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NEITHER MAHĀYĀNA
NOR THERAVĀDA:
ASHIN JINARAKKHITA
AND THE INDONESIAN
BUDDHAYĀNA
MOVEMENT

On April 18, 2002, Ashin Jinarakkhita (1923–2002), also known as Ti Chen Lao He Sang (Tizheng Laoheshang 體正老和尚), passed away at the Pluit Hospital in Jakarta, Indonesia.¹ Ashin Jinarakkhita, an ethnic Chinese monk, dressed in a Theravāda saffron robe and wearing a beard in the Chinese Mahāyāna style, sat motionlessly in a meditation posture on the hospital bed. Despite his Burmese Dharma name and Theravāda robe, Ashin Jinarakkhita was far from being a Theravāda monk. As his monastic disciples wheeled his body out of the ward, a crowd of lay followers that waited outside the ward was chanting “Homage to Amitābha Buddha” (Namo Amitufo 南無阿彌陀佛).² Ashin Jinarakkhita’s body was transferred to Vihāra Ekayāna Graha (Guanghua yi-

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¹ Ashin Jinarakkhita was first ordained as a Chinese Mahāyāna monk and given the Dharma name Ti Chen (Tizheng 體正). He later received his Theravāda Dharma name Jinarakkhita after his higher ordination in Burma. Ashin Jinarakkhita was often known as Bhante Ashin and Sukong (Shigong 師公) by his disciples and followers.

² My informants told me that the death and funeral of Ashin Jinarakkhita were recorded and made available online. See “The Mahasamadhi of Sukong—(Ashin Jinarakkhita) Part 1,” December 11, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZJ4ZlQ_fzY (accessed March 7, 2018), and “The Mahasamadhi of Sukong—(Ashin Jinarakkhita) Part 2,” February 27, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOpPBjHdJv4> (accessed March 7, 2018).

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cheng chansi 廣化一乘禪寺) in Jakarta, where memorial services were conducted four times a day over a seven-day period. Japanese Buddhologist Kimura Bunki 木村文輝, who was present at the wake, pointed out that more than forty thousand people, including former Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid, then vice president Hamzah Haz, and the leaders of various religions in Indonesia, went to the funeral service.³ More interestingly, Kimura noted that although Theravāda and Vajrayāna monks attended the wake and recited prayers in accordance to their religious tradition, Mahāyāna monks officiated the important funerary ceremonies. The Mahāyāna monks led the recitation of the *Dhāraṇī of Great Compassion* (*Dabei zhou* 大悲咒), *Heart Sūtra* (*Bore boluomiduo xingjing* 般若波羅蜜多心經), *Sūtra of Immeasurable Life* (*Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經), *Diamond Sūtra* (*Jingang jing* 金剛經), and the name of Amītibha Buddha in Chinese.

Nevertheless, Ashin Jinarakkhita was cautious not to have all his final rites be conducted in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition in Jakarta, where most of the Buddhists are ethnic Chinese; it would have appeared “too Chinese.” As his disciples shared with me in interviews and informal conversations, Ashin Jinarakkhita wanted to shed the image of Buddhism as a religion for Chinese Indonesians and promoted the religion as an “inclusive and non-sectarian” (inklusif dan non-sektarian) faith for all Indonesian people.⁴ Therefore, Ashin Jinarakkhita specified his wish that his remains be cremated in Bandar Lampung city in South Sumatra province. His disciples shared two reasons why Ashin Jinarakkhita wanted the cremation ceremony to be held in Sumatra. First, the monk chose Sumatra because it was the center of the historical Srivijaya kingdom, a Buddhist maritime kingdom that flourished between the seventh and thirteenth centuries.⁵ Ashin Jinarakkhita had a following of native Indonesian (*pribumi*) Buddhists in Sumatra who claimed to be descendants of the historical Srivijaya and Majapahit kingdoms. For this reason, he decided to use his funeral as a platform to unite his indigenous disciples from Sumatra

³ In fact, Kimura points out that Ashin Jinarakkhita specified his wish for the *Diamond Sūtra* to be chanted at his funeral. Although no one knew the reason why Jinarakkhita specified the *Diamond Sūtra* to be chanted, Kimura speculates that this could be attributed to the monk’s personal interest in the Mahāyāna doctrine of “emptiness” (*śūnyatā*) and his veneration of his first tonsure master, Pen Ching (Benqing 本清). See Bunki Kimura, “Present Situation of Indonesian Buddhism: In Memory of Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita Mahasthavira,” *Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism* 23 (2003): 67–68; “The Mahasamadhi of Sukong—(Ashin Jinarakkhita) Part 1,” December 11, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZJ4ZIQ_fzY (accessed March 7, 2018).

⁴ Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015; Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015; Sudhamek, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015.

⁵ For a history of the Srivijaya, see O. W. Wolters, *The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970).

and his ethnic Chinese followers from Jakarta. Second, Ashin Jinarakkhita wanted to address the problem of “Java-centrism” and sought to promote Buddhism beyond his native Java. Throughout his religious career, he was known as “the flying monk” for his frequent travels to evangelize various parts of Indonesia.⁶

Ashin Jinarakkhita’s funeral reveals how Buddhism overlapped with issues surrounding ethnicity and nation-building in postcolonial Indonesia. Widely regarded as the first Indonesian-born Buddhist monk (*biksu pertama putra Indonesia*), Ashin Jinarakkhita took it as his mission to propagate Buddhism in the archipelago nation. His Buddhayāna movement, which combined the doctrines and practices of Mahāyāna and Theravāda Buddhism, had a profound impact in Indonesia during the second half of the twentieth century. Ashin Jinarakkhita established an inclusive and nonsectarian monastic community, consisting of Sangha from various Buddhist traditions. He crafted a vision of Indonesian Buddhism as a diverse, yet unified religion in line with the motto of “Unity in Diversity” (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*) of the modern Indonesian nation. Later, he introduced the concept of “Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha” to make Buddhism compatible with the first principle of the Pancasila, the five philosophical pillars of Indonesia during the New Order era (1966–98). The Buddhayāna movement continues to attract a following of Indonesian people in the twenty-first century.

Previous studies have considered the place of Ashin Jinarakkhita in Indonesian history. While some of them focus on the role of Ashin Jinarakkhita in the “Buddhist revival” of Indonesia,⁷ others examine his controversial concept of the Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha.⁸ A biography of Ashin Jinarakkhita in English is needed, but the aim of this article is not solely biographical. Rather,

⁶ Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015; Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015.

⁷ J. W. M. Barker, “Contemporary Buddhism in Indonesia,” in *Buddhism in the Modern World*, ed. Heinrich Dumoulin and John C. Maraldo (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1976), 147–53; Yoneo Ishii, “Notes on the Historical Development of Modern Indonesian Buddhism,” *Tonan Aja Kenkyu* 18, no. 2 (September 1980): 257–70; Kimura, “Present Situation of Indonesian Buddhism,” 53–72; Karel Steenbrink, “Buddhism in Muslim Indonesia,” *Studia Islamika* 20, no. 1 (2013): 1–34; Julia Linder, *Entwicklungen des Buddhismus im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert in Indonesien: Strömungen, Verwerfungen und Aushandlungen der “Agama Buddha (di) Indonesia”* (Frankfurt am Main: PL Academic Research, 2017).

⁸ Heinz Bechert, “The Buddhayāna of Indonesia: A Syncretistic Form of Theravada,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 9 (1981): 10–21; Iem Brown, “Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism and Monotheism,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 18, no. 1 (March 1987): 108–17; Wilis Rengganiasih Endah Ekowati, “Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita’s Interpreting and Translating Buddhism in Indonesian Cultural and Political Contexts,” in *Teaching Dhamma in New Lands* (Wang Noi, Ayutthaya: International Association of Buddhist Universities, 2012), 36–45; Hudaya Kandahjaya, “Ashin Jinarakkhita and Adi Buddha in Indonesia Buddhayana” (unpublished manuscript).

this article draws upon Ashin Jinarakkhita's career to reconsider the category of Southeast Asian Buddhism in Buddhist Studies. I argue for the need to broaden the category of Southeast Asian Buddhism beyond Theravāda Buddhism on mainland Southeast Asia to include varied forms of Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia that use Mandarin Chinese, Southern Chinese dialects, and Southeast Asian languages in their liturgy and scriptures. Ashin Jinarakkhita's Buddhayāna movement, which promoted nonsectarian doctrines and practices to be in line with the national discourse of "Unity in Diversity," was a calculated strategy to ensure the survival of Buddhism as a minority religion in the world's largest Muslim nation.

RETHINKING "SOUTHEAST ASIAN BUDDHISM"

The term "Southeast Asian Buddhism" brings to mind Theravāda Buddhism, the dominant religion in the mainland Southeast Asian states of Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. Needless to say, scholars of Southeast Asia have long been interested in studying how Buddhism shaped the history, culture, and politics of mainland Southeast Asia. While Vietnam is considered a part of mainland Southeast Asia, Vietnamese Buddhism, which mostly belongs to the Mahāyāna tradition, is often regarded as a part of East Asian Buddhism, which is based on the Chinese-language canon and is widely practiced in China, Japan, and Korea. In contrast, maritime Southeast Asia conjures the image of the Malay Archipelago, consisting of the Muslim-majority states of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, as well as the Catholic Philippines. Singapore, on the other hand, is deemed an anomaly because of the predominant Chinese population. Scholars of Southeast Asia tend to highlight the cultural and historical differences between mainland and maritime Southeast Asia by emphasizing the religious contrast between mainland Theravāda Buddhism and maritime Islam and Catholicism to conceptualize the religious diversity of Southeast Asia as a region.⁹ In doing so, these studies fail to recognize the presence of Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia and its significance among Chinese communities in the predominantly Islamic and Catholic region.

On the other hand, scholars of Buddhism have often limited the study of Southeast Asian Buddhism to the Theravāda Buddhist majority on the main-

⁹ See, e.g., David Joel Steinberg, ed., *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), chap. 5; Barbara Watson Andaya, *The Flaming Womb: Repositioning Women in Early Modern Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), chap. 3; Craig Lockard, *Southeast Asia in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), chaps. 4–5; Robert L. Winzeler, *The Peoples of Southeast Asia Today: Ethnography, Ethnology, and Change in a Complex Region* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2011), chap. 9; Anthony Reid, *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), chap. 5.

land.¹⁰ For instance, Donald Swearer's seminal work, *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia*, focuses only on Theravāda Buddhism in Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia.¹¹ Pattana Kitiarsa's state-of-the-field article also limits the study of Southeast Asian Buddhism to Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia and suggests that "Theravāda Buddhism is one of the most important fields of inquiry within a larger context of Southeast Asian studies."¹² While Anne Hansen's article "Modern Buddhism in Southeast Asia" discusses Buddhist reform movements in Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, she does recognize the presence of a vibrant Chinese Buddhist minority in Malaysia at the end of her essay.¹³ In other words, previous scholarship has considered the category "Southeast Asian Buddhism" to be almost synonymous with Theravāda Buddhism.

There are three possible reasons to explain the dichotomy between mainland Theravāda Buddhism and maritime Islam (and Catholicism) in the study of Southeast Asia. First, this could be attributed to the historiography of writing nation-state histories of Southeast Asia. Scholars of Southeast Asian Buddhism (and historians of Southeast Asia generally) tend to write the narrative of Southeast Asian countries in a linear fashion from early modern Buddhist kingdoms to modern Buddhist majority nation-states. The narrative of the evolution of Buddhist kingdoms neglects the Chinese presence and the connectivity of Buddhist monks across the South China Sea. A second reason could be the form of Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia. The majority of the Buddhists in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore are ethnic Chinese adhering to Mahāyāna Buddhism. Therefore, scholars of Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asian states tend to come from a background of Sinology and East Asian Buddhist Studies and to consider Chinese Buddhism in Southeast Asia as an extension of Chinese Buddhism rather than as "Southeast Asian Buddhism." Additionally, many of them published their works in Chinese, making them inaccessible to scholars of Southeast Asia who do not read the language.¹⁴

¹⁰ See, e.g., Pattana Kitiarsa, "Beyond the Weberian Trails: An Essay on the Anthropology of Southeast Asian Buddhism," *Religion Compass* 3 (2009): 200–224; Donald K. Swearer, *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010); Paul Williams and Patrice Ladwig, eds., *Buddhist Funeral Cultures of Southeast Asia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Anne Ruth Hansen, "Modern Buddhism in Southeast Asia," in *Routledge Handbook of Southeast Asian History*, ed. Norman G. Owen (New York: Routledge, 2014), 224–34.

¹¹ Interestingly, Swearer also included Sri Lanka in his discussion of "Southeast Asian Buddhism." See Swearer, *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia*.

¹² Kitiarsa, "Beyond the Weberian Trails," 200.

¹³ Hansen, "Modern Buddhism in Southeast Asia," 232.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Shi Chuanfa 釋傳發, *Xinjiapo fojiao fazhan shi* 新加坡佛教發展史 (Singapore: Xinjiapo fojiao jushilin, 1997); Chen Qiuping 陳秋平, *Yimin yu fojiao: Ying zhimin shidai de bincheng fojiao* 移民與佛教: 英殖民時代的檳城佛教 (Johor: Nanfang xueyuan 2004); Xu Yuantai

Consequently, there is a lack of conversation and engagement between scholars working on Chinese Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia and scholars of Theravāda Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia. Third, and closely related to the second reason, academic boundaries and institutional limitations create a gulf between scholars trained in Southeast Asian Buddhism and in East Asian Buddhism. While students of Southeast Asian Buddhism are linguistically trained in Pāli and mainland Southeast Asian languages, students of East Asian Buddhism usually study Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and a modern European research language (typically French). For this reason, scholars of Southeast Asian Buddhism are equipped with country-specific linguistic and cultural knowledge under the assumption that they will be studying Theravāda Buddhism on the mainland.

An article by Justin McDaniel cautions that the Theravādins are not the only Buddhists in Southeast Asia, but there are also Mahāyāna Buddhists in the region, especially in Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia. He also points out that Theravādins are not limited to mainland Southeast Asia, but many from Thailand are now serving as Buddhist missionaries in Indonesia.¹⁵ So far, there has been little research on both Mahāyāna and Theravāda Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia.¹⁶ The paucity of literature contrasts with the extensive studies of Theravāda Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia.¹⁷ In this study, I address the dichotomous framing of mainland Theravāda Buddhism/maritime Islam and Catholicism in the historiography of Southeast Asia by shed-

許源泰, *Yan'ge yu moshi: Xinjiapo dao jiao he fo jiao chuan bo yan jiu* 沿革與模式: 新加坡道教和佛教傳播研究 (Singapore: National University of Singapore Department of Chinese Studies and Global Publishing, 2013).

¹⁵ Justin Thomas McDaniel, "Buddhists in Modern Southeast Asia," *Religion Compass* 4, no. 11 (2010): 659.

¹⁶ There are few monograph-length studies in English. See, e.g., Colin McDougall, *Buddhism in Malaya* (Singapore: Donald Moore, 1956); Mohamed Yusoff Ismail, *Buddhism and Ethnicity: Social Organization of a Buddhist Temple in Kelantan* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993); Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng, *State, Society and Religious Engineering: Towards a Reformist Buddhism in Singapore* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003); Y. D. Ong, *Buddhism in Singapore: A Short Narrative History* (Singapore: Skylark Publications, 2005); Irving Chan Johnson, *The Buddha on Mecca's Verandah: Encounters, Mobilities, and Histories Along the Malaysian-Thai Border* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012); Ari C. Dy, SJ, *Chinese Buddhism in Catholic Philippines* (Mandaluyong City: Anvil Publishing, 2015). For bibliographies on Buddhism in Malaysia and Singapore, see Jeffrey Samuels and Hun Lye, "Buddhism in Malaysia," *Oxford Bibliographies* (March 23, 2012), <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393521/obo-9780195393521-0005.xml> (accessed March 7, 2018); Jack Meng-Tat Chia, "Bibliography on Buddhism in Singapore," <https://jackchia.com/resources/> (accessed March 7, 2018).

¹⁷ For bibliographies on Buddhism in Southeast Asia, see, e.g., Anne Blackburn, "Buddhism in Southeast Asia," *Oxford Bibliographies* (September 13, 2010), <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393521/obo-9780195393521-0152.xml> (accessed March 7, 2018); "Southeast Asia Research Guide: Buddhism in Southeast Asia," (February 5, 2018), <http://guides.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/c.php?g=105536&p=687510> (accessed March 7, 2018).

ding light on the much-neglected Buddhist community in Indonesia. And to tell the story of Buddhists in Indonesia, this article focuses on Ashin Jinarakkhita's career and his Buddhayāna movement.

BECOMING THE FIRST INDONESIAN BHIKKHU

Ashin Jinarakkhita was born on January 23, 1923, in Bogor, a city in West Java, at the time part of the Dutch colony of the East Indies.¹⁸ He was given the name Tee Boan An (Zheng Man'an 鄭滿安) by his Chinese immigrant parents.¹⁹ When Tee reached school age, he went to a Dutch-Chinese School (Hollandsch-Chineesche School) for elementary education.²⁰ After completing his elementary education at the Dutch-Chinese School in 1936, Tee left his hometown to continue his secondary education at the Prince Hendrik School (Prins Hendrikschool [PHS]) in Jakarta. Previously, he wanted to continue his education in Department B (*jurusan B*) of the Dutch Secondary School (Hogere Burgerschool [HBS]) but was late for his application.²¹ Therefore, after spending a year at PHS, he transferred to the second-year program at HBS in Salemba, Jakarta.

Ever since the time Tee went to school, his father noticed that he was different from his peers. Unlike other children, Tee enjoyed visiting Chinese temples (*klenteng*) near his home in Bogor and reading about gods and ghosts.²² During that time, the majority of the Buddhists in the Dutch East Indies were ethnic Chinese who often worshipped in Chinese temples that fused elements of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.²³ Tee's early exposure to Buddhism at the Chinese temples was primarily through chanting and vegetarianism. There were neither Dharma lectures nor religious classes in the temples he attended. The Chinese migrant monks who resided at the temples were ritual spe-

¹⁸ Edij Juangari wrote an official biography of Ashin Jinarakkhita titled *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara: Riwayat Singkat Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita* (Sowing the seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago: A brief biography of Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita) that was published in 1995. This hagiographic biography was based on three interviews with Ashin Jinarakkhita and forty-six interviews with disciples, friends, and associates of Ashin Jinarakkhita. An abridged version of the biography with additional materials titled *Mengenang Seorang Abdi Buddha* (Remembering an Abdi Buddha) was published in 2012 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the monk's death. See *Mengenang Seorang Abdi Buddha* (Sangha Agung Indonesia and Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia, 2012). Edij Juangari, interview by author, Jakarta, January 27, 2015.

¹⁹ His name is sometimes rendered as The Bwan An or Tan Bwan An. See, e.g., Ishii, "Modern Indonesian Buddhism," 264.

²⁰ Edij Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara: Riwayat Singkat Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita* (Bandung: Yayasan Penerbit Karaniya, 1995), 23–24.

²¹ Track B refers to the science track for high school education.

²² Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 28–29.

²³ Leo Suryadinata, *The Culture of the Chinese Minority in Indonesia* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1997), 174.

cialists, and mostly involved in conducting funerary rites.²⁴ As it was rare for someone of his age to be interested in Buddhism and vegetarianism, Tee was well liked by the monks. However, his parents were not very pleased with his interest in religion and spirituality.²⁵

During his time in secondary school, Tee became acquainted with a Dutch man by the name of Reigh, a member of the Theosophical Society. The Theosophical Society was established in New York by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, William Quan Judge, and others in November 1875. In the 1880s, a German named Baron von Tengenagell founded a branch of the Theosophical Society in the Dutch East Indies. However, little is known about von Tengenagell except that he died in Bogor in 1893, and the Theosophical Society declined following his death. A few years later, Dutch and Javanese elites revived the Theosophical Society and opened lodges in various parts of Java. In 1901, the Theosophical Society published the first monthly Theosophy magazine in Dutch and later, in 1905, introduced the Javanese and Low Malay (lingua franca of the Dutch East Indies) edition. The magazine was widely circulated and enjoyed significant readership among the Dutch and Javanese educated class in colonial Java.²⁶ Reigh felt a special affinity with Tee and imparted the skill of magnetic healing to him. Later, he gave Tee two of the foundational books of the Theosophical Society: *The Ancient Wisdom* and *The Secret Doctrines*.²⁷

In 1941, Tee graduated from the Dutch Secondary School. He was accepted to study sciences at the Dutch-Chinese School in Bandung, the capital city of West Java.²⁸ A year later, his school life was disrupted by the Japanese invasion

²⁴ Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015.

²⁵ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 36–37.

²⁶ For a historical background of the Theosophical Society in the Dutch East Indies, see Herman de Tollenaere, “The Theosophical Society in the Dutch East Indies, 1880–1942,” in *Hinduism in Modern Indonesia: A Minority Religion between Local, National, and Global Interests*, ed. Martin Ramstedt (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 35–44.

²⁷ *The Ancient Wisdom* and *The Secret Doctrines* are both considered to be seminal Theosophical texts. *The Ancient Wisdom: An Outline of Theosophical Teachings* is a book by Annie Besant (1847–1933), a prominent British social activist and theosophist. This book was first published by the Theosophical Publishing House in 1897. *The Secret Doctrines: The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy* is a two-volume book by Russian occultist and spirit medium, Helena Blavatsky (1831–91), that was published in 1888. Annie Besant, *The Ancient Wisdom: An Outline of Theosophical Teachings* (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1897); Helena Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrines: The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy* (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1888); Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 29–30.

²⁸ Oiyuan Liu points out that the Dutch authorities established Dutch-Chinese Schools in 1908 to decrease Indies-Chinese’s political orientation toward China and to make them more Dutch-oriented. Therefore, instruction in Dutch-Chinese Schools was in Dutch, and the curriculum was similar to those of the schools in Europe. See Oiyuan Liu, “Countering ‘Chinese Imperialism’: Sinophobia and Border Protection in the Dutch East Indies,” *Indonesia* 97 (April 2014): 105. According to Edij Juangari, the Dutch-Chinese School later became a part of the Bandung Institute of Technology (Institut Teknologi Bandung).

and subsequent occupation of the Dutch East Indies. During the Japanese occupation of the Dutch colony from March 1942 until after the end of the war in August 1945, classes were suspended, and students returned to their hometowns.²⁹ In this period, Tee volunteered in a soup kitchen to provide food for the needy. At the same time, he made frequent trips to Solo and Yogyakarta, where he became acquainted with members of the Theosophical Society.³⁰

Following the Japanese surrender on August 15, 1945, Indonesian nationalists led by Sukarno (1901–70) and Mohammad Hatta (1902–80) declared Indonesian independence two days later. In the following year, Indonesian students had the opportunity to go to the Netherlands as student-workers. After the end of the Japanese Occupation, Tee's father urged him to continue his education. As Tee had no money to further his studies, he took the chance to go to the Netherlands. Soon after his arrival, Tee submitted an application to the University of Groningen, and he was accepted into the department of mathematics and natural sciences to study chemistry.³¹

During his studies in the Netherlands, Tee became an active member of the Theosophical Society, often attending lectures at the local lodge in his spare time. He also studied Pāli and Sanskrit with Gerardus van der Leeuw. After his second year abroad, Tee started to give lectures at Theosophical gatherings not only in the Netherlands but also in Paris and London. Later, he began to study the teachings of major world religions and became particularly interested in Buddhism. His growing interest in Buddhism led him to the decision to fully devote himself to the study of it and to discontinue his studies in chemistry. After five years in the Netherlands, Tee returned to Indonesia in 1951 to pursue his spiritual quest.³²

By the time he was back in his homeland, the archipelago had become an independent republic under the presidency of Sukarno. Postcolonial Indonesia was a "sovereign state based on a belief in the One and Only God."³³ Despite being the world's largest Muslim-majority country, Article 29 of the Constitution of Indonesia guarantees the right to religious freedom.³⁴ Soon

²⁹ For studies on the Japanese invasion and occupation of the Dutch East Indies, see, e.g., Harry J. Benda, *Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation, 1942–1945* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1957); Remco Raben, ed., *Representing the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia: Personal Testimonies and Public Images in Indonesia, Japan and the Netherlands* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1999); Bōei Kenshūjo and Willem G. J. Rummelink, eds., *The Invasion of the Dutch East Indies* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2015).

³⁰ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 33–36.

³¹ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 37–38.

³² Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 38–42.

³³ *Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia* (Jakarta: Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, 1967).

³⁴ See Nadirsyah Hosen, "Religion and the Indonesian Constitution: A Recent Debate," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (October 2005): 419–40.

after his return to Indonesia, Tee decided to become an *anagārika* to spread the Buddha's teachings.³⁵ His Western educational background and knowledge of various religious traditions helped him rise to prominence within the Indonesian Theosophical Society. Tee quickly became the vice chairman of the central committee of the Young Theosophy (Pemuda Theosofi) group and was often invited to lecture all over the island of Java. During his trips, he became acquainted with prominent Theosophical Society leaders and intellectuals such as Mangunkawatja,³⁶ Ananda Suyono, and Parwati Soepangat (1932–2016), who would later become his Buddhist followers.³⁷ Before long, he gained a reputation for his knowledge of Buddhist doctrines and his friendly demeanor.³⁸

One of Tee's first missions was to build a vibrant Buddhist community in the Chinese temples. He noticed that although there were Buddhist monks at the temples, most of them did not lecture on the Dharma. Therefore, the *anagārika* organized religious activities at the temples to allow the Chinese community to learn the Buddha's teachings. He gave regular Dharma lectures and water blessing rites that attracted Chinese devotees.³⁹ At the same time, Tee was well liked by the Javanese population for his humble and smooth attitude. They considered him a religious leader who "deserved to be invited to exchange ideas" (*layak diajak bertukar pikiran*).⁴⁰ The number of his followers started to grow quickly.⁴¹

³⁵ "Anagārika" literally means "one who does not inhabit a house." This term was adopted by Anagārika Dharmapāla (1864–1933) to denote the "intermediate role between layman and monk." See Damien Keown, *A Dictionary of Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 12. Steven Kemper's recent study *Rescued from the Nation: Anagarika Dharmapala and the Buddhist World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015) has examined Anagārika Dharmapāla's Buddhist reform movement in colonial Lanka. However, Dharmapāla and Ashin Jinarakkhita had neither met nor known each other (Dharmapāla died in Lanka in 1933 when Jinarakkhita was only ten years old). While we do not know if Jinarakkhita had come across Dharmapāla's writings, we can be certain that he neither mentions nor cites Dharmapāla's ideas and strategies in his hybridized interpretations of Buddhist doctrines.

³⁶ Mangunkawatja (also known as Mangunkawaca) was a member of the Theosophical Society and one of the first lay disciples of Ashin Jinarakkhita. He later became the founding president of Ashin Jinarakkhita's lay Buddhist organization, Persaudaraan Upasaka-Upasika Indonesia.

³⁷ The late Parwati Soepangat was one of my informants. She was among one of the first female Javanese disciples of Ashin Jinarakkhita and an important founding member of the Buddhayāna movement. For a brief biography of Parwati Soepangat, see Heru Suherman Lim, "Parwati Soepangat: A Buddhist Srikandi from Solo," in *Compassion & Social Justice*, ed. Karma Lekshe Tsomo (Yogyakarta: Sakyadhita, 2015), 12–16; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

³⁸ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 44–45.

³⁹ The water blessing ritual involved the recitation of the *Dhāraṇī of Great Compassion*. During my fieldwork, I attended one of these ceremonies; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

⁴⁰ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 45.

⁴¹ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 45.

In 1953, Tee came up with the idea to hold a national Vesak celebration at Borobudur.⁴² Borobudur, a ninth-century Buddhist temple located in Magelang, Central Java, is one of the best-known Buddhist monuments in the world. It was abandoned as a religious site following the decline of the Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit kingdom and the rise of Islam in Java in the fifteenth century. In 1814, the British governor of Java, Thomas Stamford Raffles, and his team of archeologists rediscovered the abandoned Buddhist monument.⁴³ Tee was quick to draw on historical claims of ancient Buddhist kingdoms to legitimize the need to revive Buddhism in postcolonial Indonesia. He therefore proclaimed that it was his mission to restore the abandoned Borobudur into an active religious site.⁴⁴ In earlier times, the Theosophical Society had organized small-scale Vesak celebrations several times at the Agung Temple in Bali. Hence, it was no surprise that Tee's proposal was supported by his colleagues from the Theosophical Society. They soon distributed pamphlets promoting the Vesak celebration across Indonesia and sent out invitations to officials and representatives of neighboring Buddhist countries. Tee and his colleagues also extended their invitations to the embassies of Burma, Sri Lanka, India, Singapore, and Thailand.⁴⁵

On May 22, 1953, some three thousand Buddhists congregated at Borobudur to celebrate the Vesak Day for the first time in postcolonial Indonesia. This Vesak celebration marked the first time that Buddhists in Indonesia prayed and meditated together at the ancient Buddhist site. The event became a national spectacle and made headlines in the newspapers. According to Edij Juangari, Ashin Jinarakkhita still fondly remembered the event decades later as the "first Vesak celebration to be held at Borobudur since the time of Majapahit."⁴⁶ He considered the successful celebration a "shock therapy" that surprised and amazed people and generated awareness about Buddhism. More importantly, he was delighted that the Indonesian public became aware that Buddhism was "alive" again in Indonesia.⁴⁷

Days after the Vesak celebration, Tee gave several lectures in Central Java before returning to Jakarta. Whenever Tee was in Jakarta, he would visit Kong Hoa Sie (Guanghua si 廣化寺, later known as Vihāra Vaipulya Sasana), a

⁴² Vesak is usually rendered as "Waisak" in Indonesia. In 1983, Vesak became a national holiday in Indonesia.

⁴³ For a historical overview of Borobudur, see John N. Miksic, *Borobudur: Golden Tales of the Buddhas* (Boston: Shambhala, 1990).

⁴⁴ Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

⁴⁵ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 45–46.

⁴⁶ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 46.

⁴⁷ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 46–47; Edij Juangari, interview by author, Jakarta, January 27, 2015.

major Buddhist monastery in Indonesia's capital city.⁴⁸ Kong Hoa Sie was a branch temple of Putian South Mountain Guanghua Monastery (Putian Nanshan Guanghua si 莆田南山廣化寺) located in Putian 莆田, Fujian Province in China.⁴⁹ There were several Chinese migrant monks residing there, and one of them was the founder of the monastery, Venerable Pen Ching (Benqing 本清, 1878–1962).

Pen Ching was born in 1878 in Fujian. At the age of nineteen, he became a novice at Guanghua Monastery under the tutelage of Thung Chan (Tongzhan 通湛). In 1901, Pen Ching traveled south to the Dutch East Indies for the first time to propagate the Dharma. He resided at the Tay Kak Sie Temple (Dajue si 大覺寺), an eighteenth-century Chinese temple located in Semarang, Central Java, where he taught the Dharma for three years before returning to China. After his return, he was nominated abbot of the Guanghua Monastery, as he was the most senior monk. However, he rejected the invitation and went back to the East Indies the following year.⁵⁰ This time, he stayed in Hiap Thian Kiong (Xietian gong 協天宮), a Chinese temple in Bandung. Shortly afterward, he went to Karawang and stayed at the Kuan Ti Bio (Guandi miao 關帝廟), which he expanded and made into a popular place of worship among the Chinese community. After spending two years at this temple, he left it to become a wandering monk. In 1926, Pen Ching arrived in Jakarta and resided in a hut in the yard of a small Buddhist shrine, known as the Jade Lotus Hall (Yulian tang 玉蓮堂), in Petak Sinkian. When the shrine was relocated in 1949, the ownership of the land was transferred to Pen Ching. By then, the Chinese Civil War, with the impending Communist victory, meant that Pen Ching could not return to Putian. Thus, he decided to settle in Jakarta and build a monastery. With the assistance of his two disciples, Tipan 體盤 and Yuanren 圓仁, Pen Ching expanded the shrine into a monastery, and in 1951, the Kong Hoa Sie was opened and named after the Guanghua Monastery in China.⁵¹

Whenever Tee went to Kong Hoa Sie, he and Pen Ching would spend many hours discussing Buddhism. Tee deepened his understanding of the Dharma from his conversations with the abbot. Feeling a debt of gratitude to Pen Ching, he eventually decided to become his disciple. In July 1953, Tee was ordained as a novice on the birthday of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. His ordination was witnessed by Venerables Ju Sung, Ju Khung, Cen Yao, and Wu

⁴⁸ "Kong Hoa Sie" is the Hokkien pronunciation of "Guanghua si."

⁴⁹ For a brief history of the Guanghua Monastery, see Wu Tianhe 吳天鶴, "Fujian Putian Guanghua si Shijia Wenfo shita 福建莆田廣化寺釋迦文佛石塔," *Wenwu* 文物 8 (1997): 66–78.

⁵⁰ *Untukmu Mahasthavira: Panitia Peringatan Hari Ulang Tahun Ke-68 dan 38 Tahun Pengabdian Y.A. Mahasthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita* (Jakarta, 1990), 29.

⁵¹ *Untukmu Mahasthavira*, 29–30.

Cing. Pen Ching gave Tee the Dharma name Ti Chen (Tizheng 體正), which literally means “essential correctness.”⁵²

Following his ordination, novice Ti Chen resided at Kong Hoa Sie in Jakarta. At the monastery, Ti Chen received training in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition and recited Chinese-language scriptures. Although he could not read Chinese, he was able to chant the scriptures with romanized Chinese pronunciation. Ti Chen studied Chinese Mahāyāna texts such as the *Diamond Sūtra* and learned Chan meditation (*zuochan* 坐禪) under the tutelage of Pen Ching (see fig. 1).⁵³ After several months of monastic training, Ti Chen decided to seek high ordination to become a full-fledged bhikkhu. The lack of the required number of monks for the transmission of precepts (*chuanjie* 傳戒), however, made it impossible for him to be fully ordained in Indonesia. Therefore, Ti Chen planned to seek higher ordination in mainland China but was unable to do so.

In his biography of Ti Chen, Edij Juangari points out that he could not travel to China because the country did not have diplomatic relations with Indonesia at the time.⁵⁴ However, this is incorrect, as Indonesia and China established diplomatic ties in 1950, shortly after the establishment of the People’s Republic. In fact, recent studies note that Indonesia and China maintained cordial relations until the Thirtieth of September Movement in 1965.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the establishment of the PRC did have a detrimental effect on Buddhism and religion in general in mainland China. The founding of the PRC saw an exodus from China of many Buddhist monks who feared communist persecution. These refugee monks consisted of eminent figures from the provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang, as well as the younger and less-distinguished ones. While some fled to the European colonies of Hong Kong and Macau, others followed the evacuation of Kuomintang’s Republic of China to Taiwan.⁵⁶ The increase in restrictions and regulations on religious groups in China gradually led to the disruption of networks between these groups in China and in the diaspora communities in Southeast Asia.⁵⁷ This is more likely the reason why Ti Chen could not go to China for his higher ordination in the mid-1950s.⁵⁸

⁵² Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 48–49; *Untukmu Mahasthavira*, 27.

⁵³ Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015.

⁵⁴ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 49.

⁵⁵ See, e.g., Hong Liu, *China and the Shaping of Indonesia, 1949–1965* (Singapore: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2011); Taomo Zhou, “Ambivalent Alliance: Chinese Policy towards Indonesia, 1960–1965,” *China Quarterly* 221 (March 2015): 208–28.

⁵⁶ Charles Brewer Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan: Religion and the State, 1660–1990* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 105.

⁵⁷ See Jack Meng-Tat Chia, “A Recent Quest for Religious Roots: The Revival of the Guangze Zunwang Cult and its Sino-Southeast Asian Networks, 1978–2009,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 41, no. 2 (November 2013): 100.

⁵⁸ In the winter of 1953, the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China supervised the first post-1949 Chinese Mahāyāna ordination at the Daxian Monastery (*Daxian si* 大仙寺) in



FIG. 1.—Ti Chen (second from left) with his master, Pen Ching (third from left), at Kong Hoa Sie, Jakarta 1953. Photo courtesy of Edij Juangari.

As ordination in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition was precluded, Ti Chen considered seeking it in one of the Theravāda countries. Ti Chen first tried to contact the embassy of Sri Lanka in Jakarta, but he did not find support there. He then tried with the embassy of Burma, where his intention was welcomed enthusiastically. Coincidentally at that time, Ti Chen got to know about the Burmese monk Mahāsi Sayādaw (1904–82),⁵⁹ a renowned insight (*vipassanā*) meditation teacher,⁶⁰ and would soon travel to Burma to become his disciple.

Ashin Sobhana, who later became better known as Mahāsi Sayādaw, was born in 1904 in Upper Burma.⁶¹ After his ordination, he studied Pāli scriptures for four years and passed the state Pāli examinations. Later, he learned insight meditation under the tutelage of Mingun Jetawan Sayādaw (1868–1955) in Thaton. In 1938, Ashin Sobhana started teaching insight meditation

Taiwan. My informants were unsure why Ti Chen did not go to Taiwan or Hong Kong for his higher ordination. See Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, 105.

⁵⁹ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 50.

⁶⁰ Insight (*Vipassanā*) meditation, which focuses on perceiving the true nature of reality, is one of the most popular meditation methods today. In his recent study, Erik Braun highlights the pivotal role of Ledi Sayadaw in the popularization of insight meditation in the early twentieth century. See Erik Braun, *The Birth of Insight: Meditation, Modern Buddhism, and the Burmese Monk Ledi Sayadaw* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

⁶¹ Sayādaw is the Burmese honorific for senior monks. Therefore, Mahāsi Sayādaw literally refers to “senior monk of Mahāsi.”

in Seikkhun, and he soon had a growing group of followers. After the independence of Burma in 1948, Ashin Sobhana became the abbot of Mahāsi monastery in Ingyintaw-taik, where he became known as Mahāsi Sayādaw. With his growing reputation as a meditation teacher, the prime minister of Burma invited Mahāsi Sayādaw to teach at Sasana Yeiktha in Rangoon.⁶²

In December 1953, Ti Chen arrived in Rangoon and was welcomed by members of the Burmese Buddhist community meditation center of Sasana Yeiktha, where Mahāsi Sayādaw taught insight meditation. A month later, Ti Chen was ordained again and received his higher ordination in the Theravāda tradition under the tutelage of Mahāsi Sayādaw, who bestowed him the name Jinarakkhita, which means “one who is victorious and protected.” After several months spent studying insight meditation, following pressures from Indonesia, Ashin Jinarakkhita had to leave Burma and return to his country.⁶³

In January 1955, Ashin Jinarakkhita was welcomed back to Indonesia by the local Buddhist community, which considered him to be the “first son of the Indonesian nation ever to become a monk since the end of the Majapahit dynasty” (putra bangsa Indonesia pertama yang menjadi seorang bhikkhu sejak berakhirnya Dinasti Majapahit).⁶⁴ The Indonesian Buddhist community saw the monk as a spiritual leader who would “revive” Buddhism that had “disappeared” in Indonesia.⁶⁵ However, the form of Buddhism that Ashin Jinarakkhita sought to promote in the country was wholly different from the one in the premodern maritime Hindu-Buddhist kingdom. Ashin Jinarakkhita and his followers drew on historical claims to justify the propagation of Buddhism in the Muslim-majority country. What they wanted to do was to dissociate Buddhism from Chinese culture and to present it as an indigenous religion that was compatible with the modern Indonesian nation.

As discussed earlier, most of the Buddhist monks in Indonesia were dialect-speaking Chinese immigrants who resided in Chinese temples. Most of them were ritual specialists who could not speak Bahasa Indonesia: they gave neither Dharma lectures nor religious instructions to the local population. Therefore, Ashin Jinarakkhita’s return and his subsequent religious activities marked a departure from the ritual-focused monks in those temples. Ashin Jinarakkhita’s novice ordination in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition, and his first choice of China as the place for higher ordination probably, suggest that his original intention was to become a Chinese Mahāyāna monk like his teacher, Pen Ching.

⁶² For a brief biography of Mahāsi Sayādaw, see Jack Kornfield, *Living Dharma: Teachings of Twelve Buddhist Masters* (Boston: Shambhala, 1996); see also Mahāsi Sayādaw, *The Great Discourse on Non-Self: Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta*, trans. U Ko Lay (Bangkok: Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1996).

⁶³ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 57.

⁶⁴ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 58–59.

⁶⁵ Edij Juangari, interview by author, Jakarta, January 27, 2015.

However, his inability to seek higher ordination in China meant that he could no longer continue his monastic training in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition. Unable to go to China, he sought higher ordination in the Theravāda tradition and studied mediation in Burma. Despite his “conversion” to the Theravāda tradition, Ashin Jinarakkhita neither abandoned his Chinese cultural roots nor his Mahāyāna practice. As far as I could gather from interviews with his disciples, Ashin Jinarakkhita continued to recite Mahāyāna scriptures, exchange greetings with his Chinese followers by saying “Amitufo 阿彌陀佛” (Amitābha), and venerate Avalokiteśvara.⁶⁶ Ashin Jinarakkhita’s monastic training both in the Mahāyāna and Theravāda traditions allowed him to be affiliated with both the Chinese and the Burmese Buddhist networks and legitimized his Buddhayāna movement based on the hybridized interpretations of Buddhist doctrines.

THE MAKING OF THE BUDDHAYĀNA MOVEMENT

Ashin Jinarakkhita considered himself neither a Mahāyāna nor a Theravāda monk. Since his return from Burma, he started a new Buddhist movement called “Buddhayāna,” which, he emphasized, was in line with the Indonesian motto of “Unity in Diversity.” His Buddhayāna movement stressed that despite the existence of diverse Buddhist sects and doctrines, they all lead to a “single path” (Ekayāna) to enlightenment.⁶⁷ His vision of a Buddhayāna movement was to promote an indigenous “Indonesian Buddhism” (agama Buddha Indonesia) for a culturally and linguistically diverse Indonesia.⁶⁸

I will present Ashin Jinarakkhita’s Buddhayāna movement at both the doctrinal and the practical level. At the doctrinal level, Ashin Jinarakkhita propagated the idea that Buddhayāna—or the Buddha vehicle—was the essence of Buddhism. He thought that the spirit of Buddhist wisdom pervades all traditions, and the Buddhayāna movement, which was an expression of such view, offered an opportunity for Buddhists to explore doctrines and practices of Mahāyāna, Theravāda, and Vajrayāna Buddhism without having to choose among them.⁶⁹ Ashin Jinarakkhita was critical of the view that assumed that sectarian Buddhism was “purer” Buddhism, and he argued that there was no classification of Mahāyāna, Theravāda, and Vajrayāna during the Buddha’s time. Instead, he believed that the Buddha taught a variety of ways and stages

⁶⁶ Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

⁶⁷ Biku Dharmawimala, “Buddhayana dan Kontekstualisasi Agama Buddha di Indonesia,” in *Buddhayana Values* (Jakarta: Keluarga Buddhayana Indonesia, 2012), 10.

⁶⁸ Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

⁶⁹ Dharmawimala, “Buddhayana,” 4.

of practice according to the propensity and ability of each person.⁷⁰ Ashin Jinarakkhita considered the “Buddhayāna [to be] synonymous to the single path [to enlightenment]” (Buddhayāna identik dengan Ekayāna)⁷¹ and he thought that his movement would bring Indonesian Buddhists to the core teachings of the Buddha.

As Venerable Dharmavimāla, a prominent disciple of Ashin Jinarakkhita explained to me, the Buddhayāna movement conceptualizes Buddhism as a religion within three concentric circles (see fig. 2).⁷² The innermost circle is the “core teaching” (*inti ajaran*) and liberating dimension of Buddhism. The next circle is the “method” (*metode*), which is varied according to the personal capacity and karmic circumstances of the disciple. Finally, the outermost circle is “culture” (*budaya*), which makes one form of Buddhism seemingly different from another. Dharmavimāla points out that the Buddhayāna movement promotes the need to look beyond the layers of “method” and “culture” in order to get to the “core” of the Buddha’s teachings.⁷³ This, I would suggest, was a strategy of Ashin Jinarakkhita to make Buddhism in harmony with the modern Indonesian state, by embedding the idea of reaching the core of the Buddhist teachings in the nationalist discourse of a unified, multicultural Indonesia.

In terms of practice, Ashin Jinarakkhita encouraged a nonsectarian mixing of doctrines and liturgy. He preached that the Buddhists should not become fixated on a single sectarian practice and should not consider another approach to be wrong and inferior. He encouraged his followers to discern for themselves what is most suitable for their own practice.⁷⁴ On a personal level, Ashin Jinarakkhita kept the Theravāda precepts of not handling money and not eating after noon, and he maintained the Mahāyāna practice of vegetarianism. According to my interviewees, he did so to bridge the vinaya practices of both traditions.⁷⁵ In addition, Ashin Jinarakkhita had always wanted to receive the bodhisattva precepts, and when the revival of the Chinese Mahāyāna ordination in Taiwan made it finally possible,⁷⁶ he traveled there in 1976 to receive the bodhisattva precepts.⁷⁷ Later in the 1980s, he grew a beard to look like a Mahāyāna elder monk but continued to dress in Theravāda robes.⁷⁸

⁷⁰ Dharmawimāla, “Buddhayana,” 7.

⁷¹ Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

⁷² Dharmawimāla, “Buddhayana,” 4–5.

⁷³ Dharmawimāla, “Buddhayana,” 4–5; Dharmavimāla Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015.

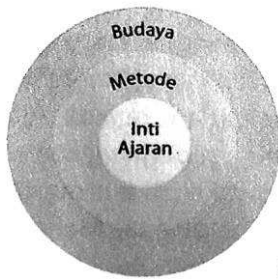
⁷⁴ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 183–84.

⁷⁵ Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

⁷⁶ In the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition, a preceptee (*jiezi* 戒子) undergoes the higher ordination by first receiving the novice precepts (*shami jie* 沙彌戒), followed by the bhikṣu precepts (*biqu jie* 比丘戒), and finally, the bodhisattva precepts (*pusa jie* 菩薩戒).

⁷⁷ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 203.

⁷⁸ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 206.



Gambar 1.1 : Lapisan dari tiga lingkaran

FIG. 2.—Explaining Buddhism in three concentric circles. Source: Biku Dharmawimala, “Buddhaya dan Kontekstualisasi Agama Buddha di Indonesia,” in *Buddhaya Values* (Jakarta: Keluarga Buddhaya Indonesia, 2012), 4. Color version available as an online enhancement.

From his personal practice and his appearance, it was evident that Ashin Jinarakkhita wanted to stress that he was neither a Theravāda nor a Mahāyāna monk, but a combination of both. When the Dalai Lama met Ashin Jinarakkhita during his visit to Indonesia in 1976, he was probably confused by Ashin Jinarakkhita’s sectarian affiliation, and he asked, “To what sect of Buddhism do you belong?” Ashin Jinarakkhita candidly responded, “I am just a servant of the Buddha.”⁷⁹

During my fieldwork, I found a liturgical book titled *A Guide to the Buddha Dhamma (Penuntun Buddha Dhamma)*, which offers fascinating insights into the liturgical practices of the Buddhayāna followers. As told to me by my informant Parwati Soepangat, this liturgical book compiled by Waicakajaya Ananda Susilo under the supervision of Ashin Jinarakkhita, was published in 1967 for mass circulation among members of the Buddhayāna movement.⁸⁰ This liturgical book reveals two major characteristics of Buddhayāna’s liturgical practices. First, it demonstrates the attempt to indigenize Buddhism in Indonesia: for instance, the national anthem of Indonesia is printed in the opening pages.⁸¹ The printing of the national anthem in Buddhist liturgical books

⁷⁹ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 203.

⁸⁰ According to Parwati Soepangat, this liturgical book was popularly used by adherents of the Buddhayāna movement until the 1970s, when a new text was published to include the recitation of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha. Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

⁸¹ Upasaka Waicakajaya Ananda Susilo and J. A. Maha Nayaka Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, *Penuntun Buddha Dhamma* (Cirebon: PERBUDI/PUUI Dewwan Tjirebon, 1967), 3–4. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of this text are my own.

was a very uncommon practice, and it could be read as an attempt by Ashin Jinarakkhita to present Buddhism as a religion supporting nationalism in Indonesia. Furthermore, the translation into Bahasa Indonesia of the Pāli devotional passages and scriptures is provided next to the original text (see fig. 3). Parwati Soepangat explained that since most Indonesian Buddhists can read neither Pāli nor Sanskrit, the Bahasa Indonesia translations help them understand the passages they chant.⁸²

Second, the liturgical book reveals a hybrid mix of Theravāda and Mahāyāna devotion practices among Buddhayāna members. I noticed that, although the liturgical book looks like a typical Theravāda Pāli-language liturgical text that begins with the salutation to the Buddha (*vandanā*), threefold refuge (*tisarāna*), and five precepts (*pañcasīlāni*), followed by Pāli scriptures such as the *Discourse on Blessings* (*Mahā-mangala Sutta*) and the *Discourse on Jewels* (*Ratana Sutta*),⁸³ it also contains Mahāyāna scriptures and mantras. For example, the book includes the *Dhāraṇī of Great Compassion*, in its Hokkien title, *Tay Pi T'jiu* (*Dabei zhou* 大悲咒).⁸⁴ The Sanskrit mantra has been transliterated in Roman characters (see fig. 4), and it contains instructions for making “healing water” (*air penyembuhan*) through the recitation of the *Dhāraṇī of Great Compassion* and the mantra of the *Heart Sūtra*.⁸⁵ In addition, the book contains a short article titled “Theravāda and Mahāyāna” (Theravada dan Mahayana), that highlights the nonsectarian and multitrade orientation of the Buddhayāna movement. The article states that

The Buddha taught the same fundamental knowledge of the Dhamma [and] emptiness, and welfare for the absolute liberation from suffering, [known as] Nibbāna.

Both Theravāda and Mahāyāna teach a similar lesson with the same objective; [nonetheless] they have quite different religious ceremonies.

In Mahāyāna, [there are] a lot of elaborate religious ceremonies, while Theravada [religious ceremonies] are very simple.⁸⁶

The first two years of Ashin Jinarakkhita’s religious career since his return from higher ordination in Burma were a time of intensive proselytization. He and his lay disciples made two “Dharma tours” to both urban and rural parts of Java, Sulawesi, and Bali to spread the Buddhist teachings. A few years later, he extended his missionary reach to Sumatra.⁸⁷ Ashin Jinarakkhita was espe-

⁸² Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

⁸³ See *Penuntun Buddha Dhamma*, 21–23, 43–51.

⁸⁴ *Penuntun Buddha Dhamma*, 103–5.

⁸⁵ *Penuntun Buddha Dhamma*, 106.

⁸⁶ *Penuntun Buddha Dhamma*, 308.

⁸⁷ See Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 131–36.

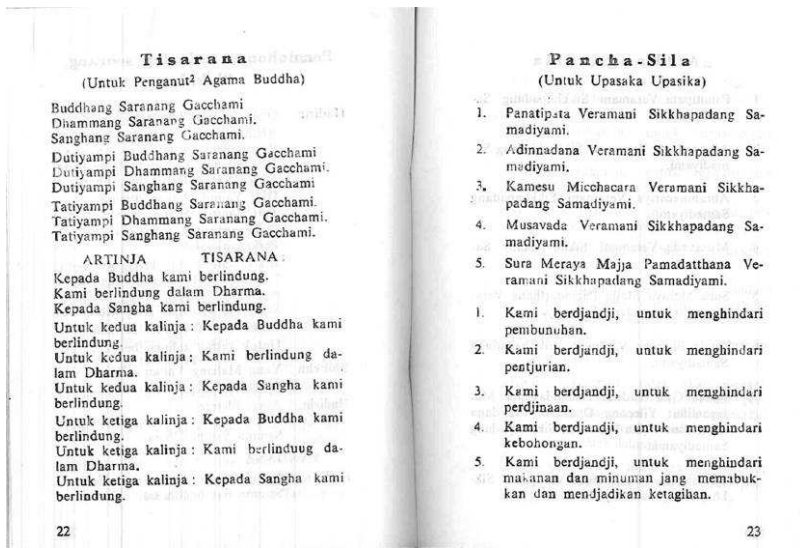


FIG. 3.—Pāli devotional passages with Indonesian translation side by side. Source: Upasaka Waicakajaya Ananda Susilo and J. A. Maha Nayaka Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, *Penuntun Buddha Dhamma* (Cirebon: PERBUDI/PUUI Dewwan Tjirebon, 1967), 22–23.

cially interested in converting non-Chinese Indonesians. However, it is difficult to quantify the success of his religious activities. This was because, on the one hand, the 1930 colonial census only presented the religious affiliation of a small portion of the population. On the other hand, the subsequent 1961 census—the first to be published after Indonesia’s independence— withheld the data on religion because of its “perceived sensitivity.”⁸⁸ Therefore, it is not possible to compare the increase, if any, in the number of Buddhists between the last Dutch colonial census of 1930 and the first population census in independent Indonesia conducted in 1961. Nevertheless, in her article, Iem Brown points out that Ashin Jinarakkhita managed to quickly attract a sizeable congregation, particularly in the larger cities, such as Semarang, Bandung, Jakarta, Surabaya, and Makassar.⁸⁹ These large cities, as I found out in my fieldwork, had a sizeable Chinese population. Hence, it was probable that many of Ashin Jinarakkhita’s early converts were ethnic Chinese. Despite the lack of data to

⁸⁸ Leo Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya Arifin, and Aris Ananta, *Indonesia’s Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), 103.

⁸⁹ Brown, “Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism,” 110.

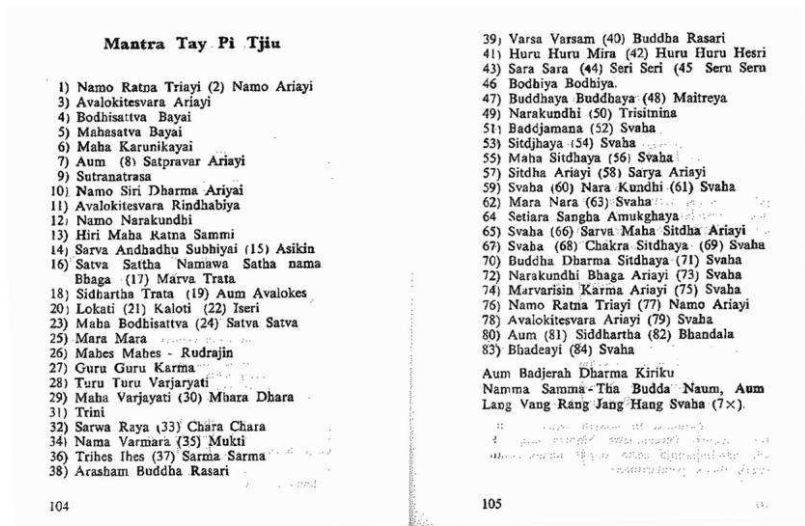


FIG. 4.—Mantra Tay Pi Tjiu (*Dabei zhou* 大悲咒), also known as the *Dhāraṇī of Great Compassion*. Source: Upasaka Waicakajaya Ananda Susilo and J. A. Maha Nayaka Shavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, *Penuntun Buddha Dhamma* (Cirebon: PERBUDI/PUUI Dewwan Tjirebon, 1967), 104–5.

confirm the rise in the number of Buddhists, it was likely that the Buddhist population was increasing, as the monk had to set up lay and monastic organizations to manage his followers.

As the Buddhayāna movement started to grow, Ashin Jinarakkhita felt the need to establish an institution to organize his lay members. In July 1955, he established Indonesia's first lay Buddhist organization, the Indonesian Fraternity of Lay Buddhists (Persaudaraan Upāsaka-Upāsikā Indonesia, hereafter PUUI) to consolidate his lay disciples and to train lay preachers to help him spread the Dharma.⁹⁰ Ashin Jinarakkhita selected the city of Semarang in Central Java as the headquarters of his organization. In an early study of the Chinese in Semarang, Donald Earl Willmott noted that Ashin Jinarakkhita came to Semarang several times in the spring of 1955. The monk gave a number of lectures at the Kong Tik Soe (Gongde ci 功德祠), the Hwa Joe Hwee Koan, and the meetinghouse of the Theosophical Society. While there he also

⁹⁰ PUUI was renamed Indonesian Buddhist Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Agama Buddha Indonesia) in March 1972, and later renamed again as the Indonesian Council of Buddhist Upasaka and Pandita Buddhism (Majelis Upasaka Pandita Agama Buddha Indonesia) in 1976. Eventually, in May 1979, the lay Buddhist organization was renamed the Indonesian Buddhayāna Council (Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia). See *Perkumpulan Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia: Anggaran Dasar dan Anggaran Rumah Tangga* (Lembaga Ortala, 2014), 1–2.

officiated religious ceremonies at the Tay Kak Sie and taught meditation. According to the chairman of the Semarang Society, the monk recruited six young Indonesians and eleven Chinese, including two girls as his lay disciples.⁹¹

Following the Vesak celebrations of 1955, a lay disciple by the name of Goei Thwan Ling donated a piece of land in Ungaran, near the city of Semarang. Ashin Jinarakkhita soon built a temple on this land and named it Vihāra Buddhagaya Watugong. With his growing popularity and following, Ashin Jinarakkhita established the PUUI at Vihāra Buddhagaya in July 1955 (see fig. 5).⁹² At that time, there were few Buddhist monks in Indonesia, and Ashin Jinarakkhita, being the only Indonesian-born cleric, recognized an urgent need to train lay disciples to spread the Buddhist teachings. The PUUI became an important forum for Ashin Jinarakkhita to organize his lay followers and to train Buddhist missionaries to spread his message. He started to ordain his senior disciples with the best knowledge of the Buddha-dharma as *panditas*,⁹³ or lay preachers, to serve the needs of a growing congregation.⁹⁴ Among those ordained, there were his lay disciples Sariputra Sadono, R. Sumana, Mangunkawatja, Tengger, and Ananda Suyono in the area of Central Java, and Khoe Soe Kiam, Ong Tiang Biau, and others in West. These *panditas* were trained to lead Buddhist funeral ceremonies, bless Buddhist weddings, and especially to give Dharma lectures. The PUUI also played an essential role in spreading Buddhism in various parts of Indonesia. In the 1950s, the communication and transport systems in Indonesia made it hard for Ashin Jinarakkhita to travel from one place to another and reach the growing number of his followers. Therefore, it was the *panditas* who supported him in ministering the congregation. The use of lay preachers made it possible for the Buddhayāna movement to grow quickly within the span of a few years.⁹⁵

With the success of PUUI, Ashin Jinarakkhita realized that the establishment of a Sangha community could help him further expand the Buddhayāna movement in Indonesia. He encouraged his lay disciples to consider becoming monks. One of his older lay disciples by the name of Ong Tiang Biau was the first to seek ordination, followed by other two: Ki Sontomihardjio, a seventy-year-old retired schoolteacher from Kutoarjo, Central Java, and Ketut Tangkas, a thirty-year-old bachelor.⁹⁶ With three prospective monastic disciples, Ashin Jinarakkhita went forward to organize the first ordination

⁹¹ Donald Earl Willmott, *The Chinese of Semarang: A Changing Minority Community in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1960), 252.

⁹² Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 70–72.

⁹³ *Paṇḍita* is a Sanskrit word meaning “learned scholar.”

⁹⁴ Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015; Sudhamek, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015.

⁹⁵ Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

⁹⁶ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 116–18.

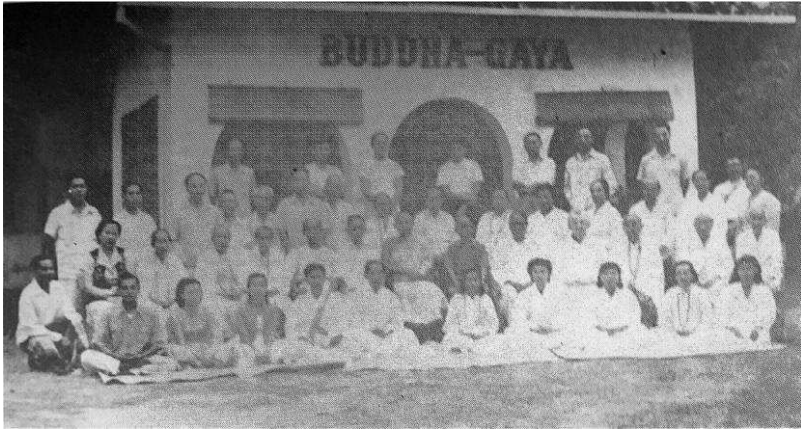


FIG. 5.—Ashin Jinarakkhita (second row, seventh from left) with Leaders of the PUUI at Vihāra Buddhagaya Watugong, Semarang, 1955. Photo courtesy of Edij Juangari.

ceremony in postcolonial Indonesia during the Vesak month of 1959. He decided not to invite Chinese migrant monks from local temples in Java to be involved in the event. Instead, he relied on his networks to invite fourteen monks from East, South, and Southeast Asia to officiate the ordination (see table 1).⁹⁷

The Buddhist community in Jakarta greeted the arrival of the fourteen monks' entourage with enthusiasm. On May 17, 1959, the first ordination ceremony was held in Jakarta to ordain Ong Tiang Biaw as a novice, and he was given the name Jinaputta. After the ordination ceremony, Ashin Jinarakkhita seized the opportunity to bring his guests on a Dharma propagation tour around Java, that would touch first at the Vihāra Vimala Dharma in Bandung, and then Central Java, via Tegal and Pekalongan (see fig. 6). On the morning of May 21, 1959, a second ordination ceremony was held at the Vihāra Buddhagaya Watugong in Semarang for the ordination of Ki Sontomihardjio and Ketut Tangkas. The two newly minted novices were given the names Jinananda and Jinapiya, respectively. The following day, a higher ordination ceremony was performed to ordain Jinaputta as a full-fledged Bhikkhu.⁹⁸

After the higher ordination event, Ashin Jinarakkhita celebrated Vesak with his fourteen foreign guests, three newly ordained monastic disciples, and several thousands of followers at Borobudur. Another higher ordination ceremony

⁹⁷ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 222.

⁹⁸ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 116–19.

TABLE 1
LIST OF INVITEES FOR THE 1959 ORDINATION CEREMONY

Name	Place of Origin
1. Narada Mahathera	Sri Lanka
2. Ariyavamsa Mahathera	Sri Lanka
3. Sathissara Mahathera	Sri Lanka
4. Mahanama Mahathera	Sri Lanka
5. Piyadassi Mahathera	Sri Lanka
6. Saranapala Mahathera	Sri Lanka
7. Kavivorayan Thera	Sri Lanka
8. Maha Somroeng Mahathera	Thailand
9. Visal Samanagung Mahathera	Thailand
10. Kru Champirat Thera	Thailand
11. Candovauno (Ung Mean) Mahathera	Cambodia
12. Sombdach Choun Nath Mahathera	Cambodia
13. Mahāsi Sayādaw Mahathera	Burma
14. Bhikṣu Kimura	Japan

SOURCE.—Edij Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara: Riwayat Singkat Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita* (Bandung: Yayasan Penerbit Karaniya, 1995), 122.

was held in Bali on June 3, 1959. This time, the Sangha entourage officiated the higher ordination of Jinapiya.⁹⁹

Ashin Jinarakkhita deemed the first ordination ceremony in postcolonial Indonesia a success. He not only was able to strengthen his networks with monks in other countries but also acquired three monastic disciples to assist him in expanding the Buddhayāna movement in Indonesia.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, the media coverage of the visiting monks and ordination ceremonies provided good publicity for Ashin Jinarakkhita's movement. Indonesians now knew about the establishment of an Indonesian-born Sangha order in their own country.

Over the next couple of years, Ashin Jinarakkhita attempted to recruit more monastic disciples, and he soon recognized the necessity of establishing a Sangha organization to represent the community in Indonesia. On January 23, 1963, along with his disciples Jinaputta, Jinapiya, and Jinananda, he founded the Maha Sangha Indonesia in Bandung. The Sangha union aimed to serve as a “shelter for monks and nuns from the traditions of Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna with a Buddhayāna view” (bernaung para biksu dan biksuni yang berasal dari tradisi Therawada, Mahayana, dan Wajrayana yang memiliki pandangan Buddhayana).¹⁰¹ Shortly after the founding of Maha Sangha Indonesia, Ashin Jinarakkhita also made the momentous decision to ordain the

⁹⁹ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 121–22.

¹⁰⁰ Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015.

¹⁰¹ The Maha Sangha Indonesia was renamed Sangha Indonesia in 1972, and again renamed Supreme Sangha Indonesia (Sangha Agung Indonesia, also known as SAGIN) in 1974. See *Perkumpulan Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia*, 17.

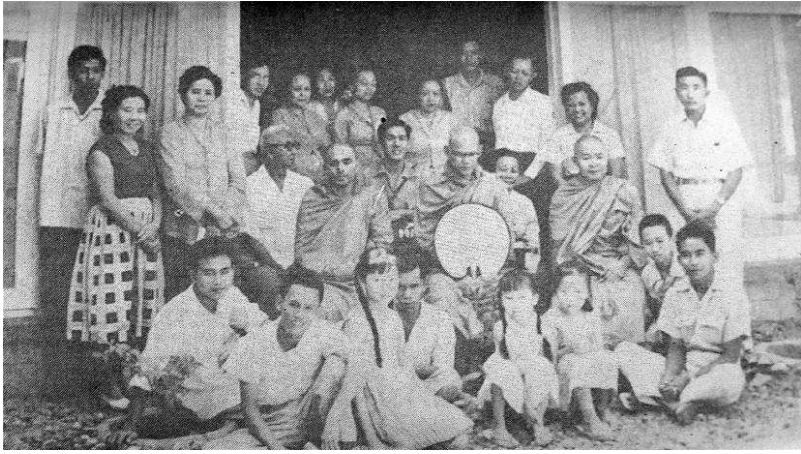


FIG. 6.—Ashin Jinarakkhita (second row, first from right) with Mahāsi Sayādaw Mahathera (second row, second from right) and Piyadassi Mahathera (second row, third from right) at Vihāra Vimala Dharma in Bandung, 1959. Photo courtesy of Edij Juangari.

first Buddhist nun in Indonesia. During the early 1960s, *bhikṣuṇī* ordination in the Theravāda tradition was unheard of, and it remains a point of contention among the Theravādin communities in contemporary South and Southeast Asia.¹⁰²

As the first Indonesian-born monk and founder of the Buddhayāna movement, Ashin Jinarakkhita did not have the authority of tradition and precedent. In fact, his longtime female disciple, Parwati Soepangat, told me that Ashin Jinarakkhita was an advocate of gender equality, which would explain why he did not hesitate to support the ordination of nuns in Indonesia. Furthermore, given his Mahāyāna background, he considered *bhikṣuṇī* ordination a mainstream practice in the Chinese Buddhist world.¹⁰³

In 1963, Ashin Jinarakkhita ordained his first female disciple as a novice nun (*śrāmaṇerī*; *shamini* 沙彌尼) at Vihāra Vimala Dharma in Bandung. He gave her the Pāli name Jinakumari (1913–95), and the Chinese Dharma name

¹⁰² See, e.g., Tessa J. Bartholomeusz, *Women under the Bo Tree: Buddhist Nuns in Sri Lanka* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Emma Tomalin, “The Thai Bhikkhuni Movement and Women’s Empowerment,” *Gender & Development* 14, no. 3 (November 2006): 385–97; Hiroko Kawanami, “The Bhikkhunī Ordination Debate: Global Aspirations, Local Concerns, with Special Emphasis on the Views of the Monastic Community in Burma,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 24, no. 2 (2007): 226–44.

¹⁰³ Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015; See also Parwati Soepangat, *Pengabdian dalam Buddhadharma* (Bandung: Team Penyusun Vihara Vimala Dharma, 2002), chap. 11.

Wan Thong.¹⁰⁴ Subsequently, he ordained several more women, including Jinavimala (Wan Cheng), Jinaphala (Wan Sian), Jinadasa (Wan Sun), Jinamaitri (Wan Khing), Jinaloka (Wan Hui), Jinakaruna (Wan Sem), Jinapadma (Wan Lian), and Wan Yung.¹⁰⁵ In 1966, he sent Jinakumari and several novice nuns to attend the Mahāyāna higher ordination at the Po Lin Monastery (Baolian chansi 寶蓮禪寺) in Hong Kong.¹⁰⁶ After receiving her higher ordination, Bhikṣuṇī Jinakumari returned to Indonesia to assist her master with Dharma propagation and temple building activities. Ashin Jinarakkhita appointed Jinakumari as the chief *bhikṣuṇī* in the Maha Sangha Indonesia and entrusted her with many important tasks in the expansion of the Buddhayāna temples. According to Medya Silvita, Jinakumari took on the administrative role of overseeing the purchase of land, as well as the construction and renovation of monasteries. Additionally, Jinakumari played an active role in spreading the Dharma to women using stories and methods such as vegetarian meal cooking.¹⁰⁷

By the mid-1960s, Ashin Jinarakkhita had built a vibrant Buddhist community in Indonesia. He founded a new movement that shifted the image of Buddhism from a Chinese religion to a multiethnic religion—for both Chinese and indigenous people—in the modern nation-state. His Buddhayāna movement, which emphasized the coexistence and co-practice of diverse Buddhist doctrines and scriptures leading to a single enlightened path, were strategically juxtaposed with Indonesia's national motto of "Unity in Diversity." We are now going to see how, in the following period, the broader context of socio-political change and conflict in Indonesia shaped the development of Buddhism in general, and the Buddhayāna movement in particular.

SANG HYANG ĀDI-BUDDHA AND INDONESIA'S NEW ORDER

On October 1, 1965, the so-called Thirtieth of September Movement (Gerakan 30 September; hereafter G30S) allegedly murdered six generals of the Indonesian army and attempted to stage a coup. General Suharto (1921–2008) quickly crushed the G30S Movement and blamed the Communist Party of Indonesia (Partai Komunis Indonesia [PKI]) for instigating the violence. He used anti-

¹⁰⁴ There is little information on the early life of Jinakumari. According to Medya Silvita, Jinakumari was born in 1913 in Medan, North Sumatra, and died in 1995. The names of her lineage masters were Yuen Chie, San He, Yen Cue, Thung Chan, Pen Ching, and Ti Chen (Ashin Jinarakkhita). See Medya Silvita, "Jinakumari: Indonesia's First Nun," in *Compassion & Social Justice*, ed. Karma Lekshe Tsomo (Yogyakarta: Sakyadhita, 2015), 7.

¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately, I was unable to track down the Chinese characters of their Dharma names. Silvita, "Jinakumari," 9.

¹⁰⁶ Following the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, the communist authorities suspended Buddhist ordination ceremony in China. Therefore, Buddhist novices went to Hong Kong or Taiwan to receive their high ordination in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition.

¹⁰⁷ Silvita, "Jinakumari," 7–8.

communism as a pretext to hijack President Sukarno's powers and installed himself as second president of the Indonesian Republic. In the months to follow, Suharto banned the PKI and gave the orders to kill and imprison thousands of alleged communists.¹⁰⁸ In 1967, Suharto became president and ushered in thirty-one years of authoritarian rule known as the New Order (Orde Baru) that lasted until his resignation in 1998. The New Order regime focused mostly on economic development and maintained a repressive approach toward left-wing views and political dissent.¹⁰⁹

Suharto's government blamed communist China for the G30S Movement and for its influence over the PKI, and Suharto's authoritarian regime severed diplomatic ties with the PRC in 1967 (this would remain so until 1990).¹¹⁰ The New Order government was suspicious of Chinese Indonesians' ties to communist China and their possible involvement with the PKI. Therefore, Suharto introduced an ethnic policy to assimilate the Chinese Indonesians and make them loyal citizens of the Indonesian nation. His government promulgated a series of laws and presidential orders to assimilation (*pribumization*) aimed at Chinese Indonesians, including the adoption of Indonesian-sounding names (1966),¹¹¹ a ban on the public display of Chinese religion, beliefs, and customs, as well as the use of Chinese languages and writing (1967),¹¹² and the elimination of the "three pillars" of Chinese culture, namely, Chinese media (1965), Chinese political and social organizations, and Chinese schools (1966). As Chinese-Indonesian scholar Leo Suryadinata suggests, "the objective of the

¹⁰⁸ The 1965 coup and the subsequent mass killing of alleged communists have been the subject of recent discussions by scholars and social activists. See, e.g., Douglas Kammen and Katharine McGregor, eds., *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965–68* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012); John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup d'État in Indonesia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); John Roosa, "The State of Knowledge about an Open Secret: Indonesia's Mass Disappearances of 1965–66," *Journal of Asian Studies* 75, no. 2 (May 2016): 281–97; Geoffrey B. Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965–66* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018). Joshua Oppenheimer produced two documentaries, *The Act of Killing* (2012) and *The Look of Silence* (2014), to expose the Indonesian massacre of 1965–66.

¹⁰⁹ For further reading on the New Order period, see, e.g., Jörgen Hellman, *Performing the Nation: Cultural Politics in New Order Indonesia* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2003); Virginia Matheson Hooker, *Culture and Society in New Order Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993); Frans Hüsken, Mario Rutten, and Jan-Paul Dirkse, eds., *Indonesia di bawah Orde Baru: Pembangunan dan Kesejahteraan Sosial* (Jakarta: Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia, 1997); James T. Siegel, *Solo in the New Order: Language and Hierarchy in an Indonesian City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

¹¹⁰ Taomo Zhou's recent study reveals that China's influence over the PKI and its involvement in the G30S Movement was far more limited than what the Suharto regime have previously claimed. See Taomo Zhou, "China and the Thirtieth of September Movement," *Indonesia* 98 (October 2014): 29–58.

¹¹¹ Keputusan Presidium Kabinet (Cabinet Presidium Decision) No. 127/U/Kep/12/1966, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (National Archives of Indonesia).

¹¹² Instruksi Presiden Republik Indonesia (Presidential Instruction) Nomor 14 Tahun 1967, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (National Archives of Indonesia).

policy was that through assimilation, the entire ethnic Chinese community as a separate community would disappear.”¹¹³

In 1965, prior to the coup attempt, then president Sukarno passed a Presidential Determination on “Prevention of Misuse and/or Defamation of Religion” (Pencegahan Penyalah-Gunaan dan/atau Penodaan Agama) to highlight the fundamental principle of “belief in the one Almighty God” (Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa) contained in the first of the Pancasila, the five principles of the philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state.¹¹⁴ It also guaranteed the protection of six officially recognized religions, namely, Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.¹¹⁵ After Suharto became Indonesia’s president, he saw religion as a useful tool for his anticommunist policy. The Suharto government emphasized the Pancasila principle of “belief in the one Almighty God” and considered religion a force that could be harnessed to counter the atheist PKI. Therefore, the regime required all Indonesian citizens to have a religion, which had to be stated in their resident identity card (Kartu Tanda Penduduk). Indonesian citizens who did not have any religion were required to have one, or risk persecution as communist sympathizers.¹¹⁶ Suharto generally maintained a tolerant attitude toward the Buddhist minority during his presidency. For example, in his 1969 Vesak speech to Indonesia’s Buddhist community, Suharto encouraged Buddhists to contribute to the development policy of the New Order government:

I have repeatedly stated that all groups in the society have an equal right and obligation to take part and play an active role in the implementation of the Five-Year Development Plan. You, Indonesian Buddhists also shoulder this right and obligation. That is the reason why at this commemoration of Vaicak [*sic*] Day, I encourage the Indonesian Buddhists to walk on with determination on the Noble Eightfold Path, as a means to liberate themselves and mankind from sufferings and misery.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Leo Suryadinata, *Understanding the Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007), 266.

¹¹⁴ The five principles of the Pancasila are as follows: (1) belief in the one Almighty God (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*); (2) a just and civilized humanity (*Kemanusiaan Yang Adil dan Beradab*); (3) a unified Indonesia (*Persatuan Indonesia*); (4) democracy led by the wisdom of the representatives of the people (*Kerakyatan Yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan, Dalam Permusyawaratan Perwakilan*); and (5) social justice for all Indonesians (*Keadilan Sosial Bagi Seluruh Rakyat Indonesia*). There are several translations for the concept of “Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa.” I would translate it as “Belief in the one Almighty God.” For further reading on the Pancasila, see Eka Darmaputera, *Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society: A Cultural and Ethical Analysis* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988).

¹¹⁵ Penetapan Presiden Republik Indonesia (Presidential Determination) Nomor 1 Tahun 1965, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (National Archives of Indonesia).

¹¹⁶ Suryadinata, *Culture of the Chinese Minority in Indonesia*, 161–62.

¹¹⁷ *Buddhism in Indonesia* (Jakarta: P.N. Pertjetakan Negara R.I., 1969), 6.

Nevertheless, Suharto's assimilation policy had a profound impact on Indonesia's Buddhist community and the Chinese Indonesian population in general. First, the requirement for Indonesian citizens to declare their religion caused some Chinese Indonesians who did not have a formal religious affiliation to state either Buddhism or Confucianism as their religion. According to Venerable Dharmavimala, as Taoism was not one of the recognized religions, many Chinese who worshipped at Chinese temples declared Buddhism as their religion out of convenience. These new "converts," who knew little or nothing about Buddhist teachings, contributed to an increase in the number of Buddhists in Indonesia.¹¹⁸ The 1971 Population Census of Indonesia estimated that there were 1,092,314 Buddhists in Indonesia, who made up to 0.92 percent of the population.¹¹⁹ As there was no population census regarding the number of Chinese in Indonesia prior to the publication of the Population Census of 2000, Leo Suryadinata relied on several converging pieces of evidence to speculate that the majority of Buddhists were ethnic Chinese, as the number of Buddhists happened to coincide with his estimated size of the ethnic Chinese population.¹²⁰

Second, the 1966 regulation on name changing and the 1967 regulation on the public display of Chinese religion, beliefs, and customs had an immediate impact on the Buddhist community. The Chinese names of Buddhist temples had to be changed to Pāli or Sanskrit names to appear assimilated into Indonesian society. For instance, Kong Hoa Sie changed its name to Vihāra Vaidipulya Sasana. Furthermore, following a ban on all Chinese events in public, Buddhist temples could no longer organize religious ceremonies for Chinese festivals, such as the Lunar New Year (Tahun Baru Imlek), the Hungry Ghost Festival (Festival Cioko), and the Mid-Autumn Festival (Festival Musim Gugur). Additionally, Chinese Buddhists could no longer use Chinese languages and characters in their liturgy. As a result, Mahāyāna scriptures and mantras in Chinese were transliterated into the Roman alphabet. The Buddhayāna organizations used Pāli-language texts together with a selection of transliterated Chinese Buddhist texts for their religious activities.¹²¹ Despite these restrictions, Parwati Soepangat shared with me that the Chinese assimilation policy had little negative impact on the Buddhayāna movement. She recalled that Ashin Jinarakkhita sustained a cordial relationship with the Suharto regime, and even met with Suharto on a couple of occasions (see fig. 7).¹²² Hence,

¹¹⁸ Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

¹¹⁹ Suryadinata et al., *Indonesia's Population*, 104.

¹²⁰ Suryadinata, *Understanding the Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia*, 296–97.

¹²¹ Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015; Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015; Bechert, "The Buddhayāna of Indonesia," 15.

¹²² Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.



FIG. 7.—Ashin Jinarakkhita meets President Suharto at the Merdeka Palace, 1992. Photo courtesy of Edij Juangari.

there was no surprise that the government considered Ashin Jinarakkhita to be the main representative of the Buddhist community in Indonesia.

Although Parwati Soepangat rightly pointed out that the Buddhayāna movement maintained pleasant relations with the Indonesian government during the New Order, Ashin Jinarakkhita nonetheless had to make a major and controversial doctrinal adjustment to ensure the survival of Buddhism. As discussed earlier, Suharto's government emphasized the Pancasila principle of "belief in the one Almighty God" and used religion as a tool to counter communism. Buddhism, however, is a nontheistic religion and does not have a monotheistic creator God. To make Buddhism compatible with the first principle of the Pancasila, Ashin Jinarakkhita introduced the concept of "Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha"—which I will translate as "the God Primordial Buddha"—as the Buddhist version of an almighty God (*Tuhan Yang Maha Esa*).¹²³ The monk str-

¹²³ According to Damien Keown, Ādi-Buddha refers to the "primordial Buddha." This term was only "found in late Mahāyāna and Tibetan traditions of tantric Buddhism, possibly not attested in Indian Buddhism but generated through hyper-Sanskritization." The Ādi-Buddha is usually identified as the Samantabhadra Buddha in Tibetan Buddhism. It is believed that both nirvāṇa and saṃsāra arise from his nature. See Keown, *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, 5. Several scholars have examined the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha: see, e.g., Bechert, "The Buddhayāna of Indonesia," 10–21;

tegitically claimed that the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha could be found in the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*, a tenth-century text produced during the reign of King Mpu Sindok from East Java.¹²⁴

In his unpublished study, Hudaya Kandahjaya highlights that the term “Ādi-Buddha” could be found in several early Javanese sources. He suggests that Ādi-Buddha was first mentioned in the Kawi-language *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*: “The Ādi-Buddha mind born in the cakrawarti [*sic*] king after defeating the powerful enemy is able to fulfill all wishes of all beings, hence such a mind is called the Mahāmuniwara Cintāmaṇi-samādhi.”¹²⁵ The term “Ādi-Buddha” again appeared in the Pagaruyung I (Bukit Gombak I) inscription dated April 13, 1356. The inscription mentions that King Adityawarman of Malayapura, a state in central Sumatra, was “exceedingly like Ādi-Buddha.” He was said to possess the virtues of “loving kindness, compassion, joy, and tranquility” and was “a king beneficial to misfortunate living beings.” Similar terms also appeared in an old Javanese text, *Praṇāmya satataṃ Buddham*.¹²⁶ Taken together, it was clear that Ashin Jinarakkhita relied on historical claims to justify that Buddhism—and the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha—had long been a part of Indonesia’s history.

Following Ashin Jinarakkhita’s “rediscovery” of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha from ancient Javanese texts, he mobilized his disciples from various parts of Indonesia to spread this idea. Among his followers who contributed to the research and promotion of the Ādi-Buddha concept were Girirakkhito and Dhammaviriya from Bogor, Dicky Soemani and Karbono from Bandung, Widyadharmā from Jakarta, as well as many lay preachers from the PUUI.¹²⁷ In 1965, Dhammaviriya published *The God in Buddhism (Ketuhanan dalam Agama Buddha)* to present the Buddhayāna tenets of Indonesian Buddhism:

1. The One Supreme God is Adi Buddha.
2. The Prophets are Buddha Gotama and the Bodhisattvas.

Brown, “Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism,” 108–17; Ekowati, “Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita’s Interpreting and Translating Buddhism,” 36–45; Kandahjaya, “Ashin Jinarakkhita and Adi Buddha,” unpublished manuscript.

¹²⁴ The *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan* originally written in the Kawi language had been translated into several languages. In 1910, J. Kats published a Dutch translation of the text. Balinese scholar I Gusti Sugriwa published an Indonesian language translation in 1956. See *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*, trans. J. Kats (The Hague, 1910); *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*, trans. I Gusti Sugriwa (Denpasar: Pustaka Balimas, 1956).

¹²⁵ Kats, *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*, folio 50a, quoted in Kandahjaya, “Ashin Jinarakkhita and Adi Buddha,” 16.

¹²⁶ Kandahjaya, “Ashin Jinarakkhita and Adi Buddha,” 16–17.

¹²⁷ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 185.

3. The Holy Books are: 1) *Tipitaka*
- 2) *Dhammapada*
- 3) *Sang Hyang Kamahayanikan*¹²⁸

Dhammaviriya presents Buddhism in the monotheistic Abrahamic religious context to validate that the religion fulfills the Pancasila principle of “belief in the one Almighty God”:

1. The God who is without feature or characteristic is Sang Adi Buddha.
2. The definable God who created the Universe is Avalokitesvara.
3. The God who is close to mankind is Padmapani.¹²⁹

The book also uses the Mahāyāna doctrine of the Three Bodies of the Buddha (*trikāya*; *sansheng* 三身)¹³⁰ to explain the concept of “God” in the Buddhist context:

1. Adi Buddha symbolized Dharmakaya, who caused the creation of the Universe.
2. Avalokitesvara symbolized Sambhogakaya, who created the Universe.
3. Padmapani symbolized Nirmanakaya, that is, Avalokitesvara on earth.¹³¹

Iem Brown further noted that the devotional salutation “Namo Sang Hyang Adi Buddhaya” (Homage to the God Primordial Buddha) was not mentioned in Dhammaviriya’s book.¹³² In 1972, a subsequent book with the same title *The God in Buddhism (Ketuhanan dalam Agama Buddha)*, compiled by Ashin Jinarakkhita’s disciple, Upi Dhammavadi, began with the devotional salutation “Namo Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddhaya.” This devotional salutation was to be recited before the usual Pāli salutation “Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sam-māsambuddhassa” (Homage to the Blessed One, the Exalted One, the Fully-

¹²⁸ Dhammaviriya, *Ketuhanan dalam Agama Buddha* (Bogor: PUUI, 1965), 4, quoted in Brown, “Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism,” 113.

¹²⁹ Dhammaviriya, *Ketuhanan dalam Agama Buddha*, 5, quoted in Brown, “Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism,” 113.

¹³⁰ The three bodies (*trikāya*) of the Buddha are: *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya*, *nirmāṇakāya*. The *dharmakāya* (*fasheng* 法身) refers to the transcendence of form and realization of true enlightenment. The *sambhogakāya* (*baoshen* 報身) is the Buddha-body that is called “reward body” or “body of enjoyment of the merits attained as a bodhisattva.” The *nirmāṇakāya* (*huashen* 化身 or *yingshen* 應身) is the body manifested in response to the need to teach sentient beings. For a study of the *trikāya* theory, see Guang Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha: Its Evolution from Early Buddhism to the Trikāya Theory* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005).

¹³¹ Dhammaviriya, *Ketuhanan dalam Agama Buddha*, 5, quoted in Brown, “Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism,” 113.

¹³² Brown, “Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism,” 113.

Enlightened One).¹³³ Buddhologist Heinz Bechert called the Buddhayāna movement “a syncretistic form of Theravāda,” and observed an interesting mix of “Namo Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddhaya” with Theravāda and Mahāyāna salutations in Buddhayāna’s liturgical texts produced during the New Order:

Namo sanghyang Ādibuddhāya
 Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa
 Namo Amitābha Buddhāya
 Namo Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva
 Namo Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva
 Namo Maitreya Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva
 Namo Kṣiṭigarbha Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva
 Namo Kuvera Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva
 Namo Bhaiṣajyaguru Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva¹³⁴
 Namo Sabbe Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva¹³⁵

Ashin Jinarakkhita’s attempt to align Buddhism with the first principle of the Pancasila was accepted by the Suharto government. The authorities acknowledged Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha as the “one and only God” of Buddhism. On June 23, 1975, the Indonesian government promulgated the Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 21 (Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 21) to officially recognize the Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha as the God of Indonesian Buddhism and authorize Buddhist civil servants to recite the term in their official oath taking ceremony.¹³⁶

In 1979, the Buddhayāna movement published a booklet entitled *The Doctrine of God Almighty Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha in Indonesian Buddhism (Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha Tuhan Yang Maha Esa dalam Agama Buddha Indonesia)*. The book begins with a preface containing a devotional salutation and an explanation of the rationale for publishing this text:

Namo Sanghyang Adi Buddhaya,
 Namo Buddhaya—Bodhisatwanya—Mahasatwanya.

To meet the needs of Indonesian Buddhists for scriptural guidelines that match the identity of the Indonesian nation based on the Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and the sacred heritage of Borobudur, we present *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha* with

¹³³ Dhammavadi, comp., *Ketuhanan dalam Agama Buddha* (Patjet: Buddharasmi, Vihara Nagasena, 1972), quoted in Brown, “Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism,” 113.

¹³⁴ It is interesting to note that Bhaiṣajyaguru, the Buddha of Healing (Yaoshifo 藥師佛), was rendered as a Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva.

¹³⁵ *Ringkasan Pancaran Bahagia Paritta Mantram*, quoted in Bechert, “The Buddhayāna of Indonesia,” 15.

¹³⁶ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 202.

the hope that [this booklet] can be used as a means of support and stabilize the teachings of Indonesian Buddhism throughout the Indonesian Motherland (*Ibu Pertiwi*).¹³⁷

This widely circulated booklet presents the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha found in ancient Javanese texts to suggest that the belief in God almighty had been a Buddhist practice in Indonesia since historical times.¹³⁸ It lists the three categories of Buddhist scriptures—three baskets of the Pāli Canon, thirty-two Sanskrit scriptures, and four Kawi texts—that are considered sacred texts of Indonesian Buddhism.¹³⁹ In addition, the booklet discusses how Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha can be understood using the Mahāyāna doctrine of the “Three Bodies.” However, unlike the earlier book by Dhammaviriya, *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha* offers a different understanding based on esoteric Buddhist ideas. It suggests that Ādi-Buddha is the *dharmakāya* as represented by Vajradhara; Dhyāni Buddha is the *saṃbhogakāya* characterized by the Vajrasattva; and Dhyāni Bodhisattva is the *nirmāṇakāya* embodied by Vajrapāṇi.¹⁴⁰ This explanation gave rise to a Buddhist Holy Trinity unique to Buddhayāna’s interpretation of Indonesian Buddhism and was fitting to the first principle of the Pancasila (see fig. 8).

In his 1981 article, Heinz Bechert observed that Buddhayāna’s new form of Buddhism was attractive for Buddhists in Indonesia, especially among the Chinese Indonesians. This was because Chinese Indonesian Buddhists could “adopt a form of Buddhism which declared itself to be genuinely Indonesian” and “retain many of the traditions and practices of Chinese Mahāyāna.”¹⁴¹ Likewise, my interviewees shared with me that Javanese Buddhists were delighted with the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha and its reference to ancient Javanese texts. They regarded it as Ashin Jinarakkhita’s successful effort to create an Indonesian Buddhism for the Indonesian nation.¹⁴²

Although Ashin Jinarakkhita’s controversial concept of the Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha was approved by the Suharto regime and accepted by followers of the Buddhayāna movement, it was met with criticism from Theravāda monastics, which eventually led to the schism of the Sangha in Indonesia. One of Ashin Jinarakkhita’s critics was senior Sri Lankan monk Narada Mahathera. Narada could not accept Ashin Jinarakkhita’s concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha and his ideas of “Theistic Buddhism.” He knew Parwati Soepangat

¹³⁷ “Kata Pengantar,” in *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha Tuhan Yang Maha Esa dalam Agama Buddha Indonesia*, 3rd ed. (Jakarta Barat: Yayasan “Buddhayana,” 1982); my translation.

¹³⁸ “Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha Tuhan Yang Maha Esa Dalam Agama Buddha Indonesia,” in *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha*, 1–4.

¹³⁹ “Kitab-Kitab Suci Agama Buddha Indonesia,” in *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha*, 6–7.

¹⁴⁰ *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha*, 14.

¹⁴¹ Bechert, “The Buddhayāna of Indonesia,” 15.

¹⁴² Dharmasurya Bhumi, interview by author, Bandung, March 5, 2015; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

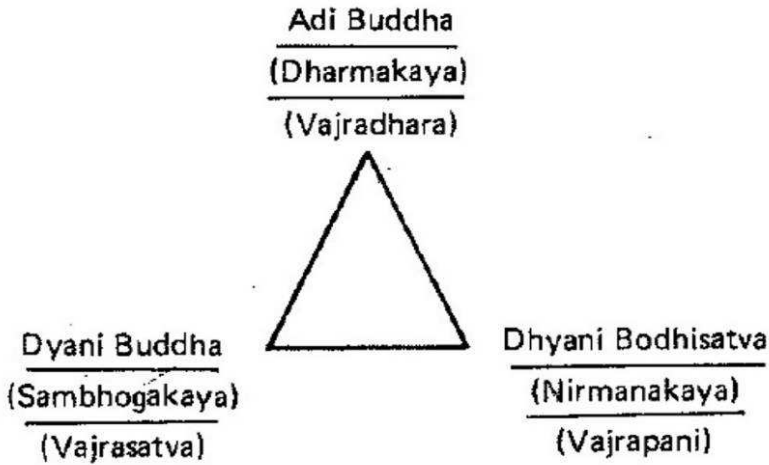


FIG. 8.—Buddhayāna’s new interpretation of the Three Bodies of the Buddha. Source: *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha Tuhan Yang Maha Esa dalam Agama Buddha Indonesia*, 3rd ed. (Jakarta Barat: Yayasan “Buddhayana,” 1982), 14.

since his early missionary trips to Indonesia, where the latter served as his translator, and they stayed in touch through correspondence. In a letter to Parwati Soepangat, Narada was very critical of Ashin Jinarakkhita’s “Theistic Buddhism”: “Please, tell your teacher that there is no God in Buddhism.”¹⁴³ However, Ashin Jinarakkhita’s disciples defended their teacher’s effort to safeguard the survival of Buddhism under the Suharto regime. As Ashin Jinarakkhita’s biographer Edij Juangari argues, Narada misunderstood Ashin Jinarakkhita’s concept of “God Almighty” because he thought that Ashin Jinarakkhita was equating Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha with the Western concept of “God.” He points out that Ashin Jinarakkhita’s ideas were based on a combination of Buddhist teachings and ancient Indonesian beliefs. This misunderstanding, he suggests, was attributed to the fact that Narada was not born and raised in Indonesia and to his ignorance of the sociopolitical situation that Indonesian Buddhists were facing during the New Order.¹⁴⁴

Ashin Jinarakkhita’s idea of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha also faced opposition within the ranks of the very religious order that he founded. Five of the Theravāda monastic members, namely, Girirakkhito, Jinapiya, Jinaratana, Subhato,

¹⁴³ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 144–45.

¹⁴⁴ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 145; Edij Juangari, interview by author, Jakarta, January 27, 2015.

and Sumangalo, claimed that Ashin Jinarakkhita was deviating from the authentic teachings of the Buddha-dharma. Girirakkhito, who initially supported Ashin Jinarakkhita's idea, decided to turn against him. The five monks resolved to leave Maha Sangha Indonesia to propagate the teachings of "pure" Theravāda Buddhism: on January 12, 1972, they submitted a letter to secede from the Maha Sangha Indonesia and declared the establishment of Sangha Indonesia. A handful of Buddhist monastics and laity who opposed Ashin Jinarakkhita welcomed the establishment of a new Sangha organization and switched their allegiance to the new group. The Sangha Indonesia actively propagated the teachings of Theravāda Buddhism and criticized Ashin Jinarakkhita's idea of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha, asserting that the doctrine was not orthodox Buddhist teaching but a concoction of local custom and tradition.¹⁴⁵

The schism of the Sangha was further complicated by the interference of the government. In 1974, Gde Pudja, director of the Guidance of Hinduism and Buddhism office (Bimas Hindu dan Buddha) in the Ministry of Religious Affairs, ordered the merger of Ashin Jinarakkhita's Maha Sangha Indonesia and the recently established Sangha Indonesia to form Supreme Sangha Indonesia (Sangha Agung Indonesia, hereafter SAGIN). Ashin Jinarakkhita was appointed as the chief of SAGIN with Jinapiya, Girirakkhito, and Uggadhammo as his deputies. This awkward arrangement was short-lived: the founding members of Sangha Indonesia were unwilling to accept Ashin Jinarakkhita's leadership and his concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha. In 1976, several Theravāda Buddhist monks resigned from SAGIN to form the Sangha Theravāda Indonesia.¹⁴⁶ Two years later, Dharmasagarō (Dinghai 定海), a Chinese Indonesian monk first ordained under Ashin Jinarakkhita who had received his Mahāyāna ordination in Hong Kong, also decided to leave SAGIN. Dharmasagarō, along with eleven Chinese Indonesian monks and nuns, cofounded the Sangha Mahāyāna Indonesia (Yinni dacheng sengqie hui 印尼大乘僧伽會). According to Kimura, Sangha Mahāyāna Indonesia also declared their belief in the Buddha as "God." However, the organization focused on removing the folk religious elements from Chinese worship and adopted a more "radical" stance than SAGIN.¹⁴⁷

The second half of the 1970s saw a burgeoning of Buddhist organizations in Indonesia. The Suharto government again saw the need to conglomerate the various organizations into a federation for the Indonesian Buddhist community. In May 1978, a Buddhist congress was held in Yogyakarta to form the Representatives of Indonesian Buddhists (Perwalian Umat Buddha Indo-

¹⁴⁵ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 195–97.

¹⁴⁶ Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 202–3.

¹⁴⁷ Kimura, "Present Situation of Indonesian Buddhism," 65–66.

nesia, hereafter WALUBI). At its establishment, WALUBI became the umbrella association of three Sangha organizations, namely, Sangha Theravāda Indonesia, Sangha Mahāyāna Indonesia, and SAGIN, and seven lay Buddhist organizations, namely, Majelis Agama Buddha Nichiren Shōshū Indonesia, Majelis Buddha Mahāyāna Indonesia, Majelis Dharma Duta Kasogatan, Majelis Pandita Buddha Dhamma Indonesia, Majelis Pandita Buddha Maitreya Indonesia, Majelis Rohaniawan Tridharma Seluruh Indonesia, and Majelis Buddhayāna Indonesia (MBI).¹⁴⁸ In 1982, the first president of WALUBI, Suparto HS, suddenly passed away and was succeeded by the Javanese army general Soemantri. Following the WALUBI congress in 1986 that was attended by President Suharto, Ashin Jinarakkhita's "nemesi" Girirakkhito was elected the new president (1986–91), and was reelected for a second term (1992–97).¹⁴⁹

The divergences and tensions between Ashin Jinarakkhita's Buddhayāna movement and Girirakkhito's Theravāda purist faction lasted for more than a decade. It was only in 1995 that WALUBI expelled Ashin Jinarakkhita's SAGIN and MBI from the Buddhist federation. Leo Suryadinata suggests that the split could be attributed to both doctrinal struggle and personality conflicts between the two factions. Furthermore, there were some members who considered Ashin Jinarakkhita's faction to be a threat to the leadership. Suryadinata notes that the then director of the Buddhist section in the Ministry of Religious Affairs sided with the WALUBI leaders. To lessen the tensions between Jinarakkhita's faction and Girirakkhito's, President Suharto requested the two conflicting factions to reconcile at the 1995 Vesak celebration. However, Suharto, along with vice president Try Sutrisno and armed forces commander general Feisal Tanjung attended the Vesak celebration organized by WALUBI in 1996, thus revealing that the government favored WALUBI nearing the end of the New Order.¹⁵⁰ With the end of the Cold War, Suharto's government probably no longer considered communism an immediate threat to Indonesia. While Ashin Jinarakkhita and his Buddhayāna movement remained influential in Indonesia, the authorities probably saw his concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha as less significant in the post-Cold War era.

Following the fall of Suharto and the anti-Chinese riots in May 1998, Indonesia went through a process of reformation (*reformasi*) and democratization. The post-Suharto era saw an increase in democratic space and the lifting of Chinese assimilation legislations. This gave rise to the revival of Chinese culture, language, media, and religion. Setefanus Suprajitno, for instance, observed a resurgence of Chinese festival celebrations and religious rites at

¹⁴⁸ *Perkembangan Agama Buddha di Indonesia* (Jakarta Barat: Penerbit Dian Dharma, 2007), 21–22.

¹⁴⁹ Suryadinata, *Chinese Minority in Indonesia*, 181.

¹⁵⁰ Suryadinata, *Chinese Minority in Indonesia*, 183–84.

Chinese Buddhist temples in many parts of Indonesia.¹⁵¹ The Buddhayāna organizations revived their Chinese celebrations and religious activities. Concomitantly, Ashin Jinarakkhita's disciples reconnected with their lineage ancestral temple, Guanghua Monastery, in Fujian, China.¹⁵² Despite the Chinese revival and more relaxed political environment, Ashin Jinarakkhita retained the doctrine of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha as the foundation of the Buddhayāna movement. When I visited Buddhayāna temples during my fieldwork between 2013 and 2015, I noticed that Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha remains present in liturgical texts and ritual practices. Ashin Jinarakkhita might be gone, but his ideas remain in present-day Indonesia. Future research on the Buddhayāna movement in post-Suharto Indonesia would be able to shed more light on Ashin Jinarakkhita's legacy in Indonesian Buddhism.

CONCLUSION

In a brochure I collected during my visit to the Indonesian Buddhayāna Council in 2015, it is stated that there are 512 Buddhayāna temples distributed over twenty-five provinces in Indonesia. While 35 percent of the temples are located in cities, 65 percent are in villages and rural areas. The Indonesian Buddhayāna Council has a board of committees in twenty-five provinces and 180 boards of committees in cities all over the Indonesian archipelago.¹⁵³ The large number of temples and extensive networks of the Buddhayāna movement in Indonesia were evidence of the movement's influence and reach more than a decade after the demise of their founder.

Most studies of Buddhism in Southeast Asian history and society are shaped by a teleology leading to the formation of Buddhist majority nation-states. The purpose of the narrative is typically to explain the connected history of Theravāda Buddhism, nationalism, and nation-building in mainland Southeast Asia. Consequently, the dichotomous framing of mainland Theravāda Buddhism/maritime Islam and Catholicism has become a common approach to conceptualize the religious diversity of Southeast Asia as a region. While this textbook narrative serves as a useful frame to discuss the history and culture of Southeast Asian societies, it has caused Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia to be overlooked. This is because Buddhism is a religion of the minority—with the exception of Singapore—in the Muslim-majority Malay Archipelago. As Justin McDaniel has cautioned, we must recognize that Theravādins are not the only Buddhists in Southeast Asia.¹⁵⁴ The focus of this ar-

¹⁵¹ Setefanus Suprajitno, "Negotiating the Cultural and the Religious: The Recasting of the Chinese Indonesian Buddhist," *Biblioasia* 7, no. 3 (2011): 24–30.

¹⁵² Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015.

¹⁵³ *Buddhayāna* (Jakarta Barat: Indonesia Buddhayana Council, undated), no pagination.

¹⁵⁴ McDaniel, "Buddhists in Modern Southeast Asia."

ticle then is to argue for a more inclusive understanding of “Southeast Asian Buddhism” by using Ashin Jinarakkhita’s life and career to present a lesser-known history of the Buddhist minorities in Islamic Indonesia.

During the first-and-a-half decade of Ashin Jinarakkhita’s religious career, between his return from the Netherlands and the 1965 coup, the relatively free religious environment created by the country’s constitution allowed Ashin Jinarakkhita to propagate Buddhism in various parts of Indonesia. He developed three strategies to spread Buddhism. First, he sought to indigenize Buddhism by relying on claims of ancient Buddhist kingdoms to legitimize the native status of Buddhism in postcolonial Indonesia. He drew on the history of Srivijaya and Majapahit kingdoms and held Vesak celebrations at Borobudur to prove his point. Second, he embarked on nationwide missionary campaigns to convert both ethnic Chinese and native Indonesians. He was especially interested to reach out to non-Chinese to show that Buddhism was not a religion only for the Chinese Indonesian minority. Third, and most important, Ashin Jinarakkhita established his Buddhayāna movement, which he claimed was compatible with the Indonesian motto of “Unity in Diversity.” His Buddhayāna movement, which embraced diverse Buddhist denominations and doctrines, emphasized the need to propagate an Indonesian Buddhism and promoted unity while being based in diversity. Ashin Jinarakkhita founded a Sangha and a lay organization to help him spread his message.

Following the 1965 coup and Suharto’s rise to power, Suharto’s anticommunist authoritarian regime promulgated legislations to assimilate the Chinese Indonesian population and sought to use religion as a tool to counter communism. Ashin Jinarakkhita was quick to adjust his strategies to ensure the survival of Buddhism during the New Order period. Ashin Jinarakkhita continued to make Buddhism less Chinese and more indigenous in order to defend the survival of the religion during the New Order. More significantly, and controversially, he introduced the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha as the Buddhist version of “God Almighty” to make Buddhism compatible with the Pancasila principle of “belief in the one Almighty God.” However, Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha was a double-edged sword for Ashin Jinarakkhita and his Buddhayāna movement. On the one hand, the concept was accepted by Suharto’s government, thus ensuring that Buddhism continued to be one of the recognized religions in Indonesia. On the other hand, some of Ashin Jinarakkhita’s followers became critical of his “theistic” explanation of Buddhism and broke away from the Buddhayāna movement.

As the first Indonesian born Buddhist monk, Ashin Jinarakkhita faced important and sometimes difficult choices about how, and for whom, to teach the Buddhist doctrines in a postcolonial Muslim majority state. Scholars have pointed out that native-born Peranakan Chinese such as Ashin Jinarakkhita were willing to operate within “assimilated organizations” and became more

“Indonesianized” in order to live and prosper in the country.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, simultaneously with his engagement with the Chinese Indonesian community, Ashin Jinarakkhita reached out to nonethnic Chinese Indonesian natives and promoted the controversial concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha to please the Indonesian government. In Ashin Jinarakkhita’s ideas of Indonesian Buddhism, we find a combination of doctrinal innovation and institutional building. His Buddhayāna movement, which sought to create an indigenous Indonesian form of Buddhism for the modern Indonesian nation, was an ingenious strategy to safeguard the survival of Buddhism. In his missionary project, Ashin Jinarakkhita propagated his “inclusive and non-sectarian” Buddhism based on a combination of Mahāyāna and Theravāda Buddhist teachings, ancient Javanese texts, and visions of Indonesian pasts. We find that Ashin Jinarakkhita’s pioneering and ambitious projects, which transcend ethnicity, relied upon not just the Chinese Mahāyāna but also Burmese, Sri Lankan, and Thai Theravāda networks to build his religious institutions in Indonesia. These different visions coexisted within his Buddhayāna movement. His ideas of a national Buddhism were motivated less by scriptural concerns than by Indonesian politics and the status of the ethnic Chinese in the country.

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¹⁵⁵ Chinese in the East Indies/Indonesia were categorized into “Peranakan” and “Totok.” Chinese born in the Indies/Indonesia were considered “Peranakan” and Chinese born in China were considered “Totok.” The two terms were used to distinguish native-born Chinese from the new Chinese migrants. See G. William Skinner, “The Chinese Minority,” in *Indonesia*, ed. Ruth T. McVey (New Haven, CT: HRAF Press, 1963), 97–117; Suryadinata, *Chinese Minority in Indonesia*, chap. 1; Mely G. Tan, *Emis Tionghoa di Indonesia: Kumpulan Tulisan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2008), chap. 7.