning the good of Buddhist Studies in China, a non-Buddhist country with a part of population who are Mahayana Buddhists, and in Thailand, a Theravada Buddhist country.

I believe that the promotion of Buddhist studies can yield benefit not only for Buddhists themselves but also for the rest of all humanity.

***Pataraporn Sirikanchana***

***Editor***

# The Four Noble Truths The Truths for Human Beings' Liberation and for Application in Solving Problems

**Dr. Banjob Bannaraji**

## **Introduction**

When asked about what the Buddha realized, we quite often gain an easy answer: “He realized the Four Noble Truths – Suffering, the Cause of Suffering, the Cessation of Suffering, and the Path to the Cessation of the Cause of Suffering.”

Usually, we pay little attention to how he realized the doctrine. Why? Because it seems that we, as Buddhists, are satisfied with what he attained and made him attain Supreme Enlightenment rather than paying attention to his teachings on how to attain freedom from suffering. Actually, the “how to attain” is interesting and worthy of study, it covers his greatness: beginning with how to think and how to practice leading to success in the end.

However, before going into details, let us study why the four truths are called “Noble Truths”? In the Buddhist scriptures, the term is derived from “ariyāni saccāni” in Pali or “āryāni satyāni” in Sanskrit. Both “ariyāni” and “āryāni” (original form, ariya or ārya) literally mean “getting freed from defilements”, while “saccāni” or “satyāni”, are the Pali and Sanskrit words for “truths”. Therefore, the Four Noble Truths means “the four truths making one free from defilements.” Notably, getting freed from defilements originates from the realization of the Four Noble Truths; the realization gives birth to freedom, and freedom gives birth to sustainable peace and happiness. Moreover, the Four Noble Truths are known as always-existing; wherever and whenever, they last perpetually and remain unchanged.

## **The Form of the Four Noble Truths**

The Buddhist scriptures describe the Four Noble Truths taught by the Buddha himself as shown in the following charts;

Chart 1 (as the process of the origination of suffering)

Suffering	The Cause of Suffering
Birth → old age → death ↓ sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and stress ( based on separation from lovely things, association with unlovely things)	(Ignorance → mental formations → consciousness → mentality and corporeality → the six sense-bases → contact → feeling → <b>craving</b> (→ clinging → becoming) <sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The items in parenthesis, in the upper right column, are not mentioned in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, the Buddha’s first sermon. I, the writer, have taken them from the original Patīccasamuppāda and included them here in order to confirm the dependent origination between craving and others.

The above chart gives four ideas;

1. The Buddha clearly separated suffering and the cause of suffering and at the same time revealed the relation as cause and result of them, making known suffering as the result, and the cause of suffering as the cause. Furthermore, he gave details of both as seen in the chart.

2. One interesting question is: What is the true definition of suffering? In Buddhist scriptures, there are many definitions given – pain, misery, woe, trouble, discomfort, and difficulty, but here ‘oppression’ is its true meaning and covers all other meanings. Because of oppression, beings and things are subject to change and loss.

3. In the chart, among worldly persons, defined as suffering are birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and stress. Commonly, people are confused how birth can be suffering, because in their eyes birth brings about joy and birthday celebrations are a good example of this sentiment. In the Buddhist view, however, birth in its true nature leads human beings to inevitably face old age and death, which accompanies birth as soon as it comes into being.

4. Suffering as the result was presented first and followed by the Cause of Suffering as the cause. Why did the Buddha do like that? Because he wanted to make the truths easy to understand. As we know, there are various sufferings as mentioned above in chart, they are phenomena experienced and witnessed in daily life and easy to understand, so it is proper to present them first. From that, he presented its cause in order to show the relation between suffering and the cause of the suffering. At this point, he was like a medical doctor; just as when we go to a doctor, he has to know our illness first and then he investigates its cause, likewise the Buddha wanted each of his listeners (like sick people) to know their own suffering first and then led them to know its cause. Surely, I believe, the listeners would have been confused if he had presented them with the cause of their suffering first, in the same way; it is odd, if a doctor tells his patient the cause of a disease the symptoms of which the patient has never felt.

5. In the chart displaying the cause of suffering as one of the Four Noble Truths many factors are listed, but the Buddha mentioned only **craving** as the cause of suffering when he preached his first sermon, the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (the Discourse on Putting the Dhamma in Motion). However, in the presentation of the Dependent Origination or “Paticcasamuppāda”, there are three defilements mentioned as the main cause of suffering, namely **ignorance, craving** and **clinging**. They play an important role in giving birth to suffering, and these defilements are indeed the factors that cause suffering. Of the three terms, **craving** is more vivid than the rest, but in truth **ignorance** and **clinging** reinforce **craving**.

Chart 2 (as the process of the cessation of suffering)

The cessation of suffering	The path to the cessation of the cause of Suffering
Five cessations : Cessation by suppression (by Insight Meditation) Cessation by substitution of opposites (by Tranquility Meditation) Cessation by cutting off (by the	The Eightfold path : <b>Wisdom</b> Right View, Right Thought, <b>Morality</b> Right Speech,

knowledge of the destruction of mental intoxication) Cessation by tranquillization (by the knowledge of the tranquillization as the fruit of the destruction of mental intoxication) Cessation by getting freed absolutely with no return of the destroyed intoxication <sup>2</sup>	Right Action, Right Livelihood, <b>Concentration</b> Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration
--	--

1. The Buddha distinctively showed the cessation and the path to the cessation of the cause of suffering, and also revealed the relation of the two.

2. In the Four Noble Truths, the cessation of suffering or dukkhanirodha in Pali was actually the cessation of “**craving**” as the cause of suffering. In his sermon, the Buddha did not give details of the stages of the cessation of the cause of suffering, but the details as shown in the above chart were given in later Buddhist scriptures by the venerable Sāriputta.

3. The path to the cessation of the cause of suffering or dukkhanirodhgāmini patipadā in Pali is called “Eightfold Path” derived from “atthagika magga”.

Chart 3 (shows the relation of the Four Noble Truths)

Suffering ← ← ← ← ←	← ← ← The Cause of Suffering
Birth → old age → death ↓ sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and stress ( based on separation from lovely things, association with unlovely things)	(Ignorance → mental formations → consciousness → mentality and corporeality → the six sense-bases → contact → feeling →) <b>craving</b> (→ clinging → becoming)
↑ ← ← The cessation of suffering ←	← The path to the cessation of the cause of Suffering
Five cessations : Cessation by suppression (by Insight Meditation) Cessation by substitution of opposites (by Tranquility Meditation) Cessation by cutting off (by the knowledge of the destruction of mental intoxication) Cessation by tranquillization (by the knowledge of the tranquillization as the fruit of the destruction of mental intoxication)	The Eightfold path : <b>Wisdom</b> Right View, Right Thought, <b>Morality</b> Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, <b>Concentration</b> Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration

<sup>2</sup> Only the cessation of suffering or the dukkhanirodha in Pāli is found with a little detail, in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. No five cessations were given in it, they were given by the venerable Sariputta in the Patisambhidamagga.

Cessation by getting freed absolutely with no return of the destroyed intoxication	
--	--

The chart shows the path to the cessation of the cause of suffering headed by Right View, functioning to investigate sensual pleasures as suffering and craving as the cause of suffering until they are clearly seen as they are. Right View is conducive to Right Thought: thought of self liberation from sensual pleasures and craving, from hatred caused by separation from the desirable sensual pleasures, and from cruelty fired by hatred. Supported by the Right Thought, what follows as a consequence are Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. In the Buddhist psychology, thought (manokamma, mental action) is believed to influence behavior; the behavior always follows the thought. As for the last three - Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration can be considered in two ways: Firstly, the three follow the first two - Right View and Right Thought; that is; when we have the two (Right View and Right Thought) respectively, we have right behavior (Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood) in line with them, causing the last three (Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration) to follow. Secondly, after the first two (Right View and Right Thought) take place, we, in suffering or in facing problems, think of liberation or solution and then fulfill our thought through practicing mindfulness supported by Right Effort which is conducive to Right Concentration.

### The Source of The Four Noble Truths

To answer the question: where is the form of the Four Noble Truths derived from? Let us study the following charts.

Chart 1 shows the relevant process of suffering and the cause of suffering investigated **in backward order** (patiloma) from Old Age, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Stress onwards by the Buddha before his enlightenment.

Dependent on <b>Ignorance</b> ← ← ← ← ←	Arises Mental Formations
↑ Dependent on Mental formations ← ← ←	Arises Consciousness
↑ Dependent on Consciousness ← ← ← ←	Arises Mentality and Corporeality
↑ Dependent on Mentality and Corporeality ← ←	Arise the Six Sense-Bases
↑ Dependent on the Six Sense-Bases ← ←	Arises Contact
↑ Dependent on Contact ← ← ← ← ←	Arises Feeling
↑ Dependent on Feeling ← ← ← ← ←	Arises <b>Craving</b>
↑ Dependent on Craving ← ← ← ← ←	Arises <b>Clinging</b>
↑ Dependent on Clinging ← ← ← ← ←	Arises Becoming

↑ Dependent on Becoming ← ← ← ← ←	Arises Birth
↑ Dependent on Birth ← ← ← ← ←	Arise Old Age, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Stress

Chart 2 shows the relevant process of the cessation of suffering and the path to the cessation of the cause of suffering investigated **in forward order** (anuloma) and totally destroyed by the Buddha.

Through the total fading away and cessation of <b>Ignorance</b> →	→ cease Mental Formations
→ Through the cessation of Mental formations	→ ceases Consciousness
→ Through the cessation of Consciousness	→ cease Mentality and Corporeality
→ Through the cessation of Mentality and Corporeality	→ cease the Six Sense-Bases
→ Through the cessation of the Six Sense-Bases	→ ceases Contact
→ Through the cessation of Contact	→ ceases Feeling
→ Through the cessation of Feeling	→ ceases <b>Craving</b>
→ Through the cessation of Craving	→ ceases <b>Clinging</b>
→ Through the cessation of Clinging	→ ceases Becoming
→ Through the cessation of Becoming	→ ceases Birth
→ Through the cessation of Birth	→ cease Old Age, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Stress

The two charts show the source indicating that the Four Noble Truths are a short form of the Dependent Origination or the Patīccasamuppāda in Pali.

## The Patīccasamuppāda or the Dependent Origination as the Process to Enlightenment

### 1. Background

As we know, before he attained Supreme Enlightenment, the Buddha was a prince, who lived a luxurious life in three royal palaces extraordinarily constructed for him only. Surprisingly, one day, not only the three royal palaces but also the whole world became burnt by fires of sufferings. The so-called sufferings were caused by the sights of sickness, old age and death the day he ventured beyond the confines of the royal city.

After that, he pondered such questions in his mind like: “Why are beings subject to old age and death? How will they be freed from old age and death?” He further thought: “Why, during their lives, do they suffer sorrow, lamentation and stress?” Then, at the time of birth of his son, the prince while sitting in the royal park waiting for his pregnant wife to give birth to Rahula, and as the joyful news reached him that evening he found the answer to his questions leading to the conclusion that birth itself is the very beginning of old age and death. If there is no birth, old age and death will not be given birth to. Then he further asked: “What is birth? What is the cause of birth? Dependent on what, arises birth?”

As regards these questions, he concluded that it was not easy to gain a satisfactory answer in the context of a householder's life. Therefore he went forth as a sage. Leaving all sensual pleasures behind, he concluded that going forth was the best way to be free from the sufferings. Six years later, he attained Supreme Enlightenment. He became the Buddha through a series of answers revealed in the Paticcasamuppāda *in backward order*: “Birth depends on Becoming, Becoming depends on **Clinging**, Clinging depends on **Craving**, Craving depends on Feeling (Sensual Sensation), Feeling depends on Contact, Contact depends on the Six Sense-Bases, the Six Sense-Bases depend on Mentality and Corporeality, Mentality and Corporeality depends on Consciousness, Consciousness depends on Mental Formations (Mental Activities), Mental Formations (Mental Activities) depends on **Ignorance**”, and also in the Paticcasamuppāda *in forward order* : “Through the total fading away and cessation of **Ignorance**, cease Mental Formations, through the cessation of Mental formations, ceases Consciousness, through the cessation of Consciousness, cease Mentality and Corporeality, through the cessation of Mentality and Corporeality, cease the Six Sense-Bases, through the cessation of the Six Sense-Bases, ceases Contact, through the cessation of Contact, ceases Feeling, through the cessation of Feeling, ceases **Craving**, through the cessation of Craving, ceases **Clinging**, through the cessation of Clinging, ceases Becoming, through the cessation of Becoming, ceases Birth, through the cessation of Birth, cease Old Age, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Stress.”<sup>3</sup>

At this point, we understand that the Buddha proceeded to Supreme Enlightenment according to the process called “the Paticcasamuppāda” or “the Dependent Origination”; he investigated phenomena around him until he realized the truths and then proclaimed that he had become the Buddha, who until today is known as the Enlightened One, the Awakened One, and the Joyful One.

## 2. The Four Noble Truths Found in the Buddha's Other Teachings

The Buddha stated that all his life, he never preached anything else but the Four Noble Truths. His saying raises the question if that was possible in all his 45 years of preaching. Indeed, when we study his teachings thoroughly, we will find that he applied the Four Noble Truths for different listeners on different occasions and at different places in all his pronouncements.

Here are two examples:

### 2.1 *Sorrow from love*

Once, the Buddha saw his female devotee named Visākhā crying in tearful sorrow and asked her about the cause. Knowing that her sorrow came from her youngest granddaughter's death, he started to console and teach her, saying in verse:

“From love comes sorrow,  
 From love comes fear,  
 For one who is freed from love,  
 Fades away sorrow,  
 Also does fear as well.”<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Vinaya. 1.1.

<sup>4</sup> Khu.Dh. 213.54.

Having listened to the verse, she attained enlightenment, destroying sorrow through the cessation based on the path.

In the verse, “sorrow” is suffering, “love” is the cause of suffering, “Fades away sorrow, Also does fear as well” means the cessation of the cause of suffering, “one who is freed from love” is one who attained enlightenment. Where is the path to the cessation of the cause of suffering to be found? It is hidden in “one who is freed from love”, because for one who follows the path, sorrow ceases.

## 2.2 *Suffering from war*

Once, there were wars between King Pasenadi of the Kosala country and King Ajātasattu of the Magadha country. In fact, both countries had marital relations; King Pasenadi’s younger sister married King Bimbisāra of the Magadha country and gave birth to King Ajātasattu, who succeeded his father by patricide. They had close alliances and later waged wars on the Kāsika village, in which both kingdoms claimed rights. At last, King Pasenadi was defeated and lost the village to King Ajātasattu. King Pasenadi in his suffering approached the Buddha who consoled him with this verse:

“The winner brings about avenge,  
The loser lives in suffering,  
The peaceful lives in bliss,  
Turning his back to both win and loss.”<sup>5</sup>

In the verse, “avenge” is the cause of suffering, “lives in suffering” is suffering, “The winner” and “The loser” are ones, who are being overwhelmed by the cause of suffering and suffering. On the contrary, “lives in bliss” means the cessation of suffering, “The peaceful” is one, who attained the cessation of suffering “by turning his back to both win and loss” i.e. by following the path to the cessation of the cause of suffering

## 2.3 The Application of the Four Noble Truths to Solve the Current Social and Global Problems

Of the above examples, the first shows the application of the Four Noble Truths to solve the personal problem and the second, the national problem in the past. At present, the world has been facing increasing numbers of problems such as political problems, economic problems, ethnic problems, religious problems, etc. According to the Four Noble Truths, these are sufferings, which are caused by craving. The problems are awaiting a solution. They can be solved if persons in charge follow the Four Noble Truths; that is; they, with one mind, investigate and clearly see both the problem and the cause (condition) of the problem; then they, with open minds, cooperate to reduce the cause (condition) on the planned right path, without bias.

A good example is the border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia. They are bordering countries, so the context of the conflict is not beyond the frame of Four Noble Truths as follows;

---

<sup>5</sup> ibid.

Suffering (result) ←	The Cause of Suffering ← (cause)	The Cessation of Suffering (result) ←	The Path to the cessation of the cause. ←(cause)
Conflict → attack → war happening	Increasing Craving for the border area	Cessation not yet happens	Ideas to solve the conflict are different.

## Conclusion

The Four Noble Truths are a short form of the Paticcasamuppāda or the Dependent Origination formulated by the Buddha, who divided the truth into four for the listeners' realization of his teachings: the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of the cause of suffering, and the path to the cessation of the cause of suffering. The principle of the Four Noble Truths is always applicable to solve problems, both personal and global. The application has to start from the path to the cessation of the cause of suffering, keeping Right Mindfulness focused on the problems until Right Concentration occurs, and then using Right View to investigate and seeing problems and their causes as they are and escaping them based on Right Thought, thereby bringing about Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood naturally. Consequently, the problems and their causes are sure to be destroyed according to the Cessation of Suffering.

## References

1. Mahāchulā Tepitaka, Vinaya 1. Bangkok: the Press of Mahāchulālanākarānārājavidyālaya, 2532.
2. Mahāchulā Tepitaka, Suttanta 25. Bangkok: the Press of Mahāchulālanākarānārājavidyālaya, 2532.
3. Mahāchulā Tepitaka, Suttanta 31. Bangkok: the Press of Mahāchulālanākarānārājavidyālaya, 2532.
4. Dhammapadatthakathā Part 111. Bangkok: the Press of Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya, 2536.
5. Dhammapadatthakathā Part V111. Bangkok: the Press of Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya, 2536.

# **Moral Emphasis and Application in Buddhist Studies : The Case of Thai Education**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pataraporn Sirikanjana

## **1. Introduction**

Buddhist Studies in Thailand historically originated in Buddhist monasteries where monks were teachers and young male attendants were their students. Since monks' knowledge was then of Pali and Buddhism, the subjects of studying were Thai, Pali, and Buddhist studies. Buddhist studies at that time concerns the history of the Buddha and his principal disciples and the Buddha's teachings which were originally recorded in Pali. Students learned to chant Buddhist verses in Pali and memorized things they learned from their monk teachers. They learned to follow and obey their teachers rather than develop their creative minds.

In the reign of King Rama V (1869 – 1910), the center of Thai education moved, for the first time, from the monastery to the Royal Court. Nevertheless, only royal children and retainers had a chance to study. It was the dawn of secular knowledge and westernization. Women in the Thai court could gain access to modern knowledge apart from their cooking and sewing expertise. While women in the high social status gained more knowledge in the Thai court, ordinary Thai male could pursue their studying in Thai monasteries. In the reign of King Rama V or King Chulalongkorn, two Buddhist colleges were established in Thai monasteries. Monks who had passed the ninth level of Pali studies and quitted the monastery could find their jobs in governmental offices. In the reign of King Rama VI or King Vajiravudh (1910 - 1925), education flourished in Thailand. Schools and the first university, Chulalongkorn University, were built in Thailand for all Thai people. At that time, Buddhist studies was not

an independent course for students. Its content scattered and appeared in other courses, e.g., Thai History, Thai Literature, and Thai Art and Culture.

At present, Buddhist studies is a compulsory selective course in primary and secondary schools in Thailand. At the university level, Buddhist studies is offered to students, in M.A. and Ph.D. programs. However, many Thai scholars believe that Buddhist studies can uplift Thai morality and decrease Thai social deterioration. They thus call for the emphasis of the Buddhist studies as a compulsory course in Thai education and hope for the best that Buddhist studies can somehow solve current problems, both political and economic, in Thai society.

## **2. Buddhist Studies in Thailand Today**

Thai education, as well as education elsewhere around the world, put its emphasis on the cultivation of students' skill and efficiency rather than students' moral lives. Though the preparation of students to work efficiently is necessary for them to earn their living, the inculcation of morality in their minds is no less crucial for their successful and happy lives. It is obvious that those who achieve fame and fortune but lack moral guidance of their lives cannot live in peaceful happiness. They cannot find true friendship and true love. They can neither lead themselves nor their society to prosperity.

Formerly, the Sangha and monks took charge of the cultivation of morality of the people. Nowadays, both State and the Sangha cooperate with each other to propagate Buddhist morality and design courses in Buddhist studies in order to educate Thai people.

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu (1906 - 1993), an eminent Thai monk, however, was not satisfied with the educational policy of the Thai

government. As one of the most learned monks in Thailand, he noticed that education during his time was found lacking. He called it “a tail-less dog” and invited all educators and intellectuals to “fix the tail to the dog.” He commented that the educational plan of the Thai government overlooked moral lessons for students. Education without moral cultivation was thus similar to a tail-less dog that tried to deceive others that it was more lovely than ordinary dogs. He urged people to realize that education without morality was useless and even dangerous to their society.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of Buddhadāsa, the educational system of the world today had lost its way. It merely put an emphasis on material development. It followed the materialistic life of the western world which craved for physical well - being rather than spiritual growth. Since its goal was a materialistic success, students were encouraged to follow their own desires as well as to cause trouble to themselves and others<sup>2</sup>. Buddhadāsa criticized that western education which aimed at materialistic development put an emphasis on “knowledge for knowledge’s sake” he pointed out that education today concerned logics, assumptions, and philosophical thinking. It was useless in practice. It could not solve any problems in our daily lives. Even Buddhist studies in schools and universities also concerned philosophical arguments. It became a game of intellect rather than means of true understanding of life and freedom from suffering<sup>3</sup>.

Apart from misconceptions concerning educational objectives and methods, according to Buddhadāsa, Thai society also lacked responsible and efficient teachers in Buddhist studies. Those who became teachers and professors of Buddhist studies were motivated by the need to earn their livings and not by their moral ideal.

The other highly respected Thai monk worth mentioning here is Venerable P.A. Payutto or, officially, Phra Brahmagunabhorn (P.A. Payutto). Ven. P.A. Payutto agrees with Buddhādāsa. He explains that, in Thailand Buddhism is the foundation of Thai culture. Buddhist studies is thus crucial for Thai people as the effective means for seeking Thai identity and strengthening Thai morality.<sup>4</sup> Through the Buddhist teachings, one can learn to be aware of the materialistic domination and to appreciate the merit of wisdom. Besides, one will be prepared to live harmoniously with those in different generations in the context of Thai culture. For example, having been trained to get rid of self - centeredness, one can be more understanding and ready to listen to the other. Ven. P.A. Payutto believes that Buddhist studies, if managed properly, can provide proper knowledge and constructive ways of life. He thus suggests that Buddhist studies should be promoted as the moral system for Thai people and as the essence of Thai culture.<sup>5</sup>

### **3. Buddhist Studies and Moral Cultivation**

It can be said that Buddhist Studies managed in academic institutions today has not yet been successful. Students can only memorize some parts of Buddhist history and Buddhist teachings but can benefit nothing from what they have learned.

According to Buddhādāsa and Ven. P.A. Payutto, Buddhist studies should lead to moral cultivation and, finally, the end of suffering. Buddhādāsa's success in spreading his Buddhist teachings depends in part on his unique methods. If we understand the real meaning of his teachings, we can grasp his moral implication. Buddhādāsa believes that the essence of the Buddha's teaching is universal in the sense that it is not limited to the form one finds in the texts, especially in any literal sense. He aims to recover and

preserve the original teaching of the Buddha and uses the Buddhist terms as symbols pointing beyond themselves to effect and transform the lives of his listeners. He attempts to move his listeners beyond the prescriptions and definitions to experience truth by themselves.

Buddhadāsa conveys his teaching to others through his special use of language and visual symbols. His use of language can be differentiated into the critical and the symbolic. The critical use of language is his attempt to stimulate his listeners to examine their casual ways of thought and practice and to stimulate their self – criticism through their wisdom. He believes that conventional ways of thinking and using language prevent us from penetrating the true meaning of the Buddha’s teaching. In order to demonstrate the basic flaw of the conventional usage of language, he classifies language into 2 levels : everyday language and dhamma language. He calls the popular usage of Buddhist teaching everyday language, and his exposition dhamma language. Everyday language is worldly or mundane language based on ordinary sense experiences and mundane expectations. It inevitably deals with all matters superficially and crudely. Scriptural or doctrinal language tends to be understood literally and traditionally. Such interpretation does not penetrate to a deeper intellectual or spiritual level of meaning.

Following Buddhadāsa, everyday language is the language of those who do not know dhamma in a deeper sense. He asserts that the essence of Buddhism expresses itself in dhamma language, the true meaning of the language used by the Buddha in his teaching.<sup>6</sup> For example, Buddhadāsa interprets the Triple Gem as essentially one and the same. The Buddha, in everyday language, signifies the historical Gotama Buddha who was enlightened and preached his doctrine two thousand years ago. The Buddha in dhamma language,

on the other hand, means the dhamma or the underlying quality, character or mode of being which makes Prince Siddhattha the Buddha. This was referred to by the Buddha himself : “ He who sees the Dhamma sees the Thusgone ; he who sees the Thusgone sees the Dhamma.”<sup>7</sup>

Dhamma in everyday language refers to the Buddha’s teaching as contained in Buddhist texts. Thus, a group of people gathering in a temple for a sermon is considered to be seeking the dhamma. Also, if a person can remember well the Buddha’s words in the texts, s/he is usually taken as one who knows the dhamma. But the dhamma is dhamma language refers to the true, profound or subtle, meaning, and not the literal meaning, of the Buddha’s teaching.

The Sangha, in everyday language, for example, means the Monastic Order or the congregation of monks. In dhamma language, according to Buddhadāsa, the Sangha is the quality of the human mind or the principle of practice which leads to the end of suffering. Thus, even laypeople, who possess this quality or principle, can be called members of the Sangha. Consequently, in dhamma language, the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, or the composition of the Triple virtuous quality, within a human being, which leads one to the end of suffering. To take refuge in the Triple Gem thus means to follow one’s own virtuous nature of mind in order to attain Nibbana.

Buddhadāsa argues that human intellect cannot attain the deeper meaning of the Buddha’s teachings because it is trained improperly. Speaking to the Thai context, in particular, he contends that Thai children are trained in school to be clever and selfish. They learn to compete intellectually with each other in order to gain more fame and money, to be shrewd rather than virtuous.<sup>8</sup> He argues that a person can be morally good without higher education or a formal

academic training. The proof can be seen among Thai people in former times who were illiterate or poorly educated but morally good. Buddhādāsa asserts that human beings can be virtuous only by returning to their true self - nature which involves a rejection of the logical reason and intellect, which tends to distort reality.

Moreover, Buddhādāsa criticizes monks in Thailand for practicing magic by making amulets and consecrating Buddha images, for becoming fortune-tellers and practitioners of mere ceremony, and for preferring a worldly life of luxury to a simple, ascetic life aimed at ultimate emancipation by means of meditation. He comments that such conduct undermines the Buddha's teaching and discourages people's faith in Buddhism.

Buddhādāsa's use of symbol is not limited only to a scriptural interpretation. At Suan Mokkha (Garden of Liberation ), his hermitage in Southern Thailand during his lifetime, he had a Spiritual Theatre constructed in order to present the Buddha-dhamma through paintings, films, bas-reliefs, and occasional lectures. In the Spiritual Theatre, one finds many kinds of symbolism to convey his dhammic teaching to visitors. Considering Buddhādāsa's teachings on selfnature and the capacity of human wisdom, it can be noted that symbols with verbal interpretation are necessary only for those whose minds are obscured and tainted by defilements and ignorance. He often uses symbols to provoke a spontaneous response that arises from the mind's pure nature and its capacity for true wisdom.

Buddhādāsa finally suggests the proper educational system as follows:

- 1) It should provide knowledge of life, duty, moral discipline, meditation training, and working skill to students.

- 2) It should provide students with both theories and practices, especially the understanding of the Fourfold Noble Truth in their daily lives.
- 3) It should train students to activate their own wisdom to know themselves, to cultivate their moral minds, and to overcome their animal instincts.
- 4) It should train students to live morally with others in their community. Students should learn to share love, duty and responsibility, and peaceful lives with others.<sup>9</sup>

P.A. Payutto shares the views expressed by Buddhādāsa. He explains that education should be something that makes students understand the root cause of their attitudes and others' as well as the cause of world history. Such understanding will prepare students to live for the best of themselves and this world.<sup>10</sup> Through education, we should be provided with the consciousness of self – development in order to have a chance to better ourselves throughout our lives.

Furthermore, through education, we can obtain the right knowledge of the Buddhist teachings which yield the right practices and their outcome. We can also realize that we are trainable (Veneyya). We can manage ourselves to live peacefully and harmoniously with others in this universe. We know that the struggle to overcome nature or force nature to serve us can bring us trouble in the future.<sup>11</sup> By means of the Buddhist studies, we have a chance to know the Principle of the Middle Path (majjhimāpaṭipadā). We thus make use of nature sufficiently and avoid destroying natural environments.<sup>12</sup>

P.A. Payutto suggests that the Buddhist studies should be offered as an integrated course relating to history, ecology, sociology, and so on. It should emphasize human values and human potentiality to endlessly better themselves within the Law of Nature and as a part of nature. He reminds Thai Buddhist that Buddhist studies is crucial for the development of Thai morality and should be a compulsory course for students' moral knowledge and moral practices.

Especially, teachers and professors of Buddhist studies should possess 2 qualities as follows :

- 1) The proficiency in training students to have critical minds, to reasoning, and to thing systematically.
- 2) The inspiration and the role models for students.
- 3) The teaching skill in Buddhist morality which can lead students to be "good people" of their own society and of the world.<sup>13</sup>

Buddhist Studies, according to P.A. Payutto, should follow the Threefold Training (Ti-sikkhā) providing students with Buddhist morality, meditation practice, and wisdom. Students, therefore, are trained to be able to depend on themselves in leading their lives, to be free from mental distress, and to live happily with other beings.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Buddhist Studies is the gift for all mankind. Everyone, Buddhists and non - Buddhists, can benefit from it. The Buddhist teachings reveal the truth of nature, e.g., good action yields good result in return. It asserts the Law of Cause and Effect generally accepted by people around the world. Even though we do not have faith in the Buddha, we can benefit from his teachings through thinking critically,

reasoning, contemplating, meditating, and even experimenting in our real lives. We can accept the Buddha - dhamma after having seen its truth by ourselves. Buddhist studies, if managed properly, can initiate wisdom in one's mind. Buddhist studies which promotes critical thinking and meditation training yields the flourish of wisdom. The Merit of Buddhist studies can be concluded according to the words of Buddhādāsa as follows :

Eternal peace on earth depends on our proper understanding of "education". If education is managed properly, this world will become the world of holy saints where one can find no pain, soldiers, policemen, and prisons because one has been morally trained and "good" in oneself.<sup>14</sup>

## **Author's profile**

**Pataraporn Sirikanchana** is a long – time professor in the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University. Having received the Harvard – Yenching Scholarship, she pursued her studying in the Ph.D. program of Religious Studies in the University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A. and Graduated in 1985. She has many books and articles published both in Thai and in English, including an academic contribution to Religions of the World : A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices published in U.S.A.. She is also a prize winner of the Chamnong Tongprasert Foundation award for the Best Contribution of Work in Philosophy in 2009. At present, apart from being a profess at Thammasat University, she is an Associate Fellow of the Royal Institute of Thailand and the Deputy Rector of the World Buddhist University (WBU).

## Endnotes

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu, Dhamma Banyai Toh Hang Sunak (The Dhammic Lecture for Fixing the Tail to the Dog) (Bangkok : Dhamma – dāna, B.E. 2525 / C.E. 1982), pp. 36 – 37. (In Thai)
- <sup>2</sup> Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu,, “Karn Suksa Khong Lok Patchuban” (Education of the Present World), Karn Suksa Khu Aria (What is Education?), ed. Phra Dusadee Medhamkuro (Bangkok : Somchai Press, B.E. 2517 /C.E 1974), pp. 43 – 44. (In Thai).
- <sup>3</sup> Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu, Cheewit Tong Tiam Duay Kwai Song Tua” (Life Should Be Led by Two Buffalos”), *ibid.*, p. 17. (In Thai).
- <sup>4</sup> P.A. Payutto, Thammai Khon Thai Chung Rian Phra Buddha – sasanā (Why do Thai People Study Buddhism?), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Bangkok : Buddha – dharma Foundation, B.E. 2533 / C.E. 1990), p. 77. (In Thai).
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3 – 4.
- <sup>6</sup> Buddhādāsa - bhikkhu, “Everyday Language and Dhamma Language,” Toward the Truth, trans. And ed. Donald K. Swearer (Philadelphia : The Westminster Press, 1971), p. 79.
- <sup>7</sup> Saniyutta Nikāya, Khandhavāravagga 17/216/146, quoted in Buddhādāsa - bhikkhu, Bhāsā Khon, Bhāsā Tham (Everyday Language and Dhamma Language) (Bangkok : Technical College, Press, 1968), pp. 5-7. (In Thai).
- <sup>8</sup> Buddhādāsa - bhikkhu, Yaowachon Kap Seelaṭham (Yung People and Morality) (Bangkok : Dhamma –dāna, B.E.> 2522 / C.E. 1978), p. 52 (In Thai).
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 153 – 157.
- <sup>10</sup> P.A. Payutto, Why do Thai People Study Buddhism?, p. 22.
- <sup>11</sup> P.A. Payutto, Thang Sai Klang Khong Karn Suksa Thai (Thai Middle path of Thai Education) (Bangkok : Amarin Printing Group, B.E. 2530 / C.E 1987), p. 52.
- <sup>12</sup> P.A. Payutto, Karn Suksa Phua Araya Tham Thee Yang Yuen (Education for Sustainable Civilization), 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Bangkok : Sahadharmic Press, B.E. 2539 / C.E. 1996), pp. 108 – 109.
- <sup>13</sup> P.A. Payutto, Why do Thai People Study Buddhism?, p. 70.
- <sup>14</sup> Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu, “Karn Suksa Chanit thee Nam Lok Pai Su Khwam Vinas” (“Education Which Leads the World to Destruction”), Karn Suksa Khu Arai (What is Education?), pp.. 127 – 128.

# **Buddhism in the Historical and Modern China**

Luo Yong

## **INTRODUCTION**

Buddhism appeared in China in the first century, but there are not enough evidence to show exactly when it came. It is said that the legend of the dream of Han Emperor Ming was the beginning of the transmission of Buddhism to China, but the research indicates that Buddhism had already come to China via the Silk Road before.

When Buddhism was introduced to China, it was thought to be one section of Daoism or some other local religions. During the first to third centuries, the first Buddhist translation was believed to be the Sutra of Forty-two Sections which was translated by Kashiapmadanga who came from central India. The historically first Buddhist translations were introduced by a Parthian monk An Shigao. Later, there were several famous monks who contributed much to the Buddhism introduction to China during the early period.

During 3 AD - 6 AD, China had several centuries of disunited and chaos. China expanded its territory to the west and the north. With the help of the Silk Road, the contacts with central Asian countries were stressed. Many monks came from central Asia and India to teach or translate Buddhist sutras, and many Chinese monks went to India to study and bring the Buddhist sutras back. Until the middle of the Tang dynasty, almost all of the important Buddhist sutras had been introduced to China already.

When Buddhism became stronger, different Buddhist schools were founded in China. There were seven main schools founded or flourished during the Tang dynasty, they were: Pure Land School, Tiantai School, Garland School, Chan School, Idealistic School, Vinaya School and Secret School.

After Buddhism came to China, the relationship between Buddhism and Chinese religions were in harmony most of the period, but clashes happened sometimes. The great persecution of the Tang dynasty was a turning point. Since then, the Buddhism went to a period of transformation

and merger. In modern China, Buddhism was on the way of revival and revolution. There was about 30 years difficult time after the new China was built, but Buddhism was similarly on a way to revive again in the temporary China.

## **1 Early Buddhism emerged in China**

### **1.1 Buddhism appears in China (2 BC-2 AD)**

After Emperor Asoka sent missionaries to other countries, the transmission was launched from northwest of India to Central Asia. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, Buddhism gradually developed in many Central Asian kingdoms, such as Kushan and Parthian. With the trade connection through Silk Road from China to Central Asia, the Chinese had their first contact with Buddhism through Central Asians who were already Buddhists. According to a recent research, Buddhism was established in China during Qin Shihuang (秦始皇) period (259 BC-210 BC), the first emperor of China. Some scholars think it should be earlier.<sup>1</sup>

Buddhism was translated to Chinese as “Futu” (浮屠) at first, later as “Fo” (佛). Ji Xianlin (季羨林), the contemporary most famous Buddhist scholar of China, through linguistic study gives a conclusion that Buddhism was transmitted to China through two ways: (1) India- Kushan - China; buddha-bodo, boddo, boudo-fotu(佛屠); (2) India-Central Asian small kingdoms- China; buddha-but-fo(佛).<sup>2</sup> However, he also can't tell us what is the exactly time of Buddhism coming to China.

It is said usually that the legend of Emperor Ming's dream was the beginning of the introduction of Buddhism into China. Emperor Ming (28-75 AD) dreamed of a golden man with a shining halo, flying around the building and fled to the west finally. He asked his advisers about his dream. His foreign affairs administrator Fu Yi (傅毅) said there was one man called “Fudu (浮屠)” (Buddha) in the region of Tianzhu (天竺) (Southern India), that must be him. Emperor Ming believed him and sent two envoys Cai Yin (蔡愔) and Qin Jin (秦景) to inquire about the

teaching of Buddha. It is said they brought the “Sutra of Forty-two Sections” back to China on the back of white horses. Then Emperor Ming kept them in a temple named White Horse Temple, which is now thought to be the first temple in China. And there were two Indian monks return with them, named Dharmaraksa (竺法兰) and Kasyapa Mataniga (竺摩騰), together with sutras containing 600,000 Sanskrit words.<sup>3</sup>

## **1.2 The early translations**

The first documented translation of Buddhist scriptures was introduced to China by An Shigao (安世高) (Mid. 2 AD). He was a prince of Parthian, but later he quit his royal position and became a monk. He arrived at Luoyang (洛阳) at 148 AD, the capital City of the Later Han dynasty and learned Chinese. He lived in China more than 20 years, and translated about 36 volumes which include 40 books on Buddhist texts on basic doctrines, meditation and dharma. Most of his translation was the sutras of Theravada Buddhism.

An Xuan (安玄), a Parthian layman who did his business at Luoyang and worked alongside An Shigao, he translated an early Mahayana Buddhist text on the Bodhisattva path with Yan Fotiao (严佛调) who was thought to be the first Chinese monk.

Lokaksema (支娄迦讖) was a Kushan monk, he arrived at China at 147 AD, he had translated 14 volumes which include 27 books of sutras, all of which were Mahayana sutras, such as the Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita Sutra (道行盘若经).

## **1.3 The overview of Buddhism in early period**

During this period, Buddhism was at the beginning of being introduced and recognized. When Buddhism was introduced to China, “it appears that Buddhism was being perceived and digested through the medium of religions Daoism.”<sup>4</sup> It was thought to be one section of Daoism.

After more and more Buddhist sutras were translated into Chinese, Buddhism was gradually known. Luoyang was the most famous place of Buddhist teaching and translation, such as the monks from India (An Shigao and Lokaksema) and the first temple-White Horse Temple, were all at Luoyang. And the other areas, according to the research, such as south (Jiaozhou 交州) and west (Sichuan 四川) of China, Buddhism already reached there. <sup>5</sup>

Buddhism was also appreciated by some political leaders of the kingdoms. Liu Ying, the younger brother of the Emperor Ming believed in Buddhism, during his later life, he “Liked Daoism more, learned Buddhism, fast and sacrificed” (“The Biography of Chu Monarch Ying, Book of Later Han” 《后汉书·楚王英传》). The Han Emperor Huan (汉桓帝) was the first one of Later Han dynasty to believe Buddhism. However all of them did not just believe Buddhism, but also Daoism, they prayed to Buddha and Laozi (老子) at the same time. <sup>6</sup>

## **2. Golden period (3 AD - 6 AD)**

### **2.1 Buddhist translations**

Buddhist translation faced many difficulties at first, the early translations of Buddhist sutras usually used Taoist terms to get the system of Buddhist philosophy, such as Dao (道) for dharma, bodhi, yoga, wuwei (无为) for nirvana and ming (命) for karma. <sup>7</sup> Latter translations were more reasonable and subtle. During this period, the Indian monks and Chinese monks continued to travel along the Silk Road to teach Buddhism and to translate the Buddhist texts. There were many famous monks.

Zhi Qian (支谦 222-252 AD) was a famous monk who taught Buddhism in the south of China, his translations spanned a wide range of genres and included both Mahayana and non-Mahayana scriptures. He changed the translate style from pronunciation translation to meaning translation. Kang Senghui (康僧会 247-280 AD) contributed to the diffusion and translation of

Buddhist sutras into the Chinese language. Zhu Shihang (朱士行 203-282AD) was the first Chinese monk who went to Central Asia to acquire Buddhist teaching. Dharmaraksa (竺法护) came to the capital city Luoyang in 266 AD, he was the first one who translated the Lotus Sutra (莲华经) and the Dasabhumika Sutra (十地经), which became the classic texts of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism. Altogether, Dharmaraksa translated around 154 Theravada and Mahayana sutras. Zhi Dun (支遁 314-366 AD) claimed that all who followed Buddhism would, at the end of their life would enter Nirvana.

Buttocho (佛图澄 232-348 AD) was very good at showing the magic power and succeeded in converting the Shi Le (石勒) who was the leader of a kingdom and became his advisor as he founded the Later Zhao (后赵) dynasty in 319; later he was a government official under Shi Hu (石虎), which allowed him to found a great number of Buddhist temples.

Dao An (道安 312-385 AD) who compiled a catalogue of sutras and promoted the Maitreya cult.

Hui Yuan (慧远 334-416 AD) promoted Amitabha cult and together with Buddhahadra (佛陀跋陀罗) of the practice of meditation and yoga. Dao Sheng (道生) focused on the Nirvana sutra.

Seng Zhao (僧肇 384 - 414 AD) was a Chinese Buddhist philosopher. He helped to translate Indian treatises and also wrote his own. He criticized earlier Chinese Buddhist schools for believing in being or non-being, and digested the Daoism and Buddhism to be a new stage of Chinese Buddhism.

Fa Xian (法显 337- 422 AD) was a Chinese Buddhist monk who traveled to Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka to acquire Buddhist scriptures between 399 and 412. "A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms" described his important journey in the history of Buddhist transmission in Asia.

## **2.2 Great Buddhist translator: Kumarajiva (鸠摩罗什 344 - 413 AD)**

Kumarajiva was born in a Kui-zi (龟兹) Buddhist family and became a Buddhist monk at the age of 7. He was thought to be the most famous scholar and translator during that period.

Kumarajiva was forced to live in the Later Liang (后凉) for about 16 years, during this time, he learned Chinese. Later he was welcomed to Chang'an, the capital city of Later Qin (后秦). The new emperor Yao Xing (姚兴) respected Kumarajiva so much that he supported his Buddhist translation.

Kumarajiva translated 98 works from many languages into Chinese, of which 52 survived. The most important texts translated by him were the Diamond Sutra, the Amitabha Sutra, the Lotus Sutra, the Vimalakirti Nirveda Sutra, the Mulamadhyamakakarika and the Astasahasrika-prajnaparamita Sutra. His translation has a very high quality, which are still praised for their flowing smoothness, clarity of meaning and literary skill. So his translations were more popular than the others' during that period.<sup>8</sup>

Around and after the time of Kumarajiva, the four major Sanskrit agamas were also translated into Chinese. All of the translators contributed to the Chinese Buddhist scripture in China. The texts both include Mahayana and Theravada. The teachings of the Sutra Pitaka were usually considered to be the earliest teachings of Buddhism and the core texts of the Early Buddhist Schools.

### **2.3 Early Buddhism expanded in China**

After the fall of the Han dynasty (202 BC-220 AD) in the early part of the third century, China faced a period of political disunity. It continued about 360 years until the Sui dynasty (581-618 AD) built a new united country. At the beginning of the Han dynasty, Confucianism was supported by the Emperors of the country, and Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒 179-104 BC) who was a famous scholar and officer during the Han Emperor Wu, proposed "Only Confucianism (独尊儒术)", intending to promote Confucianism to be the only official ideology of the Chinese imperial state.<sup>9</sup>

After the chaos of Three Kingdoms (220-280 AD), Confucianism declined and Daoism became popular. Buddhism also got the space and chance to develop quickly and expanded to almost all territories of China. During this period, people suffered so much, it was easy for them to believe Buddhism for avoiding the difficult real life and hoping to live a better life in the afterlife.

During this time, there were several Kingdoms and Emperors strongly supported Buddhism. The first great time of Buddhism in China was during the Eastern Jin dynasty, there were many landowning classes who were disappointed by and not more interested in governmental officials joined the Buddhist community. The Emperor Wu Liang dynasty (464-549 AD) was called "Buddhist Emperor", he advocated and supported the Buddhist teaching and the temple building, during his time, there were 2846 temples, 82700 monks and nuns.<sup>10</sup>

Buddhism Caves and Buddhist arts flourished during this time. The prince of the Wei kingdom, it said in 467, he caused an image to be constructed "forty-three feet" in height. The best known caves such as Yungang caves (云冈石窟), Longmen caves (龙门石窟), and Mogao caves (莫高窟) were built during his period. Yungang Caves were built during the Northern Wei dynasty. All together the site is composed of 252 grottoes with more than 51,000 Buddha statues and statuettes.<sup>11</sup> Longmen Caves were started to build from this period, now there are 2345 caves and niches, 2800 inscriptions, 43 pagodas and over 100,000 Buddhist images at the site. 30% of the caves date from the Northern Wei Dynasty, others were built later.<sup>12</sup>

### **3. Flourish period (7AD – 10 AD)**

#### **3.1 The prosper period of Chinese history**

After the Gold Period of Buddhism development in China, a new united country appeared again, it was Sui dynasty (581-618AD). Though this dynasty was replaced by Tang dynasty after 38 years, its founder, Emperor Wen (隋文帝 541-604 AD), was a great Buddhism supporter.

The successor, Tang dynasty (618-907 AD), considered Daoism as its national religion at the early period, but Buddhism was appreciated widely, especially by the Emperors and the governors. The Emperors held the celebration ceremonies to welcome and to send back the Buddha's finger bone relic of Sakyamuni. Especially during period of the Empress Wu Zetian (武则天 624-705AD), the Buddhism got a great supporting and development. Buddhism gradually became an important ideology during the prosperous Tang dynasty. Buddhist monasteries played an important role in Tang society. The monasteries were used for traveler's lodging, for the children's education and for the social events gathering and for some other purposes. The eminent monks were treated very respectfully, even by the emperors. It is recorded that when the seventh patriarch Shenhui (神会) was appreciated by several emperors and was considered the national master who had talks with the emperors directly. When he was invited to Chang'an where was the capital city of Tang dynasty "the new Emperor, in appreciation of his work, invited the monk to visit him at his restored palace and ordered the department of Works to accelerate the building of his quarters at the Hezhi Monastery."<sup>13</sup>

Buddhist monasteries were also engaged in economy. Early Tang dynasty in the Equal-field System (均田制) provisions "thirty acres of the field to the priests, nuns twenty acres, monks and nuns of the same applies".<sup>14</sup> So they owned land property, the monks worked to earn by themselves, even employed others to help them. The monasteries exploited the new lands and were free from the governmental tax. Such as Tiantong Temple (天童寺) in Zhejiang (浙江) "owned 13000 acres, its land covered several counties, the rental was 35,000 Hu (斛) every year".<sup>15</sup> So the monasteries developed very fast, becoming independent from the government and social supporting.

During this period, Buddhism transmitted to Korean and Japan, there were many Buddhist Schools declined in China but grew gradually after the great persecution.

### **3.2 The Schools of Buddhism**

During this period, there were many schools of Buddhism were flourished or founded. The main schools were Pure Land School (净土宗), Tiantai School (天台宗), Garland School (华严宗), Chan School (禅宗), Idealistic School (唯识宗), Vinaya school (律宗) and Secret School (密宗).

### **3.2.1 Pure Land School ( 净土宗 )**

The Pure Land School was founded by Huiyuan (慧远) during Eastern Jin dynasty, but the monk Shandao (善道 613-681 AD) was its real patriarch. It focuses on the simple Amitobha cult, so it is called Buddha Were (念佛宗) as well. Its basic writing is “After one of the three (三经一论)”, they are the Wuliangshou Jing (无量寿经), Guanwuliangshou Jing (观无量寿经), Amitobha Jing (阿弥陀经) and Essay of Died of. They describe the Western Paradise, and who give the devotion to the Amitobha Buddha is possible to go there. Shandao set up the theory of practice and wrote the five activities which could lead to rebirth in the western Paradise: uttering the name of the Buddha, chanting the sutras, meditating on the Buddha, worshiping and singing praise to the Buddha. The Pure Land School was one of the most popular of Buddhist school in the history and has still many believers today.

### **3.2.2 Tiantai School (天台宗)**

The Tiantai School was founded by Zhiyi (智顓 538-597 AD). According to Zhiyi, the Lotus Sutra was the Sutra which Buddha taught at the end of his life, so it is the most important one. The central teaching of Tiantai School is the Threefold Truth (三谛): void of all things, temporariness of all phenomena, and the synthesis of emptiness and phenomenal existence as the truth of the mean or middle. Consciousness could be separated from worldly phenomena (dharma), spiritual concentration (止) and insight consciousness (观) helps to become aware of the non-

existence of all appearance. Tiantai School declined after the great persecution in the year of 845.

### 3.2.3 Garland School (华严宗)

The Garland School was founded by Fazang (法藏 643-712 AD). It was based on the Garland Sutra (华严经). The Garland School believes that the phenomena are empty, but the Buddha Principle is real. The principle (理) and the phenomenon (事) of the emptiness are interfused and mutually identified. No phenomenon can exist independently and alone; all things depend on others and are combined to a whole. After Fazang, The Garland School was further advanced by Chengguan (澄观) and Zongmi (宗密). Chengguan was canonized the “National Master” by the Tang empire. After Zongmi, especially during the great persecution, Garland School gradually became weakened. But it greatly influenced the later Neo-Confucianism of Ming dynasty.

### 3.2.4 Chan School (禅宗)

Chan School was founded by Bodhidharma (菩提达摩 382? - 532 AD) and Huineng (慧能 638-713 AD). “Human nature is Buddha (人性即佛性)” and “Sudden Enlightenment 顿悟成佛” were its character to point directly to the mind of human from the dogma, asceticism, rites and the traditional monastery system. The famous story of the Gatha of Shenxiu and Huineng just showed the character:

The body is a Bodhi tree,  
the mind a standing mirror bright.  
At all times polish it diligently,  
and let no dust alight.

身是菩提树  
心如明镜台  
时时勤拂拭  
勿使染尘埃

Bodhi originally has no tree.	菩提本无树
The bright mirror also has no stand.	明镜亦非台
Fundamentally there is not a single thing.	本来无一物
Where could dust arise?	何处染尘埃 <sup>16</sup>

The believers of Chan relied on spontaneous actions and Chan meditation (坐禅) to achieve enlightenment. Because of emptiness (空) of reality, the Buddha nature can only be apprehended by intuition. Avoiding conscious thought, reality is expressed by silence or negation of the object in mind. It was the Chan School that also developed the worldwide known fighting techniques (功夫) in the Shaolin monastery. The spontaneity thought of Chan Buddhism is familiar to Daoism action of the free individual. Chan Buddhism grew well in China and becomes one part of Chinese philosophy and culture. Hu Shi (胡适 1891-1962 AD) who was a famous scholar of modern China said “The Ch'an (Zen) movement is an integral part of the history of Chinese Buddhism, and the history of Chinese Buddhism is an integral part of the general history of Chinese thought.”<sup>17</sup>

Important branches of the Chan School were the Caodong School (曹洞宗) and Linji School (临济宗). Chan School became the main schools after the great persecution.

### 3.2.5 Idealistic School (唯识宗)

The Idealistic School was founded by the great pilgrim Xuanzang (玄奘 600-664 AD). Xuzang was a great monk, translator and traveler. He was famous for his 17 years overland trip to India with the purpose of acquiring the Buddhist Sutras and back with lots of Buddhist Sutras to China. The Idealistic School based on the Mahayana-Samgraha and the Yogacarin writings. According to the idealistic teaching, the external world did not really exist and was only an illusion. The five sensual consciousnesses like light, hearing, and so on, were just helped by the conscious mind. The mind forms conceptions from the perception outside. A seventh

consciousness was the thought center which stored and coordinated all the ideas reflected in the mind.

Because of the strong logic of this school and its complexity to be understood and practiced, it did not survive in the great persecutions of 845.

### **3.2.6 Vinaya School (律宗)**

The Vinaya School was founded by the monk Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667 AD), specialized in study of all aspects of the Vinaya. Daoxuan chose the Vinaya of the Dharmaguptaka School in India, in Chinese called the “Vinaya in Four Divisions” (四分律), as the standard. After it had been settled, the school went on to function as a sort of canon law department for Chinese Buddhism, producing commentaries on the Vinaya, establishing procedures for handling difficult cases and so on.

Vinaya School became an important school with a long history development in China until today. After Daoxuan, there were many disciples. The monk Jianzhen (鉴真 688-763 AD) was a successor of this school, after travelling to Japan, he founded Japanese Vinaya School.

### **3.2.7 Esoteric School (密宗)**

Esoteric School was founded by the “Kaiyuan's Three Great Enlightened Masters”:

Subhakarasiṃha (善无畏), Vajrabodhi (金刚智 671-741 AD), and Amoghavajra (不空 705-774 AD), who established Esoteric School in China during the reign of emperor Tang Xuanzong (玄宗 685-762 AD). Mahāvairocana Tantra (大日经) was translated by Subhakarasiṃha and Vajrasekhara Sūtra (金刚顶经) translated by Amoghavajra were the main sūtras of Esoteric School. Esoteric School was famous for its mysterious and magical teaching which included mantra formulae and rituals.

Because of the support from the emperor Tang Xuanzong, their teachings were quickly taken up within the Tang court and among the elites. Esoteric School was very popular and became one of the main schools of Tang dynasty. After the middle period of Tang, Esoteric School went to weak, but it was very popular in Tibet and developed to be Tibetan Buddhism.

### **3.3 The conflicts between Buddhism and Confucianism & Daoism and the great persecution**

After the flourish of Buddhism in China during the early and middle periods of Tang dynasty, the Buddhism became very strong in China. The stable economic development of the monastery was due to the support of empire of Tang and landowner class. The monasteries owned vast land and lots of workers, and they were free from tax and got richer and richer. It was not acceptable by the empire and other opponents. In the year of 845, the greatest persecution towards Buddhism happened.

There were four famous persecutions towards Buddhism in the history of China, which happened in the year 446 (Emperor Taiwu of North Wei 北魏太武帝 408-452AD), 574(Emperor Wu of North Zhou 北周武帝 543-578AD), 845 (Emperor Wuzong 武宗 841-846AD), and 955(Emperor Shizong of Later Zhou 后周世宗 921-959AD).The great persecution of Tang dynasty was ordered by Emperor Wuzong , who was persuaded and under the influence of some Taoist priests.

Maybe there were different causes to fire the persecutions, but the conflicts among Buddhism and Chinese philosophy and religions were the potential reasons. They thought the Buddhism was non-Chinese religion, and the Buddhists were not accepted to live in harmony amidst other Chinese religions, such as Confucianism and Daoism. Early in the ninth century, Han Yu ( 韩愈 768-824 AD), one of the greatest classical writers of Tang dynasty and China, he published a famous essay in which he openly denounced Buddhism as un-Chinese, and said it was a way of life of the barbarians. He made a remark of such ruthless suppression: "Restore its people to human living! Burn its books! And convert its buildings to human dwellings!" Twenty-one years after his death, what had happened just as he proposed carried on.<sup>18</sup>

The Great Persecution lasted only two years, but there were 4,600 big temples and monasteries and over 40,000 minor places of worship destroyed, millions of acres of landed property of the temple were confiscated, 150,000 male and female slaves or retainers of the temples and monasteries were freed, and 265,000 monks and nuns were forced to return to secular life. Only two temples with thirty monks each were permitted to stand in each of the two capitals, Chang'an and Luoyang. Buddhist scriptures, images and stone monuments were destroyed wherever they were found.<sup>19</sup>

After the great persecution, Buddhism in China declined and some schools disappeared, such as the Idealistic School. "Ancient Chinese Buddhism never fully recovered from the persecution".<sup>20</sup> But the Chan School was not influenced so much, and it gradually became one of the main schools in Chinese Buddhism.

#### **4 Transformation and Merger Period (11 AD – 19 AD)**

##### **4.1 Song dynasty (宋 960-1279 AD)**

After the great persecution in 845, Buddhism in China revived soon, but some schools declined or even disappeared, "after the Kaiyuan (开元) period and An Shi Rebellion, there was nothing to see about the Idealistic School".<sup>21</sup> And the different schools learned and got along with each other, finally the Pure Land School and Chan Buddhism became the two main schools in China.

During Song dynasty, the Confucianism rose and came to be considered as the national religion. However, they did not exclude the Daoism and Buddhism. The Confucianism provided a social system for the people to service, and the Buddhism stressed on the soul of the people to build a better life, so they can gradually work together in unity. Confucianism absorbed some merits of Buddhism and the new theory of Confucianism appeared. The great philosopher Zhu Xi (朱熹 1130-1200 AD) redefined Confucianism and contributed much to Confucianism. He was thought to be the greatest representative of the Neo-Confucianism.

#### **4.2 Yuan dynasty (元 1271-1368)**

The Yuan dynasty was founded by the Mongol, who came from the north of China. Before they came to China, they were influenced by the Tibetan Buddhism already. After the Mongol conquered the whole territories of China, Tibetan Buddhism was considered almost as the national religion. Kublai Khan (忽必烈 1215 – 1294 AD), the first Mongol emperor, supported Buddhism strongly. He even appointed the Tibetan Buddhist monk Basiba (巴思八 1235–1280AD) to be the national instructor.<sup>22</sup> The Tibetan Buddhism was given the authority to be in charge of all Buddhist affairs during this period. The monasteries not only owned the land and workers, but also ran the business, such as industries and commerce, like open the pawnshops, hotels and shops.

When the Tibetan Buddhism developed quickly, the other Buddhism schools also got developed, especially the Chan Buddhism. The Emperors not just supported Tibetan Buddhism only; they allowed and supported other Buddhism Schools and religions in some degree.

#### **4.3 Ming dynasty (明 1368-1644 AD)**

The founder of Ming dynasty was a monk at his early year, he rose originally in the name of religions. After became the emperor, he wanted to build a new system to control Buddhism. From the time of the first Ming emperor, the government set strict administration to control over every aspect of the Buddhism. The emperor abolished the Tibetan Buddhism's privilege, but rewarded the famous Tibetan monks; this was the main policy which his successor took to keep a political relationship with the Tibet. A close relationship existed between the Buddhist sangha, or monastic communities, and the government. Buddhism was part of the body of the country to service the imperial court, even the individual monks were involvement with the court and politics.

This period the laymen study Buddhism was popular. The Buddhism and Chinese philosophy continued to merge. Wang Yangming (王阳明 1472-1529 AD) was the famous idealist Neo-

Confucian philosopher, he developed the theory of Zhuxi's Neo-Confucianism, and proposed the mind and body was separated and to get the reality of the world just through the intuition, the meditation which he called site-still (Jingzuo 静坐) was the way to get the intuition. It was strongly influenced by Buddhism and Daoism.

During this period, the Pure Land School and Chan School of Buddhism in China were the most welcomed Buddhism.

#### **4.4 Qing dynasty (清 1644-1911)**

The Emperors of Qing dynasty came from the northeast China; the level of development of their culture was much lower than that of the central China. After they conquered China, they accepted and learned much from China, such the language, culture, and the political system. They inherited the political system of Ming dynasty to control the ideology and more strictly. The religions were considered as the measures to control the whole country. They followed its former dynasty to build the monk officer system to organize the monks from the capital city to other province according to different levels. The early emperors of Qing dynasty attached an important to the Buddhism, Emperor Shunzhi appreciated Chan Buddhism much and it was said he convert to Buddhism finally. Emperor Qianlong took 18 years to carve the "Qianlong Tripitaka" and translated it to Manchu language; the aim was to "respect and love the emperor, eliminate the evil and follow the goodness 尊君从善" and showed the great achievement of his dynasty.<sup>23</sup>

The Tibetan Buddhism was supported by the emperors to keep good relationship with the Tibet territory. Dalai Lama 5 was invited to Beijing, the capital city in the year of 1625. The Emperor Shunzhi (顺治 1638-1661) gave a big welcome ceremony and built a temple for him specially which called Xihuang Temple (西黄寺), and gave many gifts and gold to him when he went back to Tibet. 1653, Emperor Shunzhi canonized the Dalai Lama 5, and from then, all of the Dalai Lamas would be canonized by the Qing officially. 1792, Emperor Qianlong set up the "Golden

Urn” to choose of the new Dalai Lama from two candidates. The Tibetan temples also were built in Beijing and the Tibetan Buddhism translation and also supported by the empire. The Tibetan Buddhism got great developed with the promotion of the empire.

And the other Buddhism schools were declined generally. Chan School was activity at the early Qing dynasty, the several early emperors were appreciated Chan Buddhism. But later it divided into many sections; its status was replaced by the Pure Land School later. Pure Land School was recognized and believed by all the schools. But the other schools were not as good as before and became dreariness gradually at the end.

When the Buddhism development faced difficulties, the Buddhist study was activity unusually. There were many famous scholars converted to monks or contributed much to Buddhism study and transition, such as Zhu Da (朱耷 1626?-1705? AD), Shi Tao (石涛 1630-1724AD) and Huang Zong xi (黄宗羲 1610-1695AD).

## **5. Buddhism in Modern China (About 20 century AD - )**

### **5.1 Revival period (About 20 century AD – 1949 AD)**

The modern China faced many difficulties both from inside and outside since the end of 19 century, the whole Chinese civilization and nations faced a great crisis which was never seen in the past 2000 years. With the Qing dynasty collapsing, the Confucianism declined and lost its dominance position, while western science and technology entered and spread, and the whole country was unstable and ideology of social was chaos again. However, Buddhism was walking on the way of revival and revolution. During this time, Buddhism showed three characters of development: the rise of Buddhist laymen, revival of different Buddhism Schools and renovation of Humanistic Buddhism (人生佛教).

Yang Wenhui (杨文会, 1837-1911) was a famous layman who transmitted and promoted the revival of Buddhism much in the modern China. He was very interested in Buddhism when he

happened to read the Buddhist sutra “Awaking of Faith” (大乘起信论) and devoted himself to revive the Buddhism. He founded the Jinling Carved by the Department at Nanjing (金陵刻经处). He and his supporters carved and printed more than 3000 kinds of Buddhist books within 50 years. He also collected many sutras from Japan which disappeared already in China. His works built the foundation for the Buddhism development in modern period. He also promoted the Buddhist education and study, there were many famous person were influenced by his contributions. He was thought to be the “Father of the revival of Chinese Buddhism in the modern period”.<sup>24</sup>

During this time, there are some famous Buddhist colleges founded and different Buddhist schools revival. The Ouyang Jian (欧阳渐) founded the Shina the College (支那内学院), he printed and published many books to promote Buddhism study and education about 30 years. He appreciated and contributed much to the revival of Dharma character school (法相宗). The Chan Buddhism has a deep root in Chinese culture, so its revival was launched gradually. The Pure land School was respected in promoting the public welfare actively. And other Buddhist schools certainly further continued in this regard.

The monk Taixu (太虚 1889-1947 AD) was a leader of the revolution of Chinese modern Buddhism. He studied with Yang Wenhui at his early time. He devoted his whole life to the revival and revolution of Chinese Buddhism. He edited the Buddhist magazine “Buddhism Monthly” and wrote articles to publicize Buddhism and organized the Buddhist association to promote the development of Buddhism. He also founded the Wuchang Buddhist College (武昌佛学院) and Tibetan Teaching College (汉藏教理院), and he was a rector of the Southern Buddhist College of Fujian (闽南佛学院). He also proposed the slogan “Revolution of Buddhism (佛教革命)”, he promoted the Buddhist revolution through the Humanistic Buddhism (人生佛

学) which advocated that Buddhism should improve the personality and the social and to get nirvana just through the daily life and daily moral behaviors. He united the Buddhist life and social life, and gave a leading direction for the development of Buddhism in modern China.

## **5.2 New China period (1949- now)**

1949 was the turning point of Buddhism development in China. At the beginning of new China, the Communist Party tried to unite and cooperate with the other parties and groups to build a new country. There were many Buddhist temples and colleges reopened, rebuilt and built. Such as the Chinese Buddhist College, Shanghai Buddhist College, Wutai Mountain Buddhist Temple, Tibet Buddhist College and so on. But the conflicts between Buddhism and Communism became more and more tense. Between 1966-1978, the ten years of “Cultural Revolution”, the Buddhist temples were destroyed, the Buddhist books were burnt, the monks and nuns were forced to secularize even to be eliminated. Buddhism almost disappeared in China.

From reformation of 1978, Buddhism was rebuilt and developed again. Most of the Buddhist temples reestablished and the number of monks and nuns gradually grows.

There was later on political relaxation on the control of Buddhism, the freedom of convert to Buddhists is protected and respected, the Buddhist activities and study are supported by the government and social. Buddhism is becoming more and more welcomed and is thriving in China. Buddhism is thought to be a part of Chinese culture. The development of China should include the prosperity of Buddhism; the revival of Chinese culture should include the revival of Buddhism.

Zhao Puchu (赵朴初 1907-2000 AD), chairman of Buddhist Association of China, proposed Humanitarian Buddhism (人间佛学) to advocate that the Buddhism should be contribute to the social and correspond with the development of Chinese economy and political, it directs the road of the development of Chinese Buddhism. As the constitution of Buddhist Association of China is written:

“It is a national patriotic organization educational group for Buddhists of various nationalities. The tenet is to assist the government to implement the policy of freedom of religious beliefs, to maintain the legitimate rights and interests of Buddhists in China, to propagate Buddhist doctrines and teachings, to develop Buddhist cause, to carry forwards fine traditions of Chinese Buddhism, to strengthen the Buddhism proper construction, to initiate Buddhist cause, to unite Buddhists of various nationalities in China to participate in socialist material and spiritual civilization construction and make contributions to the reform and open up program, economic construction, and world peace.”<sup>25</sup>

Resent years, Buddhism is becoming popular in China. A 108-meter-high world highest-Guanyin Statue was built in the year 2005, in Sanya of Haina, in the most southern City of China, and there were 108 eminent monks from different regions and countries participate the opening ceremony.

The first World Buddhist Forum (世界佛教论坛) was held in Hangzhou City (舟山) and Zhoushan City (常州), Zhejiang Province, China, 2006. The second was held in Ling Shan (灵山) of Wuxi (无锡) on March the 28th, and closed in Taipei (台北) on April the 1<sup>st</sup> with the theme “A harmonious World; A Synergy of Conditions”, the delegates from almost 50 countries across the world.<sup>26</sup>

Shaolin Temple has built many Branches in other regions of China and abroad, including some parts of America and Europe. The White House Temple which is the earliest temple said recently it will be extension to be 1300 acres and to be the biggest temple in China in the later few years.<sup>27</sup> The Hangzhou Buddhist College just held its opening ceremony for finishing setting a new campus.<sup>28</sup>

## Notes:

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhistworld/china-txt.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Ji Xianlin, *Buddhism Talk of Ji Xianlin*, p.41, Modern China press, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Tang Yongteng, *Han, Wei and Jin Dynasty History of Buddhism Top*, pp.36-38, Commercial Press, 1938.

<sup>4</sup> *Buddhism in China: a historical survey*, Whalen Lai, from *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*.

<sup>5</sup> Xie Lujun, *A very short history of Buddhism*, pp.69-70, Jiuzhou Press, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>7</sup> Feng Youlan, *A short history of Chinese philosophy*; Section 21.

<http://www.phil.pku.edu.cn/res/files/fengyoulan/chph/fyl21.htm>

<sup>8</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_Buddhism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Buddhism)

<sup>9</sup> Feng Youlan, *A short history of Chinese philosophy*; Section 17.

<http://www.phil.pku.edu.cn/res/files/fengyoulan/chph/fyl21.htm>

- 
- <sup>10</sup> Xie Lujun, A very short history of Buddhism, pp. 129-131, Jiuzhou Press, 2007.
- <sup>11</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yungang\\_Grottoes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yungang_Grottoes)
- <sup>12</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longmen\\_Grottoes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longmen_Grottoes)
- <sup>13</sup> Hu Shi, Chan (Zen) Buddhism in China: Its History and method, Philosophy East and West, Vol.3, No. 1 pp.3-24, University of Hawaii Press, Hawaii, USA,1953.
- <sup>14</sup> Xie Lujun, A very short history of Buddhism, p.173, Jiuzhou Press, 2007.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., 174,
- <sup>16</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huineng>
- <sup>17</sup> Hu Shi, Chan (Zen) Buddhism in China: Its History and method, Philosophy East and West, Vol..3, No. 1, pp.3-24 by University of Hawaii Press, Hawaii, USA,1953.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_Buddhism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Buddhism)
- <sup>21</sup> Jiang Weiqiao, The History of Chinese Buddhism, p.129, Shanghai Century Press Group, 2005.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 206.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 243.
- <sup>24</sup> Xie Lujun, A very short history of Buddhism, p.247, Jiuzhou Press, 2007.
- <sup>25</sup> <http://www.116.com.cn/116/fjxh/zcfg/fils/387260.shtml>
- <sup>26</sup> <http://www.wbf.net.cn/english/index.htm>
- <sup>27</sup> <http://www.chinanews.com.cn/cul/2010/09-17/2539655.shtml>
- <sup>28</sup> [http://www.fjnet.com/jjdt/jjdtnr/201009/t20100905\\_167965.htm](http://www.fjnet.com/jjdt/jjdtnr/201009/t20100905_167965.htm)