THE SANGHA ORGANIZATION IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BURMA AND THAILAND*

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Tharavada Buddhism, "The Teaching of the Elders", considered to be the oldest form of Buddhism, is closely bound up with the basic social, economic and political dynamics of life for the peoples of Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. The Sangha organization, according to the scriptures and also in practice, is one of the most important constituents of Buddhism. Hence the role of the Sangha in these countries has assumed a position of great significance – in its bearing upon the insitution of kingship as well as in its pervasive influence on the structure of these societies as a whole. An understanding of its role in shaping and moulding the history of these countries requires some knowledge of the background of the Sangha tradition as provided by the achievements of King Asoka and the Mahavihara monastery of Ceylon. It is therefore important to compare the mother-traditions with those transmitted to Theravada Southeast Asia.

The earliest tradition set by King Asoka of the Mauryan dynasty established an example of what a Buddhist monarch should be. The concept of a universal monarch better known to Buddhists through the Asoka Sutta,[1] the imperial ideology based on the universality of the Dhamma concept,[2] the accommodation provided by King Asoka for realization of the multi-local beliefs and practices of India of that time,[3] the convening of the Third Buddhist Council at Pataliputra, his purification of the Sasana[4] and the missionaries he despatched to nine different countries to spread Theravada Buddhism, were the most salient constituents of the tradition. In a nutshell, his imperial ideology and his role as the patron of religions were the corner-stone of tradition in the development of Buddhism.

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1. J. Przyluski, *La legende de l'empereur Acoka* (*Acoka Avandana*) (Annales du Musée Guimet, Bibliotheque d'Etudes, Vol. XXXXII), (Paris, 1923), p. 119.
2. R. Mookerji, *Asoka*, (London, 1928), p. 68ff.
3. Paul Mus, "Barabudur les origines du stupa et la transmigration; Essai d'archeologie religieuse comparée", *BEFEO*, XXXIII, 1933, pp. 650, 798.
4. E. Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, Vol. I, (Oxford, 1925), pp. 161–2.

In the light of such tradition, the missionaries sent out at the conclusion of the Buddhist Council with the message of the Buddha bore greater significance for the growth of Buddhism in its early stages outside India. The missionary effort asserted by the Arahant Mahinda, the son of King Asoka, was first successful in Ceylon where there were no other powerful religions to challenge it.[5] The Dhamma preached to and accepted by King Devamnanpeya Tissa (247–307 B.C.) turned the course of Buddhism into a new phase of efflorescence not only for Ceylon but also for Theravada Southeast Asia. As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the transformation of Buddhism into a state religion followed the same pattern as that in India. The acceptance of the Sasana by the King was a signal for his subjects to follow suit. After his conversion in the manner of King Asoka,[6] he established a monastery known as Mahavihara[7] at his capital, Anuradhapura, which assumed a dominant place both in terms of its importance to the people of Ceylon and of its tradition, to which Theravada Southeast Asia largely adhered. As such it will be of interest to give a short account on the Mahavihara.

This monastery, founded by King Devamnanpeya Tissa for the accommodation of monks, gradually became a centre of learning with a reputation like that of Nalanda of India in the eye of contemporary Buddhists[8] and like Parivena of Sri Lanka to modern Buddhists. It was at Alokavihara in the Metale District of Central Ceylon that the Fourth Buddhist Council was held by the Mahavihara monks in the fifth century A.D.[9] and it was within the Mahavihara tradition that the great commentator, Buddhagosa, residing at this monastery, wrote his celebrated *Visudhimagga*,[10] the *Atthasalini*[11] and all major Sinhalese commentaries on the Tipitaka. The Burmese claim that the learned monk was a native of Suvannabhumi (Thaton) and he was also reputed to have brought with him a complete set of the Tipitaka from Ceylon to Thaton.[12] The Cambodians also claim that he came to their country.[13] Be that as it may, it was at

5. D.E. Smith (ed.), *South Asian Politics and Religion* (Princeton, University Press, 1966), p. 537.
6. Walpola Rahula, *History of Buddism in Ceylon* (Colombo, 1956), p. 62.
7. This monastery may be compared with the Jetavana monastery dedicated by a great banker of Sravasti, Anthapindaka of the Buddha's time, for the residence of monks. See B.M. Barua and G. Slnha *Barhut Inscriptions* (University of Calcutta, 1926), p. 59.
8. Walpola Rahula, *op. cit.*, p. 303.
9. C.E. Godakumbura, "Relations between Burma and Ceylon," *JBRS*, XLIV, ii, p. 147.
10. Walpola Rahula, *op. cit.*, p. 303; see, also, U Lu Pe Win, "Buddhaghosa and Burma", *JBRS*, LVIII, i, 1975, pp. 93–100.
11. Taw Sein Ko, *Burmese Sketches* (Rangoon, British Burma Press, 1913), p. 89.
12. Pe Maung Tin and Luce G.H., (tr.), *The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Burma*, (Rangoon, Rangoon University Press, 1960), pp. 46–7 (Hereafter cited as *GPC*).
13. Sir John Bowring, *Kingdom and People of Siam* (London, 1857), Vol. I, p. 36.

Mahavihara that the *Dipavamsa*, the Chronicle of the Island and the *Mahavamsa*, the Great Chronicle, were composed in the fourth and fifth centuries respectively[14] and they served as models for Burmese historiography of the earlier period.[15] In the light of this background it may be seen that the corpus of the Pali texts adopted by Theravada Southeast Asia was an inherited Buddhist literature derived from the Mahavihara tradition.

In fact, early Buddhism was "specially unpolitical and anti-political".[16] Its later development, however, as with the Mahavihara tradition, was fused into almost every corner of the socio-political life of its adherents. Its growth to such an extent in Ceylon, nonetheless, made its contributions less important politically to contemporary Theravada Southeast Asia, particularly Burma and Thailand. It was not until the reign of King Anawrahta (1044–77) that the transformation of Sinhalese Buddhism into a politically and culturally important force took place[17] and thereafter Burma became the first and earliest Theravada zone in Southeast Asia. Before that she had been affected by several cultural infiltrations from India, Tibet, China and Ceylon – and in consequence her society contained a variety of cultural norms co-existing with indigenous ones.[18] In Thailand, however, Theravada Buddhism assumed the position of state religion during the time of King Ramkamhaeng (1279–1300) of Sukhothai[19] and, at about the same time, it also reached Cambodia.[20] Finally, it became politically significant in Laos during the reign of King Fa Ngum (1353–73).[21] Thus by the mid-fourteenth century Theravada Buddhism, either by aggression as in Burma or by peaceful means as with Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, had established itself throughout

14. Walpola Rahula, *op. cit.*, p. 303.
15. See *GPC*. pp. i–xviii.
16. Max Weber, *The Religion of India : The Sociology of Hinduism of Buddhism* (Free Press, Glencoe, 1958), p. 233.
17. *GPC*, pp. 71–9.
18. U Hla Maung, "Buddhism in Burma," *FA*, 151–157, Dec. 1958–June 1959, p. 834; Maung Htin Aung, *Folk Elements in Burmese Buddhism* (Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 66–7; John Brohm, "Buddhism and Animism in a Burmese Village, "JAS, 22, 1963, pp. 155–67.
19. Damrong, *Tamnan Buddha Sasana* (History of Buddhism), (Bangkok, nd.), pp. 163–6; Karuna Kusalasaya, "Buddhism in Siam", *FA*. 151–157, Dec. 1958–June 1959, p. 909.
20. Chou Ta Kuan, *Notes on the Customs of Combodia* (tr.) J. Gilman d'Arcy Paul (Bangkok, 1967), pp. 24–5.
21. As with Cambodia which introduced Theravada Buddhism into Laos, Laos was influenced by Mahayana Buddhism and perhaps Hinduism. See Maha Sila Viravong, *History of Laos* (New York, Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1964,), pp. 36–8; M.L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Laos* (Bangkok, Chalermnit 1967), pp. 41–52.

the whole area of its present-day influence in Southeast Asia. With the possible exception of Laos, there had been some common features to be observed in the spread of early Theravada Buddhism. There was some growth also of Mahayana Buddhism and Hinduism in Cambodia and to a lesser extent in both Burma and Thailand. In Burma, but not in Thailand, Tantrism[22] flourished, perhaps as an offshoot from Nepal or Tibet. More important, however, for this discussion was the fact that the role of the Sangha and the state-sangha relationships were either a replica of the Sinhalese pattern or of the Asokan tradition, notwithstanding the fact that different modifications were made to meet the needs of the political ecology of individual countries.

This fact was reflected in the Sangha organization of nineteenth century Burma and Thailand. It consisted of four main constituents, namely Sangha, monastery, lay people and king. "Sangha" is a Pali term denoting the community of Buddhist monks and is well known by the Buddhist through the basic knowledge of the *triratna*–the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.[23] In Burmese a monk is called *bhun kri* and in Thai *phra*. The former signifies the one who is great in the accumulation of merit (Pali, *punna*; Thai *bun*) and it implies in the cognizance of the common people that only one who has greater merit both in the previous lives and in present life can become a *bhun kri*. As regards this principle that a monk has better merit at least on face value, there is no difference of opinion among the Buddhists. But, nonetheless, the the term *phra* has various meanings and each of them is construed in the context of a given situation. For instance, *phra* is a title given to a monk; the monk himself; a term indicating the highest respect; a conferred civil service title just below *phraya* and a prefix denoting royalty, holiness, honour or perfection.[24] Because of this ambiguity, an ordinary Burmese Buddhist might not understand the term *phra* in a particular context and a Thai Buddhist might misunderstand the Burmese term *bhun kri*. Both of them, however, understand what a *bhikkhu* (lit. a mendicant monk) or a Sangha is. It must be emphasised that even though both Burma and Thailand accept the same tradition derived from India and Ceylon, together with the Tipitaka, they created local modifications and variations.

To carry this discussion further, the Burmese term *bhun kri* is not used as a prefix for royalty or as a title conferred on the person in government service in spite of the fact that it refers to the more important role of merit in the life of a person according to the law of *karma*. The fact that the king was a person of great merit was not incorporated into the connotation of the word *bhun kri* which therefore indi-

22. *GPC*, pp. 70–1; 74–5.

23. Robert C. Lester, *Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia* (The University of Michigan Press, 1973), pp. 47–65.

24. G.B. McFarland, *Thai-English Dictionary* (Stanford University Press, 1969). pp. 516–7.

cated, in terms of social linguistics, that a *bhun kri* is above the king. In contrast to the Burmese term, its counterpart *Phra* denotes less importance of the *bun* but serves to indicate an attribute of a person in both *Phra Satsanachak* (the realm of religion) and *Phra Ratcha Ana Chak* (the kingdom). In other words the term *phra*, used as a royal prefix and also as a title for the government servant, narrows the gulf between the two worlds.

Similar shades of meaning are to be found in the terms for monastery[25] which allow for subtle differences of social implication. In Burmese a monastery is called *kyon* or *bhun kri kyon* (school of monks) and in Thai *wat*. Sometimes if a *kyon* is mainly confined to learning, it is termed as *casantuik* which is similar in terms of concept to the *rong rian* (school) of modern Thailand. The important point to notice is that the Burmese term does not clearly distinguish a monastery from a school, whereas the Thai one does. In fact in Pali the word for monastery is *vihara* as with the Maha-vihara (*maha*, great and *vihara*, monastery) of Ceylon to which Theravada Southeast Asia adhered. Yet even in Ceylon today the term *vihara* refers to the image-house, the building in which the image of the Buddha is housed and venerated.[26] In Burma also the term *vihara* is known but it is not in common usage. In the popular vocabulary of Burma, the monastery, as the term indicates, is a centre of learning, as with the Parivena of present-day Sri Lanka, for monks and lay students. The Thai term, *wat*, carries less connotation of learning.

These terminological differences reflect differences in the role monasteries play in Burma and Thailand. In the nineteenth century there were generally two types of monastery – the village monastery and the forest monastery, the terms for which indicated the two kinds of monks, *grama-vasi* and *aranya-vasi*.[27] The fact that the

25. Monasteries originated during, and probably, before the Buddha's time when the introduction of vassavasa or rainy season-retreat led to increasing numbers of monks. Thus the dedication of Veluvana-aramana by the Magadhan King Bimbisara was accepted by the Buddha for the residential quarters for the monks. It was since then that monastery became an integrated feature of Buddhism and monastic life regulated and routined, developed. See A. M. Shastri, *An Outline of Early Buddhism*, (Varanasi, 1965), p. 58.

26. Walpola Rahula, *The Heritage of the Bhikkhu* (Grove Press Inc., New York, 1974), p. 147.

27. According to the usual rule, a 'forest monastery' has to be at least 500 bow-lengths (about a kilometer) from the nearest town or village. The Mango Grove Monastery where the Maha-sami Sangharaja resided in 1361 is about one kilometer west of Sukhothai. See A.B. Griswold and Prasert na Nagara, "The Epigraphy of Mahadharmaraja I of Sukhodaya", *JSS*, 61, 1 pp. 119-161. In Burma, a monastery which is labelled as 'forest monastery', is 500 *tas* (in measuring distances the cubit *ta* is the standard, Judson, *Burmese-English Dictionary*, p. 479) away from the nearest village or town, U Tin, *Myanma Min Okchokpon Sadan* (Treatise on Administration of Burmese King), (Rangoon Central Press), III, p. 6 (*MMOS*), and the *grama-vasi* means 'village dweller' and the *aranya-vasi* 'forest dweller'. The former devoted more to the study of scriptures and the latter to meditation. Because of their different roles, the *grama-vasi* was also known as *gantha-dhura* and *aranya-vasi vipassana-dhura MMOS*. IV, IV, p.211.

former, as the name indicates, was more devoted to the study of the Doctrine (*pariyatti*), and hence was in close proximity to society, and the latter was concerned more with the realization of *nirvana* (*pativedha*) did not necessarily mean that the two were in conflict. In devoting themselves to the practice of Buddhist teaching (*patipatti*) in their own ways, the two camps of monks were both searching for their ultimate goal and both had the recognition of the king as evidenced by royal order of King Bodawpaya,[28] and by the order of Thibaw's *Thathanabaing*.[29] Nonetheless, in accordance with the original teaching of the Buddha that the *patipatti* and *pativedha* are far more important than the *pariyatti*,[30] the former are considered by Buddhists to represent the higher form. In spite of this, what is emphasised in the original teaching became subject to alteration in the fact of natural calamities such as that resulting from the great famines of Ceylon in 43–29 B.C.[31] The Sinhalese tradition that put more stress on the *pariyatti* than the *patipatti* and *pativedha* saw its reflection in the similar trend to be observed in Burma and Thailand.

In both countries the king favoured the *pariyatti* but did not ignore the importance of both the *patipatti* and *pativedha*. In fact, in the king's eye, the *gandha-dura*, which literally means the study of books, and the *vipassana-dura*, duty of meditation, did not represent a fundamental difference in the performance of the monastic task but rather a difference merely in the way of practising the Dhamma among the Sangha. The *vipassana-dura* was considered not less important, but nevertheless, better if kept in confinement away from the villages or towns, and made the province of the *pamsukulika bhikkhu* (ascetic monk) who could devote himself to the *vipassana* in his search for the realization of the Truth.[32] Even among the village monasteries, royal favour was not equally distributed, for there were royal monasteries and 'non-royal' ones. Royal monasteries included those built by the king or by one or more members of the royal family or by officials. Examples are Mahatulwatcamkyon[33] and Maha-

28. BE 1145 (1783) *Ameindaw* (Royal Decree), (Burma National Library), No. 350.

29. Taw Sein Ko, *Hluttaw Mhattam* (Records of the Hluttaw), (Rangoon, Government Press, 1960), pp. 200–1.

30. Walpola Rahula, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

31. *Ibid*, pp. 24–8.

32. In Burmese expression, the *pariyatti* is the 'drinking root' of the Sasana and without it other things such as *patipatti* and *pativedha* cannot grow. The fact that *pariyatti* was more important than both *patipatti* and *pativedha* had been established since the introduction of Theravada Buddhism into Burma as evidenced by Shin Arahan's speech to King Anawrahta that without the scriptures there could be no study and without study there could be no institution. *GPC*, p. 77.

33. It was in this monastery that the *Thathanabaing* of King Mindon resided. U Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet Mahayazawindawgyi*, (Chronicle of the Konbaung Dynasty), (Rangoon, 1967), III, p. 446 (*KBZ*).

atulaweyankyon of Burma, built during the reign of King Mindon[34] and Somanasa and Rajapratista in Thailand, built in the time of King Mongkut.[35]

Royal monasteries seemed to be more politically significant for the institution of kingship because they were more favoured by the king and because it was in one of them that the *Thathanabaing* in the case of Burma, and the *Sangharat* in that of Thailand, used to live. They were situated in or near the capital city. On the whole, however, in terms of the number of monasteries and of the contribution dispensed by them in furthering traditional education, the 'non-royal' monasteries had farther reaching effects in their respective societies. In Burma the 'non-royal' *pwai kyon*[36] type of monastery was especially important. It stemmed from the practice of the *grama-vasi* and did not have its identical Thai counterpart, though both were similar to some extent in terms of their functions. According to the *Sasana Lankara Catan*, this sort of monastery, still existing in the nineteenth century, was a heritage bequeathed by the reign of King Anawrahta of Pagan.[37]

It is worth noting the reasons for its survival. Though King Anawrahta (1044–77) attempted to check the increasingly worldly practice of the monks in favour of the 'pure' Buddhism which he inherited from Thaton, his efforts were unsuccessful. Monasteries which disguised their practice were able to survive perhaps because their pragmatism made them more acceptable to the ordinary people. They taught a wide variety of worldly subjects: astrology, medicine, surgery, military tactics, the methods of elephant and horse riding and fighting, boxing and the arts of self-defence. In the nineteenth century, this type of monastery was much more popular than the ordinary 'non-royal' monasteries where a more traditionally oriented education was provided in Burma, as in Thailand.

In fact there were two kinds of education – *lokipanna* and *lokuttara-panna*, as understood by the traditional society of Burma. The former (*lokipanna*) was more involved in secular and vocational education and the latter (*lokuttarapanna*) in the

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 446–51; During the reign of King Mindon, there were 217 *taik* (group of monasteries within a monastic compound) and 1442 monasteries in and around Mandalay.

35. *Luang* Boribal Buribhand and A.B. Griswold, *The Royal Monasteries and Their Significance* (The Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, BE 2516 (1973), p. 14.

36. *Pwai kyon* literally means monastery where festivals are held. In the inscriptions of Pagan, offerings of musical instruments to the monasteries indicate that festivals were performed at the monasteries and the people living near such monasteries used to come to see festivals, thereby making the monasteries crowded. Because of such crowded festivals, the monasteries were called *pwai kyon*. See Mya Kay Tu, *Nan Dhale Mhattam Mya* (Records on Palatine Customs), (Rangoon, Ngalon Hla Sape, 1966) pp. 90–109.

37. Maha Dhamma Thingyan, *Sasana Lankara Catan* (History of Buddhism), (Rangoon, Hanthawaddy Press, 1956), pp. 129–30.

study of sacred literature. In this context, the *pwai kyon* were the academies of both military and vocational training for both theoretical and practical purposes and, broadly speaking, a centre of both kinds of education. Perhaps as an additional factor in the popularity of the *pwai kyon*, western medical instruction was introduced into their curriculum in 1612 after the growth of Portuguese power was finally pruned back by King Anaukbetlun (1605-28). In the course of his action, the seizure of 800 'white Indians', most probably Portuguese, and 2,000 'black Indians' presumably Indian or other non-Europeans, and their resettlement effected by the king in Upper Burma,[38] was responsible for the spread of western medicine and surgery as some of the captives were skilled in these fields.

The two types of education thus provided, and the festivals of the monasteries and pagodas, together formed the main elements in the attraction of the *pwai kyon* for the people in general. Contests among the students to measure the skill of an individual trainee were usually held at the premises of the *pwai kyon* and sometimes at the festivals of certain monasteries or pagodas.[39] For instance, in 1816 during the reign of King Bodawpaya, at a ceremony marked for the dedication of an 'umbrella' for the summit of the Mekkhaya Mintha pagoda, fourteen novices took off their robes and engaged in boxing and wrestling with some laymen. At this contest held by the permission of the king, three novices were wounded and defeated by the laymen but eleven other novices were victorious. In fact the novices were better versed in the arts of boxing and wrestling than the laymen.[40]

As such the *pwai kyon* were the training schools in the traditional society of Burma. Perhaps most of the Burmese soldiers who fought against neighbouring countries such as Manipur and Thailand might have been the product of the *pwai kyon*. It was due to the growing popularity of the *pwai kyon*, and more particularly the royal assumption that the *pwai kyon* were the breeding grounds for potential rebellion, that King Bodawpaya in 1812 attempted to suppress the *pwai kyon*. In spite of this royal action against them, they were still in existence forty years later when King Mindon again attempted to eliminate them in 1855. It may be assumed, nevertheless, that some

38. *MMOS*, IV, pp. 213-5.

39. During the reign of King Minkhaung (1401–22), the Aungsegon Sangharaja was very famous for the arts of self-defence, especially boxing. It was often awarded annual boxing prizes at competitions. His popularity for being well versed in boxing was drawn to the attention of one of the Shan Sawbwa and consequently a Shan boxer went down to Ava to contest with the Sangharaja. The king and the Shan Sawbwa were on-lookers at the contest. Although the Sangharaja was at the age of sixty-nine by then, he defeated his counterpart. Maha Dhamma Thingyan, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

40. *MMOS*, IV, p. 222.

pwai kyon still survived this second attack, albeit crippled in strength and confined to a secret existence, for *Kinwun Mingyi* U Gaung, the counterpart of *Somdet Chao Phraya Borom Maha Sri* Suriyawong of Thailand, learned the art of self-defence from the monks of a *pwai kyon* when he was young.[41]

Apart from the *pwai kyon*, the functions of other monasteries in Burma and Thailand resembled each other closely. The monasteries were the repositories of learning and wisdom. War among countries or between rival leaders within a particular country might cause the deaths of thousands and the destruction of buildings and libraries but the core of learning as the main function of the monastery remained. The preservation of this learning through revolutions and social changes that occurred round about the *kyon* or *wat* was a common characteristic of Theravada Buddhist Southeast Asia.[42] The monastic multiplication method,[43] side by side with the *Mingala Sutta*[44] and *Lokaniti*[45] among other things, continued to be taught, and the monks continued to be the doctors in traditional society, and to teach traditional medicine to their pupils. All branches of learning were therefore centred within the confines of the monastery and those who were the products of monastic education became an elite, in the broad sense of meeting the needs of the official hierarchy of that time. The technological impact derived from contact with the west affected such learning and introduced some modification within it.

The spread of literacy among the people at large owed a great deal to monastic education. Manucci, an Italian visitor reported in 1700 that Burma was governed by the pen.[46] At the turn of the nineteenth century Henry Gouger, a careful British observer, said that the degree of literacy in Burma was higher than that of England.[47] The first British Commissioner, Arthur Phayre, reported,

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41. *MMOS*, IV, pp. 231 3.
42. Taw Sein Ko, *op. cit.*, pp. 224, 228–9. D.K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn*, (New Haven, 1969). p. 12.
43. This multiplication method is the same as the astrological method. For example–
    dwe (2) x aeka (1) = dwe (2)
    dwe (2) x dwe (2) = ca (4)
    dwe (2) x tri (3) = cha (6)
44. The *Mingala Sutta* is one of the basic texts which a lay student is bound to learn. It has thirty eight articles.
45. The *Lokaniti* is a general term applied to a treatise which includes maxims, pithy sayings and didactic stories. See *Lokaniti* (trans.) James Gray (London, 1886).
46. J.S. Furnivall, *An Introduction to the Political Economy of Burma* (Rangoon, Peoples' Literature Committee & House, 1957), p. x.
47. Henry Gouger, *A Personal Narrative of Two Years' Imprisonment in Burma* (London, John Murray, 1860), pp. 21–2.

> Almost everyone could read and write and even if this report may have been touched with exaggeration, it is certain that the proportion of people who could read and write was then far higher in Burma than in England.[48]

Before and after annexation in 1885, the British laid stress in their educational policy on the need to cooperate with the monasteries. The monastic schools by then still predominated as centres of learning for nearby children.[49]

Despite such a high percentage of literacy among the Buddhists, monastic education was exclusively for boys, and the percentage of literacy for girls was thus, obviously, lower than for boys.[50] There were two main reasons for this inherent weakness in the system. First, the introduction of female students would have been against the rigid rules of monastic discipline, and secondly, female education was regarded in any case as unnecessary. In consequence elementary education for girls was usually unsponsored and was carried out by lay teachers.

In addition to the contribution made by monasteries to education, they were also places of refuge in times of national turmoil. When British troops occupied the Mandalay Palace in 1885, a number of young princes aged from fourteen to twenty-five, were found in a monastery situated on the north-eastern side of the palace enclosure.[51] Even now in Buddhist countries the monastery still serves as a centre of learning especially in rural areas, as a home for the aged and destitute, as a sanctuary and as a social centre.

In addition to this, the diversity of roles and political significance of two temples, one in Thailand and the other in Laos, is worth noting. In Theravada Southeast Asia the taking by officials of the oath of allegiance to the reigning king was one of the most important rituals supporting the institution of kingship. In the case of Burma, particularly during the Konbaung dynasty, the place where such oaths were administered varied. In Thailand and Laos, by contrast, there were temples regularly used for the purpose. In Thailand, during the reigns of the first five kings of the Chakri dynasty,[52] this ceremony, known in Thai as *Phra Ratchaphithi Sisatchapankan*, usually took place before the Emerald Buddha. In Laos, after the royal decree of 1824,

48. Quoted in J.S. Furnivall, *op. cit.*, p. x.
49. U Kaung, "A Survey of the History of Education in Burma before the British Conquest and After." *JBRS*, XIVI, ii, Dec. 1963, pp. 73–4; U Aye Kyaw, *Myanma Nuinnam Amyuisa Pannare Samuin* (A History of National Education in Burma), (Rangoon, Palepan Cape, 1970), pp. 1–7.
50. Taw Sein Ko, *op. cit.*, p. 224.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
52. Constance M. Wilson, *State and Society in the Reign of Mongkut 1851–1868 : Thailand on the Eve of Modernization* (Ph.D. Thesis, Cornell University, 1970), p. 297.

such ceremonies were performed at the temple of Sisaket, a temple which had been established by *Chao* Anou (1805–28). During the period of Siamese expansion (1836–93) when Laos was under Siamese domination, allegiance to the Thai kings was sworn at the same temple, and it was here again that loyalty to the French was sworn when Laos was a French protectorate. After independence in 1953, the oath of allegiance to the king was administered at the same temple.[53]

Monastic landlordism was another important feature of early Buddhism in Theravada Buddhist countries. It sprang from two main causes. First, Buddhism, once established as a state religion, became an instrument for the wielding of temporal power as well as for the justification of the position one had obtained. The king as the patron of the Sasana gave land and labour endowments to certain pagodas or monasteries in the belief that he would reap his reward in accordance with the law of *karma*, and his subjects followed his example. Secondly, the fact that monks were forbidden by the Vinaya, the Code of the Monastic Discipline, from engaging directly in commercial transactions made possession of land the main source of income available to monasteries. In Ceylon, the growth of monastic landlordism pre-empted about one third of the land of the country in the early period[54] and the wealth and temporalities of monasteries had further increased in the tenth century.[55]

In traditional society, land and wealth were the two sides of the same identity; ownership of either was one of the main sources of power. In the light of this notion, the king declaring himself as *re mre arhan*, Lord of the Land and Water in the case of Burma, and *chao phan din*, Lord of the Land as with Thailand, emphasised the fact that he was the source of power deriving from the ownership of land. But this principle contained its own weakness in the sense that when the king donated most of the productive land to the Sangha, the royal treasury and the power that flowed from it were threatened. This phenomenon could be seen in Burma during the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.

During the reign of King Kyaswa (1234–50), the increase in religious endowments, to the point where the royal treasury was affected, was perhaps the first indication of the political potential of the Sangha. Once land had become a religious endowment, it enjoyed immunity from royal taxation. Alternatively, the taxes gathered from such land were kept for the purposes of the Sasana. If such land were allowed to grow without check, the Sangha order might well be in a position, as was the case in

53. Frank M. Le Bar, *Laos, its People, its Society, its Culture* (New Haven, Hraf Press, 1960), p. 49.
54. Max Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
55. Walpola Rahula, *op. cit.*, p. 38; M.B. Ariyapala, *Society in Medieval Ceylon* (Colombo, 1956), p. 180.

Ceylon, to claim a *de facto* veto over candidates for the throne. In this situation, the king had two alternatives – either to confiscate all religious lands where the evidence for the original endowment was weak, and thereby to increase the royal treasury, or to maintain the *status quo* thereby reducing the treasury. The choice of the former by the king in 1235 immediately faced enormous opposition and the king in consequence was forced to appoint a commission of six members to investigete the case in question. The commission found that the confiscated lands belonged to the Sangha; and the king, in the presence of the ministers, formally returned them to their owners. A similar problem arose during the reign of King Uzana (1250–4).[56]

Far more important effects were generated by the system of monastic landlordism in the fifteenth century. In Burma, the growth of this institution perhaps reached its highest point during this period as monks added to the lands given to them by their lay disciples by purchasing further areas in spite of the fact that this ran counter to Buddhist teachings. Though these possessions undermined the royal treasury, in another way they contributed to economic development as the concerted effort of monks and laymen resulted in a successful reclamation of waste lands. It was estimated that through monastic enterprise an area of over 5000 acres was cultivated.[57] Kings sometimes gave active support to this process. It was a time when a close and harmonious relationship was established between the state and the Sangha order.[58]

Notwithstanding such occasional harmony, there was a tendency in Burma, as also in Thailand, for the king to be aware of the growing ownership of land by monks as is indicated by the birth of the so-called Revenue Inquest or *Sittan*. These *Sittan* were usually prepared and submitted to the authorities by local *Myothugyi* or *Ywathugyi* under the royal order when the demarcation or ownership of land was in doubt or when the royal treasury was low, and they were typical of Burmese Revenue Records in that they served to indicate the complexity of Burmese political and social organization, its feudal character and the importance of the *myo* or township as the unit of administration. The *Sittan*[59] of 1764 and 1765 made during the reign of

56. Than Tun, "Mahakassapa and His Tradition," *JBRS*, XLII, ii, Dec. 1959, pp. 111–20; "History of Burma, A.D. 1300–1400," *ibid.*, pp. 119–21.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

59. See Yi Yi, "Konbaung Khet Sittan Mya," (Revenue Inquests of the Konbaung Dynasty), *JBRS*, XLIV, i, June 1966, pp. 71–127; U Aye Kyaw, "Hanthawaddy 32 Myo Sittan," (Revenue Inquest of Hanthawaddy 32 Towns), *The Universities Quarterly*, (*UQ*), I, iv, 1966, pp. 183–95; "Muttama 32 Myo Sittan," (Revenue Inquest of Martaban 32 Towns), *UQ*, V, i, 1970, pp. 241–54; "Bassein 32 Myo Sittan," (Revenue Inquest of Bassein 32 Towns), *UQ*, V, ii, 1970, pp. 207–12. Almost all *Sittan* followed a general rule. For instance, on which day, in which year and to whom the investigation is made, history of the area concerned, lineage of the ruling families, boundaries of the area, class of the land, kinds of plants grown therein, methods of taxation employed, types of customary fees which local people have paid to the ruling chief and customary funeral ceremonies if the local chief died, are serially included. These *Sittan* constitute an extremely important primary source for the understanding of Burmese administration and society.

Shinpyushin (1763-76) those of 1783, 1784, 1802, undertaken by King Bodawpaya (1782–1819), and some by King Mindon are still in existence, though the earliest *Sittan*, believed to have been taken during the reign of Mingyiswasawke (1368–1401), has not survived. During the Konbaung dynasty, all kings save Alaungpaya (1752–60) required *Sittan* to be submitted.[60]

Though monastic landlordism found its place in both Burma and Thailand, it was more prominent in Burma, perhaps because Burma followed the Sinhalese tradition more closely in this matter. In addition, political stability particularly towards the end of a dynasty or at the beginning of a new one, as with the rise of Alaungpaya, founder of the Konbaung dynasty, or at the enthronement of a new king as with King Mindon and King Thibaw, was extremely precarious. In Thailand, on the other hand, stability appeared more firmly based as is suggested by the long period of Ayuthaya dynasties and the Chakri dynasty. There was thus less opportunity for the growth of monastic landlordism in Thailand. Political instability gave more chances to the Sangha to split into different sects or to break loose the disciplinary code or gather power through the acquisition of lands either through purchase or through donations.

While Burma and Thailand differed from each other in respect of monastic landholding and political power, both of them differed from Ceylon. In Ceylon, the Sangha order became by tradition so powerful and so influential from the earliest period that its participation in national affairs was readily accepted and its support became extremely important in choosing the claimants to the throne. On occasions, the monastery precincts became a place of royal coronation.[61] Moreover, the two relics – the alms-bowl and the sacred tooth – had the institution of kingship constituted as the *sine qua non* for the exercise of temporal power in Ceylon;[62] and a king whose faith leaned towards Mahayana Buddhism ruled Ceylon at one time.[63] Such things did not take place in either Burma or Thailand after they accepted Theravada Buddhism as a state religion. The point to stress is that the Sangha order in Theravada Buddhist countries was and is the nerve centre, particularly in Burma and Ceylon, but its response to the varied political ecology of the time in these different countries was not the same.

60. *MMOS*, II, p. 108.
61. To cite one instance from among some is that the reign of King Vijayabahu I (1055–1114), the brother of the reigning king, Prince Jayabahu was appointed as viceroy with support of the Sangha and, after the death of the king, the prince succeeded the throne with unanimous assent of the Sangha. Walpola Rahula, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-3; D.T. Devendra, "Buddhism in Ceylon," *FA*, 151–7, Dec. 1958-June 1959, pp. 861–76.
63. Dr. S. Paranavitana, "Mahayanism in Ceylon," *FA*. 151–7, Dec. 1958–June 1959, pp. 515–27.

In spite of these differences, all three countries were alike in the existence, in all of them, of three main classes of land – royal land, official land and private land.[64] Royal land comprised the private property of the king which he inherited from his ancestors or acquired by marriage. In some cases, particularly in Burma, such lands such as *sim-mre* (land confiscated on account of rebellion) and *amwe chum mre* (land lapsed to the king because its owner left no heirs) became royal land. Official lands were those which the king had bestowed upon an official as an appendage of office or as trust to be administered. In Burma, for example, *ne mre* (land for residence), *ca mre* (land for subsistence) and *lup mre* (land for cultivation) fell into this category. Private lands consisted of those lands which originated either from royal lands or from official lands or from the private reclamation of waste lands. The latter was called *dha ma u khya mre* which literally means the land on which the sword was first laid. In Burma there were seventeen distinct categories of land[65] of which three were important in a consideration of monastic landlordism.

There were *bhura mre* (land of the Buddha), *pitaka mre* (land of the Pitaka) and *kyon mre* (land of monastery).[66] All these lands were commonly known in Burma as *wattakam mre*. In fact, as in other Buddhist countries, these lands were synonymous with the Sasana land and, in the case of Burma, although the term for the monastic land is *kyon mre*, it was, of course, identical with the land of the Sangha. As such the three categories of land were the three constituents (*triratna*) of the Sasana, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. All types of land were dedicated by the king himself, by his officials or by his subjects. But the accommodation of differences within the context of dedication was also provided for according to the scriptures. In other words, the mode of consecration created by an individual person can differ as there are two kinds of *dana* (offering)- *samghikadana* and *puggalikadana* – with reference to monastic endowment.[67]

Samghikadana means any offering, be it a monastery or a piece of land made for the benefit of the whole community of the Sangha, which therefore does not belong to any individual monk. The *puggalikadana* by contrast may be owned by the recipient. In this context, common ownership of land or property sprang from the *samghikadana* and private ownership from the *puggalikadana*; and the former was more lasting than

64. For the case of Burma, see J.S. Furnivall, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

65. They are : (i) four kinds of Ayadaw land with respect to the royal ownership; (ii) three kinds related to the Ayadaw land; (iii) three kinds of ancestral land; (iv) four kinds related to ancestral land, and (v) three kinds of religious land. *MMOS*, V, p. 19.

66. *MMOS*, V, p. 35.

67. Ashin Aobathabiwantha, *Sutesana Saruppra Abhidhan*, (Illustrated Dictionary for Research), (Rangoon, Pannya Nanda Press, 1955), pp. 264–5.

the latter. The temporal power in theory could not confiscate the property of the *samghikadana* but it could do so with regard to the privately owned property of the *puggalikadana* provided that the owner of such property left no heir as with the *amwe chum mre*.[68] Important in this analysis of the types of *dana* is the fact that the *samghikadana* was inclined more to generate the spread of monastic landlordism than the *puggalikadana* as the head of the Sangha could claim that the *samghikadana* land belonged to the whole community of the Sangha and hence was under his jurisdiction.[69] This happened, as has been indicated, in fifteenth century Burma.

The role or the office of the *Sangharaja*, "the king of monks", occupied an important position in the institution of kingship. The term, *Sangharaja*, carries the connotation that he was the king of the *Phra Satsanachak* as distinct from the *Phra Ratcha Ana Chak*. But in Burma, the term, *Sangharaja*, became less frequently used, especially during the Konbaung dynasty; in its stead, the term, *Thathanabaing* (possessor of religion) and sometimes the term, *Sasanapru*[70] (guardian of religion or one who looks after religion) were often used. In spite of the differences in the usage of the term for the patriarch in the nineteenth century, the term, *Sangharaja* was popularly used in Burma in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[71] In fact the king's claim either as a *chakravartin*, a *buddhisattva* or patron of religion could not be squarely met if it was not transmitted through the channel of the *Sangharaja* or through the community of the Sangha to the common people.

Accordingly in the realm of religion the office of the *Sangharaja* was an important instrument through which temporal power was usually exercised. Moreover, the *Sangharaja* was treated as an authority in interpreting the tenets of the Vinaya and the other scriptures.[72] He was the preceptor of the king as well as the *guru* of the young princes.[73] Thus a nineteenth century British officer wrote :

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68. *MMOS*, V, pp. 35–6.

69. Maha Dhamma Thingyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 129–34.

70. *KBZ*, I, pp. 70, 517; *KBZ*, III, pp. 153–4.

71. Maha Dhamma Thingyan, *op. cit.*, p. 131; Than Tun, *op. cit.*, pp. 99–118.

72. Royal order issued in 1807 with respect to this aspect. See U Ba U, *Mranma Aupkhyupre Panna* (The Art of Burmese Administration), (Mandalay, Bahosi Daily Press, n.d.), 134–5.

73. In this instance it is remarkable that Taungdaw Sayadaw, the last *Thathanabaing* of the Konbaung dynasty was the *guru* of King Thibaw and so was *Krom Somdet* Phra Paramanuchit Chinorot, of King Mongkut. See Taw Sein Ko, *op. cit.*, pp. 216–7. Natthawut Sutthisongkhram, *Phraprawat lae Phraniphon Khong Somdet Phra Mahasamanachao Krommaphra Paramanuchit Chinorot* (The Life and Work of Krommaphra Paramanuchit Chinorot), (Bangkok, Wattanaphanit, 2505 (1962)), pp. 47–50.

> Great respect is paid by the King to this high dignitary of the Church. When he goes to visit His Majesty or visit other monasteries, he is carried on a gilt litter in great state. He lives in a magnificent monastery, highly decorated with carving and richly gilt; and from the centre of which rises a lofty *shwe-pyathat* (a golden seven-tiered canopy), a dignity which is not even allowed an heir-apparent to the throne.[74]

In the light of this tradition, still existing in the nineteenth century, the importance of the *Sangharaja* can be traced to the Pagan dynasty in Burma and the Sukhothai dynasty in Thailand. Of course, the main function of the *Sangharaja*, from the time when Sinhalese Buddhism became politically significant, was to make Buddhism conform as much as possible to the scriptures. In addition to this, its dynamic roles in Burma, as witnessed by the presence of the Mahathera Arahan together with his 4,108 monks at the palace construction during the reign of Kyansittha (1084–1113),[75] assumed at least some functional value in sacralising royal action. More interesting than the role of the Mahathera Arahan was that of Panthagu during the reign of Narathu (1167–70). In this instance, Panthagu, the *Sangharaja*, the direct successor of the Mahathera Arahan was deputed by the reigning king to make peace with his royal brother who was marching to Pagan to claim the throne. He appeared to have achieved a successful reconciliation but in fact this merely gave Narathu an opportunity to have his brother murdered. This action was against the wish of the *Sangharaja* who then, in defiance of the royal wishes; left Burma for Ceylon.[76]

Events of this kind did not happen in Thailand. But as with the case of Burma, the *Sangharaja* was highly venerated and was the main person who, through temporal power, contributed to the spread of Buddhism among the people in general. The role of the Sangha headed by the *Sangharaja* can be seen in a stone inscription as follows :

> King Ramkamhaeng of this state of Sukhodaya had, in 1214 (1292) year of the dragon, planted palms for 14 harvests and ordered workers to fashion this stone slab and place it in the midst of the palms. Venerable monks were invited to sit and deliver sermons on holy days to public congregations. On other days King Ramkamhaeng sat giving official audiences.[77]

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74. Albert Fytche, *Burma Past and Present*, Vol. II, (London, C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1878), p. 195.
75. Than Tun, "Religion in Burma, A.D. 1000–1300," *JBRS*, XLII, ii, Dec. 1959, p. 49.
76. G.E. Harvey, *History of Burma* (London, 1967), p. 276; Niharranjan Ray, *Theravada Buddhism in Burma* (University of Calcutta, 1946), pp. 109 10.
77. Prince Dhani Nivat, *A History of Buddhism in Siam* (Bangkok, The Siam Society, 1965), p. 8.

One important point, however, is that the *Sangharaja*, was appointed by the king and enjoyed the tenure of his office at the royal will. He thus had the same status as his lay officials or his lay-disciple-officials. Nevertheless, in practice the *Sangharaja*, once appointed, usually stayed in office throughout a given reign or more. In the appointment of the *Sangharaja*, one important criterion among others was the erudition of the candidate. For instance, with one exception (the appointee of King Thibaw) the *Thathanabaing* of the Konbaung dynasty distinguished themselves as persons of high learning in both profane and sacred literature.[78] Other criteria were position (Thibaw appointed his *guru* as *Thathanabaing*, though he was noted neither for learning nor administrative ability) and birth (*Krom Somdet Phra* Pavaret Variyalongkorn (1874–92) and *Krom Phraya* Vajirañaṇavarorasa (1910–21) were of royal blood). The *Thathanabaing* in Burma were usually commoners born in the villages and having no blood relationship with the royal house. Their fame came from their knowledge of sacred and profane literature and it was this which enabled them to rise to the highest position. It is interesting to notice that in Burma, though not in Thailand, the name of most *Thathanabaing*, Moung Htaung Sayadaw, Manle Sayadaw and The-ain Sayadaw, to give but a few examples, were often popularly known by the names of the villages where they were born. But more normally in both countries the titles of the *Sangharaja* were as long and as wordy as those of the kings.

During the reign of King Mindon the office of the *Thathanabaing* was vacant for more than a decade.[79] In February 1866, the *Thathanabaing* U Nyeya Dhamma, died of old age.[80] According to normal procedures, the vacant office would have been filled by one of the prominent senior monks, but on this occasion, and contrary to normal practice, the king did not raise any monk to the position, not because there was a lack of learned and respected monks in Burma, according at least to the commonly held view, but because of differences of opinion between the king and the chief queen as to the choice of the monk. The king was inclined to appoint one of the Shwe Kyin Sayadaw as the *Thathanabaing* of his reign, and the chief queen one of the Thudhamma Sayadaw.[81] Agreement was not reached and in consequence the vacancy lasted until the end of his reign in 1878. A similar hiatus occurred in Thailand at about the same time. The *Sangharaja* from among the princes, *Krom Somdet* Phra Paramanuchit Chinorot, lived only two years after he was appointed the *Sangharaja* in 1851, and his

78. Hmawbi Saya Thein Gyi, *Rhe Phrac Catan*, (Treatise on Ancient Events), (Rangoon, Aye Aye Press, 1968), pp. 42–133.
79. U Thawbita (Shwegaingtha), *A-nhae Tara Pran Mandalay*, (Mandalay Centenary), (Mandalay Kyipwaye Press, 1959), pp. 234–5.
80. 80. *KBZ*, III, p. 330.
81. U Thawbita, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

position became vacant. King Mongkut did not raise any monk to that position from 1853 to the end of his reign in 1868[82] in order presumably to avoid sectarian controversy.

It may be wondered how, in such circumstances, temporal power could be exercised over the realm of religion. However, even in the absence of a *Thathanabaing*, the king could exert his power through a council of eight members (*Thudhamma Sayadaw*.) It might have been expected that at the end of King Mindon's reign, King Thibaw would raise one of the senior monks to the position of the (*Thathanabaing*, as he had the right and the power to do. But the king did not appoint a *Thathanabaing* until February 1883 and thus the office was left vacant for a further five years after his enthronement.[83] It would seem that political stability which was in danger at the beginning of his reign was considered more important than the filling of the vacant office of the *Thathanabaing*.

The office of the *Sangharaja* in both Burma and Thailand was supported by other institutions, as indeed was the case with the office of the king as well. As with all other monarchies of Indo-China, the king stood at the apex of the governmental pyramid, and at his side in the realm of religion was the *Thathanabaing* in Burma and the *Sangharat* in Thailand. In Burma, particularly during the Mandalay period, the *Thathanabaing* was supported in his administration of the Sangha by councils. Next to the *Thathanabaing* was an executive council which comprised not less than four senior monks (*mahathera*); then followed the Council of *Thudhamma Sayadaw*, which consisted of from eight to twelve *mahathera*.[84] Under it was a Council of *Anuwiccaka Sayadaw* which was composed of from four to eight *mahathera;* it was followed by a Council of Headquarters *Sayada*w that had four *mahathera* representing the four quarters of Mandalay. Next was a Council of Administrative Assistant *Sayadaw*, comprising four senior monks as with the Council of Headquarters *Sayadaw*. At the bottom of the pyramid stood a Council of *Sacha Sayadaw*[85] which had no fixed number of monks perhaps because student population varied.

From this it is clear that the administration of the Sangha order was more structured in Mandalay than in Bangkok. Such differences were reflections of the

82. Craig J. Reynolds, *The Buddhist Monkhood in Nineteenth Century Thailand* (Ph.D. Thesis, Cornell University, 1972), pp. 118–9.

83. Taw Sein Ko, *op. cit.*, pp. 216–7; U Thawbita, *op. cit.*, pp. 234–5.

84. During the reign of King Mindon, the Council of Thudhamma Sayadaw comprised : (i) Prome Sayadaw, (ii) Mattaya Sayadaw, (iii) Moung Htaung Sayadaw, (iv) Thet Pan Sayadaw, (v) Salin Sayadaw, (vi) San Kyaung Sayadaw, (vii) Thigaraja Sayadaw and (viii) Pukhan Sayadaw.

85. U Thawbita, *op. cit.*, pp. 230–1.

different central administrative organizations of the two countries wtih Burma being more centralised than Thailand. In Thailand, the office of the *Sangharat* was often separated into one of the Right and one of the Left for convenience of jurisdiction,[86] but at the centre the hierarchy of councils on the Burma model did not exist. Instead the *Sangharat* was assisted at the regional level by three *Chao Khana Yai*[87] who were similar to the Burmese *Gaing-Chok* except the number of the *Gaing-Chok* was not fixed.[88] These *Chao Khana Yai*, regional chiefs representing the north, south and central regions, were similar to the *Samuha Nayok*, *Samuha Phra Kalahom* and the *Senabodi* of *Khlang* of the central administration in the profane world. And the *Chao Khana Yai* chose his staff himself. But like Burma, where the *Gaing-Chok* was assisted by *Gaing-Ok*[89] and *Gaing-Htauk*, there were a number of abbots under each *Chao Khana Yai* who, like their superiors, were appointed by the king, but in the case of Burma by the *Thathanabaing*.

At the grass-roots level of administration stood a *kyon* or *wat*. In both countries up to now a monastery was usually established at a village or for a cluster of villages. In the nineteenth century, as we have seen, monasteries were, among other things, the main educational institutions and were therefore of very great importance for the surrounding society. At each monastery there was at least one head monk who was responsible for the administration of his monastery,[90] but the size of the administrative hierarchy always depended on the adherents of the monastery as well as on the numbers of students studying there. For a monastery with a large student population there might be a chief monk, *Taik Nayaka* and his assistant, *Let Htauk* in Burma and *Phra Palat* in Thailand. Then followed the *Taik-Ok* in Burma and *Chao Khun Samut* in Thailand. The number of teaching priests, *Sacha Sayadaw* in Burma and *Phra Guru* in Thailand, varied according to the number of students.[91] In the case of Burma the *Sacha Sayadaw* were graded into three divisions[92]–first, second and third respectively. Similarly the abbots in Thailand were of four classes.[93]

86. Prince Dhani Nivat, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
87. Walter F. Vella, *Siam Under Rama III*, (New York, Locust Valley, 1957), pp. 33–4.
88. U Thawbita, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
89. At the district level there was at least a *Gaing-Ok* whose task was to settle disputes and maintain discipline. See D.G.E. Hall, *Burma* (London, Hutchison, 1956), p. 137. During the reign of King Mindon in Burma, perhaps excluding Lower Burma, there were 160 *Gaing-Ok* and 204 *Gaing-Htauk*. *KBZ*, III, p. 452.
90. See Kot Phra Song (Rules for the Monks), *PK* III, pp. 1–56.
91. S.J. Smith, *The Principles of Siamese Grammar*, (Bangkok, Bangkolem Press, 1889), p. 175.
92. U Thawbita, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
93. Prince Dhani Nivat, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

It can be seen then, that some constituents in the administration of the Sangha order in Burma and Thailand were similar and some were different. In both countries, however, the king usually dominated the Sangha. Although the demarcation in theory between the profane and sacred worlds was well established, in actuality it tended to be blurred. In both countries the *Sangharaja* did not enjoy real authority. A nineteenth century observer wrote with reference to Thailand :

> The Sankharat is named by the king; he has jurisdiction over all the monks and monasteries in the kingdom; but one does not see him exercise this jurisdiction in any way. All his authority is reduced to making reports to the king from time to time concerning religious topics and to presiding in assemblies of abbots convened by the king to deal with and judge religious matters concerning monks.[94]

Another nineteenth century observer commented that the *Sangharaja* had not ever aimed at any share in the management or direction of the affairs of the country.[95]

The *Sangharaja* and his subordinates, of course, had no executive arm to enforce their decisions, and they had to rely on royal authority exercised through lay officials. In both countries those officials served as the main link between the two worlds. In Burma there were two such officials – *Wutmyewun*, Commissioner of Religious Lands and *Mahadhanwun*, Commissioner for Ecclesiastical Censorship – and each was assisted by subordinates.[96] Similar to these two positions were the heads of two departments – *Krom Thammakan* and *Krom Sanghakari*,[97] the Departments of Religious Affairs.[98]

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94. Jean B. Pallegoix, *Description du royaume thai ou Siam* (Paris, 1854), II, pp. 27–8.
95. P. Bigandet, *The Life or Legend of Gautama, the Buddha of the Burmese, with annotations, notices on the phongyis or Buddhist religions and the ways to Nibban* (Rangoon, 1858), p. 273.
96. U Maung Maung Tin, *Rhwenansum Wohara Abhidhan* (Dictionary of Royal Usages), (Rangoon, Buddha Sasana Council Press, 1975), pp. 114 - 5.
97. H.G. Quaritch Wales, *Ancient Siamese Government and Administration* (New York, Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1965) pp. 80, 243–4; J.B. Pallegoix, II, *op. cit.*, p. 29. With the progress of King Chulalongkorn's reforms, the two departments were amalgated into the Department of Public Education. In the same way, his contemporary King Thibaw, had the two departments combined together under the Department of Religion and Education. In Thailand now the Department of Religious Affairs remains a part of the Ministry of Education, whereas in Burma it is a separate ministry.
98. The word, *thammakan* or *dhammakan* means one whose duty pertains to the religion and the word, *sanghakari* denotes one who controls the affairs of monks. And the Burmese word, *mahadhanwun* means literally Commissioner of Great Offerings. G.B. McFarland, *op. cit.*, pp. 431, 843.

Both in terms of the literal meaning of these names and of the actual functions of the respective departments, and *Mahadhanwun* was more important than the *Wutmyewun* in Burma and the *Krom Thammakan* was more important than the *Krom Sanghakari* in Thailand. Nevertheless, in both countries their functions often overlapped and in any case were subject to occasional alteration. For instance, the *Krom Thammakan* in Thailand was invested with dual responsibilities – to adjudicate crimes committed by monks and to carry out such ritual functions as the presentation of the ecclesiastical fans when monks were raised by the king to a higher grade.

In Burma, the *Mahadhanwun* was empowered to submit, at the beginning of each Buddhist Lent (June-July), an official list of all the ordained monks and their age and dates of ordination to the *Thathanabaing*. He was also to give a general report on the situation of religion and to summon to the *Thathanabaing* those monks who did not follow the Vinaya. The Official letters of the *Thathanabaing* were in fact written by the *Mahadhanwun* who was also responsible for communications between the *Thathanabaing* and the *Hluttaw*[99] As with the *Krom Thammakan*, the *Mahadhanwun* also had to adjudicate the cases involving monks and, if such cases were serious, they were sent to the *Hluttaw*. He was also responsible for the preparation of royal presents when required. Thus the *Mahadhanwun's* functions were close to those of the *Krom Thammakan*. But, nonetheless, the duties of the *Mahadhanwun* and those of the *Wutmyewun* were not clearly marked off from each other in the *Ameindaw* (royal order),[100] which defined them.

More important than the functions of the officials in the departments of religious affairs was the intervention of the kings in the realm of religion. Particularly in Burma and to a lesser extent in Thailand the exercise of temporal power over the Sangha was dominated by three key notions - the purification of religion, the unification of the sects and the promotion of religion. These were of course tightly linked, partly because they came from the same source - the Sasana - and partly because royal actions, no matter whether they were undertaken for political or religious ends, were usually announced in the name of religion. Though the two worlds were theoretically separated, in fact they tended to run together.

In this context the exercise of temporal power by King Bodawpaya (1782–1819) and by his Thai counterpart, King Rama I (1782–1809), founder of the Chakri dynasty, are interesting. In the case of Burma, the king considered that monks should perform their noble task in the 'forest', away from the laity; they should wear robes spun with discarded cloth and they should leave their respective monasteries to beg for offerings

99. U Maung Maung Tin, *op. cit* , pp. 114–6.

100. U Maung Maung Tin, *loc. cit.*

of food.[101] The learning of the monks was often checked by convening religious symposia in which the king himself often took part.[102] Those who lacked the required knowledge were forced to leave the order. Similarly monks residing in the provinces were in theory also subject to checks by the provincial governors or their subordinates; but in practice, in spite of the existence of the death penalty for refusal to obey the orders of the king, officials in the regional administration were reluctant to carry out such investigations as the monks were their spiritual teachers.[103]

The king also took action against a group of believers in the tripartite doctrines - *warajoti-ayu* - which literally means belief in enlightened worship[104] which was strong in Central Burma in the 1780s, particularly in and around Shinpyukyun.[105] The doctrines were (a) that there was no need to worship the statues; (b) that there was no need to show respect to monks; and (c) that man after death was never reborn.[106] Such doctrines ran clearly counter to the tenets of Buddhism. It is difficult to know how many people were involved in the group, or what their religious background was or how their creed was expounded as documentary evidence is not available. The fact that the king took action against the group indicated that it was a serious movement at least in one area. The king ordered that its followers should be executed in order that the Sasana could be purified. In spite of such royal zeal, some heretics managed to escape execution and it became necessary to issue a further order that officials who failed to catch them should themselves be punished.[107]

The most revolutionary movement, though it was short-lived, was an innovation of the *upasampada* ordination. King Bodawpaya asked the *Thathanabaing* whether or not a *sima* in which ordination for monkhood was performed was a *sine qua non* for ordination since the Buddha and His immediate followers were otherwise ordained. The *Thathanabaing* could give no sound reason for insisting that monks could only be ordained in a *sima* and had to accept what the king said; so began a new line of ordination. By this the essence of *bona fide upasampada* ordination was to follow that of the *triratna* - the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha - thereby departing from

101. Thwe Thwe Sit, *Padumman Lakthak Aupkhyupre, 1782 1819* (Administration under King Bodawpaya, 1782–1819), (M.A. Thesis, University of Mandalay, 1968), pp. 307–8.
102. BE 1168 (1806) Royal Decree, (Department of Archaeology, Burma), No. 300, 450, 838.
103. BE 1173 (1811), Royal Decree, (Department of Archaeology, Burma), No. 974; BE 1174 (1812), Royal Decree, (Departmant of Archaeology, Burma), No. 1049.
104. Ledi Pandita, *Pali-Burmese Dictionary* (Rangoon, Ledipandita Pinnya Taik, n.d.), pp. 360, 607.
105. BE 1145 (1783), Royal Decree, (Burma National Library), No. 350.
106. See U Maung Maung Tin, *Mranmaman Lakthat Catan Mya* (Essays about Burmese Kingdom), (Rangoon, 1967).
107. BE 1145 (1783), Royal Decree, (Burma National Library), No. 350.

the use of a *sima*.[108] In the opinion of the king the *upasampada* ordination was only the means, not the end in itself, for attainment to *nirvana*. In fact the king was right, but nevertheless, he could not by his own choice deviate in this way from the well established tradition of monks and people. In due course he was forced to repeal the royal order.[109]

Analogous events took place in Thailand during the reign of Rama I, though they were not as revolutionary as those in Burma. In emulation of King Ajatasathu of India and King Parakramabahu of Ceylon, Rama I issued a series of regulations for the Sangha primarily aimed at the purification of Buddhism.[110] Like his counterpart in Burma, he believed that the ultimate aim of any monk should be to attain *nirvana* through assiduous observance and practice in tune with the monastic disciplines. Accordingly the king attempted to purify the Sasana, and some 128 monks who did not follow the Vinaya were disrobed and sentenced to hard labour.[111]

Their offence was described as follows :

> Certain monks, taking advantage of their honourable standing, are so shameless as to descend to all kinds of low behaviour such as drinking intoxicants . . . wandering out at night to see entertainments, rubbing shoulders with women. Engaging in loose talk . . . . boarding Chinese junks in order to obtain fanciful objects of merchandise, thus rendering themselves objects of scorn and ridicule to foreign unbelievers . . . Some go to Phrabad, where they while away their days in flirting with women excursionists and adopt at night the highwayman's life or attend low and undignified entertainments.[112]

In fact Rama I's involvement in the realm of religion was more lasting than that of his counterpart in Burma. Particularly interesting is the *Kotmai Phra Song*, the Law of the Sangha, which is a compilation of the series of royal decrees, issued by him. Such specific rules for the Sangha seemed not to have been issued during the reign of Bodawpaya, though the *Kotmai Tra Sam Duang*,[113] the Law of the Three

108. *MMOS*, III, p. 131.

109. Thwe Thwe Sit, *op. cit.*, pp. 313–4.

110. Kot Phra Song, III, pp. 1–35.

111. *Ibid.*, pp. 56 ff. See also Klaus Wenk, *The Restoration of Thailand under Rama I, 1782–1809* (University of Arizona Press, 1968), pp. 38–40.

112. Prince Dhani Nivat, *op. cit.*, p. 24. See also his articles, "The Reconstruction of Rama I of the Chakri Dynasty", *JSS*, 43, 1, 1955, pp. 21–47 and "The Old Siamese Conception of the Monarchy", *JSS*, 36, 2, 1947. pp. 91–106.

113. Thammasat University edition, 3 volumes (Bangkok, Aksonnit Press, Bangkhunphrom 2481 (1938). Reprinted by Khurusapha in 5 volumes, 1962 63.

Seals, was an attempt to secure uniformity of the legal system, and comparable with Bodawpaya's *Rajathatgyi Ameindaw* (Penal Code).[114] Some of the points contained in the *Kotmai Phra Song* are worth attention. For instance, one decree specified that every monk or novice should carry identification papers on leaving his preceptor. This practice is still followed in Thailand, but though Burma, under the monarchy, kept an annual register of the members of the Sangha, she has now discontinued the practice and identification papers are not used.[115] Another decree required every abbot to keep a register of all monks under his jurisdiction and to be responsible for their conduct.

These examples give some indication of the attempts of Bodawpaya and Rama I to purify religious practice. In spite of the political differences between the two countries, both kings were involved in many innovations. Under the Konbaung dynasty, Burma in the 1800s reached the peak of its greatness, judged both in terms of its territorial expansion and its consolidation of power. Thailand was less painfully affected by the impact of the West, and the founding of the Chakri dynasty by *Chao Phraya* Chakri, known as Rama I, also marked the beginning of a new period of greatness. In the case of Burma there was a sharp contrast between the reforming drive of Bodawpaya's reign and the long period of relative inactivity which had preceded it. In the religious sphere, both monks and people clung to the notions of the traditional order, and such innovations as the introduction of a new calendar and the practice of the new *upasampada* were defeated by the inertia of customary practice.[116]

In addition to the purification of religion, Bodawpaya's reign saw a unification of different sects, and in this respect Burma differed markedly from Thailand. The presence of a variety of sects was a common feature of the Sangha in Theravada Southeast Asia, as in Ceylon. Such divisions resulted from the laxity of monks in following the tenets of the Vinaya and religious reforms were not so much the product of basic doctrinal differences but sprang rather from differences of opinion about the proper or strict observance of the Vinaya. A number of reasons had led to the growth of sects in Burma before the emergence of the Konbaung dynasty. First, political instability towards the end of a dynasty or the beginning of a new one tended to

114. *MMOS*, V, pp. 243ff.

115. The Government's attempt with the promulgation of the National Registration Act of 1949 to have monks registered was a failure and subsequent attempts also suffered the same fate. The result was that no one knows how many monks there are in Burma. See D. E. Smith, *Religion and Politics in Burma* (Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 215–20.

116. BE 1172 (1810), Royal Decree, (The Department of Archaeology, Burma), No. 898–9; BE 1178 (1816), Royal Decree in *MMOS*, III, pp. 136–6.

demoralise the Sangha. Secondly, Burma's contacts with Ceylon, though mutually beneficial in some ways,[117] also contributed to the formation of new sects.[118] Thirdly, the rise of Portuguese power based at Syriam stimulated the growth of non-traditional sects in Lower Burma.[119] Fourthly, the vast extent of Burmese territories, extended by Tabinshwehti (1531–50) and Bayinnaung[120] (1551–81), encouraged the proliferation of sects.[121]

At the beginning of the Konbaung dynasty, the presence of two main sects– Ekamsika (in Burmese Atan) and Parupana (in Burmese Arom) together with affiliated or non-affiliated minor sects, perpetuated the divisions among the Sangha.[122] The Ekamsika advocated wearing the robe off one shoulder while the Parupana held to the covering of both shoulders. Alaungpaya (1752–60), founder of the Konbaung dynasty, saw himself perhaps as following tha Asokan tradition in which the king integrated the contending sects into one, or the tradition of King Parakramabahu (1153–86) of Ceylon in which the king unified three sects. In fact the existence of such sects did not

117. For the relationships of Ceylon with Burma, Thailand and Cambodia, see W.M. Sirisena, *Ceylon and Southeast Asia, Political, Religious and Cultural Relations from A.D.c. 1000 to c. 1500* (Ph.D Thesis, ANU, 1970), Chapters V and VI.

118. During the reign of King Narathihapate (1254–87), for instance, there were six sects, namely (1) Camboja (ii) Thiwali Thera (iii) Tamaleinda Thera (iv) Ananda Thera (v) Buddhavamsa Thera and (vi) Mahanaga Thera. Except the leader of the Camboja sect, the leaders of other sects had returned from Ceylon. Mede Sayadaw, *Vamsadipani* (History of Theravada Lineages), (Rangoon, Hanthawaddy Press 1966), pp. 90–3.

119. By the turn of the 17th century, Philip de Brito, a *ferringi* leader in the service of Arakan, could establish his power in Lower Burma (D.G.E. Hall, *History of Southeast Asia*, (New York, 1970), p. 246) and Buddhism was eclipsed there as the Buddhists dared not openly show their faith. When such things were happening there were some monks with lax rules in monastic discipline who arrived in Lower Burma from Ceylon. As Ceylon was regarded as the authoritative source of Buddhism, some monks followed what the Sinhalese Sangha did by having some parts of their robes worn on their head. Such a practice was again replaced by wearing hats through the influence of Philip de Brito. Thus hat-wearing sects came into existence in Lower Burma. Mede Sayadaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 126–7.

120 Bayinnaung was regarded by the Thai as the Conqueror of the Ten Directions (*Phu Chana Sibtit*) and popularly known among Thai through a classic historical novel, a film and some popular songs about him. See Yacob, *Phu Chana Sibtit* (Conqueror of the Ten Directions), (Bangkok, 'Amonkanphim, 8 vols). There is no historical novel on Bayinnaung in Burma to be compared to this.

121. During this period, Burma had a close relationship with Thailand and many Thai monks stayed at Toungoo from which a sect, originally established in Thailand spread over Burma. The important notion of this sect is that the adherents tied the chest with a piece of robe. See Mede Sayadaw, *op. cit.*, pp, 122–3.

122. *KBZ*, I, p. 70.

necessarily damage the legitimacy and authority of the king, but the unity of the Sangha was nevertheless considered to be an asset, contributing to his glory, as well as reflecting his close adherence to the Asokan tradition.[123] Accordingly, the king decreed that all monks should practise the ways of the Ekamsika headed by the *Thathanabaing*.[124] In spite of his order the other sect managed to survive; the two sects were again present during the reign of King Singu (1776–82).

In was perhaps for the same reasons that Singu once again attempted to unify the sects. In 1779 leaders of both Ekamsika and Parupana sects petitioned the king for his support and, as a result, a religious debate sponsored by the king was held between the two sects at Thudhamma Zayet, a place where religious functions were held. Each was represented by senior monks. The Parupana monks on this occasion were regarded as giving a better display of argument and a royal decree was issued reversing Alaungpaya's judgement and instructing the Sangha to adhere to the practice of the Parupana.[125] Even this decision did not permanently settle the dispute; it was revived, as we have seen, at the beginning of the reign of Bodawpaya (1782–1819).

Bodawpaya deputed the *Mahadhanwun* and his assistants to call upon the leaders of both sects to explain why the Sangha was thus divided into two contending camps.[126] In following this procedure, the king was again emulating the Asokan tradition since King Asoka also questioned each of the Sangha about the division of the order. Once again the Ekamsika leaders were unable to give satisfactory answers to the king; the Parupana leaders again had the better of the debate. The result was that a final verdict was pronounced in 1784 that the Sangha follow only one kind of practice – that of the Parupana sect – and the leader of the Ekamsika sect, Atula Sayadaw and his followers, were disrobed and exiled into the forest.[127]

It might be presumed that, by the nineteenth century, only one sect was left in Burma, since no royal action was taken to enforce unity. In fact there were two separate sects – Thudhamma and Shwekyin – during the reigns of King Mindon and King

123. As with King Asoka, Alaungpaya considered that according to the teaching of the Buddha, there was no division among the Sangha. Hence, to be in line with the original teaching the king made the sects unify. Mede Sayadaw, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

124. In due course, the one-shoulder sect enjoyed royal favour, but the king made a mistake in giving the blessing to that sect and it was realised only after the conquest of Lower Burma as the monks there were of the two-shoulder sect and also strictly followed the Sinhalese tradition. Up to the end of his reign, however, he never repealed his decree. *MMOS*, III. p. 11.

125. *KBZ*, I, p. 516.

126. *Aron Atan ngin Bodawpaya Ameindaw* (Bodawpaya's Decree with respect to the one-shoulder and both shoulder wearing of robes), (Burma Historical Commission).

127. BE 1145 (1783), Royal Decree, (Burma National Library), No. 350; *MMOS*, III, p. 131

Thibaw. These kings however chose not to follow the example of their predecessor of the early Konbaung period. On the contrary, like Rama IV and Rama V in Thailand, they were content to accept the division. The Thudhamma sect appears to have been identical with the Parupana sect. The name Thudhamma derived from the Thudhamma Zayet, a building where religious ceremonies were usually performed during the Konbaung period. The Shwekyin sect derived its name from the town of Shwekyin from which its leader came. The growth of this sect may have occurred during the reign of King Mindon.[128]

It is important to notice that ths primary issues dividing the Ekamsika and the Parupana – the style of wearing the robe – presumably had its repercussions also on the Sangha of Thailand. The Dhammayutika sect which, like the Shwekyin sect of Burma, emphasized strict adherence to the Vinaya was founded by Prince Mongkut,[129] who later became King Mongkut after the death of Rama III. This sect which spread to Laos[130] and Cambodia[131] followed the Mon style of wearing the robe (both shoulders). This style was disliked by the reigning king, Rama III. In consequence Prince Mongkut was requested to require his monks to return to the old style. However, the case was not solved. The robe controversy continued to divide the Mahanikai and Dhammayutika sects after Prince Mongkut ascended the throne. He finally issued a decree permitting monks to wear the robe in any style.[132]

Besides such immediate questions as that of preserving the unity of the Sangha or of securing strict adherence to a particular style of wearing the robe, there remained

128. By the order of the Thudhamma Sayadaw, Shwekyin Sayadaw was called to attend the Thudhamma ceremonies. When he refused, repeated orders were issued and finally the plan was drawn to have Shwekyin Sayadaw come to the ceremonies by sending lay officials under the command of the Thudhamma Council. This plan was known to Shwekyin Sayadaw and he was prepared to leave Mandalay either for Lower Burma or Ceylon. The case came to the attention of King Mindon and Shwekyin Sayadaw was requested not to go from Mandalay and the Council not to call him to attend the ceremonies by the king. To solve the problem the king built four monasteries for Shwekyin Sayadaw and his disciples at Shwebo. Thereafter, the Shwekyin sect came into existence with Shwebo as its headquarters. U Thawbita, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

129. Craig J. Renolds, *op. cit.*, pp. 62–112.

130. Though it has regional concentration centering on the province of Champasak in southern Laos, it was a sect of importance, mainly because the king and his families as well as other upper class groups adhered to it.

131. In Cambodia, it was founded in 1864 by Louk Preas Saukoun, a Cambodian monk who had spent most of his life in studies at a Bangkok monastery. He was a distinguished scholar and became the second prelate in the realm.

132. See Craig J. Reynolds, *op. cit.*, pp. 81–112.

the more general association of Buddhism with the institution of the monarchy. The king, by the nature of his office, was a supporter of Buddhism and no distinction was made between the performance of his temporal tasks and his patronage of religion (*Sasana dayaka*). In both Burma and Thailand, the king erected pagodas and monasteries, donated land and slaves for the benefit of pagodas, monasteries and Pitaka, offered monks such necessities as food and robes, required his sons to enter the Sasana as novices, held examinations[133] for monks and novices, and sometimes for laymen as well, and advanced those monks who distinguished themselves in the *pariyatti*, *pativedha* or *patipatti*. Royal interrogations made to the Sangha with reference to both philosophical and practical aspects of Buddhism by Rama I and Rama III in Thailand[134] and by Bodawpaya in Burma[135] were similar to each other.

On the other hand, there were some differences in the practice of the kings of the two countries in their promotion of religion. One contribution rendered by the king to the preservation of Buddhist study in both countries was the copying of the Tipitaka, but it seems that Burmese kings were more assiduous in their attention to this task than were their Thai counterparts. For instance Bodawpaya,[136] Bagyidaw (1819-37),[137] Mindon and Thibaw had the Tipitaka copied,[138] and Bagyidaw indeed had the task done twice. Mindon not only had the Tipitaka copied on palm-leaves but also inscribed in Burmese on 733 upright marble slabs, which were then enshrined at the Kuthodaw Pagoda,[139] Like these Burmere kings, Rama I also saw that the Tipitaka

133. In the nineteenth century, there were four classes of ecclesiastical examination of the scriptures in Burma as opposed to nine in Siam. In Burma, examinations were held annually just before the beginning of Buddhist Lent and they consisted of two parts - written and oral. The written portion was conducted by the officials and the oral by the Council of Thudhamma Sayadaw. The principal text-books prescribed were *Kaccayana's Grammar*, *Abidhammatha Sangha*, *Abhidhanappadipika*, *Chanda* and *Alankara*. Those who passed the examinations were honoured by the king himself and their parents were exempt from various taxes. If one passed the highest examination, his fifteen nearest relatives in addition to his parents were also exempt from taxes. Prince Dhani Nivat, *op. cit.*, p. 29; Taw Sein Ko, *op. cit.*, pp. 248–9; *MMOS*, IV, pp. 233–5; Myint Swe, "Thibawmansa nhan Patamapyan Sum Krim" (Prince Thibaw and Three Patamapyan Examinations), *Ngwetayi Magazine*, No. 144, June 1972, pp. 47–52.

134. Prince Dhani Nivat, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–8.

135. See Moung Htaung (Thathanabaing), *Ametoau Aphre* (Answers to the Royal Questions), (Mandalay Padetha Pitaka Press, 1961).

136. BE 1145 (1783). Royal Decree. (Burma National Library), No. 350.

137. *KBZ*. II, pp. 247, 374.

138. Taw Sein Ko, *op. cit.*, pp. 188–92.

139. U Thawbita, *op. cit.*, pp. 237–39.

was copied.[140] This kind of royal action was designed to serve three aims: the preservation of the Tipitaka, the promotion of Buddhist study and, more generally, the spread of Buddhism. The last aim seems to have been more specifically in the mind of the Burmese kings who were anxious to be regarded as new Asokas. Bodawpaya, for example, sent missionary monks to 42 places including Ceylon and Thailand with the Tipitaka. Mindon and Thibaw sent similar missions to some places in Burma.[141] The convening of the Fifth Buddhist Council by King Mlndon[142] was one rare contribution to the promotion of religion and he was thought of as following the Asokan tradition in calling the Council.

Finally it may be of interest to look briefly at the extent of involvement by monks in non-religious affairs. As had been indicated, the line of division in the two worlds – the realm of religion and that of the kingdom – was less clearly drawn in Burma than in Thailand. However, in both countries the king was the source of all power, hence there was no question of a distribution of power between the two worlds. It was legitimate for the king to override the power of the *Sangharaja*, or the Sangha, and we have already noticed a number of examples. On occasion, however, a king might use the Sangha for what might be regarded as temporal purposes. As we have seen, for example, Narathu (1267-70) directed Panthagu, the *Thathanabaing*, to make peace with the king's rebel brother. Another example was the role of a celebrated monk, named Disapramuk, who was entrusted with a peace mission to Peking in 1275, and who succeeded in ending the war between Burma and China.[143] This is the first example of a Burmese monk leading a political mission abroad, but it set a tradition to be followed in the future.

During and after the Pagan dynasty, the growth of monastic landlordism arising from generous lay donations of land to monasteries increased the temporal power of some *Sangharaja*. Later monks often brought their influence to bear in political matters, for example, their intercession to end the war between the Burmese king and the Mon kings during the reign of Razadarit (1385–1423).[144] Similarly, monks attempted to persuade Alaungpaya to stop a war against the Mon, arguing that

140. Klaus Wenk, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–42.

141. Taw Sein Ko, *op. cit.*, pp. 188–90.

142. 2400 monks participated in the Fifth Buddhist Council which took five months and three days. U Thawbita, *op. cit.*, p. 239; the number of monks was signified by the arrival of the 2400th year of the Sasana Era.

143. Than Tun, *op. cit.*, *JBRS*, XLII, ii, Dec., 1959, p. 69.

144. U Kala, *Mahayazawingyi* (The Great Chronicle), I, (ed.) Saya Pwa, (Rangoon, Hanthawaddy Press, 1962), pp. 394–403; see also Banya Dala, *Razadirit Aretoaupum* (the Crisis of Razadirit), (Rangoon, Zwe Press, 1974).

both Burmese and Mon kings were *bodhisattva*, but on this occasion their petitions were not successful.[145] Bagyidaw (1819–37) consulted leading monks during the first Anglo-Burmese War,[146] and he sent a monk to meet the British in 1826.[147] In the same way, Mindon consulted his senior monks when moving the capital from Amarapura to Mandalay was under consideration.[148] He sent monks to recall Prince Padein to Mandalay when the prince was in revolt against him in 1867.[149] In 1873 some *Myothugyi*, such as Salin and Sagu, were appointed at the request of the *Gaing-Chok* and *Gaing-Ok* of the towns.[150] These examples make it clear that Burmese monks were involved more in non-religious affairs than were their Thai counterparts.

Burma and Thailand were subject to the combined influence of the Asokan and Sinhalese traditions. The Asokan tradition, with its emphasis on the universality of the Dhamma, the purification of religion, the unification of the sects and the promotion of Buddhism through the work of missionary monks, was presumably transmitted to Theravada Buddhists through the *Asoka Sutta*. The Sinhalese tradition, a successful off-shoot of King Asoka's work, found its way also to Theravada Buddhist Southeast Asia and made its influence felt particularly through the enrichment of Pali literature in the region. Though early Buddhism was unpolitical and even anti-political, its growth in Ceylon changed its original character and as it became politically important in Sinhalese society, so it began to adopt a political role in the societies of Theravada Buddhist Southeast Asia, a process that was established by the mid-fourteenth century, though with some local variations as between Burma and Thailand.

The greater emphasis in Burma on the *pariyatti* than on the *patipatti* and *pativedha* were reflections of the Sinhalese tradition. And, as with Ceylon, the monastery was the main centre of education, providing *lokipanna* and *lokuttarapanna*. Literacy among Buddhists on the whole was high, but female education was sponsored by lay masters, not by monks. But there were differences between monasteries according to whether they served the needs of village dwellers (*grama-vasi*) or forest dwellers (*aranya-vasi*). The latter tended to emphasize *patipatti* (meditation) while the former stressed *pariyatti*. Of these, one type – the *pwai kyon* – an offshoot from the village type of monastery, became more popular. Attempts were made by some Burmese kings to suppress these.

145. Daw Khin Khin Sein, *Alonmantar Amintoau Mya*, (Royal Decrees of King Alaungpaya), (Burma Historical Commission, 1964), pp. 56–7.
146. *KBZ*, II, p. 409.
147. Major Snodgrass, *Narrative of the Burmese War* (London, John Murray, 1827), pp. 270–3; 311.
148. Than Tun, *Nay Lhai Rajawan* (Travelogue), II, (Rangoon, Nantha Taik, 1968), pp. 56–6.
149. *KBZ*, III, pp. 346–7.
150. *MMOS*, IV, pp. 240–5.

Monastic landlordism, though to be found in all Theravada Buddhist countries, was more common in Burma than in Thailand and in this respect Burma resembled Ceylon where monastic landlordism was already strong by the tenth century. The *Sangharaja* as the head of religion was by then so important that the king's claim to be *chakravartin* or a *bodhisattva* was not recognized by his subjects unless it was supported by the *Sangharaja* or the Sangha. Nevertheless, as the *Sangharaja* was appointed by the king, and had no executive arm to enforce his decision, he could be dominated by the king. In appointment of the *Sangharaja*, three qualifications – his erudition, his status as royal guru and his blood relationship with the king, were taken into consideration; but in the case of Burma his erudition came first (with the exception of the case of Toungdaw Sayadaw, whom King Thibaw appointed *Thathanabaing* by virtue of being his *guru*). In Thaillnd, by contrast, royal blood also counted, as was the case with Prince Paramanuchit, who became the first *Sangharaja* in Siamese history to be chosen from amongst the princes. There was no Prince *Sangharaja* during the Konbaung dynasty. Burma's *Thathanabaing* were mostly commoners born in the villages and popularly known by the names of their villages.

The administrative organization of the Sangha was more structured in Mandalay than in Bangkok; at the regional level the three *Chao Khana Yai* were similar to the Burmese *Gaing-Chok*, but the number of the *Gaing-Chok* was not fixed. At the grass-roots level of the monastery, the two organizations resembled each other more closely. At the centre, the relationships between the two worlds were regulated by two departments of government, the functions of which were similar; the king's intervention into the realm of religion was frequent in Burma, at least until the nineteenth century. From the beginning of the Konbaung dynasty to the reign of Bodawpaya, the Burmese kings were also less tolerant of the division of the Sangha into sects. By the nineteenth century, they were prepared to accept a division as did their Thai counterparts. Royal efforts to promote religion were similar in the two countries. It might be said that the Burmese kings in general made more of an effort to follow the Asokan tradition and the Sangha were more involved in non-religious affairs in Burma than in Thailand.