

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BUDDHA AND THE PRIESTS OF OTHER RELIGIONS IN THE TIPITAKA

Chamnong Kanthik

Associate Professor, Ph.D., Department of Oriental Language, Faculty of Humanities, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Thailand

Sudaporn Khiewngamdee

Lecturer in Pali and Sanskrit Program, Department of Oriental Language, Faculty of Humanities, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Thailand

Purpose: This research aims to study the concepts and types of priests of other religions which appear in the Tipitaka, to study the Buddha's relationship with other religious priests and to use it as a practice for Buddhists to live in harmony with other religions.

Methodology: The researcher used as a research method a documentary and commentary of the Pali Tipitaka Siamese official version, Mahamakut Rajavidyalaya and the Tipitaka and the Commentaries which are translations of the Mahamakut Rajavidyalaya Foundation under Royal Patronage. The study mainly focused on the appearance of the Vinaya Tipitaka and the Suttanta Piaka.

Main Results: The result of this study found that other religions and priests, which appear in the Tipitaka as the 6 teachers' religions; Including Purnakassapa, Makhligosala, Ajitakesakambala, Pakudhakaccayana, Niganthanaputra and Sajayve-lahaputra. Each religion has a different viewpoint. Other religious priests include Paribajaka, Tpassa, Jatila, Ayatithika and Hermits. The relationship in terms of being an adversary include Brahmins, Huhukajti, Dghanakhaparibajaka and Saccaka-Nigantha and so on. Then, there is also a friendly relationship, such as Shasenapati, a disciple of Nigantha, Kaanta-brahmana, Mahasakuludayiparibajaka, Paribajaka named Kandaraka and Dghatapass- Nigantha.

Implications: When analyzing why other religious priests changed Buddhism. Due to the use of the miraculous miracle, and from the curiosity or intolerance in the study of that person. In the past, the contact of the Buddha with other religion's priests was friendly. If there was something to criticize, when he clarified, it was considered terminated. If there is some good, it was accepted and applied in Buddhism. If the act of the Buddha was to deal with other religion's priests as a practice for the disciples of today, it is possible to do so.

Introduction

Buddhism occurred among Brahmanism and other doctrines in India. The Buddha himself used to study and searched for the way to enlightenment from other doctrines when he first renounced the world. The Buddha-to-be studied the doctrines of Udaka Rmaputta and ra Klma, and later he applied meditative attainments and absorption that he obtained from both doctrines as the base of consideration of the Three Common Characteristics. In Smaaphala Sutta of Dgha Nikya, the famous doctrine was one of the six teachers, but it was in the wrong view in the Buddhist perspective. The in-depth study revealed that those doctrines were the rivals of Buddhism. According to Vinaya Piaka, after being newly enlightened, the Buddha met Upaka jvaka and conversed with him. When the Buddha told Upaka that he was the enlightened one, Upaka did not believe it by shaking his head and sticking out his tongue and then went away. Shaking the head of Upaka might indicate agreement or disagreement because nowadays people in India shake their heads for agreement too.

After enlightenment, the Buddha gave a sermon to the five ascetics who believed in self-mortification and tamed the three-brother-ascetics with matted hair and their disciples who paid respect to nga and fire by using his psychic power.

The mentioned relationship between the Buddha and the priests in other religions seemed to be negative or unfriendly. In other suttas, such as Mahsakuludayi Sutta in Majjhima Nikya, on the way of alms-collecting in the morning, seeing that the time was still early, the Buddha paid a visit to residence of wanders and conversed with them, Details in this sutta showed that the meeting was friendly and in a well-wishing atmosphere.

Buddhists should study and pay attention to the role of the Lord Buddha towards the priests and disciples of other religions and then apply it into their practice with members of other religions to build friendly relations. For the above mentioned reasons, the researcher was interested in a study of the relationship between the Buddha and the priests of other religions in the Tipiaka.

Objectives of the study

1. To study concepts and types of priests in other religions in the Tipitaka,
2. To study the relationship between the Buddha and the priests of other religions, and
3. To propose a guideline of practice for Buddhists in living with members of other religions.

Scope of the study

The study was focused on the Tipiaka in Pali, the Siamese (Symaraha) official version, printed by Mahamakut Rajavidyalaya in B.E. 2556(2013) and the Tipitaka and Commentaries, translation version, printed by Mahamakut Rajavidyalaya Foundation in B.E. 2546(2003) in the Bicentennial Celebration of the Chakkri Dynasty in Ratanakosin Period(91 book series). The main study was emphasized on the Vinaya Piaka and the Suttanta Piaka.

Research Methodology

The data of this documentary research were collected by a study of the Tipiaka in Pali and Thai versions. Only the events, stories, Vinaya items and explanation of the Commentaries (91 book series) in which the Buddha treated with the priests of other religions were chosen. The data were analyzed by content analysis. The positive results were explained for a good practice. All the results were composed systematically with conclusions for practical policy and further study.

Expected advantages

1. To know the concepts and types of priests in the Tipiaka,
2. To know the relationship between the Buddha and the priests of other religions, and
3. To obtain a guideline for Buddhists for living with members of other religions.

Literature Review

Sujip Punyanuphab (1996)(2539 B.E)¹ in Shanda Sutta on his literary work, the Tipiaka for People B.E. 2539, said that a naked recluse named Kassapa told the Buddha about his ordinary practice, such as being naked, standing toileting, and licking fingers while eating, all that signified his recluse-hood and noble-hood. The Buddha said that the practice that was not composed of Sla, Samadhi and Pa was far away from recluse-hood and noble-hood. The one accomplishing with loving-kindness, good-will, deliverance of mind, deliverance from mental intoxication and liberation through wisdom(Pavimutti) was called a recluse and Brahmin.

Arayavamsa (2015)(2558 B.E) said about the relation between Buddhism and Hinduism in his book, *The Relation of Hinduism and Buddhism on Interaction of Thais and Indians*, that the relationship between Thais under Buddhism as the national religion and Indians under Hinduism as the national religion was under the influence of belief of religious members in each period and duration of time. The religious influence mixed with faiths, opinions, traditions, customs, and cultures made ways of living of people in Thailand and India similar. Although the ideal or aim of each religion was different, the fundamental teachings in moral level of both religions could be traced from the same origin. It was no wonder if there was assimilation of Buddhists and Hindus in India and Thailand.

Phramaha Prakasit Acarapali (Kaewkongkate) (2016)(2559 B.E.) in a study of *Titthiyaparivsa*, the practice for screening members of other religions to become monks in Buddhism, found that only the naked recluses had to vow for *Titthiyaparivsa* for 4 months since they were accustomed to being naked and had views against Buddhism. The recluses from other doctrines could enter to the monkhood without this condition because they had belief and practice similar to those in Buddhism. In the life of *Bodhisattvahood*, the Buddha and some of his disciples became hermits wearing robes, renouncing the world, wandering for alms-collecting, teaching the principles of *Kamma*, the five precepts, the eight precepts, and absorption and attainments similar to the practice in Buddhism. During the observation of *Titthiyaparivsa*, if any members of the naked doctrine became the stream entrants, they could ask for ordination at once because they had achieved the fundamental attainment.

Thanada Wijakkhana, Phramaha Duangden Thitaano, and Phramaha Hansa Dhammaso (2017)(2560 B.E.) in a study of the way of management conflicts arising from *Mna* in Theravada Buddhism, found that the way of conflict management arising from *Mna* in Buddhism consisted of preserving precepts, cultivating loving-kindness and insight meditation, concentrating on impermanence, and forgiveness. It was found from stories of *Viabha*, monks of *Kosamb*, *Jamb* *Demon King*, *The three-brother-ascetics* etc. that *Mna* or conceit was a major factor causing problems to oneself and society and creating separation and disunity in society including war and the loss of lives and assets. The Buddha established himself in equanimity and managed the conflicts according to their causes and states by focusing one's mind before confronting with the problems and the conflicts with others. To change the wrong view to the right view could easily and rapidly reduce and eradicate *Mna*. The concept of *Mna* in Buddhism and in the view of people in general was completely different. In Buddhism, *Mna* means ego or comparative ego with others as better, equal or lower. For people in general, *Mna* refers to the effort or patience to push oneself to success. According to Buddhism, *Mna* or conceit is a defilement that can be eradicated with difficulty. In the *Tipiaka*, those who can completely eradicate defilement are only *Arahantas*. All beings are bound in the cycle of rebirth by *Mna*. According to the *Tipiaka*, how to eradicate *Mna* comes in many ways; to eradicate lust by cultivating concentration on loathsomeness, aversion by loving-kindness, wrong thought by mindfulness on breathing, and self-conceit by perception of impermanence.

2 in a study of the role of monks in reducing conflicts in Buddhist way, found that the role and method of monks in reinforcement of conflict reduction in the Buddhist was on oneself and the others. Monks could use their role and method in conflict reduction in the Buddhist way by participating in activities with people based on monks' burden in 6 aspects; administration, religious study, education welfare, propagation, public assistance, and public welfare. Monks were the medium between religion and state to work together in the same direction. Furthermore, monks could reinforce the conflict reduction with the teaching on *Phasuka Vihra Dhamma* principles; to have loving-kindness in bodily action, in verbal action, and in mental action in order to have people live their lives honestly and happily.

3 in a study of the Buddha's conduct towards people in lower caste, found that the Buddha's conduct was a model of those having meritorious perfections to all beings. The Buddha used a variety of teaching methods to teach lower caste people, gave a chance for them to be ordained in Buddhism, and to study *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* in his religion equally. Monks with a good practice and self-

development up to the attainment of salvation could be praised and admired. The Buddhas conduct resulted to the revolution of the caste system and was recognized by all in the Buddhas time. The concepts and methods obtained from the Buddhas conduct could be applied in solving social elite system, and at the same time, could be used to build unity and reconciliation by giving rights, freedom and equality of human dignity, social opportunity and living opportunity, building each other a dependent system, respect for personal rights, and establishing unity principles.

Results of the study

The results of the study found that there were many types of priests and ways of practice because of many doctrines and concepts. Some priests renounced the world to follow their own ideal and some followed the leaders of the doctrines. For example, Purnakassapa said that when a person himself did an action or asked the others to do it, violated others by himself or asked the others to do it, . killed, stole, made adultery, told a lie etc., sin or badness did not occur to him (D.S. 9/94/55-56 Sym)[Footnote 30](#).

Such a belief was to negate merit and demerit. It might be the influence of Purnakassapas teaching that made some people nowadays believe in the theory of non-action. This belief resulted to a belief in the world to come. Some people did not care about the fruits of goodness and badness, but they did care only the advantages in the present. Doing badness for the sake of present benefits was better than doing goodness for advantages in a far future.

Makkhaligosala believed that nothing could defile or pollute all beings, beings had no cause and factor and they could be defiled and polluted by themselves. On the other hand, they could be purified by themselves without the assistance of their action, action of the others, no power, no effort . All beings were moving by destiny and it could stop when it came to an end as the thread thrown out until its end (D.S. 9/95/69 Sym)[Footnote 29](#). This belief was called destiny doctrine, waiting for fortune. The followers of this doctrine considered the effort as useless and comical. What could be traced when a thread ran out until its end. Those who had such a belief would let their lives pass uselessly or preferred to take the risk. This belief could be called Ahetu-apaccaya Vda (Ang. Tika. 20/501/195)[Footnote 28](#).

The mentioned concepts belonged to the six teachers in the Buddhas time. Another four teachers were Ajita Kesa Kambala, Pakudha Kaccyana, Nigaha Na Putta, and Sajaya Velaha Putta. Nigaha Na Putta was the founder of Jainism or Naked Doctrine[Footnote 27](#), a famous doctrine in India from the past to the present. Being naked was not recognized by cultures around the world. Tribal people who remained naked were treated as uncivilized and they should be developed. It was remarkable that monks in Jainism remained naked but they were accepted to live their lives among civilized people.

The Buddha arose among prior philosophers and teachers. When the Buddha was a prince, he studied 18 arts and one of them was theology[Footnote 26](#). It could be said that there were priests in different doctrines in the royal court at that time. When Prince Siddhattha renounced the world search for salvation, he approached and studied other doctrines without conceit and monarchic pride. Applying the teaching and practice from those doctrines as a clue, the prince could attain enlightenment. After enlightenment, the Buddha taught people and priests in other doctrines depending on his opportunity. The Buddha had to keep contact with priests and leaders of other religions without avoidance. It could be noticed that the Buddhas teachings were profound, gentle, and clever. For example, the Buddha taught the five ascetics with the Middle Path, not to be extreme in self-mortification and sensual pleasure, and taught the three-brother-ascetics and their disciples with the right practice to fire, i.e. to eradicate the fire of lust, hatred and delusion because those ascetics worshipped fire and nga king (Vi. Maha. 4/37/35 Sym)[Footnote 25](#). The Buddha used his psychic power to suppress or tame the others when necessary. But above all, the Buddha kept a good relationship with the priests from other religions as mentioned in Mahasakuludiyi Sutta (M.M.



13/3/314-355/256-280 Sym)[Footnote 24](#) that on the way for his alms-collecting in the morning, the Buddha paid a visit to Sakuludiyi Paribbjaka and he welcomed the Buddha with friendliness and hospitality.

There were some visitors coming to see the Buddha with anger, such as Dghanakha Paribbjaka. Conversing based on logical principle and calmness, the Buddha made Dighanakha realize his own mistakes and ask the Buddha as his refuge (M.M. 13/269-275/217-221 Sym)[Footnote 23](#). The essence in the Buddhas teachings was to achieve the fruit of practice and let go those who did not pay attention to his teachings. The Buddha never defeated anyone by harsh speech, assaulting or killing (Khu. Dha. 25/24/36 Sym)[Footnote 22](#).

With the practice and conduct of the Buddha as a model, the later disciples could live with members of other religions. Some beliefs and traditional practice transferred from time to time were accepted in Buddhism. For example, once the Buddha sneezed while giving a sermon, monks exclaimed *jvatu bhante bhagav jvatu sugato* = Long Live the Lord! and that interfered giving the sermon. The Buddha asked the monks if that exclamation could come true. The monks replied that it was not like that. In the later time, monks went to other areas and sat still speechless. People thought that it was extraordinary behavior. So the Buddha allowed monks to respond to peoples sympathy and goodwill.

Eating meat one should not eat, Monks ate elephant meat and horse meat from alms-collecting, but that was looked down on and condemned by people because those meats were obnoxious. It was related to the Buddha, and then the rule of practice was set forth. At a later time, Supassa, a nga king, paid an audience to the Buddha and said that the monks should not eat snake because snakes and ngas might cause harms to monks. The rule of practice in monks consumption was set forth in addition to 10 Akappiyamasa or 10 kinds of forbidden meat. This mention was to show that the Buddha listened to opinions of people in particular society and followed their ways of living (Vi.Maha. 5/59-60/57-60 Sym)[Footnote 21](#).

For the rain retreat, monks wandered here and there throughout the year-round. In rainy season, monks walked past rice field and caused damage to it. People complained that priests in other doctrines kept the rain retreat, but why not the monks in Buddhism. That was related to the Buddha, he asked for the truth and then the rule for rain retreat or Buddhist Lent was set forth for monks.

Converting to a new religion is a significant matter for everyone. In the Buddhas time, there were many members and disciples of other faiths who vowed to take the Triple Gems as their refuge. Beside the Buddhas characteristics, his teaching methods were interesting. For example, the Buddha defeated ngas in the fire houses of the three-brother-ascetics by using his psychic power[Footnote 20](#). Supernatural power may not be accepted by some people. But we have to adjust our mindset. With the wonder of the Buddhas psychic power, the Three-brother-ascetics and their disciples stayed calm and were ready to listen to the Buddhas teaching. In a comparison, psychic power is similar to a convincing advertisement of products to interest the audience and their consumption.

It can be said that the Buddha compromised with the majority of people. It is a clue for Buddhists in the present to adjust ways of living to people in communities where they live. For Dhamma principles, seeing the goodness of Buddhism, some people convert to Buddhism and develop themselves by higher practice. Some become monks and live in the monkhood forever and some disrobe, but they all still take the Triple Gems as their refuge and observe the five precepts (M.M. 13/314-355/256-280 Sym)[Footnote 19](#). No one places blame on the Buddha, but on his own falsehood instead. Since the Buddha taught his disciples to treat others with loving-kindness, so Buddhism is a religion of wisdom and peace.

Conclusion

Indian civilization is distinguished and has continued for a long time. It was mixed up from 2 tribal civilizations; Ariyaka and Milakkha. The Dhamma principles concern God, nature, and living a life. The final stage of living a life is to renounce the world to become sanyasi. The teachings of the main religions or doctrines are to live a life as a recluse. Lay-men, governors, warriors, emperors, and soldiers wishing to live a perfect life must renounce the world in the final stage of their lives. The relationship between the Buddha and priests in other religions was friendly. If there were some misunderstanding or disagreement, every issue came to an end with explanation and clarification. Evidence in killing could never be found in the life of the Buddha. Some positive or advantageous sides in other religions were adapted in Buddhism, such as the Ptimokkha reciting ceremony. This showed that the Buddha paid respect to the supremacy of the Dhamma.

Some people or recluses may attach to the outer form of practice, such as bathing in the Ganges River in order to wash away the sin. In Buddhism, the Buddha placed a focus on inner refreshment and cleaning (sacittapariyodapana) (Khu. Dha. 25/24/36 Sym)[Footnote 18](#) because sin and defilement was embedded in ones mind. The more sin and defilement one has, the more badness he can express through bodily action and verbal action by killing, stealing, telling a lie, using harsh speech etc. Self-mortification, rubbing the body with ashes, taking a bath in the Ganges River, or sitting on ones heels could not eradicate the inner sin or defilement. The Buddha tried all these practices (D. S. 9/266/176 Sym)[Footnote 17](#), but failed and then he changed his way of practice. After his enlightenment, the Buddha revealed his enlightenment to the others; some accepted it and some rejected it depending on their freewill, such as the five ascetics and Upaka Ajvaka. The Buddha kept contact with some doctrines as mentioned in Mahsakuludyi Sutta (M.M. 13/314/255 Sym)[Footnote 16](#). It should be noticed that some doctrine leaders living in the same time with the Buddha, but the Buddha never had a chance to converse with them directly, only through disciples of both sides, such as Nigaha Na Putta. It might be that it was not appropriate to let the naked ones have an audience with the Buddha.

Suggestions

The Thai Sagha should bring the results of this study into a learning supplementary content to monks and novices so that they can learn from the role of the Buddha in building relationships with other religions and then use it as a guideline in dealing with priests and members of other religions. Monks and novices will have a broad mind to treat other religious members and not block themselves from contacting with other religious members. In opposite, the qualifications of monks and novices can convince the outers to turn to Buddhism.

For further study, the suggestions are on; 1. The role of monks to deal with other religious members based on the Buddhas conduct, 2. Influence of Buddhism on people and religions in India, and 3. the concept of external doctrines in the Tipiaka.

[4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16](#)

References

1. Aryavangso, V. (2015(2558 B.E)). Hindu and Buddhist Relations on the Interaction Between Thai and Indian Votary. Bangkok : India studies centre. Thammasat University.
2. Horner, I. B. (1996). The Book of the discipline (Vinaya-pit.aka).Vol.IV(Mah^āavagga). volume IV, Oxford. The Pali Text Society.
3. Kanthik, C. (December, 2002(2545 B.E.) - December, 2003(2546 B.E.)). Silpasastra 18. Journal of MBU Panyachaksu, 4(22).
4. Mahamakut Buddhist Foundation (2013). The Tipit.aka, Sy^āamarat.t. hassa tepit.akam. ,

- Suttantapit.ake Khuddanikāyassa Dhammapadagāthā Vol. XXV. Nakhon Pathom : Mahamakuta-Raja-Vidyalyaya Press.
5. Mahamakut Buddhist Foundation (2013(2556 B.E)a). The Tipit.aka, Syāmarat.t. hassa tepit.akam. , Suttantapit.ake an_guttaranikāyassa (pat.hamo bhāgo) Vol. XX. Nakhon Pathom : Mahamakuta-Raja-Vidyalyaya Press.
 6. Mahamakut Buddhist Foundation (2013(2556 B.E)b). The Tipit.aka, Syāmarat.t. hassa tepit.akam. , Suttantapit.ake dīghanikāyo (sīlakhandhavaggo) Vol. IX. Nakhon Pathom : Mahamakuta-Raja-Vidyalyaya Press.
 7. Mahamakut Buddhist Foundation (2013(2556 B.E)c). The Tipit.aka, Syāmarat.t. hassa tepit.akam. , Suttantapit.ake Majjhi-manikāyassa majjhiman.n.
 8. āsakam. Vol. XIII. Nakhon Pathom : Mahamakuta-Raja-Vidyalyaya Press.
 9. Mahamakut Buddhist Foundation ((2013)(2556 B.E)d). The Tipit.aka, Syāmarat.t. hassa tepit.akam. , Vinayapit.ake mahāvaggo (dutiyo bhāgo) Vol. V. Nakhon Pathom : Mahamakuta-Raja-Vidyalyaya Press.
 10. Mahamakut Buddhist Foundation (2013(2556 B.E)e). The Tipit.aka, Syāmarat.t.hassa tepit.akam. , Vinayapit.ake mahāvaggo (pathamo bhāgo) Vol. IV. Nakhon Pathom : Mahamakuta-Raja-Vidyalyaya Press.
 11. Phra Athikan Suntron Arpatharo (2013(2556 B.E)). The Role of Monks in The Promotion of Reducing Conflict in Bud-dhism. Bangkok : A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of The Requirement for The Degree of Master of Arts (Buddhist Studies) Graduate School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.
 12. Phramahaprakasit Acarpali (May-August, 2016(2559 B.E.)). Tittathiparivasa : Vatpatibat samrabgadkrong khontangsasna konbodpenbhisu. Journal of MCU Buddhapanya Review, 1(2).
 13. Phramahayodhin Yodhiko, Assist Prof (November - December, 2016(2559 B.E.)). The Buddhas Altruistic Treatment Toward the Lower Class. Dhammathas Academic Journal, 16(3).
 14. Somdet Phra Buddhakosajarn (Prayudh Payutto) ((2017)(2560 B.E)). Podcananukrombuddhasastra chababpramoonsab. In Dictionary of Buddhist terms : A word order., Bangkok. Sahadharmika Ltd.
 15. Sujib Punyanubhab (1996(2539 B.E)). Phratripidok chababsamrabprajajon. In The Tipitaka for the People, Bangkok. Mahamakuta-Raja-Vidyalyaya Press.
 16. Wichakana, T., Thitayarno, P. D., and Dhammanaso, P. H. (2017(2560 B.E.)). The Way to Manage Conflicts Arisen from Mana in Theravada Buddhism. Journal of MCU Peace Studies Special Issue, 5.61