

Religious Paradigm Shift in the Asean Region during the Age of Coming of Sinhalese Buddhism in the 13th Century

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Abstract

Since the 13th century until now, the introducing of Sinhalese civilization especially Buddhism, had replaced the world-view of the former religions that were Hinduism and Buddhism both Theravada from Asoka period and Mahayana, had contributed to the ancient ASEAN. With the shift of religious paradigm, the ASEAN at that time in particular the Mainland welcomed and adopted the Theravada Sinhalese Buddhism due to 6 conditions:- 1) The fall of older kingdoms and older religions, 2) The rise of new kingdoms and welcoming the new intra-religious movement, 3) The great reforms initiated by the state leaders, 4) The greatness of material's emphasis placed by the previous kingdoms and religions, 5) An emphasis on simplicity put by the new religious movement, and 6) The enormous reforms of Buddhism in Sri Lanka initiated by The Paramakramapahu I, the Great. Thus, the religious paradigm shift of the Buddhism in this ASEAN mainland took place at the age of introducing of Sinhalese Buddhism and has had great impacts and contributions to the mainland ASEAN region especially in the 13th century onwards.

Keywords : Theravada Buddhism of Lankan lineage, Religious Paradigm Shift, ASEAN region

Introduction

In the course of the long history of ASEAN Buddhism, after Buddhism was imported to this area directly from India and indirectly from central Asia and China, All the Buddhism forms from India flourished in the mainland of the ASEAN before 12th century CE. The period of coming of Sinhalese Buddhism into the ASEAN region in 13th Century marks the great change or reforms according to the teaching of three common signs: impermanence, dukkha, and anatta (non-self) all are subject to change and conflict including the individual, society and environment, conditioned or unconditioned are subject to change according to the Buddha's teachings of tilakkhana even in the societal paradigm level. The shift from the religious paradigm to another is vital to duration of the course of temporal age, in one period, it never comes into existence, later it does and finally puts to an end, what are the conditions?

Why some period it flourishes while another very deteriorates and falls into Dark Age.

The religious paradigm shift here is intent on the change of coming, establishing and practicing formally by the state and people. The placement area focuses on the mainland of the South East Asia, the ASEAN is broken up into 2 parts: 1) mainland 2) maritime, the former includes the emerging kingdoms at that time during 18th Buddhist Century, these are Sukhothai (1238-1438), Ayuthaya (1350-1767), Pagan (1044-1287) especially mid and late era, Ava (Inwa: 1364-1555), Arakan (1287-1785), Taungoo (1510-1599), Kongbon (1752-1885), Hanthawaddy Pegu (1287-1539, 1550-52), Shan state (1287-1563), Lanna (1292-1775), Lan Xang (1354-1707), Tam Porn Link (Tambalinga/Tanmaling/Tamballinggam) later Nakorn Sri Dharmaraja as Dharmanagari written in Nagarakretagama, and Angkorian era (802-1431) especially late era, Post-Angkorian era (Chaktomuk, Longvek, Oudong, 1431-1863). These all underwent the influence of Sri Lankan Buddhism and its interplay among one another or the same culture of Buddhism after older faiths i.e. Mahayana Buddhism from India and the Hindu Cults had been supplanted by Theravada Buddhism from Sri Lanka.

This paper will discuss and analyze the conditions to rising up of the new religious movement, the reasons leading to the reforms, the religious paradigm shift from the main forms of the former Indian Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana as well as Hindu-Brahmanism into Sri Lankan Buddhism. This covers the lifestyle, politics, religions, cultures and so on. In this paper, the Theravada Buddhism of Sinhalese Buddhism means Buddhism have had its development of history and took the deep root in the Sri Lanka only in the 13th century. Religious Paradigm shift is referred to as a fundamental change in the basic concepts and experimental practices of a scientific discipline. In this paper, it is used for religious sense i.e. Theravada Buddhism of Sri Lankan lineage. ASEAN Region is defined specifically as the abbreviation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations which a regional organisation is including ten Southeast Asian states which promotes intergovernmental cooperation and facilitates economic integration amongst its members by its formation on August 8, 1967 joint by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand as well the CMLV Countries. This paper will place emphasis on the stream of religions in the ASEAN especially Sri Lankan Buddhism influencing over the South-east Asia mainland during the 13th Century entailing the impacts of various dimensions including politics, economics, education and so on until the present time.

The Interplay of the Sri Lankan Buddhism and the ASEAN Mainland

1. The Development of Sri Lankan Buddhism

After Buddhism in the time of King Asoka, the Great led by Mahindathera and Sanghamitta was introduced into the land of red palmed people's land (Present called Sri Lanka), (H.R. Perera, 1988 : 14-17) it became the state religion of that country and has its unique characteristics, has been well-established in Sri Lanka and developed for thousand year, in additions, it has new order unique and intermingled with ethnic group consistently and it is Sri Lankan Buddhism. The age marks the interrelation with external kingdom during the 12th – 13th century, it is in the time of the revival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka resulting in the great council that later spread near and far in particular, Suwannabhumi kingdoms.

In Sri Lankan history, it reveals that both the kingdom and Buddhism are the same thing and hard to separate out inevitably from the age of beginning, normal conditions and flourishing, dark age, it is tough to find the substitute or symbolism: the initial age of Buddhism in Sri Lanka starts from the reign of king Devanampayattissa (307 BC to 267 BC) (H.R. Perera, 1988 : 12-13) in contemporary with the King Asoka, after that Buddhism is a state religion until the coming of deteriorating age in the period of war between Tamils and deterioration of Buddhism round B.E. 400 the time of Vattagamaniabhaya (H.R. Perera, 1988 : 29-30) with coming and taking over of Tamils for 14 years until he renounces the throne and fled to collect power and he was supported by the most ven. Mahatissa after that, he came back to the throne leading to the council and inscribing the Buddha's word into ola palm for the first time and give in turn support to Mahatissa and built the temple for him i.e. Abhayagirivihara causing monks of Mahavihara unhappy, this led to the schism into 2 orders: Mahavihara and Abhiyagirivihara.

From that on, the Sri Lankan order has been divided into 2 orders: it is Theravada, two orders are that Mahavihara is conservative, who needs no modification of dhamma and vinaya and blamed another group as Alajji (shameless group), this handed down from the orthodoxy of the Mahindathera, initial stream of Theravada Buddhism in Lanka while the latter is more open and receptive to new ways of teachings. Later on, it is in the age of Theravada literature or new commentary that in B.E. 956 Buddhagosha, the great scholar in the world Theravada Buddhism left from India to Sri Lanka in order to translate the commentary as well as Tipitaka in Singhalese into Pali language and then brought back to Jampudvipa, this marks the prosperous age of literature.

Then, Buddhism in Sri Lanka at that time was weakened by the state situation due to encountering the internal and external dangers such as the violent struggles for the throne as well as natural disasters and attacks from Tamils who incited the disorder for long until the king was capable to

overcome and rearrange kingdom without any dangers after the deterioration of Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

It is in Sri Lanka this age that marks the existent forming of Sri Lankan Buddhism due to its revival and purification, Buddhism during the time of Vijayapahu I he wished to revive Buddhism in the B.E. 1609, later on, Parakramapahu I (H.R. Perera, 1988 : 53-54) a son of the above king was a great and successful king in the history of Sri Lanka who ruled over the country peacefully, as soon as the state was consolidated and in peace as result of the revival of Buddhism, he ordered the unification of one Sangha order, initially appointed the king of Sangha (Sangharaja as the first time) ruling over the Sangha community throughout the state, built and restored the numerous temples (Kevin Trainor, 2004 : 124-125). This is counted as the age of art and Sri Lanka and it became the center of education on Buddhist studies like Nalanda University in India, Buddhism in Sri Lankan tradition was noted for its greatness attracting monks and scholars from the neighborhood especially the ASEAN to study Buddhism and then bring back Buddhism in Sri Lankan form to their own countries (H.R. Perera, 1988 : 54-56).

The peak of Buddhism in this period lasted for a while and the B.E.C. 17 marks the great council of Dhamma and Vinaya counted as the 7th council in the history of Theravada Buddhism. The fame extended near and far was a cause for introducing Buddhism in Sri Lankan tradition to Suwannabhumi, after the great king, Parakramapahu I, Sri Lankan again was attacked by Tamils of South India. The war between both still went on and internal politics in Sri Lanka at that time was not solid, and later the European colony took over alternatively by the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English until it gained the freedom or independence in B.E. 2491.

Above cited history shows evidently that the Mahavihara played an important role in the development of Theravada Buddhism in Ceylon during the period until the 10th century (Kanai Lal Hazra, 1982 : 56). Though the opposite sect of this sect called the Abhayagirivihara was the important phenomena in the history of Sri Lankan Buddhism and gained its support some period from the rulers like Mahasena it fell to overshadow the former one ultimately. The Ceylon chronicles and other sources referred to the rise of new movements which were opposed to the former, the royal patronage strengthened the Mahavihara as the main center of Theravada Buddhism during this period (Kanai Lal Hazra, 1982 : 57).

Two Initial Locations of Theravada Buddhism in Ancient Southeast Asia

Buddhism in Sri Lanka tradition was introduced into Suwannabhumi or the Mainland of ASEAN at that time in 2 Kingdoms: 1) Pagan (Roger Bischoff, 1995 : 69-71) and 2) Tamparalinga or Sri Dhammaraja (South of Thailand) (Karuna Kusalasaya, 1995 : 19). This marks the initial reception of

Sri Lankan civilization through Buddhism after the monks from Pagan kingdom and Mon state who were newly ordained by Sri Lankan Buddhism came back to their own kingdom and started to spread this form of Buddhism, which was warmly welcomed by the state and the people of the ASEAN. Thus, this form was so prosperous, meanwhile the previous form of Buddhism i.e. Indian Theravada during Asoka's period gradually faded away. The noted monk in that time was called Rahula from Sri Lanka who lived in Pagan and then headed for Sri Dhammaraja kingdom (Tamparaling) later Siamese in the Sukhothai period accepted it and made it a state religion before it later propagated into the Lanna kingdom, late Nagara and Lavaek post-Nagara kingdoms and later to Lan Xang of Laos and neighborhood kingdom, from that on, the rise of Sri Lankan Buddhism took root in this mainland of the ASEAN except the upper Vietnam.

Conditions of Religious Paradigm Shift in the Age of Sri Lankan Buddhism in the ASEAN

During the Century 12th-13th, conditions for the coming of Theravada Buddhism from Sri Lanka and the adaptation of the ASEAN people and states are as follow:

1. The fall of older kingdoms and older religions: Before the coming of Sri Lankan Buddhism, the kingdoms at time are Theravada Buddhism from India during Asoka's period and another is Mahayana-Hindu, the former is mostly practiced in the early Dvaravadi, Sigotrapurana, Maurtaban/Thaton, early Srikrasetra and Pagan these are expected to be Theravada from Indian Buddhism while the latter are included in these kingdoms i.e. Champa, Funon, Chenla (Isanapura), Angkorian era or Mahanagara, and Lopuri, Sri Vijaya, Mataram, Kedri, Singhasari Majhapahit and the early Tamparalinga. The religions of these kingdoms always depends on the rulers as the state religions, all mentioned received the Indian Buddhism except the ancient Vietnam under the Chinese empire influenced over by Chinese civilization in particular Buddhism as Chinese Buddhism in the early form.

These Indianized kingdoms rose and fell for thousand year both rose and fell until the 15-16 B.E.C. the major kingdoms like Pagan and Mahanagara came to the peak while the former started to welcome the Sri Lankan form of Buddhism instead of Indian forms of Buddhism while the latter still practiced Mahayana Buddhism and its extreme prosperity took place in the age of Jayavaraman VII (B.E. 1724-62) and in the islands, there were some kingdoms like Srivijaya and Majapahit used to flourish commercially that ended up also the Dvaravadi in the present central Thailand extended to the north of Thailand i.e. the present Lampoon of Haripoonjaya. The 18-19 B.E.C. marks the end of the past great kingdoms and the small kingdoms scattered.

2. The Rise of New kingdoms and welcoming the New Intra-religious movement

After the great kingdoms gradually went down, there appeared the new kingdoms as well as the new form of the state religion, these kingdoms included the Sukhothai, Ayuthaya, Lanna, Lan Xang, Ava and Hanthawaddy of Mon, these kingdoms used to be influenced by the Indian Buddhism in the early times of Kingdom, later it was replaced by Sri Lankan Buddhism, like the Sukhothai Kingdom used to be influenced by Indian and Hindu Buddhism as mainstream later Sri Lankan Buddhism has taken root in later kingdom of Ayuthaya for over 400 years, while the fall of the ancient Champa and Mahaagara conduced to the rise of the new kingdom of Siam rising up to be the power and Buddhism in this kingdom was also brought from Siam while Lanna Kingdom received Sri Lankan Buddhism from Maurtaban/Thaton and Sukhothai kingdom. In Cambodia Sri Lankan Buddhism had been present well before the fall of Angkor and later was adopted by the rulers and people until it became the mainstream (Ian Harris, 2005 : 16).

3. The Great Reforms Initiated by the State Leaders

After the rulers of the state or kingdoms changed it into new kingdoms, the state is in the normal condition, without war and the turmoil of the society that means the kingdoms are more solidary, these facilitate the need of aesthetics or thing that requires leading mind results in the leader's needs in pushing the state differently from the past, instead the old religion to the new refreshing religion or familiar to new things causing many reforms such as structure of country administration, modification and revival including creating new things in the kingdom all in all in order for peace and easy rule over by means of new religious movement as driving force to the goal i.e. peace and solidarity and security of the kingdom.

The obvious change especially in the reign of the subsequent kings to the first one after the first has recovered and revived the sovereignty and built the city, the new kings continued to create the new thing, a ruler searched for the new different thing from the past even the religion in this age, several rulers started to change the new paradigm, the King Ramkhamhaeng, the first king who has brought Buddhism from the Nagara Sri Dhammaraja and Phangum of Lan Xang (Laos) also adopted Theravada Buddhism from Cambodia.

4. The Greatness of Materials' Emphasis Placed by the Previous Kingdoms and Religions

Indian religion like Hinduism and Mahayana in classical Kingdoms were established for the purpose of the greatness of the dignified royalty and also Brahmins looked very dignified socially and religiously as the enormous ceremony and huge religious structures were typically made from stone causing much labor, it is necessary to employ many citizens, prisoners, captives, these result in unfavorable reactions, even it is not agreeable in the beginning, in the long run, until there is the new alternative for them, the work is designed for the rulers, it is ruler's and elite's accomplishments.

These are conditions to the change among the population. Although the royalty enjoyed the facilities, service and pamper this is caused by the influence of Hinduism in India concerning 4 castes:- a ruler or warrior, a Brahmin, a Vassa and a Sudda but in the land of South-east Asia, the Brahmins and the merchants from India also brought the notion of Vanna/caste into the local people and for their own class. Even Buddhism rejects the caste system but the culture of Hindu seems strict and serious inevitably. This was not much as successful as in the motherland of India.

5. An Emphasis on Simplicity put by the New Religious Movement

The simplicity's emphasis placed by the Theravada Buddhism of the Sri Lankan form is that it is approachable or accessible to every class of the people from all walks of life. This institutes simple ways, for instance, no the clergyman who looks after the huge religious edifices for dignifying rites, while the missionary Theravada monks are strict in the practice and live a simple life and isolates themselves in the solitude and meditation, they live without the property and closely intimate with grassroots or local people with loving-kindness and compassion, no labor is commanded to build the huge religious structures. Furthermore, the young men who wanted to gain education could be temporarily living in the monastery while the older faiths have no school for them. Therefore, Theravada of Sri Lankan form gained more popularity and when the numbers of people became the Buddhists of this form. The beliefs about connection in Hinduism both Saivism and Vaishnavism as well as the Mahayana Buddhism from India faded away. The notion of Divine king or the Incarnate Buddha by the older faiths that inspired the people to build the great things such stone sanctuaries or palaces. The Brahmins lost place or authorities in the royal court and the number decreases, royal ceremony performed by the Brahmins was only traditional and meaningless. The Brahmins after the loss of great royalties lost their place among the common people, also the caste system's place like in India is no longer available. The older faiths faded away until its Dark Age, even the continuing influence over the traditional governance or royal ceremony still continued in the some periods like Ayuthaya, but the common people feel like that this is not relevant to their life.

6. The Enormous Reforms of Buddhism in Sri Lanka Initiated by The Paramakramapahu I, the Great

After some periods of time the Theravada Buddhism from India during Asoka's time and Mahayana including Vajrayana used to give contributions to this classical kingdoms of both mainland and maritime ASEAN continually in the same time the Theravada Buddhism from Theravada Buddhism from Sri Lanka replaced the older faiths and commenced with the establishment, the previous ones little by little faded away. The great reforms of Buddhism Sri Lanka was done by the king Paramakramapahu I, the Great after the social turmoil and non - political solidarity for several years, he continued the revival of Buddhism after his previous kings have done firstly, the Big reforms of Buddhism in Sri Lanka at that time include the unification of Sri Lankan Sangha, the council of Dhamma and Vinaya through purification of Tipitaka,

commentary and sub-commentary, the first establishment of the Sangharaja (Monk's king or leader after the temporal political system of monarchy), the great restoration of temples and art creativity in addition to being a Buddhist center at that time (H.R. Perera, 1998 : 59-62). As far as the enormous reforms reached near and far, the start of establishment of Sri Lankan Buddhism was done by the Sangha, the learned, the scholars from the Southeast Asia who traditionally and typically studied there. After that, they brought it back to their own kingdoms. Some went and studied privately but some supported by the government. This great reforms led to the so-called Sri Lankan or Sinhalese Buddhism until it gained more and more popularity and finally overshadowed the older faiths in the ASEAN region

The influence of Buddhism at that time shifted from Indian Buddhism to Sri Lankan Buddhism and the latter have played the vital and mainstream role in this region until the present time.

Conclusion

Buddhism in the Sri Lankan form/tradition during the 13th century is counted as the shift of religious paradigm and have played an integral role and its great contribution to the mainland of the ASEAN region. The conditions for this are: 1) The fall of older kingdoms and older religions, 2) The rise of new kingdoms and welcoming the New Intra-religion, 3) The great reforms initiated by the state leaders, 4) The greatness of material's huge emphasis placed by the previous kingdoms and religions, 5) An emphasis on simplicity put by the new religion, and 6) The enormous reforms of Buddhism in Sri Lanka initiated by The Paramakramapahu I, the Great. Even the age changed due to the external conditions into this regions like from the Islam civilizations through coming of Arab and Indian, Persian Muslims, Western civilizations through coming of European colonialism and capitalism, the age of national state until contemporary age by changing hands to take control the ruling systems: politics, economics and culture and each alternatively come into this region, all in all, the Buddhism from Sri Lanka still remains and endures the challenge and the question. Buddhism from Sri Lanka tradition has exerted the influence over this region and has tested and question here is the rise of this form of Buddhism have been apparent, how long it will last, unsettled questions about its fall and new Buddhist movements will be the next challenge.

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