

# The Future of Buddhism in Industrial Societies

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## Historical Background

### (1) Buddhism in India

Let me start with a brief description of the history of Buddhism in India, the country where it originated. This history can be divided into four periods.

① A first period is from the Buddha to King Asoka. Buddhism began around the 5th or 4th century B.C. as a small community. The Buddhism of this period can be characterized as that of a sectarian group. It is quite probable that Buddhism remained basically a sectarian religion until the time of King Asoka. It was a crucial period in which many elements and patterns were established that have remained fundamental to subsequent phases of Buddhist thought and life. By the time of the Second Buddhist Council, held in the 4th century B.C., the Buddhist community already encompassed two competing assemblies. Those who adhered to an elite monastic tradition came to be known as Theravada, while those who adhered to a more popular tradition came to be known as Mahayana. Early Buddhists were primarily preoccupied with individual salvation, with the early monastic order oriented toward otherworldly attainments. Within the sectarian Buddhism of the early period, there were a number of elements, however, that prepared the way for the civilizational Buddhism that began to emerge during the reign of King Asoka.

② A second period is from the reign of King Asoka to the second century, Buddhism became a new religion that was associated with a sophisticated high culture and that transcended the boundaries of local regions and politics. Asoka, who was the third ruler in a line of Mauryan emperors, sent special representatives to ensure that the Dharma was practiced and taught by the various religious communities within his realm. During the 3 centuries from the second century B.C. through the first century C.E. Buddhism became a powerful religious force in virtually all of India, as well as in Sri Lanka and Central Asia. New states seeking to secure their control over culturally plural areas emulated Asoka's example and adopted Buddhism as an imperial religion. It happened in Sri Lanka, central India and northwestern India. By this time Buddhism had also begun to penetrate into trading centers in northern China and to spread along land and sea routes across Southeast Asia to South China as well.

③ A third period is from the second to the 9th century, Buddhism enjoyed a period of immense creativity and influence. It flourished in Sri Lanka, India, and Central Asia. Through its assimilation to indigenous beliefs and practices, and its adoption as imperial religion, Buddhism became firmly entrenched in both northern and southern China and in many parts of Southeast Asia. It became the preeminent religion in a newly unified Chinese empire, continued its spread in parts of Southeast Asia, and was established in important new areas, first in Japan and then in Tibet. However, by the middle of the 9th century the era of Buddhism as a pan-Asian civilization was rapidly drawing to a close.

④ A fourth period is during the 9th and 10th centuries. The two Buddhist civilizational centers in India and China were themselves subject to attack, both internally and externally. The combination of Hindu resurgence and Muslim invasion led to the effective disappearance of the Buddhist community in India by the 13th century. Buddhism has flourished rather in peripheral regions since this period.

(2) Chinese Buddhism

It is not easy to make it clear exactly when Buddhism became entrenched into China. Studying old texts one can ascertain that Buddhism was introduced to the Chinese society in about the second century B.C.. In the middle of the second century the Han Emperor was converted. About this time an office of translations was created for the sacred texts which were mostly in Sanskrit. Many small countries appeared and competed with each other after the Han dynasty had disintegrated. Buddhism started to spread over the whole of Chinese society deeply in that period. As some monarchs in small countries tended to protect Buddhism, Buddhism expanded in China gradually. Although its accommodating character attracted many converts, Buddhist monks were also sometimes persecuted by Confucian monarchs. From the 9th century onward, Buddhism began to suffer a decline, doctrinally and institutionally, as the T'ang dynasty itself disintegrated.

In practice, Buddhism in China was remarkably accommodating. It followed the bent of the Chinese mind, which had always been practical, moralistic, not very doctrinaire, anxious to keep the peace in social relations and tolerant of diverse opinions. Later two distinctive religious trends emerged in China. One led to transcendental meditation. The other led to devotion and invocation of certain Buddhas who were believed to be able to bestow aid on their devotees.

Another way of viewing the process of decline from the late 8th century onward, however, is to see it as a time of transition, and yet, of further adaptation to the circumstances of life in China. In this light one can observe that the great monastic institutions and schools of doctrine declined, while new forms of religious practice, deemphasizing doctrine, took their place. Of these, the practice of Zen meditation and Pure Land devotionism are the most representative of later Chinese Buddhism. In recent centuries temples and monasteries have often practiced both of these side by side. The survival of Zen and Pure Land Buddhism was assured in the very course of

dispersion. Training and practice in Zen focused on the person of the Master, not on a church or parish. Pure Land faith looked toward the Western paradise and not to an earthy city. Zen became the strongest of the sects of later Chinese Buddhism. Zen was the only type Buddhism that continued a vigorous intellectual life after the T'ang. Gradually, the rest of Chinese Buddhism was absorbed either by Zen or by the popular Pure Land sect, and eventually these two lost their distinctiveness, merging in a vague mixture of folk religions. Zen Buddhism and the Pure Land sect naturally had the strongest appeal to the common man and numerically became the greatest force in East Asian Buddhism.

The Confucian dynasties and the Manchus showed themselves to be suspicious of a doctrine which encouraged abandonment of the world and the disruption of normal social relations. In their eyes there was a real risk that Buddhism would lead to an undermining of the values of the state and the availability of citizens to serve it. They blocked the further expansion of Buddhism and often actually reduced the real influence of monks. From that time onwards, although Buddhism has been tolerated as an historic reality, it has continued to lose its influence and its vitality in China.

Undoubtedly the most decisive success of expanding Buddhism took place in China, which was then the cultural and political power towards which all the surrounding countries looked for example and authority during T'ang dynasty. Neighboring people looked to China as the paramount military power of the world and as the obvious model for government and culture. The various people who surrounded China imitated T'ang consciously. This was because of increased contacts, but another reason may have been that the people of these peripheral lands had in the meantime reached a cultural level at which the direct imitation of Chinese culture was feasible. The very cosmopolitanism of T'ang culture made China more attractive to foreign people. The first unified Tibetan government, established in the 7th century, and the state of Nan-chao, founded in Yunnan around 740 were both directly inspired by the T'ang system of

rule. The T'ang political and cultural pattern was even more fully adopted by the people to the east of Asia. Silla became a veritable replica in miniature of the T'ang. The first Turgusic kingdom of P'o-hai, closely copied certain T'ang institutions. The efforts of the Japanese in the 7th and 8th centuries to create another small T'ang in their remote islands was an even more remarkable example. In a word, Buddhism has been disseminated to these peripheral lands as a representative of the cosmopolitanism of T'ang culture.

### (3) Buddhism in Southeast Asia

Until the 10th or 11th century, the early period of Buddhism in Southeast Asia it was diverse and eclectic, infused with elements of Hindu deities, Mahayana Buddhas, Tantric practices, as well as Pali Theravada traditions. The classical period of Buddhism in Southeast Asia started from the 11th century. It began with the development of the monarchical states of Srivijana in Java, Angkor in Cambodia, Pagan in Burma, Sukhotai in Thailand, and Luang Prabang in Laos, and culminated in the establishment of a normative Pali Theravada tradition of the Sinhala Mahavihara monastic line. Hence, by the 14th and 15th centuries the primary, although by no means exclusive, form of Buddhism in Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia was Sinhala orthodoxy. Historically, this orthodoxy follows the Sinhala Theravada tradition and accompanies the ascendancy of the Burmese and the Thai in mainland Southeast Asia. Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia, however, depart from this pattern. Vietnamese culture was strongly influenced by China, and Malaysia and Indonesia were affected by the spread of Islam during the 13th century.

The shift to a Sinhala Theravada orthodoxy in Buddhist Southeast Asia took place gradually from the late 11th to the early 13th century and onward. One of the factors reflecting this development was the decline of Buddhism in other parts of Asia. Another factor was an increasing interrelationship among Sri Lanka, Burma, and Thailand. Buddhism made a decisive contribution to the concept of Southeast Asian kingship and monarchical rule through its ideal of

the Dharmaraja, who was represented by King Asoka. Sri Lanka played the decisive role in the increasing dominance of Theravada Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia. Sinhala Buddhism contributed to the legitimation of the ruling monarchies. Also it became the religion of the masses through the worship of relics and sacred images.

### **Main Characteristics of Buddhism**

#### **(1) Kingship**

Reflecting on the history of Buddhism, one can easily notice a close alliance between Buddhism and kingship. King Asoka, who had unified the state in India for the first time, became a sponsor for Buddhism and transmitted it to all over India. When Buddhism prevailed over Asia, most kings in peripheral countries worshiped King Asoka's deeds and wanted to imitate him. Thus King Asoka has become an archetype of the ideal Buddhist king who protects Buddhism.

It were monarchs in the northern ethnic states who were first willing to introduce Buddhism to China. Buddhism achieved its peak under the zealous patronage of Empress Wu. Buddhism flourished when devotional monarchs became sponsors for Buddhism. But it suffer a decline when Confucian monarchs oppressed it for long times. From the 7th century to the 8th century, Korean and Japanese monarchs who created the first unified states were eager to adopt Buddhism as a representative of the cosmopolitanism of T'ang culture. In modern Southeast countries, Buddhism was supported by stable monarchs. Therefore, we can understand readily how the success of Buddhism amongst the people in general has stemmed from this alliance between Buddhism and kingship. Buddhism desires that the whole state be governed basically in accord with the precepts of the Dharma. The State would thus, first and foremost, become a vehicle of spiritual progress towards deliverance. For their part the monarchs who adopted Buddhism often wished to derive from it, not

only personal spiritual progress but also the consecration of their kingship. Buddhism was moreover a moral support aiding them in the education of the people. This system of alliance was therefore a source of great strength. It is of course true that, as a consequence, Buddhism had the support of the temporal powers and that this means that material needs were met and that Buddhist monks were free to concentrate on their spiritual quest. Moreover, the prestige and the privileged position which Buddhism enjoyed greatly encouraged its expansion amongst the people at large. While the success of Buddhism was thenceforth conditional upon the success of its protectors, their decline might well have precipitated its decline also.

The states have been the most important factors in the development of Buddhism in Asia. It is natural that Buddhism survives and enjoys the privileged position as national religion in countries where stable institutions of monarchs have continued for long times. But on the other side, Buddhism suffers a decline in countries where rulers often change, or where other foreign peoples have invaded to destroy the previous government.

## (2) The wheel of rebirth

It is well known that Buddhist cosmology is characterized by the wheel of rebirth and *karman*. According to it, all beings live and die repeatedly and produce fruits which must have their due consequence in a following existence. Liberation from the wheel of rebirth is the purpose of Buddhist perfect salvation.

Buddhism is based upon an acute awareness of suffering. According to the Buddha, life inherently involves suffering and suffering arises from desire or selfish craving. Certainly this is an awareness which prevails in Indian religious tradition generally, as also an understanding of life as an inescapable round of suffering. The essential internal problem with which Buddhism is preoccupied is the universal phenomenon of suffering and the method advocated for its elimination, which is the eradication of desire. If we wish to distinguish the Indian attitude to the problem of salvation from the religious

perspectives of Christianity or of Islam, we should note three points:

① First: All beings, not excepting the deva (sacred beings), are subject to a progressive wearing out—to old age, and to return in a new state. In principle, this process continues without end. All existence, according to the law of karman, produces fruits which must have their due consequence in a following existence. The wheel of rebirths is set to turn endlessly. The Buddha's claim was precisely to offer a method to enable one to break out of this closed circle and to halt the process for oneself.

② Secondly: Likewise, no death is final. After a longer or shorter interval, every one is born again in a new existence. Moreover, this new existence is also provisional, leading on to death.

③ Thirdly: In this process, the beings who are reborn are not necessarily in the same kind of existence in which they were situated previously. On the contrary, they would be more often than not at a different level of existence. So it happens that men become animals, or deva, or demons. Demons pass to the state of human life and deva fall to our level, or even lower.

Thus, when we affirm the existence of our own personality, we are living in an illusion. Buddhism states its position here by saying: Everything that we believe makes up solid realities is only impermanent, only insubstantial, only a source of sorrow and pain. These three qualities—impermanence, insubstantiality, and sorrow are the three characteristics of human life and of the drama in which it is lived.

The only complete and logical Buddhist way is to become a monk. For he renounces his worldly goods, even his own individuality, leading a celibate and continent life stripped of all property, in order to destroy within himself all desire. He aims at an ever stricter discipline, a more and more enlightened meditation in order, in this way, to attain liberation from suffering. The renunciation of the world for spiritual purposes have been very much part of Buddhism.

Karman is particular to Indian religions, including Hinduism. Outside of India, this idea was not necessarily accepted in all Buddhist



countries. On the other hand, Animism and worships of ancestors prevail as popular folk religions all over Asia.

(3) Memorial rites for the dead

Speaking in general, Asian people tend to believe in the other world where spirits of the dead and other types of spirits live animatedly, different from this world. It is quite common for people having belief in spirits to think that they can communicate with the other world through specific rituals or through medium of shamans. According to Buddhist thought of karman, living beings is destined to rebirth endlessly, not to go to an other world, such as paradise, or world for the dead. Therefore, the idea of karman is considered to be based on a denial of animism and worship of ancestors. Yet Buddhism has adapted itself to circumstances where people believe in spirits and the dead souls of the dead living in the other world. One of the representative scholars of Oriental history, de Vary, points out as follows about the transformation of Buddhism in China.

‘Buddhism sooner or later adapted itself to most of the Chinese family system and political institutions. It was able to do this because, except for the religious life’s specific demand that one leave the world, and except for its urging the ruler to promote and protect the religion as a source of spiritual benefits, Buddhism had little to say specifically about the organization and conduct of family life or the state. Empty-handed in these respects, it remained free to adapt to native tastes.’

What de Vary points out can be applied not only to Chinese Buddhism, but also to Buddhism in general. The character of Buddhism is remarkably accommodating, regardless of its denial of worldly things. Buddhism in China is one case in which it adapted itself to native religions. Devout Chinese Buddhists cherished aspirations both for this life and for the future state. In this life they sought the maintenance of peace, both private and public, preservation from

disaster and the achievement of success in their careers. As for one's future existence, it is naturally desired that this will be happy. Even though Buddhist doctrine and the most orthodox monks deny this, on grounds that the future of a person is determined by the karman that one has accumulated, people believe that prayer can be in some sense efficacious.

In China, Buddhism began to have connection with rites of passage, especially rites for the dead. Buddhist rites and ceremonies were often considered to be dedicated to the souls of the dead. We will present one example in order to examine the transformation in Chinese Buddhism. Buddhist rites were usually performed seven times every seven days after death in India, because the dead's consciousness was said to come back to this world at such times. After that interval, every one is born again in a new existence, leading on to death. These rites were founded on the Indian thought of rebirth and karman. When Buddhism came to China, Chinese Buddhist monks gave a new unexpected interpretation to rites after death. They interpreted them as memorial services for the dead which helped to send away dead souls to a paradise. Chinese Buddhists added three ceremonies to the original seven ceremonies of India. They called these ceremonies the "Ten Buddhist rites (十仏事)". After the funeral, the family of the deceased came together repeatedly calling monks to perform memorial rituals. Thereby, the more rituals were performed, the more the soul of the deceased could enjoy a happy life in a paradise. Japanese Buddhist monks accepted the "Ten Buddhist rites" and added three rites to them further. These customs are called as the "Thirteen Buddhist rites (十三仏事)". People in Japan usually take it for granted that Buddhist monks perform memorial rituals again and again when one of their family dies.

In Japan, the spirits of those who have some relations left in this world to perform the ancestral rites are called *uenrei* (有縁霊). Having lived a full life, this spirit has descendants who after one's death will perform the proper rites. It will thus become an ancestral spirit who protects its descendants. The opposite of the *uenrei* is the *muenrei*

(spirit with no relations, 無緣靈). They have no direct descendants to perform rites for them. It was believed that as a result these spirits could become vindictive and bring about misfortune to those still living in this world. Buddhist memorial rituals must also be performed in order to prevent these dangerous spirits from bringing about misfortune.

In this way in China and Japan, the concept of the wheel of rebirth was not necessarily accepted correctly. In fact, ancestor worship and cults for the dead are the major factors which transformed Indian Buddhism into popular Buddhism mixed with native folk religions. Particularly in Japanese Buddhism, memorial services and belief in the other world took the place of the concept of the wheel of rebirth.

### **Current Problems in Modern Society**

In order to understand the problems Buddhism is facing today, we should first reconsider the relationship between Buddhism and modernization in Asia. The colonization of Asia by Western countries started from the 17th century was accompanied by missionary works of the Christian churches, putting pressure on Buddhism. Moreover, modernization in Asia, which lasted from the 19th century to the 20th century, has transformed on a large scale the traditional life style and the religious beliefs of the masses. As a result, Buddhism has been confronted with a major crisis in the 20th century. Several factors have contributed to this situation, but I single out three of them.

① Firstly, the invasion of the Christianity which overwhelmed the power of Buddhism. ② Secondly, the establishment of Western educational institutions. ③ Thirdly, value judgements peculiar to the industrial society which emphasize the significance of labour.

① Western countries utilized Christianity to control Asian countries during the period of colonialism. Some Buddhist countries, such as Sri Lanka, Burma, and the Indochinese States, were fully colonized, while others, such as Thailand, China, and Japan, were

subjected to strong colonial influences. The symbiotic relationship between the political order and the monastic order was disrupted, with adverse effects on Buddhist institutions. Missionary onslaughts were sometimes physically violent. For example, the Portuguese destroyed Buddhist temples and relics in Sri Lanka. Buddhism assumed a significant role in the movements to establish or reassert national independence in modern Asia against Western colonialism, representing the basis of the national culture. In both Cambodia and Laos, for example, the monks have played a significant role politically.

② In pre-modern Asia, the Buddhist Sangha had exclusive charge of educational institutions which taught morals and social order to the masses. Monks, thus, have received high esteem as intelligent scholars. The establishment of university on the Western model, however, deprived the Buddhist monks of this esteem. The Sangha lost its power of attraction as it became impossible to compete with the modern educational system because university students started looking for more rewarding occupations, unattracted by the monastic life. In Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, where higher educational systems are widely established, the status of monks does not have a good reputation and is not considered hopeful occupation. Japanese monks usually have another job besides it which gives them more money and social reputation. On the other hand, in countries where a Buddhist revival has taken place, as a counter weight against Western education Buddhist education has been promoted. For example, in Sri Lanka there was opposition against the establishment by the state of Western-style universities and schools open to both monks and lay people. The problem was solved by founding universities exclusively for monks. In Burma, premier U Nu, who had adopted a policy of Buddhist revival, promoted Buddhist education in the national universities.

③ People in industrial society do not support the Buddhist ideal that monks must avoid ordinary work and marriage in order to reach the state of Nirvana. Labour is thought as the highest value among the modern masses. From the point of view of people living in

industrial society, Buddhist monasticism is difficult to maintain in future because it contradicts the principles of industrial society, such as receiving formal school education, working hard for money and maintaining a family. In Confucian states such as China, Korea, and Japan, Buddhism has received severe criticism for its complete retreat from this world. Compared to Buddhism, we can say that Confucianism is inclined to coexist with the principles of industrial society. From this point of view, some assume that the success of economic development in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan derives from the cultural background of Confucianism.

It has happened, however, that Buddhism tried to adapt to modern industrial society. The fact that movements by lay Buddhists appear in a few countries in modern times is one of such examples. Lay Buddhists insist on the equality between monks and lay people in worship of the Buddha. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism and led a movement to liberate the untouchable caste in India. Among Japanese new religions, Sōkagakkai, Risshōkōseikai, and Reiyūkai represents of active lay Buddhist movements, gathering many converts. The founder of Sōkagakkai, for example, insisted on the practical values of worldly gain and satisfaction as well as the attainment of goodness and beauty, and taught that the 13th century Japanese prophet Nichiren was to be worshipped as the True Buddha predicted in the Lotus Sutra.

In Southeast Asian countries, notably Burma and Thailand, almost every layman must join the monastery for a period of instruction and meditation. Thus, all men in these countries can to a certain extent be considered monks. This increases lay participation in monastic affairs.

Let us focus particularly on how Japanese Buddhism has coped with the challenge of modernization. In modern Japan, a monk's life is not different from that of lay people concerning marriage and taboo of foods. Many monks live in their private temples where also their family lives. Thus, Japanese temples are nothing but the monk's

home far removed from the Sangha. In other words, Japanese monks leave the Sangha and come back to their home, so that, Japanese Buddhism can survive despite changes of political powers.

Buddhism in Japan today is so closely affiliated with memorial rites that it is often called “funerary Buddhism”. Since the 16th century, Japanese in general began to have funeral services performed by monks. The Edo shogunate established the family temple system (寺請制度) in which every household was at least nominally affiliated with a Buddhist temple. This system continues to provide an important social basis for modern Buddhist organizations. Average monks can live stable lives by getting income through funeral services. Then, and also now, this has been the object of harsh criticism, claiming that the material well-being of monks has led to the moral corruption. But without economic means through funeral services, Japanese Buddhism can not survive in face of the collapse of political powers. This is an exceptional but also important fact, because Buddhist organization in general need material support from the state. I think that “funerary Buddhism” has the social aspects of service industry and Buddhist monks play a role as professional funeral practitioners in modern society characterized by division of labour. Japanese Buddhism example is one of the possibilities which Buddhism chose to survive in the future.

Let us have a look, therefore, at various types of memorials in present-day Japan. New types of memorial services are created one after another and utilized by people. One of them is *mizuko kuyō* which started from 1970s and refers memorials or offerings for aborted children. Recently academic researches on this issue are increasing. Furthermore, the custom of offering memorials for inanimate objects such as dolls or needles, for victims of one’s “profession” such as eels or whales reveals the Japanese belief that such beings, whether animate or inanimate, possess some sort of spirits or souls. Memorial services for fish are commonly performed by fishermen. Equally, memorial services for cows and horses are performed by farmers and horse traders. Companies and research facilities use a

large number of guinea pigs and other small animals for scientific experiments. Many companies perform a regular memorial ceremony in honor of these animals. There are many towers built memorializing all these animals in the famous graveyard on Mt. Kōya. As a recent phenomenon, memorial services for pets are popular. Of course, these contemporary phenomena may well be explained by the emergence of small families and nuclear families. But what is more important is to take account of roles of the monks. All types of memorial services must be indeed performed by monks.

In Japan every person and everything, such as non-sentient entities, can attain Buddhahood with ease. It may be surprising for Buddhists in other countries that Japanese call the dead a Buddha. Every spirit can be pacified and become a Buddha though Buddhist memorial services. This custom was established in Japan, but at the same time derived from the doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism that all sentient beings have the Buddha nature. Contemporary Buddhist monks in Japan seize every chance to preach the necessity of performing memorial services for avoiding curse. They are salesmen or funeral directors for memorial services. However one could criticize such situation as the corruption of Buddhist monks, it is also possible to focus upon the economic funds these practices provide, and which make Buddhist organizations more stable and help to promote academic research.

Thanks to this, Japanese Buddhist studies have developed so steadily that scholars have increasingly become knowledgeable about what the Buddha really taught. They notice a significant gap between early Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism. Indian Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism are quite different from each other on the ground of cultural conditions. Many Buddhist scholars seem to hesitate in acknowledging this gap between early Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism. Some make efforts to adjust the difference and come to the conclusion that inside one's heart one can communicate with the Buddha however outward difference exist. Others find it quite difficult to adjust the difference and, as a result of this, insist

that Japanese Buddhism is not the genuine Buddhism. As the history of Buddhism was also a process of assimilating native cultures, Buddhism in whatever areas came to be different from early Buddhism.

The development of modern Buddhist studies also contributed to increase the interest in Buddhism among Western intellectuals. This constantly increasing interest arose among Westerners not simply towards Buddhism as an object of scholarly research but also as a source of spiritual inspiration. It was not until the 1870s that a positive interpretation of Buddhism began. H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott, who founded the Theosophical Society in 1875, made contact with Ceylonese Buddhists and became formal Buddhists. At the turn of the century, Western, and especially European, Buddhist interest centered chiefly on the Theravada tradition. Theravada Buddhism was presumed to represent the oldest and simplest form of Buddhism.

A German Buddhist group was founded as early as 1903. In England, Dharmapala came to London to establish a branch of the Mahabodhi Society in 1925. D. T. Suzuki visited England in 1936. In America, Mahayana has always been the most prominent expression of Buddhism because of westward immigration, trade, historical background, and so on. Especially increasing immigration from Asia has made American people familiar with Mahayana Buddhism.

According to Sinkō Saeki, American white Buddhist converts can be divided into 3 types. A first type is a devotee who wanders from one religion to another religion. A second type is a dropout from American society. A third type is an intellectual who behaves himself as Buddhist believer and pretends to have respect for all religions, even if this means losing faith in Christianity. Decline of the faith of Christianity in the West often results in gradually increasing the interest in Buddhism.

In conclusion, Let me summarize the 3 main points I made. Japanese Buddhism developed the peculiar aspect of “specialists for funeral” functioning as service industry. Thus, it represents the case



in which Buddhism accommodates itself to industrial society perhaps too smoothly. In Southeast Asia, Buddhist monks often play significant roles in nationalistic movements. In the West, Buddhism has been accepted among common people as a meditation technique. These 3 issues are still in progress now, but unrelated to each other. If we try to find out similarity, in all these cases Buddhist monks participate actively outside the Sangha. While Japanese monks are eager to work in the economic field, monks in Southeast Asia participate in political movements. And we can say that perhaps the Buddha's teaching on retreat from this world attracts Western converts more than traditional Buddhist monks. The popularity of "the wheel of rebirth" among Westerners seems to be a symptom of recent trend which accompany with New Age movements.

#### NOTES

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