

Revised Role for Buddhism in ASEAN: Conquering the Education Crisis¹

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IABU at the International and Institutional Level:

Buddhism is not the major religion with ASEAN, but here within the IABU, we are committed to see Buddhist studies thrive, amongst other programs offered at the institutional level. We must maintain our awareness that within ASEAN, Buddhism is a minority religion, despite being prominent in most of our homelands. Buddhism is only a major factor in mainland ASEAN and only a minority or something trendy in the island-regions. Again, here in this paper, only the Buddhist community is being addressed, but by extension, other communities are implied in the commentary and not excluded - and they can observe and learn in some possible way how to improve their religions as well. This paper should be useful towards and for any community.

People can learn about Buddhism in a variety of ways: visiting monks and temples, the internet, or even earning a university degree in the subject matter. To ensure that Buddhists or any student in the program are getting a quality education, the International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU) was set up and began to operate in 2007 with its goals, mission and vision to accomplish this task at the higher levels of institutionalized learning.

At the international level, the IABU is an umbrella association covering every Buddhist university and program offering degrees in Buddhist Studies and other related areas of study. The IABU operates according to the IABU Constitution, and our vision, mission and goals for improving Buddhist Studies. We encourage our members to produce quality research, and through annual academic conferences, share this research, pertaining to important themes. We envision to complete a data directory with all of the university programs contained within, produce an annual academic journal and the occasional special thematic edition, and a periodic newsletter that would need proactive notifications or contributions of participating universities that consist of newsworthy institutional news, submitted in to the IABU, so we can publish this information on their behalf.² The IABU has set up an official bank-account to accept donor-funds with the security of multiple-signatures from the executive council before withdraws occur. The IABU, since its inception has relied on generous funding from MCU, but in reality funding is needed from every member university before we can implement the plans of teacher and student exchanges, publication of excellent research, and organizing the annual or bi-annual academic conferences (usually in conjunction with the United Nations Day of Vesak, to make hosting easier on MCU). With proper funding, the

¹ A draft version of this document was examined on my personal academia.edu website, gathering 326 individual reviews, 55 comments, and was peer-reviewed by 33 academic-associates. Every peer-reviewed comment was taken into account, and the statistics may be read from here: <https://www.academia.edu/s/751d901864/summary>

² We attempted to do this before, but only some 30+ universities submitted data, out of nearly 100 schools or programs associating with the IABU. The project was scrapped after three attempts to call for program information. We aspire for Buddhist Studies programs to take a greater interest in the IABU and find ways to support the IABU, either financially or through hosting different regional events, facilitating the exchange of teachers or students, and other fund-raising endeavors, for the sake of Buddhist Studies. We have the Common Buddhist Text project, which merges Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhist texts into a single volume to illustrate important doctrines related to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, making it accessible to the common reader; and we have the Uniform Catalogue of Buddhist Texts which is a project to place all of the Buddhist Texts on a single website, where cross-referencing and other features will be possible. Projects need funding and salaries need paid. We are trying our best to improve Buddhist Studies internationally, and need financial support for our projects.

IABU can do more for Buddhism and the Buddhist World. The universities should also operate accordingly, although we cannot legally enforce our members to engage likewise, despite the signatures on the documentation to set up the IABU:

Vision:

- Motivate future generations to gain and apply profound understanding of the Buddha-dhamma in every aspect of life.
- Raise the quality of scholarly work within Buddhist Studies and across other academic endeavors.
- Contribute to meeting the challenges that face human society world-wide.

Mission:

- Support and collaborate with Members to ensure humanity can benefit from the richness and variety of the multidimensional Buddhist traditions.
- Provide a framework towards better understanding diverse policies and activities.
- Collaborate in administration, teaching, research and outreach.
- Recognize each other's qualifications.

Goals:

- Propagate the Buddha-dhamma through collaborative academic channels.
- Eliminate Buddhist sectarian, national, and institutional barriers.
- Raise the academic standards throughout the Buddhist world.
- Maximize academic potentials and abilities.

The IABU cannot operate effectively without greater financial support from donors, and donor-institutions. Collaborations may involve travel-expenses, but who would fund this travel between institutions, and from the university to the research-site – as just one example? Our executive council is made up of members from many nations and different institutions, but even those executives are not generating funds from their nation or institutions for the benefit of the IABU. We know that the IABU is not a fund-raising association, but we are receptive to the generosity needed to accomplish our goals and mission, through our vision. Thus far, the IABU relies on generous funding from MCU and by extension, the Royal Thai Government, but this should not be the case – it should be a shared, international effort. Where is the support from Indian universities, Sri Lanka universities, Bangladesh universities, Burmese Universities, Lao PDR universities, Cambodian universities, Vietnamese universities, Chinese universities, Singaporean universities, Indonesian universities, the various Thai universities, and the various universities or programs also from Western/European nations? If we are to achieve our goals as Buddhists, and Buddhist universities, we need to organize ourselves in a more effective manner, and perform, perhaps, as a shareholding block in world academia. We should have newly elected external effective members of the executive council from amongst our large body of universities who are dynamic and hardworking individuals striving for the benefit of Buddhism and our member-association. It's time to move away from buddy or peer-group management (elections to the council consisting of just approving the present members and never having open/public-elections featuring qualified candidates) and transform into what we envisioned. We should not have executive council members who are ineffective and are unable to perform simple chores that are asked of them, inside of the Executive Council. Who, though are these new people that can step up to the plate and contribute more effectively? We need your name and CV, and perhaps a statement

on how you, as a well-connected person and scholar, can effectively take charge as an executive council member to benefit Buddhist studies and Buddhism in the world.

In the same spirit, according to perceptions about Buddhist doctrines, Buddhists advocate that the tradition be above national-politics; we all know this, but politicians and even business-personnel themselves may claim to be Buddhist. Many of our Buddhist universities have fallen into new political alliances brought on by the forces of national change, because these nations also want to belong to a larger association. Patronage and sectarianism also intoxicates or influences the decision-makers in universities. Many people think that Buddhism is above national politics, but people exist who subsume everything beneath the direction of the nation – Buddhists are just a small or major part of the nation and its vision. The people may be Buddhist but nations have different objectives. The IABU is a mature association, and as such, we comprehend the values of the UN, UNESCO, and the UNECOSOC, of which we influence to some extent, as many of our members are executive-council members for the ICDV, which serves as a special consultative group for the UNECOSOC.³

What is ASEAN and how may the IABU be seen within ASEAN?

The nations of Southeast Asia formed the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Even though our Buddhist universities formed the IABU, we cannot legally enforce any behaviors; but within ASEAN, governments can legally impose impositions upon the citizens. When someone becomes a Buddhist, they follow the five impositions, or precepts – when taken seriously, a Buddhist will refrain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxicants. When a nation joins ASEAN, they must be able to attain certain requirements and observe regulations. Our politicians who are indeed Buddhist, are expected to perform minimally, according to that criteria. If a nation was built on Buddhist principles, or if Buddhism is the dominant tradition in that land, we'd expect those governments to also refrain from killing, stealing, lying, intoxicate citizens and refrain from sexual-misconduct. However, some people leave Buddhism inside the temple walls, because modern globalized-society demands other methods of thinking; people return to the temple to give a donation and seek solace from the problematic world operating outside on different principles. Generals may embark into politics and still behave as a soldier (which is totally acceptable and comprehensible), but it must be remembered that the majority of citizens may have the mindset of a civilian – someone that may not live the mercenary-life.⁴ Buddhist values are only apparent aspirations – people would like to see Buddhist values implanted into the national constitution or the founding documents for ASEAN, as these are also common secular values for any culture. People can vote for ideas in a national constitution, but the people do not vote to become a member of ASEAN – since this is a government to government scheme or collaboration for more effective transnational issues involving security, economics, politics, and socio-cultural management. Our member universities are not voting on anything occurring within the IABU, and are not offering any advice on what should be happening – and the perfect voice for these engagements would be the IABU Newsletter or Journal of the IABU. We need to have an effective forum of university presidents/rectors, and gain an awareness of our future and collective aims. Institutionalized Buddhism can develop through spirited collaborations not through authoritarian proclamations and half-hearted acceptance and partisan-avoidance.

³ See, page 53: <http://csonet.org/content/documents/E-2014-INF-5%20Issued.pdf> – accessed on 28 January 2015

⁴ See: https://www.academia.edu/1223697/The_Yodhajiva_Suttas - accessed on 17 April 2015

For most of us, we have no choice about events that occur above our pay-grade or where conceived before our own conception. ASEAN is a conglomerate of ten nations, soon to be eleven with the foreseen inclusion of East Timor, operating under a motto that seems to support globalization – an idea opposed by billions of people: One Vision, One Identity, One Community. It may be easy for our ASEAN-people to believe in a singular vision: to increase development-levels in the post-colonial world; but in reality, many languages and identities exist, and therefore we are by convention: several communities divided by borders. However, the motto is grand enough to aspire towards. This unifying slogan fits well within Buddhist Studies and the goals of the IABU, so by extension we can support the ideals of ASEAN. Buddhism, ideally, wishes to refrain from schisms – so an aspiration of the IABU is to work uniformly within Buddhism, without discrimination or segregation. In this sense, there is nothing apparently inconsistent with the IABU and Buddhist doctrine, for ASEAN and the development of Buddhist education. Another important view was raised by raised by an associate, Marlar Than Aung, a Muslim scholar from Myanmar, who kindly reminds us: If we want to be ‘one’, we have to release our religious-ego everywhere, such as in our social-interactions, business-transactions and politics. Religion doesn’t belong to the Nation, but people who live in the country, of whatever religion, comprise of the components constructing the Nation. We have to train ourselves to be good people according to religious teachings. Then we can build up civil society, the nation and our communities based upon our commonalities or similarities. If this is not done everywhere we face problems, and we cannot ever, become unified as ‘ONE’.⁵

We can see, then, ASEAN is to be a dynamic developed caring community, coming into existence this year, in 2015; whereas the IABU became operational in 2007. There are three main pillars for matters concerning ASEAN: The ASEAN Political-Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. Recently, the IABU has tried to shadow these important themes by also following the scheme of UNESCO, in terms of conference topics, so that the IABU can become more successful in the international arena and contribute to global affairs. The IABU should also focus on the needs and developments within ASEAN to be regionally effective. The IABU should be guiding these universities to implement Buddhism effectively within our universities and by extension, the communities where we reside and influence through our various programs. Our universities need to pay attention to what is happening here in this conference room and the material preserved in our publications. It’s not the role of a Buddhist institution to block or censor a conversation⁶ which is sanctioned and demanded by our higher institutions – particularly those involving the UN Millennium Development Goals and the sustainable-development goals. Referring to the revised role for Buddhism in ASEAN, Buddhism may not have an effective place in the political-security community or within the economic community, but exhibits great potential for influencing affairs within the socio-cultural community where it must compete or exist alongside other systems of social-control – either in the guise of religion or secular ideologies.

ASEAN calls for accelerated economic growth, social progress and cultural development. Regional peace and stability (although non-interference in another

⁵ Through personal communication on a draft-version of this paper, in an open-session on my academia.edu site where all of my documents are posted, for the sake of Buddhist education.

⁶ The UNDV “council” has blocked or banned three papers: two on the bhikkhuni issue and one involving a controversial sect in Thailand, which bewilderingly holds influence over national affairs. Academically, these were sound papers, and the IABU finds no grounds for banning the papers from discussion. Either MCU was strongarmed by the sect to suppress the opinions or archaic opinions weighed heavily on the minds of other members, who could not handle papers on female-ordination.

nation's affairs), through respecting justice and the rule of law is promoted, along with adhering to the UN Charter. Collaborations are expected in the realm of: economics, social, cultural, gender, technical, scientific and the administrative fields. There are many types of business organizations associated with ASEAN, involving (and we are thinking about how Buddhism can improve the following fields): airlines, health supplements, automobiles, bankers, business advisory councils, chambers of commerce, chemical industries, textiles, furniture, insurance, intellectual property, airports, iron & steel, pharmaceuticals, tourism, economics, shipping, various think-tanks, and other stakeholders involving the police [ASEANAPOL], auditors, food-sciences and technology, fisheries, and human-rights organizations. People are to provide assistance to each other through training and research, as well into the education, professional, technical and administrative fields. Agriculture, industry and trade-networks need developed through improved transportation and communication links – enabling the standard of living to rise amongst the people dwelling in ASEAN. They can only do this, through mutual respect for independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national-identities free from external interference, subversion or coercion. We may ask scholars, in various conference-rooms and documents: where does Buddhism and Buddhist doctrine fit into these various enterprises? If we want Buddhism to become successful, we need to see where the doors are, before we can open doors and bring Buddhism into the scheme of things (business-operations).

Another important principle for ASEAN that cannot be overstated: no nation in ASEAN should interfere with the internal politics of another nation, and any dispute must be solved through peaceful-means, and the renunciation of the threat or use of force, towards effective cooperation.⁷ To facilitate additional or alternative ASEAN objectives, an Eminent Persons Group was created for consulting with stakeholders in the various important sectors throughout civil society, organizations, businesses, academics and politicians so that ASEAN can succeed at community building, with a single market [AEC: ASEAN Economic Community] – functioning as one country.⁸ A lot of this action has little to do with Buddhism, yet, Buddhism engages into our daily affairs – our aspirations for peace – despite the cry of the alternative: to be aloof from worldly affairs. What do we do or what is to be done? One effective chore that can be accomplished: invite the eminent Buddhists to become our Executive Council members: people that can generate interest and motivation towards our vision, mission and goals.

Stakeholders and the Goals of Buddhist Education:

Attention now needs to turn towards “stakeholders” – because these are the people who guide social change. What is a stakeholder? Chances are that our students are not aware of this class of people. A stakeholder is a compound word, comprising of “stake” and “holder”, someone is a holder of stakes. A stake is an important part or share in a company involving the risk of loss, if the enterprise goes wrong, but one can gain if the venture proves to be positive. The participating company or person is the holder or possessor of the aforementioned state. Therefore, a stakeholder is basically someone with money invested into a company or a project with the hopes of it

⁷ See, for example: “Thailand warns US to mind its own business over politics”. Accessed on 29 January 2015: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/28/us-thailand-politics-idUSKBN0L10LZ20150128>

⁸ NOTE: Many aspects of this paragraph originate from various pages within ASEAN's Official Website – and could not have been written otherwise without examining the website. The website's language is technical and basic enough that there is really no other simpler way to restate everything. Therefore, I just collected and represented the material as done here, for the sake of the article and for the sake of harvesting wisdom for ASEAN, and the 2015 UNDV Conference. See: www.asean.org – people are encouraged to read over the entire ASEAN website.

succeeding – therefore they are also affected when something goes properly or wrongly. This may be a member of the capitalist-class who uses strategic-management theories or those that engage into corporate social responsibility. This is not a term for the common person, it's exclusive, and does not include you or me, unless you are one of the few who are actually 'stakeholders'. Professors of Buddhist Studies, for instance, are generally not considered a stakeholder, despite their level of commitment to the ideals of ASEAN, or basic education (through their specialization) – they are just low-level wage-earners not familiar with ASEAN, but the person trying to get others directly involved in the process appears to be the Rector of the University or Deans/Directors of the Program (people who deal with the higher-level personnel or potential donors, and strive only to appease Ministry of Education quality-assurance measurements without ever witnessing their own professors lecturing in the rooms and concede to student demands without questioning or communicating with the lecturers). Faculties and departments have not implemented the ASEAN Curriculum in their self-styled programs – illuminating their lack of awareness with real work evolving situations. Somewhere, there are people who care enough to utilize their profits (withheld-wages from workers), money or capital and invest into some worthwhile-project, but where is the reinvestment into the lives of the teachers who need to live and reinvest into their own lives, and receive an ample savings – in accordance with the principles of Buddhist economics.⁹ Obviously, the lowly-paid professor cannot put forth this investment, and needs to make pleas for assistance without coming across as a needy-beggar, meanwhile higher-level people in the administration are seen taking world-tours and posting their fun-filled activities on social-media. Investors are dearly needed to work with professors, and advocate for professors – supporting the wisdom of the professors and seek a marketplace for their books. Somewhere, administrators are eating the financial allocations for the departments, because the lecturers must seek additional employment outside of the classrooms just to survive. Salaries are not equivalent to Buddhist economics or with the current demands of this technologically-advanced society. In this era when governments are spending less on education; people with capital are needed to generate morally beneficial projects. Certainly, poorer-people can work as a collective to generate funds to support a project, but this is done with much difficulty and implies great risks for financially ill-equipped people. Again, teachers are not paid enough to increase their intellectual capital, and business-personnel transition into appearing as subject matter experts, but they are not without their biases towards their employers.

We can begin to ask: Who are the stakeholders in Buddhist education? Who is funding Buddhist education or participating in 'Buddhism', so that successes are gained and progress is attained, for Buddhism and the stakeholders? Who will win? We need to have conversations with these benefactors or higher-level personnel – the people with 'money' and influence. Above, the different fields of employment were listed, and it is these companies that may have some moral aspiration to see Buddhism become more effective, and where can their donation be most effective for the sake of Buddhism, and not for the sake of self – in a new strategic alliance. We need to identify them, speak to them, reach out to them, and advocate for greater consideration for Buddhist ethics in their proceedings. See below, at what is promoted for Buddhist education within ASEAN, and the areas where stakeholders can utilize Buddhist principles. This is beneficial for us all to realize, since ASEAN wishes to cooperate in the region's

⁹ Please search for my article in your internet search engine for the paper on sufficiency economics, where several issues are discussed, collected, and represented.

political, economic and social development - through these various points – and ask ourselves, critically, if this is Buddhist or how Buddhism can cooperate?:

1. Promote understanding and appreciation of political systems, culture and history of ASEAN Member States. [*Is this Buddhist? Can Buddhism cooperate?*] - This does not have to be a Buddhist activity, rather it is the responsibility of the education system in each national government. It's always beneficial to learn more about other people. There is nothing anti-Buddhist about knowledge.
2. Lay the groundwork for an institutional framework to facilitate the free flow of information for mutual support and assistance amongst ASEAN Member States. [*Is this Buddhist? Can Buddhism cooperate?*] – Buddhism would advocate for getting along with neighboring and other nations, and it is benevolent and meritorious to assist others, especially if they are struggling or suffering. There is nothing anti-Buddhist about comradery.
3. Develop strategies for strengthening the rule of law and judiciary systems and legal infrastructure. [*Is this Buddhist? Can Buddhism cooperate?*] – Buddhism operates under strict regulations to govern the monastery and monastics – likewise, civil-society mandates adherence to the national legal-code. There is nothing anti-Buddhist about following necessary regulations.
4. Promote good governance. [*Is this Buddhist? Can Buddhism cooperate?*] There is nothing anti-Buddhist about doing the correct thing, even if the correct thing is the rejection of the corrupt system. If the structure needs changed, it becomes a moral duty to create and implement a better system that helps people.
5. Promotion and protection of human rights. [*Is this Buddhist? Can Buddhism cooperate?*] There is nothing anti-Buddhist about advocating for moral and ethical justice. Society deserves human-rights, including gender-equality and proper wages.
6. Move forward with political development initiatives. [*Is this Buddhist? Can Buddhism cooperate?*] Buddhism is not supposed to get involved in politics or the engagement into many tricks to manipulate perceptions upon society. “This policy good for you.” How does someone else know what is good for me or not? Who is living our lives, who is controlling our life? Why are there people manipulating our lives. Buddhism would opt out of this sort of engagement, or interrupt and demand protection of human rights. There may be something anti-Buddhist about certain initiatives.
7. Prevent and control corruption. [*Is this Buddhist? Can Buddhism cooperate?*] Buddhists are to never steal and never lie – corruption is something that a Buddhist monastic or Buddhist lay people should never get involved with. Certainly, there is nothing anti-Buddhist about this intent. Buddhists enforce ethics in the community.
8. Promote the principles of democracy. [*Is this Buddhist? Can Buddhism cooperate?*] Buddhism does not have to support democracy. Buddhism can support a benevolent or righteous dictatorship that is working hard to initiate necessary reforms in a formerly corrupt nation. There is not much democracy in the patronage system, and there is no democracy in the monastic system, where the abbot has absolute control over what happens inside of the temple. However, even in these non-democratic systems, the leader does listen to the suggestions of the minions or underlings, so there is feedback reaching the upper-echelons – and it is these higher-ranking people that must consider what the public want, or they may face a social-rebellion against their leadership. Buddhism advocates for renunciation from troubling systems. There is something anti-Buddhist about the promotion of an imperfect-democratic system – Thailand engages often in coups, because the people of the

nation are frustrated over systems that don't do well for their lives. Democracies have shown that the government in power exhibits partiality, benefiting only those in the same political party. Buddhism demands a better and more equal-system, akin towards socialism or even a system with flavors of communism. Great monks advocate for forms of Dhammic-Socialism. ASEAN and the UN may wish to see the work of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu¹⁰ and others, where a benevolent dictator or governor of the people is conducive towards the Buddhist ideology. Governments and democracies don't necessarily behave in Buddhist ways – and it is in that light that this element becomes anti-Buddhist.

9. Promote peace and stability in the region. [*Is this Buddhist? Can Buddhism cooperate?*] Certainly, Buddhism advocates for peace and stability. There is nothing anti-Buddhist about this principle.

Stakeholders are the people involved who can affect this change or the needed changes – most are driven by capitalism and not Buddhism, supporting projects through their financial investment. Proper stakeholders would be the proper personnel – but this is hard to discern when judging at the surface level. Exactly who is in charge of these programs needs to be monitored, because there are monks who have not become world-renunciates as the Buddha's system was designed for, rather they became keen administrators dealing with their own egocentricism and subsequent delusion, as part of the temptation from leaving childhood poverty towards being placed on the highest social-ladder. The proper Schumacher'ian ABC-member/official must be resolute and uncorrupt, and strive for the success of the program. The official or monastic running the program must not be interesting in the vocation on purely strategic-grounds, for acquiring fame and fortune, like a business-monk.¹¹

¹⁰ See for instance, the literature on the theme of Dhammic Socialism: http://www.suanmokkh.org/archive/pdf/TW_3.pdf and http://www.suanmokkh.org/ds/what_ds1.htm or <http://www.stc.arts.chula.ac.th/CJBS/Buddhadasa%20Bhikkhu.pdf> and even <http://www.stc.arts.chula.ac.th/CJBS/Dhammic%20Socialism.pdf> and of course this publication on the theme of the Dhammaraja: http://www.kpi.ac.th/kpith/downloads/kpi15/%E0%B8%A0%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%A9%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%AD%E0%B8%B1%E0%B8%87%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%A4%E0%B8%A9_OK%203-11-56.pdf. I submitted my own research to this conference which was never considered because my point of contact mismanaged the submission of my work, now posted here: https://www.academia.edu/4228243/The_Dhammaraja_Textual_Utterances_and_an_Examination_into_Geese_Behavior

¹¹ These suggestions were raised by one reviewer of this paper, prior to its publication, by Mr. Jacob Buganga, as were the following statements or ideas, which I have been unable to answer due to the time-constraints involved with preparing this conference, since I am the prime organizer of the academic-conference and general editor for the conference volume. He made these comments on a draft version of this article, previously posted on my academia.edu webpage. I am grateful for his assistance above, and for the following important (revised/edited) points to consider:

- *How should Buddhism deal with non-Buddhist topics?* The generalized traditional Buddhist would remain aloof but observant to the proceedings.
- *How do Buddhists deal with the egocentrism and delusions of monks, as a result of temptation, from being placed at the highest rung on the social ladder?* The lay society acts as a system of checks/balances and while the lay society may not have legal means to correct a misbehavior of a bhikkhu, there are other means through which laws can be enforced, through a National Office of Buddhism and the Supreme Sangha Council – such as in the case of Thailand. When monks are found to be wayward, the National Office of Buddhism can investigate monks and proceed in a civil manner, which can also involve police and a forceful disrobing and arrest if necessary.
- *How do we deal with monks who strategically manipulate their vocation for acquiring wealth and property – as if they are running a business, and use their robes for leadership positions?* Again, the proper authorities deal with these issues which may involve a police investigation after the National Office of Buddhism has made its determinations. Monks are not above the law, and are subjected to the national law, monastic law, and cultural laws.
- *How do we address economic interests at the expense of virtue? Are the rising economic factors going to be addressed within Buddhism, since this is an unspoken determination which threatens the peace and virtues*

A government or university can create an austere/transparent structure, but people may not necessarily support it. The structure for ASEAN and a more improved structure for Buddhist education can be built, but can it be filled with the supportive masses of population? Work needs to be done to generate this support for a structure that connects trivial amounts of people – usually the class of adult-learners. E.F. Schumacher in his famous text, *Small is Beautiful*, advocates for a system of information dissemination, and this is extremely important for the mobilization of relevant knowledge, involving:

A: Administrators: usually consists of government officials who have the power to enforce laws and enact social change or oversee development issues, but they follow or rely on existing laws, and lack the ability to make changes to laws.

B: Businessmen: entrepreneurs or innovators, those with technical knowledge and control over the production-process, commercial requirements and communications – these people, through their financial-capital may sway law-makers to reform laws.

C: Communicators: these may be the professional intellectual people, academics, researchers, journalists, teachers and any other people that have the time, facilities, ability and inclination to think, write and communicate conservative traditions and revolutionary perspectives – to benefit the next generation of learners and producers.

within Buddhism? Running a temple has become increasingly costly. As it goes with money, some people are good at managing and others are not skillful with managing money. Recently a monk in the highest echelon of bhikkhus was found guilty of mismanaging funeral-funds and the other affairs pertaining to the death and cremation of a senior monk, to the sum of 67-million ThB – the corruption involved mandated his removal from the Supreme Sangha Council, but he is still allowed to be the abbot of his temple. While it does not cost much to place a dead body in a furnace, people question why certain relatives had new houses built. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-2912657/THAILAND-PRESS-Abbot-Wat-Saket-removed-Sangha--The-Nation.html>

- *How do we address the lack of capacity or poor accountability, specialization, participation and lack of leadership skills amongst Buddhist figureheads – because they serve as mirrors for the lower ranks and others that have become concerned?* Sometimes we just cannot get through to people, and of course some people have no proper leadership skills. Often there are insider-means to remove people from positions if they are found to not be the suitable personnel for that duty.
- *How is Buddhism going to react towards strong and ancient cultures that still exist, in these times when more cultures are nurturing greed and violence – and Buddhism and the men in robes are not immune to this issue?* The sense of this question implies that Buddhism is facing the threat of encounters with the Islamic world, and how are Buddhists to handle this tense situation. There are people who advocate for one way or another, and we should know that the institution of Buddhism respects other traditions, even though they may have the wrong views on certain issues.
- *How do we handle situations where a monk is in charge of running a program but a lay person can do a better job, but the position cannot be given to the lay-person, because that causes a loss of face or disgrace upon the bhikkhu? Instead, laity are forced away.* There are other universities to apply for, allegedly, but most are too far from where someone lives with a family. To relocate is usually at the expense of the teacher, and seldom do universities assist in the relocation of an incoming teacher. This further places teachers into debt. Additionally consider that teachers are paid after the month of employment, so the teacher has to repurchase items and lose money in the savings account, and when the salary comes, it is barely enough to pay for existing/current expenses, and does not consider what was spent to get the job. In terms of having someone else running the program, no one will ever know if the layman is better, because he is already dismissed from his duties, and the bhikkhus still run things as before: conservatism is self-preservation.
- *How is Buddhism managed in far-away places where it appears to have a different social-face from the true 'original'-face? Some places are under threats of violence and persistent social problems.* These distant places are managed by a lay community, but it is only the monk that is linked to maintain his professional and nationalistic duty – any serious breach of etiquette may be reported to the National Office of Buddhism.
- *How do we handle sensitive information coming from places with renown-monks who respond to social-situations or affected communities in need of assistance – when they are under the thumb of criminalized or suspect-Buddhist leaders that are dragging and justifying Buddhism in opposite directions from the intention of the Buddha?* We might just have to listen and observe and switch our alliances, and shun those who are wrong. However, again, it could be a mobilized mob that is wrong, shunning the correct revolutionary. It's a battle for truths and rights.

Only through ‘ABC’, can developmental work (and education) become successful¹², if funded by a donor, through four functions¹³ - the right people need to perform the correct actions:

- **Function of Communication:** the facilitation of direct communication enables everyone to comprehend what is happening in the nation: done through the news, websites, social media, SMS, distribution of official government publication – this involves the open-sharing of information.
- **Function of Information Brokerage:** disseminate relevant information on appropriate technologies for the appropriate time: television programming that disseminates public information, radio programs; and officials going door-to-door to meet with residents, participation in town-hall meetings, and even reading and writing in comment-sections on websites or other media where messages can be received. This involves using the relevant technologies to disseminate the information about ‘information’ – effectively utilizing propaganda.
- **Function of Feedback:** the transmission of technical problems from the field-workers to those in advanced countries where suitable facilities for solutions exist. This may be done through academic research that has been published in journals, books or television programming. Lectures or officials may scrutinize this information and disseminate it back to those concerned either in the classroom, factories or fields, etc. When the intellectuals have scrutinized the information, they can create improvements, perhaps designed in lab-conditions, for later implementation in field-settings as a possible solution. Feedback must reach the decision-makers or they cannot remain in touch with the real issues of the suffering masses.
- **Function of Creating and Coordinating Sub-structures:** action-groups/verification centers in the developing nations. Policy-makers may take the feedback given by the NGOs or the special consultative groups, for basing their future decisions upon this knowledge. Intelligence-gathering agencies are needed to gather the facts about the situation, and these groups may consist of scholars, researchers, data-collectors, analysts, scientists, and whoever else taking an interest to help monitor the development, through a structure set up to control or assist the circumstance – so, these are action-groups or verification-centers. Investigate the small-centers where change is effectively occurring. What do these new measurements suggest?

Schumacher continues: “It can succeed only if it is carried forward as a broad, popular, ‘movement of reconstruction’ with primary emphasis on the full utilization of the drive, enthusiasm, intelligence, and labor power of everyone. Success cannot be obtained by some form of magic produced by scientists, technicians, or economic planners. It can come only through a process of growth involving the education, organization, and discipline of the whole population.¹⁴ Anything less than this must end in failure.”¹⁵ A politician may set one certain issue as an important factor for the campaign, and if selected or elected – endeavor to see the issue into fruition. We can take these words and see that they are also applicable to the current situation in Thailand or around other nations in ASEAN.

¹² E.F. Schumacher: *Small is Beautiful* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1975), p. 201

¹³ E.F. Schumacher: *Small is Beautiful* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1975), pp. 202-203

¹⁴ See: Dion Peoples: <http://www.undv.org/vesak2011/book/program2010.pdf> - “Discipline is Required for Resolving any Crisis”, pp. 119-131

¹⁵ E.F. Schumacher: *Small is Beautiful* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1975), pp. 204-205

The interests of ASEAN so we can be effective in Buddhist Education:

As great as the aspirations for Buddhist education and social unity are, we must be intellectually-honest and assert:

- The Political-Security Community is not for the common person. Martial law is essentially to protect the elite in power and enforce submission to the promoted ideals, and enforcement of martial law can also prevent terror-units from harassing civilized society.
- The Economic Community is not for the common person, because most of us have really nothing beyond month to month subsistence, if we are even that fortunate.
- The Socio-Cultural Community seems to be the agency for the civil-servants, who would control the masses through administration/bureaucracy. This collectivizes the civilian population and enables them to speak with a collective voice if properly organized.

ASEAN needs to have people feel as if they truly belong to ASEAN – the ASEAN Identity needs to be developed. We may have to confront these challenges as common people. We have to educate ourselves, certainly as Buddhists, and be ready to be open to receiving new information, and not be resistant to changing our habitually-errant behavior. Internationally and restated: political-sciences are important to understand each other, cultural-studies are important to comprehend another, and histories are important to understand what has been officially revealed or made available for people to learn. We are still learning our cultural religions of Buddhism and Islam, but is it our own traditions which would reject this regional integration, ideologically? We have problems because we don't know enough to do enough. We might be religious, but is this best for our engagements or enterprises (businesses)? We choose civic life over spiritual life – we make choices according to managing our household affairs (economics). Do we want to be successful and earn enough money to ensure that our children have a better life and a better world? What do we do when our socio-cultural ways get in the way or interfere with our economic cooperation? What is our legacy, after all of this environmental degradation and socio-economic fiascos that we've created and left as a heritage for our grandchildren? Are we truly this sick as a society?

This is the age of globalization, where there are fewer borders and everything (natural resources for processing and other consumable products) is easier to attain, but often our salaries have not increased to gain the material items that we need. Our engagement into the natural world has left us with environmental degradation and our sources for wealth are gone. Resources may be only left in the materials that we have to recycle. Stakeholders are the people behind the system of globalization, or the system of unification of the Southeast Asian nations – and they need to do more for our Earth. Who are these powerful people interested in unifying the region, possibly to serve their own interests and the interests of their associates? Again, this is beyond the scope of the common person, with little power and no persuasion over them to improve or remedy our ailing Earth. The common person may not be the stakeholder today, but the potential exists for them to become the stakeholders of tomorrow, if collectively organized – the next generation may become the agents for greater innovation for ASEAN and for Buddhism. No single nation can develop and enrich themselves anymore, in this globalized world. It benefits these nations to unite economically – to exploit each other's labor, land and resources, and to defend themselves from external elements. In this way, ASEAN becomes an association that can defend itself from powerful external enemies, for instance, their former colonial masters. Buddhists can

bolster each other through collectivization. Now, ASEAN can defend itself and develop itself, as an independent entity united to express itself under the values it now propagates. Can Buddhists also unite and express themselves as a unit, within their universities? How is Buddhism greater than sciences, and what demand can Buddhism proclaim to deserve ample funding to influence future intellects?

Transitioning to the Communicators and Curriculum:

In regards to propagating ASEAN ideals, though: General Prayuth Chan-Ocha, the Prime Minister of Thailand, has emphasized similar logic, partially because of previously dismal forecasts, to becoming a great communicator for the nation. His weekly televised broadcasts are very informative and benefit everyone in the nation, when they tune in with open minds to comprehend the direction of the nation under reforms. General Prayuth envisions Thailand playing a leading and effective role in ASEAN, as this is also represented in the new draft-charter. According to a recent study: “Students from Thailand were another group whose responses fell mostly in the territory of generally positive, if not extremely enthusiastic, toward ASEAN. The responses pointed up obvious gaps and unevenness in their objective knowledge about the Association – particularly extremely high cartographic literacy but low recognition of the Association’s symbols and history. ...The survey shows Thailand to be a focal point in [other/external] students’ imaginative geographies of travel (though less so [for] work).”¹⁶ Seeing the problems before him, and seeking to reform the hearts and minds of the people, General Prayuth Chan-Ocha, the 29th Prime Minister of The Kingdom of Thailand, propagates these 12 Values for Thai children to learn in schools, and for everyone in society to use in their daily lives:

1. Love the Nation, Religion, Monarchy
2. Honesty, sacrifice, endurance with good intentions for the public
3. Grateful to your parents and teachers with all your hearts
4. Strive to learn and be diligent in studies
5. Preserve the national culture
6. Do not lack but share in morality and religion
7. Possess discipline and respect of Thai laws and elders
8. Learn about sovereignty of the people, possessing the correct understanding of democracy with the monarch as the head of state
9. Mindful-awareness in thinking and being disciplined through doing things through the guidance of His Majesty, King Bhumibol.
10. You can live on Self-Sufficiency
11. Be strong in body and mind, and reject corruption
12. Think of the greater public and national good over self-interest

Many of these twelve values are common to the ASEAN Values, and these twelve values may be good points for reflection for possible Buddhist contributions for ASEAN.¹⁷ The various national governments within ASEAN all have their own values for children to learn, towards shaping them into being productive members of this new collective society.¹⁸ We can also ascertain that many of these expressions are indeed Buddhist values, and to educate our children in such values is assisting Buddhism and

¹⁶ <http://www.aseanfoundation.org/documents/Attitudes%20and%20Awareness%20Toward%20ASEAN.pdf> – accessed on 28 December 2014

¹⁷ I recognize the assistance of Professor Damien Keown for this suggestion.

¹⁸ These virtues can be seen in the Prachatai Infographic, here: <http://www.prachatai.com/english/node/4456> - last accessed to complete this footnote on 6 February 2015

the development of our children within Buddhist studies as an element of culturalization. Likewise, the various religions in society have aims to make the next generation: a generation of improved people. Teachers are important to disseminate these values. Teachers should know more about these religions and ideas to express the proper values: there are three main religions in ASEAN, although many governments recognize five – some religious values may run counter to these politicized-suggestions. The twelve values are not recognizing the central role that Thailand chooses to play within ASEAN.

Again, the IABU, has member universities in Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Singapore and Indonesia; and religions or other important social guidance systems are omnipresent throughout those nations and Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines. Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, and perhaps variations on Marxism (and the antagonistic-opposition) are the leading ideologies in these various places. The ASEAN socio-cultural community or the social sphere of ASEAN is very diverse and must be considerate to the plethora of values. As already mentioned, ASEAN established the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). The ASCC has six main characteristics, which can be further examined in their documentation, which also follow along with recognizing the UN Millennium Development Goals - which will also lead to the development of an ASEAN civil-service – and the development and training of such civil-servants may be exhausting¹⁹, in:

- Human Development
- Social Welfare and Protection – including the establishment of an ASEAN Consortium of Social Welfare Practitioners, Educators and Schools of Social Work
- Social Justice and Rights
- Ensuring Environmental Sustainability
- Building an ASEAN Identity – including teaching ASEAN centered courses
- Narrowing the Development Gap

After years of the stereotypical “oppression and exploitation” that reigns during colonial/imperialistic periods, nations seeking their self-determination selected embarked upon a path to create and following their own national religious/political ideology. The people of ASEAN now want something ‘just’ or righteous in their lives, something correct - something inherently their own – but can they do this as a collective? Again, go over all of the documentation for ASEAN, and the ASCC – and comprehend that the collective comprises of different people with different ideas. Within Buddhist studies, we have people from many different nations and we have several sections and division within Buddhism.

An important point was raised by a colleague, Mr. Zaenal Eko Putro of Indonesia, stating: “If we want to develop [the] ASEAN Culture Community (ACC), we need to reduce [eliminate] our deep [rooted] differences. You are right to mention that we have problems with [the] so-called post-colonial issue; so, in reality ASEAN is a diplomatic multi-lateral [relationship] among Southeast Asian countries, instead of an association, to bridge the gap between ASEAN communities. As far as I know, Indonesia is not well prepared to join either the ACC or AEC [when compared to] other ASEAN members. Indonesia has always been entrapped in extreme tension with Singapore and Malaysia in terms of [but not limited to] geographic issues, economic and cultural issues. Muslims in Indonesia have [many] problems dealing with radicalism. Buddhists in Indonesia fight [with] each other to defend their own sect. I think we cannot simply mention ways to identify countries in ASEAN based on

¹⁹ See: <http://www.asean.org/archive/5187-19.pdf> - accessed on 8 November 2014

religion. Many scholars and politician think and get only a small part of this issue, but [none go far enough] to unify them into [becoming] an ASEAN single-identity.”²⁰

In Myanmar (a nation with the most skepticism towards ASEAN), Thailand, Laos and Cambodia: Theravāda Buddhism is the social-guidance system; in Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei: Islam is the leading social-guidance system, and in the Philippines: Christianity guides the people’s lives. Some people, maybe the secularists, find no value in Islam, find no value in Buddhism, find no value in Christianity, and engage into religious tolerance, and tolerance for others. We need to learn to communicate across our cultural boundaries. There are university degrees, such as International Studies, and Religious Studies which provide adequate insights into how an international-block would operate; whereas training in specialized areas like Buddhist Studies may only provide isolated perspectives and contempt for alternatives. Students who have this narrow and short-sided training in the early years of their university careers will not develop into what ASEAN requests.

To get ready for ASEAN, new universities or new training programs will need to be developed, and within our Buddhist universities, current faculty or departments are inadequate and are making wrong decisions towards ASEAN, in 2015 and beyond. They are making wrong decisions in the presentation of courses they are offering to students, and they are mismanaging their human-resources. They have not taken in consideration the ASEAN Curriculum Sourcebook. How do we address the inadequacies? What do we change? Subject-matter experts (stakeholders in the sense that they can control the information disseminated to the next generation) have already discussed and worked on this issue, and agreed on implementation procedures.

An important question was raised by a sociologist, Dr. Cindy Zeiher²¹, from the University of Canterbury: What does it mean to be a Buddhist (instructor and practitioner) in a university setting? While many professors are specialized in one tradition, many or most are also competent in the general religion or fundamental teachings. Multi-dimensional Buddhist traditions might involve knowing a variety of traditions or specializing in a tradition that incorporates the various traditions, like what can be found in Indonesia with their Three-Vehicles tradition. Our Buddhist professors should know about international affairs, national traditions, have textual competence, legal competence, and have respect for the necessary rituals designed for the monastic setting. Some scholars have limited intellectual range. Therefore, many scholars came together to remedy the conflict, with the hopes that the education crisis would be cured.

Towards the Solution against the Education Crisis

At the 3rd Conference for the International Association of Theravāda Buddhist Universities, from 16-18 May 2013, at Mahamakut Buddhist University: leading professors from Buddhist Studies programs affirmed the contents, which produced the “**Report on the Workshop for Making Standard Buddhist Curriculum**”, and the Workshop on Formulating an ASEAN Buddhist Studies Curriculum concluded that there needs to be compulsory subjects, core subjects and elective subjects:

- **Compulsory Subjects:** Courses that are mandated by the government to attain a degree (courses on sciences, government [civic/social-studies] institutions/law, neurosciences, sociology, philosophy, etc...): This should include elements of studies to bring up students to the level of other students who are doing secular subjects

²⁰ Again, through personal communication during the open session of the draft of this document posted on academia.edu

²¹ Again, through personal communication during the open session of the draft for this document, posted on my academia.edu website.

- **Core Subjects:** Buddhist Studies courses.... (Tipitaka Courses, etc...): exact areas and how they are taught to be decided upon – Theravāda, Mahayana, Vajrayana courses
- **Elective Subjects:** (career specialization topics): (Pāli, Engaged Buddhism, Dhamma-teacher...): Buddhist Philosophy, Logic and Methodology, Sociology of Religion, specialized Sciences...

Towards this aim, ASEAN's education requirements suggest that courses [every course] incorporate the following ideas, contextualized, for every course:

- ASEAN THEMES (merge these ideas into your courses):
 - Knowing ASEAN
 - Valuing Identity and Diversity
 - Connecting Global and Local
 - Promoting Equity and Justice
 - Working Together for a Sustainable Future
- ASEAN Pathways (merge these ideas in your lessons):
 - People
 - Places
 - Materials
 - Ideas
- Sample Lesson Plans:
 - Overview
 - Desired Understanding
 - Lesson Objectives
 - Essential Questions
 - Materials and Handouts
 - Glossary of Terms
 - Anticipatory Set

The following are all of the courses designed by all the professors in the conference workshop – these international professors have more experience and deeper insights than most of the localized administrative personnel making uninformed decisions in faculties:

IATBU Workshop - Foundation/Core Buddhist Studies Courses:	
CORE TOPIC:	Specific Course Titles:
History of Buddhism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-Buddhist History 2. The Buddha and Disciples 3. History and Development of Buddhism in India 4. Dissemination of Buddhism
Textual Studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suttanta-Pitaka 2. Vinaya-Pitaka 3. Abhidhamma-Pitaka 4. Buddhist Commentary Literature 5. Buddhist Supplemental Texts (includes hybrid-Sanskrit, Sanskrit texts, Burmese, Thai, etc...)
Meditations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meditations I 2. Meditations II 3. Meditations III 4. Meditations IV
Language Studies (Scriptural or Local languages)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language I 2. Language II 3. Language III 4. Language IV
Buddhist Studies Courses (T, M, V)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fundamental Buddhist Doctrines 2. Theravāda 3. Mahayana 4. Vajrayana
ASEAN & Sciences Psychology/Sociology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ASEAN Cultural Identities 2. The Buddhist and Society 3. Buddhism & Sciences 4. Information Technology 5. Political Philosophy
Engaged/Sustainable endeavors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buddhism and Environmentalism 2. Engaged Buddhism 3. Buddhism and Women Issues

As agreed upon in the 2013 Workshop. Our universities should consider these subjects and realign what they are propagating.

Now, what does this mean? We don't know every nation's national requirements for a Bachelor Degree – those minimum requirements must be considered, then, the above classes were selected and debated upon by the leading experts for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Buddhist Studies. This means: these are the agreed upon courses from the workshop, and although you cannot see any specific syllabus, any syllabus can be devised by the instructor teaching that specific course-title. The contents of the courses are likely going to be similar with only local or ideological variations, for example. This also means, that to become successful in ASEAN, Buddhism must adapt (or react) to the demands placed upon it. The Buddhist Studies courses in ASEAN must contain that criteria: the ASEAN themes and pathways into the lesson plan. Buddhism has compromised in the past and compromises itself in the present – it can certainly align to the new demands of the new socio-political association. Buddhism is not just about one sect, and as the IABU advocates in the same way, every Buddhist tradition is important and should be learned at the BA level. If someone aspired to specialize in a tradition that can be accomplished later, in a MA Program.

Some concerns have been raised, in particular from Professor Richard Payne, who ponders²²: “In general, I find myself concerned about the ‘top-down’ systems of

²² Through personal communication pertaining to the draft document, being read here, now – revised and posted on my academic.edu website.

educational standardization, and the at times authoritarian systems implied by some of the goals/values. At the same time, I agree with your concerns about the standards and quality of education, and don't have an easy alternative - perhaps attention to an ongoing process of transforming the educational culture, as distinct from fixed goals. I also think that the default to nation-state identification for Buddhism, e.g., Thai Buddhism, as an organizational principle will impede communication within the [larger, wider-base, international] Sangha as a whole, serving to create/reinforce authority and power that are fundamentally divisive. Again, this may not be realistically challenged in the short term, but part of an ongoing transformation.”

To respond to these valued remarks, we would assert: the professors who debated the content took everything into consideration. These professors are highly qualified in their academic-genre. If those taking the antagonistic position wish to have a bottom-up system: students devise the theme of the course and the direction of the course and can pick and choose any advising professor to guide them along (if that even become necessary), then we have just eliminated the passing on of knowledge from the previous generation to the next generation. Knowledge and experience becomes lost. Students are not qualified to even know what lessons will be best for them in their future. Students cannot comprehend why they need courses on Buddhist Critical Thinking Skills or Buddhist Analytical Skills – such as those spearheaded by Dr. Dion Peoples – because they cannot even fathom the contents of the Tipitaka at their inferior-levels of intellect – meaning, these modern students cannot write original content, and perpetually copy pages from the internet or use assignments from upperclassmen. New course become a challenge to their paradigms and they panic, asserting: the Buddha only taught vipassana-meditation and to extend loving-kindness towards all sentient beings, and there is kamma and dependent origination, and we must travel the eightfold noble path and seek the truth through the four noble truths. Buddhism, obviously, is much more, and students seeking to learn Buddhism need to also advance into higher levels of dhamma-comprehension, which may not even be the abhidhamma. Buddhists, and in particular, must adhere to and respect the Dhamma-Vinaya of our Buddha Gotama.

Furthermore, while the Supreme Sangha Council of Thailand is respected, people comprehend that it serves only Thailand (and therefore: it is not the authority for international Buddhists), and may only extend its influence into places where Thai monks are resident and performing as requested to the immigrant communities. When Thai Buddhism, for example, enters into a foreign nation and sets up within that immigrant community – as a foreign entity itself, it seldom contacts the local community. Immigrant communities often lead an isolationistic-existence, seeking solace only with those Thais (for example) who can serve as bridges with the local community. However, within Theravāda Buddhism, people can set aside their nationalisms, because the chanting ceremonies are largely similar²³, except when there may be sectarian differences. This means that the people from Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia - for example, can all serve monks and attend temples of the Theravāda tradition, in a similar manner, transcending barriers. In this regard, Theravāda Buddhism may serve as the foundation for ASEAN commonalities for the Buddhist nations, and Mahayana Buddhists may take pains to learn more about this style of Buddhism before they advance deeper into their own doctrines. Immigrant communities, for example, in the case of Oregon (I attended Wat

²³ See for instance: Chanting the Saṅgīti Sutta – searchable on your internet search-engine, from academia.edu, the site where all of my documents and books are posted – making my writings freely available in this era when universities claim they lack funding to publish my books. Chanting the Saṅgīti Sutta was actually published by MCU but is no longer available in material form. Here: <http://mcu.academia.edu/DionPeoples>

Buddha Oregon, in Turner, weekly in 2003-4), or Texas in the USA, should also aspire to become unified within or subsume themselves under Theravāda Buddhism, pooling resources and capital in this regard, as opposed to distant and relatively irrelevant community centers that the American non-Buddhists might treat with suspicion. One way to assist in bridging the nationalistic divide would be to train Dhammaduta monks in the policies and vision of ASEAN, as something being similar, conceptually, to the European Union and the United States of America, where people of different ethnicities are brought together for a common cause. In immigrant-communities, a single ethnicity is brought together for a singular cause, potentially excluding any others from a sense of belonging.

The respective leaders of religion and politics in the various nations have always tried to draw attention towards social and nation-building matters, thus drawing religion, often the source for national values, into the political field. Our universities should consider to undergo similar thinking for reforming the nation, where Buddhism can be adequately implemented into daily life and influence the direction of our ever-changing highly technologically diverse societies. Students must learn to adapt or equip themselves with the capacity to change in certain situations. There is not only one answer for every scenario. Again, critical thinking and proper analysis is key in seeking to create a world that we envision and aspire to create. Buddhist values push society forward. The Buddhist Sangha in Thailand is a stakeholder in change and in conservatism. Our United Nations Day of Vesak Conferences often illuminate the various crisis-situations that we endure. For several years we unite for a special holiday, but we have not seen any evidence of change. We talk about reforms, but where is the materialized evidence of such reform and progression? How have we improved our society and the lives around us? The time has come to actualize or implement our writings into the functional/material realm – converting theory into practice, actualization through praxis. The IABU approved papers for presentation that assist in pushing the boundaries however, the host institution has the final directive and occasionally bans papers that it determines problematic towards its own politics that it portrays internally, within Thailand, to the dismay of the international community.

The Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University doubles or rather triples, as the Chairman of the International Association of Buddhist Universities and as a member of the governmental-body in the Supreme Sangha Council as its Assistant Secretary to the Supreme Sangha Council - in absence of a governing (healthy) Sangharaja. In a sense, one man – one monk – has almost supreme control over the majority of Buddhists in Thailand and holds influence over Theravāda Buddhism, and Buddhists across the globe. The current director of the IABU is also in the hierarchy of the MCU monastic-administration. The manager of the IABU no longer teaches to university students but primarily organizes the international academic conference for the UN Day of Vesak and has created courses and freely instructs professors on important themes pertaining to the conferences, such as: Buddhist analytical/critical thinking skills. The point of mentioning the preceding is this: Thailand is doing one thing internally, and another activity externally, but the two activities have not merged. The Chairman of the UNDV has not taken action on matters illuminated by the IABU, and implemented them into MCU – the host and hotbed of this august gathering. It's almost as if the two realms will not collide or not progress together – and blame for resisting change is placed upon institutionalized-components of the tradition and never any association or educational-institution. Institutions like the National Office of Buddhism for the Royal Government of Thailand or the Supreme Sangha Council are the authorities that are often mentioned as the force behind conservatism or serve as counterrevolutionary agents. In many respects, the strict conservatism is noble and

respectable, but it excludes the voices of those aspiring to be legitimized as bhikkhunis and any paper refuting the controversial Dhammakaya-sect that is perpetually under government surveillance for financial transgressions of various natures.²⁴

We, as Buddhists, must fully comprehend conservatism and deeply comprehend why such protectionism is mandated by the tradition of Theravāda Buddhism. Anyhow, we can see that a divide remains, the two worlds do not meet, and people are victims of this passively-aggressive institutionalized-violence upon religious/spiritual liberties. Institutionalized Buddhism does not meet the Buddhism of the common practitioner to any serious degree. When considering Schumacher's ABC's, communicators, businesspersons and the administrators all have much more work to do, to bring Buddhism and the effective doctrines and perspectives to the lives of the villagers and others who are struggling more than the urbanized community. In this regard, and under the mantra of 'Wisdom is the Light of the World' – MCU can play a serious role as the ideal 'MODEL for ASEAN' – and how so, can this be effective? For instance: MCU, the host and prime organizer of the United Nations Day of Vesak, could become a model-campus if campus-wide reforms were instituted – but this can never be adequately accomplished under leadership that just recycles around the various offices and faculties – because their opinions will never change – and it is the same people annually, quarterly, and monthly making or maintaining the same decisions. Insiders remain insiders, and outsiders remain outside. In the sense of Buddhhadhamma, we talk and discuss changes (impermanence) and damages, we know how to improve and proceed properly, but no one is administering the remedy, so we fall into decay and never cure ourselves of the sickness. We are not living as truthfully as we could and should, and this neutrality or ambivalence is really a form of repeatedly-sanctioned violence.

What can be done – For ASEAN, for Buddhism, for MCU?

Buddhism is often an endeavor of the mind, and this is an emphasis that needs to be and is truly evident in Buddhism. In light of all the selections in this research: Buddhism must reinvent itself as the great intellectual tradition. However, Buddhism must not only be an intellectual tradition but should also be a system where the noble ideas are actually practiced to benefit others in society. In this way, Buddhism will remain relevant with the modern intellectual and actual world. Clearly the mind (in our academic classes) needs to be developed and utilized (proactively, into society), and given constant attention – this is progress leading to personal and social benefits. This is probably not clear to the reader, so the Buddha had to re-emphasize matters for those antagonistic to his message. Repeatedly the Buddha asks us to use our minds, to reinterpret what we are learning through the lenses of his contribution for global wisdom.

The Buddha advocated for a guarded, peaceful mind; and he advocates or encourages us to behave, much like what has been turned into a popular cultural mantra in Thailand, to: "kit-dii, puut-dii, tam-dii", or in Thai-script: คิดดีพูดดีทำดี. Observing in this way allows for the creation of wisdom. Paradoxically: nations are full of 'Buddhists', or are claiming to be Buddhists; but are not, in fact, living up to Buddhist principles. Just recently, Thailand moved higher up in global rankings for being amongst the highest consumers of alcohol per person – Thais are now ranked 4th in the world, despite being a Buddhist nation where the consumption of alcohol is a

²⁴ Evidence of this claim is freely available on the world-wide web. Neutrally speaking: there are articles on the esoteric teachings of this sect, and more articles related to the financial troubles and excesses from this sect of Buddhism – anyone interested can form a research project on these revelations.

prohibition under the precepts. Buddhism places emphasis on mindfulness, yet: Thailand ranks 3rd in the world for having the most traffic fatalities.²⁵ Thailand, despite being ‘Buddhist’, is considered one of the most politically corrupt nations on the planet, and was so formerly corrupt, a military-coup was needed to replace the former government – to operate more effectively.

According to a set of scholars: Thailand is probably the most recognizable nation amongst the other nations inside of ASEAN²⁶ – students are less-likely to mistake Thailand for another nation on a map. Thailand discerns itself as the hub of Asia, and by extension, the hub of ASEAN, although the ASEAN headquarters is in Indonesia. Cambodia, Laos and Thailand are culturally similar, but the other nations have other distinctions that bring separations and other feelings of not necessarily belonging in a new union. Myanmar feels the least connection with and perhaps a mistrust towards ASEAN.

Again, the motto of MCU is: “Wisdom is the Light of the World” – so it also seems that the wisdom that is generated here in this institute-for-education would be well received upward and outward. In a nation that has a new mindset for reforms: MCU and what occurs at the UNDV should be absorbed by MCU, and passed upward as information for the sake of courtesy to the Supreme Sangha Council, and shared with not only the government of Thailand, but with the UNECOSOC, UNESCO and UN, as well as with the comrades and others within ASEAN, and anyone internationally.

Ecologically Improving MCU as a Model for ASEAN Universities:

A lot of consideration was taken to ponder how to best illuminate aspects for change within MCU that would not be harmful to the university, and would actually benefit the university and the surrounding community. To initiate a proper study, the useful tool of the Google Earth program illuminates two similar plots of land governed by members of the Thai Buddhist Sangha that are arranged in a similar way but the responsible decision makers have utilized the land in different or distinct ways, according to their official purpose. Let us take a visual look at both locations, using the technology of Google Earth. Here are the two plots of land, and their location and description is mentioned below:



Above: Left - Wat Onoi, Nakorn Pathom Province; Right – MCU, Ayutthaya Province

Have you properly examined the locations with the birds-eye or deva-eye view? Wat Onoi, is a Buddhist temple - a forest temple, featuring a variety of distinct infrastructures and rationalities, some of which include: a Mahayana temple structure in the front street-side and parking section of the temple, and next to it is a large sitting Buddha-image, still under construction. The daily-use Theravāda section of the temple

²⁵ <http://englishnews.thaipbs.or.th/thailand-ranks-worlds-third-highest-road-fatalities> - re-accessed on 22 December 2014

²⁶ <http://www.aseanfoundation.org/documents/Attitudes%20and%20Awareness%20Toward%20ASEAN.pdf> – accessed on 27 December 2014

is in the forested area. The main, unique feature of Wat Onoi, is its large solar-energy farm (seen on the bottom-left portion of the photo), which generates more energy than what is consumed by the temple. The excess energy or electricity is sold to the Thai government, which uses the electricity for the surrounding areas, selling excess kilowatts back into the grid. Many of the huts for the monks also feature solar-cells or panels on the roofs, to collect and transfer solar energy for converting into electricity. The temple is ecologically friendly, also possessing a variety of animals to consume food-waste. The temple is a great model for the Sufficiency Economics derived from the ideology and royal-project research of King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand. Below, are a few pictures of the solar-farm and kutis featuring solar-panels.



If Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University aspires to develop according to national directives, as a public institution, it should lessen its burden upon the tax-paying public. MCU should install solar-panels to generate its own electricity. There is ample land available for running a solar-farm, which could also benefit local farmers, if there is additional units for provincial authorities to purchase and redistribute. Many monks are trained at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and when they graduate and leave, they can take the technological-knowledge of solar-energy generation to their temples in other places in the nation, and internationally, since foreign monks are trained here also. Universities are supposed to be the beacon of knowledge or possess the wisdom to illuminate the world.

MCU can also be a leading center for agricultural research: growing the medicinal crops that are discussed in the ancient literature, like those plants in the “Casket of Medicine” [the Bhesajjamañjūsā] – a text that originates from Sri Lanka, but could use a re-examination from modern learners within Thailand or anywhere else in tropical ASEAN where these plants are found – to scientifically approve or reject this ancient wisdom as effective treatment or not, and if so: learn to make medicines from these plants. MCU has a lot of unused ground that can be utilized for this experiment. MCU, as a Sangha-institution, has the respect of religious laity, consisting of random people who often seek monks for remedies to their ailments. If the products are found to be effective, they may become marketable and customers can donate funds that would assist in the further development of any agricultural programs. MCU has a lot of available land and resources to begin these technical-applications of ancient Buddhist and any recent Thai or international knowledge, which in turn becomes beneficial for their graduating student-agents returning to society as monks in the temple or lay people seeking employment in some way to serve people of ASEAN nations and others. Certainly there is enough land at MCU to create demonstration-lots for agricultural projects.

If MCU aspires to become a leading center of education for and within ASEAN, it must have the capacity to discuss issues with other nations in ASEAN, and here MCU is really deficient. Students of MCU assert that there are only a few people on the campus who are proficient in English, so there is really no one or few people who can be effective support-agents for international monastic students. The faculties are also

eliminating their foreign lecturers because the excuse is that the students don't know how to properly react to the Westerner, and criticize the Westerner behind their back to the administration – which causes the departments to not rehire the lecturer, who has done nothing wrong, may have been misunderstood as being aggressive, and for talking about sexual matters during one lesson (about reproduction and mate selection) in a ecology course, where it was prescribed in the textbook. It's culturally upsetting, when different foreign cultures collide within the host nation – but the truth needs to be exposed. Not everyone can speak Thai, and English is the official language of ASEAN: more Thai's need to elevate their level of English, and students must also possess a higher caliber of English. There are students graduating from the international-program within the Faculty of Buddhism who cannot function effectively in their courses, and rely on a comrade to translate for them; and many still copy assignments from friends or the internet. They have no shame in committing plagiarism. There are Thai lecturers at MCU, who have been caught taking their exam questions directly from the internet. The office for foreign student affairs could be more sympathetic and the various departments of the university should utilize the Language Institute more effectively, and even demand courses for students that will help their education and university career.

Another Solution for Buddhist Education:

Buddhists need to think in new ways. Clearly, the ways in which Buddhists have thought, in relation to the modern/developed world, has brought: not the best of matters, as expressed in the global-rankings. Buddhism dominates in the tropic-region of Southeast Asia. Every day, climatically, seems the same, with only variations in humidity or precipitation. It doesn't take much effort to survive, daily, on little economic subsistence. It doesn't take a lot of intellectual power to think about how to survive living with an agricultural lifestyle. It does take some intellectual effort to be a qualified Buddhist, and a Buddhist that can teach other Buddhists on how to be a better or greater (in skill) Buddhist. Towards this skill and analytical ability, I authored a text on Buddhist Critical Thinking Skills that scrutinizes these discourses or portions of texts – here is the Table of Contents²⁷:

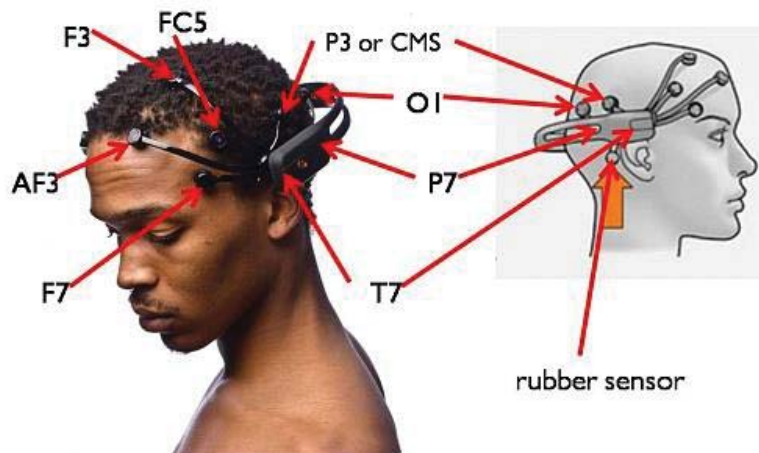
²⁷ The full text, unpublished, can be found on my academia.edu website, using the keywords: Buddhist Critical Thinking Skills, and my name.

Chapter I - Introduction:	1
Buddhist Interpretive Skills:	3
Secular Interpretive Skills:	4
Using Excerpts of Selected Texts and Discourses:	8
Theravada Position for Scientific Hermeneutical Methods:	22
Chapter II - Training in Higher Morality:	43
Abridged Version of the <u>Gulissāni Sutta</u> :	46
Illustrated and Abridged Version of the <u>Anumāna Sutta</u> :	50
The Initial Value of the <u>Aparagāthāsaṅgika</u>	52
Compendium of the <u>Saṅgīti Sutta</u> 's Moral Pronouncements:	57
<u>Poṭṭhapāda Sutta</u> 's Section on Morality:	69
Abridged Version of the <u>Mahāsuññata Sutta</u> :	77
The Abridged Version of the <u>Vinaya Patimokkha</u> :	90
Chapter III - Training in Higher Mentality:	100
Introduction: the <u>Aitareya Upanisad</u> :	100
Training in Higher Mentality	101
Abridged <u>Cūlahatthipadopama Sutta</u> :	102
Abridged <u>Vitakkasanthāna Sutta</u> :	112
Abridged <u>Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta</u> :	118
Abridged <u>Mahāvedalla Sutta</u> :	120
Abridged <u>Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta</u> :	125
Abridged <u>Poṭṭhapāda Sutta</u> 's States of Perception:	128
Contriving a Meditative System from the <u>Saṅgīti Sutta</u> :	142
Using the Chart as a Functional Meditation Tool	146
The <u>Saṅgīti Sutta</u> as a Meditation Manual	157
Chapter IV - Training in Higher Wisdom:	162
Abridged Version of the <u>Caṅki Sutta</u> :	162
Representation of the <u>Dasuttara Sutta</u> :	176
Selected Aspects of the <u>Saṅgīti Sutta</u> in Charts:	187
Abridged Version of the <u>Kannakathala Sutta</u> :	191
Chapter V – Analytical Conclusion:	195
Examining “Progress” from the Guide:	198
Collective Conclusion:	217

The novel approach in the conclusion of the text utilizes the sixteen hāras that are found in the Nettippakaranam, and scrutinizes the word: “progress”- since progress is a single term reducing the mandate from the discourses, or in other words: we are supposed to progress through life, progress through morality; we are supposed to always be improving and progressing. This completed project rested upon my mind for many months, and it became clear later that the work was not done. There were numerous other instances in the Tipitaka where the Buddha demonstrates his analytical mind or where there are proclamations for people to scrutinize matters in some analytical way. Here is a glimpse at the relevant portions of the Table of Contents:

Chapter Two	13
2.1 Introduction:	13
2.2 Defining terms:	14
2.2.1 Computation:	15
2.2.2 Intelligence:	16
2.2.3 Analyst:	19
2.2.4 Analysis:	20
2.2.5 Perception:	21
2.2.6 Memory:	22
2.2.7 Information-processing:	22
2.2.8 Attention-span:	22
2.2.9 Reasoning-capacity:	22
2.2.10 Mindset:	22
2.3 Four Intelligence Approaches:	23
2.4 Literature Discussion:	23
 CHAPTER THREE:	 42
3.1 Selections towards Conjuring a Scene for an Analytical System	42
3.2 Selections from the <u>Tipitaka</u>	55
3.3 Scrutiny in Judiciary and Assembly Matters	76
3.4 Ways of Thinking	82
3.5 Types of People	90
3.6 Assorted details disconnected from other sections:	95
3.7 An Encouraging Admonishment	100

I bought the Emotiv EPOC Neuroheadset, so I could examine the brainwaves of patients, and see if these thinking skills can also have some effect upon the minds of the volunteer students. In the second chapter, I present a novice effort to begin the exploration of the brainwaves. When additional volunteer participants can be accessed and examined, a more in-depth research-project can resume.



28

The idea here, is to see if thinking critically (analytically) also generates certain brainwaves. This is another area for extended and extensive research, in which access to a medical lab would be greatly appreciated. MCU, through my research and lead in this area can bring Buddhist ‘scientific research’ into technological modernity. In the third chapter of the work, many tool-sets for better analysis are offered with the proper academic references. In the next section, a representation of some of the matters from the third chapter will be represented.²⁹

²⁸ http://emotiv.com/bitrix/components/bitrix/forum.interface/show_file.php?fid=4961&width=500&height=500 - accessed on 1 April 2015

²⁹ For the full length presentation of this text, see my second volume on Buddhist Critical Thinking Skills or soon to be revised as Buddhist Analytical Thinking Skills, available on my academia.edu website.

New Perspectives for the Revised Role of Buddhism for ASEAN:

In order to advance Buddhism into the future, a reassessment of the Tipitaka is necessary. None of this information below is unorthodox. The problem is that in recent times, Buddhism has become so refined and specific that it caters to the whims of the ignorant masses who haven't ever read the Tipitaka. They have not read the Tipitaka for the sake of the advancement of wisdom and for the sake of advancing the current condition. They read for the sake of happiness and meditation – mere contentment and self-satisfaction. Recall the various global rankings of Buddhist nations, and reflect upon how Buddhism is used in these nations. Below, for the sake of brevity (without contextualization), are the valuable analytical skills. The context can be found in my unpublished text. Here are the dhamma-sets that can be utilized for the sake of determining new approaches to solve old problems – if only someone knew more about these and was teaching/advocating for these, as I do:

The Buddhist Analytical Thinking Skills:

It's a miracle, if Buddhists can be educated properly within the tradition. To establish the tone, the Buddha suggested: "There are... these three kinds of wonders. What three? The wonder of psychic potency, the wonder of mind-reading, and the wonder of instruction."³⁰ The suggestion urges Buddhists to be better educated in Buddhist doctrine and be able to receive instruction. What follows is instruction for our professors of Buddhist studies, the people responsible for educating Buddhists to become greater Buddhists, not just initiates into stagnant traditionalism. Somehow we are tasked with acquiring the correct views, and this should be done accordingly, through our analytical endeavors, our education processes, our trials we face and learning from our errors – just amongst the many chances and challenges for or with learning. There is a recontextualized suggestion for good instruction, proper instruction: "There are these two things that lead to the decline and disappearance of the good Dhamma. What two? Badly set down words and phrases and badly interpreted meaning. When the words and phrases are badly set down, the meaning is badly interpreted. These are the two things that leads to the decline and disappearance of the good Dhamma."³¹ We can start by properly scrutinizing the texts that we are reading. The Buddhist tradition relied on the verbal transmission of the Buddha's words for centuries, before finally the written records were prevalent enough for students to examine the texts. The Buddhist tradition also relies on commentaries by elders to interpret what these texts are supposed to mean, towards the younger generations. The Buddha suggested: "...These two misrepresent the Tathāgata. Which two? One who explains a discourse whose meaning requires interpretation as a discourse whose meaning is explicit, and one who explains a discourse whose meaning is explicit as a discourse whose meaning requires interpretation. These two misrepresent the Tathāgata."³² We may utilize the the available analytical skills that the Buddhist Tipitaka provides for us to consider, and when we consider these tools for reinterpreting or scrutinizing our own texts, we gain a more profound comprehension of the knowledge and wisdom contained in the texts, rather than just possessing the surface level or literal level of understanding – we gain a deep comprehension.

³⁰ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha* – a translation of the *Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 263

³¹ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha* – a translation of the *Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 150

³² Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha* – a translation of the *Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 151

Here is another insight into why, from the Buddha: "...If one were to speak thus, one would be stating what has been said by me and would not misrepresent me with what is contrary to fact; one would explain in accordance with the Dhamma, and no reasonable consequence of one's assertion would give ground for criticism."³³ Elsewhere he states: "I do not dispute with the world; rather, it is the world that disputes with me. A proponent of the Dhamma does not dispute with anyone in the world. Of that which the wise in the world agree upon as not existing, I too say that it does not exist; and of that which the wise in the world agree upon as existing, I too say that it exists."³⁴ In this digital-age, and the proliferation of social media, many people create memes filled with fake quotes from the Buddha. Often we are told not to interpret his statements but remember his slogans: "...those bhikkhus who conform to the meaning and the dhamma with well-acquired discourses whose phrasing is not mere semblance are acting for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, for the good, welfare and happiness of many people, of devas and human beings. These bhikkhus generate much merit and sustain the good Dhamma."³⁵

"There are these four kinds of persons found existing in the world. What four? One of little learning who is not intent on what he has learned; one of little learning who is intent on what he has learned; one of much learning who is not intent on what he has learned; and one of much learning who is intent on what he has learned."³⁶ [What is to be learned are: the discourses, mixed prose and verse, expositions, verses, inspired utterances, quotations, birth stories, amazing accounts and question-and-answers – ideally, one should comprehend the meanings of what one has learned.]

"I have taught many teachings, bhikkhu: discourses, mixed-prose and verse, expositions, verses, inspired utterances, quotations, birth stories, amazing accounts, and questions-and-answers. If, after learning the meaning and Dhamma of even a four-line verse, one practices in accordance with the Dhamma, that is enough for one to be called 'a learned expert on the Dhamma.'"³⁷ "There are these five things that lead to the decline and disappearance of the good Dhamma. What five? Here, the Bhikkhus do not learn the Dhamma: discourses, mixed prose and verse, expositions, verses, inspired utterances, quotations, birth stories, amazing accounts, and questions-and-answers. Again the bhikkhus do not teach the Dhamma to others in detail as they have heard it and learned it. Again, the bhikkhus do not make others repeat the Dhamma in detail as they have heard it and learned it. Again, the bhikkhus do not recite the Dhamma in detail as they have heard it and learned it. Again, the bhikkhus do not ponder, examine, and mentally inspect the Dhamma as they have heard it and learned it. These are the five things that lead to the decline and disappearance of the good Dhamma."³⁸ Many of them are not paying attention in the way that they should towards liberation, but are receiving the teachings and conforming, submitting themselves under this contrived means for social control. Buddhism now is used for social control, not for liberation. Also consider the idea that speaking about Dhamma with others, also helps comprehension: "...When one sees three advantages [talk also flows smoothly], it is

³³ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the Saṃyutta-Nikāya*, Vol. I (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2000), p. 561

³⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the Saṃyutta-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2000), p. 949 – from the single-volume edition.

³⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), pp. 160-161

³⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 392

³⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 554

³⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 767

enough to teach others the Dhamma. What three? The one who teaches the Dhamma experiences the meaning and the Dhamma. The one who hears the Dhamma experiences the meaning and the Dhamma. Both the one who teaches the Dhamma and the one who hears the Dhamma experience the meaning and the Dhamma. Seeing these three advantages, it is enough to teach others the Dhamma.”³⁹ Then: “It isn’t easy... to teach the Dhamma to others. One who teaches the Dhamma to others should first set up five qualities internally. What five? Having determined I will give a progressive talk one should teach the Dhamma to others. Having determined I will give a talk that shows reasons, one should teach the Dhamma to others. Having determined I will give a talk out of sympathy, one should teach the Dhamma to others. Having determined I will not give a talk while intent on material gain one should teach the Dhamma to others. Having determined I will give a talk without harming myself or others, one should teach the Dhamma to others. It isn’t easy... to teach the Dhamma to others. One who teaches the Dhamma to others should first set up these five qualities internally.”⁴⁰

“What is the assembly trained in interrogation not in vain talk? Here, in this kind of assembly, when those discourses are being recited that are merely poetry composed by powers, beautiful in words and phrases, created by outsiders spoken by disciples, the bhikkhus do not want to listen to them, do not lend an ear to them, or apply their minds to understand them; they do not think those teachings should be studied and learned. But when those discourses spoken by the Tathagata are being recited that are deep, deep in meaning, world-transcending, connected with emptiness, the bhikkhus want to listen to them, lend an ear to them, and apply their minds to understand them; they think those teachings should be studied and learned. And having learned those teachings, they interrogate each other about them and examine them thoroughly, asking: how is this? What is the meaning of this? They disclose to others what is obscure and elucidate what is unclear, and dispel their perplexity about numerous perplexing points. This is called the assembly trained in interrogation, not in vain talk. ...The assembly trained in interrogation, not in vain talk, is foremost.”⁴¹

Not enough people possess analytical knowledge, not enough people have committed the analytical knowledges towards being their mantra: the analytical knowledges of meaning, dhamma, language, and discernment. Example questions are: What is the meaning of this, how can it be interpreted? How is this Dhamma used? What are the characteristics, function, manifestation and proximate cause of this Dhamma? What are the various grammatical components of these words, phrases and sentences? What other sense can be made of what is to be interpreted? When these questions can be asked of yourself, then insights into another mind is possible, since many of us perform in similar ways. “...having encompassed a mentality corrupted person’s mind with my own mind, I understand... for what reason? Because his mind is corrupted. It is because of mental corruption... Having encompassed a mentality placid person’s mind with my own mind, I understand... for what reason? Because his mind is placid (with faith and confidence).”⁴²

“And what is the wealth of learning? Here, a noble disciple has learned much, remembers what he has learned, and accumulates what he has learned. Those teachings that are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right

³⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 245

⁴⁰ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 773

⁴¹ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 164

⁴² Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 96

meaning and phrasing, which proclaim the perfectly complete and pure spiritual life – such teachings as these he has learned much of, retained in mind, recited verbally, mentally investigated, and penetrated well by view.”⁴³

The Buddha sees the value in different approaches towards the Buddhadhamma, there is no singular path to tread. Dhamma-masters, as opposed to only meditation-masters, are additionally presented in the *Anguttara-nikaya*. Amongst Buddhist-practitioners (monks), it is common to seek out a meditation-master and it is rare for someone to venture out on a quest to become a learned dhamma-master. The terms “*dhammayoga*” and “*dhammakathika*” are used towards those who use a predominantly cognitive approach to the Dhamma – through comprehending the aggregates, elements, sense-bases, and so forth, subtle and hidden – penetrating it with insight and path wisdom.⁴⁴ Again⁴⁵: Meditation-masters are those who dwell having touched the deathless element with the body. Dhamma-masters are those who see a deep and pithy matter after piercing it through wisdom.

The Buddhist tradition is not asking people to become intellectuals, but become something like a parrot, who can repeat the correct message at the correct times: sustaining the message, preserving the messages became paramount in Theravāda Buddhism. There is little intellectual innovations or advancements – and potentially a tragic error within the way Theravāda Buddhism developed. It’s asking people to be aware, to be intelligent in that regard – to progress beyond ignorance. Clearly the mind needs to be developed and utilized, and given constant attention – this is progress leading to benefits. The next quote also demonstrates this: “The mind, when tamed, guarded, protected and restrained, leads to great good.”⁴⁶ “Bhikkhus, I do not see even one other thing that when underdeveloped and unmanifested, leads to such great harm as the mind. The mind, when underdeveloped and unmanifested, leads to great harm. ...I do not see even one other thing that, when underdeveloped and uncultivated, leads to such great harm as the mind. The mind, when undeveloped and uncultivated, leads to great harm. ...I do not see even one other thing that, when undeveloped and uncultivated, brings such suffering as the mind. The mind, when undeveloped and uncultivated, brings suffering.”⁴⁷ Some people know the messages better than others, and there is a value placed on the sort of companionship one maintains: “One who associates with an inferior person declines; one who associates with an equal does not decline; attending on a superior person one develops quickly; therefore you should follow one superior to yourself.”⁴⁸ “Association with superior persons... is a factor for stream-entry. Hearing the true Dhamma is a factor for stream entry. Careful attention is a factor for stream-entry. Practice in accordance with the Dhamma is a factor for stream-entry.”⁴⁹ These are four factors for stream entry, and this is quality advice, and it is advice that leads towards liberation, not submissiveness and submissiveness under a system of social control.

⁴³ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the *Āṅguttara-Nikāya** (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 673

⁴⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the *Āṅguttara-Nikāya** (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), footnotes on pages 1760-1761

⁴⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the *Āṅguttara-Nikāya** (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 919

⁴⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the *Āṅguttara-Nikāya** (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 95

⁴⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the *Āṅguttara-Nikāya** (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 93

⁴⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the *Āṅguttara-Nikāya** (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 221

⁴⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the *Saṃyutta-Nikāya* Vol. II.* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2000), p. 1792 – from the two-volume set, p. 1831 in the single volume.

This is probably not clear to the reader, so the Buddha had to re-emphasize matters for those antagonistic to his message: "...so too those beings are few who are wise, intelligent, astute, able to understand the meaning of what has been well stated; more numerous are those who are unwise, stupid, unable to understand the meaning of what has been well-stated and badly stated. ...So too those beings are few who are endowed with the noble eye of wisdom; more numerous are those beings who are confused and immersed in ignorance. ...so too those beings are few who, having heard the Dhamma, retain it in mind; more numerous are those who, having heard the Dhamma, do not retain it in mind. ...So too those beings are few who examine the meaning of teachings that have been retained in mind; more numerous are those who do not examine the meaning of the teachings that have been retained in mind. ...So too those beings are few who understand the meaning and the Dhamma and then practice in accordance with the Dhamma; more numerous are those who do not understand the meaning and the Dhamma and do not practice in accordance with the Dhamma..."⁵⁰

"Wisdom shines in its manifestation... a wise person thinks well, speaks well, and acts well. ...Because the wise person thinks well, speaks well, and acts well, wise people know of him: 'this fellow is wise, a good person.' These are the wise person's three characteristics of a wise person, marks of a wise person, manifestation of a wise person. ...It is in this way that you should train yourself. ...One who possesses three qualities should be known as a wise person. What three? He formulates a question carefully; he replies to a question carefully; when another person replies to a question carefully, with well-rounded and coherent words and phrases, he approves of it. One who possess these three qualities should be known as a wise person. ...It is in this way that you should train yourselves."⁵¹

"I do not say, Brahmin, that everything seen [or heard, sensed, cognized] should be spoken about, nor do I say that nothing seen [or heard, sensed, cognized] should be spoken about. For, Brahmin, if, when one speaks about what one has seen, unwholesome qualities increase and wholesome qualities decline, I say that one should not speak about what one has seen. But if, when one speaks about what one has seen [or heard, sensed, cognized], unwholesome qualities decline and wholesome qualities increase, I say that one should speak about what one has seen [or heard, sensed, cognized].⁵² These are also known as the ignoble declarations.⁵³

"...We should not engage in contentious talk. It is in this way that you should train yourself. When there is contentious talk, an excess of words can be expected. When there is an excess of words, one becomes restless; when one is restless, one loses one's restraint. The mind of one without restraint is far from concentration."⁵⁴ Further: "Surely, bhikkhus, you have committed a transgression – so foolish, so confused, so inept were you – in that, having gone forth, in such a well-expounded Dhamma and Discipline you competed with each other in regard to your learning, as to who can speak more, who can speak better, who can speak longer. But since you see your transgression as a transgression and make amends for it in accordance with the Dhamma, we pardon

⁵⁰ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), pp. 121-122

⁵¹ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), pp. 202-203

⁵² Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), pp. 549-550

⁵³ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 612

⁵⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 1061

you for it....”⁵⁵ Again: “Bhante, I have committed a transgression in that when the Blessed One was instructing, encouraging, inspiring, and gladdening the bhikkhus with a Dhamma talk connected with the training rules, I so foolishly, stupidly, and unskillfully became impatient and bitter, thinking: ‘this ascetic is too stringent.’ Bhante, may the Blessed One accept my transgression seen as a transgression for the sake of future restraint.”⁵⁶ However, the Buddha said: “Do not pass judgment on people. Those who pass judgment on people harm themselves. I alone, or one like me, may pass judgment on people.”⁵⁷

What is the assembly that speaks Dhamma? Here in this kind of assembly the bhikkhus take up a disciplinary issue, one that may accord with the Dhamma or be contrary to the Dhamma. Having taken up the issue, they persuade one another and allow themselves to be persuaded; they deliberate and welcome deliberation. Possessing the power of persuasion and the power of deliberation, willing to relinquish their opinion, they do not wrongly grasp that disciplinary issue even more tightly, nor, adhering to their position, do they declare: ‘this alone is true; anything else is wrong.’ This is called the assembly that speaks Dhamma. ...The assembly that speaks Dhamma is foremost.”⁵⁸ Yet, for those that are challenging the issue within the Dhamma-Vinaya: “...Bhante, if a person to be tamed by you won’t submit to discipline by any of these methods [gently, sternly, or both], how does the Blessed One deal with him?’ [The Buddha replies:] ‘If a person to be tamed by me won’t submit to discipline by any of these methods, then I kill him.’ [The horse-trainer is stunned at this response, and seeks clarification:] ‘But Bhante, it isn’t allowable for the Blessed One to destroy life, yet he says, Then I kill him.’ [The Buddha responds:] ‘It is true, Kesi [the horse-trainer], that it isn’t allowable for the Tathagata to destroy life; however, when a person to be tamed won’t submit to discipline by the gentle method, the stern method or the method that is both gentle and stern, then the Tathagata thinks he should not be spoken to and instructed, and his wise fellow monks too, think he should not be spoken to and instructed. For this, Kesi, is ‘killing’ in the Noble One’s discipline: the Tathagata thinks one should not be spoken to and instructed and one’s wise fellow monks, too, think one should not be spoken to and instructed.’ ‘He is indeed well slain, Bhante...’”⁵⁹

“...in this dhamma-discipline the training is gradual, the action is gradual, the procedure is gradual; there is no abrupt penetration of knowledge...”⁶⁰ Some sample aspects of inquiry, include: “to what extent is one... what are the things which constitute...”⁶¹ “...self-examination is very helpful for a bhikkhu to grow in wholesome qualities. ‘Do I gain internal serenity of mind or not? Do I gain higher wisdom of insight into phenomena or not?’”⁶²

⁵⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the Saṃyutta-Nikāya*, Vol. I (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2000), pp. 668-669

⁵⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 323

⁵⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 912

⁵⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), pp. 166-167

⁵⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 493

⁶⁰ F.L. Woodward: *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon, Part II, Udāna – Verses of Uplift and Itivuttakā – As it was said* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1996), p. 65

⁶¹ F.L. Woodward: *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon, Part II, Udāna – Verses of Uplift and Itivuttakā – As it was said* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1996), p. 4

⁶² Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 1404

“...on that occasion the bhikkhu develops the enlightenment factor of mindfulness; on that occasion the enlightenment factor of mindfulness goes to fulfillment by development in the bhikkhu. Dwelling thus mindfully, he discriminates that Dhamma with wisdom, examines it, makes an investigation of it. Whenever... a bhikkhu dwelling thus mindfully discriminates that Dhamma with wisdom, examines it, makes an investigation of it, on that occasion the enlightenment factor of discrimination of states is aroused by the bhikkhu; on that occasion the bhikkhu develops the enlightenment factor of discrimination of states goes to fulfillment by development in the bhikkhu.”⁶³ More on mindful awareness: “...these five faculties, having different domains, different resort, not experiencing each other’s resort and domain – they take recourse in the mind and the mind experiences their resort and domain”: The mind takes recourse in mindfulness, Mindfulness takes recourse in Liberation, Liberation takes recourse in Nibbana

...the lifestyle is not one burdened by relationships, and since this project is being written within the university structure: “Bhikkhus, this holy life is lived without students and without a teacher. A bhikkhu who has students and a teacher dwells in suffering, not in comfort. A bhikkhu who has no students and no teacher dwells happily, in comfort.”⁶⁴ Should we have Buddhist universities? Should we have an international association of Buddhist universities, incidentally managed by this researcher? A teacher has students hungry for knowledge and department supervisors who are disconnected from the classroom reality and knowledge possessed by the professors. Wrong decisions are often made by uninformed students and by ill-informed supervisors. If there was ever the case where Buddhist students could possess and read the Tipitaka, or perhaps at the very-least, the Saṅgīti Sutta, a sort of education-manual for knowing what is significant to recollect from the Buddhadhamma, then our Buddhist monks would possess ample knowledge. If there should be no students and no teachers, no one to supervise the training processes, what then is the binding factor? “...it is by way of elements that beings come together and unite. The unlearned come together with the unlearned, the lazy with the lazy, and the unwise with the unwise. The learned come together and unite with the learned, the energetic with the energetic, and the wise with the wise. In the past it was so; in the future it will be so; and now too at present it is so.”⁶⁵ Directly to the point of this conference presentation: ASEAN is coming upon us, and as the manager for our Buddhist universities, all of our universities need to adapt to this new paradigm; and if the new paradigm is our necessary collective identity, largely as Buddhists, or even Theravada Buddhist, we need to raise our direction and abilities within Buddhist education to facilitate the new direction of our regional-block or collective. We have to see things in a new way, in our new role, within our new direction – towards our success and liberation (standing alone and strong as a regional block).

Students must know their role, know why they are enrolled in academic programs, know what the courses are about, when they take the class and during the class itself - it’s important to pay attention. Some students have sat through eight-weeks of courses, and then, idiotically, asked why the class is necessary to have? The student-antagonist never did the reading from the Nettippakaram in the Suttanta-Pitaka Course – assigned to enable or empower the students to become better acquainted with how to

⁶³ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the Saṃyutta-Nikāya* Vol. II. (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2000), pp. 1782-1783 – from the two-volume set.

⁶⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the Saṃyutta-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2000), p. 1213 – from the single volume edition.

⁶⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the Saṃyutta-Nikāya*, Vol. I (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2000), p. 642

interpret then better produce reports - could barely comprehend the lessons which were also readings on selected suttas highlighting the emphasis of critical/analytical thinking within the Suttanta-pitaka. Restated: the Nettippakaranam is a text for people who are designated as teachers to be able to comprehend Dhamma at deeper levels for the sake of disseminating such Dhamma to the new generations of students. Students in a graduate-program should be the adept capable of becoming the next generation of teachers. If students don't want to do the assignments, perhaps they don't want the qualification that they are seeking. Obviously he was in the wrong graduate-school program. They, the program director, never considered the burdens of the teacher to do the following, for the bewildered students: "We did not ask our questions in order to trouble the Venerable... but we thought that the Venerable... would be capable of explaining, teaching, proclaiming, establishing, disclosing, analyzing, and elucidating the Blessed One's teaching in detail. And the Venerable... has explained, taught, proclaimed, established, disclosed, analyzed, and elucidated the Blessed One's teaching in detail."⁶⁶ Students were being resistant to the training, and here the advice from the Kesi Sutta, detailed above, certainly applies. The program, though, decides to fire the lecturer to suppress the controversy contrived by ignorant, inept pupils.

A question along the lines of: "Why do I need to know this?", simply demonstrates an absentness or complete disconnection from the reality of the situation. Why should the professor tell a student that the student should learn Buddhist critical or analytical thinking skills? Does the student know about the formation of Buddhism; did the student learn about the development of Buddhism and Buddhist thought (as a socio-philosophical guidance system)? Are there Buddhist doctrines that go beyond suttas used during monastic chanting-ceremonies, or simple doctrines like the brahmanivharas? Have students even read the Tipitaka before entering into the classroom? Students ask teachers for a variety of reasons, and react differently – and students may know that the teachers are capable of answering in a variety of ways. Above are the student expectations for the teacher to convey when answering, much like this:

1. Teacher, are you capable of explaining this scenario:
2. Teacher, are you capable of teaching this scenario:
3. Teacher, are you capable of proclaiming this scenario:
4. Teacher, are you capable of establishing this scenario:
5. Teacher, are you capable of disclosing this scenario:
6. Teacher, are you capable of analyzing this scenario:
7. Teacher, are you capable of elucidating this scenario:

"Bhikkhus, there are these three bases of talk. What three? Referring to the past, one would say: So it was in the past. Referring to the future, one would say: So it was in the future. Referring to the present, one would say: So it was in the present. It is in relation to talk, that a person may be understood as either fit to talk or unfit to talk. If this person is asked a question that should be answered categorically and he does not answer it categorically; if he is asked a question that should be answered after making a distinction and he answers without making a distinction; if he is asked a question that should be answered with a counter-question and he answers it without asking a counter-question; if he is asked a question that should be set aside and he does not set it aside, in such a case this person is unfit to talk. [If he answers appropriately, he is determined to be fit to talk.] ...If this person is asked a question and he does not stand firm in

⁶⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the Saṃyutta-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2000), p. 945 – take notice that I have switched over to the single-volume edition, and perhaps the page numbers are different from the two-volume set.

regard to his position and the opposing position; if he does not stand firm in his stratagem; if he does not stand firm in an assertion about what is known; if he does not stand firm in the procedure, in such a case this person is unfit to talk. [If he can stand firm in his positions then he is fit to talk.] ...But if this person is asked a question and he does not answer evasively, divert the discussion to an irrelevant subject, or display anger, hatred, and bitterness, in such a case this person is fit to talk. ...if this person is asked a question and he overwhelms the questioner, crushes him, ridicules him and seizes upon a slight error, in such a case this person is unfit to talk.⁶⁷ Chances are, those seven questions will cause frustration within the teacher or make the teacher become irate. They may be incapable of demonstrating ample competency in the subject under scrutiny. Again, from somewhere above, we have seen that the students are responsible for asking proper or even timely questions; likewise: “Here, bhikkhus, when conversing with someone, one comes to know: ‘Judging from the way this venerable one initiates, formulates, and poses a question, he is unwise, not wise. For what reason? This venerable one does not speak about matters that are deep, peaceful, sublime, beyond the sphere of reasoning, subtle, comprehensible to the wise. When this venerable one speaks on the Dhamma, he is not able to explain, teach, describe, establish, reveal, analyze, and explicate its meaning either briefly or in detail. This venerable one is unwise, not wise. ...when conversing with a person, one comes to know: ‘Judging from the way this venerable initiates, formulates and poses a question, he is unwise, not wise.’”⁶⁸

The Buddha did it for his students, why are you unable to do it for your students; again: “A Tathagata awakens to this and breaks through to it. Having done so, he explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyzes it, elucidates it. And he says: See!...”⁶⁹

There were other times when the Buddha was faced with some unclear questions, and: “...seeing the meaning of it, gave utterance...”⁷⁰ Sometimes the smallest piece of a phrase is enough to get to the point of the issue, and then continue on to other more important matters. People should also pay more attention to the Buddha’s true message, or rather gain competence in his complete message – not just small elements that have, centuries later, only become the ‘core’ of what is being taught – because he mentioned: “When those discourses spoken by the Tathagata that are deep, deep in meaning, supramundane, dealing with emptiness, are being recited, they will not be eager to listen to them, nor lend an ear to them, nor apply their minds to understand them; and they will not think those teachings should be studied and mastered. But when those discourses that are mere poetry composed by poets, beautiful in words and phrases, created by outsiders, spoken by their disciples, are being recited, they will be eager to listen to them, will lend an ear to them, will apply their minds to understand them; and they will think those teachings should be studied and mastered. In this way, bhikkhus, those discourses spoken by the Tathagata that are deep, deep in meaning, supramundane, dealing with emptiness, will disappear.”⁷¹

⁶⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), pp. 287-288; these four questions are presented elsewhere, for instance also on pp. 432-433, where there is an associated verse: “He is hard to attack, hard to defeat, deep, hard to assault; he is proficient in both what is beneficial and harmful.”

⁶⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 566

⁶⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the Saṃyutta-Nikāya, Vol. I* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2000), p. 551

⁷⁰ F.L. Woodward: *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon, Part II, Udāna – Verses of Uplift and Itivuttakā – As it was said* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1996), p. 2

⁷¹ Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the Saṃyutta-Nikāya, Vol. I* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2000), p. 709

How do we get to the circumstance of something being deep in meaning? How or why have these discourses with deep meanings been picked for recitation? Why is it, ouch, that people are no longer reciting discourses with deep meanings, but only reciting discourses that are biographical and used as ceremonial-pieces? Buddhism has certainly decayed. The Saṅgīti Sutta was formerly used as the text in Buddhist education, but today, monks have mistakenly moved beyond it, towards something inadequate (previously mentioned in the researcher's work on: "Chanting the Saṅgīti Sutta"). What is the real reason for not wanting to study and master the Saṅgīti Sutta? Are monks afraid of the 230 dhamma-sets that cover every aspect of sīla, samadhi and panna; and serve as the structural framework for the later abhidhamma texts of a few ancient Buddhist schools/sects? What are monks reciting now – ask yourself that question? Are they reciting what the Buddha told people/disciples to recite, or are they reciting something contrived from the 15th-19th centuries in this (Western Calendar) common-era? What has been determined to be, in these modern times, our heritage of the Buddhist tradition, is far from the reality of twenty-five centuries ago, and the modern Sangha doesn't seem to be too concerned, because there is money to be made for performing chanting ceremonies and other activities that fall within the category of religious-rituals. This needs to be reemphasized:

We listen deeply to the person that we are potentially debating. Students demand another parallel structure, again:

- EXPLAIN: Teacher, are you capable of explaining this scenario:
- TEACH: Teacher, are you capable of teaching this scenario:
- DESCRIBE: Teacher, are you capable of proclaiming this scenario:
- ESTABLISH: Teacher, are you capable of establishing this scenario:
- REVEAL: Teacher, are you capable of disclosing this scenario:
- ANALYZE: Teacher, are you capable of analyzing this scenario:
- EXPLICATE the meaning briefly or in detail: Teacher, are you capable of elucidating this scenario:

Most monastics are unable to demand this from their master-teachers, and most master-teachers are unable or unfit to perform at this level for their disciples. We have major problems in Buddhism, because our professors cannot accomplish these tasks. They have not been properly trained on how to properly train the next generations of Buddhists, and my research is the starting-point to remedy the crisis within the structure of the doctrine. Here is a great summarization: "The Venerable Sariputta said this: A half-month, friends, after my full ordination I realized the analytical knowledge [of meaning by the way of its divisions and formulation; of the Dhamma by way of its divisions and formulation; of language by way of its divisions and formulation; of discernment by way of its divisions and formulation]. In many ways I explain it, teach it, proclaim it, establish it, disclose it, analyze it, and elucidate it. Let anyone who is perplexed or uncertain approach me with a question. I will satisfy him with my answer. Our teacher who is highly skilled in our teachings is present."⁷² We need to return to teaching the complete Buddha-dhamma and not mere convenient teachings. It's very clear that our teachers have not pushed the boundaries but we ourselves, with a bit of effort, can and should return Buddhist universities to global prominence.

⁷² Bhikkhu Bodhi: *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha – a translation of the Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 539, and the footnote #875 on pages 1709-1710

Conclusion:

Likewise, we are forced to scrutinize and reflect upon the designs of our university programs – many are not progressive and are not liberal in spirit or design: where is the innovation and spirit of progressiveness? Reforms are necessary to implement the incorporation of ASEAN into our lives. We must reform and modernize our Buddhist curriculum. We can be proactive and progressive to align ourselves with this modernization movement for the benefit of everyone. We have to have more intelligent methods for scrutinizing the matters that we discuss in a university thesis and dissertation. It is up to us as students and teachers of Buddhism to ensure that we progress, as I have written elsewhere.

What is this paper trying to say? The IABU was set up to improve Buddhist Studies and Buddhism, but this should already be evident as expressed in our vision, mission and goals. However noble, the IABU needs proper financial support from benefactors and stakeholders. Elements from within ASEAN should support the IABU so the association can benefit UNESCO and UNECOSOC, to facilitate then dissemination of the wisdom to enlighten the world. This is how the IABU is situated within the international community. We are not to be a dictatorial authority mandating things, but should be the bridge to be the catalyst towards facilitating improvements. We aim to improve Buddhist Studies.

ASEAN is an association to bring nation-states together. The IABU brings Buddhist universities together. ASEAN is governed by ideals and likewise, so is the IABU. ASEAN is something that we cannot really control, since it is an economic and political association that needs the support of the people to make it effective. Collectively, the people of ASEAN are important as the socio-cultural community that engages into politics and economics. Again, ASEAN is something that we cannot really control, since we are not fully stakeholders within that association. The IABU consists of member universities that may become a major stakeholder in the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, since many of the mainland nations of ASEAN are Theravāda Buddhists or are Buddhists of another variety. The IABU can guide Buddhists through the socio-cultural communities in ASEAN.

The common Buddhists often discuss problems with the monks in the village-community. Professors should also be in tune with communities through spending time with the various factions to learn the full truth of certain scenarios. Professors often write on community-affairs and should have better answers, through their critical or analytical thinking skills. If they do not possess the skills, they should learn them from the above or from my texts on the subject-matter. The IABU, as the bridge, takes readers into the realm of seeing the complete or better picture of developing situations. UNESCO/UNECOSOC should then take our annual research offerings into consideration, since we are the vehicle for Buddhist-expressions in the region and global community. Collectively we may actualize ourselves into being important stakeholders because we are the human capital that drives or empowers social change. When we comprehend our mature role and comprehend the framework and ideals of ASEAN, we learn the operational-locations for our strategic operations as communicators with important functions.

We have to transform into stakeholders as an association. We have to use our collectivism as our strength to stand for the very virtues that we espouse and disseminate in our classrooms. As stakeholders we must answer the calls of ASEAN and actively demonstrate our effectiveness. In a greater sense, we have to reassemble and proceed more analytically and scientifically to remedy the entanglements of modernity. Schumacher, as previously mentioned, advocated for society to reform, produce growth in education, organization and discipline of the entire nation. Recall:

discipline is required for solving any crisis. Students need to be involved in the new curriculum since the new institution of ASEAN will be impacting the lives of their donors and sponsors or the common attending team of laity that associate around these bhikkhus. Many people come to famous monks and seek advice or answers to the calamities that are afflicting their lives – monks must be knowledgeable and be willing to adapt towards the circumstances that confront and challenge their lives. For the laity, change is a burden, and monks ideally should possess the proper answer or the cure for the affliction. Our professors also need to rise above the challenges that we are collectively facing and become the agents responsible for making change and enforcing these reformed ideals into our students in our classes and in their work. They must be responsible for being able to maneuver in these principles. We cannot all just be communicators, but also acting agents – the remedy for eliminating suffering.

From the ground-up, here is the focus of this paper – here is what you must take from this presentation for the UNDV 2015 Academic Conference:

1. Most of us are culturally trained as Buddhists.
2. Because we are culturally trained as Buddhists, we are not intellectually, a Buddhist.
3. To be a Buddhist with raised intellect, revised training methods are suggested.
4. It is suggested that the Saṅgīti Sutta become the new model text for our intermediate level students (beginning in the BA programs), because these are the 230 aspects of Dhamma that are conveyed to be recollected by the Buddhist textual tradition.
5. BA students should be trained in the Buddhist analytical/critical thinking skills (BCTS), as highlighted in my unpublished works, but available freely on-line.
6. Students should engage into academic works, utilizing the Buddhist tools highlighted in my BCTS texts, when they scrutinize their subject matter.
7. Ensure that their subject matter has real world application for the development of their nation and for the cooperative endeavors of ASEAN.
8. As a collective, the IABU is a stakeholder of Buddhist Education, and in some sense is a leading agent for the development of Buddhist studies.
9. Since the IABU is an agent for the development of Buddhist studies, we endeavor to highlight or support papers that are progressive and will benefit the local society, the university, the nation and the larger collective of ASEAN and the other various regional blocks.
10. We, as Buddhists should aim at making our world a better place, since we all know that the Buddha's teachings were designed to assist devas and humans encompassed in their own suffering – Buddhist teachings are for the liberation of humanity from our samsaric condition or whatever crisis that we are engaging, not only here in this conference room, but around the globe.
11. The time for acting appropriately was many years ago, but we can do it now, so that we can have a greater future.

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