

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

BUDDHISM AND POLITICS: THE POLITICAL ROLES,
ACTIVITIES AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE THAI SANGHA

by

Somboon Suksamran, B.A., M.A. (Chulalongkorn), M.A. (Manchester)

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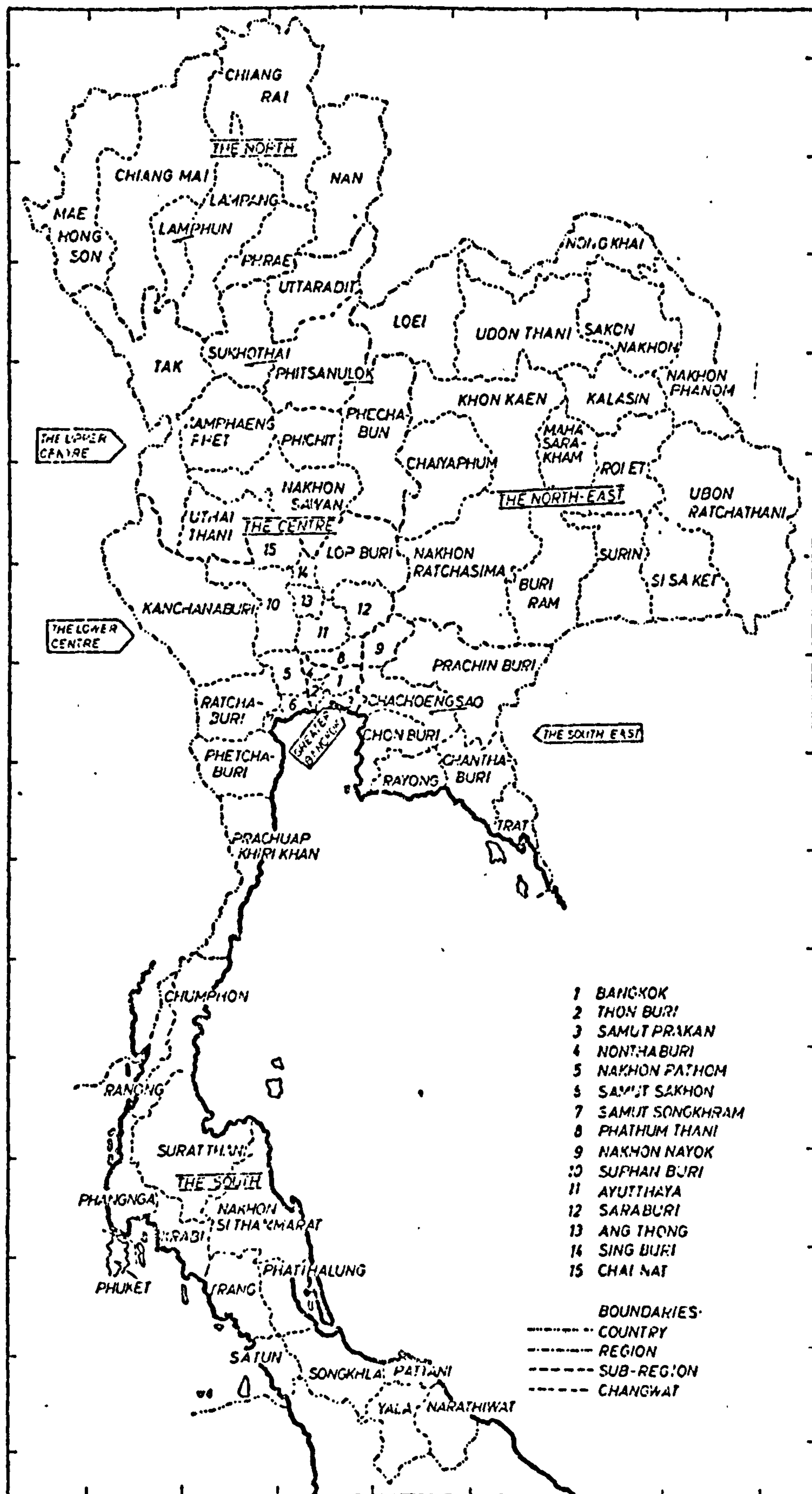
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Dedication

To Lawan



Map: The Provinces of Thailand
(from W Donner, The Five Faces of Thailand, London, Hurst & Co., 1978).

PREFACE

Any academic research into the interaction of Buddhism and politics in Thailand is bound to face certain difficulties. For even if the existence of such an interaction is recognized by informed sections of society, whether they are monks or laity, it is seldom genuinely acknowledged and frequently denied. This paradox derives from two deeply rooted notions. First, that politics is 'the dirtiest business' and 'the most distasteful manipulation of power' in human affairs. Second, that only a 'pure' Buddhism and a 'sound' Sangha can ensure the moral welfare of the nation, and that their preservation in unadulterated form is critical for the survival of national unity. It is therefore maintained by the Thai rulers and the Sangha authorities alike that the Sangha is divorced from mundane affairs. Thus the study of the interaction of Buddhism and politics probes areas which are sensitive for both the government and the Sangha authorities, and they discourage it. In this situation the researcher runs the risk of being accused of 'having malicious intentions towards the nation's religion', and, since the nineteen sixties, he is likely to be suspected of being a 'communist'.

When I first formulated my research topic in 1974, I did recognize that these religio-political constraints might have undesirable effects on my research. But at that time Thailand might be characterized as being in a period of democratic experiment. There was promise of greater academic freedom than ever before. Research in Buddhism and politics seemed to be a real possibility, and I was optimistic that extreme repressive government would never again return to Thailand. Between mid-1974 and 1975 I conducted some preliminary field research, and I left Thailand for Hull in early 1976 with the hope of returning

for intensive field research in November. My plan was shattered by the bloody coup d'etat of 6 October 1976 which brought in the most repressive rule in modern Thai history. The academic freedom the Thai universities had temporarily enjoyed was severely suppressed. The prestige and reputation of certain liberal-minded lecturers and professors suffered considerable humiliation. With this abrupt change in the political climate I had to adjust my methodology and the content of my projected thesis and avoid fieldwork in Thailand. The data for the core chapters was to be gathered by fieldwork; it now rests on the preliminary field research, library sources and personal communications with a number of individuals, some of whom are main characters in the study.

Being unable to conduct field research in Thailand, I went to the United States of America to carry out library research instead. There I spent nearly six months (mid-April to October 1977) at Cornell University where I gained considerable benefits from the vast resources of its library, especially the rich variety of its collections on Thailand. Commercial publications and other written materials unavailable in libraries in the United Kingdom and USA were acquired through the good offices of friends in Thailand.

As this research was undertaken under political constraints, it inevitably has many limitations. However much I wanted this research to be empirical, the political constraints did not allow me to utilize sociological methods of field inquiry. I had therefore to base this research on somewhat 'unconventional' research methods. Also inevitably I have had to be cautious in what I have included in the thesis even for the academic reader. In view of the many setbacks along the way, I must ask the reader not to treat this piece of work as a disciplinary or theoretical thesis, but as an inter-disciplinary descriptive thesis offered as a contribution to South-East Asian Studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe many people many things for this thesis, the many debts that I can never fully repay.

I would like to thank Drs. Thulyathep Suwanjinda and Amra Pongsapitch, my colleagues at Chulalongkorn University, for their useful advice at the early stage when I was formulating ideas, and the Dean of the Faculty of Political Science, Professor Kramol Thongdhammachart, for his kind support. I am indebted to Professor Trevor O Ling of the Department of Comparative Religion, University of Manchester, for continued help, guidance, and encouragement during the research and writing of this thesis. I am also indebted to the late Professor Mervyn A Jaspan, who was to have been my supervisor, for encouraging me to continue my research in this field.

When I was gathering my preliminary field data between mid-1974 and 1975, many people - both monks and laymen - gave their co-operation in many ways. Some of them are mentioned in the thesis. Others, to whom I am greatly indebted, have to remain anonymous. I am especially grateful to those who kindly and enthusiastically expressed their views in the course of my interviews, conversations and correspondences. Without their co-operation and goodwill, this study would have been very peripheral. I am also grateful to those monks and laymen who are the main object of this study.

In the stage of assembling of written Thai materials, I am overwhelmingly indebted to my brother, Dr Apichart Suksamran, for his tireless efforts in searching out available information for this thesis. I also sincerely thank certain government officials and individuals who provided me with various kinds of information including those of a

'confidential' nature. They too must remain anonymous. Without their assistance critical analysis could have hardly been made and the thesis would have suffered from lack of insight.

At Cornell University many people, to whom I am grateful, helped me in many ways. Professor DK Wyatt and Mrs Helen Swank kindly arranged permissions for me to come to Cornell and use the library facilities. Mrs Sari Devi Suprabto (Somchit Indrapathi) helped me considerably by searching out relevant materials there. Professors A Thomas Kirsch and Lauriston Sharp of the Department of Anthropology freely gave me their time and knowledge, and offered me many of their insights into their analyses of Thai society. Professor Benedict RG Anderson has guided me to new horizons of analytical investigation into the relationship between the Sangha and state. I am greatly indebted to Professor Charles F Keyes of the Department of Anthropology, University of Washington at Seattle both personally and through his writings which have inspired me to take up the study of the interaction of Buddhism with politics. I am particularly grateful to him for his comments and advice on this thesis at the early stage of formulation. I would also like to thank Professor SJ Tambiah of the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University for reviewing my previous work constructively, and thus enabling me to make improvements in this thesis.

At the University of Hull I am grateful to Dr David K Bassett, the Director of the Centre for South-East Asian Studies, for reading and commenting on the first draft of the thesis and especially for his cheerful encouragement and support throughout. I owe a special debt to Mr Victor T King of the Department of Sociology & Social Anthropology and Dr Paul Lightfoot of the Department of Geography for reading and making invaluable comments on every draft of the thesis. Their comments and advice have contributed to the improvement of the thesis greatly. I

also thank Dr Lightfoot for proof reading the final typescript. I am greatly indebted to Mr Lewis G Hill, my supervisor, for his continued assistance, support, and guidance. It was he who patiently shouldered the heaviest burden in correcting my English and putting my fragmented data into an organized thesis form. Without his wise guidance, this thesis would have been presented in a less satisfactory form. I would also like to thank these people for befriending us during our time at Hull. Our thanks in this respect also extend to Mr and Mrs J Mundy.

My wholehearted thanks go to my wife, Lawan, to whom this thesis is dedicated. She not only sacrificed the opportunity to continue her further education, but has also shared anxiety, difficulties, frustration and hope. Without her understanding, toleration, encouragement and moral support, this thesis would never have been finished. I owe apologies to our son, Panithan, who has to put up with his father's frustration without knowing why.

I must thank most sincerely the institutions which have given me financial support for the period of my research. First Chulalongkorn University which has generously allowed me leave of absence from my teaching duties. Second, the University of Hull for a University of Hull Postgraduate Scholarship from October 1975 to October 1978, and The Mervyn Aubrey Jaspan Field Research Award in October 1978. Third, The Ford Foundation for providing the substantial scholarship from January 1976 to June 1979 which solved all my financial worries, and giving me the additional funds and sponsorship which made possible my research in the United States between April and October 1976. Only through the combined generosity of these institutions was this research possible, and I am deeply grateful. To single out individuals in the organizations might be invidious, but members of the staff of each were always helpful and I thank them collectively.

Finally, I sincerely thank Ms Pat Wilkinson for providing fast and excellent typing assistance, and for her friendship to our family.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BKK	Bangkok
CPT	The Communist Party of Thailand
CSOS	The Communist Suppression Operations Command
FBT	The Federation of Buddhists of Thailand
FFT	The Federation of Farmers of Thailand
FIST	The Federation of Independent Students of Thailand
FLUT	The Federation of Labour Unions of Thailand
ISOC	The Internal Security Operations Command
MNCT	Monks and Novices' Centre of Thailand
NSCT	The National Students Centre of Thailand
PDG	People for Democracy Group
P.Ch.P.Ch.	Prachachon Phua Prachathipathai (People for Democracy)
UCL	The Union for Civil Liberty
YMFT	The Young Monks' Front of Thailand

NOTES ON TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION OF THAI

The exact sounds of Thai words might be difficult for non-Thai speakers to pronounce. To make it easier the words have been transcribed as closely as possible to the original sounds in the Central Thai dialect except that the tones have not been put in. The translation of Thai into English has been kept as close as possible to the original. Where it is not possible to do this, the translation is intended to preserve the ideas conveyed by the words. The spelling of Pali words and their meanings is based on Phra Rajavaramuni's A Dictionary of Buddhism.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the interaction of politics with Buddhism and the Sangha (the community of monks) in Thailand. Buddhism is seen as having long served as one of the main socializing, acculturating, and unifying forces in Thai society. It has profoundly influenced the cultural, economic, and political development of the nation, and also reputedly continues to mould the social and political values of the great majority of the Thai population. The Sangha has played a very important role in the social life of almost every Thai. I intend to show that though Buddhism and the Sangha have had complex interactions with politics over a long period of time, recent socio-political changes in Thailand have led to the formation and assumption of new roles and a quite unique redefinition of roles for the Sangha. The main force behind this change has been the political development of the Thai state. To acquire a full perspective of the relation between Buddhism and kingship, Sangha and state, it is necessary to examine the nature of their interactions from early times, and in this I am fortunate in being able to draw on a number of previous works. These earlier studies have their limitations, as will become clear when I consider them in more detail below, for they only take up the topic as a subordinate part of their consideration of other problems, and the most recent of them only bring us up to 1972. The most original part of this study is therefore the examination of the modern period dating from the late 1950s, especially the period between 1973 and 1976 when I attempt to elucidate the critical political developments and their interrelationship with changes in the Sangha.

In this connection, the study attempts to investigate the impact of

government controls and directions on the Sangha. I intend to show why since the late 1950s the government has encouraged the Sangha to participate in the execution of government policies and how the Sangha has responded to this political mobilization. I will attempt to establish the degree to which the Sangha has co-operated with the government. Assuming part of the Sangha is willing to collaborate with the government, I will then attempt to answer the questions: how far can Buddhism and the Sangha provide a positive ideology and assistance for the goal realization of the government and by what methods? Assuming part of the Sangha is not willing to co-operate with the government, I will ask the question: what are the opportunities for the Sangha to retain its place and its traditional status? I will attempt to understand the Sangha's own perception of its roles in this light.

Another important area of investigation in this study is that, if some members of the Sangha are not willing to co-operate with the government and react independently to socio-political changes, what are the stimuli for their actions, and what are the opportunities for these monks to retain their place and traditional status? In this, I intend to show how the abrupt socio-political changes during 1973-1976 have resulted in the assumption and formulation of new and non-traditional roles and activities by certain groups of monks. I will consider their ideological positions and their perceptions of their roles.

2. Concepts

Certain concepts are crucial for this study; most immediately the concept of socio-political change and the derivative notions of traditional society, political modernization and political development. It is also necessary to consider political legitimacy, because it is this that distinguishes authority from power. Though what I mean by these terms

will become clear in the detail of later chapters, it will be helpful if I attempt some brief preliminary definitions here.

(a) Socio-political change

Since there are many definitions of politics, I must make clear that, for the purposes of this study, I am concerned with ideas and actions which relate to the use of power in the organization of the state. I include in my concept of political action those activities in which men acquire, employ, or influence the distribution of power, authority, wealth and prestige within a social structure. As I am particularly concerned with the question of the responsiveness of government to competing interest groups, any action which has relevance for the broadening or narrowing of popular involvement in governmental decision-making, for the pursuit or maintenance of power or authority; or has effects on the distribution of prestige or wealth in the nation, can be considered political.¹

By socio-political change I have in mind processes by which sets of social relationships, particularly those based on power and wealth, and sets of ideas about the nature of society and its power relationships, alter through time. I consider that ideas about power and its associated relationships are not coterminous with the actual context of these relationships in society, and that the relationship between the two fluctuates through history. Though frequently in this thesis this involves an idea

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1. For discussion of what constitutes the concept of politics see, for example: Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, Character and Social Structure (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1970) pp. 26, 192-196; Bernard R. Crick, In Defence of Politics (London: Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1962) pp. 20-22; Morton H. Fried, The Evolution of Political Society (New York: Random House, 1967) pp. 20-21; and Marc J. Swartz, (ed.) Local Politics (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1968) pp. 1-12.

of movement in one direction, that is of modernization, I want to stress now that I do not wish to imply that this movement is a necessary condition. I recognize alterations in social organization produced by such factors as increasing numbers of personnel within an institution or the appointment of a new incumbent of a status, may produce socio-political change without modernization or development - without what was once called progress.¹ A broad definition of socio-political change such as this allows for the inclusion within the definition of everyday alterations in social organization of little long term significance, and broader oscillations in social structure,² while still incorporating such notions as modernization and development. While socio-political change is the prime concept in this study, any such broad notion presents difficulties when considering detail: wherever possible I intend to specify much more precisely the processes which constitute socio-political change in each situation.

Both political modernization and development are here considered partly as process and partly as ideology. Much previous work in the West has concentrated on process, while some recent work has stressed ideology. Both aspects are important in any study of politics and Buddhism in Thailand. But as in a previous work, Political Buddhism in Southeast Asia, I have considered these as process in some detail, I now

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1. A valuable study revealing elements of just such a situation is C. Geertz, Agricultural Involution: The Process of Ecological Change in Indonesia (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968). These processes of progressive change, stagnation and retrogression are elegantly incorporated into a general theory of change by W.F. Wertheim in Evolution and Revolution (London: Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd., 1974) Chapters 1 to 3.
 2. Such as have been suggested for the Kachin Hills in E.R. Leach, Political Systems of Highland Burma (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1954).

wish to lay emphasis on ideology. Political modernization and development are particularly considered as legitimizing power relationships, and it therefore becomes crucial to understand the concept of legitimacy in Thailand. I will now consider these concepts in more detail.

(b) Political modernization and political development

Certain authors employ the terms 'political modernization' and 'political development' as near synonyms. For them political modernization-development takes place within an historical context in which influences from outside the society are capable of being absorbed within the society's process of social change in a similar fashion to the way in which changes in different elements of a society (e.g. the economy, the polity and the social order) all act on one another.¹ Other authors find it more convenient to distinguish two separate notions,² so here immediately we encounter serious difficulties of definition which need further examination.

The conditions for and directions of political modernization and development appear to depend largely on the type of society, its historical heritage, its culture, and its political, economic and social structure.³

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1. For example, Lucian W. Pye, Aspects of Political Development (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1966) pp. 44-45; S.N. Eisenstadt, Modernization, Growth and Diversity (Bloomington: Department of Government, Indiana University, 1963) p. 5; Gabriel A. Almond and Bingham G. Powell Jr., Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1966) pp. 34-37; See also Max F. Millikan and Donald L.M. Blackmer, The Emerging Nations (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1961) and Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1958).
 2. For example, Norman Jacobs, Modernization Without Development: Thailand as an Asian Case Study (New York: Praeger, 1971); Hans-Dieter Evers, "Modernization and Development" in H-D Evers (ed.), Modernization in Southeast Asia (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974); and Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975).
 3. David E. Apter, The Politics of Modernization (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1965) pp. 43-80.

Nevertheless, the leaders of developing or modernizing societies initially tend to look to the more advanced societies, significantly Western societies, which they admire, as their models for change. Usually then, a process loosely labelled as 'Westernization' enters into considerations of political modernization and development.

In general the students of political modernization and development tend to take up a single dominant criterion as indicative of the degree of political development or modernization that a society has experienced. Thus, we find emphasis on increasing national integration,¹ the increasing differentiation of specialized functions,² the institutionalization of political organization and procedures,³ the expanding capacity of the political system to respond successfully to and cater for the rising expectations of its citizens,⁴ a broad set of socio-economic factors,⁵ the ability to achieve social mobilization for new goals, and the degree of participation in government.⁶

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1. For example, Claud Ake, A Theory of Political Integration (Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1967); Karl A. Deutsch and William J. Foltz (eds.), Nation-Building (New York: Atherton Press, 1966); Leonard Binder, Political Development in a Changing Society (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), and Pye, op.cit.
 2. For example, Fred W. Riggs, "Bureaucrats and Political Development"; Joseph La Palombara (ed.), Bureaucracy and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).
 3. For example, Huntington, op.cit.
 4. Almond and Powell, op.cit.; Robert T. Holt and John E. Turner, The Political Basis of Economic Development (New York: Van Nostrand, 1966); Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Politics of Underdevelopment", World Politics, Vol. 9 (October 1956).
 5. Seymour M. Lipset, Political Man (New York: Doubleday, 1963); Phillips Cutright, "National Political Development: Measurement and Analysis", American Sociological Review, Vol. 28 (April, 1963); Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development", American Political Science Review, Vol. 5 (September 1961).
 6. Lerner, op.cit.

An examination of these studies suggests that political development and modernization rely on a number of supportive and overlapping conditions. First, they depend on national integration or nation building. This involves the development of a capacity to maintain a certain level of public order, and to mobilize resources for a specific range of collective enterprises. They entail the translation of diffuse and unorganized sentiments of nationalism into a spirit of citizenship, and equally the creation of institutions that can translate the aspirations of nationalism and citizenship into policies and programmes.¹ Second, development and modernization involve the establishment of separate structures to perform a wide variety of functions, i.e. there must be a gradual separation of roles, structures, or sub-systems.² Third, in the less differentiated former institutions of the society, there must be a certain level of new institutionalization, such as the development of political organizations or procedures which acquire legitimacy and stability.³ Fourth, they require a high level of capacity to regulate and respond to the demands of citizens, if a political system is to acquire popular support. This has implications for the sheer magnitude of political and governmental performance, and its effectiveness and efficiency in the execution of public policy, its rationality in administration, and a secular orientation towards policy.⁴ Fifth, they depend upon four basic economic and social conditions: wealth, industrialization, urbanization, and education.⁵ Sixth, the political system must attain a

1. Pye, op.cit., pp. 37-38.

2. Riggs, op.cit., pp. 122-123; Almond and Powell, op.cit., p. 22.

3. Huntington, op.cit., pp. 12-24.

4. Almond and Powell, op.cit., pp. 28-29, 198-212; Pye, op.cit., pp. 43, 46-47.

5. Lipset, op.cit., pp. 27-58.

high level of social mobilization, a process in which major clusters of old or traditional social, economic, and psychological commitments are eroded or broken down so that people become available for new patterns of secularization and behaviour.¹ Seventh, political development and modernization, in so far as they are based on the concept of equality as well as public order, depend on the expression of mass participation and popular involvement in political activities.² Finally, political development and modernization rely on the level of secularization of political culture whereby men become increasingly rational, analytical, and empirical in their political orientation.³

Political development and modernization, then, are both employed to refer to similar fields of study. Having viewed their content, the question remains for the purposes of this study of whether they should be distinguished from one another. Norman Jacobs in his study of Thailand defines them separately. To him modernization is used to denote:

the maximization of the potential of the society within the limits set by the goals and the fundamental structure (or forms) of the society. Modernization is stimulated by novel, recently revealed ways of accomplishing tasks which offer improved, more successful ways to cope with the existing, traditional environment..... This is a continuous process. The stimulus for modernization may be external, or internal, or both.

Development, in contrast, denotes the maximization of the potential of the society, regardless of any limits currently set by the goals or fundamental structure of the society it is an open-ended commitment to productive change, no matter what the consequences might be on existing goals or existing ways of doing things.⁴

1. Deutsch (1961) op.cit., pp. 494-503.

2. Pye, op.cit., pp. 39-40, 45-46, 65.

3. Almond and Powell, op.cit., pp. 23-25, 50-63.

4. Jacobs, op.cit., p. 9.

Jacobs goes on to suggest that development alone is confined to 'feudal' societies and not 'patrimonial' societies such as he defines Thailand.¹ He further argues it can be expressed quantitatively. Jacobs is followed in emphasizing this trend of distinction by Hans-Dieter Evers who is concerned to confirm the idea of modernization without development.² While appreciating the nature of their concern to differentiate objectively between what is essentially maximizing the potential of an existing structure to exploit the environment, and maximizing the exploitation of the environment by introducing new structures, I would see both notions present in government policy in modern Thailand. For, contrary to Jacobs' view, they stem essentially from conservative and progressive viewpoints respectively. Each produces change, but the nature of the change in both cases can be reactionary or progressive, so that it is only after change in any situation that one can establish whether attempted modernization has in fact produced modernization or development; or whether attempted development has in fact produced modernization or development. Since modernization can become development or vice versa with relative ease it seems this distinction does not carry us very far, that in practice the fields covered by the terms overlap to such a degree that the terms can be dealt with as synonyms. For in fact politically both are ideologically motivated; in Thailand they are both contained within and stem from government policies. Both are concerned with political, economic, and social change away from what is called traditional society, and both derive their impetus from internal and external forces.

1. Ibid., pp. 10-12.

2. Hans-Dieter Evers, "Introduction: Modernization and Development" in Evers, op.cit., p. xiii.

There is a further radical view about modernization and development which must be mentioned. Radical scholars are very critical of the Western-based conceptions of development and modernization. Andre Gunder Frank, for example, rejects them for their theoretical inadequacies and policy ineffectiveness, and regards such modernization and development theories as a cloak concealing imperialist interests. He strongly rejects the presuppositions that 'developed countries exhibit the pattern variables of universalism, achievement orientation, and functional specificity, while underdeveloped ones are characterized by their opposites - particularism, ascription, and functional diffuseness'; and that to develop the underdeveloped countries it is merely necessary to eliminate the characteristics of underdevelopment and adopt those of development by changing particular variables, roles, or parts of the social system - in other words that it is unnecessary to change the power structure and the distribution of wealth and prestige in the system itself. To Frank the theoretical inadequacies stem partly from the fact that these conventional theorists construct one theory for one part (i.e. the developed part) of what has been one world economic and social system for two or more centuries and construct another theory for the other part¹ (i.e. the underdeveloped part). The policies of 'modernization' theorists are based on the presupposition that development occurs through the diffusion of knowledge, skills, organization, values, technology, and capital from the developed to underdeveloped countries. Frank argues that such diffusion indeed takes place, but that the end result is completely different. Instead of promoting development, this diffusion perpetuates and indeed intensifies the underdevelopment of the underdeveloped countries. For example, Frank points out that the diffusion

1. Andre Gunder Frank; Sociology of Development and Underdevelopment of Sociology (London: Pluto Press, 1973) pp. 6-14, 16, 54.

of economic liberalism from the developed countries to the underdeveloped ones encourages a capitalist economy, and as a consequence, it widens the economic and social gap not only between the developed and underdeveloped countries, but also within the underdeveloped societies themselves.

Social liberalism encourages the monopoly of social and economic power by a few individuals and thereby resists the development of economic, political and social wholes.¹

Along with Frank's view, Robert I. Rhodes stresses that conventional theorists fail to take the historical relationships of development and underdevelopment into account, and they ignore the existence of social classes when they consider the obstacles to development.² For example, they have often evaded the simple historical fact that colonialism destroyed the natural roots which would have nourished the rise of industry. Rhodes points out that continuing political and economic backwardness in underdeveloped countries was in fact created by the intrusion of forces of capitalism and colonialism in an earlier period. As such he regards the conventional theory of development as a legacy of colonialism,³ while Colin Leyes describes this as 'bourgeois' development theory.⁴

These critics argue that by following the Western model of development and modernization, underdeveloped countries only subordinate them-

1. Ibid., pp. 27-40.

2. Robert I. Rhodes, "The Disguised Conservatism in Evolution Development Theory", Science and Society, Vol. XXII, 1968, pp. 385-397. The view that 'social classes' play an important part in the perpetuation of underdevelopment in South-East Asia is also expressed by Evers, op.cit., pp. 108-131.

3. Rhodes, ibid., pp. 401-403.

4. Colin Leyes, "Underdevelopment and Dependency: Critical Notes", Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1977, pp. 93-107.

selves to the economic, political, and technological domination of developed countries which are capitalistic and neo-colonial, and thereby perpetuate their underdevelopment. They also argue that such modes of development and modernization not only increase the gap between rich and poor countries, but also widen wealth, status and power differentials between groups within the dominated countries. Hence, exploitation and oppression are maintained and even intensified.¹

Although these radical scholars do not often make their alternatives explicit, they suggest that effective progress can only be achieved through a social revolution. As Frank put it:

... an alternative policy for economic development and cultural change will have to be politically even more revolutionary and help the people of the underdeveloped countries to take the destruction of this structure and the development of another system, into their own hands. If the developed countries cannot diffuse development, development theory, or development policy to the underdeveloped countries, then the people of these countries will have to develop them by themselves.²

Frank goes on to suggest that the Western-based modes of development are in fact 'the Emperor's clothes, which have served to hide his naked imperialism'. Rather than fashioning the Emperor a new suit, these people will have to dethrone him and clothe themselves.³

These radical views of the nature of modernization and development are important to our study because their presence in Thailand became manifest in the 1970s. The importance of these ideas, especially the association of the terms 'development' and 'modernization' with 'Westernization' will become clearer when we discuss the ideological polarization

1. A similar view can be found in, for example, W.F. Wertheim's 'Resistance to Change - From Whom?' in Evers, op.cit., pp. 97-107.

2. Frank, op.cit., p. 55.

3. Ibid.

among the political groups, activists and the political monks.

(c) Traditional society

The views we have considered on political modernization and development tend to proceed from an idea of there being some social or economic or political conditions in the past which can be considered as 'traditional'. This is, of course, the common English usage of the term 'traditional' and I have found it difficult to avoid using it in this sense in this thesis. Even so I see it as somewhat unsatisfactory when it acquires additional attributes, such as referring to a static state.¹ Then socio-political change becomes a process by which society moves from one rigidly defined form to another. This appears to distort history and imposes a narrow view of the nature of socio-political change. I find it hard to envisage Thai society as ever having been socially, economically or politically static, whether one is discussing it at the level of ideology or social action. When it comes to considering political arguments which employ the term without reflection, we should recognize that 'traditional' actually refers to the set of ideas about the nature of previous society which is held by every new generation. Though apparently historical in form, these ideas often partake more of the nature of myth than of the hypothetical complete history. In this sense, 'traditional' is what is thought by the people today to have been the condition of previous society, and is a set of models composed of many changing elements which ultimately, in discussions of political action, is the many sets of ideas about the past currently held by the present society. These sets of ideas differ increasingly from one another as one moves one's examination of them from those held by conservatives to those held by radicals. Traditional therefore, is also

1. As, for example, in S.N. Eisenstadt, 'The Influence of Traditional and Colonial Political Systems on the Development of Post Traditional Social and Political Order', in Evers, op.cit., pp. 3-6.

used in this more elusive but more exact sense when examining political debate.

There is then no gulf between 'traditional' and 'modern' society; rather there is a continuity in socio-political change which subsumes them as relative and constantly changing concepts. On theoretical grounds, this is a reason for the need for considerable historical depth in the thesis as I explore the ideologies and processes which are the paraphernalia of the ideology-makers of many generations. The constant search for legitimacy which is faced by power holders demands their frequent reappraisal of a long history which is familiar, at least in outline, to all Thai. There is also a practical reason for this historical stress; originally I intended to write a thesis based on a field study of the modern Sangha and its political relationships. This field work was partly completed in 1975, but the disturbed political situation in Thailand in 1976 rendered this course unwise, and I have had to focus on documentary sources to a greater extent than originally intended.

(d) Political legitimacy

The notion of political legitimacy is, in general, based on the belief that the government has the right to govern and the people (the governed) recognize that right. It involves the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that its political institutions, structures, processes, policies, decisions, and actions are the ones most appropriate for the society in question. A legitimate government or political system is one which has proved it possesses those qualities of righteousness, propriety, or moral goodness which are accepted by the

governed.¹ Thus, whether a government is legitimate or illegitimate depends on the government's success in convincing the people that its values are their primary values.

In a broad sense legitimacy is derived from two types of value. According to David E. Apter these are 'consummatory' and 'instrumental' values. Consummatory values are based on a particular set of moralities, an integral set of cultural norms that are widely dispersed in the population, or contradictory sets held by mutually antagonistic groups. Instrumental values refer to the capacity of a government or political system to deal effectively with political, economic, and social problems, and to make provision for the future well-being of that society.²

These values have a time dimension, which was well recognized by Max Weber when he wrote of 'the sanctity of immemorial traditions' as the most universal source of legitimacy. The modes of legitimation accepted as traditional consist of the belief that the present institutions of authority are continuous with those that existed in the past, or that the power holders have acceded to their positions in accordance with procedures and qualifications which have been valid for a very long time.³

In this study I consider religious values as a mode of legitimation.

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1. For more detail see, for example, Dolf Sternberger, "Legitimacy", International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. IX, 1968, p. 224; Carl J. Friedrich, Man and His Government: An Empirical Theory of Politics (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963) p. 234; Lipset, op.cit., p. 64; Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (New York: Free Press, 1968) pp. 124-132, 324-329; and David Easton, A System Analysis of Political Life (New York: Wiley, 1967) pp. 237-288.
 2. Apter, op.cit., pp. 83-85, 236-238.
 3. Weber, op.cit., pp. 124-132.

I shall attempt to show that in Thailand religion is a major source of both consummatory and instrumental values in the legitimation of authority.

In Thailand, only a small part of the ruling elite exposed to Western ideas has developed a real comprehension of, and presumably a commitment to, Western modes of modernization which include democratic procedures. Others have been distrustful of alien ideas, and on the whole, would have preferred to perpetuate the traditional authoritarian system which maintained the belief that the function of government is to lead and the role of the people is to obey.¹ Both see the masses as remaining steeped in conservative modes of thought, and as being in any event far removed from the decision-making process. In this situation, the ruling elite has attempted to mobilize mass support for its modernization and development programmes in line with Western ideas. The paradoxical position of the conservative elite here may be explained by the desire to demonstrate to outsiders the legitimacy of its position.

The process of transformation of the society has frequently produced conflict and tension both within and between conservative and modernizing factions in the country. By this I mean there have been clashes of opinion both between conservatives and progressives over the need for modernization, and clashes of opinion within conservative and progressive factions over the kind of modernization - whether it should be socialist or capitalist, Western or non-Western, for example. At times this has

1. For elaboration of the persistence and continuity of 'traditional authoritarian government' in modern Thailand see, for example, Thinapan Nakata, "Political Legitimacy in Thailand: Problems and Prospects", Journal of Political Science Review (English Edition), Vol. I, No. 1, March 1976 (Bangkok: The Social Science Association Printing Press of Thailand, 1976).

led to confusion and even chaos in the society. When this has occurred, the government has often seen its prime task as retaining office, and to achieve this has resorted to repressive measures. However, since the leaders have wished to retain their commitment to Western ideas of modernization and democracy they have continued to seek popular legitimacy for their rule, since it permits them to govern from day to day without resort to coercive power. Coercion can then be reserved for possible major crises.

In Thailand since religion ranks highly among the nation's traditional institutions, the close association of religion with political authority would appear to be an invaluable means for the government to maximize its legitimacy. By exploiting the consummatory values that Thai Buddhism so obviously provides, they secure legitimacy. This can enable them to build a government with sufficient popular support to carry through their modernizing plans which they envisage will, given time, legitimize their rule through instrumental values. Thus, in Thailand we can conceive of a political situation quite different from that enjoyed by modern Western governments, among whom the instrumental values of legitimacy are sufficiently developed for them to relegate the institutions providing the consummatory values of legitimacy to a lesser place in their development planning.

3. Previous work on Buddhism and Politics in Thailand

It is not my intention to consider here all previous work which provides data on Buddhism and politics in Thailand. Rather, I select for discussion only those works which by reason of their analysis or substantial data have been valuable in helping me to formulate my argument and in providing factual material for consideration.

The earliest commentary I have discovered which deals directly with this area of this study is a 'Special Allocution' by Prince Wachirayan Warorot (Vajiranana - 1859-1921) when he was Supreme Patriarch of the Thai Sangha, on King Wachirawut's birthday in 1916. It is entitled The Buddhist Attitude towards National Defence and Administration. Originally published in Thai, it was later translated into English, possibly by the King himself. This work is very significant in that the author was regarded as one of the finest scholars in the Buddhist world. He had been one of the most important assistants to King Chulalongkorn (his elder brother) in launching the King's programme of modernization, notably in the reform of education, provincial administration, and the Sangha administration in the late nineteenth century.

The first part of the text makes clear the continuity of Buddhist ideas of the righteous king as the devout Buddhist, the patron and protector of Buddhism and the Sangha, and the leader and protector of his subjects. It legitimizes the position of the king (Wachirawut) by describing him as a ruler who had completely performed the duties of a righteous king, thereby bringing prosperity and stability to the nation and the people. The second part of the text deals with the policy of governance. Here Buddhist canon and legends are invoked to justify government policies and actions. For instance, it states that defence against external forces is one of the policies of governance, one that cannot be neglected. It sets out the organization of state and the army necessary for the successful defence of the realm.

King Wachirawut (1910-1925) himself also wrote a set of articles justifying his policies in Buddhist terms.¹ He injected into the Thai

1. For example, Tetsana Saupha (Sermons to the Wild Tiger Corp) (Bangkok: Kurusapha Press, 1953); Phra Phutthachao Tratsaru Arai? (What is the Knowledge Attained by the Buddha?) (Bangkok: National Library, 1925).

collective consciousness certain new and potent ideas of nationalism. These, on the one hand, conjoined the concept of nation and the older symbols of kingship and religion, and, on the other hand, mobilized all these symbols as a safeguard against colonialism. His works also re-affirm and continue the traditional Thai religio-political ideology that the prosperity and progress of the nation is closely related to the prosperity of Buddhism, and that the religion and the king constitute the moral foundation of the nation; they are inseparable.

Prince Dhaniniwat's work on Monarchical Protection of the Buddhist Church in Siam¹ spells out the relationship between the monarch and the Sangha. But it concentrates mainly on the period before 1932, and it offers little social and political analysis of the nature of the relationships between the two parties and the people.

The political relationship of the Sangha and state was also taken up by Yoneo Ishii in a short article entitled "The Church and State in Thailand".² His work is probably the first academic study that considers the political use of Buddhism and the Sangha for the promotion of national development and national integration by political leaders since the 1960s. Although Ishii's work is valuable in opening up a new horizon, the analysis is confined to establishing a causal connection between change in government policies and Sangha reorganization, and is illustrated by the Sangha Acts of 1905, 1941 and 1962. He demonstrates each government involved reorganized the Sangha for political ends, but the ideas put forward require more consideration and elaboration than the seven pages of the article allow.

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1. Probably first published in the 1930s. The work I refer to here was reprinted by World Fellowship of Buddhists, 1964.
 2. Asian Survey, Vol. VIII, No. 10 (1968) pp. 864-871.

This need for a deeper investigation was partly fulfilled by J.A. Niels Mulder¹ who went on to investigate the political mobilization of the Sangha by Sarit (1957-1963). Mulder's main analysis was that Sarit as well as his successors sought national security and stability through the promotion of national development and social welfare; and that the Sangha, by virtue of its religious qualities and leadership especially at the village level, presented itself as one of the best possible instruments to effect government policies. Thus the government mobilized the Sangha to help in community development and national integration. However, much of the study is devoted to an argument as to whether the Sangha wielded greater motivational power than did secular leaders, and to the premature evaluation of the negative consequences of the Sangha involvement in government policies. Mulder tells us little about the actual roles of the Sangha in government programmes.

More details of Sangha activities were provided by Charles F. Keyes in his excellent analysis² of King Chulalongkorn's efforts to pacify the dissidents in Northern Thailand and to unify the country by breaking up 'primordial'³ ties through the reorganization of provincial administration and the reform of provincial Sangha administration. His work further clarifies the interaction of Buddhism with politics in the twentieth century. He suggested that the government policy of national integration

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1. Monks, Merit and Motivation: An Exploratory Study of the Social Functions of Buddhism in Thailand in the Process of Guided Social Change (Special Report Series No. 1, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University, 1969). This work was revised in 1973, and changed the title to Monks, Merit and Motivation: Buddhism and National Development in Thailand.
 2. "Buddhism and National Integration in Thailand", Asian Studies, Vol. XXX, No. 3, 1971, pp. 551-568.
 3. i.e. the relationship by which local leaders maintained their power at the expense of the authority of central government.

since the 1960s was in fact the legacy of King Chulalongkorn. This policy manifests itself in the Phra Dhammatuta and Phra Dhammajarik programmes. His article, however, focussed on the government's attempts to integrate hill people into Thai society, culture and politics. Despite the valuable discussion of the possibilities of the success of the Phra Dhammajarik programme, Keyes tells us little about its actual operation.

The inadequacies of previous accounts of the Sangha's roles in government policies of national development and national integration were partly filled by my previous work.¹ However, this study is concerned only with the period up to 1972. Moreover, I now see some of the weaknesses of my analysis of the problems in that study. For instance, my concept of political modernization and development then was too narrowly defined, and certain aspects of such concepts were not taken into account. This led to some premature conclusions which will be seen to be modified in this thesis.

Another intensive study on the interaction of Buddhism and the Sangha with politics has been carried out by S.J. Tambiah.² This work provides us with a valuable sociological and anthropological analysis of the interaction of Buddhism and Thai kingship of early times, of the development of the Sangha structure and organization in relation to the Thai polity, and partly of the political mobilization for the achievement of certain government policies today. The study has been both criticized and praised for attempting to encompass a wide range of topics over a very

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1. Political Buddhism in Southeast Asia: The Role of the Sangha in the Modernization of Thailand (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1977).
 2. World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

long period of time within the bounds of a single theory.¹ I must confess that I do not fully comprehend the issues in dispute in the sociological and anthropological theories, for they are largely outside my field of interest, but I do feel that the immense span of the work does at times appear to make the illustrative material fragmented and confusing. Also, unlike Keyes, Tambiah seems not to have made extensive use of the original written Thai sources. Nevertheless, his thesis that changes in the nature of relationships between Buddhism, the Sangha and the state can be attributed to the forces of socio-political change is unmistakably valid. His stress on continuity in the Sangha structure and of Thai ideas on the relationship of the Sangha and state and Buddhism and kingship, is most acceptable. I have found his work particularly useful for understanding the early period of Thai polity, and overall consider it as a stimulating and original contribution to the field.

Other contributions to the study of the interaction of Buddhism with politics in Thailand have been concerned with Buddhist millenarianism in Thai history. The articles by Tej Bunnag² and Keyes,³ for example, suggest that under certain socio-economic and political circumstances Buddhism could be manipulated to provide legitimacy for rebellious or revolutionary ideologies.

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1. See, for example, Edmund Leach, "The Dharma of Kingship", The Times Literary Supplement (T.L.S.), Friday, 14 January 1977, No. 3, 905, p. 22; and also the Review by Richard Gombrich in Bulletin of the School of Oriental & African Studies, Vol. XLI, Part 2, 1978, pp. 410-412.
 2. "Kabot Phumibun nai phak Isan r.s. 121" (Millennial Revolt in Northeast Thailand, 1902), Sangkomsat Parithat, Vol. V (1967) pp. 78-87.
 3. "Millenialism, Theravada Buddhism, and Thai Society", Asian Studies, Vol. XXXVI (1977) pp. 283-302; see also his "The Power of Merit", Visakha Puja B.E. 2516 (Bangkok: 1973).

Lanka.¹ The problem with these studies is the extent to which they are relevant to Thailand. It must be recognized that there are a number of difficulties in their use which stem from differences between the Sangha organization and its relation to the state in the various countries. Though all the countries are Theravada Buddhist and have substantially the same doctrine, there the similarities end. First, in both Burma and Sri Lanka the Sangha has had at times a large degree of autonomy from the government and a tradition of opposition to attempts at state control without their consent,² a condition totally unlike Thailand where the state and the Sangha have been closely enmeshed since early times. Second, both Burma and Sri Lanka were colonial dependencies. During their struggles for independence, the nationalists found Buddhist support by pointing to the neglect and destruction of the religion by the colonial government. In time Buddhism and nationalism converged to the extent that monks became political leaders and played a prominent role in the achievement of independent statehood. Later, after independence when

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1. For example, Michael E. Mendelson, "Religion and Authority in Burma", The World Today, Vol. 16 (1960) pp. 110-118, "Buddhism and Politics in Burma", New Society, Vol. I (1963), and Sangha and State in Burma: A Study of Monastic Sectarianism and Leadership (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975); Donald E. Smith, Religion and Politics in Burma (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), South Asian Politics and Religion (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966); Emanuel Sarkisyanz, Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965); Fred von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism in Southeast Asia: Burma, Indonesia, The Philippines (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), "Secularization of Buddhist Politics: Burma and Thailand", Donald E. Smith (ed.), Religion and Political Modernization (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) pp. 49-66; Heinz Bechert, "Buddhism and Mass Politics in Burma and Ceylon", Donald E. Smith (ed.), Religion and Political Modernization (1974) pp. 147-167, "Theravada Buddhist Sangha: Some General Observations on Historical and Political Factors on its Development", Asian Studies, Vol. 29 (1969-1970) pp. 761-778; Urmila Phadnis, Religion and Politics in Sri Lanka (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1976); D.C. Vijayavardhana, The Revolt in the Temple (Colombo: Sinha Publications, 1953).
 2. For elaboration see, for example, Mendelson, Sangha and State in Burma; Phadnis, ibid.; Vijayavardhana, ibid.; and Hans-Dieter Evers, "The Buddhist Sangha in Ceylon and Thailand: A Comparative Study of Formal Organization in Two Non-Industrial Societies", Sociologus, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1968) pp. 20-35.

certain nationalists, such as Aung San, attempted to secularize their policies, they found the Sangha unwilling to relinquish its political power. With the anti-colonial issue closed, the energies of the politicized Sangha could now be concentrated on other political problems. For example, the re-establishment of Buddhist education and the local language in schools and universities became a very important cause in both countries. Further, during the colonial period the discipline of the politicized monks had become very lax, but attempts to reorganize and purify the Sangha by the secular authorities often met with strong resistance, and led to a proliferation of Buddhist organizations with widely differing views on how the Sangha should be structured. This in turn led to much manoeuvring by both lay and monastic political groups for each other's support. In Sri Lanka, while Bandaranaike initially managed to exploit this situation to achieve power, he was later assassinated by a monk. In Burma, U Nu was also initially successful in a similar fashion, but his promise of state Buddhism threatened the disintegration of the Union of Burma and led ultimately to his downfall.¹ This history of the involvement of Buddhism in politics created in both countries a public acceptance of political monks and indeed an expectation of monkish political activity which is quite alien to Thailand, where colonialism had always remained an external threat. Indeed in Thailand Buddhism is traditionally seen as diametrically opposed to politics; pure to impure. There is no expectation of political activity by monks; on the contrary, such activities are generally discouraged.

Because the modern relationship between politics and Buddhism in these other Theravada Buddhist countries is so unlike that pertaining in Thailand, I decided that rather than burden the text with detailed back-

1. For Sri Lanka's case see Phadnis, op.cit.; and also Vijayavardhana, op.cit. In Burma's case see, for example, Smith (1965) op.cit., and Mendelson (1975) op.cit.

ground on these countries in order to make reasoned comparison possible, I would confine my study to Thailand. This does not mean that I abandon these other works completely, for I have found them valuable in deciding on areas and methods of investigation, and wish to acknowledge this debt.¹ Much the same arguments apply to the more general studies of Theravada Buddhism in South-East Asia.²

5. Methodology

This thesis was originally intended to be a study based on fieldwork. As explained in the preface, I was left with no alternative but to pursue my topic largely by library research. In this section I explain the methods I employed to accumulate and analyze my data.

(a) Documentary data

Works in English have provided the necessary theoretical orientation and background knowledge of the problems, whereas the information comprising the main body of the thesis and for analysis has been drawn largely from Thai sources.

Thai written materials comprise (1) government and commercial publications, (2) government documents - both confidential and non-confidential, (3) statements and publications of political groups,

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1. Particularly to the works cited on page 24, note 1.
 2. For example, Robert C. Lester, Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1973); Robert N. Bellah (ed.), Religion and Progress in Modern Asia (Illinois, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1965); Manning Nash (ed.), Anthropological Studies in Theravada Buddhism, Cultural Report Series No. 13 (New Haven: Southeast Asian Studies, Yale University, 1966); Heinz Bechert, Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft in den Ländern des Theravāda-Buddhismus (Otto Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden, 1967); see also Smith (1974) op.cit.

individual activists, and political monks, and (4) periodicals and newspapers. The confidential government documents were compiled mainly by government agents specially assigned to watch the specific activities of the political groups, individual activists and political monks. These documents are very useful for they not only provide necessary information for analysis, but also enable us to understand the government's perception and attitudes towards the people under surveillance.

Scattered statements and publications, mainly in the form of leaflets, press releases, produced and distributed by the political groups, activists, and political monks provided information about their ideological positions, policies, and techniques of mobilizing public support. Some of them had a limited circulation, but certain government departments had them all. Others were more widely available. These documents also enable one to make an objective distinction between the authors' perceptions of their positions and the evaluations of their positions by the government officials.

I managed to obtain access to some of these confidential documents through the good offices of certain government officials and some other individuals who fled the country after the 6 October 1976 coup. These helpful people prefer to remain anonymous.

The monthly journal Buddhachak published by the Mahachula Buddhist university provided me with information about the attitudes and ideological positions of the 'progressive' monk-students of the two Buddhist universities towards the socio-political changes of the 1970s, whereas the Dhammachaksu published by Mahamakut Buddhist University represented a rather conservative view of the 'less progressive' monk-students.

The fortnightly newspapers Siang Yuwasong published by the Federation

of Buddhists of Thailand was valuable in providing information about its own activities and programmes as well as keeping one informed of the movements of other monks' organizations. I had to rely on this source to study the Sangha reform movement.

The statements of the right wing monks, especially those made publicly by Kitthiwuttho were mainly obtained from two major sources - the monthly journal Chofa and the small books or pamphlets published by the Abhidhamma Foundation whose managing director was Kitthiwuttho himself.

(b) Field data

Much of the first hand information about the roles and activities of political groups, activists, and of left wing monks throughout 1974 and 1975 was acquired through my own participant and non-participant observations. The observation was 'uncontrolled' as it was carried out as the events took place. By 'non-participant' I mean I did not assume a role or take part in the activities, but was an outside observer. By 'participant' I mean that I was actually involved and assumed certain roles in the activities.

I began to collect the information about the political monks as early as mid-1974 by non-participant observation. From mid-1974 I concentrated my attention on the activities of some left wing monks in three main events; the farmers' demonstrations, especially in late November 1974; the monks' sit-in (the Phra Phimondham case); and the campaign for the total withdrawal of American troops, especially the Mayaguez incident in late 1975. These observations enabled me to identify initially certain leaders among the left wing monks, and later I was able to establish a rapport with some of them. In contrast, I had little opportunity to observe closely the activities of the right

wing monks, for to a large extent these were accessible only to the establishment and sworn members of certain right wing movements. However, in some public meetings I did make non-participant observations of their activities.

My assumption of a role as one of the executive members of the Union for Civil Liberty during 1974-1975 also enabled me to obtain access to part of the first hand information about the ideologies, activities, and policies of certain secular left wing movements. My direct responsibility then was to deal with the farmers or their representatives who wished to make their grievances known to the government, and to make a point of contact for other sympathetic organizations which either acted on behalf of the farmers or supported their demands. Because of my position, the observations undertaken then were both participant and non-participant.

In the process of making decisions on strategies for redressing grievances, bargaining, and demonstrations, the organizations or movements concerned would meet and adopt resolutions. In most cases I would be involved in this process, i.e. I was a participant observer. Once this stage was over, and a demonstration, for instance, had actually taken place, I became an outsider, i.e. non-participant observer. In any event, I tried to focus my attention on how the monks became involved and what their activities were in particular events.

In order to minimize the extent of my own value judgments of the roles and activities of the political monks in certain issues, during 1974-1975 I tried to communicate personally and informally with a good number of people of different socio-economic status. This involved, for example, friendly conversations over coffee with some university lecturers, casual chats with students in the university campus, and with shopkeepers,

and sometimes with passengers on buses. On these occasions I would attempt to solicit their opinions about the roles and activities of the monks either in particular events or on certain issues. I do not claim that this method is technically sound, or the sample represents genuine public opinion. Nevertheless, as a Thai living in Thai culture, I am confident that allowing for its weaknesses, the information acquired by this method was genuine, at least at the time the research was undertaken.

Also during this period I was in constant communication with certain political groups, individual activists and some political monks. This informal communication provided me with insights which could not have been obtained by other means. This kind of information proved to be very useful for the analysis of part of my data.

A close rapport with specific political groups, activists, and political monks made during 1974-1975 was maintained throughout 1976 by means of correspondence. I was kept informed of their activities in addition to what was reported in the press. But this pattern of communication suffered a great deal due to the censorship imposed during October 1976-January 1978. At this time the government controlled the press to such an extent that the expression of viewpoints differing from the official position virtually disappeared. I then gathered information from people who visited Britain and the United States. This repressive condition had begun to relax a little by March 1978 and I was then able to resume correspondence with some persons and monks in Thailand. In addition, I made up a set of questions and asked friends to put them to certain monks. Some of them were very helpful and gave answers which were recorded and sent on to me here. Although this method of data collection is not considered as an important source of information, it has proved useful to my analysis. Because of the uncertainties of Thai

politics, it is necessary that these helpful people too must remain anonymous.

6. The structure of the thesis

In this chapter so far I have spelt out the purposes of the study and discussed basic concepts crucial to the thesis. A survey has been made of the relevant literature, and the sources of data and the methods used to collect it have been described. Within the basic theme of the interaction of the Sangha with politics in the context of socio-political change, a number of major problems have been selected for discussion. The format of the thesis follows from these problems.

It should be clear from the above sections that the thesis has a larger historical content than previously intended. In the discussion of tradition I indicated my views on the continuity of Thai society, and on the impossibility of divorcing the study of the present from the past. Chapters II and III are therefore concerned with the history of the relationships between Buddhism and kingship, and between the Sangha and state, moving from early times to the present.

In Chapter II I investigate the relationship between kingship and Buddhism in Thai history. I seek to show how Buddhism served as a moral legitimation for the king; what kind of contribution religion provided to the religio-political ideology of the state; and how and why the Thai kings manipulated Buddhism to legitimize their policies, positions, and their right to rule. I also consider the effects of socio-political changes on the conception of kingship.

This sets the background for Chapter III which deals with the relationship between the Sangha and the state. It begins with the assumption that the Sangha, due to its religious and secular roles,

can exercise social control over the people, and thus regulate the social order. I then investigate the relationship between the Sangha and the society focussing on their role relations. Although my findings suggest that my initial assumption to a large extent is valid, the evidence presented here suggests that the Sangha is unlikely to have great influence on political leaders. Rather, the Sangha tends to be subjugated or subordinated to the state. In order to understand why the Sangha is loyal and subservient to the political authorities, I examine the pattern of relationships between the Sangha and the state and the implication of their relationships. In this, I investigate the reasons for and the development of patterns of patronage and control by the political authority over the Sangha in the light of socio-political changes in the structure of the Sangha authority and its administration. Overall this chapter is intended to show how and why the Thai Sangha became an instrument of the state.

The stage is now set to consider the political mobilization of the Sangha and its responses in Chapter IV. I seek to show that the Thai political leaders, especially since the 1960s, have resorted to the Sangha to promote the government policies of national development and national integration in order that they might legitimately maintain their power. I first examine the problems confronted by the Thai rulers. These are problems of communism and national integration. They are regarded by the government as threats to national security and the stability of the nation, and as hindrances to national development. Secondly, the justification employed by the political leaders to mobilize the Sangha to assist in these government policies is investigated. The responses of the Sangha at various levels are examined in order to understand their ideological position in response to the political mobilization. The involvement of the Sangha in government policies is divided

into (1) the role of the Sangha in development programmes, (2) the Sangha's role in strengthening the people's attachment to Buddhism, and (3) the role of the Sangha in strengthening bonds of sentiment between the Thai and the hill people, and in creating loyalty to the nation of minorities through the development of a strong belief in Buddhism. The study conceives the roles of the Sangha as political, and as becoming institutionalized and intensified at a time when national security and integration was seriously threatened by communism and dissidence in the North and North-East. The roles and activities of the Sangha in these programmes were political in that all these programmes were interrelated and were intended to counteract communism and subversion, achieve national integration, and secure people's loyalty to the government.

The nature of these programmes and the roles, activities and involvement of the Sangha in the programmes will be discussed and analyzed.

With this perspective, it is now possible to examine in Chapter V the socio-political changes of the early 1970s which led to the emergence of 'political monks' during 1973-1976, and to define this key term. I consider the nature of those changes which penetrated the Sangha, especially the effects of ideological polarization and the monks' responses to it. After having discussed reasons for the emergence of the political monks, I seek to identify who the political monks were; their ideological positions; and their association with the secular political movements. Then these considerations are used to determine the distinction between left and right wing political monks, and I explore their organizations, their objectives, and leadership in the period 1973-1976.

I then proceed to examine the roles, activities, and involvement of the left wing political monks in Chapter VI. Before investigating these problems, the debate on the question of whether or not the monks should involve themselves in political issues is discussed. This chapter is also intended to illuminate the ideological conflicts between the conservative and the progressive monks in the light of socio-political changes. I seek to investigate the left wing political monks' justifications for their involvement in political issues, their reinterpretation of certain Buddhist teachings, and their redefinition of their roles.

The most explicit involvement in political issues of the left wing monks was manifested in their taking part in electioneering and peasant demonstrations. I take these two sets of activities as case studies in which to examine the issues raised in the general debate with which I began the chapter. These cases are particularly interested to provide illustration of the common justification that Buddhist monks should serve the people who support them and involve themselves in humanitarian causes.

Then the monks' sit-in and the Sangha reform movement are considered to elucidate how the political monks use socio-political changes to promote their causes and justify their actions. This involves an examination of demands for 'justice' and reform in Sangha affairs, and leads to a fuller investigation of views and actions of the left wing political monks. In order to understand the range of their views, the various groups of left wing monks and the connections between them are described, and their relations with secular left wing movements are examined. Lastly, I discuss the strategies and tactics employed by left wing monks and the attitudes to them of various sections of society.

To conclude the study of political monks, the political roles,

activities, and involvement of a right wing monk, Kitthiwuttho Bhikku, are considered as a case study in Chapter VII. It begins with an examination of the conditions in which produced a right wing reaction and how Kitthiwuttho became politically active. These were the effects of socio-political changes following the political crises of 1973-1976, the creation of a Parliamentary system of government in Thailand, and the communist victories in neighbouring Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. I investigate Kitthiwuttho's ideological position, his notions about social order and his connections with right wing secular movements. In this, great attention is given to the discussion of his perception of communism and its threat to the nation, religion, and the monarchy (chart, satsana, Phra Maha Kasat in Thai),¹ which led to his declaration of a 'holy war on communism'. This is followed by an examination of his manipulation of Buddhism to justify his ideological position, and his startling claim that 'killing communists is not demeritorious'. Equally importantly, I attempt to show the methods he employed to manipulate the provincial monks, and gather mass support for his ideology and actions. Lastly, the attitudes of various sections of the society towards the actions and ideology of this monk are discussed.

In the conclusion (Chapter VIII) I recapitulate the ideas put forward in earlier chapters, and discuss them further to make clear what I consider to be the critical factors in the roles, activities and involvements of the Sangha in Thai politics. I attempt to evaluate the effects of their increased political engagement on the Sangha as a whole, and consequently the fate of Buddhism in Thailand. Finally, I consider the strengths and weaknesses of my research, and offer suggestions for future investigation in this field.

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1. This is a central concept for all Thai, and the words are loaded with highly emotive symbolism. In the period under consideration the concept is used repeatedly in political dialogue, and I have found it difficult to find alternatives to replace its rather cumbersome formulation. In consequence I must ask the reader in advance to forgive its necessary repetition which becomes tedious at times.

CHAPTER II BUDDHISM AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide historical data on the relationship between Buddhism and political authority in Thailand. I deal first with the arrival of Buddhism and its development in the country, attempting to trace how and why Buddhism became attractive to the Thai rulers. Second, I investigate the contribution of Buddhism to political authority, that is I inquire into the relationship between Buddhism and kingship; and examine the mobilization of Buddhism by the state for political legitimacy. I shall also investigate the dependence of Buddhism on political patronage.

1. The arrival of Buddhism and its early development

According to Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Buddhism was introduced to the area of modern Thailand long before the formation of the Thai state. In Thai myth it was brought from India by missionaries of King Asoka in the third century B.C. We have evidence of it being brought by Indian traders from Magadha to the Kingdom of Dvaravati in the mid-sixth century.¹ This was a Mon state, a confederation of city states, the most important of which were Uthong, Nakorn Pathom, Lopburi in the Central region and Lampun in the North.² It is thought to have become a centre from which Buddhist civilization was disseminated to other

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1. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab (thereafter Damrong), Monuments of Buddhism in Siam (transl. Sulak Sivaraksa and A.B. Griswold) (Bangkok: The Siam Society, Monograph No. 2 (revised), 1973), pp. 1-2.
 2. Charnvit Kaset Siri, The Rise of Ayudhya (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1977) pp. 5-11; H.G.Q. Wales, Dvaravati: the Earliest Kingdom of Siam (London: Quaritch, 1969) pp. 20-28; and Kachorn Sukphanit, "Wicha Prawatsart lae Prawatsart Thai" (History and Thai History) Sangkomsat Parithat, Special Issue, Vol. 1, December 1964, p. 42.

cities such as Suphanburi, Ratchaburi, and Nakorn Ratchasima and other South-East Asian kingdoms.¹ While Theravada Buddhism flourished in the areas under the domination of the Mon, further to the south in the Malay Peninsula - from Suratthani as far south as Pattani - Mahayana Buddhism thrived under the rule of the powerful kings of Srivijaya in Sumatra who cherished this faith. The Khmer kingdom received its Mahayana Buddhism from the island empires of Sumatra and Java sometime during this period.² By the beginning of the eleventh century the Dvaravati state had succumbed to Khmer power, probably in the reign of Suriyavarman I of Angkor. Lopburi, the former capital of the Mon, became an outpost of the Khmer empire, but further north the direct rule of the Khmer did not go beyond the Sukhothai-Sawankalok region.³

The Khmer domination of the area marked the end of the Dvaravati kingdom and lasted well into the early part of the thirteenth century. The people in the territory under direct Khmer control now underwent a very different cultural experience, being exposed to the impact of Hinduism and Brahmanism brought in from Angkor by certain Khmer kings who were devotees. Damrong believed that Mahayanism continued in these areas through the support of some rulers.⁴ However, the long period of Khmer domination (eleventh to thirteenth centuries) gave sufficient time for the Indianized Khmer culture to enrich local culture deeply. As a result, the concept of kingship under the domination of the Khmer

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1. L.P. Briggs, "Dvaravati, the Most Ancient Kingdom of Siam", Journal of American Oriental Society, Vol. 65, No. 2 (April-June 1945) pp. 98-101; Gordon H. Luce, "Rice and Religion", Journal of the Siam Society, Vol. 53, No. 2 (July 1965) p. 140; and Damrong, op.cit., p. 2.
 2. Damrong, ibid.; see also the translators' footnotes 5, 8-9 on pp. 41-42.
 3. G. Coedes, The Indianized States of Southeast Asia (ed. W.F. Vella, transl. S.B. Cowing) (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968) pp. 137-138.
 4. Damrong, op.cit., p. 3.

was a product of a mixture of Mahayana Buddhist and Hindu-Khmer culture which was the main characteristic of Ayudhya kingship. Being a Khmer vassal and far from direct Khmer influence, Sukhothai developed a concept of kingship which had fewer Hindu and Khmer cults and ceremonies than Ayudhya. Sukhothai kingship was mainly developed from and influenced by Buddhism of the Theravada school which was brought to this area by King Anuruddha of Pagan.¹ By the time of the emergence of the Thai polity, which was signified by the formation of the kingdoms of Sukhothai and Cheingmai in the North around 1250 A.D., it appears that the Mon tradition of Theravada Buddhism was strongly established. Despite the uncertainties about the development of the early Thai kingdoms and the location of the original homeland of the Thai,² it is agreed that they had lived alongside or among the indigenous population and submitted to the political authority of first the Mon of Dvaravati (sixth to eleventh centuries) and then the Khmer of Cambodia (eleventh to thirteenth centuries). During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there appeared many tiny independent states. Among them were the loosely organized states of Sukhothai and Cheingmai in the North and Ayudhya in the South.³ From the thirteenth century onwards, the Thai began to gain political control over the Mon and Khmer.

1. Ibid.

2. According to Thai sources, the emergence and origin of the early Thai kingdoms was very complex and much is concealed in myth. See, for example, Damrong Rajanubhab, Ruang Phra Ruang (History of Sukhothai Dynasty) (Bangkok: 1960); Phraratcha Phongsawadan Chabab Phraratchahatlekha (Annals, Autograph Edition by King Mongkut) (Bangkok: 1968); Thri Amarthyakul, Phraratcha Phongsawadan Krung Sayam (Annals, History of Siam) (Bangkok: 1964); Phraya Prachakitkornchak - Chaem Bunnag, "Phongsawadan Yonok" (History of the North) in Prachum Phongsawadan Chabab Hosamut haeng chart (Collections of Chronicles, National Library Edition) Vol. 2 (Bangkok: 1964); and Kachorn Sukphanit, "The Thai Beach-Head States in the 11th-12th centuries", Silpakorn, Vol. 1, nos. 3-4 (September-November 1957).

3. Coedes, op.cit., p. 190.

The religio-political ideology of the early Thai rulers appears to have been a kind of syncretism of Khmer-Hinduism and Buddhism. However, perhaps partly because of the adaptive capacity of the Thai, the mixture of different cultures seemed to lead to no major cultural conflict. As Damrong puts it:

The Tai (Thai) knew how to pick and choose. When they saw a good feature in the culture of other peoples, if it was not in conflict with their own interests, they did not hesitate to borrow and adapt it into their own requirements.¹

Nevertheless, in the Ayudhya region where the Khmer ruled directly, the Hindu-Khmer culture was stronger than it was in the northern kingdoms of Sukhothai and Cheingmai. As a result the Hindu-Khmer influence on Ayudhya kingship and its religio-political ideology lasted for centuries.

The relationship between kingship and Buddhism in the early Thai kingdoms must be largely deduced from myth. According to the Tamnan history, or history of Buddhism, which came into existence well before the fifteenth century, there was a close relationship between the development of Buddhism in the kingdoms and the patronage of the faith by Buddhist kings. In the Tamnan, the Buddhist kings of India, Burma, Ceylon, Cambodia and Thailand are linked together as if they were in the same dynasty, ie. the dynasty of Buddhist kings. They succeeded one another as the upholders of Buddhism, their ties going back to the Buddha himself who was the creator of a common tradition to which all the kings belonged. All these kings appear to have been religious men ascending to the throne as a result of merit drawn from their acts as supporters and protectors of the faith. Their kingdoms were prosperous and progressive, and their positions were secure as long as they were

1. Damrong, Monuments of the Buddha, pp. 4-5.

religious and righteous.¹

Despite the fact that the extent of Buddhist and Hindu-Khmer influences on kingship and religio-political ideology in the early Thai states is ill-defined and debatable, we can tentatively suggest that the religio-political ideology and conception of kingship of this period are a reworking of certain Buddhist and Hindu-Khmer ideas.

By 1250 A.D., approximately, the Thai kingdoms in the North especially Sukhothai had reached a stage of political development at which they could challenge Khmer and Mon power. In the South the power of the Khmer in the Ayudhya-Lopburi region began to decline and finally Ayudhya emerged as an independent state around the middle of the fourteenth century.

When Sukhothai emerged as an independent kingdom, Theravada Buddhism was already firmly established there. A few decades later it became clear that the Sukhothai kings favoured the Singhalese variant of Theravada Buddhism. This had been first established in Nakhon. Sitthamarat and attracted a great number of followers. When the king of Sukhothai heard of this he invited the monks of the new order to come to Sukhothai. Singhalese Buddhism thrived and remains the state religion in Thailand to the present day.² In Ayudhya, despite strong Hindu-Khmer influence, a close link was also maintained with Theravada Buddhism.

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1. Charnavit Kasetsiri, op.cit., pp. 8-11, 52-60. For elaboration see N.A. Jayawickrama (transl.), The Sheaf of Garlands of the Epochs of the Conqueror (A Translation of Jinakalamalipakarnam of Ratanapanna Thera) (London: Pali Text Society, 1968); Phraya Prachakitkornchak op.cit.; Department of Fine Arts, Tamnan Munlasatsana (History of Origin of Religion) (Bangkok: n.d. - believed to have been written in the 1420s), Tamnan Prakat Muang Nakornsithammarat (History of Nakornsithammarat) (Bangkok: 1962).
 2. Damrong, Monuments of Buddhism in Siam, p. 6.

It would require a lengthy discussion to explain why Theravada Buddhism had such great appeal to the rulers of the newly emerging kingdoms of Burma, Laos, Ceylon, and Thailand and why it was adopted as their national religion. However, Trevor O. Ling suggests that Theravade Buddhism was attractive to the rulers of these kingdoms because it possessed a number of valuable features:

First, it had what seemed to them a sophisticated system of psychology and ethics - sophisticated, that is to say, by comparison with the indigenous spirit-cults and debased Indian priestcraft which had until then constituted the spiritual powers of the region. Secondly, the professional carriers of this form of Buddhism were non-priestly. They did not claim to command supernatural forces nor were they likely to invoke supernatural sanctions. They relied on the good will of the people, the attractiveness of their philosophy and the uprightness of their own conduct. What they did seek, beyond these advantages, was the protection and support which the kings could afford them and their way of life. For their part kings were by no means unwilling to guarantee such support, once they came to see the potential value of this cult of the Buddha.¹

He further points out that from the point of view of the ruler, Theravada Buddhism was attractive as a socio-political system which provided the people with (1) a perspective within which each human existence could be seen as the working out of moral gain and loss in previous existences; (2) a scale of moral values in which equanimity, peaceableness and generosity rated high; and anger, conflict, violence and desire for gain rated low. It also (3) embodied an organisation of voluntary teachers and moral preceptors (the Sangha) whose main concerns were strictly non-political; and who would be economically supported by the people, but were also prepared to cooperate with the ruler and advise him on religious and social matters in return for his guaranteeing them a virtual monopoly

1. Trevor O. Ling, An Introduction to Political Buddhism in Southeast Asia: The Role of the Sangha in Modernization of Thailand (London: C. Hurst and Co., 1977) pp. x-xi.

as the spiritual and religious professionals of the kingdom.¹ The relationship between the kings and the Sangha was reciprocal. The king desired the cooperation of the Sangha because he saw that this would provide his kingdom with moral legitimation and considerably assist in matters of social control. At the same time, the Sangha sought to secure the king's adherence to Buddhist values, for this would guarantee his support. Thus, it is possible that these two interests more or less coincided: that an ideology which needed a supportive political power met a political ruler looking for a legitimizing ideology.

2. The Buddhist concept of kingship

In Buddhist scripture, political authority is embodied in kingship. This belief is best understood if one examines the creation myths. In the beginning the world evolved as part of the universe. From fire came solids, liquids and gases which became the earth, the moon, the sun, the planetary system and stellar constellations. Plant and animal life evolved, and over time became increasingly differentiated. Eventually human beings became differentiated from other animals, and fed on rice after it evolved. They then became stronger, and differences in physical type and sex appeared. At this stage fragrant and clear-grained rice in unlimited supply was naturally available in open spaces and became communal property. Every human being enjoyed as much of it as his body required. Some males and females became interested in sexual intercourse; they developed in them passion and lust, which were considered immoral. These immoral persons were expelled from the settlements; they made huts to conceal their immorality, and yet were still allowed to have a share in the communal property. Then, there appeared

1. Ibid., p. xi.

greedy persons who collected and hoarded rice. As passion, lust, immorality, and greed increased, rice ceased to grow spontaneously, and its quality degenerated. Men then divided rice fields among themselves as private property, and settled boundaries. Disputes over property arose; men proceeded to steal other's plots; and censure, lying and punishment became known.

As men became increasingly immoral and greedy for private possessions, conflict, violence, and disorder grew. This led men to gather themselves together and discuss how their lives should be regulated. They then agreed that they needed a 'certain being' who should give order to society, who should censure that which should be censured, and who should banish those who deserved to be banished. They also agreed to select the most handsome, best favoured, most attractive and most capable from among them; and they invited him to be their ruler and to regulate society. In return, the ruler was given a proportion of the rice produced by the people.

The ruler was called Mahasammata (the great elect) because he was chosen by the many; Khatthiya (Khasathiya - Thai) or the Lord of the Fields (Chaophaendin - Thai) because he protected the people's fields; and Raja (the one who pleases the many) because he was righteous and guided by Dhamma.¹

Conceived of in this way, the Buddhist concept of political authority suggests that kingship was established because of the imperfections of

1. This brief account of the origin and evolution of the world, society and Buddhist kingship derives from Buddhist scripture especially Aggana Suttanta; Anguttara Nikaya Suttanta; Digha Nikaya Suttanta; and Jataka. These works have been translated into English by many scholars, and can be readily consulted in the publications of the Pali Text Society.

man and the need for social order. Buddhist scripture such as the Pali canon and the Jataka emphasizes the need for a king if order is to prevail. The relationship between the king and his subjects is described as follows: the king was elected because he was the great merit-maker in former lives. Such accumulation of merit afforded him the kingship, "otherwise he could not have been born a king".¹ He governed the kingdom and reigned over the people and was endowed by them with authority to reprove, rebuke, punish or destroy anyone who transgressed a royal command.² He was the receiver and enjoyer of tax from the people.³ He was their source of happiness and paternal protector.⁴ He was the upholder of Dhamma through which he watched over and protected his subjects.⁵ The king was also endowed with five qualities: physical strength, material strength, the strength of officials, the strength of nobility, and the strength of wisdom.⁶

On the part of the subjects, they needed the king for protection and went to the king for the sake of honour and security. They esteemed him and obeyed him without challenge.⁷ Therefore a person who cared for his life should refrain from despising the king, and should conduct himself properly towards him.⁸

Thus Buddhist kingship was essentially based on the concept of righteousness. To maintain his political authority and to regulate state

1. Samyutta Nikaya, Vol. I, p. 93.

2. The Milindapanha, p. 226.

3. Anguttara Nikaya, Vol. III, p. 45.

4. Digka Nikaya, Vol. 3, pp. 93, 97.

5. Anguttara Nikaya, Vol. I, p. 109, and Vol. III, p. 149.

6. Jataka, Vol. V, p. 120.

7. Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 269.

8. Samyutta Nikaya, Vol. 1, p. 96.

affairs for the benefit of the kingdom and hence reaffirm and enhance his authority, the king had to be a righteous ruler, the Dhamma Raja. The ethics of Dhamma are of universal relevance, applicable as much to individual conduct as to the principles of government. This is beautifully stated in the Anguttara Nikaya, part of which is the dialogue between the Buddha and his disciples about the good Buddhist ruler:

The Buddha: 'Monks, the rajah who rolls the wheel (of state), a Dhamma man, a Dhamma Rajah, rolls on indeed no unroyal wheel'.

A Monk: "But who, lord, is the rajah of the rajah?"

The Buddha: "It is the Dhamma, monk. Herein, monk, the rajah, the wheel roller, the Dhamma man, the Dhamma rajah, relies just on Dhamma, honours Dhamma, reveres Dhamma, esteems Dhamma; with Dhamma as his standard, with Dhamma as his banner, with Dhamma as his mandate, he sets a Dhamma watch and bar and ward for folk within his realm".¹

Thus, the king existed to uphold the righteous order, and could not act arbitrarily. He was also advised to shun the four wrong courses of judgment and decision either through favouritism, malice, delusion or fear (chanda, dosa, moha, bhaya). Also he should constantly observe the Ten Royal virtues (Dasarajadhamma), namely, Dana (charity, giving, or generosity), Sila (high moral character), Pariccaga (self-sacrifice), Ajjava (Honesty, integrity), Maddava (kindness and gentleness), Tapa (austerity, self-control, non-indulgence), Akhodha (non-anger), Ahimsa (non-violence, non-oppression), Khanti (patience, forbearance, tolerance), and Avirodha (conformity to law).²

The morality and righteousness of the Dhamma Raja is closely related

1. F.L. Woodward, The Book of the Gradual Sayings, Vol. III (Pali Text Society, Oxford University Press, 1933) pp. 114-115.
2. For elaboration of the implications of the Ten Royal Virtues see Phra Rajavaramuni, A Dictionary of Buddhism (Bangkok: Mahachula Buddhist University, 1975) pp. 206-208, 216-218; and also Siddhi Butr-Indr, The Social Philosophy of Buddhism (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 1973) pp. 149-150.

to the prosperity of his kingdom and the physical and mental well-being of his subjects. The king's conduct and his actions had far-reaching consequences since they affected his own kingship as well as the fortunes of his subjects who were almost entirely dependent on him.

We are told that:

When the kings are not righteous, so are princes, brahmins, and householders, townsfolk and villagers. This being so, the moon and the sun deviate from their courses, so constellations and stars, days and nights. months, seasons and years; the winds blow wrong.....; the god (of rain) does not pour down showers of rain, the crops ripen in the wrong season; thus men who live on such crops have short lives and look weak and sickly. Conversely, when the kings, the rulers, are righteous, the reverse consequences follow.¹

This conception of Buddhist kingship appears to suggest that the king is not only the ruler but also the mediator and regulator of the social order. Thus, if he was righteous, he was a blessing; if he was unrighteous, he brought disaster on his subjects. A king who did not adhere to Dhamma and take it as master, and who failed to observe the royal virtues, would lead his kingdom to ruin. He would no longer be a worthy king and the people would dethrone or kill him.²

Rulers of Buddhist kingdoms in South-East Asian absorbed the concept of ideal ruler, Dhamma Raja, as part of their own traditions. They realized that the maintenance of their power rested on adherence to the Dhamma. It was therefore necessary for them to keep Dhamma alive by supporting the Sangha which perpetuated and disseminated Dhamma. By patronizing and supervising the Sangha, the ruler preserved the Dhamma, and in doing so ensured that his duty as righteous king could be fulfilled.

1. Anguttara Nikaya, Vol. II, p. 74. (Cited by Siddhi Butr-Indr.)

2. Majjhima Nikaya, Vol. II, p. 88. (Cited by Siddhi Butr-Indr.)

Knowledge of the teachings of the Buddha should never die for with it would die the norms against which the ruler's conduct could be judged.

3. Buddhism and Kingship at Sukhothai

The Sukhothai polity has been described as a paternal government. The king was regarded as the father of the people to whom respect was paid and in whom the people had faith.¹ He was easily accessible to his subjects when they had trouble. This is exemplified in an inscription which reads:

If any commoner in the land has a grievance which sickens his belly and gripes his heart, and which he wants to make known to his ruler; it is easy; he goes and strikes the bell ... King Rama Gamhen, the ruler of the kingdom, hears the call; he goes and questions the man, examines the case, and decides justly for him.²

The paternalism of Sukhothai may have been reinforced by certain Buddhist values. For example, the Buddhist principle regulating the social relationship between parents and children delineates the rights and duties of the two parties. Here, respect, gratitude, obedience, and love towards parents are strongly emphasized. Parents are advised to care for their children by expressing their parental love for them, by restraining them from doing evil deeds and exhorting them to do good.³

1. There are many standard works on the character of the Sukhothai polity; see, for example: Damrong Rajanubhab, Laksana kan Pokkhrong Prathet Sayam tae Boran (The Ancient Government of Siam) (Bangkok: Ministry of Interior, 1959); A.B. Griswold and Prasert Na Nagara, A Declaration of Independence and Its Consequences, Epigraphic and Historical Studies No. 1 (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1968), The Inscription of King Rama Gamhen, Epigraphic and Historical Studies No. 9 (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1971), King Lodaiya of Sukhodaya and His Contemporaries, Epigraphic and Historical Studies No. 10 (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1972), and The Epigraphy of Mahadhammaraja I, Epigraphic and Historical Studies No. 11 (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1973).
2. Griswold and Prasert, The Inscription of King Rama Gamhen, p. 208.
3. For elaboration of this point see Siddhi Butr-Indr, op.cit., pp. 95-100.

It is very probable that the kings of Sukhothai had utilized the Buddhist concept of kingship to enhance and maintain their political power. The notion that Dhamma was the supreme code for regulating the social order and a moral guide for government was espoused by King Ram Kamhaeng (and his successor). Ram Kamhaeng, for example, was said to have believed that:

If society is morally sound and the people have a high spirit by keeping steadfast to Buddhism and adhering to Dhamma, the kingdom will be tranquil and prosperous.¹

To demonstrate their righteous rule and thereby constitute the norm for the society, the kings of Sukhothai took a leading role in religious activities, promoting, and protecting Buddhism, and in patronizing the Sangha. King Ram Kamhaeng, for instance, not only showed his subjects his own dedication to Buddhism but also taught Dhamma to the people. On each Uposatha day (observance of the Eight Precepts, or bi-weekly recitation of the Vinaya by monks) he invited a learned monk to teach Dhamma at his palace. He personally led the people to observe the Buddhist precepts strictly during the season of vassa retreat. At the end of vassa he presented Kathina to the monks. He gave donations to monks who were proficient in Dhamma and in propagating Buddhism. He built monasteries and religious places and encouraged his subjects to follow his example. Buddhism in his reign was said to have prospered because of the king's devotion.²

His successor, King Lothai (or Lodaiya) followed Ram Kamhaeng's mode of government and continued to support Buddhism. This king is also

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1. Kraingsak Pisanaka, Thai Ha Yuk (Five Periods of the Thai Nation) (Bangkok: National Library, 1969) p. 152.
 2. Griswold and Prasert, "Kingship and Society at Sukhodaya", in Change and Persistence in Thai Society, eds. by Skinner and Kirsch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975) p. 44.

said to have been a patron of Hindu cults and as a consequence the Brahmanical tradition seems to have been strengthened during his reign by influences from South India.¹ Despite the fact that he was a fervent Buddhist, little is known of his manipulation of Buddhism for political ends during his long reign (1298-1347 approximately). When he died in 1347 his son, Lithai (Lidaiya) succeeded him. It was this king who made extensive use of religion to facilitate his rule.

According to Griswold and Prasert, King Lithai, while following King Ram Kamhaeng's method of government, may have made more use of Hindu tradition of government than his grandfather. He is believed to have known the Dharmasastra (the Hindu treatise on the science of kingship) well and made use of it. For example, at his coronation the Brahmanical ritual (Abhiseksa) was performed to complete the ceremony.² As a Buddhist king, he proclaimed himself Maha Dhammaraja (king of righteous kings). He is said to have thoroughly studied the Three Pitakas.³ During his reign, Buddhism appears to have prospered because of his devotion. He was recorded to be the first Thai king who donated land and slaves, probably prisoners of war, to the monasteries,⁴ a practice that was followed up to early Bangkok period.

Probably the most important religious act of Lithai was his ordination. He was the first Thai king who temporarily left his throne to enter the monkhood, an act that in Thai belief gains the highest merit. Besides being the action of a religious man, the king's ordination should be seen in the light of the political conditions of Sukhothai in this period.

1. Ibid., pp. 48-49.

2. Ibid., pp. 59-60.

3. Ibid., p. 56.

4. Ibid., pp. 58-59.

When Lithai came to the throne he was confronted with at least two heavy responsibilities; that is, first to ward off an invasion from the newly emergent and expansive Ayudhya, and second to recover his father's territories and to pacify rebellious vassals. In both cases he needed alliances with independent neighbouring rulers. By promoting Buddhism, and establishing himself as a righteous king, exemplified by his ordination, Sukhothai became the centre of Buddhism. At his ordination it was recorded that the rulers of Lanna and Nan had come to participate in merit-making. They and some other rulers in the North sent diplomatic missions to Sukhothai in order to bring Singhalese Theravada Buddhism to their homelands.¹ In this fashion Lithai succeeded in cementing strong alliances against Ayudhya or, at the least, in ensuring the neutrality of his neighbours. His devotion to Buddhism also assured his vassals that they would be treated with kindness and compassion, the essential virtues to be observed by a righteous Buddhist king. We are told that Lithai's policy of pacification of his vassals involved a military campaign followed by a generous peace. When he succeeded in subduing the vassals, he assured them that they could rely on his justice and mercy. He taught them to be good Buddhists.²

Lithai's use of religion as an ideology to support the status quo and for purposes of social control is well exhibited in his own book called Triphum Phra Ruang or Tribhumikatha (lit. the story of the three

1. For fuller details see Satuan Supasophone Phraputthasatsana kap Phra Maha Kasat Thai (Buddhism and Thai Kingship) (Bangkok: Klang Witthaya, 1962) pp. 65-69; Babara Andaya, "Statecraft in the Reign of Luthai of Sukhothai", Cornell Journal of Social Relations (Special Issue on Southeast Asian Studies) Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring 1971, pp. 61-83.

2. Griswold and Prasert, op.cit., p. 57.

worlds of Phra Ruang). The text describes the structure of the universe, the Triphum Cosmography, the relationship between the merit and power, the destination of each category of entities and deities as determined by the kamma and merit of each entity. All entities were ranked, from demons to gods in a hierarchy of merit which accrued according to kamma. It describes the cyclic processes of birth, death and rebirth of deva, human beings and animals of various forms. Their three worlds were divided into 31 levels. The highest world contained four levels inhabited by the high grade brahma (phrom - Thai) deities. The middle world contained 16 levels inhabited by lower grades of brahma deities. The lowest world consisted of eleven levels with human beings dwelling in the fifth level from the bottom. The six levels above the 'world of mankind' were inhabited by entities of higher status than human beings. Below it were creatures of less merit. The text describes the nature of each level, the conditions of existence for its inhabitants, how they came to be there and how they might change their status.

The central emphasis of the Triphum is on the effects of good and bad kamma. It stresses that the people who have good kamma are rewarded, in contrast with those who acquire bad kamma after death. Rewards and punishments for certain kinds of good and bad kamma are described. For example, when a person who had accumulated great merit died, he would go to a higher level in the three worlds, depending on the amount of merit acquired while he was alive. He might even go straight to the brahma level, if he had sufficient merit.

This powerful statement of the king's view of the entire world was intended to be propagated throughout the kingdom. It makes some major points that are of direct relevance to our study.

In the first place the notions of good and bad kamma, and merit and demerit were employed to promote and regulate the social order. The promised reward for good kamma was intended to encourage people to do good and be moral thereby promoting social order. The concept of merit and demerit serves to justify the social and economic position of individuals in the hierarchy of the society. Secondly, the concept of religious sanctions reinforces social sanctions as an overriding coercive force on the population. Thirdly, that the prescription of punishment for acts of demerit varies according to the status of the person serves to regulate the social relationships between people of different statuses. For example, punishment for people of high status is more severe than for people of lower status who commit the same act of demerit. The Triphum also prescribed the appropriate relationship between people of different statuses. For example, it delineated the proper conduct of members of the family to each other; the relationship between the clergy and the laity, between superiors and subordinates and so on.

Apart from using the Buddhist values expressed in the Triphum as an instrument for social control, Lithai appears to have used the concept of merit to justify his right to rule. This is succinctly expressed in the following excerpts:

"One who had made and accumulated merit in previous lives by paying homage, honouring and revering the Triple Gems (the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Sangha) as well as having gratitude to them, adhering to Dhamma, observing moral precepts (Sila), practicing Phawana (concentration of mind on the Buddha and his Dhamma), when he dies, goes to heaven. When he is reborn, he is born a ruler or in a higher caste with power, wealth and subordinates..... With greater merit than others, he becomes cakkapat (Chakravartin - king of kings)..... For those who are born in the ruling class, or king, should be aware that it is so because they had good kamma and had accumulated merit in previous lives. It is not so because of natural

causes It is merit and demerit that determines one's destination; (that is why) some people are born with wealth, wisdom, beauty, power, and have long lives as against the ones who are born with poverty, suffering, ugliness, idiocy, and have a short life. Merit and demerit determines who will be the ruler and who will be the slave or servant or governed".¹

Associated with his righteousness and the right to rule is his authority.

His subjects have the duty to obey and to serve the ruler. The text states,

"Whenever the cakkapat emerges, people all over the realm come to revere, pay respect and obey him. Whatever the king commands, it is legitimate because he is righteous The lesser lords come to pay him homage and offer themselves as his subordinates and render their territories to him".²

Following this discussion, it is possible to consider the Triphum as a political as well as religious treatise. For it shows how religion can help stabilize the social order and maintain the political power of the ruler. By inculcating the fear of hell in the minds of the people, it discourages social and political protest. It also encourages either meek acceptance of suffering and present status or withdrawal from the tribulations of human society.

After the death of King Lithai, some time between 1370 and 1374, Sukhothai gradually declined and fell under the control of Ayudhya.

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1. King Lithai, Triphum Phra Ruang (Bangkok: Klang Witthaya, 1966) pp. 94-98, 111, 143, 201.
 2. Ibid., pp. 94-108.

4. Buddhism and the Ayudhya Kingship

The religio-political ideology, the concept of kingship, the administration, and political institutions of Ayudhya were influenced by the interwoven traditions of Khmer and Mon, Hinduism and Buddhism working in combination. From Khmer-Hindu tradition, Ayudhya inherited its concept of divine kingship (Devaraja). The king was considered as a receptacle of divine essence, as the earthly embodiment of Vishanu (Vishna) or Siva (Shiva) for instance. He was Lord of Life and Lord of the Land. As the sovereign of the kingdom, his absolute power and authority was beyond challenge. The king was described thus:

He is the highest in the land, because he is god-like. He can make the superior person (Phu Yai - Thai) be a subordinate person (Phunoi - Thai) and vice versa. When the king gives an order, it is like the axe of heaven. If it strikes the trees and mountains, the latter cannot withstand it, and will be destroyed.¹

Hindu tradition manifested itself in the forms of royal ceremonies such as rituals associated with the oath of allegiance and the coronation. The kings of Ayudhya introduced and adapted from the Khmer many features of their political institutions and administration, their arts, their honorific court language, and their system of honorific titles and social ranking.

The influence of the Buddhist concept of the righteous king manifested itself in Pali Dhammasattha, the Theravada legal code for guidance in government. However, it must be emphasized that although the Dhammasattha was of Hindu origin, it was the Mon version that guided the Thai kings. The Mon-Pali Dhammasattha sought legitimacy not from Hinduism but mainly from the Buddhist genesis myth contained in a Sutta. Lingat makes

1. Akin Rabibhadana, The Organization of Thai Society in the Early Bangkok Period, 1782-1873 (Ithaca: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, Data Papers No. 74, 1969) p. 44.

clear the Buddhist content thus:

"In composing this literature, Mon writers took for their model Hindu Dharmasastras, and this is why many provisions of the new code may be found in the Indian Manu code or other similar works. But (Buddhist) Dhammasatthams are quite different from Sanskrit Dharmasastras. First of all their authors left aside every matter which, in Hindu codes, was connected with Brahmanical religion or traditions. They were Buddhist people, and their codes were first to be applied to Buddhist people..... The substance of law was not entirely taken from Hindu codes. They introduced, as was natural, a few customary rules prevalent among the indigenous population".¹

Prince Dhaniniwat also suggests that the kings of Ayudhya followed the principles of Buddhist righteous kingship. As he put it:

"(The king) abides steadfast in the Ten Kingly Virtues constantly upholding five common precepts ... and eight precepts, living in kindness and good will to all beings. He takes pains to study the Thammasat (Dhammasattha) and to keep the four principles of justice, namely: to assess the right or wrong of all service or disservice rendered to him, to uphold the righteous and truthful, to acquire riches through none but just means and to maintain the prosperity of his state through none but just means".²

The king was also thought of as a potential Bodhisattva, that is, he was seen as one who temporarily had given up striving to achieve Nirvana, so that he might serve his fellow men in their quest for religious and material satisfaction in this worldly life. Thus it is recorded that when King Ramadhipati and his successors died, they entered Nirvana. This concept is probably of Mahayanist origin.³

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1. R. Lingat, "The Evolution of the Conception of Law in Burma and Siam", Journal of the Siam Society, Vol. 38 (1950) p. 14.
 2. Prince Dhaniniwat, "The Old Siamese Conceptions of the Monarchy", Journal of the Siam Society, Vol. 35 (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1954) p. 163.
 3. Griswold and Prasert, "Kingship and Society at Sukhodaya", p. 69.

The political uses of Buddhism by Ayudhya kings were manifold. The examples that follow are intended to illustrate this. At the oath of allegiance ritual which was of Hindu origin and performed by Brahmins, the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha were invoked to complete the ritual. From Ayudhya to the early Bangkok periods this ritual was performed in Buddhist monasteries in which the monks took an equal part with the Brahmins for the completion of the ritual.¹

Another aspect of the political exploitation of religion was manifested in the unification of Ayudhya and Sukhothai in the reign of King Trailok of Ayudhya (1448-88). Prior to his reign, though Ayudhya had ruled over Sukhothai, it had failed to absorb it. It has been suggested that King Trailok had succeeded in integrating the kingdom because he understood the importance of the Buddhist religion and recognized that military dominance alone was fruitless.² He sought to build a religio-political base in order to secure support from the Sangha, and to reach the peasants through the Sangha and religion. In order to win 'the hearts and minds' of the people of Sukhothai, the king made great efforts to restore and build monasteries in the North. Among these activities, which afforded him the reputation of being a good Buddhist king and greatly impressed the Sukhothai population, was the restoration of Wat Buddha Jinnarat. This was once the spiritual centre of the Kingdom, where the image of Buddha Jinnasi, the Sukhothai paladium was housed. Following the example of

1. Chitt Phumisak, Bot Wikhroh Wannakam Yuk Sakdina (An Analysis of Sakdina Literature) (Bangkok: Chomrom Nangsue Sangtawan, 1974) pp. 113-120.

2. Charnvit Kasetsiri, "Buddhism and Political Integration in Early Ayudhya: 1350-1488", Journal of the Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 446.

King Lithai of Sukhothai, King Trailok temporarily left the throne to enter the monkhood and stayed in the North. His ordination was symbolically significant in that it was intended to be a replica of the Buddha's ordination. He had five of his men ordained before him, just as the first five disciples of the Buddha were ordained before him. Likewise he had another 2348 men ordained after him. Politically, his ordination and his stay in the North must have pleased the Sukhothai folk, for the actions followed the good example of the great Sukhothai king, Lithai.¹ On his ordination, the kings of Cheingmai, Pegu and Luang Prabang sent him gifts. Charnvit suggests that the king's ordination might have been planned so that the king could penetrate and take command of the Sukhothai Sangha. The idea was that his 2348 men who were ordained with him would remain in Sukhothai and become the critical link between the political authority and the rural population of the North.²

Another religious act which suggests that the king sought legitimacy from Buddhist tradition was manifested in his composition of a royal version of Jakata, the religious story of the Buddha's life before attaining Buddhahood. The political significance of this literature was that it emphasized the religious acts of the king as a prime qualification for a righteous ruler. It was also intended to follow the local tradition of King Lithai who composed the Triphum.³

It is interesting to note that Buddhism was also used to legitimize the usurpation of the throne. For example, when King Songdham of Ayudhya seized power from a rightful heir and established himself as

1. Ibid., pp. 448-449.

2. Ibid., p. 449.

3. Ibid., p. 450.

king (1610-1628), he sought legitimacy through his religious acts.

The Supreme Patriarch of the sixth reign described it thus:

The king realized that he had illegitimately seized power, and he had to be conscious of his unpopularity among the masses. Although at that time there was no one who dared to challenge his power, he sought support from the masses. Being accomplished in Buddhism and knowing that it was held in esteem by the people, he sought popularity and legitimacy through the religion. He encouraged ecclesiastical education and devoted his efforts to promote Buddhism. The king revised the Jakata, and ordered the compilation of Tri Pitaka. He encouraged the people in the court to adhere to Dhamma. He himself regularly attended the sermons¹

The interaction of politics with religion in the Ayudhya period may be summarized as follows. The Khmer-Hindu and Buddhist influences had converged in Ayudhya and achieved a complex reworking there. Each gave legitimation to the polity. Buddhism affirmed the role of kingship as the expression of Dhamma and righteousness, and as the fountain of justice, as well as the ordering principle of society. Its moral principles ensured that the king should be measured against the law. The Hindu-Khmer notion of divine kingship, in its modified form, conceptualized the king as the embodiment of the law and provided him with a majestic aura of mystery and a place in the cosmic order. Both traditions buttressed the political authority of kingship.

It should also be noted that the religious concerns of the kings of Sukhothai and Ayudhya were examples for their successors to follow. Their interest for us is not only because some of them were good Buddhist kings but also because they realized that Buddhism could afford

1. Somdet Phra Maha Samachao Krom Phraya Wachirayan Warorot Pramaun Phranipon (Collection of Writings) (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 1971) p. 273.

them legitimacy. There is also a continuity of the political use of religion for various purposes up to the present day. This will be spelt out throughout this study.

5. Buddhism and Kingship at Dhonburi

Ayudhya finally fell through the Burmese invasion of 1767. The capital was looted and burnt, and many of its population, both monks and laymen, fled. Eventually General Taksin forced back the enemies and restored Thai freedom. He became king and moved the capital to Dhonburi.

In the early years of his rule, King Taksin shouldered the heavy tasks of pacifying the dissidents and unifying the kingdom. Among the rebels was a group of dissident monks led by a high ranking monk, Phra Fang. These monks organized themselves in army style. They led their lives just as laymen, observed no Vinaya, indulged in mundane and government affairs, but still wore saffron robes. They managed to seize power in the northern capital of Pitsanulok, but were soon captured by Taksin. Phra Fang and his followers were executed. In the South Taksin also succeeded in pacifying another group of dissidents led by the ruler of Nakhon Sitthammarat.

In his efforts to unify the kingdom, Taksin sent high ranking monks from the capital to assume important supervisory positions in the northern Sangha. After pacifying the southern rebels, he invited the leading southern monks to receive gifts. He built new monasteries and restored the ruined ones.¹ Since Nakhon Sitthammarat was the centre of Buddhism in the South, these religious acts could be seen as an

1. For detail see Satuan Suphasophon, op.cit., pp. 148-152.

attempt by the king to utilize religion to justify his political intervention and to acquire support from the southern people.

As a king seeking legitimacy through religious values, Taksin devoted his efforts to restore the prosperity of Buddhism, which had suffered from the Burmese invasion. Following King Lithai's example and that of Songdham, he ordered the revision of Triphum and commanded a new edition of the Tripitaka be compiled. He built and restored many monasteries in the country.

Taksin lived in an age when Buddhism assumed aberrant forms due in part to the lack of proper support and supervision resulting from the perennial war with Burma. In consequence, the behaviour of the monks had deviated far from the conventional norms of Buddhism. The king set out to purify the Sangha and unworthy monks were cruelly purged. For example, in order to distinguish virtuous monks from the unworthy, some monks were tried by ordeal.¹ Taksin himself seriously took up the study of meditation and claimed to have acquired supernatural powers, a claim unacceptable in Buddhist orthodoxy. Moreover, he saw himself as a sodaban (Pali-Sotapana) or stream-winner, a type of deity who had embarked on the first of the four stages to enlightenment.² Because of this illusion, he claimed superiority over the monks and ordered them to bow to him. Those who refused to accept his claims were flogged and sentenced to menial labour. The supreme patriarch and two other senior monks who would not yield to his demands nor recognize

1. Iaming and P. Phitsanakha, Somdet Phrachao Taksin Maharat (King Taksin the Great) (Bangkok: 1956) p. 299.

2. Ibid., p. 424.

his claims were demoted. It was Taksin's assumption of sodaban, and his unorthodox treatment of the Sangha that partly contributed to his downfall. Because of his unorthodox behaviour, he was seen as insane and as a potential threat to the unity of the Thai nation. He was forced to abdicate and sentenced to death by his successor, Rama I.¹ As far as the belief that the king was the one who possessed the greatest merit is concerned, the downfall of Taksin was described thus:

"When the king (Taksin) ran out of his bun (merit), he died at the age of 48."²

6. Buddhism and Kingship in Bangkok

King Rama I assumed the throne in 1782 and began the Chakkri dynasty. He moved the capital of Thailand to Bangkok. Though during his dynasty significant changes took place in the concepts of kingship, the process of change was slow. On the one hand the Hindu tradition began to decline in importance. For example, in a Royal Decree of 1782, the king ordered that linga, as central features of Hindu worship, be destroyed. In many state ceremonies, Buddhist rituals were superimposed on Brahmanical ones. For instance, in the oath of allegiance ceremony, the initial ritual became the worship of the Triple Gems instead of the former Brahmanical ceremony. Yet in his government, Rama I, despite some adaptations, largely followed the model of Ayudhya. For example, the Buddhist Dhammasattha was still his guide in the administration of justice and government. His approach was paternalistic.³

1. For more detail see Ibid.; and also Craig J. Reynolds, The Buddhist Monkhood in the Nineteenth Century Thailand (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, 1972) pp. 29-34.

2. Akin Rabibhadana, op.cit., p. 12.

3. Prince Dhaniniwat, "The Reconstruction of Rama I", Journal of the Siam Society: Selected Articles, Vol. IV, 1959, p. 241.

When Rama I succeeded Taksin there were many important tasks to carry out in order to bring the kingdom out of chaos. However we are concerned here with his restoration of the moral tone of the kingdom, with the acts that established him as a Buddhist righteous king. As a strong king who sought legitimacy and stability for his rule in the orthodoxy of Buddhism, he declared that it was one of his main priorities to restore the prosperity of Buddhism and the purity of the Sangha which had suffered from the Burmese invasion and the unorthodox acts of King Taksin.¹

One major act was the revision of the Tripitaka in 1788. The king appointed a council of 218 monks and 32 Buddhist scholars for this task. They took five months to complete the revision, the ninth since the Buddha's enlightenment. The Tripitaka was said to be correct.²

The Tripitaka revision had manifold implications. Symbolically, it was merit-making on the grand scale, the greatest merit accruing to the king as sponsor. Politically, since Dhamma was contained in the Tripitaka, the revision led to the revival of the moral tone of the kingdom, and indicated Rama I's intention to be a righteous king.

The king also ordered the revision of the Triphum so that the text was in accordance with the Tripitaka. His intentions in revising the Triphum were in line with those of King Lithai. It was meant to be a primary instrument for educating the people in Buddhist values. As we have seen already this effectively reaffirmed the values of kingship

1. Chao Phraya Thiphakarawong, Phraratcha Phongswadan Krung Ratthanakosin Ratchakan thi Nung (Annals of Bangkok, the First Reign) (Bangkok: Klang Witthaya, 1962) p. 6.

2. Reynolds, op.cit., pp. 50-53; Klaus Wenk, The Restoration of Thailand under Rama I (Tucson: Arizona University Press, 1968) p. 41.

and justified hierarchy in the established social order.

In order to purify the Sangha and restore its prestige, the king issued a number of decrees on monastic conduct. The decrees specified the correct behaviour which the monks had to observe. They laid down the relationship between the monastic community and lay society, and between the monks and civil authority. Punishments for disobedience were also prescribed.¹

In his legislation and administration of justice, the king, as did his successors, closely followed the prescriptions in the Dhammasattha. If there was any doubt about the merit of a law, the laws were

"to be examined with regard to their agreement with the Pali canon, and in cases where they did not agree were to be altered accordingly in order to restore what was believed to be the original text".²

Rama I's own behaviour was intended to be exemplary for his officials and his subjects. Thus we are told:

"In the morning the king used to come out to offer alms to monks (He) invited (them) to partake of food in the Audience Chamber In the evening the king ... came out to ... listen to the daily sermon delivered by a monk".³

The king, moreover, instructed his officials and the royal household to observe regularly the five and eight precepts in the monastery.⁴

Examining the religious activities of Rama I we can see that there

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1. For a good elaboration see Prince Dhaniniwat, Monarchical Protection of the Buddhist Church in Siam (Bangkok: World Fellowship of Buddhists, 1964) pp. 1-15; see also Reynolds, ibid., pp. 35-50.
 2. Wenk, op.cit., p. 36.
 3. Dhaniniwat, 'The Reconstruction of Rama I', pp. 257-258.
 4. Ibid.

was a slight shift in the conception of kingship from one of divine kingship towards that of the Dhammaraja or Buddhist kingship. In a sense, it reflected the Buddhist kingship of Sukhothai. From now on Thai kingship was sacred because it symbolized the Dhamma, the principle upon which the order of the kingdom depended, and it became less and less dependent on the Hindu myth of divine kingship.

After the death of Rama I in 1809, it could be said that the condition of the religion and the Sangha was healthy and stable as a result of his restoration and purification of the faith and the Sangha. He had also established the close relationship between kingship and religion which continues to the present day. The main religious tasks remaining to his successors were to maintain the prosperity and purity of Buddhism and the Sangha, and to secure the people's adherence to Dhamma.

During the reigns of Rama II (1809-1824) and Rama III (1824-1851) there appears to have been no significant change in the relationship between kingship and Buddhism. Both kings continued to assume the traditional functions of patronizing and protecting Buddhism and the Sangha.

The relationship between Buddhism and kingship began to change during the reign of King Mongkut (Rama IV - 1851-1868). King Mongkut had been in the monkhood for 27 years before assuming the throne. As a monk he had gained a reputation for being a reformer influenced by the Mon tradition. Dissatisfied with the old practices of Buddhism, the prince-monk had launched a reform programme to make Thai Buddhism as close as possible to the Pali canon of Theravada Buddhism. This involved the reform of monastic disciplines, changes in details of rituals, and the redefinition of the canon. One of the most important

consequences was the establishment of the new Thammayut order within the Thai Sangha. The new order has been highly regarded ever since for its disciplinary strictness and its close association with the royal family.¹

As king, Mongkut thought of himself as being essentially a man, not a 'superhuman' as held by the concept of divine kingship.² He was very sceptical about the legendary stories which glorified divine kingship such as Jakata and Triphum. He rejected everything in religion that claimed supernatural origin. He was also very sceptical about the notion of heaven and hell which was prominent in Triphum.³

It has also been suggested that the public image of the king from this reign onwards gradually changed from that of divine king buttressed by the Brahmanical cult and ritual to that of the leading human, the defender and patron of the Buddhist church. The old customs and ceremonies associated with divine kingship were questioned, re-interpreted in Buddhist terms, secularized, or neglected and gradually forgotten. Buddhist rituals were introduced to replace the Brahmanical rituals in the royal ceremonies or superimposed upon them.⁴ However this does not mean that the Chakkri kings had lost their interest in

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1. For the most comprehensive study of King Mongkut's reform in this respect, see Reynolds, op.cit., Chapters 3-4 (pp. 66-137).
 2. F.W. Riggs, Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1967) pp. 95-105.
 3. W.L. Bradley, "Prince Mongkut and Jesse Caswell", Journal of the Siam Society, Vol. LIV, No. 1 (1966); C.J. Reynolds, "Buddhist Cosmography in Thai History with Special Reference to Nineteenth-Century Culture Change", Asian Studies, Vol. XXXV, No. 2 (1976) pp. 210-220.
 4. Riggs, op.cit., pp. 99-101.

the classic Dhammaraja concept of kingship, or that they were entirely averse to the glorification of the king as Devaraja. As Tambiah has pointed out, King Mongkut, like his predecessors, while striving to justify and legitimate his position by capitalizing on the Buddhist concept of kingship, also relied on Brahmanical rites which glorified the king as Devaraja.¹ This view is shared by John Blofield who said that although the ceremonies were associated with the Brahmanical cult, the context was essentially Buddhist. The two elements were in harmony. Each dealt with different compartments of life. As he put it:

... it would be going too far to say that King Mongkut permitted the Brahmin ceremonial merely because it lent splendour to royal occasions One turned to the Buddha to understand how to pursue the great task of liberation, and to the Hindu gods to obtain various mundane favours affecting the welfare of the individual and of the kingdom as a whole. As a pious man, who was nevertheless the king, it was his duty to pursue his own liberation and at the same time solicit the protection of the Hindu gods for his throne and his country.²

It appears to be difficult to measure the degree to which the Thai kingship was divorced from the Hindu cult. We can only speculate that from the time of King Mongkut, the Thai kings have been more identified with Buddhist values than previously, but have by no means totally discarded the tradition of Hindu kingship. Brahmanical ceremonial is still used to complement Buddhist rituals in royal ceremonies today.

During King Mongkut's reign, manifold cultural, economic, and

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1. Tambiah, op.cit., pp. 226-227; see also Wales, op.cit.
 2. John Blofield, King Maha Mongkut of Siam (Singapore: Asia Pacific Press, 1972) p. 41.

social changes had been initiated. After Mongkut's death in 1868, his son Chulalongkorn succeeded him and launched further 'modernization' programmes.¹

King Chulalongkorn was very concerned with the task of modernization of the country. His long reign (1868-1910) brought administrative, judicial, and financial reform; the development of modern communications; the first stirring of political development; the growth of social services and bureaucracy; and great economic development. Administrative, social, and economic reforms in this reign constituted a great leap in the transformation of the society. The king nevertheless did not neglect the traditional legitimizing functions of a Buddhist king, namely the promotion of and purification of Buddhism and the Sangha.

Following traditional expressions of monarchical support for Buddhism and the Sangha, the king built many new monasteries and restored the old ones. He had a replica made of the Buddha Jinnasi, the image of the Buddha which was once one of the paladia of the Sukhothai kingdom. The replica was housed in a new royal monastery, Wat Benjamaborpit. The king's attempt to pacify Buddhism and to propagate it was manifested in the revision of Tripitaka. The revised edition was later translated from Pali into Thai and printed in book form. The translation was intended to enable the people to understand Buddhism more widely. The entire set consisted of ten volumes. The king himself paid privately

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1. For details concerning the cultural, social, economic and political modernization schemes attempted by King Mongkut see, for example, John Blofield, *ibid.*; A.B. Griswold, *King Mongkut of Siam* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961); W.A. Graham, *Siam* (London: De La More Press, 1924); Kenneth P. Landon, *Siam in Transition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1939); Walter F. Vella, *The Impact of the West on Government in Thailand* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1955); H.G.Q. Wales, *Ancient Siamese Government and Administration* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1965 (reprint) and S. Watthanaset, *Kiatthikun Phra Mongkut Klao* (The Fame of King Mongkut) (Bangkok: Thai Watthana Panitch Press, 1957).

for the publication of 1,000 sets for distribution to monasteries in the kingdom and to libraries abroad. He entered the monkhood temporarily in 1874. In 1898, the king received the Buddha's relics found at Kalapilavatthu in India from the Viceroy of India.¹ It was in this reign that the great reform of the Sangha was launched to unify the Sangha organization and to systematize the Sangha administration. This reform, as part of the attempted 'modernization' of the country, significantly aimed at nation-wide integration, of which educational and provincial administrative reforms were a part. We shall discuss the manifold reasons for and the implications of these reforms and the parts played by the Sangha in the next chapter.

The concept of divine kingship continued in decline, and many customs associated with it were curtailed or abolished. For example, King Chulalongkorn abolished the practice of prostration in front of the monarch. From this reign, the king's traditional duty of adhering to Dhammasattha was extended so that the king was no longer just an executor of traditional laws; he became a legislator with unlimited powers to change Thai government and Thai life. The change in the conception of kingship in this respect was attributed to the impact of Western notions of modern government.²

King Chulalongkorn died in 1910 and was succeeded by his son, King Wachirawut (Rama VI) who ruled the kingdom between 1910 and 1925. The new king perpetuated the traditional legitimizing functions of a Buddhist. Despite the absence of significant religious acts of purification and

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1. Prachoom Chomchai (ed. and transl.); Chulalongkorn the Great (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1965) pp. 100-103.
 2. For more details see Vella, op.cit.; Riggs, op.cit.; and Wales, op.cit.

promotion of Buddhism and the Sangha equivalent to his predecessors, the political exploitation of Buddhism by this king was unmistakable. In the face of the threat from the colonial powers, King Wachirawut was very concerned about national unity, essential to maintain the independence of his kingdom. In order to realize this goal, he injected into Thai collective consciousness a spirit of nationalism and national allegiance. He developed a sense of nationhood composed of nation (chart - Thai), religion (satsana - Thai), and monarchy (phra maha kasat - Thai). These three symbolic components constituted the pillars of the Thai nation; each depended on the other and had to be preserved if the Thai nation was to survive and progress.¹ The king implored the Thai to unite in body and spirit to defend the nation, the religion, and the monarchy from the incursions of enemies, mainly Western colonial powers. In the course of defending and protecting the three institutions, the king maintained that it was legitimate if the soldiers killed enemies. As he put it,

For those who have to fight in war in the defence of our nation, some may think that it is against the teaching of the Buddha which prohibited killing But we are not intending to wage war against one another, but to protect ourselves. In this case, the Buddha once said that it was the duty of able men to fight against enemies who invade with the intention to take our land, to jeopardize Buddhism, and to destroy our sovereignty..... Let us make it known to the world that we, the Thai, are determined to protect our nation, religion, and monarchy, and to preserve them as they were in our ancestors' time.... We shall fight with swords and guns, sacrifice our bodies as fences for protecting and preserving them.. ... It is not against the Buddha's teaching.... Protecting our nation is indispensable, just as we have to protect Buddhism and Dhamma.²

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1. For elaboration of Wachirawut's idea of the interdependence and interrelation of the nation, the religion, and the monarchy see: Frank E. Reynolds, "Civic Religion and National Community in Thailand", Asian Studies, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2, February 1977, pp. 267-282.
 2. King Wachirawut, Tetsana Sau Pha (Sermons to the Wild Tiger Corps) (Bangkok: Kurusapha Press, 1953) pp. 168, 193-194.

The king furthermore tied national independence to the survival of Buddhism. He reminded the Thai that Thailand was the last line of defence for Buddhism; he emphasized that the first and second lines (Burma and Ceylon) had already fallen and now it was up to the Thai to make the last stand. If they did not take this responsibility, they would ensure the end of Buddhism. This would be a great disgrace for the generations of Thai to come.¹ Buddhism, in the eyes of the king, could provide basic principles necessary for preserving the moral order of the society and thus he encouraged the people to adhere to Dhamma. By adhering to Dhamma, the king said people would live in peace and be happy.² In order to strengthen people's adherence to Dhamma and Buddhism, the king introduced Buddhist daily prayers in schools, police stations, army garrisons, government departments, and even in prisons and mental hospitals.³

The innovation of the concept of nationhood as composed of the nation, the religion, and the monarchy by Wachirawut has continued to play a crucial role in Thai religio-political ideology. It has become the foundation of the 'civic religion' of Thai socio-political life.⁴ The political exploitation of the religion in this respect has been followed by later Thai rulers, especially in the 1960s, to mobilize the support of the Thai people for politically defined ends. More recently, the symbolic slogans of nation, religion, and the monarchy have been

1. Ibid.

2. King Wachirawut, Phra Phutthachao Tratsaru arai (What is the knowledge attained by the Buddha) (Bangkok: National Library, 1925) p. 34.

3. Frank E. Reynolds, op.cit., p. 274; Virginia Thompson, Thailand: The New Siam (New York: Macmillan, 1941) pp. 368-369.

4. For elaboration of the term 'civic religion' see Reynolds, ibid., pp. 267-282.

invoked by certain political movements and activists of the 1970s to provide legitimacy for their political ideology and activities.

Wachirawut died in 1925 and was succeeded by King Prachathiphok (Rama VII - 1925-1932), the last absolute monarch of Thailand. The 1932 Revolution brought an end to absolute monarchy and it was replaced by constitutional monarchy. Thailand now embarked on a democratic form of government. However, the Thai king still played an important, though mainly symbolic role in Thai Buddhism. The king now is both the high protector and patron of Buddhism and the constitutional head of government. Unlike the absolute monarchy for whom protection and promotion of Buddhism and the Sangha was a prerogative, the Thai king nowadays, as constitutional monarch, acts in accordance with the wishes of the cabinet.

CHAPTER III THE SANGHA AND STATE

This chapter considers the continuity of the interaction of Sangha and state. First, in order to understand why the political rulers are very concerned with the prosperity of Buddhism and the uprightness of the Sangha which is expressed in their patronage and control, we shall investigate the relationship between the Sangha and society. The Sangha is seen as one of the influential social and moral forces that may exercise control over the population, and that can influence the social and political behaviour of Buddhists. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that it is unlikely to have great influence on the political rulers; rather it tends to be subjugated or subordinated to them.

Secondly, in order to understand why the Sangha is loyal and subservient to the political rulers, we shall examine the various means of patronage and control over the Sangha exercised by the political authority. Patronage of the Sangha by political rulers is conceived not only as a traditional legitimizing function of a good Buddhist ruler but also as a means to acquire co-operation and to secure the loyalty of the Sangha. One significant implication of patronage is that the high-ranking and administrative members of the Sangha have been incorporated or co-opted into the establishment and become an integral part of it. By exercising tight control over the Sangha organization and administration, the political rulers ensure that the Sangha keeps in line with the government's policy as the whole Sangha becomes part of the government's structure.

Thirdly, this chapter attempts to demonstrate the impact of socio-political changes which have conditioned or stimulated the need for changes and modifications in the patterns and methods of patronage and control over the Sangha. Because of its prestige and quality, its

incorporation into the administrative structure of the state, and its tight control by the state, the Sangha is seen as possibly the best political instrument to enhance the political rulers' legitimacy in various government policies.

1. The Sangha and Society: A Reciprocal Relationship

For the Thai who are Buddhists (approximately 93% of Thailand's population) the Sangha is one of the greatest, most traditional, and most important institutions in the society. The members of the Sangha (the monks) have played a prominent role in, and are closely involved with, the life of almost every Thai, both in religious and secular matters.

(a) Religious role of the monks

As far as the religious role of the Sangha in relation to the laity is concerned, the monks are held in esteem; they are respected, revered, and considered indispensable. Because of their austere life, their association with blameless activity, and their familiarity with sacred literature through study, teaching, and meditation, the monks are seen as being dedicated to following the path of the Buddha - pure, disciplined, self-denying, and intellectual.¹ As such they are the mediators and vehicles of merit-making activity. As religious specialists only they can properly officiate at the Buddhist ceremonies and merit-making. The monks are the source of spiritual guidance on which the laity can depend for spiritual satisfaction and mental security. The dependence of the

1. For elaboration see S.J. Tambiah, Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in Northeast Thailand (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Jane Bunnag, Buddhist Monk, Buddhist Layman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); see also Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 1-11.

laity on the monks in this light is succinctly expressed in the following quotation:

"The bhikkhus (monks) are necessary for the successful completion of these ceremonies whether it be a ceremony of marriage, housewarming, sickness, death, or protection against ill omens. The bhikkhus give their religious blessing as they carry out the necessary chants and rituals..... In terms of popular Buddhism such ceremonial attendance is considered one of the principal duties of the bhikkhus..... Whether it be a village festival or a family ceremony, a protective aura of the bhikkhus' attendance is desired by the village people".¹

The religious functions of the monks are manifold. These and their significance have been well studied by many scholars,² thus we will not reiterate them here. While the laity depends on the monks for their spiritual guidance, the monks, restricted by the Vinaya code (the religious rules regulating the life of the monks), are entirely dependent on the laity's material support for their livelihood. Thus, monks and laymen are interdependent; their relationship is in effect reciprocal, though it is not regarded as such in Buddhist theory. To keep Dhamma alive as their spiritual refuge, it is the duty of the laity to support the Sangha. As recipients of material benefits from the laity, the monks themselves are under a moral obligation to contribute their services for the benefit of the laymen, and not to concern themselves only with their personal salvation. The traditional religious services rendered to the laity in Buddhist orthodoxy are expressed in various forms of ritual and ceremonial as well as spiritual activities

1. William J. Klausner, 'Popular Buddhism in Northeast Thailand', Visakha Puja B.E. 2514 (Bangkok: Thai Watthana Panit, 1971) pp. 36-37.
2. See, for example, Melford F. Spiro, Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971); Tambiah, op.cit.; Bunnag, op.cit.; Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 5-11; J. Ingersoll, 'The Priest Role in Central Village Thailand' in Manning Nash (ed.), Anthropological Studies in Theravada Buddhism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); and Steven Piker, 'Buddhism and Modernization in Contemporary Thailand', Contributions to Asian Studies, Vol. 4 (1973) pp. 51-67.

which in turn constitute the religious functions of the monks. In Buddhist theory, the monks by performing religious functions, can transmit religious virtue to the laymen; and by propagating the religion and teaching of Dhamma they raise the laity's standard of morality by showing it how religion and Dhamma can be utilized for a happier daily life. In the process both monks and laity acquire merit.¹

(b) Secular functions

In Thai Buddhist thinking, the prosperity of Buddhism and the Sangha is believed to be related to the prosperity of the society. It is generally recognized among the Thai Sangha as well as the laity that since the monks are tied to secular society for their living, the well-being of society enhances the opportunity for monks to achieve their religious ends satisfactorily. Monks are expected not to turn their backs on society but to offer help, even in secular tasks, when no one else competent is available. In this respect, the monks have not only religious functions but also secular, or social, functions to perform for the benefit of society. The reliance on help from monks in secular affairs, especially in the rural community, is partly attributable to the often minimal extent or even absence of government services in such fields as schools, police, a court system, banks, some social welfare services, recreation and development.

The secular services that monks have provided for society are manifold. In my previous study,² the types of secular activities in which monks have been involved, the political and social implications of these

1. For more detailed discussion see Somboon Suksamran, ibid., pp. 6-11.

2. Ibid., pp. 11-21, 70-108.

activities have already been detailed. In the context of this study, I shall therefore discuss some aspects of the monks' secular roles briefly.

Educational role: In the past, before the school system in the modern sense had been set up, monks were the teachers of people from all classes. The monastery was the only educational institution for the great majority of the people, and gave instruction in secular as well as religious subjects. The monks then were the intelligentsia of the nation and they monopolized national education. Their teaching role gradually declined when the state educational system was introduced during the 1840s and 1880s. The new system had at first to rely on monastic help; the monks, though no longer monopolizing national education, still helped in teaching secular subjects due to the inadequacy of trained lay teachers, and most government schools were situated in the monasteries.¹ Since 1932, state education has rapidly expanded, and monks have lost their vital function as teachers of the young. Nowadays, although the monks have lost their direct teaching function, the majority of state schools are still attached to the monasteries. The monks are sometimes asked to help in teaching such subjects as morality, Buddhism, and ethics in schools and universities.² It is they who persuade pious Buddhists to build new schools and libraries in the monastery grounds, and to repair and upkeep the old ones.³

1. For fuller detail see David K. Wyatt, The Politics of Reform: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

2. Phra Maha Chai Apakaro, 'Some Observations on Present Day Education for Monks', Visakha Puja B.E. 2513, pp. 60-61.

3. Department of Religious Affairs, Annual Report of Religious Activities (Bangkok: Department of Religious Affairs, 1965) pp. 131-133.

Many Buddhist Sunday Schools have been established by monks in the country in order to improve the morality of the younger generation which is said to have been affected by undesirable aspects of Westernization. Their main purpose is to instruct the young to understand Dhamma and lead their lives in accordance with it.¹ Some monks themselves still hold that they cannot entirely abandon their teaching role. For example, a learned monk claims:

In the countryside, when boys finish their state primary school and come to be ordained, they are not capable of reading and writing as well as they ought to. Monks have to teach them all over again.²

The education for monks themselves has been modernized to meet the requirements of a changing society. For example, the Buddhist universities have expanded their departments to include such secular subjects as Humanities, Education, Social Science, Library Science, Southeast Asian Studies, Mathematics, Sciences, and Sociology. These universities also sponsor a programme to encourage their graduates to take up teaching in rural areas.³

Counselling role: The monks also act as counsellors for the villagers in secular affairs. Whether it be personal or communal matters, a respected monk, especially the abbot, is frequently asked for advice. In domestic matters the advice sought by the laity is of great variety. The counsel desired may be a request for an auspicious date to raise house pillars, to hold a wedding or house warming, to have a son enter or leave the monkhood, to undertake a new job or to begin a journey, and

1. Ibid., pp. 131-133.

2. Phra Maha Chai Apakaro, op.cit., p. 60.

3. Mahachula Buddhist University, General Information (Bangkok: Kurusapha Press, 1972) pp. 6-8.

to hold various ceremonies. Some come to ask whether they should engage in new occupations. Others come to talk about their occupational difficulties such as shortage of irrigation water, the high price of fertilizer, debt, land holding, and problems with middlemen and landlords. Sometimes the monks help in dividing inheritances and settling disputes in the family.¹

In an age of modernization, the monks are closely involved in helping villagers to adapt to the new demands of a modern society. In communal activities, they give advice, co-operate and participate in many activities. In such activities as the construction of village wells, small dams, roads and bridges, the building or repairing the public rest-houses or schools, whether the inspiration be the villagers' own needs or a government direction, the monks will have been consulted and their view sought on the particular village projects before work commences. It has been suggested that the monks' influence on these activities is considerable. The approval of monks is indispensable, if the communal projects are to have a chance of success.² Banjob Isdulya and his colleagues, in their study which compares the relative influence of the monks and

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1. Village studies in Thailand relating to the role of the monks in these respects are numerous. For example, Suthep Sunthornphesat, Ammart-charoen District: An Intensive Study of a Village on Local Leadership (Bangkok: Local Affairs Press, 1968); H.K. Kaufman, Bangkhuad: A Community Study in Thailand (Locust Valley, New York: J.J. Austin, 1960); Ruangdej Srimuni, Leadership and Development in Northeast Thailand (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Durham University, 1972); Chakkrit Noraniti-phadungkarn, Elite, Power Structure and Politics in Thai Communities (Bangkok: Kurusapha Press, 1970); Pattaya Saihoo, 'Botbat Khong patthanakorn nai phak tawan okk chiagnua' (Role of Development Workers in the Northeast), in Suthep Sunthornphesat (ed.), Sangkom Witthaya muban nai phak tawan okk chiagnua (Sociology of Northeastern Village Thailand) (Bangkok: Social Science Association Printing Press of Thailand, 1968); and Ingersoll, op.cit.
 2. John E. De Young, Village Life in Modern Thailand (Berkeley: California University Press, 1958) pp. 148-156; Klausner, op.cit., pp. 36-37; Ruangdej Srimuni, ibid., pp. 135-137; see also Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 15-16.

government officials as leaders, suggest that the majority of villagers in the sample tend to follow the advice and decisions of the monks rather than those of the government officials. In this case, 3811 people were asked whose decision they would follow if they were requested by the government officials to co-operate in a communal project of which their respected monks did not approve. Thirty point six per cent said they would not co-operate, while 17.5 per cent said they would; and, surprisingly, 36.1 per cent could not make a decision. The rest said they would make their own choice.¹ Monks not only actually participate in the communal projects but also sometimes initiate and organize such projects.²

The monks are consulted on political issues and sometimes give their opinions. For example, Isdulya discovered that some 64 per cent of 731 monks he interviewed were consulted on political issues by villagers.³ Unfortunately the study does not specify the political issues on which the villagers sought advice.

The political parties are also aware of the influence and importance of the leadership of the village monks. Politicians always try to win the monks' favour and support, especially at election times. In the general elections of 1968, for example, I observed the national election campaign of the United Thai People's Party in their central office. Each

1. Banjob Isdulya et al, Raingan phon kan Wichai Ruang Laksana bang prakan khong Sathaban Sangkom Thai thi pen uppasak thor kan pokkhong rabob Prachathipathai (Certain Characteristics of Social Institutions Affecting Democratic Government in Thailand) (Bangkok: Krung Sayam, 1972) pp. 149-151.
2. Ruangdej Srimuni, op.cit., pp. 135-137; Chakkrit Noranitiphadungkarn, op.cit., pp. 80-81; Suthep Sunthornphesat, op.cit., pp. 38-39.
3. Isdulya, op.cit., p. 143; see also Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 16-17.

candidate was instructed to secure the support of the village leaders including the abbot. Funds from the party budget were allocated for this purpose, part of them were to be spent on buying things for the wat, and part donated to the wat. Other parties with sufficient funds presumably attempted something similar, in the hope that the monks would at the least not speak against them. The practice of attempting to win the support of the monks has continued, as we shall see later.

The monks as arbitrators: In association with their counselling role, the monks sometimes serve the community as arbitrators of village disputes which are open to compromise and do not seriously violate the law.¹

People come to monks to have their disputes settled mainly because they trust them to be impartial, and because they dislike getting involved with government officials or law courts. In the villagers' thinking, to have a law suit in the court is a somewhat shameful business, and to spend money on hiring a lawyer is very unwise.² The relationship between the villagers and government officials is an unequal one. It is characterized by an air of superiority assumed by the officials who perceive themselves as intellectually and socially superior to the villagers. Generally, the villagers recognize and dislike the unequal relationship, a fact which does not encourage good understanding and co-operation between the two parties. The occasions which bring them together are few. The villagers go to the government official when it is absolutely necessary or when they are sent for. It is commonplace that when they meet, the villagers have to treat the officials as if they

1. Strongly contested disputes and crimes must, of course, go to the courts and police.

2. This is expressed in a popular Thai saying that 'sue kanom hai ma kin dee kaow chang mor kawm' (It is wiser to buy a sweet for a dog than to spend money hiring a lawyer).

were their masters (chao nai); moreover, being unfamiliar with the 'official procedure', they are easily subject to the officials' reproach. There is also much resentment of red tape, abuse of power and corruption.¹ The villagers may meet the officials when policemen or excise officers go to arrest law-breakers; and when officials go to the village to instruct the village headman and villagers to carry out an order, to convene a meeting or to make an inspection tour.² This kind of relationship often leads the villagers to the view that every government official is their master, vested with the authority to order and control and to give rewards and punishment. They further believe, as Moerman has observed, that all officials are 'those who eat the head and the tail by greedily demanding taxes, fees, and bribes, which support them and for which they give nothing in return'.³

In this situation the idea that the bureaucracy are the servants of the people who pay taxes or elect the government seems not to have occurred to most villagers, and the idea that they have power to control the government seems remote. Their relationship then may be characterized by an absence of democratic procedures: a one-way traffic of

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1. For more details see Stephen B. Young, 'The Northeastern Village: A Non-Participatory Democracy', Asian Survey, Vol. 8, No. 11 (1968); Thulyathep Suwanajinda, Khein Theravit, and Somboon Suksamran, Sap Daeng: Muban Keo Kheo Dao (Sap Daeng: The Village of Sickie and Red Star) (Bangkok: Phikkhanet, 1975); see also Pattaya Saihoo, op.cit., pp. 268-270; Choowong Chayabutr, Kawm rub phid chob khong kharat-chakan thor prachachon (The Accountability of Government Officials to the People) (A typescript paper contributed to the Seminar on Government Officials' Accountability, August, 1969); Kaufman, op.cit., pp. 32-36; and Herbert J. Rubin, 'Will and Awe: Illustrations of Thai Villager Dependency upon Officials', Asian Studies, Vol. 32 (1973) pp. 425-444.
 2. Thulyathep Suwanajinda et al, ibid.; Pattaya Saihoo, ibid.; Kaufman, op.cit.
 3. Michael Moerman, 'A Thai Village Headman as Synoptic Leader', Asian Studies, Vol. 23 (1969) p. 543.

suggestions and orders from the top downwards, and a feeling of ineffectiveness on the part of the villagers. It has been their experience that direct contact with government officials usually leads to complications, to expenditure for no purpose, followed by the officials' reproach and further trouble. Thus, direct contact with the officials is regarded as best avoided whenever possible. For all of these reasons when any dispute or trouble occurs the villagers tend to prefer having their cases, if possible, settled by monks or in other ways.

The close relationship and association between the monks and the villagers can also be viewed from the functions of the monastery. From the functional point of view, the wat is more than simply a place of residence for monks. After the family, the wat is the most important institution in rural life. It stands as a symbol of the commitment of the people to Buddhism and the core of village unity. It constitutes the vital focus of community life in the village, and almost all religious and secular activities take place there. It has been suggested that the wat may serve as: a community chest; a meeting place where news and gossip are exchanged; an entertainment centre; a hospital in times of difficulty; a school for religious training as well as secular education; a warehouse from which community equipment may be borrowed; an employment agency; a social work and welfare agency; a free hostel for students; a free hotel; an information and news agency; a play ground for children and a sports centre; an estate office; a counselling centre; a museum where traditional arts are preserved; and an administrative office for some official purposes such as village meetings and ballot booths.¹

1. For elaboration of the functions of these, see Kaufman, *op.cit.*, pp. 113-115; Phra Maha Prayut Payutto, 'Botbat khong phrasong nai Sangkom patchuban' (The Role of the Monks in Contemporary Thailand), in *Phutthasatsana kap Sangkom Thai* (Buddhism and Thai Society) (Bangkok: Sivaphorn Press, 1970) pp. 15-16.

The intimate relationship between the Thai people and the wat and its monks is well expressed in the Thai saying:

"The wat will be prosperous if it is supported by the villagers; and the villagers will be good, if they have the wat and the monks guide their morality. If the wat, the monks, and the villagers co-operate everything will be fine. If they are in conflict and turn against each other, they will both be destroyed".

Despite the attempted modernization launched by the government, its effects seem not to have radically changed the relationships between the rural population and the Sangha. The recognized religious status and prestige of the monks, the dependence of the laity on their religious role, their indispensable role in certain secular activities, and their social utility in the community all contribute to the unique position of the Sangha. The monks thus are spiritual leaders, the centre of respect, trust and co-operation. It is obvious that their position as spiritual leaders mainly derives from their religious role, and this is their primary source of influence. Their secular role strengthens and enhances the monks' influence further.

Indeed, a number of studies on leadership in rural Thai society have suggested that in many respects the village secular leadership is weaker than its religious leadership, and that monks wield greater motivational power than do the secular leaders.¹ Because of the recognized qualities of the monks, it is likely that they can provide the integrative force in

1. For example, Kaufman, ibid., pp. 30-40, 65-80; De Young, op.cit., pp. 165-170; Ruangdej Srimuni, op.cit., pp. 200-205; see also J.A. Niels Mulder, Monks, Merit, and Motivation: Buddhism and National Development in Thailand, Special Report No. 1 (Second revised edition) (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1973) pp. 28-34, 40-43; Charles F. Keyes, 'Local Leadership in Rural Thailand' in Clark D. Neher (ed.), Modern Thai Politics: From Village to Nation (Massachusetts: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1976) pp. 219-243; and Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 70-71.

the social and cultural life of Thai Buddhists, and help induce social solidarity by providing a set of basic Buddhist values for the regulation of the life of the society. If they want to exercise their powers to mould the social and political behaviour of Buddhists, it is also possible. Nevertheless, it would be a serious error to assume that the Sangha can exercise a form of socio-political control at its discretion. In fact, the Sangha is hampered in achieving an independent socio-political role because it receives recognition and patronage from the political authority. With its strength at the village level, it might ideally be an autonomous ecclesiastical hierarchy which could exert considerable influence on government. But this, in fact, has never been the case in Thailand. Rather the Thai Sangha has been loyal and subservient to the political authority in return for protection and patronage. The hierarchical Sangha organization is a government creation modelled on and part of the civil service. We must now examine this relationship between the Sangha and the government more closely.

2. The Political Authority's Patronage of the Sangha

One conspicuous element in the relationship between the Sangha and government has been the institution of patronage. This has taken many forms over the centuries, and it is the intention of this section to deal with those types of patronage in turn.

(a) Wat building activity, land donation, and slave endowment

It has been a long established tradition that when a new king ascended to the throne, he built a new royal palace and a new royal

monastery.¹ The magnificence of the buildings signified the extent of the king's pious concern for the well-being and prosperity of the religion and the Sangha. It also suggested the righteousness and merit of the ruling king upon whom the progress and tranquility of the society depended. The simultaneous construction of the wat and the palace indicated an earthly structural relationship between the Sangha and the political authority.

Wat building entails a great deal of labour and financial resources, and it is believed to be one of the most meritorious donations to the religion and the Sangha. Associated with merit is the prestige acquired by the builder of the wat. As the king was and still is the leading merit-maker and the model for secular behaviour, his meritorious acts have been followed by the princes, nobles, and the rich. Those who cannot afford to sponsor the building of the wat themselves usually seek the opportunity to have a part in it, thereby sharing merit and prestige with the major building sponsor. The wat built by the king or under his patronage is called Wat luang (Royal Monastery), and the one built by a commoner is Wat rath (Commoner or private wat).²

The building of the wat, especially in the Ayudhya period, served

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1. The evidence of wat building activities by various Thai kings are well documented in, for example, Sukhothai Inscriptions; Chronicles of Ayudhya and Bangkok periods. See also A. Brand, 'Merit, Hierarchy and Royal Gift-giving in Traditional Thai Society', Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Vol. 31, 1975, pp. 112-119; J. de Campos, 'Early Portuguese Account of Thailand', Journal of the Thailand Research Society, Vol. XXXII, 1940; and Damrong Rajanubhab, 'Moonhet haeng kan sang wat nai prathet thai' (Motives for the Building of Monasteries in Thailand) in his Chumnum niphon keo kap tamman phra phutthasatsana - Collections of Writings on History of Buddhism (Bangkok: Rungruang Tham Press, 1971) pp. 148-152.
 2. For distinction and status of Royal wat and Commoner wat see Damrong, ibid., p. 115; Jane Bunnag, op.cit., pp. 114-115; and Tambiah, World Conqueror and World Renouncer, pp. 231-236.

the practical purpose of drawing together additional labour, which was very necessary for defensive and economic purposes. A shortage of manpower in Ayudhya had risen because of casualties in the wars with Burma and the practice of the victors taking away people as slaves as well as looting captured cities. It was increased by people hiding away to avoid military service and corvée labour. One method of avoiding becoming an outlaw was to register with the government as a Kha phra (monastery slave).¹

The monastery slaves were assigned to the service of a wat and were exempted from corvée labour. The kha phra settled their families in the vicinity of the monastery compound and on the land belonging to the wat. They were required to tend to the upkeep of the monastery and to provide security for its sanctuaries and other properties. Where a monastery possessed cultivable land, they worked it for the benefit of the monastery and its monks. In some cases the kha phra were allowed to keep produce surplus to the requirements of the wat.²

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1. The tradition of assigning kha phra to serve the monks and the donation of land to the wat had long been practiced in Hindu-Buddhist countries. Buddhist countries received this tradition from the Hindu tradition by which kings donated land and slaves for the upkeep of Hindu temples. By the twelfth or thirteenth centuries this practice became common in Theravada Buddhist kingdoms of South-East Asia. See for detail, W. Geiger, Culture of Ceylon in Medieval Times (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1960) pp. 35-36, 194-195; A.L.H. Gunawardhana, 'Some Aspects of Monastic Life in the Later Anuradhapura Period', Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies, Vol. II, No. 1, 1972; G.H. Luce, Old Burma: Early Pagan (Locust Valley, New York: J.J. Austin, 1969-1970) pp. 106-118; Pe Maung Tin, 'Buddhism in the Inscriptions of Pagan', Journal of Burma Research Society, Vol. 26 (1936) pp. 63-65.
 2. For further details see: David K. Wyatt, 'The Abridged Royal Chronicle of Ayudhya of Prince Paramanuchitchinorot', Journal of the Siam Society, Vol. LXI, part I (1973); Kana Kammakan chatphim ekkasan thang Prawatsat Watthana-tham lae Borankadi (Committee on the Publication of Historical Cultural and Archaeological Documents), Prachum Phratamra Boromrachuthit phua kalapana samai Ayudhya phak 1 (Collected Documents on Royal Land Donations of Ayudhya, Part I) (Bangkok: 1967); Phongsawadan Nau, op.cit., pp. 26-27; Department of Fine Arts, 'Phongsawadan Muang Pattalung' (History of Pattalung) in Prachum Phongsawadan Phak 15 (Bangkok: Kurusapha Press, 1964) Vol. XII.

The allocation of kha phra to the monasteries could be seen as a way by which governments solved their manpower problems by collecting a population in permanent settlements within easy political reach. In addition, once established the wat also became a centre of a new community and attracted further groups of people to reside in and around it.

The donation of kha phra was practiced throughout the Ayudhya and early Bangkok periods. It ceased in the reign of King Chulalongkorn who, with a growing population in more peaceful conditions, was able to abolish slavery and the corvée system. Thereafter the political patronage of the Sangha took other forms. In the place of kha phra the government provided funds for the wat so that they could hire labour to maintain the wat, and this practice continues to the present. The kha phra became the tenants of wat land.

Another feature of material political patronage of the wat and its monks, still being practised today, is the donation of land and the donation of benefits from the land to the wat. Land that is donated to the wat is called Thi thorani song or monastery land. Once donated, ownership is invested in the wat and its management becomes the responsibility of the wat lay committee (kammakakan wat) who are appointed by the abbot of the wat. The other type of land is called Thi kalapana or monastery revenue estate from which the rent or other benefits are dedicated to the upkeep of the wat and welfare of its monks, though ownership remains in the hands of the donor and the arrangement can be terminated at his discretion. The major donor of both types of land has been the political authority, whether it be the king or the government.

In the Sukhothai and Ayudhya periods the monastery lands comprised rice fields and orchards. These lands were cultivated by kha phra, or

were rented to tenants. For example, a Sukhothai inscription recorded that the harvests of the rice fields and garden lands were to supplement the monastery's resources.¹ We are also informed that the kings of Ayudhya made grants of lands to ecclesiastical dignitaries,² or again that King Songdham (1620-1628) donated Thi kalapana to the new wat he built at Saraburi on the occasion of the discovery of the Buddha's Foot Print. He also released all 600 families who lived on the donated land from taxation and labour corvée and assigned them to serve the monks and cultivate the land as kha phra.³ The kings of the Chakkri dynasty followed the example of their predecessors.⁴ For example, Rama IV bought a rice field in Saraburi and donated it to the monks in Lopburi.⁵

The amounts of land given to the wat by the kings are far from certain. Western visitors in the nineteenth century were impressed that many wat in the country possessed a considerable acreage of the best land.⁶ A.W.

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1. Griswold and Prasert, The Asokarama Inscription of 1399 A.D., Epigraphic and historical studies, no. 2, The Siam Society, Vol. 57 (1969) p. 54.
 2. Wyatt, op.cit., p. 42.
 3. National Library, 'Kam haikan khong khunkon ruang phra Phutthabat' (Statement of Khunkon on the History of the Buddha's Foot Print) in Prachum phongsawadan Phak 7 (Collected Chronicles Part 7) (Bangkok: Rung Ruang tham Press, 1964) pp. 58-68.
 4. The land donation activities of the early kings of Bangkok are frequently described in Royal Chronicles of the First to the Fourth Reigns; see, for example, Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, Phraratcha Phong Sawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan Thi 1-3 (Royal Chronicles of the First-Third Reigns) (Bangkok: 1960-1961); see also Department of Fine Arts (Comp. and ed.), Prachum Charuk Wat Phrachetthuphon (Collected Inscriptions of Wat Phrachetthuphon) (Bangkok: 1974); Prince Wachirayan Warorot, Tamnan Wat Borwornniwetwihan (History of Wat Borwornniwetwihan) (Bangkok: 1922).
 5. Department of Fine Arts, 'Prakat Phraratchatan laek plean thi - Wisungkamasima C.S. 1224' (Royal Proclamation on the Exchange of Consecrated Land C.S. 1224) in Prachum Prakat Ratchakan thi 4 (Collected Proclamations of Rama IV), part 6.
 6. Jacob T. Child, The Pearl of Asia: Reminiscences of the Court of a Supreme Monarch or Five Years in Siam (Chicago: 1892) p. 20.

Graham reported that the Thai Sangha enjoyed a considerable income from the land.¹ Today, the everyday business of the wat properties is, as in the past, administered by the wat lay committee, although their activities are supervised and closely controlled by the Department of Religious Affairs.² Nevertheless, in practice, the abbot of the wat still enjoys his prerogative in making decisions as to whom the wat estate should be rented.³

We know very little about how wealth derived from the monastery land and estate is distributed among the monks today, apart from the generalization that the proceeds go to the wat for its upkeep and the welfare of the monastic community. But in the past it would appear that the national Sakdina ranking system included the Sangha, and their rank was associated with their land holding. This is made clear in the Phra Aiyakan Tammang nai Thaharn lae Phonlaruan B.E. 1998,⁴ a law proclaimed by King Trailok of Ayudhya in 1455. According to this law, the population was classified by rank. A rank served as an indication of one's status and authority in the social order and one's responsibility towards society in the administrative system. Differentiation of ranks was measured by the amount of land which had been conferred upon each individual by the king. This arrangement of the social order was known as the Sakdina system.⁵

1. A.W. Graham, Siam: A Handbook of Practical, Commercial and Political Information (London: 1902) p. 507.
2. Sangha Act 1941, Article 49; and Sangha Act 1962, Articles 33, 40.
3. For details of tenancy practices, rate of rent and income derived by a wat, see Kaufman, op.cit., p. 11, and Jane Burnag, op.cit., p. 125.
4. This is translated into English by H.G. Quaritch Wales as 'Laws of Civil, Military, and Provincial Hierarchies of 1454' in Ancient Siamese Government and Administration, p. 34.
5. For details of the hierarchy of rank, and amount of land each rank could hold, see Laws of Civil, Military, and Provincial Hierarchies, being appendices to Chai-anan Samutwanit, Sakdina kap Phatthanakan khong Sangkom Thai (Sakdina System and the Development of Thai Social Order) (Bangkok: Namaksorn, 1976).

In this law there was a provision for monks, novices, brahmans, and other religious men. Their Sakdina grade was justified by their skills or responsibilities towards the society. For example, the monk of Phra khru rank who was thoroughly cognizant of Dhamma had a Sakdina grade of 2,400 rai (a measure of land; today 6.25 rai = 1 hectare, or 2.5 rai = 1 acre), while the monk of the same rank who was not competent in Dhamma enjoyed the Sakdina grade of 1,000 rai. An ordinary monk who had knowledge of Dhamma was given a Sakdina grade of 600 rai, while the other rank-and-file monks who had no knowledge of Dhamma had a Sakdina grade of 400 rai. A novice who was cognizant of Dhamma had a Sakdina grade of 300 rai, as against 200 rai for one who was not. In later reigns the Sakdina system underwent many revisions. It was totally abolished in the reign of Chulalongkorn.

It is far from clear as to whether the individual monk actually possessed the land. Chitt Phumisak's interpretation seems to be the most valid. According to him, the individual monk did not actually possess the land. Rather, the Sakdina grade for a particular monk indicated the share derived from Thi thoranisong and Thi kalapana.¹

(b) Ecclesiastical honorific title awards

Another kind of patronage by the political authority of the Sangha is the award of ecclesiastical honorific titles, the Samanasak. The word samana here basically refers to the monk or the one who leads the ascetic life. Sak or Sakdi means power in the sense of resources or energy. Just as the Sakdina served as a refined index of rank in lay society, Samanasak signifies the rank and status of an individual monk

1. Chitt Phumisak, Chom na Sakdina Thai (Faces of Thai Sakdina) (Bangkok: Charoenwit, 1975) pp. 182-197.

in the Sangha hierarchy. Thus while the title of Somdet Chaophraya denoted the highest rank and status of an official in the Sakdina system, the title of Somdet Phrasangharacha indicates the highest rank of a monk in the system of Samanasak.

According to Damrong Rajanubhab samanasak has been established since the Sukhothai period when the king received this tradition from Ceylon.¹ In Sukhothai there appears to have been a simple hierarchy of Samanasak; Phra Sangharacha at the top, next to this were Phra kru and Thera respectively. These Samanasak were conferred upon the monks by the king in order to give a lasting honour to them in a similar manner to titles given to the brahmins who served in the court in secular affairs.²

In the Ayudhya period, as a result of Hindu-Khmer influence, the Samanasak system was elaborated. It became obviously tied to administrative positions within the Sangha. The Samanasak for monks, in descending order of importance were Somdet Phra Sangharacha, Phraracha kana, Phra khru, and Maha Thera. The Samanasak of Somdet Phra Sangharacha was conferred on the titular head of all monks in the kingdom, i.e. the Supreme Patriarch. Within the Phraracha kana rank, there were different grades.³ Monks of this rank were either the Sangha governors of major provinces or the abbots of important royal monasteries or both. The Phra khru holders were assigned to look after the Sangha affairs in lesser provinces and cities.⁴ The title of Maha Thera was conferred on long-

1. Damrong Rajanubhab, Chumnum Nippon keokap Tamnan Phra Phutthasatsana (Collection of Writings on History of Buddhism) (Bangkok: Rungruang Tham, 1971) pp. 164-167.

2. Ibid., pp. 167-168.

3. For details see ibid., pp. 173-175, 177-190; and also Prince Dhaniniwat, A History of Buddhism in Siam (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1965) pp. 16-17.

4. Damrong, ibid.

serving monks of good conduct. The Samanasak system has continued, with some revisions and modifications, until today.

At the present time there are basically four divisions of Samanasak: these are (in descending order of importance) Somdet Phraracha kana, Rong Somdet Phraracha kana, Phraracha kana, and Phra khru. It is a monk from Somdet Phraracha kana rank who is appointed the Supreme Patriarch (Somdet Phra-sangharat) of the Thai Sangha. Although the Rong Somdet Phraracha kana bears the title Somdet, he is not of full Somdet status. The Phraracha kana rank is further subdivided into four hierarchical grades or statuses (see Table 1), and there are further distinctions within each of these grades. The honorific Phra Khru title is awarded by the king and the holder is generally known as Phra khru sanyabat. He is superior to the Phra khru saman, who is appointed by monks of phraracha kana rank and is generally known as phra khru Thana nukrom.

The modern ranks, titles, and numbers of Samanasak monks from Phraracha kana upwards are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 Ranks and Honorific Titles of Samanasak Monks

Rank	Samanasak	Number
1	Somdet Phra Sangharat	1
2	Somdet Phraracha kana	6
3	Rong Somdet Phraracha kana	14
4	Phraracha kana chan tham	25
5	Phraracha kana chan thep	46
6	Phraracha kana chan rath	107
8	Phraracha kana chan saman	313

Source: Department of Religious Affairs, Tamniab Samanasak (Directory of Samanasak) 5 December 1976.

The criteria adopted for selecting recipients for honorific titles have varied through time. The evidence suggests that in the Sukhothai, Ayudhya and early Bangkok periods, competence in ecclesiastical education, knowledge of Dhamma and Buddhist scriptures, and good behaviour were the main qualifications for securing honorific titles.¹

Today success or achievement in the following areas would contribute significantly toward royal recognition and the award of an honorific title:

"the education of self through success in taking Pali or Thai exams in religious subjects; contributions towards the education of others; a record of social service projects; the ability to inspire laymen in the 'development areas' (usually construction of monastery buildings or even secular structures); a reputation for administering one's monastery as an abbot and for carrying out responsibility well and eagerly; talent in preaching, writing, or even medicine - if such talent creates faith among the people; and, naturally, public respect for living a correct and proper life as a Buddhist monk".²

A reputation in meditation is also taken into consideration in giving honorific titles to certain monks.

When a title becomes vacant, the Mahatherasamakom considers candidates from the rank or grade below that title, with the advice of the Department of Religious Affairs. When a decision is reached, it is passed through the Minister of Education to the Cabinet and the Prime Minister and thus to the king for ratification.

On the king's birthday each year, the successful candidates of Phra-racha kana upwards, are called to the palace to receive certificates and

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1. Simon de Loubere, A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam (London: T. Horne, 1963) p. 115; Damrong, ibid., pp. 194-195.
 2. John P. Ferguson and Shalardchai Ramitanondh, 'Monks and Hierarchy in Northern Thailand', in Journal of the Siam Society, Vol. 64, part 1 (1976) p. 118.

ceremonial fans from the king or his representative. The certificate indicates the rank and status of a particular monk and involves a change of name for him, the new name usually being chosen to mirror the qualities for which the title is given. The ceremonial fan (Pat Yot) reveals by its shape, colour, and design to an informed observer the rank, status and honour of its owner.¹ Furthermore, it is only used at royal ceremonies (Ratcha phithi) and at state ceremonies (Phithi Luang). At such a ceremony, the monks sit in order depending on the rank their fan represents, not according to their rank in administrative system, and not by seniority.² These Samanasak monks are invited to officiate and perform at royal and state ceremonies more often than the monks without honorific titles. The more important the ceremony, the higher the rank of the monks invited. As such, the opportunity for the Samanasak monks to establish contact or connection with the secular establishment (king or government officials) is greater than for the rank-and-file monks. Materially, the gifts given at the royal and state ceremonies are usually better in both quality and quantity than the ones received in a private ceremony.

Associated with Samanasak is the monthly stipend or Nitayapat accorded to the Samanasak holders.³ The scale of stipend varies with administrative responsibility, and ranges between 50 baht per month⁴ for

1. For the elaboration of the categories of ceremonial fans see: Department of Religious Affairs, Phathithin Satsana (Religious Calendar) (Bangkok: 1977) pp. 265-280; also Damrong, op.cit., pp. 201-203.
2. For details of the seating arrangement for monks of different ranks and grades at a ceremony, see: Phra Kawiworayan, Anachak Song Thai (The Thai Sangha Domain) (Bangkok: Thai Baebrian, 1963) pp. 204-205.
3. These represented less than 25 per cent of a total Sangha population of approximately 286,838 in 1974, Wat Vachiradhammapadip, Thai Buddhism: Facts and Figures 1970s (New York: 1976) p. 28.
4. In 1978, 40 baht = £1.00 and the average labourer's wage would be approximately 900 baht per month.

petty Phra khru rank to 1,700 baht for the Supreme Patriarch. Like the salary of the secular officials, the monks' stipend has been occasionally improved to keep pace with the increasing cost of living.¹ A simplified list of stipends in 1975 is given in Table 2.

Table 2 Stipends of titled and graded monks

<u>Honorific Title</u>	<u>Monthly nithayapat (stipend) in baht</u>
Somdet Phra Sangharat	1,700
Somdet Phraracha kana	1,500
Phraracha kana (special grade - i.e. Rong Somdet rank)	320-340
Phraracha kana chan tham	300
Phraracha kana chan thep	280
Phraracha kana chan rath	260
Phraracha kana chan saman	140-240
Phra kru	50-140
Monk who attained barian grade 9	160

Source: Department of Religious Affairs, Thaleangkan kana song (Announcement of the Sangha), Vol. 63, part 6, 25 June 1975, pp. 11-19; for fuller details of classifications of monthly stipend for Samanasak monks who are at the same time officials in the Sangha administration, see: Banchee attra nithayapat phra Samanasak lae phra Sangkhathikan (Scale of Stipends for Samanasak monks and monk-officials), Official Document of Department of Religious Affairs, dated 26 March 1975.

Also noteworthy is the fact that those monks who are stationed in provinces that are considered kandan (hardship or remote posts) are given an additional allowance (bia kandan), an arrangement that follows the

1. The rate is decided in the Department of Religious Affairs and, to my knowledge, there is no record of the monks themselves asking for the increase.

practice for government officials.

An honorific title also helps its holder to climb the ladder in the administrative hierarchy of the Sangha. This does not mean that the honorific hierarchy exactly parallels the Sangha administrative one. Rather, the former complements the latter, with the two merging at the top. Table 3 shows in simplified form the relationship between honorific titles and positions in the Sangha administration from the top to the provincial level.

Table 3 The relationship between honorific titles and the administrative hierarchy

Positions in descending order of importance	Number of positions	Honorific Titles					
		Somdet rank	Rong Somdet rank	Phraracha kana rank			Other
				Dhamma grade (chan tham)	Thera grade (chan thep)	Rath grade (chan rath)	
1. Somdet Phra Sangharat (The Supreme Patriarch)	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Chao kana Yai (Sangha General Governors)	4	3	1	-	-	-	-
3. Chao kana Phak (Regional Sangha Governors)	18	-	5	7	6	-	-
4. Chao kana Changwat (Provincial Sangha Governors)	72 (one vacant)	-	1	4	8	36	1 (phra kru)

This table is based on: Department of Religious Affairs, Phathithin Satsana B.E. 2520 (Religious Calendar 1977) and Tamniab Samanasak B.E. 2519 (Directory of Honorific Titles 1976).

A monk of Phraracha kana rank and upwards is empowered to appoint personal assistants, the number depending on both his honorific rank and administrative position in the Sangha hierarchy, see Table 4. He can confer upon them the title of Phra khru with a further title affixed to signify their functions.

Table 4 Samanasak ranks and assistants

<u>Samanasak ranks</u>	<u>Number of Assistants</u>
The Supreme Patriarch	15
Phraracha kana of Somdet rank	10
Rong Somdet Phraracha kana	8
Phraracha kana chan tham	6
Phraracha kana chan thep	4
Phraracha kana of rath and saman grade	3

Source: Based on information acquired from Phra Maha Pheera Suchatho of Wat Buddhapadip, London.

Before leaving the subject of monastic honours, it would be useful to focus analytically on some points.

First, the award of honorific titles is seemingly in conflict with fundamental Buddhist tenets. Within the monkhood all should be equal, for ideally monks are men who have chosen to put aside the world with its distinctions of authority, status and wealth. The imposition of the Samanasak system on monks ranks them like laity. The higher ranks enjoy greater privilege, which is further marked by differential monetary rewards and positions in the Sangha hierarchy.

Second, the practice of giving stipends to individual monks encourages the personal accumulation of wealth. This is not compatible with Buddhist orthodoxy, in that monks should not have personal possessions. Wealth,

if acquired, is considered to belong to the whole monastic community.

Third, the practice of linking directly or indirectly the Samanasak to the administration of the Sangha results in a hierarchical ordering of the monkhood. This again seems to be in conflict with canonical Buddhism. The organization of the Sangha prescribed in the Vinaya was based on the seniority and honour due to the teachers and preceptors. The relationship was characterized as one of teacher to pupil. If the monkhood was to be organized at all, the organization would have to be minimal. Thus the later emergence and development of a hierarchical ordering of the Sangha can be seen as part of the creation of secular political authority, possibly to keep control of the monks. By giving rewards in the form of honorific titles and stipends, the political authority secures the administrative Sangha's loyalty and co-operation.

Finally, honorific titles and dignitary fans are not merely symbols of high and valued status in Thai society, but their acquisition is also a prime motivation for ambitious monks. This is a genuine ingredient in Thai Sangha affairs, and it is difficult to see how it can be reconciled with the idea of a 'pure' Sangha. As a leading fundamentalist critically comments:

"Nowadays the monks are losing their important function as spiritual leaders. They become followers of lay society which is filled with status consciousness, and greed for power, prestige, and wealth. In such circumstances, if the laymen cannot rightfully and morally satisfy their desires, they deceive, corrupt, bribe, flatter, and generally become crooked in order to satisfy their greed..... This situation is also prevalent among the monks. Whatever kind of greed the laymen possess, so do the monks, perhaps even more so".¹

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1. Phra Maha Sathienphong, 'Phra Song Thai nai rob 25 phi' (Buddhist Monks in a Quarter of Century) in Sangkomsat Parithat, Vol. 9, No. 6 (December 1971) pp. 22-23.

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or p,

Phra Maha Sathienphong also suggests that the merit system based on the learning, teaching, and practising of Dhamma is given less importance as a qualification for the conferment of Samanasak than other abilities. As he puts it:

"The selection of monks for the Samanasak is made by the Sangha authorities..... Believe it or not, very often the selection is unjust and has the air of corruption, flattery, partiality and favouritism..... Some unworthy monks were awarded honorific titles because they were the favourites of some influential Sangha authorities. Apart from these 'privileged monks', the second priority has been given to ability in promoting the construction of material things such as bot (a building in a monastery in which important religious ceremonies and rituals are performed) or sala (preaching hall). It becomes a practice that if a monk could have a bot built, he would be given a preceptor position (Uppachaya) and a sala could be exchanged for a Phra khru title".¹

3. The Authority of the State over the Sangha

It should be clear from the preceding discussion that the political authority expects loyalty and co-operation from the Sangha in return for patronage. Yet patronage alone is not enough to secure religious support. Thus in conjunction with patronage it is necessary for the political authority to exercise a measure of control over the Sangha. Here I consider the mechanism of this control. The political control of the Sangha probably stems from the following suppositions.

First, the government views a strong and uncorrupted Sangha as a means for social integration and as an effective safeguard against hostile ideology, i.e. communism. In this respect, the political control primarily aims at the protection of the monks against themselves, that is against the allegedly inevitable tendency of some monks to become lax and

1. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

corrupt and to forget their primary role of maintaining diligence in religious learning.¹ Government control and intervention in Sangha affairs is further justified by the assertion that the traditional Vinaya code alone does not cover certain kinds of misconduct by monks, and if this occurs the Sangha lacks authority to deal with it; and that government control over the Sangha 'helps ensure civil peace and social order, because if the Sangha loses the respect of the people, the trouble is liable to affect the people as well'.²

Second, the Sangha organization is one of the biggest national organizations with a large number of members.³ Although ideally it is outside the secular social system, its size and organization alone constitute a menace to the political ruler and justify the latter's control over the Sangha. For instance, the government might fear that the monks might become subversive teachers of the masses, or become rebellious themselves as had been the case in Burma and Vietnam.⁴ Political disturbances caused by monks such as the Phra Fang case might also encourage the authority in this view.⁵

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1. Dhaniniwat, Monarchical Protection of the Buddhist Church in Siam, pp. 1-2.
 2. Phra Sasana Sobhana, 'Government of the Thai Sangha', in Visakha Puja B.E. 2510, pp. 9-10.
 3. In 1976 the membership was estimated at nearly 300,000 monks and novices. For the figures of members of the Sangha in relation to population from 1927-1970 see Mulder, op.cit., p. 10.
 4. For example of politically active monks in Burma during colonial days see Mendelson, Sangha and State, pp. 173-234; Smith, Religion and Politics in Burma, pp. 86-107, and in Vietnam in the 1960s see Smith, Religion, Politics, and Social Change in the Third World (New York: The Free Press, 1974) pp. 121-128.
 5. See Chapter II.

Finally, control over the Sangha enables the government to keep the Sangha in line with government policy and all Thai governments have attempted to achieve this. For example:

"Every major governmental policy change, be it the Cakkri Reformation of 1782, the early modernization efforts of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn, the Revolution of 1932, or Marshal Sarit Thanarat's policy of national development through strong leadership has been accompanied by efforts to reform and reorganize the monkhood".¹

The political authority has had several means of control. These have been revised, modified, and redefined over time to ensure that the Sangha adapts to the policy of the government. The sanctions applied to the Sangha appear to be not qualitatively different from those evoked to justify intervention into, or supervision of the activity of any other social organization.

The Nature of the Controlling Authority: We know very little about the controlling authority in Sukhothai period and before the fifteenth century. Since the fifteenth century, the control and supervision of Sangha affairs has been delegated mainly to civil departments. Nevertheless, some kings, such as Taksin and Rama I, directly supervised the Sangha themselves.

The Krom Dhammakan (Department of Church Administration) was established in the reign of King Trailok. It had responsibility for Sangha affairs and acted as the king's agency through which he appointed monks to high offices in the Sangha hierarchy, and conferred Samanasak. This department was empowered to supervise the behaviour of the monks in every province. Attached to this department was a special court whose responsibility was to adjudicate any serious crime committed by monks.²

1. Mulder, op.cit., p. 19.

2. Wales, Ancient Siamese Government and Administration, pp. 78-81, 93, 243.

This system remained in force until the early Bangkok period.

The first king of the Bangkok period, Rama I, enacted a series of laws on Sangha activities (Kotmai Phrasong), the consequence of which was the imposition of tight control on the Sangha. These laws on the whole emphasized the King's concern for the healthy condition of Buddhism, the right conduct of monks, and the authentic learning of Buddhist doctrine. They laid down the guide lines for the protection of the religion from deterioration, spelling out the responsibilities of civil and ecclesiastical officials, and penalties for monks and laymen who damaged the faith and prestige of the Sangha.¹ During the reign of King Mongkut another similar set of laws was proclaimed. He even forbade monks of Phraracha kana rank to disrobe without royal permission.² The Krom Dhammakan continued to act as the agency of the kings.

After King Chulalongkorn launched administrative modernization in the late nineteenth century, the bureaucracy became more differentiated and specialized. The Krom Dhammakan was promoted to ministerial position and became the Krasuang Dhammakan (Ministry of Public Instruction) responsible for education in the country and religious affairs. This was later merged as the Department of Religious Affairs into the Ministry of Education, the present day authority. Today this department is directly responsible for controlling and supervising the Sangha.

The Department of Religious Affairs is functionally divided into eight sections which are further sub-divided into thirty-one sub-sections.

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1. Dhaniniwat, op.cit., pp. 1-14; Wenk, op.cit., p. 139; Tambiah, World Conqueror..., pp. 183-187.
 2. 'Prakat Ruang Phraracha kana thana barian suk mak kern pai cha thong khao duan phim' (Royal Proclamation on Phraracha kana Disrobe Without Royal Permission) in Collections of Royal Proclamations of the Fourth Reign, Vol. I (Bangkok: 1968) p. 83.

An investigation into the functions and responsibilities of some of these divisions will illuminate the extent of the government's control of the Sangha.

(1) The Secretariat Office of the Mahatherasamakom: This division is of particular interest for the purpose of this section because it implements the policies and decisions of the Mahatherasamakom (the administrative body of the Sangha),¹ and acts as a channel of communication for the Sangha between its various levels and units throughout the country. It also acts as the link between the government and the administrative body of the Sangha. This division arranges and keeps records of the meetings of the Mahatherasamakom, and publicizes Sangha activities. It prepares the lists of candidates for the award (or withdrawal) of honorific titles and honorary fans; it registers and maintains the record of Samanasak, administrative, and barian² monks. This division enforces the orders of the Mahatherasamakom regarding the dismissal of monks. It prepares and controls the allocation of the monks' stipend. It issues monks' identity cards, and is empowered to reprimand monks who behave wrongly. It also has the power to investigate cases where monks are accused of violating the Vinaya and secular laws, and to bring the accused before the Sangha authorities for trial. If the accusation involves criminal law, it is empowered to arrest the accused and force him to disrobe, if convicted.³

(2) Division of Ecclesiastical Properties: This division is entrusted with the management of the Sangha's and individual wat proper-

1. The detail about Mahatherasamakom will be discussed in later sections.
2. Monks who have passed a certain level of Pali examinations.
3. Department of Religious Affairs, Thalaengkan kana Song (Announcement of the Sangha Authority) Vol. 65, part 2 (February 1977) pp. 77-82; see also Sangha Act 1962, Articles 26-28, 42.

ties. It makes decisions on and controls the economic transactions of these properties.¹

(3) Division of Ecclesiastical Education: This division is in charge of promoting and improving ecclesiastical education, publishing religious text books and periodicals, establishing libraries, and revising syllabuses. It makes decisions on the allocation of the budget for ecclesiastical schools and Buddhist universities.² Thus, religious education is tightly controlled both in terms of content and activities.

(4) Religious Development Division: Among other activities entrusted to this division is the sponsorship of missionary monks who participate in the programme of national development. It is this division which is the architect of the Phra Dhammatuta programme (see Chapter IV).

Finally, at the decision-making level in the Sangha administration, the Director General of the Department of Religious Affairs is, ex-officio, the only lay member in the Mahatherasamakom. He serves as its Secretary General. As the head of this department he has responsibility for the formulation and implementation of government policy relating to religious affairs. He should not only keep the Mahatherasamakom informed of government policy, but also influence the decisions made. Theoretically, the Mahatherasamakom as the sole executive of the Sangha administration, is empowered to regulate Sangha affairs by issuing regulations and orders which will affect the whole Sangha. In

1. Ibid., pp. 87-95; see also Ministerial Regulation, No. 2, B.E. 2511.

2. Ibid., pp. 47-55.

practice, it is the Department of Religious Affairs who prepares such regulations and orders for the Mahatherasamakom. At the meeting these ready-made documents are presented to them for consideration and scrutiny. There, the Secretary General will explain why such regulations and orders were so formulated, and press their acceptance. An informant, a high ranking Phraracha kana, who prefers to be anonymous, gave me the impression that the Mahatherasamakom is usually only a rubber stamp for the Secretary General's proposals.

The political control over the Sangha is extended downwards to provincial, district and village levels. There are government education officers hierarchically organized from national to district level. The education officers' task is to encourage the adoption of government policies by local monks, but in cases of conflict he can pass the problem on to the district officer and if necessary the provincial governor, who has the authority to override ecclesiastical objections. At the provincial and district levels, the government places the Sangha in certain geographical areas firmly under the control and supervision of the civil provincial governor and district officer. Attached to the office at each level there is also at least one representative of the Ministry of Education to execute their policy concerning Sangha affairs.

There are also other governmental departments which are involved both in providing bureaucratic services to the Sangha and supervising them. For example, the Ministry of Interior is responsible for registering new wat, and decides whether a new wat should be erected or an old one be abolished. It also supports the Phra Dhammajarik programme and employs Buddhist chaplains where necessary under it. The Ministry of Public Health provides medical care to sick monks.

Such secular control and supervision of the Sangha leaves it little autonomy in its own affairs. Structurally speaking, the Sangha as a whole seems by no means to be in a position to challenge the power of the political authority. Rather it is subservient to it. An investigation into the administrative structure of the Sangha, to which we are now turning, will further illuminate the tight control of the Sangha by political authority.

4. The Administration of the Sangha

In the introduction to my book, Trevor O. Ling wrote:

In the case of Thailand, religion is still publicly prominent both in the sense that the religious professional (..... the monk) is a very obvious feature of public life, and in the sense that religious institutional structures have, until now at least, held a considerable place in the calculations and plans of successive Thai governments and have received a good deal of patronage. If Buddhism is to be counted as one of the 'great' religions, then Thailand provides a good example of the part which the political nexus has played in making and keeping a religion 'great' ...

(p. x)

The close association and relationship of the Sangha and the state can be seen from the administrative structure of the Sangha. Two major features of the Sangha administration may be described as follows. Firstly, its development has always been a result of socio-political changes, and at any one stage a modification of the previous stages. Secondly, at all times the administration of the Sangha has been subjugated to the political power in the sense that the administrative structure of the Sangha is incorporated into that of the civil government in such a manner that it is easily controlled.

(a) Continuity in development

In the Sukhothai period, the administration of the Sangha was

hierarchically organized corresponding to the hierarchy of civil administration. The civil administration was characterized as follows: at the apex was the king who was referred to as phor khun (father of the people). Under him was a hierarchy of administrators, the upper ranks recruited from the nobility, who assisted the king in government administration. Some were stationed in the capital, others were assigned to govern principalities or provinces called Muang lukluang. These incumbents had status in the administrative hierarchy as phor muang (father of the city). Next to phor muang were phor ban (father of the village), who were responsible for the administration of a cluster of villages. In the vassal states, the king appointed his officials and/or members of the royal family to govern. Some vassals, however, had semi-autonomy and their own indigenous rulers who were called khun.¹

At the apex of the Sangha hierarchy was the Phra Sangharat (Supreme Patriarch) appointed directly by the king. His assistants were Phra khru each of whom had jurisdiction over a specified territory. In certain major principalities or provinces and major vassal states there were Phra Sangharat who presumably had less power and prestige than the one who resided in the capital. Head monks in smaller and less important provinces had the status of Phra khru and were appointed by the rulers of the provinces. The administrative monks in vassal states were appointed by their rulers.² The king retained the right to intervene in all Sangha affairs.³

1. Damrong, Laksana kan pokkhrong ..., pp. 6-7.

2. Damrong, 'Tamnan kana Song', pp. 164-166.

3. Chao Phraya Wichitwong Wuthikrai and Phraya Phitthathibodi, Tamnan Phra-aram lae Tamniab Samanasak (History of Monastery and Directory of Ecclesiastical Officials) (Bangkok: Rongphim Thai, 1914) pp. 34-35.

The organization of the Sangha then appeared to have been in orders: the kamawasi (gamavasin - Pali) or town orders, otherwise known as khanthathura (ganthadhura - Pali), and Aranyawasi (Arannavasin - Pali) or forest dweller order, otherwise known as Wipatsanathura (Vipassana dhura - Pali). The kamawasi order comprised the monks who devoted themselves to the study and teaching of Dhamma. The Aranyawasi order included monks who devoted themselves to the practice of meditation.¹

Ayudhya period: The organization of the Sangha remained unchanged until about 1424 when a group of monks, having received a new ordination from Ceylon and having secured recognition from the king, established a new order, Vanaratana.² This was also categorized as a Kamawasi order because its members concentrated studying and teaching Dhamma. Thus, from this time to the reign of Rama III of Bangkok the organization of the Sangha appears to have been made up of three orders. The new kamawasi was called the Right Kamawasi, the original kamawasi became the Left Kamawasi, and the Aranyawasi remained as it was.³

The administrative structure of the Sangha was now modified to accord with the structure of the civil government which was influenced by Hindu-Khmer traditions. The Sangha from now on was more hierarchically ranked, and the samanask became more elaborate.

The administration of the Sangha in the Ayudhya period can be briefly described as follows:

1. Ibid.; see also C.J. Reynolds, The Buddhist Monkhood ..., pp. 7-11.
2. Reynolds, ibid., pp. 12-16.
3. Wichiwong Wuthikrai and Phitthathipbodi, op.cit., pp. 43-45.

(1) Somdet Phra Sangharat (Supreme Patriarch) was the titular head of the Sangha in the country.

(2) Below him were three Chao kana Yai (Sangha General Governors), one at the head of each order. The king normally appointed the more senior Chao kana Yai of either the kamawasi of the Left or the Aranyawasi as the Supreme Patriarch.

(3) Below the Chao kana Yai in each order were Phraracha kana who were the heads of monks in the capital and important provinces.

(4) The head monks of the lesser provinces or cities were monks of Phra khru rank.

(5) At the bottom of the Sangha administrative hierarchy were abbots who supervised the religious affairs of their wat.¹

These monk-officials were authorized to establish their own administrative staff to help them in the administration of the Vinaya.²

The formal link between the Sangha and the political authority appeared to have been that the Supreme Patriarch and Chao kana Yai constituted an advisory committee to the king in matters of Vinaya, religious affairs ceremonies and rituals.³ The administrative monks and all monks were supervised and controlled by the Department of Church Administration.⁴

1. Damrong, op.cit., pp. 170-183.

2. For details about the number of assistants each of the higher administrative monks could have, see: Wichitwong Wuthikrai, op.cit., pp. 55-67.

3. Ibid., p. 59.

4. For detail see pp. 102-103.

Early Bangkok Period: The main characteristics of the Sangha administration underwent little change throughout the later Ayudhya, Dhonburi and early Bangkok periods. Nevertheless, there were changes in the organization of the Sangha in the reign of Rama III. These included the establishment of a kana klang (central section), but this new section was essentially part of the Kamanwasi of the Left. In this reign there also emerged the order of Thammayut under the initiative of King Mongkut when he was in the monkhood.¹

A major change in the administrative structure of the Sangha appears to have taken place in the reign of King Chulalongkorn as part of the programme of modernization. Some of the massive schemes of his reign led to change in the administrative structure of the Sangha. Since Chulalongkorn's reforms are well documented and have been studied by many scholars,² we will not reiterate all of them here.

1. For details of the emergence and development of this new order see: Reynolds, op.cit., pp. 63-113.
2. A few of the standard works by the king himself and indigenous scholars are given below. Other works are listed in Yoneo Ishii (et al), A Selected Thai Bibliography on the Reign of King Chulalongkorn (Osaka: Osaka University of Foreign Studies, 1972) pp. 4-8, 13-20, and 21-44; King Chulalongkorn, Phra borom rachathibai kaekhai kan pokkhrong phaendin (King Chulalongkorn's Explanation of Government Reforms) (Bangkok: 1927), 'Proclamation on the Siamese State Council and Privy Council', in S.J. Smith (ed.), Siam Prepository (Bangkok: S.J. Smith's Office, 1874), 'Phra rachobai keokap kan suksa khong chart' (Royal Policy on National Education) in Silapakorn, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1949; Damrong Rajanubhab, Thesaphiban (Bangkok: Klang Witthay, 1958), Phraratcha Phongsawadan krung Ratthanakosin Ratchakan thi 5 (Dynastic Chronicle of the Fifth Reign) (Bangkok: Kurusapha, 1961); Chakkrit Noranithiphadungkan, Somdet Phrachao Borommawongthoe Krom Phraya Damrong Rajanubhab kap Krasuang Mahatthai (Prince Damrong Rajanubhab and Ministry of Interior) (Bangkok: NIDA, 1963); Prachoom Chomchai (ed. and transl.), Chulalongkorn the Great (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1965).

Before examining the main features of the Sangha administration of this period, it would be useful to survey briefly some aspects of civil administrative reform which led to the reform in the Sangha administration.

The administrative structure of Thailand prior to the great reforms in the reign of Chulalongkorn was characterized by the lack of differentiation of function and authority in the departments within the central government; an ineffective financial administration; a loosely-organized provincial administration; and, above all, the absence of a true centralization of power. One of the main factors that worked against the centralization of power was the loosely-organized provincial administration.

The provincial administration before 1892 was described as Kin muang (lit. eat province) system. Under this system the king appointed a provincial governor (Chao muang) who received no salary, but took his income in the form of taxes and corvée labour from his subjects in return for his protection.¹ The Chao muang was empowered to control judicial administration and very often that meant the interpretation of the law to his own liking. The obligation to the central government of a provincial governor was to remit part of the revenue to the king, and to recruit men for corvée or military purposes. As long as he was loyal to the king and there was no serious public outcry against him, the Chao muang was rarely disturbed by the central government. Because of this, and being economically independent, the Chao muang became de facto kings

1. For elaboration see: Damrong Rajanubhab, Thesaphiban (Bangkok: Klang Witthaya, 1952); Tej Bunnag, The Provincial Administration of Siam, 1892-1915 (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1977) pp. 17-22.

in their own areas. In the remote provinces the office of Chao muang became semi-hereditary and the incumbents sometimes challenged the power of central government.¹ Such a lack of national unity and effective administration endangered the territorial integrity and independence of the kingdom. This became obvious when the imperial power of France and Britain encouraged remote semi-independent provinces and vassal states to seek freedom from the Thai polity under their protection.² Thus the need for reforms in administrative structure became absolutely imperative by the reign of Chulalongkorn.

The reorganization of provincial government was closely related to the reorganization of central government. As far as the reorganization of provincial government is concerned, the organization of the Ministry of Finance resulted in the centralization of financial power and accordingly undermined the economic self-sufficiency of the provincial rulers. The reorganization of the Ministry of Interior under the strong leadership of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab was followed by the experimental reorganization of provincial government. Between 1888 and 1892, High Commissionerships were created to supervise and control the provincial administration; to terminate the provincial nobility's almost independent existence by transforming them into salaried civil servants; to systematically nationalize the judicial and financial administration of the provinces; and to secure the co-operation of the people at the lower levels of every sphere of the provincial administration.³ Encour-

1. Damrong, ibid., pp. 18, 28-29; Tej Bunnag, ibid., pp. 27-39.

2. Damrong, ibid., p. 12; Likhit Dhiravegin, Siam and Colonialism (1885-1909): An Analysis of Diplomatic Relations (Bangkok: Thai Watthana Panich Press, 1975) pp. 27-46.

3. For detail see Tej Bunnag, op.cit., pp. 99-118; and Chakkrit Noranithiphadungkan, Somdet Phrachao Boromawongthoe Krom Phraya Damrong Rajanubhab kap Krasuang Mahatthai (Prince Damrong Rejanubhab and Ministry of Interior) (Bangkok: NIDA, 1963).

aged by this success, the Act concerning District Administration (Phraratchabanyat Laksana Pokhrong Thongthin) was promulgated in May 1897 and followed by Regulations Concerning Provincial Administration (Kho Bangkhap Pokkhrong Huamuang) in 1899. The act and regulations formulated rules for the organization of the provincial, district, commune, and village administration.

Under the new structure, the system of local administration was centralized under the control of the Minister of Interior. For administrative purposes the whole country was geographically divided into monthon (circles), changwat (provinces), amphur (districts), tambon (communes) and muban (villages). These territorial divisions, except the lowest two, were administered by salaried government officials sent from the Ministry of Interior. There were 22 monthon in 1915. Each monthon was under the supervision of a superintendent commissioner (Khaluang Thesaphiban) - formerly the high commissioner. Each changwat was administered by a governor responsible to the superintendent commissioner. A changwat was divided into districts (amphur) whose head was a nai amphur (district officer). The commune was administered by a commune headman who was elected by the village headman (Phuyai ban). The village headman was responsible for administrative tasks in his village and was elected by the villagers. The commune and village headmen were supervised by the district officer.

The reform proved successful although it took time for the Ministry of Interior to check the provincial power of some great families. The country gradually became so effectively centralized that a Western scholar remarks that Thailand at this period was a more stable and integrated society than were most other Asian countries.¹

1. Lucian W. Pye, Southeast Asia's Political Systems (New Jersey, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1967), p. 23. See also Wyatt, 'Family Politics in Nineteenth Century Thailand' in Clark D. Neher (ed.), Modern Thai Politics: From Village to Nation (1976).

In the reform of the provincial administration the government discovered the provincial Sangha was an imperfect imitation of the civil administrative hierarchy, and was in a state of disrepair. The reasons for this were manifold.

First, although the predecessors of Chulalongkorn, notably Rama I and Rama IV (Mongkut), had established many of the principles which were to form the important bases of the national religion, there was no single body of Sangha law aiming at the unification of the Sangha. Furthermore, prior to the late nineteenth century, the Thai political rulers had little concern with the state of religion and the Sangha as they existed in the 'Lao' tributaries, i.e. in the areas which are today North Thailand, North-East Thailand, and Laos proper. Keyes suggests that although the people in these areas were Theravada Buddhists, their local version of Buddhism and practice was different from what the central political leaders conceived as the orthodoxy of Buddhism.¹ The majority of people in the North, for example, adhered to the local version of Theravada Buddhism known as the Yuan cult. Keyes described the distinctive character of this kind of Buddhism thus:

"It differs from the variant in Siam proper (Central and North Central Thailand) in the script used for sacred literature, in the structure and content of rituals, and in the organization of the Buddhist clergy or Sangha.... The Yuan church in the 19th century was relatively unstructured. Each temple (wat) had autonomy, and its clergy was only minimally tied to clergy elsewhere. Powers to ordain monks and novices belonged to the senior monk in each temple and he in turn could pass his power on to one of his followers when he was near death".²

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1. Charles F. Keyes, 'Buddhism and National Integration in Thailand', Asian Studies, Vol. 30, No. 3, May 1971, pp. 552-555.
 2. Ibid., p. 552. For more details see, for example, W.C. Dodd, The Tai Race (Cedar Rapids, Torch Press, 1923) pp. 75-78; Ferguson and Schalardchai, op.cit., pp. 124-135; Sanguan Chottisukkharat, Prawat Kruba Sriwichai Nakbun haeng Lanna Thai (Biography of Kruba Sriwichai: Lanna Thai Saint) (Cheingmai, Sanguan Press, 1963).

Moreover, the Sangha of the Yuan tradition appeared to have had little hierarchical organization. It has been suggested that some leaders of this church were very popular for their presumed magical powers, and attracted large followings. Their influence was such that they defied the Sangha authority in Bangkok, and the Thai officials in the North feared that they would lead a millenarian movement with revolutionary implications.¹ A similar situation in terms of autonomy was also reported to have been found in the North-East.² A millenarian uprising took place there in 1902. The leader of the movement was an ex-monk who claimed to possess magical powers acquired during his sojourn in the monkhood.³

Second, the lack of a systematic and clearly defined Sangha administration encouraged the formation of dependent relationships between the large monasteries and the lesser monasteries. These dependent relationships had arisen from the relationships of teacher to student, leader to follower, and of group allegiance. The network of dependent relationships might have been in existence a long time, but only came to the notice of the civil authority in the 1890s.

The main problem was that the informal teacher-student, and parent-dependent monastery network effectively bypassed the formal structure of authority within and without the Sangha. Thus many monasteries were semi-independent of the formal control of the civil and Sangha

1. Keyes, ibid., pp. 557-558; Chottisukkharat, ibid., pp. 16, 23-24.
2. For details see Prince Wachirayan Warorot, Kan Kana Song (On the Sangha Affairs) (Bangkok: Mahamakut Educational Council, 1971).
3. See Tej Bunnag, 'Kabot Phumibun phak Isan R.S. 121' (Millenarian Revolt in Northeastern Thailand, 1902) in Sangkomsat Parithat, Vol. 5, 1967, pp. 78-86; Damrong Rejanubhab, Nithan Borankadi (Historical Anecdotes) (Bangkok: Phrae Phitthaya, 1971) pp. 335-338; Keyes, 'The Power of Merit' in Visakha Puja B.E. 2516, and 'Millenialism, Theravada Buddhism, and Thai Society', Asian Studies, Vol. 36, No. 2 (1977) pp. 283-302.

authorities. For example, in provinces all abbots were supposed to be under the supervision of the Sangha provincial governor. But if the abbots grew discontented with the provincial head, they could subordinate themselves to their parent monasteries and limit their co-operation with the formal authorities. Another manifestation of dependency was that appeals could be made to the parent monastery to resolve dispute or adjudicate on infractions of the Vinaya, instead of seeking intervention from the formal authorities.¹

Finally, the reorganization of the Sangha in the provinces was also intended to be an instrument for the accomplishment of the government policy of national education in the 1890s. In this effort the government heavily relied on the assistance and co-operation of the Sangha. The king appointed his younger brother, Prince Wachirayan Warorot, who was then the de facto head of the Sangha, to be one of the directors of the educational reform programme. Wachirayan Warorot was designated as the organizer of the religion and education of the Buddhist population. It was decided that the national education scheme would be implemented by 23 high ranking monks appointed in each monthon. These monks were called 'education directors' and worked under the direct supervision of Wachirayan Warorot and the civil authorities. After having made preliminary investigations, it became clear to the civil and Sangha authorities in Bangkok that the chances of success of educational reform in the provinces depended largely on the active co-operation of the provincial Sangha. This was because in the beginning the government schools would still be attached to the monasteries. Furthermore, the government did not have as yet enough trained personnel to replace the

1. A well documented analysis of dependent relationships is in C.J. Reynolds, op.cit., pp. 224-233.

monks to teach in and to run the schools. Government goals could only be realized when the Sangha administration was systematically organized and centralized in line with the civil administrative structure, and the provincial monks became responsive to government policy.¹ It was also believed that state education and faith in Buddhism could flourish only if there was a centralized Sangha with a clear-cut chain of authority, and rationalized procedures for maintaining the purity of the Sangha.²

In summary, the thrust for the reform of the Sangha administration came from the need for national integration and the unification of the Sangha itself, the need for harmony between the Sangha and the civil administration, and the need to purify the Sangha. It was on these grounds the government promulgated the Buddhist Church Administration Act of 1902 (Sangha Act 1902).

(b) The Sangha Act of 1902

The Sangha Act of 1902 reflected the traditional notion that the progress and prosperity of the nation and Buddhism were inter-related. This is clearly stated in the preamble to the Act, thus:

"Whereas the amendment of the law and the reformation of the administrative system of the State have brought about manifold developments and outstanding progress to the country..... It is obvious that the religious affairs of the Buddhist Church are also of no less importance to the development and prosperity both of Buddhism and of the country in that, systematically administered, they will serve to attract more people... to Buddhism under the guidance of Bhikkus, thereby leading them to the right mode of living in accordance with the Buddha's instructions".

1. For fuller detail see David K. Wyatt, The Politics of Reform, pp. 210-253.

2. Reynolds, op.cit., p. 253.

The Act was also designed to create a systematic and unified national Sangha hierarchy for the first time in Thai history and to establish a centralized authority for all monks who could control the decisions of the lower ranks. The main features of the Sangha administration and its relation to the political authority can be briefly described as follows:

1. The central administration consisted of four Chao kana Yai (Sangha General Governors) each of which was the head of a section. These sections were three - North, South and Central - for the Mahanikai order, and one for the Thammayut order. Each Sangha General Governor had one deputy (Vice General Governor). The eight of them constituted the Mahatherasamakom or Council of Elders. This was the highest authority in the Sangha hierarchy acting as an administrative body and an ecclesiastical tribunal. The Mahatherasamakom was also advisory committee to the king in ecclesiastical affairs and administration. The Mahatherasamakom performed its administrative and judicial functions and exercised its authority under the supervision of the king (under His Majesty's Grace).¹ It should be noted that the Act does not mention the office of Supreme Patriarch. At the time the Minister of Public Instruction (now Minister of Education) acted as secretary to the Mahatherasamakom and implemented its decisions with the consent of the king. Later when Prince Wachirayan Warorot was officially installed as the Supreme Patriarch, he was the president of the Council of Elders and the person in whom authority was centralized. However, his exercise of power was to be approved by the king.

1. Sangha Act 1902, Article 4.

2. The provincial administration of the Sangha was designed to parallel the provincial administration of the civil government. It was hierarchically organized into monthon (circles), changwat (provinces), districts (amphur or kwang), commune (tamban), and, at the bottom, the village wat. Each level had Sangha administrators who worked in liaison with the civil authorities. The top administrator in each monthon was chao kana monthon (corresponding to Khaluang Thesaphiban) who was at least the holder of Phraracha kana rank and was appointed by the king. His main function was to supervise the monks in his jurisdiction and to execute the decisions of the Council of Elders. The rest of his functions were largely common to each level, such as appointing the lower administrators at district level, helping his immediate subordinates solve problems, judging appeals against subordinates' decisions, and recommending the promotion of monks under his supervision.

Below him were Chao kana muang or changwat (provincial Sangha governors) who were also royal appointees. The functions of each incumbent were similar to that of the Chao kana monthon, though his authority was restricted to his province. The head of the Sangha administrators at the district level was Chao kana amphur or kwang. In the province of Bangkok he was appointed by the king from Phraracha kana rank. In other provinces, he was appointed by Chao kana monthon on the recommendation of Chao kana changwat. He was assisted by Chao kana tambon who presumably were his appointees and who were responsible for the administration of Sangha affairs in the commune.

At the bottom of the Sangha hierarchy was the wat headed by the abbot (Chao awat). Generally, the abbot of a royal wat was appointed by the king. Otherwise, the appointment was made through the Chao kana kwang by the consent of the monks in that wat and the laymen who supported the wat.

3. The Act explicitly indicated the controlling power of the political authority. The king either directly, or indirectly through his civil officials, supervised the important ecclesiastical appointments. He personally made appointments in the capital and, by controlling the conferrment of Samanasak, regulated the high-level appointments in the provinces. The Council of Elders was to regulate Sangha affairs under 'His Majesty's Grace'. Moreover, appointments in the provincial Sangha were to be approved by the civil authority, i.e. the provincial governor. The Department of Religious Affairs supervised and controlled the management of Sangha's properties, the establishment or abolition of monasteries, the registration of monks, and the conduct of the monks. In conclusion, the Sangha Act of 1902 enabled the political authority to keep tight control over the Sangha.

This Act remained in force until it was replaced by a new Sangha Act in 1941.

(c) The Sangha Act 1941

The introduction of this Act appears to have been a very much long-term result of the June 1932 Revolution.¹ The 1932 Revolution brought about an end to absolute monarchy and replaced it with the conventional Western institution of constitutional government. The idea of separation of power was advocated; a parliamentary form of government, a responsible cabinet headed by a prime minister, an independent judicial system, political parties, and an electoral system were also introduced. After 1932, the new ruling elites sought legitimacy for a democratic

1. For detail of causes and consequences of the 1932 Revolution see: Thawat Mokaraphong, History of Thai Revolution (Bangkok: Odian Store Press, 1972); David A. Wilson, Politics in Thailand; and Kaitthichai Phongphanit, Kan Pathiwat 2475 (The 1932 Revolution) (Bangkok: Phadung Witthaya, 1971).

form of government by propagating the ideals of equality, freedom, liberty, and representative government at the expense of the defects of the previous authoritarian regime.

These Western notions of democracy penetrated into the Sangha. Some monks, who were fascinated and excited by these new political ideas, expressed the view that the Sangha authority structure should be more democratized and the Sangha administration should follow democratic principles. At the time of the 1932 Revolution, we are told:

The new political ideas penetrated into the temple grounds..... Novices and young monks were some times requested not to leave the temple grounds during the period of revolutionary activity. The pull was too great, however. The roads of Bangkok were dotted with yellow robes during the exciting days. Some temples forbade discussion of political subjects. There were people who suggested that a democratic form of government was needed in the temples as well as elsewhere. To this some of the head priests agreed. Many more objected.¹

There were also protests against some administrative monks and the general character of the Sangha authority structure. This was well reported by Virginia Thompson:

Among the welter of petitions that greeted the new regime were some monks asking for the transfer of certain provincial officials who had been approved by the church authorities. By September 1932 many monks had formed themselves into parties in order to do away with the control of the lord abbots. This threw the abbots, whose attitude toward the revolution had not crystallized until then, onto the side of the government, which in turn strengthened their position by protective legislation. That this did not entirely liquidate the movement among the monks was apparent when the patriarch ordered thirty-three monks to retire in January 1933 because they had tried to force their abbot to hand over power to them. In February 1935 a delegation representing some two thousand monks from twelve provinces arrived in Bangkok to petition the Premier to bring government control of the Buddhist Church into line with the democratic regime.²

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1. Kenneth P. Landon, Siam in Transition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939) p. 216.
 2. Virginia Thompson, Thailand: the New Siam (New York: Macmillan, 1941) p. 642.

There was very little Thai written evidence available to prove that the influence of the movement 'for democracy in the Sangha' of the monks had enough impact for the promulgation of a new Sangha Act. It would be misleading to speculate that the promulgation of the Sangha Act 1941 was a result of a single movement of dissident monks. Rather, it was a result of a number of factors combined. Two probably major factors which encouraged the legislation were, firstly, the widespread Western idea of democracy which was spurred on by the anti-authoritarian stance of the new commoner-recruited political leaders, and secondly, the commitment of these leaders to live up to their ideology, i.e. to do away with anything deemed authoritarian. It might have been for these reasons that the government agreed to liberalize the structure of the Sangha authority. Ishii interprets the legislation of the Sangha Act 1941 as 'an experiment to introduce the Buddhist order to the principles of democracy, i.e. the idea of the separation of administration, legislature, and judicature'.¹ Accordingly, the administrative structure of the Sangha became once again a replica of the political and administrative system of the civil government.

The main features of the Sangha administration were briefly:

(1) The Supreme Patriarch (Somdet Phra Sangharat) was the head of the whole Sangha. He was appointed by the king and held the office for life. He was empowered to issue ecclesiastical regulations or orders through and by consent of the Sangha Sapha. He exercised administrative power through and by consent of the Kana Sangha Montri; and exercised judicial power through and by consent of the Kana Winaithorn.²

1. Yoneo Ishii, 'Church and State in Thailand', Asian Survey, Vol. 8, No. 10, October 1968, p. 867.

2. Sangha Act 1941, Articles 5-9.

2. The Sangha Sapha (or Ecclesiastical Assembly corresponding to the legislature) consisted of not more than 45 life-long members who were appointed by the Supreme Patriarch mainly on the basis of seniority.¹ Its chief function was to legislate ecclesiastical orders and regulations concerning the mode of practice, the conduct of monks, and the penalty for the monks who violated the Vinaya and Sangha Act. It also had power to investigate into Sangha activities.²

3. The Kana Sangha Montri (or Ecclesiastical Cabinet corresponding to the executive branch in the civil government) was composed of the Sangha Nayok (corresponding to the Prime Minister) and not more than nine Sangha Montri whose positions were equivalent to those of members of the cabinet in the civil government. All of them were appointed by the Supreme Patriarch and had tenure for four years. Among the nine members, at least four of them must be appointed from the members of the Sangha Sapha. The main function of the ecclesiastical cabinet was to administer the Sangha.³

4. The central administration was divided into four departments: Ongkan Pokkhrong (administration), Ongkan Suksa (education), Ongkan Phoeyphae (propagation), and Ongkan Satharanupakan (public works). Each department was headed by a Sangha Montri, but the whole cabinet was collectively responsible for their decisions.⁴

5. For the purposes of local Sangha administration, the whole country was divided, parallel to the civil administration, into nine phak (regions)

1. Ibid., Articles 11, 15.

2. Ibid., Articles 16, 21-23, 25.

3. Ibid., Articles 28-30.

4. Ibid., Articles 30, 33.

and 71 provinces (changwat). Each province was further divided into amphur (districts), which consisted of communes (tambon), each of which in turn consisted of villages (muban). The head administrative monks of these units were Chao kana-phak, -changwat, -amphur, and -tambon respectively. The head of a village wat was Chao awat (abbot). Each area was hierarchically controlled and supervised by an ecclesiastical committee headed by the Chao kana of each level.

6. The Kana Winaithorn or ecclesiastical court corresponded to the civil judiciary and consisted of three levels: Kana Winaithorn-Chan diga, -chan utthorn and -chan ton.¹ These corresponded to the supreme court, court of appeal and court of first instance, respectively.

Yet however many democratic features the Sangha administration may appear to have had, it was not beyond the control of the political authority. The Supreme Patriarch was appointed by the king, who as a constitutional monarch, acted on the advice of the government. The Minister of Education had power to issue ministerial regulations for the implementation of the Act, to countersign the appointment of the president and vice-president of the Sangha Sapha, to attend the meetings of the Sangha Sapha and to submit proposals for its deliberation, to determine the day on which its session should open and request the convening of special sessions,² to grant or withhold permission for the publication of any matter discussed in the Sangha Sapha and the Kana Sangha Montri and to countersign the appointment of the members of Sangha Montri.³ Furthermore, the Minister of Education could overrule the decision of the Sangha Sapha.⁴ With regard to the property of the

1. Ibid., Articles 50-52.

2. Ibid., Articles 4, 12, 14, 16.

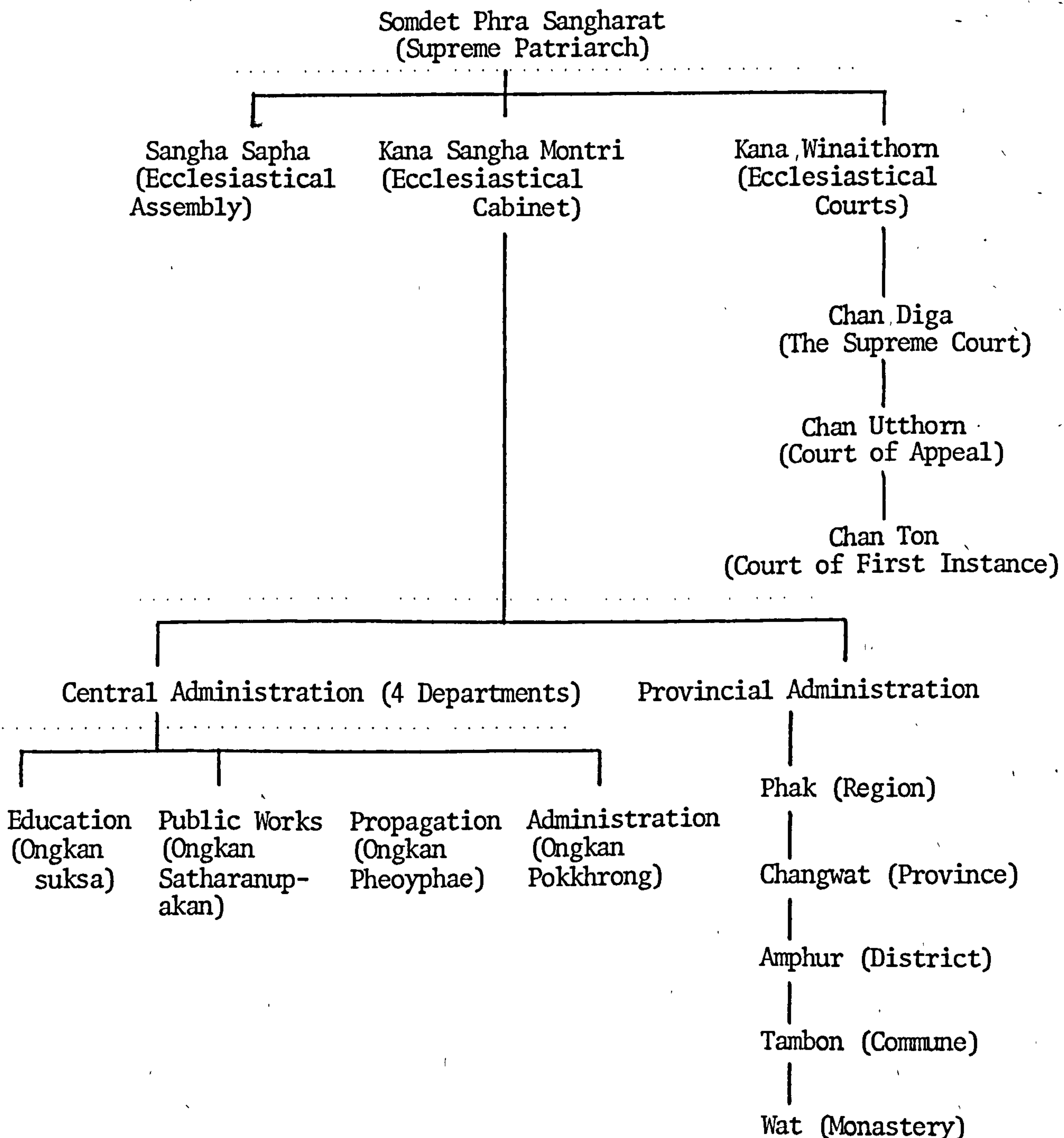
3. Ibid., Articles 19-20, 27.

4. Ibid., Article 28.

Sangha as a whole and of the individual wat, the Ministry of Education reserved the right to intervene at any time in any matter.¹

Based on this Act, the administrative structure may be seen as follows:

Table 5 The Administrative Structure of Sangha based on Sangha Act 1941



1. Ibid., Articles 47-49.

The democratic reform of the Sangha administration seemed to work smoothly at first, but the principle of separation of power which was the prime spirit of the Sangha Act 1941 permitted the re-emergence of long dormant disputes between the two sects (nikai) - the Mahanikai order and the Thammayut order. The Mahanikai order was, and still is, the majority order controlling about 93 per cent of monks in the country, but the prestigious minority Thammayut order, owing to its close association with the royal family and its reputation for disciplinary strictness, had long controlled a significant proportion of the powerful positions in the upper levels of the Sangha administration. This perennial confrontation was worsened by a number of factors which justified the intervention of the government and brought an end to the democratic character of the Sangha administration. The Sangha Act 1941 was abolished in 1962 and replaced by the Sangha Act of 1962.

(d) The Sangha Act 1962

The 1962 Sangha Act stemmed directly from the assumption of power by Sarit Thanarat through coup d'etat in 1957 and in October 1958. The reasons for the 1958 coup were announced as follows:

1. The growing menace of communism was undermining the basic foundations of the state by attempting to uproot the monarchy, destroy Buddhism, and overthrow institutions of all types which the Thai nation cherished.
2. Several parties had made a mockery of the constitution by their selfish manipulation of democracy. Their abuse of privileges and liberties provided by the constitution had obstructed national progress, created rifts within the nation, and made people enemies of each other. This would lead to the eventual disintegration and fall of the nation. These national ills could not be solved by the mere act of replacing the government. It needed a major transformation.....
3. External threats to the country created by the deteriorating situation in Indo-China by the communist aggression ... needed to be remedied.¹

1. Prakat kana Pathiwat Chabab Thi 8 (Revolutionary Council's Announcement No. 8), 20 October 1958.

In contrast to his predecessors, Sarit was doubtful about Western democratic government as an effective means to modernize the country. In spite of pretending to be a constitutional leader, he stated openly that Thailand was not ready for Western-style representative government and that the post-1932 experiments had been a failure.¹ He abolished the constitution, dissolved Parliament, banned all political parties, and replaced them with a system of military dictatorship. In place of symbols of democracy, i.e. constitution, people's assembly, and representative government, Sarit introduced and invoked certain other political labels in Thai political life. These were national development, national integration, and the perils of communism. These political symbols were used to initiate, explain, defend and legitimize his political actions. To Sarit national development and national integration were seen as a means of modernizing the country through which national security and political stability could be achieved. While the peril of communism was conceived of as constituting a major cause for national disintegration, and as being a hindrance to national development and thereby a threat to national security and political stability. Being aware of the importance of the traditional institutions of monarchy and religion, Sarit appears to have employed the strategy of invoking and popularizing these two collective identity symbols of the nation to promote certain politico-economic objectives of national development and national integration.

As far as the Sangha is concerned Sarit considered that if the Sangha was to be an effective tool for national advancement, it must be strong, disciplined, and well organized. The internal discord of the

1. Kaitthichai Pongphanit, op.cit., pp. 40-43.

Sangha and its inability to overcome it troubled Sarit and seemed to him intolerable. He therefore made a move to impress his own will on the Sangha. In October 1960 he announced that

"The government always holds the nation, religion and monarchy in esteem. The 250,000 monks and novices have always been respected and given privileges over common people in that they have free accommodation, a good livelihood without engaging in any work, pay no tax, are exempted from army conscription and therefore risk no danger. The only request from the government is that they be pure, leading an ascetic life, be disciplined in the Vinaya, and perpetuate Buddhism.

Now there has been a long and chronic discord in the Sangha which is worrying the people and government..... If the Sangha cannot settle the dispute and asks the government to intervene, the government will co-operate within the legal framework. The government hopes that the dispute will be settled in the frame of Vinaya, ecclesiastical regulations, and by the Sangha itself. But if there should be any ill intentions causing deterioration to Buddhism, presenting trouble and difficulty for the maintenance of law and order, and above all threatening national stability, this government will have to intervene in Sangha affairs to the utmost degree".¹

The government did intervene and the monk who was accused of causing trouble was removed from his administrative position and stripped of his honorific title by government order on 11 November 1960. Nevertheless, Sarit decided to reorganize the Sangha two years later. In this he is said to have been supported by the top administrative Sangha. They were in agreement with the government that the Sangha Act 1941 had only caused schism within the Sangha. This is because the Sangha Sapha had become a forum for conflicting views. The members were bound to divide into those for and those against the motion under discussion,

1. Prime Minister's Office, Kam Thaleangkan khong Ratthaban Raung Kwam penpai nai Kana song (Announcement of the Government concerning the Disputes within the Sangha) 28 October 1960.

and then the voting caused further division in the Sangha.¹ For the authoritarian government the Sangha Act 1941 with its democratic spirit was no longer suitable for the Sangha administration. This is clearly expressed in the statement appended to the 1962 Act:

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

Sarit himself had told the top Sangha administrators that:

It is the intention of the government that the Sangha Act 1962 should be passed in order to re-organize the Sangha so that it would be as similar as possible to that pertaining in the Buddha's lifetime, and that it is the intention of the government to give support in every possible way to Buddhism which has been the Thai's religion from time immemorial and whose culture is deeply ingrained in the national stability and character.²

The main features of the Act can be summarized as follows:

1. At the apex of the Sangha hierarchy is the Supreme Patriarch (Somdet Phra Sangharat) appointed by the king. He is given supreme authority in the government of the Sangha to appoint and dismiss members of Mahatherasamakom, and to issue patriarchal commands.³

2. The Mahatherasamakom (Council of Elders) was created as a single

1. Kamahuno (pseud.), Phutthasatsana samrab samanchon (Buddhism for the Common Man) (Bangkok: Aksornsamphan, 1964) p. 148.

2. Office of the Prime Minister, The Prime Minister's Message to the President of the Council of Elders on the Opening Ceremony of the First Session of the Meeting of the Council of Elders, dated 21 January 1963.

3. Sangha Act 1962, Articles 7-8, 12-13.

administrative body to replace the former Sangha Sapha, Sangha Montri, and Kana Winaithorn. It is responsible for the administration of the Sangha, and for administrative purposes, it is empowered to issue the Mahatherasamakom regulations and orders, and acts as advisor to the Supreme Patriarch.¹ The Mahatherasamakom consists of all Somdet Phraracha kana as ex-officio members, and four to eight members from Phraracha kana rank appointed by the Supreme Patriarch.² The appointed members hold the office for two years and can be reappointed.³ The Supreme Patriarch himself is the ex-officio President of the Mahatherasamakom. The Director-General of the Department of Religious Affairs is the ex-officio Secretary General and his department is the General Secretariat Office of the Mahatherasamakom. Thus, the whole of the Sangha affairs are closely controlled and supervised, through the Secretary General, by the government.

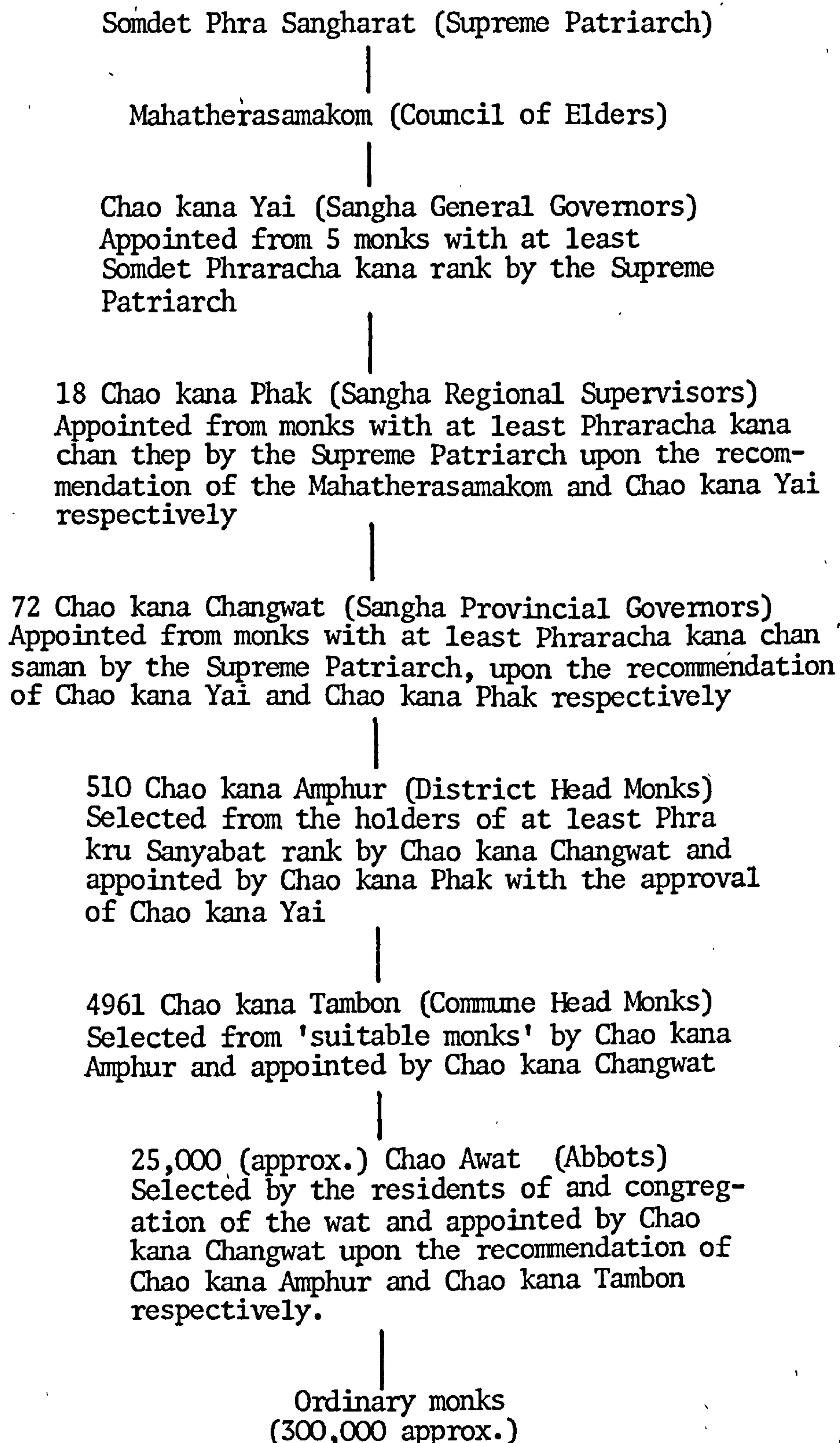
3. The Act keeps intact the hierarchical provincial administration ranging from region (phak), province (changwat), district (amphur), and commune (tambon) to village (muban). The organization of the administrative structure of the Sangha continues to parallel the structure of the civil government. Here again honorific titles play an important role in determining a monk's position in the administrative hierarchy, especially at district level and upwards. The provincial administrators in the Sangha hierarchy in descending order are illustrated in the following chart.

1. Ibid., Article 18.

2. Ibid., Article 12.

3. Ibid., Article 14.

Table 6 Organization of the Sangha administration illustrating hierarchical line of control and appointment*



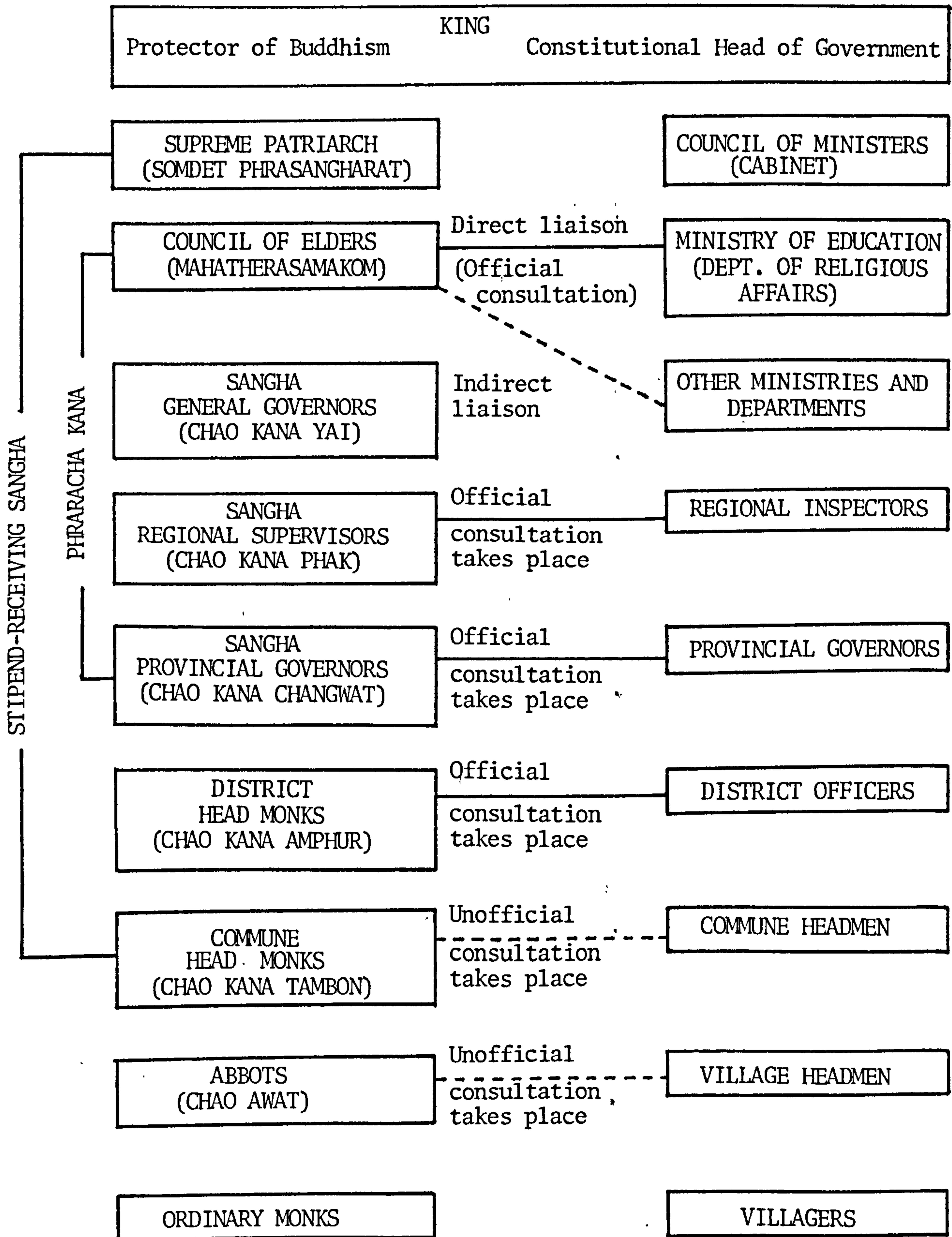
* Elaborated from Sangha Act 1962 and Mahatherasamakom's Regulation No. 5, 1963. The population figures refer to 1975.

The 18 Chao kana Phak are the head administrators of the 18 regions. Their term of office is four years and they may be re-appointed. Each is assisted by a deputy who should have similar qualifications. The Chao kana Phak's main function is to supervise the Sangha administration in his region and be responsible to the Chao kana Yai. Each Chao kana Changwat is assisted by a deputy. The main function of the Chao kana Changwat is to supervise the Sangha activities in their provinces and they are responsible to the Chao kana Phak. The chief administrators of the district Sangha are Chao kana Amphur who supervise the Chao kana Tambon who, in turn, supervise the abbots and are responsible for the Sangha affairs at commune and village levels. An abbot is responsible for supervising the monks and novices in his wat.¹

The relationship between the Sangha organization and the government is shown in Table 7.

1. For more detail about the organization and responsibilities of these administrative monks see Sangha Act 1962, Articles 20-23, 36-38; and also Kot Mahatherasamakom chabab thi 5 B.E. 2506 (Regulations No. 5, 1963).

Table 7 Administrative Structure of the Sangha and Its Relationship to the Government



It should be explicitly or implicitly clear from the preceding discussion that changes in the authority and administrative structure of the Sangha in relation to the political authority has, to a major extent, stemmed from the socio-political changes of the time. Symbolically, the political authority justifies its intervention into Sangha affairs and its exertion of control over the Sangha by asserting that this must be done for the sake of the purity of the faith and the Sangha. Politically, the reorganization of the Sangha authority structure by political leaders has frequently been intended to make the religious structure an instrument for the promotion of national government policies. This will become clearer in the following chapter when we examine the political mobilization of the Sangha for politically defined ends.

CHAPTER IV THE POLITICAL MOBILIZATION OF THE MODERN SANGHA

The immediate concern of this chapter is to examine the political mobilization of Buddhism and the Sangha in the process of socio-political change. While recognizing that religious institutions have long been used as a means of political legitimation for rulers and to promote government policy, our immediate interest is focussed on the period since the late 1950s. This is because the political use of religion since that time has been more marked both in form and content than previously. The political mobilization of the Sangha occurred when the rulers thought that national security and integration were threatened, and when they wanted to enhance their legitimacy as a government. It has resulted in the formulation and assumption of new roles by the Sangha which has had to adapt and redefine its former roles.

This chapter therefore investigates various problems that are conceived as threats to national security and integration. It seeks to demonstrate how the rulers have tried to solve these problems, and why they have resorted to traditional institutions such as Buddhism, the Sangha and the monarchy to provide assistance. Justifications for co-operation with the government on the part of the Sangha are also considered. The later part of the chapter is devoted to an examination of the active role of the monks under the direction of the government and the Sangha authorities in programmes instigated for political reasons. The monk's role as government agent in these programmes is conceived as an institutionalized role in contrast to the role of 'political monks' to be discussed in the next chapter.

1. Political Developments leading to the Mobilization of the Sangha

Chapter III ended with the consideration of changes in the internal

structure of the Sangha in the Sangha Acts of 1941 and 1962. To understand the changes in the direction of Sangha activities external to the order, it is necessary to return briefly to 1932 and examine certain political developments since then.

The 1932 Revolution brought an end to the former structure of political power and authority and a shift in the bases of legitimacy. In place of the absolute monarchy, the new ruling elite, comprising the military and civilian bureaucrats, took over political power. The former religio-political ideology of the state was replaced by new political values and symbols. These were the assembly of the people's representatives, a democratic constitution, and a constitutional monarchy. The democratic notion that 'the country belongs to the people' was espoused for the first time.

However, hopes for democracy suffered many setbacks. Since 1932, with few exceptions, major changes in the control of government have been matters confined strictly to small elite groups. The coup d'etat has become a major device for bringing about changes in the possession of power. The political system remains largely authoritarian and the vast majority of the people are still far removed from the political process. Between 1932 and 1976 Thailand has had at least ten constitutions (some of which were labelled 'provisional'); and correspondingly, the popularly elected assembly has been periodically dissolved, often as a direct result of a new coup or a shift of power. Other political institutions for the popular control of the government, such as political parties, have risen and fallen. Political and economic changes have continued to be mediated through the ruling elite.

The ruling elite, whether legitimized by coup or constitution, seems to have been reasonably successful in perpetuating authoritarian

rule. Dr Thinapan Nakata, a Thai political scientist, has attributed the continuity of authoritarianism to the stability of traditional Thai culture which was itself authoritarian. Buddhism, he argued, has played an important part in moulding Thai political culture and submissive attitudes towards political authority.¹ He is supported by some American scholars who consider the stability of Thai political culture to be the result of cultural continuity and the persistence of traditional ideas until the present.²

This view has been reinforced by anthropological evidence that such Buddhist concepts as merit (bun) or virtue (kwarmdi) and demerit (bab) have continued to shape Thai traditional values concerning power and the social order. According to this perspective, merit and demerit determines one's station in life, and the rise and fall of individuals in the social hierarchy.³ One implication of this concept is that merit and power are related. Thus, a person with greater merit has more power or wealth than one who has less merit. David A. Wilson, for example, attributes part of the capacity of Phibun (1944-1957) and Sarit (1957-1963) to maintain authoritarian rule for a long time to their cumulative merit. He suggests that the Thai recognized their political authority partly because:

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1. Thinapan Nakata, The Problems of Democracy in Thailand: A Study of Political Culture and Socialization of College Students (Bangkok: Prae Pitthaya, 1975) pp. 55-64.
 2. For detailed discussion see, for example, James N. Mosel, 'Communication Patterns and Political Socialization in Transitional Thailand' in Lucien W. Pye (ed.), Communication and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), and 'Thai Administrative Behaviour' in William J. Siffin (ed.), Toward the Comparative Study of Public Administration (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959); Siffin, W.J., The Thai Bureaucracy: Institutional Change and Development (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966).
 3. Lucien M. Hanks, 'Merit and Power in the Thai Social Order', American Anthropologist, Vol. 64, No. 6, 1962, pp. 1247-1261, and 'The Thai Social Order as Entourage and Circle' in G. William Skinner and A. Thomas Kirsch (eds.), Change and Persistence in Thai Society (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975) pp. 197-218.

According to Thai thought, moral goodness (merit) results in good fortune, and therefore good fortune is a sign and proof of moral goodness. The content or manifestation of good fortune includes profit or wealth, fame or high rank, praise or good reputation, and happiness. The moral goodness of a man is determined by his merit, which is considered as a cumulative result of his good deeds in many lives.¹

While accepting that the Buddhist concept of merit still serves today, as in the past, as the basis of religious legitimation for the Thai socio-political order, Charles F. Keyes points out that there is a major difference between the old and new concepts of the relationship between merit and power. In the old ideology, the merit of the king was believed to be utilizable for effecting secular political ends. The welfare of the kingdom was tied up with the merit of the king. The people, in turn, either experienced beneficent rule as the result of the king's merit which he compassionately shared with them, or oppressive rule because of the king's relative lack of merit. However, the king's merit is now conceived as manifesting itself at a different, and higher, level of benevolence towards the people of the country. The ruler shares his merit with his subjects primarily in the form of moral welfare. Today, the power to determine the material welfare of the people lies in the hands of the political leaders of the country. While this power cannot be exercised until its holders have been given the king's blessing, the populace no longer thinks of their material welfare as a function of the merit inherited by the king. Rather, the new ideology has opened up the possibility for greater striving among all Thai to realize their own welfare. This new ideology sanctions greater mobility than was possible in traditional Thailand.²

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1. David A. Wilson, Politics in Thailand (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966) pp. 134-135.
 2. Charles F. Keyes, 'The Power of Merit' in Visakha Puja B.E. 2516 (Bangkok: Thai Watthana, 1973) pp. 95-102.

It is difficult to make the legitimizing function of religion explicit in today's political system in Thailand. However, the evidence suggests that religion is still reinterpreted and used to provide support for political rulers committed to modernization. By the same token, the resources of religion may be tapped for the legitimation of change. Since the late 1950s, especially during Sarit's era, and subsequently, the ruling elite have made special efforts to invoke and popularize the oldest and most potent of Thai collective symbols - religion and the monarchy. These two institutions are used to initiate, explain, or defend political actions.

It was Sarit who introduced new ideological elements into Thai political life. These superseded the symbols of the 1932 Revolution of constitution, representative government, and a popularly-elected assembly which Sarit subsequently destroyed. The new ideologies introduced by Sarit have become the legacy of succeeding governments. These are national development (kan patthana prathet), national integration, and anti-communism. In the Thai context, national development encompasses the building up of armed forces and weaponry, the construction of roads and dams, the introduction of rural development, the expansion of education, the extension of bureaucracy, and the sponsoring of economic development schemes by ministries and departments. National integration comprises the policy of integrating the country politically, socially, and economically. It ranges from appeasing and developing the relatively poor and undeveloped North-East, and spreading the Thai language, religion, and custom to the ethnic and cultural minorities in the North, North-East, and the South, to the coercive resettlement of migratory hill peoples. Anti-communism involves the suppression of communist activities in the countryside, especially guerilla activities and insurrections. It has broader implications because there is also

a tendency to label any dissidence as communist. Thus, people who are antagonistic to or directly oppose the ruling elite, and those who advocate changes which are unfavourable to the position, status, and interests of the establishment are only too likely at times to be seen as communists and to be treated accordingly.

It would appear that modern Thai governments see themselves as confronted with two basic problems which must be minimized if they are to be successful in effectively maintaining their rule. These are (i) the problem of communism and (ii) the problem of national integration. We can now consider these problems more closely. They, of course, overlap and they are considered separately only for convenience of presentation.

2. The Problem of Communism

Communism made its initial appearance in Thailand in the late 1920s within the Chinese and Vietnamese communities. In 1931, a communist party was formed and operated under the name of the Chinese Communist Party of Thailand. In the same year, the Vietnamese Communist Party moved its headquarters from Vietnam to North-East Thailand to seek the co-operation of the Vietnamese who lived there. The communist parties are said to have been successful in finding sympathisers among the Thai-Vietnamese, overseas Chinese and some Thai students.¹ Around this time, probably about 1932, the Thai communist committee which later became the

1. For detail about the development and activities of communists in Thailand see, for example: Anan Senakhan et al, Kom thi Rak (Dear Communists) (Bangkok: Pho Samton, 1974); Suchart Sawadisi, Krabuan kan Kommunit nai Prathet Thai (Communist Movement in Thailand) (Bangkok: Phikkhanet, 1974); Thongbai Thongpoud, Kommunit Lardyao (The Lardyao Communists) (Bangkok: Phikkhanet, 1974).

Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), was established and propagated Marxist-Leninist ideology through its publications. Its activities were suppressed after the government passed the first anti-communist law in 1933. As a result the communists went underground and did not re-emerge publicly until 1946 when the anti-communist law was repealed. But this period of tolerance was short-lived. After 1947 the government again began to suppress the communists and they were driven underground once more. Anti-communism reached its climax when the government adopted a policy of suppression of communists as a key stone in maintaining national security. It passed a second Anti-Communist Law in 1952. Thereafter the communists made three major changes in tactics. Having been denied the right of freedom of expression, they abandoned the political arena and took to guerilla warfare; having failed in the capital they turned to the countryside; and having been rebuffed by the integrated communities of the Chao Phraya River, they turned to Thailand's minority groups and dissident peoples living in outlying areas which had long been neglected by the central government.¹ Successful communist activities in neighbouring countries since the 1950s have encouraged the Thai communists to advance their cause by armed resistance and to seek territorial control through protracted warfare in suitable areas.

In the North-East the communists were successful in controlling remote parts of Nakornphanom and Sakonnakorn provinces during 1961-1964, and from then onwards they used these areas as support bases. After 1964, the communists also adopted a strategy of infiltrating into the cities and used urban areas to support their activities in the countryside. At the same time their fighting units were increased; and

1. Alessandro Cassella, 'Communism and Insurrection in Thailand', The World Today, May 1970, pp. 200-201.

territorial expansion through armed struggle was encouraged. Thereafter, localized and limited warfare frequently occurred between various communist fighting units and government forces in remote villages throughout the countryside.¹ Little by little communism expanded into the rest of the North-Eastern region. From 1965 onwards, the communist insurrection was so active and widespread that police forces alone could not contain it and the army had to be brought in to support them.

In the North, the insurrection in the beginning was concentrated in the provinces of Petchabun, Nan, Tak, and Chiangrai. The hard core of the communist fighting forces is said to have been the hill peoples, especially the aggressive and mobile Meo who were supported by Vietnamese and Chinese communists, both in training and logistics. Before 1967 there was little evidence of insurrection among the hill peoples. Then the communists were able to turn the hill peoples' grievances against the government to their advantage. The grievances included official restrictions on traditional economic activities, including opium growing and trading, and swidden agriculture. The hill peoples had not responded to economic and social incentives provided by the government to induce them to resettle among the lowland rice-growing peoples. The government sent the police forces to implement its policy. This harsh measure only caused animosity and improved the chances of communist infiltration. Sporadic clashes with the police occurred and gradually increased in frequency and violence. It became clear to the government that the hill peoples were not fighting alone, but were receiving logistic support from communists in Laos, Vietnam, and China. They were

1. Anan Senakhan, op.cit., especially appendices A, B and C; see also Ross Prizzia, 'Evolution of the Thai Communist Movement', Rathasat Nithet (Political Science Review), Vol. 10, No. 2, 1975, pp. 95-107.

given guerilla training by communist instructors and indoctrinated with communist ideology. From 1967, the Northern insurrection began to expand and became second only to the North-East in the extent of its activities.¹ The government reacted by sending military forces to support the police. This involved bombing and included the indiscriminate use of napalm. The misdirected air strikes only helped the dissidents to gain more sympathizers and to recruit more guerillas.² By 1973, the insurgency had expanded to cover several areas in the provinces of Pitsanulok, Loei, Prae, and Uttaradit. Since then the insurgents have made it impossible for Thai security forces to enter the special insurgency zones, except as large and heavily armed units.³

In the South, communist disturbances emerged as early as the late 1940s in the four provinces of Yala, Pattani, Satun, and Narathiwat bordering on Malaysia. Here again the communists managed to exploit an existing secessionist movement and grievances against the government among Thai Muslims.⁴

The early communist organization is believed to have come from the remnants of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) who fled the Malayan government during 1948-1958 and came across the Thai border for sanctuary. Since 1958 the MPC had used the Thai-Malaysian border zone as its base

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1. Frank C. Darling, 'Rural Insurgencies in Thailand: A Comparative Analysis', Southeast Asian Spectrum, Vol. 3, No. 3, April 1975, pp. 15-16.
 2. Cassella, *op.cit.*, p. 204.
 3. Darling, *op.cit.*, p. 15; Prizzia, *op.cit.*, p. 94; see also David Morell, 'Thailand ...', Asian Survey, Vol. 13, No. 2, February 1973, pp. 170-172.
 4. For more detail see: Apai Chandawimon, Panha si Changwat Phak Tai (Problems in the Four Southern Provinces) (Lopburi: Pra Narai Regiment Press, 1963); Darling, *ibid.*

for conducting operations against the Malaysian government. It is believed that the MCP has co-operated with the secessionist movement in activities against the Thai government. However, it is not clear whether the Thai-Muslim separatist movement is committed to communist ideology. As the MCP was overwhelmingly Chinese, it is difficult to know how much support they could gain among Muslims of Malay stock.¹ David Morell is of the opinion that there is little genuine sympathy or co-operation between the MCP and the separatist movement,² while Suhrke maintains the opposite.³ Whatever the case, the Thai government has seen it as a threat to national security which had to be suppressed. However, by 1970 the insurrection had expanded to the mid-southern provinces of Trang, Surathani, Pattalung, and Nakornsithamarat⁴ where it became evident that insurgents were Thai Buddhists, motivated by Leninist-Maoist ideology and operating under the direction of the Communist Party of Thailand. By 1973, this insurrection had penetrated northwards into areas just south of Bangkok in the provinces of Prachaubkirikan, Petchaburi, and Ratchaburi.

In summary, in most cases the communists have concentrated their subversive activities in the rural areas where there were already deep-seated grievances against the central government.

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1. For more detail about the MCP, see Anthony Short, The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-1960 (London: Muller, 1975)
 2. David Morell, 'Thailand: Military Checkmate', Asian Survey, Vol. 12, No. 2, February 1972, pp. 158-162.
 3. Astri Suhrke, 'The Thai-Muslim: Some Aspects of Minority Integration', Pacific Affairs, Winter 1970-1971, p. 541.
 4. Darling, op.cit., p. 13.

3. The Problem of National Integration

Thailand has a high degree of ethnic and cultural homogeneity. Some 85 to 90 per cent of the population follow a substantially similar way of life based on Buddhist traditions and values. Even so the ethnic and cultural differences of the minorities combined with regional and dialect differences among the majority have been seen as creating a need for a programme of national integration. By national integration I mean the bringing of the various parts of the nation into an integrated whole - to the minimum value consensus necessary for the maintenance of a socio-political order - so that the government can exert its authority throughout its realm.¹

The lack of an integrated nation has long been seen in Thailand as a threat to the security of the nation's borders. The Muslims of the South with their kinship to the Malays, the hill peoples of the North with their links to peoples in Burma, China and Laos, the Lao-speaking peoples of the North-East with ties to Lao across the Mekong, the Khmer of the South-East and their affinity to Cambodia and even the urban Chinese and Vietnamese with their sympathies to their homelands have all been coerced at one time or another to become more Thai in their loyalties. In a sense, there has always been a national policy of integration for these minorities, but of recent years there has been increasing recognition of government neglect of minorities in remote areas through the spread of dissidence, and the realisation that Communism is seeking to subvert the central government by exploiting

1. For elaboration of this concept see, for example, Myron Weiner, 'Political Integration and Political Development', Claude E. Welch Jr. (ed.), Political Modernization: A Reader in Comparative Political Change (California: Wadsworth Publishing Co. Inc., 1971) pp. 180-196; Howard Wriggins, 'National Integration' in Myron Weiner (ed.), Modernization: The Dynamics of Growth (New York, Basic Books, 1966) pp. 181-191.

ancient grievances among the minorities. For this reason, the Thai government since the 1960s has given the policy of national integration a high priority. In this study we will be concerned only with the areas in which the Sangha has been directly involved in government policies of integration, i.e. the North and the North-East.

(a) Minorities in the North

There are six major hill peoples in the North of Thailand. These are, with their estimated populations in 1965-1966: (i) the Akha, 6442; (ii) the Lisu, 9440; (iii) the Lahu, 15,994; (iv) the Yao, 16,119; (v) the Meo, 53,031; and (vi) the Karen, 123,380.¹ They differ from one another considerably in language and culture, and can be further divided into sub-groups by language and dialect.² Most of them live in the hill country on the borders of Thailand, Burma, and Laos, while a few are found in the provinces of Kanchanaburi, Petchaburi, and Ratchaburi. Some are indigenous, but the majority are believed to have migrated to Thailand from Southern China during the past century, while a few have moved from turbulent areas in Burma and Laos during the past few decades.³

These peoples consciously maintain their own identity within Thai social, religious and political life. Most of them are illiterate and have little access to Thai language.

Economically, the hill peoples manage to be self-sufficient with

1. The United Nations, A Report on the Economic and Social Needs of the Opium-producing Areas in Thailand (Bangkok: Government Printing House, 1967) p. 8.
2. For further detail see: Anthony Walker (ed.), Farmers in the Hills: Upland People of North Thailand (Georgetown, Pulau Pinang: Phoenix Press, 1975); Peter Hinton (ed.), Tribesmen and Peasants in North Thailand (Cheingmai: Tribal Research Center, 1969).
3. Kachadphai Burusphat, Panha chon Klummoi nai Prathet thai (Problems Arising from Minorities in Thailand), (Bangkok: Rungruang Tham Press, 1972) pp. 65-66.

regard to food. They grow rice, maize, millet, and vegetables. Opium, produced for trading, is the most valuable cash-crop. Their main method of agriculture is swidden or shifting cultivation.¹

They are organized in village communities, each with a headman who is recognized by the government. He is usually selected by adult male members of the village. He is responsible for the administration of village affairs, the maintenance of public peace and order, the selection of new sites for settlement, and the adjudication of local disputes. At the same time he is the intermediary between the villagers and the government linking the administrative structure of the hill peoples to that of the government. A headman tends to be selected by virtue of his experience, age and wealth. His authority is often balanced by the great authority vested in the elders of the community and in some cases in the ritual leaders.²

Most of the hill peoples are animists. They accept the existence of a multitude of good and bad spirits: spirits of natural phenomena, spirits of dead and living people; guardian spirits; locality spirits and many others. Taoism and ancestor worship are part of the religious ideology of some peoples, notably the Yao and the Meo. Buddhism hardly penetrates into the religious belief of those who have little contact with the lowland people, but is not uncommon among those who have more frequent contacts and those who live in government settlements. This also applies to Christianity. However, these more orthodox religions in no sense undermine local tradition and culture. In almost every

1. F.G.B. Keen, Upland Tenure and Land Use in North Thailand (Bangkok: SEATO Publication, 1973) pp. 21-22; Kachadphai, op.cit., pp. 68-70; Walker, op.cit., pp. 9-10.

2. Kachadphai, ibid.; Department of Public Welfare, Hill Tribes and Welfare in Thailand (Bangkok: 1971) pp. 7-8; Walker, ibid., p. 11.

village, the religious specialists, the shamans (morphi) are important in tribal religious life. A shaman, who may be a male or female, acquires this status by virtue of his or her special supernatural powers. They are invested with high status and are in a position to command respect and obedience from the villagers. Their main functions are to officiate in the worship of spirits and ancestors, to interpret the spirits' intentions to the people, to cure sickness, and to conduct various seasonal rituals. The religious goals are health, fertility, economic prosperity, consensus among men, and harmony between men and the supernatural world.¹

Apart from the few who are partially assimilated into Thai culture, the hill peoples are entirely different ethnically, culturally and linguistically from the Thai. They have neither a consciousness of being Thai nor a sense of belonging to the Thai social structure. They have not been given Thai citizenship, nor was there any attempt to integrate them into Thai society before the 1960s. Under these circumstances, it is very hard to conceive of any motive for loyalty to the government on the part of the hill peoples. On the contrary, they often pose difficulties to the government in many respects. Notably, they are seen as a threat to national security. The main threat to national security, as noted earlier, is communist infiltration, both in the form of ideological indoctrination and logistic support for insurrections. Other problems caused by these people arise from shifting cultivation and opium production.² In an attempt to remedy these problems the government, in addition to suppressive measures, launched a propaganda

1. Walker, ibid.

2. Prapat Charusathien, General, Thailand's Hill Tribes (Bangkok: Department of Public Welfare, 1966) pp. 4-12.

campaign and a development programme for the benefit of the hill peoples.¹

The objectives in promoting the development and welfare programme were as follows:

1. To prevent the destruction of forests and sources of streams, by encouraging sedentary agriculture to replace shifting cultivation.
2. To end opium poppy growing by promoting other means of livelihood.
3. To improve the economic and social conditions of the hill people, so that they may contribute to national development, by promoting community development among hill peoples grouped in settlements.
4. To induce the hill peoples to accept the role of helping to maintain the security of the national frontiers, by instilling in them a sense of belonging to the nation.²

To effect the latter goal in 1965 the government, through the Department of Public Welfare, launched a programme of Buddhist missions to the hill peoples.³ The Sangha was assigned to carry out this programme which attempted to achieve closer integration of the Thai nation through conversion of the hill peoples to Buddhism. We shall discuss this in detail later.

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1. Ibid.; The Government has also at times armed 'loyalists' among the hill tribes, and it is possible that some of these weapons are now being used against it.
 2. Suwan Ruanyot, Krong kan Patthana lae Songserm Chaokhao nai Prathet Thai (The Development and Welfare Schemes for the Hill Tribes in Thailand) (Bangkok: Department of Public Welfare, 1967) pp. 16-19.
 3. Department of Public Welfare, Raingan kan Phoeypphae Phraphutthasatsana kae Chaokhao thang phak nua nai phi 2510 (Report on Buddhist Mission to Tribal People in the North in 1967) (Bangkok: Department of Public Welfare, 1968) p. 28.

(b) Regionalism in the North-East

Among the Thai-speaking people of Thailand, dissidence is most widespread among the Thai-Lao or Isan people of the North-East. These people, who are in some senses ethnically defined, in others regionally, are tied to Thai society by two institutions - Buddhism and the monarchy. For only two decades has the government realized that their regional grievances against central control were becoming a threat to national integration and security. Therefore, since the 1960s, the Thai government has tried to make use of the two linking institutions as a means to integrate these North-Easterners into Thai society. It is in this region that the feeling of regionalism is the strongest; that an organized dissident movement has been most effectively deployed against the central government forces; and that the communist movement has been most successful in winning the support of the people and establishing its strongest bases.

The factors inducing the local feeling of regionalism, the dissidence and rural insurgency, as well as making the region susceptible to communist ideology, lie in the following supposed characteristics of the Isan region: (i) its ethnic distinction from Central Thailand and its similarity to Laos; (ii) the appeal of the Lao separatist movement; (iii) the relative economic deprivation of the region; (iv) the isolation of substantial parts of the population from central government authority; (v) the susceptibility of the Laos and Cambodian borders to the infiltration of hostile elements, Thai or otherwise; (vi) the occurrence of a number of recent acts of violence which are seen as having political motives; and (vii) a history of political dissidence.¹

1. David A. Wilson, 'Introductory Comment on Politics and the North-East', Asian Survey, Vol. 6, No. 7. July 1966, p. 632; and, by the same author, The United States and Future of Thailand (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970) pp. 80-81.

The great majority of Isan people show a high degree of consciousness of their regional and ethnic identity. They possess linguistic and cultural traits which are similar to the Lao of Laos. They are native speakers of a Lao dialect which is different from Central Thai. Sometimes these people call themselves Lao, but in the sense of being indigenous to this region they refer to themselves as Khon Isan (people of Isan), as using the Phasa Isan (Isan language), and as living in the Phak Isan (Isan region). In distinguishing themselves from the rest of the population, the Isan people refer to the others as the Thai. Charles F. Keyes suggests that such a self-identification indicates the sense of regional and ethnic identity of the Isan people.¹

With regard to the relationship with the Lao of Laos, the Isan people and the Lao have shared a common historical heritage and culture. According to John F. Cady, the Isan people were a segment of the Lao people who migrated from what is now Southern China during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and settled in this region and in present-day Laos. For most of the period between the mid-fourteenth and early nineteenth centuries they lived under their own rulers. After the Thai conquered the Lao in 1827, a large number of these people were forcibly absorbed into the Thai kingdom. The Thai government controlled the Lao until 1904 when it lost all Lao areas on the left bank of the Mekong to France.²

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1. Charles F. Keyes, 'Ethnic Identity and Loyalty of Villagers in Northeastern Thailand', Asian Survey, Vol. 6, No. 7, July 1966, pp. 362-367, and Isan: Regionalism in Northeastern Thailand (Cornell University: Cornell-Thailand Project, Interim Report Series No. 10, Data Paper No. 65, 1967) pp. 12-20.
 2. John F. Cady, Southeast Asia: Its Historical Development (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964) pp. 143-149.

Geographically, the Isan region is separated from other regions, and especially Bangkok, by chains of mountains. Direct communication between the capital and the region has always been difficult, though the frequency of contact was increased first by a railway constructed in 1890, and more recently by the American-built highway completed in the late 1950s. In comparison, communication across the Mekong between the Isan region and Laos was much easier. The Isan and Lao people maintain their close cultural and ethnic ties through migration, intermarriage, and trade. The Thai government views these links as partly compromising their efforts to effect stable and enduring national integration. They also see it as likely that elements opposed to them will use these factors to undermine Thai influence and control over the Isan people.¹

Keyes suggests that the superior attitudes adopted by the Central Thai, especially Bangkok people, towards the Isan people help to increase the feeling of Isan regionalism. He points out that the Isan people who had contacts with Bangkok people discovered that the latter thought of them as unsophisticated and uneducated provincials (khon ban nok) who were their social and cultural inferiors.²

Until recently, the ineffectiveness of the public services in the North-East was another factor that reinforced the alienation of the Isan people from the central government.³ In addition, maladministration and abuse of power by government officials have long been among the grievances of these people. As a result, they tend to view government officials with suspicion and apprehension.⁴

1. Keyes, Isan: Regionalism ..., p. 24.

2. Ibid., p. 39.

3. Michael C. Williams, 'Thailand: The Demise of a Traditional Society', Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1973, p. 432.

4. Stephen I. Alpern, 'Insurgency in Northeast Thailand: A Cause for Alarm', Asian Survey, Vol. 15, No. 8, 1975, p. 689.

Economic deprivation has been one of the most significant sources of Isan's grievances. Poor soil and the lack of effective irrigation systems result in production of rice and other cash-crops below the national averages. Prior to the 1950s, the government's objectives in this region were focussed on full incorporation of the region into the administrative structure of the kingdom. Little attention was given to plans for economic development. Average per capita income was less than one-half that of the rest of the country. Only after the Second World War was Isan's poverty brought into focus. Isan MPs since then have become increasingly vocal about local poverty and the neglect of their region.¹ But it was the rising strength of the separatist movement at the time of communist incursions into neighbouring countries in the 1950s, followed by signs of communist infiltration, that made the area a central concern of the government. Anticipating further separatist and communist political developments, the government attempted to forestall them by introducing a special plan for economic and social development of the Isan region in 1961.

The Isan politicians have long shown a tendency to oppose the central government.² Since the 1940s several MPs from this region have had a reputation of radicalism and thus have been regarded as being leftists.³ These MPs consistently brought out Isan's grievances in parliamentary debate and showed strong hostility towards the military and/or authoritarian rule of Phibun (1947-1957). They often demanded a radical improvement in the economic and social conditions of the Isan people. After 1947, the government began to move against some leading

1. Keyes, op.cit., pp. 14-21, 48-49.

2. Wilson, The United States and Future of Thailand, pp. 80-81.

3. Wilson, 'Introductory Comment ...', pp. 633-634.

Isan MPs and their sympathisers. In 1948 many were arrested and initially charged with having conspired to subordinate Thai national identity to a larger communist-dominated South-East Asian Union, and to establish a Siamese republic.¹ Five of them were parliamentarians from Isan and one from the central plain. During their detention, in March 1949, four of them were found dead of gunshot wounds. Some other MPs and sympathisers disappeared in later years and were believed to have been killed in 1952.²

Keyes suggests that this brutality deepened the resentment against the government by the political leaders and people of Isan. It was also critical in shaping subsequent political attitudes in the Isan region.³ Their aspirations were openly demonstrative. For example, in December 1949 four Isan MPs, among others, proposed that Thailand be divided into six autonomous regions of which Isan would be the largest.⁴

During the late 1940s to 1950s there emerged a small group of political parties in Thailand which represented various shadings of what David A. Wilson called 'Thailand's new left parties'. The two most important of these leftist parties were founded by Isan MPs. These were the Setthakorn (Economists) and Seriprachathipathai (Free Democrats).⁵

1. For detail see John Coast, Some Aspects of Siamese Politics (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1953) pp. 42-53; see also Keyes, op.cit., pp. 31-35.
2. Keyes, ibid., p. 34; Darling, op.cit., p. 16.
3. Keyes, ibid., p. 35.
4. Ibid., p. 40.
5. David A. Wilson, 'Thailand and Marxism', Frank N. Trager (ed.), Marxism in Southeast Asia (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959); see also Keyes, ibid., pp. 46-49. These parties became the forerunners of the later Socialist Party (Sangkomniyom) and Socialist Front Party of Thailand (Neoruan Sangkomniyom) of the 1970s.

During 1957-1958, the majority of Isan MPs were in agreement that only through socialism could conditions in the North-East be improved.¹

The socialism of the Isan leaders, the regional aspirations of their people, and the economic deprivation of the area combined were seen by the central government as the 'Isan problem', and as a threat to national security and integration. The Isan problem was also seen as providing the best opportunity for communist elements to advance their cause. Since 1958 the 'Isan problem' and its solutions have become a major preoccupation of the Thai government. They came to the conclusion that suppressive measures by the armed forces and political repression of Isan political leaders alone could not pacify the dissidents and solve the 'Isan problem'; rather, they recognized that it encouraged further alienation. It became clear to them that to resolve the 'Isan problem' the first priority was to 'win the hearts and minds' of the Isan people, i.e. to secure the people's loyalty to the nation through drastic programmes in social and economic development. The first major government programme designed specifically for the development of the North-East came in 1961 when the government promulgated a Five Year Plan for the development of the region. One of the six objectives of this plan was to promote community development, educational facilities, and a public health scheme at the local level.² To effect this objective the Sangha was called upon to give assistance.

1. Keyes, ibid.

2. See National Economic Development Board, The Development Plan For the Northeastern Region, 1962-1966 (Bangkok: National Economic Development Board, 1961).

4. Justifications for the Political Mobilization of the Sangha

In the early 1960s the government became increasingly aware that its secular development schemes were insufficient to counter its problems of subversion and regionalism. Over time evidence had accumulated of its own remoteness from the rural populace and the barriers between its officials and the people. The direct employment of the Sangha in development schemes came to be seen as one solution to these difficulties. This new policy seems to have been based on the following presuppositions: the great majority of the Thai population is Buddhist; the Sangha is held in esteem and enjoys great prestige; the rural monks are known to be influential in village affairs; and the Thai put their trust and confidence in their Sangha.¹ For these reasons the political leaders believed that the Sangha was the best possible agent for the extension of government policies of welfare and national development, and national integration; and for the mobilization of support and encouragement of loyalty to the government. At the same time the Sangha was under fairly tight government control. Through patronage the government could secure the co-operation of the high-ranking monks in the Sangha, and as the Sangha was hierarchically organized from state to village level, it was hoped that this would ensure loyal assistance at village level. The argument that communism jeopardizes Buddhism and threatens the position of the Sangha no less than it does the national interest was a powerful one. For these reasons one can see how the Sangha might be manipulated to effect the government's political ends.

Although the Sangha had been involved in government policies before the 1960s, it was only after 1964-65 that its role in this respect was

1. Discussed in detail in Chapter III.

institutionalized and became conspicuous. The participation of the Sangha in policies which were instigated for political reasons is generally regarded by the Thai as inappropriate and inconsistent with popular Buddhism. It is not surprising therefore that the leaders of the Thai governments during the 1960s and 1970s were careful in introducing this innovation. Their justifications were as follows:

1. According to the speeches of Sarit Thanarat, the Prime Minister from 1958-1963, the Sangha should co-operate in government plans, because the prosperity of the Sangha and the faith were closely related to that of the nation and the government. He emphasized that:

"The prosperity and security of the religion could be realized only if national security is achieved and economic progress is realized. This government emphasizes national development and unity, and will work for it. The Sangha can help the government in many ways..... For example, the Sangha should select only particular Dhamma in teaching the people. That is the teachings that encourages the people to work hard, be self-dependent and honest, and that encourage national unity..... The teachings that hinder progress and undermine national unity should be discouraged.¹

2. In the process of national development the Sangha should adjust its roles to help the government.²

3. The Sangha should help in promoting or building the people's moral values, while the government concentrates its efforts on social

1. Sarit Thanarat, San khong Nayok Ratthamontri thung thi Prachum sammantana Phra Kanathikan thua Ratcha-anachak (The Prime Minister's Message to the Administrative Monks' National Conference) 18 April 1960. Virtually the same arguments about the kinds of teaching suitable for the people (and hence useful for the promotion of government policies) were being put forward by Prime Minister Thanom in 1972 in his speech considered later in this section.
2. See, for example, Praphat Charusathien, Minister of the Interior (1958-1973), 'Botbat khong kana Song nai kan patthana chumchon' (The Sangha's Role in Community Development) in Raingan kitkam khong kronkan Songserm kan Patthana Chumchon khong Kana Song (Report on Activities of the Training Programme for Encouraging the Participation of Monks in Community Development) (Bangkok: Krung Sayam, 1969) pp. 42-44.

and economic development. In essence this argument was that the people were becoming materialistic and neglecting their religion. In consequence, ties of kinship and community were weakening, rendering village society more prone to communist infiltration. A new assertion of religious values would do much to strengthen the community base of Thai society in its fight against communism.¹ The fear of communism and the need to strengthen the people's attachment to Buddhist values was dramatically expressed in a speech to the monks in 1969 by Thanom Kitthikachorn, the Prime Minister from 1963-1973:

"At present people in some parts of the country are threatened by communist terrorists, and some people are particularly vulnerable to the propaganda of insurgents..... It is obvious that the enemy wants to enslave us, to destroy our freedom, our religion, and our king. They are advancing their purposes by inciting the people not to pay respect to and not believe in the Sangha and Buddhism. These really jeopardize our national security and unity".²

What the monks could do in warding off the 'communist danger' was later elaborated by the Director of the Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOS):

"... If the people believe and understand Buddhism superficially, it is dangerous to both religion and national security. This is because the communist has made a great effort to spread the idea that belief in Buddhism is irrational and not responsible to the needs of modern society. To safeguard our national

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1. Puang Suwannarat, Tatsanakati thor Botbat khong Phrasong nai kan Patthana Chumchon (Attitude towards the Sangha's Participation in Community Development) (A Letter from the Under Secretary of Ministry of Interior to the Secretary General of Mahachula Buddhist University, 4 August 1970).
 2. Thanom Kitthikachorn, San khong Nayok ratthamontri thung Phra Dhammatuta (The Prime Minister's Message to Dhammatuta Monks) 8 January 1969. He had in fact been advancing this kind of argument for some years previously; see, for example, Kam Prasai khong Nayok ratthamontri nuang nai okat ngan anusorn sip kao phi khong Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalai (The Prime Minister's Speech on the 19th Anniversary of Mahachula Buddhist University) 18 July 1966.

security the monks should help the government by promoting the people's morality by teaching them a positive and creative Dhamma. True understanding of Buddhism and the possession of high morality will contribute to public peace and ward off communism. Moreover, the Sangha should help the government because the villagers trust the monks more than they trust government officials. Thus, they are in a better position to create an understanding between the government and villagers, and to make the people comprehend the danger of communists".¹

4. The government in its policy was following the teachings of the Buddha that government should always be alert to promote the well being of the governed and the faith. This argument was clearly expressed in a speech by Prime Minister Thanom in 1972:

"... The Sangha has played an important role in national development. The Revolutionary Council has always held Buddhist principles as its guide in government..... It prepares to sacrifice itself for the protection of Buddhism and security thereof. ... The Revolutionary Council follows the teaching of the Buddha in that it is always alert to promote national development, and to administer for the benefits of the people. This teaching is applicable to every member of every institution..... Life can be valuable only if one is directed by two aims: to strive for one's own good (or benefit) and to render services for the benefit of the whole society. The latter is very important because if one thinks only of oneself and does not care for society as a whole, one will be regarded as selfish and, as a result, may be alienated from society. Therefore these two objectives must go together"²

These four justifications were interrelated in a single argument.

The government as protector of Buddhism expected the co-operation of

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1. Saiyud Kerdphon, Tatsanakati thor kan mee suan ruam Patthana chumchon khong Phrasong (Attitude towards the Monks' Participation in Community Development) Official Document, CSOC, dated 31 July 1970.
 2. Mahachula Buddhist University, Kam prasai khong Chomphon Thanom kittikhachorn (Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn's Speech) (BKK: Ratchaborphit Press, 1972) pp. 5-9, 11.

the monkhood in ensuring national security, by them adapting their roles so that they could promote the morality of the people and the welfare of the state. The spiritual goals put forward appear perfectly honourable in themselves. But in fact the government was suggesting to the Sangha that it should select for teaching those parts of the Dhamma which accorded most closely with government interest. For example, the doctrine of Santosa¹ which urges people to be content with what they have, though it accords with the views of the government on the correct submissiveness of the people, was felt to induce complacency towards national development. Instead the doctrine of self-reliance² became the basis of the development programme.

The government, in pushing the Sangha along the path it desired, faced the possibility of alienating the Sangha from itself on the one hand and from the people on the other. Presuming that this could happen then why did it not occur? The reasons included the fear of repressive measures from the authoritarian government against those disturbed by the suggestions, the general complacency of the population, the implied threats to the monkhood by the mention of how their privileges depended on the government, the acceptance of the government's stance and of the measures necessary to combat communism, and the close integration of the Sangha leaders into the establishment. As we shall see in the next sections and later chapters, the reaction of the Sangha was muted up until 1973, when the emergence of a democratic government allowed true opposition to these policies to become public and division to appear within the apparently solid edifice of the Sangha.

1. See Phra Rajavaramuni, A Dictionary of Buddhism (Bangkok: Mahachula Buddhist University, 1975) p. 336.

2. See ibid., p. 85.

5. The Sangha's Responses to Political Mobilization

In the period 1960 to 1973, the Sangha's responses to the government's attempts at their political mobilization assumed different dimensions at different levels of the hierarchy. I consider these in turn below.

At the top administrative level, the members of the Mahatherasamakom were of the opinion that the monks should take part in government policies of national development and national integration, because these brought progress and security to the nation. Their reasons were as follows:

First, they saw it as consistent with the Sangha's responsibility to render services to society. The ideological legitimation for this decision was alleged to be found in the teachings of the Buddha that, because monks depended on the material support of the laity, they are therefore morally obliged to render their services to promote the well-being of laymen.¹ Consequently if the monks do not contribute something to the well-being of society, they will be regarded as social parasites.²

Second, it was maintained that the monks were also morally obliged to help the layman by the virtues of loving-kindness (metta) and compassion (karuna).³ These two virtues established the duty of the monks to be always joyful so that they can take another's misery as their

1. See Pali Pitaka, Vol. 25, quotation 287, p. 314.

2. Phra Ubalikunupamacharn, 'Owart thor Phra Dhammajarik' (Address to Dhammajarik Monks) in Report on the Propagation of Buddhism Among the Hill Tribes (Bangkok: Department of Public Welfare, 1972) p. 12.

3. For elaboration see Phra Rajavaramuni, op.cit., pp. 291, 326, and Siddhi Butr-In, op.cit., pp. 123-130.

own, and express their concern by helping them.

Third, it was maintained that the government and the king gave the Sangha patronage, support, and protection which enabled them to enjoy the satisfaction of the monkhood. In return they should render every possible assistance to these institutions and be loyal to the interests of the nation.¹

Fourth, according to Somdet Phra Wannarat,² there were obvious threats to Buddhism. These were: the animosity of hostile forces, e.g. communism, against Buddhism; the invasion by hostile foreign countries (i.e. North Vietnam, China, and Communist Pathet Laos); the so-called Buddhists who perverted the Dhamma in their teachings; and those materialist Thai who did not adhere to Dhamma and exploited others. All these elements jeopardized Buddhism, so the Sangha's involvement in national development and integration programmes would help defeat the internal and external subversion of the faith and help to restore Buddhism.³

Fifth, the Sangha's involvement in integrating the hill peoples was seen to be especially meritorious. It was asserted by Somdet Phra Wannarat that the hill peoples had always needed Dhamma, but no one could teach them. Thus bringing Dhamma to them was meritorious, and the missionary monks were regarded as following the Buddha's example. In the

1. Phra Ubalikunapamacharn, op.cit., p. 13.

2. He was then an influential member of the Mahatherasamakom and the Director of Phra Dhammatuta Division (Maekong Ngan Phra Dhammatuta). He subsequently became the Supreme Patriarch in 1972.

3. Somdet Phra Wannarat, 'Phra Owat hai kae Phra Dhammajarik' (Address to Phra Dhammajarik), in Raingan kan Pheoyphrae Phutthasatsana nai mu chaokhao (Report on the Propagation of Buddhism Among the Hill Tribes in North Thailand) (Bangkok: Department of Public Welfare, 1967) p. 16.

same way merit would accrue to the government who sponsored the programme while the hill people, being exposed to Dhamma would also gain merit.¹ Moreover, the propagation of Buddhism to these people not only strengthened their morality, but also helped to ward off other undesirable forces (i.e. communism).²

Sixth, the Sangha's participation in government policies, especially as manifested in the Phra Dhammatuta programme,³ was seen as a means to strengthen and restore people's loyalties. This was clearly stressed by Somdet Phra Wannarat:

... through the strengthening of the people's attachment to Dhamma, the people will be loyal to the nation, the king, and the government; by adhering to Buddhism the people will better understand each other, thereby promoting national integration; through national integration people will be unified. Moreover, the monks will lift up the villagers' morale and will help them in their development.⁴

Finally, the Sangha's involvement was necessary because of rapid social changes in Thai society, and the Sangha had to take part in order to maintain its status. In other words the monkhood had to accept and take part in social change or they would become obsolescent and injure the faith. These views were promoted by some prominent monks who were the architects of plans employing monks in community development

1. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

2. Phra Ubalikunapamacharn, op.cit., p. 13.

3. This programme is to be discussed in later sections.

4. Somdet Phra Wannarat, 'Phra Owat hai kae Phra Dhammatuta' (Address to Phra Dhammatuta) in Phra Dhammatuta, Vol. 1, 1969, p. 9.

programmes.¹

The administrative monks at provincial level (Chao kana Changwat) in particular were reported to have shared similar attitudes to those of the top level administrative monks. According to Ruangdej Srimuni and Klausner the administrative monks at this level enthusiastically co-operated with the government. They organized the programmes² to train village monks, such as the abbots and teachers as leaders, and to teach them technical subjects and community development techniques. Religious instruction was also provided. These training courses, lasting from one to three weeks, offered, for example, instruction in a variety of secular subjects³ as well as practical classes in the making of wells, water jars, and water seal latrines. They provided several thousand rural monks with an increased technical competence so that they could more effectively carry out new functions in their village communities.

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1. Details of their views and arguments can be found in their articles. See, for example, Phra Maha Prayut Payutto (now Phra Rajavaramuni who was one of the founders of this programme and who is the Deputy Secretary of Mahachula Buddhist University) 'Problems, Status and Duties of the Sangha in Modern Society', Visakha Puja B.E. 2511 (Bangkok: 1968) pp. 58-72; and 'Botbat khong Phrasong nai Sangkom Thai' (The Sangha's Role in Contemporary Thai Society) in Phuttha-satsana kap Sangkom Thai Patchuban (Buddhism and Contemporary Thai Society) (Bangkok: Sivaporn Press, 1970) pp. 14-22, 56-68; see also Phra Maha Chai Aphakaro, 'Kan Prubprung botbat khong Phrasong' (The Adjustment of the Sangha's Roles) in Kalapruk, Vol. I, No. 1 (Bangkok: 1972) pp. 1-3; and 'Phrasong kap kan Phatthana thongthin' (The Monks and Community Development, in Buddhachak, Vol. 26, No. 5, July 1972, pp. 19-30.
 2. These were the establishment of Sangha Education and Development Centres in many provinces in the North and North-East. They also administered the Phra Dhammatuta and Phra Dhammajarik programmes in their areas. For details see William J. Klausner, 'Buddhist Universities Under Royal Patronage', Visakha Puja B.E. 2516, pp. 13-16; Ruangdej Srimuni, op. cit., pp. 70-76; and Somboon Suksamran, op. cit., pp. 77-79.
 3. For elaboration of courses and subjects in the training see Somboon Suksamran, op. cit.

It was only at the village level that a lack of wholehearted co-operation became clearly apparent, though whether the monks involved objected to the policies themselves or their own involvement in them is uncertain. Based on a survey of 23 villages in the North-East, Patthaya Saihoo reported that 25 per cent of the leading monks could be relied on for their active support; 50 per cent could be moderately relied on; and 25 per cent could not be expected to help at all. The survey also indicated that some monks who supported the government programmes did so of their own accord without any clearly defined policy direction from the central Sangha administration.¹

Although the government policies and programmes appear to have been largely supported by the administrative Sangha, there is evidence of strong opposition from the younger, rank-and-file monks. According to Mulder who interviewed a number of junior monks living in Bangkok, and to Ruangdej Srimuni who did the same in monasteries up-country, most of the monks they interviewed were opposed to the idea of monks' participation in government programmes. They saw their roles as consisting of religious activities per se, and, in relation to lay society, as religious teachers and specialists. Involvement in government programmes was seen as incompatible with the discipline (Vinaya) of monks

1. See: Patthaya Saihoo, op.cit., pp. 269-300. Unfortunately neither this study nor other similar studies (e.g. Mulder, op.cit.; Ingersoll, op.cit.) have made clear the degree to which abbots and monks at village level were required by the higher level Sangha administration to participate in these programmes. There is evidence that they were requested to participate, but not of the sanctions on non-co-operation or grudging assistance. For example, the Mahatherasamakom through the Department of Religious Affairs sent letters to the provincial Sangha authorities calling on them to support the government programmes and to give co-operation. (Letter from Mahatherasamakom to Chao kana Phak, Chao kana Changwat, and Abbots concerning the Objectives and Implementation of the Phra Dhammatuta Programme, 14 March 1964).

and as leading to the moral degradation of the monkhood. In their opinion, successful propagation of the religion by the Sangha was all that they needed to contribute to secure the welfare of the people, and ultimately to achieve the welfare of the state.¹

A survey carried out among 324 monk-students in Mahachula Buddhist University to ascertain their attitudes to their roles in modern society produced similar findings to Mulder and Ruangdej's.² However, it is surprising to find in the same survey that these monks did not seem to be aware of the political motives of the Phra Dhammatuta programme. The survey revealed that 93.2 per cent of the same sample approved of this programme because they saw it as promoting religious ends.³

In summary, then, the government appears to have had considerable support from the Sangha for its development programmes in the period up to 1973. Part of the reason for this support must lie in the Sangha seeing communism as a threat to its own existence; a view which, though not expressed openly, is certainly implied in some of the speeches of the members of the Mahatherasamakom considered earlier. Thus an identification with the Thai state becomes a strategy for self-preservation, which casts a rather different light on the Sangha apparently co-operating willingly with what might well be to them a rather unpalatable government in Bangkok. Clearly the government policies were sufficiently well thought out to have considerable appeal on spiritual grounds, even to the extent that some monks did not recognize any political motivation or object to government interpretations. This may also relate

1. For fuller details see Mulder, op.cit., pp. 11-14; and Ruangdej Srimmi, op.cit., pp. 98-100.

2. Tambiah, World Conqueror and World Renouncer, p. 421.

3. Ibid., p. 452.

to the ability of the monks to distinguish their own Buddhist sentiments from their Thai sentiments.

The whole problem of the degree to which the Sangha should view itself as the servant of the state as opposed to being the servant of the people was nevertheless raised by some monks, and later we shall see it becoming an increasing problem. At this stage it is difficult to see if their objections to the programmes clearly distinguished between the policies themselves and the Sangha's involvement in them. The critical monks appear to have been a tiny minority at the lower level and it is not surprising therefore that they had little influence at the top. On the contrary, what emerged here was a powerful interest group of monks from the middle and upper levels of the hierarchy who saw opportunities in the programmes and became loyal supporters of them, and perhaps even had parts to play in the instigation of some of the policies.

6. Recent Institutionalized Roles of the Sangha in Government Policies

In this section I discuss the Sangha's roles in implementing the government's policy of national development and integration. The outline of the schemes given here derives basically from a previous work of mine to which the reader is referred for more details,¹ together with some more recent data.

In the 1960s the government and the Sangha instituted a series of schemes 'to win the people's hearts and minds' in the rural areas of Thailand. The basic aims of the schemes were identical - namely, to use the Sangha to promote Buddhism in conjunction with socio-economic development as a buttress against subversion, particularly communist subversion. They differed mainly in the emphasis placed on Buddhism

1. Political Buddhism in Southeast Asia.

as contrasted with socio-economic development; in the degree of control exercised by the Sangha authorities as contrasted with the government; and in the kinds of communities at which they were aimed. Separating the achievements of the programmes and assessing their effectiveness is difficult for three reasons. First, the same personnel were often employed at various times in more than one scheme. Second, the programmes themselves were constantly changing as new ideas appeared for their improvement. Third, the Sangha administration had a habit of only reporting on the schemes for which they were responsible, rather than on all activities of the Sangha in government schemes.

Chronologically, these schemes began with the Sangha setting up the Buddhist Study Centres in 1963-1964, which soon became involved in the Community Development Programme via the Training Project for Encouraging the Participation of Monks in Community Development (1965-1966). Alongside this development came Buddhist schemes from government departments - the Phra Dhammatuta programme instituted in 1964 by the Department of Religious Affairs which was soon followed by the Phra Dhammajarik programme (1965) which came from the Department of Public Welfare. These were matched by government secular programmes such as the Accelerated Rural Development scheme, which, though instituted by the Prime Minister's Office in 1964, did not draw directly on Sangha personnel until 1970, when the Development Plan for Co-operation between the Sangha and the State was set up. All these schemes continue in the same general form up to the present.

(a) The Sangha's Role in the Community Development Programme

The government programme of community development was designed as part of the counter-insurgency measures in sensitive areas, especially

the North and North-East.¹ Its implementation is thought to avert communist subversion, and to secure the villagers' loyalty to the central government.² The socio-economic rationale for the adoption of the principles and methods of community development was the belief that important human resources in rural society had been ineffectively utilized, and that the rural populace lacked initiative in resolving their own problems. The community development programme has the following objectives: increasing the production and income of the rural populace; expanding rural public works; promoting health, sanitation, education, recreation and youth training; preserving the culture of villages; and extending the services of the government to reach the people more effectively than previously.³

The implementation of the programme is based on the following principles. First, it is a joint undertaking of the villagers and the government. Ideally, in each project the initiative should come from the villagers. The government provides technical assistance and materials that are beyond the ability of the villagers to provide for themselves. Where the villagers lack initiative and/or willingness, the government officials (the community development workers), urge them to be enthusiastic about their own responsibility for the future of their own community, and educate them to the extent of familiarizing

1. This has been clearly stressed by the government. See Department of Community Development, This is Community Development in Thailand (Bangkok: Community Development Press, 1971) pp. 16-19. For more details see, for example, J. Alexander Caldwell, American Economic Aid to Thailand (Massachusetts: D.C. Heath & Co., 1974) pp. 13, 50-59.
2. Caldwell, ibid., pp. 85-88, 132-149.
3. Department of Community Development (1971), op.cit., pp. 20-21.

them with modern ideas and technology, and the advantages and disadvantages of introducing changes. Second, community development is expected to introduce self-help projects at the village level; to mobilize local resources in the most useful way; to assist in establishing a training ground for democracy; and to create a national consciousness among the rural populace. Third and most importantly, it was meant to be a means to change people's negative attitudes towards the government, and to secure the villagers' loyalty by eliminating conflicts among them and between them and the government.¹

(i) Buddhist Studies Centres

The first programme was begun in the North-East in 1964-1965 under the auspices of provincial Sangha authorities with the support of the Buddhist universities. Today, such centres are in operation in every province in the North-East and in Cheingmai. The initial justification for establishing the Buddhist Studies Centres in the provinces was to serve two main purposes; first, to train local monks to familiarize themselves with government policies of community development so that they could contribute to the government and people's development efforts; and second, to improve the standards of education for monks in administrative and teaching positions. With regard to the first purpose, the main idea was for monks to work closely with the government officials and give all possible help to them in rural development. At the same time efforts would be made to supply the government with accurate information about the needs of the villagers.

1. Phat Bunyarataphan, Community Development in the Country (Bangkok: Community Development Press, 1975) pp. 1-9; see also Department of Community Development, Functions of Department of Community Development (Bangkok: Community Development Press, 1975).

These centres give periodic formal training courses to village monk leaders, such as abbots and teachers, in secular subjects. In preparing these courses, relevant government agencies were consulted. Instructors were mainly provided by the two Buddhist universities and government departments concerned with community development programmes. The training lasts from one to three weeks. The Buddhist universities also provide personnel to help in the administration of the centres. Many hundreds of rural monks have been trained by these centres.¹

(ii) The Training Project for Encouraging the Participation of Monks in Community Development

In response to the government's request for the Sangha's help in community development, this project was established by the Sangha in 1966. The Sangha's reasons are given below:

It is apparent that at present national development is a principal policy of the government..... To fulfil this end the government has to depend on, and have the co-operation of other institutions. The Sangha is one of those institutions and has taken part in promoting the progress and prosperity of the nation... .. In an age of accelerated development, the Sangha will be an even greater asset to the nation. Only if the monks acquire substantial knowledge, and only if they clearly understand the philosophy, objectives and methods in development laid down by the government, will the Sangha's co-operation be fruitful.²

Such a familiarity with the government's policy, and methods in community development would further enable the monks to be more effective leaders of the people in development, both materially and spiritually.³ The

1. For fuller detail about the nature of the programme, training and the participation of rural monks, see Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 75-78.
2. Mahachula Buddhist University, Krongkan Obrom Phra Phiksu Phua Song-serm kan Patthana Thongthin (The Training Project for Encouraging the Participation of Monks in Community Development) (Bangkok: Krung Sayam, 1969) p. 3.
3. Phra Thepkunaphorn, Kam klao raingan (Report to the Supreme Patriarch on the Opening of the Training Project for Encouraging the Participation of Monks in Community Development) dated 26 December 1967.

assertion that the Sangha is an asset to the nation, and possibly will be the best apparatus for the government policy of community development is said to be based on the following assumption:

... Up-country, the people put their trust and confidence in monks; obedience and co-operation in any activity becomes automatic if the request comes from the monks.....community development programmes are sure to be effectively accomplished with monastic help and co-operation. Having this in mind and in line with the national development policy of the government, the (Buddhist) University deemed it advisable to initiate projects for the training of monks in the promotion and coordination of community development activities, with an aim to contribute to the government's efforts in raising the standard of living of our rural population.¹

The objectives of the training project were described as follows:

- (1) To maintain and promote the monks' status as the refuge of the people by providing them with religious education and general knowledge concerning community development.
- (2) To encourage monks and novices to participate in community development and thus help existing development programmes to achieve their aims.
- (3) To promote unity among the Thai people and thus help to promote national and religious security.²

The administration of the project has been the responsibility of the Sangha Administrative Committee in co-operation with a Lay Administrative Committee.³ The implementation of the project has been under

1. Mahachula Buddhist University, General Information (Bangkok: Mahachula Buddhist University, 1967) p. 89.
2. Ibid.
3. For fuller detail see Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 80-82.

the supervision of two joint committees; the Sangha Advisory Committee consisting of the office holders of the Mahatherasamakom whose responsibility is to give advice and to coordinate with government in planning the project. The Lay Advisory Committee consists of Heads of the following departments: Religious Affairs, Community Development, Provincial Administration, Public Welfare, Public Health, Medical Services, Fine Arts, and Teacher Training. The President of the Buddhist Association of Thailand is included in this committee. The committee also serves as the point of co-operation between the Sangha and the government. That the approval of the Sangha's involvement in this government programme came from the highest Sangha authority is manifest in the membership of the Committee of Patrons. This committee is chaired by the Supreme Patriarch and all Somdet Phraracha kana are ex-officio members.¹

The trainee monks are divided into two categories, Group A and Group B, according to the training they are to receive, and the responsibility they are to assume.

Group A are monks who are selected and sent to receive training by the Chao kana Changwat of their respective provinces, or monks considered qualified by the committee of the training project. They must have passed at least Nak tham grade 3 or Barian of any grade; have been in the monkhood at least five years, but not more than 25 years, and must not be over 50. Generally, those monks selected to receive training during 1966-1973 held a salaried administrative office in the Sangha

1. Mahachula Buddhist University, Kamnerd lae Phonngan khong Krongkan Obrom Phra Phiksu phua Songserm Patthanakan Thongthin (Origin and Tasks of the Training Project for Encouraging the Participation of Monks in Community Development) (Bangkok: Prayoonwong Press, 1967) pp. 2-4.

hierarchy or office as an ecclesiastical teacher.¹

Group B are monks who have graduated with the BA degree from Buddhist Universities and who satisfy the following requirements: have behaved themselves properly; have shown abilities in religious functions; have been ordained at least five years; and are willing to go and perform religious duties in assigned areas.² Group B are the better educated, young monks based in Bangkok who are expected to assume higher posts in the future through their ability and education.

The duration of training and the courses taken vary between the two groups. They are designed to suit the academic background of the participants and the types of responsibility they are to undertake. In drawing up the syllabi and ensuring that the monks are well equipped for their tasks, both lay and Sangha advisory committees are consulted. Courses are aimed at meeting both educational and working needs and the assigned tasks of each group. Thus, a close look at the syllabi will reveal the roles that these monks are expected to assume.

For Group A the training is three to four months. The first part of the training includes classroom lectures. The subjects taught are: Buddhism and its application to daily life; Structure of Rural Society; Thai History; Public Health; Sanitation; Home Economies; Community Development, its principles and methods; Rural Development Policy, its principles and methods; Vocational Promotion; Educational Guidance; Leadership; Public Relations; Applied Psychology; Preservation of Artistic works; Wat Development; Sangha Law and Regulations; Selected Laws; and Preventive Medicine (or First Aid).³

1. For more details see Mahachula Buddhist University (1969), op.cit., pp. 14-15, and Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 82-83.

2. Mahachula Buddhist University (1969) ibid., pp. 15-16.

3. Elaboration from the Training Schedule for Monks Group A 1967-1973; see also Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 83-84.

This period is usually spent in Bangkok, and lasts from one to six weeks. Instruction, apart from Buddhism, is provided by the civil departments concerned with community and rural developments. At the same time related government policies are imparted in the lectures by government officials.

The second period of training, ranging from three to five weeks, has a practical emphasis. Classes are usually held in Buddhist Studies Centres in the provinces. In the first phase, provincial officials give instruction specifically relating to the actual problems encountered in their daily work in rural areas. Such lectures include a study of problems in co-operation between government officials and villagers, the nature and causes of crime, the problem of communist subversion and propaganda, and problems of public health, sanitation, and hygiene. Simultaneously, demonstrations of how to achieve improved levels of hygiene and nutrition; how to use fertilizers; how to make latrines and water jars, etc. are included.¹ After finishing this phase, the trainees commence practical field work which has the following objectives:

- (i) To propagate Buddhism by applying the knowledge they have learnt.
- (ii) To study the nature and structure of the village community in order to gain first-hand experience.
- (iii) To observe the methods of community development in a real situation and to appreciate the obstacles that may occur.

During the practical field work the trainees are advised to make comments on the following aspects of community life and suggest remedies for

1. Ibid.

problems they encounter in them.

- (i) The people's understanding of religion, culture, and traditions.
- (ii) Their level of nutrition, health and hygiene.
- (iii) How the people use their leisure, their habits and character, and their sense of community.
- (iv) Adult education and education for children.
- (v) People's occupations and incomes, and the advantages and disadvantages they find in engaging in their present occupations.
- (vi) The measure of people's initiative in self-help and co-operation, their attitudes towards the government's policies of community development and social welfare.
- (vii) Village economy and communications affecting the villagers' well-being.
- (viii) Village leadership and public order.
- (ix) Wat welfare and its development.¹

The third period of one to four weeks in duration involves the evaluation and conclusion of the whole training programme. It is usually organized in the form of seminar or discussion groups, and each group is expected to produce a report. At the end these monks are given certificates and go back to carry out their assignments in their communities.

As the monks in Group B are usually assigned to instruct local monks

1. Elaborated from Training Schedule, Period 2, for Monks Group A, 1970; for further detail see Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 84-85.

in ecclesiastical education and in techniques of community development, and are not expected to stay permanently in the rural areas, their training courses, though similar, are not as intensive and as broad as those for Group A, and are shorter in duration, lasting one to two months. Practical training may be involved, if it is deemed necessary.¹ After finishing the training, they are sent to communities as requested by the Sangha governors of provinces.

These trained monks are expected to lead, advise and mobilize the rural populace for the accomplishment of the community development programme. Such an accomplishment is believed by the Sangha and government authorities to contribute eventually not only to the enhanced welfare of the society but also to the defence of the country against communism.²

The tasks that they are advised to carry out can be summarized as follows:

(i) The primary duty of the recruited monks is the propagation and promotion of Buddhism. They are to strengthen the people's attachment to Dhamma by teaching them moral principles based on Buddhist ethics,

1. For more details see Somboon Suksamran, ibid., pp. 85-86.
2. These expectations were made explicit in the statements of high ranking monks and government leaders. See, for example, Somdet Phra Wannarat, 'Phra Owat hai kae Phra Phiksu ruam Sammanar kan Patthana thongthin' (Address to Monk-participants in Community Development), Buddhachak, Vol. 23, No. 7 (July 1969) pp. 92-93; Phra Sasana Sobana, 'Kam Klao Perd kan Obrom' (Address on the Opening the Seminar), ibid., pp. 12-14; Phra Ariyamethi, 'Kam Klao Thonrup' (Welcome Address), ibid., pp. 18-20; Sanya Thammasak, 'Tatsanakati thor Phrasong kap kan Patthana Chumchon' (Attitude towards the Sangha's Activity in Community Development) in Raingan kitkam khong Krongkan Songserm kan Patthana Chumchon khong kana Song (Report on Activities of the Training Project for Encouraging the Participation of Monks in Community Development) (Bangkok: Krung Sayam Press, 1970) pp. 10-11.

and by establishing Buddhist Sunday Schools for the young. They are also advised to arrange meetings with local monks and give instruction to them on how to maximize their roles as moral, spiritual, and social leaders in the interests of the promotion of Buddhism and community development.

(ii) In the sphere of community development they are advised to teach Dhamma that encourages the people to participate in communal activities which are for their own benefit. For example, they should emphasize in their teaching the principle of Dana (giving) so that villagers will acquire a greater willingness to sacrifice personal interests for communal interests. They should encourage them to strive for better economic welfare by diligently pursuing the right means of livelihood, by saving and using their wealth economically. They should encourage the villagers' co-operation and unity by teaching them the principles of loving-kindness and compassion, honesty, and co-operation. The monks are advised to lead, as well as encourage, the villagers' participation in such village developments as the construction of bridges, roads, wells, rest houses, and other public properties, and in repairing the old ones. With regard to the villagers' health, the monks are expected to advise the villagers to eat nutritious food, give advice concerning sanitation, public health, and hygiene.¹ In

1. See Mahachula Buddhist University (1969), op.cit., pp.19-20; Office of Accelerated Rural Development, Naew thang Phathibat kan Patthana ruamkan rawang Phutthachak kap anarchak (Direction of Co-operation in Rural Development between the Sangha and State) (Bangkok: Office of ARD, 1970) pp. 32-33; Phra Maha Sathein Thirayano, 'Naew thang kan chai thamma nai kan Phatthana' (Recommendations on the Application of Dhamma for Development), Buddhachak, Vol. 26 (July 1972) pp. 17-19; see also Phra Maha Chai Apakaro, 'Phrasong kap kan Patthana thongthin' (Monks and Community Development) Buddhachak, Vol. 26 (May 1972) pp. 24-28.

addition, they are to teach the local monks the techniques of community development.

(iii) For the promotion of the villagers' livelihood the monks give advice on, and educate the people in, modern agricultural technology and techniques concerning, for example, new methods in farming, the idea of crop-rotation, and the use of fertilizers. It is interesting to note that some monks even advised the villagers to use particular brands of fertilizer, weed killer, and pesticide.¹

(iv) The monks are also advised to encourage and instil in the villagers a sense of loyalty to the nation, government, religion, and the king. In addition, they are expected to act as intermediaries between the government, its officials and the villagers. In so doing, the monks pass on the government's policies and its concern for their well-being to the villagers. They assess the villagers' needs and attitudes towards the government and feed this information back to the government. They also advise the people on the procedures to be followed in contacting the government agencies.²

(v) While the monks are encouraged to involve themselves directly with the villagers, they are also required to improve their own wat, for it will be exemplary to the villagers in development, and strengthen the people's attachment to religion. It is prescribed that: the wat should be clean and tidy and be a proper place of sanctuary; those who live in the wat should be well treated; each wat should provide the people with the facilities for merit-making, practicing Dhamma, and performing other religious activities. The government regards it as

1. Personal communication from a monk who participated in the community development programme.

2. Mahachula Buddhist University (1969) op.cit., pp. 19-20.

axiomatic that if the wat is well developed it will attract people to it and thus enhance a corporate sense among the people. Moreover, attachment to an effectively run wat by the people makes it easy for the monks to teach them, and people may incidentally learn lessons of development for themselves.¹

(vi) In education, apart from teaching the local monks, the trained monks also help in teaching school children; give advice on further education; and help mobilize funds and labour for the extension of schools.² They also encourage the people to preserve and adjust local culture and traditions that are beneficial to their way of life.³

In carrying out their tasks the monks are required to observe the rule that they should not force information or knowledge upon the people directly. Rather they should seek to infuse the information or knowledge they wish to impart into their teaching, preaching, and conversation with the villagers. Ritual gatherings and religious occasions are sometimes used to help in promoting and supporting new schemes of development introduced by the government. However, it is not uncommon to see some active monks physically helping the villagers in the construction of roads, digging wells, and the erection of new buildings.⁴

It is interesting to note that although the community development programme is politically inspired, monks involved in the programme are instructed to avoid teaching the people politics. Even so there are some independent minded monks who are of the opinion that they should

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1. Department of Religious Affairs, Annual Report of Religious Activities for 1969 (Bangkok: Department of Religious Affairs, 1972) p. 87.
 2. Phra Maha Chai Apakaro, op.cit., pp. 24-25.
 3. Ibid., pp. 28-29; Phra Maha Sathien Thirayano, op.cit., p. 20.
 4. For more details see Ingersoll, op.cit., pp. 62-63; Ruangdej Srimuni, op.cit., pp. 78-80; Klausner, 'Popular Buddhism in Northeast Thailand'.

educate the people in some aspects of politics. For example, to mention only one, a learned monk suggested in his lecture to monks in Udon province that they should advise the people to vote for a good politician and not allow themselves to be deceived by a corrupt candidate. He said that:

... Although the law forbids the monk to become involved in politics, monks have to be involved, one way or another..... Politicians have exploited the monks and used them as an instrument. For example, if in an election the candidate makes donations to the wat, the monks consider him as a good man and praise him. This may lead the people to believe he is a good man (and vote for him). Following this, we will have corrupt MPs who do nothing and know nothing..... If it is so, it means that monks do not understand their responsibility, and encourage corruption from the beginning..... How then could political development be achieved? Monks must not ignore this problem, but have to do something within the bounds of the monkhood. Therefore, we should teach the people to be critical, not to be deceived. If we ignore this responsibility, we can forget about development efforts and let things take their natural course.¹

After the recruited monks have worked in their assigned areas for one year, they are requested to send reports to the centre. In the reports they assess the accomplishment of their assignments under the following headings: education, propagation of Buddhism, social welfare and development activities.²

(iii) The Sangha's Role in Accelerated Rural Development

The Accelerated Rural Development programme (ARD) was begun in 1964. It was also a programme designed to check counter-insurgency when the Thai government felt that the other development schemes might not be enough to offset communist activities. It aimed to reinforce other development schemes and to complement various projects of the

1. Phra Maha Sathien, op.cit., pp. 19-20.

2. For more details and evaluation, see Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 88-89.

government in rural areas. Its principal purposes were to accelerate rural development and thus increase the economic, social and educational standards of the rural people. While the community development programme emphasizes the principles of self-help, co-operation among the villagers themselves and between the villagers and the government, the ARD programme concentrates on activities in which almost everything is provided by the government. The idea was to produce immediate concrete results so that the villagers could see the advantages of co-operation with the government. They therefore put their efforts into schemes employing heavy construction equipment, modern techniques and skilled personnel, all brought in from outside, including foreign advisors and military units. Thus, its main emphasis was on the building of the infrastructure of the country in economic, social and political spheres. This involves the construction of main roads connecting remote areas with cities, country roads connecting villages with villages; provision of water supplies both for agricultural purposes and domestic consumption; the construction of other public utilities such as schools; and the provision of medical centres, village clinics and mobile medical staff. These efforts were particularly intense in areas threatened by communist subversion and insurgency. They aimed to 'win the hearts and minds of the people' without the use of warfare.¹

Connected with the ARD schemes are several other programmes, but the most important one is that of the Mobile Development Units (MDU). Its activities, like the community development programme, have a direct counter-insurgency purpose. The central theme of the MDU is to promote

1. Office of Accelerated Rural Development, Ngan Rengrud Patthana Chonbot (Accelerated Rural Development Work) (Bangkok: ARD Office, 1970) pp. 1-4; see also Caldwell, op.cit., 56-57, 85-88, and 135-138.

closer relationships between the government and rural population through demonstrated government interest and action concerning the people's well-being and security. The MDU, composed of military personnel, a medical team, and other government agents, moves from village to village in selected areas. They offer basic medical treatment, sometimes food and clothing, and instruction through films and lectures on improving agriculture and sanitation. They also promulgate anti-communist propaganda.¹

In their efforts to secure the loyalty of the country people to the government, in 1970 the Office of ARD requested the co-operation of the Sangha. The thinking behind this appeal was that in rural areas no one could do better than the local monks in mobilizing the villagers' co-operation and in increasing their sense of loyalty and attachment to the government and the nation.² The Sangha agreed to co-operate. Accordingly, a new 'Development Plan for Co-operation between the Sangha and State' was drawn up in 1970 with the following objectives:

- (i) To coordinate the government development plan with people's needs as a means of winning their hearts and minds through Sangha co-operation.
- (ii) To co-ordinate and consolidate the efforts of the government and the Sangha in order to gain maximum results from development policies.
- (iii) To create unity and social stability and security.
- (iv) To balance material progress and spiritual development.

1. For detail about the operation of the MDU see, for example, Richard Nelson, The Mobile Development Unit Project (Bangkok: USOM, Office of Field Operation, 1969); USOM, Joint Thai-USOM Evaluation of the Mobile Development Unit Construction Company Project (Bangkok: Thai-American Audio-Visual Services, 11 October 1965); see also Caldwell, op.cit.; and Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 90-91.

2. Office of ARD, op.cit., pp. 1-2.

- (v) To promote religious activities and public well-being in rural communities.
- (vi) To strengthen understanding and good relationships between government and people.¹

The Plan for Co-operation between the Sangha and the government agents in Accelerated Rural Development programmes was described as follows:

- (i) The Sangha should provide trained monks to participate in the project.
- (ii) Some high ranking administrative monks were invited to be advisors to the Secretary-General of the ARD office. They were consulted by the government on the areas and activities in which the Sangha could contribute to the programme. At provincial and district levels the Chao kana Changwat and Chao kana Amphur were requested to participate as advisors to the government agents who were responsible for this programme in their jurisdictions. These monks were expected to give advice on development plans for the communities in their areas. They were also to help the government agents in a primary evaluation of the probable outcome of the project, and to co-operate with them in running the project at the district level.²
- (iii) In implementing the project, the monks were advised to concentrate their teaching efforts on economic and social matters, morality and ethics. They were to encourage religion and avoid political issues in their teachings.³ They were encouraged to participate in material developments that strengthened the people's trust and

1. Ibid., p. 9.

2. Ibid., pp. 9-10.

3. Ibid., p. 4.

confidence in the government. They were also asked to pass on to the villagers the government's policies and its request for local co-operation and participation, and encouraging the people to facilitate the extension of the programme was seen as a desirable objective. The monks themselves were also to lead the people to participate in the programme.¹

It is interesting to note that in the plan for the 1970 programme, there was also a prescription issued by the government for the guidance of the monks as to which Dhamma should be taught to the people. In short, the Dhamma selected for teaching should emphasize the bonds of social unity; principles of self-reliance, right means of livelihood; virtues conducive to benefits and leading to temporal welfare; virtues of loving-kindness and compassion; honesty, etc. The Dhamma taught should also induce the idea that development efforts are for the benefit of the family, community, and the nation. The monks should interpolate in their teaching the importance and indispensibility of the institutions of religion and the monarchy.²

This programme of co-operation between the Sangha and the ARD Office was first tried out in one of the most sensitive areas, namely Thatphanom district in the North-East, and was claimed to be satisfactory. At present the programme is under way in other many sensitive rural areas, but the reports of its achievements are subsumed within broader reports on rural development and it is difficult to estimate its effectiveness.

In sum, then, the 1970 programme consolidated the government's

1. Ibid., pp. 8-11.

2. For detail see Ibid., pp. 32-36.

efforts to pull the Sangha into its rural development schemes. Whereas previously the monks had voluntarily taken part in community development, they were now asked to take up much larger roles as part of a grand national development plan under more direct government control.

(b) Phra Dhammatuta Programme

This programme was initiated with a number of underlying assumptions. First, the government and the Sangha authorities seem to have believed that while development schemes had produced material progress satisfactorily, spiritual progress had not kept pace with it. They held that material progress well-being and spiritual progress should go hand in hand if national development was to be fully successful, and if social order and solidarity based on Buddhism and morality were not to be undermined. They also believed that morality and social solidarity not only ensured fruitful social interactions, but also resulted in the kind of integration which would counteract communism. Second, they maintained that the people's attachment to Buddhism provided a safeguard against the incursions of communism, and that this attachment could be capitalized on in the promotion of national development and national integration. Following these underlying suppositions, they argued that those who were not adherents of Buddhism or whose attachment to the faith was weak were likely to pose a potential threat to national security and integration in that they became vulnerable to the propaganda of subversive elements.¹

1. Details of their views and arguments have partly been taken up in the earlier sections on Justifications for Political Mobilization of the Sangha, and on the Sangha's Responses to Political Mobilization, pp.157-167. In addition to this, see Prapat Charusatien, Rath lae kana Song (State and the Sangha) (A message from Minister of the Interior to Dhammatuta Monks on the Opening of Orientation, 1967; an official document of Ministry of the Interior, 1967); Thanom Kitthikhachorn, San khong Nayok rathamontri thung Phra Dhammatuta (A Message from the Prime Minister to Dhammatuta Monks) (Official document of the Prime Minister's Office, 8 January 1969); Pin Mudhukanta, Nae nam Phra Dhammatuta (Introducing Dhammatuta programme) (Bangkok: Department of Religious Affairs, Printing House, 1965); Somdet Phra Wannarat, 'Nam Dhamma sue Prachachon' (Bringing Dhamma to the People), Phra Dhammatuta, Vol. 1, 1968, pp. 8-9. Buddhadasa Bhikku, 'A-nu-mo-tana' (Appreciation), Phutthasatsana kap Sangkom thai, pp. x-xi.

It was for these reasons that the Department of Religious Affairs established the Phra Dhammatuta programme in 1964. The objectives actually put forward were:

- (i) To restore Buddhism and protect the prestige of the Sangha from deterioration, and to save the people from democratization and vulnerability to communist propaganda.¹
- (ii) To follow the Buddha's footsteps and to carry on his purpose by teaching Dhamma to the people.
- (iii) To mobilize people's loyalty to the nation, the government, and the king.
- (iv) To create a better understanding among the people and between the people and the government, thereby promoting national integration.
- (v) To strengthen the villagers' morale and help them in development.²

For the first two years (1964-1965) the Department of Religious Affairs was directly responsible for the administration and planning of the Programme, the financial and personnel administration, the selection of areas where the Dhammatuta monks were needed, and for coordination and publicity. It decided on specific objectives to suit particular designated areas and the length of time needed for carrying out the relevant tasks. In this process the administrative monks at high level were closely involved. By 1965 the programme appeared to be working quite well. However, the government and the Sangha authorities began

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- 1. Elaborated from Pin Mudhukanta's Report to His Majesty the King on the Purpose of Phra Dhammatuta Programme (Official document of Department of Religious Affairs, 5 February 1964).
 - 2. Somdet Phra Wannarat the Director of Phra Dhammatuta work, namely speeches given to Phra Dhammatuta monks during 1966-1969.

to be worried that the work of the monks would be undermined by the Sangha being seen as a government agent in the areas of communist influence. Control of the programme was passed to the Mahatherasam-
 akom, and a Division of Phra Dhammatuta Work was set up under the supervision of the Mahatherasamakom in that year as part of the Sangha administrative structure.¹ However, the Department of Religious Affairs continued to closely supervise the Phra Dhammatuta programme. Although the Division of Phra Dhammatuta work in the Sangha had more freedom in the selection of Dhammatuta monks, the civil department still played an important role in the programme planning and in training the recruited monks. The administration of the programme and methods used to accomplish its ends largely follow the model laid down by the Department of Religious Affairs in 1964 and 1965.

The selection of monks to participate in the Phra Dhammatuta programme is done jointly by the Department of Religious Affairs and Mahatherasamakom. The Dhammatuta monks are chosen from devoted volunteers who have the following qualifications:

- (i) Willingness to be loyal to Buddhism and the nation, and not to distort the teachings of the Buddha.
- (ii) Willingness to be tolerant of difficulties and all kinds of offensiveness.
- (iii) Willingness to work with dedicated minds, and having goodwill towards the religion and the nation, without expectation

1. Pin Mudhukanta, 'Kwam pen ma khong Phra Dhammatuta' (Development of Phra Dhammatuta Programme), *Phra Dhammatuta*, Vol. I, 1968, pp. 40-41; see also Somboon Suksamran, *op.cit.*, p. 97.

of material or non-material rewards, or even praise.

- (iv) Having good personality, wisdom, persuasive ability, and sufficient knowledge of Dhamma.
- (v) Ability to speak the local dialect is also considered desirable.

The majority of the Dhammatuta monks have been recruited from Bangkok. They are learned monks and monk-students of the Buddhist universities. The local monks have been mainly recruited from Chao kana Amphur and respected abbots by the Chao kana Changwat who are ex-officio heads of provincial Dhammatuta monks.¹ Since 1966 the number of Dhammatuta monks has increased year by year until in 1975 there were 2,196 monks participating in the programme. The programme has been extended to cover 70 provinces.² The heaviest emphasis has been on the sensitive areas in the North and North-East.³

The numbers of Dhammatuta monks between 1964-1975 are shown in Table 8.

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1. Elaborated from Kong Ngan Phra Dhammatuta (Division of Dhammatuta Work), Raingan kwam kaona khong krongkan Phra Dhammatuta (Reports on the Progress of Phra Dhammatuta Programme, 1969-1974).
 2. Ibid.; Department of Religious Affairs, Annual Reports on Religious Activities (Bangkok: Department of Religious Affairs Printing House, 1976) pp. 74-77.
 3. Department of Religious Affairs, ibid., pp. 75-76. There were 757 Dhammatuta monks working in the North-East and 462 monks in the North in 1975.

Table 8 Numbers of Monks in the Dhammatuta Programme

Year	Number of Dhammatuta Monks	N.B.
1964	183	Covered 13 provinces
1965	751	Covered 49 provinces
1966	1,730	All provinces
1967	1,384	" "
1968	1,654	" "
1969	1,773	" "
1970	1,879	" "
1971	1,900 (approx.)	" "
1972	2,088	" "
1973	2,240	" "
1974	2,285	" "
1975	2,196	" "

Source: Division of Ecclesiastical Education, Department of Religious Affairs, Sarup Phonngan khong Phra Dhammatuta B.E. 2518 (Report on Phra Dhammatuta Programme, 1975) (Bangkok: 1975) p. 64.

The Dhammatuta monks have been divided into nine groups since 1966. Each group has a group leader who is selected from well-known and respected monks of the high ranking administrative level. Before they commence the work in designated areas, the group leaders, deputies, and Bangkok-based recruited monks are given a short period of orientation aimed at familiarizing them with the government policies of national development and integration, and with social, economic, and political situations in the assigned areas. The instructors are mainly government officials representing various departments. At this point, the monks are told the problems which the government is facing, and how they can help to solve them. The objectives and the appropriate methods of implementation of the programme are taught by senior officials and

senior administrative monks. Another short period of orientation with a similar content is provided by local government officials within the assigned areas. This time local Dhammatuta monks are required to attend so that they clearly understand the purpose of the programme and the methods for carrying out their tasks.¹

The Dhammatuta monks begin their work in the dry season, from February to May or June of each year. Means and methods for the implementation of their assignments are mainly determined by group leaders, depending on the characteristics of the assigned areas. However, the programme has laid down a set of general guidelines for the monks to apply in their work. They are described in the Handbook for Dhammatuta Monks produced by the Division of Phra Dhammatuta Work.² The monks are advised to teach villagers the basic tenets of Buddhism and the application of Buddhism to everyday life, including the relevance of religious practices to the development goals of the nation. For example, they should persuade the people to adhere to Panca Sila (Five Precepts), the principle of Dana (Giving), Metta Karuna (Loving-kindness and Compassion), and the toleration of physical and mental suffering. They should teach them the Buddhist principles of right livelihood, the correct forms of ritual, worship, and meditation practices. They should encourage the people to take vows as Buddhists. For those who have never made a commitment to the religion, the monks perform a ceremony roughly equivalent in function to confirmation in the Christian religion. For those who are already confirmed Buddhists, the monks are to encourage them to become lay disciples. Through their

1. For more details see Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 95-97; and also Pin Mudhukanta (1965) op.cit.
2. Division of Phra Dhammatuta Work, Lak Pathibat samrap Phra Dhammatuta (Handbook for Dhammatuta Monks).

teachings the Dhammatuta monks are advised to inculcate in the people the values of good citizenship and loyalty. Apart from this main task of strengthening the people's attachment to Buddhism, the monks should help and lead the people in community development activities by teaching them the need for and values of community development, by encouraging them to observe proper sanitary conditions, and how to improve health and so on. Those experienced and trained Dhammatuta monks should also teach the local monks the techniques of development work.¹ The Dhammatuta monks are also advised to interpolate Dhamma in their teachings concerning the principles of self-government; self-reliance; modern education; the principles of co-operatives, the necessity for unity; and the application of national traditions and customs to daily life.²

In carrying out their assignments, the Dhammatuta monks travel in groups or separately on foot, in cars or on buses from village to village. They stay in the village for a few days up to a week giving sermons and talking to the villagers. The initial approach of the Dhammatuta monks is of interest, for in a sense they adopt the methods used by the Mobile Development Unit. Generally the village abbot and village headman are informed of the arrival of these monks in advance. They in turn inform the villagers and organize meetings. At the meeting the monks give a sermon or lecture, which concentrates on the explanation of the Dhamma; but through the Dhamma the monks are expected to impart matters concerning specific government policies, to inculcate in them the duties of good citizenship, loyalty to the government, nation, and the king,

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1. For more details see Ibid., and also Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 99-100.
 2. Somdet Phra Maha Wirawong, 'Lak Pathibat Dhamma' (Guidelines for Practice in Buddhism); Phra Dhammatuta, Vol. I, 1968, pp. 9-20.

and to educate people about development efforts. The lectures are usually accompanied by distribution of medicine, text books on Dhamma, and other commodities. Films are shown about government programmes, those involving the Royal Family visiting the people, opening new buildings, and carrying out state ceremonies being the main diet.¹

Sometimes, the Dhammatuta monks in co-operation with local government officials and village leaders organize a village Committee for the Promotion of Buddhism. This joint committee is responsible for the promotion of morality and unity among the villagers, encouraging better understanding between the government officials and villagers, and the promotion and revival of local traditions and custom. This programme is claimed to be conducive to the Phra Dhammatuta work.

In the cities where there are prisons, the monks teach the Dhamma to the inmates in order to improve their moral standards and prepare them to assume good citizenship. The Police Department has also asked the monks to impart in their teaching to the villagers the message that such crimes as manslaughter, robbery, drug trading, prostitution, and involvement in illegal lotteries not only cause social disorder, but also are acts of great demerit (bab).²

It is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness and the accomplishment of the Phra Dhammatuta programme, since its work is claimed to be concerned with 'spiritual or moral improvement', a rather ambiguous and abstract

1. Ibid., pp. 19-20; Somdet Phra Wannarat, 'Bringing Dhamma to the People', pp. 8-9; see also Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 99-101.

2. Police Department, Nangsue Krom Tamruat thung Phra Dhammatuta nai kan Phongkan artchayakam (Letter from Police Department to Dhammatuta Monks Asking for Co-operation for the Prevention of Crime) (Official document of Police Department, 16 February 1969).

concept. The Sangha has so far evaluated its accomplishments and the effectiveness of the programme in several ways. These include subjective estimates by the Dhammatuta monks of the degree of interest people have shown in their sermons and lectures; counting the attendance at sermons and meditation practices; counting the number of people taking vows as Buddhists; and counting the number of times they have led or taught people in community development. There seems to be a reliance on quantification of activities undertaken by the monks as an assessment of success.¹

Though in general both the government and Sangha appear to have been satisfied with the results they felt they had achieved,² there was criticism of the programme by some of the monks involved. This is well illustrated by the frank reports of the 1971 and 1972 seminars of the Dhammatuta monks, which made clear that Buddhist teachings had had little success in areas of great poverty. Here they felt material improvements had to have priority if communism was to be countered and Buddhism was to be successful. In some areas of Nan, Cheingrai, Petchabun, Narathiwat, and Surathani provinces they had not been able to enter the villages, and two monks were assassinated in Petchabun province in 1969. Perhaps this might be taken as a measure, albeit distasteful, of their success, along with the increase in communist threats against them which said if they were monks they should stay in their monasteries; if they

1. For more details about the achievements and the method used in the assessment of the effectiveness of the programme reported by the Sangha see Division of Dhammatuta Work's Reports 1969-1974, and the Reports of Phra Dhammatuta Work in Department of Religious Affairs' Annual Report of Religious Activities 1969, 1971, and 1975; see also Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 101-102.

2. Department of Religious Affairs (1975), pp. 73-74.

chose to be government agents, then they would be treated as such.¹ Apparently they were becoming effective enough for the communists to consider them a serious threat.

(c) Phra Dhammajarik Programme

The underlying suppositions on which this programme was initiated were almost the same as those for establishing the Phra Dhammatuta programme, i.e. attachment to Buddhism provides a safeguard against communism and those who are not adherents of Buddhism pose potential threats to national security and integration.² As we have considered earlier, the Thai government has, since the 1960s, considered the non-Thai and non-Buddhist hill peoples as posing these threats to the nation.³ To counter them the government in 1965, through the Department of Public Welfare, initiated the Phra Dhammajarik programmes, the Buddhist mission to the hill people, and the Sangha was called upon to carry out this programme.

The main reason for using the Sangha in this context was elaborated by Pradit Disawat, a senior official in the Department of Public Welfare, thus:

The propagation among the hill people would be likely to promote administrative and development aims among the hill people. This is because the integration of our people into a larger community depends upon the ties of customs and religion.⁴

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1. For detail see Division of Phra Dhammatuta Work, 'Raingan kan sammanar kan Pathibat ngan Pho-sor, 2514-2515' (Reports on the Phra Dhammatuta Activities, 1971-1972), Phra Dhammatuta, Vol. I, 1972, pp. 50-71; see also Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 98-102.
 2. See pp. 159-160, 164, and 187.
 3. See pp. 147-150.
 4. Department of Public Welfare, Raingan kitkam khong Phra Dhammajarik (Report on the Activities of Phra Dhammajarik Programme) (Bangkok: Department of Public Welfare, 1965) p. 10.

From this idea the Department of Public Welfare in consultation with Phra Dhammakithisophon, the Sangha regional supervisor of Region (Phak) 6 which comprises the provinces of Chiengrai, Lampang, Nan, and Prae, worked out the Phra Dhammajarik programme in detail and subsequently submitted it to the Mahatherasamakom for approval. The Sangha authority approved the programme on the grounds that it would not only serve as an effective means for the propagation of Buddhism but also promote national integration.

The main aims of the programme were to integrate the hill people into the Thai social order, administrative structure, and Thai culture; to strengthen the sentimental ties (of Thai) with the hill people, and to create loyalties among them to the nation, religion and the king through development of strong belief in, or conversion to, Buddhism.¹

The Phra Dhammajarik Programme has been run since 1965 as a joint endeavour of the Department of Public Welfare and the Sangha. Pradit Disawat and Phra Dhammakithisophon were appointed co-directors of the programme. The government provides financial and material assistance necessary for the operation of the programme. The Sangha has been responsible for recruiting and providing the monk personnel who are to implement it. By and large, the majority of the Dhammajarik monks are recruited from Bangkok-based monks on a voluntary basis. The monks recruited should be under 40 years of age and have passed at least Barian grade 4. Local monks who are chosen to participate in the programme should be under 45, but no educational qualification is specified. Both categories must have good health, and a knowledge of

1. Ibid., pp. 10-13; see also Department of Public Welfare, Report on the Propagation of Buddhism (1968) p. 28.

tribal languages is desirable.¹

Before being sent to the project areas, the monk recruits are given an orientation course for five to seven days. This includes instruction by government officials on the socio-economic backgrounds of the hill people, the immediate problems confronting the government arising from the hill people, and the government's policies to solve these problems. Senior monks teach them the techniques and methods of propagating Buddhism, and how to carry out their assignments. Each Dhammajarik monk is given an allowance of 10 to 15 baht per day when he is in the field.²

The Dhammajarik monks are divided into groups of three to five members and sent to live in various hill communities, but for security reasons they are mainly stationed in the government welfare settlements for the hill people. Monks from Bangkok are required to spend two months in the mission stations, while local monks spend four. They begin their work in January or February and continue until April or May. The number of monks participating in this programme varied between 100-200, during 1970-1976.³ A few monks of tribal background are included, ostensibly to act as interpreters.⁴

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1. Department of Public Welfare, Raingan kan Phoeypbrae Phutthasatsana nai mu Chaokhao (Report on the Propagation of Buddhism Among the Hill People in the North) (Bangkok: Department of Public Welfare, 1971) pp. 26-27.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Department of Public Welfare, Raingan kan Phoeypbrae Phutthasatsana nai mu Chaokhao (Report on the Propagation of Buddhism among the Hill People, 1971) (Bangkok: 1975) pp. 6-10.
 4. Keyes, (1971), pp. 562-563.

Table 9 shows the numbers of monks participating in the Phra Dhammajarik programmes between 1965 and 1978, and the numbers of 'tribal' villages in which the monks have carried out their work between 1965 and 1978.

Table 9 Numbers of Monks in the Phra Dhammajarik Programme

No. of Mission	Year	Numbers of Monks	Numbers of Villages
1	1965	50	10
2	1966	60	12
3	1967	100	20
4	1968	100	20
5	1969	100	20
6	1970	100	20
7	1971	150	30
8	1972	150	30
9	1973	150	30
10	1974	200	40
11	1975	200	40
12	1976	200	40
13	1977	200	40
14	1978	200	40
Total		1,960	392

Source: Department of Public Welfare, Statistics of Monks Participating in Phra Dhammajarik Programme (1965-1978) (Bangkok: 1979)

The emphasis of the programme's effort has been on the Meo. Despite the small proportion of the Meo population (11 per cent of the total population of the hill people), there were 11 groups of 55 monks working with them in 1971.¹ This concentration on the Meo was obviously a

1. Ibid.

consequence of the great concern which had developed over the past few years when the Meo had shown more and more hostility to the Thai government, and increasingly became faithful allies of the communists. But the number of missionaries stationed among the Meo has since declined. This reflects perhaps the fears regarding the security of the monks in these areas.

The main task of the Dhammajarik monks is to convert the hill people to Buddhism. The methods employed by the monks include familiarizing the hill people with religious customs; teaching them basic tenets of Buddhism, how to pay respect to the Triple Gems, and how to make merit by giving alms to the monks; encouraging them to take vows as Buddhists, and to be ordained as novices or monks.¹ In carrying out these tasks the monks are advised to follow a set of general guidelines which are as follows:

- (i) Among the hill people who have not been adherents of Buddhism, the monks are to make daily visits to them in their homes and in the evening arrange a sermon or informal conversation for those who come to visit them. They should also make contact with the children and teach them basic Dhamma and simple Thai language.
- (ii) Among the hill people who are already adherents of Buddhism, besides following the above guidelines, the monks should go round the village for alms-receiving in the morning. In the evening, the monks should teach them religious practices such as how to pay respect to the Triple Gems properly and how to apply Dhamma in their daily life.

1. Department of Public Welfare (1965) op.cit., pp. 19-20.

When the monks consider that the hill people have enough faith in Buddhism, they encourage them to take vows as Buddhists and perform a confirmation ceremony for them. At this point, the monks are advised to record and film the activities for propaganda purposes. On the Sabbath day, the monks are to encourage those confirmed as Buddhists to make merit by giving alms to monks and listening to their sermons. Significantly, they encourage the hill people to be ordained.

Apart from attempting to convert the hill people, the monks are advised to teach them good hygiene, for example, encourage them to bathe regularly, to have their nails and hair cut, to clean and tidy their houses. They should also teach the people how to develop their community. In helping promote good relationships between the people and government, the monks seek to make them understand the government's care for them, and impress on them that the government policy towards them is for their benefit. They teach the hill people elementary facts about the government organization, Thai language, customs and tradition, and their duty and responsibility towards the government and the king. The monks distribute medicine and other commodities, and tell them that these gifts are provided by the government. Before and after giving them these things, the monks instruct them to pay respect to the Triple Gems.¹ The practice of giving things to them is said to constitute a very effective means of approach to the hill people.²

The success and effectiveness of this programme of Thai acculturation is very difficult to assess. The official report of the accomplishments of the programme is usually something of a stereotyped statement that the

1. For more details see Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 106-107.

2. Department of Public Welfare (1971) op.cit., pp. 20-21.

monks have established a better relationship between the government and the hill people and the hill people's attachment to Buddhism appears to have increased year by year. The number of people who have taken vows as Buddhists and, more importantly, the number of the people who have been ordained, are claimed to be indicators of the success of the scheme.¹

Table 10 shows the numbers of male hill people who were ordained as novices and monks between 1965 and 1978.

Table 10 Ordination among the Hill Peoples

Year	Number of novices	Number of monks
1965	9	3
1966	14	4
1967	42	4
1968	30	3
1969	14	2
1970	24	1
1971	111	6
1972	119	13
1973	104	22
1974	135	22
1975	65	19
1976	83	18
1977	145	15
1978	121	23
Total	1,016	155

1. For more detail and comments see Somboon Suksamran, op.cit., pp. 107-108; see also the Department of Public Welfare, Reports on the Propagation of Buddhism among the Hill People, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1971, and 1974.

However, the Department of Public Welfare has not given information about the duration of the sojourn in the monkhood of the hill people ordained, nor the number of those who dropped out. Instead, it tends to emphasize the achievement of these novices and monks in religious or secular education. This is shown in Table 11.

Table 11 The Achievement of Monks and Novices in Education (1965-1978)

Religious Education (Dhamma Study, grade 1-3)	Secular education				
	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Pre- University Level	College Level	University Level
395	922	194	51	40	6

Source: Department of Public Welfare, Ngan Patthana lae Songkroh Chaokhao
(Development and Welfare Schemes for the Hill People) (Bangkok:
1978)

The Department of Public Welfare claims that those who have been ordained and later disrobed have better employment opportunities. Also that these people have become more useful manpower for the government and thus contributed to the welfare of the society as a whole. Occupations the ex-monks and novices have taken up are shown in Table 12.

Table 12 Employment among ex-monks and novices

<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Number Employed</u>
Radio broadcasters (in Tribal languages)	9
Teaching in Settlement Centres for Hill People	145
Interpreters	200
Border Patrol Policemen	24
Voluntary Teachers in Ministry of Education	7
Village Headmen	5

Source: Department of Public Welfare (1978).

Conclusion

Much of the data presented speaks for itself. What is clear is that during the period 1960-1973, the Sangha became increasingly drawn into government schemes. The monks became subject to greater government direction at all levels, and their teaching and other activities became more secular than spiritual in content. Even the Dhamma itself became more narrowly interpreted in accordance with the government programmes. Though the Sangha generally appeared to support these programmes, there are signs of discontent over both their changed roles and the government policies. This will become clearer in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGES AND THE EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL MONKS

In Chapter IV we noted that since the 1960s the Sangha has been mobilized to serve the government in particular schemes by the need for national security and integration. We have demonstrated that within the Sangha higher level administrative monks apparently have co-operated with political leaders to a remarkable extent and the Sangha in general has apparently willingly accommodated to a new institutionalized role, acting as government agents.

Taking the definition of politics put forward in Chapter I,¹ then, the activities of the monks involved in government schemes at all levels are clearly political actions. Yet, curiously, the term 'political monks' which has achieved some currency in Thailand in the 1970s is not applied to such monks. The assumption of new roles by them was recognized by the government and Sangha authorities and thus became institutionalized, legitimate and outside public controversy by the beginning of the 1970s.

In contrast, there were exceptional monks who developed personal responses to the political mobilization of the Sangha. Since the early 1970s, they have overtly shown an interest in and made a response to political and socio-economic issues which have had effects on the Sangha and society as a whole. These effects may directly or indirectly threaten communal interests or personal status and position. Their response to these issues or threats has resulted in the formation of new roles, some of which are so unconventional as to be almost a reversal of traditional roles ascribed to monks. In this respect their roles are not recognized by the government and the Sangha authorities and thus are

1. See pp. 3-4.

independent of their direction. Whether a monk, then, is 'political' is determined by his involvement in secular politics, by the style and method he employs to advance his ideological position, causes, and activities whether they be religious or secular. In this study we follow the popular usage and confine the term 'political monks' to this new phenomenon of the 1970s. In fact we consider two kinds of monks as 'political monks'. First, those that espouse a cause that demands political action, such as campaigning for the underprivileged, Buddhism or nationalism, and second, those that undertake political action in response to what they conceive of as threats to their personal status, privilege and position. Of course, it is not always possible to clearly distinguish between these kinds of motivation in political actions, particularly as the latter tends to be concealed under the guise of the former.

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when, why, and in what ways the monks became politically active. It is my assumption that modernization has significantly contributed to the development of their political and social awareness. The improvement of communications such as mass media and transportation during the last two decades has enabled the monks to broaden their horizons and to familiarize themselves with socio-political milieux outside the monastery. The modernization and expansion of education in the same period must have widened the monks' secular learning. Since the 1960s, for example, the Buddhist universities have modernized their courses. Such secular courses as Social Studies, Political Thought, Economics, Education, Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Asian Studies, and Public Administration have been included in Buddhist university curricula. These factors are, to a certain extent, responsible for the new dimensions of the monks' socialization and, possibly, politicization in the 1970s. On the one hand we may attribute the monks' involvement in government

policies and programmes to their growing social and political consciousness. On the other hand, we can also note that they became involved because they were manipulated or directed by the government. Most important, the absence of 'political monks' during the 1960s may be attributable to the fear of political repression which had dominated the country's political life.

The demise, though temporary, of military or authoritarian rule in 1973 permitted political freedom of a kind not previously known in Thailand. This included freedom of expression, freedom to redress grievances, to organize public rallies, demonstrations, and strikes. Within this political atmosphere, monks became more intensively politicized by competing groups embracing different ideologies. As a consequence, ideological polarization also affected politically conscious monks. I therefore propose to divide political monks into the two broadly-defined categories of left and right wing monks. Nevertheless, such a division does not mean that all political monks fall into either of the two groups. My definition of left and right wing ideologies is modelled after the policies of left and right wing political groups and activists in secular politics described below.¹

Thus, in a broad sense, political monks who espoused changes in socio-economic structures, and who identified with the secular left wing movements are classified as left wing political monks. Included in this category are monks who attempted to introduce changes in the organization and administration of the Sangha. Their ideology of reform and their attempts to effect it required the displacement of the old positions of power and status in the Sangha. In contrast, I identify monks who opposed changes in socio-political and economic structures, and who re-

1. See pp. 229-30, see also p. 249.

acted against the displacement of vested interests in the Sangha as right wing political monks. These monks shared a common ideology with the conservatives and right wing movements in secular politics. In their efforts to promote their ideologies both right and left wing monks sought legitimacy for their efforts by claiming that they were the vanguard of Buddhism, that their involvement in politico-economic issues was compatible with the teachings of the Buddha, and that their actions and ideologies were for the benefit, materially and spiritually, of Thai society as a whole. Both right and left wing political monks attempted to capitalize on the dynamic of socio-political change to mobilize support for their ideological positions and actions.

With the assumption that the dynamic of socio-political change has produced political monks, it is now necessary to consider further aspects of socio-political changes in Thailand, especially in the 1970s, which led to their emergence.

1. Political Repression and Its Effects on the Sangha

Although the socio-political changes of the period 1973-1976 were the immediate causes for the emergence of the political monks, the view that it was political repression in the previous periods that contributed to their emergence in opposition to authoritarian rule should be considered. Whereas military rule was accepted as necessary for the preservation of Thai society by conservative elements, it was rejected by the opposition who saw it as unnecessarily repressive. Their view of events antecedent to 1973 was on the following lines.

For almost thirty-four of the forty-six years since the 1932 Revolution, Thailand had been under the direct or disguised rule of military governments. Under the long and direct domination of Phibun Songkram (1947-1957), of Sarit Thanarat (1957-1963), and Thanom

Kitthikachorn (1963-1968 and 1971-1973),¹ the Thai people were deprived of freedom of speech, of the press, of Assembly, and of political parties. Civil liberties were restricted and frequently violated. Political repression had been an effective means of removing opposition and perpetuating military rule. Political murder and arrest of members of the opposition and of people who criticized authoritarian rule constituted a major element in the political repression.

During Phibun's rule several politicians and opposition figures were brutally murdered. Hundreds were imprisoned without trial. Thailand during this period was regarded by several contemporary Thai writers and the liberal opposition as being in a 'dark age' (Yuk mued).² Under Sarit's dictatorship, thousands of people were arrested for committing crimes ranging from hooliganism to communist acts and high treason. Hundreds were accused of being communists, tried by military courts, found guilty and imprisoned. Several of them were executed. Only the pro-government press survived closure and even these newspapers were subjected to heavy censorship. Labour unions were banned.³ Sarit was succeeded by his supporters, Thanom and Prapat, who followed closely in his footsteps. Thanom, by assimilating potential rivals for power into his set, by the monopoly of power and wealth, by exploiting the

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1. Absolute military rule has been reimposed twice since 1976, i.e. October 1976 to October 1977, and from 1977 up to the time of writing (April 1979).
 2. For more details see, for example, Witheskorani (pseud.), Yuk Tamin (The Dark Age of Brutality) (Bangkok: Prachakom Press, 1960); Kathadham (pseud.), Susan Nak Kanmuang (Politicians' Crematorium) (Bangkok: Phanfa Press, 1963); and Chitr Sangkhadum, Phao Saraphab (Phao's Confession) (Bangkok: Phrae Phittaya Press, 1960).
 3. For more details about the harsh measures Sarit used to suppress opposition see, for example, Thak Chaloehtiarana, The Sarit Regime, 1957-1963: The Formative Years of Modern Thai Politics (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, 1974).

enormous prestige of the throne, by pursuing a vigorous economic development programme, by retaining the military and economic support of the United States, and above all by perpetuating political repression and holding the freedom of the people in abeyance, managed to maintain his power for another decade. He temporarily relaxed the curbs on the freedom of the people during 1968-1971 and reimposed military rule again in 1971. He was overthrown by the student-led upheaval of October 1973. Within the Sangha, opponents of authoritarian rule could point to specific cases which they saw as political repression. Two of these cases, from the period 1958 to 1966, can be taken as examples.

First, three learned monks (Nakorn, Manas, and Sangwien) of the Mahanikai order were suspected of being communists. This incident began in 1956. During September to October of that year, these three monks were invited to attend a seminar organized by the Buddhist Association of Chinese People's Republic in Peking. There, the three monks were said to have made speeches on Peking Radio praising the communist regime's auspicious attitude towards Buddhism and its progressive and national development of the country. One of them wrote articles published in a Thai newspaper about the prosperity of China under the communist regime. Upon their return home, they were arrested and accused of being communists. They were unfrocked in 1960 and tried by court martial. The trial took four years to complete and eventually the three accused were declared not guilty and were released in 1964.¹

The other incident was the 'Phra Phimondham' case. This was to be so important in the events under consideration - it was in fact the cause

1. For detail, see Nakorn Klemphali, Kadi Prawatsat (Historical Cases) (Bangkok: Burapha Samakki Press, 1966) pp. 4-14, 108-165.

célèbre of the 1960s - that an initial account will be presented here, and further aspects will be examined in later chapters.

Phra Phimondham (Ard Duangmala - secular name) was born in Khon-kaen in the North-East about 1901. He had entered the monkhood in his youth as a member of Mahanikai order. He attained the Pali qualification Barian grade 8 in 1929. In 1932 he was appointed deputy abbot of a royal monastery in Ayudhya and was promoted subsequently as abbot and deputy Sangha governor of Ayudhya. In the meantime the honorific title of Phraracha kana Chan rath was also conferred on him. In 1943, he was promoted to higher rank and was appointed the Chao kana Phak. Two years later he was appointed a member of Kana Sangha Montri in charge of Ecclesiastical education and became responsible for the Pali examination of the Thai Sangha. He was promoted to Phraracha kana Chan thep in 1946 and Chan Tham in 1947. In the same year he moved to Wat Mahathat where he was the abbot until 1960. In 1949 he was the holder of the highest grade of Phraracha kana chan Thamm and became the Sangha Montri in charge of Ongkan Pokkhong, i.e. head of the department of Sangha administration. He acquired a reputation both inside and outside the country for his wisdom, and his abilities in meditation, administration and the propagation of Buddhism.

During the early 1950s Phibun's government, worried that the communists might be operating in the Sangha, directed the Sangha authorities to issue a decree forbidding the ordination of communists. The majority of the members of the Sangha Montri agreed with the government for they believed that the communists were enemies of Buddhism. But Phra Phimondham who was responsible for implementing the resolution opposed the idea on doctrinal grounds. He argued that such a decree was inconsistent with Buddhist principles, for it discriminated against people who might wish to enter the monkhood. He deliberately delayed

the implementation of the Sangha Montri's resolution, in a sense challenging both Sangha and government authority. As a result he was suspected of being a communist sympathizer and was interviewed by the Director General of the Police Department.¹ Although there was no concrete evidence to prosecute him, his reputation was impaired and he suffered from this stigma when Sarit came to power in 1957. In April 1960, Sarit convened a meeting of all administrative monks in the country and impressed on them the good intentions of the government in its policy towards the Buddhist religion and the Sangha. He told them frankly that since they depended on the state's support they should adjust their role to accommodate the objectives of the government and that the Sangha administration should be remodelled on the structure of the secular administration.² A few months later the existing Sangha Montri was dismissed and a new one was appointed which excluded Phra Phimondham.³ The new Sangha Montri subsequently declared that its administrative policies were, first, to follow the policies of the government; second, to oversee and prevent the communist infiltration of the Sangha and monasteries; third, to prevent any attempt to use the monasteries for the propagation of communism; fourth, to direct the improvement of the monasteries and to oversee the behaviour of the monks; and finally, to detect and get rid of those monks who expressed opinions that undermined the healthy condition of the religion and that were opposed to government policies.⁴ This declaration was widely criticized by the monks, especially by those of the Mahanikai order. Anonymous letters were circulated among monks and laymen urging them to

1. For more details see Thirachon (pseud.), Buanglang kan Plod Phra Phimondham, Vol. I (The Facts behind the Demotion of Phra Phimondham) (Bangkok: Samit Press, 1973) pp. 48-54.

2. Sarit's Address to the Assembly of Administrative Monks, 18 April 1960.

3. The majority of the members of the new Sangha Montri were Thammayut monks.

4. Thirachon, op.cit., pp. 34-35.

protest against the appointment of the new Sangha Montri and accusing the Sangha Montri of being the lackey of the government, of using its power to oppress the majority (i.e. Mahanikai monks), and of being a dictatorship. Policemen were sent to search many monasteries. Phra Phimondham was suspected of being the architect of this anti-government movement.

Further misfortunes fell upon Phra Phimondham. In July 1960 he was accused of indulging in homosexuality, a serious Vinaya offence which entailed expulsion from the monkhood. He pleaded not guilty and appealed to the Prime Minister (Sarit) and the Supreme Patriarch, but his appeal was rejected. Hundreds of his followers both monks and laymen saw this accusation as a plot to get rid of him. They organized demonstrations protesting against the decision of the Sangha authorities and appealed to the Prime Minister to order a re-investigation. The government sent the police to surround Wat Mahathat where the demonstration took place. On 25 October 1960 the Sangha authorities removed Phra Phimondham from his abbotship.¹ This caused further discord. The government then issued a special announcement warning the Sangha authorities that if they could not settle the matter themselves, the government would intervene.² And so it did. On 11 November 1960 the government announced to the public that, by His Majesty's Grace, Phra Phimondham was stripped of his honorific title and demoted to the status of ordinary monk. Nevertheless, his popularity remained intact. However, it was a great shock to him and his followers when in 1962 he was arrested and accused of committing communist acts. He was forced to disrobe and detained from 1962 until 1966. He was brought to trial

1. Order of the Supreme Patriarch, 25 October 1960.

2. The Prime Minister's Office, Announcement of the Government Concerning the Disputes within the Sangha, 28 October 1960.

by court martial in 1962. According to the charges made by the military prosecutor, his misdeeds extended over the period from 1946 to 1962. The accusations were: he condemned the Buddha as a 'great liar' in 1946, an act that aimed at destroying Buddhism; in 1953 and 1962 he had attacked the monarchy as a 'useless institution and a waste of money'; during the 1950s he had sent monks from his following to receive training in Marxism in India, including the three monks mentioned earlier; in the same period he was the leader of Onghan Song Kuchart Thai (The Thai Sangha's Organization for Liberation) which coordinated the Communist Party of Thailand operating in the Thai Sangha; between 1957 and 1960 he had assembled men and weapons with the intention of provoking the public to revolt against the government; he had had his men trained for guerilla warfare and revolution; in 1962 he had publicly accused Sarit and his government of dictatorship, corruption, repressing the Sangha and exploiting the people; and he had urged the public to revolt against the government and replace it with a communist regime.¹

The trial dragged on until 1966, when he was declared innocent and released to resume his monkhood. However, he was not reinstated in his honorific title or given any administrative post until 1975. It was revealed in court that Phra Phimondham would not have been in trouble, nor have lost his title, had there not been jealousy and power struggles among the members of the Sangha.² It was also suggested by

1. The Court Martial of Bangkok, Kamphiphaksa Sarn Thahan: Aiyakan Sarn Thahan v. Nai Ard Duangmala (The Verdict of the Court Martial: Military Prosecutor v. Nai Ard Duangmala) 30 August 1966, pp. 1-11 (typescript).
2. A testimony given to the court martial by Phra Dhammakosacharn on 10 August 1965. The allegations revealed here refer to the widely held belief among Phra Phimondham's supporters that his appointment to the post of head of department of Sangha administration had been hotly contested by an ambitious rival Phra Maha Weerawong of the Thammayut order. They accused this monk of jealously drawing to the attention of the authorities various alleged misdemeanours by Phra Phimondham, including the charge of homosexuality. Phra Maha Weerawong was himself well connected and successful, and ultimately became the Supreme Patriarch in 1965. He died in a car crash in 1972.

Phra Phimondham's followers that Sarit himself was jealous of Phra Phimondham's popularity.¹ It is also interesting to note that at the conclusion of the trial, the court asked Phra Phimondham to note that all that had happened to him was the consequence of his previous bad kamma, and that those who had wrongly accused him would receive the fruits of their misdeeds (bad kamma) either in this life or the next life!²

The Phra Phimondham case was seen by many monks as an act of great injustice. But few spoke out against the government at the time for fear of reprisals. It remained one of the number of grievances which were to be made public in the 1970s. The major cause of dissatisfaction with the government in the 1960s in the Sangha was however the new Sangha Act of 1962. After it was passed, the danger of communism continued to be the justification for the government tightening of control of the Sangha. For example, in April 1964 the Director General of the Department of Religious Affairs claimed that the government had every reason and clear evidence to believe that the communists had been attempting to undermine or even destroy Buddhism for political purposes.³ Ironically, any wrongs occurring in the Sangha, such as the conflicts among administrative monks, criticism of government and the

1. Take, for example, the story told to me by Mr Anan Wongseta, a former close disciple of Phra Phimondham. When Sarit visited Khonkhaen, not long after he came to power, he was surprised by the small number of the people who came to greet him at the airport. He learnt later that the majority had gone to greet Phra Phimondham who had arrived at the nearby town at almost the same time.
2. The Court Martial of Bangkok, op.cit., p. 24.
3. Some monks were arrested for communist conspiracy during 1964-1968. In 1964, nine monks were arrested and charged with provoking the people to disobey the government and undermining the monarchy (Dhammachaksu, Vol. 49, No. 12, September 1964) p. 65. In 1966, Somdet Phra Wannarat revealed to the press that there were communists within the monkhood who in the guise of Buddhists taught communism to the people in the North-East. Some of them had been arrested by the police (Dhammachaksu, Vol. 51, No. 7, 1966) p. 73. Also in 1968, eight monks were arrested while trying to enter a restricted official building. They carried arms. (Dhammachaksu, Vol. 53, No. 7, 1968) p. 71.

Sangha by monks etc. were construed as part of a communist plot to destroy Buddhism and to induce people to lose faith in the religion and the Sangha. The government ordered the Sangha authorities at all levels to keep a close watch and even spy on the activities of suspected monks.

2. Political and Economic Deterioration and Monks' Criticism of Authority

While military rule continued and modes of government remained unchanged, socio-political changes were taking place rapidly in Thailand. Political and social consciousness had developed appreciably among the population, notably among the more articulate sections of society, such as the university and college teachers and students, journalists, politicians, progressive bureaucrats, and monks. These intellectuals in turn were able to make the general public somewhat more aware of the values of freedom, civil liberty, and democratic rule. The deterioration in political, economic, and social conditions was often attributed by them to military rule.

In 1968 Thanom's regime loosened control of political activities by promulgating a new constitution which reinstated political parties (except the communist party), permitted a free press, and promised a general election in 1969. However, the constitution, as had been the case in the past, was designed primarily to facilitate the aims of the existing regime.¹ Thus, the 1969 general election returned the Thanom clique to power. However, socio-political circumstances had changed greatly since the early 1960s. More people demanded a greater share

1. For example, it allowed the Prime Minister and other members of the government to take office without being elected members of Parliament; for more details see the Constitution, 1968.

in politics, and the growing popularity of elected MPs allowed their powers in parliament to move increasingly away from the ruling clique's manipulation and control. In November 1971 Thanom staged a coup d'etat against his own government. Absolute rule returned and lasted until October 1973.

The period 1971-1973 saw a rapid political and economic deterioration. Political repression and restrictions on the freedom of expression were restored. The new regime centralized power in its own hands, excluding civilian technocrats and politicians from high-level decision-making. At the same time factionalism within the ruling military clique increased and led to the shattering of the unity of the military high command. The military leaders were so preoccupied with the task of ensuring the support of their clients¹ that attempts to solve the immediate economic difficulties produced by inflation were neglected. The informed public became aware of the weaknesses of the military oligarchs and began to judge them as corrupt and self-serving. In up-country areas, despite massive suppression, communist insurrections and rural insurgency increased, and in the increasingly violent fighting the government suffered losses.²

Economic deterioration accelerated the public loss of confidence in the ability of the military to govern, though in fact it was probably due more to external factors such as world-wide inflation, than to government policy. After a long period of economic stability prior to 1970, the rate of inflation rose alarmingly, reaching 15 per cent in 1972-1973.

1. Clark D. Neher, 'Stability and Instability in Contemporary Thailand', Asian Survey, Vol. XV, No. 12, December 1975, pp. 1099-1100; see also Henry Bienen and David Morell, 'Transition from Military Rule: Thailand's Experience', Catherine M. Kelleher (ed.), Political-Military Systems: Comparative Perspectives (London: Sage, 1974) pp. 3-25.

2. David Morell, 'Thailand', Asian Survey, Vol. XIII, No. 2, February 1973, pp. 173-174; see also Anan Senakhan et al, Kom thi Rak (Dear Communists) (Bangkok: Pho Samton Press, 1974), and Ban Muang (A Thai daily newspaper) 24 March 1977.

The price of rice doubled in 1972, while rice production dropped some 12 per cent. The economic growth rate dropped precipitously from 11.8 per cent during the latter half of the 1960s to 2.8 per cent in 1972.¹ The country's overall balance of payments showed a deficit for the first time.

Among the urban population unemployment rose sharply adding to the misery of the already lowly paid industrial workers.² In the farming sector, land was the central problem. While the amount of usable land increased only one per cent per year, the population growth was about 3.3 per cent. Landholdings, as a consequence, had become smaller over time as they were divided among an ever-increasing population. The average land holding per family was 25 rai in 1950; by 1970 the figure had been reduced to 15.8 rai. Inequalities in terms of land tenure and in rent, the insecurity of tenant farmers and rural indebtedness were other serious problems.³ The deterioration of the national economy described above added to these problems, and the standard of living for the majority of farmers dropped sharply.

1. Neher, op.cit., p. 1100.

2. Already an exploited category whose low wages meant they lived in considerable poverty. For them working conditions were often sub-standard, pension and sickness benefits did not exist, and there was no provision for job security or legal redress for wrongful dismissal. For fuller details see, for example, Phichit Chongsathit-watthana, Krabuan kan kammakorn nai Prathet thai (Labour Movement in Thailand) (Bangkok: Phikkhanet, 1974), and Suphachai Manatsaphaibun, Kammakorn thai nai rabob nai thun (Thai Labourers in a Capitalist Economy) (Bangkok: Somphong Press, 1974).

3. For details see Chaoyong Chuchart and Suthiporn Chirapanda, Changes in Agrarian Structure in Central Thailand 1965-1971 (Bangkok: Department of Land Development, 1974); Chaoyong Chuchart, Principles and Practices of Land Planning and Development in Thailand: Land Economies Report No. 6 (Bangkok: Ministry of National Development, 1971); Department of Land Development, Percentage Comparisons between Land Owners and Tenants in 1963 and 1968-1969 (Bangkok: Mimeograph, 1969); and also National Student Centre of Thailand, Pathirup thi din? (Land Reform?) (Bangkok: Phikkhanet, 1974).

The changing economic conditions also greatly affected the so-called 'new petit-bourgeoisie', who had emerged as a result of the Vietnam war boom of the 1960s.¹ This new class had been apolitical and concerned only with their economic betterment. By 1971 or 1972, the boom was fading and resulted in a certain uneasiness and dissatisfaction amongst its beneficiaries. They blamed the government for its inability to sustain the boom.

These economic setbacks were also shared by the salaried bureaucrats. The combined forces of inflation and recession made it difficult for them to maintain the standard of living they expected. They too placed the blame for their falling living standards on the military regime and attributed their difficulties to its economic mismanagement.

Despite government repression, it became evident that the tolerance of some sections of the public had reached its breaking point. Criticism of the wrongs of the military government was frequently expressed. At the forefront of the opposition were liberal-minded intellectuals, such as university lecturers, students and journalists. To a large extent, opposition to the government appeared in the form of published articles.² To a minor extent, it ranged from the distribution of leaflets to street demonstrations. The critical articles involved, for example, gentle appeals to end repressive military rule and to restore representative

1. A good detailed analysis of this 'new class' is offered by Professor Benedict R. O'Gorman Anderson, 'Withdrawal Symbols: Social and Cultural Bases of the 6 October 1976 Coup in Siam', Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, Vol. 9, No. 3 (July-September 1977) pp. 13-30.
2. These critical articles mostly appeared in the prestigious monthly review Sangkomsat Parithat (Journal of Social Science Review) during 1970-1973; and in Chao Ban (Commoner), a magazine published by a group of university lecturers over the same period.

government.¹ Also the uneven application of the economic development policy was fervently criticized. During 1970-1973 the critics directed their attacks to the theories and modes of economic development which closely followed the examples of capitalist societies, especially the United States of America. They said that such development plans promoted the monopolisation of the economic wealth of the nation by the elite, exacerbated exploitation, and widened the gap between the rich and the poor, the urban and rural sections of society. The American domination of the Thai economy and capitalist system were blamed for the economic and social hardships of the peasants and labourers, corruption and abuse of power by political leaders and government officials were also said to be a major cause of alienation.² By 1973, demands for the withdrawal of the American military bases from Thailand increased rapidly.³ One critic warned the government in 1970 that its existing policies needed a drastic change, 'if it wants to avoid a popular uprising'.⁴ This sort of opposition, though limited to educated sectors, did have enormous influence on the mass of university and college students. Some of them became the architects and leaders of change, and several thousands were militant in overthrowing the military regime in October 1973.

The growing alienation from the military regime also pervaded the young and educated monks. In the same period (1970-1973) there

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1. The most influential one was an open letter entitled Chotmai chak nai khem (Letter from Mr Khem) written by Professor Puay Ungphakorn.
 2. These views originally appeared in Sangkomsat Parithat during 1970-1973. Later they were published in Suchart Sawatdisi (ed.), Kam Prakat khong kwam rusuk nai (Declaration of New Feelings) (Bangkok: Phikkhanet, 1975), see especially pp. 5-10, 21-29, 93-105.
 3. Ibid., pp. 201-209.
 4. Ibid., p. 29.

occasionally appeared criticisms of military rule from some monks. The stages by which this happened can be best traced in the critical articles published in Buddhachak, a monthly journal of Mahachula Buddhist University. This journal began in 1946 and its main contributors have been monks. Before 1969, it had concentrated on topics such as Buddhist studies, Pali, the history of Buddhism, and limited its items of social concern to the activities of the university and events within the confines of Sangha affairs. In 1969 there was a special issue devoted to the discussion of political, economic, and social problems which the monks themselves had experienced when they participated in the government programmes of community development and the Phra Dhammatuta scheme. This was the first time that monks openly criticized the military government for its repression of the people. For example, on the problem of communist insurrection, one monk maintained that it was the indiscriminate measures of suppression that had forced the people to become communists. Moreover, the abuse of power and maladministration of local government officials was also another important factor which made the people feel insecure and led them to seek help from the communists. Another monk pointed out that the government would never secure the villagers' loyalty if it could not remedy the problems of rural poverty and the corruption of officials.¹

Other direct criticisms² of military rule became more pronounced during the period 1970 to 1973. For example, one monk expressed his detestation of the government's limitations on freedom of expression, its repression and corruption by identifying the corrupted political

1. For more details see Buddhachak, Special Issue, July 1969.

2. These criticisms were mostly anonymous. So it is difficult to establish the precise quarter from which criticism was coming, other than from the provenance of the journal, i.e. Mahachula Buddhist University.

leaders with wild beasts.¹ Another author warned the government that its repressive rule only stimulated national discontent. He stated that 'people will leave their farms and cattle and take to arms for revenge'.² They appealed to the political leaders to end repressive rule and to have more care for the people.

Many monks also began to express their great concern about the deterioration of the country's economy. Their central concern was the economic plight of the peasants. They appealed to the government to pay more attention to the farmers' grievances by giving development priority to them. One article, for example, stressed that the economic plight of the farmers was a result of capitalism in which the political leaders had a part. This author also conceived of the economic development policy of the government as an 'evil device' which aggravated the misery of the farmers, while enhancing the fortunes of the rich.³ Several articles attributed the social ills of the country to the political leaders' immorality, and to corruption within the government.⁴

Also during this period, the monks' concern for the healthy condition of Buddhism and correct behaviour of the monks became pronounced. The authoritarian character of the Sangha administration was blamed as

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1. Phra Maha Sathienphong Pun nawanno, 'Krungthep sibsong (roi) Phi khangna' (Bangkok in Twelve (Hundred) Years from now), Sangkomsat Parithat, Vol. 7, No. 4 (March-May 1970) p. 3.
 2. Anon., 'Rath Philarb' (Voices of People's Grievances), Buddhachak, Vol. 26, No. 12 (December 1972) pp. 15-16.
 3. Yotmuk (pseud.), 'Lammam Chonbot' (Voices from the Countryside), Buddhachak, Vol. 26, No. 10 (October 1972) pp. 30-31.
 4. See, for example, 'Editorial Notes', Buddhachak, Vol. 26, No. 8 (August 1972) and Vol. 27, No. 4 (April 1973).

having undermined Buddhism and having caused injustice within the Sangha. The misdemeanours¹ of some administrative monks were strongly criticized. Discontent with the Sangha authority and its treatment of Phra Phimondham began to exert its effect. Phra Phimondham's supporters persistently petitioned the government and the Sangha authority to investigate the possibility that this monk had been wrongly accused and unjustly tried. They also appealed to the authorities to return his honorific title. This movement became apparent in 1971 and lasted until 1976.² In November 1972, 16 Sangha provincial governors of the North-Eastern region acting on behalf of the whole body of administrative monks of the North-Eastern provinces sent a letter to the government informing it of their determination to demand justice and reinstatement in office for Phra Phimondham. A similar letter was also sent to the Supreme Patriarch.³ In September 1973, 4,580 monks and novices asked the Sangha authority to reconsider Phra Phimondham's case. Their demand was similar to that already made on previous occasions. Although the demand was not met until 1975, the movement clearly demonstrated a challenge to the Sangha authority. It also suggests that when the civil government was weak and unstable, so was the Sangha authority.

Thus before October 1973, the political and economic deterioration had already created preconditions for rapid, possibly violent change.

A by-product of this situation was the emergence of political monks.

1. Such as practising occultism (saiyasat), blessing mercenaries who were going to fight in Vietnam and Laos, presiding over the opening ceremonies of massage parlours or night clubs etc.
2. For details about the emergence and the development of this movement see Phra Maha Sawat Chartmethi, Maha Sangkhanibat na lan Asok (The Great Sangha Convention at Lan Asok) (Bangkok: Krung Sayam Press, 1975) pp. 2-91.
3. Letters from 16 Chao kana Changwat to the Secretary General of the Revolutionary Council, and the Supreme Patriarch, dated 15 November 1972.

What was needed were incidents that would spark an upheaval. This is the subject to which we will now devote attention.

3. The 1973 Political Upheaval and Its Aftermath

In the early part of the year there were a variety of incidents which accelerated the 1973 upheaval. One of the most significant of these began in June when nine students of Ramkamhaeng University were expelled for writing a satire on the decision of Thanom and Prapat to extend their terms of office for yet another year. Students under the leadership of the National Students Centre of Thailand (NSCT) organized a demonstration in which about 50,000 students from all over the country took part. They demanded the reinstatement of the nine students.

Over the two days of the rally the students realized that they were well supported by the urban masses.¹ The demonstration became a forum for spelling out grievances against the military government. Soon they also called for an end to military rule, the stopping of corruption and measures to restore the sagging Thai economy. Most importantly they asked for a new constitution within six months, not three years as Prapat had promised the week before.²

The demonstration was a success in one respect. The nine expelled students were reinstated. However, the government gave no promises about an early promulgation of the new constitution. But the students had already determined to fight for it, as the student leader, the

1. Thai newspapers reported that they were supported by people giving them money and food. Bus conductors and taxi drivers gave them free rides. Many non-students joined in the demonstration. See, for example, Thai Rath, 22-23 June 1973, and also Bangkok Post, 23 June 1973.

2. Bangkok Post, 23 June 1973.

Secretary General of the NSCT declared:

... this (demonstration) is only a beginning.....
We must win We must fight for the constitution
because the government of our country must be run by
the people, not the military.¹

He also called on the people to join or to support them in their fight
against the military oligarchs.

After this event the student movement won considerable support
from the Bangkok working class, middle class, and intellectuals. They
became the voice of the people and the principal opposition to the
military regime.²

The immediate cause for the October 1973 political upheaval was
the arrest of thirteen political activists, comprising student leaders,
university lecturers, politicians, and journalists, during 6 to 8
October 1973, for distributing leaflets calling for an early promulga-
tion of the new constitution. They were accused by the government of
involvement in a communist plot to overthrow it. The NSCT called a
mass demonstration in protest, and on 12 October they demanded the un-
conditional release of the arrested men, and that the constitution be
promulgated within six months. In this demonstration many thousands
of students from all over the country took part. On 13 October they
took to the streets and marched to the Democracy Monument. They were
joined by great crowds of sympathisers.³ On the same day the government

1. Ibid.

2. Ross Prizzia and Narong Sinsawasdi, Thailand: Student Activism and Political Change (Bangkok: Allied Printers, 1974) pp. 40-42.

3. The number of demonstrators was estimated at between 400,000 and 500,000; see, for example, Thai Rath, 14 October 1973.

agreed to release the men under arrest unconditionally and promised to promulgate the new constitution in October 1974.

Although their demands were not totally met, the student leaders, following the king's intervention, agreed to call off the demonstration. But a large number of the demonstrators refused to disband, unless the government could produce a guarantee that the promises would be kept. These discontented crowds marched to the Palace to seek the king's guarantee in the early morning of 14 October. Through his representative the king advised them to disband and go home. While the demonstrators were trying to leave the palace, there was some confusion, and clashes between the crowds and police occurred. Many demonstrators were injured, and it was rumoured that three girls had been beaten to death by the police. When this rumour spread to other crowds who were still in the streets and on Thammasat University campus, the demonstrators sought violent revenge. The government sent in the armed forces equipped with M.16 and tank-machine guns to suppress the demonstrators and bloodshed began. The violent confrontation lasted for two days. Throughout it, the government, using radio and television, distorted the situation. It announced that the demonstrators were not students, but communists who wanted to overthrow the government and destroy the monarchy. It warned the people not to go out. But hundreds of thousands did come out, and many joined in the battle. The violence ended when the king dismissed the government and Thanom, Prapat and Narong were forced to go into exile. The price for bringing the military regime down was high: over 50 people were killed and hundreds wounded, and several public buildings were devastated besides.

Although the success in ending the long period of military rule was primarily credited to the student movement, it must be recognized that it was the massive support from people in many walks of life which

ensured their victory. A new government was established, predominantly civilian. The king's selection and appointment of the new government headed by Sanya Thammasak gave the caretaker government legitimacy and it was accepted by the students and the public alike. A National Assembly was established through a selection process and with the blessing of the king. It comprised a variety of leading personalities: civil servants, intellectuals, professionals, a handful of farmer and labourer leaders, businessmen and military, with an overall civilian majority. A Constitutional Drafting Committee was also set up, with due attention to student wishes, comprising lawyers, political scientists, and journalists.

The new government promised to promulgate a new Constitution within six months and to hold a general election as soon as possible. It also promised to draw up plans for remedying economic and political problems. It was an era of hope and anticipation during which the people expected to see things change overnight. In fact their expectations had gone so high that it was beyond the ability of the caretaker government to satisfy them, as we shall see later.

Several politically oriented groups and voluntary associations were now formed in Bangkok and other communities and began to exert themselves as pressure groups. Their emergence was clearly in response to the long suppression of freedom of expression, and to the lack of means by which various occupational groups and the common people at large could express their grievances and induce change. The mushroom growth of pressure groups and of a free press in this period contributed to the development of the most genuinely free political atmosphere Thailand had ever experienced.

Among the politically oriented groups and associations that emerged

after October 1973 were, for example, the People for Democracy (Prachachon Phau Prachathipathai - PDG) and the Federation of Independent Students of Thailand (FIST). These two pressure groups, together with the NSCT, later became strong leftist movements. Among the liberal associations was, for example, the Union for Civil Liberty (UCL). There were also occupational groups such as the National Centre for the Protection of Teachers' Rights and a limited number of similar occupational associations. Apart from these, an Environment Protection Club and Consumer Associations were formed.

This period also witnessed the consolidation of the urban workers and farmers. The urban labourers had progressed from an initial spate of wild-cat strikes in late 1973, to more coordinated groups of unions. Notable among them was the radical Federation of Labour Unions of Thailand (FLUT).¹ The rice farmers in many provinces successfully organized themselves into collective bargaining groups. The most radical one was the Federation of Farmers of Thailand (FFT). A number of organized groups of monks for various purposes also emerged in this period. The most articulate one was the Federation of Buddhists of Thailand (FBT) which will be discussed in more detail later.

In the process of political and social change, it was hardly surprising that the outburst of political activity should give rise to factionalism within and between the various groups. In the process of conflict, too, people tended to divide themselves into opposing sides, in the broadest sense, between conservatives and those who wanted

1. For more detail about the development and membership of labour unions in Thailand between 1973 and 1976 see Bevar D. Mabry, 'The Thai Labour Movement', Asian Survey, Vol. XVII, No. 10, October 1977, pp. 935-941; see also Suphachai Manatsaphaibun, op.cit., and Phichit Chongsathitwatthana, op.cit.

to bring change to the existing social, political and economic structure. One of the most significant developments was the ideological polarization and confrontation between the left and right wing political groups.

4. Ideological Polarization and Confrontation: The Left versus the Right

The use of the concept of left and right wing political polarity in this study is not intended to suggest that the whole society is polarized. Rather the concept refers strictly to political activities in Thailand during 1973-1976, and the political groups who tried to persuade the majority of the people to support them, or at least to be sympathetic to their ideas, causes and activities. I must stress that the left and right wing labels are being strictly confined to the Thai perception of the left and the right at this period, and therefore may not coincide with the usage that prevails in the West or elsewhere.

In Thailand the left and right labels are relative, depending on the conception of one wing's ideology by the other. Between 1974 and 1976, leftists ranged from liberals to communists. Rightists included middle-of-the-road and ultra conservatives and military strong men. For the leftists, the rightists were 'capitalists' (nai thun), 'militarists' (khum suk), 'imperialists' (chakkawat niyom), 'feudalists or aristocrats' (sakdina), 'fascists' (fascit), and those opposed to social, economic and political change. The rightists were also identified as the exploiters, the oppressors, and in extreme cases the enemies of the people. The leftists, as regarded by the rightists, included activists and agitators such as the communists, communist sympathizers, socialists and liberals. Leftists were identified as the enemies of the nation, religion, and the monarchy, the 'scum of the earth' (khon rok phaendin) who caused social and political disturbance and national disintegration, and those who hindered and undermined

economic and social progress.

Since there were numerous shades of left and right there were inevitably overlaps to be found in ideologies and activities between groups and among individuals. Broadly speaking, the ideological position of the Thai left wing was support for significant political, economic and social changes. Their ideological commitments ranged from liberalism and reformism to socialism and revolution. It was the leftists' ideas about the methods of bringing about change that inevitably caused uneasiness, and antagonized the rightists, for they invariably involved an attempt to overthrow the established elite. The ideological direction of the rightists had consequently crystallized primarily in reaction to the threat of their displacement from positions of power and status.

(a) The Leftists

Although the leftists could not agree on all matters, they appear to have shared a minimal common set of beliefs which set them apart from the rightists. This consisted of: a belief in freedom, especially freedom of the press, speech and assembly; a belief in equality, minimally equality before the law; sympathy with the oppressed and the exploited; opposition to imperialism and any kind of foreign domination; and willingness to be servants of the people. The more radical leftists also agreed that the power struggle in Thailand was between the people and groups identified as feudal-capitalists, imperialist-backed militarists and dictatorial rulers.

The relaxation of censorship of the press from 1974 to 1976 allowed the emergence or revival of publications in which their leftist stance was revealed to the public. It is through these daily newspapers, weekly magazines, monthly journals, and irregular pamphlets,

as well as paperback books that we are able to appreciate, although not comprehensively, the leftist stand and their common identification.

Representing progressive liberal attitudes and values were such daily newspapers as the Prachathipathai ('Democracy'), the Prachachart ('Nation') and the Siangmai ('New Voice'). They were by-products of the October 1973 upheaval. Within this category were also the weekly magazines. Prachachart ('The Nation'), Jaturat ('The Square'), and the monthly magazine, Sithi Seriphap ('Civil Rights and Liberties') which was published by the Union for Civil Liberty. These magazines concentrated on the quest for social justice, economic equality, the removal of corruption among public officials, an end to government misappropriation of funds and the like. Chao Ban ('Commoner'), a periodical published by a group of university lecturers, concentrated on rural problems and brought peasant grievances to the attention of the government and urban readers.

Socialist trends were clearer in such weekly newspapers as Maharath ('The Masses') which focussed on explaining to the masses basic socialist principles and the nature of the class struggle in Thai society; Asia, Mahanikhon ('The Multitude'), and Mahachon ('The People') took an anti-American stance and concentrated on the imperialist role of the United States in Latin America as well as in Asia. Reflecting the ideological orientation of the labour movement which was also radical, were such journals as Raeng Ngan Thai ('Thai Labour') and Raeng Ngan Parithat ('Labour Review') which pointed to the economic plight, oppressed conditions and exploitation of Thai urban labourers. They also sought to encourage the solidarity of the labour movements and gave opinions on how to fight the capitalists. The more influential publications of students and intellectuals who formed the core of urban radical opposition were the fortnightly Soon ('The Centre') and

the weekly Athipat ('Sovereign') published by the NSCT. Both of them gave reports and commentaries on Thai social and political issues from a radical viewpoint. In particular they dealt sympathetically with the problems of farmers and labourers, ethnic minorities and regional dissidents throughout the country. More radical and revolutionary were the monthly P. Ch. P. Ch. (an abbreviation for Phrachon Phua Prachathipathai - People for Democracy), put out by the PDG, Phithuphum (La patrie) published by the Socialist Party of Thailand, and periodical publications such as the FIST's Khonchon ('The Poor'). In these papers, Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideas were the main inspiration. They employed a pervasive vocabulary of struggle on behalf of the oppressed and exploited labourers and farmers. They uncompromisingly declared war on imperialism and capitalism.

All of these leftist publications were in direct conflict with the well-established popular newspapers and magazines which typically avoided social issues and laid stress on lurid crimes, sex and sensationalism. The more respectable newspapers and magazines, which did cover social and political problems in a conservative fashion were dismissed by the leftist press as elitist..

This was also a boom period for left wing paperbacks. Mass production had made them cheap in price and hence available to almost everyone. They exposed the Thai people to influences which had previously been stifled. The paperback publications ranged from a sort of 'Do-It-Yourself' revolutionary manual to the profoundly intellectual works of Marx, Lenin, and Mao. Sympathetic studies of the thoughts and lives of these figures and of such people as Chou-En-Lai, Ho Chi Minh, Vo Nguyen Giap, Norodom Sihanouk, Keo Sampan, Supanuwong, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and so on were available in abundance. Their published works were widely translated into Thai. The works of martyred Thai Marxists such

as Chitt Phumisak, Kularp Saipradit, Pridi Phanomyong and so on re-emerged and were carefully studied. All these publications had a profound influence on the thought of the young leftists of the day.

Contributions in paperback from contemporary Thai leftists were also numerous. Their themes were, in general, the extension and elaboration of the ideas expressed in the periodicals described earlier. Among them there were also leftist exposés of individuals as exploitative capitalists, militarists, feudalists, and so on. Many dealt with social questions such as peasants, land, and labour problems, and international problems relevant to the Thai scene. To a major extent, socialist approaches were put forward as the best alternatives for remedying what were seen as the social, economic, and political problems of the country. On the extreme left, popular revolution was recommended as the only means to remove the capitalist and militarist classes and to end exploitation. In both domestic and foreign affairs, the USA was seen as the major villain, and it was suggested that Thai links with the United States should be broken and new friends such as China should be cultivated.

The ideologies of the left reached the rural masses through a number of channels. In 1974 and early 1975 the NSCT with the government co-organized and financed a programme called the Democracy Propagation Campaign in the rural areas. The official objective was to teach democracy to the people. The students were organized into groups and sent to villages throughout the country. They lived and worked with the villagers for short periods of one to two weeks. Among thousands of volunteers were a number of left wing students who took the opportunity

to pass on leftist ideas to the rural masses.¹ There were also groups of students who rejected the Democracy Propagation Campaign as right wing propaganda and who went on their own to the villages and worked on community development projects. For example, in a village in Khonkhaen province, a group of students helped the villagers to organize self-help programmes, such as further education for school leavers, co-operatives, a village road and well construction.² Similar movements were also found in Nakornsawan and some other provinces in the North.

Before the end of 1974, some leftist organizations were ready to bid for political power in the parliamentary system. On the far left, they consolidated into the Socialist Party of Thailand (Sangkomniyom haeng Prathet Thai). This party advocated a thoroughgoing socialist policy of nationalizing banks, unused land, and all key services and industries, and of providing better social welfare. Anti-imperialism and anti-foreign influence were further themes in their manifesto. In the middle of the left, there emerged the United Socialist Front of Thailand (Naew Ruam Sangkomniyom haeng Prathet Thai). It offered a more moderate programme than the Socialist Party by claiming to respect private property rights and accommodating to the strong Thai sentiments of reverence for the monarchy and religion. More moderate still was the New Force Party (Palang Mai). However, in the 1975 election all of the left wing parties together gained only 37 seats out of 269. They thus came to serve together with the centre party, the Democrats, as

1. This assertion is supported by the author's own experience when he was the instructor to volunteers in Phitsanulok, Khonkhaen, Petchaburi, Songkla and Narathiwat during 1974-1975. He also participated in the campaign.
2. T. Suwanajinda et al, op.cit.

opposition parties. The five main right wing parties took the lead in forming a coalition government. The left wing parties got even less seats in the subsequent general election (1976). Although the coalition governments both offered to accommodate certain demands of the left wing parties, these offers were not taken up.¹ In the eyes of the leftists, these governments were the preserve of the capitalists, militarists, and feudalists who would never understand the grievances and misery of the masses, and only prolong the oppression. Outside of Parliament, the left wing activists publicized their doubts about the sincerity of the government among the masses. They organized and led a series of rallies, protesting against the government throughout the country. They claimed to be the vanguard of the oppressed and exploited and sought rapid relief for them through strikes, demonstrations, public exhibitions or public speeches. The following examples will serve to illuminate the activities of the leftists as well as their ideologies in these matters.

In 1974 the PDG revealed to the public the activities of the government troops in their communist suppression campaign in Ban Nasai, a North-Eastern village, as atrocities. This village had been alleged by the government to be communist infested and had been burnt down. The PDG launched a nation-wide campaign, mobilized a mass protest against the government and demanded compensation for the villagers. In 1975, another group led by the NSCT followed up by publicizing another alleged atrocity, the Red Drum case, committed by the government authorities in Pattalung, a Southern province. According to the 'Red

1. For more details see Somporn Sangchai, Some Observations On Elections and Coalition Formation in Thailand, 1976 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Occasional Paper No. 43, May 1976); and also Jeffrey Race, 'The January 1975 Thai Election: Preliminary Data and Inferences', Asian Survey, Vol. 15, 1975, pp. 375-381.

Drum' story, hundreds of communist suspects were tortured and brutally killed by having them soaked in a 200-litre drum of petrol and set on fire.¹ In these campaigns the leftists appeared to base their case on humanitarian rather than partisan grounds and used the alleged incidents to demand a critical review of the communist suppression techniques as well as the abolition of the Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC). However, in both cases no independent inquiries were conducted. The CSOC was not abolished but changed its name to the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC).

The difficulties of the farmers and labourers were another central concern of the leftists. As we have noted earlier, the period 1974-1975 produced a multiplicity of organized farmers' groups and labour unions. Under the leadership of the radical Federation of Farmers of Thailand (FFT), farmers staged a series of demonstrations protesting against the government policies concerning land reform, land tenure and rent. The unprecedented rallying of peasants began in May 1974 and was followed by others, one in June, and another, the biggest, in November, and a few smaller ones in 1975. The farmers in their demands sought the re-allocation of land taken from them by loan-sharks and large landlords; immediate aid for landless peasants; a speeded-up investigation into the illegal or unfair seizure of land by loan-sharks, large landlords, and government; investigation into unfair rents; and an early introduction of land reform legislation. In the course of demonstrations, it became clear that many peasants did appreciate the the leftist ideologies. For instance, at the rallies a number of

1. Ruangyot Chantharakiri, 'Rai ngan Chak Pattalung: theep long khao phao long thang daeng' (The Red Drum Victims: A Report from Pattalung) Sangkomsat Parithat, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1975, pp. 41-73.

peasant leaders addressed their followings in revolutionary Marxist terms. They used phrases such as 'class struggle', 'the exploiters and the exploited', 'power to the people', 'people utmost in the land', 'capitalism is the social ill of mankind', and so on. The most remarkable demonstration was the occasion on which hundreds of farmers marched to Parliament in June 1974 and returned their identification cards to the President of the Parliament, a symbolic gesture indicating the abandonment of Thai citizenship. It was also the first time that monks led farmers in a march.

For the labourers too, this period saw a series of strikes, unprecedented in size, the amount of violence involved, and the extent of demands made.¹

Anti-American imperialism protests were another notable form of activity by the leftists. Between 1974 and 1976 there were a whole series of demonstrations demanding the withdrawal of American bases from Thailand. These effectively culminated with two massive demonstrations. The first was over the Mayaguez incident in late 1975.² This pressed the government into an agreement with the United States to withdraw most of its forces from Thailand. On 20 March 1976, a second demonstration was staged to ensure the government honoured this agreement.³

It is interesting to note that in these demonstrations and protest activities, despite their various shades of radicalism and their differ-

1. Over 1,000 strikes occurred between 1973 and 1975; see Department of Labour, Year Book of Labour Statistics (Bangkok: Department of Labour, 1975) pp. 118-119.
2. In this the US marines used a Thai base without permission to rescue an American ship, the Mayaguez, captured by the Cambodian Navy.
3. For details, see, for example, The University of New South Wales Thai Society, Thai, No. 2 (Victoria: Walker Press, 1976) pp. 3-5.

ences in opinion on other matters, the leftists showed their solidarity, and gave expression to their shared ideas. From my own experience, as the Executive Member of the Union for Civil Liberty between 1974 and 1975, there was always consultation between various leftist movements upon plans and strategies in the organization of protests. In practice, a group would be responsible for a certain cause and would seek support from other leftist groups. Support, in general, ranged from issuing a declaration or joint communique, to mass mobilization.

Thus, the period 1974 to early 1975 was the period in which the leftists were allowed to gather momentum. To some extent they dominated the political arena outside the institutionalized politics of Thailand. Their growing strength and increasing activities particularly alarmed the rightists. Yet the government was reluctant to use suppressive measures against the leftists openly because several of them were the 'heroes and heroines' of the October 1973 upheaval, whose prestige acquired from that event still remained high. The government could neither pass any law forbidding their activities, for this would hardly be 'democratic', nor could it send any troops or police to repress them, since the memory of the anti-military antagonism following October 1973 was still too fresh. The rightists therefore felt they had to operate a counter-campaign outside the institutional framework by setting up counter-balancing right wing organizations.

(b) The Right Wing Reaction

There were several factors that fostered the consolidation of the anti-leftist activities of the entrenched and still politically and economically powerful rightists, whose leaders had had to assume more cautious roles in dealing with popular opposition after the October 1973 upheaval.

After 1973 the structural underpinnings of power remained intact; there was merely a vacuum at the executive level. This was filled by the king's selection of the government. Although the government derived its legitimacy from the monarchy, it still relied on the tacit support and co-operation of the military. Because the military had suffered a considerable humiliation in October 1973, they chose not to exert their power in the subsequent year and a half, but were more concerned with quietly strengthening their position. However, from mid-1975 they began overtly to support and to ally with the rightist parties, in which they found favour, notably the Chart Thai and Dhammasangkorn. Several military leaders were given a major role in the coalition governments of 1975 and 1976.¹

The events of October 1973 did not appreciably affect the powerful position of the conservative civilian establishment, comprised of top level bureaucrats, the aristocracy, and businessmen.

The bureaucrats' power, in brief, comes from their access to coveted resources: contracts, prestige, and money.² The bureaucrats are in a position to give or withhold favours for their clientele and business interests for material or other returns. At any level of the Thai bureaucracy, the system had long been characterized by the use of public resources for personal gain.³ Thus, when the leftists campaigned against bureaucratic corruption, they were detested by the bureaucrats, military, businessmen and other groups whose fortunes depended on the

1. Race (1975) op.cit.; Somporn Sangchai, op.cit.; Neher (1975) op.cit.

2. For a good description and analysis of the political role of the bureaucracy see Fred W. Riggs, Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966).

3. David Morell, Legislature and Political Development: the Problem of Corruption, Unpublished paper, January 1975.

perpetuation of graft, kick-backs, embezzlement, bribery, nepotism and other forms of corruption. The persistent questioning by the leftists of the unaccountability of the government officials intensified the bureaucrats' hostility towards them.

The businessmen detested the leftists not only for their interference in their relationship with the bureaucracy and military, but also for their instigation and support of strikes. Furthermore, the general socialist approach to the economic system gave them much cause for alarm.

The aristocrats who were generally wealthy, highly educated and conservative, often held high-ranking bureaucratic positions and possessed big estates. Their prestige stemmed from the deference traditionally accorded to the royal circle, and their power from the large clientele they controlled through their economic holdings or their high level administrative positions. The leftists who campaigned against the Sakdina-naithum (feudalist-capitalists) were anathema to them. For these people the leftists' criticism of the validity of the monarchy and their socialist and radical approaches to the economic system, such as proposals for land-redistribution and state ownership of banks and key industries, caused them great uneasiness.

In sum, the consolidation of rightist activities came as a reaction to the threat of their displacement from power and status implicit in the changes proposed by the leftists. Since amongst themselves they could agree that the leftists were a common enemy, they attempted to find support and allies among the masses, particularly the urban public. In general, the urban public were apolitical and were attracted to support right wing movements for simple reasons. They were becoming annoyed by the frequent demonstrations and noisy protests, inspired and organized

in almost every case by the leftists. They were tired of traffic jams caused by street demonstrations, and with the many strikes which resulted in personal inconvenience such as those affecting electricity and water supplies, bus and taxi transport, and so on. These people began to suspect that the activities of the left wing movements were threatening democracy, and that they were being used by foreign communist powers for their own interests. In this way the leftists, by their own actions, began to lose their support and sympathy while the rightists found more allies.

The inability of the elected governments to meet the rising expectations of various sectors of society, and the recurrence of factions struggling for personal gain within the government and Parliament led many moderate people to become sceptical of representative government. On the extreme right the illusion rapidly took root that the elected governments, which compromised with the left on some issues, were the cause of the sudden epidemic of subversive ideas among the young. The demand for tough measures to maintain law and order was heard increasingly through the right wing press and radio. Simultaneously, propaganda was mounted against the left wing movements.

The right wing elements planned a strategy to counteract the leftist movements. This involved several steps. First, from mid-1974 onwards through government controlled radio stations and the capitalist press, the right wing movements persistently accused the radical students, farmers, and labourers of using 'mob rule' to undermine law and order, of causing economic deterioration, of threatening foreign investment, and of being lackeys of communist imperialism.

Second, for almost every leftist organization, they set up their own counterpart organization. To counteract the students' radical

organizations such as the NSCT and FIST, the Armed Forces set up a para-military right wing group, the Red Gaur (Krathing Daeng). The Red Gaur comprised unemployed juveniles including technical school students and some drop-out students, and ex-mercenaries returned from Laos and Vietnam. The Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) not only founded the organization, but also trained the members in the use of arms, armed them, and paid them out of a secret fund.¹ They were used to break up students and farmers' demonstrations, and labourers' strikes. Violence was their means, using arms or explosives to terrorize or kill their opponents. For example, in August 1975 they attacked Thammasat University for housing radical students' organizations. In the 1976 general election, the Red Gaur was rampant. The New Force Party office was ransacked and bombed, and the candidates they labelled leftists were attacked with guns, grenades, and explosives. They often threw bombs into the left wing demonstrations. In most instances there were a number of people killed or wounded.

Similarly, to counteract the radical farmer's organizations such as the FFT, and to resist leftist activities at the village level, rightist organizations were set up in the villages. The most important one, and it is still growing, was the Village Scouts (Luksua Chaoban) with the rich and independent farmers as its core. It was modelled on the South Vietnamese 'grass roots' defence organization against communists.² The Village Scouts were organized into small cells headed by urban right wingers. They were taught to resist radical elements and to mobilize peasant support. Their ideology involved the protection

1. Puay Ungphakorn, Violence and Coup-de-etat 6 October 1976 (London: Mimeograph, 1976) p. 6.
2. Border Police Command, Kumue kan obrom Luksua Chaoban (Hand Book for Training the Village Scouts) (Bangkok: 1973); see also 'Luksua Chaoban: khabuan kan samakkitham' (Village Scouts: A Movement for National Unity), Prachachart (magazine) Vol. I, No. 34, 11 July 1974, pp. 37-43.

and upholding of the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy - obviously still potent symbols in Thailand. The Ministry of the Interior was, and still is, directly responsible for this organization. Rich urban as well as rural people were invited to be chief scouts and pay for the rallies. Most importantly, the king was their patron. He gave them scarves, and unit flags.¹ Periodically, the Village Scouts were called to emotionally-charged rallies in support of the king, nation and religion. They were also mobilized to counteract the leftists on various occasions. For example, at the rallies demanding the total withdrawal of American bases in March 1976 and the anti-Prapat-Thanom demonstrations in August and September 1976 thousands of them were told over the radio to gather at major strategic spots in every major city. The clearest impact of the Village Scouts was the rally against the leftists which led to the bloody coup of 6 October 1976. It is very clear that this organization with over three million numbers in 1976,² has been and will be a most effective instrument for the suppression of the leftist movements.

No less important than the Village Scouts was NAWAPOL, another ultra-right wing organization. The basis of its ideology was yet again the symbols of the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy, but in its manifesto these concepts are elaborated at length into 'strengths' or 'forces' grouped into nines.³ From these it derives its name NAWAPOL, which means literally 'Nine New Forces'.⁴

1. Prachachart, ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. E.g. the new religious 'forces' derive their strength from nine religions (Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, Zenism, Shintoism, and Judaism) though exactly how is not explained, and from nine principal teachings of the Buddha (which are set out in detail).

4. For details see NAWAPOL, Kumie NAWAPOL (Hand Book for NAWAPOL) (Bangkok: Mimeograph, 1975) pp. 3-10. These pages comprise a lengthy definition of the name which effectively spells out the aims of the movement. The name has considerable symbolic potency as the number nine is very auspicious in Thai belief and ritual, and one of its symbolic meanings is progress.

According to its manifesto, NAWAPOL was created to prevent the development of subversion within the country. It was founded in August 1974 by a group of generals, leading businessmen and civilian bureaucrats who took an oath in front of the Triple Gems to sacrifice themselves in the defence of the Nation, Religion, and the King.¹

NAWAPOL advocated a nationalist unity free from the antagonisms of right and left which would express itself in stability at home and a non-aligned, neutralist foreign policy. National security would be achieved by virtuously following the Buddhist Middle Way to political, economic and social prosperity.²

NAWAPOL pledged itself to mobilize the support of all classes to achieve these aims, to educate people with a common understanding, and to fire them with a common purpose. A key part of its policy was that every member made a pledge that he was willing to sacrifice himself in the manner of the founders.³ This pledge is taken as an oath in front of the Triple Gems, and all sacred Thai entities, the spirits of the great Thai kings and heroes. The member swears, "If I betray the oath, let me be punished, let all catastrophies fall on me within three days or seven days. And if I keep strictly to my oath, please bless me, save me from all enemies...."⁴

1. Ibid., pp. 1-3; see also NAWAPOL's report to the Supreme Patriarch on the opening ceremony of its Seminar on Monks - People for the Preservation of the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy at Chittapawan College, 23-25 July 1975.
2. For details about the political and economic ideology of NAWAPOL see Watthana Keowimol, Kwam mankong khong Chart Satsana Phramahakasat (The Security of the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy) (Bangkok: Aksorn sophon, 1975), and Saha Setthakorn (Co-operative Economy) (Bangkok: Sawaengsithi, 1976); see also 'Watthana Keowimol kap NAWAPOL' (Watthana Keowimol and NAWAPOL), Rathasaphasan Wicharn, Vol. 1, No. 7, 26 August 1975, pp. 49-53.
3. Hand Book for NAWAPOL, pp. 3-10. This was also stressed in its Constitution and Regulations, p. 1.
4. Hand Book for NAWAPOL, p. 38.

Leading members of NAWAPOL were high ranking military and police officers, for example the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, the Fourth Regional Army Commander, the Director of the ISOC, and the Border Police Patrol Commander; the principal civilian bureaucrats; and top businessmen.¹ The Ministry of the Interior, through provincial governors, police chiefs, and district officers, provided NAWAPOL with facilities such as meeting places, transport and accommodation, and officiated at their meetings and orientation programmes. Government officials in this Ministry were permitted to join, and also to attend the meetings and orientation functions as if they were on government duties. The ISOC supported the scheme by providing NAWAPOL with, for example, secret information and office personnel.² Financial support came mainly from strongly anti-communist businessmen, military officers and Kitthiwuttho, and to a lesser extent from members' subscriptions.³ Thus at the top, NAWAPOL was a combination of the military, capitalists, and bureaucrats. In the middle range, it drew members from the lower level of government functionaries and clerks, the urban petit-bourgeoisie and village and commune headmen. The rank-and-file came from labourers and peasants. More importantly NAWAPOL attracted a number of monks, of whom Kitthiwuttho was the most important and influential member.⁴ Whether there was support from the throne is far from clear. However, one of

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1. Lists of names of leading members of NAWAPOL appeared in Department of Central Intelligence, Confidential Report on Activities of NAWAPOL (Bangkok: Department of Central Intelligence, 1976) pp. 11-15 and Appendix K, pp. 1-21.
 2. Ibid., p. 11.
 3. Ibid., p. 15. Curiously, NAWAPOL itself did not make this explicit, but claimed that its financial support came from its members. It was also widely thought that they were funded by the American CIA.
 4. Kitthiwuttho claimed that 'over ten thousand monks joined the movement', Phutthasat Parithat, Vol. I, No. 1, 1975, p. 20.

NAWAPOL's leaders, Watthana Keowimol, claimed that he and Kitthiwuttho once were given audience by the king who encouraged the activities of NAWAPOL and said:

There are many cowards in Thailand. But we must not give in, we must continue fighting. Otherwise the country will be in grave jeopardy like Laos and Cambodia. Do not listen to the criticism of those who do nothing in defence of the country. NAWAPOL has been doing the right thing for the nation. Do not be discouraged, but be patient because the situation is worsening.¹

Of all the right wing movements, NAWAPOL was the most articulate, and best defined in its organization, ideology and policies. Its organization extended hierarchically from national level to village level.² By 1976 its leaders claimed to have 30,000 - 50,000 active members.³

Though the central purpose of NAWAPOL was to educate the people,⁴ the counteracting of the leftist movements was given high priority. This involved mass mobilization; propaganda against communism, socialist parties and leftist movements; distribution of leaflets and published speeches; criticism of leftist activities by accusing them of being communists or communist lackeys, and of endangering or even destroying the nation, the monarchy and religion; violence and threats; and the creation of affiliated organizations to counter the leftist organizations. NAWAPOL also worked closely with the Village Scouts.⁵

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1. A Confidential Report on the Activities of NAWAPOL distributed among the leading members, dated 27 July 1976, cited in Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit., p. 14.
 2. For details see Hand Book for NAWAPOL, pp. 15-35, and also its Constitution and Regulations.
 3. Sornit Khemthong, Chindaeng: NAWAPOL (Red China and NAWAPOL) (Bangkok: Preecha Press, 1975) pp. 29-30.
 4. This was clearly stated in the Hand Book and the Constitution of NAWAPOL.
 5. Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit., pp. 14-17, 19-22.

One weapon used against the leftist movements was political assassination, an activity in which NAWAPOL was said to have been involved. From mid-1974 several farmers' leaders were murdered. Next came some student leaders and socialist politicians. In these cases the public was led to believe that the murders resulted from internal conflicts among the leftists,¹ and that the government for lack of evidence had never been able to make any arrest. In marked contrast when there was any attempt on the life of a right wing politician the culprits were soon identified.

Perhaps the most effective means employed by the rightists to alienate the masses from the left was the use of government-controlled radio and television stations. Since 1975, they have stepped up their broadcasts of jingoistic songs and anti-leftist propaganda. Two frequently aired songs listed the students who went into the countryside, the workers who staged strikes, the farmers who demonstrated demanding that the government should solve their problems, and the press who criticized the government policies as being nak phaedin (Burden of the Earth) and as being rok phaedin (Scum of the Earth). The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence in the Kukrit regime (1975), who was also the leader of the Chart Thai Party, used his ministerial power over state-controlled radio to launch openly the slogan 'Right Kill Left' (Khwao Phikhart Shai).

Thus, between 1973 and 1976, the forces of change and conflict had great impact on every section of Thai society in one way or another. Their most explicit effect was that the public became more politicized. Ideological polarization had also emerged and gradually pervaded the informed and politically conscious public. It is impossible to know

1. Puay Ungphakorn, op.cit.

how far it had penetrated the masses. But it had certainly reached into the Sangha. As a consequence, this period saw for the first time the overt involvement of several monks in political issues. This is the subject to be discussed in the following sections.

5. The Emergence of Political Monks

Though, as I have shown, some monks had engaged in political activities prior to 1973, their actions had either been pro-government and therefore commended by government and Sangha authorities, or anti-government and therefore minor and restrained. After 1973 the unleashed torrent of political debate and activity could not fail to invade the Sangha. The monks were intensively politicized between 1973 and 1976 when political activists increased their efforts to attract support and sympathy from all sectors of society. At the left wing political meetings, demonstrations, rallies and protests, which in most cases involved criticism of government, several groups of monks were seen to have attended and participated. At the right wing rallies, a few monks were also seen observing the events. Political and social issues of the day were reported to have been frequently discussed by monks in monasteries.¹ In time some monks implicitly and explicitly advocated particular ideologies publicly and identified themselves with the secular political activists. In order to articulate their views and to influence the direction of change, whether it was on secular issues or on Sangha affairs, some groups of politically and socially conscious monks formed special organizations outside of the institutionalized Sangha organization, thus operating as a sort of pressure group. In

1. Anon., 'Phrasong kap kanmuang' (Monks and Politics); Buddhachak, Vol. 28, No. 12, December 1974, pp. 2-3, 51-52.

these efforts, they adopted the techniques of mobilizing mass support employed by lay activists. Because of their political activities these monks came to be regarded as 'political monks'.

As several kinds of political monks emerged after 1973, in an attempt to identify them and appreciate their ideologies, they will be broadly divided into two categories: the left wing monks on one side and the right wing monks on the other. Relatively few monks became political monks, and the labels are used to designate broad differences in the ideologies, identification and activities of political monks corresponding to the distinction between left and right wing activists in secular politics described earlier. Thus, the criteria adopted for categorizing these political monks involves: (a) their ideological stand on social, political and economic issues, (b) their association or identification with secular left and right wing movements, and (c) the methods used in advancing their causes. Although these monks were politically active, their behaviour was nonetheless constrained by their monkhood, both by their vows and duties in the Sangha and by the pressure of public expectation and opinion.

(a) The Leftist Variants

The political monks on the left of the spectrum first attracted public attention in October 1973. During the students' political rallies in Thammasat University campus and in street demonstrations a few young monks were reported to have participated in the events. Some of them were so emotionally involved that they went up on the platform and made speeches condemning the government for arresting 13 political activists. At the conclusion of the October 1973 upheaval, a young monk was killed by the armed forces. In late 1973 the Department of Central Intelligence reported that some young monks had clandestinely organized themselves into about 20 groups. At that time their

ideological stand was not yet clear and they appeared to be making ad hoc responses to particular issues.¹ It became clearer by mid-1974 that these groups of monks identified with and supported the movements that were fighting for equality and justice in economic, political, and social matters. For example, members of a group called Ongkan Saha Dhammik (The Organization of Sangha Brotherhood) made speeches supporting the demand for land re-distribution at the peasant demonstrations in 1974. Another group issued a statement in support of the labour unions' demand for higher wages and better working conditions.² Some took a stand against American imperialism. For example, a group called Kana Song Phu rak Ekkarat Prachathipathai lae Kwam Pen tham (Monks for Independence, Democracy and Justice) distributed leaflets condemning the American government for using bases in Thailand to wage war in Indo-China.³ Some monks were also reported to have helped the Socialist Party in the 1975 and 1976 electoral campaigns.⁴

Although these leftist political monks varied in their degree of radicalism and their approaches to particular issues, they were united in their dissatisfaction with the existing structure of the Sangha administration. They accused it of being undemocratic, over-centralized and corrupted. The administrative monks at the highest level were regarded as dictators, self-serving and servants of dictatorial government. They were also accused of having oppressed the rank-and-file,

1. Department of Central Intelligence, Sathanakan kana song thai (Movements in the Thai Sangha), a Confidential Document, n.d., p. 3.
2. Ibid., pp. 3-5.
3. A leaflet distributed at the demonstration in protest against the American government over the Mayaguez incident, 15 July 1975.
4. Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit.

obstructed positive changes, and of being responsible for the lack of progress of Buddhism. A radical change was advocated in the Sangha so that the majority of monks would have a part in the administration.

Greatest in number and most articulate in purpose and organization was a group of monks who called themselves Yuwasong (Young Monks). This group had the definite objectives of reforming the Sangha in various respects and restoring the healthy condition of Buddhism. It declared that its activities were confined within the boundaries of the Vinaya and Sangha affairs, and that they would not be involved in secular politics. Nevertheless, the Yuwasong maintained that if secular political methods were deemed necessary for effecting its purposes, they might be utilized with great caution.

With these objectives defined, the Yuwasong came to realize that the overt secular activities of the groups of monks described above would undermine the strength of the whole movement and alienate the majority of the monks. The Yuwasong therefore called a meeting of every group in early November 1974. At this meeting, the majority agreed that their activities should be confined to three main issues viz. (i) the reform of the Sangha administration, (ii) the campaign for the reinstatement of Phra Phimondham to his honorific title, and (iii) Sangha education reform. They also agreed that an amalgamation of the various groups which had common objectives and whose styles and techniques for achieving their causes were similar would increase the effectiveness of their movement. As a result the Federation of Buddhists of Thailand (FBT) was established in November 1974.

(i) The Federation of Buddhists of Thailand (FBT)¹

The FBT is the only unofficial Buddhist organization that continues

1. In Thai, Sahaphan Phutthasasanik haeng Prathet Thai.

up to the present day. Its survival can be attributed to its moderate approaches to problems, and to its refraining from overt involvement in secular politics, confining itself mainly to Sangha affairs.

The purposes of the FBT are as follows:

1. To promote the unity of the Thai Sangha.
2. To strive for the reform of the Sangha administration.
3. To strive for and promote a democratic Sangha administration by introducing a Sangha Parliamentary system (Sangha Sapha).
4. To strive for and uphold justice.
5. To promote educational reform in the Sangha.
6. To instil (in monks) the necessary attitude of social sacrifice for the benefit of society.¹

The activities and functions of the FBT are governed by its constitution. This specifies three categories of membership: (i) ordinary members consisting of monks and novices, (ii) lay members, and (iii) honorary members consisting of high-ranking monks in the institutionalized Sangha hierarchy and laymen whom the Central Committee of the FBT agrees to co-opt. General meetings are to be held monthly, but special sessions can be called if asked for by one-third of the members.²

At its inception, the FBT was a loosely organized conglomeration of several left wing groups. Some of these had a very small membership, such as the radical Ongkan Saha Dhammik and Kana Song Phu rak Ekkarat;

1. Prachathipathai, 9 December 1974.

2. Ibid. The FBT itself has not revealed the names of its members, except those who are members of the Central Committee. It, however, claims that "many administrative monks" belong to the FBT. Thus it is impossible to make a sociological investigation into the membership of the FBT.

others such as the moderate Yuwasong and Kana Song Phu rak Kwam Yutthitham (Monks for Justice) had a fairly large membership. The total membership of the FBT in the beginning was estimated at about 200 to 300 monks,¹ of which the majority were the monk-students of the two Buddhist universities. By 1976 the membership had grown to 3,000, and the active members were monk-students and graduates of the Buddhist universities.² Most of the FBT members were not, and still are not, office holders or titled monks in the Sangha hierarchy. They are young men, whose average age is in the early 30s and most of them are well educated. In general, as I was told by a member of the FBT Central Committee, they come from peasant stock, but have been living in the cities for a few years. In terms of institutionalized power, they are not part of the Sangha establishment.

The organization of the FBT is highly personalized in nature and ad hoc in character. The 25-member Central Committee is elected by the general meeting who in turn elect a Secretary General, the most important and influential figure in the organisation. The term of office of the Secretary General is two years. Although the activities of the FBT are supposed to be administered by the Central Committee, in practice only the Secretary General and another four or five members actually make decisions. The first Central Committee was dominated by the moderate Yuwasong faction, and only two members of more radical groups were elected.

This organizational alignment gave rise to factionalism. While the Yuwasong and the Monks for Justice members insisted on refraining from secular political involvement and confining their activities to

1. Ibid.

2. Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit., Appendix 1.

Sangha affairs, the leaders of the radical groups persistently tried to establish contact with the lay leftist movements and socialist parties, and to involve the FBT in political, economic and social issues. Disintegration was thus unavoidable. Being obstructed by the moderate majority, the leaders of the radical groups denounced the FBT policies and promoted their own ideas without leaving the organization.¹ Later they made an attempt to consolidate their following into one group, but this was unsuccessful because they themselves could not agree as to which of them should be leader. However, in early 1976 they founded two separate organizations and agreed to offer each other mutual support.

These two radical groups were Ongkan Saha Dhammik which later became Soonklang Phrasong lae Sammanen haeng Prathet Thai (Monks and Novices' Centre of Thailand - MNCT); and Kana Song Phu rak Ekkarat Prachathipathai lae kwam pen Tham haeng Prathet Thai, which became Neaw Ruam Yuwasong haeng Prathet Thai (Young Monks' Front of Thailand - YMFT).

The two groups had much in common. Both of them were poorly organized and not very articulate. Each was highly personalized in the sense that it consisted of the followers of a leader, rather than being composed of adherents to a particular set of policies. They overtly identified with the lay leftist movements and advocated radical socialism as the most appropriate political and economic system for Thailand. They also advocated radical reforms in the Sangha administration. Both of them were short-lived, disappearing after the 6 October 1976 coup d'etat.

1. This intense conflict was revealed by the FBT only when the radical groups disappeared after the coup d'etat of 6 October 1976. See Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 2, No. 23, 16-31 January 1977, pp. 8, 13.

(ii) Monks and Novices' Centre of Thailand (MNCT)

The MNCT was officially established in March 1976, having previously operated under the name of Ongkan Saha Dhammik. According to the Department of Central Intelligence, the MNCT was so poorly organized as to be almost structureless. It had a small membership which was not well educated. Essentially the members were followers of the founder, a young monk called Jud Kongsook.¹

Jud was born in 1952 to a poor peasant family in the southern province of Surathani. He was ordained at the age of 13, and resided in a local wat in Kanchanadit district for a few years. Later the abbot, who was also his teacher, saw talent in him and encouraged him to go to Bangkok to further his studies. In Bangkok he resided at Wat Dusitaram under the supervision of its abbot who was a friend of his former teacher. He was ordained as a monk in 1973, and passed the Barian examination. Although Jud was a talented student, his new abbot was not pleased with his monkly conduct. He was said to have been disobedient, too independent, and to have failed to observe Vinaya strictly and to have violated the Sangha regulations frequently.²

Jud was reported to have been politically active from 1972 onwards. He was often seen attending political meetings and was fond of discussing political and social issues with other monks. He was also very critical of the Sangha authorities and showed no respect for them. After 1973 he became an active participant in political rallies and demonstrations. He was a frequent and vocal critic of government on many matters.³

1. Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit., Appendix III.

2. Siam Rath, 4 December 1974. An interview with Phra Wisuthisophon, Jud's abbot.

3. Ibid.

He became widely known in 1974 for two actions. The first was when he made statements at a left wing seminar on the state of Buddhism in Thailand in August 1974. The press reported that he had said Thailand could not be seen as a true Buddhist state while it supported American troops and allowed capitalists to exploit the farmers and labourers.¹ The second was when he led the farmers in the November 1974 farmers' demonstration. He was expelled from his monastery for the latter act and moved to reside in Wat Mahathat. His action in the farmers' demonstration won him a reputation among the leftists as being the 'monk of the people'. His expulsion also won him sympathy and was regarded as being an act of social sacrifice. At Wat Mahathat Jud found a number of radical associates who shared with him a belief in socialism, and some of whom were from the Southern provinces.²

Jud was also active in founding the FBT, but was not elected to the Central Committee and was not given any active role in the organization. In his position as the leader of the Ongkan Saha Dhammik he had tried to persuade the committee to ally with the secular leftist movement and to follow a radical approach on the Sangha reform issue. It was a vain attempt. He denounced the FBT and withdrew his organization from it in early 1976, establishing the MNCT as a new group in March.

Perhaps by then Jud may have realized that explicitly radical approaches to issues had adverse results. Thus, in formulating the overt policies of the MNCT, he modified them to attract the support of less radical monks. The stated policies of the MNCT were:

1. His statements were fully reported in Thammasat Students' Organization, Phatat Phutthasatsana (Operation of Buddhism Week) (Bangkok: Hongpharbsuwan, 1974) pp. 47-49.
2. Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit., Appendix III.

1. To propagate the 'truth' of Buddhism.
2. To render services to the people.
3. To act as a centre for exchanging ideas.
4. To oppose the authoritarian Sangha administration.
5. To promote and support the establishment of a democratic Sangha administration.¹

At the beginning the MNCT had about 20 to 30 members, but they were extremely radical. Jud himself was the Secretary General and actually made decisions on policies and carried them out with another three associates.² Despite its seemingly moderate and limited policy, the MNCT was mainly involved in lay political issues. In several instances, Jud took the liberty of claiming that the activities of the MNCT were endorsed and supported by other monks' organizations.³ We shall consider the MNCT activities in the next chapter.

(iii) The Young Monks' Front of Thailand (YMFT)

The YMFT developed from another faction of the extreme radical monks who separated themselves from the FBT. Before it was officially established in January 1976, this group of monks clandestinely pursued their activities under several names, for example, Monks for Independence, Democracy and Justice, Klum Yuwasong lae Prachachon (Amalgamation of Young Monks and People), and Neow ruam Song Phu rak kwam pen tham (The Thai Sangha Front for Justice). Its founders were Phra Maha Banchong Sukprasert and Phra Songkram Suthiwong. Both were formerly founding

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Yet the FBT for example made statements that certain activities of the MNCT had nothing to do with it: see Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 2, No. 23, 16-31 January 1977 for their comment on Jud's part in the farmers' demonstration of November 1974.

and Central Committee members of the FBT. Like Jud, Banchong and Songkram denounced the moderate and limited policies of the FBT and withdrew their organizations from it.

Apart from being widely known for their radicalism and unequivocal belief in socialism, they were little known to the public. Both of them were in their early 30s and came from peasant stock in the North-East. Banchong had moved to Bangkok in 1970 and passed the Barian examination. He resided in Wat Yannawa where the majority of the monks were from the North-East. Songkram came to Bangkok some time in the 1970s and took up residence at Wat Sangkachai.¹

Banchong and Songkram held a common view with Jud about the position and role of the monkhood. They thought that monks could not turn their back on the society, and should not limit their role solely to religious salvation, but should render their services to the people. Monks, in their view, should give priority to the underprivileged in their services. To them, the underprivileged were those farmers and labourers who were oppressed and exploited by feudal and foreign-backed capitalists who were already well protected and given privileges by the state. They had a very strong anti-American and anti-imperialist stance. They conceived that the United States dominated Thailand's economy and politics and that this was the main cause for the social and economic ills of the underprivileged. In these respects, they closely identified with the radical leftist movements and shared with them a belief that only through socialism could the country recover its prosperity. They believed that the main cause of the decline of Buddhism and the Sangha was the authoritarian character of the Sangha administration. Therefore

1. Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit., Appendix II.

a radical reform was needed, in accordance with the general reform of society. In order to achieve these objectives, the monks should operate through political means by co-operating with the secular political movements of the leftists and the Socialist Party.¹

The stated objectives of the YMFT were:

1. To strive for and create justice in the Thai Sangha.
2. To support the movement for democratic and just Sangha administration.
3. To fight against political and social injustice and inequalities.²

The membership of the YMFT was 10 to 20 young monks, not well educated and mainly from the North-East.³ They were essentially personal followers of the two leaders.

In the course of pursuing its objectives, the YMFT worked closely with the MNCT and often submerged itself in the more powerful MNCT. It also had a close association with the secular leftist movements and socialist party. We shall discuss its activities in the next chapter.

(b) The Right Wing Political Monks

The immediate causes for the appearance of right wing political monks can be sought in the religious and political crises they saw as having been engendered by the left wing political monks. The Sangha was essentially conservative and the top of the Sangha hierarchy was in many ways closely linked to the monarchy and government in power.

1. Ibid.; see also Operation of Buddhism Week, pp. 61-63, for Banchong's ideological position.
2. Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit.
3. Ibid.

There were fears at the top that the left wing monks were undermining the faith, creating schism in the Sangha, and giving support to the enemies of religion. This was further seen as weakening the moral basis of Thai society in such a way as to ultimately lead to the destruction of Buddhism, the nation, the monarchy, and the government. The problem for the top monks lay in moving from the active religious and social lead given in the 1960s to an active political policy in the 1970s. For these deeply devout and conservative men to do so would be to become too similar to what they wished to destroy, and they did not wish to take that step. They attempted to bring the left wing political monks into line by applying the sanctions available to them. These were limited, but included making warning speeches which appealed to basic Buddhist principles and stressed the importance of adhering to the Vinaya, instructing those in charge of Buddhist monasteries and training establishments to make sure their rules were more strictly adhered to by the younger generation, and ultimately disrobing disobedient monks. This last action was, of course, extreme and therefore distasteful: it was also likely to increase the solidarity of the left wing monks and spark off confrontation with them and the more liberal minded. It was therefore rarely employed. It was left to others to take a more active and public political role, albeit with tacit encouragement from the top.

The reaction against the left when it emerged can be envisaged as coming from three directions.

First, apparently spontaneously organized groups, small in numbers, would react to a particular demonstration or issue by producing and distributing leaflets condemning the left wing stance.¹ These groups

1. For example a group called Nuay Phongkan Sathaban Phrasatsana (Organization for the Protection of Buddhism) distributed leaflets countering every leaflet produced by the left wing monks.

were notable for their limited organization, their shifting personnel, and the absence of regular spokesmen. Those involved were political monks by virtue of their activities, but they were unwilling to be labelled as such, even though they were not discouraged from the top. Second, there was a doctrinal reaction, most influentially expressed by Buddhadasa (Phutthathat) Bhikkhu.¹ He rejected any kind of involvement by monks in mundane affairs, whether they be social, economic or political. He stressed that they should be more concerned with the moral and spiritual uplift of the people in the strict sense as set out in canonical Buddhist scriptures. However, between 1973 and 1976 when ideological conflict was immensely intensified, Buddhadasa published his formulation of Dhamma Socialism (Dhammika Sangkomniyom), a very complex and closely knit set of Buddhist ideas. It was intended to provide a Buddhist compromise between secular left and right wing ideologies. Though his ideas were exploited by both left and right wing political monks to suit their goals, essentially he had a conservative viewpoint which emphasized the duties and responsibilities of individuals to their religion, government, nation, and their fellows.² Third, there was a form of reaction which combined the virtues of the two kinds outlined above in the person of Kitthiwuttho Bhikkhu, a widely respected monk who had already built a national reputation for himself by his work in the religious and social programmes of the 1960s. He offered the strong and unequivocal leadership lacking in the spontaneous protests and a straightforward form of Buddhist philosophy

1. Buddhadasa is a well-known exponent of Dhamma with an international reputation among sophisticated Buddhist scholars. He has a considerable body of published work, but his level of thought is such as to limit its circulation to intellectuals. Though widely respected in Thailand as a saintly man who has divorced himself from the mundane concerns of Sangha administrators, he is not essentially a political figure and does not command a political following.
2. For details of Buddhadasa's idea of Dhamma Socialism see, for example, Dhammika Sangkomniyom baeb Phadetkan (Dhamma Socialism: A Dictatorial Style) (Bangkok: Hanghunsuanthamkat, 1974); Prachathipathai baeb Sangkomniyom (Democracy: A Socialist Style) (Bangkok: Somchai Press, 1974).

readily comprehensible to monk and layman alike. He publicly called on Buddhists to oppose the leftists and wage war on communists. He thus assumed a novel role in Thai history; never before had a monk played such a leading and overt part in Thai politics. In the following sections we shall attempt to understand his ideology, activities, and connections with the top Sangha and national establishment which legitimized his actions and established his reputation, as well as the political events that led to his public espousal of a right wing position.

(i) Kitthiwuttho's Social Action: Sources of Fame and Influence

According to his own statements, Kitthiwuttho was born in 1936 in Nakornpathom province, some 55 kilometres north-east of Bangkok. His father was a Thai-Chinese who owned a small shop. After finishing his compulsory education, he helped in the family business until he was 21. In 1957 he was ordained into the Mahanikai order, intending to be in the monkhood for only three months, as a gesture of gratitude to his parents. Then he recognized his vocation and remained in the order. In the second year of his monkhood he moved to Chumporn province where he lived in a cave for 9 months, practicing meditation and studying the Tripitaka until he could claim he was thoroughly cognizant of it. He also claimed that the villagers there who came to listen to his teaching looked upon him as if he were an Arhat (a Saint).¹ He then went back to Bangkok and took up residence at Wat Mahathat.

At Wat Mahathat he began to develop a reputation as an eloquent public speaker and radio broadcaster of Dhamma. In 1965 he laid claim to being a significant interpreter of Buddhist scripture by reviving the Abhidhamma Foundation (an organization to foster the study of the Abhidhamma Pitaka) at Wat Mahathat. Kitthiwuttho himself has been Managing

1. An interview given to Phutthasat Parithat, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1975, pp. 13-15.

Director of the foundation ever since. Although he has not had a regular Buddhist education, Kitthiwuttho is widely recognized as a good preacher who makes Dhamma easy to understand and relevant to everyday life.

While the Abidhamma Foundation has remained an important institutional outlet for the spread of Kitthiwuttho's ideas, it has not achieved the reputation of Chittapawan College, a teaching organization founded largely on his initiative. The name 'Chittapawan' was given by the king and according to Kitthiwuttho it means 'elevating the mind or developing the mind, improving it through moral practice'.¹ The overall objective of the college is to train monks and novices for the propagation of Buddhism. Kitthiwuttho himself has been the Director General of the college since it was established in 1965.

Although Chittapawan College has neither a formal place in the organizational structure of the Thai Sangha nor the financial support of the government, it has grown at a prodigious rate since 1967. It is situated on some 100 rai of land near the sea in Chonburi province. The campus today consists of several halls of residence for monks and novices, colleges, administrative offices, libraries, assembly and preaching halls, a printing house, rest houses for visitors, a hospital, a bot built in the sea, and many other buildings. All are equipped with modern facilities. The entire complex is worth about 500,000,000 baht. The running expenses alone, for the upkeep of the facilities and the subsistence of the residents are 10,000 to 15,000 baht per day.² There are plans to establish university level work at Chittapawan as well as

1. Kitthiwuttho Bhikkhu, Chittapawan Anusorn (Chonburi: Chittapawan Press, 1976), p. 13.

2. Ibid., pp. 20-21, 37-49 and 64-69.

opening a branch similar to it in Northern Thailand. The funding of all these projects will be discussed later.

The college has two main official activities: education for novices, and a training programme for monks in religious and social action which is embraced in the Programme for Spiritual Development (Patthana thang Chitt).

The education of novices is based on a twelve year curriculum which is further divided into four levels in ascending order: primary (3 years), secondary (3 years), pre-university (2 years) and university (4 years) levels. Prospective candidates are young boys of 10 to 12 years. Once a boy is admitted to the college, he must be ordained as a novice, and must reside in the college and strictly observe its regulations.¹ In 1976 there were about 650 novices attending the college at all levels. According to Kitthiwuttho, 90 per cent of these students come from very poor families all over the country. The majority of them are from peasant stock.²

These students are instructed in both religious and secular subjects as well as given practical training in crafts such as carpentry, building construction, mechanics, and agricultural work.³ The reasons given for teaching secular subjects and offering practical training, as elaborated by Kitthiwuttho, are that the monks or novices must have an understanding of all aspects of society, if the propagation of Buddhism is to be carried out successfully. Second, the practical work and training is vocational preparation for those students who may leave the monkhood for

1. Ibid., pp. 18-20, 29-35.

2. Phutthasat Parithat, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1975) p. 18.

3. Ibid., pp. 18-19.

the secular world. Kitthiwuttho also argues that the well-being of Buddhism depends on the well-being of society and vice versa. Thus, the prosperity of Buddhism depends upon a healthy economy, i.e. if the people are poor, Buddhism will deteriorate.¹ He also maintains that the college not only helps elevate and develop the morality of the people, but also prepares good and useful citizens for the nation.²

Essentially, Kitthiwuttho maintains that the Sangha must be an active force for good. Thus the monks must not remain in their wat seeking their own personal salvation and waiting for the laity to seek them out for the purposes of merit-making, but as people of the world, they must get out and help the world too. He reminds people that the Buddha said of the lazy monks 'the one who eats the food of the people but contributes nothing in return, should feel guilt burning into his stomach like molten metal for he is indebted to the people of the world'.³ For Kitthiwuttho, to be worthy, a monk should propagate the teaching of the Buddha, guide the people in understanding the moral base for their actions, and render any service that is conducive to the happiness and prosperity of the people.⁴

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1. Chittapawan Anusorn, pp. 24-26; see also Kitthiwuttho, Phutthasatsanat kap Chivit Prachamwan (Buddhism in Daily Life) (Bangkok: Askornsamphan, 1974).
 2. Kitthiwuttho, Kitthiwat (Kitthiwuttho's Words) (Bangkok: Aksornsamphan, 1970) pp. 7-8.
 3. Chittapawan Anusorn, p. 23. 'Bhikkhu thi kaitkran mai tam prayot kae ton lae phu aun pen phu boriphok khao khong Chaoban yang plaoprayot. Bhikkhu phu prathibat ton chen nan dut kluan lek thongdaen khao pai nai thong ton cha thong pen nie chao lok'.
 4. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

The active type of Buddhism promoted by Kitthiwuttho is called the Programme for Spiritual Development (Nuay Patthana thang Chitt). This began in 1967 as part of the propagation activity of the Abhidhamma Foundation. Each year about 350 monks¹ from every province are selected by the provincial Sangha authorities to undergo a training programme at Chittapawan College for about three months. The courses are similar to those of the training programme for Phra Dhammatuta and the Training Project for Encouraging the Participation of Monks in Community Development described in the previous chapter. When they return to their native villages these monks are expected to perform the following activities:

A. Religious activities

- i. To propagate and strengthen people's belief in Buddhism.
- ii. To promote the education of local monks and to develop the local wat as a meaningful institution for the villagers.
- iii. To coordinate propagation efforts with other government-sponsored programmes such as the Phra Dhammatuta and Monks' Participation in Community Development programmes.
- iv. To collect information on the people's standards of morality and report their assessments to the central office.

B. Social Welfare activities

- i. To advise and help the community in youth education, communication, and public hygiene.
- ii. To encourage the community to set up their own security organization to protect themselves against thieves and robbers.
- iii. To promote unity among the villagers.

1. According to Kitthiwuttho, the monks recruited are 'leaders of the community'. Presumably they are the village abbots and respected monks.

- iv. To instil in the people a sense of gratitude, affection, and loyalty to the nation, religion, the king and the government.

C. Economic activities

- i. To teach the people the means of right livelihood.
- ii. To encourage the people to be industrious.¹

By the end of 1975, the college reported it had trained about 3,700 monks who were working in the programme throughout the country.

The Spiritual Development Programme is reinforced by the Mobile Spiritual Development Units which commenced work in 1972. Monks working in this programme are recruited by the college mainly from their own students. Between December and June these monks, in groups of three to five, travel to designated areas throughout the country. They are joined in the field by already trained local monks. Each mobile unit is equipped with audio-visual aids and travels by car from village to village to propagate Buddhism. The villagers are informed in advance of their coming and the events involved. In the village, the people gather in the evening and the team leader leads the people in paying homage to the Triple Gems. Then a sermon is delivered for about 20 to 30 minutes. This is followed by a film which is mainly concerned with (a) the activities of the king and the royal family, (b) the activities of Chittapawan College, (c) modern agricultural technology, (d) stories about the Buddha, and (e) other films that are considered conducive to the elevation of the people's morality. In the inter-

1. Report to the Prime Minister on the occasion of the Opening of the Training Programme for Monks participating in Spiritual Development Programme 8th Mission, on 8 January 1972, at Chittapawan College.

missions, the monks preach Dhamma to the people. The message of the government's concern for the well-being of the people is usually woven into the teachings. Photographs of the king and royal family, books and pamphlets on Dhamma written by Kitthiwuttho, medicines, and other small gifts are distributed to the congregation. Finally, donations for the furtherance of the programme are accepted.¹ Kitthiwuttho claimed in 1976 that these mobile units had propagated Buddhism to no less than three million people per annum and that the figure was expected to increase in the future.²

In 1976 Kitthiwuttho stated in the annual report on the activities of Chittapawan College that the Spiritual Development Programme had fulfilled the following objectives. They had:

- i. Helped people to understand the responsibilities and duties of good citizenship.
- ii. Elevated the morality of government officials thereby enabling them to know how to apply Dhamma in their public functions.
- iii. Strengthened people's adherence to Buddhism, thereby discouraging wrongdoing.
- iv. Restored and promoted national traditions and customs, thereby creating sentiments of patriotism, and loyalty to the nation, the king, and the government.
- v. Raised the people's confidence in government and promoted better understanding between the people and the government.
- vi. Helped the people in material development which resulted in their improved well-being.

1. Ibid.; see also Boonman S. Noppakul, Ban kap Wat (Householders and Monastery) (Bangkok: Somchai Press, 1973) pp. 182-188.

2. Chittapawan Anusorn, pp. 60-61.

- vii. Led the people to a proper conception of national security, and the need for self-sacrifice to uphold the monarchy and religion.¹

Although it is impossible to evaluate objectively the accuracy of this claim, it is certain that through these programmes a large number of monks have been instructed in Kitthiwuttho's own particular version of Buddhist social action. As his messengers to the masses, they have become his power base. It is hardly surprising that his influence is widely felt and that he was well known long before 1973 for this kind of work.

The ideas of Kitthiwuttho are, moreover, transmitted to the public through two channels - namely, publications and radio and television broadcasting. He has a considerable body of published work. The Abhidhamma Foundation publishes at least two journals, the monthly Chofa and the fortnightly Wutthidham, to both of which Kitthiwuttho is advisory editor and regular contributor. Chofa aims at propagating Buddhism and Kitthiwuttho's interpretation of Dhamma to an adult readership while Wutthidham serves similar purposes for the young. But it is through radio broadcasts that Kitthiwuttho's religious and social actions have reached large audiences. Since 1967 the government has allowed him to use Armor Radio Station (Yankroh 790) for Dhamma propagation regularly.² In 1973, Chittapawan College set up its own radio station and it has been fully active in the propagation of Buddhism ever since.

1. Ibid., pp. 60-62.

2. A military broadcasting station, ibid., p. 52.

(ii) Kitthiwuttho's Connection with the Establishment

The grand scale of Buddhist and social activism promoted by Kitthiwuttho has prompted several questions. For example, how could a monk who has a modest honorific title and a minor position in the institutionalized structure of the Sangha, independently handle such big programmes? Where did he get the financial support?

There is no simple answer to these questions. His charisma, the ability to lead and inspire by sheer force of personality and conviction without the aid of material incentives and coercion, played an important part in attracting his following. But this is insufficient as an answer in itself. What is clearly the most important element contributing to the success and fame of Kitthiwuttho is his connections with persons in positions of power, namely, the influential individual monks high in the Sangha hierarchy, as well as the throne, the economic establishment, and the key figures in political authority. These connections work in combination, each supporting the other and produce an influential network.

Patron-client relationship in the Sangha played an important part in Kitthiwuttho's early success as well as in promoting his Buddhist activism and social actions in later days. In the early years of his monkhood Kitthiwuttho found his patron in Somdet Phra Wannarat, the abbot of the prestigious and famous royal Wat Phra Chettuphon. Somdet Phra Wannarat was at the same time one of the most senior and influential members of the Mahatherasamakom, and President of the Abhidhamma Foundation. From 1967 to 1972 he was responsible for institutionalized propagation activities, and was himself the Director of the Phra Dhammatuta programme. He became the Supreme Patriarch in 1972. This monk was much respected by monks for his devotion to the propagation of Buddhism and his uncorruptability. Moreover, he was highly respected by the royal

family, the political, economic and bureaucratic establishment, as well as the general public.

He first met Kitthiwuttho at the Abhidhamma Foundation and found they had a mutual interest, indeed zeal for the prosperity of Buddhism and propagation of the faith. On this basis, their relationship developed. Somdet Phra Wannarat was impressed by young Kitthiwuttho's intelligence, his devotion and tireless industry in the propagation of Buddhism, and his skills as an organizer. In 1965 he made Kitthiwuttho his personal aide and secured his appointment as managing director of the Abhidhamma Foundation. He wholeheartedly supported Kitthiwuttho's idea of setting up Chittapawan College and saw him appointed as its Director General.¹ In 1972, as Supreme Patriarch, he nominated Kitthiwuttho for the honorific title of Phraracha kana Chan Rath, the title that Kitthiwuttho presently holds.

Somdet Phra Wannarat's patronage also enabled Kitthiwuttho to secure connections in the upper strata of Thai society. Among the political establishment, Kitthiwuttho was able to secure support from several of the most influential families. Among them, for example, the family of the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence (Thanom Kitthikachorn), that of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior (Prapat Charusathien), and the family of the Minister of Public Health and Director General of the Police Department (Prasert Ruchirawong).² Their importance in Kitthiwuttho's activities is clearly reflected in the

1. Chittapawan Anusorn, pp. 37-38.

2. These three families not only controlled the armed forces, administrative, and political planning, but also the economic life of the country during their authoritarian rule (1963-1973).

positions they held in the Abhidhamma Foundation and Chittapawan College. For example, Prapat was the Vice-President of the Foundation; Thanom's father-in-law, Prasert's wife, other wives of leading generals and generals who were followers of the three families were all included in the Executive Committee of the Foundation.¹ Most of the same group of people constituted the Founding Committee and Patrons of Chittapawan College, and the Prime Minister Thanom and his wife were Presidents.²

The aristocratic establishment, top businessmen, and bureaucrat millionaires were and still are patrons of the Foundation and the College. They donated land and money for the early part of the construction and contributed considerable funds for Chittapawan activities. They, too, were included in various administrative and patron committees.³

The king and royal family have shown their support from the beginning. The king gave the name to the college and with the queen went to lay the foundation stone in 1967. They returned to perform the official opening ceremony of the college in December 1969. On the first occasion the king spoke of his appreciation of Kitthiwuttho's propagation efforts, and commended him for his energetic concern for the prosperity of Buddhism. Kitthiwuttho has also said that they have occasionally made unofficial visits to the college. In October 1967 and 1968, the king's mother went to lay the foundation stones of college and hospital buildings. She also sponsored an ordination of novices from Laos in 1968.⁴

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1. Abhidhamma Foundation, Kwam pen ma khong moonithi (History of Abhidhamma Foundation) (Bangkok: Abhidhamma Foundation, 1972) pp. 1-15.
 2. Chittapawan Anusorn, pp. 11-12.
 3. For details about significant donors and patrons of Chittapawan College see Ibid., pp. 11-12, 37-38, 41-42.
 4. Chittapawan College, Krongkan khong Chittapawan Witthayalai (Report Development Plan for Chittapawan College) (Chonburi: Chittapawan Press, 1976) pp. 10-13.

In examining Kitthiwuttho's Buddhist and social activism and his connections with the establishment, it is not difficult to understand why he closely identifies with conservative elements in Thai society, or why he has become one of their leading spokesmen. We can postulate that his ideological convictions have developed along similar lines to theirs. When he became politically active after 1973, his connections to and identification with the establishment were valuable assets which could be exploited to advance his cause. By contrast, the lack of these assets on the part of the left wing monks suggests reasons for their ineffectiveness in certain of their activities.

CHAPTER VI THE ROLES, ACTIVITIES, AND INVOLVEMENTS OF LEFT WING
POLITICAL MONKS IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES (1973-1976)

In Chapter V we noted that socio-political changes and conflicts had affected the Sangha and resulted in the formation of various groups of 'political monks'. Some groups had overtly shown their interests in secular politics and actively involved themselves in socio-political issues by supporting certain political movements and their ideologies. Others capitalized on these socio-political changes by promoting causes which were not necessarily political in nature.

In this chapter we shall investigate the role, activities, and involvement of the left wing political monks in various socio-political issues. Our discussions involve: the ideological conflict between the high level administrative monks and political monks regarding traditional modes of Buddhist behaviour; the socio-political issues in which the political monks engaged; the strategies which were adopted by these monks in their campaigns; and the criticisms of the left wing monks advanced by those of the right wing.

1. Should Monks Participate in Political Issues? The Debate

Thailand's socio-political life between 1974 and 1976 was dominated by political rallies and meetings, public speeches, demonstrations, strikes, and public exhibitions.¹ Two general elections were held during this period too. In these events, many monks had been seen participating as observers, and in some cases as active participants.

1. Public exhibitions were staged mainly at Thammasat University. They would cover various topics such as China Week, Anti-American Week, Anti-Capitalism Week, etc. with exhibitions of photographs, publications and films backed by lectures and discussion groups.

Such behaviour was frequently criticized by certain non-political monks and some laymen as inappropriate conduct for monks. There was also a call by the press to the Sangha authorities to forbid the monks' involvement in political activities.¹ A very strongly worded comment came from the Supreme Patriarch who said:

Many monks and novices today do not observe the Vinaya strictly. They do not behave according to the rules for monks prescribed by the Vinaya. Some of them behave as if they were half monk-half layman.²

He maintained that such inappropriate behaviour brought shame on the Sangha, and undermined the faith of the people both in the Sangha and Buddhism. The Supreme Patriarch requested the abbot of each wat to control strictly the monks under his supervision. Moreover, he asked the laity to discourage undisciplined behaviour by the monks by reporting to the Sangha and government authorities any monk who became involved in such activities and by stopping merit-making with such a monk.³

In August 1974, the Department of Religious Affairs called a meeting of the Mahatherasamakom. At this meeting the question of monks' involvement in political activities was raised. It was agreed that, although politics embraced all fields of human activity, a certain section of the society, namely the monkhood, should not involve itself in politics. The Mahatherasamakom set up an ad hoc committee headed by the Director

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1. For example, Siam Rath, 16 July 1974. It stated that if the Sangha authorities let this (sort of behaviour) go on, it will ensure the rapid decline of Buddhism.
 2. Pramol (pseud.), 'Phra Damrat Somdet' (The Supreme Patriarch's comment), Buddhachak, Vol. 28, No. 8, August 1974, pp. 8-11.
 3. An interview given to the press, cited in Dhammachaksu, Vol. 59, No. 4, 1974, p. 105.

General of the Department of Religious Affairs who was also ex-officio Secretary General of the Mahatherasamakom to consider the scope and the nature of political activities in which the monks and novices might participate.¹ In November the committee submitted its recommendations to the Mahatherasamakom. The latter agreed to the proposals which rejected the idea that monks and novices should participate in politics. Doctrinal Buddhism was invoked to justify the Mahatherasamakom's action. This is clearly stated in the 'Principles and Reasons for Forbidding the Involvement of Monks in Politics'. Parts of it read as follows:

Monks are regarded as persons who lead an ascetic, austere and self-disciplined life..... Political activities such as electioneering and voting are strictly confined to the secular world and the laity..... It is not appropriate for ascetic life. The monkhood is beyond politics..... Involving oneself in political affairs is wrong and brings about the moral deterioration of the actor himself as well as of the whole Sangha community and religion..... The monks must be impartial and demonstrate to every pious Buddhist without discrimination their loving-kindness and compassion. In a political election, for example, there is a winner and a loser..... Taking sides in any political election would only be harmful to the prestige of the monks. People would no longer respect them.²

On these grounds the monks were forbidden (1) to present themselves at any political rally for the purposes of electioneering or for other political ends, (2) to advocate directly or indirectly political parties or candidates, (3) to participate in any rally, demonstration or protest for the purpose of demanding certain civil rights, for example, lowering

1. Reported in Dhammachaksu, Vol. 60, Maha Puja Issue, 1975, pp. 96-97.
2. The Mahatherasamakom, Kansang ham Phra Song Keokhong kap Kanmuang Por. Sor. 2517 (The Order of the Mahathersamakom on the Prohibition of Monks' Involvement in Political Activities) 21 November 1974.

the age of majority, wage increases, (4) to take part in public speech-making or political discussion whether it be held inside or outside the monasteries. The order laid the responsibility of passing these instructions to the residents of each wat on the abbot who was to enforce the order and who was empowered to punish any offender.¹ The sanctions available ranged from reprimand to expulsion. This order came into force on 21 November 1974.

The order was received unfavourably among the progressive minded and left wing monks. One of the replies to the order appeared in an editorial of Buddhachak entitled 'Monks and Politics'.² The editorial argued that politics was not merely concerned with government, administration and elections but combined all economic and social activities. It was naive to say that monks and novices were beyond politics. Being governed and conditioned by politics, like other sections of the society, monks and novices had to adjust their conduct according to socio-political changes. The editorial argued forcefully that in electioneering the monks should have the right to guide the people as to which candidates were deserving of their votes. This was justified by the assertion that if Thai society was to progress it needed good and moral politicians. As part of society, the monks should not be forbidden to give advice to the people, if that advice was conducive to the public welfare and progress of democratic government. The editorial also disagreed with the prohibition of monks' participation in demands for civil rights and protests against injustices. It asserted that such activities occurred only when people were deprived of their rights and when social injustice prevailed. On humanitarian grounds, it argued, it was

1. Ibid.

2. 'Editorial', Buddhachak, Vol. 28, No. 12, December 1974, pp. 1-3.

legitimate for monks to support the people and help them relieve these sufferings. The Mahatherasamakom's prohibitions were seen as a denial of the real world. The editorial asserted that monks and novices in an ever-changing society should attempt to familiarize themselves with the social and political conditions of the secular world. It helped them broaden their horizons and was advantageous in the propagation of Buddhism.¹

These points of view were shared by several left wing monks. The leader of YMFT, Banchong, for example, argued that politics was one of the natural phenomena regulating all fields of human activity. He maintained that if the monks' involvement in politics was conducive to the well-being of the greatest number of people who materially supported them, it was fitting that monks identify with such activities whether they be called political or otherwise. He went on to say that the Mahatherasamakom, representing the high ranking administrative monks, had itself been involved in politics much more than ordinary monks. After all, it had been incorporated into the civil government structure. The government co-opted the administrative monks into the system of secular politics and used them as political instruments. Banchong drew attention to the Mahatherasamakom's active co-operation in government-sponsored programmes, such as the Phra Dhammatuta, Phra Dhammajarik and the like, and he accused it of hypocrisy. He, however, regarded any political involvement directed by the government as 'dirty politics!'.²

More fervent criticism came from Jud Kongsook who viewed the Mahatherasamakom as an agent responsible for the repression of civil

1. Ibid., p. 4.

2. Thammasat Students' Organization, Phatat Phutthasatsana (Operation of Buddhism Week) (Bangkok: Hongpharbswan, 1974) pp. 89-91.

rights and liberty, and as the representative of the authoritarian Sangha administration. He also criticized high level administrative monks because they only identified with the privileged class and used their power to maintain the status quo and to perpetuate dictatorial rule.¹

The challenge to the Sangha authority was not only verbal but also practical. The order of the Mahatherasamakom was ignored, and the 'unconventional' acts of monks continued.

2. Electioneering and the Monks' Involvement

A challenge to the prohibition on electioneering by monks arose seven days after the promulgation of the order of the Mahatherasamakom. It was reported in the Thai press that among the candidates standing for election in January 1975 in Nakornsithammarat was a monk who had sent in his application under the label of the Socialist Party of Thailand. The monk in question, Phong Chirapunyo, came from peasant stock.² In the same general election, there were reports that the Socialist Party had approached certain other radical monks and asked them to help in the campaign. One source of information was the Department of Central Intelligence. It asserted that the deputy leader of the Socialist Party had asked Phra Maha Sakol Panyaphaso, the President of the Students Union of Mahachula Buddhist University, and who was also in charge of Public Relations of the FBT, to mobilize support for his party from the FBT and monk-students. In return, Sakol was promised by the party that it would put him forward as one of their candidates.

1. Prachathipathai, 9 December 1974.

2. Thai Rath, 29 November 1974.

Sakol disrobed and ran for election in a North-Eastern constituency.¹

It is not clear to what extent these two monks had absorbed or understood the ideology of the Socialist Party. Sakol and Phong simply explained that socialist ideas were the most appropriate ideology for Thai society, and that socialism was not anathema to Buddhism.² They said that if they were elected they would follow the socialist practices of the party and that they would try to elevate the morality of other MPs so that they would sacrifice their personal interests for the benefit of the people.³ However, neither of them were elected.

It was in the 1975 election that the interest of certain radical monks in the Socialist Party and socialism crystallized. A number of monks affiliated with the FBT, notably Jud, Banchong, Songkram and their followers, had organized themselves into groups and travelled up-country to help in the Socialist Party's campaigns. For example, in the North they assisted the party's candidates in canvassing in Cheingmai constituencies, and they did the same in Nakornsithammarat and Khonkaen in support of Phong and Sakol respectively.⁴ In the by-election of June 1975, four monks led by Songkram actively helped the Socialist Party's candidate campaign in Cheingmai. These four monks approached the villagers and the local leader of the Federation of Farmers of Thailand. They harangued the villagers about the need

1. Department of Central Intelligence, Sathanakan kana song Thai (Movements in the Thai Sangha) (Report No. 1) n.d., pp. 6-7.

2. Ibid., see also Thai Rath, op.cit.

3. Thai Roth, 29 November 1974.

4. Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit., p. 7.

for radical land reform, the evils of capitalism, and suggested to them they should elect the Socialist candidate. They also made visits to local monks and urged them to support the socialist candidate as well as to defy the order of the Supreme Patriarch which forbade the monks' participation in political activities. They were arrested by the police on suspicion of being communist agents, but were later released, though not before their activities had been reported to the Sangha authorities. On this matter the Supreme Patriarch reprimanded them as 'having forgotten their yellow robes'.¹

In helping in the campaign, the monks also travelled with the candidate in the constituency and on occasion made speeches supporting him, an unusual event on the Thai political scene. I discussed this matter with a member of the Socialist Party and a monk who participated in the campaign. They explained that the presence of the monks was a gesture of assurance to the people that the Socialist Party revered Buddhism and the Sangha as much as the other parties. This explanation was plausible because, during the 1975 and 1976 general election campaigns, the right wing parties made great play of their claim that the Socialist Party was the enemy of religion.

The commitment to socialist ideology of the radical monks was well manifested in their efforts to propagate 'socialism'. Between 1975 and 1976 a small number of these monks organized themselves in 'Truth Propagation' groups (Nuay Phoeypbrae Satchatham) and travelled to rural areas of the North, North-East, and the South. They concentrated their propagation effort in 'communist infiltrated areas' and remote communities. I am not certain how many monks were involved in this programme. According

1. Dhammachaksu, Section 3, Asalaha Puja Issue, 1975, pp. 15-17.

to the Department of Central Intelligence, there were about 10 to 15 radical monks from Bangkok, most of them belonging to the MNCT and the YMFT.¹ The 'Truth Propagation' groups adopted the Phra Dhammatuta methods in propagating their version of Dhamma. They went from village to village and made contact with the villagers and taught them Dhamma. In the words of the Department of Central Intelligence "the Dhamma of these monks was coloured with socialist ideas".² In their propagation of 'Truth', they interpolated socialist ideology into their teachings and often misled the people into believing that the government had unjustly treated the villagers and brought the country under the domination of American imperialism.³

3. Peasant Agitation and the Monks' Involvement

Another unprecedented challenge to the Sangha authority involved the participation of monks in peasant demonstrations in November 1974. Between 19 and 30 November, several thousand farmers from many provinces led by the Federation of Farmers of Thailand (FFT) and supported by the radical student organizations, NSCT and FIST, and the radical labour union, FLUT, staged the biggest peasant rally Thailand had ever seen. They gathered in Thammasat University campus. The peasant rally was attributable to the increased discontent of the farmers over the apparent lack of direction in government agrarian policies and its inability to solve immediate difficulties of the farming population.⁴ In this

1. Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit., p. 7.
2. Ibid. (Report No. 2) pp. 4-5. Part of these ideas at least stemmed from the works of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu mentioned in Chapter V. These monks would often back up their arguments at public meetings by handing out copies of his works.
3. Ibid.
4. For details and analysis of the position of farmers in Thai society, government policies towards the agricultural sector and the formation of farmers' groups see, for example, Andrew Turton, 'The Current Situation in the Thai Countryside', Andrew Turton et al, Thailand: Roots of Conflict (London: Spokesman, 1978) pp. 104-135.

rally the farmers demanded: (i) the immediate help for landless farmers to enable them to earn a living by working on unused public land; (ii) the speeding-up of investigations into the seizure of land by loan-sharks by appointing an investigation committee in which the representatives of the FFT had a part; (iii) that land which had been taken from them by forgery and other unlawful means be restored; (iv) that persons who were involved in illegal acts be punished; (v) that the government allocate funds to relieve farmers' indebtedness; and (vi) the early introduction of land reform legislation.¹

In this ten-day rally monks participated. Many were invited to receive alms from the demonstrators in the morning and then returned to their monasteries. A few of them remained with the demonstrators. Some monks even took the platform and made speeches supporting the farmers' demands.² After waiting in vain for a positive response from the government for ten days, the demonstrators decided to stage a street demonstration on 29 November. As they were discussing how to organize the march, and how to avoid violence and harassment from the Red Guards and government troops, a group of monks announced that they would participate in the march to protect the demonstrators from harm. At about 6 p.m. the march began, heading towards the Prime Minister's Office, and it was later joined by a crowd of sympathizers. The participants numbered between 40,000 and 60,000. From my own observation, it is worth noting that in the demonstration the symbols of the Thai nation, religion and the monarchy were fully exploited. This is clearly demonstrated in the order of the march. The front line was

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1. The Federation of Farmers of Thailand, A Leaflet mimeo, 27 November 1974.
 2. The Thai press covered this event well; see, for example, Prachathipathai, Bangkok Post, Thai Rath, between 19 and 30 November 1974.

made up of about 50 monks who linked their arms together as a protective gesture. About 20 old female farmers made up the front of the second line. They held pictures of the king and queen in a reverent manner. The third line comprised farmers holding Thai national flags symbolizing their identification with the Thai nation. The fourth line consisted of farmers who held Dhammachak flags representing Buddhism. These were followed by the mass of farmers, students, labourers and sympathizers. The demonstrators also carried placards stating the farmers' discontent with government agrarian policies, and their grievances against capitalist exploitation.

As they marched, the demonstrators sang moving songs such as Khon kap Kwai (Man and Buffalo), Klinklon Sap Kwai (The Scent of the Earth and the Scent of the Buffalo), Su Ya Thoy (Fight Without Retreat). The lyrics reflected the common identification and grievances of the peasants. As the march progressed more and more sympathizers joined. At one point a few monks came to join and they were applauded by the crowd who shouted loudly that 'these are the monks of the people'. In the end, the government announced that it yielded to most of the farmers' demands.

The public later learned that the leader of the monks in the demonstration was Jud Kongsook. Afterwards he gave the following reasons for the monks' participation in the event:

We take pity on the farmers who are the backbone of the country and who toil and shed their sweat to feed the world. They are poor and neglected by the privileged classes. But they are contributing to the prosperity of Buddhism no less than the rich. Now they are miserable and suffering social injustice. We (the monks) must help them because, firstly, they feed us and are our benefactors; helping them in time of difficulty is thus an expression of gratitude; secondly, monks and farmers are related as kin by religion and by social ties. Being the children of the farmers, we cannot turn our backs on them when they need help.¹

1. Excerpts from a leaflet, Thalaeng kan Phiset (Special Declaration) distributed in protest at Jud's expulsion from his monastery, n.d.; see also Prachathipathai, 9 December 1974.

Jud also maintained that the monks' participation in this demonstration was a means to affirm the misery and suffering of the peasants. He interpreted the monks' action in this matter as a contribution to the elevation of humanity and social justice, and to the promotion of a better society and a happier existence for mankind.¹ He denied allegations that the monks' participation in the demonstration was political and that it brought shame on the Sangha.²

Though this unconventional act was well received by the leftist movements, there was strong reaction from other quarters. The leading members of the government were shocked by the march. For example, General Kris Sivara, the strongest military leader of that time, was reported to have said that the monks' action 'was the end of everything there is nothing more serious than this'.³ Prime Minister Sanya Thammasak, who was also the President of the Buddhist Association of Thailand, said that the event signified that Buddhism was under serious threat as the moral base of the nation. He suggested that the challenge mainly came from new radical ideas associated with the growth of unlimited freedom in the country and the abuse of civil liberty. What he meant by 'radical ideas' in this context was a political ideology which was aimed at the destruction of religion.⁴ The Minister of the Interior described the action of the monks as improper and a violation of the Sangha Act.⁵ The Director General of the Department of Religious

1. Prachathipathai, ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. The Nation, 3 December 1974.

4. The Prime Minister's Address at the Opening of the 22nd Buddhist Association of Thailand Conference at Wat Sothorn, Chacherngchao Province, 7 December 1974.

5. Prachathipathai, 3 December 1974.

Affairs said that he was so gravely distressed by this incident that he cried in pity for the religion. His deputy blamed the monks for causing a social disturbance and having brought politics into religion.¹

The government also expressed its great concern. At the Cabinet meeting on 2 December, the question of whether or not the monks' participation in the farmers' demonstration was instigated by 'the third or hidden hand', i.e. by communists, was discussed. However, the cabinet knew that it was difficult to prove the validity of such an allegation. It concluded that it would not take immediate action, but would wait on public opinion.²

Outside the government, public opinion varied. For example, the President of the Young Buddhist Association condemned the monks who participated in the demonstration. He maintained that disobeying the order of the Mahatherasamakom was in effect disobeying the government. The monks concerned, especially Jud, should be disrobed. He urged government and laity to take a tough line in dealing with disobedient monks. If the government and the Sangha authorities were not firm, it would seem as if they were condoning this laxity and worse would follow.³

A cross-regional opinion survey on this matter by the editorial staff of Damrong⁴ suggested three lines of argument were current. On the one hand, it was argued that the demonstration was not just a secular

1. Thai Rath, 2 December 1974.

2. Siam Rath, 3 December 1974.

3. Ibid., 4 December 1974.

4. A monthly magazine published by Academic Section, Department of Archaeology, Silapakorn University.

activity, but also a political act. Participating in the demonstration was inconsistent with Buddhist doctrine and only defiled the monkhood. The monks should confine their activities within the boundary of Vinaya and concern themselves only with their traditional functions, i.e. performing religious ceremonies and rituals, teaching and studying Dhamma, and being a spiritual refuge for the people. On the other hand, the survey team found that many of those interviewed were of the opinion that monks' participation in demonstrations was morally and socially legitimate for the following reasons. First, doctrinally speaking, such an activity was not against the Vinaya, but was an act of sacrifice in the interests of the people. Second, socially speaking, within Thai society farmers constituted an exploited class and the monks were materially dependent on them. Helping to alleviate the farmers' suffering was a moral obligation and a legitimate duty of the monks.

Between these opposed views, the survey team found that the greatest number of those interviewed believed that monks should not totally confine themselves to monastic activity but should also render services which were conducive to the well-being of the society. However, they were of the opinion that the action of the monks in the farmers' demonstration had gone too far, because it undermined the prestige of the Sangha.¹

The findings of the survey team were similar to opinions revealed in my own discussions with various individuals. These were not part of a structured survey and I do not claim they were representative of opinions in all sections of Thai society. I have included them to fill

1. Editorial Staff, 'Chao Ban Wicharn Song' (Laymen's Criticisms of the Sangha), Damrong, Vol. 1, No. 2, January 1975, pp. 10-15. A similar survey carried out by Prachathipathai (3, 9 and 15 December 1974) gave similar findings. However, neither survey specified the size of sample or their methods of investigation.

some of the gaps in the survey and to give an indication of other kinds of opinion. A group of liberal-minded students and certain radicals held that there was nothing wrong with the monks' participation in the demonstration; it contributed to the well-being of the society, especially of the underprivileged farmers. They disagreed with the idea that monks should confine themselves to monastic activities and the search for personal salvation. As one student put it to me:

It is unrealistic to think of Nirvana while the great majority of the people are suffering from injustice and exploitation. We (monks and laymen) must unite in mind and body to bring an end to these immediate sufferings before thinking about Nirvana.

A sharp contrast to this point of view came from a member of the Red Guard who told me that the monks who participated in the demonstration had committed a serious Vinaya offence because the demonstration was political in nature. Moreover, the monks' action was a crime because the demonstration was part of the communists' activities. Many individuals suggested that they did not mind the monks' involvement in secular affairs for the benefit of the people, provided that they kept in line with the Vinaya and the conduct expected of monks. For example, a middle-aged senior lecturer in a university said that in the farmers' demonstration the monks should have restricted their role to that of intermediary between the government and farmers, without participation in the demonstration.

Whatever the state of public opinion, Jud and three other monks were expelled from their monasteries by their abbots on the day following the farmers' demonstration. Jud was not satisfied with the reason for his expulsion and appealed against it to the Mahatherasamakom. At the same time, he was quick to capitalize on his popularity within the leftist movements in his response to the Sangha authorities. He con-

tacted the radical students and farmers' organizations and informed them of the expulsions. They reacted promptly and organized a protest rally on the afternoon of 30 November 1974. A crowd of some 300 to 400 people marched to Wat Dusitaram where Jud had formerly resided. There, they demanded to see the abbot, but he refused to speak to them. The demonstrators accused the abbot of treating Jud unfairly, of being a tyrant, and a lackey of the CIA.¹ They also brought Jud's case to public attention by organizing further protest rallies in public places. These rallies involved making public speeches and distributing leaflets. They went on for a few days and attracted a great number of sympathizers, including the farmers' representatives from nearby provinces. The central theme of the public speeches and leaflets was as follows: Jud was a 'monk of the people' who had sacrificed himself in the interests of the 'oppressed'; the participation of monks in the demonstration was not political but an expression of the Buddhist virtues of compassion and loving-kindness (Metta-Kuruna); their action was a declaration of the farmers' sincerity and served as a guarantee that the farmers were not communists. Many speakers criticized the high-ranking monks for holding authoritarian attitudes, and of being the instruments of corrupt politicians and capitalists. They said these administrative monks had sold themselves to the exploitative class, and that they were only good for finding fault with the minor monks but never cared to solve more serious problems.²

..... Meanwhile, the congregation or 'sit'³ of Wat Dusitaram, angered by

1. Prachathipathai, 2 December 1974.
2. Detailed accounts of these events were published in most Thai newspapers during 2 to 4 December 1974; see also the leaflet called Phra Dernkrabuan tham mai? (Why Monks Participated in Demonstrations) n.d.
3. It is difficult to provide an exact English equivalent of the Thai term 'sit' which is used in this context. It includes monks and temple boys at present or formerly in a master-student relationship with the monks of the wat; lay people in similar relationships, regular lay users of the wat including the lay wat committee; people in the local community who have sentimental ties to the wat and use it on occasion; and patrons of the wat. I employ the term congregation while recognizing its limitations.

the affronts to the abbot and the wat by Jud's demonstrators, organized an armed guard and human barricade around the wat. These people called themselves Kong Tap Dhamma (Troops of Dhamma). They also organized a motorcycle intelligence unit to keep them informed of their opponents' activities. They made public speeches and distributed leaflets condemning those monks who involved themselves in political issues.¹

The deep ideological conflict between the top Sangha and the young liberal-minded and radical monks rested on the question of what should be the proper role of the monks. The majority of the members of the Mahatherasamakom held that the farmers' demonstration by its very nature was purely a secular affair, which had political implications. Any resolution of the problem should strictly be the business of the government and the farmers. The monks should keep away; the best they could do, if they were sought, was simply give advice to the people. Such advice should be confined to the Vinaya and contribute to better understanding and harmony between the members of society. Many condemned outright the monks who involved themselves in the demonstration. For example, one member of the Mahatherasamakom, Phra Prommuni, regarded these monks as behaving as if they had no intention of remaining in the monkhood and possessing only ill will for Buddhism.² Another administrative monk, Phra Thepyanwethi, accused Jud and his followers of 'causing disaster to Buddhism'. He also urged the government to intervene and the public to reprimand them.³ A similar criticism came from the Supreme Patriarch who also suggested that the public should dis-

1. For details see Dhammachaksu, Vol. 60, Maha Puja Issue, 1975, pp. 107-109, 112-113 and 119; the account is also based on my own observation.

2. Ibid., p. 101.

3. Ibid., pp. 117-118.

associate themselves from the monks involved.¹

Responses from liberal-minded and radical monks to these criticisms appeared in the press, journals, and leaflets. In most cases, they maintained that monks' participation in the demonstration was socially and morally legitimate, because it was compatible with the teachings of the Buddha, and it was an act directed to bringing an end to suffering.² In retaliation for the allegation that 'they had ill intentions to the Sangha and Buddhism', the radical monks argued that it was the Sangha at the top themselves who had caused the deterioration of Buddhism and the Sangha. They alleged that many administrative monks indulged in occult and magical practices, and thus encouraged such false practices. They asserted that these administrative monks were responsible for the rapid growth of social ills and people's moral deterioration by pointing out they had officiated at the opening ceremonies of night clubs, massage parlours, distilleries, cinemas, theatres and so on. They also said that the administrative monks should be equally condemned for conducting religious ceremonies at the inaugurations of political parties, for anointing party offices, for blessing armament factories and soldiers who were going to war, because these activities were political.³

..... However, despite the pressure exerted by Jud's supporters, and the

1. Ibid., pp. 106-107.

2. For details see, for example, Damrong, pp. 14-15; Phra Maha Mek and Sanan Inthavaso, 'Khao nai na kap khao nai bat' (Rice in Paddy Fields and Rice in Alms bowl), Siang Dhamma, Vol. 18, No. 6, November 1975, pp. 5-15; and the leaflet entitled Phra Dernkrabuan tham mai, n.d.; see also 'Phra Song kap kan Dernkrabuan' (Monks and Demonstration), Buddhachak, Vol. 28, No. 12, December 1974, pp. 32-37.

3. Phu Rak kwam Samakki lae Yuttitham (Group for Unity and Justice), Thalangkan Phiset (Special Announcement), n.d.; a leaflet distributed between 5 and 15 December 1974; see also Phra Dernkrabuan tham mai; and Buddhachak, ibid.

arguments of his sympathizers, the Mahatherasamakom stood firm. Jud's appeal was dismissed and his ejection from the wat confirmed. Though now officially without a place in the Sangha, Jud was unwilling to admit he had done anything wrong or to pay any penance. He went on to live with friends at Wat Mahathat, officially as a temporary visitor, so that the abbot there could turn a blind eye to his presence.

4. The Monks' Sit-In: The Phra Phimondham Case

As the incident of the farmers' demonstration began to fade from people's memories, a more disturbing storm was developing in the Sangha. During the period 10 to 17 January 1975, many thousands of monks from all parts of the country assembled at the Lan Asok of Wat Mahathat. This was the biggest rally by monks in Thai history. The initial issue for the rally was the demand for the restoration of honorific titles to two monks, Phra Phimondham and Phra Sasana Sobana.

An introductory account of the Phra Phimondham case was given in Chapter V. The discussion here therefore concentrates on the development of the movement for the reinstatement of Phra Phimondham, the methods used to influence the government and the Sangha authorities, and their consequences. We shall also examine the extent to which the political monks, especially those who belonged to the FBT became involved.

The movement for the reinstatement of Phra Phimondham began as early as 1970. It consisted of both the monk and lay following of Phra Phimondham. From the beginning, the campaign was channelled through the Congregation of Wat Mahathat Association (Samakom Sit Wat Mahathat).¹ The objective was to make the Sangha and government

1. For the definition of 'congregation and Sit wat' in this thesis see footnote 3 on p. 289.

authorities recognize, or at least investigate the possibility that Phra Phimondham was wrongly accused and, if he were innocent, to restore his honorific title.

In seeking redress during 1971 and 1972 Phra Phimondham's following concentrated on seeking favourable responses from key political leaders to petitions rather than using more direct action. The decision to adopt this strategy may be attributable to the fact that in this period decision-making was centralized in the hands of a few political leaders. For example, in February 1972 instead of appealing to the Ministry of Education which was directly responsible for the matter, the President of the Congregation of Wat Mahathat Association, representing the movement, sent a petition to General Prapat Charusathien, one of the most influential political and military leaders. The petition provided detailed information about the unjust treatment inflicted on, and false accusations made against Phra Phimondham by the previous Sangha and government authorities. It requested Prapat to order a reinvestigation and restore Phra Phimondham's honorific title.¹ Prapat promised to order the reconsideration of the case.² The movement also submitted two similar petitions to the king as the patron of Buddhism.³ It also put forward suggestions on specific issues, for example, the composition of the committee of enquiry.

After having brought its grievances to the attention of the key political leaders and the king and having received Prapat's promise,

1. Letter from the President of the Congregation of Wat Mahathat Association to General Prapat Charusathien, 11 February 1972.
2. Letter from the Secretary to the Security Committee to the President of the Congregation of Wat Mahathat Association, 21 February 1972.
3. Letters from Captain Luang Satthayuthachamman to the Secretary-General of the Royal Household Office, 12 and 17 April 1972.

the association applied pressure on the Department of Religious Affairs which was directly responsible for the reinvestigation of the case. Being frustrated by the delay caused by bureaucratic procedure, the movement complained to Prapat and General Prasert Ruchirawong, another influential political leader who was in charge of the Ministry of Education. It accused the Department of Religious Affairs of deliberately shelving the matter, and requested Prasert and Prapat to order the departments responsible to speed up the reinvestigation.¹ A similar complaint against the Department was also sent to the Royal Household office.

Most important in this appeal of 1972 was the action of 16 provincial Sangha governors (Chao kana Changwat) of the Isan provinces representing all the administrative monks of the region.² These monks sent a petition to General Kris Sivara, another powerful political leader who at that time was the Secretary General of the Revolutionary Council and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. They pleaded with the government to see that justice was done and informed the government of their intention to demand justice and the reinstatement of Phra Phimondham.³ This action clearly demonstrated the strength of the movement. It also suggested that 'Isan regionalism' had pervaded the Sangha community, since Phra Phimondham himself was a North-Easterner. It is probable that these administrative monks realized that the political

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1. Letter from the President of the Congregation of Wat Mahathat Association to General Prasert Ruchirawong, 15 November 1972.
 2. Administrative monks include abbots, commune and district Sangha heads. In the whole region they numbered about 12,000 in a total monastic population of about 134,000, which was approximately two-fifths of the national total. (Estimated from the Annual Report of Religious Activities for 1975, Department of Religious Affairs, 1976, pp. 142-159.)
 3. Letter from 16 Chao kana Changwat of Isan Region to the Secretary General of Revolutionary Council, dated 15 November 1972.

sensitivity of their area might increase the potential influence of their plea.

The movement for the reinstatement of Phra Phimondham also capitalized on the internal conflict of the ruling cliques. From 1972 to late 1973, the struggle for power among the army factions was intense. At this time a young colonel, Narong Kitthikachorn, son of the Prime Minister (Thanom) and son-in-law of Prapat, had risen to power. He was the Deputy Secretary General of the Board for Crime Investigation and Suppression of Corruption. In this capacity he was given enormous power to deal with grievances against government officials. He was also apparently in conflict with General Prasert Ruchirawong, the Minister of Education and Director General of the Police Department. Prasert was also a bitter rival of Narong's father and father-in-law. The movement for the reinstatement of Phra Phimondham attempted to exploit this situation. It complained to Narong in August 1973 about the delays in the Ministry of Education, and requested him to expedite the matter.¹ Whether this tactic would have been successful is impossible to know because the government was overthrown in October 1973 before anything happened. It seems likely that the generals would have treated the whole matter as trivial.

By the autumn of 1973 the movement had extended its activities to include issuing press releases and statements in order to reach the public and to enlist their support. With this aim a book stating the case was published.² Despite the promises from political authority,

1. An Open Letter to Colonel Narong Kitthikachorn, published in Thai Daily, 4 August 1973.
2. Buanglang kan plod Phra Phimondham (Story Behind the Demotion of Phra Phimondham) by Thirachon (pseud.) (Bangkok: Samit, 1973).

nothing had materialized. The movement continued its campaign.

Another important episode came in September 1973, when 4580 monks and novices signed a petition and sent it to the Supreme Patriarch requesting him to order the reinvestigation of the case and reinstatement of Phra Phimondham. The petition reminded the Supreme Patriarch that now Phra Phimondham's case had been publicized, the Sangha was coming under more and more criticism, so that for the sake of its reputation and unity he should take immediate action.¹ When there was no response from the Sangha authority, tension increased.

When the military government was overthrown in October 1973, the movement for the reinstatement of Phra Phimondham once again altered its campaign strategy. Capitalizing on the popular dislike of military rule, the movement blamed the military governments for committing a 'serious crime against Phra Phimondham and bringing shame on the Sangha'. It labelled both Sarit's government and that of Thanom-Prapat as the 'dynasty of tyrants'. It pleaded with the new Prime Minister to 'put things right'.²

Having remained quiet for many years, Phra Phimondham now began to speak for himself. One of the most interesting tactics in the campaign was that Phra Phimondham and his followers began to exploit the Buddhist concept of righteous ruler. The new Prime Minister, who was previously the President of the Supreme Court, the highest and most prestigious position in the Judiciary, was well known for being a devout Buddhist and a scholar. He had been the President of the Buddhist Association

1. Letter of Petition from 4,580 monks and novices to the Supreme Patriarch, 5 September 1973.

2. Letters of Petition from the President of Samakom Sit Wat Mahathat to the Prime Minister Sanya Thammasak, 23 October 1973, 15 May and 13 June 1974.

for many years. Sanya had always held that a good government must be righteous and just. Now Phra Phimondham himself wrote to the Prime Minister that the deterioration of government and religion in the past decades was a result of the unrighteousness of dictatorial rule. He asserted that the previous dictators were directly responsible for the decline in morality of the people and government officials, the laxity in observance of the Dhamma and Vinaya by the monks, and the diminution of national unity. He attributed the fall of the previous military government to its unrighteousness.¹ He exhorted the Prime Minister using Dhamma as his guide to restore unity and justice to society. Only when it had done this, he claimed, would the government be held as righteous, and having given esteem to religion and the monarchy.² In another memorandum Phra Phimondham reminded the Prime Minister that the prosperity of society and the stability of the state depended on the good morality, justice, and righteousness of the ruler. In contrast, if the ruler was unrighteous, the people would be in misery and might well revolt. In the conclusion, he said that his suffering and shame had been caused by the previous unrighteous rulers. Now it was the responsibility of the new government to restore justice.³

By mid-1974 Phra Phimondham's case was frequently publicized and attracted considerable sympathy in the press. Yet there was no positive response from the government or the Sangha authorities. The latent resentment of a large number of monks began to come to the surface. Capitalizing on this favourable situation, on 20 December 1974, about

1. Phra Phimondham's Memorandum to the Prime Minister, 5 May 1974.

2. Ibid.

3. Phra Phimondham's Memorandum to the Prime Minister, 13 June 1974.

5,000 followers of Phra Phimondham sent a letter to the Sangha authorities and demanded that the Supreme Patriarch and the Mahatherasamakom give them a reply by 8 January 1975 as to whether or not the Sangha authority would organize a reinvestigation of Phra Phimondham's case. They boldly stressed that if the Supreme Patriarch and the Mahatherasamakom failed to react they would:

regard the Mahatherasamakom as deliberately ignoring the request with ill intention..... The 4,580 monks and novices, who had previously petitioned the Sangha authority, and many others will regretfully do something in order to assure that justice is achieved.¹

By now it was clear that the majority of the militants of the movement for the reinstatement of Phra Phimondham were monks who were associated with the newly emerged FBT and some other radical groups under the leadership of Jud. Banchong and Songkram. There were also significant changes in their tactics. Press releases and the distribution of leaflets to inform the public of their views and objectives were intensified. For example, on 23 December 1974 they issued a special announcement intended to qualify the rather blunt terms of their ultimatum of 20 December. It was addressed to monks at all levels and lay Buddhists. It stated their determination to demand the reinvestigation into the Phra Phimondham case, and at the same time asked everyone to support this cause. It also stressed that there was no intention to agitate against the government, or to cause schism in the Sangha, or disturbance in society.² In the meantime a peaceful demonstration was planned.

1. Letter to the Supreme Patriarch, dated 20 December 1974.
2. A leaflet entitled Thalaengkan Phiset (Special Announcement) dated 23 December 1974.

No reply was received to the ultimatum. So, on 10 January 1975, some 400 monks began a sit-in at Lan Asok at Wat Mahathat.¹ The main organizer was the FBT with the assistance of Jud's Ongkan Saha Dhammik, the ad hoc Klum Songkroh Satsanasuksa Song Phak Isan (The Sangha Group of Isan for Ecclesiastical Education), and Banchong-Songkram's faction. Collectively, the organizations and individuals involved in this issue referred to themselves as Kana Phra Song Phu Riakrong Kwam pen Tham (Monks for Justice), but were commonly known to the public as Yuwasong (Young Monks). Thus, in effect the monks involved included both moderates and radicals.

According to the Department of Intelligence, the involvement of the FBT and the Sangha Group of Isan in this sit-in was attributable to the personal relationships and common regional allegiances between Phra Phimondham and the leaders of these organizations. For example, in 1973 some 30 young Isan monks who resided in various wat in Bangkok had come to pay their respects to Phra Phimondham, and later they regularly came to perform religious rites with him as well as listen to his teachings. In due course, monastic relationships of the master-pupil kind had developed. Among their followers were many monk-students of Mahachula Buddhist University who in turn propagated the reputation of Phra Phimondham as a good teacher and a blameless monk. As a consequence, many more monks became supporters of Phra Phimondham. His most outstanding disciple was Phra Maha Sawaeng Chutthipunyo who in 1974 was a founding member of the FBT. While their faith in Phra Phimondham

1. This old established royal wat had considerable prestige. It was associated with the Mahanikai order and had a reputation for liberality, or at least toleration of a diversity of opinion among its monks. Most importantly in this context Phra Phimondham had been abbot there from the 1930s until 1962. It also houses Mahachula Buddhist University from which many of the political monks considered in this study came.

was growing, his supporters became increasingly suspicious of the previous allegations against their teacher. After having made investigations into the case, they were convinced that Phra Phimondham had been wrongly accused and unjustly punished. They came to the conclusion that the previous movement to clear the name of their teacher had not done enough and decided to use more drastic measures. It was this group which mobilized the 4,580 monks and novices to sign the petition in September 1973. When they officially established the FBT in November 1974, the reinstatement of Phra Phimondham was adopted as an urgent issue in its programme.¹

In order to appreciate the roles of the political monks in the sit-in, we shall concentrate our discussion on the organization of this demonstration and tactics used by them to realize their goals.

The demonstration was presented as justifiable on two grounds - religious and humanitarian - as follows:

- (a) Taking the unjust treatment of Phra Phimondham as a case in point, the Monks for Justice claimed that the Sangha authority, past and present, had not kept Buddhist doctrine to the pure and original teachings of the Buddha. Instead, in the past they had shamelessly abused and distorted the doctrine to satisfy personal desires and to please unrighteous rulers. Not only that, the Sangha authority had violated the Sangha Act of 1942 on which the Sangha administration at that time was based by not following the procedures of investigation and punishment decreed by law. As a result, Phra Phimondham had not only been wrongly accused but also unjustly punished. The present Sangha authority knew very well what had

1. Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit. (Report No. 2), pp. 1-2.

happened was wrong and inconsistent with the Buddhist doctrine, the Vinaya, but it never cared sufficiently to put it right, in spite of the peaceful requests of large numbers of monks and laymen.

- (b) The Monks for Justice argued that the treatment inflicted on Phra Phimondham humiliated him, placing a shameful stigma on his person. Although, in practice, he was allowed to remain in the monkhood, he was debarred from taking part in certain religious activities. If the Sangha authority did not rectify the injustice Phra Phimondham would be deprived of the rights and liberty due to him under the Vinaya forever. Moreover, the Sangha community would still be doubtful of his purity.

With this rationale, the Monks for Justice asserted that their action was doctrinally and humanly legitimate because it contributed to the restoration and maintenance of justice and the purity of the Vinaya.¹ The central purpose of the demonstration was to demand the repeal of all orders of the Sangha authority which wrongly accused and unjustly enforced punishment on him, and the reinstatement of his honorific title.²

As far as the organization of the demonstration was concerned the Monks for Justice adopted the non-violent policy (Ahingsa - Thai, Ahimsa - Pali) of a sit-in and, if necessary, fasting.³ Other aspects of the demonstration, according to my own observations, were patterned on the proven techniques of previous successful demonstrations such as those organized by the left wing movements - the NSCT, FIST, FFT, and

1. Monks for Justice, Hetphon lae Lakkan nai kan Riakrong Kwam pen tham (Rationale for the Demonstration). A press release and leaflet, dated 10 January 1975.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

FLUT. In this sit-in, the demonstrators divided themselves into groups for specific tasks. There were, for example, divisions responsible for public relations and publicity, medical care, receiving donations and supplies, and acting as guards.

Most of the participants in the demonstration were young monks from all parts of the country. The lay participants constituted a tiny minority which helped to prepare meals and drinks for the monks and dealt with cash donations. The laymen who wished to join the sit-in had to be approved by the monk-guards at the perimeter. The idea was to prevent the infiltration of the sit-in by outsiders who might have different motives. I realized this when I tried to get inside. Instead of being welcomed in customary fashion by the monks, I was stopped and asked of my intentions. However, I was eventually allowed to enter. Spectators were asked to keep outside.

The first two days of the demonstration were generally peaceful. On the second day the demonstrators numbered between 1,000 and 1,500. The monks within the perimeter sat talking and meditating. They performed morning and evening chanting (tham wat chao, tham wat yen), the conventional routine for monks. Posters and placards expressing their discontent with the Sangha administration, and demanding the reinstatement of Phra Phimondham were displayed.

As the news of the demonstration spread, a growing crowd of sympathizers, both monks and laymen, came to join and observe the demonstration. Other monks travelled from the provinces to join. In my estimation the participants might have gone up to 2,000-2,500 on the third day and increased further on subsequent days. Donations in the form of cash and other necessities such as food, drinks, and medicines had poured in from the laymen.

Apart from the demonstration within the perimeter, the Monks for Justice intensified their appeals to the public and to the monks for their support. They put various pressures on the Sangha authority, and made personal visits to the Office of the Prime Minister.

The public relations and publicity division frequently issued press releases and statements to the public. A series of leaflets were also distributed throughout the country. In these efforts, the Monks for Justice manipulated Buddhist doctrine to legitimate their actions. For example, one statement attempted to arouse the people's pride in Buddhism. It asserted that Buddhism had long been the symbol of justice. Buddhist ideology had flourished because a sound and uncorrupt Sangha had kept it alive by its exemplary behaviour. However, Thai Buddhism since 1961 could no longer be proud, because the Thai Sangha had ceased to uphold justice. The Monks for Justice then cited Phra Phimondham's case. The statement went on that it was not too late to make amends. In the conclusion, it justified the monks' action by claiming that the sit-in was an effort to resurrect the spirit of justice in Buddhism. It also equated this activity with the Buddhist traditional practice of Sangkayana or Sangiti, a general convocation of monks in order to settle questions of doctrine and to fix the text of the scriptures.¹

In another statement the Monks for Justice appealed to the 1,250 monk-students of Mahachula Buddhist University to give their support to the campaign and participate in the sit-in. In this connection the Buddhist virtue of Katannukatavedi (the quality of being a grateful person) was invoked. The monk-students were reminded that it was Phra

1. Monks for Justice, Thalaengkan chabab thi 1 (Declaration No. 1) 10 January 1975.

Phimondham who had made a greater effort than anyone else to modernize this university. It was also he who had given monks a greater opportunity to broaden their horizons and improve themselves whether they remained in the monkhood or not. As beneficiaries of Phra Phimondham's devotion, the monk-students should show their gratitude by rendering help to him when he was in difficulty. They were also asked not to take their examinations and to defy the Mahatherasamakom's order.¹

The statement addressed to the monks throughout the country stressed the authoritarianism of the existing Sangha administration as being a threat to their socio-economic status. The Monks for Justice asserted that under the existing administration the rights and liberty accorded to the monks in the Vinaya were ignored; that the high level administrative monks were a menace who ruled the great majority of monks by terror and oppression. They claimed that Phra Phimondham's case was only one of many. Moreover, they asserted that the authoritarian rule of the Sangha brought deterioration to its prestige. If this continued the Sangha and Buddhism would no longer be the moral pillar of the nation. It was therefore the responsibility of the whole Sangha to unite and fight for justice and liberate themselves from authoritarian rule.² This kind of emphasis frequently recurred in statements throughout the demonstration.

Then a rumour spread about an assassination plot on the life of the Supreme Patriarch and four other prominent members of the Mahatherasamakom. The threat was said to have come from the demonstrators;³

1. Monks for Justice, Thalaengkan chabab thi 2 (Declaration No. 2) 10-11 January 1975.
2. Monks for Justice, Thalaengkan chabab thi 3 (Declaration No. 3) 11 January 1975.
3. Dhammachaksu, Vol. 60, 1975, p. 100; it is possible that the Monks for Justice spread the rumour to pressurize the Sangha authority to react.

although the latter denied this allegation. The police were sent to protect the targets. As a result the tension was exacerbated. The top executive monks became more unyielding and refused to have any dialogue with the representative of the Monks for Justice. From the fourth day of the demonstration onwards, the demonstrators extended their tactics to making critical speeches and fasting. The originally passive demonstration became increasingly turbulent. The demonstrators now took to the platform and made critical attacks on the Mahatherasamakom. They accused the Mahatherasamakom of intending to perpetuate authoritarian rule, of being tyrannical, and of using their power to suppress the great majority of monks. The Department of Religious Affairs was also similarly attacked. Some speakers suggested that the top Sangha did not want to reactivate the Phra Phimondham case because they themselves had been directly responsible for his wrong accusation and some of them were involved in corruption. They were afraid that if this case was exposed, their prestige, status and position would suffer. To my astonishment, the behaviour of some speakers almost left them with no vestige of the monkhood, other than their yellow robes and shaven heads. Their gestures and vocabulary resembled that of the furious lay protestors. The event was further dramatized when many monks began fasting.

On 11 January 1975 the Monks for Justice gave another ultimatum to the Supreme Patriarch. They demanded a written reply as to whether or not the Sangha authority would meet their demands within 24 hours. If they got no positive response, they stated that they would then resort to more radical measures.¹ The Mahatherasamakom reacted by issuing a

1. Monks for Justice, Letter to the Supreme Patriarch, 11 January 1975.

statement condemning the demonstrators for issuing such an ultimatum, which was an unprecedented insult to the Supreme Patriarch. It pointed out that it was neither legitimate nor seemly for monks to use such a measure to force an action on the Mahatherasamakom and reminded the demonstrators that in Buddhist doctrine the Sangha was governed by the Vinaya and by reverence, in which honour and respect was paid to senior monks by their juniors. Moreover, it blamed the demonstrators for causing a disturbance when the government and the Sangha authorities had many more serious problems to handle. However, it promised to speed up consideration of the matter on condition that the demonstrators dispersed.¹

The response of the Sangha authority only exacerbated tension, bitterness and anger among the demonstrators. The speeches attacking the top Sangha became more emotional and fervent. Four fasting protesters collapsed 'with sorrow and anger'. Many became ill from starvation and were taken to hospital. Nevertheless, they refused to take any food and were said to have declared:

We are fighting not for individuals but for the justice entailed in the Vinaya and Dhamma..... If we are to die, let it be known that we die for right and justice. We will sit here until we win.²

The situation became more explosive and the pressure on the authorities escalated accordingly. More provincial monks came to join the demonstration. The greatest number apparently came from the Isan region, where monks of all ranks had organized themselves into groups and travelled to Bangkok. The first wave included between 1,000 and

1. The Mahatherasamakom's Memorandum to the Monks for Justice, 13 January 1975.
2. Thai Rath, 14 January 1975.

1,500 monks from Loei and Sisaket provinces led by their Chao kana Changwat. They were followed by monks from Ubol, Udorn, Nakorn Phanom and the remaining Isan provinces. I am uncertain of the total number of monks involved, but the press reported that 'there were so many that it caused alarm in government circles' and that 'the government ordered government officials to intercept the monks' movement'. Monks, who could not come to join the demonstration for any reason, sent letters and telegrams in support of the demonstration.¹ By 16 January the number of demonstrators had increased to between 20,000 and 25,000.

Among the Isan monks, the holders of honorific titles now threatened to turn in their honorific fans to the Supreme Patriarch.² This was not just a threat of resignation. It was important because symbolically it not only reproved the Sangha authority but was also a gesture of withdrawing loyalty from the state, for honorific titles and fans were conferred upon monks by the king. It also implied the strong possibility of the Isan Sangha separating itself from the domination of Bangkok.

In the meantime there was a widespread rumour that the sit-in was part of a communist conspiracy to destroy religion. According to the Department of Central Intelligence, the rumour originated with a mysterious organization calling itself Nuay Pongkan Sathaban Phrasatsana (Organization for the Protection of Religion). This organization distributed various leaflets in Bangkok calling on Buddhists to turn against the Monks for Justice. It also urged the government to deal with the demonstrators as they were communists.³ In order to clarify

1. Dhammachaksu, op.cit., pp. 137-139; see also Prachathipathai, Thai Rath, and Daily Mail, 12-16 January 1975.

2. Dhammachaksu, Ibid.

3. For example, the leaflets entitled Chichaeng Thalaengkan khong Kana Yuwasong (Facts about the Yuwasong), n.d., and Prakat (Declaration), n.d.

their position, the Monks for Justice made contacts with government leaders. For example, their representatives visited the Prime Minister on 13 January to inform him of the authentic aims of the demonstration and to assure the government that their action had nothing to do with politics and had no political inspiration.¹

The monks' sit-in came to an end on 17 January when the Supreme Patriarch came to meet the demonstrators and announced that the Sangha authority agreed to repeal the orders of the previous Sangha authority and to restore Phra Phimondham's honorific title. The demonstrators disbanded and returned to their wat. After having achieved their goals, the temporary coalition between active organizations of monks ended. The factions led by Jud, and Banchong and Songkram continued their activities in various political issues, while the ad hoc Sangha Group of Isan merged into the articulate FBT which now concentrated its efforts on Sangha reform.

5. The FBT and the Sangha Reform

During the sit-in the FBT had raised another important question - that is, what were the fundamental causes of conflict and deterioration in the Thai Sangha? The Monks for Justice were in agreement that the most fundamental cause was rooted in the structure of the Sangha administration, and that it needed drastic reforms, if the prosperity of Buddhism, the unity and the prestige of the Sangha were to be restored.²

The principal arguments for reform put forward by the FBT were as follows:

1. Dhammachaksu, op.cit., p. 138.
2. The FBT, Thalaengkan Ruam (A Joint Communique), 11 January 1975.

First, the present administrative system derived from the Sangha Act 1962, which was a product of Sarit's authoritarian government, and had been designed to serve the oppressive purposes of the wielders of power at that time. As a result, the Sangha administrative system was also oppressive and undemocratic.¹ Second, the power to regulate and govern the whole Sangha was so totally centralized in the office of the Supreme Patriarch and the Mahatherasamakom that the rest of the monks had no part in a decision-making process which directly affected their personal interests and the welfare of the whole Sangha. The FBT described the centralization of power in the Sangha administration as 'a ritual to transform the monks into donkeys'.² Third, the FBT interpreted the system as the means by which the government intended to subordinate the monks to its authority and to minimize the autonomy of the Sangha. Finally, the FBT maintained that the existing Sangha administration was detrimental to Buddhism, for it was inconsistent with the Buddhist doctrine of Sangha government, i.e. the Vinaya, and therefore a hindrance to the progress of Buddhism.³

With regard to the direction of the reforms desired, the Monks for Justice, being aware that the FBT was better organized, more articulate, and had more members, agreed to place their confidence in the FBT to formulate the reform proposal. Thus, the FBT shouldered this responsibility from the beginning.

1. Ibid.

2. Quoted from an Open Letter of the FBT to Monks, n.d. The expression refers to the stupidity of the donkey, not to its capacity for work. It probably also suggests that the top Sangha consider the rank-and-file monks to be stupid and hence incapable of making decisions for themselves.

3. Ibid.; The Joint Communique; and Thalaengkan chabab thi 1 (Declaration No. 1) n.d.

(a) The FBT's Reform Proposals

The central theme of the reform put forward by the FBT was the abolition of the existing authoritarian administrative system and its replacement with a democratic and decentralized system. This was in line with the organizational arrangements of the 'ideal' political system which was advocated by liberal and progressive-minded people between 1973 and 1976. The main aims of the FBT's reforms were:

- (i) The new Sangha organization should parallel the legislative, executive and judicial institutions of the (democratic) secular government.
- (ii) Sangha organization should be liberated from the domination of political control.
- (iii) The right to participate in Sangha government and administration of monks at the lower levels of the Sangha administration and of rank-and-file monks should be recognized.

These ideas were elaborated in the FBT's proposed Sangha Act, which can be summarized as follows:

- (i) Although the Sangha would remain hierarchically organized, there was to be a shift in power structure. Governmental and administrative power would be decentralized and shared by three main institutions. They were the Sangha Sapha (Sangha Parliament), the Kana Sangha Montri (Sangha Cabinet), and the Kana Winaithorn (Ecclesiastical Court). These three institutions, in effect, corresponded to the secular legislature, administration or executive, and judiciary respectively.
- (ii) Parallel to the secular political system, the Supreme Patriarch would be the head of the whole Sangha. His position would be similar to that of the king. He would be appointed for life

by the king with the advice of the Sangha Sapha. The Supreme Patriarch would exercise legislative, executive and judicial power through and with the advice and consent of the Sangha Sapha, the Sangha Montri, and the Kana Winaithorn respectively.¹

The radical changes here were that the government would no longer monopolize the authority to appoint the Supreme Patriarch and that the powers of the Supreme Patriarch were much reduced. He became the ceremonial head, rather than the 'actual' ruler of the Sangha.

- (iii) The democratic principles of 'majority rule' and 'representative government' were clearly demonstrated in the proposed composition and powers of the Sangha Sapha. The Sangha Sapha would consist of two categories of members. Category 1 would be comprised of members elected by monks who held the administrative positions of abbot and above. Prospective candidates should have two qualifications. Firstly, they must be ordained monks with at least ten years' monastic service. Secondly, they should hold at least either Dhamma study grade three (Naktham Ek) or Pali study grade three (Barian Prayok 3) qualifications.² Each province would be entitled to have one representative, except Bangkok - Thonburi, which would have five representatives. On this basis, there would be 76 elected members.

The second category of membership of the Sangha Sapha should consist of not more than 45 members. They would be appointed by the Supreme Patriarch from monks who had at least one of the following qualifications: the honorific title of Phraracha kana

1. Articles 5-9.

2. Articles 11, 13.

chan tham and above; a Pali qualification; a BA degree.¹

The tenure of office of both categories of members of the Sangha Sapha would be four years.

The main function of the Sangha Sapha would be legislative. It would be responsible for producing the ecclesiastical decrees, rules and orders which regulate the whole Sangha. It would have the power to determine the modes of practice and conduct of monks in accordance with the Vinaya, including the power to settle any matters where there were ambiguities.² More importantly, the Sangha Sapha would be able to eject its own members and those of the Sangha Montri on a vote of not less than two-thirds of its total membership.³ The secular parliamentary mode of practice would be adopted for the execution of the Sangha Sapha's functions. This involved, for example, an ordinary convention and special sessions. Special meetings might be called, if these were requested by one-third of the members or by the Sangha Nayok.⁴ The Sangha Sapha meetings would be presided over by its President who would be appointed by the Supreme Patriarch on the advice of the Sangha Sapha.⁵ Resolutions of the Sangha Sapha would be decided by vote, each member having one vote, and the majority vote would prevail. Half the total membership would be sufficient for a quorum.⁶

1. Article 13.

2. Articles 22 to 24.

3. Articles 30, 34.

4. Articles 18, 20.

5. Article 15.

6. Articles 17, 22.

The legislative power of the Sangha Sapha was to be almost absolute. This is clear in article 25 which provided for the Supreme Patriarch to be able to withhold his approval of ecclesiastical decrees submitted for his signature by the Sangha Sapha; but after two submissions, his veto could be overridden by the assembly. Moreover, the Sangha Sapha would have the power to select and appoint ordinary and special committees for performing any activity, or investigating or inquiring into matters within the scope of the work of the Sangha Sapha or matters concerning Sangha affairs.¹

- (iv) The central administration of Sangha affairs would be the responsibility of the Kana Sangha Montri which would correspond to the civil cabinet. This executive body would consist of a Sangha Nayok and not more than 14 Sangha Montri, corresponding to the civil Prime Minister and ministerial positions respectively. The Kana Sangha Montri would also be the decision-making and policy-making body concerned with the Sangha affairs as a whole. The members of this body would be appointed by the Supreme Patriarch. The Sangha Nayok and at least six Sangha Montri must be members of the Sangha Sapha, while the rest might be appointed from monks of outstanding scholarship and experience from outside. Every member of the Kana Sangha Montri, whether or not he was appointed to administer a designated department, would be jointly responsible for the general activities of the Kana Sangha Montri,² i.e. there would be collective responsibility.

- (v) The administration of the Sangha affairs would be divided into a central and a provincial administration. The central administration

1. Article 27.

2. Articles 31 to 33.

would be functionally composed of six departments (Ongkan), namely Pokkhrong (Administration); Satharanupakan (Public Works); Suksa (Education); Phoeypphae (Propagation); Withetsampan (International Relations); and Wipatsana (Meditation or Ascetic Practice). Each department would be headed by a Sangha Montri and a deputy might be appointed to help him if it was deemed necessary.¹

The provincial administration was largely to remain hierarchically organized and parallel the civil administration, as provided by the previous Sangha Acts of 1941 and 1962.² The prime feature which differentiated the FBT's proposed reform from the centralized system of the Sangha Act 1962 lay in the rearrangement of the power structure. According to the Sangha Act 1962, the Supreme Patriarch directly controlled the provincial Sangha. But the FBT's version of provincial administration was more decentralized. The provincial Sangha administration would now be responsible to the functionally differentiated departments.

- (vi) Judicial power would be vested in the Kana Winaithorn. It alone would be empowered to adjudicate and settle disputes within the Sangha in accordance with the Vinaya and the Sangha Sapha's legislation. The rules concerning the appointment of the Kana Winaithorn and regulations on judicial procedures would be legislated by the Sangha Sapha.³ The Kana Winaithorn would consist of three levels of ecclesiastical court, viz: Kana Winaithorn

1. Article 35.

2. See Chapter III, pp. 124-126, and 131-133.

3. Articles 54 to 56.

chan thon (Court of First Instance); Kana Winaithorn chan utthorn (Court of Appeal); and Kana Winaithorn chan dika (the Supreme Court).

There was also a provision regarding the administration of the wat, the lowest level within the Sangha hierarchy. This provision aimed at giving a wider opportunity to the rank-and-file monks to participate in the administration of the wat. Thus, Article 46 provided that in a wat which had more than 20 monks, wat affairs would be administered by a committee. Such a committee would be elected by the monks themselves.¹

(b) The FBT's Sangha Reform Campaign

The proposed Sangha reform, if it succeeded, would undoubtedly result in the destruction of the existing Sangha administrative structure. This would also inevitably produce unfavourable effects on conservative-minded monks and laymen who had been the main beneficiaries of the existing system. The FBT well understood that its success largely depended on obtaining the support of the lay-public, the monks at all levels, and the politicians. It therefore worked out various strategies to influence public opinion and to mobilize support.

Initially, the FBT established its own publication, the fortnightly newspaper Siang Yuwasong (The Voice of the Young Monks) which first came out in late 1975. Although its editor was a layman,² the editorial staff and regular contributors were predominantly monks. Its office was in Wat Mahathat. Siang Yuwasong served as the FBT's instrument for

1. Article 46.

2. Who was apparently a loyal follower of Phra Phimondham and who had been very active in the movement for the reinstatement of Phra Phimondham from the beginning.

transmitting its reform programmes to, and soliciting support from, various sections of society. Since it was operated on a voluntary basis, Siang Yuwasong relied on donations and subscriptions. It is through this paper that we can appreciate the stand of the FBT, its efforts to restore and promote Buddhism and the Sangha, and its strategies in the Sangha reform campaign.

In its campaign efforts, the FBT capitalized on the existence of a public opinion favourable to democratic rule, and it attempted to manipulate public resentment of dictatorial rule. Through Siang Yuwasong the FBT repeatedly drew the attention of the public to the deterioration of Buddhism and the Sangha, and attributed it to the authoritarian Sangha administration. The main attack was on the centralization of power in the hands of 'a handful of oligarchs' i.e. the Supreme Patriarch and the Mahatherasamakom. The FBT asserted that this was inconsistent with the wishes of the Buddha who had wanted Sangha affairs to be administered democratically, and it also denied the rights of the majority of monks to participate in decisions affecting the welfare and progress of Buddhism and the Sangha.¹ Rather, the present structure gave rise to greed for power and possessions, to immoral consciousness and jealousy, and thus caused schism within the Sangha. This allegation was based on the argument that the centralization of power in the hands of a few monks made the top positions in the Sangha hierarchy desirable, because whoever attained them wielded enormous power over the whole Sangha. The positions were accorded prestige, monetary reward, and contacts, especially with political

1. For details, see, for example, Samachiksong, 'Kanathipathai nai Kana Song' (Oligarchy in the Sangha), Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1976; Phra Maha Sawat Chartmethi, 'Khrail nae thamalai Satsana?' (Who put Buddhism in Jeopardy?), Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1-15 February 1976.

authority. It was also argued that the appointment of top executive monks to high levels by the political authority made them subservient to the latter. This encouraged intrigue, boot-licking, and similar practices, which shamed the Sangha as a whole. Moreover, the system gave rise to the struggle for power which caused factionalism in the Sangha. Once a person had attained a top position, then he tended to be more concerned with maintaining the status quo than with promoting the prosperity of Buddhism. In this way political intrigue, manipulation, and favouritism became important ingredients of power within the Thai Sangha.¹

Besides, the FBT capitalized on the monk-students' dissatisfaction with the Mahatherasamakom's education policy. It accused the Sangha authority of obstructing the progress of monks' education by advising the government not to recognize the status of the Buddhist universities as equivalent to those of the secular universities. The obstruction of the Mahatherasamakom in effect meant that monks were not qualified to get a job in government service should they leave the monkhood.²

Changes in the political system frequently were used as an argument to justify the need for Sangha reform as well. The FBT pointed out that dictatorial government had been proved to be the most undesirable and humiliating, so much so that the Thai people had sacrificed themselves to put an end to it. And now the secular government was a demo-

1. For elaboration, see, for example, Phra Maha Sawat, ibid.; Chalong Chuthimanta, 'Krabuan kan Sathaban Song' (Authoritarianism in the Sangha), Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, Nos. 3-4, 1976. For more details about political intrigues within the Sangha see Thirachon, op.cit.; Phra Maha Sawat Chartmethi (comp.), Maha Sanghanibat na Lan Asok (Bangkok: Krung Sayam, 1975), and also Samanen Wat Thitthawiriyo, Khor Tetching Korani Phra Phimondham (Facts about Phra Phimondham's Case) (Bangkok: Phikkhanet, 1975).

2. This issue had been frequently raised in almost every issue of Siang Yuwasong.

cratic one, the Sangha as part of that democratic society must also be changed. Only with democratic administration, the FBT claimed, could the Sangha regain its prestige, and Buddhism prosper.¹

Personal attacks on high-level administrative monks were another strategy of the FBT's reform campaign. This involved allegations of abuse of power and corruption against certain individuals. These regularly appeared in the social gossip column, Bukkhon Phainai wongkan Satsana (Personalities in Religious Circles), of Siang Yuwasong. This column constantly accused the majority of the members of Mahatherasamakom of abuse of power, for personal gain, fostering the practice of favouritism, oppressing rank-and-file monks, flattering political authority, setting monks against each other, indulging in shameful activities such as having sexual relationships with women, and practising false doctrines such as occultism.²

Some of these issues were occasionally fully reported in Siang Yuwasong in order to substantiate the FBT's allegations. Some of the examples given are presented below.

Concerning possible corruption and mismanagement of Sangha property, Siang Yuwasong, in May to July 1976, gave an account of a dispute between the abbot and the tenants of the prestigious royal wat Mahamakutkasatthiyaram. Through Siang Yuwasong, the FBT accused the abbot, who was also a member of the Mahatherasamakom, of having unkindly evicted the wat's tenants in order to lease the property to a construction company. The

1. 'The Editorial', Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, No. 19, 16-30 November 1976; see also Chalong Chuthimanta, op.cit.
2. See, for example, the columns 'Bukkhon Phainnai wongkan Satsana' in Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1 (1976) nos. 4-5, 8-9, and 11-18; and also Vol. 2 (1977) nos. 23-25.

company was planning to build a commercial centre from which the wat would gain more financial benefit. It also alleged that the abbot and other high ranking monks were bribed by the company. This action was presented by the FBT as inconsistent with the Buddha's teachings in that it was an act of greed for the accumulation of wealth. Moreover, the eviction of the poor tenants in favour of capitalists was an act of exploitation which again was not in line with the Buddha's teaching, or morally and humanly sound. The FBT warned that such cruel treatment of the poor only encouraged them to join the communists.¹

Cases of political intrigue within the Sangha and the monks' manipulation of political authority for certain purposes were repeatedly reported by Siang Yuwasong. One of the best examples was that of the appointment of monks to higher honorific rank. In this case, the FBT asserted that some members of the Mahatherasamakom had deliberately obstructed the rightful nomination of Phra Phimondham and Phra Sasana Sobana to Somdet Phraracha kana rank by manipulating the political authority to favour less deserving monks.²

The FBT had also devoted its efforts to the question of unjust appointment of monks to administrative posts. It asserted that the Mahatherasamakom had not strictly observed the principles and procedures regarding the appointment of ecclesiastical officials but often abused

1. Fuller details had been reported in Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, Nos. 10, 12 and 14, and also in Special Free Volumes, 16-31 May, and 1-15 June 1976.
2. For elaboration see 'Thalaengkan chabab thi 1, Ruang kan Sathapana Somdet Phraracha kana' (Declaration No. 1, On the Appointment of Somdet Phraracha kana), and 'Thalaengkan chabab thi 2, Ruang kwam nai pen tham nai wongkan kana song' (Declaration No. 2, On Injustice in the Sangha), both declarations were published in Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1-15 January 1976.

or bent the regulations to serve its own interests. In many cases there was an air of corruption and favouritism about the appointments. For example, the FBT suggested that the provincial Sangha governor of Ayudya had abused his power by appointing one of his disciples to the position of Abbot of an important royal wat instead of appointing a better qualified candidate. In spite of the protests of the monks and congregation of that wat, the Mahatherasamakom approved the action of the provincial Sangha governor. The FBT claimed that such injustice was fostered because the provincial Sangha governor was 'the client or follower of one of the most influential members in the Mahatherasamakom.'¹

Partiality in the treatment of monks who were convicted of Vinaya offences was another charge that the FBT made against the high level administrative monks. Most controversial of all was the case of Kitthiwuttho. In January 1976, Kitthiwuttho led hundreds of commune and village headmen in a demonstration against local government legislation, which also demanded drastic government measures in suppressing communist activities, resolving economic and corruption problems, and speedy land reform legislation. The FBT maintained that Kitthiwuttho's action was no different from that of Jud. Yet Kitthiwuttho was neither condemned nor punished by the Sangha authority. Neither did the Department of Religious Affairs make any comment. The FBT claimed that action was not taken against Kitthiwuttho because he had intimate relationships with some influential members of the Mahatherasamakom, and because Kitthiwuttho had the protection of the political and economic establishment.²

1. Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, Nos. 9-10, 13 (1976). It also frequently reported alleged abuses of power in various ways by provincial Sangha authorities. See, for example, Vol. 1, Nos. 5, 11, 17-20 (1976).

2. Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1976).

Proclaiming itself as the vanguard of Buddhism, the FBT also directed its attacks on the misdemeanours of high ranking administrative monks. It alleged that the increase in the practice of 'false doctrine' was attributable to the irresponsibility of the top administrative monks in that they encouraged such practices by not enforcing laws and regulations, and even worse, by practising these illegitimate and non-doctrinal activities themselves. 'False doctrine' in the FBT's sense included, for example, beliefs in magic, miracles, astrology and faith healing, as well as the confusing of Buddhism with other religions, especially Hinduism. 'False practices' followed from these beliefs and included giving charms and amulets, healing by touch or holy water, casting horoscopes, performing rituals against evil spirits, and blessing immoral places etc. as mentioned earlier.¹ Through Siang Yuwasong, the FBT exposed to the public the top Sangha who themselves practised 'false doctrine' by publicizing their names and printing pictures of some of them performing a ritual invoking 'supernatural spirits'.²

Soliciting the support of political parties and MPs constituted another strategy in the FBT's reform campaign. The FBT first sent its reform programme to them to sound out their attitudes to it. At this stage there seemed to be no formal or direct contact between the FBT and the politicians. The channels of communication were mainly through general letters. The second stage commenced when the FBT felt relatively confident that certain parties or MPs would seriously and sympathetically take up their cause. Only then would the leaders of the FBT or its

1. See, for example, Phra Maha Samruam Piyathammo, 'Saiyasat pen kamsorn khong Phutthasatsana rue mai?' (Is Occultism and Magic Buddhism?), Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, No. 5 (1976), and by the same author 'Saiyasat kamlang yamyee Phutthasatsana' (Occultism and Magic is Destroying Buddhism), Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, No. 13 (1976).

2. Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, No. 13 (1976).

representatives directly approach sympathetic parties or individuals. They then put forward suggestions on specific issues, and ask the parties or MPs to speak for the FBT in Parliament. Lay sympathizers with the FBT would also be asked to lobby the politicians.¹

As far as the proposed Sangha Act was concerned, the FBT managed to secure the support of the United Socialist Front Party of Thailand, which in turn was seconded by the Socialist Party of Thailand and some MPs from other parties. During the preparation of the Sangha Reform bill the representatives of the FBT were invited by the United Socialist Front Party's legislative committee to elaborate the FBT's proposed reform.² Significantly, the final draft by the United Socialist Front party encapsulated most of the FBT's major proposals. The bill was submitted to the Parliament in the second session of the 1975 Parliamentary meeting and passed its first reading. The Parliament was dissolved before the bill reached its second reading.³

1. Information about the interaction between the FBT and MPs and political parties is mainly from my own communications with some members of the Central Committee of the FBT during August-December 1975.

2. Ibid.

3. Parliamentary Report, 1975, Second Session.

CHAPTER VII THE ROLES, ACTIVITIES, AND INVOLVEMENTS OF RIGHT WING
POLITICAL MONKS IN THAI POLITICS DURING 1974-1976: A
CASE STUDY OF KITTHIWUTTHO

This chapter examines the roles, activities, and involvement of monks in the political crisis brought about by the student-led 'revolution' of 1973, the Parliamentary system of government in Thailand, and the communist victories in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in 1975. Kitthiwuttho Bhikkhu is taken as a case study of a right wing political monk because, unlike most other monks, he played a leading role in secular politics. Kitthiwuttho's ideological position was explicitly pronounced, his political role and involvement was conspicuous and novel, and more importantly his involvement was tacitly recognized by a large section of the conservative members of society as well as sympathetically supported by the right wing movements and militants.

In Chapter V we noted that Kitthiwuttho's Buddhist activism, social action, and connections with the political and economic establishment had afforded him a reputation; and that he manipulated his connections to promote his programme of Buddhist social action. These activities in turn were important assets in advancing his ideological position when he later became politically active.

In this chapter we shall investigate further the underlying causes which led Kitthiwuttho to become a political monk, his ideological position, and his connections with and his role in the ultra right wing movements, notably NAWAPOL. We shall also examine his skilful manipulation of Buddhism and his mobilization of provincial monks and the masses to support his ideology and activities.

1. Kitthiwuttho as a Political Monk and His Ideological Position

Before 1974 there is no clear evidence to indicate that Kitthiwuttho was active in secular politics, nor that the Buddhist activism promoted by him had an explicitly political flavour. However, the political events following October 1973 led him as a Thai nationalist to become politically active, stridently anti-communist and a vehement opponent of the left wing movements, which he considered to be the enemies of the nation, religion, and the monarchy. He saw communists as foremost among the enemies; whether operating outside or within the country; indeed this proposition might be reversed, for he has tended to label all his enemies 'communists'. Within the country, he saw the most dangerous threat as coming from the leftist movements operating as various organizations and within certain political parties. Among these movements, the students' organizations such as the NSCT and the FIST who led the October 1973 'revolution' were the most important enemies. For Kitthiwuttho the 1973 upheaval and the succeeding leftist activities were the result of a well organized communist plot to destroy the existing structure of Thai society. In addition to the lay leftist movement, he saw the organizations of monks such as the FBT, MNCT, and YMFT as being communist-backed.¹

1. These views were implicit in many of his public lectures during 1975, and became explicit in a number of his speeches in 1976, especially in 'Ka Kommunit nai Bab (Killing Communists is not Demeritorious)' (Bangkok: Aksorn Sampan, 1976); see also 'Phutthasatsana kap Latthi Kommunit' (Buddhism and Communism), Chofa, Vol. 10, No. 12, December 1975, pp. 5-16 and Vol. 11, No. 1, January 1976, pp. 5-10; and 'Kan Pathiwat khong Phra Phutthachao' (The Buddha's Revolution), Chofa, Vol. 11, No. 12, December 1976 and Vol. 12, No. 1, January 1977.

Kitthiwuttho's involvement in the NAWAPOL movement is a convenient starting point from which to begin the examination of his political role and activities.¹ Near the end of 1974 the liberal newspapers, especially Prachathipipathai and Prachachart, began to report that Kitthiwuttho had allowed NAWAPOL to use Chittapawan College for its meetings and for mobilizing mass support. He himself began to interpolate frequent injunctions to the public to support NAWAPOL in his sermons on Dhamma on one of the Army Radio stations.² By April 1975 he had made clear that he was one of the most important leaders and thinkers of the NAWAPOL movement through his public lectures and in a number of interviews with the press. For example, in a public lecture on the Army Television (TV.5) he told the public that in the early stages of the formation of NAWAPOL the founding members had come to seek his advice. He then told them that NAWAPOL should be organized as a popular force, not to seek political power, but to counteract the enemies of the nation, religion, and the monarchy.³ At that time he was an advisor to the movement.⁴

Although NAWAPOL did not claim to be a political party seeking parliamentary representation, it was obvious to the public that it was a political movement. Thus, Kitthiwuttho's involvement in NAWAPOL was unquestionably seen as an involvement of religion and of monkhood in politics. Kitthiwuttho himself, though he did not deny that he was involved in the NAWAPOL movement, maintained that NAWAPOL was not

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1. The emergence of NAWAPOL and its ideology and activities has been detailed in Chapter V.
 2. See, for example, Prachathipipathai, 15, 20 December 1974.
 3. The lecture was entitled 'Phutthasatsana kap Kwam Mankong (Buddhism and Security). Later the text was published in Chofa, Vol. 10, No. 7, July 1975, pp. 5-16; see also Prachathipipathai, 18 August 1975.
 4. Phutthasat Parithat, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1975) p. 20.

a political institution since it was not a political party and it did not bid for political power. To him, its members were tied together by a principle of nationalism whereby the movement took the Middle Way of Buddhism to solve problems of government, economics and society.¹ In response to the allegation that he, as a monk, was involved in politics he boldly declared:

"I have studied (Buddhism) and well understand my position. I know very well what I ought and ought not to do..... NAWAPOL is an ideology for the preservation of the nation, religion, and the monarchy. It is not a political party..... I have never wanted to involve the yellow robe (monkhood) in politics, for I know very well that it is not proper (for the monk). If I really desired political power, I would have disrobed.².... However, should anyone keep insisting that I take part in politics, let it be so. But, I want you to understand that I am doing so and will continue to do so because my only intention is to secure the country. I tell you this ... I love the country, I want to protect the nation, religion, and the monarchy, and I am ready to sacrifice myself for this".³

Thus, the initial reason for his involvement in NAWAPOL was to preserve and protect the nation, religion, and the monarchy which, for him and NAWAPOL, were in grave danger of being destroyed by the communists and enemies who operated under various names but were in fact part of the communist movement.

Kitthiwuttho's fear of, and hatred for, communists were exacerbated by the establishment of communist governments in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos in 1975. According to his own words, these events had made a

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1. Ibid.; Buddhism and Security, pp. 12-16; see also his interview with a weekly newspaper Ruam Thai, 19-25 July 1975, and his lecture on Kwam Mankong khong Chart Satsana Phra Mahakasat (The Security of the Nation, Religion and the Monarchy) later published in Chofa, Vol. 11, No. 4, April 1976, pp. 5-14.
 2. Ruam Thai, 19-25 July 1975.
 3. A speech at the Seminar on Monks - People for the Preservation of the Nation, Religion, and Monarchy at Chittapawan College, 23-25 May 1975.

very strong impression on him. He told the monks and the public about his visit to Cambodia before the fall of that country and described the terrified state of the Khmer monks who dreaded the advent of communist rule. After the fall of Cambodia he dramatized accounts of the destruction or desecration of monasteries, the brutalities communists inflicted on monks, and the indiscriminate killing of monks and ordinary people, including women and children. The incidents in Cambodia convinced him that communists and communism represented a formidable threat to the nation and religion. Moreover, when the communist government of Laos abolished the Lao monarchy in December 1975, it was for him a clear affirmation that communism represented a threat to the institution of the monarchy.¹

It was probably on these grounds that Kitthiwuttho became politically active as an anti-communist. He then made a major effort, in concert with NAWAPOL and very likely with others on the far right, to mobilize all classes of the people and monks to wage war on communists and leftist movements.

Kitthiwuttho's ideological position was one with that of NAWAPOL. For him, it was the only stance that a true Thai nationalist could take. Anyone who opposed it was therefore an enemy of the nation, religion, and the monarchy. To him the very survival of the Thai nation rested on the security and stability of these three pillars.

By 'nation' Kitthiwuttho meant the 'people' (prachachon). Thus, the security of the nation was in effect the security of the people.

1. This statement was reiterated from May 1975 onwards in his speeches and writings; see, for example, Buddhism and Security; Buddhism and Communism; The Security of the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy; and the most illustrated, Killing Communists is not Demeritorious.

The security of the people produced happiness and progress for them. Such conditions could be achieved only when the people had unity, cared for and helped one another, and shared their happiness and suffering together. Closely related to national security was the Buddhist religion which tied the Thai people together and served as a mechanism for moral and social control. It was the moral axis of the Thai nation. Without it, he postulated, the country would fall into anarchy and cease to exist. He also maintained that the Thai nation could hardly survive without the monarchy because the monarchy was the symbol of independence and unity and the morale of the nation. The king was the only true leader of the nation, who in the past had preserved the country and Buddhism for the Thai people, and who today led the Thai nation to progress and development.¹

Kitthiwuttho's stature as a distinguished monk, his reputation for Buddhist activism in social action and Dhamma propagation, and his leading role in NAWAPOL most certainly made the movement attractive to many who otherwise might have been more wary of politicians with their close military connections. Not only was he a leader and thinker, he was also an energetic and enthusiastic promoter of NAWAPOL's cause, programmes and ideology. He played an important role in designing the orientation courses and subjects for seminars and meetings for the members of NAWAPOL. On these occasions he was also one of the most important and indispensable speakers. In his efforts to propagate his 'national ideology' and NAWAPOL's causes and programmes, and to mobilize support from various sections of society, Kitthiwuttho made

1. For elaboration see Buddhism and Security; The Security of the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy; and NAWAPOL, Report of the Seminar on Monks - People for the Preservation of the Nation, Religion and Monarchy (Chonburi: Chittapawan College, 1975).

extensive use of daily radio and weekly television broadcasts. He also gave frequent public lectures at the Abhidhamma Foundation, at Wat Mahathat, at Chittapawan College, and at some other places. Public meetings organized by his following and/or NAWAPOL afforded him additional channels of communication. He also made extensive travels to various parts of the country to make speeches for the same purpose.¹ For example, on 29 June 1975 at the meeting organized by NAWAPOL in Petchaburi province, Kitthiwuttho gave a public lecture on National Security. On 25 November 1975 at a public meeting of NAWAPOL in Saraburi province; on 25 December at Chaiyaphum province; and on 26 January 1976 in Cheingmai province; he gave lectures on 'Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy' and how the people could preserve these institutions.²

Kitthiwuttho mobilized funds for NAWAPOL, but he himself had never disclosed the amount. However, the Department of Central Intelligence suggested that it was 'substantial'.³ The weekly Prachachart estimated contributions to Kitthiwuttho's funds at 'many millions of baht'. The money mainly came from public donations to Chittapawan College for its construction, upkeep, educational and propagation activities. Prachachart also reported that during 1973 to 1975 Kitthiwuttho received donations of around 200 million baht, part of which was used for NAWAPOL.⁴

1. Department of Central Intelligence, Confidential Report on Activities of NAWAPOL (BKK: Department of Central Intelligence, 1976) p. 15, and Appendix N, p. 2.

2. Ibid., pp. 13-15, and Appendix N, pp. 4-5.

3. Ibid., p. 15.

4. Prachachart (weekly), 'NAWAPOL: Rae Okkma chak Kwa' (NAWAPOL: Emerging from the Extreme Right), Vol. 2, No. 29, 8 August 1975, pp. 30-31.

2. Kitthiwuttho and Mass Mobilization for the Defence of the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy

Kitthiwuttho was articulate about the strategies and means to be employed in the fight against the enemies he had identified. The counteraction was to be mounted simultaneously by monks and laymen, each using different strategies and weapons, but acting in concert.

Immediately after the communist regimes were established in neighbouring Vietnam and Cambodia, Kitthiwuttho took the lead in organizing a special meeting at Chittapawan College. It took place on 23 to 25 May, and was called the "Seminar of Monks - People for the Preservation of the Nation, the Religion, and the Monarchy". According to the seminar report and to Kitthiwuttho himself, the meeting resulted from the worry and concern of 'people from all walks of life' about the risk of communist aggression both from outside and inside the country. Many of them had personally expressed their worry and concern to him and sought his advice.

The meeting was attended by about 2,500 people including monks, businessmen, government officials, high-ranking policemen and army officers, farmers, students, and community leaders from 30 provinces. Interestingly, Christian and Muslim leaders were also invited.¹ Although Kitthiwuttho claimed that this meeting was organized as part of Chittapawan College activities, it was obvious that the majority of the participants and all the speakers were key members of NAWAPOL.² The report of the seminar was also produced and distributed by NAWAPOL.

1. Buddhism and Security, pp. 6-13; see also NAWAPOL, A Report on the Seminar of Monks - People for the Preservation of the Nation, the Religion, and the Monarchy (23-25 May 1975) (Chonburi: Chittapawan College, 1975).

2. Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit., Appendix N, p. 2.

It is also worth noting that the Supreme Patriarch was invited to officiate at the opening ceremony. On this occasion he was reported to have said that this meeting was 'a creditable attempt to bring peace to the country, thus it deserved praise and support'.¹ Other evidence suggesting that this was a NAWAPOL meeting was that the participants who were not NAWAPOL members were asked to take an oath vowing that they would sacrifice personal interest, even life, for the survival of the nation, religion, and the monarchy.²

The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the threat presented by the communists and communist-backed organizations and to decide the means and strategies to counteract these enemies. The meeting adopted a resolution that 'the Middle Way' should be the means to preserve and defend the three institutions.³

The anti-communist strategies were firstly that the people must be informed of the nature of the threats and the identity and tactics of the enemies. Secondly, every effort was to be made to instil in the minds of the people the awareness of national unity, their national heritage, their pride of nation, religion, and the monarchy. Thirdly, the awareness of the link between national and religious security on the one hand and political, economic, and social stability on the other had to be strengthened or created. Finally, the people had to be encouraged to unite in body and mind to strive for the above objectives by fighting against the enemies.⁴

1. NAWAPOL, op.cit.

2. Buddhism and Security, p. 13.

3. NAWAPOL, op.cit.; Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit., p. 7.

4. Buddhism and Security, pp. 7-8, 10-12.

For Kitthiwuttho, 'people' referred to every Thai regardless of their religious convictions, economic and social status, and occupations. Monks, as part of the 'people', could also have a significant part to play. If the monks and laity were unified, they could produce a most effective force to fight the enemies. He said that now unity was being undermined by the communists and the leftists who conspired to turn people against each other violently. Thus, one of the most urgent tasks of every Thai nationalist was to create better understanding and restore unity among themselves.¹

In many of his speeches and public lectures, Kitthiwuttho pointed out how to achieve national unity and what role the Thai of different economic and social status should play in order to remedy peacefully the conflicts in society. He invoked a number of the teachings of the Buddha to justify the relationships of the people in society. For example, the rich should follow the principle of Dana (Tan - giving) and Metta-Karuna (Compassion and loving-kindness) by helping the poor. The poor in return should be grateful to the rich as prescribed in the principle of Katannukatavedita (Katanyu - Gratefulness) and they should not think that the rich were their enemy as the communists and the leftists maintained. Also, the employees (labourers) should not regard the employers (the capitalists) as their enemy or as an exploitative class. Both parties should consider their relationship as reciprocal. The monks should teach the people in such a way as to reduce the gap between rich and poor, by emphasizing principles of Dana to the rich, and Katannukatavedita to the poor. They should teach the rich that giving to the poor was an act of merit which would enable them to be

1. Ibid., pp. 7-11.

born happier and richer in the next life.¹ He also called upon the monks to use their 'wisdom' (panna) as a weapon to fight the enemies and to inspire the people.

Ironically, while teaching the people to solve the problems of social conflict by peaceful means, Kitthiwuttho repeatedly launched attacks on the communists and the leftists and told the public who they were. He continually tried to disillusion the people with leftist ideology. He told the people about the 'devil' of communism and the 'blind madness' of those who cherished it.

For Kitthiwuttho, the communists were mara (marn - the Evil One) and thus communism was an ideology of Evil. It was the ideology that negated virtue (kwamdi) and aimed at the destruction of society, the happiness of mankind, and religion. It was therefore the most dangerous and direct enemy of Buddhism. It was also in turn the enemy of the monarchy.² He warned the people and students not to be misled or fooled by 'subversive ideology' and 'forlorn hopes' spread by such figures as Mao-Tse Tung, Marx, Lenin, Che Guevara, Jean-Paul Sartre, Franz Fanon and so on. He said that the propagation of such subversive ideas was a means adopted by leftists to sabotage the social relations of brotherhood, and to undermine the social foundations of Thai society, i.e. religious and family institutions, the monarchy,

1. Ibid., pp. 8-11; see also Kitthiwuttho, Dhamma kap Phanha Sangkom (Dhamma and Social Problems) (BKK: Phromprasit Press, 1974); Dhamma kap kon Samai mai (Dhamma and Modern Man) (BKK: Phromprasit Press, 1974); and Sing thi kuan Kammung (Things that one should think about) (BKK: Aksornsamai Press, 1975).

2. For elaboration of Kitthiwuttho's perception of communism as distinct from Buddhism see his lectures on 'Buddhism and Communism', Chofa, Vol. 10, No. 12, and Vol. 11, No. 1 (December 1975 and January 1976).

relationships between teachers and students, parents and children and so on.¹ On many occasions he warned the people not to become prey to leftist 'mob rule' and 'mass mobilization' tactics. As far as the rural people were concerned, communist tactics, Kitthiwuttho elaborated, involved six stages.

The first step is chan prabtook (open one's heart to one's misery). At this stage the leftists, mostly left wing students, organize such programmes as 'Democracy Propagation, Community Development, Rural Reconstruction, and Returning to the Countryside' and direct them at the villages. There they establish rapport with the villagers, asking them about their problems and offering help. In every case the leftists would lead the villagers to believe that their grievances were caused by the government. The second step is chan krachapmit (tightening relationships). The leftists give assistance with the immediate needs of the villagers. For example, they help on the farm and provide medicine for the sick. Having been long neglected by government officials, the villagers naturally trust the students and regard them as 'good kids' and as 'their children' (luklan). This paves the way for the leftists to advance to the third step, chan paklak (entrenchment). They move in and live with the villagers. This is followed by the fourth step, kan obrom (indoctrination). The leftists agitate, conspire, and indoctrinate the villagers with socialist and communist ideas. The next step is chan chad tang (organization and mobilization). They now organize the villagers into, for example, farmers' associations, co-operatives and self-help groups. The final

1. A lecture to students at Kasetsart University, 28 June 1975. The text was later published in Chofa, Vol. 10, No. 8, August 1975, entitled 'Dhamma samrap phuyai' (Dhamma for Adults) pp. 5-17.

stage, chan chakchuan, is to incite and eventually lead the villagers to revolt against the government and replace it with a communist system.¹

Kitthiwuttho also informed his listeners of the tactics of the leftists operating in the cities. He said that the enemies had infiltrated into schools, colleges, universities and labour organizations. In educational institutions, the enemies could be found among the students and teachers. These enemies not only spread subversive ideas but also incited the students to rebel against Thai traditions and the social order. As early as November 1974, Kitthiwuttho in his public lectures on television had asked parents to warn their children not to be misled by 'bad friends' who took part in public rallies and political meetings. In this lecture he expressed his deep concern about the proliferation of 'subversive ideas' among the young.²

What worried him most was the rapid spread of the 'new left ideology' propagated by leftist students in colleges and universities. The 'new leftists'³ were even more evil than the communists because 'they would destroy all the foundations of society ... and build a completely new society'.⁴ This ideology, according to Kitthiwuttho, was spread in colleges and universities by students and teachers who had received it from abroad. They would derogatorily label anyone

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1. Kitthiwuttho emphasized these points over and over in his speeches; see, for instance, The Security of the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy; Killing Communists is not Demeritorious; and Buddhism and Communism.
 2. For details, see Dhamma and Social Problems.
 3. He claimed, without giving details, that the new leftists' organization began in England in 1956. It is possible that this idea derived from Thanin Kraiwichien, the future Prime Minister, who was in England at that time.
 4. A public lecture entitled Kan Pathiwat khong Phra Phutthachao (The Buddha's Revolution) on Asalha Puja Day of 1976. The text was later published in Chofa, Vol. 11, No. 12 (1976) and Vol. 12, No. 1 (1977).

who wished to preserve the existing society 'dinosaur', 'tyrant's leaving' or 'reactionary'. In fact, said Kitthiwuttho, those who were blamed were our ancestors, who had sacrificed themselves to preserve our nation, religion, the monarchy, our culture and our heritage.¹

Kitthiwuttho further stated that the communists would unrelentingly destroy religions, because religions were a major obstruction to the propagation of communism. The destruction of Buddhism had already begun in Thailand and involved a number of methods following Mao-Tse-Tung's teachings. For example, he elaborated, the communists organize public lectures or seminars. The lectures and seminars concentrate mainly on criticizing the behaviour of respected monks to discredit them, so that people lose their trust and confidence in monks, and on criticizing the teachings of the Buddha as irrelevant to the needs and progress of society. In some extreme cases the leftists even say that religion is the opium of the people, and that it was created to serve the interests of the exploitative classes.² Another tactic employed to destroy Buddhism is that they send their members to be ordained as monks. These enemies in disguise undermine Buddhism and the Sangha in various ways. For example, the disguised monks behave wrongly to make people lose faith in the Sangha. They organize themselves into groups and go out to teach Dhamma to the rural people. But in fact they distort the Dhamma and spread communism and socialism. These monks draw attention to everyday social, political, and economic

1. Chofa, Vol. 11, No. 12 (1976) pp. 8-9.

2. Ibid. (Vol. 12, No. 1, 1977) pp. 6-7. Kitthiwuttho was referring here to actual lectures and seminars which were being given throughout Thailand between 1974 and 1976.

problems which they say are caused and perpetuated by the existing system. Then, they urge people to demand an end to this system and its replacement by a new one. These monks, Kitthiwuttho asserted, distorted Dhamma by teaching that 'Buddhism and Socialism are the same' and that 'Buddhism and Communism are based on the same ideology'.¹ Moreover, these communists in disguise organize themselves into various associations, notably the FBT, the MNCT, and the YMFT, for subversive activities.²

Kitthiwuttho also saw communists as having infiltrated labouring groups where they incited the workers to stand against their employers by using strikes, sabotage and picketing. Not only that, they also extended these industrial disputes into political demonstrations. Such a situation was also seen as developing in government bureaucracies. The communists and leftists had tried to play low-level government officials off against their superiors.³

The liberal newspapers and magazines, especially Prachachart and Chaturat, also came under attack. For Kitthiwuttho these publications, which were incidentally critical of him, were the lackeys and mouth-pieces of the leftists. They, too, were the enemies of the nation, religion, and the monarchy.⁴

Having told the people who their enemies were and the kinds of tactics they used, Kitthiwuttho aroused fear and abhorrence of the left

1. Ibid., p. 7.

2. Killing Communists is not Demeritorious, p. 39.

3. Kitthiwuttho, 'Pathakatha' (Kitthiwuttho's Speech), Chofa, Vol. 11, No. 9 (September 1976) pp. 11-12.

4. The Buddha's Revolution, pp. 13-14.

in the minds of the people by describing the consequences of communist rule. He told the public how the communists would humiliate and eventually destroy religion and the monarchy. He said that if the Thai did not stand against them now, then the Thai would face the same political and social turbulence as that suffered by the Cambodians, Lao and Vietnamese. The word 'Thai', always associated with 'freedom' would no longer be meaningful, for, under communist rule, people would be little better off than slaves or animals. Liberty and equality, the virtues that the Thai admired and had enjoyed, would no longer exist, and the institution of the family would be destroyed.

Kitthiwuttho then called for an unrelenting and uncompromising attack on the communists. This was, he exhorted, the responsibility of every Thai, whether he be monk or layman, rich or poor.¹ In this effort he offered the people a plan of action which would lead to a marked alleviation of their troubles. His plan, in fact, set him directly against not only 'real' communists (whoever they might be), but also the liberals and socialists who had committed themselves to creating a constitutionally-based democratic government.

Kitthiwuttho's Mass Mobilization: Kitthiwuttho was well aware that the success of his plan depended to a large extent on the rural masses, and that if they were skilfully mobilized they would be the greatest and fiercest anti-communist force.² According to Kitthiwuttho, the rural populace were politically naive and unaware of the communist threat.³ Because of this they must be directed by the government.

1. Ibid.; see also Killing Communists is not Demeritorious; and Buddhism and Communism.
2. The Security of the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy, p. 12.
3. Killing Communists is not Demeritorious, pp. 34-37; see also Buddhism and Security, pp. 10-13.

This was made clear in a speech in Cheingmai in 1975:

If our country is to progress and the people are to be happy, the people must put their trust and confidence in the government and they must obey the government. (This is because) ... the people are like the blind and the government is like a cripple but clever. They have to co-operate. The government knows what is good for the people and how to achieve it. As the government is a cripple, the people must shoulder it and go everywhere under its direction. Then the people will not fall down the hill. But if the people go alone they are likely to get into trouble

For Kitthiwuttho, such a government must be 'good' and strong. But unfortunately, the government of the time (Kukrit's government 1975-early 1976) was not decisive enough and the Parliament was infiltrated by communists, i.e. socialists and pro-socialist MPs. Thus 'clever people' with good intentions had to intervene by mobilizing the rural masses to preserve the nation, religion and the monarchy.

By the beginning of 1976 Kitthiwuttho had made major efforts, together with NAWAPOL, to mobilize the masses. This nation-wide mobilization programme involved a hierarchical mass organization, from village level upwards through commune, district and province to the national level, with most emphasis on the rural population.

According to this plan, the leading figures of the villages were recruited to receive training at Chittapawan College in the techniques of mass mobilization and organization. They had also to undergo ideological indoctrination sessions and to make a pledge to sacrifice themselves for the nation, religion, and the monarchy. Then they were sent home to spread Kitthiwuttho's version of 'national ideology'. In his village, each leader was assigned the task of creating a kan nam

1. Personal communication from Dr Chai-Anan Samutwanit (15 October 1975).

(core organization, or cell). This consisted of at least 50 leading members, whose main responsibilities were to propagate 'national ideology' and recruit other regular members. Each new member was instructed to do likewise. In this way, Kitthiwuttho claimed, the membership would quickly expand, linked together by a common ideology and purpose.¹ Although Kitthiwuttho did not say at the beginning that his plan was in fact congruent with that of NAWAPOL, it was later clear that these laymen were also members of NAWAPOL. According to NAWAPOL's constitution, its village core organization was further divided into functional units, namely: (i) a Home Guard unit responsible for village security, acting as a defence against bandits and hostile elements; (ii) a Social and Sanitation Unit responsible for educating people on matters of social organization and hygiene, including public relations; (iii) a Political Education Unit to teach villagers about political issues and to collect information affecting the security of the country. It was also responsible for mobilizing the members for certain activities as directed by the higher organization; and (iv) an Economic and Financial Unit assigned to study the economic and occupational situation in villages. The constitution also dealt with co-operative activities and the management of village finance.² The organization at the village level was supervised by the higher levels of organization described in the NAWAPOL Constitution.³

1. Buddhism and Security, pp. 12-15.

2. For more detail, see The Constitution of NAWAPOL, and Hand Book for Members of NAWAPOL, 1975.

3. Ibid.

For his part Kitthiwuttho undertook lecture tours of villages. The general purpose of his lectures was to deepen the villagers' ideological commitment, to keep them informed of social and political situations, to boost their morale, and to advise them about techniques of organization and mobilization. His major aim was to disillusion the people with communist propaganda and inform the ignorant of the communist danger. He advised the people not to believe, listen to, or associate with left wing activists, especially the students who went into the countryside. The villagers were also advised to report the presence of these students to government officials.¹

In addition to building and expanding the dedicated lay opposition to communists, Kitthiwuttho also had a plan to improve the people's social and economic position. According to him, Chittapawan College was to undertake this responsibility. He planned to set up a kind of occupational training centre in every province. The centre would enroll poor children who had no means to undertake further education beyond the years of compulsory education. The training would include such courses as agriculture, carpentry, simple mechanical and electrical engineering, building, etc. The teachers would be recruited on a voluntary basis from local people who were specialists in these subjects. This plan, he asserted, had merit in that the children would grow up as responsible citizens, trained for occupations, and be an asset to society.²

Kitthiwuttho's organizational ability first showed its effects in early January 1976 when he and NAWAPOL mobilized a demonstration of some

1. Killing Communists is not Demeritorious, pp. 36-39.

2. Buddhism and Security, pp. 14-15. I have no information as to whether this plan has been put into practice.

15,000 village and commune headmen. Prior to this event the village and commune headmen from all parts of the country travelled to Chittapawan and held a meeting ostensibly to discuss a positive policy for national security on 3 January.¹ Certain patriotic resolutions were adopted and the participants moved to Bangkok to present their demands to the government. Kitthiwuttho himself was conspicuously present at the demonstration. The demonstrators called for, amongst other things, the decisive suppression of communists and the expulsion of certain Socialist and Democrat MPs from the Cabinet and the Parliament. If the government was unable to meet their demands, they asked that Parliament be dissolved and the government be turned over to a National Reform Council led by the military.² About ten days later, the government did decide to dissolve the Parliament and call for another general election in the next three months.

It is unlikely that the village and commune headmen's demonstration was critical in this decision. In fact, the government had had to face a number of other fundamental problems. These were, for example, the unsettled disputes within the United Parties Coalition government, as well as within the opposition parties; a rapid rise in rice prices; an increasing number of labour strikes; and the pressure of the military (which was strongly opposed to a leftist leaning coalition government) who feared that Thailand was being led towards the same fate as Laos.³

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1. Daily Times, 4 January 1976; see also Department of Central Intelligence, op.cit., Appendix N, p. 2. It should be pointed out that this happened to coincide with the passage of a Bill through Parliament which would have forced all village and commune headmen to stand down. The posts were thereafter to be elective.
 2. Daily Times, 4 January 1976; see also Prachathipathai and Prachachart, 4-5 January 1976.
 3. For a more detailed consideration of coalition government, see Somporn Sangchai, Coalition Behaviour in Modern Thai Politics (Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies: Occasional Paper No. 4, May 1976) pp. 5-12.

Nevertheless, Kitthiwuttho implicitly claimed the credit for himself. In speaking to the public on a television programme,¹ while denying that he had led the demonstration, he admitted that the village and commune headmen had sought his advice as to what measures they should adopt to pressurize the government. He said that the demonstrators had also asked him what to do with corrupt and irresponsible MPs. He pointed out that the village and commune headmen were not stupid; they knew only too well that the nation, religion, and the monarchy could not survive under the present kind of government.² He had advised them to 'take appropriate action', but he did not elaborate on this. Moreover, Kitthiwuttho saw his role in the demonstration as a 'binding agent' (tau chuam) for the headmen and as a 'middle man' between them and the government. He went along with the demonstrators in order to see that the affair remained orderly. Yet he maintained that the headmen had done 'a very good job'.³

Kitthiwuttho's participation in the demonstration appears to be in no way different to Jud's case two years previously - it was undoubtedly political. Thus, the liberal newspapers raised the question whether Kitthiwuttho would be punished for his actions, as Jud had been. The Mahatherasamakom announced that it was considering the issue, but no further action seems to have been taken. It is difficult not to assume that their disinclination to pursue the matter was the result of Kitthiwuttho's connection with the political establishment and the influential sections of society. It also meant that the Sangha

1. The speech was entitled 'The Security of the Nation, the Religion, and the Monarchy' and was delivered on 17 January 1976, three days after the dissolution of Parliament.
2. He was taken to refer here to a comparison between the Thai government and the Lao government, which was seen as a coalition between neutralists and communists, and which was being widely made at this time by conservatives.
3. The Security of the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy; see also his interview with Prachachart, 28 June 1976.

authority tacitly recognized his role.

In fact, Kitthiwuttho was able to turn the criticism levelled at him to his advantage, for it allowed him to make public an extended statement of his ideas about the role of monks. In it he was able to justify his own political acts, and argue from the Buddha's teachings that the monks' - and indeed any Buddhists' - involvement in the nationalist activities he suggested was doctrinally and morally sound.

3. Kitthiwuttho's Call to Monks to Preserve the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy

As a Thai, Kitthiwuttho said, a monk was a citizen of the country and thus had a duty and responsibility, just as his lay counterpart, to protect the nation, religion, and the monarchy.¹ He was also the 'owner of the country'.² In a normal situation, a monk performed his duty as a spiritual refuge for the people and sometimes helped them in secular activities for their material progress. This is ordinarily enough, but in the face of communist danger, monks had to do more. They had to join with the laity to protect the country, because if the nation was destroyed, religion could not exist. Moreover, because communism was the enemy of Buddhism, the monks as disciples of the Buddha were obliged to protect the religion.

Kitthiwuttho also employed humanitarian and moral arguments. He argued that because communists were 'Evil' (mara), they caused suffering

1. Buddhism and Security, pp. 6-7; The Security of the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy, pp. 8-11.
2. 'Chao khong prathet', an emotive expression implying common origins, loyalties, rights and duties, etc. held by every Thai.

to the people. One of the direct duties of monks was to alleviate the suffering of the people. Socially speaking, since the monks are dependent on the laity, they are under a moral obligation to help the people too. The monks' 'political' action was therefore in accordance with the Buddha's teachings. Only those who did not thoroughly understand Buddhism would blame the monks for their action.¹

To legitimate his own anti-communist action and justify the monks' role in the defence of the nation, Kitthiwuttho also invoked the spirit of Thai heroism. He told of the heroic deeds of Archarn Dhammachot, a monk who led the villagers of Bang Rachan in battle against the Burmese on the eve of the fall of Ayudhya. He implied that what he was doing was the same as Archarn Dhammachot and he encouraged monks to follow his example.² Interestingly, he also admired the rebellious act of Phra Fang³ which was considered by most Thais as an unacceptable act for monks and as illustrating the darker side of the history of the Thai Sangha.

When Kitthiwuttho called on monks to launch an anti-communist campaign, his well established Spiritual Development programme was probably the best instrument for transmitting his ideas to the rural monks. From early 1976, hundreds of rural monks had been instructed at Chittapawan College in Kitthiwuttho's extended version of Buddhist social action. They were now to propagate Kitthiwuttho's 'national ideology' and were urged to wage war on communists and leftists.

1. Buddhism and Security, pp. 7-9.

2. A speech at the Seminar of Monks - People for the Preservation of the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy. This story and its moral had been reiterated in many of his speeches. See also "The Position of Monks in the Defence of the Country", Chofa, Vol. 11, No. 3, March 1976, pp. 14-15.

3. Killing Communists is not Demeritorious, pp. 28-29; see also Chapter III.

In speaking to an audience of monks participating in the Twelfth Spiritual Development Programme in late January 1976, Kitthiwuttho reiterated his arguments about the communist threat to religion and the consequences of a communist victory. He reminded them of their moral obligation to society and their responsibility as Thai citizens. He reassured them that the monks' action for the preservation and defence of the three institutions was doctrinally and morally legitimate. He then said:

We must decide now what we shall do in the face of communist danger our nation, religion and monarchy are in danger of being destroyed..... One thing is definite - the monks must not just sit in the monastery seeking personal salvation and waiting for the laity to seek them out..... How can one seek after Nibbana when a gun is pointed at one's throat? Can we sit and do nothing while the country is being destroyed and while the communists are constantly attacking Buddhism? Are we going to allow our country to be ruled by the communists by not helping? Are we going to let our people be enslaved as in Laos and Cambodia?¹

Thus, he argued, monks must prove that they are not social parasites, but are morally and socially benefactors of the people. They must not only act as the spiritual refuge of the people, but also go out among them and teach them who are the enemies of the nation, religion and the monarchy. They should attack the enemies with their special weapons - their moral wisdom (panna) and the Dhamma of the Buddha.

In this and other speeches Kitthiwuttho laid down some tentative strategies for monks. They should emulate the tactics of the enemies, but use the Dhamma as a guide. They must make more frequent visits to the villagers, ask them about their daily problems, offer possible

1. The speech was later published in Chofa, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1976) 'Chootyuen naikan pathibat satsanakit Khong song' (The Position of Monks in the Defence of the Country) pp. 5-16.

assistance, care about their difficulties, broaden their knowledge about the political and social situation and instil in them feelings of gratitude and loyalty to the national institutions. The monks should use a door-to-door approach, i.e. go to the people without waiting for the people to come to them.¹ He claimed that these were the tactics employed by the Buddha when he fought against Mara, the Evil one. Monks taking this path must not care about criticism for they follow in the footsteps of the Buddha.

Kitthiwuttho also suggested that monks should select and apply certain Dhamma in their teachings. For example, he said that national security was closely related to the economic well-being of the people. If the economy was healthy, happiness (kwam suk) and prosperity (kwam chareon) would follow for the people, and Buddhism would prosper. Therefore the monks should instruct the people in the Buddha's Dhamma of Ditthadhammikatttha (Sources of Happiness in the Present Life). That is, they should teach them to be industrious, to be watchful of their properties, to associate only with good people and to live economically.² In order to encourage the people to do good in this life for greater benefit in the next life, the monks should stress in their teachings the consequences of good and bad kamma and about heaven and hell.³ He also emphasized that monks should make full use of the people's respect for and confidence in the monkhood to persuade them to their views.⁴

.... Kitthiwuttho further suggested that monks should follow his own

1. Ibid., pp. 7, 11, 15; Killing Communists is not Demeritorious, pp. 36-37.
2. The Position of Monks in the Defence of the Country, pp. 7-8.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.; Killing Communists is not Demeritorious, pp. 37-38.

example, ignore uninformed criticism, and be sure of the truths of their faith. He then laid out Buddhist refutations of leftist arguments. For example, he rejected the leftist idea that economic and social inequality was a result of exploitation as a false conception. He justified inequality in terms of the Buddhist concept of kamma, attributing differences of status, social and economic position, level of intelligence, physical strength and appearance to differences in individuals' past kamma. Thus, the leftists' promise of equality for everyone could not be fulfilled. Furthermore, the socialist idea of 'common property' was unrealistic and in itself caused social injustice because people were not equal in their contributions to society. The more intelligent and industrious people would obviously produce more than the less clever and the lazy. Thus, it was unsound to believe that everyone should enjoy equal privileges. Moreover, he claimed, the Buddha never taught that property should be communal.¹ He pointed out that the communist idea of 'equality' was destroying social equilibrium, because it undermined family relationships, religion and the monarchy. Thai society had been justly regulated because Thai people of all classes had followed the principles of social relations laid down by the Buddha. These included prescriptions for the relationship between husband and wife; parents and children; teachers and pupils; employers and employees; lay adherents and monks; friends and companions; and the rulers and the ruled.² This Buddhist order

1. For elaboration see 'Buddhism and Communism', Chofa, Vol. 10, No. 12, pp. 9-15.

2. For an elaboration of Kitthiwuttho's ideas on the nature of society see Ibid.; Dhamma for Adults, pp. 6-144; Dhamma and Modern Man, pp. 8-26; and The Buddha's Revolution. For a good fundamentalist analysis of the Buddhist tradition of social relationships, see Siddhi Butr-indr, The Social Philosophy of Buddhism (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 1973) pp. 87-122.

existed in Thailand, and the capitalists, the military and the bureaucrats as part of it were benefactors of the nation. If there were no capitalists, who would invest and provide employment for the workers; if there were no soldiers, who would protect the country; and if there was no bureaucracy, who would organize the state?¹

Kitthiwuttho also rejected the leftist notion of 'people sovereign in the land' (Prachachon pen yai nai phaendin). For him such a slogan was a distortion and would destroy the institution of the monarchy. It was impossible, he pointed out, for everyone to be sovereign in Thailand. In every society be it human or animal, there must be a leader whom the people revere, respect and obey. The Thai nation had survived because it had always had leaders, and it was the king who was really the only 'sovereign in the land'. He owned the land and generously gave land to the people. Kitthiwuttho invoked a Buddhist sutta, the Digha Nikaya Atthakatha to justify his statement.² He pointed out that even in communist society there are the rulers and the ruled, but there the ruled did not have any rights to land.³

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1. See, for example, his interview with Prachathipathai, 9 July 1975.
 2. A statement at the Seminar of Monks - People for the Preservation of the Nation, Religion, and the Monarchy; see also Dhamma for Adults, p. 18.
 3. 'Buddhism and Communism', Chofa, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1977) p. 8.

4. Kitthiwuttho's Holy War on the Communists

Kitthiwuttho reiterated his forceful but peaceable anti-communist arguments until mid-1976. In June he dramatically escalated his attacks by advocating that 'Killing Communists is not Demeritorious'. Thus began Kitthiwuttho's 'holy war'.

In an interview with the liberal magazine Chaturat,¹ he pointed out that although the communist danger was still less severe in Thailand than in neighbouring countries, over 10,000 Thai soldiers had already been killed in anti-communist insurgency actions. When asked whether killing the leftists or communists would produce demerit (pappa or bab), he replied:

"I think we must do this (i.e. killing), even though we are Buddhists. But such killing is not the killing of persons (khon). Because whoever destroys the nation, religion and the monarchy is not a complete person, but mara (evil). Our intention must be not to kill people but to kill the Devil. It is the duty of all Thai".²

He elaborated that while killing went against the Buddha's teaching in this case, the demerit was very small and the merit very great for an act which served to preserve national security. Thus the soldiers who killed communists for such a purpose gained more merit than demerit. 'It is like when we kill a fish to make curry to place in an alm bowl for a monk. There is certainly demerit in killing the fish, but when we place it in the alms bowl of a monk we gain much greater merit'.³ Then, on being questioned, he went further by

1. Chaturat, Vol. 2, No. 51, 29 June 1976. Prior to the release of this issue, Prachachart of 24 June had published part of the interview.

2. Ibid., p. 31.

3. Ibid., p. 32.

replying positively to the inquiry if the great merit obtained by (illegal) killing of leftists prevented the killers being brought to justice.¹

The interview caused quite a furore, and was widely discussed in the press and among the concerned Buddhists. In most cases they condemned Kitthiwuttho for his statement, which was taken to mean quite unequivocally that he was in favour of killing. Fervent attacks came from the liberal newspapers such as Prachachart and Prachathipathai; also the FBT, the NSCT, the Socialist MPs (especially Klaeo Norapathi, the leader of the United Socialist Front of Thailand), and Klum Santhiwithi (The Non-Violence Movement), among others. In general the attacks concentrated on the violation of the monks' discipline; for the act of killing was a negation of Buddhism, and the espousal of killing would lead to a civil war. The Prachachart, for instance, accused him of founding "a new religion", one predicated on killing.² Many cartoonists illustrated Kitthiwuttho wearing a grenade rosary in place of the customary Buddhist beads and preaching how to kill the communists.³ A leading member of the Kit Sangkom (Social Action) Party who was also a professor in Thammasat University, said that Kitthiwuttho's interview only exacerbated violence, and above all, afforded the communists a justification for their attacks on religion. He also pointed out that these emotionally charged, anti-communist tactics of Kitthiwuttho and his 'stupid statement' were not conducive to the preservation of the nation, religion, and the monarchy. Rather it would 'cause wild turbulence and bloodshed' and 'accelerate the down-

1. Ibid.

2. Prachachart, 24, 30 June 1976.

3. For example, Prachathipathai, 10 July 1976; Daily Times, 28 June 1976.

fall of national security'.¹

Kitthiwuttho also came under an uncompromising attack from the FBT. They called him 'a villain in a yellow robe' and accused him of 'contaminating the religion and the yellow robe with blood'. They also accused him of risking the survival of the religion and the monarchy solely to satisfy his own greed and lust.² Certain individual members of the FBT anonymously extended these accusations. For example, Samachiksong (a pseudonym meaning 'a member of the Sangha') said that Kitthiwuttho was extraordinarily ambitious and shamelessly sought reputation, wealth and power regardless of the best interests of the religion and society. He depicted Kitthiwuttho as Dewathat, an immoral monk (in a well-known Buddhist legend) who caused schism in the Sangha in Buddha's time and who caused misery to the Buddha. Dewathat was subsequently punished for his deeds by being swallowed alive by the Earth Goddess (Phra Mae Thorani). Samachiksong also described Kitthiwuttho as a schizophrenic, and his action was interpreted as serving the interests of the exploitative classes.³

According to Kitthiwuttho himself, similar condemnations of his interview were also expressed in many provinces. For instance, in Khonkaen hundreds of people organized a hostile demonstration. Elsewhere, posters condemning him were widespread and there were also

1. Siam Rath, 26 June 1976.

2. Phra Maha Chalermchai Wisutjaro, 'Kitthiwuttho: Botbat thi kuan Plianplaeng' (Kitthiwuttho Should Change His Role); Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, No. 11 (1-15 June 1976) pp. 3, 5; see also the editorial of the same issue; and Kalawathi, 'Dae Kitthiwuttho' (A Deduction to Kitthiwuttho), Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, No. 12 (16-30 June 1976) p. 5.

3. Samachiksong, 'Chak NAWAPOL Kitthiwuttho sue Mahatherasamakom' (From Kitthiwuttho to Mahatherasamakom); Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, No. 12, 16-30 June 1976, pp. 2, 10.

leaflets distributed asking people not to make merit with Kitthiwuttho. He accused the left wing movements and the United Socialist Front Party of conspiring to produce these incidents.¹

Despite the vehement attack from these sections of society and the radical monks, the Supreme Patriarch appears to have tacitly recognized Kitthiwuttho's action. In an interview with Prachathipathai, when asked of his opinion about Kitthiwuttho's statement, he said:

I cannot give an opinion on this matter, because I have only heard that Kitthiwuttho has said this, but there is no evidence to prove it. Moreover, I myself have never been to Chittapawan College, nor been informed of its activities. However, from the religious point of view, any action taken in the interests of both the person and public is legitimate. But, if it is taken for only personal interest, it is definitely wrong..... With regard to the behaviour of monks, some monks may do some things wrong. But the press should sometimes forgive them and not always blame them.²

He also said that the press, or any person or organization should not 'try to hammer the wedge into the wood'.³

The FBT requested that the Mahatherasamakom investigate whether or not Kitthiwuttho had been in violation of the Vinaya. The same demand was made by the NSCT, by Klaeo Norapithi, the Non-Violence Movement, and some individuals. On 30 June the Mahatherasamakom was said to be considering the matter.⁴

During the following weeks, despite heated attacks in the press on his position, Kitthiwuttho reaffirmed strongly his espousal of killing

1. Killing Communists is not Demeritorious, pp. 20-24.
2. Prachathipathai, 14 July 1976.
3. Ibid.
4. Prachachart, 30 June 1976.

communists. He seemed to be very sure that the Mahatherasamakom's decision, should there be one, would not affect his position. He lashed back at his critics in several uncompromising speeches to the monks, the public and government officials - even in interviews with the newspapers he most strongly distrusted.¹ In these speeches, while maintaining that killing communists was not demeritorious, he attempted to assemble a number of religious arguments to justify his position, and to manipulate the people's emotional ties to the nation, religion, and the monarchy, skilfully adjusting the tone of his speeches to suit his audience.

The most extended use of Buddhism as a source of support for his position first appeared in his speech entitled 'Ka Kommunit mai Bab' (Killing Communists is not Demeritorious) to which I have already referred extensively. This was delivered at Chittapawan College on 2 July 1976 to about 3,200 monks belonging to twelve Spiritual Development Units, and the provincial Sangha governors or their representatives from all parts of the country. He told the audience that however much he had been attacked, he still maintained his views. As he said:

I still hold the opinion that killing communists is not demeritorious. This is because for an act to be considered as killing and as thus resulting in demerit it must fulfil the following conditions. First there must be an intention (cetana). Second, the animal must have life (pana). Third, one must know that the animal has life (panasannita). Fourth, one must intend to kill (vadhakacittan). Fifth, one must act in order to kill (upkano). Finally, the animal must die by that act (tenamaranan).²

Kitthiwuttho then continued to explain the methods used in killing according to Buddhist doctrine, and defended himself by maintaining

1. i.e. Prachachart, Prachathipathai, and Chaturat.

2. Killing Communists is not Demeritorious, p. 43.

that what he had said in the interview did not meet any of the above conditions. Thus, he argued, he did not violate the teachings of the Buddha, because he did not commit an act of killing or order anyone to kill. Rather, it was an expression of his opinion.¹ In another place in his speech, Kitthiwuttho reaffirmed his position, as follows:

... it is true that I said killing communists is not demeritorious, and I stick to it
 Now, let us understand what I mean by the leftists and communists. Both are the same..
 ... What I mean by 'communist' is an ideology. It is the ideology which uses killing as a means to attain governmental power, as Mao-Tse Tung said 'power must be attained through the barrel of a gun'. Wherever this ideology (communism) pervades, there is massive killing. That is why over 62 million Chinese, over 7 million Vietnamese ... were killed ... It is the communist ideology that causes killing.....
 Communism is a complex compound of false consciousness, delusion, greed, jealousy, malevolence and anger. It is not a person or living animal. Thus killing communism is killing ideology (latthi), hence it is not demeritorious....."²

In the next passage Kitthiwuttho invoked the Buddha's teaching to support his assertion. He said that the Buddha taught Buddhists to kill. He referred to a sutta,³ which tells the story of an exchange between the Buddha and Kesi, a famous horse trainer. In this, the Buddha said he would kill an untrainable person. What the Buddha meant, Kitthiwuttho explained, was that one killed by ceasing to teach the person who could not be taught.⁴ Kitthiwuttho then interpreted the sutta:

1. Ibid., pp. 44-45.

2. Ibid., pp. 47-48.

3. Kesi - sutta in the Kesiya - vagga, the Suttanpitaka, Anguttara - Nikaya, Catukaka - nipata.

4. Ibid., pp. 51-52.

The Buddha kills and discards, but the word 'kill' according to the principle of the Buddha is killing according to the Dhamma and Vinaya of Buddhism. To kill and discard by not teaching is the method of killing. It does not mean that the Buddha ordered the killing of persons. But he ordered the killing of the impurities (kilesa) of people.¹

Having invoked the Buddha's authority, Kitthiwuttho then justified his position by saying that what he meant by 'killing communists' was killing ideology, the impurities in the hearts of the people.²

Why did he not make this point clear when he gave his interview? He said that he deliberately made the statement unclear in order first to 'fool those who claimed to be Buddhist scholars', and second, to 'uncover the faces of the enemies of religion'. He said that his plan was successful because those enemies had come out to attack him 'like an orchestra in concert'.³

Although Kitthiwuttho did not make the connection between killing communists (as persons) with killing communism (as an ideology) explicit at this point, he clearly suggested that soldiers were justified in killing if they did not intend to kill people but acted to protect the country.⁴ If they were to protect religion, the nation, and the monarchy, it was necessary to kill communists. The communists were not people, however; they were the Devil, impurities and ideology personified, abstractions. It was therefore legitimate to kill an

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p. 52.

3. Ibid., p. 53; see also pp. 18-19.

4. Ibid., pp. 17-18.

ideology because the Buddha taught us to do so. Yet, if the defenders of the nation, the religion, and the monarchy used the methods of the world (i.e. weapons) to kill communists, that was acceptable because their intention was morally correct. The merit they gained would be far more than the demerit acquired.¹ The Buddha taught that 'one must sacrifice the lesser good for the greater good', so too must 'our heroes sacrifice their lives in order to preserve the nation, religion, and the monarchy for all of us'.² He was so grateful to these heroes that he always dedicated a portion of the merit he made to them.³

He also said that while he was in the monkhood, he would do everything the Vinaya allowed him to do. That is, he would use Dhamma and moral wisdom as weapons. 'But if it comes to the worst', he continued, 'and the survival of the three institutions is at stake, and if I can no longer tolerate communism to the extent that I have to kill persons, I will disrobe and kill the enemies of the nation, religion, and the monarchy'.⁴

One week later (8 July 1976) in speaking to an audience of army officers,⁵ Kitthiwuttho elaborated on the two methods of killing. First, killing a person according to the Dhamma and Vinaya of Buddhism, and secondly, killing persons by using weapons.⁶ To kill according

1. Ibid., pp. 17-18, 25, 52,

2. Ibid., pp. 25-26.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 59.

5. The speech was also entitled 'Killing Communists is not Demeritorious', published in Chofa, Vol. 11, No. 9, September 1976, pp. 5-21.

6. Ibid., p. 14.

to the Dhamma and Vinaya was the duty of the monks and to kill by using weapons was the responsibility of the soldiers. If the soldiers were to kill communists (as persons), it was necessary and morally correct. It was legitimate 'to kill some 5,000 people to secure and ensure the happiness of 42 million Thais'.¹ Such an act of killing was an act of sacrificing the lesser good for the greater good.² He continued to encourage killing by saying 'whoever thinks of doing this will not go to hell, but will acquire merit'.³

He also insisted that there was no compromise possible with the communists. 'Because if we compromise', he said, 'it is tantamount to accepting defeat'.⁴ He declared:

We must say the same words, that is, Thailand does not want communists and we will not allow the communists to rule our country.... If we want to preserve our nation, religion and monarchy, we sometimes have to sacrifice certain sila (rules of morality) for the survival of these institutions. If we are cautious in keeping to the rules of morality, then these three institutions will not survive. I ask you to ponder this; how would you choose between the violation of the prohibition of killing and the survival of the nation, religion, and the monarchy?⁵

In another public lecture on the occasion of Asalha Puja,⁶

Kitthiwuttho dramatized the communist threat to the monks. He told

1. Ibid., p. 16.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

5. Ibid., p. 20.

6. An important religious holiday in Thailand, commemorating the foundation of the Buddhist order, held on the day of the full moon of the eighth month.

them that communists not only subverted Buddhism, but had also killed many monks in the North-East, North, and the South. The monks in these regions were also threatened so that the monks would do nothing against the communists.¹ He himself had also been threatened, but he was not afraid. Instead, he challenged the communists to face him openly. In this speech he once again called upon the Buddhists to kill all communists. As he said,

Today is Asalha Puja day and we come to make merit together. It is also a commemoration of the Buddha's Revolution..... Let us take today as an auspicious moment to declare war on communists. Let us be determined to kill all communists and clean the slate in Thailand..... The Thai must kill communists. Anyone who wants to gain merit must kill communists. The one who kills them will acquire great merit, and the merit acquired from such killing will help preserve the religion for as long as 5,000 or even 10,000 years..... If the Thai do not kill them, the communists will kill us.²

Kitthiwuttho's call seemed to have a considerable impact, for many people definitely felt that the nation was under attack by radical elements in Thailand and the new communist governments in neighbouring Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. As the fate of the nation, religion, and the monarchy was at stake, those who opposed Kitthiwuttho seemed to be constrained by the symbolism of the appeal he made. It seemed that his opponents could not provide better alternatives to supersede Kitthiwuttho's 'national ideology'. Nor could they, with any hope of success, define or offer an ideology of Thai nationalism other than one based on the three symbolic pillars of Thai nationhood. What they could do in opposing Kitthiwuttho was to appeal to interpretations of Buddhist symbols which would persuade the people that

1. 'The Buddha's Revolution', Chofa, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1977) p. 9.

2. Ibid., p. 18.

Kitthiwuttho was going against Buddhist morality. If this effort succeeded, then Kitthiwuttho's message and his 'national ideology' would be seriously undermined. As we have seen, the liberals, socialists and leftists had looked for support to the public and the Sangha authorities. But their attempt was in vain. They could not secure the support of the government as the Prime Minister, Seni Pramoj, made it clear to the public that the government could not intervene in the matter as it was an affair of the Sangha.¹ It was the Sangha authority, the Mahatherasamakom, who had the ultimate power to determine whether or not Kitthiwuttho had committed a serious Vinaya offence. Despite the general feeling that Kitthiwuttho clearly had breached a norm which most people thought guided the behaviour of monks, the Mahatherasamakom announced on 11 August 1976 that, having considered the allegations against Kitthiwuttho, it would not conduct any further investigations into the matter because the evidence was insufficient. They stated that there was not enough information to determine whether Kitthiwuttho had been involved in the NAWAPOL movement, and that they did not know the nature of the purposes and activities of NAWAPOL. Furthermore, the assertion that Kitthiwuttho's interview caused dissension was ambiguous, and indeed the allegations did not clearly specify the time, date, place, and context of the interview, and could not therefore be considered. Finally, it was not at all certain that the reports in the newspapers were true, because they represented different opinions.²

This decision would appear to suggest that, by not issuing even

1. Prachachart, 29 June 1976.

2. Prachachart, 11 August 1976; see also Siang Yuwasong, Vol. 1, No. 15, 1-15 August 1976.

a mild public reprimand to Kitthiwuttho, the high Sangha authorities tacitly approved his action. Alternatively it might be argued that they acted in line with government policy.

Kitthiwuttho on his part continued his Buddhist holy war. His aims seemed to have been partly realized when on 6 October 1976 a military coup was staged and a military National Reform Council abrogated the constitution, abolished Parliament, and brought an end to the three year old experiment with democracy in Thailand. In the bloody events of the three day coup, the police units, supported by right wing mobs described as NAWAPOL members, Village Scouts, and affiliated organizations such as the Krating Daeng (Red Gaur), carried out a sustained attack on the alleged 'student-leftists and communists' who were holding a large-scale demonstration at Thammasat University. Hundreds of students were killed, lynched or badly wounded, and thousands were arrested. It would require another lengthy paper to discuss the causes and implications of this coup. For the purposes of this study it is important to note that the coup of 6 October 1976, was conditioned, in part, by the definition of the situation imposed by Kitthiwuttho and the radical right, i.e. that the country was in grave danger of being destroyed by the communists, and that the Thai must forestall their plans by killing them first. At the outset the new government made a declaration of its intention to combat communists and communism. Those arrested in the aftermath of the coup, or forced to go into exile, included those whom Kitthiwuttho had identified as the 'enemies'. The radical student organizations, progressive labour unions and farmers' organizations were destroyed. Those student leaders who had not been killed or arrested fled 'into the jungle' to join the communist insurrectionaries. They were also joined by a few socialist politicians, labour and farmers' leaders, journalists, and some outspoken

liberals. The newspapers and magazines which Kitthiwuttho and other rightists found most offensive, such as Prachachart, Prachathipathai and Chaturat were closed down. The radical organizations of left wing monks, notably the MNCT and the YMFT, and their leaders simply disappeared. It was reported later that Jud Kongsook had disrobed and fled to join the communist insurrectionaries. Seemingly, at least, the goals sought by Kitthiwuttho were realized in the 6 October 1976 coup and he continued to flourish.

CHAPTER VIII CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding chapters I have sought to describe and analyze the interaction of the Buddhist monkhood and politics in the situation of socio-political change in Thailand. Much of the information itself has demonstrated that the time dimensions and the nature of socio-political change have played an important part in the realignment of relationships between the Sangha and state, the redefinition of the Sangha's roles, and in determining the responses of the Sangha.

In this chapter I seek to draw out the general conclusions of the study and attempt to answer, however tentatively, some of the main questions with which this study began. I shall also make some tentative suggestions for further investigation in this field.

1. Some General Conclusions

Two important conclusions may be drawn from the study of the interaction of Buddhism with politics in Thailand. First, in the days of autocratic rule, Buddhism (as the religion of the nation) and the king (as the political ruler) had in a broad sense exercised joint sovereignty in the kingdom. Kingship was necessary for the organization of the state, the regulation of social order, and the administration of the material needs of the subjects. Buddhism provided the ruler with the legitimating ideology for his kingship, and the moral order for the state. A wise Buddhist king would attempt to conform to the Buddhist ideals of a good ruler to ensure social prosperity and to maintain his power. As such, both religion and kingship may be considered as permanent concomitants of the enduring polity, exercising their combined authority over the people and the country.

Second, throughout Thai history, the distinction between the church

(the Sangha) and the state as separate entities is not easily made. This is primarily due to the nature of the political nexus between them. The Sangha sought to secure the adherence of the political rulers (i.e. the king or dictator or government) to Buddhist values, for this would guarantee their virtual monopoly as spiritual leaders and religious professionals of the state. The political leaders needed to secure the co-operation of the Sangha, for this would provide the state with moral legitimation and could considerably assist in matters of social control. It is very likely that the interests of the political rulers and the Sangha more or less coincided: that an ideology which needed supportive political power met political rulers looking for a legitimating ideology. What developed was a peculiar type of state based on the reciprocal relationships between the political rulers and the Sangha. The political rulers (as patrons) supported and protected the Sangha (as clients) because the Sangha kept Dhamma alive and gave daily evidence that Dhamma could be studied to great effect. By supporting and protecting the Sangha, the rulers preserved Dhamma, and in preserving Dhamma, they performed their duty as good Buddhist rulers. Simultaneously, the survival of Dhamma depended on a sound and uncorrupted Sangha, and the rulers through their state control of the Sangha acted in effect as law enforcement officers for the monastic code of discipline, the Vinaya. Ideally, in canonical Buddhism, the Sangha was supposed to be governed by the Vinaya and free from lay control; the 'Sangha or religion's domain' (Satsanachak) and the 'state or king's domain' (racha anarchak) were separate. But this has never been the case in Thailand, as we have shown, as the state has never allowed the monks to govern themselves. This kind of adaptation of Dhamma for political ends by the state has continued to the present day in Thailand.

However, the Sangha in such a situation has never been entirely without economic and political interest. Economically, it is dependent on the people, and politically (in respect of its own internal discipline and organization, and its place in the life of the state) it is dependent on the political rulers. While there are historical examples which indicate that the Sangha could for a time survive the loss of one or other of these supports, the historical evidence also suggests that it could not survive the loss of both together.

It is the continuity of this relationship between the Sangha, the state and the people that has played an important part in shaping the roles of the Sangha in modern Thailand. On the one hand, the Sangha, especially at the higher levels, has closely identified and co-operated with the state in the construction and implementation of certain government policies. In this situation, the government has deliberately manipulated the Sangha as an integrative force and as an advance agent to effect its goals, and the Sangha has utilized the prestige it derives from its moral authority to make the government's actions and policies intelligible to the people. On the other hand, the Sangha, in the eyes of some of the monks and laity, should not be identified with political authority, even though it may be closely associated with it. They see the prestige and influence of the monks resting on their religious roles per se, and not on their relations with the political authority. This view in its application would give the Sangha a degree of independence of political power. For then, under certain circumstances, the Sangha could react to socio-political changes independent of government direction. Whatever the case, their actions in a broad sense may be either altruistic, such as speaking for the underprivileged, or Buddhism or the country, or selfishly motivated as a response to threats to personal status, prestige and position.

What has developed from the rapid socio-political changes in modern Thailand has been ideological conflict and tension within the Sangha. These have resulted in the assumption of new roles or the redefinition of former roles by the Sangha in response to socio-political changes. The new roles assumed appear to have been non-traditional in the sense of assuming forms not popularly held by Thai Buddhists as appropriate for monks. Already I have demonstrated the variety of Sangha involvement in government policies and the overt interest in politics of the Sangha. Following the wide range of phenomena already set out, some answers to important questions can now be attempted.

2. The Sangha and the Government Policies of National Development and National Integration

In my previous study I held the view that the government manipulation of the Sangha for politically defined ends and the Sangha's involvement in the government policies was very likely to put the Sangha into a dilemma. On the one hand the Sangha as part of the government structure had to accommodate and execute those government policies assigned to it. In this the Sangha utilized its prestige (its moral authority) which is traditionally held in esteem by the people for goal realization. On the other hand, if the monks, as the main actors in accomplishing the assigned policies, seriously pursued the goals of the government programmes, they would have needed to manipulate community responses through a combination of promised rewards (material and spiritual), persuasion, exhortation, and in some cases propaganda about direct or indirect threats (e.g. a communist threat to national interests and the position of Buddhism). These assigned tasks, then, might be carried out only at the cost of lessening the esteem in which monks traditionally have been held by laymen. Based on information available about the nature of socio-

political changes, and the involvement of monks in government policies between 1965 and 1972, my main conclusions then were that the Sangha proved not to be the best possible apparatus for the achievement of the government policies of national development and national integration, and that the Sangha's involvement in these programmes was likely to put the prestige of the Sangha as religious leaders in jeopardy.¹

My findings in the present study apparently reaffirm my previous conclusions. The new evidence from the period 1973 to 1976 and afterwards suggests that the government policies in which the Sangha has become involved are unrealistic and perpetuate the underdevelopment of the country. It also indicates that the monks who are involved in these programmes are likely to find themselves confronting increasing opposition from the people and those monks who embrace views on development which have newly emerged in Thailand during the 1970s.

The three national development plans of the Thai government (1961-1976) have followed 'conventional' western development ideas. The Thai leaders during this period have given high priority to economic development efforts and the development of internal security programmes. The prime stimulus to change economically, as is true with other development goals, has not been a response to the felt needs of the population at large, but rather a response to the felt needs of the political-bureaucratic-commercial complex. Norman Jacobs, for example, observed that the desire for economic development is not a reflection of various economic interests in the society, but of the economic dissatisfaction of the political and economic establishment, and their ideas that economic development will afford Thailand political respect among developed Western

1. For details see Somboon Suksamran, Political Buddhism in Southeast Asia, pp. 109-121.

powers. Thus, he argued, Thai leaders will follow the model that helps the country to achieve a Western norm of development while not running counter to their own political and economic interests.¹

The 1978 World Bank report suggests that the development efforts since 1961 have not yielded significant improvements in the economic and social well-being of the vast majority of the rural populace. It indicates that most farmers in the North, North-East and the South, which together account for over two-thirds of the agricultural sector of the country, have not participated in the economic development process and have not benefited from a substantial improvement in their incomes over the past two decades. The farmers in the North-East in particular have benefited the least and are now among the poorest people in Thailand.² The peasants of the North and North-East constitute over 90 per cent of those 11 million who today remain in absolute poverty.³

The report also shows that the national development policies of Thai rulers have always favoured the tiny minority of the already well-off. So the rich get richer,⁴ and thus more powerful economically and politically. In these circumstances the idea of diffusing national wealth from the urban to the rural population has not yet been realized, and perhaps never will be. Rather, the wealth is drained from the poor rural people to the rich urban population. The report shows, for example, that the people who have the lowest incomes have the highest relative tax

1. Jacobs, op.cit., p. 126.

2. World Bank (The), Thailand: Towards a Development Strategy of Full Participation (Report No. 2059, 1 September 1978), p. ii.

3. Ibid., p. iii. The poverty line is defined by the World Bank as B.150/month/person in rural areas and B.200/month/person in urban areas.

4. Ibid., p. v.

burden and that the export and import tax system penalizes the producers of export goods who are mainly the farmers.¹ More importantly, the government has not been able to use the revenues collected to benefit the poor and to provide a level of service to them comparable to that enjoyed by the rich.² Despite the fact that the rural populace produces over 70 per cent of exports by value, provides two-thirds of the labour force and bears the heavier tax burden; yet the basic public services necessary for their well-being such as education, health, electricity and water supplies have been minimally extended to them.³ It suggests that instead of putting so much effort into improving national security through its Accelerated Rural Development programme, the government should concentrate its efforts on bringing those that have been neglected in the development process into the main stream of economic growth. This could help establish a healthier economy and a more stable political situation. The report also criticizes the over-ambitious thrust towards rapid industrialization, without a concomitant improvement in agriculture, as leading to an increasing balance of payments deficit and a heavy reliance on foreign capital. It warns that this will only increase the unevenness of development, and thus will result in a widening disparity of income between regions and between population groups.⁴

The World Bank is also sceptical about the possible success of the latest development plan (1977-1981), because it tends to follow the previous modes of development. It maintains that such a plan will

1. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

2. Ibid., pp. 24-27.

3. Ibid., p. 6.

4. Ibid., p. v.

continue the widening of the disparity of welfare between population groups and between different geographical areas of the country.¹ The main recommendation of the World Bank is that the government should turn its attention from the promotion of the already rich to the poor.

Indeed, the Thai national development plans seem to run counter to the goal of becoming a developed country. Professor Puay Ungphakorn, in his Thompson Memorial Lecture entitled "The Role of Ethics and Religion in National Development" in 1973, suggested four characteristics of a developed nation. These were: (i) the society was efficient; (ii) the people were free; (iii) justice prevailed; and (iv) the people cared for one another. He also listed four prerequisites for development: (i) peace within and without, implying good administration; (ii) worthy goals for development; (iii) developmental procedures that were well planned; and (iv) power that was carefully used and properly checked. In regard to the goals (no. ii) he listed three: (a) increased income and improved health standards; (b) economic stability; and (c) even and just distribution of the fruits of production throughout the nation (not simply increasing the GNP). And in all development, sociology and ethics must play a role as well as economics.²

Sulak Sivaraksa, a Thai Buddhist scholar, viewed development plans which emphasize quantity as fostering the Buddhist triad of evils. The development planners, mainly economists and politicians, by following the capitalist mode of development emphasized the end results of development in terms of production and consumption, and political power. Human beings were seen as instruments to provide labour, to produce and consume,

1. Ibid., pp. 28-30.

2. Cited in Sulak Sivaraksa, Satsana kap kan Patthana (Religion and Development) (Bangkok: Prachachon Ltd., 1976), pp. 10-11.

and to save and invest. Economists saw development in terms of increased wealth, thus fostering greed (lobha). The politicians saw it in terms of increased power, thus fostering hatred (dosa). Both then pooled their resources to increase quantity in general, thus fostering ignorance (moha). And thus the Buddhist triad of evils was complete. He also pointed out that this kind of development only increased the suffering and devaluation of human beings, and in this process the underprivileged suffered most.¹

My main intention in drawing together these different ideas about the national development efforts of the Thai leaders is to point out that by associating or involving themselves with these policies the monks are very likely to alienate themselves from the masses (who remain poor or get even poorer in the process of development), and thus put the Sangha's position in danger of losing popular support. The ultimate duty of monks, as laid down by the Buddha, is to relieve human beings from suffering and reveal to them the path to happiness.² Indeed, the commitment to 'development' is a commitment to liberation from the oppression, exploitation, poverty and ignorance which confront the majority of the people.

In the rural areas religion is still a powerful force and the Sangha holds a strong leadership. It is then not surprising that in the effort to promote national development as well as national integration, the government has to mobilize all these resources to enhance its success. The monks can certainly participate in government policies in so far as they do not abandon their ultimate duties which afford them

1. Sulak Sivaraksa, ibid., pp. 20-51.

2. This is well illustrated in Digha Nikaya, Vol. III, pp. 188-189 (Pali Text Society: Oxford University Press, 1911).

moral authority and religious values in the eyes of the public. They may utilize these assets with considerable caution in development efforts. The religion and its carriers should do two things: first, maintain a just and peaceful order in society, and promote individual freedom, and secondly, seek for improvement when society is oppressive. It would be morally and doctrinally wrong for the monks to abuse the people's trust and confidence in them by encouraging them to participate in government programmes which perpetuate or even increase their suffering.

The Sangha so far has been held in esteem and the monks at all levels enjoy the respect of the Thai population. They acquire prestige, respect and trust mainly from their religious roles and secondarily from their traditional secular roles which are perceived as proper by the laity. The laity sees the monkhood as the repository of refined and comprehensive knowledge of Buddhism (however much individual monks may vary in this regard) and expect the monks to transfer this knowledge to them by instruction and example. They are grateful for instruction and see it as being fully consonant with their perception of monks as world renouncers. As long as the monks limit their roles in the government programmes to what the people see as being consistent with Buddhism they should in no way jeopardize their own position. It must also be recognized that although the laymen value the monastic behaviour of the monks highly, they fully realize that the monks' way of life is removed from, and on a higher plan than, that of the layman, i.e. they recognize the purity of the sacred and contrast it with the impurity of the profane. It is therefore regarded as improper to induce the monks to become over-involved in mundane affairs since this would lead to demerit. Even if it is accepted that monks involve themselves in government programmes, it does not mean that the laity will construe that

behaviour as religiously meritorious or exemplary. In all circumstances the layman will view the monks as a category apart, both in terms of behaviour and morality. Thus, the act that is considered productive of merit for a monk is not necessarily desirable for a layman. We must take into account that, given the opportunity, the laity will work out their own economic salvation quite independently.

The actual involvement of monks and the genuine purposes of the government programmes, as I have shown in Chapter IV, prove to be a different matter. The programmes are instigated for political reasons. They are designed mainly to counteract 'subversion', to pacify dissidents, particularly in the North and North-East, and to win the support and loyalty of the rural populace for the Bangkok government. The emphasis of development is often away from a gradual approach that involves the participation of villagers through identifying their expressed needs and securing their willing co-operation. Rather, the programmes stress accelerated rural development through building roads and improving internal security from which the vast majority of the people derive minimal material benefits. The emphasis is also seldom placed on those activities which would enable the rural populace to achieve economic security and growth, in terms of improved agriculture and a higher standard of living. The people are seldom asked for their opinion, but frequently are told what kind of development assistance they are to receive and are then supervised and pressured to co-operate.

Thus, the government and the villagers see national development efforts, especially the Community Development and Accelerated Development programmes, somewhat differently. From the government's point of view these activities are part of improving the local structure, and the villagers' willing co-operation is necessarily required. The

villagers, however, now expect the government to do things for them, and view the programmes with some suspicion. They experience development in terms of orders that have to be executed rather than as schemes that are designed for their benefit on the basis of needs they have expressed through local decision-making. They may gladly accept the new services without necessarily participating. But they do not participate with enthusiasm and rarely regard the Community Development projects as requiring any personal commitment. The development aspects of the programmes therefore are put in jeopardy by the lack of co-operation and co-ordination and the brisk pace at which the programmes are implemented. Successful rural and community development is by its very nature a slow process even when enjoying the willing co-operation of the villagers. Schemes imposed from outside, however noble their motives, tend to defeat their own ends. The chances of success of the programmes are indeed slim when implemented under pressure and do not contribute to the prestige either of government or of those who associated with the programmes. If the monks, as the agents for accomplishing these government policies, seriously pursue the goals of the programmes, they will have to exploit the people's trust and confidence in them and thus lessen their esteem, and their prestige will suffer accordingly. If the Sangha is forced into exerting pressure on the villagers to get them to participate in government programmes which they do not perceive as traditionally meritorious or conducive to their well-being, then the Sangha will become identified in their eyes with government and politics.

In the political context it should be mentioned here that for Thai people politics (kanmuang) contains what is generally known by that term in the West and, in addition, the idea of distasteful manipulation of power, which is nevertheless recognized as necessary. They perceive

politics as a matter of who has power in the capital; what decisions are made; the personalities in provincial government; and the official policies affecting their lives. In other words, politics belongs to a wider world, the world of power-holders from whom ordinary people like themselves are detached. In view of such conceptions as these, the public activity of monks whether in aid of community development, or of Phra Dhammatuta programmes, or of Phra Dhammajarik activity, causes suspicion if it is regarded by villagers as being political in nature, and therefore neither a proper function of monks, nor consistent with Buddhism as the villagers perceive it. Thus, not only the monks' prestige suffers from an open association of politics and religion, but also the government's prestige is at risk when villagers realize that religion and the Sangha have been manipulated for political ends by the government.

Likewise the active involvement of the Sangha in the government policy of national integration seems to be deleterious rather than advantageous to the position of the Sangha. The government policy of integration which emphasizes the suppression of dissident groups has so far been a failure. Despite the ever-increasing means of suppression in terms of personnel in the armed forces, para-military volunteers, logistic equipment and propaganda machinery, the number of dissidents, the area of territory they control and the violence of their campaigns against the government have all increased at a rapid rate. Insurgents under arms increased from an estimated 3,500 in 1973, to 5,000 in 1974, and by February 1975 the number was placed over 8,000.¹ It was officially estimated that 'nearly 4 million people in 6,096 villages lived in fear of communist terrorists and

1. Prizzia, op.cit., p. 104.

over 2 million of them were under the influence of the CPT in 1975; and by 1977 there were 4,000 communist influenced villages in the country'.¹

The government's anti-communist propaganda, as revealed by a group of the CSOS who had long been involved in anti-communist activities, was in fact designed to deceive the people about the actual dangers of communism, so that the 'communist danger' slogan could be used to justify the government's own authoritarian rule.² It included a policy of encouraging ordinary people to take to arms and help the government in fighting against communists. In this, the Sangha were enlisted, as is implicit in Phra Dhammatuta activities and more clearly in the Phra Dhammajarik programme, to enhance the success of the government policy. Thus the monks are being manipulated to mobilize the support of the masses for the government anti-communist campaigns. I am not disputing here that a 'communist danger' exists in Thailand. Rather, I am more concerned with the political exploitation of the monkhood and Buddhism to justify or legitimize the government policy and action. From the data presented above it would appear that the government policy 'of national integration' through coercive pacification of the dissidents is not only fruitless, but also actively encourages further national disintegration. By associating themselves with such a government policy the monks not only impair their own position, but also unnecessarily put themselves in confrontation with those people who hold different ideas of how the state should be organized and how economic and social order should be regulated. The fear that 'Thai

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1. Patrice de Beer, 'History and Policy of Communist Party of Thailand', in Turton et al, op.cit., p. 148.
 2. Senakhan et al, op.cit., pp. vii-viii.

communism' or 'Thai socialism' would destroy religion seems to be over exaggerated, for even the Communist Party of Thailand has never shown antagonism to Thai Buddhism and the Sangha. Its policy on religion of 1965 and 1968 that it guaranteed basic freedom of religious belief was re-emphasized in December 1976.¹ Recently, one of the leaders of the CPT pointed out that the CPT position on Buddhism was that 'Buddhism is an integral part of Thai culture and is not necessarily incompatible with Marxism'.² I am not suggesting that the CPT policy on religion is perfectly honourable or can be fully relied on. Rather, I would ask the government and Sangha authorities to consider one question. Is it wise and worthwhile to put the prestige of the Sangha and the fate of Buddhism at unnecessary risk by involving them in the government policy of anti-communist propaganda?

There is evidence to show that Buddhism may exist peacefully under certain communist regimes, such as in Laos and Vietnam. We have evidence that after the strident anti-communist Prime Minister Kraingsak Chamanan visited Laos in February 1979 he told the Thai public that Buddhism there has been treated well.³ We can also learn a lesson from Burma and Sri Lanka, both of which declare themselves socialist states, that Buddhism there still flourished and even thrives better than Buddhism in some non-socialist states.

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1. Sammakkhao Prachachon Thulakom (a Thai fortnightly newspaper published in Oxford), Vol. 3, No. 63, 16 April 1979.
 2. The Observer, 24 December 1978, p. 4.
 3. Sammakkhao Prachachon Thulakom, Vol. 3, No. 62, 16 February 1979.

3. Political Monks in Thailand: The Prospects

In general terms the majority of the Thai Sangha may be classified as conservative, fundamentalist or traditionalist, whose main concern is with the study, preservation and dissemination of the teachings of the Buddha, while maintaining a minimal involvement in secular political and economic affairs. With the increasing rapidity of socio-political change in recent times, there emerged 'modernizing monks' within the Sangha. They felt that the Sangha should adapt its roles to keep pace with changing socio-political conditions in order to retain its status in society. The activities of 'modernizing monks' have manifested themselves in the institutionalized involvement of the Sangha in government policies of national development and integration since the 1960s. Buddhist traditions and values have been invoked by the modernizing monks to legitimize the involvement of the Sangha, along with the justification that this has been done for the sake of national stability and the progress of the people, as well as the security of the religion.

By 1974 there had appeared within the modernizing Sangha two clearly distinguishable sets of opinions regarding the means to maintain or achieve the nation's stability and progress. These manifested themselves in the formation of two broad groupings of 'political monks', the right and the left. Their emergence was induced by the unprecedentedly rapid socio-political changes of the 1970s; and their actions were a response to threats to the stability and security of the nation and religion. Nevertheless, their perception of the nature of the threats were significantly different.

The right wing political monks, represented by Kitthiwuttho, saw the threats as coming from communism and any elements associated with

it, and as being forces which would ultimately destroy the nation, religion and the monarchy. Thus, to ensure stability and to achieve progress, the existing social structure had to be maintained and every Thai nationalist had to wage war on the communist elements. Kitthiwuttho believed that only through authoritarian or very strong government could these aims be achieved.

Opposed to them were the left wing political monks, especially the MNCT and the YMFT, who saw threats to the nation and religion as coming from capitalism and any kind of imperialism. They held that the capitalist system of government and economy which maintained close links with 'foreign imperialist countries' especially the United States, only perpetuated exploitation and oppression in the country. Thus, if the nation was to progress, a radical change in the government, the economy and the social structure was needed. This could be achieved only when 'power belonged to the people', and socialism prevailed.

There appeared also a parallellism between the policies of the radical right and left wing political monks: they advocated the involvement of monks in politics for the benefit of society and religion; they exploited Buddhism to legitimize their ideologies, and reinterpreted Buddhism to favour their activities and gain public support; and they believed that Buddhism was being undermined or even destroyed and that they must counteract any threat to Buddhism.

Kitthiwuttho's anti-communist campaign, largely based on the postulate that 'Communism is associated in Buddhist minds with two unacceptable features: violence and formal hostility to religion' was powerful. This was further strengthened by his appeal to the emotive collective symbolism of the Thai nation and monarchy. It is therefore not surprising that Kitthiwuttho persuaded a large number of the people

to his view. His opposition to the displacement of the existing social, political and economic order was undoubtedly attractive to the establishment, and hence they supported his anti-communist activity willingly.

The left wing political monks justified their fear of capitalism by stressing that the vast majority of the Thai population was already poor; capitalism would make them poorer and poorer; then, how could they materially support the monks? Buddhism, therefore, would suffer and the prestige of the monks decline. Imperialism was seen by the radical left wing monks as being associated with the political, economic and, most importantly, cultural domination of Thai society by foreign imperialist countries. They argued that imperialist dominance not only escalated exploitation and oppression, but also eventually destroyed the distinctive elements of indigenous culture and religion. Thus, to maintain national identity as a true Buddhist country the links with imperialist countries must be ended.

However, the appeal of the radical left wing political monks, though powerful in its essence, seemed not to reach as many people as did Kitthiwuttho's for many reasons. Firstly, their idea of forcing a change in the structure of society was not at all attractive to the power holders of the political and economic establishment. Without support of these people, they lacked access to such important media as radio and television to transmit their message to the masses. Secondly, the radical left wing monks lacked charismatic leadership, and their associations were poorly organized and not very articulate. Moreover, their bases of support in terms of membership and finance were very limited compared with Kitthiwuttho's solid establishment. Thirdly, the arousal of the realization by the masses of the nature of capitalist

exploitation and oppression had had but a short time in which to be achieved, in contrast to the long propaganda campaign of 'communist dangers'. Similarly, as Thailand had never been colonized, the ideas of imperialism and neo-colonialism were perhaps too abstract for the unsophisticated masses to understand.

However good the intentions of these political monks, both right and left wing, their unconventional actions seem to run counter to the well-being of Buddhism, and are likely to undermine the prestige of the Sangha as a whole. For the majority of the monks the reinterpretation of Buddhism and the assumption by monks of unconventional roles, especially in a political context, seems to have been too novel to be accepted. It is very likely that they will tend to regard the actions of the political monks as incompatible with normative Buddhism, detrimental to the prestige of the Sangha and undermining the faith.

Likewise, the general attitude of the public towards the political actions of monks is unlikely to be favourable. In the case of Kitthiwuttho, the Buddhist public may accept political activity by monks as legitimate in periods of crisis when the survival of Buddhism appears to be threatened. Given that the threat is real, the advocating of killing by monks is very unlikely to be accepted by the Buddhists.

Even if the Buddhist public recognizes that a Thai monk is a Thai, and that he can hardly be expected to escape knowledge of national politics along with anything else in the national melting pot, the Thai hold that 'politics is a dirty business' (kanmuang pen ruang sokaphrok) and involved with a distasteful manipulation of power. Involving himself with politics, a monk only impurifies his monkhood and therefore jeopardizes his own position and the Sangha as a whole.

Indeed, the very existence and the survival of the Sangha and

Buddhism depends largely on the good will of the people. The monks enjoy prestige, people's trust and confidence, and respect because they are regarded by the people as religious specialists who derive their moral authority from a set of religious roles which are expected by the people. The majority of Thai Buddhists are tied to religion per se; they do not put their trust and confidence in the monks per se, and certainly not in those monks whom they perceive to be government agents and involved with politics. To maintain their prestige, the monks will have to practice correct Buddhist behaviour as the laity understands it. But if they become over involved in secular affairs, especially those with a political flavour, their actions will weaken the Sangha's prestige and influence as well as the whole institution of Buddhism in Thai society.

In historical perspective, Thai Buddhism through its Sangha has shown a remarkable continuity through its ability to adapt itself and accommodate to contemporaneous pressures. Buddhism is, of course, a facet of the society's total culture, and as part of the socio-political structure it permeates other institutions as much as it is affected by them. What has developed over time is a continuous dialogue between two distinct, but not divergent, social phenomena, namely religion and politics. Buddhism as it emerged as the national religion over centuries, was as much a response to social needs as to the politico-economic system of the society.

Conceived in this way, one can envisage that changes in the Sangha's orientation and organization have had a similar pace to changes in the socio-political structure of which it is a part, though as we have seen, changes in the structure of the Sangha have followed changes in other aspects of the socio-political structure, and not preceded them.

Nevertheless, one has to recognize that Thailand in the 1980s or in the following decades is not Thailand in the 1960s, and that the pace and direction of change may not be comparable to those of previous decades. We have seen that Thailand has now become a battle field for competition between two major political ideologies, one which aims at maintaining the existing structure and another which aims at radical change. It is very probable that the advancing tide of radical change has begun to erode the existing structure as it has done in neighbouring countries. It is then likely that Thailand's conservative socio-political system will have to undergo a metamorphosis, perhaps in the next decade. The question arises: can one envisage the demise of the Sangha as a body or the shrivelling of its roles as an institution? The survival of the Sangha as well as Buddhism very much depends on the decision of the Sangha to adjust its roles in accordance with change. As long as its survival depends on the 'good will' of the people, there are not many alternatives for the Sangha other than to comply with the wishes of the majority of the people. The monks will have to act as a cushion to soften the impact of undesirable changes on the people and Buddhism and this will not be achieved by encouraging the people to fight a losing battle. They must remember that Buddhism has long survived because of its flexible and accommodating qualities.

To appreciate the extent to which the modern Sangha can adjust itself to accommodate a new direction of change, and establish whether or not it can influence the direction of change, we need to understand its attitudes and its perception of its own life in the process of change. This aim could be achieved only by a thorough field study, a task which I envisaged, but which I could not complete.

4. Some Proposals for the Future Research

The period when the research was planned (1974-1975) was particularly suitable for discussions of political matters with monks, as well as discussions with the laity about the involvement of monks in politics. In the changed political climate after 1976, my original plan for interviewing monks and lay people suffered a considerable setback, and I could only fulfil it partly. However much I have tried to be objective, my study is still somewhat hypothetical. Had I been able to conduct proper field work as I originally planned, the gap between hypothetical and empirical aspects could have been closed.

What I regret most is that I have not been able to conduct an empirical investigation into the political connections between the high ranking administrative Sangha and the wielders of political power, and into patron-client relationships between 'political monks' and influential Sangha authorities. Had I been able to do this, some ambiguities could have been resolved. For example, did the Sangha authorities really believe that Buddhism was in danger of being destroyed by communists? Or were they pressured by the political authorities (their patrons) into acting as if this were so? How did they define and distinguish 'the interests of political authorities', 'the interests of the masses' and 'the interests of the Sangha'? The investigation into monastic relationships also should have helped us to understand why the political movement led by Kitthiwuttho was more effective than the movements led by the left wing monks; why the former was acceptable and the latter distasteful.

Other aspects I would see as remaining to be investigated empirically are: what are the perceptions of political roles of other political monks who do not show themselves publicly and thus could not be studied

in this thesis? Who are the 'silent majority' of monks, and why are they silent? What are the attitudes of the 'silent majority' of monks (which ultimately may be decisive in determining the destination of the Sangha and the faith) towards the political roles of monks? Equally important, one wants to know to what extent both the 'political monks' and the 'silent majority' of monks understand different political and economic ideologies, which ideology is their preference, and how they conceive of its compatability with Buddhism? Also, the attitudes of the Buddhist public towards the political roles of the monks and how they expect the monks to behave need further intensive investigation.

To understand these complicated problems objectively, one needs, in addition to the general understanding of the socio-economic and political structure of Thai society, to select and employ suitable techniques of inquiry to obtain information. As I have spelled out in my preface that an investigation into Buddhism and politics, especially the involvement of monks in political issues and their political ideologies tends to face religio-political constraints. I am doubtful that one could achieve accurate and reliable information about the monks' perceptions of their roles in the context of socio-political change, their attitudes towards politics, and their understanding of political ideologies without having established a substantial rapport with them. The use of conventional methods of inquiry, such as questionnaires and structured interviews, seems unlikely to carry us very far. They are often superficial, however carefully prepared and administered, and frequently tend to give only part of the picture or even be positively misleading. For example, Tambiah, a careful and conscientious field researcher whose work I admire, on the basis of questionnaires to 324 monk-students of Mahachula Buddhist University in 1971 concluded that the Isan monks 'are apolitical,

..... willing to accept constituted political authority and to work with it, let alone attack it'.¹ There is a remarkable difference between this observation and the almost contemporaneous action of the Isan administrative monks acting on behalf of the whole Sangha of the Isan region, when they sent a letter to the military government in 1972 to demand the reinstatement of Phra Phimondham, and to warn the government that they would not give up their attempt. Later (in 1975) the Isan monks were to threaten to relinquish their honorific titles and to return their honorific fans to the government.

Using certain general theories to analyze particular aspects of a society can also tend to run counter to reality. Thus, Ayal, a follower of Weber's theses on Protestantism and Capitalism, mistakenly attributes the economic underdevelopment of Thailand to certain doctrines of Buddhism. Without establishing the distinctive features of Thai Buddhism by empirical inquiry, Ayal proceeds to suggest that the Thai are preoccupied with 'personal values' which are inseparable from 'Thai Theravada Buddhism' and which militate against bonds of obligation or commitment to other individuals or institutions.² As he said: 'This Buddhist emphasis on the individual is perfectly consistent with the fact that the Thai seldom have shown a sense of obligation, solidarity, ideological commitment, and possibly even loyalty, to anything beyond personal values'.³ He then draws the conclusion from, to use Tambiah's terminology, 'unwarranted arm-chair

1. Tambiah (1976); op.cit., p. 455.

2. Eliezar B. Ayal, 'Value Systems and Economic Development in Japan and Thailand', Journal of Social Issues, Vol. XIX (1963) pp. 35-51.

3. Ibid., p. 49.

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deductions'¹ that many Buddhist doctrines hinder Thailand's economic development. To contradict Ayal's view, I cannot do better than to quote Sulak Suvaraksa who says that

To speak of Buddhism as something concerned with the private salvation of the individual is to ignore entirely the basic Buddhist repudiation of the notion of individual soul. The teaching of the Buddha is not concerned with the private destiny of the individual, but with something much wider: the whole realm of sentient being, the whole of consciousness. This inevitably entails a concern with social and political matters, and these receive a large attention in the teaching of the Buddha..... To attempt to understand Buddhism apart from its social dimension is mistaken. Preoccupation with individuals places limits on love and Buddhism is an attempt to deal with what it sees as the decease of individualism. Buddhism is primarily a method of overcoming the limits of individual self....²

Ayal and Sulak Suvaraksa of course are approaching the problem at different levels, the former being concerned with the view of the average man, the latter with a fundamental Buddhist philosophy which may not be known to, accepted by or acted upon by the ordinary Thai. Here then is another excellent problem for empirical research.

To conclude it would appear that the Sangha came to a fundamental turning point in its history in the 1960s. This arose from modernization, communism and foreign involvement. Briefly the government's search for legitimacy through modernization improved communications which led to better knowledge of events elsewhere and of the inequalities of Thai society, and above all to an expansion of material expectations among the people. Nourished by the material concerns of the peasantry, communism arose as a challenge to the integrity of the state. At the

1. S.J. Tambiah, 'Buddhism and This-Worldly Activity', Modern Asian Studies, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1973) pp. 10-11.
2. Sulak Sivaraksa, Buddhism and Society: Beyond the Present Horizons (Bangkok: Typescript paper, 1978) p. 4.

same time the United States' involvement in Vietnam and Thailand brought the questioning of authority and the form of government into focus. Any institution with allegiance both to the state and the peasantry, inevitably became involved, and contradictions implied in that dual allegiance equally inevitably emerged and developed. Thus the problems of the Sangha arose from the ambiguity of its own relations with the people and the state.

In the 1960s increasing government involvement in Sangha activities began to push it in a new direction. Political changes in the 1970s allowed a vocal left wing opposition to this change to briefly emerge. The Sangha authorities reacted to this criticism, partly by attempting to go back to a conservative, traditional and in some ways fundamentalist stance, and partly by, at least implicitly, supporting a pro-government activist course. This may mean that whether they basically approve of the direction in which they are proceeding or not, they are committed to it. They will have to accept a Sangha which is politicized, and a public which is slow to accept changes in the monks' traditional roles. Assuming there is no radical change in the government of Thailand likely in the immediate future, we can then expect an extension of politicized propaganda from the top as they seek to adjust opinions about the roles of the Sangha to the changed situation. Alternatively, as I have suggested, they may find the pressure of the political events in South-East Asia too great to adopt this authoritarian course, and therefore adjust their stance to accommodate the increasing socialism of the masses. Either choice may lead to the diminution of the religion; both offer little scope for a non-political role. What I have attempted to bring together in this thesis are the basic data necessary to understand how this situation arose, and by analysis to isolate the crucial factors in its resolution. I appear to have ended

with perhaps more questions than with those I began. In doing so, I hope I have contributed, albeit in a small way, to the continuing debate on the future of Buddhism in Thailand.

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