



SOWING

THE SEEDS OF DHARMA


IN THE ARCHIPELAGO

**A Brief Biography of the Venerable
Maha Nayaka Sthavira
Ashin Jinarakkhita**

Edij

Sowing the Seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago





*Commemorating 101 remarkable years since the birth of
the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita and 70 years of
ordained wisdom in the Dharma*



SOWING THE SEEDS OF DHARMA IN THE ARCHIPELAGO

**A Brief Biography of the Venerable
Maha Nayaka Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita**

Edij



KARANIYA
Dharma Universal Bagi Semua

Sowing the Seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago
A Brief Biography of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita

First Printing, 2024

17x24 cm, xxxvi + 252 pages

ISBN: 978-602-1235-93-5

Author: Edij

Layout and Cover: Indra Ari Wibowo

Published by: Yayasan Karaniya

Jl. Mangga II No. 8 LM

Duri Kepa, Jakarta Barat

karaniya@cbn.net.id

karaniya.com

Copyright © Karaniya Foundation

To respect the creative works of others, ideally, Dharma books should not be photocopied or reproduced without permission from the publisher. The content of this book may be quoted for reference without needing specific permission from the publisher.

Connect with us:

e-mail: karaniya@cbn.net.id;

website: karaniya.com

Facebook: penerbit karaniya

Instagram: penerbitkaraniya

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	vii
Preface	xi
Foreword	xiii
Prologue	xvii
A Few Words	xxi
New Edition Preface (From the 2016 Indonesian Edition)	xxvii
Greetings from the Maha Sangha of Indonesia (From the First Indonesian Edition 1995)	xxix
Preface (From the First Indonesian Edition 1995)	xxxi
1. Buddhism in Ancient Indonesia	1
2. The Event at Borobudur, 1953	9
3. Childhood	21
4. Getting Acquainted with Occultism	27
5. The Japanese Era	33
6. In Foreign Land	37
7. Becoming An Anagarika	43
8. Studying with Mahabhikshu	47
9. On the Path	53
10. Dharma Tour	57
11. The Village Monk and the Tengger Peak	61
12. Indonesian Fraternity of Lay Buddhists	67
13. The Light of Dharma in Bali and Makassar	71
14. The Second Dharma Tour	75
15. 2,500 Years of Buddha Jayanti	77
16. Joyful Effort	85
17. Buddha Gaya Watugong	89

18. The Establishment of Perbudhi	95
19. Monastic Ordination: The First in Centuries	101
20. The Sangha	109
21. Footprints in Sumatra	113
22. Asadha	119
23. Bridging Differences with the Venerable Narada Mahathera	123
24. A Decade of Progress	127
25. Moving to West Java	133
26. The Establishment of Indonesian Buddhists	135
27. Encounter with A Kwan Kong Devotee	137
28. Being Adaptive	145
29. The Monks Have Arrived	149
30. Indonesian Attire	153
31. The Departure of Five Monks	157
32. Pacet on Jumat Kliwon Night	161
33. Just a Servant of the Buddha	165
34. World Teacher	171
35. Twilight Days	175
36. Awaiting the End	179
37. For Future Generations	185
38. A Living Dharma Lineage	189
Bibliography	205
List of Interviewees	207
Acknowledgements (From the 2016 Indonesian Edition)	210
Acknowledgements	211
Author	213
Appendix 1 Development of Buddhism in Indonesia	215
Appendix 2 Buddhayana: A Scholastic Review	241
Index	251

List of Illustrations

1. [The Venerable Sanghanata Aryamula Pen Ching, the teacher of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita](#) xxxiii
2. [The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw \(Burma\), teacher of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita](#) xxxiv
3. [The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita \(1963\)](#) xxxv
4. [The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita \(1993\)](#) xxxvi
5. [Accompanying the Sri Lankan Ambassador delivering a Vesak speech for the year 2497/1953 at Borobudur Temple](#) 20
6. [As an Anagarika, together with the Venerable Bhiksu Thi Ing and Mr. Nirihua \(who later became the Venerable Agga Jinametto Mahathera\)](#) 26
7. [Giving a Vesak press conference for the year 2497/1953 in the courtyard of Borobudur Temple](#) 32
8. [Photo from when he was a student in the Netherlands](#) 36
9. [With the teacher, the Venerable Sanghanata Aryamula Pen Ching, in front of Kong Hua Sie Temple, Jakarta \(1953\)](#) 52
10. [The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita through the Years](#) 60
11. [With the upasakas and upasikas of Buddha Gaya Temple, Watugong](#) ... 66
12. [With the teacher, the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, and the Venerable Piyadasi Thera among the congregation of Vimaladharma Temple, Bandung \(1959\)](#) 69
13. [Waisak Procession 2514/1970 at Borobudur Temple, attended by Monks from Thailand](#) 74
14. [Group Photo with Thai Dhammaduta in 1971, Featuring the Venerable Phra Gru Pallad Atthacariyanukich \(Who Later Became the Venerable Vin Vijano Mahathera\)](#) 84

15. <u>Alongside Chao Kun Sasanasobhana (Who Later Became the Sangharaja of Thailand)</u>	94
16. <u>Visit of the President of the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) to Nagasena Monastery, Pacet</u>	108
17. <u>Ordaining Ida Bagus Giri as Samanera Jinagiri (who later became the Venerable Girirakkhito Mahathera)</u>	118
18. <u>Appointment of Romo Soemantri M.S. as the General Chairman of MUABI (now MBI), 1972</u>	144
19. <u>Group Photo from 1970, Featuring Samanera Dharmasagarro (Now the Venerable Mahasthavira Dharmasagarro)</u>	148
20. <u>Alongside the President of the Hong Kong Buddhist Association, the Venerable Kok Kwong Fashi</u>	156
21. <u>Inauguration of Aryamularama Monastery, Gadog-Pacet, Attended by the President of the World Buddhist Sangha Council (WBSC)</u>	160
22. <u>Bishops from Various Asian Countries Visit Sakyawanaram Monastery, Cipendawa Valley-Pacet</u>	164
23. <u>With President Soeharto when the Buddhist Community Leaders presented the outcomes of the Buddhist Congress in Yogyakarta (1979)</u>	178
24. <u>With the Venerable Jinapiya Thera (Later Known as the Venerable Thitaketuko), 1968</u>	194
25. <u>Maha Samaya III PUUI in Sukabumi, 1972, Alongside the Venerable Maha Sthavira Dhyanam Wan Sian</u>	195
26. <u>Twentieth Year of Monastic Life Celebrated at Samudra Bhakti Vihara, Bandung (1973)</u>	195
27. <u>Tantrayana Monks Under the Auspices of Sangha Agung Indonesia</u>	196
28. <u>Bhikkhunis Led by the Venerable Jinakumari Performed Ceremonies at Mendut Temple</u>	196
29. <u>Romo Krishnaputra Presented the Doctrine Book of Sanghyang Adi Buddha/The Almighty God to the President</u>	197

30. [“In the Name of Sanghyang Adi Buddha, I Swear...” The Inauguration of Drs. Oka Diputhera as the Director of Buddhist Affairs in 1980.....](#) 197
31. [Gus Dur, the 4th President of Indonesia, Paid His Respects at the Ekayana Buddhist Centre, Where the Body was Laid in State](#) 198
32. [The Procession to the Bodhisattva Foundation Crematorium in Lempasing, Bandar Lampung.....](#) 198
33. [A Portion of the Relics of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita](#) 199
34. [Honorary Award Bestowed by the Government on August 15, 2005, at the State Palace, Jakarta.....](#) 199
35. [Jinarakkhita Prasada Building](#) 200
36. [Ashin Jinarakkhita Memorial Hall in Jinarakkhita Prasada.....](#) 200
37. [Altar to Commemorate the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita](#) 201
38. [STIAB \(Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Agama Buddha– The College for Buddhist Studies\) Jinarakkhita, Panjang, Bandar Lampung.....](#) 201
39. [Open Senate Ceremony of STIAB \(Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Agama Buddha—The College for Buddhist Studies\) Jinarakkhita.....](#) 202
40. [Sarasehan I \(First Gathering\) for the Young Buddhist Generation, the Forerunner of the Joint Secretariat of the Brotherhood of Young Buddhists of Vihara Buddhayana Indonesia \(Sekber PMVBI\), December 1979](#) 202
41. [Participants of the National Conference of Sekber PMVBI Visiting Kong Hua Sie Temple, Jakarta, December 2016](#) 203

Preface

M*enabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara (Sowing the Seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago)* first graced the literary world in 1995, presented in the rich fabric of the Indonesian language. Since its initial publication, the book has undergone several reprintings and revisions, reflecting the evolving narrative of Buddhism's journey in Indonesia. The decision to produce an English edition of this seminal work emerged from a chorus of requests by international researchers and friends of Indonesian Buddhism who were eager to access its insights in a global language.

This English translation, based on the Indonesian edition of 2016, is a collaborative effort with the assistance of ChatGPT 4.0 and 4.o, the Large Language Model developed by OpenAI. From the initial translation to proofreading, each step has been overseen and refined by human hands, ensuring both accuracy to the original text and accessibility to a wider audience. The translation process involved critical prompts, such as requests for specific English translations from the Indonesian original, creative editing to avoid repetitive language, and stylistic adjustments to capture the essence of the narrative with minimal influence from literary styles, like that of Mark Twain.

Our aspiration with this English edition is to illuminate the path of Buddhism in post-independence Indonesia and to honor the profound contributions of its steward, the Venerable Maha Nayaka Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita. We hope that it serves as a bridge, connecting readers worldwide to the rich spiritual heritage and the unique development of Buddhism in the Indonesian archipelago. Through this, we aim to foster

a deeper understanding and appreciation of this significant cultural and religious epoch.

With this translation, we extend an invitation to scholars, practitioners, and enthusiasts of Buddhism, as well as those intrigued by Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape, to delve into a story that interlaces faith, history, and human endeavor in the shaping of Indonesian Buddhism.

Karaniya Foundation

2024

Foreword

It is both an honor and a pleasure for me to write this foreword for the English translation of *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara (Sowing the Seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago)*. In this significant book, Edij narrates the biography of Ashin Jinarakkhita, revered by Indonesian Buddhists as the first Indonesian-born Buddhist monk (*biksu pertama putra Indonesia*) since the end of the Majapahit dynasty. Devoting himself to the mission of spreading Buddhism across the archipelago, Ashin Jinarakkhita, also known as the “flying monk,” embarked on active journeys to various islands of Indonesia to disseminate the Buddha’s teachings. The Buddhayāna movement, founded by him, ingeniously blended the doctrines and practices of Mahāyāna and Theravāda Buddhism, leaving a profound impact on Indonesia during the latter half of the twentieth century.

Ashin Jinarakkhita’s legacy includes the establishment of an inclusive and non-sectarian monastic community comprising Sangha members from diverse Buddhist traditions. He envisioned Indonesian Buddhism as a diverse yet unified religion, aligning with the nation’s modern motto of “Unity in Diversity” (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*). During the New Order era, Ashin Jinarakkhita introduced the concept of “Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha,” aiming to harmonize Indonesian Buddhism with the first principle of Pancasila, the five philosophical pillars of Indonesia. Remarkably, the Buddhayāna movement continues to attract followers among the Indonesian populace in present-day Indonesia.

Ashin Jinarakkhita was a trailblazer of his time. In 1955, he founded the Indonesian Fraternity of Lay Buddhists (Persaudaraan Upāsaka-Upāsikā Indonesia) to organize his lay followers and train senior disciples

as *panditas*, or lay preachers. The *panditas* were equipped with extensive knowledge of the Buddha-dharma to serve the needs of a growing congregation, leading Buddhist funeral ceremonies, blessing weddings, and delivering Dharma lectures. They played a crucial role in spreading Buddhism across various parts of Indonesia. In a momentous decision in 1963, Ashin Jinarakkhita ordained the first Buddhist nun in Indonesia. As a proponent of gender equality, he staunchly supported *bhikṣuṇī* ordination in Indonesia. He entrusted his *bhikṣuṇī* disciples with key leadership roles and responsibilities. These *bhikṣuṇīs* played a pivotal part in the propagation of Dharma and the expansion of the Buddhayāna movement.

In Ashin Jinarakkhita's concepts of Indonesian Buddhism (*Agama Buddha Indonesia*), a blend of doctrinal innovation and institutional development emerges. His Buddhayāna movement, designed to establish an indigenous form of Buddhism for the modern Indonesian nation, represents a skillful means to ensure the survival of Buddhism in the world's largest Muslim nation. Within his missionary endeavors, Ashin Jinarakkhita propagated an "inclusive and nonsectarian" Buddhism, drawing from a synthesis of Mahāyāna and Theravāda Buddhist teachings, ancient Javanese texts, and visions of Indonesia's past. It is evident that Ashin Jinarakkhita's pioneering and ambitious initiatives, transcending ethnic boundaries, were not solely dependent on Chinese Mahāyāna but also relied on Burmese, Sri Lankan, and Thai Theravāda networks to establish his religious institutions in Indonesia. These diverse visions coexisted harmoniously within his Buddhayāna movement.

Sowing the Seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago illuminates a remarkable journey and stands as a testament to the enduring influence of Ashin Jinarakkhita's vision in shaping the landscape of Buddhism in modern Indonesian history. Originally published in 1995, the book is based on three interviews with Ashin Jinarakkhita and over forty interviews with disciples, friends, and associates. It provides valuable and candid insights into the

life and times of Ashin Jinarakkhita, as well as his prolific religious career in postcolonial Indonesia. The book underwent several reprints, and in 2016, an Indonesian edition was published with two additional chapters to commemorate the twenty-year publication anniversary. I recently received a copy of the 2023 reprint, released in honor of the 100th birth anniversary of Ashin Jinarakkhita. The multiple reprints and editions underscore the significance of this book within the Indonesian Buddhist community.

As a scholar of Buddhism, I consider *Sowing the Seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago* a vital source that provides valuable insights into the history and development of the Buddhist community in modern Indonesia. I have acquired considerable knowledge from its contents and am grateful for the opportunity to explore the rich tapestry of the Buddhayāna movement. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Edij on the publication of the English translation, a significant achievement that broadens the reach of this work to a more extensive and diverse audience. The dissemination of this insightful book in English ensures that its contributions to the understanding of Indonesian Buddhism can now be appreciated by a wider readership.

Jack Meng-Tat Chia
National University of Singapore
December 15, 2023

Prologue

It is with great pleasure that this English edition of the splendid biography of the late Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita Mahasthavira is published. I am deeply honored to have been invited to write the prologue for this book.

I had the opportunity to meet Ashin Jinarakkhita three times. The first time was in November 1997, when I interviewed him at Vihara Shakyawanaran, Cipanas. Despite being in the middle of a missionary trip, he went out of his way to return to the Vihara to welcome “a grandson of his old friend,” as my grandfather had attended the International Vesak Festival held at Borobudur in 1959 as the representative of Japanese Buddhists. The second time was in March 2001. At that time, he used a wheelchair and seemed to have difficulty speaking even a few words. Yet he received me heartily and allowed me time to ask him questions. The third and final meeting took place in April 2002. Upon my arrival, he could no longer speak, as he was in his closed coffin.

Ashin Jinarakkhita told me that every tradition of Buddhism holds certain paramount principles, as they all follow the teachings of Buddha. He emphasized that there is no distinction among the doctrines of Buddhism. Thus, he did not exclude any thoughts or practices of all sects or denominations of Buddhism, and impartially preached sermons to all people at their request. I suppose that this approach is Ashin Jinarakkhita’s basic stance and lies at the heart of Buddhayana that he advocated. One of the reasons he held such a standpoint was his Buddhist career, as detailed in this book. He grew up under non-sectarian Chinese Buddhist faith and held special devotion towards Avalokitesvara. During his schooling, he studied the thoughts of original Buddhism based on academic inquiry as a member

of the Theosophical Society. After returning from the Netherlands, he became a monk of Mahayana in Jakarta and of Theravada in Burma. These experiences led him to believe that no “pure” Buddhism exists and that it is most important to be a disciple of Buddha.

Moreover, it is evident that this viewpoint enabled him to spread Buddhism within the state. This was because Buddhists in Indonesia had diverse backgrounds in their faith, ranging from those accustomed to non-sectarian Chinese Buddhism to individuals still adhering to old Javanese Buddhism, as well as those attracted to contemporary missions and newly converted to Buddhism. If he had adhered to specific doctrinal grounds, he would have failed to unite all Buddhists and revive Buddhism in the Republic, where Buddhists were a minority. He told me, “This is Indonesian Buddhism. We need not be limited to accepting only the doctrine and practice of any particular sect or denomination.” This comment reflects his pride as an Indonesian and his strong will to create a new Buddhist culture appropriate for Indonesia.

Considering Ashin Jinarakkhita’s thoughts and activities, we cannot neglect the belief in Adi Buddha. He introduced this belief to affirm that Buddhists follow the Indonesian state philosophy, “Pancasila,” especially the first principle “Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa,” or “Belief in One Supreme God.” He declared that Indonesian Buddhism has never been atheistic since ancient times because Adi Buddha is mentioned as One Supreme God in an old Javanese Buddhist canon. He stressed that the God of Buddhism is not the personal God. Adi Buddha plays an important role as a symbol of Buddhayana, uniting all Buddhist doctrines. We can say that with the belief in Adi Buddha, the seeds of Dharma sown by Ashin Jinarakkhita have taken root in the archipelago.

He expressed to me that the most important elements in Buddhist teachings were “Truth” and “Love,” both of which are ultimately one and the same. He emphasized that a mere understanding of the teachings of

Buddha without practice is of no importance or meaning. However, during our second meeting in 2001, he asserted his dissatisfaction with the state of Buddhism and its practice in Indonesia, and expected his followers to practice further. If this can be achieved, and if the spirit spreads overseas, the seeds he sowed will blossom into great flowers not only in his motherland but also worldwide.

The author Edij was present during my second meeting with Ashin Jinarakkhita. He helped me with my research and was kind enough to share some of the stories he had gathered from people while writing this book. Because he was a polite and gentle person, he was able to extract valuable information from many people. Additionally, he has written this book with great care. While reading this book, I am reminded of Ashin Jinarakkhita, who spoke so expressively and patiently during interviews, sometimes with a stern look on his face, but at other times with a big laugh.

When I first visited Vihara Ekayana in Jakarta in August 1997 and inquired about Ashin Jinarakkhita's activities, this book was referred to by those present. Since then, I have referred to this book when conducting research on him, and it is a must-read book for researchers studying Indonesian Buddhism, fulfilling an indispensable and important role. Unfortunately, until now, this book has only been available in Indonesian, and people who did not understand Indonesian were unaware of its existence. The publication of the English edition will provide invaluable knowledge and hope to all those interested in Buddhist teachings and their potential. In writing this prologue, I wish to express my deepest congratulations and respect for the publication of this significant book.

Bunki KIMURA
Aichi Gakuin University, JAPAN
January 15, 2024

A Few Words

I am grateful for being invited to write a few words for *Sowing the Seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago*. I first read this book more than two decades ago when it was just newly published as *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara*. Back then, its pages opened only in Indonesian, offering readers an easy-to-read chronicle of the revered Ashin Jinarakkhita—a monk I hold in the highest regard and have had the honor of knowing personally. The book has provided me with further crucial information as it meticulously highlights the activities and life of Bhante Ashin. Here, while rejoicing the publication of the English translation of this important source, I wish to share additional reflections from my personal interaction with him.

Our first meeting took place in December 1971, as my first year at the university drew to a close. Encouraged by a senior and dear friend to seek repentance and cultivate merit, I embarked on a spiritual path as a temporary novice, or *samanera pabajja*, during my academic break. During the time, I was in peace and felt serenity. But, little did I know that that was only the start of my life long tumultuous and serious engagement in Agama Buddha Indonesia—a path forever intertwined with the transformative initiatives led by Bhante Ashin. Being slow-witted, my understanding of the depth and implications of these experiences would only crystallize much later, as I navigated the complexities of our shared spiritual heritage.

Bhante Ashin himself was present for my samanera ordination, which was conducted by his senior bhikṣuni disciple, the Venerable Jinakumari, who I recall was also the esteemed leader of the Sangha Wanita Indonesia (the Indonesian Women Sangha). It was this very ordination that inspired

me to affectionately refer to Bhante Ashin later as Sukong, meaning ‘grand teacher,’ for Jinakumari was indeed my direct teacher in the lineage.

The assignment of Jinakumari for my ordination and her appointment as the head of the women sangha, I believe, were a few indications of Bhante Ashin’s progressive stance on pivotal matters within Buddhist tradition and society. The choice of a bhikṣuni to lead the ordination ceremony was, in itself, a revolt to entrenched patriarchal norms, predating the broader gender equality discourse. Moreover, the choice of the term *wanita*, meaning women, over *bhikṣuni* or *bhikkhuni* was just one of many subtle yet revolutionary steps that prefaced the Buddhayana movement.

Bhante Ashin's embrace of Buddhayana, which translates simply to Agama Buddha, was a profound assertion. It demonstrated his strongest commitment to staying true to the original spirit of Śākyamuni’s intent in disseminating his Dharma dan Vinaya. Reflecting this dedication, he retained the title of Maha Nayaka Sthavira until his last breath. This resolve initiated a recalibration of existing biases, championing a path for the spiritual and physical welfare of the broader community—a principle often overshadowed by personal, historical, or other forms of rivalry. In this same vein, Bhante Ashin encouraged Indonesian Buddhists to follow Śākyamuni’s teachings as *Agama Buddha*, the Religion of the Buddha in Indonesian or *Bahasa Indonesia*, rather than employing the term *Buddhisme* or the like. His guidance was a testament to his intent to align closely with the original teachings of Śākyamuni, free from the labels and divisions that had emerged over time.

The adoption of Adi Buddha, initiated before the tumultuous coup d’état in Indonesia in 1965, is arguably a testament to Bhante Ashin’s profound spiritual insights, transcending the ordinary understanding. His unwavering commitment catalyzed this significant revival. During a challenging period in the mid-1970s, while grappling with public debates on Adi Buddha, Bhante Ashin, perceiving my concerns, offered words of

formidable resolve, “*Biku taruh kepala Biku* (This monk [the way he usually addresses himself while in conversation] puts his head on the table).”

This phrase signified that he was not the least bit scared, but completely ready to face any consequences for his beliefs, even if it meant risking his life for the propagation of Adi Buddha. His courageous stance not only bolstered my resolve but also assuaged any fears I had concerning the struggle or controversies at hand. A few years later, Adi Buddha was officially recognized by the Indonesian government. However, this recognition came after enduring initial criticisms and accusations of fabrication, and some skepticism and doubts continued even afterwards. Despite these challenges, this doctrine, as proven later, was indeed recorded in ancient native scriptures and inscriptions, reflecting practices that had been integral to the archipelago’s Buddhist heritage for over a millennium, as embedded in and epitomized by the majestic Candi Borobudur.

Yet, amidst these profound accomplishments, the stern visage that Bhante Ashin often presented belied a gentle spirit. On one of numerous occasions at his *vihāra* in Pacet, Cipanas, I observed him warmly engaging with visitors who were old ladies, imparting simple yet profound teachings, and encouraging veneration of Avalokiteśvara. During that visit, I inquired about his inclusive policy that welcomed anyone to become a lay Buddhist under the *Triśaraṇa* (Three Refuges) with no prior requisites, as opposed to advocating for the more traditional commitment of the *Upāsaka*, who upholds the five precepts (*pañcaśīla*). His response was as succinct as it was compassionate, “We open the door and give them the opportunity.”

This profound yet simple philosophy revealed the essence of his approach – one that I came to fully appreciate only after years of personal reflection and study.

Bhante Ashin’s approach to the development of Buddhism was a master class in itself. Rather than solely relying on monastics, he guided, inspired, and empowered a cadre of talented and trustworthy *Upāsakas*.

These individuals were tasked with learning, serving, and teaching other lay followers. This network of organized Upāsakas, initiated by Bhante Ashin as early as 1955, became the driving force in nurturing and growing Buddhist communities across Indonesia. It was from this groundwork that the monastic sangha later emerged, enhancing his efforts to serve society. As I observe and make comparisons with Buddhist practices in other regions, his strategy stands out as remarkably efficient and effective, contributing to a significant growth in the Indonesian Buddhist population since its inception.

Serving the needs of a rapidly expanding Buddhist community in Indonesia required not only clerics but also scholars capable of adapting liturgies and creating accessible reading materials for the faithful. When Bhante Ashin relocated to West Java in the late 1950s, he discovered, among others, Dhammaviriya – a figure relatively obscure to many but deeply devoted to him, who was instrumental in bridging this gap. This Mahapandita was granted access to Bhante Ashin’s extensive personal Buddhist library, enabling him to study and disseminate publications out of primary and secondary sources in multiple languages.

Following the passing of Dhammaviriya, my first and last teacher of Buddhism while in Indonesia, and having been granted permission to use Bhante Ashin’s library, I embarked on my own scholarly journey. The Monier-Williams’ Sanskrit Dictionary from Bhante Ashin's library was pivotal in my academic work. It helped me identify and correct a widespread transliteration error in Indonesian academia regarding the term 'post-graduate.' Specifically, this dictionary enabled me to assure my professor, Andi Hakim Nasoetion, the correct spelling of *pasca sarjana* instead of *paska sarjana*. The error, which stemmed from a misinterpretation of font usage in another dictionary, was significant as the term 'post-graduate' began to gain prevalence in Indonesian academic circles starting in the mid-1970s.

Being naturally reserved, one could hardly find Bhante Ashin being talkative. After many encounters, I knew it for myself and did not even try to start empty talk. Yet, during a special assignment around 1990, where I interviewed him for an entry in the *Ensiklopedi Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian National Encyclopedia), a surprising event unfolded. Expecting to be going home empty handed should he be reluctant in telling stories, I prepared a few basic questions enough for writing up a small narrative. However, as soon as I met and explained to him my purpose, Bhante Ashin nodded, sat, and got going relaying stories after stories from the beginning of his mission before I even had the chance to ask, almost as if he had intuited all my thoughts. This experience, mirroring tales of his spiritual prowess, particularly his reputed ability to read minds, left a lasting impression on me.

From this last interview, I not only captured nuances of the feelings and vigor of Ashin Jinarrakhita but also solidified his vision and humility in my mind. These accounts, which I diligently recorded and summarized for the encyclopedia entry, found a complementary and more comprehensive depiction in Edij's *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara*. This publication does more than just preserve memories; it serves as a valuable resource for anyone seeking to understand the multifaceted nature of Indonesian Buddhism.

Hudaya Kandahjaya
Berkeley, 21 January 2024

New Edition Preface (From the 2016 Indonesian Edition)

The book in your hands is a new edition of *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara*, which was first published in January 1995, and now re-emerges in a fresh edition over two decades later. The original manuscript, completed by Ir. Edij in October 1993, chronicled the life of the Venerable Maha Nayaka Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita up until that point.

Since 1993, many new stories could have embellished this biography, yet we've opted to add only two new chapters in this edition. The first is an excerpt from Prof. Bunki Kimura's writings, capturing the final rites of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita and his aspirations for the Buddhist community's unity. The concluding chapter now traces the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita's lineage back to Buddha Gotama as the 74th generation.

Enhancing the narrative, this edition includes new photos and two informative appendices. The first, "The Development of Buddhism in Indonesia," is a 2005 piece by the Research and Development Department of the Indonesian Buddhayana Council. The second, "Buddhayana: A Scholastic Review," is by MUP Dr. Krishnanda Wijaya-Mukti, M.Sc., from 2000.

In alignment with our commitment to fostering Indonesian Buddhism, and guided by the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI), we've Indonesianized the terminologies wherever possible in this edition. Additionally, careful editing has refined the language to enhance its appropriateness and accessibility.

Sowing the Seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago

We hope this eagerly anticipated edition inspires and nurtures a spirit of devotion in all its readers.

Karaniya Foundation
Jakarta, March 20, 2016

Greetings from the Maha Sangha of Indonesia (From the First Indonesian Edition 1995)

*Namo Sanghyang Adi Buddhaya,
Namo Buddhaya Bodhisattvaya Mahasattvaya.*

With immense joy, we welcome the publication of the Brief Biography of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita titled *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara*. This pivotal work, inspired by the Indonesian Buddhist community's request, also addresses Drs. Budi Setiawan's concern, the Director of Buddhist Affairs in the Department of Religion RI, regarding the need for an accurate recounting of the development of Buddhism in Indonesia and the recognition of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita's role in its resurgence.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in bringing this much-awaited book to fruition, with special appreciation for Mr. Ir. Edij, the author. This biography offers a glimpse into the life and struggles of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita, who had devoted over 40 years to the development of Buddhism in Indonesia.

We remain open to the idea of publishing a more comprehensive biography in the future and welcome any additional suggestions, documents, or information.

Last but not least, may the wisdom of the Exalted Sanghyang Adi Buddha, the sanctity of the Triratna, and the noble aspirations of the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva guide us on our continuous journey in Dharma.

With a loving heart,
The Venerable Aryamaitri
Maha Lekhanadikari
Maha Sangha of Indonesia
Jakarta, January 1995

Preface

(From the First Indonesian Edition 1995)

This concise biography of the Venerable Maha Nayaka Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita is compiled from various interviews with several Buddhist community leaders and many senior monks in Indonesia, as well as some lay people who knew him. In addition to these materials, this book is enriched with excerpts from some old literature, containing news related to the early history of the development of Buddhism in Indonesia approaching the independence era (from the 1930s to the present).

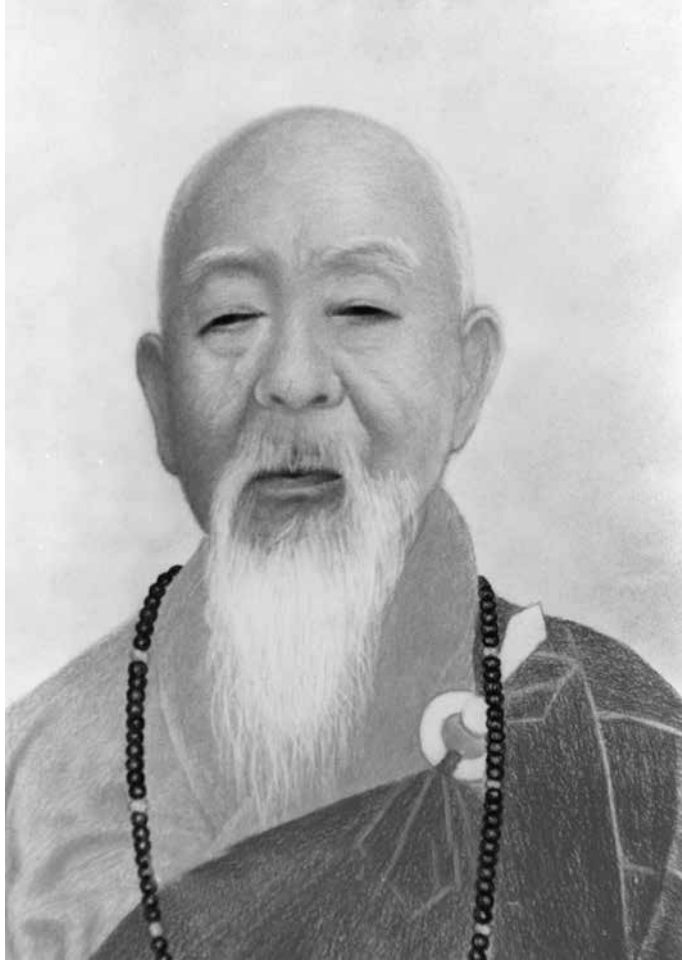
The brief account of the Dharma journey of the pioneering monk in the revival of Buddhism in Indonesia is far from perfect. There are still many incompleteness here and there. For that, we ask for your understanding.

The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita is a very humble figure. The Dharma devotion he poured out to his followers tirelessly for over forty years often made him travel from day to day. These two factors allowed us only the opportunity to interview him three times, each less than one hour. Nevertheless, those brief interviews breathe life into the contents of this book.

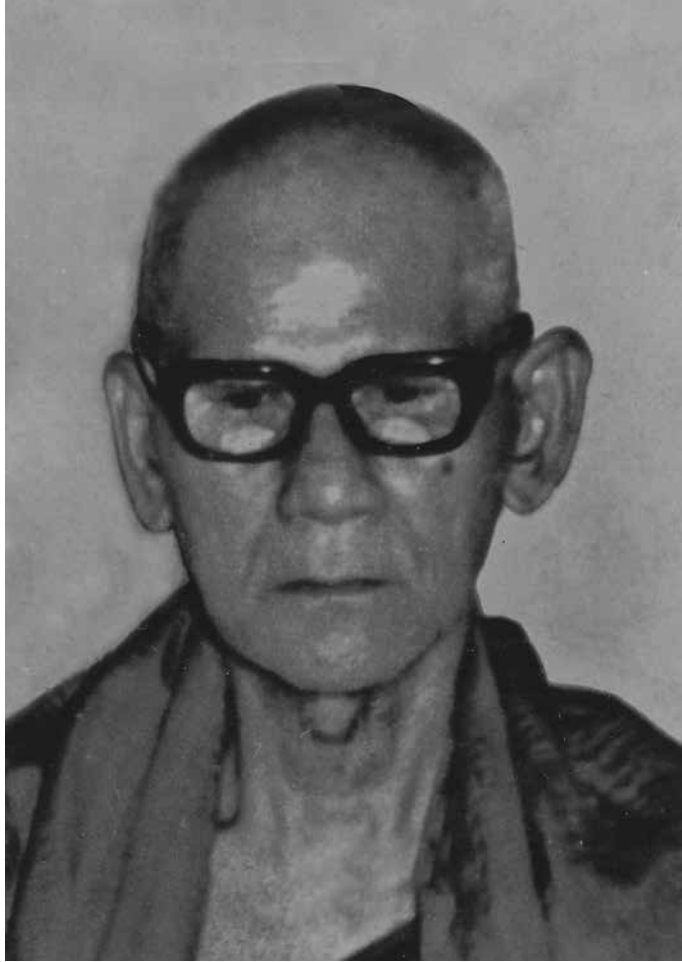
The opportunity to converse with Dharma brothers and sisters, Buddhist leaders, honorable members of the Sangha, and especially with the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita himself, is a noble blessing that we are grateful for. Additionally, we would like to express our gratitude to the Venerable Aryamaitri (as the Secretary-General of the Grand Sangha of Indonesia) for providing that valuable opportunity.

We hereby express our gratitude to all parties involved, who have contributed invaluable moral and material supports, for the success in publishing this book. Any incompletenesses or errors that occur, due to our limited ability, we ask for your kind understanding.

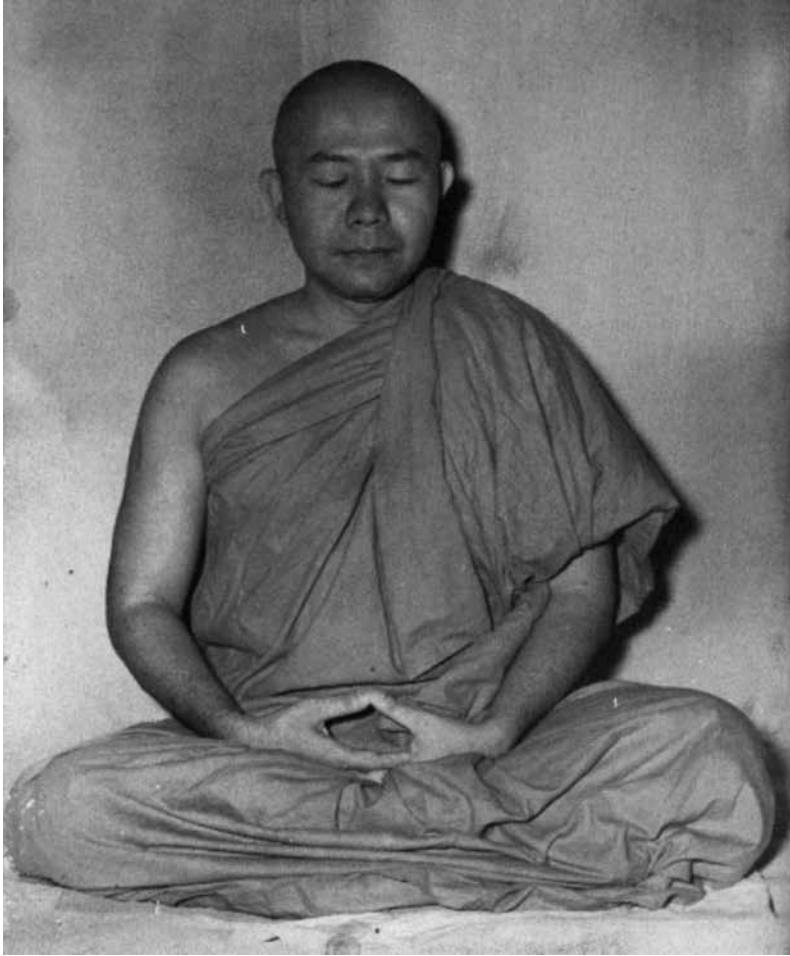
Edij
Bandung, October 1993



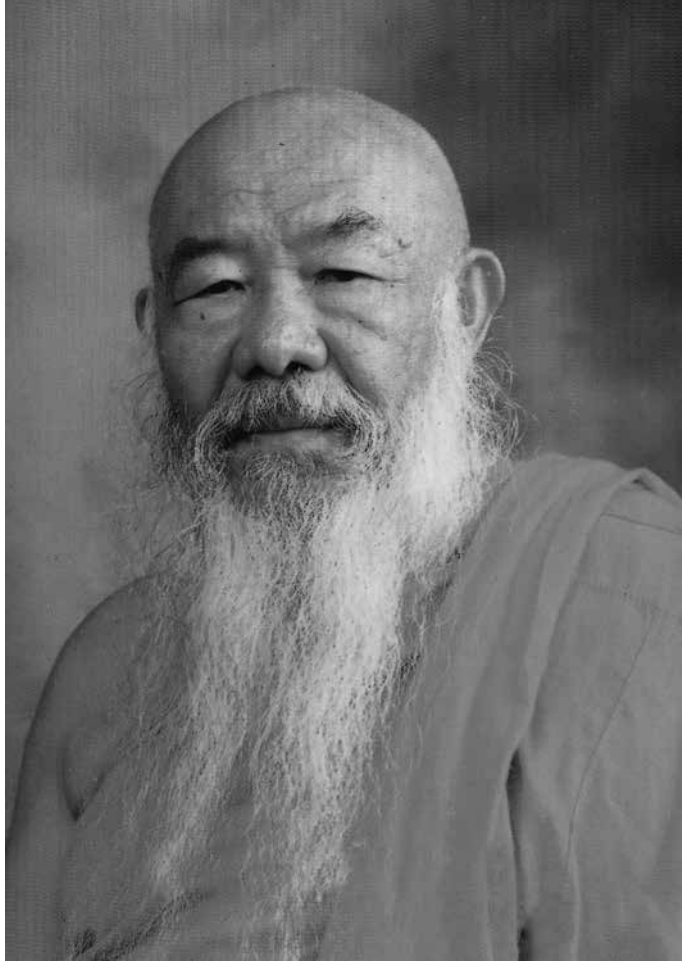
The Venerable Sanghanata Aryamula Pen Ching,
the teacher of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita



The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw (Burma),
teacher of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita



The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita (1963)



The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita (1993)

Chapter 1

Buddhism in Ancient Indonesia

Five hundred years from now

A volcanic fire of Dharma would flood the land

Buddhism would make a triumphant return

And with these cryptic words, the warrior vanished, clinging steadfastly to his convictions, leaving behind nothing but the echoes of his foresight. It was 1478, the demise of the Majapahit Kingdom, and along with it, crumbled the mighty pillars of Buddhism in the archipelago. Flocks of faithful followers,¹ their minds entwined with the hybrid Siwa-Buddha faith, sought refuge in the hidden corners of East Java and the mystical isles of Bali.

¹ The Siwa-Buddha religion is a syncretism of Buddhism and Hinduism that widely developed during the Majapahit era. After the fall of Majapahit, its followers mostly gathered in Tengger, the area around Mount Bromo, and Bali.

Leap a century and a half forward, and the Indonesian archipelago found itself ensnared in the iron grip of Dutch colonization. Along with the plunder and subjugation, came missionaries with their crucifixes, spreading the gospel. And not to be forgotten, scholars of Dutch origin scoured our culture and history, not purely for the sake of knowledge, but as pawns in the chessboard of colonial domination.

In the mysterious garland of this era, threads of virtue interwove with threads of vice. Amidst the colonizers, there bloomed flowers of goodness—spiritual scholars, heralds of peace, voices against

oppression. The Theosophical Society² marked its presence, its ethereal philosophies floating like whispers through the Indonesian spiritual skies. Its advocates, called Theosophists, would gather in a place known as a lodge. The teachings of Theosophy emphasized the universal brotherhood of humanity, transcending distinctions of race, nation, or faith. Thus, even educated Indonesians found themselves drawn to its ranks. In 1852, Blavatsky, the founding figure of Theosophy, journeyed to the Indonesian archipelago. In these Theosophical gatherings, the teachings of Buddhism were often a subject of discourse. It's no surprise, then, that they pioneered the celebration of

² The Theosophical Society was established in New York, on November 17, 1875, by Mrs. Helena P. Blavatsky and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott. Mrs. Helena P. Blavatsky was from Russia. At the age of 17, she was married to Mr. Blavatsky. However, she fled on her wedding day, later delving into spiritualism under the guidance of her unseen spiritual teachers. Following the directions of these spiritual teachers, she then went to New York. There, she met Colonel Henry S. Olcott, a British naval officer who later created the international Buddhist flag.

Waisak³ in Indonesia post-Majapahit era, albeit in a limited scope.

In addition to the two groups familiar with Buddhist teachings—the traditional adherents of Siwa-Buddha in regions of Central and East Java, and the erudite Theosophists—Buddhist rituals intermingled with Chinese traditions were also practiced by the Chinese-Indonesian community. The traditional Chinese religion is a fusion of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. The places of worship for this community are known as *klentengs*. The brand of Buddhism found in these *klentengs* belongs to the Northern tradition, commonly recognized as the Mahayana school.

It was not uncommon for monks from China to come and provide guidance in the *klentengs*. Generally, what they imparted were explanations about ceremonial forms, such as how to place incense sticks and perform prayers, maintain

³ Vesak Day is celebrated by Buddhists to commemorate three significant events: the birth of Prince Siddhartha Gotama, Ascetic Gotama achieving Buddhahood, and the Buddha's passing, all coinciding with the full moon in the month of Vesak.

candles, and so forth. Rarely did they delve into the teachings of Buddhism. If they did, it was usually in a passive manner, only when asked. And naturally, this was limited to the Chinese-Indonesian community itself.

And then, there emerged a beacon—a merchant, an author, and a culturist, Kwee Tek Hoay by name. His pen danced upon pages, infusing the essence of Buddhist teachings into the fabric of Indonesian literature. Through ‘Moestika Dharma’, his literary vessel, the Dharma found its way into hearts and minds, primarily within the Chinese-Indonesian communities, illuminating their paths with the gentle glow of Buddhist wisdom. Moestika Dharma is Dharma Jewel in Indonesian.

The mosaic of Indonesian Buddhism was diverse—a blend of traditional Siwa-Buddha followers, the ethereal strands of Theosophy, and the Chinese-Indonesian elements seamlessly blended with threads of Mahayana teachings. It was a realm where ancient prophecies lingered in the shadows,

and where the klentengs resonated with rituals and the soft murmurs of Buddhist chants.

In 1929, within the bustling hearts of Jakarta, a seed was planted. Dutch followers of the Buddha’s path came together, forging the first Buddhist organization of that epoch—the Java Buddhist Association. They were oriented towards Theravada Buddhism, with the Pali Canon as their main scriptures. At its helm stood Pandita Josias van Dienst, a pioneer, the first Theravada lay devotee to step on the Javanese shores after a long silence.

The Pandita embarked on a sojourn through Java’s mystical landscapes. His footsteps reverberated through the corridors of klentengs, engaging in exchanges of wisdom with monks and nuns—keepers of the Northern Buddhist traditions, known as ‘*niko*’. These monks, travelers from the distant shores of China, found solace within the embracing walls of the klentengs. However, the klentengs wore a forlorn look, tarnished by caretakers

who did not reflect the essence of the teachings.⁴

The arrival of Pandita Josias opened the minds of community leaders, who paid attention to the development of Buddhism. His discourses within the *klentengs*, enriched by the presence of monks and ‘*niko-niko*’, became gatherings where the torchbearers

⁴ Regarding the general condition of the temples in Batavia, Tjiam Kim Hoat, a notable Chinese community leader at the time, wrote in *Moestika Dharma* No. 23 February 1934, “In my opinion, both from what I have read in historical books and my own experience concerning the management of Chinese temples, most do not comply with or are not based on real principles, because they are surrendered to administrators who rarely or barely understand the rules of the Tao religion or Buddhist teachings; moreover, many have a low morality. Even worse are those who become administrators of all *Toapekong* temples —those who behave poorly, and are corrupted by money. From such irresponsible administrators, of course, proper future conduct can hardly be expected. “... Not only are Chinese temples generally managed irresponsibly, but also the people who come to worship or even just visit, if not many, behave inappropriately, such as wearing disrespectful attire, not taking off hats, causing disruption among people who are worshipping, disrespecting women, and other forms of misconduct. All of this can happen because the head administrators of these temples do not recognize their responsibilities, ...”

of *klentengs* convened, lending their ears to a symphony of dialogues. Conversations flowed like rivers, where the Dutch-descendant lay devotee and the luminaries of the *klentengs* navigated through the currents of Buddhist teachings, flourishing within Java’s mystical isle.⁵

⁵ In a discussion with monks and sympathizers of Buddhism at *Kwan In Tong* (*Avalokitesvara* Monastery), Jakarta, Pandit Josias van Dienst, spoke extensively about Buddhism as recorded in *Moestika Dharma* No. 23, February 1934.

“On that Sunday, January 21 at 1 pm, Rev. J. van Dienst, wearing the robe of a Buddhist pandit, departed from *Prinsenlaan* No. 69 to *Kwan Im Tong*. In front of the temple, they were greeted by *hweshio-hweshio* (monks) and led to an inner room where Rev. J. van Dienst paid respects for a few minutes before the Buddha statue, then was invited to sit facing a table served with tea and crushed peanuts that had been dried ...

“Rev. J. van Dienst discussed the existence or non-existence of God. According to his view as a Hinayana Buddhist pandit, belief in God does not necessarily have to be accompanied by requests for blessings of prosperity and safety, because such attitudes seem ungrateful or dissatisfied with what God has given, always wanting more. Lighting incense and making vows also seem to try to change what has been predetermined according to each individual’s karma, whereas actually, one should strive for salvation with one’s own effort, and the goal of religious followers is actually not to expect fortunes, only to

In the year of 1934, on a day

improve themselves to be closer to God over time.

“Up until that moment, several types of fruits were served, such as oranges and grapes. Holding a piece of grape, Rev. J. van Dienst continued his speech by likening that fruit to a tiny spark of God that resides in the human heart. That spark is invisible, cannot grow bigger and flare up to emit its light, because it is covered by several layers of veils in the form of sins, such as evil deeds, falseness, and so on”

“Then he narrated a story, which originated from Siam, roughly as follows: At one time, a god in heaven found that spark of the Almighty God’s fire, which he then brought to a gathering of gods to ask for opinions on where it should be placed. One god suggested to put it away in the farthest place, at the end of the world, so humans cannot find it. Another god objected by saying, eventually humans might reach that place, so he suggested putting it at the bottom of the deepest ocean. But this suggestion was also objected to by another god, considering that in time humans with high magical knowledge could reach the bottom of the ocean. Finally, a god suggested placing that spark in the human heart, because he knew for sure humans would not search and find what is in their own hearts. And so, it happened.

“As a result of that meeting at Kwan Im Tong, between the Buddhist Padri Upasaka (Rev. Josias van Dienst) and the *hweshio-hweshio* and some guests, a strong desire emerged to improve the nature of the temples, so they are not just places for superficial worship, but also as sources of inner knowledge learning; no longer places swarmed by rude beggars, but managed as pure houses in the true sense.”

marked the 4th of March, an extraordinary event blossomed in the spiritual realms of Indonesia. The Venerable Narada Thera, a famed Buddhist evangelist from the emerald isle of Sri Lanka, cast his blessed steps upon the Indonesian archipelago for the very first time, as a part of his grand voyage across the lands of Southeast Asia. ‘Thera’, an honorary title, signified his ten sacred years dedicated to the monastic fold. With the ocean winds guiding his journey from Singapore, he arrived upon Java’s shores aboard a sea vessel.

Originally, the sails of his journey were set for a fortnight’s stay. But the islands whispered a warm embrace, the sympathizers of Buddha and the congregation within the *klentengs* showered a cascade of heartfelt welcomes, compelling him to extend his spiritual voyage to a span of three rich weeks, culminating on the 24th day of March in the year 1934.

Traversing through the soulful landscapes of Java, the Venerable Narada Thera embarked

on a spiritual journey, exploring the sacred realms of Batavia, Buitenzorg (Bogor), Bandung, Yogya, and Solo. In each radiant city, the klentengs and Theosophical gatherings became havens where his enlightened teachings flowed like a river of wisdom. His words were warmly received by hearts filled with reverence, becoming a gentle zephyr that nurtured the seeds planted by Pandita Josias in the fertile grounds of the klentengs' traditional followers.

By the hands of Theosophical activist, the tour of the Venerable Narada Thera was sculpted into an opportunity to expand the horizons of Buddhist understanding. In a moment marked by divine serendipity, on his survey to the majestic realms of Borobudur in Magelang, on the 10th of March, 1934, blessings flowed from his sacred presence. A Bodhi tree, a symbol of enlightened essence, was sowed and blessed by the Venerable Narada Thera, witnessed by the luminary of Theosophy in Yogya, Mr. E. E. Power. This tender sapling had journeyed through the care of

another Theosophical guardian, Ir. Meertens, who had, in a time before, wandered in the spiritual realm of Buddhagaya⁶ in Benares.

As the day folded its petal into the bosom of night, following his return from Borobudur, a sacred ceremony unfurled in Yogya. In a divine gathering, the Venerable Narada Thera bestowed the blessings of ordination upon a fellowship of devotees, among whom the essence of Java flowed through a gentleman named Mangunkawatja.

On March 24, at 4:30 in the evening, the Venerable Narada Thera boarded a ship at Tanjung Priok heading towards Singapore. Around fifty people came to see him off. During his brief stay, the Venerable Narada Thera left a passionate impression of Dharma for the Buddhists in Java.⁷

⁶ Buddha Gaya, or the Buddha Forest, is the place where the Ascetic Gotama attained Buddhahood under the Bodhi Tree.

⁷ The brief journey of the Venerable Narada Thera is as follows:

March 4, 1934—Arrived at Tanjung Priok, welcomed by Pandit Josias van Dienst, Tjoa Hin Hoey, and several Singhalese people. After dining at a devotee's house, they

In May 1934, on the 10th, at the Avalokitesvara Monastery in Batavia, the Batavia Buddhist Association⁸

proceeded to Bogor and stayed overnight there.

March 6, 1934—In Jakarta, visited Kwam Im Tong and Toasebio Temple, and in the evening, went back to Bogor.

March 7, 1934—Escorted by E.E. Power, visited Bandung, stayed at Ong Soe An's house.

March 8, 1934—Gave a lecture at the Bandung temple, with an estimated attendance of a thousand people.

March 9, 1934—Escorted by Ong Soe An and Mr. E.E. Power, departed to Yogyakarta.

March 10, 1934—Visited Borobudur, and blessed the planting of the Bodhi Tree with water. Returned to Yogyakarta, and in the evening, gave a lecture at the Theosophical lodge, then ordained upasaka.

March 11, 1934—Departed to Solo, lectured at Kong Kauw Hwe school. In the evening, lectured at Tin Kok Sih Temple.

March 12, 1934—Returned to Bandung.

March 13, 1934—Visited Kwam Im Tong Bandung, managed by a female Buddhist priest (nikow). Evening lecture at the Theosophical lodge.

March 14-19, 1934—Went to Bogor, stayed at Hok Tek Bio Temple.

March 20, 1934—Returned to Kwam Im Tong, Jakarta.

March 21-24, 1934—In Jakarta, lectured at several temples, and the Theosophical lodge, and initiated about 25 people into Buddhism.

March 24, 1934—Departed from Tanjung Priok to Singapore on the ship Melchior Treub.

⁸ The precursor to the Batavia Buddhist Association was the Java Buddhist

was formed, separating itself from the Java Buddhist Association, with its president, Kwee Tek Hoay. As time went on, the Batavia Buddhist Association leaned more towards spreading Mahayana teachings, different from the Theravada

Association's Batavia branch, which was established on March 22, 1934, during a meeting at Kwam Im Tong. In the meeting, also attended by the Venerable Narada Thera, the idea was conceived to establish the Batavia branch of the Java Buddhist Association.

The Java Buddhist Association branch in Batavia was the second Buddhist assembly to stand with the support of the Venerable Narada Thera. The first was the Java Buddhist Association branch in Buitenzorg, with its committee members being A. van der Velde, Tee Teng Hui, Oei Oen Ho, Tan Hong Boe, and Ie Tjoen Leng.

Later, Kwee Tek Hoay took the initiative to form the Batavia Buddhist Association independent of the Java Buddhist Association. The activities of the Batavia Buddhist Association in spreading Buddhism tended to use approaches from the Mahayana tradition, which was closer to the customs of the Chinese people. This differed from the Java Buddhist Association that emphasized Theravada teachings. However, in carrying out their activities, both associations supported each other. The individuals selected to be the administrators of the Batavia Buddhist Association at that time were J.W. de Witt, Kwee Tek Hoay, J.L. Gandhi, Dr. R. Ng. Poerbatjaraka, and Mrs. Tjoa Hin Hoey.

teachings upheld by the Java Buddhist Association.

A few years later, precisely in 1938, Kwee Tek Hoay established Sam Kauw Hwee, the Association of Three Teachings, one of which was the teachings of Buddhism, with the other two being Taoism and Confucianism. The activities carried out by this association made the teachings of Buddhism more recognized among the Chinese-Indonesian intellectuals.

Those were the three groups that were exposed to the teachings of Buddhism in Indonesia after the fall of the Majapahit kingdom: the

intellectuals and scholars involved in the Theosophical Society; a small part of the Chinese-Indonesian community (most of the Chinese-Indonesian community, in general, didn't really understand Buddhist teachings, and only practiced the tradition); and then the followers of the Siwa-Buddha religion in several regions in Central Java, East Java, and Bali.

“Uncle Ong, this time we must cast our nets wide and grand. The time is ripe for the Great Temple to rise from the realms of dormancy. The Dharma must breathe life into these lands once again.”



Chapter 2

The Event at Borobudur, 1953

The sky had cleared, and the winds began their whispers across the vast temple's stones. Subtle yet powerful vibrations rippled through the air, making the hairs stand on end in the wake of their passage. A sense of profound reverence started to flood the hearts of those present, growing stronger as the invisible waves of energy cascaded over the ancient, worn stones, and the magnificent visages of the Buddhas.

The winds of the harbor slapped the faces of the folks standing before the iron bars of the gate. A wind that seemed to muster the strength of the entire ocean was in command. In the early days of 1951, rain still claimed the season in Indonesia. A ship, as mighty and steadfast as an ancient mariner, sidled up to the harbor. It was a vessel grand in stature, with a bounty of souls aboard. Steps were unfurled from its side like a welcoming carpet, and the ship's passengers began to disembark. Odd it was, the calm and composed manner of their descent,

as if time itself had become their humble servant.

Amongst the descending crowd, from afar, appeared a man of unusual demeanor. Shorter he was, in comparison to the Western folks, which revealed his Eastern roots. He resembled an Indian sage, clothed in robes as white as the magnolia blossoms. A beard, dark and slightly curled, flowed freely, dancing to the rhythms of the wind. His hair, partially hidden beneath a modest cap, was like a gentle hillock under a soft veil. The man's face

was a portrait of serene landscapes, a gentle smile perennially gracing his features, exuding warmth and openness as a welcoming hearth. His nose, a remarkable landmark on his visage, cascaded downwards in a sleek, thin line before blossoming outward in a prominent display.

Not long after the man set foot on the earth, two individuals approached, extending their hands and their hearts, “Brother An, welcome back!” they exclaimed, embracing him as a long-lost kinsman returned to the warmth of family and familiarity. They then proceeded, walking amidst the throng of people, towards the welcoming lands beyond the harbor.

The hall, ancient and as silent as forgotten stages, resonated with the vibrancy of the gathered congregation. Its walls seemed to shiver gently under the humming symphony of voices engaged in profound exchanges. About thirty people had tendered the hall with their presence, seasoned beings mostly, their earthly forms spanning

the realms of thirty to fifty winters. The hall was a sacred chamber within an ancient temple, the years of its existence wrapped in the mystery of countless moons and suns.

It was a rare spectacle to witness such an assembly within these walls, outside the realm of religious festivities. But the stars had not aligned for a day of religious observance, and yet here they were, individuals drawn together by a shared purpose.

A man stepped forth, clothed in attire humble yet impeccably adorned. His face bore the purity of clear skies, and his eyes flickered with the sharp brilliance of the night’s stars. “Brothers and sisters,” he began, his voice a gentle river of sound flowing through the silence, “thank you for offering your presence this night. To honor the essence of time, let us commence our gathering.”

His voice was not a tempest, but more a gentle breeze. However, his presence seemed woven from threads of significance, commanding the sacred silence of attentive ears.

He then lifted his cup, raising it high above as a beacon, and said, “Before we journey further, let us shower blessings and celebrations upon Brother An’s return.”

Then, he took a sip from the cup of tea, a gesture mirrored by all in attendance. The one hailed as ‘Brother An’ was seated at the forefront. He rose, a garden of smiles blooming on his face, receiving the spirited affirmations from his brethren. Henceforth, the meeting began. Those who had graced the gathering were sympathizers and members of the Tri Dharma Association, an amalgamation of the teachings of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

Time, that old weaver of moments, spun its threads, and the night, in the warmth of shared wisdom and communion, had grown old. Suddenly, from the gathering’s heart, a voice rose, making a new proposition. “I propose Brother An and Brother Khoe Soe Kiam to be the Chair and Vice-Chair of the United Tri Dharma.”

The proposal was embraced with the vibrant winds of applause and agreement. “How can it be, how can it be?” interjected the one they called “Brother An,” his words flowing like a gentle river of humility. “A novice, long absent from these shores, should not undertake such crucial responsibilities,” he added with modesty.

But the waves of insistence were strong, sweeping away his options for refusal. And so, the caretakers of the United Tri Dharma were heralded into existence. Amongst its founders was the revered “Brother An,” and at its helm stood Drs. Khoe Soe Kiam, a scholar of sociology, and the opener of the assembly. Thereafter, the meeting transformed into a vibrant garden of discussions, each group nurturing the blossoms of their unique topics and dialogues. As night drew its dark veils tighter, the attendees, like leaves on the wind, made their journeys back home.

Several days later, on the momentous tides of February 20, 1951, the Union of Sam Kauw Indonesia was founded in Jakarta.

Drs. Khoe Soe Kiam was heralded as its chief, with “Brother An” standing amongst its founding members.

Since its inception, the activists of the United Sam Kauw Indonesia (GSKI) ignited the fires of their teachings, spreading the flames of wisdom throughout the lands. The Chinese descendants’ communities became their targeted audience. First, they went to Jakarta and West Java, where temples, like ancient trees, stood as the grounds for their discourses.

When the presence of the one known as “Brother An” adorned these gatherings, meetings blossomed, thirsty for the nectar of his words. For his talks were rivers where healing flowed, often aiding the souls through the essence of sacred waters. But as the chapters of time unveiled, the observers within the United Sam Kauw Indonesia noticed that their “Elder Brother’s” narrations tended to be the gentle streams where the Buddha’s teachings flowed more profoundly, somewhat overshadowing the other two doctrines.

In the Indonesian Theosophical Youth Assembly, a garland of parallel influences converged. “Brother An,” carried by the currents of aspiration, was entrusted with the mantle of Vice-Chairman of the Central Administration of the Indonesian Theosophical Youth. His presence illuminated the Theosophical lodges with talks, where the Buddha’s teachings bloomed like treasured flora. These were understandings not as deeply imparted during his voyages to distant, foreign lands.

Whenever opportunity’s doors were opened within the Theosophical Youth gatherings, he walked through, carrying the lantern of discourses that shined predominantly with the Buddha’s teachings. His footsteps of wisdom didn’t only echo in Jakarta but also traversed the paths leading to the cities within the heart of Central and East Java.

Over half a year had passed since the gathering of the Three Teachings Assembly in that venerable temple.

On a fine evening, as the sky gently wept rain, within the heart of a modest dwelling in the rain city of Bogor, two figures were engaged in a rich medley of conversation. One, a pillar of wisdom and experience, stood tall and robust, with spectacles enhancing his thoughtful gaze. The other, youthful in years yet possessing a depth beyond his age, was marked by a beard and wore a cap upon his head.

“Uncle Ong, this time we must cast our nets wide and grand. The time is ripe for the Great Temple to rise from the realms of dormancy. The Dharma must breathe life into these lands once again,” echoed the passionate utterances of the bearded youth.

“Boan An, crafting such a landscape is no stroll through easy meadows. You’re well aware of the terrains we navigate in these parts,” interjected the bespectacled elder, drawing a breath heavy with the weight of consideration.

“It’s a mountain we must scale. Our brothers and sisters will show

their support. And the friends from the lodge will not stand in the shadows of silence,” affirmed the bearded youth with a river of conviction flowing through his words.

As the sky wept harder, creating a symphony of pattering on the streets and rooftops, the bearded youth arose, fanning the flames of the oil lamp’s light, then drifting towards the window. He gazed upon the rain-teased floors, and swiftly, like a guardian of the indoors, he shut the window’s leaves, warding off the tears of the sky.

From afar, the place painted a canvas of enchantment. A riot of trees, the soul of the tropics, swayed with life’s rhythms. Bananas, coconuts, the ancient banyan, among a fellowship of other green brethren, rooted in the rich, nurturing clutches of the fertile earth. But as the chariot of the sun retreated, surrendering the sky to the cloak of night, a transformation brewed in the shadows—the place became

an arena of silence and mystery. Tales, woven by the local weavers of stories, spoke of sacred realms veiled in the folds of that land. As the grasp of night tightened, it was abandoned to its mysteries, the living creatures refrained from wandering its paths.

On a night when the moon bloomed in full glory, its luminous whispers often found themselves in the company of wandering clouds, dark as a raven's feather. A procession of these celestial wanderers drifted through the night, playing a dance of shadows and moonbeams. The ethereal illumination intertwined with the darkness, crafting scenes unfamiliar and mystifying, with trees casting shadows that swayed to the rhythms of the night winds. The night, wrapped in a mantle of eerie silence, was devoid of the nocturnal symphony of the creatures of the dark. An empty stage, save for the occasional whispers of the passing winds.

The cloak of the night grew colder, the air thick with the inexplicable. Suddenly, the silence was intruded upon by the sounds

of footsteps, rustling through the dry grass, followed by the hurried flapping of bird wings taking flight. From realms unknown, a caravan of people emerged, parting the veils of grass and brittle branches, navigating through the silent narratives of the night.

"Almost there," the voice of the person walking in the front was heard. These people weren't young. There were less than ten of them. They walked quickly. Suddenly, the person walking in the front stopped. His eyes widened looking at the grass field spread in front of him. In the dim light ahead, a huge shadow figure appeared. "We have arrived," he whispered.

In front of them, about thirty meters away, stood an ancient dark building that was cone-shaped at the top, widening downwards, very large. It wasn't their first time coming there. But the unusual atmosphere that night inevitably left them astounded as well. Coincidentally at that time, the sky cleared up. Thus, the full moonlight was precisely

in front of them, behind the old building. “How magnificent.”

Filled with enthusiasm, they ran closer. After getting closer, the atmosphere’s eeriness became more apparent. They naturally stopped in front of the building’s veranda, hesitant to step closer. The massive stone building was immensely tall, about twenty times the height of an average human. Its massiveness discouraged people from approaching.

“O friends over there, please join here!” A shout breaking the silence of the night made their hair stand on end. Simultaneously, they turned to the left. A group of individuals appeared sitting under the dense trees not far from the right side of the old building. Who were they? The newcomers felt afraid to follow the call. Then, from the crowd sitting, someone stood up approaching them.

“Ho, ho, look, it’s Mr. Ananda Suyono. Ha, ha, ha, sorry Mr. Yono, we arrived earlier,” greeted the person who came closer. So, the person called “Mr. Yono” felt

relieved. It turned out that the one greeting him was Khoe Soe Kiam, the head of GSKI, also his colleague in the Theosophical Youth Association. Then they joined the people who were resting. Many were already sleeping.

“Has Brother An arrived?” asked Ananda Suyono.

“He’s still in Yogya, there’s a matter to settle for tomorrow afternoon. Hopefully, everything can be resolved.” While saying that, Khoe Soe Kiam lay down, resting his head on both hands. His eyes stared far at the old building in front.

They tried to sleep, but they couldn’t. Their heartbeats echoed every time they remembered what would happen tomorrow. And groups of people kept coming until morning, increasingly crowded. Most of them came from nearby areas, Central Java.

Approaching noon, people from outside the area began to flow in. One group followed another. The gathering piqued the interest of locals. They came to see, making

the place even more crowded. They wondered what was behind all the hustle and bustle.

At exactly 11 a.m., a convoy of several buses arrived around the location. Their arrival was specially welcomed, so people immediately knew that important figures must have come. And indeed, it was because the arrivals turned out to be high-ranking officials of the state and representatives of foreign countries. This made the local residents even more curious. As far as they remembered, there had never been an event like this before.

As the temperature rose, sweat glistened on brows. They crowded around the massive ancient building. The giant seemed indifferent to what happened in front of it. Yet, in its presence were more than three thousand people. Anxiety followed the heat, causing brows to furrow now.

Somehow initially, suddenly from the top of the giant building, a sound like a continuously struck bell was heard. The sound was so loud it was deafening, making all

attention focus there. The sound of the bell bounced from one stone to another, causing a far-reaching echo, up to the trees. There was a tree different from the surrounding trees, its leaves widened at the base and tapered at the tip, resembling a tailing heart symbol.

For those who knew, it was a sacred tree for Buddhists. Its name was the Bodhi tree. The tree could be there thanks to the efforts of past Indonesian Theosophical leaders who brought its seeds from India. Then, when a monk from Sri Lanka visited almost twenty years ago, the seed was planted where it is now.

For twenty years, almost nothing happened around there, except for the limited Vesak celebration held by the Borobudur conservator living there, namely Van Hans Werk and Ir. Mangelan Miltons, and routine events held by Theosophical activists once a year, like last year, and the years before that, since 1936. Now, the tree has matured, and it's beautiful. Its leaves are large and it grows healthily. The tree, considered sacred, also became

a witness to events that would become history thereafter.

After the sound of the bell stopped, from the crowd, four people emerged in the middle of the courtyard of the ancient building. They continued to ascend the old building. Some of the present individuals, unavoidably, followed them up. Upon reaching the top, one of the four individuals, who first set foot on the peak of the ancient building, clasped both hands in front of the chest, paying homage to everyone present.

The distinctive demeanor of the man was not easily forgotten. He was dressed in white, his curly beard unfurled, swayed by the wind. His long hair was rolled up and covered with a small dark-colored hat. His face was radiant, unable to conceal the overflowing joy in his heart. Smiling, he began to speak as the sun was precisely overhead.

Excitement had reached its peak. But the heat seemed to not matter; all eyes were directed towards the man standing at the top of the building. Behind him, a large

five-colored flag waved back and forth, even though it was tightly tied to the peak of the old building.

“Brothers and sisters, in these joyful moments, we can gather together on the Great Borobudur Temple. May the resonances of these sacred moments bring blessings to us all,” said the bearded man.

After short greetings were given by local officials and representatives of foreign countries, a reading of prayers and mantras in ancient languages was led by several men and women. Those who understood the prayers participated, while those who did not understand listened silently, trying to absorb the benevolent aura emanating from the stones of the Great Temple.

The sky had cleared, and the winds began their whispers across the vast temple’s stones. Subtle yet powerful vibrations rippled through, making the hairs stand on end in the wake of their passage. A sense of profound reverence started to flood the hearts of those present, growing stronger as the invisible tides of energy cascaded over the ancient,

worn stones, and the magnificent visages of the Buddhas, soaring up until it finally reached the peak. Thus, after nearly five hundred years of deep slumber, the giant stirred and awakened, fulfilling a five-hundred-year-old promise.

That day, May 22, 1953, at noon, on the Full Moon of Vesak, precisely 2497 years after Gautama Buddha's *parinirvana* (great passing), the Great Temple, one of the wonders of the world and a symbol of the Buddhist teaching heritage, breathed again. More than three thousand pairs of human eyes bore witness.

Before the echo subsided, the man dressed in white with a beard quickly rose, signaling the beginning of noble reflection moments of Vesak to purify the heart. Five minutes passed, ten minutes passed. Drops of sweat began to fall to the floor. Finally, at the fifteenth minute, everything was completed. What needed to be done was accomplished. People rose; they shook hands with each other. Joyful faces made the atmosphere feel delightful.

The ink laborers didn't want to miss out and immediately rushed forward. Their targets were the prominent figures present at that moment. Everyone who was asked eventually pointed to one person, the figure dressed in white with a beard and wearing a small hat.

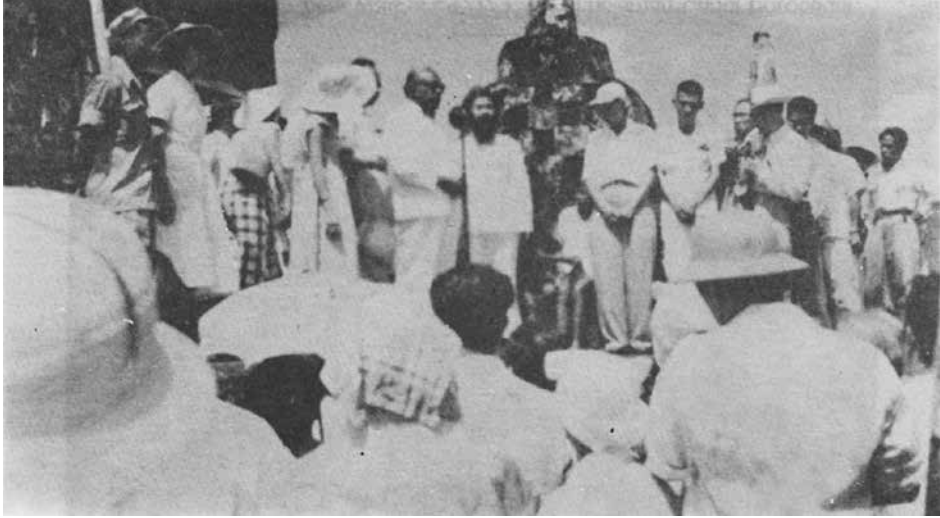
The next day, many newspapers covered the event at Borobudur Temple. It was the first time that a grand celebration of a Buddhist holy day was commemorated there. It was celebrated by over three thousand people who were familiar with Buddhist teachings—from the United Sam Kauw group, Theosophy, and the Javanese community in the surrounding areas. Yet, five hundred years ago, such a celebration was something quite ordinary....

Who is actually the bearded figure dressed in white, with his hair rolled up on top? He, along with other figures, played a significant role in the Borobudur 1953 Event. Why is he respected and considered as the “elder brother” in both the

United Three Teachings community and Theosophical circles? What is his story that led him to eventually revive Buddhism in Indonesia, after five hundred years buried beneath the ruins of the Majapahit collapse? Here is his story.

“Nyi, the essential thing is willingness. If one has willingness and determination, they have value. If one is determined, they ought to reach, if not, they shan’t. Reach, they shall. However, whether the reach is near or far, that depends on the individual’s luck or lack thereof.”





Accompanying the Sri Lankan Ambassador delivering a Vesak speech for the year 2497/1953 at Borobudur Temple

Chapter 3

Childhood

“If one is determined, they ought to reach, if not, they shan’t. Reach, they shall. However, whether the reach is near or far, that depends on the individual’s luck or lack thereof.”

On the twenty-third day of the first month of the year 1923, a baby boy was born in Bogor, into a Wykmesster family.⁹ This child was named Boan An. At the time of his birth, the occasion was marked by nothing particularly unusual—everything was as customary as an old shoe, devoid of any peculiar signs or wonders. His father, a man from the lineage of Tee,¹⁰ bore the name Hong Gie. Thus, by the paternal lines of descent, the

⁹ Wykmesster, also known as “bek,” is a position similar to a village chief or protector of a group of people. A Wykmesster oversees issuance of important documents such as identity cards, travel permits, and other essential documents.

¹⁰ At the start, the surname Tee was spelled The. However, on his own initiative, Boan

boy was bestowed the full moniker, Tee Boan An. His mother, a woman sprung from the Tan lineage, was called Sep Moy. Boan An was the apple of their eye, the third sprout in line. He had two elder brothers, Tee Boan Yauw and Tee Boan Hoa.

Tee Hong Gie and his family lived in a long house next to a small road called Jalan Roda. Bogor City is located approximately 60 km from Jakarta. Their abode wasn’t a vast expanse but carried a respectable length. Adjacent to the house, a garden stretched out, brimming with blooms of various ilk and trees of assorted heritage. At the forefront

An modified it to Tee when he was at KW-III school.

of the house, stood a venerable rose apple tree, its branches extending beyond the waist-high wire fence in front of the house. Owing to his stature as a *wijkmeester*, Tee Hong Gie's home was often frequented by people seeking counsel in matters of significant paperwork and the like.

When Boan An had barely two rings on his life's tree, his mother was called to the great beyond. His father, stricken by the hands of loneliness, chose the sister of his departed wife, Tan Sep Nyie Moy, to be the new mistress of the hearth. From this marriage, Tee Hong Gie had six more children, three boys and three girls.

Boan An, in his tender years, lived a life adorned with hardships. During his innings in the elementary yard, at HCS, the boy, along with his two elder brothers, moonlighted as runners for a physician to earn some nickels and dimes for petty pleasures. After school in the afternoon, Boan An and his brother Boan Hoa would go to collect debts. It was a task, grueling as a mule's day, with obligations as small as Rp. 2,- being

paid in drizzles over time. Moreover, because they were still young, they were often underestimated. It wasn't uncommon for them to face fierce dogs. Some people refused to pay, deliberately letting their dogs out. Others wouldn't even open the door despite the earnest knocking.

However, the fruits of their labor, a modest three percent of the collected amount, well, it was quite a sum for children. Once they successfully collected a few rupiahs, the money was handed over to the eldest brother, Boan Yauw. Boan Yauw, the keeper of accounts, would record the earnings before passing it to the doctor, a gentleman by the name of Tan Eng Ti. Then they were given a humble percentage. If they were diligent, they could earn quite a bit. Diligence could make their pockets jingle a slightly richer tune. These were sweet times for Boan An, an education of life instilling in him the dignity of standing on his own two feet.

In the gardens of his childhood, Boan An frolicked as any young imp would—mischief brewed in his

steps. He enjoyed bathing in the river waters and wandered the wild yonders with reckless abandon. From a young age, he liked to roam around the hills. His comrades in these escapades were mostly the boys from his neighborhood. There was one lad, a neighbor's child known as Anyi, who often became his partner in aquatic adventures. Tee Boan An's father frowned upon these alliances, fearing the cruel hands of mishap might grip someone else's child during their river revelries, and also, as a father, of course, his heart was a vessel of worry.

Once, Boan An and Anyi went down the river, drifting from Ciliwung to Babadak, all the way to the edge of a dam. Serendipity played its part, placing a messenger of Tee Hong Gie in the vicinity. As the roosters heralded a new dawn, the messenger, armed with tales of adventure, sought the ear of Tee Hong Gie, filling it with the exploits of the previous day. Tee Hong Gie immediately got angry and scolded Boan An. "What did you mean by taking him there? What if

his father finds out?" Tee Hong Gie admonished.

As a consequence, Boan An faced the brunt of his father's fury. Yet, at that time, they were just bathing and playing in the river, then went home. Their river exploits were but innocent dalliances. That's all. After Boan An was beaten, he went to the neighbor's house and invited Anyi to go for a walk. Such was the habit of the little Boan An—a stubborn, steadfast spirit that held its own. His words were set in the stone of intention—a 'no' stood its ground, and a 'yes' spread its wings with vigor. His father's wrath often marked his days. When he quarrelled with his father, he usually took Anyi to stroll the fabric of the world. To the mountains, to the river, playing. The same thing happened then. Boan An took Anyi out for a walk. They wandered here and there for about two hours. Only then did Boan An feel relieved.

In one such period of time, an unforgettable tale woven with the threads of childhood unfolded its saga. A drama where the roles of

father and son danced in a theater of conflict. At that time, someone came looking for his father to arrange a travel permit. Boan An asked the person to wait. Meanwhile, his father was busy playing cards, ignoring the person waiting outside. Boan An felt it was unfair, so he confronted his father. Interrupted and irked, Tee Hong Gie summoned a storm of rebukes, and then evicted him out. Boan An ran away from home immediately. In his heart, he wanted to seek the comfort of his grandmother who lived in Jakarta. However, his pockets were empty, devoid of any monetary aid. Undeterred, he embarked on foot, his destination set for Jakarta. Since he didn't know the way, he just kept walking from morning until nearly night, traversing a distance of about twenty-five kilometers. Boan An eventually reached Cibubur. Fate welcomed him there. A curious individual, intrigued by the unusual sight of a lone child navigating the twilight, initiated a conversation. "Where are you heading?" he asked.

"To Jakarta, in search of grandmother's embrace," the little

Boan An adorned the conversation with his intentions.

"Does your father's knowledge accompany your steps?" the stranger sought further.

"Let the winds not carry the tales to Papa," pleaded Boan An.

Moved by compassion, the person then extended an invitation to Boan An, offering refuge within the walls of their abode. As night draped its veil over the land, Boan An found solace in this newfound sanctuary. Intrigued and touched by Boan An's story, the stranger expressed a desire to adopt him as family, but Boan An respectfully declined.

Then morning dawned, heralding a new beginning. Boan An was standing by the roadside in front of the person's house when he saw his father coming from a distance, riding a bicycle. His father's face, a pale canvas, and his breath, a tired artist. Apparently, Tee Hong Gie had been searching for his son since yesterday. After all, as a father, he still cared deeply for his child. A father's love knows no bounds and

he was overjoyed to finally reunite with Boan An. His happiness was indescribable. Gratitude painted his words to the stranger who had been the guardian angel of his son. Before long, the two of them, father and son, pedalled their way back to Bogor on the bicycle. Since that incident, Tee Hong Gie understood his son's nature better.

Anyi always understood his friend's habits, allowing them to get along well. Boan An, as known by Anyi, wasn't easily offended, but he couldn't handle being disheartened. When hurt, it was over; even acquaintance seemed useless. He would become indifferent and no longer wanted to greet. If Boan An invited Anyi for a walk, Anyi couldn't simply say, "Later, okay."

If Anyi said something like that, young Boan An would immediately feel uneasy. Boan An preferred Anyi to say, "Wait, okay."

Despite his strict customs, Anyi knew that his friend was straightforward and generous. His allowance, earned from side jobs as a debt collector, was often shared

with friends. During one of their strolls, they passed behind a house with a guava tree. Anyi entertained the idea of plucking a few guavas, but when he tried to take one, Boan An firmly pulled his hand. Anyi was taken aback. "You shouldn't do that, ask for it! If you want it, ask for it! You shouldn't do that," Boan An firmly reprimanded.

Inwardly, Anyi harbored admiration for Boan An, pondering over how Boan An tackled tasks that he himself found challenging. They were already in their teens, around thirteen years old. Boan An once told him, "Nyi, the essential thing is willingness. If one has willingness and determination, they have value. If one is determined, they ought to reach, if not, they shan't. Reach, they shall. However, whether the reach is near or far, that depends on the individual's luck or lack thereof." These words remained with Anyi into old age.

Awakening early, tidying the bed, folding the blankets, and ensuring that no food was wasted.



*As an Anagarika, together with the Venerable Bhiksu Thi Ing
and Mr. Nirihua (who later became the Venerable
Agga Jinametto Mahathera)*

Chapter 4

Getting Acquainted with Occultism

“Yoga. Yoga defends your soul. Your mind won’t run rampant. If overburdened with thoughts, reset, once at zero, you may think again.”

In school, Boan An’s academic achievements had been quite remarkable, above average, albeit not the top. Nonetheless, his stern nature would occasionally surface, even though he wasn’t much of a talker. Actually, he spent more time in contemplation than in play. After school, he would promptly retreat to his room in the attic. When studying, he would read aloud, heard by every inhabitant of the house. His siblings would marvel, finding their brother quite the curious figure. Only when vexed, would he venture outdoors, inviting friends for a walk.

Because he was open and innocent, there was a time when

he found himself in a debate with his teacher, back when he was still in fourth grade at HCS. It was a verbal dance of differing opinions: the teacher said this, and Boan An countered with that. This way, said the teacher. That way, said Boan An. The back-and forth volley ended with Mr. Oei Jan Giok, a mathematics teacher, succumbing to irritation, feeling challenged by the young lad. After all, he was only human. He berated Boan An, “Stubborn child, acting all wise!”

Boan An wept in heaves in front of the class, an incident witnessed by peers from other classes.

HCS ranged from grade zero to seven. Following his time there, Boan An advanced to PHS in Jakarta in 1936. Originally, he had aimed for enrollment at the prestigious middle school, HBS. However, due to a late registration, all seats in the B department were already filled. The following year saw him entering HBS B (KW-III-S), immediately as a second-grader, situated in Jakarta's Salemba district.

While at HBS, Boan An's bicycle was his faithful steed to school. He lodged at a relative's residence. It was during his tenure at this middle school, a robust friendship blossomed with one hailing from Bogor, named Tan Koen Liang. They were in different classes, but for physical education classes, they were together because their classes were parallel. By the time they reached the third grade, Koen Liang was gifted a bicycle by his parents. Since then, their camaraderie flourished even more, with bicycles as their trusty companions in numerous joint adventures.

In the fourth grade, on an occasion, Boan An spun tales of ethereal beings to Koen Liang. He recounted knowing a Dutchman who could converse with these spiritual entities. Koen Liang became enthralled. And apparently, Boan An was quite the wellspring of such mystical matters.

He revealed that since elementary school, he had been a connoisseur of the realms beyond, learning from a Hajji living behind his house in Bogor. A temple, in close proximity to his home, frequently witnessed his inquisitive visits. He said he liked to ask the temple caretakers about the various statues there. Because he asked a lot of questions, he ended up knowing a lot about all kinds of deities.

To his playmate, Anyi, he was wont to narrate tales of Yoga. "When one is befuddled," he would say, "Yoga. Yoga defends your soul. Your mind won't run rampant. If overburdened with thoughts, reset, once at zero, you may think again." Even as a youngling, he dared to express such philosophical notions.

The extraordinary Dutchman, a possessor of remarkable abilities, went by the name of Reigh. Boan An became acquainted with this individual when he went for a walk to Mount Gede. Reigh, having married a widowed apothecary, procured an abode near the mount. Upon meeting, a kinship flowered, engendering a fondness in Reigh towards Boan An, who came to be cherished as if he were his own son.

It was from Reigh that Boan An then delved into the study of magnetism—a healing art harnessing the magnetic forces dwelling within the body. But the tutelage didn't halt at that; Boan An was also ushered into the mysteries of occultism. He received books like 'The Ancient Wisdom' and 'The Secret Doctrines,' sacred tomes in the Theosophical tradition. Reigh was a member of the Theosophy Society. These treasures of knowledge were later lent to Koen Liang. At this juncture, Boan An was but sixteen, with Koen Liang being a few months younger.

In this high school, Boan An's interest in spiritual matters

was profoundly conspicuous, which somewhat perturbed his father, fearing it might obstruct his academic pursuits. In truth, ever since elementary school, his father had noticed a unique disposition in his child. Despite the boy's undeniable sternness, he was pious without being socially withdrawn. This peculiar inclination commenced when he was often brought to his grandfather's residence.

This particular grandfather of Boan An, Tee Teng Hui, had a penchant for meditating in the mountains and was a vegetarian. During visits to his grandfather's home, Boan An partook in consuming vegetarian meals. Unexpectedly, he developed a fondness for it. "Delicious," he remarked.

Thereafter, he disavowed the consumption of meat, inclining instead towards vegetables, tempeh, tofu, and eggs. The presence of meat deterred him from touching the meal. His parents unleashed their consternation because, at that time, vegetarianism was misconstrued as unhealthy and inadvisable.

This occurred when he was thirteen. Fortunately, Boan An's grandmother harbored a deep affection for him. A compassionate grandmother who showered Boan An with immense attention and care. Witnessing the absence of suitable meals, she would give him money to buy oil and charcoal. Subsequently, she instructed him to ignite the fire, seize a pan, and fry tofu, spinach, water spinach, and eggs. His grandmother taught Boan An the art of cooking. Her loving presence and teachings infused Boan An with a sense of comfort and peace. She instilled in him the essence of discipline—awakening early, tidying the bed, folding the blankets, and ensuring that no food was wasted. These teachings from his grandmother lingered in Boan An's heart and mind into adulthood.

In 1941, they graduated from HBS B. Before parting ways, Boan An invited his friends for a camping excursion on Mount Gede. He assumed the role of a guide, as he was well-acquainted with the general terrains of the mountain.

Because his final exam results were excellent, including obtaining the highest ranking, Boan An was accepted into THS12, Bandung, in the Department of Natural Sciences. Koen Liang was also accepted into THS¹¹, but in the Mechanical Engineering department. Boan An departed for Bandung in September 1941, by a packed bus. At that time, intercity bus travel often entailed a lengthy wait until the bus reached full capacity before departing.

In Bandung, Boan An rented a room on Suniaraja Street. Koen Liang often visited him, discussing occultism and spiritual matters. Apparently, his curiosity and interest became more and more fervent. In reality, their interactions were less of a discussion and more of Koen Liang posing continuous questions, with Boan An offering explanation.

Outside of lecture hours, Boan An was active in the Bandung Student Corps and Ta Siok, both located in

¹¹ Now known as the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB).

Bandung. The Bandung Student Corps was a student organization where most members were Dutch, and later it welcomed indigenous and descent people or mixed-race individuals. Ta Siok was also student association, but entirely composed of people of mixed descent. In these two student organizations, Boan An learned a lot about public speaking. He was known as a friendly, open, always relaxed, and generous friend. He liked to carry candies in his pocket, which he would then share with his friends in the lecture room. On occasion, he even brought fruits to share with them.

While Boan An typically exuded a calm demeanor, there were moments when his emotions

surged like thunder. One afternoon, Suniaraja Street was somewhat quiet. The air was cold. Boan An and Koen Liang were sitting on the porch, chatting. A local thug abruptly entered, passing through the yard without permission. Boan An considered this against the rules, so he confronted the man. However, the man continued on his path. This triggered Boan An's emotions, and he yelled at the man. Fortunately, the altercation didn't escalate further, as the man, sensing Boan An's resolve, immediately left. Koen Liang was quite anxious, as he knew that man was a thug.

"I want to study, don't you disturb."





*Giving a Vesak press conference for the year 2497/1953 in the courtyard of
Borobudur Temple*

Chapter 5

The Japanese Era

... especially in Boan An's heightened intuition, as he seemed able to discern people's thoughts.

The Pacific War erupted in December 1941. However, this great war did not affect the lectures at HCS. Only after Japan entered Indonesia in March 1942 were the HCS lectures halted. Students returned to their respective hometowns. Boan An wanted to return to Bogor but had no money. So, he rode a bicycle from Bandung back to Bogor. He pedaled his bicycle, returning to Bogor via Cianjur. While climbing uphill, he was forced to get off and push the bicycle. Pleasantly, when the road descended windingly, Boan An didn't need to pedal; he let the bicycle speed on its own, only occasionally needing to brake to

avoid going too fast. Speeding could also be dangerous. At that time, many roads were damaged due to the war. The journey to Bogor took over half a day. Fortunately, the sun's heat was bearable.

In the Japanese era, people endured great misery. Initially, Japan promised to grant independence to the people, but it turned out Japan was lying. Young men and women were trained to become soldiers solely to defend Japan against the Allies. Many people were starving.

The clothes were also made of rubber fabric. When it was hot, the fabric would stick to the skin.

When removed, it felt extremely painful, especially for those with more body hair. It was considered good if stores could fill a quarter of their merchandise. More stores were empty. Rice was rationed at two ounces per person per day when it arrived regularly; if it didn't, many people missed out. Corn rice became a common meal during this period.

The people, faced not only hardships but also fear. If one passed in front of Japanese soldiers, they had to bow in respect. If not, they could be struck with the butt of a rifle. The Japanese soldiers were slapping people around.

During those distressing times, Boan An, together with Prof. Eng Tjen Gian, whose wife was a PNI figure, coordinated a communal kitchen in Bogor to serve residents who were lacking food. Boan An went to the villages. The situation at that time was dangerous. He looked for areas that lacked food supplies, then determined and announced when the communal kitchen would be held.

At that time, the communal kitchen was organized once a week. The wives of wealthy individuals did the cooking. Many residents came; they were grateful, even though they were uncertain about the conditions of the coming days.

Apart from managing the communal kitchen and fighting illiteracy, Boan An spent his time deepening his spiritual knowledge. He liked exchanging thoughts with monks at temples, with Hajis near his house, and also with priests. In terms of mingling with these elders, Boan An didn't find it difficult. He had the skills. Meanwhile, his friends and also his teacher (a Dutch named Reigh) were sent to concentration camps. So, when Boan An went to the mountains, he practiced alone.

For mountain excursions, he often invited his childhood friend Anyi. They camped at Mount Salak, Mount Gede, and sometimes at Kandang Badak on Mount Pangrango. Once there, if Boan An had already said, "I want to practice, don't you disturb," then Anyi would go enjoy the view.

Given their age, Anyi displayed flirtatious behavior, contrasting with Boan An who was virtuous regarding women. Boan An respected women. If Anyi teased women, Boan An liked to admonish. “Don’t,” he said, “it would be a loss if she later got angry. I’d rather lose money than make her angry.”

Significant changes took place within Boan An during this period. He became calmer, but his pace quickened. At home, he did not like to talk. Anyi noticed, especially in Boan An’s heightened intuition, as he seemed able to discern people’s thoughts.

Like the time at Kandang Badak. There were many rabbits there. An idea crossed Anyi’s mind to catch a rabbit. “If I use a slingshot, I could get one,” he thought silently.

Before he did anything, Boan An, who was in front of him, interrupted, “Don’t do that.”

“Do what?” Anyi asked, somewhat surprised.

“Pity them, let them eat. Go find some cauliflower to feed them.”

His interest in the supernatural world eventually led Boan An to acquaint many people from spiritual circles. He traveled in search of knowledge as far as Central Java, Solo, and Yogyakarta. He quickly became familiar with people from Theosophy, and due to his extensive knowledge, he was called “Brother An.” During this time, he also met Khoe Soe Kiam, who was equally interested in mystical matters. They often traveled together to lakes and places said to be inhabited by supernatural beings.

In the temples, he was also well-received. At that time, when a young person was vegetarian and disciplined, the monks and temple guardians were very pleased. When Boan An visited, he was fed and welcomed warmly. Moreover, his demeanor was naturally open and friendly.



Photo from when he was a student in the Netherlands

Chapter 6

In A Foreign Land

Inside that package was a pipe, intended as a gift for his father.

Boan An's father held little fondness for his son's interests in spiritualism. Scarcely a day passed without a flurry of reprimands raining down upon Boan An. Yet fortune, in its curious ways, offered an opportunity in 1946, a year after Indonesia celebrated its dawn of independence. A pathway opened, allowing students to journey to the Netherlands as "learner-laborers." During this time, his father's voice was a relentless wind urging him to pursue his studies continuously. However, financial support was distant, and Boan An was tasked with forging his own path to fund his journey.

Boan An finally decided to go to the Netherlands. With his belongings bundled, he boarded a ship, marking his departure in April. Short on funds, the ship became both a vessel of travel and a domain of labor. Days echoed with the symphony of mopping, sweeping, and cleaning toilets. He spent the month-long journey across the relentless sea with these chores as steadfast companions. Fortunately, his previous mingling with people from all walks of life helped him to endure these oceanic trials. Armed with knowledge and draped in spiritual curiosity, the ship became a garden where thoughts flourished and mingled with the Dutch minds aboard.

After a month at sea, Boan An finally arrived in the land of cheeses and tulips. Disembarking, he made his way to Groningen, following addresses given to him by Reigh. In Groningen, he met two famous Indonesian musicians, Lin Kek Siang and Lin Kek Heng. The address from Reigh turned out to be the home of Reigh's own parents, who welcomed Boan An warmly, providing a haven of shelter and kindness.

During his stay, Boan An remained mindful of his surroundings. Rising early each morning, he assisted with peeling vegetables, cooking, and washing in the kitchen. The knowledge and skills passed down from his grandmother now proved invaluable.

Without delay, he submitted an application along with his diploma to the University of Groningen. With the support of Prof. Dr. H.J. Bakker, a professor of organic chemistry at the University, Boan An was accepted into the *Fakulteit Wis en Natuurkunde* (Faculty of Science and Physics), majoring in Chemistry.

In this culturally diverse environment, Boan An became active in Theosophical organizations. Initially, he simply enjoyed attending lectures. Meanwhile, his high school friend, Tan Koen Liang, continued his studies at THS in Bandung, which had reopened after Indonesia's independence. They maintained their friendship through letters, despite the distance separating them.

Outside of classroom hours, Boan An attended Theosophical lectures and studied philosophy under Prof. Peleesnor. Additionally, he learned Pali and Sanskrit from Dr. van der Leeuw.

Summertime, with its warm caress, ignited the flames of adventure within Boan An. A resolve was forged—a journey through the terrains of European lands. Pockets lightly adorned with wealth, his journey commenced upon the wheels of a bicycle towards the realms of France. The pathways, at times, were stripped of monetary graces, and lodgings in inns became elusive dreams. Thus, the stables became his nocturnal haven, amidst horses and the soft whispers of straw.

Morning light would find him cleaning the stables, tending to the equines. The stable keepers, moved by compassion, shared meals with him, sustaining him on his journey through France.

In an age of steam and iron, Boan An, the intrepid traveler, made his way to the luminous city of Paris, drawn by the wisdom of the sage Krishnamurti. Paris, in its summer glory, greeted his Indonesian skin with warmth, a reminder of his sun-soaked homeland. The city hummed with activity, resembling a hive filled with seekers drawn to Krishnamurti's teachings. Amidst the crowds, Boan An sought pearls of wisdom from the sage's words.

In this enchanting confluence of souls, fortune smiled upon Boan An, leading him to meet another traveler from Indonesia—a Sufi by faith—who invited him to share the stage to recount tales of their homeland. Together, they wove stories, sharing the beauty and profound cultures of Indonesia with their audience.

In addition to Dutch, Boan An was fluent in French, German, and

English. Here, speakers were given honorariums for their talks, and Boan An received his share. So, on his return to the Netherlands, he carried a little money in his pocket.

Back in the land known for its tulips and windmills, news of disaster greeted him. Boan An witnessed people talking about a horrendous disaster, namely the leaking of the Wicheren Dam. This dam is one of the Netherlands' key flood barriers. Situated below sea level, the Netherlands depended on such structures to prevent flooding, and the thought of losing them and the ominous tides threatening to swallow their land stirred anxiety among the Dutch people.

Concerned, Boan An soon learned that efforts were underway to repair the damaged areas. Reading about the appeals for help in the newspapers, Boan An quickly decided to join the relief effort.

By this time, he had grown a beard, and his hair reached his shoulders. He had taken a peculiar vow to let them grow until he felt he had achieved a certain level of

wisdom. “Shan’t cut it while I’m still a nincompoop. It’s a matter of pride,” he mused.

Now, these acts of his were but symbols—signs that he was steadfastly striding down the spiritual path. Where the cruel sea had left its mark of chaos, Boan An lent his hands, aiding in the healing of the wounded land. Young men and women, people from all across the vast European plains, convened there. Together, they toiled, their bodies enfolded by muck and mud, restoring what the raging waters had ravaged. And amidst them, Boan An, a figure of peculiar appearance but with a vigor that could put the mightiest to shame, quickly became the center of much attention. His face, framed by the wilderness of his hair and beard, soon graced the cover of a magazine, narrating tales of their endeavors.

By some stroke of cosmic curiosity, this very magazine fluttered its way over to Bandung. There, Koen Liang, stumbled upon it in the silent aisles of a library. A sense of familiarity brushed

across him as his eyes met the face on the magazine’s cover. A closer inspection, and lo and behold, it revealed itself to be none other than Boan An, albeit transformed with a beard and long hair tied gallantly at the back.

Astonished and filled with curiosity, Koen Liang swiftly penned down his questions and sent them flying towards the Netherlands, seeking confirmation of this extraordinary appearance. And as the days rolled by, a letter arrived, bearing Boan An’s affirmation.

During his time in Wicheren, Boan An’s circle of friends expanded to include people from diverse countries like Switzerland and Austria. When the holidays arrived, Boan An embarked on journeys through these lands, welcomed into the homes of his newfound friends, leaving behind the days of seeking shelter in horse stables.

As he entered his third year abroad, Boan An delved even deeper into spiritualism. For three years, he studied mysticism under Dr. J.E. Van Der Stok, a Professor Emeritus at

Landbouw Hogeschool Wageningen. His exploration of various religious teachings deepened, and his inclination toward Buddhism became increasingly evident.

Despite his travels, his connection to Indonesia remained strong. Birthdays of siblings were celebrated with letters, and postcards chronicling his adventures found their way to his father. Fate, in its playful manner, once even brought him face to face with Koen Liang's brother, Koen Swan, in this faraway land, becoming a bridge of tales from his beloved Indonesian shores.

As his fourth year drew to a close, Boan An sent a letter to Koen Liang in Bandung, revealing a life-altering decision. In it, he shared his resolve not to continue his studies in Chemistry but to devote himself to spreading Buddhism. The letter surprised Koen Liang. While he had known Boan An's interest in occultism and his true aspiration, he hadn't foreseen his sole dedication to Buddhism. The decision caught him off guard.

Since the end of his second year in the Netherlands, Boan An had been giving talks at Theosophical gatherings, not only in the Netherlands but also in Paris and London. He continued practicing his magnetic healing skills, helping many along the way. Gradually, Tee Boan An's name became known among spiritualism enthusiasts across Europe.

After five years abroad, Boan An finally returned to Indonesia in 1951. His relatives in Bogor were taken aback to hear of his return, and even more so by his transformed appearance: long hair, a beard, and mostly white attire.

When Boan An had left, he hadn't spoken a word, disappearing quietly. It was only later—over a year after his departure—that a neighbor, asked by Boan An's father to retrieve a package from the Netherlands, informed others. Only then did the neighbors come to know that Boan An had been in the Netherlands. Inside that package was a pipe, intended as a gift for his father.



*“Monks are ordained to
cease the clatter of utensils
and the dance of morsels
in the mouth past the
noon’s high symphony.
They partake of morning
meals when the sun is a
young dreamer, and as the
noon draws its curtains,
a harmony of liquids
serenades their beings until
the dawn stirs the skies
again.”*

Chapter 7

Becoming an Anagarika

... the 1953 Vesak celebration was somewhat of a shock therapy. It startled people, left them astonished, and made them realize...

Tee Boan An returned to Indonesia in early 1951. His arrival was joyously received by his family. However, many of his relatives found him quite changed. Five years abroad indeed brought about many changes. Physically, Boan An was strikingly different. He looked older than his actual age. His hair was long, coiled up. His clothing consisted of a long-sleeved white shirt, and white long trousers. His lengthy beard covered his chin, with a mustache that followed the contours of his lips, merging with the beard.

His demeanor was much calmer. What impressed those who knew him most was the light in his face. His

face was much different compared to before he went abroad. It wasn't the hair that made him so different. But the warm glow in his eyes, and he had a clear facial radiance.

Initially, he visited his old friends, quite a considerable number, especially those interested in spiritualism. He was warmly welcomed by them and was even later elected as the chairman of the United Sam Kauw Indonesia, and deputy chairman of the central management of Theosophical Youth. These positions later gave him much latitude to spread the teachings of Buddhism.

Subsequently, he became a teacher in several high schools in Jakarta. In one school, named Sariputra School, he was in good friendship with the principal named Ong Tiang Biau. Ong Tiang Biau was about twenty-five years older than Boan An, so Boan An called him “Uncle Ong.”

Boan An went to school by bicycle. His unusual appearance made him quickly known by his students. Not just his appearance, but ‘Teacher Tee’s’ teaching method also left a profound impression. He never got angry, but was very firm. If someone didn’t do their homework, the task had to be repeated many times. Strangely enough, even though he never got angry, his students obeyed. This might be because they respected him. There was a unique charisma in the teacher they called Mr. Tee.

Once, while teaching in a class, Boan An suddenly fell silent and seemed lost in thought. His students wondered why their teacher suddenly stood silent. Then Mr. Tee said he could not continue teaching

that day. He had to hurry home; someone he knew had passed away. Then Mr. Tee asked his students for permission to leave. Such an incident surely left his students stunned. Who would not feel awed?

Boan An decided to become an *anagarika*— a servant of Buddha who spreads the Teachings, unmarried but not yet a monk—while in the Netherlands before returning to Indonesia. After that, he became more active in taking every opportunity to introduce Buddhist teachings. Not only in Jakarta, because in his capacity as the deputy chairman of the central management of Theosophical Youth, he was often invited everywhere on the island of Java.

In Central Java, he was well-known by the Theosophical figure Mangunkawatja, who had been ordained as a lay follower when the Venerable Narada Thera visited Indonesia in 1934. He also had a good relationship with other Theosophical Youth figures there, such as Ananda Suyono and Parwati. Boan An was

respected for his broad insight and his friendly and calm demeanor.

In the temples, he also helped guide the congregation. In the temples, there were indeed monks, but most of them did not give sermons. With the activities carried out by Boan An, many congregants began to know Buddhist teachings. When Boan An was present, many congregants came, because, besides giving sermons, he also conducted healing using plain water.

Meanwhile, as he was considered “worthy of exchanging thoughts,” he was often invited by Javanese people who delved into Kejawen (Javanese mysticism). He could be accepted among the Javanese, not really because of anything else, but solely due to his humble and gentle attitude. This surely aligned with the Javanese way of life.

Later, in 1953, Boan An floated the idea to hold a national Vesak celebration at Borobudur. In previous times, the Theosophical community had held several Vesak celebrations at the Great Temple. However, the celebrations they conducted

were limited to the participation of Theosophical activists. This proposal was well received by his colleagues. Thus, they started to mobilize. Invitations were distributed to officials and representatives of neighboring countries where the majority of the population were Buddhists. Flyers were distributed throughout Indonesia. Boan An was supported not only by the Theosophical community but also by the Javanese people and the United Sam Kauw Indonesia.

They went to the embassies of Burma (now Myanmar), Sri Lanka, India, Singapore, and Thailand. From there, they could obtain books containing Buddhist parittas (chants). Special reception was given by the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, who even ‘sent down’ his daughter to teach them to sing the Jaya Mangala Gatha. But because of the language difference, what was heard was the Jaya Mangala Gatha with a distinctive Indonesian rhythm.

Vesak Day 2497 fell on May 22, 1953. The sacred day of the Buddhist community, also known as Buddha

Day, was celebrated to commemorate three important events: The birth of Siddhartha Gotama, Ascetic Gotama attaining Buddhahood, and Buddha Gotama's *parinirvana*. All three of these events happened in the month of Vesak, right at the full moon.

On that day, many Buddhists and Buddhist sympathizers came. Their number reached over three thousand people. Because there was an extraordinary crowd, residents around the Borobudur Temple also came in droves to watch. Congregants arrived the night before. Meanwhile, the celebration was held at noon because the Vesak moment, according to the calculation, fell precisely at midday.

Many journalists also came. That was the first time since the Majapahit era that the Vesak celebration was held on a grand scale at Borobudur again. After waiting for half a day, the celebration finally took place with full reverence. The hearts of those who believed in Buddhist teachings were stirred. After all, it was the first time they could pray together, meditate together, marking the

reemergence of the Buddhist spirit at Borobudur Temple. The temple stood robustly, overshadowing the sea of humanity surrounding it. Giant Buddhist flags flapped fiercely in the wind at its peak.

The event quite attracted the attention of the community and became news in the newspapers. Thus, for the further development of Buddhism in Indonesia, the 1953 Vesak celebration became a sort of shock therapy. It startled people, left them astonished, and made them realize that Buddhist teachings once existed on this land. The broader community became aware that Buddhist teachings and its followers still exist in Indonesia.

From Borobudur Temple, not long after, Boan An, along with his friends, successfully planted the five-colored flag in the sandy sea of Tengger, at the peak of Mount Bromo, East Java.

"Shan't cut it while I'm still a nincompoop. It's a matter of pride."

Chapter 8

Studying with Mahabhikshu

Buddhist teachings were only known to a limited extent. If no one is willing to sacrifice, then who will?

In the days following the celebration, Boan An gave lectures in Central Java, and then he returned to Jakarta. In Jakarta, he often visited Kong Hua Sie Monastery (Guanghua Si). Kong Hua Sie was actually a monastery from the Chan lineage of China. However, due to language barriers, the residing master there was not able to expound the Dharma in Indonesian. It was unfortunate because the residing master was not just anyone. In the Kong Hua Sie Monastery lineage, the master was at the very top, hence he was called the Mahabhikshu.

His name was Pen Ching (Benqing),¹² and many believed he had reached a level of sanctity.

¹² The Venerable Mahabhikshu Pen Ching or The Venerable Sanghanata Aryamula

Boan An liked visiting Kong Hua

was born in 1878 in a village in Fujian Province, China. Since childhood, he had been vegetarian and was acquainted with Buddhist teachings from historical and literary books. He became a novice at Kong Hua Sie Monastery and became a disciple of the Venerable Acharya Thung Chan (Tong-zhan) at the age of 19. The following year, he became a monk.

At the age of 23, the Venerable Pen Ching arrived in Java on his Dharma journey, staying at the Tay Kak Sie Monastery in Semarang for three years. After that, he returned to his home country. There, he was offered the leadership of Kong Hua Sie Monastery. But he declined the offer. A year later, he returned to Indonesia, this time living in Bandung, at the Hiap Thian Kiong Monastery. He settled there for four years, until the arrival of the Venerable Pen Ru (Benru). The Hiap Thian Kiong Monastery was then handed over to his senior fellow disciple. And he continued his Dharma journey to Cirebon, then to Karawang, and resided at the Kuan Ti Bio Monastery. Within two years, he managed to restore the Kuan Ti Bio Monastery from a dilapidated state to being frequently visited by devotees. After

Sie. The Venerable Mahabhikshu Pen Ching warmly welcomed him because back then, it was rare for a young person to be so disciplined. Boan An liked to ask questions to the Venerable Mahabhikshu Pen Ching. From the Venerable Mahabhikshu Pen Ching, Boan An also deepened his understanding of Buddha Dharma. They could exchange thoughts all day long. When mealtime arrived, Boan An was invited to join.

fixing up Kuan Ti Bio, he then continued his journey as a wandering monk.

In 1926, the Venerable Mahabhikshu Pen Ching, who had been in monkhood for twenty-eight years, arrived in Jakarta. Initially, he lived in a small hut in the yard of a small cetya in the Petak Sinkian area, West Jakarta. Later, after the nun residing in the cetya moved, the place was handed over to the Venerable Mahabhikshu Pen Ching. Gradually, the cetya became more well-known. Finally, in 1950, the cetya was officially inaugurated as the Indonesian branch of the Kong Hua Sie Monastery.

In 1962, on the twentieth day of the fourth month of the Lunar calendar, the Venerable Mahabhikshu Pen Ching passed away. His body was cremated, and three days later, from his white ashes, a five-colored Sarira relic was found, a relic found in the bodies of holy people. (Quoted from the book "Untukmu Mahasthavira (For You, Mahasthavira)", The Committee for the 68th Birthday and 38 Years of Service of the Venerable Mahasthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, Jakarta, 1990.)

Seeing that Boan An had karmic ties with Buddhist teachings and was not interested in worldly matters, people in the monastery often urged him to be ordained. Because he was well-received and even invited to eat together, Boan An felt a sense of gratitude in his heart. In Buddhist teachings, expressing gratitude and repaying the kindness of a master is by becoming a disciple of that master.

Finally, coinciding with the birthday of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, Boan An was ordained as a novice monk with the name Ti Chen (Tizheng). Present during this period were the Venerable Mahabhikshu Ju Sung, the Venerable Master Ju Khung, the Venerable Master Cen Yao, and the Venerable Master Wu Cing.

Subsequently, Novice Ti Chen lived in Kong Hua Sie. His parents and siblings in Bogor, knowing his nature since childhood, could understand his decision. After residing and studying for several months, the intention to continue to

become a monk arose in the heart of Novice Ti Chen.

Actually, even before he became a novice, in Bandung, there was a monk named Venerable Tong Ie who had invited him to China to be ordained as a monk. Back then, Boan An agreed because he had the following thought, “In Indonesia, there’s no one spreading Buddhist teachings yet. Buddhist teachings are only known to a limited extent. If no one is willing to sacrifice, then who will?”

During this period, he couldn’t leave because Indonesia and China had no diplomatic relations. Until Master Tong Ie passed away, the intention was not realized.

Meanwhile, he received news from Bogor that his father was seriously ill. A few days later, escorted by his relatives, his father came to Jakarta for treatment. He asked to meet his son. Upon arriving at Kong Hua Sie, not long after, in the arms of Novice Ti Chen, Tee Hong Gie closed his eyes. The death of his father did not change the determination of Novice Ti Chen to become a monk.

His teacher, the Venerable Mahabhikshu Pen Ching, could read the heart of his student. He found funds for his student to go abroad to be ordained as a monk. He could not be ordained as a monk in Indonesia because the number of monks was still less than required to ordain a new monk. Since the government had no diplomatic relations with China, Novice Ti Chen tried to contact the embassy of Sri Lanka in Jakarta.

At that moment, in his heart, he had not yet made a decision to choose which Buddhist country to go to. Any country that was willing to accept him would do. The Sri Lankan embassy then was not very enthusiastic about welcoming his intention, so Novice Ti Chen contacted the Burmese embassy. There, the people at the Burmese embassy received him well, and his intentions were greeted with enthusiasm. They immediately contacted the Buddhist community in their country. Coincidentally, the group that was contacted was a group of monks led by a monk

known as Mahasi Sayadaw.¹³ After

¹³ A renowned monk from Burma, born in 1904 in Seikkhun, a prosperous village located approximately seven miles west of the city of Shwebo in Northern Burma. At the age of six, he was sent to the monastery to receive religious teachings from the Venerable U Adicca, the chief monk of the Pyinmana Monastery in Seikkhun. Six years later, he was ordained as a novice under the same teacher and was given the name Shin Sobhana (Giving Hope for Success), a name that matched his firmness, impressive demeanor, and magnificent and calm behavior. He turned out to be a clever student and made rapid progress in studying the scriptures.

At the age of 19, he was ordained as a monk, given the name Ashin Sobhana, with his teacher being the Venerable Sumedha Sayadaw Ashin Vimala. Ashin is a title for monks in the Burmese tradition. The Venerable Ashin Sobhana, within four years, made significant leaps through the levels (basic, intermediate, upper) of the Pali script exams conducted by the government. While studying, he also taught at the Taikyaung Monastery, Taungwaingale, in Moulmein. Specifically, he delved deeply into the Mahasatipatthana Sutta. Ultimately, his immense interest in the *satipatthana* method in Vipassana meditation brought him to Venerable Mingun Jetawan Sayadaw in Thaton.

Under the care of the Venerable Mingun Jetawan Sayadaw, the Venerable Ashin Sobhana underwent intensive Vipassana training for four months. The results were excellent, enabling him to teach it to three students in Seikkhun in 1938.

Subsequently, he continued to devote his attention to the form of Vipassana meditation in *satipatthana*. After the second world war ended, and Burma gained its

getting approval from there, Novice

independence in 1948, the Venerable Ashin Sobhana had settled in Mahasi Monastery, Ingyintaw-taik, making him better known as the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. In 1949, while in Seikkhun, the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw successfully completed a new translation of the Mahasatipatthana Sutta, surpassing all existing translations.

The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's reputation grew increasingly well-known in the following years. Thus, the prime minister of Burma personally invited the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw to teach at the *sasana-yeikhta*, a place for studying scriptures and practicing Dharma, in Rangoon, which covers an area of ten hectares. Within five years since the establishment of this *sasana-yeikhta*, similar meditation centers appeared all over the country, with students of the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw as meditation teachers. Not only in Burma, but these meditation centers also expanded to Thailand and Sri Lanka. Several such centers grew in Cambodia and India. According to the 1972 census, the number of yogis practicing across the country was more than seven hundred thousand.

In recognition of his extraordinary achievements and scholarship, he was awarded the title Agga Maha Pandita (One Who Has Achieved Noble Wisdom) in 1952 by the future president of Burma.

In the historic Sixth Sangha Council in Burma in 1954, the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw played a crucial role. He acted as the Osana Sayadaw (Final Editor) and Puncchaka Sayadaw (Questioner).

In this Sangha Council, he also played a critical role in improving not only the Pali scriptures but also the comments (*atthakatha*) and sub-comments (*tika*). In improving these secondary literatures, the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw was responsible

Ti Chen was immediately advised to

for making critical analysis, correct interpretation, and precise reconciliation of several divergent and critical explanations. The tangible result of the Sixth Sangha Council was the revival of interest in Theravada Buddhism among Buddhists.

The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, a few years later, also involved in composing the introduction of the Pali Visuddhi-magga-Atthakatha. A revision work on some conditions and misinterpretations involving its talented and noble author, the Venerable Buddhaghosa.

And in 1959, he had the opportunity to visit Indonesia along with a group of monks from Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand, and Japan to participate in the monk ordination ceremony, which was held for the first time again in Indonesia.

The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's other important works include the translation of Visuddhi-magga Mahatika. This translation result is a remarkable performance by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. The part about Samayantara (different views from other religions or beliefs), for example, is the part that requires the most expertise. To translate it, the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw had to, among other things, study Hindu philosophical doctrines and their terminology using all available references, including works in Sanskrit and English.

The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's international reputation in Buddhist meditation has attracted many foreign visitors and yogis. Some of the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's works were also published abroad, including "The Satipatthana Vipassana Meditation" and "Practical Insight Meditation" by Unity Press, San Francisco, California, USA; and "Progress of Insight" by Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka. Until 1978, at the age

depart. A visa could be obtained in a short amount of time.

At the end of December 1953, Novice Ti Chen departed for Burma by plane. The flight costs were covered by funds successfully collected by his teacher, the Venerable Mahabhikshu Pen Ching. His friend Ong Tiang Biau also helped a lot.

"The flying monk."

of seventy-five, the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw had written 67 Buddhist literatures in Burmese.

The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw is highly respected by countless grateful students, both in his homeland, Burma, and abroad. At the time this excerpt was written, Sayadaw had reached the age of seventy-five in his life, and no longer had the strength and firmness of his youth. But as a true Buddhist student, he continues to work diligently to spread the Dharma throughout the world, guiding thousands, even tens of thousands of people on the Path of Inner Enlightenment and Freedom.

U Nyi Nyi

Yogi and student of Mahasi

Executive Committee Member of

Buddhasasana-nuggaha

Rangoon, October 18, 1978

(Cited from "Untukmu Mahasthavira (For You Mahasthavira)", Committee of the 68th Birthday and 38 Years of Service Anniversary of the Venerable Mahasthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita)



*With the teacher, the Venerable Sanghanata Aryamula Pen Ching, in front
of Kong Hua Sie Temple, Jakarta (1953)*

Chapter 9

On the Path

“We are not only forbidden from holding money, but our daily sustenance blossoms from the gardens of benevolent hearts.”

Samanera Ti Chen, an intrepid traveler, soared through the skies, bound for Burma. Times had spun their wheels since he last stood upon his native soil, a returnee from the Dutch lands—with hair cascading down like waterfalls, and a beard that wagged like the tail of a seasoned dog, clothed in the hues of purity and peace. This time, however, he returned a different specimen. His head as bare as a winter tree, cloaked in a single robe of profound orange, an emblem of his newfound path.

Burma embraced him, arms wide as the endless sky. And wasting not a moment nor a breath, he plunged himself into the tumultuous

seas of Vipassana meditation at the heart of the Mahasi Sasana Yeikhta in Rangoon, now fondly known as Yangon. In this hallowed hall of wisdom, our man stirred the winds and caused quite the commotion — scaling the heights of progress at a pace that left mouths agape and eyes widened in bewilderment. His remarkable sojourn caught the discerning eye of the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw himself, who appointed the wise Bhikkhu U Nyanuttara Sayadaw to shepherd him through the realms of spiritual discoveries.

As the hands of time gracefully danced across the calendar, on a crisp

day marked the 23rd of January in the year 1954, our devoted Samanera Ti Chen underwent a transformative ceremony, emerging anew as a Samanera once more, this time immersing himself in the Theravada traditions of Burma, and as the sun bid adieu to the day, he was fully welcomed into the brotherhood of monks. At the helm, steering this vessel of spiritual passage, stood the Venerable Agga Maha Pandita U Ashin Sobhana Mahathera, a beacon known by the deeply moving name Mahasi Sayadaw. Endowed with blessings and given the name Jinarakkhita, he emerged adorned with the honorific “Ashin”, a title bestowed upon the bearers of the monk’s robe.

But life, as it is, is a river that never ceases its flow. Even in the tranquil hold of Rangoon, where he basked in the warm light of meditation under the tutelage of the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, the winds of change began to gently stir the leaves. Letters, carrying whispers and pleas from the distant shores of Indonesia, sailed through the skies, finding their way into his

contemplative existence, weaving threads of nostalgia and tugging at the strings of his heart, urging him to return to the welcoming arms of his motherland.

Back in Indonesia, a symphony of excitement played in the hearts of the Buddhist sympathizers as words woven in letters brought tidings of joy and the promise of the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita’s imminent return. Tales of his journey were passed from eager lips to listening ears, traveling through skillfully narrated words in letters, and finding echoes in the hallowed pages of the magazine Tri Budaja, a torchbearer of the Buddhist odyssey. So, with hearts aflame with anticipation and spirits riding on the wings of hope, the story of his triumphant return was lovingly interlaced into the core of their waiting beings.

While the Buddhist folks at home were marinating in a broth of hope and anticipation, the eagerly awaited monk seemed to linger in realms unknown, even as the calendar leaves flirted with the tail end of 1954. Anxious hearts sent

letters, like doves through the winds, seeking tales of their cherished guide and companion.

After a symphony of waiting, whispers in the wind sang that the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita would grace the native shores on the 17th of January, 1955, soaring through the skies from Singapore. It appeared that before his homeward odyssey, invitations from Malaysia and Singapore beckoned him, serenading him into inaugurating a Buddhist high school in Malaya and spreading the aromatic petals of Dharma.

In the lands of Malaya, he became known as “the flying monk”, flitting like a curious butterfly, here today and in the clasp of new horizons tomorrow. Money, that elusive companion, never jingled in his pockets, yet the compassionate generosity of the local Buddhist spirits always bestowed him with flight tickets. Even the wings that carried him homeward were painted with the kindness of the Singaporean fellowship.

When surrounded by the buzzing mosquitoes of Singapore’s

press, he unveiled the intricate journey of his travels, crafted without the threads of money. “We are not only forbidden from holding money,” he explained, “but our daily sustenance blossoms from the gardens of benevolent hearts.”

He further spilled the beans, “Monks are ordained to cease the clatter of utensils and the dance of morsels in the mouth past the noon’s high symphony. They partake of morning meals when the sun is a young dreamer, and as the noon draws its curtains, a harmony of liquids serenades their beings until the dawn stirs the skies again.”

As the clock played the tune of 04:55 in the evening, and the calendar marked the unfolding of the 17th of January, 1955, the plane cradling the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita gently landed on the grounds of Kemayoran Airport, Jakarta. The airport restaurant hummed with the melody of bustling souls from GSKI, around two hundred hearts beating in the rhythm of welcome. From afar, their eyes met the saffron symphony of robes and the moon-like serenity of

a bald head, and their hearts played tunes of gratitude, joy, and pride for having a spiritual shepherd, a guiding luminary, illuminating the paths of GSKI's future odyssey in Indonesia.

His return sent waves of elation, gently touching on the shores of Indonesian Buddhists' hearts. He was the first native son to flourish into monkhood since the fall of the Majapahit Dynasty. His outbound journey had seen him as Samanera Ti Chen, draped in the traditions of Mahayana China, but homecoming saw him swathed in robes of yellow, the living echoes of Buddha's times, preserved by Theravada traditions. His presence was a garden of peace, where tranquility emerged in every corner.

Once his feet whispered tales of return to the native soils, Bhante Ashin, as he was lovingly called by his fellowship, paid homage to his

master, the Venerable Mahabhiksu Pen Ching at Kong Hua Sie, Jakarta, temporarily nesting there. Every day, a parade of souls visited, showering him with petals of welcome. Not long did he dwell in Kong Hua Sie, for the winds carried him on Dharma journeys to distant havens. A fellowship of devotees stood as his supportive pillars, and thus, the spiritual odyssey unfurled its sails in the early whispers of 1955. Having become a Samanera, he had let the organizational reins slip from his hands.

Meanwhile in February 1955, the Venerable Narada Mahathera returned to Jakarta from a trip to Australia. He intended to give a lecture, but did not receive permission from government officials. Finally, the Venerable Mahathera Narada continued his journey home.

Chapter 10

Dharma Tour

As if the heavens themselves were in throes of a titanic struggle, lightning streaked across the sky, a brilliant display of nature's unbridled power...

The Dharma journey of the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita began in the verdant lands of West Java. From the bustling streets of Jakarta, to the green canopies of Bogor, through the mountain mists of Sukabumi and Cianjur, he made his way to the city of Bandung. There, like a shepherd gathering his flock, he brought together the sympathizers, gave sermons that touched souls, and inducted many into the fold of upasaka and upasika.

His pilgrimage then extended across the heartlands of Central Java. The pinnacle of Buddhist congregation that year was the

Waisak full moon of siddhi at Borobudur. The celestial event on May 6, 1955, at 6 PM, welcomed an assembly of the devout from across Java, Bali, and even the distant shores of Makassar. The airwaves of Radio Republik Indonesia at Yogyakarta buzzed with anticipation, ready to broadcast the ceremonial proceedings.

On that day, Borobudur was awash with a sea of humanity, most arriving in packed buses, a pilgrimage of modern conveyance. As the clock neared five, however, the skies opened up in a torrential downpour. As if the heavens themselves were in throes of a titanic struggle, lightning

streaked across the sky, a brilliant display of nature's unbridled power. The deluge delayed the ceremonies until eight in the evening, after the rains had graciously receded.

The stones still wet with heaven's blessing, the faithful ascended the temple's summit. Leading the procession was the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, followed by upasakas chanting the Jaya Mangala Gatha, their voices weaving through the night air. Candlelight flickered, casting an otherworldly glow, as they wound their way upwards, spiraling around each level to reach the pinnacle.

Atop the ancient terraces, large candles surrounded the open Buddha stupa, a sentinel of serenity. There, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita and the congregants paid homage, followed by the solemn recitation of the Panca Sila. Upasaka Mangunkawatja's rendition of the Jaya Mangala Gatha filled the night, leading into a meditative Waisak reflection.

The wee hours were marked by discourses from the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita and Drs. Sasanasurya Khoe Soe Kiam, the esteemed chairman of GSKI. "Upasaka Tengger," as they fondly called Moeljobroto from Tengger, Bromo Mountain, seized the moment to enlighten all about the Buddhist community of his highland home.

Questions and answers flowed until the dawn's early light. At 4:30 AM, a devotion capped the 2499th Waisak celebration, beginning with meditation. As the sky blushed with the first light of 5:45 AM, the gathering descended the temple levels. Near the Bodhi tree, they convened once more for prayer, local government officials joining, for the first time, a ceremony led by a monk.

This gathering also witnessed the ceremonial bestowment of a marble Buddha statue, a gift from a Cambodian benefactor, gratefully received by Parwati on behalf of the Theosophical youth society of

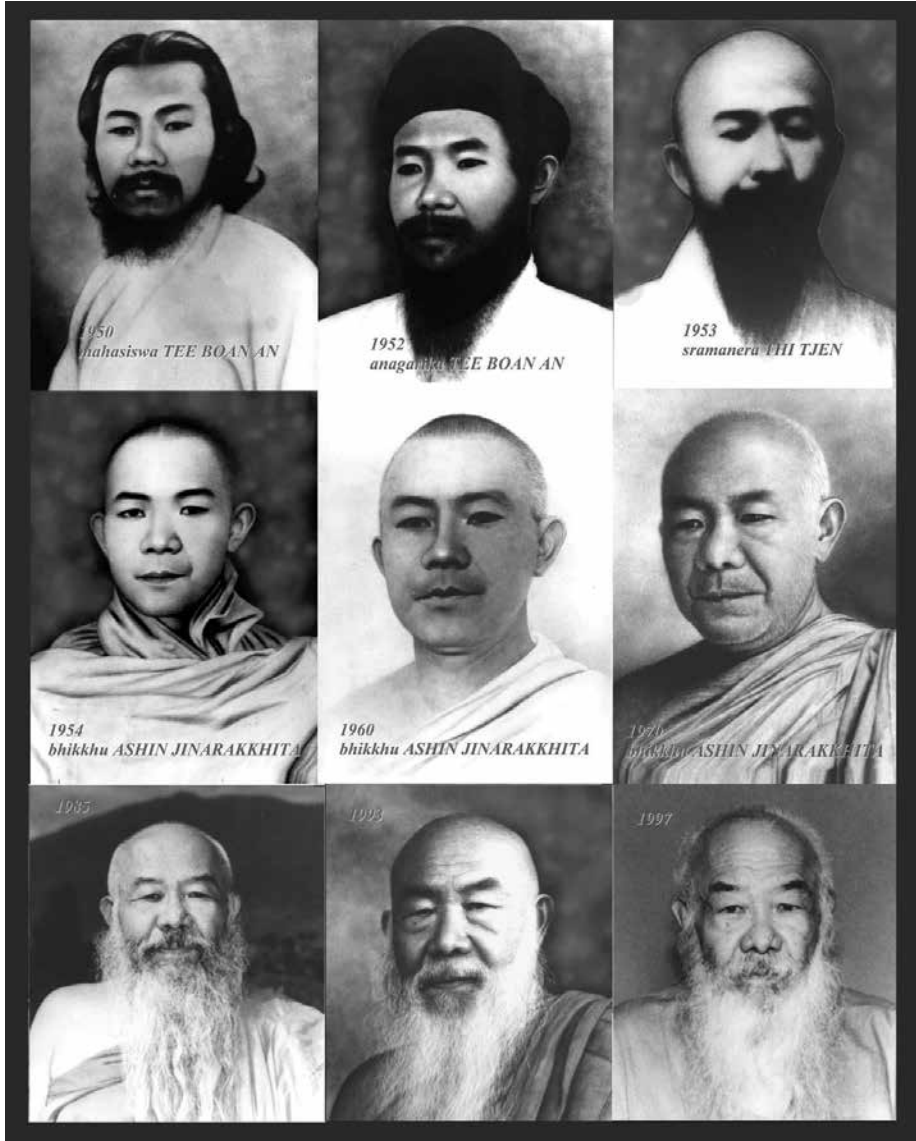
Yogyakarta. To Goei Thwan Ling, who generously offered land near Semarang for the future Buddhist center, a Buddhist flag was handed to claim the ground for faith.

From the historic steps of Borobudur, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita made his way to the city of Solo. By evening, another chapter

of Dharma was unfolded by him and the active members of GSKI.

“...the offering of sacrifices was not beneficial. The vibrations it created were also harmful. Far better to substitute sacrifices with blossoms.”





The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita through the Years

Chapter 11

The Village Monk and the Tengger Peak

To climb, the monk had to slip off his flip-flops. His hands stretched, threading through the straps. Then he began his ascent.

Having roused the spirits of his followers in the cities, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita began to delve into the secluded hamlets nestled in remote areas. He ventured into places where he knew traditional Buddhist communities existed, even if it meant traversing mountains and forests. He explored Purworejo, Sidoarjo, Probolinggo, Boyolali, Kutoarjo, Yogyakarta, Solo, Semarang, and other nearby locales. In these regions, Buddhist communities have existed for generations. The Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's arrival was a joyous event for the villagers, who were delighted to see a monk. He was welcomed into their homes, and

in the evenings, after returning from the fields, the villagers would gather in the home of an elder. There, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita would deliver his lectures. Many villagers did not understand Indonesian, but fortunately, there were those who knew Javanese and could interpret the proceedings.

The villagers' homes were simple. Walls woven from bamboo, roofs of nipa palm leaves, floors of earth, devoid of electricity. At night, darkness was kept at bay with oil lamps. The Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita would expound upon the Buddha Dharma. And since he had to stay overnight, he rested

in the villagers' homes. They vied with each other to prepare their dwellings for the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita to stay. Nights in the village were profoundly quiet. The sound of crickets and nocturnal creatures accompanied their sleep. By the eighth drumbeat, the villagers would already be asleep, for they had to be off to the fields early the next morning. The villagers were glad to host the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, drawn to his humble demeanor and authenticity. In those times, the outpouring of love from the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita was indeed extraordinary, recognized by his followers. Those who 'knew' and were close to him felt a profound peace. This is also what enabled him to be accepted everywhere. His arrival kindled their enthusiasm.

From Central Java, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita continued his journey to Eastern Java region. It happened to be the month of Kesodo. The local inhabitants around that time would perform sacrificial prayers at the peak of Tengger with every full moon of Kesodo. Most adhered to Hindu teachings, with a

few following the combined faith of Siwa-Buddha.

Upon hearing that there would be a gathering at the peak of Tengger, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita decided to go. His visit to the region was not a solitary affair; he was followed by a number of devotees, most of whom were college students from Yogyakarta enjoying their break. Among them was a young student named Parwati. She understood Javanese and served as the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's interpreter.

On chilly nights, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's companions would ascend Mount Tengger. The cold air was piercingly sharp, cutting to the bone. Everyone wore layers upon layers of clothing. The terrain was tough, particularly for a monk clad only in robes and flip-flops. There was no proper path, just a series of footprints that had created a trail of sorts. They followed this trail upwards. Thankfully, there was a local willing to guide them. Halfway to the peak, a cliff barred their way. A rope dangled from above the cliff.

The only way up was to climb this rope. If they were birds, they might have flown straight to the top.

One of the local guides climbed first, followed by a member of the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's entourage, then the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita himself. To climb, the monk had to remove his flip-flops. His hands stretched, threading his hands through the straps. Then, he started his ascent. Slowly but surely, they all reached the top. Parwati found the climb somewhat challenging as a woman, but ultimately everyone arrived safely.

At the summit, the mist was thick, making it dark. But this did not last long. The light of the full moon soon illuminated their path. An hour later, they reached the peak. Many people had already gathered there. Although most were Hindu, they warmly welcomed the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's group. The sense of brotherhood was palpable, despite their differing customs.

At the peak, there was a crater emitting smoke, creating an eerie atmosphere. Every Kesodo moon,

the locals offered animal sacrifices, like chickens, into the crater. They believed this was necessary to appease the "residents" of the mountain.¹⁴

¹⁴ Kesodo means the twelfth month according to the Saka calendar. The Kesodo celebration on Mount Bromo has its history. During the fall of the Majapahit kingdom, Prabu Brawijaya, along with his family and loyal subjects, left the palace and headed for Mount Bromo. There they settled and lived as farmers. Unfortunately, Prabu Brawijaya did not stay permanently with his people; he suddenly disappeared without a trace. The followers left by their king continued their lives on Mount Bromo as farmers. Despite the bitterness of their fate, these loyal subjects of the Majapahit king managed to survive and established a very simple village.

Among Prabu's followers was a woman named Roro Anteng, which means 'the silent one'. Roro Anteng was admired by a pandita's son named Joko Seger. Joko Seger wanted to marry Roro Anteng, and she agreed, provided that Joko Seger would meditate facing South, North, West, East, Upwards, and Downwards, each for one year. Joko Seger accepted Roro Anteng's condition and immediately began his ascetic practice.

To make a long story short, Joko Seger finally succeeded in marrying Roro Anteng. However, after many years, they still had no children. Together, they prayed to the gods to be blessed with twenty-five children. If their wish were granted, they would sacrifice their youngest child by throwing him into the crater of Mount Bromo.

The Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita spoke clearly, explaining that the offering of sacrifices was not beneficial. The vibrations it created were also harmful. Far better to substitute sacrifices with blossoms. His

Their wish was granted, and they had twenty-five children. The twenty-fifth child was named Kusuma. When Kusuma came of age, the crater of Mount Bromo began to rumble violently, as if demanding the fulfillment of the promise. Although no one knew of the parents' vow at the time they made it, Kusuma was aware. He repeatedly reminded his parents. Naturally, his parents were shocked. However, with a sincere heart, Kusuma intended to sacrifice himself to the crater. He earnestly pleaded with his parents to allow him to sacrifice himself into the crater of Mount Bromo for the good of the people. Better one victim than a disaster that befalls all.

Thus, precisely during the full moon of the Kesodo month, Kusuma was accompanied by his parents and all the people of Bromo to the crater of Mount Bromo. Without any hesitation, Kusuma threw himself into the tumultuous crater. At that moment, a resonant voice was heard, "I am not Kusuma; I am the God Kusuma."

Therefore, the people around Mount Bromo, every year during the full moon of the Kesodo month, hold a celebration to honor the God Kusuma who always protects the people of Mount Bromo. They do this by sacrificing the fruits of their harvest and other offerings.

In the 1950s, the number of people participating in the Kesodo celebration reached more than ninety thousand.

explanation was straightforward, yet remarkably, those present accepted it. He then led the recitation of Buddhist prayers of loving-kindness, while the Hindus recited their own prayers. Together, they prayed to purify the atmosphere around the crater.

The atmosphere became serene, and fear dissipated. The flowers brought by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's followers were scattered into the crater. The foul smell was replaced with the fragrance of the blossoms, which wafted upwards, carried by the winds to the far reaches.

Afterward, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's group took their leave. They planted a grand five-colored flag. That flag waved proudly once again atop Mount Tengger.

Having purified the summit of Mount Tengger, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's entourage descended back to the village at the foot of the mountain. A few hours later, roosters crowed at dawn. Early in the morning, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita left that village to visit

another. At that time, there were several villages whose inhabitants wholly embraced Buddhism. The arrival of the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita brought them joy. It is hard to articulate the emotions they felt upon being visited by a monk for the first time. The Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita delivered teachings, then initiated them into the Buddhist community with the recitation of the Trisarana.





With the upasakas and upasikas of Buddha Gaya Temple, Watugong

Chapter 12

Indonesian Fraternity of Lay Buddhists

The centralization on the the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita due to his charisma and his unique position as the sole Indonesian monk had its downsides, too.

After months of journeying to remote corners, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita returned to the city. In that period, he visited many villages and hamlets. His indefatigable movement was faithfully followed by his disciples, mostly students. Where the villagers did not speak Indonesian, they became his interpreters. One day here in this village, the next morning they were off to another. They slept in villagers' homes, dined on corn rice at their hearths. Early in the morning, they'd march out alongside the villagers. The locals went to their fields, and they went to yet another village. With no transport to avail, they took

to their heels. Through sweltering heat or sodden rain, thanks to spirits pure and buoyant, not a soul in the Venerable Jinarakkhita's entourage fell ill.

Coincidentally, near Semarang city, in Ungaran, at Watugong to be precise, a devotee previously initiated by the Venerable Jinarakkhita offered a plot of land. On this ground, the Venerable Jinarakkhita erected a humble abode for meditation practice. This devotee was Goei Thwan Ling. This place was henceforth known as Buddha Gaya. With this meditation center in place, whenever the Venerable Jinarakkhita visited Semarang, he

could stay there. Many followers would visit when the Venerable Jinarakkhita was at Buddha Gaya Monastery. Many came to listen to his discourses. And, more in tow came with their life's troubles.

The laypeople's troubles were varied. When illness struck a family, they sought the Venerable Jinarakkhita. Business woes? They trooped to him. With knowledge and a radiance of compassion, the Venerable Jinarakkhita gave counsel and prayed for the ailing. His serene and peaceful nature could soothe troubled minds. A calm mind aids a swift recovery, and clarity can be brought to any situation.

The lay people came to hold him in high regard and affection. Not a few felt indebted to him. Some among the common folk believed that the Venerable Jinarakkhita possessed "extraordinary abilities." Thus, for issues big or small, people sought his aid. After being helped, they were gently steered towards the Buddha Dharma. Starting with the issues at hand as examples, the Venerable Jinarakkhita elucidated

karma, the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, and other Buddhist teachings.

The centralization on the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita due to his charisma and his unique position as the sole Indonesian monk had its downsides, too. The lay people became quite dependent on him. Observing this, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita eventually established the Indonesian Fraternity of Lay Buddhists (Persaudaraan Upāsaka-Upāsikā Indonesia, hereafter PUUI) in Semarang, coinciding with the holy day of Asadha, in July 1955.

At that time, there were already dozens of lay followers, both men and women, who had been ordained by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita. Most of them were individuals who had thoroughly studied Buddhist teachings. The PUUI was intended as a vessel for lay followers to assist monks in providing services to the community. Following thorough discussions, Mangunkawatja was elected as the chairman, with R. Sumana, also known as Oei Sin Liong, as the secretary.

From Semarang, branches of the PUUI subsequently formed in cities across West Java and East Java. With the establishment of the PUUI, the community received proper guidance. The lay followers catered to the needs of the community well. There began to be Buddhist funeral services, Buddhist wedding blessings, and so on.

Thereafter, the lay followers were encouraged to give talks to the community. Initially, after the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita finished a lecture, if there were questions from the audience that

were not too complex, he would ask his lay followers to respond. Gradually, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita would give half a talk, and his lay followers would continue. Eventually, lay followers were given the chance to deliver lectures on their own. Among them were Sariputra Sadono, R. Sumana, Mangunkawatja, Upasaka Tengger, Ananda Suyono, and others. Meanwhile, in West Java, many figures from the Sam Kauw community were also ordained as lay followers by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, including Khoe Soe Kiam, Ong Tiang Biau, and others.





With the teacher, the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, and the Venerable Piyadasi Thera among the congregation of Vimaladharmā Temple, Bandung (1959)

Chapter 13

The Light of Dharma in Bali and Makassar

Thus his arrival in Makassar was greeted as if he were a high-ranking diplomat from a foreign land.

After roaming the Java land from west to east, even straying to Madura, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita set sail for Makassar. He arrived in Makassar in the balmy month of August 1955. In Makassar, the arrival of the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita was celebrated with particular enthusiasm by the local community, primarily folks from the temple circles. A special committee was even fashioned to welcome him. To hold the status of the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita as a monk in high regard, the welcoming committee endeavored to secure a special permit, affording him a reception

befitting the arrival of an illustrious foreign diplomat.

The greeting carriage was allowed to enter the port and approach directly beside the vessel Tjiluwah, which ferried the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita. Such courtesy was not even extended to the local governor. For when the governor arrives, it's only his automobile that's permitted to sidle up to the ship's bulwarks, while the vehicles of other dignitaries await outside the warehouse.

Moreover, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's party was spared the reporting to the customs officials,

rendering their luggage exempt from inspection. Straight off the ship, they hopped into the automobile, and out they went without any scrutiny. Indeed, this was a trust granted by the governing officials to the Buddhist community.

In Makassar, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita gave lectures, conducted healing services, and ordained lay followers. After a handful of days there, without delay he continued his journey to Bali.

As they bid farewell to the monk for his continuation to Bali, all the escorting automobiles were allowed to drive straight up to the side of the ship *Plancius*, uninterrupted by the customs officials.

From Makassar, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita continued to Bali, bringing a Buddhist spiritual renaissance with him.

Coincidentally at that time, in the city of Denpasar, a commotion was afoot. A certain Christian sect was zealously spreading its creed. In their propaganda, they conducted healings in an open field

in Denpasar, and on one occasion, belittled the Hindu religion. The Hindus could not accept such provocation. Consequently, in those days, demonstrations were carried out by the students of senior and junior high schools.

The arrival of the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita at that juncture was welcomed with open arms by the Hindu community. He was revered for his humility and the radiance of his loving-kindness. Indeed, he was implored to offer words of counsel amidst those demonstrating. Nevertheless, folks found it peculiar to witness a yellow-robed, shaved head figure in their midst. Yet, the words of this bald man struck a chord in the hearts of the listeners, silencing them and leaving a lasting impression. The heated atmosphere was soothed. In the end, everything was resolved amicably.

From Denpasar, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita visited other locales in Bali, delivering lectures. At the conclusion of each sermon, he would ask with a knowing smile who among the crowd wished to embrace

the path of the Buddha. While only a handful were moved, there indeed were Balinese folks whose faith in the Buddha Dharma was kindled after hearing the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita spoke. These very individuals would later become the seeds of a Buddhist community in the years to follow.

“May strength in both body and mind be the lot of all! And may the capacity to serve one’s fellow beings be granted to every being!”





*Waisak Procession 2514/1970 at Borobudur Temple,
attended by Monks from Thailand*

Chapter 14

The Second Dharma Tour

One who has forsaken worldly attachments is like a dove that swiftly leaves the peacock trailing behind.

The Dharma Tour of the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita heralded a spiritual revival amongst the Buddhist community across Java, Bali, and down to the depths of South Sulawesi. From October to December 1955, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita embarked once more on his pilgrimage across Java, Bali, and Sulawesi.

At every stop along his journey, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita was greeted with warm receptions, not only from the Buddhists but also from local officials, civilian and military alike.

A Buddhist community began to coalesce. The Venerable Ashin

Jinarakkhita became their guiding teacher. They called him “Bhante,” an honorific for a monk. Among the faithful, he was affectionately known as Bhante Ashin Jinarakkhita.

The Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita knew well that he could not stride alone in spreading the Buddha Dharma. Thus, his first course of action was to ordain those who had delved deeply into the Buddha Dharma as upasakas. Once ordained, these lay disciples could spread the Dharma and guide the faithful. In time, a congregation swelled in number, and these upasakas and upasikas were united under one banner—the Persaudaraan Upāsaka-Upāsikā Indonesia.

Even clad in simple flip-flops, with a fan in one hand and a woven rattan basket in the other, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's agility was hard for his lay disciples to match. This was understandable, for they were still bound by the obligations of ordinary life—families, jobs, studies, and the like. It's akin to comparing doves to peacocks. One who has forsaken worldly attachments is like a dove that swiftly leaves the peacock trailing behind.

Despite their worldly ties, they divided tasks to aid their teacher. Yet often, their teacher had to move from place to place alone, sometimes hopping onto a crowded bus, or, if necessary, walking. If the destination was far, he'd take a horse cart if available; a rickshaw if not; and if neither, then on foot he went.

The second Dharma Tour proceeded smoothly and stirred a resounding echo of Dharma throughout the lands of Java, Bali, and Makassar. After the wearisome travels, from the 2nd to the 11th of December 1955, in Buddha Gaya, Watugong, the meditation group's leaders organized the very

first Vipassana training under the guidance of the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita. Thirty-one individuals enrolled, and twenty-six followed through to attend—six women and twenty men.

As the year waned, a conclave of the PUUI (Indonesian Fraternity of Lay Buddhists) convened in Semarang. At this gathering, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita proposed the publication of a commemorative tome in honor of the 2,500th anniversary of Buddha Jayanti to be celebrated on Vesak Day 1956. The proceeds from the sale of this memorial volume were to be dedicated to the erection of the Vihara 2500 on a parcel of land graciously provided by the Buddha Gaya Foundation. The proposal was met with unanimous approval, and assistance for this grand endeavor was to be sought from the Sam Kauw Fellowship of Indonesia.

... the ceremony of that day was but the commencement of a grand undertaking, thus all hands must pitch in to ensure that the Jayanti Vihara is completed within the Jayanti year.

Chapter 15

2,500 Years of Buddha Jayanti

The ages turn, yet the Buddha remains close at hand. His voice whispers in our ears, urging us not to flee from strife. Rather, with tranquil gaze, we should face it and recognize in this life the grand opportunities to grow and progress. (Shri Pandit Nehru, 1956)

The year 1956 A.D. was auspicious for Buddhists the world over. It marked precisely 2,500 years since the Buddha's parinirvana. Among Buddhists globally, there circulated a belief: 2,500 years after the Buddha's parinirvana, his teachings would either flourish anew in this world or vanish entirely. All Buddhists naturally desired to see the Buddha's teachings persist in the world. Thus, everywhere, Buddhists endeavored to celebrate Buddha Day—coinciding with the sacred day of Vesak that year—on a grand scale. The year 1956 was known as the 2,500th Buddha Jayanti.

In the spirit of the Buddha Jayanti, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita visited Singapore at the invitation of the Buddhist Association there. He stayed for two weeks and participated in a ceremony to lay the foundation stone of a Jayanti Vihara at Sri Lankaramaya. The ceremony took place on January 22, 1956. Present then were the President of The Singapore Buddhist Association, Mr. T.A. Simon, the Venerable M.M. Mahaweera Thera, and the Venerable Bhikkhu Chandrasiri from Sri Lanka.

The Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita was afforded the opportunity to deliver a few words of greeting in Indonesian. He reminded

the audience that the day's ceremony was but the commencement of a grand undertaking, thus all hands must pitch in to ensure that the Jayanti Vihara is completed within the Jayanti year.

The echo of the 2,500th Buddha Jayanti also spread to Indonesia. A committee for the celebration of the 2,500 Years of Buddha Jayanti was formed. The Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita proposed the establishment of the 2500 Vihara. The chairmanship of the 2,500th Buddha Jayanti committee was entrusted to the senior layman, Mangunkawatja. They quickly set to work. Invitations were sent far and wide.

Through the efforts of the PUUI Semarang at that time, a commemorative book for the 2,500 Years of Buddha Jayanti was compiled. The book contained the history of Buddhism's development, and many of Buddha's teachings. It also included a greeting for the 2,500 Years of Buddha Jayanti by the then Prime Minister of India, Nehru, and messages from Buddhist figures around the world, as well as a personal

greeting from the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita himself.

At the Indian Information Office building, located on 21 North Merdeka Street in Jakarta, an exhibition concerning the life of the Buddha was opened. The exhibition ran for ten days, from May 24th to June 3rd, from morning until night.

The regions were eager to partake in the commemoration, from Bandung to Medan. The day before the celebration's climax at the Borobudur Temple, on May 23, 1956, a cornerstone laying ceremony for the 2500 Vihara was conducted at Kassap Pudukpajang, Ungaran, by Mahaupasaka Mangunkawatja, accompanied by a parable recitation from the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita. The ceremony was witnessed by the faithful from Semarang, Bekasi, and Jatinegara. The vihara was to be erected with a budget of Rp. 100,000. And on the morning of May 24, 1956, a Bodhi tree was planted in Watugong, 1.2 kilometers south of Kassap.

In Indonesia, the 2,500 Years of Buddha Jayanti was commemorated

on Thursday, May 24, 1956. The ceremony at Borobudur was led by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita. The ceremony began at the Mendut Temple at 6 in the evening and continued with a procession towards the Borobudur Temple.

The congregation exceeded seven thousand individuals. The upasakas and upasikas all donned white robes. At the Borobudur Temple in Kedu, at 22:20 that evening, a ceremony for the 2,500 Years of Buddha Jayanti was held, marking the zenith of the Buddhist followers' celebration in Indonesia, under the five-colored Buddhist flag: blue, yellow, red, white, and orange (saffron), which was placed on the second level of the Borobudur Temple's pinnacle.

The service was led by Mangunkawatja, commencing with hymns of praise to the Buddha. The upasakas, along with the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, circled the statue adorned with flowers and the glow of candles. Additionally, there were hundreds of bottles filled with water set up by Buddhist followers to be

used as holy water after being taken home. Similarly, after the ceremony concluded, the flowers were distributed to those who requested them.

Around the statue of the Buddha, hundreds of Buddhist followers and onlookers sat. The congregation, unfazed by the cold, waited until midnight. At midnight precisely, a meditation session began that lasted until the morning. However, many enthusiastic participants yielded to drowsiness and eventually fell asleep surrounding the Buddha statue.

During the month of May, newspapers in Indonesia were filled with news about the Buddha Jayanti, featuring reports from both within the country and abroad. This was truly heartening. Thus, the question was answered: Would the teachings of the Buddha flourish anew, or would they vanish entirely?

Once upon a time, not so long ago as eternity but well before today's buzz and bustle, in the lands caressed by the Javanese sun, Buddhism did glorify the hills and

valleys with its serene philosophies. Yonder in Central and Eastern Java, folks did hold the Buddha's teachings close, through generations untold. They were the devotees of Siwa-Buddha, a fine blend of Hindu spells and Buddhist chants.

And behold, there were temples, those klentengs, visited by robed pilgrims from the Celestial Empire, Mahayana monks they were. Alas, they struck a wall not of bricks but of tongues, for language did bar their mission's march. These monks, noble in intent, found themselves shepherding the incense and candle rituals more than spreading the Dharma's deeper lore. Mostly, it was the sons and daughters of the Chinese soil, taken to the klentengs, seeking solace or perhaps a hint of the ancestral spirits.

Then there came a man, Kwee Tek Hoay by name, in the roaring twenties, who cast the Buddha's net wider through the printed page. With ink and paper, he did introduce the Three Teachings, wrapping Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism into a single scroll of

wisdom. Though his words fluttered mostly in the houses of the Chinese, nestled chiefly on Java's populous isle.

And can we pass over the Dutch Theosophists, those seekers of the mystical East, who, in the twilight of the nineteenth century, brought to these shores a salad of spiritual ideas, Buddhism included? Their meetings were a collage of the world's beliefs, a patchwork quilt of divine understanding, from which the curious might draw threads to weave their own spiritual garments.

The Theosophists, those curious souls, they were the first to conjure up the celebration of Vesak at Borobudur in their own quiet way. They ferried in the seeds of the sacred Bodhi tree in the decade of the '30s. Come 1934, they beckoned the Venerable Narada Thera from the pearl of the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka. This marked the first known Theravada monk to set foot on Indonesian soil since the grand old Majapahit kingdom did crumble.

Within his three-week sojourn, the Venerable Narada Thera did

bless the planting of the Bodhi upon the hallowed grounds of Borobudur and initiated some eager Indonesian Theosophists into the fold as lay disciples. Then he returned to his own land, leaving the Theosophical doings much as they were, with no grand design to spread the Buddha's word.

Enter one Boan An, a youth of steely resolve. This lad was steeped in Theosophical youth and had a hand in shaping the Union of Sam Kauw Indonesia. From a tender age, he dabbled in the mystic realms, versed in all manners of religious thought. Observing Islam's deep roots in his homeland, the robust spread of Christian teachings by priests and pastors, he pondered, "Why not Buddhism, with its noble truths?"

In the Netherlands, he chose to forsake academic pursuits for the noble task of championing the Buddha's teachings. A sight to behold, he was, with long hair, a flowing beard, and donned in white, rallying his comrades to mark Vesak at Borobudur in grand fashion, setting tongues wagging and the

Buddhist faith in plain sight for all to see.

He then donned the saffron robe in Burma, becoming the first of his nation to embrace the monastic life. Returning to Indonesia, he traversed forests, scaled mountains, and sailed seas to trumpet the Buddha's teachings. In but two years, he roused a Buddhist community in Indonesia—a small flock compared to the populous nation, but fervent and burgeoning.

If I may recount, it was two decades past that Theosophists, temple monks, figures of the Three Teachings, Kwee Tek Hoay, the Venerable Narada Thera—they all laid the kindling for the Buddha Dharma's glow. The spark that lit this beacon was the Borobudur Event of '53. And it was the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita who fanned the flames of the Dharma, sending them dancing far and wide.

Not just in Indonesia, but in Buddhist nations and even among the modest ranks of Buddha's sympathizers in the West, the 2500

Year Celebration of Buddha Jayanti was observed with grand festivity. In some corners of the globe, this jubilee extended through a whole year's cycle.

Everywhere, cornerstone layings for new viharas were on the agenda. And the epicenter of the world's 2500 Year Buddha Jayanti commemoration was rooted in the Lumbini Gardens. Over half a million Buddhist faithful thronged the hallowed grounds of Buddha's touchpoints in India.

On the Wednesday morning of May 23, 1956, as the dawn cracked its first light, bells tolled across the breadth of Sri Lanka, heralding an event of profound significance for the Buddhist faithful. That Wednesday, according to the disciples in Sri Lanka, marked exactly 2,500 years since Gotama Buddha attained parinirvana.

Thousands upon thousands of Buddha's adherents, robed in the purity of white, streamed towards the viharas for prayer, and the resounding bells beckoned them towards sanctity.

Roughly two hundred thousand souls gathered in Anuradhapura, the sacred city of the Buddhist faithful in Sri Lanka. Amid the ruins of what once were the proud capitals of Sri Lankan kings, stands a grand tree, believed by the local Buddhist populace to be the direct descendant of the very Bodhi Tree under which Buddha himself attained enlightenment.

Meanwhile, in Rangoon, Burma, it was officially declared on the 24th of May, 1956, that the Herculean task of revisiting the Pali Tipitaka had reached its satisfactory conclusion. Some 2,500 monks had labored continuously in rotation for two years within the confines of the World Peace Pagoda's caves in Rangoon. Amongst the monks who played pivotal roles in the Sixth Buddhist Council was the spiritual mentor of the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, the esteemed the Venerable Agga Maha Pandita Mahasi Sayadaw.

Thus, the sixth Buddhist council had come to its solemn end, this time orchestrated collectively by five Asian nations, coinciding precisely

with the 2,500th anniversary of the Buddha's passing.

From the break of day, as the monastery bells tolled, the people of Burma stood shoulder to shoulder along the roads leading to the pagoda where the council was convened. The pagoda grounds, too, were swarmed with the faithful, even though only 3,000 monks and 2,500 lay followers were granted entrance to the cave, along with invited dignitaries. Amongst the assembly were Burma's President, Dr. Ba U, Prime Minister U Nu, Chief Justice U Thein Maung, as well as the president of the Buddha Sasana Council, U Thwin, and other officials.

The event unfolded with deep reverence, as thousands prostrated in homage before the monks seated on the dais. This poignant vista, unfolding for the first time in a millennium, stirred the depths of one's being.

Meanwhile, according to Buddhist reckonings in Thailand and Cambodia, the 2,500th Buddha Jayanti would be commemorated the following year.

On the 30th of June, 1956, the Buddhist community in Indonesia welcomed a monastic guest from Sri Lanka. His name was the Venerable Bhikkhu Chandrasiri. Arriving from Singapore, this monk came to Indonesia as a Dharmaduta, a messenger of the Dharma. During his time in Indonesia, the Venerable Bhikkhu Chandrasiri had the opportunity to visit Borobudur and Watugong. Before returning to Singapore, he extended an invitation from the Singapore Buddhist Association to participate in the Good Will Buddhist Mission to Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Singapore. In Indonesia, the Venerable Bhikkhu Chandrasiri stayed for a month and a half.

At the end of July 1956, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita commenced the Good Will Buddhist Mission, visiting Sri Lanka, Malacca, Singapore, and Kuala Lumpur over the course of approximately three months.



Group Photo with Thai Dhammaduta in 1971, Featuring the Venerable Phra Gru Pallad Atthacariyanukich (Who Later Became the Venerable Vin Vijano Mahathera)

Chapter 16

Joyful Effort

Viriya: Now that's a word with the heft of a blacksmith's hammer, evoking images of knights in gleaming armor and stout-hearted chaps. It's the very embodiment of "manliness" or "might," drawn from 'vira'—a man, a warrior; you might nod respectfully to its cousin in Latin, 'vir'—the very essence of virtue. It's one of the fabled five 'powers'—bala, if you will.

In the Anguttara Nikaya V.14, *viriya* is expounded as the steadfast energy in sidestepping or overcoming the scoundrels of the mind, the unvirtuous states, and in the cultivation and maintenance of the virtuous ones.

Driven by a grand compassion for all critters, great and small, particularly humankind, our venerated Buddha divulged to the world the path to the Ultimate Freedom, the Supreme Liberation. This Freedom, this Liberation, is not a bauble that can be handed from one soul to another.

One must clinch Freedom through their own toil. Hence, the

Enlightened One advised, "You must strive on your own, the Buddhas merely point the way."

"A man's destiny is his to shape."

No Buddha, Brahmin, Mara, Vishnu, Maheswara, grand deity, or any other, can bestow salvation upon an individual.¹⁵ For this reason, the Compassionate Teacher declared, "Direct your energy aright, and Liberation, Freedom you shall win!"

One such Jataka tale that illustrates *viriya* is the Kalandaka

¹⁵In this context, it means that enlightenment cannot be imparted by another, but must be won through one's own efforts. The Buddha and other holy teachers are merely signposts, while the path must be walked by oneself.

Jataka—the saga of a black squirrel. In this parable, the Bodhisattva is born as a squirrel of ebony hue. Atop a branch of a towering tree, he dwells in a nest with his three diminutive offspring. One fateful day, a tempest strikes, and the branch snaps, tumbling into the sea, taking the tiny squirrels with it. Powerless, the wee ones drift with the tides. Witnessing the grim fate of his progeny, the father’s heart is thrown into turmoil. Swiftly, a resolve ignites within him to dry the mighty sea to rescue his offspring. And so, he toils tirelessly to drain the ocean’s depths.

Sakka, the sovereign of the deities, becomes privy to this event and materializes before him. Chuckling, he remarks, “O Squirrel, thou art embarked on a fool’s errand. How dost thou propose to empty the sea? Abandon this folly.”

But the spirited squirrel retorts, “Hold thy tongue, Sir. Pray, leave me be, for I’ve not a moment for idle parlance. I am possessed of determination and shall endeavor until success is mine.”

The iron will of the squirrel moves Sakka, and he finds joy in his heart. In a turn of good fortune, Sakka benevolently reunites the squirrel pups with their father. Then, with sympathy and gentleness, he strokes the squirrel’s back with three fingers, leaving three lines that can still be seen on the back of every black squirrel to this day.

In the Maha Jataka, we find the following lines:

*Midst the ocean’s vast embrace, no
shore in sight,
all others vanished from my plight.
Yet my heart wavers not.
This is the perfection of my resolve.*

Like the Bodhisattva and the squirrel afore, we must marshal all our energies, night and day, to enrich the virtue we’ve garnered; this alone is the way to surmount sorrow and grasp the highest of joys. We must not utter nor entertain the words “cannot” and “incapable.” One endowed with *viriya* halts not midway in his endeavor, be it due to sloth or fatigue overtaking. Procrastination finds no harbor in

his heart; instead, he presses on till success is in his grasp. Amid life's fickle fate—gains and losses, repute and disrepute, acclaim and scorn, bodily pain and pleasures—he shall not falter. He must stand as resolute as the cliff against the tide. Sloth—of body or spirit—mingled with pride and worry, seeks to tarnish *virīya*, yet he must not let them prevail. With unwavering effort, he must cultivate his intent:

To neglect not his duty in performing good deeds and in preventing and extinguishing evil that has arisen.

To foster virtuous acts not yet come to pass.

To sustain the wholesome and beneficial that have arisen and not let them drift away.

To allow virtue to burgeon to ripeness, to bloom in full splendor.

This teaching of the Buddha, the conquest of the three poisons—lust, hatred (anger), and delusion—executed with unyielding spirit, will put an end to all suffering.

Once upon a time, Buddha Dharma was the creed of all India

and many a Malay land such as Indonesia (Sumatra, Java, and Borneo), Malaysia, and the like. It cast a profound and gracious influence upon the folks and their ways of living. Of late, this teaching has begun to take firm root in the West, especially among those deep thinkers who've found dissatisfaction with other, less empirical beliefs. Experience teaches us that dogmatic faith and intolerance do oft walk hand in hand; wherever one rears up, the other's shadow falls not far behind.

Without fire and sword, but with steadfastness, Buddha Dharma has found and will find its way into the hearts of millions upon millions of living beings. Unlike fire, the Light of Dharma, abounding with *Virīya*, never brings destruction, but only casts Light into the souls of men, never to singe their flesh. History tells us that since Buddha's time to this day, not a drop of blood has been shed in Buddha's name. Dark tales of carnage, so often shadowing other beliefs, are nowhere to be found in the Buddha Sasana.

The Firm and Compassionate Teacher would rather bring joy to all living beings by steering them towards steadfastness in virtue and wisdom, showing them the Path to Liberation from Suffering.

May all be strong in spirit and body! May all be capable of serving others! May all possess Spirit and Steadfastness! May all be safe and happy!

Ashin Jinarakkhita
On the full moon of Waisaka
2500 BE, 24 May 1956¹⁶

— — — — —
“Ah, my good fellow, whence do you hail? Is there any service that I might render unto you?”



The atmosphere became serene, and fear dissipated. The flowers brought by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita’s followers were scattered into the crater. The foul smell was replaced with the fragrance of the blossoms, which wafted upwards, carried by the winds to the far reaches.

¹⁶ Translated from “2500 Buddha Jayanti,” pages 57-59, the Fraternity of Upasaka Upasika Indonesia Semarang, 1956

Chapter 17

Buddha Gaya Watugong

His stature was upright, his facial features marked with lines of strength. At that moment, his eyes carried a dim light, as if clouded by some internal unease.

Some twenty kilometers from the city of Semarang, in the region of Ungaran, lay a district known as Watugong. A single road connected Semarang to Watugong. Traveling from Semarang, on the right side of the road, about a kilometer into Watugong territory, there was a small path. Following this path further inwards, one would have come upon a large white signboard supported by two poles, each three meters high. These pillars, too, were painted white, standing two meters apart. The signboard bore the inscription “Buddha Gaya” in large letters, with “Watugong” written below on the left, its letters half the size of “Buddha Gaya.”

Beyond the white sign, flanked by tall grasses and weeds, lay Buddha Gaya, a name translating to ‘Forest of Buddha.’ Despite its name, the area more closely resembled a well-maintained meadow than a forest, with grasses stretching up to knee height and neatly maintained.

Ascending the small path for about thirty feet, one would see a structure with a signboard reading “Buddha Gaya” at its entrance. This had been a popular spot for visitors in the past couple of years, especially on Sundays when many students from outside Watugong came to learn from a certain monk. Inside the hall, they followed the rule to

leave sandals outside, symbolizing the act of leaving all impurities out, not to be brought within.

Many also came seeking aid, bringing various problems they faced. Some carried family issues, others believed their families were afflicted with “manufactured illnesses.” All sought the monk’s help. This monk was not old; he was only thirty-three years of age. With compassion, he assisted all those who came, advising them to be charitable and to refrain from evil deeds. He taught them not to be greedy, to learn patience, and imparted understanding about the laws of karma and impermanence, distilling the teachings of the Buddha.

Due to the help many felt they received, the monk came to be widely spoken of. Later on, many from other regions sought him out. He welcomed them all with open arms.

That afternoon, in the main room of Buddha Gaya, about ten individuals were seated cross-legged, back to the entrance. In front of them, a monk was delivering a discourse.

His appearance was radiant, his eyes alight with clarity. He spoke with a light-hearted chuckle.

His teachings were straightforward, dealing with daily occurrences familiar to the listeners. After the discourse, he allowed time for questions.

After the discussion, the monk still attended to a few individuals with personal issues, before inviting them to lunch. Vegetarian dishes were prepared by a cook who took care of the needs there. Initially, when the place was first built, the monk would cook, sweep, and clean on his own. But his followers felt discomfort seeing their teacher undertake these tasks alone and arranged for help. Thus, the teacher had more time to devote to teaching.

That afternoon at Buddha Gaya was rather quiet, save for a few remaining to learn meditation. The light drizzle that fell cooled the air. At that time, a young man of about twenty-one or twenty-two years of age ran to Buddha Gaya. Upon arrival, he requested to meet the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita.

His stature was upright, his facial features marked with lines of strength. At that moment, his eyes carried a dim light, as if clouded by some internal unease.

Before long, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita came out to meet him. The young man was taken aback to see the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita; he recognized the figure all too well. How could he not?

A year ago, in his birthplace, he had seen the same monk. At that time, he had led his schoolmates in a protest against the provocation of a Christian sect. And it was this monk who had then delivered an address that had successfully calmed the atmosphere. An unforgettable figure. He was surprised to encounter the monk again in Watugong. Was this indeed the one known as the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita? “Good afternoon,” the monk greeted warmly, snapping the young man out of his reverie.

“Oh, good afternoon, am I in the presence of the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita?”

“Yes, please come in. It’s cold out here.” the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita invited his guest inside. The young man left his shoes outside and then they sat cross-legged facing each other. The air inside felt warm.

“Ah, my good fellow, whence do you hail? Is there any service that I might render unto you?” the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita asked in a gentle tone.

“I’m Oka Diputhera, Bhante. A friend of Ketut Tangkas from Yogyakarta. I’m also from Bali. I saw Bhante there last year during the demonstration at Denpasar’s open field. Do you remember?”

“The demonstration in Denpasar?” asked the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita.

“Yes, when there was propaganda by a Christian sect!” Oka Diputhera replied.

“Yes, yes. I remember. Ah, you were there at that time?” inquired the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita.

“Yes, Bhante. I was the one leading my friends,” said the young man.

The atmosphere became friendly. Oka Diputhera shared how he had gathered his friends at the senior high school and then, after graduating, went on to university in Yogyakarta. Coincidentally, he shared a boarding house with a fellow countryman, Ketut Tangkas, who had frequent contact with the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita. He was a student at IKIP Yogyakarta and had a great interest in Buddha Dharma.

At that time, Oka was suffering from a young man's ailment—he was heartbroken. Coincidentally, around the same time, Ketut Tangkas in Yogyakarta received an invitation to attend a Vipassana meditation retreat in Watugong. This was the first Vipassana meditation retreat held open to the public.

Ketut Tangkas was a sensitive person, easily moved emotionally, which was reflected in his slightly drooping straight eyebrows extending from the middle of his forehead to his temples, and his eyes had a gentle look. Seeing the troubled state of his friend, he gave

him the invitation and encouraged him to join the meditation retreat. It could calm the mind, he told Oka.

So Oka Diputhera set off for Watugong, as it happened to be a time when he was free. He arrived in the afternoon and met the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, who, as it turned out, he had seen before in Bali.

Almost thirty people attended the Vipassana meditation retreat at that time. Among them was a woman from Germany. From Semarang itself, there were attendees including the director of Jamu Jago at the time. Participants came from various regions. Among those from Bali was a tall, eloquent young man with a bright and captivating face. Like Oka Diputhera, he too was a friend of Ketut Tangkas.

Ketut Tangkas had been ordained as an upasaka before and thus, when he went back to Bali during the holidays, he talked a lot about Buddhism and the presence of the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita to his friends. The handsome young man was among those who were intrigued. It was Ketut Tangkas who

sent the invitations to Bali. And he came to Watugong in response to that invitation.

They followed the training for sixteen days. On the sixteenth day, most of them were ordained as upasakas and upasikas. Among those ordained were Oka Diputhera, the German woman, and the handsome man from Bali. Holding a lotus flower in their hands, the atmosphere was deeply religious and sacred. Oka felt moved. His eyes welled up

with tears, but he held back so they would not fall. The German woman was given the name Mettadevi, while the handsome Balinese man received the name Dharmaruci. Oka Diputhera himself was given the name Dharmesvara.

Those ordained as upasakas and upasikas were very enthusiastic about spreading the teachings of Buddhism, for they themselves had felt its benefits after participating in the training.





*Alongside Chao Kun Sasanasobhana
(Who Later Became the Sangharaja of Thailand)*

Chapter 18

The Establishment of Perbudhi

Stealing is not merely the act of swiping goods without the consent and knowledge of the owner. Stealing time is included in the definition too.

In that era, the number of Buddhists swelled. Being freshly formed, their sense of community was very deep. Among the faithful, a proposition was raised to erect a sanctuary for Buddhists to congregate and exchange thoughts, to voice their aspirations. This proposition of the laypeople was brought before the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita.

The monk declared such matters to be the concerns of the laity, worldly affairs. He had no intention of meddling in secular business. If the congregation felt the need to establish such a forum, he had no objections. Only stipulating

that this body should not deviate from the teachings of Buddha. The year was 1957. The proposal of the laypeople rolled on, from one locale to another, until in February of that year, the very first Indonesian Buddhist association was established in the era of independence. This fellowship was named Perbudhi, an abbreviation for the Indonesian Buddhist Association, with its heart set in Semarang.

At that time, Semarang, due to its geographical position, was a repository of prominent Buddhist figures. This was understandable since Watugong, not too far from Semarang, was where many

Buddhists sought guidance and teachings. Subsequently, at a congress attended by Buddhist representatives from various regions in May 1958 in Semarang, Upasaka Sosro Utomo was elected as the inaugural chairman of Perbudhi.

Previously, in the middle of February 1958, the Venerable Narada Mahathera returned to Indonesia after a span of more than twenty years since his initial arrival. His visit was warmly welcomed by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita. Together they embarked on a tour of the regions, delivering lectures and initiating the faithful.

Because the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita was inundated with invitations from various locales, he entrusted the Venerable Narada Mahathera to his lay disciples. Parwati, an upasika, often accompanied the Venerable Narada Mahathera, serving as his interpreter, thanks to her fluency in English. After a fortnight in Indonesia, the Venerable Narada Mahathera returned to Sri Lanka.

The circuitous journey of the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita through the archipelago carried on. On numerous occasions, he expounded on the proliferation of Buddhism across various regions. When on the isle of Java, he would sketch the evolution of Buddhism in Sumatra, Bali, Madura, or Sulawesi, and vice versa.

But two or three years back, he'd say, when he sermonized at a temple in Jakarta, the place felt very spacious because only a smattering of followers would attend. Now, when he gave a lecture, the space seemed to burst at the seams. A sure sign that the Buddhist congregation had burgeoned.

On a certain occasion, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita held forth thus:

When we were in Madura (Pamekasan), the common folk welcomed Buddha Dharma with open arms. They'd inquire everywhere, 'Where's the teacher?'

Night after night, hundreds would press us to hasten the establishment of viharas and places of Buddhist worship so they could listen and learn. In the

district of Parakan, even the headman and the scribe have taken up the precepts, becoming upasakas, and their domain is renowned for its tranquility, setting a paragon for other villages.

Why does the simple folk from all walks pay ever more heed to the Buddha's teachings day by day? Because there is no coercion in Buddha's lessons. We are thrown back upon ourselves; it's not enough to merely believe. One must have comprehension in all things.

Let us briefly unfurl the essence of the Buddha's teachings right here, which falls into three parts: Sila, Samadhi, and Prajñā. Sila is the Panca Sila, comprising non-harming, non-stealing, non-adultery, truthfulness, and refraining from intoxication or addiction. Besides, there are additional precepts for monks, nuns, and novices.

The former Prime Minister U Nu of Burma had proclaimed that the world would know happiness if mankind adhered to the Buddha's Panca Sila. Prime Minister Nehru of India also declared that peace can only be attained through Buddha's teachings. He posited a choice for the world, between destruction by nuclear bombs

and artificial satellites, as a result of suspicion and low desires, or seeking peace through the embrace of Buddha Dharma.

The precept against taking life is not absolute, much like the case of a farmer who must rid his crops of pests. If those crop-devouring critters were to be spared, famine would stalk mankind, potentially bringing greater catastrophe and death. Likewise, a soldier's duty to protect his country from invaders bent on killing and conquest cannot be overlooked.

Stealing is not merely the act of swiping goods without the consent and knowledge of the owner. Stealing time is included in the definition too. It includes the theft of time. Consider the mystical society, such as Sam Kauw, which declares its lectures will commence at 4:30 in the afternoon, yet habitually they dawdle until after 5 o'clock, thus stealing a half-hour from the punctual and rule-abiding members. Such officials are thieves in their own right.

As for the matters of extramarital relations and the untamed lusts, it is well known, without belaboring the point, the sorrows heaped upon

wives by husbands who forsake their marital vows, maintaining mistresses at extraordinary expense, leading to corruption and beyond. The aggrieved wife, wounded by her husband's betrayal, often sees the happiness of home laid to waste by the violation of the Buddha's precepts.

The untrustworthy are liars, and it needs no elaboration on the impact falsehood has on one's life. Deception also imperils the soul and physical wellbeing. Sobriety, the fifth precept, is critical, even in matters as simple as drinking coffee or smoking tobacco.

Consider the smoker who professes an inability to function without a puff, craving a specific brand—if accustomed to Caramel, then only Caramel will do, regardless of the cost. Without it, life becomes a torment.

And then there's the coffee addict, plagued by headaches if the morning cup is missed, always fussing over purchasing genuine coffee, which these days is rare and, if found, outrageously priced.

Brothers and Sisters, imagine the freedom of those unshackled by addiction to substance, drink, or food.

If coffee is at hand, they drink; if not, no matter—it's no bother to them. The same goes for tobacco: smoke if you will, but don't become a slave to the habit.

Alcohol intoxication wreaks havoc on health and moral order. Alcohol in moderation, perhaps as a remedy, isn't malevolent, but when it becomes an addiction leading to inebriation, that is deemed detrimental for followers of Buddhism.

One seeking the knowledge of spirituality and truth must firmly uphold the Panca Sila (Five Precepts), and only then, once accustomed, progress to meditation. Those who have participated in Metta Bhavana at Watugong, Semarang, initially found it uncomfortable, sleeping on mats with just a pillow, but in time they grew to find contentment: the practice they once deemed burdensome became light.

To attain Samadhi, one must first learn Sila, be willing to sacrifice, and cleanse the mind, with emphasis on character. Many believe character is immutable. If one claims it cannot be changed, it is but an excuse, a lack of desire to change, thus declaring it immutable.

There are those who, professing confidence in meditation, elevate themselves to the status of a teacher, claiming mystical powers, the ability to heal illnesses, and so on, and if they feel something on their back, they say it is the kundalini awakening. In the teachings of Buddhism, such claims are not essential; what matters is to know oneself and to be conscious of one's own actions. With awareness, we cannot be swayed by material things, and life becomes serene. No longer afflicted by high blood pressure, prone to anger. Is an angry person ever happy? Salt greatly influences human emotions, so much so that it has sparked wars in history. Yet, if we are not driven by desire, we can enjoy food with little or no salt.

We cannot fulfill every desire, for the world is impermanent. If we know how, we can live happily. Why is it that complaints are heard from all around when, in fact, the world is replete with joy and happiness?

One method, among others, to achieve happiness is through meditation; to practice the Panca Sila step by step, dedicating a specific time each day.

Life's duration may not be extensive, yet often, individuals squander their hours engaging in trivial conversations for four to five hours a day. Why then is it so hard to find even ten minutes each morning and evening for health and happiness?

It's advised to establish fixed times for meditation, preferably in the morning before six and in the evening before ten. Sit comfortably, in a regular posture if the lotus position is unfamiliar. Your body should feel relaxed and not tired, your back straight, breathing naturally. Focus your mind on an object, even a piece of chalk will do, directing all attention to that chalk alone. Practicing Samadhi leads to tranquility and health. Ask those who have experienced it; yoga isn't merely about physical movements like abdominal exercises, especially when one's diet is excessive and the Panca Sila are violated. True yoga isn't for show, as has been increasingly witnessed and heard recently.

Naturally, when initially centering the mind, the focus will only hold for a brief moment. Gradually, as one progresses, tranquility and Prajñā—vital essence bestowing pure energies for both

spiritual and physical well-being—can be achieved.

Rituals alone cannot bring everlasting peace; it must be pursued with intellect and understanding. Yet intellect, without the foundation of the Panca Sila, becomes obscured. How many intelligent individuals misuse their smarts and stray in their lives?

The Panca Sila instills profound compassion, offering those who practice it boundless happiness. The teachings of Buddha are vast; mere talks are insufficient as they are easily forgotten. What is essential are courses to discuss the lessons in depth, step by step. Only then can we hope to achieve true peace in life. Do not regard these teachings as difficult; where there is a will, there is a way. It is with conviction that the committee of Sam Kauw and its members will progress towards the bliss taught by Buddha, and may all beings find happiness.¹⁷

¹⁷ An excerpt from a lecture by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, given in Jakarta at the end of a journey throughout Indonesia that began on September 17, 1958. This quote is referenced from “Tribudaja,” No. 62, March 1959.

Because there is no coercion in Buddha’s lessons. We are thrown back upon ourselves; it’s not enough to merely believe. One must have comprehension in all things.



Chapter 19

Monastic Ordination: The First in Centuries

Having taken his vows as a monk, Samanera Jinaputta must remain humble, not proud of his status, and must perform his duties to the best of his abilities for the welfare of all humanity. (The Venerable Narada Mahathera, 1959)

The number of lay followers ordained by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita has grown, expanding the reach of the propagation efforts of his teachings. The community familiar with and understanding of Buddha's teachings widened, and whispers began to stir, encouraging others to follow in the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's footsteps and become monks. Word spread that there would be a monk ordination in Indonesia.

Ong Tiang Biau, the man once called "Uncle" by Boan An, and later ordained by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita himself as a lay follower, had delved deeper into

the Buddha Dharma. He eventually expressed to his teacher a desire to live as a monk. After seeing the sincerity in his heart, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita gave his blessing.

Meanwhile, in anticipation of Vesak, a modest place had been established as a vihara in Bandung. On April 12, 1959, a Buddha statue, a gift from the Burma Buddha Sasana Council, was moved from Jl. Cibadak No. 68 to Jl. Dago No. 3. Hence, the temporary vihara for the city of Bandung was inaugurated by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, and named Vimaladharma Vihara. The name was chosen to honor a monk from Thailand who had witnessed

the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's ordination in Burma four years prior, the Venerable Chaokun Bimoldam, (Bimoldam = Vimaladharmā, *author*).

In Jakarta, a special committee was formed for the arrival of a delegation of monks from abroad who would come to perform the ordinations in Indonesia. Accommodation, food, transportation, and other expenses were collectively covered by the Buddhist community in Java.

The international monks arrived in several groups between May 15 and 22, 1959. Fourteen monks in total came: seven from Sri Lanka, one from Burma, three from Thailand, two from Cambodia, and one from Japan.¹⁸ The arrival of

¹⁸ The fourteen monks who visited Indonesia were:

From Sri Lanka: the Venerable Narada Mahathera, the Venerable Ariyavamsa Mahathera, the Venerable Sathissara Mahathera, the Venerable Mahanama Mahathera, the Venerable Piyadassi Mahathera, the Venerable Saranapala Mahathera, and the Venerable Kavivorayan Thera, who was born in Thailand.

From Burma: the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw Mahathera.

From Thailand: the Venerable Maha Somroeng Mahathera, the Venerable Visal

these members of the Sangha was enthusiastically welcomed by the Buddhist community in Jakarta.

At the Dharma Vihara on Jl Hayam Wuruk 124 in Jakarta, on May 17, 1959, Ong Tiang Biau was ordained as Samanera Jinaputta.¹⁹

Samanagung Mahathera, the Venerable Kru Champirat Thera.

From Cambodia: the Venerable Candovauno Mahathera (Ung Mean), the Venerable Somdach Choun Nath Mahathera.

From Japan: The Venerable Kimura, who arrived late and thus did not participate in the ordination ceremony of the Venerable Jinaputta but was present for the Vesak celebration at Borobudur.

¹⁹ Speech by the Venerable Narada Mahathera on the occasion:

Today is a historic day, as for the first time in ten centuries, an Indonesian samanera is being ordained in Jakarta, namely Mr. Ong Tiang Biau. Brother Ong has devoted part of his life to Buddhism. His other works and deeds should be made an example for all Buddhists.

Based on these considerations, today we perform the ceremony to ordain Brother Ong as a Buddhist Samanera, together with the mahatheras and monks from various Buddhist countries who have come specifically for this purpose and to celebrate Vesak at Borobudur.

Ten centuries ago, Buddhism disappeared from Indonesia. Twenty-five years ago, when we first came to Indonesia, there were no more than six, but we were very pleased to have read a Buddhist magazine published by the late Kwee Tek Hoay, father of Upasika Visakha Mrs. Tjoa Hin Hoey, who also

From Jakarta, the group of monks, accompanied by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, traveled to Bandung and then on to Central Java via Tegal

and Pekalongan. In Central Java, the monks stayed at Buddha Gaya, Watugong.

published Buddhist books. Now the number of Buddhist magazines has increased, and a great revival of Buddhism has occurred as well. This is the merit of the first Indonesian monk, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, who has worked hard for the development of Buddhism in Indonesia.

Buddhism does not entice adherents from other religious teachings, nor is it aggressive. We can work together with religious associations with the greatest spirit of tolerance.

Buddhists must be valuable citizens for the country of Indonesia in particular and for the world in general. This world must be regarded by Buddhists as a mother, to be nurtured as well as possible, and each must carry out their duties for the sake of peace.

The ordination ceremony of Samanera Jinaputta, who has left behind significant responsibilities from his lay life, now demands that, as a samanera and later as a monk, he must dedicate himself entirely to Buddhism. On May 21, 1959, after the establishment of the International Sima, Samanera Jinaputta will be ordained at Buddha Gaya, Watugong.

Upon becoming a monk, Samanera Jinaputta must remain humble, not arrogant about his status, and perform his duties to the best of his ability for the welfare of all humanity and the eternal development of the Buddhist religion. Besides, Samanera Jinaputta must live a life that is simple and pure, both internally and externally, physically, and spiritually.

(Quoted from Tribudaja, No. 65, June 1959)

Meanwhile, Buddhists had arrived from all over Indonesia. Starting at 8 a.m. on May 21, dozens of buses filled the street in front of the Buddha Gaya meditation center in Watugong, where the ordinations of Samanera Jinananda and Samanera Jinapiya took place. Samanera Jinapiya was formerly Ki Sontomihardjo, a 70-year-old retired school teacher from Kutoarjo, Central Java, and also a lay follower. While Samanera Jinapiya was previously Ketut Tangkas, a bachelor nearing thirty.

At 1 p.m., the monks and participants made their way to the Vihara 2500, Gaya, Kassap. They first initiated Buddha Gaya as a “sima,” a place for ordaining monks. The sima is an important symbol in the Theravada Buddhist religious tradition of Burma, representing the establishment of Buddha’s teachings in the area where the sima is located. In its concrete form, a sima is a vihara surrounded by flowing water,

with sacred stakes made of wood, stone, or cement erected in the four cardinal directions around it.

The stakes at the Vihara 2500, Kassap were initially made of cement, but upon the advice of the Thai and Burmese monks, they were replaced with natural stones, signifying that the vihara had now become an International Sima, to be used for the ordination of monks in the future. Surrounding the sima, mountain water flowed clear and cool.

After chanting mantras before the Buddha altar in the vihara, the theras and monks were divided into four groups, each consisting of three individuals. They stood around the sacred stakes chanting mantras, with their chanting being answered by two lay followers standing near the stakes as guardians. Following the ceremony, attendees were invited to approach the vihara and enter the altar room, where the Venerable Narada Mahathera gave a discourse on the newly inaugurated International Sima and

its significance for the Buddhist movement in Indonesia.

Since the tenth century, it was only today that a Buddhist Sima was established in Indonesia, and this is the second sima in the world to be formed by theras and monks from various different countries. Generally, a Buddhist country and its monks have their own traditions, differing in style and ceremonial practices from one another. However, on May 21, 1959, at 13:00 in Kassap, a historic International Sima inauguration took place, formed by theras and monks from different traditions but united in understanding. This made the sima historically significant, and the following day, it would also become a historic site where a monk would be ordained for the first time in Indonesia.

At exactly five o'clock in the afternoon, the Vesak 2503 celebration ceremony was held at the Buddha Gaya Vihara, Watugong, starting with the raising of the Buddhist flag followed by the singing of "Aku Berlindung" ("I Take Refuge"). This

was followed by the reading of sutras by the Sangha and the lay followers (upasaka-upasika), which continued in turns until the fourth watch of the night.

On May 22, at 6:30 a.m., a group of monks and lay followers headed to the Vihara 2500, Gaya, Kassarap, for the ordination of Samanera Jinaputta (61 years old) to become a monk. This solemn event was covered by many domestic news agencies. With this, the Sangha in Indonesia grew by one member, the Venerable Jinaputta.

After the ordination ceremony, which was similar to that of the samanera, the monks departed by bus to Mendut and Borobudur temples. The procession and ceremonies were hindered by a downpour, soaking the hundreds of lay followers and attendees. The local people showed great interest despite the conditions.

The procession climbed to Mendut Temple, circled three times, and then the monks and lay leaders entered the temple, chanted mantras, and lit candles and incense.

By 3:30 p.m., the rain had eased to a drizzle, which led to the cancellation of the planned speech to the visitors at the Mendut Temple courtyard. The group then continued on to Borobudur Temple. However, heavy rain also disrupted the activities there, turning the surrounding fields into puddles and mud.

Nonetheless, the interest of thousands of people was undiminished, but the Vesak atmosphere was unsettled, and those who came to experience the purity of the commemorative day were mostly disappointed. A gazebo was provided for the thera, the monks, and distinguished guests, with the center for the monks and the sides for the honored guests.

Monks and theras from Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, and Japan spoke in turn. Greetings were given by the Governor, the Regent of Kedu, representatives of the ambassadors of Burma, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and officials from military institutions.

By 10 p.m., the rain had subsided, and the full moon began to shine in the sky, still filled with floating clouds as if swayed by the wind. In the cool air and light drizzle, the procession around Borobudur Temple was led by members of the Sangha, followed by lay followers and the congregation, each carrying a candle for light. The flickering candles created a beautiful sight from below the temple.

On the highest stupa, where the ceremony would be held, both large and small candles had been placed, giving special illumination to the dark night. Meanwhile, the surroundings of Borobudur transformed into a night market with stalls and vendors selling food and drinks.

The Buddha statues were adorned with fragrant flowers, and the vibrant smoke from the incense filled the room crowded with participants, the majority of whom were merely spectators. On the temple grounds, films about Buddhism were shown.

At 8:15 p.m., a group meditation was organized to coincide with the auspicious full moon siddhi time. However, it was closely followed only by a small portion of the participants. The appointment of the lay followers (upasaka-upasika), which was initially to be followed by the reading of sutras and lectures on the temple, was moved to the pavilion near the dining area due to the drizzle. Approximately 15 lay followers from various regions were appointed by the group of monks.

The closing ceremony of Vesak 2503 was carried out by monks who had stayed awake all night until 5 a.m. on the temple. The ceremony was attended by lay followers along with the congregation. After the ceremony, to enliven the atmosphere, the committee organized a sort of raffle with prizes, including pictures of the Buddha and framed images of the Buddha. During this historic Vesak celebration, a message from the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, was read by the Ambassador of India.

After celebrating Vesak together June 1959, Samanera Jinapiya was at Borobudur, the group of foreign monks then made visits to various regions. In Bali, on the third day of the Venerable Jinapiya.



The precept against taking life is not absolute, much like the case of a farmer who must rid his crops of pests. If those crop-devouring critters were to be spared, famine would stalk mankind, potentially bringing greater catastrophe and death. Likewise, a soldier's duty to protect his country from invaders bent on killing and conquest cannot be overlooked.



*Visit of the President of the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) to
Nagasena Monastery, Pacet*

Chapter 20

The Sangha²⁰

In the congregation's anticipation of the grand Vesak celebration of 2503, at the Buddha Gaya Watugong Monastery, especially at the Mendut and Borobudur Temples, as well as other places across the Indonesian archipelago where monasteries stand and Buddhist faithful dwell, we, in the name of the Noble-Sangha, do hereby express our heartiest delight upon reviewing the deeds accomplished and those endeavors yet to be undertaken. This year's Vesak of 2503 stands unparalleled in the annals of Indonesian celebrations, dating back to 1930, enriched as it is with

the ordination of monks, a practice perhaps dormant since the ninth century. It behooves us, therefore, to inquire, what is this Sangha?

The Sangha is a body composed of those who have forsaken all worldly pursuits, having undergone certain rites as ordained by venerable traditions. It is acknowledged in all religions that the domestic and worldly life imposes constraints upon the noble inner life.

Though a householder may practice many of Buddha's teachings and find contentment in religious life, the Buddha esteemed that the path to sanctity could not be wholly traversed amid the toil and pleasures of such a life. This is not to say that

²⁰ Quoted from "Vesak 2503", Central Committee of the Vesak Celebration, Semarang, 1959.

there have been no householders who have attained the level of arahant. Buddhist texts recount such holy beings, but in their past lives, they too had trod this Noble Path.

For those who have embraced this Great Renunciation, the Exalted Buddha established the Sangha in the year 588 BCE, 45 years before the Buddhist Era. Within this Sangha, Buddha made no distinctions such as those found amongst the Brahmin priests. From every stratum of society, one could join the Sangha and from every level, one could study His teachings.

Over time, the rules for monks and nuns became the first portion of the Tipitaka, known as the Vinaya Pitaka, comprising five books: the Parajika, the Pacittiya, the Mahavagga, the Cullavagga, and the Parivara.

In our current times (the 20th century), only those who accept these are called samaneras, and later monks, if they are received by the Sangha (the community of monks) through two ordination ceremonies.

The first is the Pabbajja Ordination, and those who receive this are known as samaneras, and the second is the Upasampada Ordination.

The first two books, Parajika and Pacittiya, are both also referred to as Suttavibhanga. The Parajika contains four grave offenses.

A monk who transgresses any of these four rules ceases to be a monk; he is no longer entitled to call himself such, in other words, he reverts to being a layperson and is not entitled to wear the yellow robe. For him, life as a monk cannot be continued.

These four rules prohibit killing, sexual intercourse, stealing, and making false claims of spiritual attainments such as having supernatural powers or any of the *abhiññas*.

Abhiñña, these Six Higher Powers or Psychic Powers consist of five related to worldly (*lokiya*) abilities and one that transcends the worldly (*lokuttara*). The five are the result of perfection in Samadhi, and the sixth arises from the penetrative insight (*Vipassanā*) that eradicates the defilements, achievable by an

Arahant. These Six Psychic Powers are the Power of Accomplishment (Iddhi-vidhā), the Divine Ear (Dibba-sota), the Knowledge of Others' Minds (Citta-pariya-ñāṇa), the Divine Eye (Dibba-cakkhu), the Recollection of Past Lives (Pubbe-nivāsānussati), and the sixth is the Eradication of All Defilements (Āsavakkhaya).

Furthermore, the Parajika book contains thirteen Sanghadisesas—rules that require a Sangha assembly to adjudicate them.

The Pacittiya book details the Pacittiya rules which mandate monks to confess their breaches to another monk, upon which they are absolved. It also includes the Sekhiya rules—Disciplines that must be observed such as how to wear robes, walk, accept alms, and so on. The total number of these rules is 227, and on every Uposatha day, they are briefly recited in each monastery, also in a specific place designated for that purpose, called the Sima, which is also used for the Upasampada Ordination. This Suttavibhanga book also contains rules for nuns.

The Mahavagga Book:

- How to enter the Sangha.
- Meetings for Uposatha and the method of reciting the Patimokkha (227 rules).
- Residences for the rainy season (Vassa).
- The closing ceremony of the rains retreat (Pavarana).
- Rules for wearing robes, using seats, tables, etc.
- Ways to consume medicines and food.
- The Kathina ceremony, which is a gift marking the end of the rainy season.
- Materials for robes, rules for sleeping, and guidelines for sick monks.
- How the Sangha should convene.
- Procedures in case of disputes.

The Cullavagga Book:

- Rules related to violations.
- Ways to rehabilitate a monk.
- Methods for resolving issues.
- Instructions for bathing and dressing.
- Concerning beds and seat-tables.
- Regarding disputes.

- The duties of a teacher and a student.
- Those who cannot perform the Patimokkha.
- Procedures for ordination and instructions for monk candidates.
- The history of the First Sangayana in Rajagaha.
- The history of the Second Sangayana in Vesali.

The Parivara Book:

A monk's year is divided into two parts: nine months for wandering or staying in the forest and three months when one must stay in one place, known as Vassa (the rains retreat). During these three months, monks provide or receive teachings within a monastery. These three months are concluded with a ceremony, the Pavarana ceremony, marking the end of the retreat, where every monk residing in the same monastery asks for forgiveness for any intentional or unintentional wrongdoings. The first Vassa usually begins on the full moon of July, and the second Vassa starts a month later.

Following the Pavarana ceremony, there is another more festive event, Kathina, where monks receive offerings of clothing from the local Buddhist community.

As a closing remark to our address, may the Vesak 2503 ceremony allow Indonesia to receive the Blessings of Grace from the Wise and Compassionate One, Buddha, and the Great Bodhisattvas, for the happiness and prosperity of our nation, which is now in great need.

May the philanthropists, contributors, and volunteers who have greatly assisted in the realization of Vesak 2503 continue to be blessed by the Three Jewels, namely the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Monastery 2,500, Gaya-Kassap, Pudukpayung, April 4, 1959.

With a loving heart,
Ashin Jinarakkhita

“Samadhi, the proper practice of meditation, can completely destroy or eradicate the roots of undesirable cravings and desires.”

Chapter 21

Footsteps in Sumatra

In the face of such a moment, tears of joy could no longer be held back. Kneeling down, four individuals offered flowers in a gesture of profound happiness.

Following the inaugural ordination of monks in Indonesia, the esteemed foreign monks departed. The newly ordained members of the Sacred Sangha of Indonesia, however, did not remain idle for long. Continuing their Dharma journey, they traveled to various regions. After touring the islands of Java and Bali, in October 1959, they visited Makassar.

From Surabaya, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita and two new monks embarked on a ship to Makassar. After a two-day journey, they arrived in Makassar on the morning of October 6, 1959. The arrival of these monks was

warmly welcomed by the Buddhist community and the media in this southern part of Sulawesi.

At the port, upasakas, upasikas, and followers were arranged in a neat line. Walking in pairs and donned in white robes, the upasakas and upasikas formed an orderly procession. The Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita passed through the middle of the half-kneeling crowd, hands clasped in anjali. Leading the way at the front was a follower bearing the Buddhist flag, followed by the monks adorned with garlands of flowers.

The Buddhist community greeted them with enthusiasm. Daily,

people visited their lodging, seeking explanations about the Dharma and blessings from the monks. Thus, it could be said that the monks had little time to rest, as they were constantly visited by those seeking house blessings and recitations of sacred mantras.

The monks were also received by the local Governor. During the 45-minute conversation, the Governor advised the welcoming committee to record the teachings imparted for eternal remembrance. Furthermore, the Governor offered his guest house in Malino for the monks' use if they wished to visit.

Before the monk delegation excused themselves, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita offered a prayer for the Governor, wishing him tranquility in fulfilling his sacred duties for the nation's peace and prosperity.

They were then welcomed by the Regional Military Commander, Colonel Andi Mattalata, along with the Regional Police Chief, the Mayor, and other officials.

Each day, they visited three to six homes. In the first week, lectures on the Dharma were given daily at 2 PM in Sam Kauw Bio. Later, due to increasing house visit requests, the lectures were held every two days. Nevertheless, the Dharma delegation never showed signs of fatigue; their faces always radiated with a serene joy.

From Sulawesi, the group of monks continued their journey to Sumatra, first arriving in Medan at the beginning of November. During their stay, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita took up residence at the Bodhi Monastery on Asia Street. Each night, continuous lectures were held, attracting significant attention. Hundreds of people attended each session. The Venerable Jinapiya stayed in Medan for an extended period.

In early 1960, the Dharma journey reached the southern part of Sumatra, passing through Padang and its surrounding areas. On March 14, 1960, Yogamurti, along with his wife and children, arrived in Palembang from Bandung to provide

guidance on the reception of the monks who were soon to arrive in Palembang.

On March 20th, 1960, a monk regarded as the only great master of Buddha Dharma in all of Indonesia arrived in Palembang, accompanied by Pandita Dharmaruci Ida Bagus Giri, the head of the Bali branch of Perbudhi. The assembly landed at Talang Betutu airport and then proceeded to the Dharmajaya meeting hall to deliver lectures.

The ceremony began promptly at 10:00 AM with local Buddhist figures speaking at length about Buddhism in Indonesia. This was followed by Pandita Dharmaruci discussing the teachings of Buddha Dharma. During a short break, the audience was given the opportunity to ask questions. Only one person inquired, "What is reincarnation?" to which Dharmaruci provided a clear and concise answer.

After waiting a few minutes without any further questions, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita began his Dharma discourse. Among other things, he mentioned that

there were eight million Buddhist followers in Indonesia. His speech garnered significant attention from the Buddhist community.

On March 21, 1960, the delegation toured various temples in Palembang and precisely at noon visited the Stanvac oil refinery in Sungai Gerong. At 07:30 PM, another lecture was held at a temple, warmly received by the Buddhist community of Palembang.

On March 22, 1960, at 10:00 AM, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita and his companions left Palembang for Bengkulu by plane. As a result of this visit, a branch of Perbudhi was established in Palembang, and many upasakas and upasikas were ordained.

Arriving in Bengkulu on March 22nd, 1960, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita and his entourage once again received an extraordinary welcome. Around 09:30 AM, crowds of people arrived in trucks and cars packed with those eager to see a monk in person. Thanks to both mass media and word-of-mouth,

public curiosity had been piqued to see what a monk looked like.

Around 11:30 AM, the rumble of the airplane carrying the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita and his entourage was heard circling above Padang Kemiling airport.

Approximately eighty people came to welcome the monk and his entourage. They hurriedly lined up at the airport gate to pay their respects. Four members of the welcoming committee entered the airport first to greet the monks up close and guide them on their way.

The long-awaited moment finally arrived. About ten minutes later, the airplane carrying the monk and his retinue landed. The aircraft door opened, and the stairs were lowered. From atop the aircraft, in the distance, a figure in a yellow robe was visible, his head gleaming in the sunlight's reflection. The eagerly anticipated monk had arrived, accompanied by a pandit, later identified as Dharmaruci Ida Bagus Giri from Bali, along with Mr. Yogamurti and his wife and child from the Bandung branch of

Perbudhi, and another individual from Palembang.

The monk descended from the plane with serene steps and a face full of compassion, heading towards the four welcoming individuals. Overcome with emotion, the four could not contain their feelings. The deep-seated desire in their hearts to meet a monk was now fulfilled. In the face of such a moment, tears of joy could no longer be held back. Kneeling down, four individuals offered flowers in a gesture of profound happiness.

The monk and his group stayed for nine days. Every evening, mantras were recited in a temple, led by the monk, Pandita Dharmaruci, and Yogamurti. For the first time in Bengkulu's history, such a large congregation was seen praying under the guidance of a great teacher.

Subsequently, five upasikas and six upasakas were ordained. On the evening of March 25, 1960, a sacred lecture on Buddha Dharma was given by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita and Pandita Dharmaruci at the Royal Cinema. The talk attracted

significant attention from the Buddhist community in particular and the general public at large. Civil and military dignitaries also attended to listen.

From Bengkulu, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita returned to Java to participate in the national Vesak celebration at Borobudur. This time, the Vesak celebration was even more grand, with the Buddhist community jointly cleaning the Borobudur Temple. Meanwhile, the leadership of the Buddhist community organization, Perbudhi, along with the Gabungan Sam Kauw Indonesia,²¹ endeavored to lobby the government for official recognition of Buddhism as a religion in Indonesia.

The Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita revisited Palembang at the end of July 1960. There, he gave lectures at the TNI Cavalry Battalion headquarters and also at

²¹ Although many leaders of Perbudhi also held positions in the GSKI in the early 1960s, they began to follow their own separate paths. The leaders of the Buddhist community tended to focus solely on spreading the teachings of Buddhism, whereas the GSKI propagated three teachings simultaneously.

the Palembang City Meeting Hall in the evenings, apart from speaking at temples. The lecture at the Meeting Hall was not very crowded due to a schedule change.

After a few days in Palembang, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita went directly to Lampung to ordain several upasakas and upasikas. Meanwhile, in September 1960, the Venerable Jinaputta had departed for Singapore, meeting with the Venerable Narada Mahathera there, and then continued to Sri Lanka for further studies. The Venerable Jinapiya stayed in Medan to nurture the Buddhist community, and Samanera Jinananda resided at Watugong.

Upon returning from his journey through Sumatra, from one end to the other, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita led the Metta Bhavana practice at the Vimaladharm Vihara in Bandung.



Ordaining Ida Bagus Giri as Samanera Jinagiri (who later became the Venerable Girirakkhito Mahathera)

Chapter 22

Asadha

Two months after celebrating the most sacred day for Buddhists worldwide, Vesak Day, Buddhists also commemorate Asadha Day, the anniversary of the Turning of the Wheel of Dharma (Truth) or, in other words, the anniversary of the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana*. Asadha Day falls on the full moon of the Asadha month, which roughly coincides with July (in 1960, it fell on July 8th).

It was on this day, for the first time after Prince Siddhartha became the Buddha beneath the Bodhi tree (*Ficus Religiosa*), that He delivered His Sermon on Truth in the city of Benares to five ascetics. These five

hermit monks became Buddha's first disciples, known as the *Panca Vaggiya Bhikkhu*.

By abandoning two extreme beliefs, Siddhartha discovered the Middle Way (*Majjhima Patipada*), which led to Clear Insight (*Vipassana*), Right View (*Samma Ditthi*), Tranquility (*Vupasamaya*), Supreme Knowledge (*Abhiñña*), Perfect Enlightenment (*Sambodhi*), and ultimately, Nirvana.

By practicing *Sila*, we can soften our desires. *Sila* means adhering to and respecting the agreements and rules we voluntarily commit to follow. *Sila* also includes

Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, and Right Effort.

Samadhi, the practice of correct meditation, can shatter and eradicate the roots of undesirable desires. Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration of the Noble Eightfold Path are also part of *Samadhi*.

As the flower and fruit of earnestly and devoutly practicing *Sila* and *Samadhi*, *Pañña*, or Perfect Wisdom, arises, in which desires cannot grow anymore, as their roots have been destroyed. Right Understanding and Right Thought are the fruits of our efforts in seeking a way to free ourselves from suffering. With the disappearance of desire in any form, a Free and Happy Life is achieved as all suffering naturally ceases. This is what is known as Spontaneous Living, without any tension, seeing and understanding all events as they truly are, recognizing all events in their correct interrelations, uninfluenced by the notion of self. This is also referred to as Complete Knowledge (*Pañña*).

If we delve deeper into the Tipitaka, we can discern the true signs of the Buddha's Compassion. It's no surprise, then, that Buddhism places great emphasis on the daily practice of *Maitri* (in Pali: *Metta*) and *Karuna* (*Compassion*), famously known as *Brahma Vihara* (The Abode of Brahma).

For those who radiate or expand feelings of Compassion and Kindness (*Metta* and *Karuna*) daily, and nurture their mind, consciousness, and personal feelings, they will be shielded from all calamities and will achieve eleven forms of happiness.

First Happiness: One can sleep soundly and peacefully. Free from worrying thoughts and turmoil, as soon as one lies down to rest, they fall asleep as if entering *Dhyana* (in Pali: *Jhana*, a level of meditation).

Second Happiness: Upon waking, one does so calmly and spiritedly, without muddled or fearful thoughts. As the mind returns to the awareness of the day, it opens like a lotus flower unfurling its petals.

Third Happiness: One will not dream anything unpleasant or disturbing. Dreams are all pleasant and feature beautiful, serene scenes, for instance, listening to sermons on Truth in dreams, offering flowers, interacting with deities, etc. Nightmares or frightening dreams, such as being chased by criminals or wild animals, being murdered, falling into abysses, etc., never occur.

Fourth Happiness: People will love them as they cherish their own precious jewels worn as necklaces or ornaments. For one who nurtures Loving-Kindness harbors neither resentment nor grudges against anyone, and therefore, they have no enemies.

Fifth Happiness: Deities and other subtle beings will also love them. Wherever they go, they can transform a turbulent atmosphere into a serene one. Conflicts among subtle beings can be resolved by such a person.

Sixth Happiness: The deities and other subtle beings will continue to protect them like parents safeguarding their children. The

deities remain supportive in all their endeavors.

Seventh Happiness: Fire, poison, and weapons will not “take effect.” For instance, there’s the story of Uttara, the daughter of a wealthy merchant named Punnaka. Sirima, another woman, out of jealousy and envy towards Uttara, one day, while Uttara was in samadhi, poured hot oil over her head. At that moment, Uttara had reached the level of Dhyana in her compassion. The hot oil flowed over her like water on a lotus leaf. This was due to Uttara’s concentration. Not a single hair was harmed by the hot oil. Her skin was unscathed too. (See Dhammapada Atthakatha III, 310 or Hanorathapurani I, 451.)

Eighth Happiness: Their mind is easily restrained and not erratic. Concentration is readily achieved.

Ninth Happiness: Their facial appearance is radiant.

Tenth Happiness: Even at the time of their death, they remain calm and untroubled. They pass away like entering sleep, without suffering.

Eleventh Happiness: If they are unable to attain higher spiritual levels, like becoming an Arahant or a Buddha, when they leave this physical body, they will be reborn in the Brahma Realm and become a Brahma, as if awakening from sleep. Thus, the term 'Brahma Vihara' becomes clear. A human being who trains themselves in one of the Brahma Viharas, if they pass away, will become a Brahma in the Brahma realm, that is if they have yet to liberate themselves from all desires, the root and source of suffering, to achieve Nirvana.

Our hope with this writing is nothing other than for the lovers of Truth to delve into the spirit of Buddhism, a religion not new, but one that flourished in the archipelago of Nusantara in ancient times, and is now, in line with the

contents of ancient texts, reviving in our country for the happiness and prosperity of our beloved nation.

May all beings, through their individual efforts and endeavors, achieve tranquility and liberation from all suffering. May they be blessed by the Grace of the Three Jewels, so that Loving-kindness (*Metta*) as the source of our life, is not just an empty word or term found in books or on the lips of leaders, but becomes a real and living force in our society.

With loving kindness,
Ashin Jinarakkhita (Talk preceding
Asadha 1960²²)

*Dig up the bygone, but tailor it to the
tune of today and its milieu.*

²² Quoted from Tribudaja, No. 78, July 1960.

Chapter 23

Bridging Differences with the Venerable Narada Mahathera

“I have heard it contended times without number and I have read in books also claiming to express the spirit of Buddhism, that Buddha did not believe in God. In my humble opinion such belief contradicts the very central fact of Buddha's teaching.

(Mahatma Gandhi)

The Venerable Narada Mahathera, a revered monk from Sri Lanka, had traveled extensively during the 1950s, spreading Buddha's teachings across nations. As a distinguished monk from the Theravada tradition in Sri Lanka, his teachings inevitably reflected the customs of his homeland, much like a Mahayana monk from China would be influenced by his native culture.

On the other hand, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, though ordained in Burma under the Theravada tradition, approached the

propagation of Buddha's teachings in Indonesia without denigrating other traditions such as Mahayana. He frequently visited Mahayana temples, delivering sermons there, and in Javanese villages, he employed local customs and traditions in his teachings. While embracing the Theravada tradition from Burma, he remained open to the pluralistic essence and integration with deeply rooted Indonesian traditions.

Despite being a proponent of Theravada, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita often encouraged his

followers to delve into the existing Indonesian customs. “Dig up the bygone, but tailor it to the tune of today and its milieu.”

This approach marked the beginning of a divergence in views between the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita and the Venerable Narada, by then a Mahathera. Historically, Indonesian society has acknowledged an omnipotent entity commonly referred to as God. Buddhism practiced in ancient Indonesian kingdoms like Sriwijaya and Majapahit recognized the concept of Adi Buddha,²³ a divinity in Buddhism that evolved in Indonesia during that period. The

²³ Since the early post-parinirvana era of Buddha Gotama, there have been two distinct viewpoints regarding the Buddha. The first view regards the historical Buddha as a mere human who achieved Buddhahood in his lifetime. The second view perceives the historical Buddha as an incarnation of the Eternal Buddha, manifesting in the world to show the path to Buddhahood. As stated in “2500 Years of Buddhism” edited by P.V. Bapat (p. 305), “The historical Buddha is merely a manifestation of the Adi Buddha, coming into the world to teach Dharma and relieve human suffering.”

The Buddha is said to possess three bodies (Triakaya), which are:

Nirmanakaya (Transformation Body) -- this form is used to teach ordinary humans.

Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita sought to resurrect this concept, urging scholarly followers to rediscover these teachings, referencing the

Sambhogakaya (Enjoyment Body) -- often depicted as a body of light or a heavenly manifestation.

Dharmakaya (Dharma Body) -- also known as the *Tathagatagarbha* (Womb of the *Tathagata*), it is eternal, omnipresent, not a personified reality, singular, free from dualities, and self-existing.

Though there are many Buddhas, there is only one *Dharmakaya*, synonymous with Adi Buddha.

In the “2.500 Buddhajayanti” publication by PUUI Semarang (1956), a discussion on Borobudur elaborates on Adi Buddha. Page 51 mentions, “Above the Panca Dhyani-Buddha is the most supreme, the Adi Buddha.”

And on page 170, it states, “Mahayana venerates Adi Buddha, as well as the Panca Dhyani-Buddha, Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, among others.”

The first verse of a puja-mantra found on Lombok Island also evidences that the ancestors of the Indonesian nation worshipped Adi Buddha:

*Pranamya Satatam Buddham, Adi Buddha
Namaskaram Sattva Sattvaka Punyakam,
Vaksye Dhanam Param.*

(Our reverence to Adi Buddha, as our homage to the Buddha of all Buddhas and the Progenitor of Buddha. The one who bestows benevolence on all beings, big and small. We shall name Him the richest of all.) Indonesia’s Government Regulation No. 21 of 1975 regarding the Civil Servants’ Oath stipulates that for Buddhists, the phrase “In the name of God Almighty” is replaced with “In the name of Sang Hyang Adi Buddha.”

Borobudur Temple, a monumental crystallization of Buddhist doctrine.

The Venerable Narada Mahathera found it challenging to accept “Theistic Buddhism,” as known in the Mahayana traditions of Indonesia and Nepal. This divergence in opinions and approaches, however, did not disrupt the relationship between the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita and the Venerable Narada Mahathera. The Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita continued to respect his senior, and they remained collaborative in their journeys to spread the teachings. When the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita was unable to accompany his Dharma brother, he would have his disciples, the upasakas and upasikas, represent him.

Among the most frequent assistants to the Venerable Narada Mahathera during his time in Indonesia was Parwati. With her proficient English, Parwati served not only as an aide but also as a translator. After the Venerable Narada Mahathera returned

to his country, he maintained correspondence with Parwati, who initiated the first exchange of letters. In her letters, Parwati inquired about Dharma and the global progression of Buddhism. The Venerable Narada Mahathera, steadfast in the Theravada tradition, once wrote, “Please, tell your teacher that there is no God in Buddhism.”

It appeared he was still struggling to accept the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita’s efforts to resurrect Buddhist teachings known in Indonesia, which acknowledged a concept of divinity. This was likely a misunderstanding.

The Venerable Narada Mahathera, often traveling to Western countries to advance Buddhism, seemed to equate the concept of divinity in the ancient Indonesian Buddhist teachings with the Western notion of “God.” The concept of divinity in Indonesian Buddhism is distinct from the concept of God as understood in Western, predominantly Christian, cultures.²⁴ The Venerable Narada

²⁴ The concept of God as understood in Christian teachings indeed contrasts

Mahathera's unfamiliarity with the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's initiatives was perhaps due to his lack of personal experience with Indonesian culture and history.

In conducting the affairs of an organization, remember not to flaunt one's ego, for the teachings of Buddha instruct on the 'non-self' or 'anatta'.

with Buddhist doctrine. In Buddhism, the emphasis is placed on divine attributes themselves, such as compassion and wisdom. We come to know the essence of God as we perfect these divine qualities within ourselves. Mahatma Gandhi's viewpoint may provide an insight into the general concept of God in Buddhism:

"I have heard it contended times without number and I have read in books also claiming to express the spirit of Buddhism, that Buddha did not believe in God. In my humble opinion such belief contradicts the very central fact of Buddha's teaching. It seems to me that the confusion has arisen over his rejection, and just rejection, of all the base things that passed in his generation under the name of God... He, therefore, reinstated God in the right place and dethroned the usurper who for the time being seemed to occupy the White Throne... He unhesitatingly said that the Law was God Himself. God's laws are eternal and unalterable and not separable from God Himself. It is an indispensable condition of His very perfection. Hence the great confusion that Buddha disbelieved in God and simply believed in the moral law."

Mahatma Gandhi, in "The Indo Asian Culture", Vol. V No. 2, October 1956. Quoted from "Berita Vimala", No. 3/4, Year II, March/April 1961.

Chapter 24

A Decade of Progress

Sakbejo-bejone kang lali, isih luwih bejo kang tetep eling lan waspodo.
Even the most fortunate of the forgetful are still less blessed than those who remain mindful and aware.

Poet Ronggowarsito (1802-1874)

In the early 1960s, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita directed his efforts towards propagating Buddhism in West Java, amid rising personal disputes among Buddhist leaders in Central Java, which were impeding their collective endeavors. Buddhism had flourished throughout Indonesia, with Perbudhi and PUUI establishing over fifty branches across Sumatra, Lombok, Java, to Kalimantan and Sulawesi. Pioneered by monks, novices, laymen, and scholars, these groups tirelessly followed the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, echoing his devotion.

Unfortunately, the rise in the Buddhist population in Central Java

led to personal frictions among local leaders, impacting the shared cause. Similarly, a growing rift emerged between Perbudhi and GSKI, with Perbudhi's figures focusing solely on spreading Buddhism, unlike GSKI senior persons who also propagated two other doctrines.

The Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita consistently reminded Perbudhi's pioneers, "In conducting the affairs of an organization, remember not to flaunt one's ego, for the teachings of Buddha instruct on the 'non-self' or 'anatta'. Leaders should prioritize the greater good over personal gains, echoing the wise words of Poet Ronggowarsito,

‘Even the most fortunate of the forgetful are still less fortunate than those who remain mindful and aware.’ Stay true to Buddha Dharma and avoid self-interest.”

In West Java, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita spent much time at the Vimaladharmasrayana Monastery in Bandung. Initially, he personally managed the monastery, handling everything from cleaning to cooking, sustaining on simple meals like corn rice. Gradually, the monastery developed, featuring a serene lotus pond, symbolizing harmony with the predominantly Muslim neighborhood.

In early 1961, a joyous event occurred: Ida Bagus Giri, a respected figure in the Buddhist community of Bali, received ordination as Samanera Jinagiri by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita at Buddha Gaya, Watugong. This addition bolstered the propagation of Buddhism in Indonesia, with Samanera Jinagiri actively engaging in Bengkulu and Palembang.

Upon learning of her husband’s ordination, Samanera Jinagiri’s

wife, overwhelmed with emotion, traveled from Bali to Watugong. Comforted by Parwati, she grappled with her husband’s new path, especially with young children at home. Parwati, understanding the depth of her feelings, invited her to stay in Solo, offering solace during this transitional time.

After a few months as a novice monk, Samanera Jinagiri eventually left his monastic life and returned to lay life, heading back to Bali. Coinciding with this, Buddhism received formal recognition from the government, with a representative for Hindu-Bali religion being appointed at the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This representative was none other than Oka Diputhera.

Meanwhile, since April 11th, 1961, Samanera Jinananda had been residing at the Avalokitesvara Monastery in Pamekasan, Madura. This monastery, first visited by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita in 1955, had also hosted a week-long Metta Bhavana training led by him in 1958. Moreover, nine foreign monks had stayed there in 1959.

The Vesak celebration that year, as in previous years, was centered around Borobudur. It was a year etched with poignant memories. Borobudur was cloaked in thick layers of dust, several centimeters deep, due to the continuous eruptions of Mount Merapi. Footprints crisscrossing the temple lent a profound and touching impression to the Buddhist visitors.

Mid-year, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita met with Lieutenant Colonel Soemantri, an assistant to his close acquaintance, General Gatot Soebroto of the Indonesian Armed Forces. Although not a Buddhist at the time but a Javanese who revered Kwan Kong, Soemantri was persuaded to lead the Buddhist community. Before the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita personally intervened, Drs. Khoe Soe Kiam, the head of GSKI, had repeatedly attempted to attract Soemantri but was met with resistance.

The Asadha celebration at Vimaladharma Monastery in Bandung was held with great enthusiasm. The event even saw

speeches from the Commander of Siliwangi Military Regional Command and the Governor. Additionally, in the same Asadha period, a vegetarian exhibition at the monastery received warm reception from non-Buddhists as well.

In September, an Indonesian Buddhist women's delegation, led by Mrs. Gatot Soebroto, journeyed to Japan to participate in the World Conference of Buddhist Women. In November, the Jakarta branch of Perbudhi was officially inaugurated, with Soemantri M.S. as its head. Also in November, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, Samanera Jinananda, and Pandita Dharmaruci set off for Banjarmasin, spreading the spirit of Dharma in Kalimantan.

In November 1961, Cambodia hosted the sixth Maha Samaya World Fellowship of Buddhists. Indonesia sent representatives the Venerable Jinapiya and a woman named Lehi Saleha from Bandung. Sariputra Sadono, hailing from Semarang, greatly contributed to the fundraising efforts for this event.

During this period, Buddhism became increasingly known to the public, partly due to broadcasts on RRI (Radio Republik Indonesia) which featured Buddhist sermons, generally aired twice a month.

On April 8, 1962, a groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of Nagasena Vihara took place in Sindanglaya, Cipanas, about 30 kilometers from Cianjur, West Java. The ceremony was conducted by Lt. Col. Soemantri M.S., Head of Perbudhi Jakarta, representing General Gatot Soebroto who was unable to attend.

Two months later, the Buddhist community, and indeed all of Indonesia, mourned the loss of one of its finest sons, General Gatot Soebroto. As per his final wishes, General Gatot was buried at Watugong, accompanied by a large congregation led by the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita. Throughout his life, General Gatot Soebroto had greatly supported the development of Buddhism in Indonesia.

In July, Palembang celebrated the inauguration of its first

monastery, Dharmakirti Vihara, on July 8, 1962.

Entering 1963, the Buddhist community in Indonesia marked the tenth anniversary of the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's service. Celebrations were initiated by Buddhists everywhere.

The funds raised from these anniversary events were used for monastery construction and to support Buddhist activities in their respective regions.

In a festive atmosphere, on Friday, March 1, 1963, the first-ever samaneri (novice nun) ordination in Indonesia took place. Two women were ordained as samaneris. Later, on July 10th, 1963, Nagasena Vihara was officially opened. Present at the event were ambassadors from Buddhist countries such as Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and India. During this ceremony, Samanera Jinamarga and Samanera Jinakarma were ordained, further expanding the members of the Maha Sangha Indonesia. Among them was Samanera Jinagiri, who resumed his monastic life after having left it for several months.

Feeling discontented with lay life, he eventually could not resist the call to leave worldly life behind, not even his wife and children could deter him.

Internationally, congratulations poured in for the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita. Buddhist magazines of that time extensively covered the ten-year anniversary of their revered teacher's monastic life.²⁵

²⁵ In its fourth year, issues 8 and 9, "Berita Vimala," the internal newsletter of Vimaladharmā Vihāra, Bandung, published the following message:

"With immense joy, Buddhists both in Indonesia and other countries celebrate the tenth vassa (year in monkhood) of the Dhammaduta Mahanayaka Sthavira Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, who stepped into the Holy Sangha ten years ago in Indonesia. For over a decade, he has followed in the footsteps of Buddha's sthaviras and the great Bodhisattvas on his Dharma journey, spreading Buddha Dharma in Indonesia as an Indonesian son.

This event marks a historic milestone in Indonesia, as for centuries, the once-glorious Buddha Dharma dimmed with the arrival of colonizers. With our nation's independence, where national identity is being rediscovered by its children, an Indonesian son courageously emerged as a pioneer to reestablish the Buddhist Flag on our ancestral lands (1953 at Borobudur Temple and Tengger Sea of Sand). We, all Buddhists, are fortunate that the door

The central celebration of the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita's *dasa vassa* (ten years in monkhood) was held at the Gedung Wanita, Jakarta, on August 28 and 29, 1963. The first day was dedicated to the Buddhist community, and the second day for officials and ambassadors of friendly nations.

Meanwhile, due to health concerns, Sariputra Sadono, the head of DPP Perbudhi, resigned. The

has been opened, albeit through various hardships faced by The Guiding Teacher.

Besides being a pioneer in rebuilding the edifice of Buddhādharma in Indonesia, he is also a true Indonesian son who consistently supports Pancasila. His divine essence has inspired the establishment of over fifty branches of the Indonesian Buddhist Association across the country. His national spirit, always eager to serve the nation's glory, his humanity filled with immense tolerance in facing the sufferings of followers and society, and his guidance in justice and democracy in tackling various issues, are exemplary.

May Tathagata bestow endless blessings upon this great Indonesian son, a heroic Dharma figure. May the great and holy Bodhisattwa Mahasattwas always guide him on the Dharma Path for the greatness of our homeland, nation, and world peace.

With this, all Buddhists from Sabang to Merauke, especially the caretakers of Berita Vimala, offer their devotion, respect, and prayers for the happiness of our Great Hero."

Perbudhi Central Executive Board was then moved from Semarang to Jakarta, with Soemantri M.S. taking over as the Acting Head from September 1, 1963. Consequently, the center of Buddhist development shifted from Central Java to West Java and Jakarta.

As a logical consequence of the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita frequently residing in Bandung, Buddhist activities increasingly took place at the Vimaladharmā Vihāra in Bandung. This monastery attracted considerable attention from students studying in Bandung and interested in Buddhism. Among them were Herman S. Endro, Nyoo Wan Nio, Michael, and others, who actively managed “Berita Vimala,” an internal

newsletter of Vimaladharmā Vihāra with distribution reaching beyond Bandung.

On October 30, 1963, at 8:30 PM in Vimaladharmā Vihāra, a solemn ceremony was held to ordain Samanera Jinaratana and Samanera Jinakumar by the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita. The event was also marked by an engaging speech from the Chairman of Perbudhi Bandung branch, Karbono, a PJKA employee known for his eloquent talks.

*For one who nurtures Loving-Kindness
harbors neither resentment nor grudges
against anyone, and therefore, they
have no enemies.*

Chapter 25

Moving to West Java

Throughout the journey, he felt the snake following him. Strangely, after entering the Vihara, the snake was nowhere to be seen.

The relocation of the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita to Bandung marked a significant shift in the trajectory of Buddhism's growth in Indonesia, focusing on West Java. Settling in Vimaladharmā Vihara, Bandung, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita's presence brought a buzz of activity. The vihara was frequented by people from all walks of life, not just university students studying in Bandung.

The vihara also became a hub for meditation practices, both Metta Bhavana and Vipassana Bhavana, and a breeding ground for enthusiastic Buddhist followers. Among them

were figures like Karbono, Sujata Tjung, Liem Yoe Kiong and his wife.

One day, Nyoo Wan Nio, an ITB Pharmacy student and a regular visitor, brought a male housemate to Vimaladharmā Vihara. The Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita and the Venerable Jinapiya were present. The young man was haunted by the vision of a black snake, visible only to him, leaving a blackened wound on his toe. Frightened and convinced he was cursed, he followed Wan to seek guidance. On the way to the vihara, he felt the snake's relentless pursuit, but once inside, it vanished.

After conversing with the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, the young man's mind calmed. He was advised to stay in the vihara for a few days, during which he learned about Buddhism and meditation. The young man, Mochtar Rashid from Padang, began to delve deeper into Buddhist teachings after his recovery and became active in spreading *Dharma*.

In Bandung, Karbono, a PJKA (State Railway Company) employee, stood out for his insightful Buddhist discourses. Well-read and articulate, he drew from various Indonesian Buddhist books and magazines, making his talks practical and impactful.

Bandung also provided the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita with capable assistants in spreading Buddhism. Among them were Dicky Soemani, interested in Indonesian Buddhist history and spiritual communication, and Parwati, a former devotee from Solo, now a university lecturer in Bandung. Additionally, a Buddhist

ABRI (Indonesian Arm Forces) officer, Lieutenant Colonel Soesantyo Aryo, actively supported the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, even requested a Buddhist oath-taking ceremony when promoted, a first in Bandung.

The move to West Java thus marked a significant chapter in the spread and development of Buddhism in Indonesia, spearheaded by the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita and supported by a growing community of devoted practitioners and learners.

From Bandung, the teachings of Buddhism began to spread to various areas in West Java, such as Sukabumi, Cianjur, Cikampek, and Bogor. In his hometown of Bogor, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita was greatly assisted by locals who had known him since the beginning. Among his admirers in Bogor, there were many intellectuals, including Upasaka Dhammaviriya. Frequently, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita found himself traveling between Jakarta and Bandung.

Chapter 26

The Establishment of Indonesian Buddhists

On January 1, 1965, the Tanah Putih Vihara was inaugurated and became independent from Perbudhi.

Upholding the discipline of ethical values, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita was known for his firm yet compassionate guidance towards his devotees. At that time, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita was very strict, especially concerning the morality of his devotees. Consequently, if any adherents violated the precepts, they were immediately reprimanded. Those who were aware appreciated this, while others who felt offended started to harbor resentment. This marked the beginning of opposition towards the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita. He was considered too interfering

in organizational matters. After the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita left Watugong for West Java, seeds of discord began to grow among the community in the Semarang area. Followers loyal to the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita remained steadfast in following their teacher's guidance in running Perbudhi. Meanwhile, those who were offended and felt slighted began to form their own group.

This group sought support from the Venerable Jinapiya and Samanera Jinagiri. However, the Venerable Jinapiya and Samanera Jinagiri did not want to get involved in such community organizational

issues. They adopted a neutral stance. They accepted everyone who came to them, and this group felt that they had their support.

In early 1964, Goei Thwan Ling requested the return of the land he had donated for the establishment of a Sima at Buddha Gaya, Watugong. The Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita could do nothing as the land was still legally in Goei Thwan Ling's name.

On September 20, 1964, the Venerable Jinapiya returned from Sri Lanka and set foot back on the land at 08:10 on a Sunday.

Then, on January 1, 1965, the Tanah Putih Vihara in Semarang was inaugurated. The ceremony was led by Samanera Jinagiri. When the time came to formally declare the establishment of the monastery, a young and eloquent man stepped forward. With a commanding

voice, he took the microphone and announced, "On January 1, 1965, Tanah Putih Vihara is inaugurated and separated from Perbudhi."

The declaration by the man surprised many of the attendees, including Upasaka Sariputra Sadono. He immediately stood up, but was restrained by many who seemed to have pre-planned this interruption. The young, bold man who made the announcement was named Silasuriya Yuwono. Meanwhile, Samanera Jinagiri remained calm and simply smiled throughout the event. Following this startling incident, Samanera Jinagiri continued with the blessing ceremony. Thus, from that day, Indonesian Buddhist was established, with Tanah Putih Vihara as its base. From that day on, Indonesian Buddhist expanded its influence and began to gather followers in cities across Central Java.

Chapter 27

Encounter with A Kwan Kong Devotee

*If you deem me incompetent, I am prepared to resign. I may be angry with you too.
But every second, every moment, your feet are always above my head.*

In upholding the Law of Truth
and Justice,
All temptations of pleasure and
promises of joy,
Thousands of pains and tortures,
Even a million deaths,
Will not sway my heart!²⁶

²⁶ Kwan Kong, a legendary figure from the Three Kingdoms era in ancient China, is celebrated for his valor, loyalty, and sense of justice. He has been venerated as a deity by the Chinese people. In Buddhist terminology, a deity is a type of living being that is not visible to the ordinary eye. Deities have exceedingly long lifespans, thousands of times longer than that of humans, and they experience abundant happiness and pleasures. The joys of ordinary human life pale in comparison to the bliss experienced by these celestial beings. Humans who perform many virtuous deeds in their earthly lives can be reborn as deities in heavenly realms. However, according to

In 1961, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita learned from his devotees that in Jakarta there was an assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, General Gatot Soebroto, who worshiped Kwan Kong. His name was Soemantri M.S., and at that time he held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

The Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita then made a visit to his home. Soemantri's house was modest, with few furnishings, yet

Buddhism, the ultimate goal of humanity is not to reach such a heaven. The current incarnation of Kwan Kong is believed by those with the ability to "see" to be a deity safeguarding the Southeast Asian region.

imbued with a strong Javanese ambiance.

When the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita was there, Soemantri happened to be visiting a friend's house, and only his wife was at home. Mrs. Soemantri then asked a servant to call her husband home, as the visit from such an unusual guest was unexpected.

Soemantri, who was at his friend Amiang's house chatting, was surprised when his servant arrived asking him to return home immediately. "A yellow robe?" Soemantri wondered to himself. But he quickly headed home.

At his house, he saw two bald men in yellow robes and one lay person sitting. His guests stood up as he arrived, and they shook hands.

"Soemantri," he introduced himself.

"Boan An," said one of the men in yellow robes.

"Ah, this is the famous Boan An," Soemantri thought to himself. He had heard of this name as the person who later became the first

Buddhist monk in Indonesia after the Majapahit era.

They then engaged in a conversation, mainly about spirituality, as Soemantri had an interest in that field. Suddenly, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita asked, "Do you have a place for worship here?"

"Yes," Soemantri replied.

"May I see it?"

"Of course," Soemantri said, leading his guest into a room in his house.

In that room, there was a worship table with a picture of Kwan Kong on it. This was the legendary warrior from the Three Kingdoms era in China, renowned for his bravery and loyalty. Entering the room, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita simply remarked, "Good, good."

Then they excused themselves to leave. Two months later, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita visited Soemantri's home again, this time accompanied by Mrs. Liem Yoe Kiong, a woman actively supporting Buddhist activities in Bandung, and

another lay follower. As before, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita's visit was warmly received. They chatted amiably, as if they had known each other well. Soemantri had a generous heart, open and straightforward, which perhaps explained his devotion to Kwan Kong, despite being Javanese.

In the midst of their conversation, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita suddenly said, "I ask you to lead the Buddhist community."

Soemantri was shocked. "But I am not a Buddhist," he protested.

"It's destined," replied the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita.

Since Soemantri believed all religions were good, he agreed. He was subsequently appointed as the Chairman of the Perbudhi branch in Jakarta, established on November 9, 1961. Under Soemantri's leadership, the Jakarta branch of Perbudhi flourished rapidly.

Soemantri had a deep interest in the supernatural. Whenever he heard of someone being

"possessed," he would immediately go to see. He could communicate with spirits, especially intrigued if the "consciousness" of Kwan Kong arrived. When Kwan Kong "appeared," the possessed person's behavior precisely mimicked Kwan Kong—eyes bulging, sitting majestically, stroking an imaginary long beard, and huffing as if overheated. Strangely, this "consciousness" of Kwan Kong was especially fond of Soemantri, pointing at him emphatically and saying in a mix of Hokkien and Indonesian, "*Teecu, teecu, lai-lah, lai-lah!*" meaning "Disciple, disciple, come here, come here!"

The possessed person particularly enjoyed drinking boiling coffee. Once, Soemantri was asked to drink hot coffee, which made him hesitant, but the person insisted. Although it seemed boiling, it didn't feel hot going down the throat. Soemantri also experienced bathing in hot oil, cutting his tongue, etc., before meeting the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita. But after meeting him, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita advised against

such practices. “What for?” said the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita.

Soemantri threw himself wholeheartedly into leading the Buddhist community. He wasn't wealthy but was exceptionally honest and firm. His straightforward heart led him to sell even his household furniture and only TV to develop the Buddhist community. Soemantri's honesty greatly impressed Ang Cin San, often his driver during his leadership in Jakarta.

Once, Ang Cin San was asked by Soemantri to collect a deposit of IDR 250,000 from Liem Sioe Kong, the brother of businessman Liem Sioe Liong. Given an envelope by Liem Sioe Kong's wife, Ang Cin San didn't check the amount and handed it directly to Soemantri. Surprised to find IDR 500,000 inside, Soemantri questioned Ang Cin San, who was unaware. Suggesting to keep the extra for household needs, Soemantri became furious, scolding, “You have no shame. Go return it!”

Ang Cin San, who had never seen Soemantri that angry, promptly

returned the excess money and never dared to take liberties with Soemantri again.

Soemantri knew Liem Sioe Liong and his brothers from the time when Liem Sioe Liong was starting his business in Central Java, where Soemantri often helped. Liem Sioe Liong later was known as the richest person in Indonesia. As Liem Sioe Liong's business grew and he began traveling abroad, he would stop by Soemantri's place to ask if he needed anything. Soemantri usually asked for Buddha statues, prompting Liem Sioe Liong to comment, “Always statues.”

Soemantri had a principle regarding statues; if given, he accepted; if asked, he gave. For instance, once, Liem returned from Singapore with a beautiful Avalokitesvara statue. Soemantri, not having placed it yet, left it on the table. A visitor saw the statue and exclaimed, “What a beautiful statue, Mr. Mantri, can I have it?”

Without expression, Soemantri replied, “Take it.”

Soemantri and the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita got along well. The Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, always straightforward and honest since childhood, found a match in Soemantri's loyalty and sincerity. After meeting the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, Soemantri learned a lot and felt indebted and respectful towards his teacher, recognizing his many qualities.

Once, when Soemantri, Ang Cin San, and another person were staying overnight in Pacet, Lembah Cipendawa, they were chatting late at night when suddenly their curtain was drawn aside. It was the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita. Shocked, they saw him leave. According to their knowledge, he was supposed to be in Bandung. After inquiring in Bandung, they confirmed his presence there, leaving them amazed and respectful towards their teacher.

Not long after, Ang Cin San, who often drove for the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, fell ill with a serious heart condition in 1966. The doctor, Dr. Gan Tjong Beng, a renowned

physician in Jakarta, was about to travel abroad. Three different people reported seeing the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita visiting Ang Cin San late at night, but he didn't believe them until the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita himself confirmed it.

When Dr. Gan's assistant, Dr. Iwan Santoso, informed Ang Cin San about the scheduled surgery, he asked for a postponement, confusing Dr. Santoso. Later, Dr. Gan himself was surprised by this decision. Ang Cin San explained about the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita's visit, believing he came to help. Dr. Gan was furious. The last patient before Dr. Gan left turned out to be the mother of the famous footballer Tan Liong Houw. Amazingly, Ang Cin San recovered completely without surgery. He felt deeply indebted to the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita.

During a discussion about spirituality at the Nagasena Monastery, Soemantri was curious about consciousness leaving the body and traveling elsewhere.

The Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita offered to show him through meditation. Soemantri experienced shrinking and flying to his mother's house in Central Java, seeing her in a towel and slippers. Upon confirming this with his mother over the phone, she was astonished at his knowledge of her activities. The Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita then reminded him that he should not repeat that exercise.

Such extraordinary events involving many people strengthened their belief in the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita's assistance, although he never admitted to such abilities, typically responded with a smile. A notable instance was recalled by a district head in Central Java, as told to Ang Cin San. He recounted a time when their car broke down in a remote village. The Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, seemingly effortlessly, extinguished the smoke billowing from the engine with his robe's sleeve, miraculously enabling the car to function again.

Ang Cin San later questioned the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita about this incident. His response was pragmatic, "If you beat out the fire, of course it'll go out. What's so strange about that?"

This response reflected his grounded and realistic nature. Despite his firm character and occasional display of anger, his actions were always logical and humane. Yet, his devotees often interpreted his deeds as mystical or signs of his spiritual advancement, believing he possessed extraordinary powers or had attained a high level of sanctity.

Soemantri, deeply involved in the Buddhist organization, often found himself at odds with other Buddhist leaders. Despite disagreements with the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, he maintained respect for him as his teacher. Soemantri viewed the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita as naive, easily trusting complaints from Buddhists who he believed wouldn't lie to their teacher.

Soemantri himself was often the subject of complaints, which led to debates with the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita. Despite their strong opinions, Soemantri once expressed his unwavering respect, saying, “Bhante, if you deem me incompetent, I am prepared to resign. I may be angry with you too. But every second, every moment, your feet are always above my head.”

This statement reflected Soemantri’s fierce loyalty and dedication to his teacher, regardless of their differences.





*Appointment of Romo Soemantri M.S. as the General Chairman of MUABI
(now MBI), 1972*

Chapter 28

Being Adaptive

In our quest to foster Buddhism in Indonesia, we're not just cultivating the religion itself. Rather, we're striving to contribute to our nation's spiritual evolution. This way, the births that occur here gradually improve in quality, thus enhancing not just Indonesia's physical but also its spiritual stature.

In 1965, the eruption of alleged PKI rebellion marked a harrowing chapter for all Indonesians. With his guidance firmly rooted in religious teachings, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita successfully steered his followers through these tumultuous times.

In 1966, Samanera Jinagiri and Samanera Jinaratana ventured to Bangkok, where they were ordained as the Venerable Girirakkhito and the Venerable Jinaratana. Returning to Indonesia, the Venerable Girirakkhito passionately spread Buddhist teachings across the archipelago, joined by other monks.

The year 1967 brought news from Sri Lanka: Upasaka Soenaryo, a devotee of the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, had embraced monastic life as the Venerable Sumangalo. While the Venerable Jinaratana chose to continue his studies in Thailand, 1968 witnessed the ordination of Suryakarma Chandra as Samanera Dharmasagarō.

Come April 1969, an Indonesian delegation introduced the concept of Buddhayana in Penang, Malaysia. Buddhism, historically, is divided into two major schools: Theravada, prevalent in countries like Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand, and Mahayana, followed in Tibet,

Japan, China, and Korea. Ancient Indonesian Buddhism was primarily Tantric, a branch of Mahayana, with the Sriwijayan empire once a renowned hub for Buddhist scholars.

Disputes between Theravada and Mahayana adherents were not uncommon, often marked by mutual disregard. Theravada Buddhists viewed Mahayana teachings as divergent, not anchored in the earliest scriptures, the Pali Tipitaka. Some Mahayanists, on the other hand, perceived Theravada or Hinayana as narrow or lesser.

The Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita approached the dissemination of Buddhist teachings in Indonesia with flexibility, spreading Theravada teachings while embracing Mahayana elements. His approach was shaped by his own journey—initiated into Mahayana and later ordained in Theravada tradition in Burma. He always cautioned against sectarian fanaticism, encouraging inclusivity. This approach later became known in the West as Buddhayana or Ekayana.

He also constantly reminded his disciples that spreading Buddhism in Indonesia was inseparable from enhancing the nation's overall quality of life, both physically and spiritually. As he often said to Parwati, a dedicated Buddhist from Solo, "As one born and raised in Indonesia, we bear the duty to aid in the evolution of the Indonesian nation. In our quest to foster Buddhism in Indonesia, we're not just cultivating the religion itself. Rather, we're striving to contribute to our nation's spiritual evolution. This way, the births that occur here gradually improve in quality, thus enhancing not just Indonesia's physical but also its spiritual stature."

It was this wise approach that led the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita to encourage his scholarly supporters to rediscover the Buddhist teachings entrenched in Indonesian culture. One significant finding was the concept of Sanghyang Adi Buddha, identified as the divine in Indonesian Buddhism. This rediscovered doctrine required widespread socialization. Key figures in its revival included

Dhammaviriya from Bogor, Dicky Soemani and Karbono from Bandung, Widyadharm from Jakarta, and many other devotees. The Venerable Girirakkhito, affectionately known as Bhante Giri, played a pivotal role in propagating the Sanghyang Adi Buddha doctrine through his speeches and publications.

Almost all prominent Buddhist figures at that time felt a strong

impetus to introduce this doctrine to Buddhists from various backgrounds. Herman S. Endro, one of the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita's students at Vimaladharm Vihara and then a recent graduate from the Law Faculty of a university in Bandung, was notably active in this endeavor.





*Group Photo from 1970, Featuring Samanera Dharmasagaro
(Now the Venerable Mahasthavira Dharmasagaro)*

Chapter 29

The Monks Have Arrived

Then, the yellow robes of the two former monks were replaced with white robes, followed by a request to be accepted as lay practitioners (upasakas), and they were then bathed by the attending Sangha members.

In early July 1969, the Venerable Narada Mahathera made his return visit to Indonesia. Subsequently, at the invitation of the Maha Sangha of Indonesia, four Thera Dharmaduta from Thailand arrived on July 25, 1969, coinciding with Asadha Day. Two of them spent the vassa period in Palembang, and the other two in Jakarta. They planned to stay in Indonesia for six months. The two in Palembang were the Venerable Phra Gru Pallad Sambidatana Viriyacarya and the Venerable Phra Maha Prataen Khemadasi, and those in Jakarta were the Venerable Phra Gru Pallad Atthacaryanukich and the Venerable Phra Maha Sujib Khemacharo. After

the vassa period, the guests traveled to various cities in Java and Sumatra.

In Jakarta, Upasaka Suktadharmia and his wife Upasika Suktadharmi, as *dayaka* and *dayika*, accompanied the visiting monks to Semarang, Pekalongan, and Surabaya. The two in Palembang toured Baturaja, Curup, Bengkulu, and Palembang itself, and then stayed for three months at Vimaladharmia Vihara in Bandung.

At the end of 1969, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita went on an overseas trip, visiting Thailand, Penang, and Singapore. Accompanying him was a devotee who was later ordained in Sri Lanka

as the Venerable Sumangalo. Joining the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita as a *dayaka* was Upasaka Suryaprabhava Mochtar Rashid, then the editor-in-chief of the magazine *Berita Vimala*, who was also preparing for his apothecary exam. In a conversation with the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, whom he deeply respected, Rashid was told, "First become a monk, then you will pass."

"Why?" Rashid asked, perplexed.

The Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita just laughed in response.

In January 1970, *Berita Vimala's* editorial team received exciting news directly from Mochtar Rashid that he had decided to become a monk in Thailand. On February 6, 1970, he was ordained as a monk with the name Phra Subhato.

On March 12, 1970, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita returned to Bandung after approximately three months abroad. While in Thailand, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita invited Thai

monks to attend the upcoming Vesak celebrations in Indonesia, where a monk ordination ceremony would be held at Borobudur Temple. During his time in Thailand, the Venerable Jinapiya, who had been there since 1968, descended from Wat Meungmung, Chiang Mai, to Bangkok to meet his teacher.

On May 6, 1970, three Thai monks visited Indonesia. Among them was the Venerable Chao Kun Phra Sasanasobhana, head of Wat Bovoranives and the third-ranking monk in the Thai Sangha hierarchy, along with the Venerable Phra Dhammasobhana, and the Venerable Phra Khantipalo, the vice-head of Wat Bovoranives. During their journey to Borobudur, the group stayed at Vimaladharm Vihara, accompanied by the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita.

On May 8, 1970, at 2 PM, five individuals were ordained as monks at the great Borobudur Temple. A temporary *sima* facing east was established at the temple's highest level, marked by a mat. Present were four Thai monks who had

been in Indonesia for ten months, longer than initially planned. Indonesian monks attending included the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, the Venerable Girirakkhito, the Venerable Jinamerta, and the Venerable Subhato. The five ordained were Samanera Jinasuryabhumi, Samanera Dhammasinha, Samanera Dhammavijaya, Samanera Dhammasusishyo, and Samanera Dhammabhumi, who were subsequently named the Venerable Agga Jinametto, the Venerable Uggadhammo, the Venerable Sirivijaya, the Venerable Jinadhammo, and the Venerable Saccamano respectively. This event marked the first monk ordination at Borobudur.

The following day, after the Vesak celebrations, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita and the foreign guests visited Sri Paku Alam in Yogyakarta, highlighting the centuries-old positive relations between Thailand and Indonesia, including Thai Buddha statues originating from Srivijaya. That evening, the Venerable Chao Kun Phra Sasanasobhana handed over

the newly ordained monks to the guidance of the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita.

The Venerable Chao Kun also presented a gift of a 45-volume Pali Tipitaka set, its 24-volume English translation, three volumes of Dhammapada Commentary, a Pali-English dictionary, and a volume of Vinayamukha to the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita. These valuable contributions were stored at Vimaladharm Vihara, Bandung.

The Borobudur ordination ceremony garnered significant media attention, including TV, radio, and press coverage, both domestically and internationally. However, the sanctity of the ceremony was somewhat diminished by the overcrowding and incidents of pickpocketing at the event.

On May 17, 1970, Upasaka Vidyamitra Michael was ordained as Samanera Ananda Vidyasagara at Vimaladharm Vihara, Bandung. Then, on September 10, 1970, Upasaka Dharmasusila Hudojo was ordained by the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita as Samanera

Rahula Vidyasurya at Nagasena Vihara, Pacet.

In October 1970, at Nagasena, an emotional ceremony took place as the Venerable Sirivijaya and the Venerable Saccamano reverted to lay status. The ceremony, led by the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita and the Venerable Phra Gru Pallad Atthacariyanukich. Then, the yellow robes of the two former monks were replaced with white robes, followed by a request to be accepted as lay practitioners (upasakas), and they were then bathed by the attending Sangha members.

In 1971, the head of the Hong Kong Buddhist Association, the Venerable Kok Kwong Fashi, visited Indonesia. During his tour from West to East Java, he expressed

his admiration for the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, encouraging Indonesian Buddhists to make the most of their fortunate opportunity to have such an exceptional teacher.

The Venerable Kok Kwong Fashi's visits to various regions were often accompanied by the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita and Samanera Dharmasagaro. Inspired by the Venerable Kok Kwong Fashi, Samanera Dharmasagaro resolved his doubts and was later ordained as the Venerable Dharmasagaro in Hong Kong.

... the development of Buddhism cannot be detached from the existing culture in Indonesia. Therefore, assimilation and pluralism are unavoidable.

Chapter 30

Indonesian Attire

Buddhism in Burma shares similarities and differences with Buddhism in Sri Lanka. The same goes for Buddhism in Thailand. The teachings are the same, but the traditions vary. Indonesia is a vast nation. Why don't we dare to express the traditions that already exist in Indonesia in our practice of Buddhism?

In overseeing his adherents, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita was firm about morality. Fully aware of Buddhism's rebirth in Indonesia, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita implemented a policy emphasizing the importance of starting any endeavor on a solid foundation. Therefore, he expected his disciples, the upasakas and upasikas, to be exemplary for other Buddhists. These lay devotees were sheltered under the umbrella of PUUI (Union of Indonesian Upasakas and Upasikas). Although they were upasakas, being human, they inevitably made mistakes. The Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita understood

this but demanded that they set a good example for the community, especially since Buddhism was just taking root again in Indonesia.

Thus, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita often corrected his upasakas who erred. If they persistently repeated their mistakes, particularly violating moral precepts, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita reluctantly expelled them from PUUI, according to his role as the guiding teacher of upasakas and upasikas. Those who disagreed with this decision often became resentful and antagonistic towards the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita. They accused

him of meddling in their personal affairs. This led to a repeat of earlier conflicts that had occurred in Central Java when Buddhism was centered there. Resentful individuals began to scrutinize the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita for faults and stirred dissent among other followers.

Leveraging their extensive Dharma knowledge gained from reading various books, they spread rumors that the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita had deviated from Buddhist teachings. They argued that the development of Buddhism in Indonesia, differing from practices in countries like Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Burma, was not as pure or authentic as the original teachings of Buddha. With such arguments, they opposed the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita's leadership and refuted the concept of Sanghyang Adi Buddha, dismissing it as a fabrication.

This was a clear misunderstanding. The Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita had repeatedly reminded his supporters that the

development of Buddhism cannot be detached from the existing culture in Indonesia. Therefore, assimilation and pluralism are unavoidable.

As he once said, "Buddhism is universal. While the attire may differ, dependent on topography, geography, etc., the core teachings remain the same. In Theravada Buddhist countries, there are differences among themselves. Buddhism in Burma shares similarities and differences with Buddhism in Sri Lanka. The same goes for Buddhism in Thailand. The teachings are the same, but the traditions vary. Indonesia is a vast nation. Why don't we dare to express the traditions that already exist in Indonesia in our practice of Buddhism?"

The term Sanghyang Adi Buddha was unearthed by contemporary Buddhist scholars. It was widely embraced across various regions. During the Maha Samaya in Bandung, the Buddhist community unanimously accepted Sanghyang Adi Buddha to represent the concept of God in Indonesian Buddhism.

At the Buddhist Congress in Semarang in early 1972, veneration to Sanghyang Adi Buddha was first used in worship. The Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita and the Venerable Girirakkhito led the ceremony. The Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita lit five-colored candles, and the Venerable Girirakkhito began the service by chanting, “Namo Sanghyang Adi Buddhaya,” followed by all the Buddhist leaders present. The Venerable Girirakkhito’s distinctive voice carried a profound message.

Subsequently, during the 1972 National Vesak Celebration at Borobudur, this term was nationally reaffirmed by the Venerable Girirakkhito. The Vesak celebration was as vibrant as in previous years,

beginning with the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita lighting the five-colored candles and the Venerable Girirakkhito leading the worship. As in the Semarang Congress, the Venerable Girirakkhito commenced the devotion by saying, “Namo Sanghyang Adi Buddha...,” and continued.

It turns out, later on, some of the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita’s disciples who were considered intellectuals, such as Karbono, Widyadharma, Herman S. Endro, and others, changed their minds and strongly opposed the use of the term Sanghyang Adi Buddha. Ironically, they were the ones who had initially helped to rediscover and popularize the term among the Buddhist community in Indonesia.



*Alongside the President of the Hong Kong Buddhist Association,
the Venerable Kok Kwong Fashi*

Chapter 31

The Departure of Five Monks

This news was certainly startling for the Buddhist community in Indonesia, as it meant the Sangha in Indonesia was no longer unified.

In mid-1970, the Venerable Subhato, formerly known as Mochtar Rashid, returned from Thailand. As a loyal follower of the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita after his life was saved on one occasion, he returned with a fervor to develop the Buddhist teachings he had learned in Thailand. In his efforts to develop Buddhism at that time, the Venerable Subhato strongly upheld the Theravada tradition of Thailand, based on the Pali Tipitaka scriptures. In Thailand, monks are not vegetarian and are allowed to smoke. This divergence in practices eventually led to a difference of opinion with his former

teacher, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita.

Later, the Venerable Subhato approached the Venerable Girirakkhito and persuaded him to return to the “pure” teachings based on the Pali Tipitaka. Influenced by this, the Venerable Girirakkhito began to distance himself from the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, starting in 1972 after the conclusion of the Indonesian Buddhist Congress. That year, the Venerable Jinapiya and the Venerable Jinaratana in Thailand, and the Venerable Sumangalo in Sri Lanka, received a letter from the Venerable Girirakkhito. The letter

sought their support to establish a separate Indonesian Sangha from the Maha Sangha Indonesia. The three monks agreed to the Venerable Girirakkhito's proposal and sent their written consent.

Armed with the written consent from the three monks abroad, on January 12, 1972, the Venerable Girirakkhito and the Venerable Subhato declared their separation from the Maha Sangha Indonesia and simultaneously announced the formation of Sangha Indonesia. Its members consisted of five monks: the Venerable Girirakkhito, the Venerable Jinapiya, the Venerable Sumangalo, the Venerable Jinaratana and the Venerable Subhato, with two in Indonesia and three abroad. A new Sangha can only be established with a minimum of five monks. This news was certainly startling for the Buddhist community in Indonesia, as it meant the Sangha in Indonesia was no longer unified.

Generally, the Buddhist community in various regions was not much affected by this split. If the Venerable Sthavira

Ashin Jinarakkhita visited, he was welcomed warmly and enthusiastically. Similarly, when the Venerable Girirakkhito visited, he too was received well.

A group of devotees opposing the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita welcomed the formation of Sangha Indonesia. They received moral support from the existence of Sangha Indonesia. This group of devotees then actively propagated the "pure" Theravada teachings, asserting that what was taught by the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita deviated from true Buddha Dharma.

A primary target of their criticism was the doctrine of Sanghyang Adi Buddha. They vehemently claimed that this doctrine was a fabrication of the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita and not a part of the "pure" Buddhist teachings. Ironically, it was these very figures who had previously been instrumental in popularizing the doctrine of Sanghyang Adi Buddha. The moral backbone of their group was the Venerable

Girirakhito, while the Venerable Jinapiya, the Venerable Sumangalo, and the Venerable Jinaratana were not in Indonesia at that time.

Despite such challenges, the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita remained steadfast

in his policies. He continued his efforts to ensure that the presence of Buddhism in Indonesia brought benefits to the nation as a whole.





Inauguration of Aryamularama Monastery, Gadog-Pacet, Attended by the President of the World Buddhist Sangha Council (WBSC)

Chapter 32

Pacet on Jumat Kliwon Night

So, that's the fundamental concept: guiding the faithful to understand the Buddha Dharma by leveraging existing traditions.

In West Java, particularly in the Cianjur area, there's a long-standing story about Eyang Suryakencana, a revered ancestral figure believed to be a protector of the region. Before the Sakyawanaram Monastery in Lembah Cipendawa was established, the site already had a shrine dedicated to Eyang Suryakencana. A large rock by the river was believed to be the place where Eyang Suryakencana meditated in ancient times.

When the land for the monastery was purchased, the local community requested that the shrine remain. The Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, respecting the wishes

of the locals, agreed, as Eyang Suryakencana was also a Buddhist. This led to the establishment of the Sakyawanaram Monastery, which included a space for venerating Eyang Suryakencana.

Later, a ritual involving a bath under seven water sprouts on every Jumat Kliwon night began to be held at the monastery. This ritual attracted not just Buddhists but also others, including those practicing Kejawen, a Javanese spiritual tradition. Among the visitors were notable figures like Soedjono Hoemardani. During the 1970s, the Venerable Aryasasano, a key assistant to the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, played

a significant role. A descendant of a Sultan's family from Kalimantan, he became a monk after meeting the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita and was actively involved in social and political developments in Indonesia.

Once, a group of devotees suggested a trip to Central Java for the *1 Suro* celebration, a Javanese tradition of cleansing the body and soul. This conversation led to the idea of the Jumat Kliwon night ritual at the Sakyawanaram Monastery. Initially, attendance was sparse, but over time, the ritual gained popularity. Participants would cleanse themselves in the cold water of the seven sprouts, followed by teachings, chanting of parittas, and meditation sessions led by the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita or other monks. The cold water, combined with the refreshing mountain air, invigorated the participants, making them more receptive to the teachings and meditation.

So, that's the fundamental concept: guiding the faithful to

understand the Buddha Dharma by leveraging existing traditions. Over time, as many who participated in the Jumat Kliwon (Friday Kliwon) night cleansing ceremony at Sakyawanaram Temple experienced tangible benefits—physical cleanliness, mental refreshment, leading to improved work and life enthusiasm—word of mouth spread. Stories circulated that the Jumat Kliwon ceremony at Pacet was remarkably efficacious, said to cleanse all ailments, resolve issues, and even bring luck.

Consequently, attendance at these Friday night events surged. Initially, attendees were gathered for Dharma teachings, prayer ceremonies, and meditation to purify the spirit. Later, as the crowd swelled to thousands, only a fraction could fit into the prayer hall. Others, after bathing, would light incense, bow to Buddha and sacred beings seeking blessings and resolutions to their problems, and then return home.

Rumors then began to circulate alleging superstitious practices at

Sakyawanaram Temple, such as fortune-telling, matchmaking, and communal nudity in the baths. These accusations were grossly unfounded; men and women bathed separately, each with designated areas.

Attendees were also provided with simple vegetarian meals. The coolness of the water often brought mental clarity to those troubled,

especially after participating in prayers and listening to Dharma teachings. In a calm and refreshed state, understanding and solutions to problems could emerge more easily.

This history and purpose underpin the establishment of the Jumat Kliwon prayers in Pacet, which began in the 1970s.





*Bishops from Various Asian Countries Visit Sakyawanaram Monastery,
Cipendawa Valley-Pacet*

Chapter 33

Just a Servant of the Buddha

His Holiness the Dalai Lama was taken aback by this response. It was common for him to associate Buddhism in Thailand with Theravada and in Taiwan with Mahayana.

In 1974, thanks to the efforts of the Director-General of Hindu and Buddhist Affairs at the Ministry of Religion, Gede Puja, M.A., the Indonesian Sangha was reunited with the Maha Sangha Indonesia. After unification, the Sangha in Indonesia was renamed Sangha Agung Indonesia, with the Venerable Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita as Maha Nayaka, the Venerable Jinapiya Thera as Anu Nayaka I, the Venerable Girirakkhito as Anu Nayaka II, and the Venerable Uggadhammo as Anu Nayaka III. There was also a council of monks (*Bhikkhu Samagama*) consisting of the leaders of the Sangha Agung Indonesia with seven members.

On June 23, 1975, good news came for the Buddhist community in Indonesia as the government officially recognized Sanghyang Adi Buddha as God in Indonesian Buddhism, implementing this term in the oath of civil servants under Government Regulation No. 21 of 1975.

However, in 1976 some Theravada monks again separated, refusing to accept the leadership of the Venerable Maha Nayaka Sthavira (MNS) Ashin Jinarakkhita, although he was elected by the majority of the Sangha. In the same year, the Venerable Jinaratana, one of the founders of Sangha Indonesia,

returned to Indonesia from abroad and received the Bodhisattva Precepts in Taiwan. The Venerable Sumangalo remained overseas until his passing.

In 1976, His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited Indonesia and had a chance to meet with the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita. They conversed amicably in English.

“To what sect of Buddhism do you belong?” His Holiness the Dalai Lama asked the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita.

“I am just a servant of the Buddha,” replied the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama was taken aback by this response. It was common for him to associate Buddhism in Thailand with Theravada and in Taiwan with Mahayana. The response was unusual for him who was used to categorizing Buddhism in terms of Theravada in Thailand and Mahayana in Taiwan.

The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita was a servant to all, serving followers without regard

to their sectarian affiliations. His openness brought diverse visitors to the Lembah Cipendawa, including bishops, student groups from IAIN -- Islamic education institutions -- and others. To a Belgian professor and high-level Zen practitioner, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita once said, “Certainly, holy people can be found everywhere.”

The year 1978 brought a mix of joy and challenges for Indonesian Buddhists. In that year, 500 years after the fall of the Majapahit kingdom, Buddhism was officially recognized by the Republic of Indonesia in the GBHN. A key figure in the recognition of Buddhism as an official religion in Indonesia was Prof. Dr. Moestopo. Previously, efforts by Buddhist leaders in Indonesia had met with hesitancy from the government, partly due to questions about whether Buddhism acknowledged the existence of an Almighty God. Prof. Dr. Moestopo then sought the guidance of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita, who advised him to contact the Buddhist community leaders of the time.

Still seeking clarity, Prof. Dr. Moestopo eventually approached the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita directly with a straightforward question, “Does Buddhism have a God?”

“Yes,” responded the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita.

“What is His name?”

“Sanghyang Adi Buddha.”

Satisfied with this answer, Prof. Dr. Moestopo engaged extensively with the then Minister of Religious Affairs, and ultimately, Buddhism was declared one of the five officially recognized religions in Indonesia.

However, in the same year, Sangha Mahayana Indonesia was formed, led by the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita’s disciple, the Venerable Dharmasagaro. The Venerable Dharmasagaro first met the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita at Dharmayuga Vihara during the Vesak celebration in 1964.

Before becoming a monk, the Venerable Dharmasagaro was known as Suryakarma and had studied Buddhism at the Sariputra

School in Jakarta. In 1968, he joined the pabbajja samanera (novice ordination) under the guidance of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita in Klaten. Initially intending to be a samanera for a month, he ended up continuing for half a year. His parents were initially shocked to learn that their son had become a samanera, leading him to return to lay life. He was initially among those scheduled to be fully ordained as a monk on Vesak day in the year 2514 BE (1970 CE) at Candi Borobudur.

In July 1970, after the passing of his parents and by August 1970, Suryakarma decided to resume his life as a samanera. Reflecting on his parents’ death and contemplating the Buddhist teachings on the impermanence of life, he, at 25 years old, wondered whether he could live another 25 years. These reflections strengthened his resolve to become a monk. Consequently, in 1972, he was sent by the Maha Sangha Indonesia along with two other samaneras to Hong Kong to receive full monastic ordination (*upasampada*). Realizing the truth in Buddha’s teachings about birth, aging, decay, and death,

he firmly decided to pursue the monastic path.

After returning to Indonesia, the Venerable Dharmasagaro greatly assisted the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita in nurturing the Buddhist community. However, in 1976, he had a disagreement with another disciple of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita. This disagreement led him to resign from the Sangha Agung Indonesia. Subsequently, his supporters encouraged him to establish a separate Sangha, leading to the formation of the Sangha Mahayana Indonesia.

Despite the separation, the Venerable Dharmasagaro continued to acknowledge the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita as his teacher. In the Mahayana hierarchy, he is considered a grand-disciple of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita. He held in high esteem many teachings of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita, especially the lesson of simplicity. He followed this teaching in his life, sleeping without a mattress, only on a mat, eating

simple meals, and wearing plain clothes.

The Venerable Dharmasagaro regarded the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita as the pioneer of the revival of Mahayana Buddhism in Indonesia. In leading the Sangha Mahayana Indonesia, he followed in the footsteps of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita, respecting local Indonesian customs. Under his leadership, the practice of '*liam keng*' or chanting, conducted in the Indonesian language, was initiated.

During the 1970s, many Buddhist organizations were formed, often leading to differences and conflicts rather than mutual support. These disputes somewhat hindered the progress of Buddhism and its contribution to national development.

Entering his middle age in the 1980s, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita allowed his beard to grow long and turn white, following the Mahayana tradition that permits monks of a certain age to maintain a beard. His beard became notably thick. In 1980, the Venerable MNS

Ashin Jinarakkhita visited India and participated in the Vesak celebrations there.

He reinvigorated his efforts for reform in nurturing the Buddhist community in Indonesia, a mission he had embarked upon since the late 1960s. Observing the segmentation within the Indonesian Buddhist community, with some strictly adhering to Theravada and others exclusively to Mahayana, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita once again emphasized the concept of Buddhayana.

While Theravada is also known as Hinayana or the lesser vehicle, and Mahayana as the greater vehicle, Buddhayana is seen as the Buddha's vehicle, encompassing the greater, lesser, and even the diamond vehicle or Vajrayana. With this approach, Buddhists can study Theravada without belittling Mahayana, or delve into Mahayana while also understanding the teachings of Theravada.

Thus, it is hoped that Buddhists will have an open perspective and not fall into narrow-mindedness.

Initially, they are given the opportunity to broadly understand the teachings of Theravada, Mahayana, and Tantrayana. Then they can choose, according to their own interests, which path to deepen their practice in. Ultimately, all these paths lead to the same final goal, the attainment of Buddhahood. In this way, Buddhists are not limited to any particular dogmatic view.

In popularizing this approach, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita remained consistent with his long-standing wisdom: not to abandon the unique cultural characteristics of Indonesia. He continued to adopt a cultural approach in advancing the religious life of Buddhists in Indonesia.

Good news arrived for the Indonesian community in 1983 when the Indonesian government declared Vesak Day as a national holiday. This achievement was not easily won. Key roles were played by Brigadier General Soemantri and other prominent figures in the Buddhist community. At that time, General Soemantri was appointed as the

chairman of DPP Walubi (Perwalian Umat Buddha Indonesia), which was established on the government's initiative to unite the various Buddhist organizations in Indonesia. With the establishment of Walubi, it was hoped that the aspirations of the Buddhist community could be channeled more effectively, thus preventing rifts that could ultimately be detrimental to the nation as a whole.



Chapter 34

World Teacher

Indeed, a holy person can be found anywhere.

By the mid-nineteen-eighties, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita began to suffer from rheumatic joint disease, possibly due to his early efforts in introducing Buddhist teachings across Indonesia, often getting drenched in forests and mountains. The condition progressively worsened over time. He had sought treatment far and wide to no avail. Each year, at least once, the ailment would flare up. When it did, the pain was so severe that he couldn't walk and had to be carried or pushed in a wheelchair.

There was an embarrassing incident once. An invitation arrived

for the inauguration of the Jakarta Dhammacakka Jaya Vihara in Sunter, Jakarta. Monks came to Pacet to invite the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita to attend the ceremony. Foreign monks were also invited. The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita agreed to come. However, just before the day of the inauguration, his condition flared up, rendering him unable to walk and necessitating the use of a wheelchair. He couldn't even stand. Thus, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita was unable to attend the inauguration of Jakarta Dhammacakka Jaya Vihara. The incident was a source of embarrassment for him.

The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita tried various treatments, but nothing cured him. Every year the disease would resurface. When it flared up, it lasted about a week. He tried all sorts of medications, but to no avail. He, too, was human and susceptible to illness. But this didn't stop his efforts in spreading the spirit of the Buddha's teachings. As much as possible, he tried to fulfill the requests of the Buddhist community to travel to different areas.

In 1984, when his illness flared up again, a devotee offered him *vibhuti*, a kind of powder allegedly produced by a holy person in India. "Give it a try! Many have been cured, Bhante. If it doesn't work, it's no big deal."

He thought there was no harm in trying. So, he applied the grayish powder to the painful areas and ingested some. Astonishingly, his condition did not recur. Occasionally, when the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita forgot to apply or consume the powder, his illness would flare up again. But when he

applied and ingested it again, he recovered. This led the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita to think, "There must be a connection here."

Feeling indebted for his recovery, he decided to express his gratitude in person to the individual responsible. Thus, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita embarked on a journey to India. Before leaving, he resolved in his heart that this would be his last trip abroad, intending to stay in Indonesia for the remainder of his life. He believed that the travel expenses would be better spent on building temples in villages.

The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita then traveled to India, where he was personally received by the holy man, known as Sai Baba.²⁷ Tens of thousands of people came

²⁷ Sai Baba taught the beauty of compassion, not confined by the boundaries of religion. He hoped that if someone came to him belonging to a particular faith, they would return as more devout devotees of that faith. A Buddhist visiting him should ideally return with a deeper understanding of Buddhist teachings and practice them more effectively. The same applies to adherents of other faiths. However, due to demographic and geographic factors, he often adopted approaches more common in Hinduism.

each year to meet Sai Baba, but not all were granted an audience.

Upon his first visit there, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita was immediately welcomed for a conversation. Sai Baba had distinctive physical features. His hair was thick and bushy, black as the night, resembling a large crown covering his head. His head appeared unusually large compared to his average-sized body. He had a prominent nose, and his ears were covered by his hair. His lips were wide, perpetually in a broad smile. His eyes radiated kindness.

It seemed that Sai Baba was aware of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita's thoughts. Upon their meeting, Sai Baba said, "Please come once a year, I will be with you at your place every Thursday."

The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita had been contemplating using his travel funds for buying land and building temples in villages. Inwardly, he responded, "If you help me, if the ticket is available, I will come."

And indeed, later on, someone from Singapore offered travel tickets for the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita along with several of his followers—regardless of how many of them—to meet Sai Baba.

The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita also felt indebted to Sai Baba for another reason. Before his teacher, the Venerable Mahabiksu Pen Cing, passed away, he had left a message for the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, requesting him to visit the Kong Hua Sie Root Temple in China if he ever had the chance. The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita had forgotten about this request but remembered it just before his third visit to Sai Baba. Therefore, before heading to India, he made a brief stop in China to visit the Kong Hua Sie Root Temple.²⁸

However, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita never tried to compel his supporters to recognize Sai Baba as a saint or to follow his teachings. His relationship with

²⁸ At that time, in the hierarchy of the Chan (Zen) Buddhist tradition of the Kong Hua Sie lineage, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita held the highest position.

Sai Baba was a personal spiritual connection. He believed that if his people found Sai Baba's teachings beneficial and good, they were welcome to follow them. But if they felt it was not suitable, they were not obliged to adopt his path.

As Buddha himself advised the Kalama people, "Do not believe in something simply because it has been passed down through generations, or

because of the reputation of certain teachers.... But if, upon examination, you find that the teaching is not beneficial, is opposed by the wise, then abandon it."

If you help me, if the ticket is available, I will come.



Chapter 35

Twilight Days

As his days waned, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita devoted his time at Sakyawanaram Vihara in Pacet. At the peep of dawn, around three or half-past, he would already be out of his humble abode, strolling through the monastery nestled in the valley, lighting incense and candles in numerous corners. Almost every day, if he was there, people would come visiting early in the morning, each laden with a heap of problems. Age had visibly touched him; his face, once radiant with vitality upon his return from Burma, now reflected the wise weariness of age.

He greeted his visitors with an unfailing smile and warmth, often infusing humor into his conversations as he listened to their endless stream of issues from dawn to dusk. The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita wasn't always to be found in Pacet; often he had to heed the calls of the Buddhist community, sometimes even venturing off the island. Though well past seventy, he didn't hesitate to set an example for his followers.

Once, on a usual trip to Bandung, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita spent a night at Vimaladharm Vihara. There was a young housekeeper there named

Marsino, barely into his twenties. That year, 1992, was the year of the monkey. Marsino had the chores of cooking and maintaining cleanliness around the monastery.

The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita would rise incredibly early, around three o'clock, even before Marsino at times. He performed his rituals, lighting candles, offering incense. Sometimes, he would retreat to his room after his prayers, only to emerge again at five, sitting and basking in the crisp, rejuvenating morning air.

On one occasion when the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita was at the Vimaladharmā Vihāra, Marsino decided to prepare a pineapple for him. After peeling the pineapple, he discarded its tougher core into the trash. Unbeknownst to Marsino, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita was sitting not too far from where he was working. Observing Marsino's action, he commented, "Marsino, don't throw that away, it's still edible."

The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita then approached the

trash can, retrieved the pineapple's core, washed it, and began to eat it. Marsino stood there, dumbfounded, muttering "Omitohud..." while patting his chest. From that day on, Marsino became more cautious not to waste food, learning to appreciate every morsel.

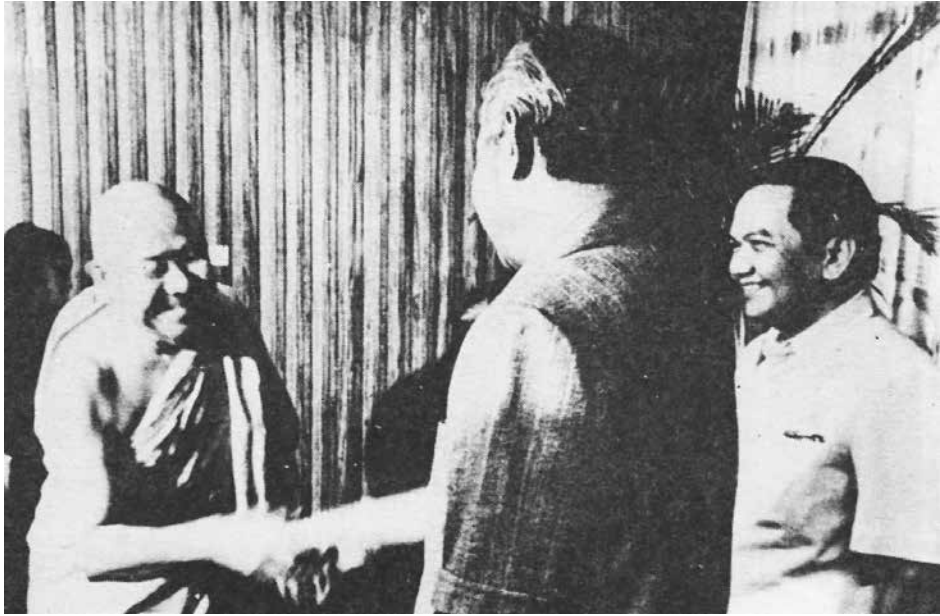
The wisdom of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita is aptly described by Prof. Dr. M.A. Lathouwers, a Zen practitioner from Belgium, "He showed that in life, resilience and joy can go hand in hand. His discipline did not hinder his spontaneity. His unwavering faith was coupled with an open heart, gentleness, hospitality, and a deep understanding of others, recognizing that each individual carries their own karma. His unpretentious personality, seemingly effortless, revealed that every human being has their own unique, authentic personality that cannot be duplicated or pigeonholed into stereotypes."

Among the younger generation in those years, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita was known

simply as a highly respected elderly monk. When they met him, they often didn't know what to say, unsure of how to interact with someone of his stature. In contrast, the older folks would gather around him enthusiastically whenever he visited, seeking his advice, blessings, and more. Despite his strong charisma, he remained a person of openness, democracy, and harmony at heart. It was a missed opportunity for the younger generation at the time not to take advantage of his wisdom and to delve into the knowledge he had to offer.

To achieve perfection, the highest happiness, paramang sukha. Not the ordinary happiness that lasts only momentarily, but paramang sukha, Nirvana. Seek what is everlasting, not the transient.





With President Soeharto when the Buddhist Community Leaders presented the outcomes of the Buddhist Congress in Yogyakarta (1979)

Chapter 36

Awaiting the End

One early morning, as the call to prayer began to resonate, a group of young folks, about eight in number, sat cross-legged in front of an old monk outside a small hermitage at the Sakyawanaram Monastery in Pacet, Cianjur. Their conversation went something like this:

One of the youths asked, “Venerable Sukong, what drove you to decide to become a monk?”

The old monk, referred to as Sukong, chuckled heartily, “Heh heh heh, certainly not due to a broken heart, I’ll tell you that. You see, back then I noticed Islam was well spread in Indonesia, what with its many

clerics, well-established. Christianity and Catholicism had their pastors and priests preaching away. But Buddhism? It was nowhere, despite its noble teachings. So, in my heart, I thought, ‘If no one’s willing to sacrifice, then who will?’ Back then, there were monks in the temples, but they rarely spread Buddha’s teachings. They just looked after worship places, taught folks how to light incense sticks, candles, and the like.”

“Was it your karma then?”

“Don’t deify the law of karma; it’s merely one of the natural laws. We also possess free will.”

Another one queried, “Venerable Sukong, what really is the essence of your struggle all these years?”

“Struggle? What struggle? Heh heh heh.”

“How about the essence of your service all this time?”

“Void.”

“And why did you set up this place in the valley?”

“Well, when the faithful come, they often stay overnight, right? So, it’s just to provide a place to sleep, however modest. We also offer vegetarian food as available. They can pray. If they leave here with a calmer mind, all the better.”

“But why is there a shrine for Eyang Suryakencana here? That’s not Buddhist, is it?” another chimed in.

“Eyang Suryakencana was a highly respected individual in these parts. He was a follower of Buddhism. His descendants, not so much. The shrine is to honor him, to remember his good deeds. If not us

Buddhists, who else will appreciate his contributions? And then, there’s the white tiger statue. It’s merely a symbol to remind us of Eyang Senopati. We must always dig up what’s already there and adapt it to the times. This nation is a grand one. In the history of unified Indonesia, there have been three epochs. First Sriwijaya, then Majapahit, and now the Republic of Indonesia. During the Sriwijaya and Majapahit eras, there were many renowned Buddhist figures, even recognized internationally, like Dharmakirti, Gajah Mada, and others. If not us, who else will remember and honor their virtues? Other faiths?

“Regarding East Java, I always remind the faithful there to remember Erlangga. That’s our Indonesian uniqueness. There’s another thing unique to us. Only in Indonesia do we find the statue of Prajñāparamita. Nowhere else, you see. Even though Prajñāparamita is part of Mahayana. In Theravada too, there’s Prajñā, which is to be realized. But only in Indonesia do we have its statue. When I travel abroad, I always bring a replica of the

Prajñāparamita statue as a gift for the believers there, heh heh heh.”

“And what about the dog statue that’s worshiped?”

“Well, that’s got its own story too. It’s not really worship, mind you. It’s just to remember its services. Once, there was a loyal dog here, guarding the monastery’s safety. After it passed away, we made a place to honor its loyalty and asked its spirit to help protect this place. So, if anyone comes here with ill intentions, those thoughts get scattered. That’s all. Heh heh heh, now there are many dogs around here.”

“But once a dog dies, it gets reborn elsewhere, right?”

“Yes, we ask the spirit to help guard this place. It’s alright, isn’t it? We humans help each other, so why not ask other beings for help too? It’s fine if you don’t believe it. Heh heh heh.”

“Then what about that horse statue?”

“Oh, that’s the horse of Kwan Kong. Brigadier General Soemantri

M.S. made it. He worshiped Kwan Kong. He used to bathe in boiling oil, walk on fire, things like that. Then we approached him to help with the development of Buddhism in Indonesia. But this horse of Kwan Kong is different from others. Usually, in other places, it’s depicted as majestic, rearing up or something. Here, it’s just grazing. Only here will you find a Kwan Kong’s horse eating grass, heh heh heh.”

“And what’s the purpose of life, Sukong?”

“To achieve perfection, the highest happiness, *paramang sukha*. Not the ordinary happiness that lasts only momentarily, but *paramang sukha*, Nirvana. Seek what is everlasting, not the transient.”

“Is it only achievable by monks?”

“No, not just by monks. That’s why there are Monastic Sangha and Ariya Sangha. Ariya Sangha is the Brotherhood of the Holy Ones, and it doesn’t have to be monks. Laypeople can be part of it too. So, if there’s a monk who looks down on laypeople, that’s narrow-mindedness.”

“Is it only attainable by Buddhists?”

“When Buddha was asked whether holy people can also be found in other teachings, he said as long as there are the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path in those teachings, holy people can always be found there. So now, we see, in other religions there are also many holy people.”

“What is Sukong’s aspiration now?”

“Well, nothing much left, just waiting for death. When we die, it’s okay, we are ready. But sometimes it’s the pain we can’t bear. Being human, when in pain, we try to overcome it with meditation, but sometimes it’s very painful. That’s the result of past bad karma that still necessitates rebirth.”

“What about the future of Buddhist adherents?”

“That depends on each person’s karma.”

“Aren’t you preparing a successor?”

“I don’t think that far. I don’t want to be disappointed. There’s a story about Confucius who had a poor disciple. When others offered lavish foods for prayers, he could only offer simple mustard greens and plain rice. But Confucius knew he was the one who truly understood. Confucius hoped he would succeed him after his death. But what happened? The disciple died first. Confucius was disappointed. Sukong doesn’t want to expect anything. Sukong doesn’t want to be disappointed.”

“What direction should the development of Buddhism in Indonesia take?”

“Don’t hope for too far. You might end up disappointed. Just improve yourself. The Truth will always exist. Even if eventually only one person succeeds in realizing it, the Truth will persist. Continuously improve yourselves. Always adhere to the teaching ‘Do not commit evil, cultivate good, purify the mind and heart.’ Then, your life will be happy.”

“What is meant by virtue?”

“Any action that leads to liberation, to *satori*, that is virtue.

Keep learning. Try to understand, once understood, embody, and then put it into practice. Keep striving. Develop faith. That's why choosing a teacher is crucial, be very careful. Don't just believe blindly."

"How do we cultivate faith, Sukong?"

"Like I said before. Through understanding. Once you understand, put it into practice. Don't just keep it in your head."

On another occasion, a devotee came to visit. After bowing respectfully, he sat next to others who had arrived earlier. Those who came first were from Central Java, seeking the old monk's help in raising funds for a temple in their region. It was still early morning, and the air was biting cold. The old monk nodded in agreement, "Hopefully, someone will help," he said.

Then another attendee, a middle-aged woman, showed him her thumb, which was rotting.

"Please help, Sukong, someone has cursed me."

"Ah, don't worry, not very rich, who would envy you? It looks like an insect bite. It's rotting because of the poison. Try this," the old monk said, offering a grayish powder.

Then another, older and more prosperous-looking woman approached. "Sukong, I seek your blessings," she said, bowing down.

"My body is always in pain, Sukong."

"When you get a new body, you won't have these pains anymore."

After the conversations, they left, leaving behind the one who had come last. The old monk entered his bamboo hut, which had a bookshelf, located in front of his sleeping quarters. He turned on the tape recorder inside. Soon, the strains of classical music filled the air.

"That's a classical music cassette someone gave me."

"Do you like music, Sukong?"

"Good vibrations are always welcome, heh heh heh. I've loved classical music since I was young. Back then, there were no cassettes,

so I used to visit friends who had pianos.

“In Mahayana, there’s also rhythm in devotion, right? When you listen to good music, it can lift you. Classical music too, if you understand it. But jumpy music, like metal, makes you forget everything. Catholic churches use music, and so do Protestants. The call to prayer in Islam has its own melody. In Theravada, they don’t like to use music.”

“Maybe they just don’t have it?”

“They do. In ancient times, songs were sung to invite deities

and request Dhamma teachings. In Thailand too, but it’s the laypeople who sing.

“You should participate in services. Prayer is important, but concentration is key. That’s the importance of meditation. When you reach the climax, pain disappears. Prayer is beneficial. Just visualizing the noble qualities of the holy ones, even if it’s just for ten or fifteen minutes, is very beneficial.”

If no one’s willing to sacrifice, then who will?



Chapter 37

For Future Generations

Following the passing of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita on April 18, 2002, his body, positioned in a meditative seated pose, was transferred from the hospital to the Ekayana Buddhist Centre in West Jakarta and placed in a rectangular coffin that evening. The coffin, which was closed the following day, remained there for 7 days, receiving visits of respect from approximately 40,000 mourners including former President Abdurrahman Wahid, the Vice President Hamzah Haz, and various religious leaders. On April 26, 2002, the coffin was taken to Bandar Lampung in South Sumatra, where about 15,000 people gathered for a

final tribute. In the morning of April 28, 2002, his body was cremated at the Lempasing crematorium.

The next day, devotees brought back the ashes of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita's remains to Jakarta. They held a ceremony at Kong Hua Sie Vihara, where the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita was first ordained, and then moved to Sakyawanaram Vihara in Pacet, Cianjur, West Java, which was the center of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita's activities in the latter half of his life. Another ceremony was held there. His ashes were then enshrined in a pagoda at Sakyawanaram Vihara, with

ceremonies continuing every seven days until June 5, 2002, marking the 49th day since his passing.

There are four notable aspects of these ceremonies, which likely reflect the thoughts of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita himself and also indicate the state of the Buddhayana community at that time.

Firstly, the body of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita was taken to Sumatra solely for cremation. This was in accordance with his wishes, and the background of this request is noteworthy. If the cremation had only been conducted in Jakarta, where most Buddhists are of Chinese descent, it might have given the impression that the form of Buddhism promoted by the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita was a religion primarily for people of Chinese heritage. Such a perception would have contradicted the vision of Buddhayana, which encompasses followers from various ethnic groups. To avoid this, the most important ceremony, the cremation, was carried out in Lampung, where

many Buddhists are transmigrants originally from Java. This decision underscores the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita's intention to prevent any form of sectarianism after his death.

Secondly, the series of ceremonies were predominantly conducted in the Mahayana tradition, or more precisely, in the Chan or Zen style. Although Theravada and Vajrayana monks also participated in the ceremonies, following their own customs, Mahayana monks officially led all major ceremonies. During the prayer ceremonies held four times a day until the day of cremation, the Maha Karuna Dharani, Prajñāparamita Hrdaya Sutra, Sukhavativyuha Sutra, and Vajracchedika Prajñāparamita Sutra were chanted in Mandarin. Recitations of Amitabha's name in Sanskrit were also repeated on various occasions. One reason for this might be that all these ceremonies were organized by the Ekayana Buddhist Centre in Jakarta, led by the Venerable Sthavira Aryamaitri, a Mahayana monk.

Thirdly, the recitation of the Vajracchedika Prajñāparamita Sutra during these ceremonies aligns with the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita's wishes. Although the exact reason for his preference is unknown, it likely stems from his career as a Chan or Zen monastic. It might be assumed that there was an affinity for Mahayana teachings, particularly the doctrine of emptiness, which formed the core of his Buddhist belief. Despite the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita generally maintaining that all Buddhist traditions are fundamentally the same, he never explicitly stated a preference for any particular sect. Another possibility is that his final request was an expression of respect for his first teacher, the Venerable Mahabiksu Pen Ching.

Lastly, the adherents of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita began to venerate him. Buddhists, observing the multi-colored sacred relics, claimed that these relics displayed the seven colors of the rainbow. They attributed these "miracles" to his lifelong pure

practices, which, they believed, endowed the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita with special powers. Even during his lifetime, many people believed in his miraculous abilities, and this veneration is likely to grow over time.

Although the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita has passed away, his spirit continues to be remembered. He once said that the advantage of Buddhism lies in its flexibility. This means that Buddhism does not impose any pressure on other beliefs, and Buddhists should not interfere with the beliefs and practices of others. In other words, followers of Buddhism respect both their own autonomy and that of others. The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita emphasized that merely understanding Buddhist teachings without practicing them is unimportant and meaningless.

The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita also stated that the most important elements are "Truth" and "Love," which, at the highest analysis, are one and the same. According to him, everyone

should aspire to this, or bodhicitta, and practice Buddhist teachings in their daily lives. This is equivalent to respecting the autonomy of others. When one respects the autonomy of others, one reduces ego and develops compassion for all. This is what is referred to as Universal Love, which is the same as Truth. In doing everything based on Love and Truth, one sheds all disturbances and attains peace.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the history of Buddhism over more than 2,000 years has been filled with divisions and sects. However, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita offered a challenge to achieve the opposite: he undertook a grand experiment to unify all Buddhist thoughts and practices. The success of this endeavor will result in the realization of Indonesian Buddhism and the harmonious interdependent relationships of its successors. Furthermore, it could pioneer the unity of various Buddhist beliefs and practices worldwide. The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita has passed away, and Bunki Kimura, a Buddhist scholar from Japan,

expected that his Buddhayana ideals will endure not just in his homeland but across the globe.²⁹

Well, nothing much left, just waiting for death.

The Truth will always exist. Even if eventually only one person succeeds in realizing it, the Truth will persist.

²⁹ Adapted from “Present Situation of Indonesian Buddhism: in Memory of Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita Mahasthavira,” by Bunki Kimura, in Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism: Sambhasa 23, Department of Indian Studies, Nagoya University, Japan, 2003.

Chapter 38

A Living Dharma Lineage

Indeed, there is no ordination of monks based on Mahayana Vinaya because monk ordination is based on Sravakayana Vinaya. Both the Dharmagupta Vinaya used for monk ordinations in China and the Mulasarvastivada Vinaya used in Tibet are Sravakayana Vinayas. After taking the Sravakayana Vinaya, a monk may take the Bodhisattvayana and Tantra Vinayas. Thus, the Sravakayana Vinaya unites monks within the Sangha Agung Indonesia.

Regarding the main teacher of a monk, there are two perspectives. The first view states that the primary teacher is the one who shaves the head of the monk candidate

and ordains him as a samanera. Meanwhile, the second view holds that the main teacher is the one who ordains the samanera as a monk. The Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita followed the first perspective. Therefore, even though some samaneras/samaneris are ordained as monks/nuns abroad, the Nanshan Guanghua (Kong Hua Sie) school lineage unites the monks/nuns of the Sangha Agung Indonesia who are disciples, grand-disciples, and great-grand-disciples of him.

Here is the complete lineage of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita, who is the 1st generation of Buddhayana Indonesia/Sangha

Agung Indonesia (印尼佛乘僧團開山祖), the 5th generation of the Nanshan Guanghua School (南山廣化法派第五代), the 37th generation of the Chan Linji Sect (臨濟宗第三十七代), and the 74th generation from Buddha (佛陀第七十四代弟子):	僧伽難提尊者 (Sanghanandi)
摩訶迦葉尊者 (Maha Kasyapa)	僧伽耶舍尊者 (Sanghayasas)
阿難陀尊者 (Ananda)	鳩摩羅多尊者 (Kumarata)
商那和修尊者 (Sanavasa)	闍夜多尊者 (Jayata)
優波鞠多尊者 (Upagupta)	婆修槃頭尊者 (Vasubandhu)
提多迦尊者 (Dhritaka)	摩奴羅尊者 (Manura)
彌遮迦尊者 (Michaka)	鶴勒那尊者 (Haklenayasas)
婆須密尊者 (Vasumitra)	師子比丘尊者 (Sinha)
佛陀難提尊者 (Buddhanandi)	婆舍斯多尊者 (Vasiastia)
佛陀蜜多尊者 (Buddhamitra)	不如密多尊者 (Punyamitra)
脅尊者尊者 (Parsva)	般若多羅尊者 (Prajñatara)
富那耶舍尊者 (Punayasa)	菩提達摩祖師 (Bodhidharma) – The First Patriarch of Chan in China
馬鳴大士 (Asvaghosa)	神光慧可祖師 (Shenguang Huike)
迦毘摩羅尊者 (Kapimāla)	僧璨祖師 (Sengcan)
龍樹菩薩 (Nagarjuna)	東山道信祖師 (Dongshan Daoxin)
迦那提婆尊者 (Kanadeva)	黃梅弘忍祖師 (Huangmei Hongren)
羅睺羅多尊者 (Rahulata)	曹溪慧能祖師 (Caoxi Huineng)
	南嶽懷讓禪師 (Nanyue Huairang)
	馬祖道一禪師 (Mazu Daoyi)
	百丈懷海禪師 (Baizhang Huaihai)
	黃蘗希運禪師 (Huangbi Xiyun)

臨濟義玄禪師 (Linji Yixuan) – The First Patriarch of the Linji School	千岩元長禪師 (Qianyan Yuanchang)
興化存獎禪師 (Xinghua Cunjiang)	萬峯時蔚禪師 (Wanfeng Shiwei)
南院慧顓禪師 (Nanyuan Huiyong)	寶藏普持禪師 (Baozang Puchi)
風穴延沼禪師 (Fengxue Yanzhao)	虛白慧岳禪師 (Xubai Huichan)
首山省念禪師 (Shoushan Shengnian)	海舟永慈禪師 (Haizhou Yongci)
紛揚善昭禪師 (Fenyang Shanzhao)	寶峯明暄禪師 (Baofeng Mingxuan)
石霜楚圓禪師 (Shishuang Chuyuan)	天琦本瑞禪師 (Tianqi Benrui)
楊岐方會禪師 (Yangqi Fanghui)	無聞正聰禪師 (Wuwen Zhengcong)
白雲首端禪師 (Baiyun Shouduan)	明心德寶禪師 (Mingxin Debao)
五祖法演禪師 (Wuzu Fayan)	幻有正傳禪師 (Huanyou Zhengchuan)
昭覺克勤禪師 (Zhaojue Keqin)	密雲圓悟禪師 (Miyun Yuanwu)
虎邱紹隆禪師 (Huqiu Shaolong)	古你雲門禪師 (Gunan Yunmen)
天童應菴禪師 (Tiantong Yingan)	二勝詮修禪師 (Ersheng Quanxiu)
密菴成傑禪師 (Mian Chengjie)	融文善和禪師 (Rongwen Shanhe)
破菴祖先禪師 (Poan Zuxian)	– The First Patriarch of Nanshan Guanghua School
徑山佛鑑禪師 (Jingshan Fojian)	元覺禪師 (Yuanjue)
祖欽慧朗禪師 (Zuqin Huilang)	通湛禪師 (Tongzhan)
高峯原妙禪師 (Gaofeng Yuanmiao)	本清禪師 (Benqing)
中峯明本禪師 (Zhongfeng Mingben)	古月體正禪師 (Guyue Tizheng— Ashin Jinarakkhita)

Based on this lineage, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita is a follower of a living Dharma tradition. Chan (Zen) Buddhism, originating from the Sanskrit word “Dhyana,” emphasizes direct realization through practical Dharma and meditation in daily life. This school of Buddhism was introduced to China by the Venerable Bodhidharma, an Indian prince turned monk.

Initially, Bodhidharma’s teachings were known as Ekayana (the Single Vehicle) from India, a concept taught in the Lankavatara Sutra, closely associated with the Venerable Bodhidharma. However, the term Ekayana gradually fell out of use, and Bodhidharma’s teachings became better known as the Chan school, with Bodhidharma revered as the First Patriarch of Chan in China. The Chan school spread rapidly under the Sixth Chinese Patriarch, the Venerable Huineng.

In his efforts to provide a place for monks, nuns, and novices to train, the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita established four monasteries in

Pacet-Cianjur, West Java: Nagasena Vihara, Sakyawanaram Vihara, Aryamularama Vihara, and Gunadharmas Vihara. As training centers for the Sangha, these monasteries are categorized as arama-Sangha.

Subsequent generations of monks also established arama-Sangha in various regions, including Jakarta, Ampel-Boyolali, Trowulan-Mojokerto, Lampung, Medan, and others. In these arama-Sangha, the congregation of monks and nuns is supported by a congregation of lay practitioners, especially in empowering the community, reflecting the representation of the Sangha Agung Indonesia (Sagin) and its main assistant, the Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia (MBI).

For monasteries not directly managed by monks, the Sangha Agung Indonesia appoints Representatives of the Sangha Agung Indonesia, whose duties in nurturing the community are fully supported by the local branches of the Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia (MBI). Besides the MBI as its primary

assistant, the Sagin is also supported by various elements: youth (Sekber PMVBI), women (WBI), scholars and professionals (Siddhi), and senior citizens (Wulan Bahagia), all deeply rooted in the grassroots of the monasteries managed by local foundations.





*With the Venerable Jinapiya Thera
(Later Known as the Venerable Thitaketuko), 1968*



Maha Samaya III PUUI in Sukabumi, 1972, Alongside the Venerable Maha Sthavira Dhyanam Wan Sian



Twentieth Year of Monastic Life Celebrated at Samudra Bhakti Vihara, Bandung (1973)



Tantrayana Monks Under the Auspices of Sangha Agung Indonesia



*Bhikkhunis Led by the Venerable Jinakumari
Performed Ceremonies at Mendut Temple*



*Romo Krishnaputra Presented the Doctrine Book of Sanghyang Adi Buddha/
The Almighty God to the President*



*“In the Name of Sanghyang Adi Buddha, I Swear...” The Inauguration of
Drs. Oka Diputhera as the Director of Buddhist Affairs in 1980*



Gus Dur, the 4th President of Indonesia, Paid His Respects at the Ekayana Buddhist Centre, Where the Body was Laid in State



The Procession to the Bodhisattva Foundation Crematorium in Lempasing, Bandar Lampung



A Portion of the Relics of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita



*Honorary Award Bestowed by the Government on August 15, 2005,
at the State Palace, Jakarta*



Jinarakkhita Prasada Building



Ashin Jinarakkhita Memorial Hall in Jinarakkhita Prasada



Altar to Commemorate the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita



*STIAB (Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Agama Buddha- The College for Buddhist Studies)
Jinarakkhita, Panjang, Bandar Lampung*



*Open Senate Ceremony of STIAB (Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Agama Buddha—
The College for Buddhist Studies) Jinarakkhita*



*Sarasehan I (First Gathering) for the Young Buddhist Generation, the
Forerunner of the Joint Secretariat of the Brotherhood of Young Buddhists of
Vihara Buddhayana Indonesia (Sekber PMVBI), December 1979*



*Participants of the National Conference of Sekber PMVBI Visiting
Kong Hua Sie Temple, Jakarta, December 2016*

Bibliography

- 2500 Buddha Jayanti*. Semarang: PUUI (Indonesian Fraternity of Lay Buddhists), Semarang Branch, 1956.
- Berita Vimala (Vimala News)*. No. 3, 4, Year II, March/April, 1961 to No. 10, Year XVII, 1977. Bandung: Vihara Vimaladharma.
- Buku Acara 20 Tahun Ekayana* (Commemoration Book for Ekayana's 20th Anniversary). Jakarta: Committee for the 20 Years Celebration of Ekayana Arama, 2016.
- Buku Peringatan Perayaan Waisak 2503* (Commemoration Book of Vesak Celebration 2503). Semarang: Central Vesak Celebration Committee, 1959.
- Chia, Jack Meng-Tat. *Monks in Motion: Buddhism and Modernity Across the South China Sea*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Coward, Harold. *Pluralisme: Tantangan Bagi Agama-Agama* (Pluralism, A Challenge to World Religions). Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kanisius, 1989.
- Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha Tuhan Yang Maha Esa dalam Agama Buddha Indonesia* (Doctrine of Sanghyang Adi Buddha The Almighty God in Indonesian Buddhism). Yayasan Buddhayana (The Buddhayana Foundation), Third Edition, 1982.
- Karbono, K. *Hasil Penelitian Sekitar Masalah Adi Buddha* (Research on the Adi Buddha Issue). Bandung: P.C. Budhi Bandung, 1975.

Kimura, Bunki. "Present Situation of Indonesian Buddhism: In Memory of Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita Mahasthavira." *Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism: Sambhasa* 23 (2003): 53-72.

Otobiografi Dwidasa Varsa Y.A. Biksu Dharmasagaro Mahasthavira (Autobiography of Twenty Years of the Venerable Biksu Dharmasagaro Mahasthavira). Jakarta: Committee for the Celebration of Twenty Years of the Venerable Biksu Dharmasagaro Mahasthavira, 1992.

Sang Pengasuh: 30 Tahun Pengabdian Suci Y.A. Maha Nayaka Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita (The Steward: 30 Years of Sacred Service of the Venerable Maha Nayaka Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita). Bandung: Committee for the Anniversary of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita, 1982.

Sidharta, Myra. *100 Tahun Kwee Tek Hoay* (100 Years of Kwee Tek Hoay). Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1989.

Silanandabhivamsa, Ashin. "Biography of the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw." Translated by U Min Swe, Abridged Edition. Rangoon, Burma: Buddha Sasana Organization, 1982.

Tek Hoay, Kwee. *Moestika Dharma* (The Dharma Jewel). No. 23, February 1934, Batavia.

Tribudaya. No. 1, Year 1954 to No. 129 Year 1965, Jakarta: Gabungan Sam Kauw Indonesia (The United Sam Kauw of Indonesia).

Untukmu Mahasthavira (For You, Mahasthavira). Jakarta: Committee for the Celebration of the 68th Birthday and 38 Years of Service of the Venerable Mahasthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, 1990.

Widyadharma, S., Maha Pandita. *Agama Buddha dan Perkembangannya di Indonesia* (Buddhism and Its Development in Indonesia). Tangerang: P.C. Mapanbudhi Tangerang, fourth edition, 1989.

List of Interviewees

The author extends gratitude to the following interviewees:

- The Venerable Agga Jinametto Mahathera, Malang
- The Venerable Sthavira Aryasasano, Kroya, Former Secretary-General of Sangha Agung Indonesia
- The Venerable Mahasthavira Dharmasagaro, Bogor
- The Venerable Girirakkhito Mahathera, Jakarta
- The Venerable Jinakumari, Ciputat
- The Venerable Thitaketuko, Batu-Malang, Former the Venerable Jinapiya Thera
- Mr. Ananda Suyono, Solo, Theosophy Figure
- Mrs. Anandy Sujata Tjung, Bandung
- Mr. Anyi, Bogor, Childhood Playmate
- Mrs. Bodhikumari, Bandung
- Mr. Dharmakusumah Dicky Soemani, Bandung, Buddhist Scholar
- Mr. Jantjik HP, Jakarta
- Mr. Khoe Soe Kiam, Jakarta, Former Chairman of GSKI
- Mr. Marsino, Bandung, Former Cook at Vihara Vimaladharmma
- Mr. Oei Jan Giok, Bogor, Elementary School Teacher

- Mr. Oka Diputhera, Jakarta
- Mrs. Ong Lian Nio, Bekasi, Student at Sin Hwa English School Jakarta
- Mr. Pandit J. Kaharudin, Jakarta, Former the Venerable Jinaratana
- Dr. Parwati Soepangat, Bandung
- Mr. Phoa Krishnaputra, Medan
- Mr. Prajna Samaya Tjay, Semarang, Former Dayaka
- Mrs. Pensy Winata Tjung, Bogor
- Mrs. Roedhito, Jakarta
- Mr. R. Sumana, Semarang, Former Secretary of PUUI
- Mr. Sasanaputera Satyadharma, Bekasi, Former GSKI Activist
- Mr. Sasanasobhana, Semarang, Former Buddhist Indonesia Figure
- Mr. Silasurya Yuwono, Semarang, Former Buddhist Indonesia Figure
- Mr. Soemantri M.S., Jakarta
- Mr. and Mrs. Soesantyo Aryo, Bandung
- Mrs. Som, Bogor
- Mr. Suktadharma and Mrs. Suktadharmi, Jakarta
- Mr. Swara Sampurna, Bogor, Younger Brother
- Mr. S. Widyadharma, Jakarta
- Mrs. Sylvi, Bogor, Younger Sister
- Mr. Tan Koen Liang, Bogor, Schoolmate at HBS and THS
- Mr. Tan Koen Swan, Netherlands, Schoolmate in the Netherlands

- Mr. Tedja Mochtar Rashid, Jakarta, Former the Venerable Subhato
- Mr. Tjie Ham Yoe, Bogor, Elementary Schoolmate
- Mr. Tjoetjoe Alihartono, Jakarta
- Mrs. Vimaladewi Salim, Bandung
- Mrs. Vimala Suryarama Nyoo Wan Nio, Surabaya

Acknowledgements

(From the 2016 Indonesian Edition)

The author wishes to express special thanks for the significant moral and material support provided in the preparation of this text to:

- The Venerable Dharmavimala, Bandung
- Mrs. Rose Endarti, Bandung
- Mrs. Vimaladewi Salim, Bandung
- Mr. Cunda J. Supandi, Bogor
- Mr. Soesilo Yudiro, Jakarta
- Mr. Herry Ronny, Bandung

Acknowledgements

In the spirit of sincere appreciation, I extend my gratitude to the esteemed individuals whose contributions have enriched *Sowing the Seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago*.

I am especially grateful to Jack Meng-Tat Chia, whose Foreword and unwavering support arrived with the swiftness of a river and the richness of its depths, providing perspectives that are as illuminating as they are distinct within the Indonesian Buddhist context.

My heartfelt thanks go to Reverend Bunki Kimura, whose Prologue served as a guiding compass, informed by his extensive field experiences and profound scholarship, ensuring the integrity and direction of my journey.

I would also like to acknowledge Hudaya Kandahjaya for his thoughtful contributions in *A Few Words*, which infused this work with personal narratives and reflections as intricate and meaningful as a quilt carefully sewn from the threads of memory.

I extend my deep respect to Venerable Dharmavimala Mahasthavira, whose invaluable guidance and astute suggestions, including those for fellow contributors, have served as a lighthouse of wisdom throughout this process.

My gratitude also goes to The Venerable Nyananyasha Shakya for his careful corrections and insightful suggestions, offered with dedication and humility. His contributions have added depth and precision to this work, and his example continues to inspire.

To the dedicated team at Karaniya, I express my gratitude for fostering a collaborative culture and for their diligent efforts, which have been instrumental in the timely completion of this book, akin to the steady hand of a skilled artisan.

Lastly, I extend my thanks to ChatGPT 4.0 and 4.o from OpenAI, whose indispensable human-in-the-loop approach to translation and editing played a crucial role in this endeavor, ensuring both clarity and quality.

Each contribution has been as essential to this project as stars are to a night sky. For this collective effort and the experiential learning that enhances the essence of Buddhism in the archipelago, I remain profoundly grateful.

Edij

Author



Edij began writing about Buddhism when he joined the editorial team of the magazine, *Vimala Viriya*. Soon after, he was appointed as the Chief Editor of the Buddhist magazine published by the Youth of Vihara Vimala Dharma, Bandung, from 1988 to 1989. Between 1990 and 1992, he enhanced the senior editorial team of the Indonesia National Buddhist Magazine *Manggala*.

Edij is one of the founding leaders of the Karaniya Foundation. His contributions are mainly in the fields of translation and editing.

He earned a Bachelor's degree in Petroleum Engineering from the Institut Teknologi Bandung, a Magistrate in Management from Prasetya Mulya Business School, and a Master of Science in Innovation and Entrepreneurship from HEC Paris. He is also a graduate of the Harvard Business Analytics Program.

Appendix 1

Development of Buddhism in Indonesia

Research and Development Institution of the Buddhayana Council of Indonesia, 2005

What is commonly referred to as a religion typically encompasses the institutionalization of worship, including formal teachings, interpretations of sacred texts, laws, regulations, and the entire organizational apparatus within societal contexts. This writing primarily discusses the history of adherence and the development of institutional or organizational aspects of the development of Buddhism in Indonesia.

Our knowledge of Buddhism in Indonesia before this century is quite limited. Buddhism once led the Nusantara to become a great unified state (Srivijaya and Majapahit), but about five centuries later, it seemed to fall into a slumber before rising again after the formation of the unified state of the Republic of Indonesia. Sources revealing this history include foreign news, especially the travel accounts of Chinese monks, inscriptions, temples, and some books in the Kawi language.

History records the role of rulers in protecting the spread of a religion. Even religion merged with state power. Perhaps religion used the state, or religion was utilized by the state. Religion can be a means of state dominance over its citizens. It doesn't have to be just one state religion, as found in Java during the kingdom era (Singasari and Majapahit).

In this century, the propagation of Buddhism developed not through the influence of rulers but through community cultivation and

institutionalization. However, the cultivation of the community, especially institutionalization, during the New Order was significantly influenced by the intervention of government officials.

Adherence During the Kingdom Era

In Java, in 418, the monk Fa-hien only saw a few adherents of Buddhism. Gunawarman from Kashmir, after becoming a monk, went to Sri Lanka and then to Java (She-po), spreading Buddhism in 423. The monk Hwi-ning stayed for 3 years in Kaling (Holing) in 664, translating Hinayana scriptures with the help of local monks, Jñanabhadra.

In the Ancient Mataram Period (8th-10th century), the kings were either Buddhists or followers of Shiva (Hinduism). The Buddhist Sailendra dynasty left many temples around present-day Magelang and Yogyakarta, such as Mendut, Pawon, Sewu, Plaosan, Sari temples, and others. According to inscriptions, in 778, King Rakai Panangkaran (Sanjaya Dynasty) established the Kalasan Temple for Goddess Tara and a monastery, and gifted a village to the Sangha.

The largest temple, Borobudur, built by King Samaratungga starting in 824, reflects the harmonious integration of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana teachings. The Sailendra dynasty could be referred to as followers of Buddhayana, as written in *Negarakretabhumi* by Prince Wangsakerta.

The Buddhist religious life of that era not only advanced spiritually but also in economic, political, social, and cultural aspects. It would have been impossible for them to construct such monumental works without prosperity and well-being. History also shows how Buddhism and Hinduism developed side by side in harmony and peace.

The Srivijaya Kingdom (7th-13th century) was centered around Palembang. Few temple relics have been found in Sumatra. There is the Muarajambi temple group in Jambi, Muara Takus in Riau, and the Gunung Tua group in South Tapanuli, which are Mahayana in style.

In Palembang, particularly in Telaga Batu, many stones inscribed with “siddhayatra” (meaning a successful holy journey) have been found, and at Bukit Seguntang, a large Buddha statue from the 6th century was discovered. As a maritime state, the kingdom’s potential was directed towards shipbuilding technology for its trade fleet and warships to protect the fleet. The buildings they constructed were mostly made of wood, hence leaving no traces over time.

The travel records of I-tsing reveal that the King of Srivijaya and rulers of other islands were adherents of Buddhism. In the capital, surrounded by fortifications, there were thousands of monks who studied and practiced as in Madhyadesa (India). Among them were many foreigners. The monk I-tsing, who departed from Canton, China, in 671, stopped in Srivijaya for six months to learn Sanskrit, then stayed in Malay for two months. Malay later became part of Srivijaya. After living in India for ten years, he returned to Srivijaya in 685 to translate sacred texts for four years. He returned to Canton to seek assistance and again came back to Srivijaya until 695.

In Srivijaya, initially, Hinayana schools were present, but later Mahayana flourished more prominently. Notable teachers included Dharmapala and Sakyakirti. In the 11th century, Atisa Dipankara from South India studied in Srivijaya under the guidance of Mahabhikshu Dharmakirti and was later invited by the King of Tibet to purify Buddhism with Mahayana teachings from Jawadwipa. Atisa brought nine books from Srivijaya, now compiled in the Tibetan Tripitaka (Kanjur).

Cultural acculturation led to a blend that obscured the original form and expression of Buddhism. If it involves fusion, it’s called syncretism, as seen in the Siwa-Buddha phenomenon in Bali that still exists today. When

the royal center moved from Central Java to East Java, syncretic forms intensified. King Wisnuwardhana, who died in 1268, was worshiped as Shiva at the Waleri Temple and as Buddha Amoghapaça at the Jago Temple.

Kertanegara was revered as Shiva and Buddha at Jawi Temple, as Jina (Vairocana) and Locana at Sagala with his queen, and as Bhairawa at Singosari Temple. Kertanegara was killed in 1292 while intoxicated during a deviant Tantra ritual. In the Pararaton text, he is named Siwa Buddha. Rasseers viewed Shiva or Buddha as just one aspect of a singular, Javanese-specific religion (thus non-competitive). He referred to the ancient Javanese story of Bubuksah, carved on the Panataran temple.

The ancient texts, especially the Namasangiti version of Chandrakirti from Srivijaya and the Sanghyang Kamahayanikan from the reign of Mpu Sindok, show that the community worshipped Adi Buddha. Visually, the Borobudur temple (like an encyclopedia) seems to attempt to express the same idea. Other texts indicate the presence of syncretism. This blending occurred due to the influence of Tantrayana. The Kakawin Sutasoma by Mpu Tantular (which deviates from the Sutasoma Jataka) states that Buddha is none other than Brahma-Vishnu-Ishvara, the Hindu Trimurti.

Essentially, the distinct Shiva and Buddha are one: Siwa Buddha bhinneka tunggal ika tan hana Dharmma mangrwa. This statement “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” (Unity in Diversity) is now a unifying motto of the Indonesian nation, inscribed on the national emblem, Garuda Pancasila. The Arjunawijaya text narrates monks acknowledging that all Buddhas, differentiated according to the cardinal directions, are essentially manifestations of Shiva. The Kunjarakarna text mentions that no one, whether a follower of Shiva or Buddha, can achieve perfection if they separate Siwa Buddha, who are fundamentally one.

In the Majapahit era (1293-1429), which embraced the spirit of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, Siwa Buddha did not merge entirely in their systems, so it's more appropriately termed parallelism or coalition. According to the

Negarakretagama text, both remained separate, with different teachings, different priests, and different places of worship. Even the areas of propagation were regulated. Priests following Sugata were forbidden to step on the western lands of Java Island in their royal duties, as the inhabitants there were not adherents of Buddhism. There were officials responsible for Buddhist (Kasogatan) and Shiva (Kasiwan) religious affairs. The famous Mahapatih Gajah Mada, known for his Palapa Oath, was a Buddhist adherent.

Formally, Buddhism in the Nusantara region disappeared with the fall of the great and united Majapahit kingdom (1429) due to civil war and the rise of Islamic kingdoms. We lack sources that reveal the lives of Buddhist people under Islamic rule. Historical records so far have only focused on rulers. Buddhism's influence seemingly persisted, at least in the form of lifestyle, behavior, beliefs, mysticism, fondness for meditation and ascetic practices, known as Kejawen.

Buddhism During the Colonial Period

Even though Buddhism wasn't formally recognized during the colonial era, Chinese people established temples, especially in areas known as Chinatowns. In most cities, the presence of Buddhism can be traced through the growth of these temples. According to Cl. Salmon, the term "klenteng" (temple) originates from the word Kuan-yin teng (Kuan Yin's temple). Kuan-yin is the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, a manifestation of the Greatly Compassionate and Listening One. For example, the Kim Tek Ie Temple (now Dharma Bhakti Vihara) in Batavia, established around 1650, is the oldest. In the 18th century, no fewer than 18 monks lived there (it is now managed only by laypeople). There were also temples inhabited by Buddhist nuns or caima/caici from China.

In 1901, Mahabhikshu Pen Ching (Ben Qing Lao He Shang), later known as Aryamula, arrived in Indonesia. Along with other monks from China, he provided religious services in temples across several cities, including Bandung, Karawang, Cirebon, and Semarang. Mahabhikshu Pen Ching also established the Kong Hua Sie Temple in Jakarta. These monks provided primarily ritual services, but seldom discussed Buddhist teachings. It seems their arrival in Indonesia was not part of a missionary effort.

Among the Dutch who came to Indonesia, particularly scholars, the Theosophical Society, which studies the core wisdom of all religions with an emphasis on human brotherhood, was well-known. The Theosophical Society established its branch (lodge) in Indonesia in 1883, with the arrival of H.P. Blavatsky. Blavatsky visited Java twice (in 1853 and 1858). Educated Indonesians also became members of the Theosophical Society.

In the meetings of the Theosophy, Buddhist teachings were often discussed, and all members of the Theosophy, regardless of their religious differences, studied it. Through lectures and meditation guidance provided in lodges in Jakarta, Bandung, Medan, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, and others, Buddhism began to be known again.

The practice of Buddhism among the indigenous population itself seemed to remain only as a sporadic domestic tradition. The newspaper *Sin Tit Po* reported on March 27, 1935, that in Kampung Petenon, Surabaya, there were 1,500 Buddhist adherents. They often held ceremonies for an ancient anchor believed to be from the Majapahit era, located in the village of Kedunganyar. In several villages, there were groups of people who still claimed to be Buddhists, but no longer knew Buddhist teachings. Some incorporated Buddhism as part of Hinduism, adhering to the Siwa-Buddha concept, viewing Buddha as no different from Vishnu or an Avatar.

The three societal groups mentioned above—the Chinese descendants, Theosophy adherents, and the indigenous practitioners of the traditional Siwa-Buddha religion—formed the roots of the re-emergence of Buddhist

institutions in Indonesia. In 1929, the first Buddhist organization in Jakarta was formed under the name Association for the Propagation of Buddhism in Java, part of The Buddhist International Mission based in Thaton (Myanmar). This organization was later renamed the Java Buddhist Association (JBA) with Ernest Erle Power as chairman and Josias van Dienst as secretary. Their publication, *Nama Buddhaya*, was in Dutch. Josias frequently visited temples to exchange ideas with monks and nuns.

Thanks to Kwee Tek Hoay, a dialogue between Josias and the Venerable Lin Fen Fei, the head of the Kwan Im Tong temple in Prinsenlaan (Mangga Besar), was arranged, also attended by other Buddhist leaders. They agreed that temples should not only be used for worship but also as places to gain religious knowledge. Kong Koan, an organization managing temples in Jakarta, permitted Josias to give lectures at temples around Jakarta. His Dutch-language lectures were attended by many Westerners, especially Dutch, foreigners from the East, and natives involved in Theosophy. JBA's activities attracted the attention of the Dutch government. Ida Bagus Jelantik, one of its members in Bali, was interrogated, and his Buddhist books were confiscated.

Buddhism was also introduced by Kwee Tek Hoay through the publication of *Moestika Dharma* (1932). This Malay-language magazine covered Theosophy and various religions, including Islam, Christianity, Krishnamurti, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Subsequently, he established the Sam Kauw Hwee (SKH) organization, the precursor of today's Tridharma, which followed three teachings: Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Their Malay-language publication was *Sam Kauw Gwat Poo*.

On March 4, 1934, the Venerable Narada from Sri Lanka visited Indonesia at the invitation of Theosophy leaders and stayed for three weeks in Java. He was the first foreign monk to visit Indonesia after Buddhism had been forgotten for hundreds of years, other than the monks from China. The Venerable Narada gave lectures in temples and Theosophy lodges in Bogor,

Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Solo, and Bandung. His visit sparked interest among Chinese descendants and Javanese to return to Buddhism. At Borobudur, the Venerable Narada blessed the planting of a Bodhi tree carried out by E.E. Power, with the tree brought from Buddhagaya, India, by Ir. Meertens. Later, the growing Bodhi tree had to be terminated as it was damaging the temple structure. The Venerable Narada also ordained several upasakas, including a Javanese named Mangunkawatja.

On May 10, 1934, the Batavia Buddhist Association (BBA) was formed at the Avalokitesvara Temple in Batavia, separating from the JBA. The BBA, led by Kwee Tek Hoay, focused on propagating Mahayana teachings, as opposed to the Theravada focus of the JBA. The SKH and BBA were often confused by people later on. The BBA was also supported by Dr. Poerbatjaraka, Mangoendisanjoto, and R. Soekirlan. In the same year, the JBA was dissolved due to financial difficulties. This led to the emergence of the Central Buddhistische Institut voor Java, with its publication *De Dharma in Nederlandsche Indie*. However, the activities of this organization ceased when Josias moved to Japan.

Revival After Independence

The Independence of Indonesia provided freedom to practice Buddhism. Motivated by this spirit, the Buddhist community organized the Vesak ceremony at the Borobudur Temple for the first time in 1953. The event was attended by over 3,000 participants, including foreign ambassadors, and was widely reported in the newspapers, making the public aware of Buddhism's presence in Indonesia. Prior to this, the Theosophical Society had held limited celebrations for its activists at the same location.

The idea of a national Vesak celebration emerged from Tee Boan An, later known as the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita. At the time, he lived as an

anagarika, serving as the chairman of the Gabungan Sam Kauw Indonesia (GSKI) and as the vice-chairman of the Indonesian Theosophical Youth Association.

GSKI was formed on February 20, 1953, as a merger of Sam Kauw Hwee after Kwee Tek Hoay's death and Thian Li Hwee led by Ong Tiang Biau (later became Monk Jinaputta in 1959), followed by Sin Ming Hui (now the Social Association Candra Naya) and Buddha Tengger in 1952. GSKI later changed its name to the Gabungan Tridharma Indonesia between 1961 and 1963.

Tee Boan An was a disciple of Mahabhikshu Pen Ching at Kong Hua Sie, now known as Vaipulya Sasana. In 1953, he was ordained as a samanera in the Mahayana (Chan) tradition by his teacher and was given the name Thi Cheng (Tizheng). The following year, he went to Myanmar and received upasampada in the Theravada tradition under the guidance of the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, an expert in vipassana meditation, and was named Ashin Jinarakkhita.

Thus, for the first time since the Majapahit era, an Indonesian son became a monk. In 1955, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita returned to Indonesia and began traveling throughout the country. Everywhere, in cities and villages, the community was guided to practice Buddhist teachings, training in metta-bhavana and vipassana-bhavana meditation. This encouraged the community to build viharas or at least cetiyas.

By following both Mahayana and Theravada traditions, the Buddhist community he nurtured did not concern themselves with sectarian differences. Even though the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita taught the community to recite parittas in the Pali tradition, mantras in Sanskrit or Mandarin were also introduced.

On Asadha 2499 or July 4, 1955, the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita founded the Indonesian Fraternity of Lay Buddhists (PUUI) at the Buddha

Gaya Watugong Vihara, Ungaran. PUUI, as a forum for monk assistants, was chaired by Maha Upasaka Madhyantika S. Mangunkawatja. Upasakas and Upasikas are community members who have committed themselves to taking refuge in the Triratna and pledged to observe the Panca-sila through a ritual known as wisudhi.

In 1956, the global Buddhist community celebrated Buddha Jayanti, marking 2,500 years since the passing of Buddha Gotama. There had been prophecies suggesting that after 2,500 years Buddhism would either disappear or rejuvenate. The celebration symbolized the hope of Buddhism's resurgence in the modern era. In Indonesia, the Buddha Jayanti celebration signified the reawakening of Buddhism that had once been buried under the ruins of the Majapahit kingdom. PUUI published a book titled "2500 Years of Buddha Jayanti," containing various writings on Buddhism, including Theravada, Mahayana, and Tantrayana. Among them were writings on the Borobudur Temple, including explanations that the unfinished statue in the main stupa represents Adi Buddha.

From One Organization to Another

Recognizing the need for an independent Buddhist organization separate from GSKI, several Javanese leaders, including Sosro Utomo (Buddha Tengger), formed the Indonesian Buddhist Association (1957), which during its congress in 1958 became the Indonesian Buddhist Association (Perbudhi) with Sariputra Sadono as its chairman.

This organization had a much broader membership, encompassing lay Buddhists and sympathizers, while PUUI, as its name suggests, was limited to upasakas-upasikas (and panditas). PUUI members fully supported Perbudhi, which throughout its journey was inseparable from the Venerable

Ashin Jinarakkhita's guidance. Leaders of Perbudhi usually became leaders of PUUI as well.

Indonesia was in need of more monks. To ordain new monks, in 1959 the Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita invited 13 monks from abroad, including the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw from Myanmar, the Venerable Narada Mahathera and 6 other monks from Sri Lanka, 3 monks from Thailand, and 2 monks from Cambodia.

According to Vinaya or Sangha rules, the ordination of monks, known as upasampada, can be conducted with at least 5 senior monks present. At that time, Ong Tiang Biau was ordained, later known as the Venerable Jinaputta. He was the founder of the first Buddhist school in Indonesia. Originally called Batavia English School (1931), it was temporarily closed during the Japanese occupation and then reopened as Sin Hwa English School (1945), finally becoming Sariputra School in 1955. Before becoming a monk, Tee Boan An had also taught at this school. Sariputra School housed the first Buddhist place of worship in Jakarta that was not a temple.

There, on May 17, 1959, Ong was ordained as a samanera (novice monk) and five days later as a monk at Watugong, Central Java. Concurrently, Ketut Tangkas from Singaraja and Ki Sontomihardjo from Banyumas were also ordained as samaneras. In subsequent years, candidates for monks and nuns were sent abroad for ordination.

In 1962, some Perbudhi activists in Central Java formed a new organization, the All Indonesia Buddhist Brotherhood Consultative Body (MUBSI). Then, on September 1, 1963, the Perbudhi DPP, originally based in Semarang, was relocated to Jakarta. Perbudhi was subsequently led by Lt. Col. Soemantri M.S., an assistant to WKSAD General Gatot Soebroto, who greatly supported the development of Buddhism in Indonesia. His wife, Mrs. Gatot Soebroto, had led a delegation of Buddhist women representing Indonesia at the World Buddhist Women's Conference in Japan (1961).

Besides lay organizations, as the number of monks reached five, a Sangha organization called the Holy Sangha of Indonesia emerged. In 1963, it was renamed Maha Sangha Indonesia, comprising both Theravada and Mahayana monks.

In 1965, Buddhis Indonesia was established in Semarang, separating from Perbudhi. Following the G-30-S movement, Dewan Wihara Indonesia (Dewi) emerged in 1966, chaired by Lt. Col. Suraji Ariakertawijaya, the secretary-general of Perbudhi. Dewi members primarily consisted of temples that had changed their names. Some temples were Taoist in nature or served as places of worship for specific occupational deities and family protectors, as well as ancestral or sacred object worship. These temples added Buddha statues to their array of worship objects.

The issuance of Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967 regarding Religion, Chinese Beliefs, and Customs, which restricted culturally Chinese religious activities, prompted some temples to adapt. Physically, some provided new spaces or constructed new temple buildings with dharmasalas for preaching and worship. Particularly in East Java, most temples joined under the name Perhimpunan Tempat Ibadat Tri Dharma.

During the New Order era, schools were required to provide religious education. Buddhist communities began to focus on educational development. Perbudhi and PUUI, initially active in broadcasting and religious services in temples/cetyas, started organizing courses for Buddhist religious teachers and deploying activists to schools. The shortage of educators and Buddhist schools is still felt today. Many traditional Buddhists, having received education in other religions at school, converted.

This condition prompted Buddhists to not only built temples but also to start developing schools. For instance, the Buddhist Tridharma community in Jakarta established Sila Paramita School (1967). Due to relocation caused by highway construction (1981), the school moved and remains the only Buddhist school in East Jakarta. In Jambi, the Buddhayana group founded

Sariputra School (1971). To produce religious teachers, PGA was established in Banyumas and Boyolali, followed by the Buddhist Academy in Jakarta (1979), now known as Nalanda Buddhist College (STAB Nalanda). Similar colleges emerged in various regions.

Later, in 1992, ten Buddhist school foundations in Jakarta formed the Buddhist Education Coordination Body (BKPB), whose management was inaugurated by the Governor of DKI Jakarta. It took about twelve years until there were 36 registered education foundations managing kindergartens, elementary, junior high, senior high, and vocational schools as its members. Besides Java, particularly Jakarta, West Java (and now Banten), schools also exist in Sumatra and Sulawesi.

At that time, there was a trend towards unifying various organizations into a single entity. In 1967, the Grand Assembly of the Federation of Buddhist Communities of Indonesia was organized, with members including Buddhists Indonesia, Gabungan Tridharma, Musyawarah Umat Buddha Seluruh Indonesia, Agama Hindu Buddha Tengger (later joined Hinduism), and Agama Buddha Wisnu Indonesia (later banned). This Federation became a member of the Joint Secretariat of Golongan Karya in August 1967.

Perbudhi, which did not join the federation, continued to grow, supported by PUUI, Gerakan Pemuda Buddhists Indonesia, and various Women's Buddhist groups. The 2nd Maha Samaya (Congress) of PUUI in 1969, also attended by Perbudhi and Maha Sangha Indonesia, formed the Supreme Council of All Indonesian Buddhists, responsible for establishing religious policies and accountable to Maha Sangha Indonesia. The chairman was the Venerable Girirakkhito, ordained in Thailand in 1966, with Suraji Ariakertawijaya as the secretary.

As organizations grew, conflicts became inevitable. Disputes initially arose due to personal ambitions and a lack of religious understanding. Even the monks, who were supposed to be role models and stand above all groups, failed to harmonize perceptions.

In early 1972, the Venerable Girirakkhito and four other Theravada monks separated from Maha Sangha Indonesia, forming Sangha Indonesia. Those ordained in Thailand brought influences from that country, increasing tendencies and even sectarian competition. This development was understandable as Maha Sangha Indonesia itself, driven by the need for religious personnel, had invited four monks from Thailand since 1969 to assist in the development of Indonesian Buddhists. Subsequently, in 1970, three Thai monks came to Borobudur to ordain five Indonesian monks.

Sangha Indonesia gained support from the Federation of Buddhist Communities of Indonesia and the Buddhist Community of Salatiga. At that time, Perbudhi was led by Suraji, who made the organization a unified body by incorporating PUUI, GPBI, and Women's Buddhist groups as bureaus of Perbudhi. Perbudhi declared that, in addition to Maha Sangha Indonesia, Sangha Indonesia was also the guardian of its organization. This stance led PUUI, which had been renamed Majelis Ulama Agama Buddha Indonesia (MUABI), to declare its exit from Perbudhi. In 1972, MUABI was led by Soemantri M.S. as the general chairman and Drs. Oka Diputhera as the secretary-general.

To address the division, in 1972, initiated by the Secretary-General of Golkar (Brigadier General Saparjo), several meetings were held that resulted in an oath for a unified entity. Buddhis Indonesia, MUBSI, Gabungan Tridharma Indonesia (GTI), the Buddhist Community of Salatiga, Perbudhi, and MUABI agreed to merge under the name Buddha Dharma Indonesia (Budhi).

Additionally, the Buddha Dharma Indonesia Council was formed, comprising religious leaders and scholars from various sects. However, this oath only materialized in 1975. Budhi was led by Suraji. However, GTI, arguing that as a legal entity it couldn't be dissolved without legal procedures, remained independent. Similarly, MUABI, as a 'clergy' body, did not see itself as equal to other organizations and thus did not join the

merger. This organization was renamed Majelis Upasaka-Pandita Agama Buddha Indonesia in 1976.

In 1974, under the initiative of the Director General of Hindu and Buddhist Religious Affairs (Gde Puja, M.A.), Sangha organizations were reunified under a new name, Sangha Agung Indonesia. However, in 1976, several monks ordained in Thailand formed the Sangha Theravada Indonesia. That year, His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited Jakarta and was welcomed by Buddhist religious leaders in Jakarta, regardless of sectarian differences. Yet, harmony, unity, and integration were still not fully realized.

Internationally, efforts towards unity were evident in the consolidation of all Buddhist sects into international organizations. Indonesian Buddhists also played a role in these organizations, namely the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) and the World Buddhist Sangha Council (WBSC).

In 1978, the Venerable Dharmasagara separated from Sangha Agung Indonesia and established Sangha Mahayana Indonesia. Since then, there have been three Sanghas in Indonesia: Sangha Agung Indonesia, Sangha Theravada Indonesia, and Sangha Mahayana Indonesia. These three Sanghas, along with seven councils, established the Perwalian Umat Buddha Indonesia (Walubi) in 1979.

The 1970s marked the beginning of sectarian movements. Disputes even touched upon the concept of God in Buddhism. The government's recognition of the term "God" in Buddhism emerged in the Indonesian Government Regulation No. 21 of 1975 (regarding the Oath/Promise of Civil Servants), which stated that the phrase "In the name of God" for Buddhists should be replaced with "In the name of Sang Hyang Adi Buddha." (Later, Law No. 43 of 1999 of the Republic of Indonesia reaffirmed this).

Referring to God as Adi Buddha was characteristic of the community nurtured by MUABI, but even this major organization couldn't avoid splitting. One offshoot became the Majelis Dharmaduta Kasogatan, initially

named Lembaga Dharmaduta Kasogatan Indonesia (July 23, 1975). Soon after, the Majelis Pandita Buddha Maitreya Indonesia was established (August 7, 1975). The spiritual division of Budhi evolved into the Majelis Pandita Buddha Dhamma Indonesia (October 3, 1976), following the Theravada school. It is now known as Majelis Agama Buddha Theravada Indonesia (Magabudhi). From the Gabungan Tridharma Indonesia emerged the Majelis Rohaniwan Tridharma Indonesia, which later merged with Perhimpunan Tempat Ibadat Tri Dharma se-Indonesia to become Majelis Rohaniwan Tridharma se-Indonesia (December 17, 1977). Concurrently with the birth of Sangha Mahayana Indonesia, the Majelis Agama Buddha Mahayana Indonesia appeared (August 1978). The Nichiren Syosyu Indonesia (October 28, 1964) also transformed into Majelis Agama Buddha Nichiren Syosyu Indonesia (NSI). These religious councils, except for MUABI, joined together in the Majelis Agung Agama Buddha Indonesia (MABI).

Post-Sectarian Period

On February 20, 1979, in Jakarta, a Workshop on the Consolidation of Buddhist Teachings with Indonesian National Character was held. Subsequently, the Congress of Indonesian Buddhists on May 8, 1979, in Yogyakarta, approved a single umbrella organization named the Perwalian Umat Buddha Indonesia (Walubi). This name was given by the Minister of Religion (Alamsyah Ratu Prawiranegara), who wanted a single organization to represent Buddhists in the Interfaith Dialogue Forum (1980).

Walubi is a federation comprising: (1) Sangha Theravada Indonesia, (2) Sangha Mahayana Indonesia, (3) Sangha Agung Indonesia, (4) Majelis Agama Buddha Nichiren Syosyu Indonesia, (5) Majelis Buddha Mahayana Indonesia, later renamed Majelis Agama Buddha Mahayana Indonesia, (6) Majelis Dharma Duta Kasogatan, (7) Majelis Pandita Buddha Dhamma

Indonesia (Mapanbudhi), (8) Majelis Pandita Buddha Maitreya Indonesia (Mapanbumi), (9) Majelis Rohaniwan Tridharma Seluruh Indonesia (Martrisia), (10) MUABI.

After the Congress of Buddhist Communities, MUABI was renamed Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia (MBI). Walubi was chaired by Suparto Hs from Mapanbudhi with secretary general Ir. T. Soekarno from NSI and chairman of the Advisory Board Soemantri M.S. from MUABI. Walubi had an organ called the Assembly of Sanghas in Indonesia, positioning the three Sanghas as a fatwa council with the Venerable Maha Nayaka Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita as its head.

The Congress of Indonesian Buddhists confirmed the decisions of the Workshop on the Consolidation of Buddhist Teachings with Indonesian National Character. These decisions included the acknowledgment that all Buddhist sects in Indonesia believe in the existence of a Supreme God. All Buddhist sects respect the different names used to refer to God, but believe in their essential unity. All sects recognize Buddha Gotama as a Prophet, adhere to the Holy Scripture Tripitaka/Tipitaka, and are committed to implementing the Guidelines for the Appreciation and Practice of Pancasila. Each sect has distinct followers across the country. The Congress also established criteria for Buddhism in Indonesia, including belief in the Supreme God, the Triple Gem (Triratna/Tiratana), the Three Marks of Existence (Trilaksana/Tilakkhana), the Four Noble Truths (Catur Arya Satyani/Cattari Ariya Saccani), Dependent Origination (Pratitya Samutpada/Paticca Samuppada), Karma (Karma/Kamma), Rebirth (Punarbhava/Punnabhava), Nirvana (Nirwana/Nibbana), and the concept of Bodhisattva (Bodhisattwa/Bodhisatta).

Other decisions involved a code of ethics. Although adhering to different sects, Buddhists are a large family with the same Supreme Teacher. In spreading their sect's teachings, it's vital to avoid words, attitudes, and actions that could harm other sects. Every religious guide is encouraged to

deeply understand their sect's teachings while also positively learning about other sects. Personal, group, or material considerations should be set aside in every religious activity. Every member of Walubi should assist others in establishing Buddhist religious facilities and promoting Buddhism. Members should also avoid actions that could disrupt the familial atmosphere and harmony, spread the Dharma in accordance with the Scriptures, and refrain from interfering in the personal affairs of other Walubi members.

To enhance the development of facilities and guidance for religious life, in 1980 the Director-General of Hindu and Buddhist Community Guidance established an institution named the Joint Association of Viharas, Temples, and Crematoriums (Gavikra). However, this institution did not develop significantly. Most viharas were already under the guidance of various councils. Some crematoriums had buildings resembling temples but did not actually store cremation ashes. These facilities functioned more as social gathering places for family communities, thus more appropriately termed clan houses. Clan houses were overseen by the Directorate of Social and Political Affairs and were not considered part of Buddhist religious facilities.

After the perceived resolution of divisions within the Buddhist community, the government established the Directorate of Buddhist Affairs within the Ministry of Religious Affairs on December 16, 1980. Walubi remained united following an Extraordinary Congress in 1981 to establish its constitution and by-laws, appointing Soemantri M.S. from MBI as the chairman and Seno Soenoto from NSI as the secretary-general. During this period, with Presidential Decree No. 3/1983, the government declared Vesak Day a national holiday. This decision not only solidified the religious practices of Buddhists but also eliminated psychological barriers to religious life.

Previously, the Minister of Religion issued decisions on Hindu and Buddhist public holidays, including Vesak, Asadha, and Kathina as optional holidays. Once Vesak became a national holiday, there were no longer any

optional holidays for Buddhists. Nonetheless, Buddhists were grateful and became more active in enhancing their role. The construction of various religious facilities was followed by increased social community activities, especially in the provision of health services and educational facilities or schools.

Seno Soenoto's Vesak Day message as Walubi's secretary-general in the *Sinar Harapan* daily newspaper declared Vesak Day as a Day of Gratitude, based on the Japanese perspective. This led to protests from the community, which were not addressed by the Walubi leadership. NSI, through its publication *Prajna Pundarika*, broadcast teachings considered deviant and in violation of the Buddhist Congress's decisions by other parties. In a 1985 Consultative Forum of the Directorate General of Hindu and Buddhist Community Guidance with Buddhist religious leaders, Seno Soenoto acknowledged Nichiren as a Buddha.

The first Walubi Congress in 1986 elected the Venerable Girirakkhito as chairman and Drs. Aggi Tjetje as his deputy and executive chairman. This congress reaffirmed the outcomes of the Buddhist Congress. In 1987, when provocations regarding Vesak Day as a Day of Gratitude re-emerged, the *Widyeka Sabha* of Walubi determined that NSI had deviated from the criteria of Indonesian Buddhism, violating both the ethical code and the resolutions of the Workshop on Consolidation of Buddhist Teachings with Indonesian National Character, as ratified by both the Buddhist Congress and Walubi Congress. Consequently, NSI, deemed deviant and unrecognized within the Buddhist religious spectrum, was expelled from Walubi on July 10, 1987. The government did not intervene in this matter and continued to recognize NSI's existence.

The push for a unified platform was also evident among youth and women's groups. *Pemuda Buddhis Indonesia* (*Pembudi*), originating from MUABI in 1973 and active in KNPI and Golkar after signing the 1986 Indonesian Youth Declaration, prepared for a Buddhist Youth Congress. The

government's involvement directed the inclusion of youth representatives from Walubi's councils, leading to a joint consultation in 1986 and the establishment of Generasi Muda Buddhis Indonesia (Gemabudhi) with Lieus Sungkharisma as the chairman. Prior to this, youth activities were primarily within council-based youth organizations. In addition to Pemuda Tridharma, established in 1954, there were others like Sekber PMVBI (1981), Generasi Muda Mahayana Indonesia (1986), and more.

The initially Bandung-centered Buddhist Women's Organization (1973) also incorporated women's groups from Walubi councils to convene the Buddhist Women's Congress in 1987, forming Keluarga Besar Wanita Buddhis Indonesia (KBWBI) led by Dr. Parwati Soepangat, M.A. A local organization, Keluarga Mahasiswa Buddhis Jakarta (KMBJ, 1971), collaborated with students from other cities to form Himpunan Mahasiswa Buddhis Indonesia (Hikmahbudhi, 1988). Meanwhile, with the enactment of Law No. 8 of 1985 on Societal Organizations, several Buddhist organizations known to have existed had disbanded, such as Musyawarah Kekeluargaan Buddhis Indonesia (MKBI), Rumpun Guru Agama Buddha Indonesia (Rugabi), and GUBSI. GUBSI, or Gabungan Umat Buddha Seluruh Indonesia, was a social and community organization established in 1976 with support from DPP Golkar and the Directorate General of Hindu and Buddhist Community Guidance. Budhi merged into GUBSI, whose chairman, Eko Sasongko, was appointed as a member of the People's Consultative Assembly representing the Buddhist group. The subsequent representatives of the Buddhist community in the Assembly were Soemantri M.S. and the Venerable Girirakkhito.

Meanwhile, the New Order government saw the need to clear Buddhist religious institutions of elements of Chinese culture, which were considered foreign. Based on the 1988 instruction from the Minister of Home Affairs (No. 455.2-360) regarding the Regulation of Temples, it was prohibited for traditional Chinese religious buildings to be called viharas or cetiyas. In other words, viharas and cetiyas should not display Chinese cultural

symbols. At that time, Walubi also declared that Chinese New Year (Imlek) was not a Buddhist holiday.

Buddhist organizational conflicts re-emerged following Walubi's II Congress or Munas in 1992. The Venerable Girirakkhito became the chairman, with Drs. Budi Setiawan (Director of Buddhist Affairs) as secretary-general, and Dra. Siti Hartati Murdaya as the chairman of the Board of Patrons. The Congress formed a 30-member Drafting Committee for Walubi's AD/ART (Bylaws).

Disagreements over the Committee's work led to violent incidents reported to the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM), involving the electrocution of three figures from MBI and Martrisia. Subsequently, Walubi expelled Sangha Agung Indonesia and MBI for reasons related to teachings and organizational discipline (October 15, 1994). They were accused of major and minor syncretism, dividing the community, and reviving Chinese customs. The Directorate General of Hindu and Buddhist Community Guidance immediately ceased services to Sagin and MBI. However, the reform era led Walubi to reconsider, and on November 3, 1998, Sagin and MBI were reinstated, restoring their reputation and image. During its Congress on November 6, 1998, DPP Walubi expressed regret over these issues, but Sagin and MBI were not included as participants in the Congress. Surprisingly, through Munas III, Walubi dissolved itself.

After the dissolution of Walubi, to enhance their effectiveness, Sangha Theravada Indonesia, Sangha Mahayana Indonesia, and Sangha Agung Indonesia formed the Konferensi Agung Sangha Indonesia (KASI) on November 14, 1998. KASI was established with fundamental principles: (1) Democratic, not authoritarian, not imposing one's will, (2) Without egoism, (3) Acknowledging pluralism, (4) Unity in equality and equal dignity, (5) Leadership oriented towards the function and purpose of the institution, (6) Good cooperation, fully supporting a clean and holy life, (7) Recognizing that the Pali Tripitaka, Mahayana Tripitaka, and Tibetan Tripitaka (Kan-jur)

are the holy scriptures of Buddhism that must be believed by Buddhists, (8) Respecting each Sangha's beliefs without intervention, (9) Mutual assistance, supporting each other, (10) Not interfering in each Sangha's affairs and the organizations under them, (11) All national-scale organizational relations that are binding must go through the Konferensi Agung Sangha Indonesia.

Those who dissolved the Perwalian Umat Buddha Indonesia (Walubi) formed the Perwakilan Umat Buddha Indonesia, still using the acronym Walubi. This organization also formed a Sangha Council, with individual members. The Directorate General of Hindu and Buddhist Community Guidance, led by Major General (Ret.) Ir. I Wayan Gunawan, continued to pressure Sagin and MBI to join the new Walubi (Perwakilan Umat Buddha Indonesia).

On June 16, 1999, the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, Malik Fadjar, invited KASI, Sagin, and MBI, which until then had not been guided by the Directorate General of Hindu and Buddhist Community Guidance. Subsequently, on December 17, 1999, the Minister of Religion provided guidance on fostering unity among Buddhists, which was also published in the media under the title "Return Religion to Its Followers." The Directorate General of Hindu and Buddhist Community Guidance, on December 27, 1999, issued a letter to the Regional Offices of the Ministry of Religion across Indonesia to foster MBI and Sagin outside of Perwakilan Umat Buddha Indonesia.

In addition to MBI, other significant Buddhist organizations outside the new Perwakilan Umat Buddha Indonesia (Walubi) include the Majelis Agama Buddha Tridharma Indonesia and the Majelis Agama Buddha Theravada Indonesia. The Majelis Agama Buddha Tridharma Indonesia was declared in December 1998 and later confirmed on January 3, 1999, separating itself from the Majelis Rohaniwan Tridharma Indonesia (Martrisia). The Majelis Agama Buddha Theravada Indonesia (Magabudhi) declared its withdrawal

from the membership of Perwakilan Umat Buddha Indonesia on March 20, 2000. These three councils support KASI.

Disappointment with Walubi also prompted a group of Buddhists to establish the Partai Buddhis Demokrat Indonesia (Parbudi). Conflict arose between Walubi on one side and MBI and KASI on the other, particularly over the nomination of candidates for the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) representative. Eventually, Dra. Hartati Murdaya from Walubi was appointed to the MPR after efforts to sideline the MBI candidate initially proposed by the General Election Commission (KPU). The end of this organizational turmoil came with the Directorate General of Hindu and Buddhist Community Guidance's declaration that Sagin and MBI, outside of Walubi, would once again be fostered by the Department of Religion (December 27, 1999).

Conclusion

In the past, whether willingly or not, Buddhists were dependent on the guidance provided by the government (practically by certain government officials), even though the government should not interfere in the internal affairs of each religion. Now, a new paradigm has emerged: from autocratic to democratic, from centralist to decentralist, from vertical hierarchy to horizontal egalitarianism, from feudalistic to communalistic, from uniform to diverse, from a closed culture to an open one, from exclusive to universal. Religious thought is increasingly valuing inclusive, parallel, and pluralistic perspectives.

The Sangha is the institution that inherits the Dharma through an unbroken chain of ordinations since the time of Buddha Sakyamuni, serving as a role model for the laity and should not be merged with lay organizations (let alone be controlled by the laity). True Buddhists (regardless of their

assembly) will respect the Sangha as an expression of their faith in accordance with the guidance of the Tripitaka scriptures.

Translated from *Perkembangan Agama Buddha Di Indonesia*,
Lembaga Litbang Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia,
Jakarta, September 2005

References

Buddhayana Council of Indonesia. *Buku Acara Sejuta Pelita Sejuta Harapan* (Book of Events of a Million Lights, a Million Hopes). Borobudur Temple, 2005.

Indonesia. Dept. of Religion. *Pengkajian dan Pengembangan Kerukunan Hidup Beragama di Indonesia* (Research and Development of Religious Harmony in Indonesia). Jakarta: Agency for Research and Development of Religion, 1990/1991.

Juangari, Edij. *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara* (Sowing the Seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago). Bandung: Karaniya, 1995.

Kern, J.H.C. and Rassers, W.H. *Ciwa dan Buddha* (Shiva and Buddha). Jakarta: Jambatan, 1982.

Perkembangan Agama Buddha di Indonesia (Development of Buddhism in Indonesia). Paper on Education and Training for Dharma Emissaries, Lampung, December 10-15, 2000.

Rashid, S.M. and Herman S. Endro. *Agama, Masyarakat, dan Negara* (Religion, Society, and State). Paper discussion SPES, 1992.

- Salmon, Cl. and D. Lombard. *Klenteng-Klenteng Masyarakat Tionghoa di Jakarta* (Chinese Community Temples in Jakarta). Jakarta: Yayasan Cipta Loka Caraka, 1985.
- Soekmono, R. *Pengantar Sejarah Kebudayaan Indonesia (2)* (Introduction to the Cultural History of Indonesia (2)). Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 3rd ed., 1981.
- Soetarno, R. *Aneka Candi Kuno di Indonesia* (Various Ancient Candi in Indonesia). Semarang: Dahara Prize, 1986.
- Wacana Buddha-Dharma* (Discourse on Buddha-Dharma). Jakarta: Yayasan Dharma Pembangunan (the Foundation of Dharma Development), 2003.
- Wijaya-Mukti, Krishnanda. *Umat Buddha Jakarta Mengabdikan Persada* (The Buddhist Community of Jakarta Serving the Homeland). Jakarta: Bimas Buddha Kanwil Dept. of Religion DKI Jakarta, 1995.

Appendix 2

Buddhayana: A Scholastic Overview

Krishnanda Wijaya-Mukti

There exist two versions of the Tripitaka, the Buddhist scripture. One is based on the Pali language, and the other on Sanskrit. We do not have concrete evidence about which language was used by Gautama Buddha. It seems that the Buddha used more than one language or dialect. In the Aranavibhanga-sutta, the Buddha advised his monks to adapt to the local languages of the areas where they spread his teachings (M. II, 234). According to the Kinti-sutta, people should pay more attention to the meaning and spirit rather than just the words (M. II, 239). Therefore, the Buddha allowed his followers to learn his teachings in their respective languages (Vin. II, 139).

Discoveries and research on remnants of ancient Buddhist texts, such as the Udanavarga and the Gandhari Dharmapada, have shown that these texts are not translations from the Pali Canon. Research has revealed that both the Pali and Sanskrit scriptures can be traced back to a common origin. Four out of the five Pali Nikayas have corresponding versions in the four Sanskrit Agamas. The currently known Pali Canon originated from writings in Sri Lanka. Based on linguistic research, even though similar, the Canon is not the one compiled in the Third Council.

The compilation of the Canon began at the First Council, three months after Buddha's parinirvana. The Council was attended by 500 individuals, while the number of Arhats was far greater than this (at the event of Magha

Puja, 1250 Arhats were recorded). According to the Canon itself, Purana, who returned from the southern region after the Council ended, chose to disagree with the Council's conclusions, considering his own Dharma which he had received directly from the Buddha (Vin. II, 290).

It's understandable that there are authentic Buddhist teachings that were not included in the First Council. Consequently, it's reasonable that through a long oral tradition, before being written down, the basket of the scriptures was open to the inclusion of other texts at a later date. The scriptures also include discourses by main disciples such as Sariputra, Moggallana, and Ananda, which are regarded as if given by the Buddha himself, and thus revered as the words of the Buddha.

The Buddha provided four tests of authority regarding what someone claims to have received directly from the Buddha, or the Sangha, or several senior monks, or a single senior monk. These must align with the Sutta and Vinaya (D. II, 123-125). The Buddha's democratic nature and respect for pluralism are also evident in his message to Cunda, advising to study all teachings in groups and not to argue about them (D. III, 127). Furthermore, the Buddha taught that for the wise, it is not sufficient to protect the truth by concluding: only this is right, everything else is wrong (M. II, 171). As a universal religion, Buddhism is not exclusive.

In the Buddha's time, there were no divisions like Theravada, Mahayana, or Tantrayana. From historical texts like the Dipavamsa (4th century CE), Mahavamsa (5th century CE), and Samantapasadika (Vinaya Commentary), it's known that the term Theravada first appeared after the First Council. What was accepted in this Council was referred to as Theravada, Theriya, or Therika (Tradition of the Elders).

Theravada entered Sri Lanka in the 3rd century BCE, at a time when the terms Hinayana or Mahayana were unknown. These terms are not found in the Pali Canon or the historical texts Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa. Understanding the current division between Theravada and Mahayana, it's

important to note that Theravada is not synonymous with Hinayana, a term that emerged later in India. Currently, there is no Hinayana sect in the form of a community of followers.

Buddha taught in various ways (including stages) and for various reasons (skillful means or upaya-kausalya). “Then the Tathagata considered the capacities of beings, whether they are intelligent or dull, industrious or lazy. According to their respective abilities, he preached the Dharma to them in innumerable ways, so as to make them joyful and greatly beneficial.”

The same rain from the clouds falls on diverse plants, each getting wet in its own portion, more or less as needed, and each grows accordingly (Sdmp. V). Compare how Buddha guided his disciples like Ananda, Culapanthaka, Moggallana, or Maha Kassapa. A grand-disciple who is not adept at memorization might not be compatible with a teacher like Ananda. It would be different if they had a teacher like Culapanthaka. There are many other examples like this.

The Buddha can be compared to someone who provides a buffet, and we are free to choose food that suits us; he doesn't provide a boxed meal with the same content and quantity for everyone. It's easy to understand how different methods gave birth to various sects, which are essentially schools.

According to the Saddharmapundarika-sutra, even though there are many methods, Buddha Gotama (and all Buddhas) taught the same Truth Law. He showed the Great Path with the teachings of three vehicles (triyana), namely Sravakayana, Pratyekabuddhayana, and Bodhisattvayana. “All these Truth Laws are only for One Vehicle (ekayana), namely Buddhayana, so that beings who have received the Law from the Buddhas can eventually obtain Perfect Enlightenment.”

Following the Bodhisattva Path to become a Samyak Sambuddha is the highest and most noble goal in efforts for others' liberation. But these three

types of Perfect Enlightenment are on the same path, not different from each other (Sdmp. II).

The Samdhinirmovacana-sutra clearly and firmly states that those who follow the Sravakayana, Pratyekabuddhayana, or the path of the Tathagatas (Mahayana) attain nirvana by the same path. For all of them, there is only one Path of Purity (Visuddhi-marga) and one Purity (Visuddhi), there is no second. Sravakayana and Mahayana are mentioned as one vehicle, one yana (ekayana).

According to the Venerable Piyasilo Mahathera, the term that unifies all Buddhist schools is Ekayana. The Satipatthana-sutta uses this term for its methodological definition (D.II,290), and the Saddharmapundarika-sutra defines the single path as the Buddha Vehicle.

Today, we find many schools claiming to be the true teaching of the Buddha. The truth must indeed be tested, one way is by referring to the Scriptures and recognizing the fundamental values of the doctrine in its practice, in accordance with the principles of the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha said, "Just as the great ocean has only one taste, the taste of salt, so too does the Dharma have only one taste, the taste of liberation." (Ud. 56).

The Concept of Buddhayana

Buddhayana is identical to Ekayana, a technical terminology used to refer to and encompass the overall view, school of teaching, or understanding of Buddhism, emphasizing that Dharma or truth is only one. This term is used to erode the misconception that there are many Buddhist religions reflected in the multitude of schools, each indicating different truths. In Buddhayana, diversity and adaptation are not differences or divisions, but

in essence, they are integral parts of Ekayana. Buddhayana is not a sect, but Buddhism itself.

John Blofeld likened Buddhism to a city surrounded by a large wall with so many gates that newcomers might worry about encountering a complex network of roads. However, in reality, whichever door one enters, if one keeps walking straight, one will find a path converging under one fortress of protection.

The Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh pointed out that just as various medicines are needed to cure different kinds of diseases, the teachings of Buddhism also open Dharma doors that are suitable for each person with different conditions. Although these doors might differ between one person and another, they are all Dharma doors.

Dr. D.T. Suzuki wrote: There are not two branches of Buddhism, Mahayana and Hinayana are essentially one, and the spirit of the Buddha's founding is present in both. The Venerable Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda Mahathera said, true followers of Buddha can practice this religion (Buddha) without adhering to any particular school or sect. According to the Venerable Piyasilo Mahathera, if someone understands one tradition, whether it be Theravada, Mahayana, or Vajrayana, they will also understand all other traditions. However, they must make an effort and open their minds. In other words, a blind and exclusive fanaticism towards one sect indicates a lack of understanding of the basic concepts of Buddha's teachings themselves. Those who criticize any Buddhist tradition, in fact, do not understand their own tradition.

According to the Venerable Bhikkhu Dharmawiranatha, Buddhayana aims to achieve a fusion between the essence of the teachings with an individual's lifestyle and culture. The contribution that Buddhism can make to the culture of a nation is a non-sectarian stance, an attitude that seeks harmony and concord. Buddhayana does not intend for the different sects to disappear or lose their distinct identities.

Buddhayana rejects sectarian attitudes, which lack tolerance for teachings and practices from various Buddhist schools other than their own. The weaknesses of sectarianism are clear, as it limits perspective, reinforces egoism, and breeds hatred, which obviously hinders spiritual progress.

The Prospect of Buddhayana

The global world is moving towards unification. Krishnaputra observes a trend towards unity among Buddhists, starting with the desire to have a symbol of unity accepted by all three schools, leading to the creation of the International Buddhist Flag in 1885. In 1891, H.S. Olcott formulated the 14 Articles of Buddhist Faith, which were agreed upon by leaders of both Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism.

In 1943, the international Buddhist magazine “The Middle Way” was published in London without regard to school affiliation. The World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) was established in 1950, followed by the World Buddhist Sangha Council (WBSC) in 1966, which brought together all schools/sects of Buddhism. Over 25% of the institutions/organizations within the WFB embrace the spirit of Buddhayana, identifying themselves with terms such as non-sectarian, inter-sectarian, accepting all traditions, open to all sects, and not affiliated with any sect.

At the First World Conference of the WBSC in Colombo (1967), a unanimous agreement was reached on the basic principles of Buddhism. In this agreement, both Theravada and Mahayana (including Tantrayana) shared the same principles. Differences in monastic life, local Buddhist customs and beliefs, ceremonies, traditions, and habits are merely external manifestations and should not be considered the foundation of Buddha’s Teachings.

The Third Annual International Buddhist Seminar in New York (1974) sparked a hope among participants to avoid classifying Buddha's teachings into various 'yanas'. This hope was echoed by Dr. Buddhadasa Kirtisinghe, the chairman of the seminar, who proposed the term "Ekayana" or "Buddhayana".

Dr. Ananda W.P. Guruge, working for UNESCO, in his speech titled "Universal Buddhism," stated, "I foresee the emergence of new trends in Buddhism in the West. Close interaction among different schools and sects will result in mutual influence. Western experts have expressed a preference for a form of Buddhism that combines the three traditions of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. We hear terms like 'Triyana' and 'Buddhayana' as names for this combined form of Buddhism. We should not underestimate this natural development, as this is precisely how Buddhism has evolved over the past 2,500 years."

Adherence in Indonesia

The Syailendra dynasty were adherents of Buddhayana, as written in the "Negarakretabhumi" by Prince Wangsakerta. Borobudur, built by the Syailendra dynasty, reflects how the teachings of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana were harmoniously integrated.

Everywhere in the world, there is a close relationship between religion and culture. Cultural acculturation can lead to a mixture that often blurs the original form and expression of Buddhism. If it involves blending, it's called syncretism, an example being the Siwa-Buddha phenomenon in Bali.

In the Majapahit era, Siwa-Buddha did not blend entirely into the system, making it more accurately described as parallelism (or alternatively, coalition). This concerns the relationship between religions. Within the same religion, it is foolish to suggest that studying and adhering to teachings

from various sects originating from the same prophet is syncretism. The dogma, doctrine, or creed of each branch within one religion should not differ, thus justifying it as the same religion.

In 1929, the Association for the Propagation of Buddhism in Java was established in Java, later becoming the Java Buddhist Association. Despite its Theravada character (with origins in Thaton, Myanmar), it was significantly influenced by Theosophy and collaborated with Mahayana monks in temples. The inseparability of Mahayana and Theravada in the resurgence of Buddhism in Indonesia is reflected in the figure of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita, who was ordained in both traditions.

First, he was ordained as a samanera by the Venerable Mahabhikshu Pen Ching from Kong Hua Sie Jakarta, and later by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw in Rangoon, Myanmar. In the temples he founded, worship rituals used Pali parittas as well as Sanskrit and Mandarin mantras. In the recitation of Vandana parittas in Pali, names of various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas-Mahasattvas, known only in Mahayana, are included. The Buddhist community did not differentiate between sects until the Theravada Sangha separated itself in 1972, followed by the emergence of various sectarian councils.

The PUUI/MUABI group maintained a non-sectarian character. Within this organization under the Sangha Agung Indonesia, various sects coexisted without being segregated by institutional barriers. When MUABI was asked by the New Order government to change its name, the term Buddhayana was chosen to reflect this stance (1979). In 1994, turmoil within the Walubi organization and the abuse of power cornered Buddhayana as a syncretic sect reviving Chinese customs. However, the Sangha Agung Indonesia and MBI remained consistent, and now everything has changed.

Practices of Buddhayana are evident in various forms, including: using the same temple for worship by adherents of all schools, Dharma talks not exclusively based on one tradition, celebration of holy days including

Maghapuja and Ullambana without distinguishing traditions, and reading of the Dhammapada by followers of all schools. Buddhists study various Buddhist teachings and traditions in a balanced manner. Compatibility with teachings is, of course, a personal matter. As advised by the Venerable Thubten Chodron: Being open to different approaches does not mean mixing everything together, especially meditation techniques from different traditions should not be combined in a single practice.

Translated from *Buddhayana Tinjauan Skolastik*,
Krishnanda Wijaya-Mukti, 2000

References

- Aryamaitri, Sthavira. *Agama Buddha Universal: Tuntutan Dunia Global* (Universal Buddhism: The Demand of a Global World). Ekayana Library: Buddhayana, 12th edition, May 1999.
- Chodron, Thubten. *Agama Buddha dan Saya* (Buddhism and Me—translated from *I Wonder Why*). Translated by E. Suwarnasanti. Jakarta: Karaniya Publisher, 1990.
- Dharma Sekilas* (Dharma at a Glance). Surabaya: Bodhimanda Sacred House, 1981.
- Juangari, Edij. *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara* (Sowing the Seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago). Bandung: Karaniya Publishing Foundation, 1995.
- Pannavaro, Bhikkhu. *Agama Buddha* (Buddha Dharma) *Hanya Satu* (Buddhism [Buddha Dharma] is Only One). Mendut Foundation, 2527 BE.

Piyasilo, Ven. *Jalan Tunggal, Studi Perbandingan Mengenai Mahayana dan Therawada* (The Single Path, Comparative Study of Mahayana and Theravada). Translated by Edij. Bandung: Karaniya Publishing Foundation, 1995.

Suryananda (ed). *Memahami Buddhayana* (Understanding Buddhayana). Bandung: Karaniya Publishing Foundation, 1995.

Wijaya-Mukti, K. *Belajar Menjadi Bijaksana* (Learning to Be Wise). Jakarta: Dharma Development Foundation, 1993.

Wijaya-Mukti, K. *Berebut Kerja Berebut Surga* (Competing for Work, Competing for Heaven). Jakarta: Dharma Development Foundation, 1995.

Index

A

Adi Buddha 226
Agama Buddha Indonesia 230
Avalokitesvara xvii, 48

B

Benqing 47, 193
Blavatsky 2, 222
Boan An 21
bodhicitta 190
Bodhisattva 86
Bogor 136
Borobudur 6, 16, 19, 46, 79
Brahma Vihara 122
Buddha 46
Buddhayaana 147, 171, 188, 191
Bunki Kimura 190
Burma 45

C

Chan 188
Chao Kun Sasanasobhana 108
China 2
Cullavagga 110

D

Dalai Lama 168
Dharma 3
Dharmasagaro 147
Dharmavimala 213

E

enlightenment 39

F

flying monk 55

G

Girirakkhito 147, 157

H

Holland 42
Hudaya Kandahjaya 213

I

India 219

J

Jack Meng-Tat Chia xv
Jinapiya 196
Joyful Effort 85

K

Karuna 122
Kok Kwong Fashi 154

L

Lathouwers 178

M

Mahasi Sayadaw xxxiv, 225

Mahayana 3, 7, 125, 147

Maitri 122

Metta 122

N

Narada 5

Nirvana 121

P

Pancasila 133, 233

Panca Sila 58

paramang 179, 183

Pen Ching 47, 52, 189

PUUI 68, 78, 129

S

Sai Baba 174

Sakyawanaram 177, 181, 187

Sangha Agung Indonesia 167, 191,
194

Sanghyang Adi Buddha 148, 156,
160, 167

Sila 97

T

Tee Boan An 21, 43

Tengger 46, 58, 61

Theosophy 2

Theravada 3, 54, 56, 80, 125, 126

Thi Cheng 225

V

Vajrayana 171, 188

Vimaladharmā 177

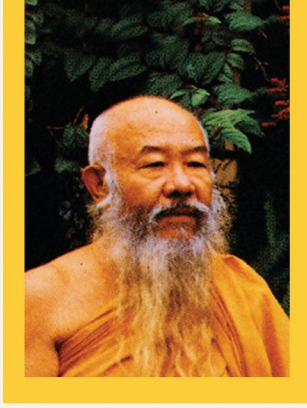
Vipassana 50, 76, 121

Void 182

W

World Buddhist Sangha Council
(WBSC) 231

World Fellowship of Buddhists
(WFB) 248



SOWING THE SEEDS OF DHARMA IN THE ARCHIPELAGO

The wisdom of the Venerable MNS Ashin Jinarakkhita is aptly described by Prof. Dr. M.A. Ton Lathouwers, a Zen practitioner from Belgium.

“He showed that in life, resilience and joy can go hand in hand. His discipline did not hinder his spontaneity. His unwavering faith was coupled with an open heart, gentleness, hospitality, and a deep understanding of others, recognizing that each individual carries their own karma. His unpretentious personality, seemingly effortless, revealed that every human being has their own unique, authentic personality that cannot be duplicated or pigeonholed into stereotypes.”

“The assignment of the Venerable Jinakumari for my ordination and her appointment as the head of the women sangha were a few indications of Bhante Ashin's progressive stance on pivotal matters within Buddhist tradition and society. The choice of a bhikṣuni to lead the ordination ceremony was, in itself, a revolt to entrenched patriarchal norms, predating the broader gender equality discourse.”

(Hudaya Kandahjaya, author of *Borobudur: Biara Himpunan Kebajikan Sugata*, USA)

“While reading this book, I am reminded of Ashin Jinarakkhita, who spoke so expressively and patiently during interviews, sometimes with a stern look on his face, but at other times with a big laugh.... (This) is a must-read book for researchers studying Indonesian Buddhism, fulfilling an indispensable and important role.”

(Bunki Kimura, Aichi Gakuin University, Japan)

“*Sowing the Seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago* illuminates a remarkable journey and stands as a testament to the enduring influence of Ashin Jinarakkhita's vision in shaping the landscape of Buddhism in modern Indonesian history.”

(Jack Meng-Tat Chia, National University of Singapore, Singapore)

Karaniya
Jl. Mangga 2 No. 8
Duri Kepa, Jakarta Barat

