

Buddhism in the West: Phases, Orders and the Creation of an Integrative Buddhism

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1. Introduction

The title of the seminar "Buddhism in Modern Contexts"¹ invites examination of the recent history of Buddhism in terms of chronological, geographical and innovative issues. By 'modern contexts' I refer to a) a specific time-span, approximately dating from late 18th (1789) to late 20th century, b) to particular societies, in this case to the 'modernising' societies of Europe and the United States since the mid-19th century, and c) to features of change and innovation which strive for an adaptation to these new, i. e. modern contexts. Although admittedly rather loosely defined, common to these different approaches is the view that with the modern era a radically new period has begun, which demands new forms of expression and organisation.

The distinctiveness of modern times or modernity as a period of its own was already emphasized with regard to Buddhism by Heinz Bechert two decades ago. In a paper in 1973 Bechert proposed a threefold distinction of the history of Buddhism, a "canonical", "traditional" and "modern" Buddhism². According to him, "'canonical' Buddhism (*Urbuddhismus*) is the Buddhism found in the *tripitaka*, the canonical scriptures in Pâli"³. It thus refers to the form of Buddhism as found in India during approximately the first two to four centuries. Secondly, "'traditional' Buddhism is the totality of beliefs and practices of Buddhists in the periods after the final codification of the canonical scriptures and before the beginnings of the modern period"; according to Bechert this form is characterized by the "integration [of Buddhism] in the sociocultural system as the 'national' religion and by

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2 Heinz Bechert, "Sangha, State, Society, 'Nation': Persistence of Traditions in 'Post-Traditional' Buddhist Societies", in: *Daedalus*, 102, 1, 1973, p. 85-95, quotes p. 85.

3 Bechert, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

the emergence of formalized state-Sangha relations"⁴. And finally, according to Bechert, "'modern' Buddhism is a common designation of all forms of Buddhism that have developed under the impact of the changes which take place in the modern period"⁵. Bechert here refers to the impact of colonialism and the "disestablishment" of the *sangha* [Buddhist order] in the early 19th century⁶. The main features of this 'Buddhist modernism' are an emphasis laid on rationalist elements in Buddhist teachings, the claim that Buddhist teachings and the findings of modern science are not only in conformity but identical, the tacit elimination of traditional cosmology, and the stress on social reform and responsibility⁷.

Although Bechert applies this threefold distinction to Theravâda Buddhism only and to those South Asian countries where this particular form of Buddhist tradition is dominant (Ceylon/Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos), it will, for heuristic and systematic reasons be worthwhile to adopt his differentiation. For Bechert advocates demarcating periods and defining forms of Buddhism in *pre-modern* times, i. e. traditional and canonical Buddhism. At the same time his approach leads one to ask how Buddhism may be described following this 'modern period'. I would like to ask whether at the close of modernity and the beginning of so-called 'post-modernity' features are determinable which might point to a new and different form of Buddhism. Although speculative prediction is not the task of social scientists, I nevertheless venture to argue that, at least in Western, industrialized societies, *one* form of 'post-modern' or 'global Buddhism' will be an integrative, ecumenical Buddhism. As Bechert's terms point to specific characteristics of Buddhism in each period described, instead of speaking of a 'post-modern Buddhism', I prefer to speak of a 'global' or 'globalized Buddhism'. The latter expression is taken from social scientific studies⁸ and denotes a characteristic of Buddhism which came to the fore since about the mid-20th century. This will be outlined below.

4 Bechert, *op. cit.*

5 Bechert, *op. cit.*

6 Bechert, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

7 Bechert, *op. cit.*, p. 91. For a detailed discussion see Bechert, *Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft in den Ländern des Theravâda-Buddhismus*, Vol. 1, Frankfurt am Main, Berlin: Schriften des Instituts für Asienkunde 1966, p. 37-108.

8 See Ninian Smart, "The Importance of Diasporas", in: S. Shaked, D. Shulman, G.G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Gilgut*, Leiden: Brill 1987, p. 288-297; Roland Robertson, "Globalization, Politics, and Religion", in: James A. Beckford, Thomas Luckmann (eds.), *The Changing Face of Religion*, London 1989, p. 10-23; Roland Robertson, "The Globalization Paradigm: Thinking Globally", in: David G. Bromley (ed.), *New Developments in Theory and Research*, Vol. 1, Greenwich, London: Jai Press 1991, p. 207-223 and Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, London: Sage 1994.

The first section of this paper sketches, chronologically and geographically, major events of the dissemination of Buddhism in 'modern societies'. It also identifies the main generalized forms whereby a religious tradition such as Buddhism is transplanted to a new cultural setting.

In the second section, the paper specifies concepts of an integrative Buddhism as developed in such 'modern contexts'. The example of two Western Buddhist orders, the Arya Maitreya Mandala and the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, points both to the emergence of new organisations and to the conceptualisation of a 'Western Buddhism'. Central to this conception is the overcoming of Buddhist sectarian differences and the creation of an "'ecumenical' or 'interdenominational' Buddhism"⁹.

A short conclusion generalizes the points brought forward in sections one and two.

I. Transplanting Buddhism to 'modern contexts'

During the 19th and 20th century Buddhism, for the first time in history, was disseminated on a large scale outside Asia. The subsequent sketch of the historical data relates to the adoption of Buddhism in so-called 'modernizing' and 'modernized societies', i. e. Europe¹⁰, North America¹¹ and Australia¹². The overview deals only with Euro-American converts to Buddhism, leaving aside Buddhists from Asia living in Western countries. For the sake of clarity the data is presented within a model consisting of five phases.

9 FWBO (ed.), *Sangharakshita - A Short Biography*, two page leaflet, no year given.

10 See Heinz Bechert, "Buddhist Revival in East and West", in: Heinz Bechert, Richard Gombrich (eds.), *The World of Buddhism*, London: Thames and Hudson 1984, p. 273-285; Stephen Batchelor, *The Awakening of the West. The Encounter of Buddhism and Western Culture*, Berkeley: Parallax 1994 and Martin Baumann, "Creating a European Path to Nirvāna: Historical and Contemporary Developments of Buddhism in Europe", in: *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 10, 1, 1995, p. 55-70.

11 For North America I relied mainly on Charles S. Prebish, *American Buddhism*, Belmont: Wadsworth 1979; Rick Fields, *How the Swans came to the Lake. A Narrative History of Buddhism in America*, Boulder: Shambala 1981, 3rd ed. 1992; Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism 1844-1912. Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent*, Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 1992.

12 For the spread of Buddhism in Australia see the excellent study by Paul Croucher, *Buddhism in Australia. 1848-1988*, Kensington, NSW, Australia: NSW University Press 1989. For a general account see Enid Adam, Philip J. Hughes, *The Buddhists in Australia*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service 1996. I was not able to include the forthcoming study on Buddhism in South Africa by Darrel Wratten, *Buddhism in South Africa. From Textual Imagination to Contextual Innovation*, Cape Town: Cape Town University Press 1997. See also Louis H. van Loon, "Buddhism in South Africa", in: Gruchy, John W. de; Prozesky, Martin (eds.), *Living Faiths in South Africa*, Cape Town: David Philip 1995, p. 209-217.

1. Contact

Western interest in Buddhism began around 150 years ago, although knowledge about Asian religions and philosophy was disseminated since the 17th century. The recognition of Buddhism as a distinct religion originated with Eugène Burnouf's outstanding work, *L'introduction à l'histoire du buddhisme indien*, (Paris 1844). Burnouf (1801-52) imposed a rational structuring on ideas hitherto perceived as unrelated and in so doing created the "prototype of the European concept of Buddhism"¹³. Following Burnouf's fundamental work, numerous studies appeared during the 1850s. Further treatises and translations paved the way for an enhanced knowledge and understanding of the foreign teachings. It was during the mid-19th century that orientalists, philosophers and Christian apologists in Europe and North America all of a sudden "discovered"¹⁴ Buddhism. Knowledge about Buddhism was, however, restricted to books and to collections in oriental libraries and scholars treated it as a textual object only.

Thus, orientalists and philosophers first made Buddhism known in the West. In Germany, following the enthusiastic interpretations of the 'Oriental Renaissance', the writings of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1869) inspired a wide interest in Buddhist philosophy and ethics among intellectuals, academics and artists. The North American east coast transcendentalists Emerson (1803-82), Thoreau (1817-62) and Whitman (1819-92) praised Indian philosophy and introduced translations, produced in Europe, to members of the American middle and upper classes.

Summing up, *translations* and literary of *texts* were the mediators that initiated the dissemination of Buddhism in the 'modernizing societies'. During this period, from the early 19th century to the 1880s, no Asian Buddhists with a missionary aim visited the West.

2. Organising: First converts and Buddhist organisations

Several events mark the end of the first and the onset of the second phase of adoption. In 1879 Sir Edwin Arnold (1832-1904) published his famous poem *The Light of Asia*, followed by Colonel Henry Steel Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism* in 1881. Both works, as well as the *Buddhist Catechism* (1888)

13) Batchelor, *Awakening of the West*, 1994, p. 239.

14) Philip C. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism*, Cambridge: University Press 1988, p. 7.

by Friedrich Zimmermann (1865-1915)¹⁵, praised the Buddha and his teaching. Echoing this overt glorification of the Asian religion, the first Westerners became Buddhists. In the early 1880s the German Paul Carus (1852-1919) and the Austrian Karl Eugen Neumann (1865-1915) became 'self-converted followers of the teaching'¹⁶. The appeal of Indian spirituality was strengthened by the intervention of the Theosophical Society. This society was founded in New York by Olcott (1832-1907) and Madame Blavatsky (originally the Russian Helene Hahn von Rottenstern, 1831-91) in 1875. Olcott and Blavatsky publicly embraced Buddhism in Ceylon in 1880¹⁷. The first American formally to convert to Buddhism on American soil was the German-American Carl Theodor Strauss (1852-1937). After a public lecture by Anagârîka Dharmapâla (1864-1933) at the Chicago 'World Parliament of Religions' in 1893, Strauss took refuge in the Buddha, *Dharma* (teaching) and *Sangha* (community)¹⁸.

It should not be forgotten that just after the turn of the century Europeans went to South Asia to become ordained as monks in the Theravâda tradition. Ananda Metteyya, the former Golden Dawn occultist Allen Bennett McGregor (1872-1923), and Nyânatiloka, former musician Anton W. F. Gueth (1879-1957), are among the most famous of these pioneer European monks. Both engaged in Buddhist activities in Burma and Ceylon respectively, as well as in Europe¹⁹. It should be borne in mind that

15 The catechism was published under the pseudonym Subhadra Bhikshu, the full title being *Buddhistischer Katechismus. Zur Einführung in die Lehre des Buddha Gotama. Nach den heiligen Schriften der Südlichen Buddhisten zum Gebrauche für Europäer zusammengestellt und mit Anmerkungen versehen*, Braunschweig 1888, 14th ed. Leipzig 1914. For the numerous translations see Hellmuth Hecker, *Lebensbilder deutscher Buddhisten. Ein bio-bibliographisches Handbuch*, series No. 5 of the research project "Buddhist Modernism", Konstanz: University of Konstanz 1992, p. 288-289.

16 See Hecker, *Lebensbilder deutscher Buddhisten*, 1990, p. 101 and 1992, p. 26-27. Tweed characterises Carus as a "sympathizer". See Tweed, *American Encounter*, 1992, p. 43.

17 See Fields, *Swans*, 1981, p. 97 and George D. Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka. Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation and Response*, South Carolina: South Carolina Press 1988, p. 48-52. Olcott may not have been the first American to take up Buddhism. Even in 1875 Dyer Daniel Lum considered himself to be a Buddhist, although the commitment was not formalized in a traditional Buddhist ceremony. See Tweed, *American Encounter*, 1992, p. 39-40.

18 See Fields, *Swans*, 1981, p. 128; Hecker, *op. cit.*, 1992, p. 252; Tweed, *American Encounter*, 1992, p. 39.

19 McGregor became a *bhikkhu* in May 1902. See Christmas Humphreys, *Sixty Years of Buddhism in England (1907-1967)*, London: Buddhist Society 1968, p. 2 and Ian Oliver, *Buddhism in Britain*, London: Anchor Press 1979, p. 43-45. Gueth was ordained as a monk in February 1904 in Burma. For his life see Michael Carrithers, *The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1983, p. 26-45; Hecker, *Lebensbilder*, 1990, p. 58-73 and Hecker, *Der erste deutsche Bhikkhu. Das bewegte Leben des Ehrwürdigen Nyânatiloka (1878-1957) und seine Schüler*, series No. 10, Konstanz: University of Konstanz 1995.

the Buddhist revival in South Asia, called by Bechert 'Buddhist Modernism' and by Gananath Obeyesekere 'Protestant Buddhism'²⁰, created various missionary impulses in Europe and North America.

During this time, further translations and studies were published, special reference needs to be done to the Pâli Text Society, founded by Thomas W. Rhys Davids (1843-1922) in 1881. Within the German-speaking world, Hermann Oldenberg (1854-1920) with his Pâli based study *Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine, His Order* (1881/Engl. 1882) served to popularise Buddhism more than any other work of the time. Oldenberg's pathbreaking work was followed by important translations of the Indologist, Karl Eugen Neumann. Neumann, a Buddhist since 1884 travelled to Ceylon and India in 1894²¹.

Around the turn of the century the first Buddhist organisations were formed in the West. In 1897 Anagârîka Dharmapâla founded an American branch of the Mahâ Bodhi Society. In Europe the Indologist, Dr. Karl Seidenstücker (1876-1936), established the 'Society for the Buddhist Mission in Germany' in Leipzig (1903). Likewise, Ananda Metteyya formed 'The Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland' in London (1907). In lectures, pamphlets and books the first professed Buddhists tried to win recruits from the educated middle and upper classes. In Australia, however, only a few theosophists and a "handful of isolated Australian Buddhists" advocated Indian philosophy and religion; a Buddhist society was not founded until the early 1950s²².

In addition to the dissemination of Buddhist concepts by way of texts there were, during this phase, a few learned Western converts to Buddhism. These 'missionaries in their own land' propagated their convictions and testified to the existence of the newly arrived foreign teaching. Furthermore, some Asian Buddhists visited the West and the first organisations propagating Buddhism were set up.

20 Gananath Obeyesekere, "Religious Symbolism and Political Change in Ceylon", in: *Modern Ceylon Studies*, 1, 1, 1970, p. 43-63; Obeyesekere, Richard Gombrich, *Buddhism Transformed. Religious Change in Sri Lanka*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1988, esp. p. 202-240 and Obeyesekere, "Buddhism and Conscience: An Exploratory Essay", in: *Daedalus*, 120, 3, 1991, p. 219-239.

21 Apart from Hecker's detailed studies on Neumann see the latter's travel diary, Karl Eugen Neumann, *Flüchtige Skizzen und Notizen aus Zeilon und Indien im Sommer 1894*, ed. by Detlef Kantowsky, series No. 9. Konstanz: University of Konstanz 1994.

22 Croucher, *Buddhism in Australia*, 1989, quote p. 25. For the few activities up to 1910 see p. 1-19.

3. Practising Buddhism

The First World War serves as the demarcation between phase two and three²³. In the United States and Australia there were comparatively few Buddhist activities between the 1920s and the late 1940s. Japanese Zen masters Nyogen Senzaki (1876-1958) and Sokei-an Sasaki (1882-1945) initiated small Zen meditation groups, but they attracted little interest. It was not until the return to America of Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (1870-1966) for a long stay between 1950 and 1958 that Zen became popular and widespread.

Nevertheless, in Britain and Germany, Buddhism was now beginning to be *practised*, at least by its leading proponents. In contrast to the previous period, the teachings were to be conceived not only by the mind but also to be applied to the whole person. Religious practices such as spiritual exercises and devotional acts became part of German and British Buddhist life.

In 1921, Georg Grimm (1868-1945) and Seidenstücker initiated the 'Buddhist Parish for Germany' and intended to employ a Buddhist itinerant preacher. The parish regarded itself as a religious community of Buddhist lay followers. Its members had taken refuge in the 'Three Jewels', i. e. in the Buddha, *Dharma* and *Sangha*, and followed the ethical precepts of lay Buddhists (the five *silas*). In 1924, Dr. Paul Dahlke (1865-1928) built the 'Buddhist House', which was part ordinary residence and part monastery, in which Dahlke led an ascetic and religious life similar to that of South Asian Buddhist monks. Two years later a temple and three hermitages for meditation retreats were added²⁴. In addition, Dahlke had an eleven foot high memorial stone erected on the North German island of Sylt, paying public homage to the Buddha²⁵.

23 In the United States and Australia during the 1920s to the late 1940s theorian culture began to lose its dominance in the cities" and that various developments "changed the character of the conversation about Buddhism", see Tweed, *American Encounter*, 1992, p. 156. Fields postulates a phase from 1905-45. See Fields, *Swans*, 1981, p. 168 ff. Prebish gives the rather broad timespan from 1893 to 1960. See Prebish, *American Buddhism*, 1979, p. 16 ff. For Australia, Croucher's second phase encompasses the years from 1910 to 1952. See Croucher, *Buddhism in Australia*, 1989, p. 19 ff.

24 For details, see Klaus-Josef Notz, *Der Buddhismus in Deutschland in seinen Selbstdarstellungen*, Frankfurt am Main, Bern, New York: P. Lang 1984, p. 46-67; Hellmuth Hecker, *Chronik des Buddhismus in Deutschland*, 3rd ext. ed., Plochingen: Deutsche Buddhistische Union 1985, p. 51-52, p. 64-66 and Martin Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten. Geschichte und Gemeinschaften*, Marburg: Diagonal 1993, p. 60-65. In Germany, a kind of schism arose within the Buddhist movement as Grimm and Dahlke fought a fierce dispute on the interpretation of the teaching of *anattā* ('No-Self').

25 Probably Dahlke's memorial was the first explicitly Buddhist monument in Europe. For a description, picture and maps see Helmut Klar, *Zeitzeuge zur Geschichte des Buddhismus in Deutschland*, ed. by Martin Baumann, series No. 11, Konstanz: University of Konstanz 1995,

In London, Christmas Humphreys (1901-83) formed the Buddhist Society as a lodge of the Theosophical Society in 1924. A Buddhist shrine was opened in 1925 and *Wesak*, the commemoration of the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and decease, was celebrated on a regular basis. As a result of Dharmapâla's missionary efforts in Britain during the mid-1920s, a branch of the Mahâ Bodhi Society was founded in 1926 and a Buddhist *Vihâra* (monastery) with three resident Theravâdin *bhikkhus* was established in London (1928-40, re-opened 1954)²⁶.

Compared to Germany, there were fewer Buddhist activities in Britain during the interwar period, yet even fewer in other European countries. Apart from the founding of *Les amis du Bouddhisme* by Constance Lounsbury in France in 1929, there is evidence of only a few Buddhists. In Italy and in Austria, there were no Buddhist organisations during this period²⁷.

The important thing to note about this period, is the inception of devotional and religious practices as an additional means for the dissemination of Buddhism in the West. At the same time the production of translations continued, albeit at a slower rate than in the period around 1900.

4. Plurality and Meditation

The Second World War marked an end to all public Buddhist activities in European capitals (except London) and cities. From the 1950s onwards new Buddhist traditions were transported to Europe. Japanese Shin Buddhism or Jôdo Shinshû (True Pure Land Teachings) was established in Britain (1952) and Germany (1956). Zen Buddhism became known through the writings of Suzuki and Eugen Herrigel (1884-1955). Tibetan Buddhism won its first followers in Berlin in 1952 through the establishment of the Western branch of the Arya Maitreya Mandala.

24-28 and 146-147; for a historical contextualization, see Martin Baumann, "Ein buddhistisches Denkmal auf Sylt", in: *Lotusblätter*, 2, 1994, p. 24-26.

26 For details see Humphreys, *Sixty Years*, 1968, p. 20-45; Oliver, *Buddhism*, 1979, pp. 50-53 and 66-67; Jeffrey Somers, "Theravâda Buddhism in Great Britain", in: *Religion Today*, 7, 1, 1991, p. 4-7.

27 See Hellmuth Hecker, "Buddhisten im alten Österreich", in: *Bodhi Baum*, 18, 2, 1993, p. 16-19. In Italy, the outstanding orientalist, Giuseppe Tucci (1894-1984), combined his academic studies with personal interests in Tibetan Buddhism, see John Snelling, *Buddhismus. Ein Handbuch für den westlichen Leser*, München: Diederichs 1991, p. 279, and Maria Angela Fala, "Il Buddhismo in Italia", in: Rahula, Walpola, *L'insegnamento del Buddha*, 2nd ed. Rome: Edizioni Paramita 1994, p. 121-131, esp. p. 122. On Tucci, however, see also Gustavo Benavides, "Giuseppe Tucci, or Buddhism in the Age of Fascism", in: Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (ed.), *Curators of the Buddha*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1995, p. 161-196.

New Buddhist groups and societies were founded in various European countries. Buddhism spread more and more widely as attractive books and translations became more readily available. Simultaneously, Asian teachers began visiting the incipient groups, to lecture and conduct courses on a regular basis.

During the 1960s, a considerable change occurred in the way that members and interested people wanted to experience Buddhism both spiritually and physically. Meditation became very popular. Courses in *vipassanā* meditation (Theravāda tradition) and Zen meditation were booked up well in advance. Zen seminars (*sesshins*) took place in increasing numbers with Japanese teachers coming from Japan to guide the newly formed Zen groups²⁸.

In the United States, lecture tours by Suzuki instigated an upsurge of interest in Zen. At the same time, "Beat Zen" and "Square Zen" created by Allan Watts, Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac popularised Zen and attracted members of the emerging 'counter culture'. Some outstanding Japanese teachers settled in America as the immigration regulations were relaxed during the mid-1950s and '60s²⁹. Around 1960 "American Zen turned from the intellectual to the practical"³⁰ and various centres and temples were founded as young Americans returned from Japan having received a traditional education. In addition, further Buddhist traditions arrived from Asia, including the numerically strong Sōka Gakkai³¹.

In Australia, this phase somewhat parallels the development of the adoption of Buddhism in Europe around the turn of the century. The first organisation was founded in 1953, with a membership of mainly well-educated citizens. These few Buddhists in the mid-1950s "adopted Buddhism as a kind of hobby: it did not inform every breath taken"³². Charles F. Knight (1890-1975) and Natasha Jackson (1902-90) "saw Buddhism as a triumph of rationalism and used it as a foil in their attacks on Christianity. It was a strongly intellectualised approach, going to great lengths to

28 For details see Batchelor, *Awakening*, 1994, p. 119-123, p. 205-223 and Baumann, "Creating a European Path", 1995, p. 59-60.

29 For details see Prebish, *American Buddhism*, 1979, p. 9-12, p. 20-31; Fields, *Swans*, 1981, p. 195-272 and J. Gordon Melton, Constance A. Jones, "New Japanese Religions in the United States", in: Peter Clarke, Jeffrey Somers (eds.), *Japanese New Religions in the West*, Folkestone: Curzon Press 1994, p. 33-53, esp. p. 35 and p. 43-46.

30 Fields, *Swans*, 1981, p. 243.

31 See Prebish, *American Buddhism*, 1979, p. 12-13; Jane Hurst, *Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism and the Soka Gakkai in America: The Ethos of a New Religious Movement*, New York: Garland Press 1992; Sandy McIntosh, "As American as Apple Pie? An Insider's View of Nichiren Shoshu", in: *Tricycle*, Winter 1992, p. 18-25.

32 Croucher, *Buddhism in Australia*, 1989, p. 45.

prove that Buddhism was fully consonant with scientific thinking"³³. Just the same points were emphasised by Ananda Metteyya, Seidenstücker and by Dahlke 50 years earlier. As in other Western countries during the 1960s, Zen, Pure Land and Sôka Gakkai were also imported in Australia³⁴.

In general, during this phase two characteristics stand out in contrast to the previous phases: Buddhism was no longer dominated by a single tradition or school, as had been the case in Europe with the Theravâda and in the US with Zen. Rather, since the 1950s Buddhist teachers of various traditions arrived from Asia to win converts and to found centres. A *plurality* of Buddhist traditions emerged. Secondly, the shift from intellectual interest to practical application, partly begun during the 1920s, deepened and spread through increased interest in meditation. *Meditational practices* served as a further significant mediator in transplanting Buddhist traditions.

5. Boom of Tibetan Buddhism

The "Zen boom"³⁵ was followed by an upsurge of interest in Tibetan Buddhism since the mid-1970s. Tibetan teachers such as Tarthang Tulku (b. 1935) and Chögyam Trungpa (1939-87) had already arrived in the US in 1969 and 1970 respectively. They formed their own organisations which established European branches during the 1980s. From the mid-1970s, high ranking *lamas* (advanced teachers) conducted preaching tours in Europe, North America and Australia. Many members of the protest movements and the 'counter culture' of the late 1960s/ early 1970s became, and continue to be, fascinated by Tibetan Buddhist rituals, symbols and the lives of the lamas. Within only two decades, Tibetan Buddhists were able to found a multitude of centres and groups, outnumbering all other traditions³⁶.

33 Croucher, *op. cit.*, 1989, p. 54-55; see also p. 70 for their rationalist interpretation.

34 Croucher distinguishes two phases, 1952-56 and 1956-71, the phases being separated by a crisis of the few Buddhist societies. Croucher, *op. cit.*, 1989, p. 37-79.

35 Ernst Benz, "Buddhismus in der westlichen Welt", in: Heinrich Dumoulin (ed.), *Buddhismus in der Gegenwart*, Freiburg: Herder 1970, quote p. 193 (Engl. transl.: H. Dumoulin, J. C. Maraldo (eds.); *Buddhism in the Modern World*, New York: Macmillan 1979).

36 For the Western fascination of Tibet and Tibetan culture, see Peter Bishop, *Dreams of Power. Tibetan Buddhism and the Western Imagination*, London: Athlone Press 1993. A tentative explanation of the appeal of Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism in particular is to be found in Martin Baumann, "Analytische Rationalisten und romantische Sucher. Motive der Konversion zum Buddhismus in Deutschland", in: *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, 79, 3, 1995, p. 207-225.

This rapid increase, accompanied by an expansion of already existing institutions, led to a considerable rise in the number of Buddhist groups and centres. In Britain, for example, the number of organisations *quadrupled* from 74 in 1979 to about 300 in 1994³⁷. In Germany, interest in Buddhism resulted in a *fivefold* increase in the number of centres and communities from less than 40 in 1975 to more than 200 in 1991³⁸. For the United States Don Morreale in 1988 listed 432 groups, centres and organisations, with 55 for Canada³⁹.

Buddhism's rapid growth started with the cultural revolutions of the 1950s and '60s. With regard to Zen in the US its rise has been described as "dramatic, involving the establishment of hundreds of different centres"⁴⁰. Henry Finney estimates that more than 90% of the American Buddhist groups and centres were founded during the 1970s and '80s⁴¹. Similarly, in Australia the number of Buddhists quadrupled from 35,000 (1981) to 140,000 (1991), organized in some 167 groups and societies⁴². This tremendous increase is, however, mostly due to a sharp numerical rise of Asian immigrants, having settled in Australia during the 1980s. A feature, likewise observable in the United States, France, Great Britain and Germany and very much in need of more attention than paid here⁴³.

The rapid growth of interest in Buddhism, and more generally in non-Christian religions, is to a certain extent due to wider socio-political changes in Western societies during the 1960s. Among many other things, these changes brought about a renewed interest in religious experience and spirituality. Within Buddhism, the meditational and devotional traditions of Japan and Tibet assumed a special appeal. This appears to resonate with

37 See *The Buddhist Directory*, London: The Buddhist Society 1979 and 6th ed. London 1994 (listing 286 groups and organisations) and *Religions in the UK. A Multi-Faith Directory*, ed. by Paul Weller, Derby: University of Derby 1993, p. 88-132 (listing 302 organisations).

38 See Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten*, 1993, p. 218-224. The number may be estimated to about 250 groups and centres for 1995.

39 Don Morreale (ed.), *Buddhist America. Centres, Retreats, Practices*, Santa Fe: J. Muir Publ. 1988. For an updated assessment, see Charles S. Prebish, "Ethics and Integration in American Buddhism", in: *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, 2, 1995, p. 125-139.

40 Henry C. Finney, "American Zen's 'Japan Connection': A Critical Case Study of Zen Buddhism's Diffusion to the West", in: *Sociological Analysis*, 52, 4, 1991, p. 379-396, quote p. 380.

41 Finney, "American Zen's 'Japan Connection'", 1991, p. 383.

42 Adam, Hughes, *Buddhists in Australia*, 1996, p. 41 and p. 61. Unfortunately, the number of Buddhist organisations in 1981 is not available.

43 For the United States, see Paul David Numrich, *Old Wisdom in the New World. Americanization in Two Immigrant Theravāda Buddhist Temples*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press 1996. For estimates of Asian immigrant and convert Buddhists in Western countries, see the table in Martin Baumann, „Il buddhismo in Occidente“, in: *Storia Generale delle Religioni*, Vol. 4, ed. by Giovanni Filoramo, Rom: Gius. Laterza & Figli 1996 (in press).

a general trend towards the revival of mystic and ritualistic elements in religious life within Western societies. These developments suggest that significant numbers of people who perceive contemporary society as spiritually uprooted and secularised desire life to be rekindled with spirituality and mystique. The cold, rational world, virtually deprived of all mystique (*Entzauberung der Welt*) should somehow become 're-enchanted' (*wieder-verzaubert*)⁴⁴.

Thus, apart from texts, Buddhist 'missionaries' and meditational forms it is possible to include religious ritual (liturgy) and mystical forms as further sources for spreading Buddhism to 'modern contexts'.

Buddhism in the West is deeply marked by its heterogeneous and diverse appearance. A multitude of traditions and schools have embarked from their Asian home countries and successfully settled in urbanised, industrialised settings⁴⁵. In the West, these schools and traditions to a large extent did not remain unchanged. Various sub-schools and sub-branches have evolved. In the course of time, a process of authentication of Western teachers by the Buddhist mother tradition in Asia occurred. This has given birth to both traditionally oriented centres and to independent centres, favouring developments of their own. Mention could be made of the Insight Meditation Society in the US, the English Sangha Trust centred in Britain (with four Theravâda monasteries in Britain, one in Italy and one in Switzerland), the almost 200 centres and groups of the Association Zen Internationale (founded by Deshimaru Rôshi, 1914-82), centred in France. Likewise, since the 1970s, Tibetan Buddhists have created a global network by way of touring lamas and a multitude of centres. In addition, Western Buddhist groups such as the Arya Maitreya Mandala (AMM) and the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO) have become established on a worldwide basis.

44 Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik I. Eine Aufsatzsammlung*, Tübingen: Mohr 1920, 7th ed. Gütersloh: Mohn 1984, pp. 123 and 367. For an analysis of the main reasons to convert to Buddhism, see Martin Baumann, "Analytische Rationalisten und romantische Sucher. Motive der Konversion zum Buddhismus in Deutschland", in: *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, 79, 3, 1995, p. 221f.

45 For a theoretical model of this transplantation process, see Martin Baumann, "The Transplantation of Buddhism to Germany. Processive Modes and Strategies of Adaptation", in: *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, 6, 1, 1994, p. 35-61. In addition, see Eva K. Neumaier-Dargyay, "Is Buddhism like a Tomato? Thoughts about the Transplantation of Buddhism to Germany: A Response to Martin Baumann", in: *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, 7, 2, 1995, p. 185-194.

II. Buddhist orders conceptualizing an integrative Buddhism

Part II concentrates on two specific Buddhist orders. I have selected the orders of the AMM and FWBO as they themselves claim to create a 'Western Buddhism', appropriate to the particular conditions of Western societies. As the basis of the orders' doctrinal teachings and meditational practices, both texts and 'techniques' from Theravâda and Mahâyâna-Buddhism are used.

The orders AMM and FWBO

The Arya Maitreya Mandala was founded by the late German born Lama Anagârîka Govinda (E. L. Hoffmann, 1898-1985) in North India in 1933. For the first 20 years, in which it was more or less a circle of about 30 Indian professors and academics, its scope and membership widened as the Western branch of the AMM was established in Berlin in 1952. During the 1960s the order attracted quite a number of people in Europe and the US as Lama Govinda conducted several lecture tours. In the early 1990s the order encompasses about 400 to 500 members and many more affiliated friends and supporters. The main region of activity is Western Europe, especially Germany⁴⁶.

The organisation of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order was instigated by the English born Sangharakshita (born 1925) in London in 1967. A year later the 'Western Buddhist Order' was founded by the ordination of its first 12 members. During the 1970s the new Buddhist movement spread throughout Britain, establishing several centres, communities and co-operatives. In the 1980s a move to the continent and to non-European countries was successfully realized. An especially strong branch of the FWBO has developed in Western India, where close ties were made with Ambedkar's Buddhist conversion movement among the untouchables. In contrast to the AMM, where growth has slowed down, the FWBO enjoys in a steady increase of supporters, order members and centres worldwide.

46 Most famous works of Lama Anagârîka Govinda are his *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, London: Rider 1960 (German 1956) and *Der Weg der weißen Wolken*, Zürich: Rascher 1969. For the history of developments see Advayavajra, "Zum 60jährigen Bestehen des Ordens Arya Maitreya Mandala. Ein Rückblick", in: *Der Kreis*, 208, 1993, p. 3-44; Martin Baumann, *Der Orden Arya Maitreya Mandala. Religionswissenschaftliche Darstellung einer westlich-buddhistischen Gemeinschaft*, Marburg: Diagonal 1994 and Advayavajra, "Lama Anagarika Govinda. Ein Wegbereiter für den Buddhismus in unserer Zeit", in: *Bodhi Baum. Jahrbuch für Buddhismus*, ed. by the W. Karwath Society, Netting: Vienna Publ. 1995, p. 107-143.

In 1996 the number of ordained order members was about 650, the number of friends was estimated at more than 100,000⁴⁷.

The biographies of Govinda and Sangharakshita serve as an example for their integrative and inter-traditional approach. During the late 1920s resp. late 1940s, the two European born founders took ordination in the Theravâda *sangha* in Burma resp. India. Years later they encountered Tibetan Buddhism and were initiated into the practices and teachings of its different schools. During the decades they spent in Asia they became intimately acquainted with various Buddhist schools and traditions. In order to overcome the sectarian delimitations and the insistences on formalities observed within a school or tradition they founded organisations of their own.

Govinda's and Sangharakshita's interpretation of Buddhism purposefully departed from existing Buddhist traditions in Asia. They adhered to no specific school or tradition, either historical or contemporary. Rather, both orders have been eager to establish a line of ordination and authority of their own. For this purpose, only persons who whole-heartedly commit themselves to the Buddhist path are able to become members of the order. Emphasis is placed on the significance of 'Going for Refuge' (becoming a Buddhist) and the transference of Buddhist values, such as generosity (Sanskrit: *dâna*), compassion (*karunâ*) and loving kindness (*maitrî*), into ordinary life.

AMM: The on-going development of Buddhism

Characteristic of the AMM is its dynamic interpretation of Buddhist history in successive steps of revolution and stagnation. According to Govinda, the 2500 years of Buddhist history forms a "necessary integral process of development"⁴⁸. Each *yâna* ('carriage, vehicle'), i. e. the so-called Hinayâna, Mahâyâna and Vajrayâna, has a value of its own and evinces specific so-called 'essential aspects' of the Buddhist teaching. Whereas the Hinayâna emphasizes discipline and ethics (*sîla*), the

47 See, among others, Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism. Its Doctrines and Methods through the Ages*, London 1957, 6th ed. London: Tharpa 1987; Sangharakshita's memoirs *The Thousand-petalled Lotus*, Gloucester 1976 and *Facing Mount Kachenjunga*, Glasgow: Windhorse 1991. Sangharakshita's impact and the movement's development was described by order member Subhuti, *Buddhism for Today - A Portrait of a new Buddhist Movement*, 2nd ed. Glasgow: Windhorse 1988 and *Bringing Buddhism to the West: A Life of Sangharakshita*, Birmingham: Windhorse 1995; from a scholarly point of view see also Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten*, 1993, p. 164-181.

48 Information leaflet of the AMM, no date (my translation).

Mahâyâna lays importance by way of the Bodhisattva ideal on loving kindness (*maitrî*) and wisdom (*prajñâ*). The Vajrayâna, as the latest historical development on Indian territory, stresses the aspect of meditation (*samâdhi*) and the interrelation of macro- (universum) and micro-cosmos (body, person). Within the AMM "the streams of the three great *yânas* of Buddhism merge", the Vajrayâna "in a way being the integration of all preceding developments"⁴⁹.

Govinda interpreted the historical developments of the Buddhist *yânas* as a successive, dynamic process, leading to the stage of the Vajrayâna. As such, Govinda remained within the range of common Tibetan apologetics which absorb the preceding developments by interpreting them as early stages of their own tradition. By relating his basic model of organic growth to the Vajrayâna too, however, Govinda relativized this putative end point of development as a further transitional stage. Unlike common Buddhist theories, which predict a decline and degeneration of Buddhist *Dharma*, Govinda advocates a progressive and optimistic notion. In the West, according to Govinda, the "great chance of a new beginning" has now come about⁵⁰. In a synoptic overview of the particular developments "the essentials of *all* schools of Buddhism" can be extracted⁵¹. Western Buddhists have now got the opportunity to differentiate culture- and time-bound aspects from these 'essentials' of Buddhism. These 'essential' elements provide "the basis for a *further development* of Buddhism in our time"⁵². The model and symbol of this next development has been, and is, the future Bodhisattva Maitreya, who thus serves as the order's emblem.

FWBO: The re-awakening of the 'Original Teaching'

Like the AMM, the FWBO does not refer to a specific Buddhist tradition in Asia. Rather, the figure of Buddha Sâkyamuni and his spiritual experience serve as the most important points of authority. According to Sangharakshita "the unity of Buddhism consists in the fact that (...) all schools of Buddhism aim at Enlightenment, at reproducing the spiritual experience of

49 Quotes from Govinda, *Lebendiger Buddhismus im Abendland: Vision und Vermächtnis des grossen Mittlers zwischen Ost und West*, Bern, München, Wien: Barth 1986, p. 169 and p. 67 (my translation). More detailed in Govinda, "Vom Theravâda zum Zen", in: *Bodhi Baum*, 9, 1, 1984, p. 22-30 and Govinda, *Lebendiger Buddhismus im Abendland*, 1986, p. 35-41 and p. 63-68 See most recently Advayavajra, "Lama Anagarika Govinda", 1995, p. 121f.

50 Govinda, *op. cit.*, p. 25 (my translation).

51 Govinda, *op. cit.*, p. 44, emphasis in the text (my translation).

52 Govinda, *op. cit.*, p. 45, emphasis in the text (my translation).

the Buddha"⁵³. Basic to the FWBO is its reference to "the spirit of the Original teaching", as Sangharakshita calls it⁵⁴. This 'original teaching' and the 'spirit' are to be brought to light again, to be re-awakened.

The path to this experience of enlightenment is interpreted as a so-called 'spiritual growth' of the 'individual'. Sangharakshita has developed a stage model in order to illustrate the individual and the historico-cultural growth from "Lower" to "Higher Evolution"⁵⁵. With reference to this model of growth, Sangharakshita's reconstructed definition of the 'core of Buddhism' as a spiritual experience opens up the possibility of choosing contents and methods from various historical traditions of Buddhism. As "the essence of Buddhism is universal and unchanging"⁵⁶, according to the interpretation of the FWBO, 'inspirational' advice will be found in nearly all Buddhist schools and traditions. "We may take different things from different forms of Buddhism, but we take them according to our actual spiritual needs, rather than in accordance with any preconceived intellectual ideas. We take whatever will help us *grow* under the conditions of Western life"⁵⁷.

The special emphasis which is placed on the 'Going for Refuge' and the observance of the ten ethical precepts (Sanskrit: *mûla prâtimoksa*) represent in Sangharakshita's words "a return to, and a renewed emphasis upon, the basics of Buddhism"⁵⁸. The approach of the FWBO represents an intra-Buddhist syncretism which in a reformistic way tries to revert to the origins of the teachings. The FWBO itself calls its interpretation of Buddhism an "'interdenominational' Buddhism", "'ecumenical' in Buddhist terms"⁵⁹.

53 Sangharakshita, *Survey of Buddhism*, 1957, repr. 1987, p. 4, same p. 228.

54 Sangharakshita, *op. cit.*, 1957, repr. 1987, p. 97. (Capitalization by Sangharakshita). Also: "the principal source of inspiration for the FWBO is nonetheless the Buddha and his teaching. It is from there that we get our idea of what constitutes development; it is from there that we get our ideal of human Enlightenment", Sangharakshita, *New Currents in Western Buddhism*, Glasgow: Windhorse 1990, p. 54.

55 Sangharakshita, *Vision and Transformation*, Glasgow: Windhorse 1990, p. 128. For a detailed explanation of this concept see p. 127-131 (Capitalization by Sangharakshita); see also Sangharakshita, *The History of my Going for Refuge*, Glasgow: Windhorse 1988, p. 94-97 and Sangharakshita, *The FWBO and 'Protestant Buddhism'*, Glasgow: Windhorse 1992, p. 82-85 and p. 182 ff.

56 Dharmachari Vessantara, *The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. An Introduction*, Glasgow: Windhorse 1988, p. 9.

57 Sangharakshita, *New Currents*, 1990, p. 64, emphasis in the text. For this "'synthetic' approach" see *FWBO-Newsletter*, 68, 1984/1985, p. 5-15, quote p. 3; see also Sangharakshita, *Survey of Buddhism*, 1957, repr. 1987, p. 230 ff. and Subhuti, *The Buddhist Vision*, London 1985.

58 Sangharakshita, *History of my Going for Refuge*, 1988, p. 115.

59 FWBO (ed.), *Sangharakshita - A Short Biography*, two page leaflet, no year given.

It may be assumed that the integrative interpretations of the AMM and FWBO are not the first and only ones to be found in the history of Buddhism. Reference could be made to various apologetical approaches both in ancient and modern times. One may also recall the late 19th century Tibetan *Rime* movement or developments within Japanese Buddhism during the 20th century⁶⁰. Taking the case of Tibet and Japan, such an "intra-Buddhist ecumenism"⁶¹, as H. Dumoulin calls it, is not restricted to Buddhism outside Asia but also takes place in the 'homelands' of Buddhism itself.

Conclusion

In a paper on "The Importance of Diasporas" Ninan Smart points to changes and new developments of minority religions in an alien cultural environment⁶². Among many issues he notices with regard to Buddhism and Hinduism that "during the Global Period [from the 1960s onwards] there is the tendency toward the consolidation of world religions, however dispersed"⁶³. Smart observes "the evolution of a kind of ecumenical Buddhism" and the creation of "a new feeling of identity, since Buddhism perceives itself as a world religion"⁶⁴. This new, universalistic orientation, directing its teachings and practices intentionally for dissemination outside Asia, was conceptualized on the basis of the reinterpretations of 'modern Buddhism', as Bechert calls this form.

This new ecumenical self-understanding has also brought about a new perception of now neighbouring Buddhist traditions. In Asia, the many different schools and traditions had virtually no contact with each other for hundreds of years. In the West, as pointed out in section I, these various schools have all become settled in comparatively small regions such as, for example, The Netherlands, Austria or Southern California. Intra-Buddhist activities and a Buddhist ecumenicalism have availed themselves of this geographical proximity. A rapid increase in inter-traditional relations has emerged, transforming former disdain into mutual respect. In consequence,

60 For a short, selective overview see Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten*, 1993, p. 308-312.

61 Heinrich Dumoulin, "Buddhismus im modernen Japan", in: H. Dumoulin (ed.), *Buddhismus der Gegenwart*, Freiburg 1970, p. 127-187, quote p. 147.

62 Ninian Smart, "The Importance of Diasporas", in: S. Shaked, D. Shulman, G. G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Gilgut*, Leiden: Brill 1987, 288-297.

63 Smart, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

64 Smart, *op. cit.*, p. 293. For the problematic notion "world religion" see the critical analysis by Timothy Fitzgerald, "Hinduism and the 'World Religion' Fallacy", in: *Religion*, 20, 2, 1990, p. 101-118.

this has brought to the fore new concepts such as a joint Buddhist Confession in Germany⁶⁵, national and international umbrella organisations⁶⁶ or an international Network of Western Buddhist Teachers⁶⁷.

Furthermore, marking as it were a deepening of this inter-traditional approach among different schools, integrative Buddhist orders have been founded. Orders such as the AMM and FWBO, in an ecumenical spirit, take a virtually 'global approach' to all historic and geographic developments of Buddhism, thus aiming to overcome sectarian delimitations. As such they claim to bring to the fore the so-called 'essential' and culturally independent 'core' of Buddhism. This newly reconstructed 'essence' of Buddhism uses teachings and practices from different Buddhist traditions in order to mediate the *Buddhadharma*. It remains to be seen how durable and successful such concepts of an integrative, interdenominational Buddhism will be.

The conceptualisation of an integrative Buddhism is, however, only one prominent feature of a 'post-modern' or 'global Buddhism'. As further characteristics one may point to concepts of a socio-politically engaged Buddhism or to feminist interpretations of Buddhism. The increasingly close co-operation of Buddhist schools and traditions especially in the West and increasingly in Asia, may indeed point to a new development on a global scale in the history of Buddhism.

65 See Martin Baumann, "Buddhists in a Western Country", in: *Religion Today*, 7, 1, 1991, p. 1-4; Detlef Kantowsky, "Buddhism in Deutschland heute", in: *Spirita*, 5, 1, 1991, p. 22-32 and Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten*, 1993, p. 194-203.

66 The European Buddhist Union has gained particular importance. For a report on its latest congress in Berlin 1992 see Sylvia Wetzel, "Der Kongreß meditiert", in: *Lotusblätter*, 4, 1992, p. 19-24; Martin Baumann, "4th International Congress of the European Buddhist Union", in: *Internationales Asienforum*, 24, 1/2, 1993, p. 187-190 and Deutsche Buddhistische Union (ed.), *Einheit in der Vielfalt. Buddhismus im Westen*, Munich: DBU 1994.

67 The NEWBUT was set up at the Dharamsala conference of Western Buddhist teachers with the Dalai Lama in 1993, see Kulananda, "Towards a Western Buddhism. A Conference with His Holiness the Dalai Lama", in: *Golden Drum*, 30, 1993, p. 18-21 and Kulananda, "Further Thoughts on 'The Open Letter'", in: *Golden Drum*, 31, 1993/94, p. 18-19.