

THE BUDDHA AND THE PURITAN: WEBERIAN REFLECTIONS ON "PROTESTANT BUDDHISM."

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In this paper I propose an appraisal of scholarly assertions (eg. Obeyesekere 1972, 1975, Malalgoda 1976, Stirrat 1981, Gombrich 1983, Bond 1988, Spencer 1990, Bartholomeusz 1994, Seneviratne 1999) that late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Sinhala² Buddhist reformism can rightly be labelled Protestant Buddhism. My discussion provides an anthropological take-off from John Holt's earlier (1991) reconsideration of "Protestant Buddhism" in reference to the new Theravada polemics of the Anagarika Dharmapala. Using Max Weber's much discussed thesis (1958) as a theoretical correlate, I will show how the Dharmapala discourse would be overly simplistic and unreflective of local agentive creativity if considered "Protestant" in its framework. Despite their seeming empirical similarities, the meanings of Dharmapala's Sinhala Theravada reformism and Weberian Calvinism were conjecturally incongruous epistemologies. Sinhala Buddhist reformism as articulated in Dharmapala's paradigm was a powerful narrative of local-level resistance and a "protest" against the supposed threat of Christian encroachment under the guise of colonial hegemonies imposed on Sinhala life-worlds.

INDIGENOUS AND COLONIAL HISTORIES

Composed in Pali between the fourth and early fifth century A.D, the Dipavamsa (The Chronicle of the Island) intimately associated the rise of Sinhala Theravadism with the constant struggle between an ordered state epitomised in the institution of an ideal Buddhist kingship and the chaotic threat emanating from the non-Buddhist Other (Greenwald 1978).³ Primordial stability was established by the Buddha himself whose three visits to the island of Lanka tamed and eventually vanquished the land of its cannibalistic demons (*yakkha*) and serpents (*naga*) through an omnipotent display of Buddhist magical prowess and terrifying natural violence.⁴

This domesticated landscape set the stage for the arrival of the culture-hero Vijaya from the Indian-subcontinent. Vijaya and his seven hundred male retainers set foot on Lanka's sandy shores at the precise moment of the Buddha's demise (*parinibbana*) in India. Moments earlier the Buddha had predicted that Lanka would be the future Buddhist utopia and placed the island under Sakka's (Indra) sacred guardianship (Mahavamsa, quoted in Duncan 1990:25). The Vijayan myth thus associated Sinhala political continuity with a coterminous Buddhist history. Vamsa chronicles construct the Sinhala as the legitimate offsprings of Vijaya and his followers with Pandyan Tamil court women.⁵ Although the Buddha was said to have consecrated the island's sacred topography, vamsic literature attributes the introduction of practised Buddhism into the Sinhala state with the conversion of King Devanampiya Tissa by Mahinda Thera, the monk son of the Indian Buddhist emperor Asoka. Together, Tissa and Mahinda successfully proselytized Theravada Buddhism throughout the island, thereby actualizing the Buddha's prophetic vision of Lanka as *dhammadipa* (Island of the Doctrine) (*ibid.* 15).

The subsequent history of the Sinhala polity as described in the vamsic texts revolves around the interrelationship between political power and the Buddhist institution. As with Theravada polities in Southeast Asia, the legitimacy of the Sinhala state rested upon a ruler's overt maintenance of and support for the religion (*sasana*) and its representatives (*samgha*). This was achieved through the Buddhist king's successful performance of his epitomized role as both the living manifestation of Sakka (*devaraja*) as well as an Asokan-inspired universal monarch (*cakkavatti*) (Duncan 1990). In discussing pre-colonial Sinhala statecraft, Malalgoda noted that "if the idea and institution of kingship helped unite the city at the political level, the introduction of Buddhism helped to consolidate the unity at the ideological level." (1976:12-13) Urmila Phadnis added that the relationship between kingly authority and the *samgha* was one of "mutuality and interdependence" (1976:40). Monks legitimized the position of the sovereign through proclaiming their support for the royal establishment and its prerogatives.⁶ The *samgha* was in turn reciprocated with gifts (eg. land, people, buildings, etc) and state sponsorship which symbolically increased

the ruler's store of merit (*pin*). These meritorious deeds which grounded a ruler's political legitimacy were diligently recorded into "merit-books" (*punna pothaka*) as textual and verifiable records of their right to rule. By participating in the accumulation of merit, the Sinhala king ensured his position as an unmatched moral agent whose coercive powers ensured the perpetuation of the *dhammadipa*. The celebrated king of the Mahavamsa, Duttagamini (161-131 B.C), summed up the role of the Sinhala-Buddhist *cakkavatti* whose military campaigns were waged "not for the joy of sovereignty...my striving ever to establish the doctrine of the Sambuddha" (Mahavamsa, quoted in Smith 1978: 43). This fundamental role as royal benefactor and aggressive *dhammic* guardian was fortified by an influential *sangha*. Should the *sangha* decide to withdraw its ecclesiastical buttressing, fissures could emerge in the political mechanism of the state allowing for possible contestations to the throne. The saga of Duttagamini reveals clerical support accredited to a king whose wartime massacres went against the most elementary Buddhist tenet of compassion (*karuna*) and loving kindness (*metta*). In one celebrated episode, five hundred monks took leave of the *sangha* to serve as soldiers in Duttagamini's army in his battle against the Cola Tamils who had established a Hindu dynasty in the central Sinhala citadel of Anuradhapura (Gombrich 1971:29).⁷

Ethnicity, like religion, was a crucial component in the constitution of the ideal vamsic monarch. Despite Kirti Sri Rajasinghe's (1747-82) public proclamations as a Buddhist king and his numerous contributions to the *sangha*, the Kandyan monarch was considered as an illegitimate ruler by certain segments within the *sangha* and the powerful aristocracy due to his South Indian Nayakkar and Saivite affiliations (Holt 1996, Tambiah 1992).⁸ Tambiah (*ibid*) noted that theoretical definitions of ideal kingship may not necessarily coincide with practice. Nayakkar illegitimacy was largely the construct of elite (including certain monkly) Sinhala circles within the Kandyan court due to a complex interplay of chiefly politics, ethnic animosity, poverty, and personal disparagement in the wake of increasing pressures from European political penetration.

By the time of European incursions into Lanka's maritime provinces, the classical Buddhist polities had lost much of their former glory. The Portuguese were the first colonial power to establish hegemonic control of the littoral having arrived in Colombo in 1505. By 1546, Roman Catholicism had established a growing presence in the Portuguese stronghold of Jayavardhana Kotte on the southwestern coast. In a letter to the king of Portugal (dated December 16, 1546), the Viceroy of Goa, Joao de Castro wrote of how a church had been erected in the inner sanctum of the Sinhala city "where divine services [were] held" (Siriweera 1993:18). Eleven years later, Kotte's puppet king Dharmapala and the chiefly nobles were baptized by the Franciscan friar Joao de Vila Conde (ibid). The baptism signaled the end process in a period of Buddhist religio-cultural decline in Kotte and the Portuguese controlled provinces. Disgruntled Buddhist elites shifted political allegiance to the kingdom of Sitavaka, bringing with them the fabled Tooth-Relic, the classical symbol of Sinhala kingship. Sitavaka's independence was short-lived and the kingdom succumbed to Portuguese domination by the end of the sixteenth century (Duncan 1990:31).

Portuguese power was displaced in 1656 by Dutch and disgruntled Kandyan forces. Earlier, Sinhala nobles had reinvigorated the kingdom of Sinhale centered on the fourteenth century citadel of Senkadagala Sirivardhana Pura (Kandy) situated in the mountainous central highlands in a disparate attempt at maintaining Sinhala monarchical autonomy in the face of increasing Portuguese intrusions in the coastal lowlands (Malalgoda 1976:49, Duncan 1990:31). Meanwhile Roman Catholic, Dutch Reformed Church (Calvinist), and Anglican populations in the maritime provinces flourished, especially amongst the middle and lower *karave* (fisherman) and *salagama* (cinnamon peeler) castes who viewed conversion to a "government religion" as an avenue for social and economic mobility. Kandy's geographical inaccessibility allowed Buddhism to enjoy a short-lived efflorescence in the city supported by a staunchly Buddhist court (Malalgoda 1976:48-49). Most higher caste *goyigama* (farmer/cultivator) elites of the *radala* rank purposefully resisted Christian conversion due to their ritual associations with the Kandyan court. Although the Dutch encouraged missionization as a means of divorcing Sinhala loyalties

from the Buddhist ruler at Kandy, proselytisation did not heavily impact on the *goyigama* whose cooperation and influence was crucial to the colonial enterprise of indirect rule. That anti-Christian sentiment was strongly felt amongst members of the traditional elite and is evident in the stinging language of seventeenth and early eighteenth century war poems (*hatana*) such as the *Mandarapura-puvata*, *Rajasimha Hatana*, and the *Maha Hatana*. Roberts (1997:1010) stated that the revision of the Mahavamsa in the 1780s saw the introduction of the Sinhala term *parangi* to refer to Colombo's foreign merchant community, which included Muslims and Europeans. According to Roberts (ibid), "in the Sinhala world its [*parangi*] pejorative was compounded by its polysemy: *parangi* is also a term for that disfiguring scrofulous disease known as yaws, a form of syphilis."

Kandyan Buddhism during this period found itself engaged in practices heavily permeated by Mahayanist, Tantric and Hindu accretions stemming from the decline of Buddhism in India from which Sinhala Theravadism had received much of its intellectual and inspirational motivations (Malalgoda 1976:27). This led to intensified schisms between members of the *samgha* as doctrinal interpretations diversified. The worldly power of the Kandyan monks increased with many playing an active and decisive role in the political decision making process between colonial powers and an increasing corrupt Sinhala court.

Kandy was eventually "pacified" by British forces in 1815. By this time internal dissent within Sinhala elite circles over the Nayakkar dynasty coupled with John D'Oyly's British policies of subterfuge had resulted in widespread impoverishment and unmendable fractures within the Buddhist state's political apparatus (Duncan 1990:33). The monastic establishment had by this time divided itself into a number of distinct and oftentimes hostile fraternities (*nikaya*). In the eighteenth century, the monk Valivita Saranankara established the "Silvath Samagama" in opposition to caste segregation and what was deemed to be the increasing materialism of the institutionalized *samgha* (Phadnis 1976:48). Disheartened with the Siyam Nikaya's *goyigama* exclusivism, Ambagahapitiye Nanavimala together with members of the *salagama* and *karave* caste living in the lowlands established the Amarapura

Nikaya as an alternative “casteless” fraternity removed from Kandyan ecclestial control.⁹

By the late 1870s, British political power had shifted from Kandy to the coastal port of Colombo which had been growing as an important centre of political administration and commerce, though not of Buddhism. Malalgoda (ibid.188) observed that, “in Colombo, Buddhism was not favoured with the patronage of political authority; hence its presence there was less conspicuous than in the earlier capitals [eg. Anuradhapura, Polunoruwa, Kandy, etc.]” Low country littoral ports were the centers of colonial domination and Christianity. A new elite comprising urban middle-class “Anglicized” Sinhala people, well-versed in the culture of the colonial state emerged in Colombo. Having spent most of their formal education in English-medium Missionary schools many of this new literati and entrepreneurial class found themselves integrated into the colonial body politic through the Civil Service. Yet as Sinhala they were denied full participation in Ceylon’s political-administrative machinery. Many also benefited greatly from the burgeoning economic climate of urbanism, accumulating wealth through plantation ownership, trading, arrack renting and graphite mining (Roberts 1997:1011). Late-nineteenth century Colombo was a hotbed of Buddhist reformism as monks and laity encountered the relentless zeal of Christian proselytizers. English-educated Sinhala were joined in their reformist activities by segments of the Sinhala-educated intelligentsia, including village school teachers, Ayurvedic physicians, minor government officials, coroners, and so forth. Colombo society was simultaneously experiencing a radical process of sociocultural transformation as this indigenous elite began questioning and reevaluating established institutions and epistemologies, for example, caste ascription, ritualistic performance, and popular religious interpretations.

The middle-class interest in Buddhist reformism was not an unprecedented social phenomenon. *Katikavata* laws compiled between the twelfth and eighteenth century relate of *samgha* reforms initiated by kings as part of their royal duty to ensure the purity of the religion through maintaining the morality of its monks (Amunugama 1985:698).¹⁰

Tambiah (1976:170) noted that during the Anuradhapura period (209-923 A.D), at least nine kings were recorded to have performed acts of religious purification (*sasana sodhana*). The assurance of *dhammic* purity epitomised in the institution of a unified and uncorrupted *samgha* not only legitimised kingly authority but was deemed to generate positive societal rewards through allowing for maximum merit accumulation by the citizens. Like the clergy in Theravadin Southeast Asia, the Sinhala *samgha* was popularly referred to as *punnakhetta* (merit-fields) “where one could sow seeds of merit and reap good harvests in the births to come” (Malalagoda 1976:17). Walpola Rahula (quoted in Greenwald 1978:18) added that,

if the field was not fertile, the crop would be poor, and the farmer must naturally be unhappy about it. If the *Sangha* was impure, the charity bestowed on them would bring poor results, and the donors must naturally be unhappy about it. This was one reason why kings and the people were so anxious about the unblemished purity of the *Sangha*.¹¹

The earlier sub-branching of the *nikayas* can be read as a concerted attempt at monastic reformism initiated by clerical groups within the Sinhala *samgha*. What distinguished nineteenth century Buddhist reformism from its earlier vamsic predecessors was its urban flavour and attempts to “rationalize” the religion as a scientific discourse so as to make it appear “progressive” and “modern,” thereby allowing for their own intellectual reconciliation spurred on by the threat and fear of growing Christian missionization on the island (Seneviratne 1999:50).

Reformist activity emanating from affluent Colombo Buddhists targeted a mass audience of both urban and rural monks and their followers. The reformists constructed an essentialised Sinhala cultural identity closely associated with a nostalgic vision of the vamsic-inspired inseparability of ethnicity, language and an “orthodox” Pali *agama* expunged of all indigenous accretions. Despite its prominent anti-Christian and ethnocentric rhetoric, this reified *Sinhalaness* was not

an overt attempt at instilling pro-Independence sentiments but was rather articulated within the cultural framework of Ceylonese nationalism (Rogers 1990:94). It was out of this dynamic social environment of Buddhist polemizing that the Anagarika Dharmapala espoused his position on Buddhist philosophy and practice (Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988:205).¹²

THE ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA: BUDDHIST PURITAN?

Born into the *goyigama* caste of the new Sinhala bourgeoisie in 1864, Don David Hevavitharana (Hewavitarne/Hewavitarana) received most of his formal education in English missionary schools in Kotte and Colombo. As a child he was likely to have witnessed the public debate between the Buddhist monks Hikkaduve Sumangala and Mohotivatte Gunananda and the Christians at Panadura in 1873.¹³ It was probable that his family's close personal associations with these two literati monks had influenced David's future career choice as a Buddhist reformist.¹⁵ On his way to and from St. Thomas' College each day, the teenager passed by Mohotivatte's Kotahena Temple (Sangharakshita 1980:38, Bond 1988:53). It was Mohotivatte who introduced David to Theosophical occultism. This was a philosophy which was "an eclectic idealism that postulated the origins of spiritual wisdom in the East" (Holt 1991:311). In 1884, David joined the Theosophical Society's Buddhist's branch in Colombo (the Buddhist Theosophical Society) under the auspices of retired American Civil-War veteran Colonel Henry Steele Olcott and Madam Blavatsky. The Theosophists utilized Christian idioms in their active propagation of Buddhism, all the while presenting Buddhism as a "rational" philosophy opposed to the dogmatic "mythology" of Christianity (Amunugama 1985:582). Olcott emphasised the importance of Buddhists to use the weapons of Christianization in their propagandist project. In his *Old Diary Leaves* (volume IV [1887-1892]), he wrote:

If you ask how we should organize our forces, I point you to our great enemy, Christianity, and bid you look at their large and wealthy Bible, Tract, Sunday-school, and Missionary Societies - the tremendous agencies they

support, and make our most practical and honest men of business their managers. Nothing can be done without money. The Christians spend millions to destroy Buddhism, we must spend to defend and propagate it.

(quoted in Malaloga 1976:244-245)

Under the organizational guidance of Olcott, the Buddhist Theosophical Society founded and managed numerous Buddhist schools across the island including Colombo's popular Ananda and Nalanda colleges. Buddhist schools were modeled upon mission schools with Buddhism replacing Christianity in catechism classes.¹⁵ He also invented traditions of a universal Theravada "culture." He devised Buddhist hymns patterned on Christmas carols to be sung at Vesak and persuaded Ceylon's British administrators to declare Vesak a public holiday. He also encouraged the sending of Vesak greeting cards, and created the international Buddhist flag (Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988: 204-5).

As a young and enthusiastic member of the Society, David traveled extensively on proselytizing missions throughout the country as well as abroad (India, Japan, Siam, the US, etc). It was during this period of intense Buddhist study and fervent missionization that David resurrected the role of the *anagarika*, symbolically replacing his "Western" name with the Pali title Dharmapala (Guardian of the Doctrine). The *anagarika* of classical Pali Buddhism was associated with the monkly ideal of full and total renunciation. Dharmapala's *anagarika* delineated an interstitial social status between the layperson's secularism and the *samgha's* other-worldliness. He remained entrenched in the workaday trappings of daily life while staunchly adhering to the Eight-Precepts (*ata-sila*) which included celibacy and eating only one meal a day.¹⁶

As an *anagarika*, Dharmapala hoped to be able to devote himself to the common good of societal improvement through the dissemination of Buddhist (and later Ceylon nationalist) ethics. The role allowed him to handle financial transactions, an act traditionally prohibited in the code of *samgha* discipline (*vinaya*) but which was necessary in forming the enterprise of modern reformism. By the mid-1890s, the Anagarika

Dharmapala had become skeptical and dissatisfied with the Theosophists' project which he viewed as embodying proliferate Hindu accretions at the expense of theoretical Buddhism. His study of the Pali canon (eg. the *Vissudhimagga*, *Sattipatthanasutta*, *Udumbarasutta*, *pitakas*, etc) brought to the forefront the schism between Buddhist and the late Theosophical discourse of panreligiosity (Roberts 1997:1015). This was coupled with an increasing personal disparagement with Olcott in part due to the latter's questioning of the authenticity of the Tooth-Relic. By so doing, Olcott had inadvertently brought the most powerful of Sinhala icons of Buddhist statehood, hegemony, and cultural identity to task (Obeyesekere 1975:237). It was a caustic attack on Sinhala constructions of sovereignty and historical legitimacy as well as a blasphemous disregard for what was believed to be an embodiment of the physical Buddha (Roberts 1997:1023). In his diary entry dated the 12th of June, 1898, Dharmapala lamented that, "Theosophists rose into prominence by borrowing Buddhist expressions. Their early literature is full of Buddhist terminologies. Now they are kicking the ladder" (quoted in Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988:253). Distancing himself from the Theosophists, Dharmapala pursued his dual ambitions of religious reformism and Buddhist propagandism framed within an increasingly fundamentalist ethno-religious patriotic vigour. These goals were articulated through his travels, lectures, and numerous articles published in his journal, *The Mahabodhi* and in his newspaper the *Sinhala Bauddhaya*. By the time of his death in 1933, as the monk Sri Devamitta Dharmapala he had well established himself as the foremost Buddhist reformer in modern Sri Lankan history. It was this mode of Dharmapala's visionary reinterpretation of Sinhala-Buddhist discourse and practice that Obeyesekere and others have imagined to be "Protestant."

SINHALA AND WEBERIAN IMAGININGS

Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere defined "Protestant Buddhism" as a two-fold social process which manifested the "specific Sinhala experience of British colonialism" (1988:203). On the one hand, it reflected a generalized "protest" against both traditional Buddhist practice and an encroaching Christianity with "its associated Western political dominance" (Obeyesekere 1972:62). On the other, "Protestant

Buddhism” outlined an alternative interpretation of Buddhist philosophy structured upon a textual reading of the Pali canon that emulated many of the organizational features and theoretical concepts of Protestant Christianity. For instance, Obeyesekere argued that the *anagarika* ideal espoused by Dharmapala “was a Protestant model: the *anagarika* symbol is the Sinhala Buddhist analogue of an early Calvinist type of reformism with its increasing this worldly asceticism” (1970:55). Earlier, Michael Ames (1963:49) had suggested that the factors triggering the development of late nineteenth century Sinhala Buddhist reformism shared a common theme with that of the Reformation. He remarked that:

The general pattern of events in Ceylon closely parallels developments which took place during the Christian Reformation. Pre-reformation Christianity, like Sinhalese Buddhism, was also based on a dualism between the monks who followed a religious vocation and laymen who pursued worldly occupations. But through the course of the reformation and accompanying social changes, in many Christian communities, the monastic vocation became more worldly while the laity grew more ascetic.

In this section I intend to complicate Ames’ and Obeyesekere’s observations through unraveling the local meanings structuring Dharmapalan reformism. Prior to analyzing the validity of these arguments in the wake of Dharmapala’s Buddhist militancy, it is necessary to situate the sociological underpinnings of the Protestant discourse within its original Weberian context.

Max Weber’s 1905 German classic *Die Protestantische Ethik unter des “Geist” des Kapitalismus* (The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, reprinted 1958) discussed the phenomenal rise of modern Europe through an “elective affinity” between a Puritan religious ethic of daily practice and the “spirit” (*geist*) of an emergent rational capitalist age. This mode of what sociologist Talcott Parsons has termed formal rationality (*zweckrationalitat*) involved the pragmatic calculation of means and ends in the experience of capital accumulation.¹⁷ Weber

observed that as an economic system, capitalism involved a disciplined “pursuit of profit, and forever renewed profit, by means of continuous, rational, capitalistic enterprise” (1958:17). The systematic realization of profit maximization coupled with a celebrated frugality was not merely an economic endeavour, but a worldview (*weltanschauung*) that pervaded the culture of early Puritanism. It must be pointed out that despite the emphasis placed upon the renewed acquisition of wealth in the writings of Puritan divines such as Benjamin Franklin, profit maximization was not outrightly advocated in the discourse of Puritanism. Rather, material accumulation was the unintended reward of a *weltanschauung* centred upon a this-worldly asceticism geared towards the tireless glorification of God (Marshall 1982:86). Ascetic Protestantism, Marshall added, did not condemn material success but was highly critical of the “impulsive pursuit of it” (ibid). The sole intent of profit was a base temptation leading to the sins of sloth, hedonism, and indulgence which distracted the individual from a life of divine grace.

The “spirit of capitalism” that emerged in the Occident from the seeds of Puritanism was the opposite of the “economic traditionalism” common in most non-Puritan societies such as in the classical civilizations of Babylon, China and India. Economic traditionalism did not generate an ethos of profit maximization through rational economic action and investment, although it desired an “unlimited greed for gain” (ibid.). Workers in these non-capitalist systems tended to prefer relaxation to constant activity. Self-contentment, and not improvement, characterized the workforce’s ideology (Bendix 1977:52). Weber noted that not all the workers in an economic system bent on traditionalism subscribed to the dominant dogma of unproductive satisfaction. Bendix (ibid. 54-55) pointed out that Weber had observed how “there had always been economic ‘supermen’ who had conducted their business on a highly systematic basis, who worked harder than any of their employees, whose personal habits were frugal, and who used their earnings for investment.” Since these “supermen” were few and far between, prior to the advent of English Puritanism, they had no great influence in generating a “spirit of capitalism” that was to steer society on the road towards modern economism.

Weber associated the “spirit of capitalism” with Protestant and in particular Calvinist soteriology.¹⁸ The religious doctrines of Calvinism preached a culture centered upon the “calling” (*Beruf*) which stressed that an individual’s salvation had been predetermined by God without the individual’s knowing. Those who had not been divinely elected to receive God’s state of grace faced the terror of an eternal damnation. The uncertainty of realizing one’s predestined fate induced a “psychological sanction” of “salvational anxiety” amongst the early Puritans (Weber 1958:104, Marshall 1982:92, Abercrombie *et al* 1988:198). In order to ascertain one’s election it was necessary to gain self confidence through the punctilious performance of the “calling,” a steadfast religious and economic labouring in the service of God. This involved a life of constant activity and prudence thereby amassing wealth while simultaneously forsaking the temptations of pleasure. St Paul’s injunction postulated that “he who will not work shall not eat.” Richard Baxter confirmed that “it is for action that God maintaineth us and our activities; work is the moral as well as natural end of power...It is action that God is most served and honoured by” (quoted in Bendix, 1977:61).

Calvinism in its archaic Weberian form was a religious doctrine of wealth negation and the renunciation of worldly engagements. This philosophy was transformed in latter-day Calvinist discourse to become one that legitimated capitalist engagement as long as it was carefully managed and used for the celebration of God (Tambiah 1990:12). Weber pointed out that, “God helps only those who help themselves. Thus the Calvinist...creates his own salvation, or as would be more correct, the conviction of it” (1958:64). Economic success achieved through hard work coupled with a Puritan inner-worldly asceticism of strict moderation that emphasized “honesty, punctuality, industry, frugality, and restraint” was a motivational sign that one was among God’s chosen few (Brran 1987:63). At the same time, the Puritan Calvinist was encouraged to lead a godly-life of devotion and careful time-management through church-going, prayer and never ending adoration of the Divine (Marshall 1982:75). The reprobate was imagined as one who did not adhere to Calvinism’s moral code but indulged in the passions of material success. Religion and economics became enmeshed in a single work

ethic that pervaded all aspects of Calvinist life. Once established as an economic *habitus*, the “spirit of capitalism” perpetuated itself and in time lost its religious affiliations with its original Calvinist progenitors.

Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988) asserted that there was much in common between later Calvinist virtues and the message of nineteenth century Sinhala Buddhist reformism despite seeming differences in theological roots. Like the Calvinists, the Anagarika Dharmapala, in his writings, stressed the importance of individual hard work and self-reliance. In an essay published in the *Mahabodhi* Journal (May, 1914), Dharmapala remarked how “the Blessed One denounced every form of belief that destroyed individual activity” (quoted in Guruge 1965:194). In a subsequent article (December, 1927) he preached that, “self reliance, activity in doing good, renunciation of sensual passions and freedom from dogmas are the essential principles of Buddhism” (ibid. 446). Notwithstanding the surface similarities between Buddhist virtues and the Calvinist moral code, there is a fundamental difference when one considers them in the light of their ultimate aims. To the Calvinist, the ethos of this-worldly activity was necessary in order to legitimize one’s election, both to the anxiety-filled self and to members of the social community. Activity was, therefore, construed as a definite and unquestioned salvational indicator.

Although Dharmapala stressed that “the essential principle that the Lord Buddha emphasised is ceaseless activity - activity in destroying evil, activity in generating good thoughts, good words, good deeds,” the practice of diligence in itself did not demonstrate election or guarantee release from the birth cycles through *nibbanic* salvationism (quoted in Sanghtrakshita 1980:139). The concept of the elect was absent in Dharmapalan readings of the Pali canon. For the realisation of *nibbana*, which Dharmapala advocated for all good Buddhist to strive towards, the layperson had to renounce his worldly associations and take on the role of the monk. Dharmapala suggested that, “those who wish to live the higher life to realise Nibbana...should wear the yellow robe, and live in a monastery, and beg his food and not touch or ask for gold and silver” (quoted in Guruge 1965:227). Furthermore, this ideal model of samghic world rejection was the mirror opposite of the latter-day Calvinist

who remained very much entrenched in the workings of the world and its economic mechanisms. Whereas the activism of the Buddhist monk stressed the ultimate renunciation of materialism, the Calvinist engaged tirelessly in its ceaseless reproduction. Nevertheless, Dharmapala believed that the laity could aspire to achieve states of near-enlightenment (not final *nibbana*) through pragmatic and rational activity. This was unlike the popular Theravada interpretation which detailed a prolonged course to *nibbanic* attainment through a gradual process of merit accumulation, moral perfection and mental purification. The Buddha himself was believed to have achieved *nibbana* only after five hundred and fifty lifetimes. The *Vissudhimagga*, a fifth century Pali commentary composed by the Anuradhapuran monk Buddhaghosa, explicitly detailed the implausibility of achieving *nibbana* in the present existence which required the transgression of seven difficult stages spread over multiple lifetimes.¹⁹ By arguing that “Nirvana is not a postmortem existence” for the “earthly body, purified both physically and mentally,” Dharmapala resorted to the discursive framework of early pre-Commentarial Buddhism with its emphasis on the distinct possibility of a this-worldly Enlightenment (*ibid.*)²⁰ In discussing early (pre-Kandyan) Buddhism in Lanka, George Bond remarked that the latter view of a transcendentalized *nibbana* “a thousand lives away” was a practical application of the Buddhist doctrinal philosophy by Pali Commentators which enabled them to subsume the mundanity of everyday life under a supramundane orientation which developed Buddhism into “a religion that had integrity and yet related to all people” (1988:26).

Dharmapalan Buddhism, in contrast to Calvinism’s stoic self-asceticism, advocated that the householder (*agarika*) actively participate in the *samgha*’s salvational quest through assisting them in their daily activities (eg. providing food and up-keeping the monastery) whilst simultaneously leading an exemplary life based upon Vedic-inspired *brahmacariyan* ideals of moral and psychological unrighteousness.²¹ The Buddhist householder was encouraged to “enjoy a life of pleasure, engage in arts, trade, agriculture, to produce wealth...The householder was the sower, and the religious man was the fertile field, and good deeds were the seeds that the householder sowed” (*ibid.* 225). The householder was

constantly engaged with and was a part of mundane existence, while professing a strong religious commitment. His diligent labouring represented a means to a salvational end. This was unlike the Calvinist model where worldly and spiritual performance proved an end in itself, the material rewards it triggered being natural and unintended consequences of the act.

The *samgha*'s pivotal role as the *brahmacariya par excellence* was affirmed in Dharmapala's reformist discourse. There was no attempt to reject the *samgha* as an institution at the expense of individual achievement even though Dharmapala had bitterly complained about the laxity of some members of the Sinhala monastic community. In a mood reminiscent of late Kandyan *vamsic* rhetoric, Dharmapala lamented of how "the Bhikkhus in Ceylon are indolent and ignorant of the *Paramattha Dhamma* (Ultimate Truth), and keep up their position by a smattering of Pali grammar and Sanskrit prosody" (quoted in Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988:226).

Dharmapala's stinging critique of a *samgha* rife with monks driven by hedonism and lacking proper knowledge of the *vinaya* and the *pitakas* (discourses) has to be understood within the political language of classical Theravada programmes of religious reformism undertaken by secular Buddhist elites such as the *Thammayut* order of Siam's King Mongkut (r.1851-68) and Kandy's *Silvat Samagama* fraternity (Tambiah 1990:161). These reformist attempts at purging the *samgha* of its worldly/non-canonical pollutions have also to be situated within a dynamic political climate of competing regimes of knowledge as Theravada societies experienced the onslaught of Christian missionization.

Weber argued that the Protestant sects were the outcome of a Christianity that had been transformed through the Reformation by a "process of laicization." Lutheranism rejected the occupational dualism explicit in Roman Catholicism between an institutional priesthood and the laity. Protestantism and latter-day Calvinism in particular, emphasised a mundane life that was part of a divinely ordained moral scheme which did not require the mediation of religious virtuosos.

Dharmapala, contrastingly, never advocated a “process of laicization” in the Buddhism that he preached, as Malalgoda (1976:260) had erroneously asserted. Furthermore, although his doctrinal philosophy was laity-centric through advocating an idealised Buddhist practice amongst urban and rural Sinhala, Dharmapala did not suggest that the *samgha* be abolished or that it had lost its social and didactic significance. He noted that the influential position that the *samgha* had traditionally exerted over Sinhala society was a phenomenon of the glorious pre-colonial Sinhala past. *Samghic* decay had been brought about by foreign cultural penetration and a general pattern of Sinhala idiocy in aping alien cultural practices (Seneviratne 1999:35). Dharmapala saw potential in the *samgha* as an effective tool in advancing the reformist cause. This, however, was achievable only when the *samgha* had been sanitized of its sectarian differences, rampant materialism, corruption and religious ignorance.²³ Dharmapala advocated the imposition of order on a disordered moral universe suffering under the yoke of foreign domination, an idea reminiscent of indigenous *vamsic* historiography.²³ Monks were the necessary purveyors of order, and Dharmapala advocated that, “intelligent, educated, unselfish, patient, self-sacrificing *upasakas* [male laity] and *Bhikkhus* are needed to lead ignorant, helpless Sinhalese Buddhist”(quoted in Guruge 1965:521). The Dharmapalan monk, noted Seneviratne (1999:27), was an ideal type. He was “a personality in whom a complex of traits - methodism, punctuality, cleanliness, orderliness, time-consciousness, dedication, and ‘non-sensuousness’ (to use Dharmapala’s own term) was rationally integrated.”

Dharmapala’s celebration of the exemplary monk is opposed to Calvinism’s avowed disinterestedness in clerical intermediaries to Christian grace. Lacking ritual practitioners, the Puritan was a solitary figure in the path of Godly omnipotence. Since salvation had been predestined and therefore non-negotiable, the autonomous self had only to demonstrate election through the fulfillment of the “calling” as a sacred obligation. Weber believed this interpretation of Calvinist doctrine was an important motivator for the rise of the cult of the individual in post-Reformation European societies. Calvinism’s extreme ontological self-engrossment extended to an avowed disinterestedness

in all manner of social interaction. Weber (1958:106) observed the phenomenon amongst the Puritan Divines:

It was in fact only the most extreme form of that exclusive trust in God in which we are here interested. It comes out for instance in the strikingly frequent repetition, especially of the English Puritan literature of warnings against any trust in the aid of friendship of men. Even the amiable Baxter counsels deep distrust of even one's closest friend, and Bailey directly exhorts to trust no one and to say nothing compromising to anyone. Only God should be your confidant.

Unlike the individualism of the Calvinist, the Dharmapalan monk and layperson were active participants in the workings of the social community that represented a “co-operative commonwealth working for the welfare of many” (quoted in Sangharakshita 1980:132). *Nibbana* was the exclusive prerogative of the *samgha* but this did not mean that they disengage themselves from society in austere ascetic pursuit. Members of the Sinhala *samgha* had performed important social functions in precolonial Lanka. Malalgoda (1976:19) noted that monastic dwelling monks (*gamavasi*) were “professional intellectuals” who provided basic secular and religious education and counselling services to their rural and urban brethren. Monastic schools (*pansala*) and colleges (*pirivena*) had by the nineteenth century become well entrenched in the Sinhala social landscape.²⁴ In Dharmapala's Ceylon, monks also headed the Nurses Trade Union and acted as “chaplains” in prisons and hospitals across the island (Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988:227). At the same time, scholar-monks such as Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala, Valane Siddhartha, Weligama Sumangala, Mohotiwatte Gunananda, and Ratmalane Sri Dharmaloka were involved in the political arena as prominent and orate opposers to the looming threat of Christianization (Tambiah 1990:6). This was a religio-social role that was fundamentally distinct from its earlier precursors.

Meanwhile, laypersons were likewise advocated to involve themselves in the well-being of society through religious proselytizing

and community projects. Through the *esprit de corps* between monk and laity, Dharmapala hoped to resurrect what he believed was the classical but now defunct role of the Sinhala *samgha*. Monks were strongly encouraged to energetically involve themselves in all manner of household culture such as moral education, personal hygiene, and economic management (ibid.34). In order to facilitate this involvement, Dharmapala established *dayaka sabhas*-monastic-centred organizations comprising monks and lay people. These organizations ensured that monasteries received constant material support, while its representatives were actively engaged in the dissemination of the reformist message through discussions, talks, education, and so forth.²⁵ As a pilot project initiated in Colombo, the experimental *dayaka sabha* soon spread throughout Ceylon and became what Amunugama has called “the basic tier of Sinhala Buddhist organisation” (1985:718).

In an act reminiscent of Mongkut’s Thammayut reformation, Dharmapala invented a philosophical and scriptural Buddhism pillared upon a middle class vocabulary of rationality and (western) scientism. Seneviratne (1999:26) identified this creative Buddhist modernism as a “new religion” which did not have correlates with historically established forms. It was an interpretation of Buddhism remarkably similar to the Orientalist scholarship of the Pali Text Society with which Dharmapala was familiar. David Scott (1992) has shown how the two phases of colonial writing on Sinhala religion were patterned upon a common theme of Eastern degeneracy. To late eighteenth century British Orientalists, Sinhala societal depravity was marked by a historical shift in religious orientation away from orthodox Pali canonicism to popular syncretisms. Like Dharmapala, the Orientalists saw contemporary Sinhala Buddhism as corrupt and in desperate need of reinvigoration. The second phase of colonial writing was marked by Evangelical constructions of Sinhala religiosity as an amalgam of a civilized “high” Buddhism with a primitive pre-Buddhist “demonism” (*kapooism*). A large section of Anagarika Dharmapala’s religious paradigm deals with the expulsion of “non-Buddhist” symbols (such as the propitiation of indigenous and Hindu-Buddhist divinities, *yaktovil* and spirits) that had permeated and contaminated a “pristine” vamsic Buddhism, making a rational doctrine seem irrational and superstitious.

In a lecture delivered at the Bengal National Medical College in 1911, Dharmapala expressed his stringent disapproval of Sinhala ritual practice:

Astrology, occultism, ghostology, palmistry are vulgar sciences that require no investigation...The occultist dabbling in mystery and esoterism brings down the human understanding into animalism. They are enemies of human development and of the science of wisdom.

(quoted in Guruge 1965:217)

Science was to Dharmapala the key that unlocked doors to social and economic empowerment. He viewed Buddhism as scientific and not based on blind faith since “every new discovery in the domain of science helps us understand the sublime teachings of the Buddha Gautama” (quoted in Guruge 1965:439). The rhetoric of an indigenous Buddhist scientism was not unique to Dharmapala but was a tool manipulated by other Sinhala intellectuals of the time to justify local genius. James D’Alwis (1823-78) showed how ancient Sinhala ideas of science predated Victorian empiricism. D’Alwis spoke of how the fifth century Sinhala had strategically placed diamonds at the apex of stupas as lightning conductors and therefore demonstrated an advanced knowledge of electricity even before such ideas were developed in Europe (Rogers 1990:93). Despite his strong anti-colonial tone, Dharmapala praised Europe for its secular scientific vigour while contemporary Asian societies were plagued by vices and “superstition.” Unlike Weber, Dharmapala did not believe that European social advancement could be equated with the rise of the Reformed Church and its associated entrepreneurial endeavour. He conscientiously dismissed Christianity’s role in shaping what he viewed to be the positive aspects of European civilization. Religion, according to the Dharmapalan definition, was fundamentally opposed to science due to the former’s stubborn dogmatism. For science to lead to progress, it was necessary for religion to be eclipsed by science’s objectivism. He stated that “with the spread of modern scientific knowledge, Christianity, with its unscientific doctrines of creator, hell, soul, atonement, will be quite forgotten” (quoted in Guruge 1965:464-5). It was this emphasis on modern scientific

knowledge rather than religious practice that Dharmapala believed led to the historical rise of the West to become progressive, modern, and powerful.

Although praising the rise of European modernity, Dharmapala was avowedly anti-Christian in his theoretical argument.²⁶ “Bhramanism and Christianity were the two forces that came like avalanches and buried the pure, refined, kind-hearted children of Lanka,” he proclaimed (ibid. 482). Yet for Lanka to compete on equal terms with an increasingly capitalist economy dictated by colonial hegemonies, it was expedient that the Buddhist Sinhala rise above their current subordinate position through the adoption of modes of behaviour and knowledge that had proved successful in Western development. Thus Dharmapala recommended that monks learn English, industrial and vocational educational projects be launched, and that scholarships be offered to gifted Sinhala youth to study in Japan, a country Dharmapala greatly admired for its modernity, independence and Buddhist heritage (Roberts 1997:1021).

Tambiah (1990) has shown how the rise and pursuit of science as an intellectual endeavour in the post-Enlightenment Occident had impacted upon local Protestant sensibilities. This was especially so with the establishment of the Royal Society in London in 1645. Twenty-two years later, Thomas Sprat’s influential work *History of the Royal Society of London* attempted a systematic mapping of the correlation between Puritan rationalism and scientific empiricism (ibid.13). Science and experimentation began to be celebrated in Puritan epistemologies as an unquestioned means to ascertain the mysteries of God’s creative energy which took the form of regular and natural laws. Although both tenets praised the scientific method, the goals of Puritan and Dharmapalan science differed. Dharmapala envisioned science as a secular window of opportunity to societal and global modernism. It had a real and pragmatic purpose of this-worldly improvement. Unlike Protestantism, science to Dharmapala was not a means of proving the existence of spiritual laws. Empiricism was a tool by which to legitimize the possibilities for Sinhala social and economic advancement as “financially scrupulous, clean, courteous, pure, indigenized, industrious

and enterprising” (Roberts 1997:1021). Since Victorian discourse equated science with progress and hence civilization, to argue, as Dharmapala (and James D’Alwis) did, that Buddhism was scientific and rational, powerfully brought to task dominant British inflections of a stagnant Sinhala primitivism.²⁷

Gombrich and Obeyesekere’s (1988) characterization of the Dharmapalan ideological philosophy as Puritanically anti-ritual is similarly debatable. Dharmapala advocated ritualism albeit one that he believed was scientific and rational, purged of its Sinhala “non-Buddhist” accretions, in particular to the ecstatic cults and propitiation of Brahmanic-Sinhala gods (*deva*). Even so, in private entries in his journal (May 8, 1893; November 2, 1894; November 28, 1894) he continued to invoke the *devas* Karthik and Sumana to assist him in his proselytizing mission (Roberts 1997:1020). This, was however, never publicly acknowledged. In the hugely popular ‘Daily Code for the Laity’ (*Dharmapala Lipi/Gihi Vinaya*) Dharmapala emphasised the importance of meditation for both parents and children, daily worship of the Buddha, the observance of the Eight Precepts on full-moon and new-moon (*poya*) days, and weekly temple visits to listen to sermons (Obeyesekere 1972:71; Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988:215).²⁸ These were in fact nothing new in Sinhala Buddhist practice. As a child growing up in urban Colombo, Dharmapala recalled how his family meditated, observed precepts and fasted “once a month on full moon days” (Obeyesekere 1975:246). Monks were also advised to participate in rituals that were deemed “Buddhist” thereby encouraging them to involve themselves in lay society rather than confining themselves to a shell of individualistic world rejectionism in *nibbanic* pursuit. The rituals Dharmapala legitimated glorified the Buddha as an icon of spiritualism. Although he condemned the elaborate exorcistic rites of the *yaktovil*, he did not question the annual performance of the ‘Asala Perahera’ in which the Tooth-Relic was ceremoniously paraded through the streets of Kandy. His was a selective “protest” against particular aspects of traditional Buddhist practice and not a total rejection of it, as Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988:215) had concluded. Dharmapala’s intense and fundamentalist admiration of Buddhism can be viewed as that of a passionate devotee to the religious symbol. Roberts (1997:1020) remarked

that Dharmapala had even dreamt of being the Buddha's kin and loyal disciple, a charismatic role remarkably similar to that of Ananda's. "You are my cousin," said the Buddha to Dharmapala "I expect no worship from you" (diary entry dated 16 September, 1896).

In his critique of the "Protestant Buddhist" hypothesis, James Holt has suggested that instead of a Puritan ritual alienation, the Buddhism that emerged out of late-nineteenth century reformist activity showed an intensified ritualism that reflected a "monasticization of social religion," as the monastery and the *samgha* became important foci of religiosity and social engagement. The monastery even extended its cultural influence to the private sphere of domestic relations through the advocacy of setting up of Buddhist shrines (*buduge*) within urban middle class Sinhala homes in a concerted attempt by Dharmapala and his sympathizers to make Buddhism a part of everyday lives (Obeysekere 1970:50-51). Holt observed that not only were Buddhist symbols (eg. Buddha statues constructed along major roads, Buddhist idioms inscribed on national message boards, etc) more prominent in the independent Sri Lankan state (an observation first commented on by Obeysekere in 1972) but that Sinhala Buddhist ritual occasions were "far more numerous or frequent than in the liturgical calendar of the Protestant community" (1991:309). Participation in "proper" Buddhist ritual practice was encouraged as a means of asserting an essentialised Sinhala Buddhist identity and the solidification of Dharmapala's latter ethos of ethno-cultural patriotism.

Perhaps the most obvious difference between Weber's Protestant Ethic and Dharmapala's Buddhist imagining is the "elective affinity" between the religious ethos and the rise of modern capitalism. Weber (1958) indicated that the Protestant belief in predestination coupled with its emphasis on frugality and labour were necessary, though not sufficient factors, for the emergence of capitalism. Eisenstadt (1968:9) stated that Weberian religious sociology was specifically concerned with the *Wirtschaftsethik*, that is, on the broad attitudes inherent in the ethos of religions that directed economic motivation. Anagarika Dharmapala did not view his reinterpretation of Buddhism as producing sustained economic effects or inaugurating Western-type capitalism in Ceylon

although modernization was an intended consequence of a scientific Buddhist rationality coupled with right forms of personal and group action as spelt out in the *Dharmapala Lipi*. What concerned him was societal (political) transformation through a reassertion of Buddhist and ethnic confidence. His ideas provided an explication for the evolutionary progression of society from an utopic vamsic world to the degenerate present characterized by the dogmatic irrationality introduced by colonialism. Dharmapala called for a return to a righteous Buddhist moral order. It was a nostalgic attempt to resurrect the glory of an indigenous past framed within a discourse of native modernity which set the stage for the individual's eventual attainment of *nibbana*.

Weber argued that Buddhism, unlike Calvinism, did not possess a rational economic ethic centred upon the intensive procurement of wealth and therefore did not lead to the culture of the entrepreneurial enterprise. Wealth was viewed solely in terms of a reward for past merits and should not be saved so much as spent (eg. charity, supporting the *samgha* etc) as a reinvestment for future merit. Echoing Weberian conceptualizations, Ames (1963:65) believed that the dominant Sinhala Buddhist ethos was one that deemphasised worldly accumulation at the expense of detachment and generosity. Comparing giving to a natural process, Dharmapala stated that, "the earth, season after season bears fruits; the sky gives rain, the cow gives milk, and the beggar who visits the door of the householder gets his dole. Charity is the law of life" (quoted in Sangharakshita 1980:140). Although championing a model of selective renunciation of worldly desire in the *anagarika*, Dharmapala did not view the pursuit of wealth as a vice. Ideally wealth when acquired was to be used for the immediate benefit of the community and not hoarded for self-satisfaction or the procurement of profit. In an impassioned message to the "young men of Ceylon," Dharmapala reminded them of their duty to "unite and work in harmony to increase the wealth of our people," adding that "we are custodians of our posterity" (quoted in Guruge 1965:511). The Puritan-like practice of thrift and hard work coupled with systematic book-keeping and personal cleanliness were necessary for the furtherance of a Buddhist society according to the Dharmapalan plan of action (Roberts 1997:1020). Since his goals of merit generation, *nibbanic* improvement, and societal

betterment were the opposite of Weber's individualistic Calvinist, to associate Dharmapala's Buddhist doctrine with Protestantism paints a muddled picture of it. For Dharmapala's Buddhism to be "Protestant," it should have addressed the correlation between Buddhist reformism and the economic principle that motivated a capitalist transformation of society. Amassing wealth through frugality and reinvestment were not sufficient criterion in defining a capitalist mode of production. Nonetheless Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988:231) rightly noted that, "Dharmapala encouraged thrift and hard work for straightforward rational reasons, to promote the material well-being of his countrymen. Thrift and hard work were likewise recommended to the laity by the Buddha."

The virtues that Gombrich and Obeyesekere (ibid. 236) have associated with Puritanism (eg. frugality, effort, diligence, non-consumption of alcohol, fashion conservatism, etc) also occur in the doctrinal principles of other religious systems. Ernest Gellner (1968:290) for instance, had observed "Protestant features" which included, "a tradition without clergy in the full sense...or personal mediation; but based on trading towns, stressing literacy and learning, sometimes hostile to shrines and popular cults" amongst North African Muslims, particularly those of the Ibadi fraternity.²⁹

Dharmapala's discourse has thus to be analyzed in relation to local Sinhala constructions of meaning occurring within the specific historical context of high British imperialism. In an astute observation of his personal diary entries, Roberts (1997:1019) has shown how Dharmapala's fixation on the *brahmacariya* ideal of sexual renunciation was clearly presented within a well defined Buddhist cosmological scheme centered on the avoidance of Mara's lustful temptations. This is not to deny the fact that Dharmapala may have been influenced by the Christian discourses on virtuosity through his readings and education in mission schools. Yet in his writings Dharmapala recalled the negative impression he had of his Protestant teachers and the incipience of his inimical stance towards the faith.

One day when I was at this school - I was only twelve years old - I saw one of my teachers go out in to the field with his gun and shoot down a bird. I was horrified. I said to myself - and at that time I was reading the Bible four times a day - 'This is no religion for me. He is a preacher of Christianity and he goes out cold bloodedly and kills innocent birds.' The teachers in that school also drank liquor, a practice that was against my earliest teachings. Not long after this time one of my classmates died. As we looked at him, lying so still on his bed, our teacher told us to pray. Suddenly I realized that we were praying because of fear. And I soon became very critical of the Bible.

(quoted in Obeyesekere 1975:247)

Despite his constant efforts at reforming Buddhist practice throughout Ceylon, many Sinhala Buddhist, especially rural, dwellers did not subscribe to Dharmapala's idealised discursive path which remained largely at the level of an intellectual theory of action confined to the new Buddhist petty bourgeoisie. This group accounted for only 5 to 10 percent of the island's total population. Their minority status makes Gombrich and Obeyesekere's conclusion that contemporary Buddhism in Sri Lanka is "Protestant Buddhism" an overstatement (Holt 1991:311). For the Buddhists who did sympathize with Dharmapala's reformist agenda it was a selective acceptance. Gombrich and Obeyesekere rightly pointed out that:

The vast majority of Protestant Buddhists do not go the whole way and renounce family life or moneymaking occupations, but they dedicated their spare time to religious concerns and assume symbols of asceticism: they wear white cloths very frequently when they go about worldly business, take alcohol 'only for medicinal purposes,' even become vegetarians or at least give up eating beef. (1988:233)

Nevertheless Gombrich and Obeyesekere did not elaborate on how the wearing of white, avoidance of alcohol or vegetarianism (to name but a few common Sinhala practices) was seen as an engagement with specifically “Protestant” values. In fact, one of the motivating factors that led to the rise of middle class culture revolved around arrack-renting. The worldly asceticism reflected in the above quotation resembles very much the typical practice of religiously oriented Buddhist laity (*upasaka*, *upasika*) in many Theravada cultures. What Gombrich and Obeyesekere have described could have reflected a generalized Sinhala Buddhist response towards increasing religiosity derived from numerous cultural influences (including possible Tamil Hindu influences which Dharmapala vehemently refuses mention) rather than to a specific “Protestant” culture that was neither “traditional village Buddhism” nor “contemporary” urban Sinhala Buddhism.

To argue then that Dharmapala’s reformist model was inherently analogous to “Protestantism” is to do injustice to a doctrine that praises itself in its anti-Christian flavour.³⁰ This is, however, not to argue that Dharmapalan paradigms were in no way influenced by dominant Christian conceptualizations of ideal practice. The performance of the new *dharmadesana*, missionization, and a rhetoric reminiscent at times of Biblical inflections may have indeed been modeled on Dharmapala’s conscientious appraisal of Christianity (Seneviratne 1999:26). What is more important I believe is to understand the contextualisation of these reformist discourses according to indigenous discourses. Anagarika Dharmapala developed his readings of Buddhist philosophy out of an ongoing Sinhala “protest” against what he considered to be the hegemonic doctrines of Christianity (Obeyesekere 1972:62). He did not attempt to mask his bellicose attitude towards Christianity which was well reflected in his emotional and stinging condemnations of the faith. Christianity and other forms of monotheism were no better than the peasant’s propitiation of Brahmanical and indigenous Sinhala divinities, which Dharmapala had dismissed as mere “puppet shows to satisfy the ignorant mind” (quoted in Guruge 1965:437). Buddhism and Christianity existed on polar ends of the religious spectrum. Christianity’s dependence on faith alone made it a religion. Blind faith obliterated activity and Dharmapala stressed that “dependence

on a god helps destroy self-reliance” (ibid. 194). In an article published in the *Mahabodhi*, Dharmapala’s rejection of Christianity was obvious:

The unscholarly European takes to Christianity as the duck to the water. Christianity is an Asiatic Arabian cult. It had no special merit, except that it was acceptable to the slave and the starving poor...This Asiatic animistic cult, this superstition that gave hope to the low born, three centuries after the alleged crucifixion of Christ, became the religion of a decadent empire...Christianity is an Asiatic superstition, rejected by the civilised races of Asia.

(quoted in Guruge 1965:464-5)

“Protestant Buddhism” as a specific religious interpretation does not take into consideration non-Protestant Christian denominations that may have been of equal if not greater significance in shaping Dharmapala’s thinking. Christian religious colonialism in nineteenth century Ceylon was not the sole pejorative of the Protestant mission. The island’s Christian landscape was a hodge podge of different denominational cultures and parishes. These included Portuguese Roman Catholicism, Church of England Anglicanism, the American Baptist Mission, Dutch Reformed Puritanism etc. Of these, Roman Catholicism has had the longest period of inter-cultural contact with the island’s Sinhala population having established itself in the littoral with the arrival of the Portuguese. Holt (1991:210) rightly suggested that Gombrich and Obeyesekere failed to recognize Roman Catholic influences in “Protestant Buddhism.” The short-lived order of nuns (*bhikkuni*) in Sinhala Buddhism, defunct since the eleventh century but reinitiated in 1897, resembled Catholic sororal cloisters alien to the Protestant churches and may partly have been a Sinhala response to the culture of the convent from which it emerged.³¹ The Sanghamitta Sisterhood was the outcome of Dharmapala’s vision in collaboration with the women reformists who fervently advocated greater female suffrage in the *samgha* and Sinhala society as spelt out in early Buddhist history. The influence of Catholicism on the Sisterhood was evident in

their “habits,” confessionals, and “diocese”-centered internal organization (Bartholomeusz 1994:72-73).

Dharmapala spent some of his early education in Catholic schools. He wrote of how “every half hour the class had to repeat a short prayer in praise of the Virgin Mary, and I got accustomed to Catholic ways, though I was daily worshiping my Lord Buddha” (Guruge 1965:698). How this Catholic school experience impacted upon his later work is debatable although its plausibility must be entertained. Of his education, Dharmapala recollected in the *Mahabodhi* (1927):

From my infancy I was brought up in an atmosphere of religion. My earliest teachers were Roman Catholic and then I had two years training in a church missionary boarding school...Then I had five years training in a Church of England school, and I remember when I was asked by Revd. Warden Miller to become a Christian...For more than a quarter of a century, the Bible accompanies me wherever I go...I compare the teaching of Jesus with the teachings of the Buddha, his parables with the Buddhist parables, his ethical and psychological teachings with the ethics and psychology of Buddhism. Thereby I have been greatly benefited in the intuitional acceptance of Truth.

(quoted in Guruge 1965:444-445)

Unlike Protestantism, Roman Catholicism brought with it a cult of saints and their related iconography which was easily reproduced into pre-existing Sinhala categories of symbolic representation. Stirrat (1981:186) observed that the cult of the Catholic saints was originally propagated by missionaries as a means to win local converts through appealing to pre-existing Sinhala religious sensibilities.

This remarkable congruity between iconic representations and their associated meanings coupled with its practicality for socioeconomic and status improvement made Roman Catholicism a popular religion in Ceylon. This of course did not mean that all Sinhala converts to

Catholicism interpreted the discourse in identical ways. Stirrat pointed out how the priesthood and its intellectual elites (such as members of the French Oblate mission in the nineteenth century) often had disdain for the Sinhala equation of ecstatic cults with Catholicism for instance, in the ritual of saintly possession and vow-fulfillment. By the late nineteenth century, Roman Catholicism had established itself as the foremost Christian denomination in the island with Catholics making up nine-tenths of all Christians (de Silva 1979:347). In short, it was Catholicism and not Protestantism that exercised the greatest theological control in Christian Ceylon during the British era. Holt (1991) had argued that Protestantism's aiconicity and anti-ritualism could not have been responsible for the proliferation of Buddhist symbols and ritualism during and after the so-called period of "Protestant Buddhist" reformism. Rather than Protestant, Holt suggested that Roman Catholicism could have had influenced the phenomenal rise of Buddhist iconography in British Ceylon.

Bellah has cautioned against too literal an application of the Weberian thesis to the structural transformation Asian societies have undergone. The Ethic was a specific European cultural phenomenon that occurred in an "historical and institutional setting" (Bellah 1965: 244).³² This leads to a dilemma when an attempt is made to apply the Weberian analysis to a society with radically different cultural (religious, political, institutional, etc) and historical experiences.³³

The rhetoric of Sinhala Buddhist reformism was articulated within a framework circumscribed by indigenous conceptual metaphors. Anagarika Dharmapala, although frowning upon "non-Buddhist" ritualism viewed himself as what Roberts (1997) called, "a crusading Bosat." Like the bosat (*bodhisatta*) of Mahayanist philosophy, the *brahmacariya* model of the celibate anagarika was of a being actively engaged with Humanity so as to improve upon its welfare and lead to the eventual realization of nibbana for all its members. Thus, the selective renunciatory role of the anagarika has to be situated within pre-existing Sinhala meanings regarding the religious and charismatic person. Through a performance of the renunciation of bodily and material pleasures, the anagarika created a new classificatory identity that found

legitimacy in an imagined local past that intimately correlated charisma, power and knowledge in the embodiment of the renunciate and the ruler. This new cultural category and the reformist ideology it propagated was also the result of the socio-political climate in neighbouring societies. Amunugama (1991) has shown how Dharmapala's political thinking was influenced by the elite Bhadrakok of British Bengal who like Dharmapala, had attempted to revitalize Hinduism through constructing a narrative history that celebrated a glorious pre-colonial Hindu past. Although praising the Bhadrakok movement, Dharmapala was highly critical of their "aping of Christian ritual" and "god worship" as they attempted to purge Hinduism of its non-Hindu accretions (ibid.577).

I have argued that Weber's Protestantism and Dharmapala's Buddhism are mutually exclusive religious epistemologies. I am not, however, embarking on an interpretation that throws the baby out with the bath water. Suffice to recall that Dharmapala was living in a dynamic Ceylon permeated with narratives and historical memories of Protestant and Catholic Christianity. His reformist thinking was a result of a dialogue entered into with these soteriological forces yet framed within an indigenous Sinhala Buddhist semiotic. The question I have posed is thus one of influence, that is to ask, who held the reigns of the text in this dialogue?

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF MEANING

Religious reformism, according to Bellah "reinterprets a particular religious tradition to show not only that it is compatible with modernization but also that, when truly understood, the tradition vigorously demands at least important aspects of modernity" (1965:208). Reformism attempts to bridge the gap between a pre-existing religiosity with experiences of modernity. It does not attempt to preserve or resuscitate an earlier form of religiosity but to manipulate past religious nostalgia in understanding contemporary processes of social change. Reformism unlike traditionalism is not a conservative force that celebrates the presumed immutability of historical structures. Religious reformism comprised a dynamic interplay of religious sequences and their associated semiotic readings, producing a brand of religiosity akin

yet unidentical to an earlier predecessor.³⁴ Dharmapalan polemics brought reformism a step further by creating a moral and national philosophical code that was applicable to all Buddhists and not confined to the *samgha*. It was a discourse that appealed to powerful ethno-cultural memories of an imagined vamsic primordiality - a Lankan *dhammadipa* removed from the vices of colonial import. Within this utopic space of Buddhist pristinity the Sinhala would progress along the lines of Victorian modernity. Industry, education, health, and nativism would flourish, placing Ceylon on par with the industrial civilizations of the West.

Tambiah believed that, "there is a remarkable similarity in the preoccupations and the style of Buddhist revitalization in Ceylon, Burma, and Thailand during this phase of colonial impact, which was direct in the former two but indirect in the case of the third." (1976:427-428) The possibility that Thai and Burmese reformist agendas influenced Dharmapala's Buddhism must be entertained especially in relation to his travels to those societies. Similarly, although these movements combined Buddhist soteriology with a "new weaponry borrowed from the challengers," it is uncertain to what extent reformation manipulated specific "Protestant" ideals as their "new weaponry." Were one to argue that Dharmapalan Buddhism represented a "Protestant-type" reaction against an increasing Christian presence in the urban littoral, it would be necessary then to extend the concept of "Protestant Buddhism" to Thailand and Burma as well where Buddhist reformation predated the small Protestant church's missionizing activities.³⁵

Through labeling Dharmapalan philosophy as "Protestant," scholars have inadvertently imposed a European cultural category upon an indigenous movement resulting in an analytic tool that fails to consider indigenous agency. Syed Hussein Alatas (1977) has cautioned against too literal an imposition of European definitions on the frameworks of local meaning systems.³⁶ Anthropology, Tambiah (1990:3) rightly observed, is an endeavour at understanding the "Other" in their own terms and according to the rules of their discursive practice, a legacy no doubt attributed to the Weberian quest for *verstehen*. Nevertheless, this understanding is mediated through the person of the anthropologist who attempts to reflexively translate local knowledges into the language

of Western academia. Some twenty years after formulating the concept of "Protestant Buddhism," Obeyesekere published *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook* (1992), in which he strongly condemned Marshall Sahlin's reading of Hawaiian history as being an exercise in European mythmaking which underestimated Hawaiian sensibilities on how Europeans were perceived at the dawn of Pacific colonialism.³⁷ In interpreting Dharmapala's ideology as that of a homogeneous "Protestant Buddhism," Obeyesekere and others have unfortunately employed mythmaking strategies to construct a "Protestantism" which was never an important part of Sinhala reformist pragmatism. Rather a more holistic and reflexive reading of the reformism project would attempt to situate the ideology within the polysemic discourses of anti-Christian, pro-Sinhala, Buddhist, vamsic, and urban Ceylonist imaginations occurring within a specific historical context. By so doing, anthropological mythmaking is minimised through a thick engagement with the life worlds of the agents involved.

To argue for a "Protestant Buddhism" makes it equally suggestible that an argument may be made for an equally untenable "Buddhist Protestantism." Stirrat (1981) had observed how folk constructions of Catholicism centered on the cult of St. Sebastian. I believe that both analogies are unhelpful in understanding diverse cultural productions and agency. Weber's *Protestant Ethic* was specifically constructed to understand post-Reformation economism in Puritanical Europe. Holt (1991:309) has rightly concluded that, "there is, perhaps, no religion that is more antithetical soteriologically to Theravada Buddhism than Protestantism. One is a religion of faith [linked to monotheism] while the other is one of self-effort." It is important not to discount the impacts of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism on shaping this new ideological system. However, this impact must not be privileged, and has to be read within the historical and through the mythical narratives of the actors involved. To them it was not Protestantism that formed the ballast of their philosophy but Buddhism. It is only by realising local meanings that we can begin to imagine the "Other" in their own terms and fully appreciate their contributions to the moulding of one of contemporary Sri Lanka's most dominant historical discourses.

Notes

- 1 I am greatly indebted to Professors Stanley Tambiah and Nur Yalman of Harvard University for their thought provoking and stimulating comments on draft versions of this paper. This paper would not have been possible without their help.
- 2 Throughout this paper, I use the word Sinhala to refer to the ethno-cultural as well as the linguistic group commonly called Sinhalese in non-Sinhala (Euro-American) literature and popular usage.
- 3 It is in the Dipavamsa that we get the first cryptic mention of the word Sihala/Sinhala (On Account of the Lion) in reference to the bounded geopolitical landscape of the island (Tambiah 1992:132). The later Culavamsa describe the island as Sihale, Sihala, Tisihala, and Trisimhala (Roberts 1997:1009). Buddhaghosa's fifth century Samantapasadika recorded that the *vinaya* (Rules of Monastic Discipline) commentaries were written in Sihala-bhasa, the language of Sihaladipa (the Island of Sihala) (Gunawardana 1990:47, Tambiah 1992:136).
- 4 The identity of the *yakkhas* is uncertain. They could represent the ogres and diabolic agents of Sanskritic literature or anthropomorphized manifestations of local malevolent spirits. It is possible that the *yakkhas* were a Sinhala demonizing of indigenous pre-Buddhist, pre-Vijayan inhabitants (Vaddas?) prior to the demographic and cultural colonization by Sinhala speakers (Greenwald 1978:33n, Smith 1978:55). Greenwald (1978:23) suggested that the *yakkhas* may represent Dravidian Hindus who had to be conquered in order to establish Sinhala hegemony. For a further exploration of the relationship between disorder and stability in Sinhala mytho-history, see Smith (1978), Smith and Kapferer (1988).
- 5 Vijaya's earlier sexual exploits with the forest ogress Kuveni had produced a son and daughter who by virtue of their mother's non-human extraction had participated in an incestuous union.

The children of this tabooed liaison became the Vaddas and inhabited the deep forests far from the civilized centres of the Sinhala Buddhist moral universe (Obeyesekere 1975:234).

- 6 The Buddhist monarch in pre-colonial Burman and Tai States had similarly to balance morality and the coercive force of power. Kings deemed as immoral by the masses were considered unworthy of rule and their position challenged through rebellions and rival claimants to the throne (Ling 1979:29).
- 7 Duttagamini's weapon of choice in his battles was a spear embedded with a relic (*dhatu*) of the Buddha symbolizing the inseparability of Buddhism and Sinhala monarchical authority.
- 8 Kirti Sri's *samghic* contributions included the sponsoring of a mission to Siam, the glorification of the Malvatta and Asgiriya Vihares, and the restoration of monasteries throughout the island.
- 9 Nanavimala had received higher ordination (*upasampada*) in Amarapura, Burma in 1800 since *upasampada* rights were denied to non-*goyigama* monks in Lanka (Malaloda 1976:97-98).
- 10 *Samgha* purificatory reforms may have begun during Asoka's reign as evidence from the Samchi-Sarnath-Kaushambi Edict points out. Directed as a public ordinance to the high officials of Pataliputra and Kaushambi, the edict reads:

...this is the command of King Devanampiya Piyadasi: 'I have united the order. No one, monk or nun, shall split the order. Whosoever, monk or nun, causes a schism in the order shall be made to wear the white garments and expelled from the community'
(quoted in Tambiah 1976:166)
- 11 The benefits that accrued from the maintenance of religious purity has also been summed up in the *Maha Parinibbana Suttanta*. See Tambiah (1976:175) for further explication on the Pali discourse.

- 12 For an comprehensive biographical account of the Anagarika Dharmapala, see Sangharakshita (1980)
- 13 The Panadura debate was one of five major Buddhist-Christian debates in the nineteenth century. The others were held at Baddegama (1865), Varagoda (1865), Udanvita (1866) and Gampola (1871) (Seneviratne 1999:49).
- 14 Sumangala was instrumental in the Buddhist revivalism in Galle. He was a close friend of David's father, Don Carolis Appuhamy (Amunugama 1985:701)
- 15 For Christian-type models adopted in Buddhist schools, see Obeyesekere (1972: 61).
- 16 The role of the *anagarika* never took off despite Dharmapala's advocacy. In the early years of the twentieth century a few Sinhala youth took the *anagarika* vows most notable amongst them being Walisinghe Harischandra and Walisinghe Dharmapriya. Amunugama (1985:728-729n) has suggested that the rise of a politicized Sinhala *samgha* in the nineteen fifties made the *anagarikan* ideal obsolete.
- 17 The flip side of the rational coin was substantive rationality (*wertrationalitat*) signified by the absence of pragmatic calculation of ultimate ends.
- 18 Weber did not argue that the "spirit of capitalism" was the only factor that led to modern capitalism. His was a multifactoral approach. The "spirit" was, however, a critical factor in the catalyzation of capitalist development. Trevor Ling (1985:117) remarked that, "Weber's argument rests on a knowledge of the fine details of English religious and social history during the relatively short period [mid 17th - mid 18th centuries], in which, according to him, there was a significant link between a well-defined but historically ephemeral form of degenerate Calvinism on the one hand and the capitalist spirit among a small number of English Calvinists on the other."

- 19 For a reading of the *Vissudhimagga*, see Bond (1988: 22-33).
- 20 Suffice it to recall that Olcott's Buddhist catechism similarly stressed the possibility of attaining Nibbana in the present. Popular narratives of Buddhist history often mention instances whereby lay people achieved immediate enlightenment upon hearing the Buddha preach (Bond 1988:26). Perhaps the most well-known case was that of the Buddha's father, King Shuddhodana.
- 21 Dharmapala listed a number of rules that the *brahmacariya* was expected to follow. These included the Eight Percepts (*ata sil*) which epitomised Buddhist moral practice as well as rules that promoted physical and psychological well-being.
- 22 Despite his relentless attacks on what he saw as an undisciplined *samgha*, Dharmapala's idealism won him the support of younger radical monks educated in local *pirivenas* (Buddhist colleges) including Kalukondayave Pannasekhara (Seneviratne 1999:40).
- 23 The post-Dharmapalan period in Sinhala Buddhist history did encounter radical attempts at the elimination of the *samgha* as an institutional form which was seen as incorrigibly corrupt and its social functions obsolete. These were experiments in what Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988:233) labeled "extreme Protestant Buddhism." This radicalism was best expressed in the short-lived *Vinayavardhana Samitiya* (Society for the Protection of the Vinaya) in 1932 which called for a "Buddhism without Bhikkhus" (Kemper 1978, Bartholomeusz 1994).
- 24 Writing in 1821, Davy was surprised to find that "very many of the natives are said to be grammatically acquainted with Sinhalese...Reading and writing are far from uncommon acquirements, and are almost as general as in England amongst the male part of the population" (quoted in Malalgoda 1976:176). Terwiel (1994) has noted the important role that monastic schools (*rongrien wat*) played in the education of boys in nineteenth century Siam. Many primary and secondary schools in rural Thailand are

still appendaged to monasteries although their teaching staff and curriculum are now determined by the Ministry of Education in Bangkok.

- ²⁵ For a discussion of the way Dharmapala radically transformed the traditional Buddhist sermon (*dharmadesana*) to meet the demands of an urban audience committed to intellectualism and materialism, see Seneviratne (1999:42-55).
- ²⁶ Dharmapala noted that, “The mythical stories of the Jewish Bible, have no scientific foundations. They are unfit for the advanced thinkers of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, scientific inventors are poor, and they have to depend on immoral capitalists, who are under the clutches of the ecclesiastic...science has become the slave of the theologian, and the Christian church has annexed that portion of science that helps to live the sensual life” (quoted in Guruge 1965: 717-718).
- ²⁷ Thongchai Winichakul (2000) has noted how court-centred Bangkok elites in the nineteenth century similarly appropriated European discourses of civilization (*siwilai*) in indigenous narratives of Thai modernity. Unlike the Thais however, Dharmapalan rhetoric was selective in equating the West with the “civilized” centre. Dharmapala vehemently critiqued aspects of Western culture and Christian worldview which he believed had corrupted the Sinhala (Seneviratne 1999:30-31).
- ²⁸ The *Dharmapala Lipi* contained a total of 200 rules guiding lay Buddhist conduct. These ranged from rules on the chewing of betel and on the proper use of the lavatory, to rules of interactive behaviour between laypersons and the *sangha* as well as rules on the conduct of domestic ceremonies. The code was extremely popular and sold 49,500 copies by its 19th reprint in 1958 (Obeyesekere 1972:71).
- ²⁹ Gellner added that Ibadi Muslims were known as “the Calvinists of Islam” (1968:290). Unfortunately he does not provide the source or context from which this term appeared.

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- ²⁹ Gellner added that Ibadi Muslims were known as “the Calvinists of Islam” (1968:290). Unfortunately he does not provide the source or context from which this term appeared.

- 30 Thai reformist movements also presented a stance that was opposed to Christianity. For instance, the monk Phuttathat Phiksu (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu) was a skeptic of the assumed similarities between Buddhism and Christianity. In 1968, he published the book *Christianity and Buddhism* in which he turned Christianity on its head by translating Christian religious notions into Buddhist concepts (Tambiah 1976:412-414).
- 31 The Sinhala order of *bhikkunis* is popularly believed to have begun with the arrival of the Bhikkuni Sanghamitta, Asoka's ordained daughter to the island. Unlike the lay nuns of the Sanghamitta Sisterhood who adhered to the ten precepts (*dasa sil*), the *bhikkuni* adhered to 311 rules.
- 32 Even within Europe, the Protestant Ethic as a motivational force that led to the rise of modern capitalism only occurred in England. Weber did not consider Germany as possessing the ethic due to the failure of the Reformation ideology there even though the Germany of the nineteenth century was an industrial nation on par with England (Bellah 1968:247).
- 33 Shifts in contexts can lead to shifts in motivational arrangements in different societies. For instance, Javanese *santri* merchants were powerful capitalist entrepreneurs in the early nineteenth century but fell into disarray with the depression, never to recover (Bellah 1968:244).
- 34 Reformism is opposed to neotraditionalism which attempts to maintain the superiority of "traditional" religious symbols through ensuring the coexistence of modernity with "tradition."
- 35 In 1850 there were about ten Protestant missionaries in Siam (Tambiah 1976:213). Their small numbers belied a highly active proselytizing community. Quoting Vella (1957), Tambiah added that, "the Protestant missionaries were active in many fields. They preached, translated religious tracts and portions of the Bible into Thai, printed and distributed their translations, practiced medicine, and conducted schools."

- ³⁶ The indigenous Southeast Asian was only lazy in the eyes of colonial administrators who failed to grasp Malay, Javanese or Filipino concepts of work (Alatas 1977).
- ³⁷ The dialogue between Obeyesekere and Sahlins has triggered much anthropological interest. It is not my purpose to enter into the intricacies of the debate but only to call attention to how Obeyesekere's earlier ideas on Buddhist reformism in Ceylon can be critiqued in the same light as his own critique of Sahlins.

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