

**INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN THE HIGHER
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
DIALOGUE BETWEEN
MAHACHULALONGKORNRAJAVIDYALAYA UNIVERSITY
AND SAENGTHAM COLLEGE**



PHRAMAHA THONGPOOL KULWONG

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(COMPARATIVE RELIGION)
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Phramaha Thongpool Kulwong

1 June 2006

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to study the doctrine of dialogue in Buddhism and Christianity from the texts of both religions. It includes opinions on dialogue held by the administrative staff, teaching staff and students from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Saengtham College obtained by interviewing 24 people (12 from each institute) about : 1) theory of the dialogue, 2) dialogue in religious educational institutes, and 3) problems and their solutions.

The findings show that there are three attitudes found in the texts of Buddhists and Christianity : Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Pluralism. It can be said that the Exclusivism and Inclusivism are for preaching, whereas Pluralism is for dialogue and relations with other religions. In the Buddhist texts and Christian gospels there was frequent dialogue between the Buddha and Jesus with other religious people. However, this finding is equally agreed and disagreed.

The field work findings show that that administrative staff, teaching staff and students of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Saengtham College agree with theory of the dialogue in the sense that it will bring about peace in the world. They disagree with the passing over tradition as to learn other religions since it is merely a pretension. The dialogue in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya is a bit too scholarly for the students to take part in. However, the dialogue in Saengtham College has been conducted in a small group so the students can equally take part in it. However, it has been conducted less. For the problem that obstructs the dialogue, both institutes share the same idea that the dialogue cannot be possible because of narrow-mindedness and non-sincerity. However, they can be changed by means of doing an activity together in order to be accustomed to each other and to raise friendship which lead to a good and effective dialogue.

**KEY WORDS : DIALOGUE / INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE / EXCLUSIVISM /
INCLUSIVISM / PLURALISM / CHRISTIANITY / BUDDHISM**

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สานเสวนาทางศาสนาในสถาบันการศึกษาสาขาระดับอุดมศึกษา : ศึกษาเปรียบเทียบสานเสวนา
ในมหาวิทยาลัยมหาจุฬาลงกรณราชวิทยาลัยกับวิทยาลัยแสงธรรม (INTER-RELIGIOUS
DIALOGUE IN THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES: A COMPARATIVE
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UNIVERSITY AND SAENGTHAM COLLEGE)

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาเชิงเปรียบเทียบหลักคำสอนเรื่องสานเสวนาในพระพุทธศาสนา
และคริสต์ศาสนา จากคัมภีร์และเอกสารที่เกี่ยวข้องของทั้งสองศาสนา รวมทั้งศึกษาแนวความคิดเรื่องสานเสวนา
ของผู้บริหาร คณาจารย์และนักศึกษา จากมหาวิทยาลัยมหาจุฬาลงกรณราชวิทยาลัยและวิทยาลัยแสงธรรม โดยการ
สัมภาษณ์ฝ่ายละ ๑๒ ท่าน รวม ๒๔ ท่าน ใน ๓ ประเด็นคือ ๑. ทฤษฎีสานเสวนา ๒. สานเสวนาใน
สถาบันการศึกษา ๓. ปัญหาและแนวทางในการปรับปรุงการจัดการสานเสวนา

ผลการศึกษาค้นคว้าเอกสารพบว่า ในคัมภีร์พระพุทธศาสนาและคริสต์ศาสนามีท่าทีทั้ง ๓ คือ แบบ
Exclusivism แบบ Inclusivism และแบบ Pluralism ซึ่งอาจกล่าวได้ว่า ท่าทีแบบ Exclusivism และ Inclusivism
มีไว้เพื่อสอนศาสนา ส่วนท่าทีแบบ Pluralism มีไว้เพื่อสานเสวนาหรือปฏิสัมพันธ์กับศาสนาอื่น ในพระคัมภีร์
ของพระพุทธศาสนาและคริสต์ศาสนาปรากฏการสานเสวนาของพระศาสดากับศาสนิกอื่นอยู่หลายแห่ง แต่จาก
ผลการศึกษาค้นคว้า มีทั้งผู้ที่เห็นด้วยและไม่เห็นด้วยในสัดส่วนที่ใกล้เคียงกัน

ผลการวิจัยภาคสนามพบว่า ผู้บริหาร คณาจารย์และนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยมหาจุฬาลงกรณ
ราชวิทยาลัยและวิทยาลัยแสงธรรมเห็นด้วยกับทฤษฎีสานเสวนา โดยเห็นว่าสานเสวนาเป็นสิ่งที่จะทำให้เกิดสันติ
ขึ้นในโลกได้ แต่ไม่เห็นด้วยกับการข้ามวัฒนธรรมเพื่อไปศึกษาศาสนาอื่นเพราะเห็นว่าเป็นการแสวงหา
สานเสวนาในมหาวิทยาลัยมหาจุฬาลงกรณราชวิทยาลัย มีลักษณะเป็นทางการมากเกินไปทำให้นักศึกษาไม่มีส่วนร่วม
ในการสานเสวนา ส่วนในวิทยาลัยแสงธรรม สานเสวนามีลักษณะเป็นกลุ่มเล็กและนักศึกษาได้มีส่วนร่วมอย่าง
ทั่วถึง แต่ยังมีการจัดสานเสวนาน้อย ส่วนปัญหาที่ทำให้สานเสวนาไม่เกิดขึ้น ทั้งสองสถาบันมีความเห็นตรงกันว่า
เกิดจากการไม่เปิดใจกว้างและความไม่จริงใจ ซึ่งอาจมีการเปลี่ยนแปลงได้โดยการทำกิจกรรมร่วมกันเพื่อให้มี
ความคุ้นเคยและเป็นมิตรซึ่งจะนำไปสู่การสานเสวนาที่ดีและมีประสิทธิภาพได้

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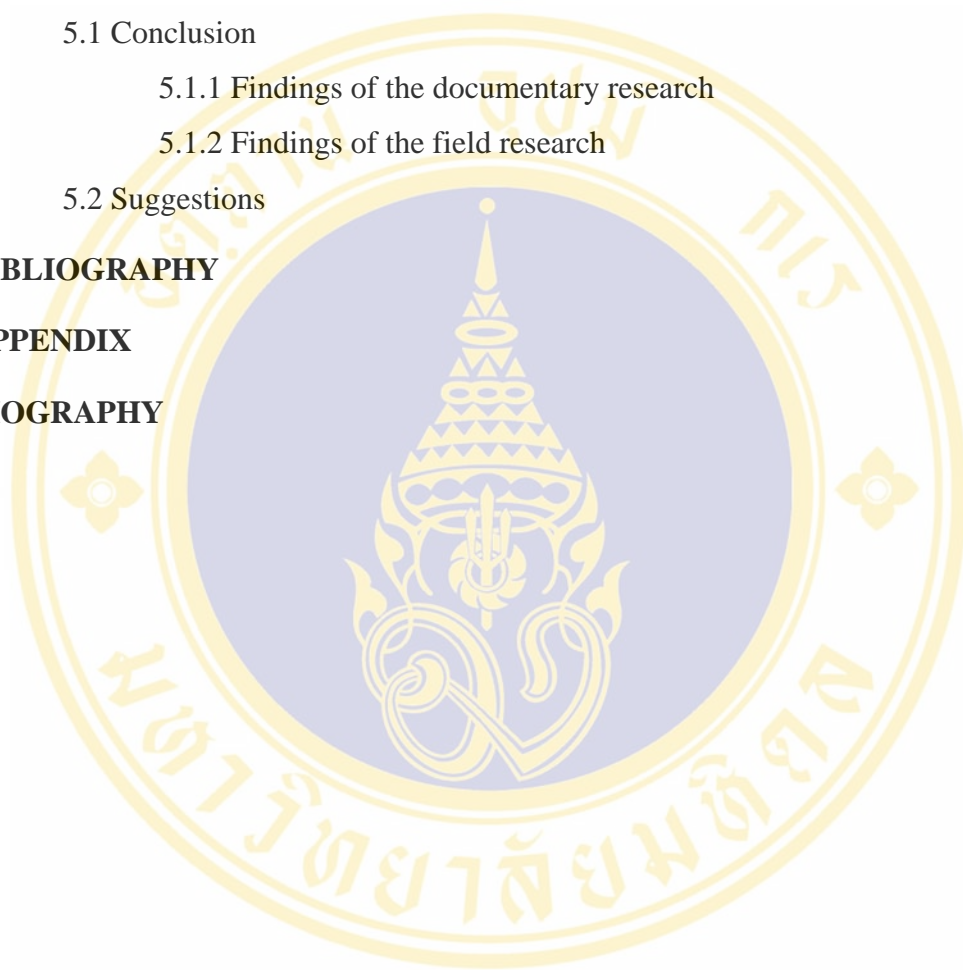
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The references to the Tipitaka in this thesis are taken from the Thai Tipitaka of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University edition B.E. 2539 and the commentaries as they stated in the following list of abbreviations :

Vi. Ma.	Vinaya-pitaka Mahavagga
Di.Si.	Digha-nikaya Silakhandavagga
Di.Ma.	Digha-nikaya Mahavagga
Di.Pa	Digha-nikaya Patikavagga
Ma.Mu	Majjhima-nikaya Mulapannasaka
Ma.Ma	Majjhima-nikaya Majjhimapannasaka
Ma.U.	Majjhima-nikaya Uparipannasaka
Sam.Sa.	Samyutta-nikaya sagathavagga
Sam.Ni.	Samyutta-nikaya Nidanavagga
Sam. Ma.	Samyutta-nikaya Mahavaravagga
An. Tik.	Anguttara-nikaya Tikanipata
An.Jatu.	Anguttara-nikaya Jatukkanipata
An.Panc.	Anguttara-nikaya Pancakanipata
An.Das.	Anguttara-nikaya Dasakanipata
Khu.Khu.	Khuddaka-nikaya Khuddakanipatha
Khu.U.	Khuddaka-nikaya Udana
Khu. Dh.	Khuddaka-nikaya Dhammapada
Khu.Ther.	Khuddaka-nikaya Theragatha
Khu.Khu.A.	Khuddaka-nikaya Paramatthajotika Khuddakapatha- atthakatha

The references to the New Testament are taken from the Edition 1971 (summarized in 1997 as they stated in the following list of abbreviations :

Mt.	Matthew
Lk.	Luke

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Jn.	John
Mk.	Mark
Cs.	Colossians

Examples for the references:

1. In the Tipitaka the volume, number, and page are respectively mentioned, for example, Ma.Mu. 12 / 388 / 353 stands for Majjhima-nikaya Mulapannasaka of volume 12, number 388 and page 353.
2. In the New Testament the chapter and number are respectively mentioned, for example, Mt. 11: 21 stands for Matthew chapter 11, number 21.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and significance of the problem

Problems that occurred in the age of globalization are dependent on one another like links of a chain. For examples, the drugs may not merely be because of demand and supply or of a broken family, the prostitution may not merely be because of no choice or oppression, the sexual misconduct committed by schoolchildren may not merely be because of friends or of a broken family that cause these problems. The aforesaid problems do not arise from a single factor but from the social structure. That is, one problem is caused by a variety of factors, it is so complicated and detailed. Therefore, solving the problem must be mindful since sometimes in stead of solving it, it produces a new problem. To deal with a problem at present is separately made, only one dimension seen is that of a personal behavior without linking a person and society though both are dependent on one another and unseparatable. This vision can only correct behaviours of a bad person or drive out from the society, it cannot go deep into the problem of structure which is beyond responsibility of a person. So the major problems cannot be solved since there are structural factors behind them (Somkiat Meetham, 2546 : Introduction). So solving problems should systematically deal with the structures and require a systematic co-ordination inside a good structure because sometimes there are problems within the structural system so the problems-solving delays or is ineffective.

Politics, economics, society and religions are the major structures that create problems and solve them. Sometimes, problems turn a big structure, but only one organization solves them, so the solving is ineffective. The more problems there are, the more complicated structures there are. For an example, the conflict in the three southern provinces is a big problem and most complicated. To provide money or solving it by means of economics is not sufficient. There must be co-ordination in a form of structure for solving problems consisting of politics, economics, society and

religions. These components will step forward to solve problems correctly and permanently. However, a present trouble is that the structural system within the structure of problems-solving obstructed. Uncompromised step forwards causes ineffectiveness in solving a problem.

One of the systematic structures for solving a problem is the religion which is one of machines that moves forwards to solve problems rightly and becomes the system for creating a peaceful society (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 2543 : 30). In the world of technology-based civilization, it is well known that it provides the humans more comforts. The more technology is developed, the more it causes complicated troubles. Though humans increase the material wealth, the religion must be there as to soften the social problems. In sociology, the religion is one of the most important factors that produces the sense of belonging that one and other fellows of the same religion belong to the same group. The religion, therefore, harmonizes people as Her Majesty the Queen points out its significance, 'All religions aim at teaching humans to be moral, well established in the wholesomeness. The religion is a permanent refuge for humans both in times of happiness and sufferings, it reminds us not to be heedless, over-joyful, it also helps us be mindful and strong in the time of sufferings since it is the spiritual principle for all. Though, there is a variety of religions, humans handle one another with great care and tenderness. It is seen that in Thailand all sectors are really religious. As a result, the major society, i.e. the nation has been continuously happy for a long time' (Ministry of Education, Department of Religious Affairs, 2520 : VII).

A religion is seen that it imparts in solving the social problems in the major structure. It is held that it is the most important part in guiding humans to free from problems in life. Within the word 'religion' there is a number of religions spreading all over the world. As it is said that the religion cultures the sense of belonging, identity and the same practice, it produces union in a certain society. When the number of humans and their groups increases, the world is still the same in size. The humans in each society re-act upon one another positively or negatively. And the technology civilization rapidly grew in the last decade, the transportation and information have been easier, and there is the network covering the whole world. So it makes this world narrow and narrow. When a society relates each other, the religion also comes after the society. Facing a different belief caused the conflict-based war as it occurred in the

past. It is seen that though all religions aim at teaching the congregation in goodness, it was observed in the past that if the goodness was different in seals, it led to the conflicts. For this matter, His Majesty the King expressed his worry, 'all religions hold that attaining the top is the ultimate merit. It means that to help each other attain such the goodness is the ultimate merit held by all religions. However, in the path we must be mindful, not to let a conflict happen, because different religions have different ways. Do not let the differences of the path obstruct us, because the obstacles of quarrelling among religions regarding the method is sometime regarded as pulling down to the hell. All religions teach humans the loving-kindness without command, without oppression. (Hajgi Prayoon Vatanayakul, 2532 : III).

Though the religion is a system for solving a problem the religion itself is troublesome. The so called trouble does not confine to the doctrines but interpretations made by followers. All religions shared the same thing, that is to say, when the prophet was alive, there was no a separation in all religions since the prophet could judged all problems. The posthumous interpretations of the doctrine have been troublesome and caused many different sects. From the conflicts that took place among religions, there have been arisen one more problem, i.e. the intra-religious conflict. Though the majority of Thai people are Buddhists, Buddhism is not officially enacted as the national religion. It is because of preventing the nation from the religious conflicts due to the Thai Constitution B.E. 2540 section 5 act 73, 'The state must support and protect Buddhism and other religions, promote the mutual understanding and union among people of all religions including apply the religious doctrines to culture morality and develop quality of life (<http://www.parliament.go.th/con40/con-main.htm>.2005, February 2). This section of the Thai constitution connotes the vision of the problem about a religious conflict to come in the future. And all religions want to solve his conflict since a religion cannot solve other problems if the religion itself is troublesome. Mutual understanding among religions and sects must be, therefore, promoted at present. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu left the concept of the mutual understanding to us as a heritage to be reflected on. Out of his various heritages, the second heritage refers to his three resolutions that all

Buddhists should bear in minds as a guideline for performing duty for the sake of the world. The three resolutions are :

1. Trying to realize the heart of one's own religion
2. Trying to drag oneself out from the power of materialism
3. Trying to work for mutual understanding among religions.

(<http://www.geocities.com/buddhadasa2001/heritage/heritage1.htm>:2005, February3)

The third resolution expresses his worries about the religious conflict which may occur because of misunderstanding the religion of one another and this may be a cause for chaos in the world. Dr.Praves Vasi agrees with his resolutions and affirms the third resolution that all universities should establish a centre for research and mental development in order that students can undergo the mental development through different and various methods according to their tendencies. They should be a host organizing an inter-religious dialogue and spreading such a dialogue. The Department of Religious Affairs should lay down the strategy affirming the three resolutions above including organizing a regular inter-religious dialogue through the broadcast ([http:// www.matichon.co.th/matichon/matichon.php?s_tag=01act03080148 & show=1§ioned=0130&day=2005/01/08](http://www.matichon.co.th/matichon/matichon.php?s_tag=01act03080148&show=1§ioned=0130&day=2005/01/08)).

The religious relationship that arises from the dialogue has two characteristics : 1) Inter-religious dialogue, and 2) Intra-religious dialogue. The religious dialogue has three forms as follows :

1. Dialogue of Study
2. Dialogue of Prayer
3. Dialogue of Life.

Organizing the dialogue, we must dare speak out the different beliefs and need not find out the same opinion at the end. It provides an opportunity to learn beliefs of each other as well as to grow learning and to change misunderstanding prior to the dialogue (Leonard Swidler, 1987 : 6. Cited Parichart Suwanbubbha, 2544 : 73).

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is an ecclesiastical university of the Thai Sangha founded by King Chulalongkorn Rama V at Wat Mahathat in order to be an institute for the Tipitaka study and advanced subjects for monks, novices and lay Buddhists. It has produced a number of Buddhist scholars. It can be said that it is a format of teaching Buddhism in the modernization. The most basic subjects concern

with Buddhism. General people can register in some subjects and will be allowed to register in all subjects in the future. The university is held as an educational symbol of Buddhism in Thailand. It plays an important role in expressing attitudes towards different issues- be they education, propagation, co-ordination in solving social problems, and especially the religious dialogue which is a very important task in which the university can run and take part.

Saengtham College is the centre for training those who are about to be a priest in Thailand. A priest- to- be must be accredited by this college. It can be said that it is a source for producing the figures of Christianity. The theory of dialogue has been developed from the Vatican Council II and it can be said that Saengtham College began to happen from the same purpose. It was scrutinized that the mission was not united and not be in accord with problems and needs of the Thai society since in the past, a priest-to-be had to go abroad for study and this caused non-solidarity and contrast with such a purpose. However, though the dialogue has been occurred for a long time, it has been not yet put into an actual practice in a reasonable level.

Both the higher religious educational institutes are regarded as the effective sources for producing the religious figures and these figures will become spiritual leaders for their respective religious people. The researcher thinks that promoting the dialogue is useful since it is not popular as it should be. So the researcher pay a strong intention in order to study the dialogue in Buddhism and Christianity including study opinions of the administrative staff, teaching staff and students of both institutes towards the religious dialogue of how they think about the theory of dialogue, the dialogue in the religious institutes and how they solve the dialogue problem.

This research will be useful for the contemporary society which faces a risk of striking and non-understanding among religions. If the religious dialogue becomes popular the researcher believes that it will satisfactorily reduce the violence that arises from misunderstanding one's own religion and other religions.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To study the dialogue in Buddhism and Christianity

2. To study the opinions about the dialogue of the administrative staff, teaching staff and students in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Saengtham College

1.3 Scope of the Study

This research will only focus on the dialogues in Buddhism and Christianity as mentioned in the Tipitaka and Bible, respectively. The other study will be made in order to interview the administrative staff, teaching staff and students of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Saengtham College in the three points :

1. The opinion about the theory of dialogue
2. The opinion about the dialogue in the institute
3. The opinion about the problems and their solutions in the dialogue.

In this study there is a limit as under :

1. Since there are a number of exemplary dialogues found in the Tipitaka and Bible, the researcher presents some of them.
2. The researcher had a limit in the time for interviewing some administrators and lecturers since they had no enough time to be interviewed, so some interview-outcomes are short and not extended in some questions.

1.4 Expected Results

1. Knowing the dialogues in Buddhism and Christianity
2. Knowing opinions about the dialogue from the administrative staff, teaching staff and students in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Saengtham College
3. Knowing the direction for development of the religious dialogue in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Saengtham College

1.5 Definitions of terms

Dialogue means a group movement for managing a conflict which relies on the third person in running the process of discussion among groups of persons concerned in the conflict situation of emotional tension, it aims at reducing bias which caused

from a result of conflict and creating mutual understanding among those who take part in it (Cited from Parichart Suwanbubbha, 2548 : 3).

Higher religious educational institutes refer to Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Saengtham College.

Opinions mean ideas of the administrative staff, teaching staff and students towards the religious dialogue.

1.6 Research Methodology

The study of 'Inter-religious dialogue in the higher educational institutes : a comparative study of dialogue between Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Saengtham College' follows the exploratory research by the two means :

1. Documentary Study follows the following categories :

1.1 Studying the primary documents by collecting data from the Thai Tipitaka edition of Mahachula and the Bible

1.2 Collecting the secondary documents from academic works, articles, journals, electronic media, reports, and the thesis concerned.

2. Field Study is conducted by creating the formal interview. The tool for this research is one interview form that underwent the search, collecting data, creating from reviewing literatures and the research works concerned in the three aspects :

- a) Opinions about theory of dialogue
- b) Opinions about the dialogue in the institutes
- c) Opinions about the problems and their solutions

2.1 Population and sampling group, the data base in this research consist of the administrative staff, teaching staff, and students of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Saengtham College.

2.2 How to select the sampling group, this research follows the purposive sampling by considering attributes of the sampling group : They must be the administrators, lecturers and students of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Saengtham College out of whom are selected for 12 persons per each. And in each institute they are divided into three groups, 4 persons per one group. There are totally 24 interviewees.

2.3 Data analysis, this research is a qualitative research based on searching data from documents and the field study by interviewing, whereas reasoning, interpretation, and criticism will be presented by means of the Critical Interpretation.

1.7 Related works and research

The committee for religious relationship (2529) published a book named ‘A manual for religious relationship Vol.1’. It informs the principles for conducting a right religious dialogue, its meaning, things to be mindful in creating religious relationship, etc. Due to the fact that the religious relationship is a new issue in Thai society, it is seen by someone that the background of the religious dialogue is the propagation of a certain religion. For this matter, the Church obviously declares in this book that the propagation of a religion and the religious relationship are totally different.

Vanna Uyod (2531) did a research on the critical comparison of management and administration of education between Buddhist monks and Christian priests in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Saengtham College in order to study the philosophy, purposes, and various factors that support the process of success including the tendencies to be run in the future. It is found that the urgent problems of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University towards the success in carrying on the work are budget, revising curriculum, learning accessories, evaluation and solving problems about location and environment. For the tendencies in the future, it aims at developing effectiveness and quality of the staff and students and the role in society. Meanwhile, Saengtham College’s major problem to be improved for a perfect work is about the lecturers. They should provide a new teaching method and focus on the students while carrying on the work. The evaluation should be made through various ways in order to get the correct information for presenting to the Council of Catholic Patriarch of Thailand. Having compared the administration and management in both institutes, it shows that Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University has the problems both in carrying on the work and roles towards society, whereas Saengtham College has only the problem on roles towards society.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (2542) delivered a lecture at the Art Centre, Gospel College of Christian Church of Thailand, Chiangmai. His lecture has been severally reprinted. He compared the doctrines of Buddhism and Christianity including the founders of both religions and said that the comparison must be based on a goodwill towards each other because the goodwill will lead to good mutual understanding ; understanding will lead to thoughts and actions without any conflict ; and non-conflict will lead to the world peace.

Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A.Payutto) (2542) gave an example about the Buddhist attitude towards other religions and the attitude that prescribes for all towards other religions including Buddhism in a book named 'Looking at world peace throughout the background of globalization'. For the Buddhist attitude towards other religions, the author shows an example in Culasaropama-sutta in Majjhima-nikaya, Majjhimapannasaka which can be summarized that if a person asked the Buddha that the teaching of this or that master correct or incorrect, he will suppress such a question and teaches what he realized. He will never judge the teaching of other masters. For an attitude that Buddhism prescribes for all towards other religions including Buddhism, the author shows an example in Kesaputta-sutta or Kalama-sutta which essentially provides us the freedom of thinking.

Phra Jatuporn Sitsungnern (2543) studied the evaluation of curriculum in Bachelor of Arts with reference to general subjects of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. The study aims at evaluate the context, primary factors, process, and outcome of such a curriculum. The findings of the study shows that 1) for the context, administrators and curriculum experts thought that the context of curriculum is suitable in medium level, 2) for the primary factors, administrators thought that they are suitable but audio-visual accessories, documents for teaching and reference are not suitable, whereas the lecturers and students thought that the primary factors are suitable in medium level, 3 for the process, administrators thought that the curriculum process is suitable but the curriculum administration is not suitable, whereas lecturers, students and graduates thought that the same is suitable in medium level, and 4) for the outcome, the graduates and their bosses thought that the quality of graduates is highly suitable.

Phramaha Sakorn Tharathee (2544) studied 'The characteristics of ideal administrators : a case study of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University'. The study aims at 1) studying the characteristics of ideal administrators according to the ideas of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University officials in the main campus, 2) comparison of the characteristics of ideal administrators according to ideas of the university officials, and 3) studying ideas and suggestions of the officials towards the administrators in order that they can administrate the university effectively. It is found that 1) the administrators possess the ideal characteristics in five aspects : morality, character, leadership, capacity and human relationship, respectively, 2) for the character, it is found that officials who are at the age of 25-30, have ideas higher than those of lower than 25 years-old, because they differently expressed different ideas on each administrator who shows inner behavior and outer behavior to win the minds of the under-controlled, 3) the MCU officials pay interests in the administrators who are equipped with knowledge, capacity in the administration, and following the principle of being a Thai Sangha University and possess the generosity, morality, and paying attention to the tasks assigned to the under-controlled.

Rattiya Salae (2544) did a research on the relationship among religious people in Pattani, Yala and Narathivas. The researcher mainly studied the process of relationship and compromising between Muslims and Buddhists in the three southern provinces with special reference to possibility in making use of cultural power for development. The findings shows that an important power that supports the relationship and compromising among the religious people in Pattani, Yala and Narathivas is understanding and accepting 'the different value' of each other. It can be possible on the basis of friendship which grew up from the supporting system in the form of relations among close friends, relatives, employers-employees, boss-subordinates, teacher-students, and leader-followers both in system and out of system with conditions of necessities for livelihood. This power can be regarded as a spirit which is the machine of priceless value if it is wisely applied for developing quality of life in order to step forwards the national development.

Juthakarn Yothasamut (2545) studied the religious relationship : a comparative study between Buddhism and Islam in Bangkok, aiming at comparison of the doctrine of the religious relationship in Buddhism and Islam and studying the attitude towards

religious relationship between Buddhists and Muslims. It is found that both Buddhism and Islam claim that they have the most authoritative and best teachings and lay down themselves as the standard for judging other religions. However, both religions accept that other religions have a correct teaching and can attain the ultimate truth alike, but both religions still play the important role in attaining the ultimate truth. In both religions there is a concept of Pluralism claiming that the ultimate truth that all religions refer to is the same truth, and all have potentiality for attaining it. So the inter-religious dialogue is an approach to help people attain the ultimate truth according to the teaching of Buddhism and Islam. Such an inter-religious dialogue will be the process to help the religious people know and understand the various truths in each religions including promote peace and good relationship among religions. For the field study of attitude of Buddhists and Muslims towards religious relationship, it is found that both groups expressed different ideas : Muslims hold that Islam is the absolute and best for mankind, and accept that there is a correct teaching in other religions but it is incomplete as it is in Islam, whereas Buddhists possess the idea of pluralism. Both groups have a great pleasure to attend the inter-religious dialogue since it is believed that such a dialogue will create more mutual understanding among one another including corporation among religions. It is noticeable that a religion is only the variable that concerns and influences the attitude of Buddhists, and way of life of religious people has tendencies to lead to the good mutual understanding and relationship in Thai society which is characteristically multi-society.

Somkiat Meetham (2546) gave an example of the Buddhist attitude towards other religions in the collection of selected articles on the Buddhist point of view in the middle of the contemporary change that the Buddha taught a group of monks that if there is any person complaining Buddhism and if it is not true, it should be pointed out that such a matter is not available in Buddhism, if there is any person praises, do not delight in it, if it is true, it should be made clear that such a matter is available in Buddhism.

Hajyi Prayoon Vatanayakul (2547) reflected in a book named 'Good mutual understanding among religions' that the good mutual understanding does not confine to only checking hands, being friends, non-quarrelling, or living independently, but it means helping each other as a human, working for men. And to do so must rely on

learning things from each others and correcting conflicts, despite in the same religion, it should be done. And he refers to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's three resolutions : 1) trying to realize the heart of one's own religion, 2) trying to work for mutual understanding among religions, and 3) trying to drag out oneself from the power of materialism.

Donald K. Swearer (2547) delivered a lecture on the world beyond boundary : the universal perspective of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu on religions and the dialogue with Christians. He pointed out the meaning of the term 'dialogue' or a friendly talk that it refers to endeavor to understand the world view and way of life of others in depth without bias. The aim of dialogue is not for conversion but understanding and learning one another more. In his lecture, he referred to four written works of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu for being complements in his lecture. The four works are : No Religion, Christianity and Buddhism, Everyday language and Dhamma language, and A good Buddhist can be a good Christian.

CHAPTER 2

THEORY OF DIALOGUE

2.1 Background of the religious dialogue in brief

The religious dialogue officially started from the Vatican Council II. In the Council there were 2,860 Archbishops attended while 24 Archbishops were absent due to their sickness and political reason. Pope John XXIII scheduled this council and prepared it for three and half years, and presided over the council on October 11, 1962 which lasted until December 8, 1965 and was finished by Pop Paulo VI. This council aimed at scrutinizing the situation of the modern world which changed rapidly and seeking an answer from the religious point of view for the present society. This was a perspective that differed from the previous council in history since there was no any condemn and blame on the wrong teachings but starting point for the dialogue, idea, and way of life which differ from the Church with sincerity and open-mindedness (Seri Pongpis, 2545 : 100).

As a result, this council aroused interest in the religious dialogue and changing an attitude towards other religions from the previous view that 'there is no salvation outside the Church' to the new understanding that whoever follows one's own way of life honestly and sincerely, he or she is able to realize the salvation as well. There was declaration by the council on the relationship between the Church and non-Christian faiths, for instance :

The Catholic Church does not dispel whatever true and sacred in these religions. The Church sincerely determines the ways of practice and livelihood including rules and the doctrines, though they are different in many points from what the Church believes and teaches, but they often bring the light of truth which shines over mankind. However, the Church declares and has obligation not to stop declaration of the Christ who is the way, the truth and the life (John 14 : 6). And in Him, men must see the religious life absolutely and all this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ (Corinthians, 5 : 18).

Therefore, the Church reminds you to know, protect and aware the values of spirit, morality, and society and culture existing in these people of different faiths. You can do this through communication, talk, and co-ordination with people of other religions with intelligence and love by showing faith and living a Christian life (Document of the Vatican Council II, 2512 : 286).

When the result of this council spread to the world there arose the protest and support. However, some religious scholars paid attention and defined various meanings of the religious dialogue as I shall present next.

2.2 Definition of Dialogue

It has been extensively defined as follows

David Bohm defines that dialogue has the Greek roots of “dia” and “logos”, which is referred to “passing through the meaning”. It is similar to a stream of meaning flows between the crowd and may spring a re-understanding and something happens. A dialogue moves over an individual understanding and identifies and forms a community meaning in common. (<http://www.thedialoguegrouponline.com/index.shtml> 2005, February 25)

Leonard Swidler defines that a dialogue is a conversation in general topic among the two persons or more. The main intention is to allow participants pick the opportunity to know the other. So, all can change and grow in thought. (<http://astro.temple.edu/~dialogue/Antho/decalog.htm>:2005, February 25)

Donald K. Swearer (2004:14) defines a dialogue is the attempt to understand perspectives and lifestyle of others deeper without prejudice in order to understand and learn more about each other.

Streng Frederick (1985:235) defines a dialogue is a sharing of the real sentiment and a lifestyle with others and might spring learning about the belief of others while exposing the deep sentiment about truth, goodness and beauty of one's life to others.

Kimball Charles (1991:86) defines a dialogue is a course for communication through words and it is an interrelation, which both endeavors to be cautious express their sentiments. At the meantime, both are attentive to hear others with respect. An

inter-dialogue is a communication aiming to build trust, understanding, challenge, the growth of thoughts and spiritual development.

Parichart Suwanbubbha (2001:73) defines a dialogue is each party shares or expresses feeling on the belief attachment accepting how it is soundly true, good and worth to one's life for the other party to learn.

The Center of Peaceful Way and Governance defines a dialogue is a group dynamism to address conflict having the assistance of the third party facilitating to organize an interpersonal dialogue involving in a stressful conflict of emotion, which is the main factor and aiming to reduce prejudice created by the conflict and to build a better understanding among participants. (referred in Parichart Suwanbubbha, 2005:3)

Khothom Areeya (2005:29) defines a dialogue is a profound hearing to reach the meaning.

Chusak Sirisut, priest (2001:91) defines a dialogue is a conversation and all positive things creating an inter-religion understanding among individuals or groups of believers leading to understanding and to enhance good things among each other.

Ek Thapping, priest defines a dialogue is an association with other believers of the different belief because of owning the service affection and mentality based on respect and unity with an aim to hear, and to understand others about the life and the mind and to adopt the good mentality of a religion and hope of a solution. This is to help them to see values and wishes of the good News of Christ and wishing to share by any means. At the meantime, it is to avail our understanding of the News of Christ and to widen our techniques to receive the news updating to time and able to express more evidently. (Bulletin, 1979-XIV/1-3) 41-42,p, 102. Referred in Ek Thapping, 1986: 2)

Austin Flannerie (1986:14) defines a dialogue is interpersonal association among individuals or groups with sincerity, respect, and trust each other to know more or better relations.

Somboon Saengprasit, priest (1986:58) defines a dialogue is an affection toward the different religious believers accepting them as our brethren having the same God as the Father, Jesus Christ as the Elder Brother, which has sacrificed His Life for all and the Holy Spirit as Friend assisting. This affection is shown by being friendly, cooperative assisting and forgiving them.

Somkij Nanthawisudhi (1986:35) defines a dialogue is an association with the different religious believers having the affection and mentality of service with respect, harmony, with the same goal, knowing how to hear each other idea, knowing how to help each other solve arising problem, knowing hoe to reconcile religious conflict, avoiding ill-feeling by hearing opinions and reasons of each other with calmness and focusing on a peaceful settlement, with affection, sincerity and based on interventions of the truth of religious teaching.

Sirphong Jarassri defines a dialogue into 2 areas, i.e.

1. General Definition

A dialogue is not just an exchange of idea among each other but as self-medium as human being living for each other.

2. Religious Definition

A dialogue is an interrelation among believers who expose themselves to each other with respect and sincerity in order to share their life experience and belief. (<http://www.thai.to/diokorat/dialogue/07.html>:2005, February 25)

So, a dialogue is an individual interrelation of different religious believers courageous to express differences without any prejudices under risk of emotional stresses in order to reach mutual understanding.

2.3 Divisions of the Inter-religion Dialogue

It can be divided into 2 kinds, i.e. (Parichart Suwanbubbha, 2001:71-72)

1. Inter-religious Dialogue is a religious dialogue among different religious believers, e.g. Buddhists, Christians, Muslims and so on.

2. Intra-religious Dialogue is a religious dialogue among believers of the same religion but different sects such as the Theravada and the Mahayana, the Catholic and the Protestant and so on.

A religion dialogue within the same belief among Christians is called the Ecumenical Movement.

2.4 Levels of the Inter-religion Dialogue

There are 3 levels, i.e. (Hill et al, 203-42; referred in Parichart Suwanbubbha, 2001:79)

1. Dialogue of Study – it is a dialogue among scholars referring mainly on scriptures. This level serves the truth seeking and digs to the root of the scriptures.

2. Dialogue of Prayer – it needs to access practices by implementation and religious rites sharing to reach the course of belief and devotion arisen from practices such as joining the Ramadan and the Buddhist meditation and so on.

3. Dialogue of Life – it is a dialogue among the local or a community of different members of different belief to address the community problems together, e.g. the narcotic drug arising in the community, so they organize dialogue to find solutions without contradiction to the existing principles of the beliefs of each other.

Each level had its own effectiveness by situation. So, it needs to consider appropriation because applying dialogue unmatched to time, place and persons might be barren to objectives and goals.

However, levels of dialogue are varied such as M. Thomas Thangaraj divides into 4 levels, i.e.

(http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Interfaith_dialogue/guidelines_interfaith.php#decologue: 2005, February 25)

1. The Dialogue of Life – it is the openhearted talk related to living, i.e. happiness and suffering or life problems creating worries and so on.

2. The Dialogue of Action – it is a cooperation to develop harmony or for independence.

3. The Dialogue of Theological Exchange – a talk to improve skills and religious intuition as well knowing self-value of each other.

4. The Dialogue of Religious Experience – it is a sharing of the religious experience or the wealth of the spirituality yielded from practices of the religious cultures such as meditators, devotees of the way of God or the Ultimate Truth and so on.

Even many scholars divided dialogue into many levels, but it can be summarized into 3 levels, i.e. 1. Dialogue of Theories, 2. Dialogue of Practices, and 3. Dialogue of the Religious Experience. The dialogue of theory is the talks around the scripture focussing on knowledge. The dialogue of practices is the talks to solve

problems together based on scriptural implementation. Finally, the dialogue of the religious experience is the talk of religious exposures, which is the high level and needed those who had deep experienced in religious practices to share the wealth of the religious experience among each other.

2.5 Perspectives before Inter-religion Dialogue

Entering the inter-religion dialogue requires preparation and mind preparedness or attitude toward other religion. Without moral attitude, the Inter-religion Dialogue would fail. Generally, it conations 3 levels of attitude, i.e.

1. Exclusivism – attaching that one's religion is greater. An attitude expressing that one's religion is the best and superior than others. One's belief is the most moral and detachment is only by this religion. (Hick, 1992:54). So to reach truth or the ultimate truth is framed only in one religion and the only single group and others cannot. (Whaling 1986:150). By the definition of John Hick, it reflects criteria to judge the exclusivism within 3 characteristics, i.e.

1. The principles of one's religious teaching are counted most correct.
2. All other religious principles are completely wrong.
3. Unnecessary to learn from other religious principles

Such attitudes ill-facilitate the inter-religion dialogue even, it requires to be true to one's belief but it does not mean rejecting others, looking others as inferiors. It breaks the principles of the inter-religion dialogue, which stresses win-win conversion, i.e. able to also equally share opposite opinion, standpoints and beliefs.

2. Inclusivism – adhering to one's beliefs but also giving some importance to other religions, i.e. accepting reaching the truth is the preparation of one religion and other religions can get near or be enlightened by only this religion. (Byrne, 1995:3). It still admits other virtues of other religions but they can only be through this channel or the explanation of one's religion only. There are 3 characteristics, i.e.

1. The success of other religions is through being enlightened by this inclusive religion.
2. This inclusive religion is significant to rules and finding of the ultimate truth.

3. Other religions can truly relate with truth and achieve independence upon be closer to this inclusive religion.

By Karl Rahner's views, it is called the anonymous Christians. That is, any other religious believers even not knowing Christianity or sometime counter the scriptures but do good deeds, they would attain virtuous life and light from God like other Christians. However, critics of this concept is "it is similar to colonization". Buddhism can also say that persons of good deeds in other religion are the "anonymous Buddhists." (Migliose, Danial L. 1991:161). The concept of Rahner is Inclusivism because it is corresponded with the three characteristics above.

Inclusivism sees some virtues in other religions but the ultimate virtue is in only one religion and the other religious virtues are attained only being closer or enlightened by this inclusive religion only. So, this idea ill-facilitates the inter-religion dialogue because it judges that virtues of other religions are attained through the inclusive religion, which is totally not corresponded with the principles of the inter-religion dialogue.

3. Pluralism – it is an attitude to accept diversity while also respects them. By John Hick's views; pluralism accept the salvation or the independence and non-suffering soul can spring from other religions regardless of beliefs. However, this concept sees that various religions have things in common that religions are attempted to move human-centered to the truth-centered. Meaning, Religions attempts to tell about the human problems created by being human-centered, which is related to selfishness, sinfulness and ignorance. Religion then proposes changing from the human-centered into the zenith of the center. Meaning, each religion offers a way to lead human to its ultimate truth but with different details. Each goal focuses on eliminate human sufferings and offers a salvaged way and the ultimate happiness for human. But each as its own different way within all its religious teaching principles. There is not one way of salvation but many. (Whaling, 1986:153). So, it may conclude that even there was much diversity but within them there may have similarities. The concept of pluralism had no intention to institute a new religion to replace the old ones but accepting the identity of each religion and apply their differences in order to learn and to understand them for peaceful living with each other. By John Hick's pluralism, it ends into 2 characteristics, i.e.

1. Accepting the existence of beliefs and religions pluralistically
2. Accepting each religion may offer different ways to lead human to salvation or nirvana

Pluralism facilitates the inter-religion dialogue because it judges or values none. Each religion retains goodness and worth its believers. Such belief can bring happiness to its believers.

So, an attitude toward other religions is vital to the inter-religion dialogue because prospecting and viewing other religions by exclusivism and by inclusivism, dialogue is impossible. Had Swidler's rules been compared to viewing other religions in three ways as above, there is only one way to match with exclusivism and inclusivism. It is being oneself and being authentic to one's belief. However, being well settled with the only one way cannot turn the inter-religion dialogue effective and efficient. At the meantime, a religious pluralism can be well matched with Swidler's entirely. Readjusting attitudes before participating the inter-religion dialogue should be strongly advised because it facilitates the inter-religion dialogue effective and efficient.

2.6 Steps and Techniques of Inter-religion Dialogue

Leonard Swidler proposes attitudes before organizing the inter-religion dialogue. It is admitted to be the 10 Golden Rules, i.e. (<http://astro.temple.edu/~dialogue/Antho/decalog.htm>:2005,February 25)

Rule 1:Destinations of the dialogue are to learn, to grow in thought, to change attitudes and to fruitfully act.

Rule 2:The inter-religion dialogue assembles different thoughtful persons, believers and cultures – or more than two parties of different beliefs.

Rule 3:Participants must be honest and sincere to oneself – one's belief and not being drifted by conversant in order to avoid conflicts but express sincerity to others as one is or as one believes.

Rule 4:Each participant speaks the same level – if one party proposes principles the other needs to dialogue principles. If others offer practicality and experiences, other parties should discuss the same. And if one party discusses on

principles and other propose practices, then it would lead to conflicts and chaos unnecessarily.

Rule 5: Participants must be firm in one own ground – clarifying one standpoint while allows other to express theirs. Informing one's standpoint allow others to know counter party and understand well each other. It makes interaction easy.

Rule 6: Participants should not be haste to conclude others' belief or standpoint or prejudging before hearing. Such deeds create prejudice and lead to rejection of hearing other opinions.

Rule 7: Equality prevails among participants and ready to learn from each other allowing each party to explore and exchange with each other. This leads to the win-win conversion.

Rule 8: Dialogue should be based on trust and honoring each other. It must avoid any hidden agendas.

Rule 9: Participants should be ready to draw critics to one's belief for improvement – creative critics to develop one's idea in order to meet the global changes.

Rule 10: Participants need to understand other beliefs more might join their experiences not only by the body but shared experiences. John Dunne says it is the religious pass over to be well round and understanding deeply with other religions – temporally stop being an authentic believer of one's own in order to learn and practice as different other believers do till understand, motivated and conscious of their rationales better. The one returns the passing back to their own belief. This is another way to learn and to understand other religion. The religious passing over can be divided into 3 phases, i.e.

1. Basic – open the heart to learn about other religions from lesson or textbooks
2. Intermediate – participating religious affairs such as marriage, funeral/cremation or candle procession and so on
3. Advance – participating rites, e.g. baptism, Buddhist monkhood and other religious experiences such as Buddhist meditation camps or the fasting during the month of *Ramadan* of the Muslims and so on

From the above 10 rules and to be well settled with the Thai societies, they are modified as below (Parichart Suwanbubha, 2001:29-43)

Rule 1: Free from Hidden Agendas – no other masked intentions in the dialogue such as self/ group-interest

Rule 2: Human Interaction – man-man rather than man-material; had the other party been material-like, there would be no respect and honor but by man-man, there were because man senses. Briefly, it is *“Do unto others as you want others do unto you.”*

Rule 3: Equality – fairness in speaking and listening, in each other identity, no dominance, no senses of inferiority and all are equal in the human dignity.

Rule 4: Clear Standpoint – inform the religious standpoint clearly and accurately while being open to listen to differences and criticisms.

Rule 5: Non-anticipation and Prejudging - not exploiting one's belief, culture and ethnicity to judge others

Rule 6: Open the Heart – welcome opinions and different beliefs with respect and understanding and allowing participant the self-criticism

Rule 7: Honesty and Sincerity – be truthful to one's belief and the beliefs of the participants and avoid the lazy tolerance.

Rule 8: Trust Others – admit authentic opinions of others and ever conscious of others can reason.

Rule 9: Distinguish Principles and Practices – when one is asked on principles and practices, they must be separated when responding: principles asked should be responded in the level of principles and practices by practices.

Rule 10: Dialogue is not the Last Answer to Problems – it is part to address problem in every problem but it cannot solve all because it needs time to dig problems together and requires strong collaborations from persons involved.

David Bohm is another one who identify dialogue and summarizes into 3 rules, i.e. (Soros Sirisai, 2005:88-92)

1. Deep Listening – it is an open heart to hear others and oneself without resisting and judging. It assembles the natural free flows of thoughts creating quality improvement, shared meaning, upgrading intuition, ability to see problems with new way of thinking and lastly finding solutions.

2. Free and Relaxing – with leisure and without prepared answers to anyone and just thinking that the dialogue assembles friendliness and if question raised, it is optional. Rationally, each question contains its own answer, slow down in speaking and with full consciousness, short and sharp, non-over attachment but prioritizing the dialogue process because it is the process of determinitism: the correct process to reach the result. Meaning, when following the steps and the process, consequences would certainly flow.

3. Equality – fairness should prevail: no prejudice in judgement and discrimination of gender, age, position and so on, no dominance, free-flow of thoughts and with equal values and all thought flows the quality improvement gaining a new meaning where all share ownership.

David Tracy notes 5 Rules of Conversation in the book “Plurality and Ambiguity”

1. Express clearly in what one says
2. Provide details as much as possible
3. Listen to other with respect even the different idea
4. Ready to correct and defend one’s opinion when being inquired

5. Ready to argue with rationales when claimed and tolerance to conflict with readiness to open to clear recommendation. ([http://www.columban.ph/Sean Dwan_interreligious_dialogue.HTM2005,February 25](http://www.columban.ph/Sean_Dwan_interreligious_dialogue.HTM2005,February_25)) Majid Tehranian raises a slogan of the Toda Institution: “*Civilized Dialogue for Global Citizen*” for better dialogue, the institution develops 10 rules. (Diachaku Ikeda et al, 2005:35-36)

1. Honor others and be attentive
2. Seek common issue, avoid adhering to the group-centered by accepting and honor participants to propose different opinions.

3. Avoid irrelevant issues during dialogue and control self not to interfere while others speak.

4. Thank others’ comments before propose one’s own

5. Be conscious that silence is also a conversation – speak when having opinion, useful issue or questions related to the dialogue or upon proposal to clarify truth of the topic or to find common conclusion.

6. Indicate the issue of difference to add to the topic.

7. Never curve others' idea for one's advantages- emphasize participants' idea to signal that one understand their idea before one propose the different ones.

8. Conclude first dialogue first before new ones

9. Draft agreement for setting policy and action plan of the group

10. Tanks participants providing useful tips of thought in dialogue

The inter-religion dialogue is seen simple by some but difficult to others because it is risky to war of words and misunderstand. The first group might meet difficulties later because of negligence to well prepare while the latter is yet to understand the principles of the inter-religion dialogue more. Then the latter group will breed the negative attitude on the inter-religion dialogue and it should not be. So, the inter-religion dialogues need preparatory stages/ ante dialogue, dialogue and post dialogue. (Chusak Sirisut, 2001:95-97)

1. Preparatory Stages/ Ante-dialogue

1.1 Spiritual Preparation

- Understanding that all religions promote inter-religion dialogues (ecumenical movements) by studying from one's scriptures
- Learning about rightful principles of dialogue, process, techniques and goals
- Know well one's own scriptures being a good disciple of one's belief
- Know well principles of teaching and rites, customs and traditions of the party, express generosity, attentiveness and kindness so as to gain enough knowledge to begin dialogue

1.2 Physical Preparation

- Personality, polite dress, friendliness and honoring other party
- Follow traditions: making appointment with fixed times and be punctual and some gifts if it were the Thais but it should not prohibited by the religion of the dialogue party.
- Prepare well topic of dialogue

2. Practices during the Inter-religion Dialogue

2.1 Interpersonalship and conscious of place and time

2.2 Behaving courteously

2.3 Be attentive, listening, questioning and showing interest

2.4 Follow religious customs such as language, religious proper names, know traditions before entering the church, temple or mosque and behave well at place and if not knowing or uncertain –never take risk but ask host.

2.5 Never show embarrassment or contempt of belief or practices differed from that of oneself.

2.6 Always conscious that there are countless more one does not know in one's religions and others' religions but one can learn from others; different languages have different profundity and it requires inquiries for common understanding.

2.7 Attach to one's belief and not be the lazy tolerance to avoid conflicts but explain truth to realize that here is different thing.

2.8 Beginning of the conversation; there should be examination of similarities and mostly there are with little difference to share when having good relation

2.9 Know how to accept truth with politeness and admit ignorance – to comprehend many matters needs time for additional studies, never explain without deep consideration where misunderstanding will avail among the dialogue party.

3. Practices of the Post Dialogue

3.1 Reflect further what has been perceived, hears, listened, and seen for better understanding

3.2 Explore more knowledge and understanding from one's religion in what one does not know

3.3 Share knowledge and understanding with friends or those who have the same belief or other beliefs

In summary, participant should have following qualifications, i.e. (Knitter, 1985:207-213)

1. Well round in one's religion or an experienced person in religion able to be the representative, i.e. when questions are raised, one should be able to answer for one's religion because responses affect questioner. Has it been incorrect, the questioner would further elaborate the answer and might lead to misunderstanding.

2. Participants should have knowledge of other religions and being well round in other religions is counted the foundation of the dialogue because an dialogue requires knowing oneself and others for precise practices such as knowing prohibitions and permits of other religions.

3. Ready to open oneself to change, which might later, happens after the dialogue, it is the internalization and disregards previous misleading.

So, preparing before a dialogue is vital. It is compared to fetching water. Had leaking been much covered, water could be more. It is similar with a dialogue. Had preparation better been made it would be more advantageous gained from the dialogue. Preparations above are similar to cover the leaks, and more important to dialogue.

2.7 What Should Be Avoided in the Inter-religion Dialogue

Parichart Suwannabuppha collects six (6) things should be avoided as follows. (Parichart Suwannabuppha, 2001:74)

1. A dialogue is not a compromise and to accept differences without deep consideration or a lazy tolerance. An inter-religion dialogue does not support relativism.

2. An inter-religion dialogue is not a dispute or to defeat any parties.

3. A dialogue is free from prejudice and prejudgment and thinking being a superior or an inferior because being superior, one will belittle others and if thinking being an inferior one will easily incline to others, and dishonest to one's religion.

4. A dialogue is not a superficial conversation or exchanging religious information only.

5. A dialogue is free from any hidden agendas or other hidden intentions, e.g. religious propaganda and so on

6. A dialogue is not a baking method leading to syncretism. It is the duty of participants to be honest and witnessing one's belief.

What to avoid above are part of preparation t a dialogue. All these six 9^ things should be in mind of the dialogue participants. Had one been ignored, the dialogue would fail.

2.8 Necessity of Dialogue

David Bohm notes the vitality of an dialogue and summarizes into 4 items as follows: (Soros Sirisai, 2005:82-84)

1. The world changes, the more advancement the technology be. Human is easier and prevailing to communicate. Worldly growth links but separate human from each other. Human faces anew disease, “Loneliness amid the crowd.” So, a dialogue is needed to build a natural interrelation.

2. All own different position and duty, maturity, qualification. It allows each interaction has to be formal through tradition and customs but interpersonal evades and human cannot access its being of each other. A dialogue allows easier more natural inter-touch between humans.

3. Conversations to solve problems by summarizing solutions with regulating rules but sometimes they allow loopholes to repeat problems. Each talk would propose endless solution. So, talks without goal to find solution and leave it as natural, it is a disorder against the dialogue approach.

4. All are born in the different environment, differently trained and accumulated. This turns each one inborn presupposition or priori belief. When they dialogue they seek their own presupposition as key leading to endless dispute. An attempt of a dialogue is to reduce and eliminate the presupposition heading to a natural talk, which is the way of the dialogue.

So, a dialogue is indispensable in the global societies where technologies separate human from each other. The global societies are enjoying but the human heart is lonely. Human is at risk by the growth of materialism, work differences, and solution- oriented and separated by he presupposition. Shared thinking by a dialogue where human naturally builds relation should have been the solution for difficulties as stated above. Rationally, association, and opening mind to hear each other is counted a technique to address diversification where win-win is gained by all.

2.9 Summary

Two renowned scholars interested in theories of dialogue and developed them are David Bohm the author of “Deep Listening” and Leonard Swidler the author of

the “ 10 Golden Rues”. Theories of dialogue of both scholars are popular because they are practical and effective as stated in the theories.

A successful dialogue needs preparation. So participants should be well prepared and set proper attitude. Three attitudes should be known first are the exclusivism, which is rigid and viewing that apart from one’s religion, they are immoral. Meaning. One’s religion is the best and other cannot reach the ultimate goodness. Such attitude is not proper to be applied, it might lead to conflict and violence at last. The inclusivism is an attitude likely to accept others and admits other religion is also moral but they cannot own moral unless they seek morals from one’s religion. Such attitude is not yet proper to be applied in a dialogue even seeing morality in other religion but finally all morality come from the same origin. Finally, the pluralism, an attitude accepts diversities and morality of other religions. Each own its identical morality and proper to their followers. Such attitude most matches a dialogue because it accepts diversities, respects other identity and believes that cultures and lifestyle of everyone are all worth and similarly enhancing happiness in life.

Whether were the theories of dialogue and the three attitudes as above just formed after the Vatican II or whether were they been set as guideline by the founders and the disciples of all religions since the past. These are two (2) question raised in this investigation. By objectives-based, the researcher would further discuss about the dialogues in Buddhism and Christianity later.

CHAPTER 3

DIALOGUE IN BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

3.1 Buddhism and the inter-religious dialogue

The inter-religious dialogue seems to be a new issue in the modern society. The aim of all religions is to bring peace and happiness to human minds and the world (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 2537 : 99). However, according to the history of mankind, there appeared many times the religions partially involved with the violence. This may be a cause that all religions need re-consider their roles by means of the dialogue as to pull back a religious community that lost its way to the old way the prophet laid down the purpose for. The inter-religious dialogue has been occurred in the past. Buddhism began to happen in the middle of a variety of religions so it was not too difficult to meet, discuss or conduct the inter-religious dialogue with other religions. In this chapter, an attempt is made to present the information available in the canonical texts of Buddhism and Christianity in order to affirm that it is a common thing in a certain religion that there are the three paradigms as mentioned by John Hick so that the religious people accept the fact that ‘a religion is just like that’, there is no any reason to challenge, condemn or raise a conflict concerning the truth, goodness, and beauty in each religion.

3.1.1 Buddhist attitude towards other religions

Buddhism regards other faiths as *Annatitthiya* meaning another *Diarathi*. *Diarathi* in Thai is a core word meaning the doctrine, whereas *Titthiya* means a port for mooring a boat. If it is used in the Dhamma language or religious language, it refers to a certain religion, and Buddhism is also a *Diarathi* (another religion) for other religions. That is, other religions regard Buddhism as a *Diarathi* and vice versa (Buddhdasa Bhikkhu, 2543 : 4).

In the time of the Buddha, there were a number of religious masters. According to the Tipitaka, there were 62 doctrines. It is noticeable that in that time there was a variety of thoughts so it was indispensable to relate with other religions. Furthermore,

the debate among adherents of different religions was regularly conducted, the one who expressed a reasonable speech, could be accepted by the candidate (Sirivath Kamvansa, 2545 : 24). Though there was a variety of thoughts counting up to 62 doctrines, there were six prominent masters or called the six teachers. Their brief teachings are as under :

1. Purana Kassapa believes that the soul stands still, only the body moves, works. The body commits sins, merits, does good, bad. The soul is not responsible for the results of such actions because there is no sin, no merit, no virtue, no fault. Whether one orders others to do or does things oneself, there is no any sin. So this is called Akiriyaditthi.

2. Magghali Gosala believes that things have no cause, no condition, no creator, no compounder, it is self-exist, automatic. This is called Ahetukaditthi.

3. Ajita Kaesakambala believes that every thing is annihilated. There is no man, no animal, no mother, no father. Whatever we do, it is just doing. The sacrifice is fruitless. Respecting a respectable is useless. This world does not exist nor next world. Living beings are annihilated after death. There is no cycle of birth and death. At the breaking-up of the body it is annihilated and perishes. Wholesome or unwholesome deeds do not exist. Performing merits is foolish. Seeking for happiness is worth doing, though it occurred after robbing, stealing, firing a house or killing. This is called Ucchedaditthi.

4. Pakudha Kaccayana believes that the unbreakable or unchangeable state consists of seven elements : earth, water, fire, air, happiness, suffering, and consciousness which are not originated or created by anyone. They are permanent, unshakable, unchangeable, non-provider of happiness or suffering. Therefore, a killer, a killed, a sin caused by killing does not exist. There exists only the state that squeezes through the seven elements. This is called Sassataditthi.

5. Sanjaya Velatthaputta believes that the results of good and bad deeds do not exist, it cannot be said whether they are existent, non-existent, both, nor neither. This world or next world do not exist, they cannot be said whether they are existent, non-existent, both, nor neither. The soul does not exist, it cannot be said whether it is existent, non-existent, both, nor neither. This is called Amaravikkhepika (Doctrine of Evasion).

6. Mahavira believes that the path leading to Moksa is the triple gem, namely right view, right knowledge, and right behavior. The God is non-sense since he cannot create any happiness or suffering upon anybody. Happiness and suffering are the result of actions. The praying is useless, non-sense.

Buddhism shows an attitude towards other religions as depicted in the Tipitaka. Here, I shall explore the important attitude of Buddhism towards other religions in brief as follows :

3.1.1.1 Attitude of Exclusivism in Buddhism

This attitude is composed of a strong confidence of Buddhism. It may be said that all religions share this attitude. The significance of it is to arouse self-confidence to the followers. In Buddhism there are the Buddha's words which are in the line with this attitude.

The attitude of Exclusivism is mentioned in Mahasatipatthana-sutta in which the Buddha addressed to a group of monks at the city of Kuru as follows :

There is, monks, this one way to the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and distress, for the disappearance of pain and sadness, for the gaining of the right path, for the realization of Nibbana, that is to say the four foundations of mindfulness. (Ma.Mu. 12/106/101)

The word 'one way' is defined by the commentators in the four connotations : 1) the way that a person who left a group practices alone, 2) the one way that was created by the Buddha, the way of one person, i.e. the Blessed One, 3) the practice in one religion, i.e. Buddhism, and 4) the way leading to one goal, i.e. Nibbana, this may be grouped into the third connotation.

The attitude above shows that there is only one way to the purification of beings and for the overcoming of suffering, and such a way is to say the fourfold Satipatthana which is the teaching in Buddhism. This Buddha's word confines the salvation only in Buddhism. Those who want to overcome suffering must follow this way. So the saying above is the attitude of Exclusivism because it is in the line with the characteristics of Exclusivism according to John Hick's conception. That is, the Buddhist principle on Satipatthana is really correct, 2) all other religious teachings are

wrong, i.e. they cannot lead to the salvation, and 3) following the principle, there is no need to study teachings in other religions.

The attitude of Exclusivism is also mentioned in Culasihanada-sutta, the discourse on the lion's roar, in which the Buddha addressed to Bhikkhus thus :

In this Dhamma and discipline, monks, the ascetic is found of the first, the ascetic is found of the second, the ascetic is found of the third, the ascetic is found of the fourth. The doctrines of others are devoid of recluses : that is how you should rightly roar your lion's roar. (Ma.Mu. 12/139/133)

The words the first, second, third, and fourth ascetic refer to Sotapanna, Sakadamgami, Anagami and Arahant, respectively. These four ascetics come to an existence because of following the Buddha's teaching. It is seen in this attitude that any path or fruits regarded as the ultimate are not found in other religions, but only in Buddhism. So this is regarded as Exclusivism due to John Hick's conception. That is, 1) the Buddhist principle is totally correct since it leads to liberation, i.e. being the first, second, third, and fourth ascetic, 2) all other religious teachings are wrong since they cannot lead to liberation or being the first, second, third, and fourth ascetic, 3) following the Buddhist principle, there is no need to study teachings in other religions since there are no such the first, second, third, and fourth ascetic.

Another attitude of Exclusivism is mentioned in Culavacchagotta-sutta, the discourse on the Buddha's reply to the wanderer, Vacchagotta, who raised the last question in this Sutta. The passages run thus :

“Master Gotama, is there any Ajivaka who, on the dissolution of the body, has made an end of suffering ?”

“Vaccha, there is no Ajivaka who, on the dissolution of the body, has made an end of suffering.”

“Master Gotama, is there any Ajivaka who, on the dissolution of the body, has gone to heaven ?”

“When I recollect the past ninety-one aeons, Vaccha, I do not recall any Ajivaka who, on the dissolution of the body, went to heaven, with one exception, and he held the doctrine of the moral efficacy of action (Kammavadi), the doctrine of the moral efficacy of deeds (Kiriyaavadi).”

“That being so, Master Gotama, that sectarian fold is empty even of one who goes to heaven.”

“That being so, Vaccha, that sectarian fold is empty even of one who goes to heaven.” (Ma.Ma.13/ 186 / 218)

The sayings above are in the line with the characteristic of Exclusivism of John Hick. That is, 1) the doctrine in Buddhism is the most correct, 2) the doctrines of others are totally wrong since they cannot lead to even a heaven, and 3) following Buddhism, there is no need to study the doctrines of others since they cannot lead to even a heaven, no matter of salvation. So the attitude the Buddha expressed through the sayings above can be grouped into the attitude of Exclusivism.

It can be concluded that the attitude of Exclusivism as mentioned Tipitaka is affirmed by the Buddha of how the truth is, because a founder of a religion is regarded as the knower, attainer of the absolute truth. If he does not make sure what he knows and attains, he cannot teach the followers to follow him. It is creating a reliance over the followers (Phar Dhammapidok (P.A.Payutto), 2542 : 198). Therefore, the strong attitude, confirmation of what one attained is a must in order that the followers raise a confidence and follow.

3.1.1.2 Attitude of Inclusivism in Buddhism

The attitude of Inclusivism relies on realizing goodness in other religions, but the goodness in one's own religion is the best and the same possessed by other religions is revealed by one's own religion. This attitude is mentioned in Tipitaka as follows :

The attitude of Inclusivism as mentioned in Sisapavana-sutta, the discourse on the handful leaves of which the Buddha addressed to monks, is as follows :

“What do you think, monks, which is more numerous : these few Sisapa leaves that I have taken up in my hand or those in the Sisapa grove overhead ?”

“Venerable Sir, the Sisapa leaves that you have taken up in the hand are few, but those in the Sisapa grove overhead are numerous.”

“So too, monks, the things I have directly known but have not taught you are numerous, while the things I have taught you are few. And why, monks, have I not taught those many things ? Because they are unbeneficial, irrelevant to the

fundamentals of the holy life, and do not lead to revulsion, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana. Therefore I have not taught them.” (Sam.Ma. 19/1101/613)

From the sayings mentioned, it is seen that there are a number of practices leading to the goodness in this world, but the practice leading to the ultimate good is available only in Buddhism. Buddhism, especially the doctrine selected by the Buddha for attaining the ultimate goal, can be compared with those Sisapa leaves in the hand of the Buddha, whereas the goodness in other religions is compared with those Sisapa leaves in the forest, though there are so many, but cannot be practiced in order to attain the ultimate goal. So this attitude is grouped in Inclusivism since it is in the line with the three characteristics of Inclusivism : 1) the success or salvation of other religions can be possible if Buddhism provides the light upon them, 2) Buddhism plays a major role in recovering the ultimate truth, and 3) other religions may pursue the way to salvation if they are close to Buddhism or it is called in Buddhism as Kalyanamitta.

3.1.1.3 Attitude of Pluralism in Buddhism

The attitude of Pluralism bases on accepting the differences, respect in identity of others, and relation as a human to human, it is believed that the faith, culture and way of life of an individual are valuable and meaningful for an adherent of a certain faith. This attitude is also available in Buddhism through the following examples :

The attitude of Pluralism appears in Mahasihanada-sutta as under :

“I see some practiser of mortification in this world living a sorrowful life because of little merits, arising after death in a state of woe, a baleful state, a place for destruction, in hell, some arising after death in a good place, a heavenly state. Since I can see as it is the arising, the destiny, the death and re-arising of those ascetics, how could I disapprove of all austerities, and censure and blame all those who lead a harsh life of self-mortification ?” (DN.Si. 9/381-384/161)

The religious teaching varies in multiple levels but is equally important, just as all steps of a ladder are equally important (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 2546 : 71). So the mortification in all religions is equally important since a lack of one thing cannot attain another thing as an example of the ladder mentioned earlier. The Buddha did not deny the goodness in other religions, he admitted that other religions also possess the

wholesomeness. His sayings above are in the line with the two characteristics of Pluralism : 1) the Buddha admitted the religious experiences of others, i.e. attainable way to the salvation as they are, and 2) he admitted that other religions provided a specific approach to the salvation. So his sayings above can be grouped into the attitude of Pluralism.

The attitude of Pluralism is mentioned in Mahasacca-sutt thus :

Not only Udaka Ramaputta has faith, I too have faith, not only Udaka Ramaputta has mindfulness, I too have mindfulness, not only Udaka Ramaputta has concentration, I too have concentration, not only Udaka Ramaputta has wisdom, I too have wisdom. Suppose I endeavour to realize the Dhamma that Udaka Ramaputta declares he enters upon and abides in by realizing for himself with direct knowledge. I soon quickly entered upon and abided in that Dhamma by realizing for myself with direct knowledge. (MN.Mu. 12/372/408)

The statement above shows that the Buddha admitted the religious experience of Udaka Ramaputta. This is in the line with the two characteristics of Pluralism : 1) the Buddha admitted that Udaka Ramaputta entered the salvation as he really was, and 2) he admitted that Udaka Ramaputta had a specific approach to the salvation in his own way. So the statement above can be grouped into the attitude of Pluralism.

Another attitude of Pluralism is mentioned in Tipitaka Vol.20, Kesaputta-sutta in which the brief story is thus : Once the Buddha went to the state of Kosala, approaching to the Kalama district named Kesaputta. Kalama people often heard the Buddha's reputation, so approached to him and raised a question :

“Venerable Sir, there are some ascetics coming to Kesaputta and declared only the doctrine of themselves, but condemned, blamed on the doctrine of others, so they are not reliable. Venerable Sir, we are doubtful in those ascetics that among them who tell the truth, who tell a lie ?

The Blessed One says, “It is, Kalamas, suitable for you to be doubtful, to be uncertain. You have raised a doubt, an uncertainty in a doubtful state. Come on, Kalamas, you

- are not led by oral tradition
- are not led by lineage of teaching
- are not led by hearsay

- are not led by a collection of scriptures
- are not led by logical reasoning
- are not led by inferential reasoning
- are not led by reflection on reasons
- are not led by acceptance of a view after pondering it
- are not led by the seeming competence of speakers
- are not led by the idea, 'This is our teacher'.

Whenever you, Kalamas, know for yourselves - these Dhammas are not wholesome, these of fault, these blamed by the wise, these practiced by an individual leading to non-benefit, to suffering, then you should reject them”.

(AN.Tik.20/66/256)

The Buddha does not judge who are right or wrong, but let the Kalamas examine by themselves of what is right or wrong. After this, the Buddha taught the greed (Lobha), hatred (Dosa), and delusion (Moha) and asked the Kalamas whether Lobha, Dosa and Moha are wholesome or unwholesome, are of fault or not, blamed by the wise or not, practiced by an individual leading to the benefits or not, suffering or not. Kalamas could consider and judge by themselves of which Dhammas should be selected or censored.

This attitude is in accordance with the two characteristics of Pluralism : 1) the Buddha admits that the other religious leaders may pursue the way leading to salvation as they really are, but before believing them one should carefully examine them, and 2) the Buddha admits that the other religious leaders may have their own way leading to salvation, but before believing them one should carefully examine them. So the Buddha's saying above can be grouped into the attitude of Pluralism.

3.1.1.4 Attitude corresponding to the dialogue

Though Buddhism shares the attitudes of Exclusivism and Inclusivism which may be said that they are in all religions for presenting one's own standpoint as mentioned earlier, it does not confine to only this attitude, it expresses a positive attitude towards other religions which may not directly be in the line with the theory of dialogue, but the following attitudes correspond to the dialogue :

1. Loving-kindness and understanding towards other religions

An attitude towards other religions consisting of loving-kindness and understanding is recorded in Vinaya-pitaka on a commander in chief named Siha who is an adherent of Nigantha Nataputta. Its brief story runs thus :

Once the commander in chief Siha, a follower of Nigantha Nataputta, hearing the prince Licchavi praising the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, wanted to approach the Buddha. Being an adherent of Nigantha, he had to get permission from Nigantha, but was denied for two times. At the third time, he decided not to inform the same, then approached the Buddha as he wished and raised his doubtful question about the truth of a false claim made by others over the Buddha. The Buddha made him non-doubtful. Commander Siha praised the Buddha and took refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. However, the Buddha reminds him that, “Siha, you think it over and decide, for a well-known person like you, it is better to think it carefully”.

Hearing this, Commander Siha delighted more and praised the Triple Gems as the second time. The Buddha further said that ‘Siha, your clan has ever been the seat for Nighanthas for a long time, so you should mindfully maintain alms-giving to the Nighanthas who have entered to your clan.’ (Vin. Ma.5/293/113)

The preaching of the Buddha does not focus on winning more disciples or more acquisitions, but on the attaining the certain Dhamma. There is no prohibition on the good actions in the other religions. It shows that the good actions do not confine only to Buddhism as the Buddha said in Udumbarika-sutta :

“Nigrodha, I say this in order to get you as my pupil. I do not speak for this reason. I say this in order to draw you away from your rules. I do not speak for this reason. I say this in order to draw you away from livelihood. I do not speak for this reason...Nigrodha, there are unwholesome things that have not been abandoned, tainted, conducive to rebirth, fearful, productive of painful results in the future, associated with birth, decay and death. It is for abandonment of these things that I teach Dhamma. If you practice accordingly, these tainted things will be abandoned.” (DN.Pa. 11/78/58)

It is said that teaching of the Dhamma is not for any other sake but for the sake of listeners. It reveals the pure loving-kindness, no hidden agenda. Having this attitude, the Buddhist teaching corresponds to the dialogue.

2. Attitude towards the doctrine of others

This attitude is mentioned in Digha-nikaya, Silakhandhavagga of the Tipitaka Vol.9. It's brief story is thus : King Ajatasattu asked the Buddha whether a fruit of the homeless life is visible here and now, just as men who work and enjoy here and now the visible money which is a visible reward, or not. The Buddha asked a question in return that the king ever raised this question to other religious masters (Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala, etc.) and how did they reply to him. On hearing the king's reply due to the facts, the Buddha did not condemn or blame on the doctrine of others, but replied to the king in accordance with his way of the Dhamma. (DN.Si.9/160-194/51-67)

The story in this Sutta connotes the attitude of Buddhism that it does not want to praise itself, contempting others. But it provides a chance to the freedom of ideas (Phra Dhammapitaka, 2542 : 7). Nevertheless, it shows us the open-mindedness of the Buddha towards other religious masters which is considered as a specific character of Buddhism as well (Manop Nakkarnrian, 2545 : 120). So this Sutta corresponds to the dialogue because of its respect upon the belief of others without judging or evaluating it before the dialogue.

3. Attitude towards the Buddha expressed by other religions

The attitude towards the Buddha is mentioned in Culasaropama-sutta that once a Brahmin, named Pingalakoccha said to the Blessed One :

“Master Gotama, there are these recluses and Brahmins, each the head of an order, the head of a group, the teacher of a group, a well-known and famous founder of a sect regarded by many as a saint- that is, Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala, Ajita Kesakambala, Pakudha Kaccayana, Sanjaya Velatthaputta, Nigantha Nataputta. Have they all had direct knowledge as they claim, or have none of them had direct knowledge, or have some of them had direct knowledge and some not ?”

The Blessed One said : “Enough, Brahmin, Let this be ! – ‘Have they all had direct knowledge as they claim, or have none of them had direct knowledge, or have some of them had direct knowledge and some not ?’ I shall teach you the Dhamma, Brahmin. Listen and attend closely to what I shall say.” (Ma.Mu. 12/312/348-349)

According to the Brahmin, he intentionally wants the Buddha criticize the masters of other faiths whether they possess the knowledge as they teach or not, but the Buddha ignores such a matter. It is seen that the attitude expressed by him does not declare himself as an enemy with other masters. The Buddha intentionally convinces those who are in front of him to attain the fruit of Dhamma. This attitude, therefore, corresponds to the dialogue, i.e. non-judging others and honesty to one's own belief.

4. Attitude towards those who agree and disagree with

This attitude appears in Digha-nikaya, Silakhandhavagga of the Tipitaka Vol.9. Its brief story is thus : once Bhikkhus heard a wanderer, named Suppiya who is the teacher of Brahmadata, the youth, contrasting ideas between the pupil and teacher. The teacher found fault in all sorts of ways with the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, whereas his pupil spoke in various ways in their praise. So Bhikkhus discussed in this matter. Then the Buddha went there and asked them about what the subject of conversation was. They informed him. Then the Buddha said :

“Monks, if anyone should speak in disparagement of me, of the Dhamma or of the Sangha, you should not be angry, resentful or upset on that account. If you were to be angry or displeased at such disparagement, that would only be a hindrance to you. For if others disparage me, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, and you are angry or displeased, can you recognize whether what they say is right or not ?” “No, Lord.” “If the disparagement is not true, you should explain what is incorrect as being incorrect saying : that is false, not our way, not found among us”.

Monks, if others should speak in praise of me, of the Dhamma, or of the Sangha, you should not on that account be pleased, happy or elated. If you were to be pleased, happy or elated at such praise, that would only be a hindrance to you. If the praise is true, you should acknowledge the truth of what is true, saying : that is correct, right, our way, and found among us”. (DN.Si.9/1-6/1-3)

The Buddhist attitude bases on emphasizing monks mindfully consider both the disparagement and praise. Monks should not be angry when they are disparaged, but they should re-act to whatever happened as it is. That is, they should explain what is true as being true, what is not true as being not true. If they are praised, they should not be pleased or careless, but maintain the same attitude, i.e. explain what is true as

being true, what is false as being false. This shows the honesty in the previous faith which is one of the dialogue principles.

For the preservation of truth, it is mentioned by the Buddha in Canki-sutta that the youth Kapadika asked the Buddha of how to preserve truth, and the Buddha replied :

“If a person has faith, Bharadvaja, he preserves truth when he says : ‘My faith is thus’; but he does not yet come to the definite conclusion : ‘Only this is true, anything else is wrong.’ In this way, there is the preservation of truth ; in this way, he preserves truth. But as yet there is no discovery of truth. If a person approves of something...if he receives an oral tradition...if he reaches a conclusion based on reasoned cognition...if he gains a reflective acceptance of a view, he preserves truth when he says : ‘My reflective acceptance of a view is thus’; but he does not yet come to the definite conclusion : ‘Only this is true, anything else is wrong’. (MN.Ma. 13/429/539)

According to Buddhism, speaking in the dialogue should not base on judging that only this is true, anything else is wrong, but on saying that my faith is thus, I have heard thus, in this way truth is preserved. This attitude is in line with the concept of dialogue as mentioned earlier.

3.1.2 Inter-religious dialogue in Buddhism

The theory of dialogue may not formally occur in the lifetime of the Buddha. However, Buddhism has its own way of the dialogue which derives from customs and manners of the Buddha. The doctrine close to the dialogue is that of ‘Kalena dhammasakaccha’ meaning ‘the religious discussion at due seasons, regular or opportune exchanging knowledge or ideas about truth, wholesomeness, and useful issues (Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A.Payutto), 2538 : 323). The religious discussion at due seasons consists of the five following types :

1. Aditthajotana-sakaccha, discussion for the rise of knowledge in the doctrine unknown
2. Ditthasamsandana-sakaccha, discussion for clear understanding in the doctrine known, yet uncleared, and for the sake of others

3. Vimaticchedana-sakaccha, discussion for dispelling doubts of oneself and others

4. Anumati-sakaccha, discussion for investigating truth

5. Kathetukamyata-sakaccha, discussion by means of raising a question and replying by oneself in order to make it easy for listeners, to be wholesome for oneself and others, and to be the gift of truth.

(Phra Dhamdhirarajmahamuni (Chodok Nanasiddhi), 2533 : 243)

The doctrine of Dhammasakaccha above is in line with the aim of the dialogue at present, especially numbers 1-3. Since at the outset, the dialogue aims at learning in order to grow thinking leading to changing the attitude and to act fruitfully, this is in line with the doctrine of Dhammasakaccha above. That is, the religious discussion is for the rise of knowledge in the doctrine unknown, approving the known, and dispelling doubts of oneself and others, or it may be said that there is a change of attitude towards others after learning together. The dialogue is deep listening, mainly focusing on listening, it is emphasized in Buddhism as well. The Buddha emphasizes listening, speaking in praise of it as one of wholesome deeds (Khu. Ther. 26/173/358). The Buddha lays down the fivefold effective listening :

1. Not looking down upon what others spoke
2. Not looking down upon the one who speaks
3. Not looking down upon oneself
4. Concentration, listening the Dhamma with mind of one-pointedness
5. Critical reflection (Yonisomanasikara).

(AN.Panc.22/151/195)

It can be said that the aforementioned Buddhist doctrine is in line with the concept of deep listening of David Bohm as well as in the same line with Swidler's rule in dialogue on the equality of the dialogue participants, i.e. not regarding others lower than oneself and vice versa. Everyone is the winner, no one loses, i.e. all gain benefits from the dialogue, no one gets advantages or loses it.

The Buddhist doctrine as mentioned above is really in line with the theory of dialogue. Another thing being in line with the dialogue or probably being the format for the Buddhist dialogue is that the mode of Buddha's manners. His manners can be

seen through his relation with other religions. They are the way and method for the inter-religious dialogue to be followed by Buddhists.

An example of the inter-religious dialogue in Buddhism appears in Uttiya-sutta of Dasaka-nipata, Anguttara-nikaya. Its brief story is thus :

On one occasion, a wanderer named Uttiya asked the Buddha that the world is eternal, only this is true, anything else is not true. The Buddha did not reply it. Again, Uttiya asked the Buddha that the world is not eternal, only this is true, anything else is not true. The Buddha did not reply it again. Again, Uttiya asked the Buddha that the world is finite, the world is infinite, the soul is the same with the body, the soul is one thing and the body is another, after death a Tathagata exists, after death a Tathagata does not exist, after death a Tathagata both exists and does not exist, after death a Tathagata neither exists nor does not exist, only this is true, anything else is not true. The Buddha did not replied again. Again, Uttiya asked that he raised a lot of questions but the Buddha still ignored them, so what kind of problem he would answer. The Buddha said :

“Uttiya, I have taught the Dhamma to the followers for understanding, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and distress, for the disappearance of pain and sadness, for attaining the Dhamma, for the realization of Nibbana.” (AN.Das. 24/95/224)

Once again, Uttiya asked that the Buddha could draw out all beings, half, or a quarter from suffering. At the end of this question, the Buddha kept silent without saying anything more. It is seen that the dialogue sometime needs no reply for all questions. If the questions are not for benefit, but merely focus on challenging, the silence is, therefore, one of methods the Buddha applied to the inter-religious dialogue. His silence may be viewed in the three aspects : 1) he keeps silence on the questions that lead to unbeneficial answer, 2) if he answers, there will arise endless questions, and 3) He keeps silence in order that the silence reminds a questioner thinking it over and considering oneself deeply. The third aspect is shared with David Bohm's concept of deep listening. Sometime, the silence can communicate better than a speech, since it makes us reflect on ourselves, understand ourselves before understanding others. However, there are more formats in the inter-religious dialogue to be explored next.

The inter-religious dialogue conducted with Saccaka Nigantha appears in Saccaka-sutta in which its brief story runs that on one occasion, Saccaka Nigantha seeing Venerable Assaji going to Vesali for alms, went up to him, exchanged greetings with him and asked him of how the recluse Gotama disciplines his followers and how the recluse Gotama's instruction is usually presented to his disciples. Ven.Assaji replied that the Blessed One taught that material form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness are impermanent ; material form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness are not self ; all formations are not self ; all things are not self. That is how the Blessed One's instruction is usually presented to his disciples. Saccaka Nigantha said that the recluse Gotama's view was wrong, evil view, if he had a chance to meet him, he would detach him for that evil view.

When he had a chance to meet the Buddha, he raised the question that ever asked Ven.Assaji to the Buddha, and the Buddha replied the same. He disagreed and presented a simile that: 'Just as when seeds and plants reach growth, increase, and maturation, all do so in dependence upon the earth, based upon the earth ; and just as when strenuous works are done, all are done in dependence upon the earth, so too, a person has material form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness as self and based upon them he produces merit or demerit.'

The Buddha asked Saccaka in return in order that he could maintain his view again, and he strongly maintained his view. The Buddha asked him, 'Would a king exercise the power in his own realm to execute those who should be executed, to fine those who should be fined, and to banish those who should be banished'. He accepted this. The Buddha asked in return, 'You said that material form is your self, do you exercise any such power over it as to say, 'Let my form be thus ; let my form not be thus ?' Saccaka was silent, at the end he admitted that he was not be able to exercise any power over the form . Then, the Buddha asked him in feeling, perception, formations and consciousness, respectively. He admitted that he was not able to exercise any power over those aforesaid things. (MN.Mu. 12/ 388/353)

The dialogue appeared in Culasaccaka-sutta above implies the deep listening of the Buddha and Saccaka Nigantha. Both paid attention on listening each other respectfully and deeply until both shared the meaning. This is in line with David

Bohm's concept of deep listening and can be critically categorized into Leonard Swidler's rule of dialogue as follows :

1. The dialogue between the Buddha and Saccaka Nigantha shows exchanging learning so that it provides growth of creative thinking which leads to change the previous bias over the Buddha and share an idea leading to an effective action.

2. The Buddha and Saccaka Nigantha express different ideas.

3. The Buddha and Saccaka Nigantha are honest in their own belief, not just easily follow the other. It is seen that the Buddha had to explain material form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness, respectively, until Saccaka agreed with his reasons.

4. The Buddha did the dialogue with Saccaka in the same level, i.e. the Five Aggregates (Panca-khanda).

5. The Buddha let Saccaka express his own standpoint, then expressed his standpoint later on. This is in line with the rule of dialogue that one must obviously express one's standpoint and let the participant express his as well.

6. It is seen that the Buddha did not first judge the belief held by Saccaka as being incorrect. This is in line with the rule of dialogue that one should not first judge a participant.

7. There was equality in the aforesaid dialogue, i.e. the Buddha and Saccaka had a chance to equally learn, no one surpassed.

8. The Buddha and Saccaka had no hidden agenda.

9. It is seen that when the dialogue was finished, Saccaka accepted the Buddha's belief. Such belief was caused by criticism on his previous belief. That is, before accepting other's belief, one carefully considered the such belief is reasonable and reliable, and his previous belief is unreasonable.

10. When the dialogue was finished, Saccaka took the doctrine prescribed by the Buddha as his guideline for practice. This is the passing over tradition to study other religions.

Therefore it may be said that the dialogue as appeared in the Tipitaka is in line with Leonard Swidler's rule of the dialogue.

Upalivada-sutta informs us about the dialogue between a Nigantha named Dighatapassi and the Buddha. The Buddha asked Dighatapassi of how many kinds of action his master (Nigantha Nataputta) described for the performance of evil action. He replied that the master was not accustomed to use the description 'action', but 'rod' which shares the same meaning, he further said that his master described three kinds of rod, namely Kayadanda, Vacidanda, and Manodanda. On being asked which one was the most important, he replied that Kayadanda was the most important, and he asked the same in return. The Buddha said that there were three actions, namely Kayakamma, Vacikamma, and Manokamma, out of which Manokamma was the most important. The religious discussion was finished. However, Dighatapassi informed this entire conversation to the assembly of Niganthas. At the end, Upali, the householder, was sent to refute the Buddha. Before sending Upali, Dighatapassi did not agree with this mission because he believed that the Buddha was a magician and knew a converting method. However, Upali decided to meet the Buddha.

On arrival, Upali reminded and asked about issues discussed between Dighatapassi and the Buddha. The Buddha related to him the previous conversation. He said to the Buddha :

“Good, good, venerable sir, on the part of Dighatapassi. The Nigantha Dighatapassi has answered the Blessed One like a well-taught disciple who understands his teacher’s dispensation rightly. What does the trivial mental rod count for in comparison with the gross bodily rod ? On the contrary, the bodily rod is the most reprehensible for the performance of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action, and not so much the verbal rod and the mental rod.”

“Householder, if you will debate on this basis of truth, we might have some conversation about this”.

“I will debate on this basis of truth, venerable sir, so let us have some conversation about this.”

“What do you think, householder? Here Nigantha Nataputta might be restrained with the following four checks :

1. Avoidance of all cold water
2. Being endowed with the avoidance of all evil
3. Cleansing all evil

4. Being suffused by the avoidance of all evil.

And yet when going forward and returning he brings about the destruction of many small living beings. What result does the Nigantha Nataputta describe for him ?”

“Venerable sir, the Nigantha Nataputta does not describe what is unintended as greatly reprehensible.”

“But if one intends it, householder ?”

“Then it is greatly reprehensible, venerable sir.”

“But under which of the three rods does the Nigantha Nataputta describe volition, householder ?”

“Under the mental rod, venerable sir.”

“Householder, pay attention how you reply ! What you said afterwards does not agree with what you said before, nor does what you said before agree with what you said afterwards. Yet you made this statement : ‘I will debate on the basis of truth, venerable sir, so let us have some conversation about this’.”

“Venerable sir, although the Blessed One has spoken thus, yet the bodily rod is the most reprehensible for the performance of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action, and not so much the verbal rod and the mental rod.” (MN.Ma. 13/61-63/59-61)

The Buddha referred to four similes until the householder Upali was satisfied, however at the end Upali was satisfied and pleased by the very first simile, but he opposed the Buddha thus since he desired to hear the Buddha’s varied solutions to the problem.

For the example above, there are aspects that should be followed and not to be followed according to the theory of Swidler as follows :

1. Pre-judge over others before the dialogue, it is seen in this case that Saccaka, the wanderer, judged the doctrine of the Buddha as being wrong before the dialogue. However, this thought aroused him to conduct the dialogue. But the pre-judge over others should not be followed according to the Swidler’s theory.

2. Trust, earlier, Upali was convinced by Dighatapassi not to meet the Buddha since the Buddha was a magician and knew a converting method, he trusted in the Buddha, so he decided to meet the Buddha. This should be followed since the dialogue must start on the basis of trusting each other.

3. Issue in the same level to be discussed in the dialogue, it is seen that the dialogue between the Buddha and Upali is in the same level, i.e. the religious experience. That is, both discussed on which channel the action produces the most reprehensible result.

4. Honesty and sincerity, for this dialogue the Buddha usually emphasized the honesty and sincerity. He reminded Upali as to debate on the basis of truth, so that he would have some conversation. At the outset, Upali seemed not to obey him since he reasoned that he would like to hear the Buddha's solutions to the problem.

5. It is seen that this dialogue bases on the open-mindedness for learning attitude and belief of each other, then arises the growth of mutual understanding which later leads to the change, i.e. earlier, Upali regarded the Buddha in a wrong way, and later, it leads to the practice together, i.e. he admitted his wrong view and got ready to follow the right view.

6. This relationship was made by both sectors, i.e. the Buddha and Upali who have different ideas. While conducting the dialogue, the Buddha did not regard the other inferior, nor did he regard himself inferior than the other. The dialogue continued with equality, no one was superior, nor was inferior.

7. In this dialogue, each sector declares one's standpoint to the other. That is, Upali affirms that Kayadanda is the most important, whereas the Buddha regards Manokamma as being most important. Both have different ideas, and obviously declare their own standpoints before the dialogue.

Therefore, it can be said that the dialogue in the lifetime of the Buddha is very close to Swidler's theory of dialogue. It asserts that the dialogue was applied throughout the society in the lifetime of the Buddha, and was a marvelous thing since there was no any religious war. Of course, the religious dialogue applied in those days might not be a sole cause of the religious war, it obviously implies that in those days there was competition based on the reason, it was a verbal war without detraction, it was a verbal war which had listening as a war manual text. More listening sharpened the art of speech as the praise of a wise that Bahusutta (man of great listening). This listening is regarded by the Buddha as one of good deeds (Sadhu sutam) (Khu.Ther. 26/173/358).

The evidence that affirms the inter-religious dialogue was continuing up to the period of King Asoka, the great Buddhist king, who refused the war and violence, but embraced the principle of peace and non-violence (Choosak Tipkesorn, 2547 : 171). The king reflected his idea which is in line with the dialogue in his 12th rock inscription thus :

“There is a variety of the civilization of this essential teaching, but the root of such civilization is that of verbal restraining. How does one restrain in it ? One should not speak in praise of one’s faith and condemn the doctrine of others when it is not at a due course of time or even at a due course of time, whatever. (Speaking in praise of one’s faith and condemning the doctrine of others) should be made but a bit since the other religions are worth respect in a certain aspect. A person who pays respect to other religions as such is regarded as a promoter of one’s religion, and at the same time, he is a charitable to other religions. On the contrary, one destroys both one’s religion and other religions.

A person who speaks in praise of one’s religion and speaks in disparagement of other religions does all things on the basis of devotion upon one’s religion. What is that ? He does it with the intention : ‘I will show reputation of my own religion’, but when he does it so, he makes more the harmful thing to one’s religion in return.

Therefore, coalition, union is really wholesome. How do we do ? We have to listen and pleasantly listen to the Dhamma of each other. It is so, the king who is beloved of gods desires that the congregation of all religions should be intelligent and undertake the good deeds. Whoever are faithful in different religions, they should be widely declared that the king who is beloved of gods regards no any other gift or sacrifice excels this thing at all. What is this thing ? This thing is the civilization of essential teaching in all religions and such civilization should be promoted more and more”. (Phra Dhammapitaka (Prayuth Payutto), 2540 : 53-55)

This 12th rock inscription obviously shows the dialogue principles which may be concluded in the three types :

1. Regarding everyone equal, no praise of oneself and condemning others. This is in line with Swidler’s principle of dialogue on no pre-judge over others as being inferior before the dialogue.

2. No judge others before listening to them. This can be found in the saying : ‘One must listen and pleasantly listen to the Dhamma of each other’. Listening is the heart of dialogue. The one who emphasizes the listening is David Bohm whose theory is of the deep listening.

3. Honesty in the previous faith and clear standpoint. This can be concluded from the saying : ‘regards no any other gift or sacrifice excels this thing at all. What is this thing ? This thing is the civilization of essential teaching in all religions’. The king encourages everybody to be prosperous in the Dhamma of a certain religion.

It is noticeable that the passage ‘should be made but a bit’ can be seen in the three points : 1) non-sincerity, 2) difficult to prohibit, and 3) ‘being made but a bit’ may provide a channel to talk to the congregation in order to affirm the trust in one’s own religion because all religious leaders necessarily say that their religion is the best which is speaking in praise of only one’s religion. Furthermore, this saying implies that the other religion is not as good as one’s religion. So King Asoka might have provided a channel for such a claim.

3.1.3 Analyzing

The Buddhist attitude as depicted in the Tipitaka is combined with loving-kindness, aiming at helping others in the right understanding without a feeling of aversion. For some issues that previously discussed, when they were talked and made clear, the friendship arose later on. However, it was the period of the commentary and sub-commentary works that the commentators spoke in the disparagement of the others, overlooked the goodness of others. This is not what the Buddha wants (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 2534 : 43). This is perhaps because of the contexts in the contemporary that changed the way of thinking of the commentators and sub-commentators. However, the attitude of regarding others as an enemy cannot be held as the actual Buddhist attitude.

So far the study is made, the inter-religious dialogue took place in the lifetime of the Buddha under the name ‘Dhammasakaccha’ which may a little bit differ from the theory of dialogue prevalent at present. The dialogue in Buddhism can mostly be compared with the present theory of the Dialogue of Study. That is, it mainly based on recitation of the texts, but in those days the texts were not written, so the teaching of

the religious master was recited in stead. For the Dialogue of Life, Buddhism has continuously tried to solve social problems since the time of the Buddha. That is, Buddhism has got ready to co-ordinate with whatever are benefits for society though they might be the doctrine of others. This can be observed through the customs and manners of the Buddha. The truth is not necessarily expressed only by the Buddha, but whatever expressed by him is the truth. Some correct sayings are praised by him, for example, sometimes his disciples preached the doctrine that he never preached, if they preached well, he would approve such teachings delivered by them. It directly relates to the Buddha's saying : 'Whether the Buddha occurs in this world or not, the doctrine or truth exists, Tathagata is the discoverer and points out the way'.

For the Dialogue of Prayer, it is not found that the Buddha's disciples tried on the practice of other religions. However, Buddhism agrees with this dialogue of prayer. It can be observed from the saying : 'Ehi passiko' meaning 'come and see', i.e. inviting investigation including a survey and examination. No matter when it is put into practice, and raises confidence or not.

For the principle of dialogue in Buddhism, the Buddha's customs and manners should be examined. One tradition in such dialogue is repeatedly questioning the previous belief. Having conducting the dialogue, the Buddha or adherents of other religions repeatedly question about previous belief. There are three purposes for such repeatedly questioning :

1. To assert the previous knowledge, or belief
2. To understand others more, i.e. to understand others' idea or belief
3. To avoid misunderstanding or improperly listening or meaning which cause various problems later on.

Repeatedly questioning is, therefore, one of characteristics in the dialogue for which is applied not only by the Buddha, but also by adherents of other religions.

A person who understood and applied it is King Asoka. One of his sayings is seen in the rock inscription thus : 'One must listen and pleasantly listen to the Dhamma of each other'. This directly relates to the meaning of dialogue. Several scholars defined the term 'dialogue' as 'deep listening'. In the time of King Asoka in which the country was peaceful, there occurred the idea closely related to the dialogue principle. It can be said that he applied the process of dialogue in order to create

mutual understanding among one another for both the kingdom and the religious sectors in stead of exercising military force. These things show the contradiction between the dialogue and war. If there was war (in King Asoka's colonization), there would not be the dialogue, whereas if there was the dialogue (in King Asoka's supremacy of the Dhamma), there would be no war.

It can be said that the inter-religious dialogue took place in the lifetime of the Buddha and he has been the master for the dialogue. He might not describe any theory but his customs and manners are complete theory of the dialogue. The inter-religious dialogue is not, therefore, something fearful as many have frightened. On the contrary, no inter-religious dialogue may bring about the fearful danger. It is the inter-religious dialogue that becomes correct and necessary for the modern society where humans live a suspicious life towards one another.

3.2 Christianity and Inter-religious dialogue

The dialogue is the principle declared by the Roman Catholic Church in the Vatican Council II, 1965. Before exploring the background of the dialogue, it is necessary to refer to the message in the Bible about its attitude towards non-Christian faiths including the doctrine that originates concept of the dialogue from documents of the Vatican Council II and the supreme patriarchal messages of the Pope II who served as the highest leader of the Church 40 years ago. The more or less distinction of this concept will be dealt as under.

3.2.1 The Christian attitude towards other religions

Though Jesus Christ is a Jewish by birth, but when he obviously declared his doctrine, he was rejected by the Jewish. Therefore, there arise questions of whether he expressed different attitudes towards those who accept him and reject him or not, if he expressed different attitudes, how he did, if not, how he did ; and how he laid down standard of attitude towards those who agreed and disagreed with him. These questions require further investigation.

3.2.1.1 Attitude of Exclusivism in Christianity

This attitude is for the self-esteem but depreciation of others, it is not for variety or diversity. As we have seen, this attitude can grow the confidence among followers, so it is prevalent in all religions. In the Bible, this is found :

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house ; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash”. (Matthew 7 : 24-27)

The sayings above show that Jesus’s teaching is the best and most beneficial. One who does not follow it encounters a great disaster. This concept limits the other way for good deeds, i.e. there is no any other way for good deeds. The so called good deeds must base on the teaching of Jesus. If one does not follow it, he will be a foolish man and encounter disaster at the end. Therefore it can be said that the above teaching shares the concept of Exclusivism since it is in line with the characteristics of Exclusivism as described by John Hick : 1) the doctrine of Christianity is the most authentic, 2) the doctrine of others is totally wrong, i.e. not leading to salvation, and 3) if one follows the doctrine of Christianity, one needs not to learn the doctrine of others.

3.2.1.2 Attitude of Inclusivism in Christianity

The attitude of Inclusivism partially invites some adherents of other faith, i.e. admits the goodness in other religions but it is inspired by the light of the Gospels as it appears in the Bible :

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets ; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them”. (Matthew 5 : 17)

The passage above shows that Jesus admits Judaism since he said that he did not come to abolish the Law but to make it complete. It is seen that the so called Law was not yet perfect ; Jesus came to fulfill it absolutely. This attitude is, therefore, Inclusivism since it is in line with the three characteristics of Inclusivism : 1) If there

should be success or salvation in other religions, it must be inspired by the light of Gospels in Christianity, 2) Christianity plays an important role in discovering the ultimate truth, and 3) other religions may pave the way for salvation only if they relate to Christianity or tie friendship with Christianity.

The encyclical of the Holy Father, John Paul II, shares the attitude of Inclusivism in which some of the passage run thus :

“For them (adherents of other faith), the Christ’s salvation can be achieved only through the grace of God along with deep relationship with the Church. The Church does not formally welcome to the Church but provides the light upon them in an adaptable form that suits their psychological conditions and way of life. The so called grace comes from the Christ”. (Choosak Sirisudh, 2001 : 76)

It is seen that the salvation of other religious people relies on the Christ. He secretly gives the salvation upon a person who performs good deeds while such a person does not realize it. This means that an individual achieves the salvation because of the grace of God in Christianity. Therefore this attitude can be grouped in that of Inclusivism since it is in line with the three characteristics of Inclusivism : 1) If there may be success or salvation in other religions, it must relies on the light of the grace in Christianity, 2) Christianity plays an important role in discovering the ultimate truth, and 3) other religions may pave the way for salvation only if they relate to Christianity or tie friendship with Christianity.

3.2.1.3 Attitude of Pluralism in Christianity

The attitude of Pluralism welcomes variety and diversity and existence of other religions. Jesus pays attention upon his relatives as well as upon others as he says :

“I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished”. (Matthew 5 : 18)

The Law as mentioned above refers to the doctrine in Judaism. Through the saying above Jesus admits the existence of Judaism and he further admits that the Jewish can attain the salvation in their own style and they also have their own way leading to salvation. That is, the Jewish have the Law as the pathway to salvation. Therefore the saying above can be grouped in the attitude of Pluralism since it is in

line with the two characteristics of Pluralism : 1) there is acceptance of salvation to be attained by Jewish as they really are, and 2) there is acceptance of a particular pathway to salvation in the Jewish style.

The attitude of Pluralism is mentioned in the declaration of the Council on relationship between the Church and non-Christian faiths thus :

“The Catholic Church does not dispel whatever are true and sacred in these religions. The Church consider the practice and way of life including rules and teachings respectfully and sincerely. Though they may variously differ from what we believe and teach, they bring the light of truth which shines over all humans many times”.

This declaration shows that the Church accepts the truth and sacredness in other religions as they really are and accept that the so called truth and sacredness enable humans achieve the light of salvation. Therefore it is grouped in the attitude of Pluralism since it is in line with the two characteristics of Pluralism : 1) there is acceptance of salvation in other religions as they really are, and 2) there is acceptance of a particular pathway to salvation in other religions.

In the Bible, there are attitudes of Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Pluralism out of which the Pluralism is the most supportive to the dialogue since it embraces variety and diversity, regarding others as they really are without evaluating others who belong to different faiths. However, in the Bible there are more attitudes which are supportive to the inter-religious dialogue as they shall be pointed out next.

3.2.1.4 Attitude corresponding to dialogue

Apart from the three attitudes viewed through all religions by the religionists, there are some more attitudes corresponding to the dialogue appeared in the scriptures as well, for examples :

1. Attitude towards the doctrine of others

Jesus, the prophet in Christianity is a Jewish, but he is not accepted as the Messiah. Meanwhile Christians not only regard him as the prophet but also the only one son of God who descent to be the savior for humans. He did not deny the Jewish and the Old Testament but fulfilled it. This is the attitude he expressed towards the doctrine of others as he says :

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery’. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”(Matthew 5 : 27-28)

“It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.” (Matthew 5 : 31-32)

The passages above approve that Jesus was born in the middle of the Jewish who may be regarded as non-believers. So the attitude Jesus expressed to the non-believers mostly related to the Jewish. And what he said above shows his attitude towards the doctrine of others, he did not differentiate the Old Testament but fulfilled it.

2. Attitude towards the other religious people

The attitude towards the other religious people or neighbors as called by the Church is regarded as the principal teaching, i.e. love as he says :

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all you soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, love your neighbor as yourself.” (Luke 10 : 27)

Not only human fellows that Jesus prescribes for love, but also the enemy, as he says :

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate you enemy.’ But I tell you : Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get ? Are not even the tax collectors doing that ? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others ? Do not even pagans do that ? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5 : 43-48)

On one occasion a man asked Jesus that who his good neighbor is. In reply Jesus said : “There is a man whose cloths were stripped by robbers. A priest (who is highly honored by the Jewish) happened to be going down the same road, on seeing that man he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite (who calls himself as a real Jewish), when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a

Sumaritan (who is regarded by the Jewish as a non-believer) came where the man was, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.” Jesus asked in return thus :

Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers ? He replied, “The one who had mercy on him”. Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” (Luke 10 : 29-37)

The examples above show that Jesus did not express a negative attitude towards non-believers, he equally loves just as rains fall down equally in all area. All the righteous and unrighteous get love from him alike. And the last example shows that the righteous is not by birth, a non-believer can be the righteous as well. This attitude affirms the dialogue principle of the pre-judge on others whether they are good or bad. The appearance of the priest form cannot approve the goodness, whereas those who belong to other groups may be the righteous. Therefore one should not pre-judge others until one experiences or conducts the dialogue.

3. Attitude to be expressed towards other

According to the Christian creed, a man cannot judge one another since God alone can judge. A man usually sees others' fault more than his. So Jesus says :

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye ?” (Matthew 7 : 3)

He does not speak in praise of the one who usually sees the fault of others but ignores his own fault because one's own problem is more important. Judging others is not our duty but the God's. So a man should perform one's own duty as perfect as possible. There is another attitude towards others he suggests :

“Do to others what you would have them do to you.” (Matthew 7 : 12)

Naturally, a man loves himself, meanwhile he has to love others as well. To think over about others' heart or to consider for others' heart is an important matter. Though this is common matter, we still ignore it (Seri Pongpis, 2545 : 21). These are examples available in the scriptures concerning expressing attitude towards others. It can be summarized that no judging others which is not one's duty and thinking over about others' heart as they have been mentioned correspond to the dialogue because a

good dialogue should be open for criticizing oneself as well as respectfully treating others, so that one will get the respect in return.

4. Attitude towards a person of ill-will and resisting

An attack can happen through various ways – bodily, verbal or mental. Jesus teaches resisting caused by bodily attack thus :

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth’. But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you”. (Matthew 5 : 38-42)

“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me ? Up to seven times ?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times”. (Matthew 18 : 21-22)

The resistance is non-resistance and is the most effective way. It can be summarized that the foundation of attitude towards others bases on the same teaching, i.e. ‘love’. It is the love that forces one love neighbors and even enemies, thinks over others’ feelings, consider others’ hearts, forgive even one who harms us. Therefore the Christian attitude towards other religions is rendering love towards each other.

If we would like to interpret the statement above as to suit the dialogue principle, we can categorize it in the principle of honesty and sincerity ready for the proof. To strike the right cheek is like the dialogue participant criticizes in stead of resistance or hatred, on the contrary, he gets ready to be criticized, it is like turning the left cheek to be struck. This is open-mindedness and no hidden agenda. So this attitude corresponds to the dialogue.

5. Attitude of no hidden agenda

To have hidden agenda or no straightforward, or meeting for not mutual understanding but having something behind whether profits or whatever beyond the ever agreed issues, Jesus disagrees with these manners as he says :

“Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do...”(Matthew 6 : 1-2)

It shows the straightforward without hidden agenda. It is obviously recorded in the Gospels that Jesus does not agree with hidden agenda. So too, a good dialogue should not have hidden agenda.

6. Honest attitude towards one's belief

Honesty toward one's belief is a characteristic of the dialogue. One refers to whatever teaching is recorded in the texts as it really is. It is said that :

“Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord...Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’, and your ‘No’, ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one”. (Matthew 5 : 33, 37)

It is a brave attitude, one should say things as they really are. It is honesty towards the doctrine, confirmation in one's belief which is the most important part in the dialogue because the dialogue does not aim at conversion but discussion about the faith with mainly focus on mental development and open-mindedness for listening others.

3.2.2 Inter-religious dialogue in Christianity

The contemporary dialogue is generally accepted that it began to happen since the Vatican Council II. It encourages Christians to have endeavor to know non-Christians thoroughly and speak in praise of them righteously (Choosak Sirisudh, 2538 : 3). However, in the Bible there appears the dialogue by Jesus as we shall explore next.

3.2.2.1 History of dialogue in the Church

The inter-religious dialogue is not a new matter that just occurred in the Church. Actually, it has been occurred in the Church for a long time. A strong attention in the dialogue paid by the Vatican Council II is just the renaissance of inter-religious dialogue. In last 2000 years ago, we can divide the dialogue into three periods according to Bargo as follows :

First period, when the Church newly began, it was just a sect of Judaism. Not too long, Christianity spread throughout the Roman empire and was introduced to the world as the universal faith. As a result, Christianity was no more a sect of Judaism. In this period, it may be said that Jesus did the dialogue with Judaism. However, he did not only conduct the dialogue with Judaism but also with a Jewish who was contemptible.

After the Christ's ascending to the heaven up to the 4th century, it was the period that the Church seriously conducted the dialogue with other faiths – be they Greek Philosophy, mystic religions, or Roman law- and things from various religions were wholeheartedly welcomed to the Church.

Second period, it started from the 4th century up to the middle 20th century. During this period the attitude of Christians towards other religions was fantastically changed. The Roman empire declared Christianity the national religion, people had no freedom in a religion. The governors persecuted people believe in one faith, the other was strictly prohibited. The premises of other religions were ruined by the Christian army. This attitude of regarding others as enemies took deep root and led to the religious war such as the Crusade War. And when the Church encountered Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism, it employed the same strategy, i.e. persecution and destroying the religious premises and regarding others as enemies.

Third period, it was the 20th century that theologians and missionaries who were increasing in number raised a question towards the Church that whether progress and victory of Christianity in this world by means of replacing other religions was the plan for salvation by God or not. During 1962-1965 the Church steered a new era and held the Vatican Council II by the Supreme Patriarch John XXIII. It was the first time for a formal discussion about other religions and for assigning an attitude towards other religions. The Pope Paul VI pioneered 'The office of secretary-general for non-Christian faiths'.

The Christian attitude towards the inter-religious dialogue reflects the mistakes happened in the past. Those mistakes are the great lessons for Christianity as well as other religions about a bitter result of ignoring the dialogue which was well conducted by the respective prophets. Either applying a religion for the political profits or the politics that involved with a religion is solely mistake made by humans. It originates

from the greed or Satan that overcomes the freedom given by God for doing good. However, the light of peace and coolness began to happen when the Church paid a strong attention to the inter-religious dialogue and got ready to revitalize the original doctrine again.

3.2.2.2 Dialogue in the scriptures

The dialogue conducted by Jesus with non-believers is short and mostly finished with mutual understanding from both sides. Some examples are shown as follows :

“When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink ?” His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink ?” For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water”. (John 4 : 7-10)

“While Jesus was having dinner at a house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners ?” On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick...” (Matthew 9 : 10-12)

The Samaritan woman and tax collectors were regarded by most people as sinners, but Jesus looked beyond such bias which obstructed the sight of majority, he looked at everybody with love and compassion, he came for healing the sick without any reward in return. Regarding the tax collectors as the sick does not mean that he judged others as sinners but troublesome. That is, they were regarded by others as sinners and such regarding is troublesome itself. So they were troublesome or called by Jesus as the sick who were waiting for healing from him. The relationship without conceit raises the truth and realizing problems which lead to their solutions at the end. Jesus employed the dialogue as to express his sincerity in order that those who have problems dare speak out their problems.

Though it is a short conversation, it shows a strong standpoint. The agape alone that drives Jesus bravely face the blame from his companions. He made relationship with those who were regarded as sinners just for their sake. Some parts of

the aforesaid conversation can be categorized into the dialogue principle of Leonard Swidler as follows :

1. The conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman and tax collectors is exchanged learning which leads to the growth of thoughts, changing misunderstanding ever prevailed upon each other and leading to the proper act.

2. This dialogue is done with persons of different faiths, i.e. the Samaritan woman and tax collectors whose faiths are different from that of Jesus.

3. There is equality in this dialogue, i.e. Jesus did not regard himself superior to the Samaritan woman and tax collectors.

4. Jesus did not judge the Samaritan woman and tax collectors the sinners. That is, it was generally held that the Samaritan woman and tax collectors were sinners, but Jesus did not think as such.

5. Jesus's expression in this dialogue shows that he honoured those persons with no hidden agenda but his love towards them.

For the dialogue in the scriptures is short and less argument, so one's standpoint on faith is less expressed. Mostly, Jesus speaks out his faith and most listeners agree with his faith. However, there appears a contrasting discussion with Jesus, for example :

“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness ; your testimony is not valid.” Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own belief, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards ; I pass judgement on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. I am one who testifies for myself ; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.” Then they asked him, “where is your father ?” “You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also. He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come.” (John 8 : 12-20)

The discussion mentioned above is a part of the dialogue, at the end of it, the Pharisees picked up stones to stone him but he could avoid them and fled from the temple area. It can be said that the aforesaid dialogue is not a good example for the dialogue since the Pharisees could not accept a different faith of Jesus.

This is an example recorded in the Bible which approves that the dialogue happened in those days and an effective dialogue can be possible if there is corporation from both sides. That is, both sides must obey the dialogue principle because if whoever disobeys it, the dialogue cannot be possible as such an example in the Bible.

3.2.2.3 Vatican Council II and dialogue

Supreme Patriarch John XXIII announced the Vatican Council II in October 11, 1962. While the council was going on, he passed away before the end of 1963. Pope Paul VI continued it until its completion in December 8, 1965. The Council aims at empowering the Church in searching solutions for a rapidly changed society. It is the starting point for the dialogue dealing with different ideas and way of life with open-mindedness (Seri Pongpis, 2545 : 100).

The renaissance of dialogue came to an existence again in the Vatican Council II. In this council there was declaration of the council on the relationship between the Church and non-Christian faiths. It can be summarized into the three points :

1. Humans of all nations belong to the same community, same origin, and same goal.
2. The Church condemns the separation, persecution caused by the nation, color or religion since it contrasts with the will of the Christ.
3. The Catholic Church does not deny the truth, sacredness in religions which bring about the light of truth.

It may be said that the Vatican Council II revitalizes the dialogue which disappeared for hundreds of years since Jesus died. There are two figures who played an important role in this period :

1. Pope Paul VI and dialogue

The concept of dialogue of Pope Paulo VI is reflected through his encyclical named 'His Church' (Ecclesiam Suam). Some parts are shown here (Choosak Sirisudh, 1999 : 50-51), for example :

The encyclical No.67 : The Church should conduct the dialogue where the Church is located and works. The Church has something to be spoken out, the Church has messages to be announced, the Church has media to broadcast.

The encyclical No. 77 : The dialogue on salvation is without persecution over others to accept it, it is done by requesting with an absolute love, it is responsibility for those who accept it. But there is freedom for them to accept or deny it...This propagation of truth will not bring about exercising the outer weapons, but depends on the right means of training as humans do. It is inner encouraging by a common conversation and presenting salvation with honor to personal freedom.

The encyclical No. 78 : The dialogue on salvation is open to all without differences. So too, our dialogue should be universal, i.e. accepting all except those who totally deny or pretend to accept it.

The encyclical No. 79 : The dialogue on salvation should be gradually developed, step- by- step progress, humbly start before being perfectly successful. It is not only of this reason that we postpone things we are able to do at this time. We should be active for an opportunity to come, bear in mind the value of time.

The encyclical No. 90 : Before speaking, one needs to listen, not just listen to humans' voice but the voice from their heart.

The encyclical No. 91 : But danger still exists. An example of the apostle is risky for danger. The will to live a life of brotherhood must not lead to reduce the significance of truth. Our dialogue must not weaken our attachment on belief .

The encyclical No. 97 : The Church must always get ready to conduct the dialogue with all the good-hearted both within our circumstance or outside.

The encyclical No. 98 : There is no any stranger for the heart of the dialogue.

To sum up, Pope Paul VI paid a strong attention in the dialogue. His idea can be divided into the eight points :

1. The Church should start doing dialogue with the world
2. The dialogue is not persecution on belief

3. The dialogue should show honour to all since all are important.
4. The dialogue should be regularly conducted, not stand still.
5. There should be a good listener in the dialogue.
6. The participants should be unshakable in their faith.
7. The Church should be always ready for the dialogue.
8. The participants are good friends, not strangers.

In the cyclical there are a lot of ideas concerning with the dialogue. These eight points may cover some parts of such ideas. However, these can stand for the testimony that the concept of dialogue is revitalized for the sake of world peace without concealed agenda but love towards the world fellows.

2. Pope John Paul II and dialogue

Pope John Paul II involved with the dialogue as the successor to ideology of Vatican Council II. His concept of the dialogue is reflected through several encyclicals. Some of his encyclicals to be shown here are of the Church in Asia which can be summarized as follows :

1. He strongly assures that the dialogue is the mission inherited from the Vatican Council II as he says :

“The communication, dialogue, and co-ordination with adherents of other religions is the mission inherited by the Vatican Council II...”(Encyclical of the Church in Asia, 2543 : 91).

2. He thinks that the dialogue is propagation of the doctrine as he says :

“To do the dialogue with other religions is not only creating mutual understanding and growing knowledge over each other, but also one of the missions in spreading the doctrine of the Church...” (Encyclical of the Church in Asia, 2543 : 91-92).

3. He encourages Christians to be honest and unshakable in their own faith, though they accept truth from others, as he says :

“Though the Church wholeheartedly accept the goodness and sacredness in the doctrines of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam as being reflection of truth and light to humans, it does not obstruct duty and intention to continuously declare that Jesus Christ is the way, truth, and life...” (Encyclical of the Church in Asia, 2543 : 92).

4. He suggests those who will conduct the dialogue that those who have unshakable faith are worth conducting dialogue with other religions, as he says :

“Only the one who possesses unshakable faith in Christianity and is adult is able to conduct a certain dialogue. Only the Christians who are deeply affected in the mystery of the Christ and are happy among the believers hopefully conduct an effective dialogue without any risk...” (Encyclical of the Church in Asia, 2543 : 93).

5. While conducting the dialogue, one should honour others, not regard oneself as being greater or superior to others, as he says :

“One should not be conceited, speak in praise of oneself but contempting others while he is meeting those who join the dialogue with him...” (Encyclical of the Church in Asia, 2543 : 93).

6. One should be open-minded and get ready to listen to others, as he says :

“The relationship with other religions can be progressive only in the context of open-mindedness with adherents of other faith, getting ready to listen to them, and the will to respect and understand them in contrasted matters...” (Encyclical of the Church in Asia, 2543 : 93).

The aforesaid passages show only one of the ideas of the dialogue mentioned in the Encyclical of the Church in Asia. However, it is held that they reflect the concept of dialogue totally and completely.

3.2.3 Analyzing

The social context in the lifetime of Jesus was surrounded by various religions and beliefs. If we analyze this point, it is impossible that Jesus would never discuss with those religious scholars. It can be seen through his saying that he does not come to abolish the Old testament but fulfill it. This saying is accepted as well as rejected (by Jews). There arises the competition between the previous belief and the present one. And in such competition there arise argument and expression of one's belief in order to affirm one's belief and honesty in it. It shows that the situation is driving to the dialogue unconsciously. It is impossible that people have believed in Jesus without listening to his expression of his own belief. He teaches people to have a belief. Therefore what will make people believe is that he must first believe in it.

Mostly, Jesus promotes both the propagation of doctrine and relationship, for an example :

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28 : 19-20)

Though there appears only the inducing for conversion in the Bible, this exists in all religions. His purpose is only to inspire ones in goodness and he is sure that his teaching can originate a good person. The equipment given to his disciples for spreading the gospel is ‘love’. He prescribes love for all regardless their caste, color, and religions. Therefore the gospel is spread without persecution but love which can be divided into two kinds : 1) love upon God, i.e. honesty and confidence in one’s faith, and 2) love towards humans regardless their religions or caste. Both relate to the theory of dialogue at present, i.e. honesty and affirmation of one’s faith by telling and explaining the existing faith and kindly discussion requiring no reward from the dialogue.

Therefore the dialogue in the Bible is numerous, it takes place from relationship among different faiths since the Church was a new matter in those days. The dialogue took place and all the time whenever he spread his teaching.

The dialogue disappeared from the Church for a particular period, and came into formal existence again in the Vatican Council II. The three Supreme Patriarchs who had played an important role in promoting the dialogue are : Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI, and Pope John Paul II. The ideas expressed by the three Popes are in line with the dialogue principle prevalent at present. If it is not deeply considered, it may be regarded as hidden agenda. In fact, one of the dialogue principles is that speaking what one believes, being self-confident, and what one believes is the doctrine of a religion, whereas speaking out is propagation of the doctrine. Speaking what one believes does not mean that the other must believe, but one speaks in order to provide understanding in what one believes. Propagation of the doctrine is standpoint of all religions, it is not confined to only the Church. Therefore propagation of the doctrine is not alien to the dialogue principle.

For the Christian attitude towards other religions, it is obvious in the scripture, i.e. expressing love to humans even enemies, including all religions. This is the sign of goodness, shown by Christianity. Therefore it is impossible that Christianity regards other religions as enemies. However, there are the Christians who understand the essence of gospel and some who do not understand it, it is possible that the latter may regard other religions as enemies.

3.3 Conclusion

Having studied the dialogue in Buddhism and Christianity, it is found that there has been the dialogue in both Buddhism and Christianity since the lifetime of their founders. The teachings of both religions well concern with the dialogue theory of today. However, the Tipitaka and Bible contain the attitudes of Exclusivism and Inclusivism which are not supportive of the dialogue, but of propagation of the doctrines. It may be said that both the religions apply the attitudes of Exclusivism and Inclusivism for the sake of propagation of the doctrine, and the Pluralism for the sake of the dialogue.

In Buddhism, the dialogue (Dhammasakaccha) is regarded as one of the 38 Highest Blessings. It may be said that the Buddha always conducted the dialogue with the religious leaders and his own disciples throughout his course of life. In the Tipitaka, there contain a lot of customs and manners of the Buddha related to the dialogue. In this research some of them are mentioned, since the evidences as far as referred to testify that the dialogue has prevailed even in the time of Buddha. For some attitudes which may not be supportive of the dialogue, they express honesty on their own faith, This is an important principle of the dialogue as well. So too in Christianity, it is found throughout the New Testament that Jesus Christ always conducted the dialogue. The prominent attitude and supportive of the dialogue is that of love which was introduced by him in the last days of his life. After his death, the dialogue disappeared from Christianity and is revitalized in the Vatican Council II.

The dialogue is a religious heritage standardized by a religious founder as to steer the path for his followers. At present, the one who can effectively inherit such a religious heritage and widen it is a religious educational institute. Next, we shall survey of how the religious educational institutes think about the dialogue.

CHAPTER 4

MAHACHULALONGKORNRAJAVIDYALAYA UNIVERSITY AND SAENGTHAM COLLEGE ON THE DIALOGUE

4.1 Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Dialogue

Before investigating ideas of the administrative and teaching staffs of the university including its students, we shall briefly explore its historical background, motto, determination, missions and purposes as a supplementary source for further discussion.

4.1.1 Historical background

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is an ecclesiastical institution of the Thai Sangha, founded by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) at Wat Mahathat for the purpose of higher education on Pali Tipitaka and advanced sciences for monks and laity. It was innitially named ‘Mahathatvidyalai’ in 1887 and run schooling on November 8, 1889. It was renamed ‘Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Under the Royal Patronage’ on September 13, 1894. However, it was merely a place of Pali and Buddhism schooling. A step forward to a tremendous change was taken by Phra Phimolatham (Choi Thanadattathera) who was then the abbot of Wat Mahathat and other renowned elders of Mahanikāya Order. It was officially declared open in the model of the university and offerred a B.A. in Buddhism on July 18, 1947.

The university has been gradually developed ever since, in 1997 the government rendered the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Act. As a result, it becomes legal and is under the supervision of the government. It was nearly a century that it played an important role in the name of ‘Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Under the Royal Patronage’, and now becomes ‘Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University’ as it was publicized in Rajakijjanubeksa No.114, section 51 A, on October 1, 1997 (Committee for Education Assurance, 2547 : 1-3).

4.1.2 Motto

Pañāṇā lokasmi pajjoto (Wisdom is the light in the world).

4.1.3 Visions

Investigation on Tipitaka and advanced sciences.

4.1.4 Missions

- Providing students with degrees
- Research and development
- Supporting Buddhism and academic service for public
- Nurturing arts and culture.

4.1.5 Purposes

Being established, the university aims at the following targets :

1. To enable the university completing the four mentioned missions as to lead the Buddhism, society and nation in an admirable direction
2. To strengthen the university being centre for education and research focussing on specialization on Buddhism and its applications in the changing circumstances
3. To assure the university status, structure and administration in accordance with the action plan
4. To encourage the students and university staff to obtain more knowledge, capacity, morality, self-responsibility and social awareness
5. To serve as an academic centre for Buddhism and related arts and cultures.

The university aims at developing the nine admirable qualities of students as follows :

1. Admirable manners
2. Thoughtfulness
3. Spiritual and intellectual leadership
4. Capacity of problems – solving
5. Devotion for Buddhism
6. Generosity for community

7. Updating world situation
8. Vast vision
9. Self-awareness on moral conducts

4.1.6 Curriculum related to the dialogue

The university provides the Bachelor Degree on Religion which can be most related to the so called dialogue. The purposes of curriculum are as follows :

1. To enable students to understand the historical background and teachings of different religions
2. To enable students to aware the importances of religions towards society
3. To equip students with vast vision and reasonable discussion on religions.

The compulsory subjects for the aforesaid degree are : Essence of Buddhadhamma, Comparison between Theravada and Mahayana, Christianity, History of Religions, Religions and Sciences, Brahmanism-Hinduism, Islam, Comparative Religions, Religious Dialogue and Mahayana Philosophy (<http://www.mcu.ac.th/site/major/images/a3corsetail.htm>). These subjects directly respond to the aforementioned purposes.

It is clearly seen that the curriculum majoring on Religions responds to both Intra-religion dialogue and Inter-religion dialogue, since it mainly focusses on religious studies including Mahayana Buddhism and religions and sciences.

4.1.7 Activities related to the dialogue

The university has served as a host and participant for religious conferences both in the country and abroad. Some noteworthy are :

- 2000, being a host for the Buddhist Summit : The Second World Buddhist Propagation Conference at Phuttamonton Conference Room, Nakhonpathom, wherein there were 5000 religious leaders and Buddhists both from Thailand and abroad.

-2002, conducting the World Council of Religious Leaders at Phuttamonton, Nakhonpathom Conference Room, and UN Conference Centre, Rajadamnern Rd., Bangkok, wherein there were 3000 religious leaders and Buddhists from Thailand and abroad.

-2004, being a host for the Board Meeting World Council of Religious Leaders at the conference room 205, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, wherein there were 60 distinguished religious leaders from Thailand and abroad.

-2004, conducting the World Youth Peace Summit at Phuttamonton Conference Room, Nakhonpathom and at UN Conference Centre, Rajadamnern Rd., Bangkok, wherein there were worldwide 3000 youths of different faiths.

-2004, being a host for the International Conference on Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist 'Working As One : Buddhist Unit and Cooperation' at Phuttamonton Conference Room, Nakhonpathom and UN Conference Centre, Rajadamnern Rd., wherein there were worldwide 3000 distinguished Theravada and Mahayana leaders including scholars and intellectuals.

-2005, conducting the International Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak at Phuttamonton Conference Room, wherein there worldwide 500 Buddhist leaders participated.

It may be said that the aforementioned activities co-relate to the dialogue. However, as to measure whether the practical dialogue is active or not, the researcher interviewed some distinguished representatives of the university, i.e. administrators, lecturers and students who can reflect on the dialogue.

4.1.8 Ideas on the theory of dialogue

Being interviewed, the representatives of the university reflected on the theory of dialogue through the nine questions as follows :

1. Do you think whether the dialogue is useful or not ?

It is found that the administrative staff positively agrees with the dialogue, it is useful, not only raises wisdom and awareness of actual religions but also peace and harmony. Wisdom means self-realization. Buddhism cannot respond some questions whereas other religions can do, so we can learn from the others in order to improve our understanding and accept them. When we seek the similarities, heal the differences, and share the same goal, then peace can be possible. Every religion seeks for peace, so it is the goal for all. However, the approach to peace may differ

according to the background of a certain religion. It is just like the top of a mountain that can be approached through various ways.

The dialogue which is based on the loving-kindness is really useful, it is the task of scholars. In Buddhism, there are some cases such as Venerable Kumarakassapa discussed with King Payasi (DN. 10/301-330/ 278-309), Kundalakesi talked to Venerable Sariputra (KhA. 41/441), King Milinda questioned Venerable Nagasena, etc. (The Council of Elders, 2536 : 1-573).

Even the dialogue is useful, according to the university administrators, it must be based on bravery of participants. That is, the participants dare reveal their background to prove sincerity on both positive and negative sides. On the other hand, understanding the background of each other dispels a possible uncertainty ; whereas attachment of a failed background raises only negative point of view towards an opposite faith.

From the point of view of the teaching staff, the benefits of dialogue are threefold :

1. Dialogue can be a frame, but should not be fixed ; it needs not follow any strict theory. Whatever raises wisdom and well-being, though it may beyond the frame of dialogue, it should be put into practice.

2. Dialogue is useful, leads to creativity, reduces fear among men, and creates the context of understanding.

3. Dialogue equips a man with the reason that exists inside.

The students share the same idea towards this question. They reflected that the dialogue is not only useful, improves harmony among men, and is the best way for intellectuals, but also can be applied even in all institutions especially in a family. Parents and children understand one another, react properly, and know the limits of one another. Being applied in a school, it brings about understanding among teachers, guardians and students, it partially enriches education. However, it depends on the dialogue- participants whether they can follow the findings after dialogue or not.

It can be summarized that all administrative staff, teaching staff and students agree with the various usefulness of the dialogue. However, some administrator regards it as a method of propagation used by Christianity. The dialogue would be

reliable if the theorist manifests his sincerity. That is, the Christian must not conceal any agenda in a dialogue. Some administrator is not comfortable only with this point.

For the similarities and differences, the administrative staff emphasizes the over-all picture of the dialogue that can raise the benefit for the sake of mankind and religions. The teaching staff points out the unstability of the theory since the dialogue can be applied in some times and situations, so it should not be strictly fixed, it should be adjusted as per convenience and benefit. Whereas the students focus on the integration of the dialogue for not being merely conducted among religions but to be applied in general institutions such as family and educational institute.

2. Which kind of the dialogue can be conducted and brings about the most benefit and why ?

The administrative staff shares the same opinion on this point. That is, the participant must be open-minded for one's guilty and set it aside, being ready for discussion. However, the issues raised in the dialogue should be useful, relating to peace and solving the contemporary social problems.

The teaching staff renders some different ideas as follows :

1. Open-mindedness is the most important in the dialogue. The differences in one's faith should not be concealed. Before the dialogue, there must be an assumption that all religions share both the positive and negative sides which may differ from the other faiths. If the differences are not initially told and later revealed, there may cause an unsatisfaction to the certain religious for they may be strictly reserved. Therefore, the participant must initially open his mind and sincerely speaks out, whereas the listener must freely understand the differences.

2. One's faith must not be occupied by an other faith. The dialogue must be free from unhonored and harsh speeches towards other faiths.

3. The trust leads to open-mindedness and listening to one another. Thinking about the benefit for all can be compromised.

The student's ideas are divided into three points :

1. The open-mindedness is a must. Without it, understanding others' faith may be impossible.

2. Not only knowledge on the principles of a certain religion, but also the sufficient knowledge on background and problems of one another is necessary.

3. There is sincerity, no any hidden agenda or profit.

To sum up, the administrative and teaching staff including the students share the same idea. That is to say, the open-mindedness and sincerity are the actual dialogue that can be put into practice. At the beginning, one's mind on revealing similarities and differences should be opened, later the open-mind is for listening others' faith. The said deed refers to the sincerity.

3. Which kind of the dialogue cannot solve any problem and why ?

The administrative staff similarly agrees that all kinds of the dialogue are useful but should be free from these unwholesomenesses :

1. Narrow-mindedness without listening to others' ideas
2. No equanimity, excessive conceit, and hypocrisy
3. No appreciative action and prejudice towards others.

The teaching staff believes that if the dialogue is correctly conducted in the suitable way, it is useful. However, one should avoid the improper dialogues as follows :

1. Illusive dialogue without sincerity that presenting only one's positive aspects and concealing the negative ones. Though this is conducted more and more, it cannot be successful.

2. Self-centreness and clinging to the sole faith without consideration for the positive aspects of other faiths. Bearing this in mind makes the dialogue failed and dangerous.

The students similarly agree that the dialogue can be fruitfully conducted. However, it may not be completed, if it consists of the following factors :

1. Narrow-mindedness which leads to moody arguments and quarrels
2. Fearfulness and untrusted reaction
3. Equanimity and no appreciative action towards others
4. Selfishness without consideration for the sake of all.

To sum up, all interviewed share the same idea that the dialogue can be fruitfully conducted, but it fails if it is conducted without open-mindedness and sincerity, or it is so called the illusive dialogue.

4. Does the dialogue concern with the principles in Buddhism and how ?

The administrative staff similarly agrees that the dialogue that concerns with the principles in Buddhism is Dhammasakacchā, the discussion of truth at due seasons (AN.22 /65/ 113). In such a discussion there are questions and answers that should be dealt by means of the four Buddhist ways :

1. Ekansavyākaranīyapañhā, the questions that should be given direct answers
2. Vibhajjavyākaranīyapañhā, the questions that should be answered by way of analyzing them.
3. Patipucchākaranīyapañhā, the questions that should be answered by counter-questions
4. Thapanīyapañhā, the questions that should simply be put aside. (AN. 21/ 42/ 70).

Some administrator gives more information about the teaching relating to the dialogue available in Aparihāniyadhamma (Conditions of welfare) in which one runs thus “holding regular and frequent meetings”.

The ideas of the teaching staff are shown as follows :

1. The dialogue can be seen through the Buddha’s daily activities. According to him, a discussion or exchange of ideas is necessary. One of his activities is to go out for alms round in early morning. He approached to various thinking schools for discussion of truth. In such a discussion he has intention of revealing the truth and the meaning, neither exalting himself nor belittling others ; he follows this principle “Whatever is regarded unwholesome by me and other dogmatists, it should be abandoned, whatever is regarded wholesome by me but unwholesome by the other, it should be considered and practised.” (DN. 9/381-384/ 161).

2. It relates to one of the blessings in Mangala Sutta : to associate with the wise (KN. 25/3/7), for associating with the fools is wasting of time and useless.

The students’s ideas can be seen as under :

1. The dialogue concerns with one of the principles of Aparihāniyadhamma : to hold regular and frequent meetings (DN. 10/70/90-91).

2. Non hidden agenda can be compared with Agati or the four prejudices :

1. Chandāgati : prejudice caused by love or desire
2. Dosāgati : prejudice caused by hatred or enmity
3. Mohāgati : prejudice caused by delusion or stupidity
4. Bhayāgati : prejudice caused by fear. (AN. 21/17/29)

3. Equanimity can be compared with the teaching of spreading Mettā or loving-kindness, i.e. Sabbe sattā : all sentient beings who share the same suffering, birth, old-aging, and death (MN. 12/232/244 ; 12/305/336). The equanimity covers all animals. Whether animals or men are equal, one treats the others as if one needs treatment from others (KN. 25/110/144).

To sum up, the administrative and teaching staff including students similarly agree that the dialogue concerns with the principles in Buddhism. However, they may refer to some different principles, but the principles are still available in the Tipitaka as referred earlier.

5. Do you think that bravely speaking of differences or maintaining on one's own standpoint without easily following others is important or not ?

According to the administrative staff, all religions should bear a particular standpoint, distinguishing the differences and similarities. The differences cannot be regarded unwholesome and should not be justified as such. It is just pointing out of how they differ from other faiths, uncomparable. In some cases Buddhism and Christianity share the same aspects such as 'Be the light for yourself' (SN. 15/13/13) 'You are the light of the world'(Matthew 5 : 14), 'Preserve wholesomeness as if the salt keeps its saltiness' (SN.), 'You are the salt of the earth' (Matthew 5 : 13).

It can be concluded that the administrators emphasize on what is different is not bad, but diverse. In some cases religions share the same attitude, so it is to say 'seeking similarities, preserving differences'.

To speak of differences, according to the teaching staff, sounds good, since a reasonable friendship depends on the positive and negative points revealed. Some negative point in a certain faith may not be reasonable in the other faith. The existence

of God, for an example, can really be proved according to some faith, whereas it is regarded as unreasonable in some faith. Without this difference discussed, there is no understanding. Furthermore, reference to the differences proves belief or honesty in one's own religion which is one of norms in the dialogue.

Therefore, to speak of differences hints others to know one's own faith and reason. The others need not agree with such a statement, but honor one another.

The students' ideas run thus :

1. To reveal differences or standpoint in one's own faith, one should be expert in such a particular faith. If one does not understand one's own faith thoroughly, one may misguide others. Misguiding leads to a wrong practice.

To show one's own standpoint or to reveal differences means to the reaction among men. For example, a husband and wife must know differences of one another and accept them, so they can be prosperous in family life. To show differences is the starting point for living together.

2. Before dealing with differences or similarities, one should bear in mind the Buddha's teaching on the six speeches worth speaking and unworth speaking as under :

a) The speech which is unreal, untrue, unprofitable, unbeloved, displeased by others is not spoken by the Tathāgata.

b) The speech which is real, true, but unprofitable, and unbeloved, displeased by others is not spoken by the Tathāgata.

c) The speech which is real, true and profitable, but unbeloved, displeased by others is spoken by the Tathāgata in due time.

d) The speech which is unreal, untrue, unprofitable, but beloved, pleased by others is not spoken by the Tathāgata.

e) The speech which is real, true, unprofitable, but beloved, pleased by others is not spoken by the Tathāgata.

f) The speech which is real, true, profitable, and beloved, pleased by others is spoken by the Tathāgata in due time.

To sum up, the administrative and teaching staff including students similarly agree that reference to the differences is significant for one's own standpoint is made known to others and is then honored accordingly. However, the students have some more views that the one who can distinguishes the differences from the other faith is

an expert in one's own faith. If one is not an expert in one's own faith, one's talk is useless since it is just an individual's idea, not representative of a certain religion. The listeners may misunderstand such a religion. Furthermore, one should bear in mind while talking the frame of Buddhism.

6. Do you think an approach to the other religious tradition by joining in such a context for deeper understanding therein is necessary or not ?

For this, the administrative staff reflects that Buddhism has no objection if one desires to come and learn or inspect it (AN. 20/66/256). But in some religion this point is not allowed and may cause misunderstanding, the will to understand it may become an insult in return. So partially joining in a particular faith should be permitted by the religious leaders concerned.

On the other hand, the administrative staff views that this action seems inspecting a creed which may be regarded a groundless standpoint.

It is concluded that this point, according to the administrative staff, can be done. But it must be dealt with mindfulness, it bases on the will to understand the other faith, not on the doubt or standpointlessness. Though Buddhism welcomes this point, it should also be dealt with mindfulness.

The teaching staff differently expresses their ideas as follows :

1. Some lecturers reflect that the trans-tradition by partial joining in the other religion is not reasonable. The faith does not easily happen, it is the last option, it is greater than the intelligence, it exists beyond the intelligence and reason. So it happens after the process of intelligence and reason.

The trans-tradition for understanding other religions is not a true faith, but a pretended one. The actions caused by the pretense and faith raise different outcomes. However, studying other religions is wholesome and useful in the contemporary world where there is a diversity, since ignorance towards other religions results for being narrow-minded and no sustainable friendship with others.

2. Some lecturers agree with the trans-tradition for learning other religions for there is no any restriction in this issue in Buddhism. The Buddha welcomes all to practice according to his teaching. If one realizes wholesomeness, one can continues, if not, one can freely give up (DN.11/3/2).

In the case that a Buddhist follows the other faith, it is a good point since one can consider one's faith of how far the faith has been practiced. The name of a certain religion should not be a matter of attachment. It conceals the wisdom and prevents from seeing things as they really are. Just like men who stand in different banks of a river, each thinks that the other is like that, oneself is like this. The inter-action cannot be possible because of the different seal.

On the other hand, the transition of tradition and belief in the other faith is a profit for such a person. For an example, a foreigner who is interested in meditation must also pay respect to an image of the Buddha and recite the Pali chantings. Doing as such, he / she comes to realize that how the Buddhists believe and practice. It is really an advantage. Being open-minded, one can learn a lot.

The students' opinions are as follows :

1. The transition of tradition for learning and understanding others is not true faith but a pretense or self-cheating. If one wants to understand the other faith, one can only study from the texts.

2. The human beings have two levels : mundane and supra-mundane levels. The mundane one or an ordinary should learn one another mainly focusing on the fundamentals, i.e. *Pancasila* or Five Precepts because all religions share the same fundamentals, the Five Precepts, or in whatever form they may be rendered. A man should learn fundamentals from each other without pretense of belief.

Meanwhile, a supra-mundane one or a noble one stands beyond such a level. The transition of tradition or non-transition of tradition means nothing for him since he mainly focuses the '*Dhamma*' more than the so called 'religion'.

To sum up, transition of tradition by investigating the other religion is not prohibited according to Buddhism, but should be carefully done. The permission from leaders of religions concerned is a must. This opinion is also shared by some lecturers. However, some lecturers and students reflected that the same should not be done because it is a pretense. The transition of tradition based on the pretense bears different outcomes from that of true faith. The pretense leads to misconceptions on

others, so the transition of tradition is useless. However, learning other religions is not refused by the lecturers and students.

7. *How do you think with statement that ‘those who join the dialogue must be ready for criticizing one’s own faith in a positive way’ ?*

For this question, the administrative staff pointed out that if the intention to criticizing is not pure, the criticized cannot be reasonable and leads to mistakes, so the intention of a criticizer is essential.

In Thai society criticizing oneself is acceptable, but criticizing one’s company is not acceptable. According to the some administrators, too much criticizing may loose unity.

In this matter there are two things that should be considered :

1. Intention of a criticizer must be positive.
2. Open-mindedness for criticizing, whatever is a true matter, it should be declared true, and vice versa.

The teaching staff has two different ideas :

1. To criticize one’s own belief is always positive, so the only thing is how one criticize the same in the objective way. That is, criticizing as it really is without any bias as two examples shown below :

a) The *Dhammasavana* Day (a Buddhist observance day) according to the *Dhammayuttika* Order, is different from that of *Mahanikaya* Order. The time is there, but such a day is determined by humans. So we have to clearly bear in mind that the Buddha suggested us not to cling to the time which is conventional ; the time should not be held tightly by delusion. Such a delusion causes endless problems. Therefore, the critique should help trace back to the essence of teaching.

b) Terrorism based on a religion must be clearly studied whether the religious text really encourages killing or not, or just killing mental defilements. If it is true, it should be declared true. In Buddhism the Buddha said that having slain mother and father goes the Brahmin. This teaching is as such, but it should be reflected the true meaning of such a teaching.

Therefore, a creative critique should be traced back to the essence of a religion or a certain text in order to reveal the truth and mutual understanding among non-believers.

The students' ideas run thus :

1. The self-critique is good, and should be done in both positive and negative aspects. However, there should be a restriction on critique, i.e. criticizing without annoying an individual or organization.

2. Let others criticize, so there will be various points of view. The critique is like revealing of treasure.

3. A criticizer should be keen in one's own accounts so that the critique will be useful and put into practice.

Though the overall picture of ideas expressed by the administrative staff, teaching staff, and students vary, those ideas can be complement for one another. That is, for the administrative staff, the critique must be based on a positive intention. For the teaching staff, it must go back to the essence of a religion. For the students, a criticizer must be well equipped with knowledge in his own religion and open-minded to listen to the others. However, some administrators think that an over criticism may affect the solidarity since each focuses on criticizing without hearing each other. This problem can be solved according to the teaching staff by means of a critique based on the essence of teaching. It will bring about the true solidarity.

8. Is the dialogue peaceful approach ?

For this question, the administrative staff pointed out that the dialogue is a peaceful approach though in the first sight there may be disappointment, having talked to each other it will vanishes. Hence, the dialogue is one of approaches that leads to peace.

The teaching staff's ideas are twofold :

1. The dialogue is a means to peace, not peace itself. If there is no discussion, there is no correspondence such as incorporation.

2. The persons who conduct the dialogue aim at making the same peaceful or not.

The students think that the dialogue is a peaceful way, for there is no better way than reasonable talk and listening. This is the way that the Buddha also stepped on. For him, an unreasonable person is not worth talking to.

Some students assured that the dialogue is a peaceful approach because it is win-win policy. Nobody is superior or inferior, so the dialogue is an approach to peace in the sense that each adjusts oneself to another.

To sum up, all think that the dialogue is one of various approaches that leads to peace, i.e. a certain peaceful way. And this was also practiced by the Buddha throughout his period.

9. Can the dialogue solve conflicts among religions ?

The administrative staff think that the dialogue based on sincerity can solve conflicts among religions. Some administrators such as *Phra Sripariyattimoli* (2547 : 308) suggested that the dialogue may be an approach. If there may be more approaches that help reduce violence, it should be put into action. There are three types of persons who concern with religions :

1. Pagan : a person without any religion compared with a boat without a guiding tail, who causes harmful things within himself
2. Fanatic : an extremely religious who is dangerous for himself as well as others
3. Religious man : the one who is of good characters and worth doing a dialogue for solving world problems.

To sum up, the dialogue is an approach that helps reducing religious conflicts but it must be done in the dialogue process by the religious men who can make it most efficient.

The teaching staff expressed their ideas as under :

1. All lecturers reflected that the dialogue can solve conflicts among religions. Though the conflicts cannot be totally solved, the basic problem is solved, since there is agreement at the outset of how to behave towards others, and be careful in expressions which may cause contempting others.

2. How far do those who conduct the dialogue strictly follow the principles and make use of the findings of such a dialogue ? If the speech is not put into practice, the dialogue cannot solve any problem, further it may raise more conflicts.

The students' opinions runs thus :

1. It depends on sincerity of those who conduct the dialogue do not pay attention on solving problems but trying to win the mass.

2. The dialogue may solve the conflicts among religions only when the process of dialogue is strongly practiced.

3. It is difficult to avoid the hidden agenda since humans basically think that oneself is exalting others.

From the birds eyes view, all agreed that the dialogue helps solve the conflicts among religions, if it consists of a) the true knowledge on the dialogue, b) sincerity, and c) following the process of dialogue.

4.1.9 The concept of dialogue prevalent in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Through the seven questions about the dialogue conducted in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, the administrative staff, teaching staff and students expressed their ideas as follows :

1. Does the curriculum in your institute concern with the dialogue ?

For this question, the administrative staff's ideas are divided into two ways :

1. Some agreed that the curriculum concern with the dialogue since the comparative religion is taught as a subject. In the previous days, the persons from different religions were invited to teach, but at present such a person is less. Anyhow, the university promotes the exchanging programme for students by sending MCU students to study in Taiwan, Korea, etc. and those countries also send their students to study in MCU. It can be regarded one type of the dialogue.

2. Some disagreed that the curriculum does not concern with the dialogue because there are less subjects concerning other religions and no sufficient knowledge on the dialogue.

It can be concluded that the administrative staff has two different ideas : a) the curriculum and learning at present are useful for the dialogue, and b) the present curriculum is not sufficient.

The teaching staff showed two different ideas as below :

1. The curriculum does concern with the dialogue because learning system of MCU is widely open by studying the comparative religion and occasionally inviting a priest for teaching. However, such a wide opening may cause a major problem, i.e. lacking the sufficient knowledge in Buddhism which is the most important.

2. It does not concern with the dialogue because teaching and learning are not ready. The dialogue is not emphasized and put into teaching enough. So the curriculum or subjects including persons concerned with the dialogue are too less.

The students expressed two different ideas :

1. The curriculum concerns with the dialogue because of the following reasons:
a) the *Dhamma* in Buddhism is taught as a subject, so it is useful for the dialogue.

b) General religion is taught as a subject, so it relates to the dialogue.

c) The curriculum relates to the dialogue and depend on the intention of a teacher whether he will be open-minded and make it active or not. Such a dialogue must consist of threefold factors: curriculum, teacher and time, since sometimes students have to do activities outside the campus.

2. The curriculum does not concern with the dialogue because manners of a Buddhist while inter-acting with other believers is never taught. And there are no specific curriculum on the dialogue.

To sum up, the administrative staff, teaching staff and students expressed their two opposite ideas : one group agreed that the curriculum concerns with the dialogue because it welcomes other religions and invites teachers from other faith. Furthermore, MCU shares the exchanged students with foreign countries, it is one way of promoting the dialogue. One group argued that the curriculum does not concern with the dialogue because other religions are less taught and roughly. There is no any curriculum on the dialogue, for it guides us behave properly in a different context.

2. Is the dialogue in your institute conducted enough and is it successful ?

The administrative staff can be seen in two different ideas :

1. The activities conducted by the institute is successful in a reasonable level. That is, there arise friendship and more understanding though a little bit. The *Aparihaniyadhamma*, holding regular and frequent meetings, is required.

2. The activities so far conducted are not successful because they are just a ceremony without investigating into the essence of each other, so it cannot be regarded successful according to the principle of the dialogue.

It is concluded that the activities so far conducted are less, they should be more frequently and deeply conducted. So far activities have been conducted, it is known as a ceremony for meeting and rendering an agreement without understanding the essence of one another.

In this matter, the teaching staff has two different ideas :

1. Though there are less activities conducted by MCU students with other religions and relationship with the teaching staff of different religions, they are well done by the administrative staff. The dialogue conducted by MCU creates more mutual understanding between Theravada and Mahayana. At present, MCU extends its classroom to Taiwan. It implies a good sign for more dialogue.

2. The dialogue so far conducted is not successful since it is too less. It is only an intra-dialogue, not inter-religious dialogue. Such a dialogue is less, too. So far the dialogue has been conducted, it was a ceremony than that of an intellectual activity to be systemized.

Though MCU welcomes Mahayana students, Theravada students or teaching staff did not really pay intention to learn from them at all. So as overall picture, the dialogue at MCU is still less and not much successful.

The students shared the same ideas as mentioned above, however, they gave more reasons as below :

1. The dialogue in the previous days was not enough, just related to the action plan, it cannot be put into an active dialogue, it is a starting point for introducing people to know it.

2. The intra-dialogue is reasonable, but the inter-religious dialogue was not successful.

3. The dialogue is fixed only in a classroom. It should be conducted outside the classroom in order to meet a different religion.

To sum up, all agreed that the dialogue-related activities are not sufficient, it is just a ceremony conducted as to show the public the availability of the so called dialogue. Mostly, an intra-dialogue is promoted, but an inter-religious dialogue is less emphasized. Students reflected that it is just a project done for propaganda, it is not put into practice. Anyhow, it meets a reasonable success, i.e. there have arisen more friendship and students exchanged program.

3. How much do the students participate in the dialogue and is it necessary for them ?

Regarding the participation in the dialogue, according to the administrative staff, it is necessary for students in such a participation since the students were only listeners in previous days, all activities belonged to the administrators. Meanwhile, the students and lecturers rarely focused on the dialogue because they did not understand the principles of dialogue.

It is concluded that the administrators focused on students' participation in the dialogue. But in previous days the students hardly participated in the dialogue, it is because of their less intention.

The teaching staff shared the same opinion that the students should participate in the dialogue since they will handle with the religious affairs so they should play an important role in this task. However, more or less role should be based on the capacity or potentiality of a certain student.

Regarding the participation of students in the dialogue, the students took part less, just paid attention on being listeners or observers, not directly involved. As a result, the relationship between students and other religions is less, narrow, and below the surface.

Another point to be considered is the language used for the dialogue. In the past, English was used for communication, so the language may be an obstacle for the students in the dialogue.

The students thought that it is necessary for them to participate in the dialogue since they will deal with the university affairs in future. In the past, the students only participated or did as per the order without any opinion. If the students have an opportunity to express their ideas, the dialogue will really be useful and bring about the ideas of new generation.

To sum up, all shared the same idea that the students should participate in the dialogue because they will continue the policy after their administrators in future. In the past, the students partially listened without expressing any idea. Some administrators commented that the students had less participation because of their own responsibility. That is, they did not pay attention in the dialogue because they might not understand it.

4. Should the dialogue be applied by the students to the other religious institutions and what is the benefit or negative result of such a dialogue ?

The administrative staff has two different ideas :

1. The dialogue between students of different religions and different institutions must understand the process of dialogue as to bear in their mind the frame work of dialogue.

2. Students must be equipped with knowledge in one's own religion and other religions as well.

Regarding the good and bad result, administrators pointed out that if the process of dialogue is followed, there is always a good result. However, one should bear in mind the time, place and topic to be discussed since they may cause misunderstanding.

To sum up, the administrative staff agreed with the dialogue to be applied in the different religious students and different institutions, but the principle of dialogue, time, place and topic to be discussed should be determined since there may be a bad result if it is out of frame work.

The teaching staff shared the same idea that the dialogue leads to a good result and should be applied by students to the other religious students, it may be conducted in the form of youth relationship or non-religious universal activities such as

Loykratong Festival. Aforesaid activities should be conducted once within two or three months since they will continuously raise more friendship and ideas from other religious fellows.

The students shared the same idea that the dialogue should be applied to the other religious institutions, it bears a good result, less bad result. They gave reasons as under :

To meet each other is good and bears three profits at least :

1. A student can learn outside the institute.
2. A student can learn in a real situation.
3. A student experiences a new environment which may raise new idea different from studying in a classroom and ties friendship which leads to share the same ideology and to the certain peace.

The overall picture of ideas shows that the dialogue to be shared with other religious students, according to administrative staff and teaching staff, raises a good result. But the students should carefully prepare themselves ready before the dialogue and the topic for the same. The teaching staff pointed out that it should be frequently conducted in the form of tradition in stead of religion. Meanwhile, the students said that it is a good thing, and they eagerly want to do it.

5. What kind of corporation in the previous dialogues and what is the most useful corporation and why ?

The administrators reflected that the most important corporation is to pay a strong intention and join the dialogue. The religious leaders have done it well. And the other corporations between Theravada and Mahayana are students-exchanged program and open the MCU classrooms in Korea and Taiwan.

It can be concluded that the result of corporation is not so obvious, but the educational corporation gets a good start.

The teaching staff concluded the success as follows :

1. MCU wins the public mind and is acceptable as a Buddhist institution in the world.
2. MCU is well known for being the forum of free and various thoughts.

3. MCU's effective and qualitative capacity is clearly seen.

4. MCU promotes understanding others so that they understand MCU, and stands as an organization for global mutual understanding.

The students' idea is as under :

So far there has been corporation, it is mostly signing, it is not put into a certain practice. However, the dialogue shared by other religions or different Buddhist sects can introduce one another and create a positive attitude towards each other, it is held as a starting point for such a corporation.

To sum up, the administrative staff and students shared the same idea that spending time to participate in the dialogue and knowing each other is regarded as a corporation at the outset. But after agreement and signing, it seems nothing appears. Whereas, the teaching staff mainly focused on the positive outcomes and what the university achieved after a dialogue.

6. What is the policy and goal on the dialogue that the university should have and plan for ?

The administrative staff pointed out that the dialogue should be promoted in an ecclesiastical institution or a university that teaches the dialogue-related subject in order to learn and exchange ideas. The place for dialogue should be changed among the institutions one after another. The goal of dialogue is to extend more classrooms in different countries such as Singapore, Sri Lanka, and China.

It is concluded that the institutions teaching the same subject should shared the dialogue as to learn and exchange ideas of each other. Regarding the goal, MCU regards the extending classrooms as a means of the dialogue, so it aims at extending more classrooms in different countries.

The teaching staff gave the three suggestions as follows :

1. MCU should aim at promoting Buddhism to be the forum for mutual understanding and harmony with other religions, since it becomes an ideal institution when there are religious conflicts. So it should host the dialogue for reducing those problems.

2. MCU should support the dialogue more with special reference to activities on visiting the premises of other religions.

3. MCU should arrange subjects on the dialogue which guide the proper practice and achieve the ultimate benefit at the time of the dialogue.

Students' ideas are divided into three ways :

1. There should be an obvious syllabus on the dialogue.

2. There should be corporation between religions and institutions as to have the dialogue successful.

3. There should have a plan for training students in the excellent institution of such a subject. That is, MCU should co-ordinate with Saengtham College, if one wants to study Christianity, one should go to study at Saengtham, and if Saengtham students want to learn Buddhism, they should come to study at MCU, and so Mahayana Buddhism.

To sum up, the administrative staff thought that there should have a network among the institutions that teaches the same subject in order to conduct the dialogue and exchange knowledge. The administrative staff also emphasized on extending the classrooms in the different countries as one type of the dialogue. The teaching staff suggested that MCU should have a certain syllabus on the dialogue aiming at creating MCU a central forum for mutual understanding among religions. The students reflected that the corporation and co-studying should be mainly focused. That is, studying with students of different religions in the institutions which are expert in a certain subject.

7. Do the previous dialogues match the theory of dialogue ?

The administrative staff expressed two different opinions :

1. It matches the theory because it is conducted in accordance with the frame.

2. It does not match the theory because it was conducted for a big group, every body had no chance to speak out, only attended a seminar.

The teaching staff said that the previous dialogues roughly matched the theory of dialogue, but it did not closely match, it was because of many factors that made the dialogue inactive, for example, a very big group of the dialogue which prevented students from taking part in expressing their ideas.

The students' ideas meet two different directions :

1. The dialogue matched the theory, but it was not really successful since the participants did not open their minds as they really are. To say in brief, the theory was alright, but the participants did not sincerely follow the process of dialogue.

2. It does not match, because students sometimes do not know what the administrators are doing and on which direction they are focusing. So it is better to obviously introduce the syllabus on the dialogue. Buddhism requires knowledge of how to present itself and how to deal with non-believers.

All administrators, lecturers and students shared the same idea that the dialogue matches the theory, though all the process of dialogue has not totally been followed, it is still within the frame of dialogue. Those who disagreed, pointed out that the dialogue was not open to welcome all ideas, only the presenters of different religions expressed their views. An important point that students pass on the administrative staff is that the administrators cannot distinguish whether the activity conducted is a dialogue or not, since some do not clearly understand what is the process of dialogue.

4.1.10 The opinions on problems and their solutions

The administrative staff, teaching staff and students expressed ideas about problems and their solutions in accordance with the six following questions :

1. Do you think what makes the dialogue impossible or unsuccessful and why so ?

For this question, the administrative staff responded in the five points :

1. Communication through different languages may not have enough of details. There should have two languages, no more medium languages or translations. Since the language is an important pathway to the dialogue, so we should understand the fellow's language as well.

2. The objectives for dialogue should be clearly dealt with. Unclear objectives usually result in failure because an other participant may interfere with the other issues which cause a failed dialogue.

3. Because of lacking sufficient knowledge in other religions one judges the others as they really are not.

4. Over attachment to the background or mistakes according to the history causes a doubtful attitude and dishonesty upon each other.

5. Narrow-mindedness and unawareness of differences.

To sum up, the dialogue runs through language for communication. If the language is not clear, the wrong impacts break out. An important point is that the narrow-mindedness prevents one from listening others' ideas and believes, having one's own norms for considering others. As a result, the dialogue cannot be possible and successful.

The teaching staff divided the causes of a failed dialogue into four ways :

1. Narrow-mindedness based on showing individual's belief on behalf of different believes which is unacceptable or unfollowable for the other

2. Profit-based dialogue relating whether to politics, or economics, which makes the dialogue a forum for the pretense

3. Insufficient understanding in one's own faith maintaining the dialogue on the emptiness

4. No confidence on others.

The students expressed their ideas in three ways :

1. An obstacle of the dialogue is narrow-mindedness which rejects others' ideas or believes.

2. A prejudice, bias, exalting oneself and contempting others.

3. One man shows, i.e. one side makes a pretense. The dialogue done by one side cannot be successful.

It can be concluded that 'narrow-mindedness', according to the administrative staff, teaching staff and students, is a major problem for the dialogue. Here, the prominent points of views expressed by them will be shown : the administrative staff mainly focused on the language since it is an important tool for communication in the dialogue. If it is not clear, there is no understanding. The teaching staff mainly focused on self-awareness. That is, a person who deals with the dialogue must sufficiently understand one's own religion, otherwise, he will uselessly deals with such a dialogue.

The students mainly focused on sincerity in the dialogue since the failure or success of the dialogue depends on both sides.

2. To make the dialogue successful, how should we deal with the solutions ?

The administrative staff suggested the solutions in four ways :

1. Students should be supported in learning language for communication, especially providing them an opportunity for being a translator in the time of dialogue.
2. An effective dialogue requires more time, not rushing, it should gradually let the time be a link of relationship.
3. The process of dialogue, i.e. frequent dialogues is also the means, since the talk can bring about mutual understanding.
4. The three following purposes of life prescribed by *Buddhadasa Bhikkhu* should be applied :
 1. Investigating one's own religion in depth
 2. Escaping from materialism or consumerism
 3. Mutual understanding among religions.

The teaching staff's perspective is fivefold :

1. Open-mindedness requires for listening the different ideas.
2. A non-profit organization should render the financial support so that the dialogue will not be under the political or economical conditions.
3. One should focus on oneself as well as other religions so that one can understand others' ideas and believes which lead to the appropriate attitude.
4. One should make oneself reliable through a known person as medium. That is, the close friendship with a fellow in a certain religion is important in the inter-religious dialogue, so such a fellow can be medium for more relationship with others in a certain religion.
5. Sincerity and no hidden agenda are required.

The solutions suggested by the students are briefly shown in three ways :

1. Open-mindedness for listening, open-mindedness for learning, and being ready for learning.

2. Making the dialogue easily accessible, i.e. not too official look, making it possible even in a coffee shop.

3. Investigating the doctrines of Buddhism in depth since they can guide a good dialogue.

To sum up, the administrative staff reflected that the language, time and frequency are important. That is, the language in conversation level should be developed. Meanwhile, one should not expect an effective dialogue only in one time, but gradually improved, and the dialogue should be held regularly. The teaching staff disagreed with the idea of the administrative staff in the sense that the funds can make the dialogue more reliable. The students thought that the dialogue should be easily accessible in all the time and places. However, the overall picture is seen in accordance with the three purposes of life prescribed by *Buddhadasa Bhikkhu* as mentioned above.

3. Which dialogues between the intra-religion dialogue and inter-religion dialogue should be conducted first and why ?

The administrative staff responded this question in three different ways :

1. The intra-religion dialogue should be conducted first in order to share mutual understanding among the sects. The reason is that if the inter-religion dialogue is conducted first, the intra-religious men may not understand and create problems thereafter.

2. The inter- religion dialogue should be conducted first, since there have not tremendous conflicts among sects. So the inter-religion dialogue should take the priority. Because, if there are conflicts among religions, there may be the tremendous violence.

3. Both should be conducted at the same time, it depends on an opportunity to decide and select the intra-religion dialogue or the inter-religion dialogue.

The teaching staff expressed ideas in two ways :

1. The intra-dialogue should be mixed with the inter-religion dialogue. That is, there must be mutual understanding within the same organization as to maintain the strength and unity, then spreading the agreement or even differences that well together agreed outside. On the other hand, the intra-dialogue searches for the standing point

within Buddhism regardless the seal of Theravada or Mahayana, and makes it known as the identity of Buddhism, so that other religions can understand the overall picture of Buddhism.

2. The inter-religion dialogue should be take the priority, since it is more important, and it may be in a state of chaos more, if mutual understanding among religions will not get the priority.

The students shared the same idea that the dialogue should be firstly conducted within a certain religion according to the following reasons :

1. The intra-religion dialogue should have the priority, because there will have the same goal and understanding each other. Having conducted the inter-religion dialogue, one can respond any issue on behalf of another since there has been an agreement before.

2. The intra-religion dialogue should take the priority, since the inter-religion dialogue may cause unreliability among the believers because of the presentations to other religions not yet discussed.

3. The intra-religion dialogue should be firstly conducted since a certain religion should reform oneself before corporation with the other. On the other hand, one should be a qualified follower in a certain religion, then conducts an intra-religion dialogue and an inter-religion dialogue, respectively.

To sum up, there are two ways of ideas. According to some administrators and lecturers, the intra-religion dialogue should get the priority in order to achieve mutual understanding and confidence among followers. Some administrators and lecturers thought that the inter-religion dialogue should have the priority since the conflicts among religions are tremendous problems and lead to damage more than the conflict within Buddhism did. However, some suggested that both should be conducted in the same time since we cannot know whether those problems are internal or external. The students shared the same idea, that is, the intra-religion dialogue should have the priority, and gave reasons as mentioned in case of the administrative staff and teaching staff above.

4. What are the most urgent problems that require the dialogue applied for, and why ?

According to the administrators, there are two most urgent problems :

1. Internal problems : the problems which have taken place in Buddhism or within ecclesiastical administration such as education, ordination, diversity in teaching the Dhamma.

2. General problems : the problems which concern with well-being of people such as violence, terrorism, conflicts in the three down southern provinces of Thailand.

The teaching staff expressed their ideas about the problems in two ways :

1. The religions-referred terrorism is really troublesome that all religions have to do the dialogue in order to have an agreement and lay down a universal charter that all religions do not support terrorism, whosoever is a terrorist with reference to a religion must be condemned by religious leaders and people. When this policy is clear, the terrorists cannot find out any follower, so such a problem comes to an end.

2. The problems concerning with suspecting each other such as the conflicts in the three down southern provinces must be solved through the dialogue. So far they are not yet discussed and understood, the religion-referred war may break out.

The students' ideas regarding the problems are divided into four points :

1. Struggling for the believers is a problem that should be discussed whether it is like that or not. The dialogue is for clear understanding about it so that the fearful attitude towards each other will disappear.

2. The violence can be reduced by means of the dialogue.

3. Mutual understanding among religions can be possible by learning the teachings of a religion of each other and putting into practice together.

4. Materialism which focuses on the materials more than the spirituality becomes a new way of life. The problem is that how one will realize the significance and value of the spirituality. Therefore, materialism is regarded as a global problem shared by all religions. However, the solution to this problem is not universal since it is individually solved.

To sum up, the administrators pointed out that the internal problems should get the priority for the dialogue. However, some said that the urgent problems should be firstly solved through the dialogue. That is, whatever they are regarded problems, we should deal with them by means of the dialogue. The teaching staff suggested that the

religious teachings on violence should be carefully considered and concluded that all religions condemn such violence. If there is a person who is a terrorist by referring to a certain religion, all religions should condemn him and show the proper teaching. The students pointed out that the major problems to be solved by means of the dialogue are the struggling for believers and materialism. That is, men are turning their backs to religions, according to the religious scholars, this is viewed as a ruin for human beings. So the problem to be solved by means of the dialogue is that of humans' addiction in materialism.

5. *Out of the dialogue, do you think are there any more approaches or methods that can strengthen the dialogue ?*

The administrative staff expressed three ideas :

1. An institution can fulfill the dialogue by encouraging those who are interested in the dialogue in a classroom, in an institution, organization, and the nation, respectively.
2. The union for peace can fulfill the same because it is beyond nationality and religions.
3. Administrators who are responsible for the institution should have a chance to do the dialogue because they are able to put the outcomes available from the dialogue into practice.

The teaching staff expressed four ideas :

1. Technology for communication such as the dialogue conducted through internet or modern equipments without wasting of time for transportation, and answering problems about religions scrutinized by the respective religious scholars.
2. Practice, i.e. putting the findings of dialogue into the process of action which strengthens the dialogue effective.
3. Corporation among the government, private sector and people, the dialogue will not be successful without such a corporation from all sectors.

The students expressed two ideas :

1. The process of dialogue is perfect. The only thing to be added for more effective dialogue is to strictly follow the principle of it.

2. The activities can strengthen the dialogue since they imply many things such as loving-kindness, union, which make known by actions more than speeches.

To sum up, the administrative staff thought that an educational institute and the respective officers are supplemental sector that can make the dialogue effective. That is, an institute lays policy, the responsible persons concretely make it successful. The teaching staff thought that technology and corporation between the government and public can make the dialogue effective. That is, technology helps in a rapid and exact communication, whereas the government supports and the publics corporate. Students thought that a correct dialogue itself can make it effective without any supporting.

6. Does the dialogue cause any more problems ?

The administrative staff expressed the idea that the dialogue is solely useful without any blame. It is blameful since it is out of the frame of dialogue.

The teaching staff expressed three different ideas :

1. The dialogue may get troubles if what one speaks outside is different from that of agreement in the meeting. It can be said that he has no sincerity in the dialogue.

2. The dialogue may get troubles if a person who participates in such a dialogue does not understand the principle of it, and not be open-minded.

3. Some lecturers said that conducting the dialogue will cause no problems because when we are open-minded, we also find out an opportunity to understand each other.

The students responded this question in two ways :

1. If we strictly follow the principle of dialogue, there are no problems.

2. There may be a problem in the case of a false communication. The communication does not mean only the language but also the art of speaking.

It can be concluded that all shared the same idea that the problems do not depend on the process of dialogue but the persons who participate. So before the dialogue, the persons should be trained and get ready for it.

4.1.11 Suggestions

All aforementioned questions may not cover all ideas of the interviewees towards the dialogue. In order to get more various information, the interviewer gave an opportunity to the interviewees to give their suggestions which may not be included in the earlier questions. A representative sample of the administrative staff, teaching staff and students gave their suggestions as follows :

4.1.11.1 The administrators' suggestions

Having been interviewed about the theory of dialogue, the dialogue in MCU, and problems and their solutions, a representative sample of the administrators of MCU gave valuable suggestions as to be guidelines for the dialogue as under :

1. There should be a particular centre for the dialogue established in MCU focusing on the dialogue. It should be a section in MCU supported by the government running both the national and international dialogues.
2. All universities should pay an attention on the dialogue and conduct a course on religions beginning from the primary school, secondary school and university. The course should be named 'Fellows' Religions'.
3. All the staffs and students should firstly learn the dialogue theory before extending to other universities. An internal dialogue among the administrators, lecturers and students should be practiced in order to create mutual understanding within the organization.
4. There should be a special religious retreat of no identification of any religion.

4.1.11.2 Lecturers' suggestions

Having been interviewed about the dialogue theory, the dialogue in MCU, and problems and their solutions, a representative sample of the teaching staff of MCU gave useful suggestions as to be a guideline for the dialogue as under :

1. The dialogue must be frequently held in order to make it clear and put into practice.
2. An educational institution should promote the religious learning for children in order to understand and aware since childhood. In the case of MCU, it should

provide an opportunity for students to discuss with the other religious persons in order to change an attitude towards other religions.

3. The communication in the dialogue should be clear as to share the same understanding.

4. The right persons should be put in the dialogue and are able to apply findings of the dialogue into practice.

5. The other religions should be compared with a medicine. That is, if there is only one medicine, the patients face difficulties to recover their health. Since there are a lot of diseases, so it is necessary to have a variety of religions curing them.

6. The religions should not take control of good persons, but pay more attention to bad persons. If those good persons were taken control without any attention for bad ones, they might be over populations and cause dangers to the society.

7. The honey bees are a good example. That is, they take only sweet drops from a flower without any ruin over it, taking the best quality from a flower. So we should take the best things from each other without destroying each other.

4.1.11.3 Students' suggestions

Having been interviewed about the dialogue theory, the dialogue in MCU, and problems and their solutions, a representative sample of the MCU students gave useful suggestions as to be guidelines in the dialogue as under :

1. Knowing oneself clearly and open-mindedness for learning from others are necessary.

2. One must be sincere in the principle of dialogue. Doing so will lead to a creative thing.

3. The fundamentals such as *Pancasila* or the Five Precepts should be emphasized, since they are available in all religions. They should be made known the world standard without any seal of a certain religion and applied by means of science of how killing animals, for example, causes towards the environment and the world.

4.1.12 Conclusion

The ideas expressed by the administrative staff, teaching staff and students of MCU towards the dialogue are shown that the dialogue is useful and should be promoted for all organizations and institutions (family, education, religions, etc.). All believed that it can reduce violence, be it the violence in family or the so called religious violence, and that it was practiced even before the time of the Buddha. The Buddha himself used the dialogue called '*Dhammasakaccha*' meaning 'discussion, argumentation, explanation, exchanging ideas, and examination (P.A.Payutto, 2529 : 748). It is a subject that all students in the major of religions must study. It can be said that MCU has arranged the dialogue as a subject. Though it is in a Buddhist style, it can connect with the dialogue which is the modern one as mentioned above. However, though Buddhism consists of the excellent doctrines, the success does not solely depend on them, but on the personnel as well. That is, those who conduct the dialogue must be open-minded and listen to others' ideas or believes. This is called a kind of tolerance (P.A.Payutto, 2542 : 26). In the case of transition of tradition for learning other religions according to John Dune who supported Swidler's idea, most interviewees did not agree with this concept, because it is regarded a pretense, non-sincerity. The outcomes based on this action are different from those of the real practice and faith. Furthermore, to do like this may not be accepted by those who believe in a respective religion. Hence, if it is concretely practiced, it must be officially permitted. Whereas, Buddhism welcomes this concept, it invites all to come, inspect and practice (*Ehipassiko*).

For the dialogue in the university, most interviewees thought that the mega dialogue so far conducted is just a ceremony without any deep understanding among religions. However, such a ceremony gradually absorbs friendship. If it is continuously conducted, it will be perfect in the future. For the students' participation, it is a bit little, since they are only listeners without expressing any idea because of many obstacles such as language and too big forum.

The dialogue cannot begin to happen and is not successful if the participants are narrow-minded attaching to the negative background in the past. However, though they are sincere, the harmony is based on the language, so the language is the most important factor resulting a mutual understanding. Most interviewees thought that the

intra-religion dialogue should get the priority since it can create the solidarity and understanding inside as to cooperate with outside without insulting among the fellows. The present facing problems should be urgently solved.

4.2 Saengtham College and Dialogue

4.2.1 History of Saengtham College

A brief history of Saengtham College was established in December 18, 1965 (2508). The Supreme Patriarch (Paul VI) promoted the priests in Thailand from the Mission (equal with the Diocese) to the Diocese and divided the administration into two main regions, namely the region of Bangkok Diocese and of Tharare-Nongsaeng Diocese. However, the retreat for those who were ready for being ordained was not made clear, it depended on the policy laid down by a small seminary in the respective dioceses. The said institutes varied in the period of retreat, methods, contents and the syllabus. Furthermore, the Seminar for higher education focusing on Philosophy and Theology was not yet founded. So the novices were sent to be trained in foreign countries such as Malaysia (Penang), Italy (Rome), India, and America. As a result, there arose variety, non-solidarity, and contrast with the background and needs of Thai society.

To respond the requirement of the Vatican Council II which emphasized establishing a training institute for Catholic priests in each country according to the various geography and nations especially the environment and special needs of a respective society, the Catholic Patriarch Council of Thailand held a meeting and decided to open the Seminary named Saengtham Seminary (LUX MUNDI SEMINAR) at 20 Petkasem Road, 29th Km., Thambon Thakham, Amphur Sampran, Nakhornpathom in 1972. The construction was completed and the inauguration ceremony was held in February 2, 1975. The Saengtham College began to happen and was permitted by the ministry of university affairs to run a private college for higher education in April 19, 1976.

4.2.2 Motto

The light of the gospel truth guides wisdom and life.

4.2.3 Vision

The college promotes knowledge based on philosophy, religions and cultures and devotion of oneself in accordance with the gospel truth. It also promotes the pastoral work, spreading of the good news, self-sacrifice, devotion to the church, society and the nation.

4.2.4 Missions

Saengtham College considers the four missions to be put into action as follows :

1. Self-sacrifice in investigating philosophy and religions
2. Promoting and supporting the researches on philosophy, religions and cultures
3. Creating students being equipped with morality, good conducts, wide knowledge, and right livelihood
4. Creating oneness, unity, and peace in the society.

4.2.5 Purposes

Having been established, Saengtham College lays down the three purposes :

1. Producing graduates equipped with knowledge, capacity in philosophy and religions as to apply in daily life and the society
2. Producing the priests, clergymen, and religious preachers in various educational institutions within the churches or in a community as to service the society widely
3. Being centre for the research on religions and cultures as to raise the right and deep understanding to be applied in daily life.

4.2.6 Curriculum concerning with the dialogue

Saengtham College is a particular institute like MCU. That is, it is the Catholic institute of Thailand. It may be said that the college began to happen as the result from the Vatican Council II. One of the resolutions of the said council was that policy of the dialogue and ecumenism. To respond such a policy, the college runs the Bachelor of Arts in Theology and has been approved by the ministry of university affairs in October 8, 1979. The curriculum focus on the three purposes :

1. To provide the religious science in a wide circle as to raise the right understanding in religions including cultures in depth which may be the pathway to mutual understanding between religions and cultures and can be put into practice accordingly.
2. To produce the religious leaders to be a part in developing the Thai society especially in a religion or morality which will raise the true peace among people
3. To be the centre for study and research on Christianity and related sciences in all aspects as to have mutual understanding among religions.

From the purposes mentioned above, it is seen that the syllabus is corresponding the dialogue. The purposes are not only corresponding the dialogue, but also the subjects correspond to it. Some subjects are : Principle of Inter-religious Dialogue investigating on methods and means for the good relationship with those who believe in a certain religion and its sects in order to create peace in the society according to religious teachings, Religious Studies concerning with the background and development of religions in the contexts of feeling and behaviors in order to truly understand religions in depth, Buddhist Philosophy learning about history, development and essences according to Buddhist Philosophers with special reference to Theravada Buddhist philosophy which influences to the way of life and the Buddhist society, and Islamic Philosophy dealing with history, development, and essence of Islamic Philosophy with special reference to the principles and essences that influence the ways of life and Islamic society. These subjects partially raise mutual understanding among religions and correspond to the dialogue and support an effective dialogue. However, Saengtham College arranges activities into the syllabus that correspond to the dialogue as mentioned below.

4.2.7 Activities corresponding to the dialogue

The activities corresponding to the dialogue are continuous outcomes from the syllabus. That is, the syllabus mentions that the students must perform activities not less than 30 hours, it is learning by doing. This method applies the theory to a real situation which varies in details. The specific events vary in the characteristics and

situations. The activities are divided into many aspects as to suit the respective students. The students can select two practical subjects out of four subjects as under :

Practicum 1 : Catechetics, the first year students practice in teaching methodology. They apply the religious knowledge and general knowledge for children, youth, and adults.

Practicum 2 : Youth Pastoral Ministry, the second year students are trained in the youth pastoral work. They cooperate with children and youth conducting activities in order to teach them the unity, service mind, oneness, leadership and the way of right livelihood.

Practicum 3 : Mass Media and Pastoral Ministry, the third year students practice in the mass media and preaching the gospels in order to learn the meaning and value of the surrounding media and select the effective and creative media for the pastoral work and preaching.

Practicum 4 : Social Action, Principles and Practice, the fourth year students practice in the social action and pastoral ministry and preaching in order to learn the social livelihood, way of life, and livelihood in various forms as to understand, determine, and pay more attention in the social welfare. ([http://www. saengtham. ac.th/ lux/modules.php?name=News &file=article&sid= 62005](http://www.saengtham.ac.th/lux/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=62005), February 25)

Though aforesaid activities do not directly concern with the dialogue, they can be also regarded a part of the dialogue, since those who do such activities can meet other religious men, so they have an opportunity to exchange knowledge from one another. However, Saengtham College directly conducted the activity corresponding to the dialogue, i.e. the Religions for Peace Project. It invited 22 higher educational institutions from the network of the western region with three purposes :

1. To provide the teaching staff and students of the 22 higher educational institutions from the western region network the knowledge on the principles and practice towards religions in Thailand, which are Buddhism, Islam and Christianity.
2. To make known the way of practice in religious relationship in daily life.
3. To create a positive perspective in religions which is the way of co-living peacefully.

This project was conducted on 22 August 2005. It shows that an attempt in promoting the dialogue widely is made. Though, it might not be obviously successful,

something different and new would definitely happen in the ideas of the participants. To get the reflections in the minds of the administrative staff, teaching staff and students, hence, the researcher interviewed them who can be regarded as the sample of Saengtham College as follows :

4.2.8 Opinions on theory of the dialogue

The administrative staff, teaching staff and students of Saengtham College expressed their ideas on the theory of dialogue according to the following nine questions :

1. Do you think whether the dialogue is useful or not ?

The administrative staff expressed their ideas in the four ways :

1. The dialogue is useful because it can bring about peace in the world.
2. The dialogue leads to the sense of unity, it will lead to the unity that helps prevent us from evils for the sake of world happiness.
3. The dialogue brings about mutual understanding because it is learning one another, not for comparison, but understanding.
4. The dialogue reminds us to return to study our own religion in depth.

The teaching staff responded to this question in the four ways :

1. The dialogue is useful for creating mutual understanding and friendship.
2. The dialogue is useful for more awareness in one's own religion.
3. The dialogue is useful for sharing teachings to each other.
4. The dialogue is useful for making the society wider and open-minded.

The students shared the same idea as mentioned above but gave different reasons as follows :

1. It is useful because we have a chance to create mutual understanding among religions which is learning and realizing values in other religions as to have more relationship.

2. It is useful since we will pay attention studying our religion in depth, because we have to present the truth according to our doctrines.

To sum up, the administrative staff, teaching staff and students shared the same idea that the dialogue is useful for taking humans to peace, and it reminds us to return to pay attention our own religion. In the process of the dialogue there is exchanging knowledge, in the presentation we have to show the true doctrine in our religion, so we have to return to study our own religion in depth in order to present the facts to each other.

2. Which the principles of the dialogue can be applied and bring about the ultimate benefit, and why ?

The administrative staff's idea can be divided into two ways :

1. The dialogue requires the open-mindedness, no attachment to one's own faith, accepting others' ideas and believes.
2. The dialogue requires respect and honour to each other, i.e. no prejudice, but equality.

The teaching staff had three different ideas :

1. The principle of sincerity
2. The principle of open-mindedness, listening others. According to Christianity, human beings have right to be open-minded, the God will inspire on another.
3. The principle of accepting differences.

Students expressed their ideas in three ways :

1. There must be sincerity, good will, no hidden intention
2. One must understand other religions, i.e. learn and aware the other religions before the dialogue as to make it most benefit.
3. One must be open-minded and respect in the others' ideas and belief.

To sum up, the interviewees thought that the most important principle is that of open-mindedness and sincerity, i.e. being open-minded in listening others' ideas and belief with respect and sincerity. There are no hidden agenda, no hidden profits. It can be said that both open-mindedness and sincerity are the pathway to the good and effective dialogue.

3. What kind of the dialogue cannot actively solve the problems and why ?

The administrators shared the same idea that all the principles of the dialogue are useful. But they suggested the principles for a good dialogue that should avoid these things :

1. Over confidence, prejudice, narrow-mindedness that may prevent us from understanding one another and lead to the violence
2. Referring to the troublesome background of one another that may cause no trust and lead to be fearful in discussion
3. Hiding or hidden agenda.

The teaching staff believed that all the principles can be really made use, but factors that cause an uncompleted dialogue are as follows :

1. Being afraid and suspicious that others may have hidden profits doing the dialogue for their own profits
2. Seeing uselessness of the dialogue, thinking that living independently is better, no need for the dialogue. This way of thinking raises no dialogue.
3. Narrow-mindedness, self-centretness, without listening others' ideas
4. Argumentation, i.e. discussion as to win others
5. No sincerity, i.e. hidden profits.

Students shared the same idea that all the principles of the dialogue are useful. However, they suggested unwholesome things for the dialogue as follows :

1. Narrow-mindedness without listening others' ideas which may lead to misunderstanding and conflicts
2. Misunderstanding, i.e. seeing no problem so it is not necessary for the dialogue. Hence, the dialogue should be more introduced to the villagers.
3. The participants do not get ready for the dialogue. That is, a wrong man is put in the dialogue, it may raise argumentation.
4. Silence without any talk cannot reveal the essence of one another which is one of factors leading to the suspicions.

To sum up, all agreed with the usefulness of all the principles of the dialogue, and suggested the conditions unsupporting the dialogue as a whole that attachment to the previous mistakes made by others in the past whether they are true or false,

according to administrators, raises the suspicions towards one another so that the dialogue cannot begin to happen. The teaching staff and students added more that if the necessity of the dialogue is over looked, the dialogue cannot happen as well.

4. Does the dialogue relate to the doctrines or not ?

The administrative staff expressed three ideas :

1. According to Christianity, the God exists in all religions. He is the wholesomeness which is the essence in all religions. The dialogue paves the way for such the wholesomeness. So it concerns with the doctrine of Christianity.

2. The so called dialogue is not available in Christianity. It is not mentioned in the doctrine. But the higher administrators from Vatican determine it of how the world religions should co-exist. It is the idea rendered by the administrators, it is not the doctrine. However, it does not contrast with the doctrine, it is regarded as the teaching of the church.

3. The dialogue corresponds to the teaching on love, love for the Lord, and love for the neighbors (Luke 10 : 27), and to the way of Jesus's life while living with the poor (Mark 12 : 44).

The teaching staff had threefold idea :

1. The dialogue corresponds to the doctrine and preaching the gospel (Luke 9: 6). Preaching the gospel is like spreading the seeds that needs the dialogue.

2. It corresponds to the resolutions in the Vatican Council II. After this council, the dialogue has become more popular.

3. It corresponds to the teaching that 'Love the neighbors'. The other religions are compared with the neighbors. To love others is loving oneself. In conducting a dialogue, love without any conditions (agape) is required. If love is active, the dialogue will go smoothly.

The students shared the same idea that the principles of dialogue corresponds to the doctrine in Christianity, and gave the following reasons :

1. The dialogue corresponds to the doctrine of love (Luke 10 : 27), since when we love others and talk to the beloved persons, we bring good things to them and wish them all the best. Teaching in this way really corresponds to the dialogue.

2. It corresponds to the Vatican Council II. The relationship among different sects firstly started, then extended to other religions. An outcome of the Vatican Council II aroused the Christianity in accepting other religions' goodness.

To sum up, most interviewees thought that the principles of dialogue correspond to the Christian doctrine about love and resolutions of the second Vatican Council. For this issue, some administrators thought that the actual teaching of the dialogue is not available, since the dialogue has been determined in the Vatican Council II which is the idea of the administrators. However, the dialogue does not contrast with the doctrine, and the teaching which mostly supports the dialogue is that of love. Another point that should be considered is that some lecturers reflected that the dialogue is the same with preaching the gospel. This statement may imply that the hidden agenda in the dialogue is propagation of the religion. For this case, it does not mean that it is the propagation of religion, but revealing one's own belief to others, not preaching the gospel as to convert others, but as to show one's own standpoint.

5. *Do you think that dare speaking about differences or showing one's own standpoint without simply following others is important or not ?*

The administrative staff agreed with showing one's own standpoint, though it may be different from the others. However, the administrators gave different reasons as follows :

1. Speaking about differences must go for understanding, not for disunity. One dare not mention differences or confirm the truth because he or she is afraid of loosing some profits, for example, they are government officials, but dare not reveal oneself because he / she is afraid to be unsatisfied by the boss, and may not finally get any promotion.

2. Before confirming one's own belief, one should examine oneself that he really knows what he believes in or not. If not, one should learn and try to understand firstly, then express whatever he believes to the others. Or he examines oneself and shows both positive and negative sides.

The teaching staff reflected on this question in two ways :

1. To dare speak out the differences or the standing points is necessary but it should be politely done without aggressive and frank speeches. That is, the art of speaking is required.

2. To talk about the difference is the standing point of oneself. We can say or share whatever we trust in, meanwhile, we have to listen whatever others say or trust in return.

The students differently thought as follows :

1. The differences are just skin deep or ceremony. All religions share the same essence.

2. To show one's own stand point is good because the others can understand us and treat us correctly. If we have a strong stand point, the others pay respect to us. However, we sometimes need not mention the differences. We do not compare the differences.

To sum up, all the interviewees agreed with pointing out the differences or standing points of oneself, but differently reasoned: the administrators thought that talking about the differences is good, but it must go for understanding not for disunity, and before discussion one should break through one's own religion in order to present it correctly. The teaching staff thought that talking about the differences must be based on a gentle speech and the art of speaking. Students thought that talking about the differences is good because it makes for the right understanding and manner upon one another.

6. *Do you agree with passing over the other religious tradition by being a part in such a tradition in order to understand it in depth, and is it necessary or not ?*

For this question, the administrative staff thought that it is good, and Saengtham College occasionally allows its students for this task, it is called immersion of oneself into a religious tradition of the other religions, it is not changing one's own idea but linking the way of thought. However, the limit is that students can participate in a certain religious activities but they will not be allowed for the ordination. Or the other religious fellows can join the ceremonies except the Sacrament. Briefly speaking, the administrators agreed with the passing over the tradition or immersion of oneself. However, they reminded as to beware of limitations and permissions from both sides since the most important ceremony in a respective religion must be absolutely honoured.

The teaching staff agreed with the passing over the tradition and differently reasoned thus :

1. The passing over the tradition as to learn and understand the other religions is agreeable because it goes for seeking knowledge and spiritual wholesomeness and it provides joys in one's own religion.

2. It is agreeable and the dialogue in this level suits a stable minded who understands the doctrines from both sides. On the other hand, the social contexts must be ready, suitable for those who seek for the truth who are stable and perfect in one's own way of practice. It is love for seeking the truth while oneself maintains the standing point intact. However, if general religious men would like to pass over the other religions, they may simply join the common ceremonies that become way of life, such as funeral ceremony, new house inauguration, marriage, these are enough for them. But undertaking ordination or the Sacrament may be seen out of limit and being rejected.

The students expressed two different ideas :

1. Passing over the tradition to learn other religions is good because it supports the propagation of the gospels and is the gateway for learning each other. However, one should get permission from the owner of a respective place.

2. Only learning the texts and discussion are sufficient, the immersion of oneself or being ordained in a respective religion implies no respect.

Almost interviewees thought that the passing over is not prohibited by the Church, but it should be made in a limited context for honouring each other. However, the passing over must meet the need of a respective congregation, it should be permitted by the congregation in a certain religion.

7. How do you think about the statement that a participant in the dialogue must be ready for criticizing one's own faith and others' in a positive way ?

The administrative staff showed three different ideas :

1. We should not criticize belief but only the doctrine, because the belief is, according to Christianity, regarded as relationship between human beings and God. If a person experiences the God, his belief will be more firm. We cannot criticize such a kind of beliefs since we never experience as him. But we can criticize the doctrine as

to how it should be applied in accordance with the modern society. It is concluded that the belief is not likely to change, but the doctrine may be developed.

2. Though the critique by others is good, but one hardly accepts it. However, if it is a good and reasonable critique, one should accept it in order to correct the troublesome.

3. Self-critique is the basis for the dialogue. Discussing with others, we must criticize ourselves and listen to others criticizing on us since it implies our sincerity.

The teaching staff thought that a creative critique is possible, and reasoned as below :

1. A creative critique is good. We have to bear in mind that in the past there were mistakes in Christianity because the Christians forgot the God. For this matter, they realized the mistakes and got ready for improving themselves. They followed the saying of John XXIII, the Pope, delivered in the Vatican Council II that Christians must always improve themselves.

2. The positive critique can be made because it helps revise and revitalize the value of a certain religion.

However, self-critique is foremost. That is, one must know and understand a certain religion in depth so that he is able to criticize, therefore, his critique is acceptable.

The students shared the same idea that the critique is good if it is creative and objective. It is like informing those who do not know to know, who do not understand to understand. And the most important is that the critique modernizes the religion and develops it as well. Beside the self-critique, the critique from others should be welcome.

To sum up, the administrators thought that religious experiences should not put into a critique, but the doctrines, as to apply them for the contemporary situations. Some administrators admitted that it is difficult to listen to a critique, but it is a must if it is reasonable. The teaching staff thought that a critique helps revitalize the values of the Church, and criticized the Church that in the past, some Christians forgot the God. It is until the Vatican Council II that they returned once again to Jesus. The students

shared the same idea with the teaching staff that a creative critique helps modernize and renew Christianity.

8. *Is the dialogue a peaceful method ?*

The administrative staff thought that the dialogue is a peaceful method because it is the way we learn other religions without any conflict and contempting the other. It may be said that the dialogue is the best way since all kinds of peace begin to happen by means of a talk. For example, a happy family results from a talk with each other.

The teaching staff shared the same idea that the dialogue is a peaceful method, because it aims at the peaceful co-existing. Sometimes the dialogue may negatively starts but it positively ends.

The students shared the same idea that the dialogue is a peaceful method because a talk is not something bad, but a creative share. The religionists should have an agreement by means of the dialogue which is the peaceful way. Whenever a religious problem occurs the clergymen in the respective religions should make clear of what really happened so that the congregation and the others can harmoniously understand.

To sum up, all agreed that the dialogue is a peaceful method though it is only one of various methods that promote peace. Almost the interviewees regard it as the best way for peace.

9. *Can the dialogue solve the conflicts among religions ?*

The administrators shared the same idea that the dialogue can solve the religious conflicts because it will help understand the doctrines, theory, and rituals of the other religions and maintain one's own tradition without contempting the other. Having understood, one respects one another. As a result, one behaves according to one's own faith and others' beliefs and rituals. Without understanding, one may deserves no respect upon the others' faith. Knowing each other helps us behave properly in both sides. It is not a compromise and winning others' minds, but the wholesomeness that all can accept.

The teaching staff sharing the same idea reasoned differently :

1. To solve the conflicts is one aim of the dialogue because the dialogue raises a variety of views and wider vision. To view wider means the interests. Thinking in this way causes no conflict.

2. The dialogue can solve the religious problem but it takes times. It starts from getting development into activities in the camp and extends to all organizations. All the procedures requires a long course of time.

The students shared the same idea that the dialogue can solve the religious conflicts. At the outset, it may seem an argument, but not so long, the mutual understanding will begin to happen.

To sum up, all agreed that the dialogue can solve the conflicts among religions because it introduces one another. Knowing each other prevents mistakes from both sides. Having behaved properly and wholeheartedly, peace begins to happen. However, the dialogue requires a course of time to result in peace, because only one dialogue cannot make known each other. Knowing one another insufficiently leads to a wrong practice which in turn results opposite to peace. So the dialogue should be conducted frequently and continuously.

4.2.9 The opinions about the dialogue in Saengtham College

The administrative staff, teaching staff and students of Saengtham College expressed their ideas about the dialogue in the college in responding the following seven questions :

1. Do the syllabus in your institute respond to the dialogue ?

The administrative staff expressed two different ideas :

1. The subjects related to the dialogue are still less, nevertheless the dialogue personnel are also less. There may be the so called scholars but those who can put it into the practice.

2. The syllabus of Saengtham College – both theoretical and practical - directly responds to the dialogue. That is, the fourth year students of the faculty of Anthropology must study the Religious Relationship as a subject, and the fourth year students of the faculty of Theology must study about preaching. This is a theoretical

part. For the practical part, the second, third and fourth year students are sent to practice every Saturdays and Sundays by means of visiting and talking including teaching the children in a slum, street side, and refugee labours, etc.

The teaching staff agreed with the responsibility of the syllabus and reasoned thus

1. The syllabus responds to the dialogue since in some subjects concerning with the other religions, the college has invited a Buddhist monk and an Imam to teach such a respective religion. However, this is still less.

2. The syllabus responds to the dialogue since the dialogue-related subjects such as Eastern Philosophy and Religious Relationship are accordingly taught. However, they are not sufficiently put into practice, just starting point.

The students also agreed with the responsibility of the syllabus and reasoned thus:

1. It responds because there are the Religious Relationship as the direct subject and other subordinate subjects such as Eastern Philosophy and Comparative Religion. These subjects guide of how to have a proper attitude towards other religions.

2. It responds because the college has invited a Buddhist monk to teach Buddhism so that the students can experience the different circumstance.

3. It responds because there is the pastoral work on every Sundays. The work can be compared with a kind of the dialogues.

To sum up, most interviewees thought that the syllabus of Saengtham College responds to the dialogue. Furthermore, the pastoral ministry can be regarded as a kind of the dialogues. However, some administrators commented that the dialogue is practiced less, especially those who can put the dialogue into an action.

2. Is the dialogue in your institute sufficient and successful ?

The administrative staff expressed two different ideas :

1. The dialogue activity in Saengtham College is not sufficient, just beginning.

2. The dialogue activity is sufficient because there is a variety of the dialogue activities with people every Saturdays and Sundays. During the vocation, the college sends students to observe in various churches. These activities are complementary of experiences so that the graduates can start working.

The teaching staff expressed the following ideas :

1. The dialogue activity is less because of limitation of time. However, the previous activities have been successful well.

2. The direct dialogue is not available, it is just a regular religious activity.

The students responded to this question that an official activity of the dialogue is less, it is the starting point of the college to shape the dialogue.

Regarding the success of the dialogue, it met the reasonable success. It is found that the students in other institutions have understood Saengtham College more and vice versa. For example, someone thought that Christianity was a foreign religion, having talked, he could understand more.

To sum up, some administrators thought that the pastoral work is the dialogue activity run by Saengtham College, so they held that the activity is sufficient. But some administrators, the teaching staff and students reflected that the full dialogue has not been sufficient and just begins. However, so far conducted dialogue has been successful well.

3. How far do the students participate in the dialogue and is it necessary ?

The administrative staff shared the same idea that all the students of Saengtham College take part in the dialogue activity. As mentioned earlier, Saengtham students have to go outside to meet people, be they children, migrated labours, etc. They directly experience them without preaching the doctrine, but the universal truth to help them. This is necessary because the most students are about to be the priests in the future. When they become the priests, they can behave according to the social context.

The teaching staff thought that the students have taken part in the previous dialogues well. It is necessary for them to participate because they will be the leaders in next generation. In the past, students have been involved in the activities, whereas

the teaching staff has been advisors. In the next semester, the college will provide more opportunity to the students in the dialogue activities.

All the students similarly agreed that due to the fact that the college has less students, in the previous dialogues all students have taken part. Some students added that if the dialogue is conducted by the institute, all students attend it, if it is conducted by a camp, it depends on the individual decision.

To sum up, the administrative staff, teaching staff and students thought that all students of Saengtham College have taken part in the dialogue. Due to the fact that there are less students, it is easy for controlling and participating, and that it is very necessary for students to take part since they will be leaders and make use of these experiences in the future.

4. Should the process of dialogue be applied by students as to dialogue with the institutions of different faiths and how does it work – good or bad ?

The administrative staff similarly agreed that it is useful in the case that the students apply the dialogue to the students in different institutions and different religions. But it must be done in order to create understanding. In the past, there was less dialogue because individuals, thinking that one could live without others, lived independently. But at present, the situations around us connote that we cannot live alone, we have to be dependent as to live a happy life. The profit of applying the dialogue is that the students become more oneness and share experiences in life. When they become the clergymen in their religions, they will ease the relationship among religions.

The teaching staff thought that it is good in the case that the students apply the dialogue to the students in different institutions and different religions, but it never begins to happen. However, Saengtham College has sent students to experience the Buddhist way of practice at Wat Pananachart. It provided more knowledge and understanding about Buddhism. Furthermore, the students were enthusiastic in such an activity.

The reason for not preceding such an activity is due to the limitation of time, so it is difficult to run this matter.

The students shared the same idea that it is useful, but it never happens whether with a Bhikkhu or a Bhikkhuni. It should be more interests because the modern students can easily understand. When they complete their study and become a leader, they can share the experiences with others. Having known each other while studying, they can make it easy when they assume the leadership since they have ever known one another.

To sum up, the administrative staff and students thought that it is useful in the case that the students apply the dialogue to the fellows in different institutions and different religions. They can experience the way of life of each other. And the most important thing is that it will be easy for the religious relationship when those students assume the leadership in one's own religion. Meanwhile, the teaching staff thought that it is good but it is never put into action due to the limit of time.

5. What kind of the corporation has been rendered in the previous dialogues, and what is the corporation that provides the most benefit and why ?

The administrators reflected that so far conducted dialogues did not involved with the religious leaders but religious people. Therefore, there easily arose the corporation on the basis of friendship and principle of life without mentioning the doctrine. The ultimate benefit occurred is that the students have a chance to learn other religions. As a result, they know and understand one another so that they can easier corporate.

The teaching staff's idea can be summarized that so far conducted dialogues met the good corporation. But the corporation after the dialogue did not be obvious. The only thing that happened after the dialogues is that both sides dare open their minds to listen to each other. It is said that this immediately happened while the dialogue started.

The students reflected on this point that the corporation may not be obviously seen since it is almost the abstract, i.e. a positive feeling that occurs within the mind.

To sum up, all the interviewees thought that the concrete corporation does not occur. The only thing occurred is that open-mindedness to listen to each other, or it is said that it is a positive feeling that occurs wherever the dialogue is conducted.

6. How does the institute lay the policy and the aim on the dialogue ?

The administrative staff laid the following policy and aim :

1. The subjects related to the dialogue will be more added in order to help students understand the principle of dialogue.
2. There will be the students exchanged program starting among the Christian institutions. If there is no any obstacle, the program will be extended to the other religious institutions.
3. The inter-religious dialogue must be more conducted. It is not only for learning but deserving respect and honour towards the others.

The teaching staff expressed two different ideas :

1. The present syllabus is good and sufficient but the way of practice is just starting. So the practical aspect should be emphasized.
2. The syllabus concerning the dialogue is not sufficient, there must be more supplementary subjects- both theoretical and practical - about the dialogue. For example, there should be an inter-religious dialogue between student monks with those who are about to be the priests, including other religious people. However, this should be conducted by all the universities so that it can solve the social problems.

The students responding to this question gave the following suggestions :

1. The college should conduct more inter-religious dialogues in order to know the procedures in running the dialogue.
2. The college should conduct a special dialogue with MCU and work together, it may be a small group as to ease the management.
3. The college should be more open, since there are only the Catholic fellows therein. It should be widely open for those who are interested, be they the Christians of different sects or other religious people.

To sum up, the administrative staff laid the policy and aim for the dialogue that there must be more syllabuses on the dialogue including the students exchange

program which may be done with the other Christians of different sects and other religious people who are interested in the dialogue. The teaching staff and students suggested that there should be more the dialogue activities with the different religious students and more corporation with all the universities. Some students suggested that Saengtham College should be widely open for those who are interested in Christianity to study in the college though they are not Christians.

7. *Have the previous dialogues been in the line with the theory of the dialogue and how ?*

The administrative staff thought that the previous dialogue did not be done according to the full theory of the dialogue. However, they did not contrast with the theory, so the previous ones of Saengtham College have been in the line with the dialogue principles. Though they were not done according to the full theory of the dialogue, they did not contrast with the dialogue principles.

The teaching staff expressed two ideas :

1. They have been in the line with the theory because there were not competitive argumentations to win the others. They have accordingly followed the theory.

2. They have been in the line with the theory because they have followed the religious doctrines which do not, of course, contrast with the dialogue principles. So following the religious teachings has been in the line with the theory of the dialogue.

The students expressed two ideas :

1. They have been in the line because it is observed that everyone has had no any conflict, contempting others, etc. Everyone has been happy with the discussion, so they have been in the line.

2. They have been in the line, the practical dialogues first started, not the theoretical ones. When they bear a good result, the theoretical ones have been considered. It is found that they have been in the line with the dialogue theory as well.

To sum up, the administrative staff, teaching staff and students thought that the previous dialogues have been in the line with the dialogue though all the theory might not be put into action since those dialogues bear the beautiful fruits without any

conflict, and the most important thing is that they follow the religious doctrines. So the previous dialogues have been in the line with the theory.

4.2.10 Opinions on the problems and their solutions

The administrative staff, teaching staff and students of Saengtham College expressed their ideas on the problems and their solutions in responding to the following six questions :

1. What are the problems that obstruct the dialogue or make it unsuccessful ?

The administrative staff expressed these ideas :

1. It is the bias that obstructs the dialogue and makes it unsuccessful. That is, one is not open-minded to learn a positive aspect in other religions, thinking only that one's own religion is the best, the others' is not good. This can be found even in the religious leaders' minds.
2. It is an unclear attitude, i.e. a hidden intention for non-dialogue activity that obstructs and makes it unsuccessful.
3. The dialogue cannot be possible because of over-looking significance of the dialogue, i.e. not understanding, lack of knowledge of how to begin and what is the benefit to win, etc. which causes an effort and finally inactiveness for the dialogue.

The teaching staff expressed the following ideas :

1. The dialogue is not successful because the religious leaders deserve no significance of the dialogue. It obstructs the process, it cannot be continued. If any one does it, he may be regarded as a disobeyed.
2. The dialogue is not successful because one is afraid and suspicious for another. It may be because of a bitter mistake previously made by the last congregation.

The students expressed the following ideas :

1. The dialogue cannot be possible and successful because so far it was conducted, it was done without seriousness. The religious leaders have been not serious in it, just lay an order to do. So it resulted ineffectively.
2. The dialogue is not a sufficient priority for people, they emphasize on livelihood better than the dialogue.

3. Insufficient awareness for the others, eagerly presenting one's own doctrines without listening to others makes the dialogue impossible.

To sum up, the interviewees reflected that it is the over-looking significance of the dialogue of the religious leaders and people that obstructs it and makes it unsuccessful. That is, the religious leaders are not sincere in conducting the dialogue, but only the commanders, whereas the religious people focus on the livelihood than that of the dialogue. There are more miscellaneous factors such as narrow-mindedness and being afraid and suspicious.

2. *How should we solve the problems so that the dialogue is successful as we wish ?*

The administrative staff expressed the following ideas :

1. We must first learn to change an attitude towards the others by creating friendship. The friendship enables us to open minds and trust so that the dialogue easier begins. The so called learning results from 1) training together, and 2) doing an activity together. It should be noted that such an activity must not be done under the name of any religion, but under the social welfare. These factors grow a good friendship without any seal. As a result, the process of the dialogue goes easily.

2. A responsible sector or an agency for the dialogue in every zone, school, and university must be officially appointed.

3. We must encourage the motivation and sense of fellowship, and arrange an activity to be dealt with, and the theoretical or practical program.

4. We must publish a manual for the dialogue in order to introduce of what should be done and not should be done.

The teaching staff expressed three ideas :

1. The solution of problems should go gradually, starting from friendship, it creates friendly environment which makes the dialogue successful.

2. The college should co-arrange an activity, inviting the relative persons in various religions to take part and point out the solution. The so called relative persons refer to the authoritative persons who are responsible for running the dialogue until it is completed obviously.

3. The significance of the dialogue should be introduced to the surrounding people at the outset, then to other ones.

The students expressed the following ideas :

1. The dialogue should go step by step, starting by talking in general issues as to open mind and prepare oneself for the dialogue.

2. The leading staff for the dialogue must always encourage the participants, i.e. particular responsible persons in the college, they usually remind colleague the dialogue.

To sum up, the administrative staff, teaching staff, and students thought that the dialogue and its effectiveness initially start from the friendship by co-organizing an activity and being friends. Being friends at the outset will proceed the dialogue smoothly and effectively. Side by side, a manual for learning should be produced to educate general people.

3. *What kind of the dialogue between the intra-religious dialogue and inter-religious dialogue should be first conducted and why ?*

The administrative staff expressed two ideas :

1. Some suggested to conduct both the dialogues in accordance with the due course.

2. Some suggested that the intra-religious dialogue should be first conducted, the solidarity inside should be made firstly, then the inter-religious dialogue, because the solidarity inside wins the trust from outsiders.

The teaching staff expressed two ideas :

1. The intra-religious dialogue should be first conducted because we have to learn the background of separation of sects and make it understood before conducting the inter-religious dialogue.

2. Both the dialogues should be conducted side by side because living in the society cannot be deviated of which dialogue should be done first or later. Living between Christians and Buddhists comes under the way of life. Christians are surrounded by Buddhists. So the due dialogue should be conducted in accordance with a relative opportunity.

The students expressed three ideas :

1. It depends on an opportunity. The intra-religious dialogue or inter-religious dialogue is not fixed.

2. The inter-religious dialogue should be first conducted because the context of Thai society is that of Buddhists. So we share daily life with Buddhists more than Christians.

3. The intra-religious dialogue should be first conducted because we should first understand ourselves so that when we are asked, we can reply in the same line.

To sum up, almost administrators, lecturers and students thought that both the dialogues should be conducted hand in hand because Thai Christians are surrounded by Buddhists. So an opportunity to conduct a dialogue with Buddhists is more possible. However, the intra-religious dialogue should be also conducted whenever we find an opportunity.

4. *What is the urgent problem that requires the dialogue and why ?*

The administrative staff mentioned the following urgent problems :

1. The ignorance of religions of children and youth : at present the children and youth have a weak faith, thinking that they can survive without any religion, if they, the next civilians of the world, do not pay attention on religions, the world will be under the danger.

2. The mutual understanding : it is whether the previous issue or the present one, a conflict may arise in a fragile situation though there is any conflict among religions, it is not because of understanding but the cause does not start up.

3. The confronting problems : any unspecific problems that threatens the society at present. The religion should partially solve such problems.

For the same question, the teaching staff expressed the following ideas :

1. Thought there is no problem, the dialogue can be conducted since it is for preventing any problem from arising.

2. No understanding : it may be an intra-religious or inter-religious problem, if it is without understanding, it creates a big problem.

3. Materialism and consumerism : the confronting problems that all religions should urgently solve, because they are not problems for a certain religion.

4. Social welfare : when arise the natural disasters or sufferings, the religions should be leaders in rescue.

The students expressed the following ideas :

1. Mutual understanding : because of no understanding, there arose a variety of problems such as violence.

2. Moral misconduct : it is the most urgent problem that all religions should discuss to find the way out together.

To sum up, most interviewees thought that no understanding is the most important and urgent because it causes conflicts which may break out later on. The other problem is that the children and youth are under the stream of materialism and consumerism and turn their back from a religion. Such a problem happens in all religions. So all religions should urgently conduct a dialogue to solve this problem.

5. *Besides the dialogue, which a suitable method or form can make the dialogue more effective ?*

The administrative staff expressed the following ideas :

1. A moral activity without mentioning the name of a religion will make the dialogue more effective.

2. The participants of the dialogue will be supplementary in making it more successful. That is, they must take part in applying the findings of dialogue to wider circumstances.

The teaching staff expressed the following ideas :

1. The dialogue itself is perfect, there is nothing to be added. Only strictly following the process of the dialogue is the best complementary of it.

2. An activity is complementary in forming the dialogue. If the dialogue is conducted inside a room, it may be unclearly seen. But if an activity for corporation is strengthened, it will make the dialogue sensible.

The students expressed the following ideas :

1. More discussion will be complementary because it is like a rehearsal before the dialogue.

2. A religious organization should make the dialogue policy clear because it is complementary in strengthening the dialogue and quickly making it successful.

3. Encouraging understanding each other will be complementary when ones sufficiently know each other, it is easier to conduct the dialogue.

To sum up, the administrative staff and teaching staff thought that the activity and persons will be complementary for a more effective dialogue. That is, an activity for being accustomed to each other must be organized, meanwhile the participants should cooperate. The students added that a religious organization will be complementary for making the effective dialogue because if a religious organization emphasizes on the dialogue, the same must be quickly successful.

6. *Does the dialogue cause any other problem ?*

The administrative staff shared the same idea that if ones follow the principle of dialogue, there will be no any problem. However, the format, way, and time to conduct it must be suitable, if not, there may arise a problem. It is concluded that all must be respectful in the dialogue principle so that it provides the success to all in turn.

The teaching staff's idea can be concluded that the problem does not depend on the theory of dialogue but those who conduct the dialogue. If they do not get ready, the dialogue may cause problems than solving problems. So the persons must be already prepared for the dialogue. That is, ones should understand one's own religion and others'. The most important thing is that one should be open-minded to listen to opinion and belief and deserve respect in such opinion and belief.

The students shared the same idea that the dialogue which causes problems or not depends on the participants of the dialogue whether they really follow the principle of the dialogue or not. If they do not, there may arise problems later on.

To sum up, all the interviewees thought that the principle of dialogue does not cause any problem later, if the format and persons match. That is, the format of conducting the dialogue must rely on the topic, time, and place, etc. Meanwhile the persons must strictly follow the principle of the dialogue.

4.2.11 Suggestions

All aforementioned questions may not cover all ideas of the interviewees towards the dialogue. In order to get more various information, the interviewer gave an opportunity to the interviewees to give their suggestions which may not be included

in the earlier questions. A representative sample of the administrative staff, teaching staff and students of Saengtham College gave their suggestions as follows :

4.2.11.1 Administrators' suggestions

Having been interviewed about the theory of the dialogue, the dialogue in Saengtham College, and problems and their solutions, a representative sample of the administrative staff gave the valuable suggestions as to be guidelines for the dialogue as follows :

1. Those who conduct the dialogue should be reliable, wholesome in their way of life, and acceptable in characteristics. Despite no speaking, people follow these figures. They can extend the dialogue and make it reliable quickly.
2. The dialogue consists of a good principle, but those who participate in it must be open-minded.
3. We need the highly religious leaders to discuss more. Having been well conducted in a high level, the dialogue can be extended next to the congregation.
4. The specific personnel for the dialogue in the religious educational institutes must be appointed so that it will be easier to co-ordinate work and the dialogue can be more frequently conducted because the responsible body is there.

4.2.11.2 Teaching staff's suggestions

Having been interviewed about the theory of the dialogue, the dialogue in Saengtham College, and problems and their solutions, a representative sample of the teaching staff gave the valuable suggestions as to be guidelines for the dialogue as follows :

1. A religious educational institute should co-ordinate in managing the education. For example, the students should have a chance to learn subjects concerning Christianity in Saengtham College or the subjects concerning Buddhism in MCU in order to experience a real environment which is a factor leading to more mutual understanding.
2. Having finished the dialogue, we should extend it to various organizations and general people and educate them the process of dialogue which is learning process for happy and peaceful co-living.

4.2.11.3 Students' suggestions

Having been interviewed about the theory of the dialogue, the dialogue in Saengtham College, and problems and their solutions, a representative sample of the students gave the valuable suggestions as to be guidelines for the dialogue as follows :

1. The dialogue-based activity should be frequently done. It needs not a big group, but it should start from a little group, then extend to a big one. It is just like throwing a stone into a surface of water, its wave extends wider and wider.
2. A religious leader should widen his vision and provide other religious people an opportunity to learn his religion. And the teaching staff at a church or at a school should cultivate a positive attitude than contempt other religions.
3. Buddhism mostly influences the way of life of Thais. So Buddhism should co-ordinate more in solving any conflicts that arise in Thailand, for example, the problems in the three provinces in the southern Thailand.

4.2.12 Conclusion

A representative sample of the administrative staff, teaching staff and students of Saengtham College expressed their ideas that the dialogue is useful for both one's own religion and the society as a whole because it reminds us to pay more attention in learning our own religion. At the same time it requires understanding others and the mutual understanding results in happiness and peace for a major society. It can be said that the dialogue is a way to peace because its aim is to bring about peace to the world. According to the interviewees, the most important principle of the dialogue is that of sincerity in the dialogue without hidden agenda or hidden interests.

Most interviewees thought that the principle of the dialogue is in the same line with the doctrine of love in Christianity. Some interviewees thought that it is in the same line with the principle of the Vatican Council II. In this matter, some administrators expressed a different point of view that the specific doctrine of the dialogue is not found in Christianity, it began to happen in the Vatican Council II. However, such a principle as held in the Vatican Council II does not contrast with the doctrine.

Unavoidable thing in the dialogue is the presentation of one's standing point which may be different from others'. Most interviewees reflected that dare speaking

one's own belief, which differs from others', will create more friendship. So it is very important in the dialogue. The passing over a tradition can be made but within a limit, i.e. not immersing oneself so deep, for examples, joining the Sacrament in Christianity or being ordained in Buddhism. Daring criticism of one's own belief is held to be important since it always renews one's own religion. For the last issue, all interviewees believed that the dialogue can solve conflicts among religions, but it must be conducted usually and continuously.

Saengtham College has its specific curriculum on the dialogue and provides the pastoral activity for society which is held a practical dialogue. However, a theoretical dialogue with other religions is still less. For the participation of students, since there are less students in the college, all students take part in all activities organized by the college. All interviewees agreed with sending students to conduct the dialogue with students in different religions and institutions because it will create friendship and is easy to react one another when they turn the religious leaders. The administrative staff and teaching staff have laid the policy for more dialogues. They want to conduct the dialogue in form of co-studying in a classroom where the same subject is taught and want all the universities co-ordinate in such a dialogue.

The problem for dialogue is ignorance on importance of the dialogue of the religious leaders, whereas the religious people regard the livelihood better than the dialogue. Ignorance on importance of the dialogue produces no dialogue, without the dialogue there arise many problems such as suspiciousness and contempting others. The way to solve these problems is friendship. That is, at the beginning we may not immediately proceed the dialogue, but we should do activities together as to create friendship. After the rise of friendship, the dialogue will automatically start. Due to the fact that the Christians in Thailand has been surrounded by Buddhists, so the dialogue cannot be fixed which one between the intra-religious dialogue and inter-religious dialogue should be first conducted. The due dialogue depends an opportunity. The most urgent problem that requires the dialogue is that of no understanding one another because it can bring about the violence at any time. The dialogue will never cause any problem to those who participate in it later if it is carefully prepared and strictly follows rules of the dialogue.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This research aims at studying the teachings of Buddhism and Christianity related to the dialogue including comparison of ideas on the dialogue of the administrative staff, teaching staff and students of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Saengtham College which consist of the three main points : 1) idea on the theory of the dialogue, 2) idea on the dialogue in an institute, and 3) idea on the problems and their solutions and suggestions for the dialogue in the religious educational institutes. In this chapter the researcher conclude both the documentary research and field research including suggestions for those who are interested in doing further research.

5.1.1 Findings of the documentary research

Findings of the documentary research show that in the Tipitaka, there are several examples of the dialogue conducted by the Buddha and his disciples. Particularly, the Buddha is an ideal example for the dialogue. There is a Buddhist term close to the dialogue, i.e. the term ‘Kelena dhammasakaccha’, meaning ‘discussion of truth on due occasions’, an opportunity to exchange knowledge and opinions about truth, goodness and beneficial topics.’ The customs and manners of the Buddha related to the dialogue with adherents of other religions are recorded in the Tipitaka. For a discussion, the Buddha does not aim at convincing the listeners to believe him or respect him but presenting what he discovered and exchanging idea with ones whose ideas are different from him. Of course, there are those who agree with him and those who disagree with him. He obviously says that he has accepted the goodness in other religions since there are some points being in the same line with Buddhism and some being different. For expressing his attitude towards some different points from Buddhism, the Buddha respectfully expresses them without evaluating them as Sandaka, the wanderer, speaks in praise of Buddhism that it does not praise itself and

depreciate the other, it preaches according to the cause and effect. For both the praise and disparagement, the Buddha teaches not to be over-pleased in the praise and not to be angry with the disparagement, one should explain what the fact is. That is, if this thing is available in Buddhism, it should be accepted, if not, it should be rejected. The dialogue principle mainly focuses on deep listening, so too, Buddhism praises the listening as 'Bahusutta' meaning 'a man of great listening'. Meanwhile the Buddha states the five principle of good listening : 1) not depreciating what one speaks, 2) not depreciating one who speaks, 3) not depreciating oneself, 4) mindful listening, and 5) analytical listening. These principles are in line with the dialogue principles of today standardized by Leonard Swidler on his rule of equality and by David Bohm on his concept of the deep listening.

Asoka is a king who violently exercised power to extend his border but at the end he found no happiness on the basis of violence, so he turned to follow the good governance (Dhammadhipateyya) of Buddhism. However, the country he ruled contained adherents of various religions so he prescribed the listening and pleasantly listening the doctrine of each other to all religions, one should not condemn the doctrine of others since it is as if destroying oneself. The king taught a valuable lesson to the generations after him, "If there is violence, the dialogue cannot take place, meanwhile if there is the dialogue, the violence does not take place as well".

The attitudes which are not supportive of the dialogue are Exclusivism and Inclusivism. It may be said that the said attitudes are for propagation of a religion since propagating the doctrine the Buddha necessarily affirms that his Dhamma is the best, the others' doctrine cannot lead to salvation, no need to learn other doctrines. The Buddha is the discoverer of the path leading to salvation and whoever wants to liberate, one must approach Buddhism or be a good friend with Buddhism. On hearing this, the followers devote themselves to practice and become more confident in the Master.

In Christianity, there are a number of the dialogues conducted by Jesus Christ in the Bible, for an example, he asked for water with a Samaritan woman. This is in line with a rule of dialogue. That is, the Samaritans are regarded as non-believers, rejected by the Jews. But Jesus ignores this and regards everybody equal without evaluating others before knowing them which is a basic rule for the dialogue,

everybody must be equal in order that the dialogue will be successful. In the Bible, there are more attitudes supportive of the dialogue, for examples, the attitude of promoting self-criticism as Jesus said that one should pay attention to the plank in one's eye, do not look at the speck of sawdust in one's brother's eye, the attitude of equality as he said that do to others what you would have them do to you, the attitude of no hidden agenda as he said that give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do, and the attitude of honesty on the doctrine as he said that let your 'Yes' be 'Yes', and your 'No', 'No', anything beyond this comes from the evil one. The said attitudes are in line with the dialogue rule prescribed by Leonard Swidler. However, it is found in the Bible that there are the attitudes unsupportive of the dialogue, i.e. Exclusivism and Inclusivism. The reason for expressing these attitudes is the same with that of Buddhism as mentioned earlier, i.e. it is for cultivating confidence over the disciples in practicing the doctrine.

From the 4th century up to 20th century, the dialogue disappeared from Christianity due to several causes such as war and politics, etc. During the said period the concept of Exclusivism was very popular, it may be observed through the passage, "Outside the Church, there is no salvation." The time passed until the Vatican Council II, the dialogue once again has come to existence in Christianity. However, the concept of Inclusivism has not been extinct, it may be observed through the Pope John Paul's implication that the salvation of non-believers can be possible through the grace of God. Though this attitude still exists, possibility on the dialogue in overall picture of Christianity will be positive.

5.1.2 Findings of the field research

The findings of the field research show that the representatives of administrative staff, teaching staff and students of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University agree with theory of the dialogue. They reason that the dialogue will lead to mutual understanding and peace at the end. The dialogue can be applied to all institutes such as to a family in order to cultivate understanding between parents and their children, to an educational institute in order to meet the needs of the administrative staff, teaching staff and students. However, one should not over-attach to the dialogue rules; if there may be something useful it should be included as to

make the dialogue effective. All the interviewees think that the dialogue principle is in line with the teachings of Buddhism, but they equate it with different terms of Buddhism such as Dhammasakaccha, the principle of questions and answers of the Buddha, Aparihaniyadhamma, and the association with the wise as mentioned in Mangala-sutta, etc. The Buddha often exercises this dialogue principle, particularly before his going for alms in morning.

There are a few issues with which the administrative staff, teaching staff and students disagree. One is the issue on the origin of dialogue, some administrators are not sure about the aims of dialogue since it may have a hidden agenda, so the origin of dialogue, i.e. Christianity, should obviously announce that what the aims of dialogue are. If the dialogue is for the sake of peace, all religions get ready to collaborate and develop it hand in hand. Another is the issue on the concept of the passing over the tradition by John Dunne. Most interviewees do not agree with the passing over tradition to learn a religion ; it is viewed as a pretence and self-lying. The process of faith is one and beyond the intelligence; so we cannot believe in the other religion if we still attach to one's own religion. The passing over tradition is just trying to believe but not sincerely believe. Therefore the outcome of pretence and sincere belief is different. It is noticeable in this issue that there is, according to the teachings in Buddhism, no restriction on adherents of other faith to come and learn, on the contrary, it invites to come and learn. And at present, there are a number of those who pass over tradition to learn Buddhism. Most interviewees reflect on the same issue that the Buddhists should not pass over tradition to learn other religion. However, some interviewees think that Buddhism does not reject the passing over tradition to learn other faith, but the other faith reject Buddhists pass over tradition to learn their faith.

For the dialogue in the institute, most interviewees think that the curriculum of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is supportive of the dialogue principle, especially the project of 'Exchanged Students' which exchange students with the foreign religious institutes such as Taiwan, Korea, etc. and the project of affiliation institute in a foreign country. The said policy is regarded as a kind of the dialogue. However, though the curriculum is supportive of the dialogue, the students have not taken part in the so far conducted activities of the dialogue, they have been only listeners without expressing any idea since the dialogues conducted by the university

have been official and too vast forum, difficult to be accessed by all. Therefore most interviewees think that the dialogues conducted by the university have been just ceremony, not an ideal dialogue. As a result, success of such a dialogue is still less. However, it is well starting point.

The administrative staff, teaching staff and students think that the dialogue cannot be possible and successful because it lacks open-mindedness and sincerity. The problem found during the dialogue is usage of language since misunderstanding in language incompletely responses to what the other presented and causes problems later on. Meanwhile if the dialogue lacks sincerity and open-mindedness, such a dialogue is conducted on emptiness. The participants cannot gain any benefit from the dialogue. To solve this problem, the institutes should support students to study languages including the religious language, educate them about the right dialogue, open-mindedness and sincerity.

Most interviewees emphasize on the significance of the intra-religion dialogue than that of the inter-religion dialogue because mutual understanding among sects in a certain religion should be made at the outset, then the inter-religion dialogue should be conducted later. Whenever there arises an argument among religions, adherents of a certain religion can be an active representative for other sects. However, some interviewees think that the intra-religion dialogue should be conducted at the outset because the external problems are more crucial and consist of violence, but the internal problems of Buddhism are without violence.

The administrative staff, teaching staff and students of Saengtham College share the same idea with that of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, namely they think that the dialogue is useful and a pathway to peace; it also reminds ones to scrutinize one's own religion. Most interviewees disagree with the passing over tradition to learn other faith since learning the other faith through religious texts and attending some activities as much as one can are enough for learning the other religions ; it is not suitable if one gets the ordination or gets Baptism. It is summarized that one can attend a religious affair but should know limitation and get permission from a respective congregation. On the other hand, the interviewees agree with the passing over tradition to learn other religion in a primary level, i.e. open-mindedness to learn scholarly teaching of the texts, and in a middle level, i.e. attending a general

religious ceremony ; but they disagree with attending in a high level, i.e. the ordination or Baptism. The dialogue is also in line with the teachings in Christianity such as love, propagation of gospel, resolution in the Vatican Council II, etc. For the issue of self-criticism, some of the administrative staff, teaching staff, and students of Saengtham College reflect that self-criticism is self-purifying, i.e. the more one criticizes one's religion, the less deficient or more clean one's religion is. The interviewees accept that Christians during the 4th – 20th centuries made mistakes in propagation of the gospel since they regarded the Church superior to God. This criticism reflects the deep sincerity and responsibility for those who are not yet sure in the process of dialogue. Though most interviewees regard the dialogue as a good thing, if the participants of dialogue lack sincerity, the dialogue is not definitely successful.

For the curriculum of Saengtham College, most interviewees think that it is in line with the dialogue principle since the religious relation is taught as a subject and the pastoral ministry in community is regarded as a practical dialogue. However, some administrators think that there are less the leading personnel who encourage students in the dialogue. The dialogue conducted by the college is not yet continued. So far as the dialogue has been conducted, though less, it is successful in a reasonable level because it met collaboration in the dialogue from various institutes. In this issue, we may see the differences between Saengtham College and Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, that is, the way the college organizes the dialogue is simple and the participants can express their ideas, whereas the way Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University organizes it is a bit formal and big forum so that the participants cannot express any idea. It may be said that Saengtham College emphasizes on the grass-root-dialogue, whereas Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University emphasizes on the structural and policy dialogue, so the participants of the dialogue in Saengtham College are students but those in MCU are the leaders.

For the issue on problems and their solutions, most administrators lecturers and students think that the problem that obstructs the dialogue and makes it unsuccessful is that the religious leaders ignore significance of the dialogue ; when they disagree or are inactive, the process of dialogue is impossible and too late and difficult to develop it. Its solution is creating motivation as to show the significance of the dialogue. Further, the religious leaders and grass roots must pay attention to the dialogue. For

creating the motivation, ones may start by means of doing activities together. Most interviewees emphasize the inter-religious dialogue than the intra-religious dialogue, they reason that the Christians in Thailand are surrounded by the Buddhists, so the inter-religious dialogue is easier and more comfortable to the intra-religious dialogue. However, there are some interviewees think that both the dialogues should be conducted hand in hand according to due occasion. In this point, the opinion differs from that of MCU's opinion as mentioned earlier.

5.2 Suggestions

1. For the next study, one should study in depth the dialogue in Buddhism from the Tipitaka, Atthakatha, Tika, and Anutika as to summarize it as the Buddhist theory of dialogue.

2. For the next study, one should study those who pass over the tradition to learn the other faith of how they think and what they achieve from the passing over, because the passing over tradition to learn the other faith raise the controversy whether it is suitable or not and it leads to understand the other faith or not.

3. For the next study, if there is enough the budget, the three levels of dialogue, namely the Dialogue of Study, the Dialogue of Prayer, and the Dialogue of Life should be fully organized by means of interview and observation in order to realize suitability and effectiveness in each level of the dialogue.

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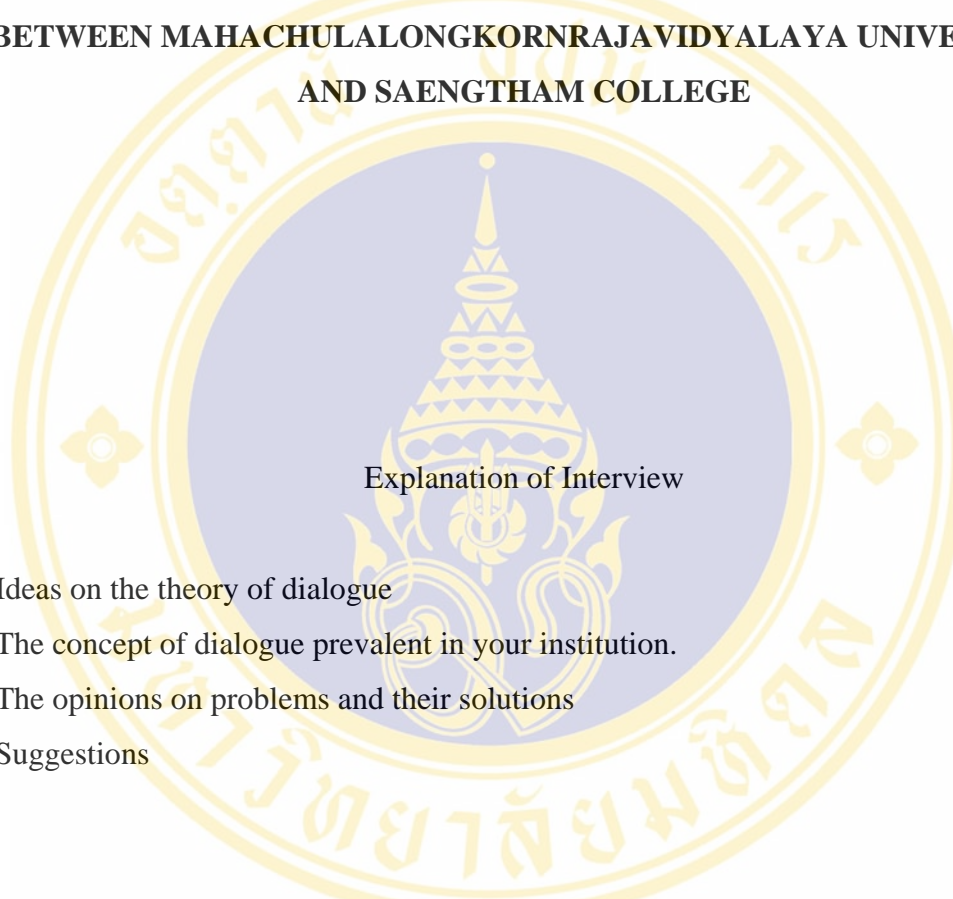
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RESEARCH INTERVIEW

INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN MAHACHULALONGKORNRAJAVIDYALAYA UNIVERSITY AND SAENGTHAM COLLEGE



Explanation of Interview

1. Ideas on the theory of dialogue
2. The concept of dialogue prevalent in your institution.
3. The opinions on problems and their solutions
4. Suggestions

Phramaha Thongpool Kulwong
Faculty of Graduate studies (Comparative Religion)
Mahidol University

Part 1

1. Ideas on the theory of dialogue

- 1.1 Do you think whether the dialogue is useful or not ?
- 2.2 Which kind of the dialogue can be conducted and brings about the most benefit and why ?
- 3.3 Which kind of the dialogue cannot solve any problem and why ?
- 4.4 Does the dialogue concern with the principles in Buddhism and how ?
- 5.5 Do you think that bravely speaking of differences or maintaing on one's own standpoint without easily following others is important or not ?
- 6.6 Do you think an approach to the other religious tradition by joining in such a context for deeper understanding therein is necessary or not ?
- 7.7 How do you think with statement that 'those who join the dialogue must be ready for criticizing one's own faith in a positive way' ?
- 8.8 Is the dialogue peaceful approach ?
- 9.9 Can the dialogue solve conflicts among religions ?

2.The concept of dialogue prevalent in your institution.

- 2.1. Does the curriculum in your institute concern with the dialogue ?
- 2.2 Is the dialogue in your institute conducted enough and is it successful ?
- 2.3 How much do the students participate in the dialogue and is it necessary for them ?
- 2.4 Should the dialogue be applied by the students to the other religious institutions and what is the benefit or negative result of such a dialogue ?
- 2.5 What kind of corporation in the previous dialogues and what is the most useful corporation and why ?
- 2.6 What is the policy and goal on the dialogue that the university should have and plan for ?
- 2.7 Do the previous dialogues match the theory of dialogue ?

3.The opinions on problems and their solutions

3.1 Do you think what makes the dialogue impossible or unsuccessful and why so ?

3.2 To make the dialogue successful, how should we deal with the solutions ?

3.3 Which dialogues between the intra-religion dialogue and inter-religion dialogue should be conducted first and why ?

3.4 What are the most urgent problems that require the dialogue applied for, and why ?

3.5 Out of the dialogue, do you think are there any more approaches or methods that can strengthen the dialogue ?

3.6 Does the dialogue cause any more problems ?

4. Suggestions

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แบบสัมภาษณ์

ประกอบการทำวิทยานิพนธ์เรื่อง

สานเสวนาทงศาสนาในสถาบันทางศาสนาระดับอุดมศึกษา : ศึกษาเปรียบเทียบมหาวิทยาลัยมหา
จุฬาลงกรณราชวิทยาลัยกับวิทยาลัยแสงธรรม

คำชี้แจง

ในแบบสัมภาษณ์นี้แบ่งเป็น ๕ ส่วนคือ ๑. แนวความคิดที่มีต่อกระบวนการสานเสวนา ๒. แนวความคิดที่มีต่อสานเสวนาในสถาบันของตนเอง ๓. แนวความคิดที่มีต่อปัญหาของสานเสวนา และวิธีแก้ไข ๔. ข้อเสนอแนะ

พระมหาทองพูล กุลวงษ์

นักศึกษาลัทธิศูตตรศีลปะศาสตร์มหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาศาสนาเปรียบเทียบ

คณะสังคมศาสตร์และมนุษยศาสตร์

มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล

ส่วนที่ ๑ แนวความคิดเกี่ยวกับทฤษฎีสานเสวนา

- ๑.๑ ท่านเห็นว่า หลักสานเสวนามีประโยชน์หรือไม่ อย่างไร
- ๑.๒ หลักสานเสวนาใดบ้างที่สามารถนำไปปฏิบัติและเกิดประโยชน์สูงสุดได้จริง เพราะเหตุใด
- ๑.๓ สานเสวนาข้อใดที่ท่านเห็นว่าไม่สามารถแก้ปัญหาได้จริง เพราะเหตุใด
- ๑.๔ สานเสวนาสอดคล้องกับหลักคำสอนทางศาสนาหรือไม่ อย่างไร
- ๑.๕ ท่านเห็นว่า “การกล้าพูดถึงความแตกต่าง หรือ การแสดงจุดยืนทางความเชื่อของตนเอง ไม่คล้อยตามคนอื่นง่าย ๆ” มีความสำคัญหรือไม่ อย่างไร
- ๑.๖ ท่านเห็นว่า “การเข้าไปศึกษาวัฒนธรรมของศาสนาอื่นโดยการเข้าไปเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของ วัฒนธรรมทางศาสนานั้น ๆ เพื่อให้เข้าใจศาสนาอื่นอย่างลึกซึ้งยิ่งขึ้น” มีความจำเป็นหรือไม่ อย่างไร
- ๑.๗ ท่านมีความเห็นอย่างไรกับข้อความที่ว่า “ผู้ร่วมสานเสวนาต้องพร้อมที่จะวิจารณ์ความเชื่อ ของตนและกลุ่มของตนในทางสร้างสรรค์”
- ๑.๘ สานเสวนาเป็นสันติวิธีหรือไม่ อย่างไร
- ๑.๙ สานเสวนาสามารถแก้ปัญหาคัดแย้งระหว่างศาสนาได้หรือไม่ อย่างไร

ส่วนที่ ๒ แนวความคิดเกี่ยวกับสานเสวนาในสถาบันทางศาสนาระดับอุดมศึกษา

- ๒.๑ หลักสูตรในสถาบันของท่านเอื้อต่อการสานเสวนาหรือไม่ อย่างไร
- ๒.๒ กิจกรรมสานเสวนาในสถาบันของท่านเพียงพอและประสบผลสำเร็จหรือไม่ อย่างไร
- ๒.๓ นักศึกษามีส่วนร่วมในสานเสวนามากน้อยเพียงใดและจำเป็นหรือไม่
- ๒.๔ ควรให้นักศึกษานำกระบวนการสานเสวนาไปใช้เพื่อสานเสวนากับสถาบันที่นับถือ ศาสนาอื่นหรือไม่ และจะมีผลดีและผลเสียอย่างไร
- ๒.๕ การสานเสวนาที่ผ่านมา มีความร่วมมืออะไรบ้าง และท่านคิดว่า อะไรคือความร่วมมือที่เป็นประโยชน์สูงสุด เพราะเหตุใด
- ๒.๖ ทางสถาบันควรมีนโยบายเช่นไรเกี่ยวกับสานเสวนา และควรวางเป้าหมายอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับ เรื่องนี้
- ๒.๗ การสานเสวนาที่ผ่านมาสอดคล้องกับทฤษฎีสานเสวนาหรือไม่อย่างไร อย่างไร

ส่วนที่ ๓ แนวคิดต่อปัญหาและวิธีการแก้ไขกระบวนการสานเสวนา

- ๓.๑ ท่านคิดว่า ปัญหาอะไรที่ทำให้การสานเสวนาไม่เกิดขึ้น หรือไม่ประสบผลสำเร็จ เพราะเหตุใด

- ๓.๒ ควรวิธีแก้ไขปัญหอย่างไร จึงจะทำให้สานเสวนาประสบความสำเร็จตามเป้าประสงค์
- ๓.๓ ท่านคิดว่า สานเสวนาประเภทใดมีความจำเป็นต้องการทำก่อน ระหว่างสานเสวนาภายในศาสนาและสานเสวนาภายนอกศาสนา เพราะเหตุใด
- ๓.๔ ท่านคิดว่า ปัญหาอะไรที่เป็นปัญหาเร่งด่วน ที่ต้องอาศัยการสานเสวนา เพราะเหตุใด
- ๓.๕ นอกจากกระบวนการสานเสวนา ท่านคิดว่ามีวิธีการหรือรูปแบบใดเหมาะสมที่จะเพิ่มพูนให้กระบวนการสานเสวนามีประสิทธิภาพมากยิ่งขึ้น
- ๓.๖ การสานเสวนาจะทำให้เกิดปัญหาอย่างอื่นหรือไม่ อย่างไร

ส่วนที่ ๔ ข้อเสนอแนะ

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Past 2

รายนามผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ (Interviewees)

๑. ผู้บริหาร คณาจารย์และนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยมหาจุฬาลงกรณราชวิทยาลัย

๑.๑ ผู้บริหาร ๔ ท่าน ประกอบด้วย

- ๑.๑.๑ พระธรรมโกศาจารย์ (ประยูร ธมฺมจิตฺโต) อธิการบดี
- ๑.๑.๒ พระราชปัญญาเมธี (สมชัย กุศลจิตฺโต) รองอธิการบดีฝ่ายกิจการต่างประเทศ
- ๑.๑.๓ พระสุธีวรญาณ (ณรงค์ จิตฺตโสภณ) รองอธิการบดีฝ่ายวิชาการ
- ๑.๑.๔ พระสุธีธรรมมานูวัตร (เทียบ สิริญาโณ) คณบดี คณะพุทธศาสตร์

๑.๒. คณาจารย์ ๔ ท่าน ประกอบด้วย

- ๑.๒.๑ พระมหาภาสกรณ ปิโยภาโส อาจารย์ประจำภาควิชาศาสนาและปรัชญา
- ๑.๒.๒ พระอาจารย์สมภาร สมภาโร อาจารย์ประจำคณะพุทธศาสตร์
- ๑.๒.๓ อ. สนิท ศรีสำแดง อาจารย์พิเศษ
- ๑.๒.๔ อ. แสวง อุดมศรี อาจารย์พิเศษ

๑.๓ นักศึกษา ๔ ท่าน ประกอบด้วย

- ๑.๓.๑ พระมหากันดา จันทร์แดง นักศึกษาปริญญาโท (นานาชาติ)
- ๑.๓.๒ พระยอดธง สุทธิรัตน (แก้วดี) นักศึกษาปริญญาโท
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