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Multiple Dimensions of Socially Engaged Buddhism: the Case of Northeast and Southern Thailand

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I will discuss the substantial social effect contributed by monks in Thailand, called "development monks," and whose role has been emphasized by Buddhist thinkers and NGO/NPO advocates as being typical socially engaged.

First, I will consider the concept of social engagement done by religious groups and institutions, especially of politically influential religion regarded as public religion. Second, the data analysis of development monks in northeastern Thailand will be illustrated. Admitting their social contribution in rural development, their mobilizing human and financial resources have been legitimatized by both Thai development ideology and Theravada Buddhism as public religion. Therefore, third, the alternative and indigenous development ideal is functional among Thai Buddhists, but dysfunctional in peripheral regions such as southern Thailand where Malay Muslims have historically protested Thai assimilationism. Recent violent incidents are also examined.

1 The Concept of Socially Engaged Religion

1-1 Public religion in secularized society

The general concept of socially engaged religion, which shows an actively concerned posture to formulate civil society, was brought from phenomenon of the socially engaged Buddhism in Southeast Asia. On June 11, 1963, Thich Quang Duc, a Buddhist monk who committed self-immolation, burned himself to death to protest against the South Vietnamese regime, which was an outstanding example of social engagement. (Ama, 2003) However, this activism was exceptional in Buddhism, despite some academic monks giving idealistic criticism against Western colonialism as well as capitalist domination in Southeast Asia. Rather, ordinary monks who practiced both relief work for the socially disadvantaged and development in rural areas were focused and these activities were traditionally practiced as the function of Buddhist temples in those countries (Suehiro, 1993).

Incidentally, why do Thai Buddhists and scholars in the Europe who focus on the activity of the monks use the term, socially engaged? When searching this word in the combination with the Buddhism, or the spirituality, the religion on the Internet, there

are more than 10,000 matches. This point will be examined from the theoretical trend of the science of religion.

One of the theoretical propositions of the science of religion is secularization. Catholic and Protestant sects in the Europe lost the political power as the separation of government and religion and the modern rationalism were strengthened (Debbelare, 1981). Moreover, while the concept of human rights as well as liberalism developed, religion has been transformed into a personal belief, which must not be invaded by anyone. This individualized religion, or privatized religion, was common in modern society (Berger, 1974).

However, it was in the 1960 and 1970s that the secularization theory was dominant. Survey of the new religions and fundamentalist denominations since the 1980s concluded that western society was not totally secularized. However, theorists of secularization did not regard these religious movements as religious redevelopment, because these religions such as "cults" and "evangelical sects" were not of mainline religion. Recently, their idea was reversed by the conservative policy supported by religious right in the USA and its enemies, labeled religious extremists who conducted terrorism to protest US hegemonic secularized world.

Casanova states that traditional religion such as Catholicism and the Protestant sects not infrequently intervened in the public sphere, and those religions that he called "public religions" could be considered counterevidence of privatized religion. According to his description concerning the characteristics of current public religion, we can easily uncover its social functions as follows: 1) to protect not only religious freedom but citizens' rights and liberty even in autocratic states; 2) to give warnings concerning war making politics and unregulated capitalism; 3) to present opinions based on religious ethics in public discussion such as abortion.（Casanova, 1994:57-58）

Casanova's theory of public religion focuses on the role of religious institutions to criticize the policy of current government and to advance civil society through advocacy based on religious idealism. On the other hand, to the present, there have been religious persons and movements to provide social welfare for states that did not embrace welfare state policy and/or social democracy. Social activities of religions did not stagnate even in secularized society.

However, when socialistic states and welfare states declined, the role of the third sectors such as NPO/NGO and the citizen's voluntary activities attracted not only advocates of civil society organization but administrators of states, because they could provide social welfare and social support to socially disadvantage people with relatively lower cost than a state. Those activities were initiated as religious charities and

maintained by religious affiliated associations and foundations. Therefore, theorists of alternative development and NGO advocates paid attention to the role of socially engaged religion and religious leaders for development activities.

Incidentally, social activities conducted by religions should be carefully evaluated, depending on whether their substantial contribution to society might be directed to religious purpose or social utility. One controversial example could be Soka Gakkai in Japan, called Nichiren Shoshu in western countries, which was reported to be an example of engaged Buddhism in an academic book, titled *Socially Engaged Buddhism* (Queen and King, 1996). Soka Gakkai is the largest new religion in Japan, which promotes peace and cultural and educational activities, however, through the New Komeito party which holds a centrist position and a human principle, consisting of life, livelihood and survival, it tries to engage actively in politics (Nakano, 2003:139-210). The evaluations of the New Komeito party and Soka Gakkai vary from the positive response that the LDP, the ruling party gave to its coalition partner to the negative one in which the opposition parties criticized the party's inconsistency on pacifism, because the New Komeito party approved the LDP's policy of dispatching Self Defense Forces to Iraq. Furthermore, their hope to govern the majority in the Diet might be a cause for concern for non member of Soka Gakkai. Other religious institutions formerly sent their representatives to the Diet, however, they eventually withdrew from politics, and as a result, only Soka Gakkai has been politically active. The power of nominal members total 8.21 million and several million active members hold a decisive vote in any election in Japan.

1-2 Evaluation standard of socially engaged religion

Kaneko distinguishes the concept of "relief" as the social demand from "salvation" based on religious principle. Although religious organizations tend to recommend human happiness to all people through harmonizing with religious order and through accomplishment of perfect personality building, citizens in secular society like Japan does not accept their teaching. However, if religious organizations and their members promote an activity having to do with social welfare within the limits of the general public's common sense and the expression of their individual beliefs, society will admit religious "utility value." (Kaneko, 2004:236-256)

Needless to say, if a religion just served humanized "utility value," it would be merely utilitarian institution in social welfare when states cannot effectively and economically provide basic human needs. Those religions would lose the religious potential that criticize secular society and attract people whose demands were not

satisfied in this world. Religions should keep strained relations in a positive way with secular society, at the same time they should accommodate with the secular demands of society as well as the general public in order to continue their organization and activities. The strain and harmonization between a religion and a society in delicate balance might provide social utility as well as human happiness.

In any case, at present, religious activities done by socially engaged religion might be evaluated by not only religious organization in themselves but the society with consideration of the following four points.

First, the meaning of participating in social formulation is not social change which seeks to destroy existing society but to improve the quality of citizen's life mentally and materially. Such religious activities were historically accomplished, and came to aim at social contribution itself as the expression of the religious idea that religious persons and institutions should serve others and society by utilizing their advantageous position and abilities. It was compassion and charitable attitude that every historic religion such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam teaches in its canon and religious community based on church, temple, and mosque have practiced social welfare by members' almsgivings, through the teaching that visible merit-making confirmed their salvation in the next world. Those merit-making ideas have always been denied in the demagogical and fundamental teaching of religious experts; however, we should not overlook the fact that general people's self-interest motivation was transformed into public interest through religious tradition. The special idea and practice of the partial society, called religion, fitted in with the universal rule of society as a whole and as a result contributed to social welfare services.

Second, politics and cultural activities aimed at the expansion of religious institutions are not social activities having to do with the public even if they are religious activities. The activity of "cults" and "fundamentalism" tries to expand their community into the society as a whole or to sustain a community as isolated society by withdrawal from the general public. On the point of intending to cooperate with the general public at all, these religious practices are not of a socially engaged religion.

Third, objective and relative evaluation is necessary to consider whether the social activity of the religious group becomes a social contribution or just staying in the expansion of religious bodies and power. One method is that religious person and religious association itself should have the critical viewpoint in their mind not to become arrogant and reckless in their religious activities. However, it might be difficult that charismatic leader and religious movement in its expanding period become introspective because of their strong confidence in their unique dogma and benevolent

reward in the future. Another way is to introduce an outside evaluator of the religious groups. For example, we can receive evaluation from the beneficiary of the service that religious groups provide. If they had to pay certain amount of cost, would they choose the services of religious based institutions such as the schools, hospitals, social welfare, and social educational facilities? Or another means is to have citizens and well informed persons as board members to receive active evaluation from outside. As for the YMCA activity, which has a long history is a pioneer at this point, yet, a lot of new religions still maintain exclusiveness about this point.

Fourth, it needs to be careful to consider the difference between the religious institutions staying in the area of a particular religious group as partial society and established religious institutions as a public religion. A secularized society such as Japan, in which the separation of government and religion is proceeded with and religious ideology is not contained in the spirit of democracy, the claim of making a society based on Buddhism, might be evaluated to examine only the result of the specific social contribution. As for Soka Gakkai, whose social activities are strongly directed to the hegemony of Japanese politics as well as the prevalence of their religious dogma among Japanese, the evaluation for them has not been reached to the extent that they are called a socially engaged religion. However, in Thailand where Theravada Buddhism is the public religion, applying Buddhism to political economy and culture and education becomes proof of social justice, and as a result citizens are involved in politics whose ideology from the confirmative to reformist is artfully connected with religious ideology. Therefore, from an external view points, religious activity legitimatized in public religion is easily admitted as a socially engaged religion (Yano, 2004:68-71).

2 Socially Engaged Buddhism: Development Monks in Northeastern Thailand

2-1 Social Background in Which Monks Engaged in Development Have Emerged

The term “development monk (Phura song nak phatthanaa)” first appeared in a master’s thesis by Phinit Laphathanan (Laphathanan, 1986). Somboon Suksamran, Phinit’s mentor at that time, analyzed the cooperative relations between the development-oriented regime and the Sangha organization after the Sarit government (Suksamran, 1977). Although the Kingdom of Thailand established its national boundaries set up by colonial powers in the mid-19th century, it was a country consisting of twenty or more ethnic groups and languages. To be a nation-state, however, required an ideology of national integration. As with the modernization of Japan after the Meiji Restoration, they attempted to create a nation of Thai people by unifying its

national language, ethnic groups, and religion. The Sangha Act and the reorganization of Buddhist monk groups were carried out as part of this plan.

Thailand, which had managed to maintain its independence during the two world wars, was involved in the East-West Cold-War structure over the Southeast Asian peninsula in the 1950s and 1960s. The Thai government had no choice but to relentlessly suppress socialist movements and the Thai Communist Party. Not only that, the government had to provide autonomy and economic prosperity in different forms, which those movements had promised to residents of poverty-stricken areas. That policy was the development policy. The sources of this policy consisted mainly of U.S. military and economic aid, and ODA (official development assistance) from capitalist nations. Domestically, the Thai government mobilized the power of royal authority and the Sangha as well.

Next, the government promoted an inspection tour by the King to rural areas and regional development projects by the royal family. It was decided that at the graduation of national universities newly founded in rural areas at the time, royals would personally hand out graduation diplomas directly to all the graduates. The Sangha organization, at the request of the government, also dispatched monks as instructors to local areas. As a result, hill tribes in northern Thailand, who by tradition used to practice ancestor-worship and animistic rituals, held ceremonies to convert to Buddhism on a village-by-village basis. The learning of the Thai language and welfare programs were also promoted to those mountain peoples. The government's goal was to form the Thai people by uniformly spreading the compassion of the royal family and the charity of the government as well as the light of Buddhism throughout the nation-state.

Thus, it was natural for those who had become Buddhist monks during this period to be conscious of development in response to the development-oriented spirit and the policy of the Sangha. In rural areas, from the early 1970s, foreign aid NGOs founded camps to help Cambodian refugees who had fled to Thai territory to escape persecution by the Khmer Rouge or the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. Later on, they also started to help regional development in Northeast Thailand establishing on-site NGO organizations and coordinating with local village heads, monks, and teachers. This is the rough background in which monks engaged in development projects began to emerge.

2-2 Research on Development Monks

In Japan, rather than focusing on the social history of development monks (Sakurai, 1999; Izumi, 2002), more studies have placed emphasis on their alternative

ideology. The mainstream argument on social development has increasingly been that we should focus on cultural tradition as a local social resource, and that regional development should be promoted utilizing those modern innovations and by the initiative of the local residents. The subject of development monks has been discussed as one typical case for that argument. Some researchers focused on the ideology and action of development monks and regarded them as key persons who can facilitate endogenous development (Nishikawa ed., 2001). For instance, Monk Naan, the most prominent development monk in Thailand, lived in Surin Province in Northeast Thailand between 1980 and 1990 as a spiritual leader, and is said to have devoted his life to the revitalization of villages in which the residents made a living by farming alone or worked as migrant laborers or day laborers, as well as to the spiritual cultivation of the villagers.

The activities of development monks following those of Monk Naan vary widely. There are some Thai researchers who have focused on development monks (Suzuki and Urasaki, 1998; Urasaki, 2002). Their activities include writing and education regarding social enlightenment beyond the field of regional development. They have introduced cases in which some monks trained the physically disabled and Japanese tourists to do meditation and one where a hospice for AIDS patients and a community center were built on the premises of a Buddhist temple.

In the above, we have examined the discussion on development monks in terms of social history and social development in Thailand. Overall, social scientists tend to place maximum value on the possibilities of Buddhism while researchers of history and religion tend to focus more on the multiple social functions of Buddhism. Since I am a sociologist, my method would be to examine the function of religion in terms of establishing the problems in social development. It is imperative that we understand the social history of development monks in order to evaluate their social roles. That Buddhist temples and monks can exercise leadership and contribute to society is largely due to Thailand's distinctive historical development and regional background. By stressing this point, I believe that we can more broadly expand the horizons of the issue of Thai development monks.

2-3 Survey Research

2-3-1 Purpose and Method of the Survey Research

By comparing the typical activity of the monks who engage in regional development and the general activity of local monks, I would like to discuss the

characteristics of development monks' activities and the corresponding relationships with the social spaces where those monks conduct their activities.

The method of comparative analysis for the cases was obtained from the grounded theory of B. G. Glaser and A. L. Strauss. In other words, rather than utilizing the cases as corroborative evidence of existing theories and observations, any logic existing in the cases will be extracted from their comparisons; this is the theory-discovering type method of analysis.

2-3-2 Comparative Analysis of the Cases (Similarities and Differences)

2-3-2-1 Outline of the Cases

The cases of typical development monks were gathered at Khon Kaen University by the Institute of Research and Development. The author surveyed the entire area of Northeast Thailand between 1996 and 1998 and presented cases of monks who were introduced by the locals as monks who had contributed to regional progress (development). In 1997 in Kamalaasai Sub-district, Karashin Province, I surveyed the content of monk's activities and the social function of all temples in the local community.

Table 1 Outline of the Survey

	Khon Kaen Univ.	Sakurai, Northeast Thailand	Sakurai, Kamalaasai Sub-district
Survey Year	1991	1995-97	1997
Survey Area	Northeast Thailand (mainly in Central South)	Northeast Thailand (mainly in the Central North)	Karashin Province (Central)
Survey Method	Interview (reputation and hearsay)	Interview (reputation and hearsay)	Interview (complete enumeration)
Number of Cases	28 (44)	32	71

2-3-2-2 Attributes of Monks

Most of the monks in the cases of the Central South of Northeast Thailand were socially high-ranking and passed over many times of latent rainy season (Vassavasa); they began participating in development in the 1970s, the earliest among all the subjects. The monks in the cases of the Central North of Northeast Thailand varied widely in terms of "Vassavasa " and "generation." They began development in the 1980s. In the cases of Kamalaasai Province, there were many elderly monks who had entered the priesthood at an old age; few of them had a sense of "regional development."

Table 2 Attributes of Monks

Comparison Item	Khon Kaen Univ.	Sakurai, Northeast Thailand	Sakurai, Kamalaasai Province
Age of Monks	Mainly those in their 40s and 50s	Uniformly scattered	Mostly in their 60s and 70s; some still young
“Vassavasa ”-Training Period	Many had a long training period.	Uniformly scattered	Half had a 10-year or less training period
Starting Period for Development	1970-80	1980-90	No awareness of “development” → thus, start?

2-3-2-3 Content of Development

In the cases of the Central South of Northeast Thailand, there were many activities and many projects that regional development NGOs had helped to carry out such as the establishment of self-help organizations including rice banks and saving associations, flood control, and forest protection. In the cases of the Central North of Northeast Thailand, by contrast, there were relatively few NGO-related projects. There were a number of cases in which the disciples of Monk Man, a renowned monk who would practice ascetic wandering in the woods, built basic social infrastructures in the region; they used offerings (dana) to the temples not only from followers in the neighboring areas but also from those in Bangkok (Kamala, 1997). In the cases of Kamalaasai Province, many held annual events in rural communities and donated money to local schools from the proceeds. Others prepared to build day-care centers on the premises of temples under the policy of the Religion Bureau.

Table 3 Development Content

Comparison Item	Khon Kaen Univ.	Sakurai, Northeast Thailand	Sakurai, Kamalaasai Province
Content of Development	A lot of self-help organizations (rice banks, saving associations) and business support. Meditation training not mentioned.	Few self-help organizations. Monks renowned for meditation (disciples of ascetic wandering monks in Northeast Thailand →miracle-working).	Only one case of a rice bank. Meditation training and preaching are combined; there are many centers or schools (dojo) as well.

	A focus on civil engineering and flood control. Day-care centers. Forest protection. Temples not mentioned.	Development of civil engineering and flood control. A lot of educational and school support. Day-care centers. Tree planting, etc Development of temples.	Infrastructures not involved. A lot of educational and school support. Day-care facilities (policy of the Sangha). Tree planting, etc. Development of temples.

2-3-2-4 Activity of Temples and Its Social Background

In the cases of the Central South of Northeast Thailand, many monks resided at the temple of their hometown after having repeated the "Vassavasa (peaceful dwelling)" training and the "duhuta" exercise (ascetic wandering) in various areas; they engaged in those activities in concert with NGOs as village leaders. In the cases of the Central North of Northeast Thailand, many monks, who had entered the priesthood as a result of their attraction to the tradition of "ascetic wandering monks" in Northeast Thailand, diverted the offerings from followers living throughout the nation to social projects. Few monks had intended to conduct rural development. In the cases of Kamalaasai Province, most monks were resident monks who were also village elders, at small temples; they intended to spend the remainder of their lives there. Few monks had development plans. Only the central temples of the ward or county simultaneously established Sunday Schools to help spread Buddhism.

Table 4 Social Background of Buddhist Monks and Temples

Comparison Item	Khon Kaen Univ.	Sakurai, Northeast Thailand	Sakurai, Kamalaasai Province
Concordance rate (%) between the monk's native village and temple site	75% for the province; most go back to their native village.	50% for the province; fifty-fifty.	90% for the Sub-district; They became priests in their native village.

Class before entering the priesthood	Farmer	Farmer, urban middle class	Farmer
Motive for entering the priesthood	Traditional custom; for merit-making.	Interest in Buddhism	Traditional custom, to spend the remaining years
Comparison Item	Khon Kaen Univ.	Sakurai, Northeast Thailand	Sakurai, Kamalaasai Province
Regional Development and Monks	Monks are leaders & supporters of rural development.	Monks may assist rural development.	Monks do not get directly involved in rural development.
Social area of the temple	Regional followers and NGO personnel	Monks are highly renowned; followers come from neighboring areas and Bangkok.	Does not exceed the village area.
Characteristics of development	Aiming to carry out development	The surplus in tambun (merit-making) is spent on development.	Not very interested in development.

2-4 Discussion

2-4-1 Key Points Common with Previous Studies

That the village and temple, and the villager and monk are inseparable entities is not simply an idea; it is a reality. In rural development, monks and temples are social capitals. Thus, villagers' offerings are indispensable to the development of temples. If the village is poor, the total amount of offerings from villagers is low. Without the offerings, temples cannot afford necessary facilities to be constructed such as a lecture hall, a main hall, a confession hall, residential quarters, a bell tower, a temple gate, and a crematorium. Thus, even monks who may be focused only on the growth of their temple rather than their village cannot help being concerned about the financial condition of the village. Since the temple also functions as a community center for villagers, as well as a place for devout followers to retreat to during Buddhist holidays and the "Vassavasa" training period, it needs to be maintained regularly. Oftentimes, one can learn the financial condition of a village or the cooperative relationship among

villagers by the degree of maintenance and cleanliness of the temple.

Sometimes, though, while traveling in rural areas of Northeast Thailand, one encounters a huge, magnificent temple ill-matched with the economy of the village. This is because among high-living capitalists and politicians during the "bubble" economy of the 1990s, presenting certain monks with a set of temple buildings became a fad. As a result, they began to build new temples in addition to the temples already in existence in the village. Their purpose was possibly to convert the money they had made using corrupt business and political connections to religious assets through money laundering, or to gain support from their constituents by exploiting symbolic social capital called "the highest charity," which could be acquired by donating a temple. Those temples had little to do with the village. In some cases, though, the surplus from the offerings would trickle down to the village and then, be used to improve infrastructure such as roads and waterworks. This has been one point overlooked in previous studies of development monks.

2-4-2 Findings Different From Those of Previous Studies

First, the number of monks who had been frequently observed on the sites of rural development led by the government and regional development NGOs during the era of Monk Naan in the 1970s-80s or up to the mid-1990s and who served as leaders in the development of social capital has been on the decline. Few villagers including the village head expect monks to exercise leadership. Rather, many hope that monks will make spiritual contributions at the temple.

As of 1985, the aforementioned development monk researcher Phinit stated that the economic level of a rural village would determine whether monks will come forward as leaders or whether they will play the role of supporters in the background in implementing civil engineering projects and establishing self-help organizations. By the mid-1990s, one can say that monks had withdrawn from the territory of regional development NGOs/NPOs were conducting. The focus of regional development had shifted from infrastructure improvement to social security, welfare facilities, and spiritual training, which can lead to the cases Noriyuki and Masayo have introduced in their research. The development content has been considerably diverse; it is about to return to the area of original social roles of Buddhist monks and temples. In fact, one can easily observe people gathered at meditation-training centers or the monks' individual quarters.

Second, unlike the development monks with clear ideology whom intellectuals and NGOs/NPOs tend to pay attention to, people nowadays give more respect to monks

who carry out multifaceted social development with a charismatic air and a smooth preaching style, or a miracle-working prayer or practice. Whether legal or not, villagers sometimes seek the winning lottery numbers in the talks with those monks or they request the monks to perform various types of exorcism or good-luck prayers. The art of medicinal herbs, which has been handed down from the master to the pupil, and the knowledge of osteosynthesis and massage are also in demand. In Northeast Thailand, a monk often plays the dual role of a witch doctor called "Motam"(medicine man). Motams are lay Buddhists with the experience of being a monk; this is an ethnic religion with spiritual worship as its core which has created a distinct religious practice using the protective power of Buddhism (Hayashi, 2000). Instead of expensive town doctors, there are a number of villagers who commute to a Motam or a monk; townspeople who suffer from chronic diseases, which are considered to show little improvement with Western medicine, trust them.

2-5 Theravada Buddhism as public religion and Thai nationalism

What the author's findings can add to the previous studies is that they further clarify the context of social history, in which Thai monks of Theravada Buddhism began to engage in development, as well as the context of social changes, in which societal expectations on monks will change. The idea of alternative human development and social development, in which socially prominent monks talk about and engage in part of development projects, and which intellectuals and NGO/NPO activists support, is the essence of Theravada Buddhism.

However, its essence will capture the spirit of the people for it has multiple characteristics as a public religion and as an ethnic religion (Casanova, 1994). In Thailand, it comes in the form of a grass-roots discourse in competition with globalization. At the same time, it is worthy to note that it has elements common with Thai nationalism. The balance between those two ideas, though it is a "madhyama pratipad" (middle-of-the-road view), seems to contain problems---problems more difficult than the speaker believes. Thailand has prominent philosophers of its own such as Dr. Sulak Sivaraksa (Sivaraksa, 1988), an international cultural figure who preaches the ideological universality of Theravada Buddhism and Dr. Prawet Wasi, a politically influential social critic (Wasi, 1989). Their ideas are alternative, yet nationalistic as well.

The historical process by which people from multiple ethnic groups and minor religions were integrated into the "Thai nation," gave Theravada Buddhism the status of

public religion. As a result, “the socially active religious institution” became a facilitator to assimilate morally “others” into true “Thai nation”. Recently with the resurgence of Islamism and the prevalence of multiculturalism, Malay Muslims in the southern Thai provinces seem to protest against Thai assimilationism and Islamic activism threw fuel on the fire through violent incidents.

3 Violence and Assimilationism in southern Thailand

3-1 Overview of the violence

The series of violent incidents can be broken down into two epochs. In the first period, the main attacks were terrorist explosions which occurred at the airport and in the city by armed militants, murder (shooting, stabbing, beheading and so on) targeting Thai Buddhist, assaults on the military facilities and police stations and arm marauding, and burning of public facilities such as schools. As it was in the 1990s, Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) was alleged to be involved in series of rampages. However, since 2003 attacks have intensified and it is not certain whether PULO participated in all deeds or other organizations did. The ASEAN countries including Thailand are guarding against the network of armed organizations such as Juma Islamia (JI), the Islamist militia organization allegedly linked to be the terrorist explosions in Bali, the Ache independence movement, Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao in the Philippines and moreover Al-Qaeda in Indonesia and Malaysia. Actually, six members of JI in Thailand and Cambodia were arrested in 2003.

There were two symbolic incidents in the second period. On April 28th in 2004, a militia group simultaneously assaulted seven armed military and police bases in Yala, Pattani, and Songkhla provinces, where they were countered by army and police security forces, and as a result, 106 members of the militia and five security guards were killed. Among the assailants were 32 members of a militia group who barricaded themselves with hostages in Kruse mosque at Pattani. When they attacked, they were said to be in highly excited state (like a junkie) of shouting prayers according to the story of the army. (Bangkok Post, 1 May, 2004)

After the incident, among Islamic leaders and human rights organizations, and scholars, immediately claimed that government forces had overreacted and then the government established an investigating committee. The bereaved families bury their dead sons and husbands without bathing the body, which was the way of cremation for the person of extraordinary death and martyrdom. (Bangkok Post, 5 May). Muslims in southern Thailand were opposed to the Thai policy of dispatching its army to the peace

keeping activity in Iraq and suppressing Islamic world with America. The viewpoint that the diplomatic policy in Thailand raised up Thai Muslims to support the resurgence of militants was introduced by the media in foreign countries (Washington Post, 15 May, 2004).

After the Kruse mosque incident, Thai government began to interrogate local Muslims alleged to be related to militia organizations, however, they strengthened their resistance to the monitoring activity of the police and the army. On October 25th in 2004, a protest demonstration occurred at Taku Bai police station in Narathiwat province, where the police and the army opened a fire, killing six people, and arrested 1,370 peoples. They were taken from Narathiwat to Patthani (ngkhayuth) army base in army track, but the 78 suffocated to death on the way (Bangkok Post, 26 Oct, 2004). Receiving severe criticism from the mass media as well as related persons pointing out the mistreatment of arrestees, the Thai government compensated 400,000 baht for the dead as a condolence money and 120,000 baht for physically handicapped respectively. But their bereaved relatives and concerned people did not consent and filed a lawsuit to the total sum 80 million baht against five government agencies of the Department of Defense, the Interior Ministry, government troops, the state police bureau, the Narathiwat provincial government (Bangkok Post, 25 Oct, 2005).

The Kruse mosque and the Taku Bai incident showed the firm stance of the Thai government not to permit armed militants, however, Muslims in southern Thailand deepened their distrust to the Thai government. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra gave an order to the army to drop 100,000,000 pieces of Japanese folded-paper cranes from the sky in southern Thailand on December 5th hoping to improve relations between Malay Muslims and Thai Buddhists. The situation has not been improved by such demonstration of hoping for peace and reconciliation of both sides.

3-2 Historic origin of the conflict in southern Thailand

It is said that militia groups declare Islam's revival of the Patani kingdom as their ideal. The Patani kingdom was Malay Islamic state which prospered as a harbor city state from the 14th to the 19th century. It was conquered in 1785 by the present Rattanikosin dynasty, and in 1882 the Sultan system was abolished and replaced by the provincial governor so that Patani became a part of the Thai nation state (Wyatt, 1984: 172-173,213). During the World War Two Malay Muslims also participated in the Free Thai protest movement against Japanese military rule and hoped for independence as nation state of the Malay Muslim state. The United Kingdom continued their colonialism which was taken back from Japan until the independence of Federation of

Malaysia in 1963. As a result, Malay Muslims in southern Thailand were left.

In the recovery period after World War II, the nationalist movement of Malay Muslims demanded the following from the Thai government. (Aphornsuvan, 2004:33)

1. That Thailand approve Muslim to elect the Islam leader to govern the four southern provinces in Thailand.
2. That Thailand make all tax revenue the revenue of the four southern provinces in Thailand.
3. That Thailand approve Pono, Islamic boarding school as compulsory education.
4. That Thailand make 80 percent of the government official in southern provinces Muslims.
5. That Thailand admit Malay as the official language.
6. That Thailand admit an Islam congress which lays down customs of Muslims.
7. That Thailand authorize an Islamic religious court.

Prime Minister Luang Thamrongnawasawat consulted on the request with seven items in the cabinet in 1947, however, most members of the cabinet did not admit "self-governance" and prolonged their reply to leaders of the southern nationalist movement. When former Prime Minister and Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkharam seized power in a coup in November, 1947, southern Muslims lost their hope of continuing negotiations and changed their protecting to more aggressive activism. After the arrest of one of their leaders, Haji Salong in January, 1948, Muslims strengthened resistance and battled with the police leaving hundreds of demonstrators dead. They presented the United Nations with a petition to be added to the Malay Federation, signed of 250,000 Muslims, and fearing the retaliation of the government, 2, 000-6, 000 Muslims ran away to Malay (Aphornsuvan, 2004:41)

According to the idea of Thanet Aphornsuvan in Thammasat University, Phibunsongkharam fears the influence and return of former Prime Minister Pridi Phanomyongand who was replaced and exiled by conservative politicians including Phibunsongkharam. He suppressed politically influential people and movements such as Free Thai that had supporters in northeastern and southern Thailand. The United Kingdom which kept Malay Federation as the British territory ignored Malay nationalism in southern Thailand and it was fixed in the history as a rebellion, a riot by Thai separatists.

3-3 Muslim, ethnic minorities excluded from public religion

Muslims in southern Thailand suffered from the integration policy of Phibunsongkharam, his successor Sarit Thanarat and Thanom Kittikhachon, who

established their power in the military and became Prime Minister by coup. Especially Marshal Sarit legitimized his authoritarian regime by a development and nationalistic ideology strengthening the triad of the Thai nations, Theravada Buddhism, and the Thai state. (Ishii, 1975; Sakurai, 2005:30-31) The relations are illustrated in figure 1.

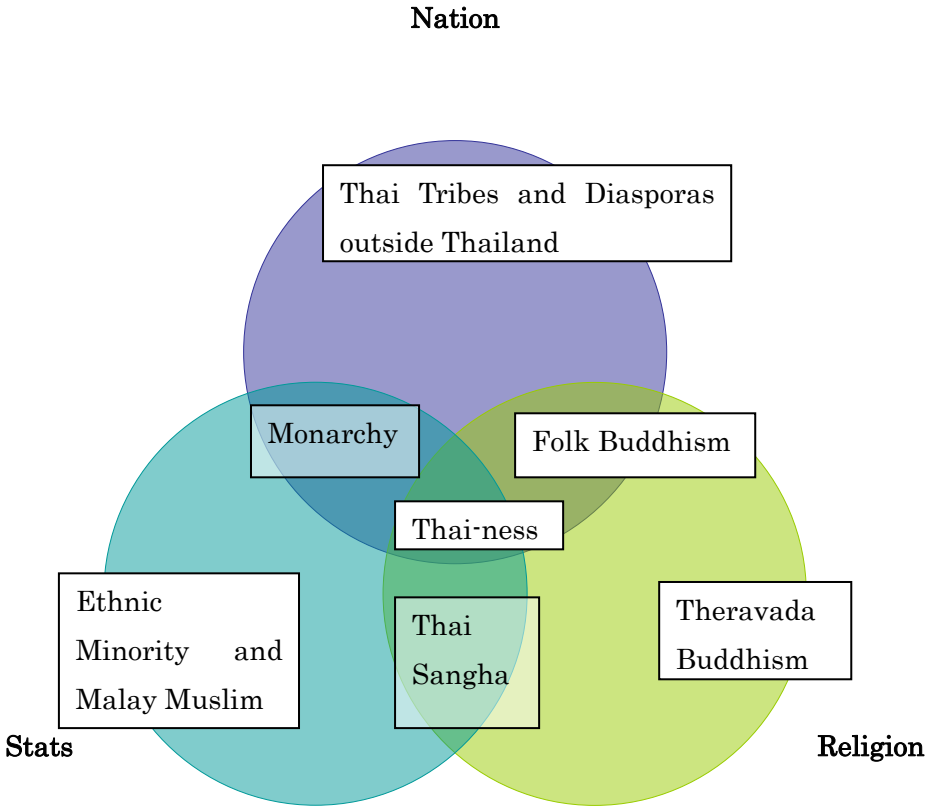

Figure 1 the triad of the Thai nations, Theravada Buddhism, and the Thai state

Three circles have each their characteristic area and should overlap according to the idea of the Thai nationalists mentioned above. Thailand could be a Thai state with a Thai nation, if 20 more ethnic groups fully the integrated into major Thai ethnicity. However, in fact, there are Thai ethnic groups, who do not live in the Thai nation, e.g. in Yunnan in China and in foreign countries as emigrants and foreign laborers. More

importantly in Thailand, there are non ethnic Thai such as hill tribes and Malay Muslims in the southern provinces. In the connecting part between the Thai nation and Thai state, exists the Thai monarchy in which the king is legitimatized as the guardian of Thai monastery. The Thai Sangha, located in the overlapping part between the Thai state and Thai Buddhism, because the Thai Sangha was authorized by the Sangha Act enacted in 1902 and Sankharat, headmaster of Thai Sangha was appointed by Thai government in 1962. And Thai folk Buddhism, conflated with spirit worship and guardian ritual, is in the overlapping area between the Thai nation and Theravada Buddhism. (Tambiah, 1976; Sakurai, 2005:54-58).

In the zone where three spheres overlap exists "Rak-Thai," foundation of Thai-ness, which conservative Thai politicians persuaded the Thai nation to identify with. Since Malay Muslims, included in the Thai state, did not hold any characteristics of Thai-ness, and refused to accept Thai-ness, the Thai government regarded them as residents of a peripheral society. But, in reality, if this region belonged to Malaysia, Malay Muslims would live as "Malay-ness" people in the triple overlapping zone of state, nation, and religion, and as a result Thai Buddhists in the southern provinces would become second class citizens who did not carry on national and religious virtue.

3-4 Utopian Islamic State in the Separatist Movement

The separatist movement was initiated by Malay Muslim elitists in politics and religion. Major groups are the following: 1) Gabungam Melayu Patani Raya (GAMPAR); 2) Barisan National Pembebasan Pattani (BNPP); 3) Barisan Revolusi National (BRN); and 4) Pertubuhan Perpaduan Pembebasan Pattani (PPPP). (Rahimmula, 2003:10-13).

Supposing that their claim of self-determination could be respected, it would be difficult for Islamic law and way of life to serve as a foundation of state in Southeast Asian countries. If they established Patani state, they should consider Thai Buddhists, Chinese Taoists, and other ethnic Christians as Malaysia did on their cultural administration. The ideal of the separatist movement, the triple overlapping of nation, Islam, and ethnic community, is utopian, because they seem to have a naive vision regarding the extent to which the blending of Islamic orders and state could be implemented and their bargaining power in terms of global politics and economy could be attained.(Ikeuchi, 2004:114-130） And their utopian society might be analogous ideology to Thai ideal society in which Thai nation, Thai ethnicity, and Thai Buddhism should overlap. Both Islamic movements and the Thai state must have an authoritarian regime.

3-5 the “Fight against Terrorism" of an Authoritarian State

The Thaksin government seems to be similar in several points to Phibunsongkharam. He tried to represent his political opponents an “others” such as antagonists and terrorists and to secure his political legitimacy to eliminate enemies. By so doing, he could be a political leader as well as a patriot. The enemies were separatist movements who refused to join in the formation of the Thai nation state identity in the Phibunsongkharam regime, and for Thaksin Islamic terrorists. The southern Thai problem has become an Achilles' heel for the Thai government, because Thai watchers in western countries, sensitive to multiculturalism, reported the Thai states’ mishandling of human rights of Muslims. Moreover, Islamic states in Southeast Asia, Malaysia and Indonesia were seriously concerned their Muslim brethrens. Irritated by not easily solved problems in southern Thailand, the top-down CEO style leadership asserted vigorous action and simultaneously such an authoritarian government has been supported by the public through two successive general elections.（Satha-Anand, 2004:9-13;2005a）

Expectations of the administration that has promised economic growth and the removal of social undesirables seem to be bigger than expectations of freedom of the press and social equity in Thailand. This is partly because the menace of terrorism was exaggerated and then the strategy of watching and combating terrorism is overly needed, and partly because the new middle class, prosperous in neo liberalist capitalist era, are not concerned the fate of others.(Aeusrivongse, 2005) As the USA,, declaring of fight against terrorism and for democracy, tended to be the most aggressive to “others,” the Thai police, declaring a war against drug and for cleanness, shot 2,637 drug traffickers dead in 2003 alone and detained thousands of persons in army bases for rehabilitation without trials. (Phongpaichit and Baker, 2004:162)

4 Conclusions

As for the problem, whether or not it is that the religious activities which aimed to contribute to civil society achieve an actual result, the viewpoint of the concerned country tends to be different from the outside researcher who considers the result of the religious activities from the background of political economy. While politicians also utilize the religious ideology of public religion to legitimatize their policy, an unintentional result not needed by the general public was sometimes generated as a side effect. Prudence is necessary for the evaluation of public religion, especially for human

and social development by monks in Thailand. (Sakurai, 2000)

The reason the author focuses on development monks is to examine their logic of practice and its efficacy in the specific context of a local community. By doing so, it is possible to consider the substantial function of religion in social development as a social science. Acknowledging that there are several variations in which development monks were engaged in rural development, we cannot limited the role of monks to development facilitator. Rather, we should consider Theravada Buddhism from the historical and political dimensions, and focus on the function and dysfunction of the monastery institution to civil society.

Southern violence should not be considered a conflict between Thai Buddhists and Malay Muslims, or between the Thai government and Islamic terrorism. Recent violent incidents have several aspects such as political, historical, and socio-economic causes, which attracts likeminded criminals, in addition to the influence of outer Islamic militia groups.

Chaiwat Satha-anand, a social scientist and peace theorist, suggests two means to settle the violence in southern Thailand. First, not to reduce a complex issue into dichotomy between "truth" and "false," but to analyze it calmly, and second, to distance themselves from identity politics (Satha-Anand, 2003;2005b). To aim at a forming multicultural society, we should not be trapped in an identity seeker-type and authoritarian politics, by which many nation states were generated and then suffered from ethnic and religious independence movements. Currently, despite the settlement efforts of the National Reconciliation Commission, violent attacks have continued and the number of the dead has reached over a thousand.

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