



INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE  
«Buddhist Education: Problems and Perspectives of Development»



# Buddhist Education in Thailand: Experience in Establishing Mahamakut Buddhist University & World Buddhist University

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Honorary Rector, World Buddhist University



29 April 2021



# Buddhist Education in Thailand

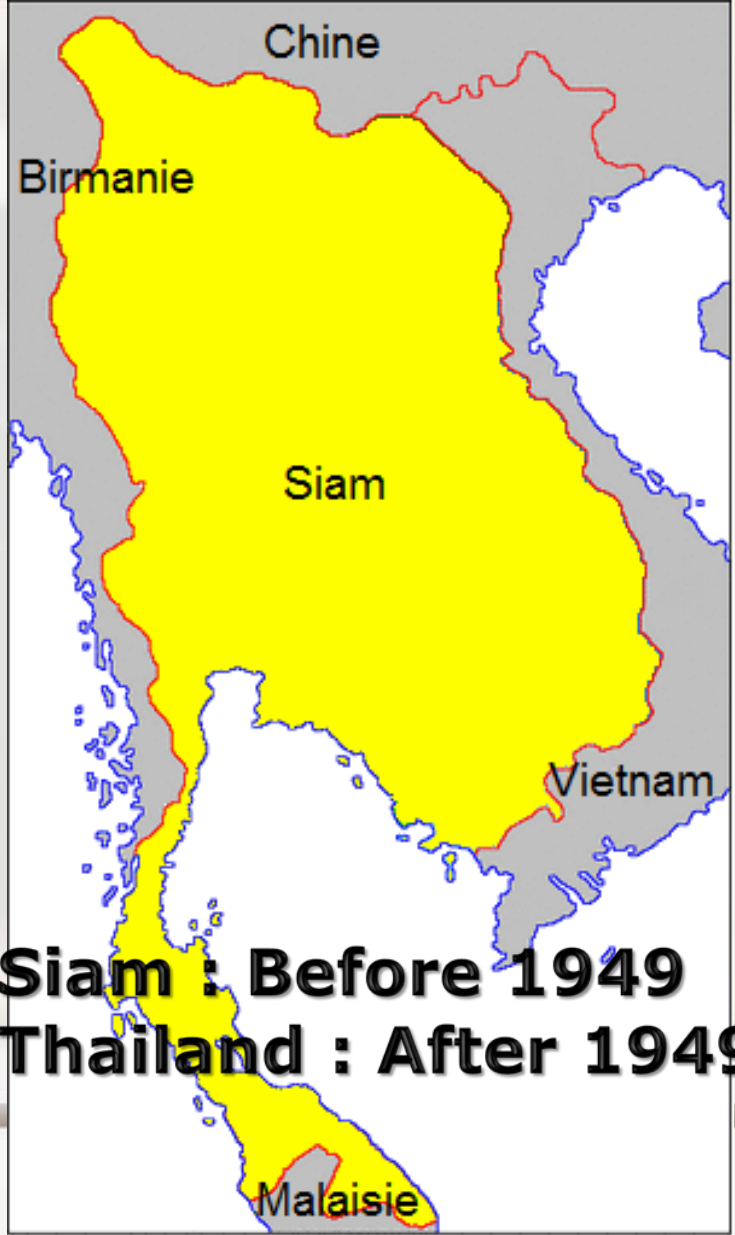


- **Buddhism in Thailand**
- **Introduction of the WBU**
- **Introduction of the MBU**
- **Experience in establishing Universities in Thailand**





# Buddhism in Thailand

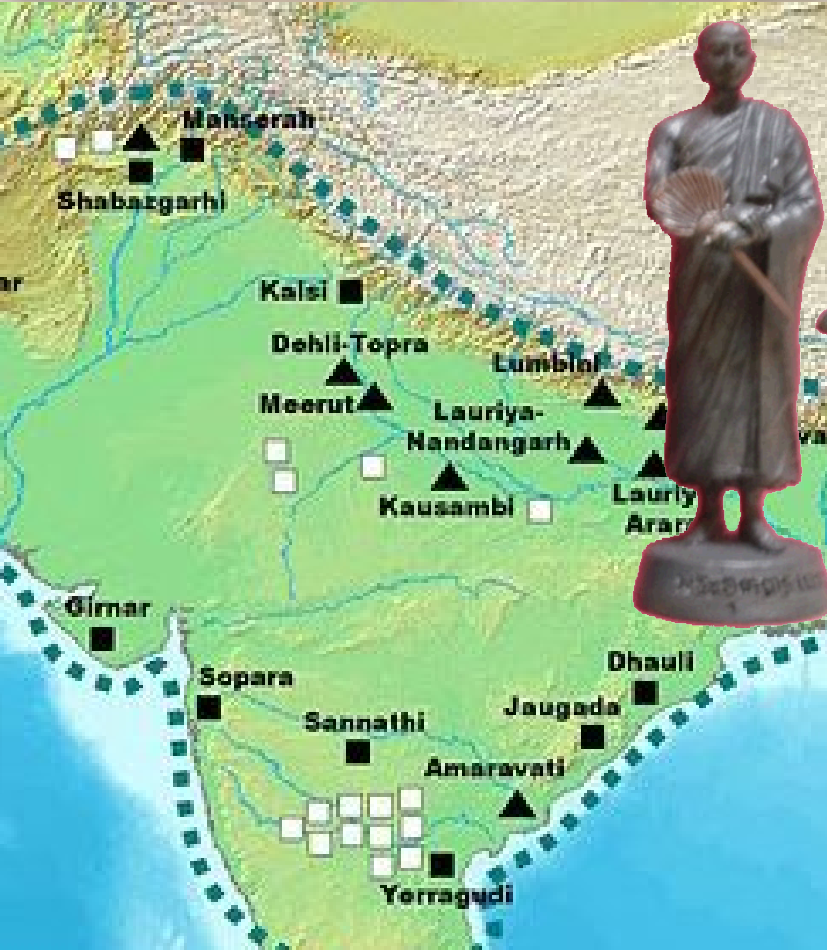


**Siam : Before 1949**  
**Thailand : After 1949**





# Buddhism in Thailand



Emperor Asoka sends off Ven. Sona & Uttara to Suvarnabhumi, the golden land.





# Buddhism in Thailand



3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE

4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE

5<sup>th</sup> Century BCE

Asokan  
Buddhism

Mahayana  
Buddhism

Pagan  
Buddhism

Sri Lankan  
Buddhism

**Buddhism reached  
Thailand in 4 periods**





INDIA  
BHARAT

BANGLADESH

Dhaka

MYANMAR  
(BURMA)

Yangon

LAOS

THAILAND  
PRATHET THAI  
Bangkok

CAMBODIA

VIET  
NAM

SRI LANKA

Colombo

MALAYSIA

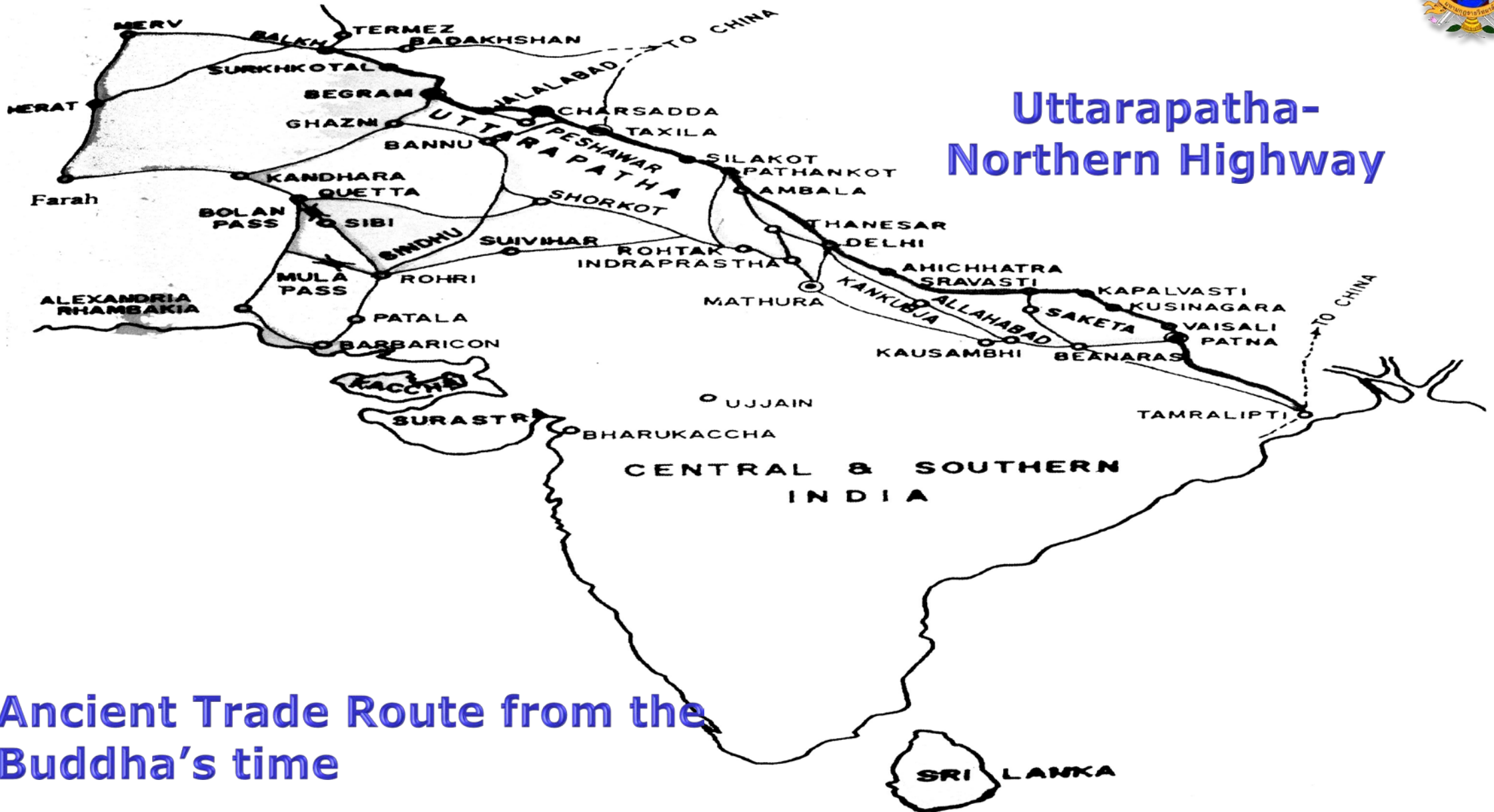
Kuala Lumpur

SINGAPORE

- 3<sup>rd</sup> BCE - 4<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Century - Mahayana
- 11<sup>th</sup> Century
- 13<sup>th</sup> Century
- 16<sup>th</sup> Century

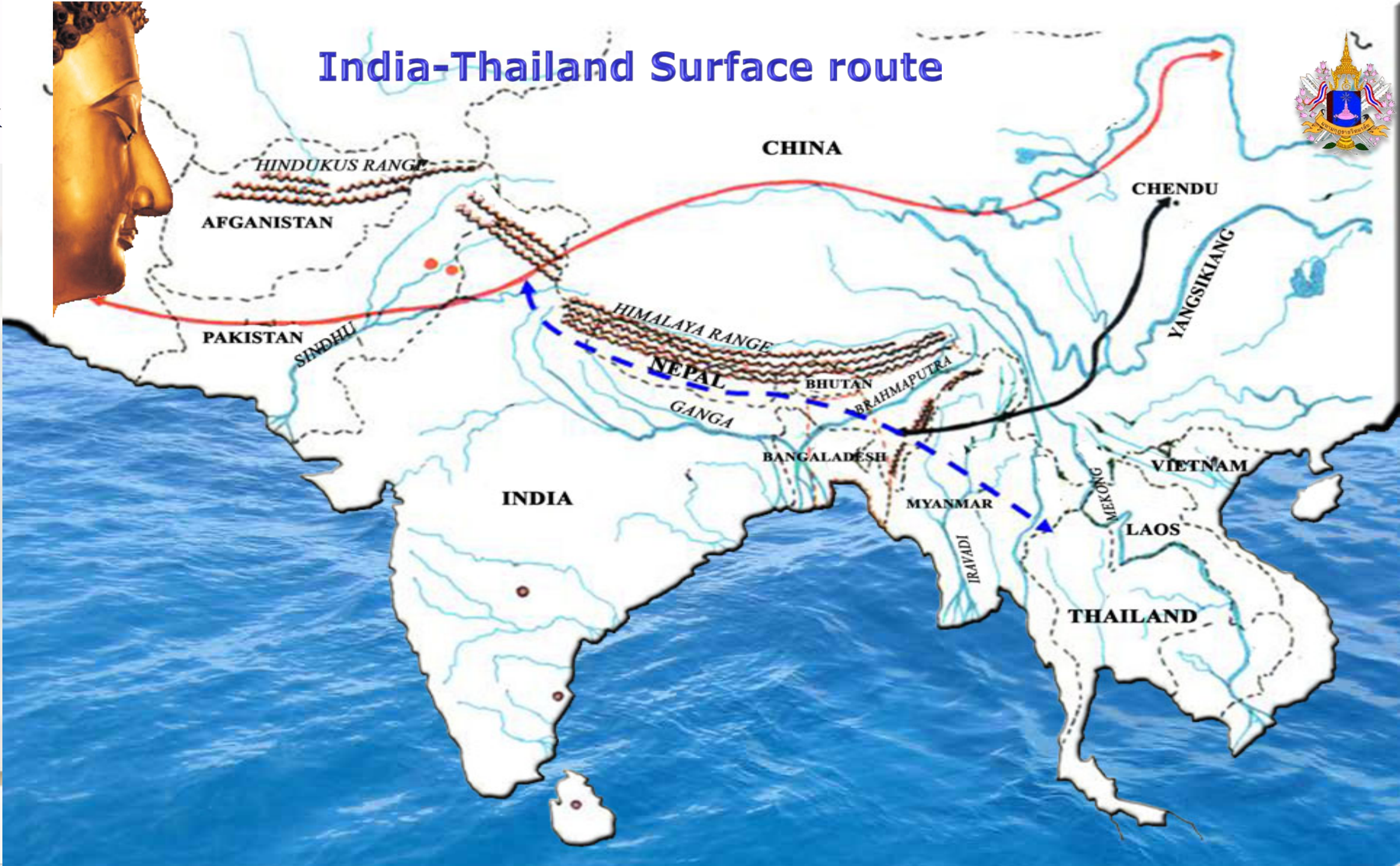


# Buddhism in Thailand





# India-Thailand Surface route







# Buddhism in Thailand

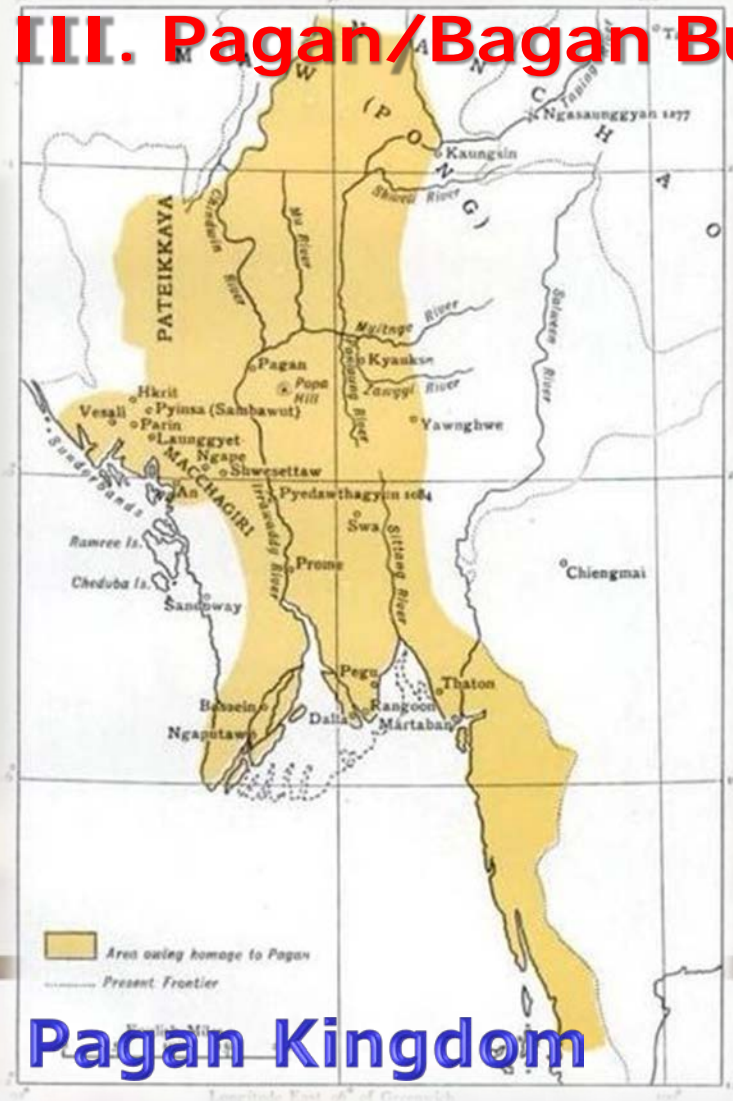


10<sup>th</sup> Century AD

11<sup>th</sup> Century AD

12<sup>th</sup> Century AD

## III. Pagan/Bagan Buddhism



Pagan Kingdom

## Sukhothai Kingdom



Beginning of Thai Nation-State



# Buddhism in Thailand



**Donald K. Swearer characterises Thai Buddhism as eclectic. He writes, ‘prior to the establishment of the major Thai states of Sukhothai and Chiang Mai in the thirteenth century, Buddhism in Thailand can only be characterized as eclectic...’**



# Buddhism in Thailand



'These diverse Buddhist expression, in turn, competed with Brahmanism, Hinduism, and autochthonous animisms. Rather than an organized sectarian lineage, the early religious amalgam in Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia might be more accurately described as a syncretic collage of miraculous relics and charismatic monks, Hindu *dharmasastra*, Brahmanic deities, Mahāyāna Buddhas, tantric practices, and Sanskrit Sarvāstivādin and Pāli Theravāda traditions.'



# Buddhism in Thailand

13<sup>th</sup> Century AD

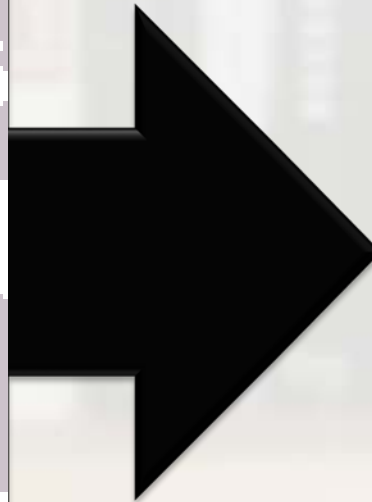
14<sup>th</sup> Century AD

15<sup>th</sup> Century AD

## Decline of Thai Buddhism



1767 AD





1277 AD

1331 AD

1424 AD

1465 AD

1565 AD

1753 AD





# Buddhism in Thailand

16<sup>th</sup> Century AD

17<sup>th</sup> Century AD

18<sup>th</sup> Century AD

## Decline of Thai Buddhism



**King Rama I - III**



# Buddhism in Thailand



18<sup>th</sup> Century AD

19<sup>th</sup> Century AD

20<sup>th</sup> Century AD

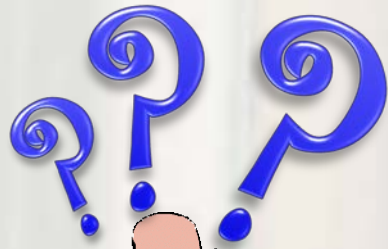
## Decline of Thai Buddhism

Decline in:

Local Belief

Practice

Monastic Education





# Buddhism in Thailand



## King Mongkut's view on Thai Buddhism

**Decline in :**  
**Adherence**  
**Preaching**  
**Monks' belief**





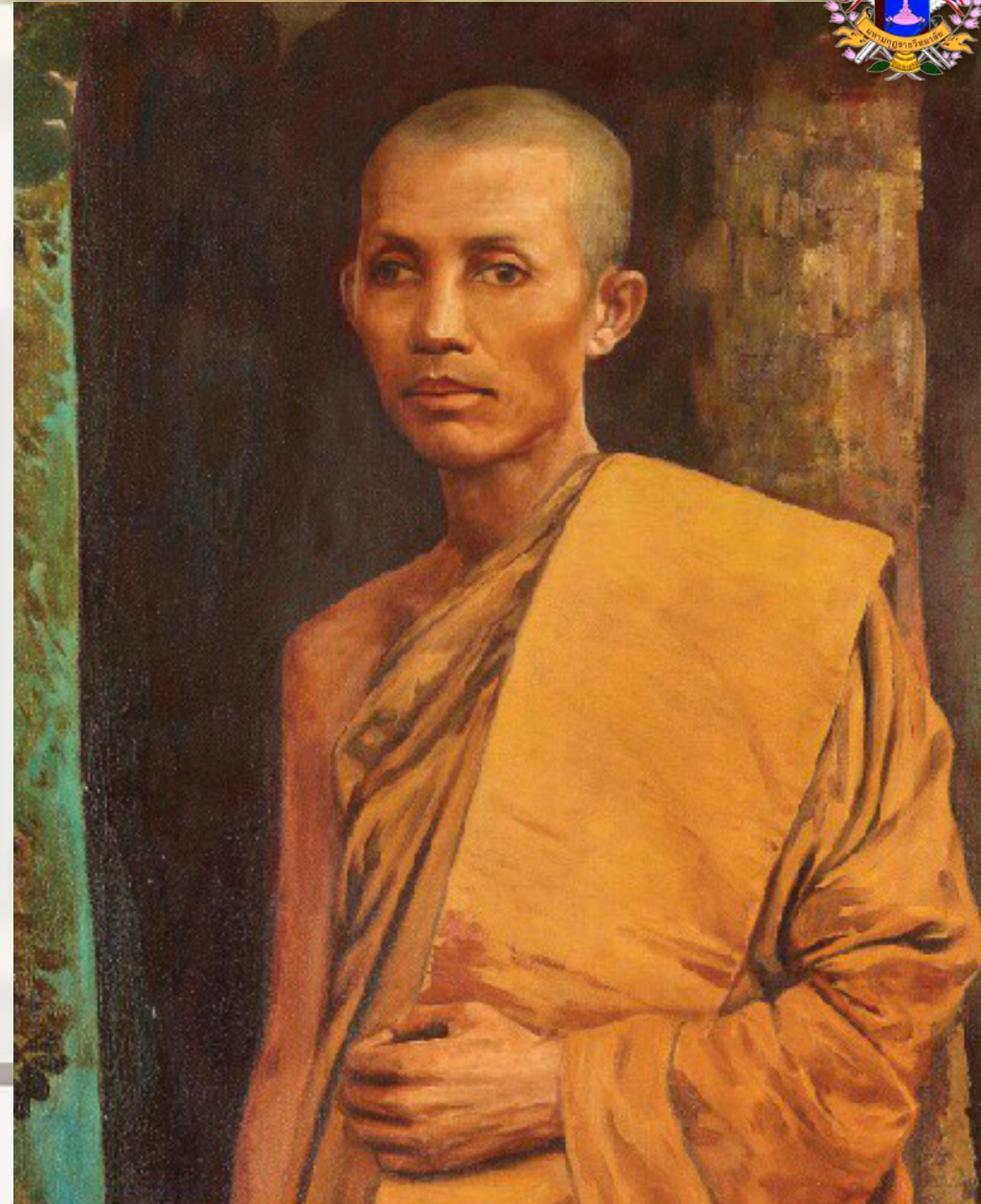


# Modernization of Buddhist education



**HRH Prince-Patriarch Vajiranyanavarorasa  
(12 April 1860 - 2 August 1921)  
Modernizer of  
Buddhist Education of Thailand  
Founder, Mahamakut Buddhist University  
In 1893**

**UNESCO  
Eminent Personality  
of the World, 2021**





# Buddhism in Thailand



## Current Thai Buddhism

**Buddhism is regarded as the national religion of Thailand because:**

**About 95% of Thai people are Buddhist  
(4% Muslim, 0.5% Christian, 0.5% others)**

**The Monarch must be a Buddhist by the constitution.**

**Buddhism has been the philosophy of life of Thais for over 1,000 years and has significance influence upon the character, the mind and way of life of Thai people.**



# Buddhism in Thailand



## Current Thai Buddhism

- ❖ Buddhism is the foundation of Thai culture and civilization, the creative force behind literature, sculpture, architecture, fine arts, drama, songs and music.





# Buddhism in Thailand

## Current Statics

Thailand has:

Buddhist monks 328,244

Buddhist nuns 10,000

Buddhist Wats 37,271





# Buddhism in Thailand

## Current Statics



**There are approximately 35,616 live Buddhist temples (monks residing)**



**There are approximately 5,943 Buddhist temple relics (no monks residing)**



# Buddhism in Thailand

## Current Statics



**Over 251,997 monks**



**Over 69,607 novices**



# Buddhism in Thailand



## Current Statics

**Over 10,000 nuns**





# Buddhism in Thailand

**'To be Thai is to be Buddhist !'**



**Every Thai male culturally should get ordination once in the life.**



**King Bhumibol as a Buddhist monk**



**Current King, King Vajiralongkorn as a Buddhist monk**





# Buddhism in Thailand

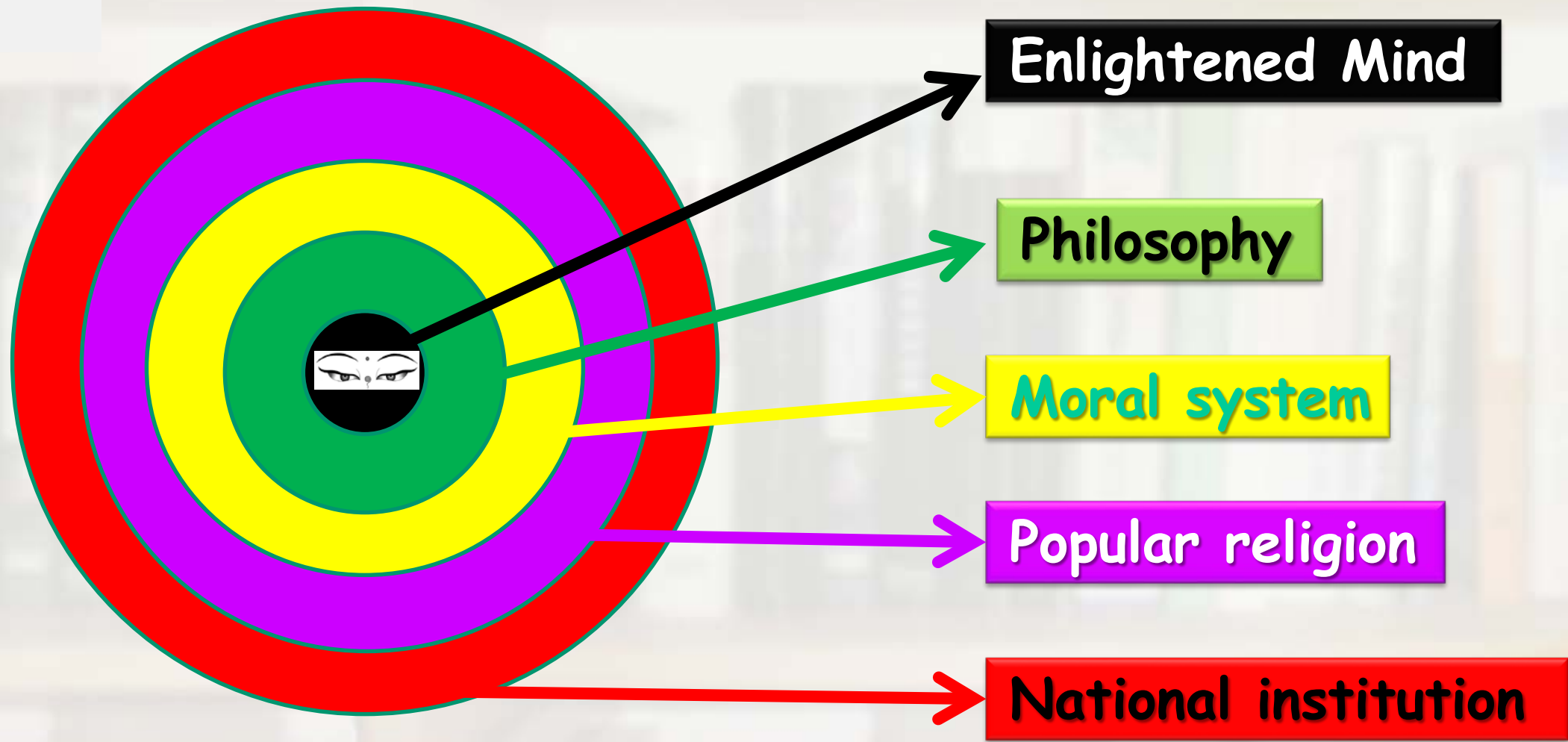
## Motives for becoming monks

1. To dedicate one's life for earnest practice of Buddhism.
2. For further education for poor children
3. For short-term training. It is believed that an ex-monk is well-matured and ready to lead family life.
4. To dedicate the merit to parents, especially to mother who cannot be a monk.
5. To help preserve Buddhism
6. For other non-Buddhist reasons



# Buddhism in Thailand

## 5 Layers of Thai Buddhism

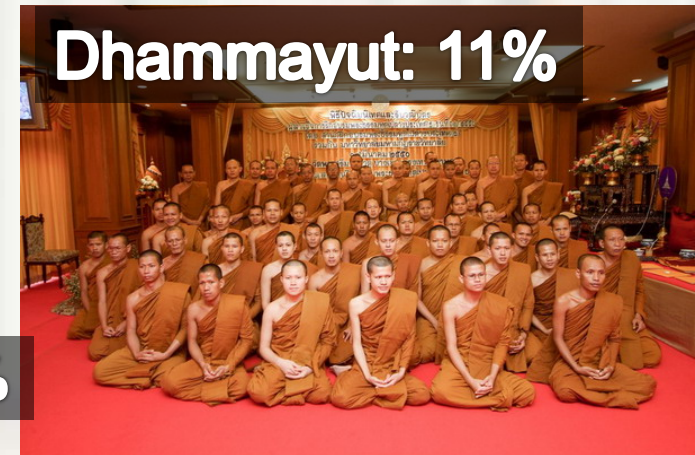




# Contextualising Thai Sangha



**Chinese Nikaya: .04%**



**Vietnamese Nikaya: .04%**



# New form of Thai Buddhism



**New form of Thai Buddhism which emphasizes mass and grand engagement of devotees and aim to propagate all over the world.**





# New form of Thai Buddhism



New 'unofficial' Thai Buddhist 'monks'???

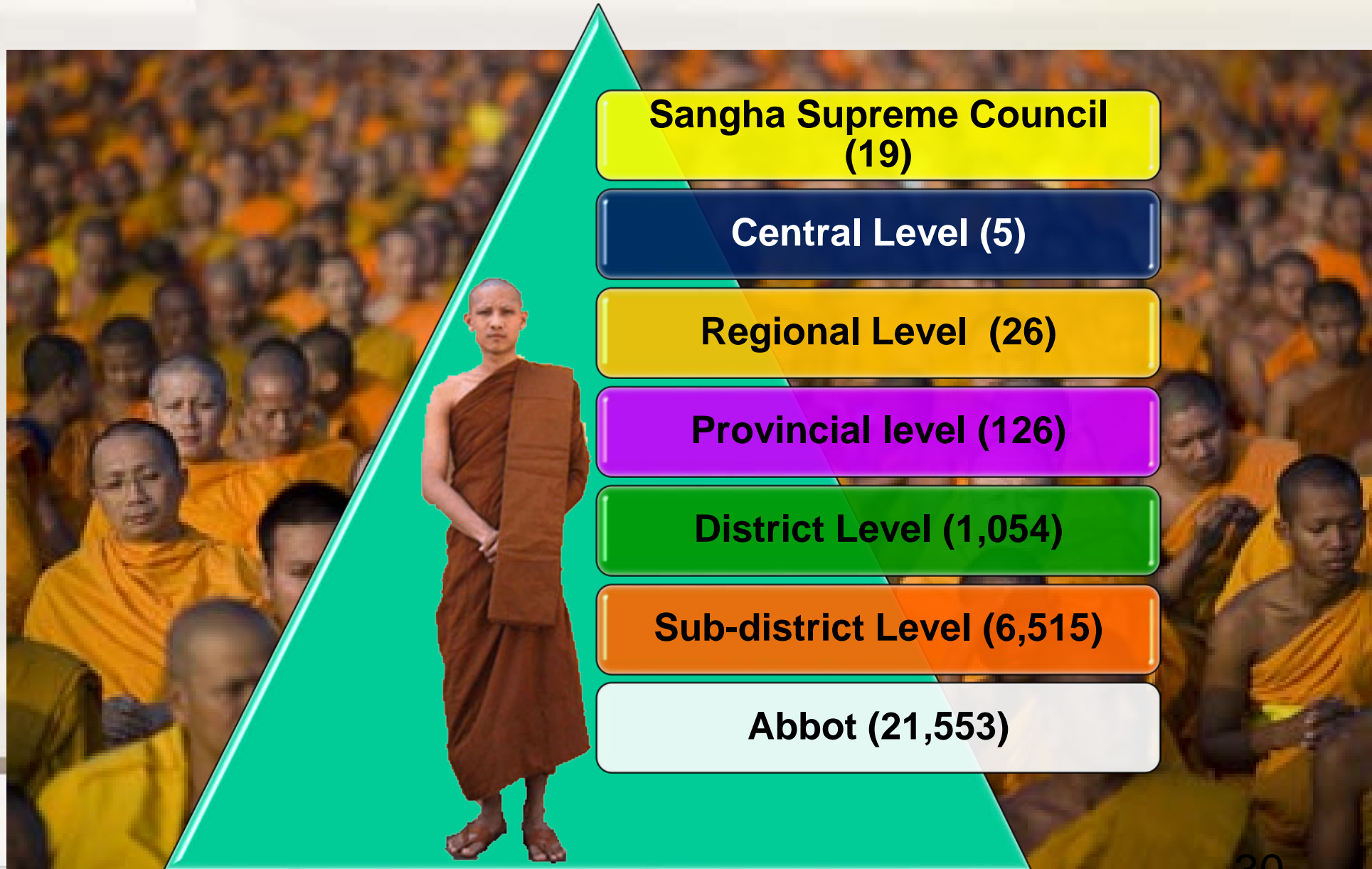


Self-proclaimed & self-ordained Buddhist 'monks'

*Santi Asoka*



# Thai Sangha Administration





# Thai Sangha Administration



## Thai Sangha Royal Titles

**Sangharaja or Supreme Patriarch (1)**

**Somdet (Golden) (6)**

**Royally Entitled (Silver) (20)**

**Royally Entitled Dhamma (49)**

**Royally Entitled Thep (101)**

**Royally Entitled Raj (218)**

**Royally Entitled General (510)**

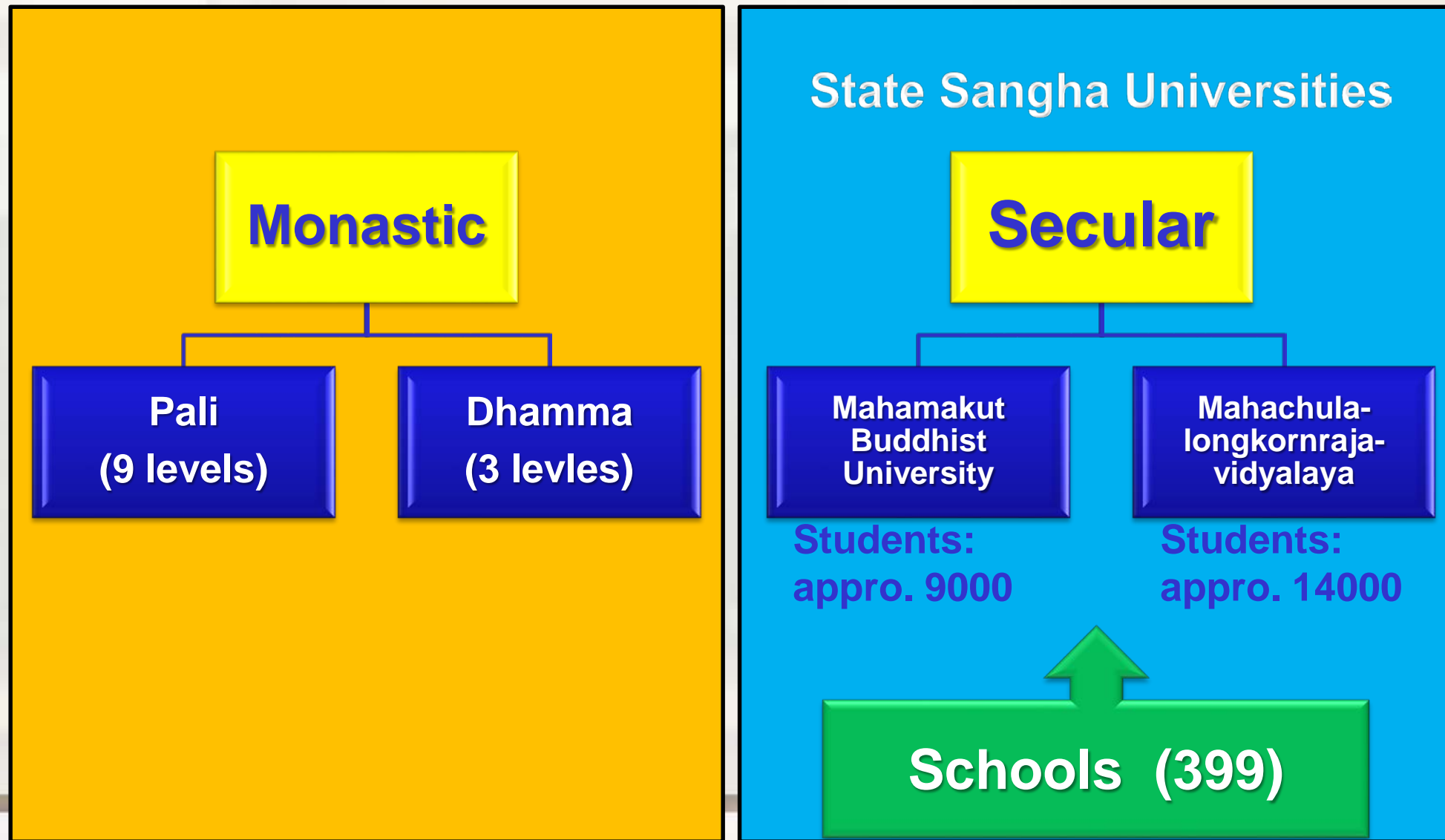
**Royally Entitled Phra Kru (13,635)**

**4.5% of Total Thai Sangha**





# Buddhist Education







**World Buddhist University**  
**an organization under**  
**World Fellowship of Buddhists**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWL0mYeBpXE>

[https://wbu.world/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Buddha-Portals-WBU-edit-Eng-Sub-4-11-61.mp4?\\_ =1](https://wbu.world/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Buddha-Portals-WBU-edit-Eng-Sub-4-11-61.mp4?_ =1)



# **Mahamakut Buddhist University**

## **A state Buddhist University**

### **In Thailand**

[Mahamakut Buddhist University: Introduction - YouTube](#)



**One of the contribution made  
to the world by  
World Buddhist University  
On Sustainable Development Goals**

[The Buddhist Path to Sustainable Development Goals - YouTube](#)





Thank you!

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