

KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION

VOL. 03

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

**DEMOCRATIC
DEVELOPMENT**



**SOCIAL JUSTICE
IN INTER-RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE**

**April
2008**

 **Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung**

DEMOCRATIC
DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL JUSTICE
IN INTER-RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE

EDITED BY:
Mr. **HENG MONYCHENDA**
Director
Buddhism for Development

PUBLISHED BY:



KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION
KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

THE KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF) is a German political foundation named after the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany after the Second World War. The KAF provides counseling and education on good governance with a view to promote democratic political institutions and policies. The KAF works in 120 countries worldwide. Half of the foundation's activities continue to be done in Germany. The office in Cambodia has been established in 1994. The partners include the National Assembly and the Senate, the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Interior and selected other ministries, the political parties represented in Parliament, media and civil society organizations. In recent years particular emphasis has been given to the support of democratic decentralization.

OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

In this series the KAF makes available documents emanating from the cooperation with its partners in Cambodia which appear of interest beyond the specific program work.

© Copyright 2008 by Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Cambodia

Authors:

His Excellency **Peter Weiss**, Venerable **Khy Sovannratana**, His Excellency **Ung Ty Friar Un Son**, His Excellency **Vann Mat**

Editor:

Mr. **Heng Monychenda**

Publisher:

Konrad Adenauer Foundation
House No. 4, Street 462,
Khan Chamkar Mon, P.O. Box 944
Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia
Tel : (855-23) 213 363 / 726 221
Fax : (855-23) 213 364
Email : office@kas-cambodia.com
Website : www.kas.de/kambodscha

Printed in Cambodia

ISBN-13: 978-99950-880-71

PREFACE

This volume of the Occasional Papers on Democratic Development looks at the term “social justice” from the perspectives of Buddhist, Muslim and Christian faiths.

We have asked outstanding proponents of the Buddhist, Muslim, Catholic and Protestant religious groups in Cambodia to elaborate on the term “social justice”. In addition, a Catholic German parliamentarian has added a European point of view.

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation has a mandate to promote democratic political institutions and policies. Why should we address a concept from religious perspectives rather than from a primarily political one? The answer is easy.

Our intention here is to deal with issues raised by the links between religion and politics. “Religion and politics” is concerned with two spheres of activity in the life of the same person. Citizens who belong to religious groups are also members of secular society. This dual association generates a close relationship between the religious and the secular spheres. The relationship we intend to look into is the influence of religious belief on secular political preference and decision-making.

Religious beliefs have moral, social and political implications. It is inevitable for people of faith to express these through their activities as citizens in the political order. Religious beliefs have secular political validity. As they are thought by their exponents to possess high religious authority, politicians and the state are well advised to take account of these convictions when formulating policies.

The concept of social justice is paramount in the policies of a state. Spurred by rapid economic growth in Cambodia the gap between rich and poor has widened, as it has in many other countries. How far this trend will be accepted will influence the policies of the state. In that regard this volume is political in nature.

I express my appreciation to all the contributing authors. Heng Monychenda, Director of the independent NGO Buddhism for Development (BfD) deserves particular gratitude for having edited this volume and for having taken great care that difficult religious and philosophical terms were appropriately translated. The KAF has had the great privilege to work with Heng Monychenda for more than two decades. We have always agreed that moral, ethical and religious values are vital for secular economic and political

decision-making. Mr. Yi Thon, Secretary General of the Cambodian Inter Religious Council was of great help in organizing a conference in Phnom Penh in August 2007 during which drafts of the papers were presented and discussed.

Wolfgang Meyer
Country Representative
Konrad Adenauer Foundation

FOREWORD

Social justice in the Cambodian context

The search for a just society and the resolution of social problems has remained a constant goal ever since societies first developed, and remains so to the present day. From a Buddhist perspective, Cambodia, just like anywhere else, is engaged in a constant dialogue to improve society with the aim of finding a just society free from social problems for all.

All the papers presented in this volume focus on justice as a central feature of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Each religion presents its own view of how the principles of justice form its foundation, ideals and the practices of its followers.

Many of Cambodia's current social ills are the consequence of previous governments, the Khmer people themselves and the geopolitical situation of the country. Violation of human rights, in particular those regarding politics, women and children, are indicators of an unjust society. Income disparity, corruption and illegal work practices are other manifestations of the same problem. The absence of adequate rules of law also indicates a society that is fundamentally unjust. All these elements are evident, to a greater or lesser extent, in Cambodia today.

Although we are not living in the past, history can guide us to a better understanding of what constitutes a just society. Of the many initiatives to improve social justice, religions are worthy of particularly close attention. All major religions share a founding in tenets of social justice. All teach their followers to show the same compassion, wisdom and love as their founders. These three principles are both the tools necessary to produce a just society, and the qualities by which we judge a society just.

From a religious point of view, Cambodia's problems are the product of the inappropriate use or complete absence of these three principles. This may be the result of many years of war, the impact of globalisation, the lack of ethical leadership or perhaps the decreasing importance of ethical standards in this day and age. However, as Khmers or religious people we cannot allow the erosion of social justice to continue indefinitely. Religious leaders of all persuasions should work together to propagate the qualities of compassion, wisdom and love. They should not imply that only "their" religion can supply these in a Cambodian context.

Open discussion and mutual understanding, such as that promoted by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation-supported seminar on social justice, is good way to start Cambodia on the road to a just society.

I wish to thank the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, who have always advocated for social justice in Cambodia, for bringing together intellectuals, politicians and religious leaders who can provide a triangle of stability for a just Cambodian society.

Heng Monychenda

Director

Buddhism for Development

SOCIAL JUSTICE THESIS PAPER

1. For Christians, to be “just” means to be right, but not in a variable or subjective manner. It means rather to be absolutely right and is based on the sacred laws and traditions that Christians believe are derived from God’s wisdom and holiness. Justice is then, an unequivocal truth from the highest possible authority.

2. The Christian understanding is that a person is just if they follow God’s holy will in every thought and action of their life and follow divine traditions and laws. A person is just who conscientiously respects the law, fulfils any legal duties promptly and never makes any unfounded demands.

3. The Christian social doctrine defines social justice as that which is in the public interest. Those who infringe on the common good offend against social justice. In the Christian view, social justice and the common good are indivisible.

A purely liberal state follows the principal: “All private actions which are not specifically forbidden are permitted.”

A social state founded on Christian justice follows the principle of social fairness: “Every action that serves the common good is an ethical and legal obligation.”

4. The basis of justice is everyone’s right to their God-given dignity. In a social state founded on the rule of law, justice means identical rights for all. The law protects against the arbitrary use and abuse of power. It also secures freedom for everyone regardless of power.

5. Justice dictates an equal chance for everyone. Everyone should have the same access to educational and professional opportunities.

6. Justice has a socially balancing effect and demands the fair distribution of burdens. In the Christian view it is appropriate for the society that the stronger contribute more to the community than the weaker.

7. Justice ensures peace. Wherever the rights of humans to live a life of dignity are ignored or where the freedom of individuals or groups is limited, violence and unrest result. Establishing justice and peace means respecting human and civil rights and eliminating social and economic hardships.

Peter Weiss MdB

CONTENT

PREFACE.....	5
FOREWORD.....	7
SOCIAL JUSTICE THESIS PAPER.....	9
CONTENT	11
INTRODUCING INTERESTS AND CONVICTIONS OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA	13
1. Historical Development.....	13
2. Today’s relationship of Church and State	14
3. Influence of the church on politics	15
4. Relationship of church and state in Europe	16
5. Church and state in the draft of the European constitution	16
CONCEPT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN BUDDHISM.....	19
1. Introduction.....	19
2. Men are born equal.....	20
3. Buddhism and Human Rights	20
4. Equality and Dignity	21
5. The Position of Man.....	21
6. Rights and Equality	22
7. The Path of Purification	23
8. The Three fold Training	24
9. Wisdom and Morality	25
10. Wisdom and Compassion.....	25
11. The Law of Karma	26
12. Inequality	26
13. Freedom of Thought.....	27
14. Freedom of Religion	28
15. The Sublime States (<i>Brahma-vihara</i>)	28
16. Shunning Prejudices.....	30
17. Conclusion	31
THE CAMBODIAN CHRISTIAN-PROTESTANT COMMUNITY VIEW ON JUSTICE.....	33
1. Introduction.....	33
2. Education on Social Morality	33
3. Basis of Social Injustice.....	34
A. Source of Social Justice.....	35
B. Lack of Social Justice.....	35
4. Implementation of Social Justice.....	35
5. Conclusion and Recommendations for the Implementation of Social Justice	37

THE CAMBODIAN CHRISTIAN–CATHOLIC COMMUNITY VIEW ON JUSTICE.....	39
1. Introduction	39
2. The Concept of Social Justice	39
3. What is Justice?	39
4. Christian Concept of Social Justice	40
5. Do we hope our religious faith can be applied with the concept of daily life social justice?	48
6. Conclusion.....	49
ISLAM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.....	51
1. Definition of Islam.....	51
2. The role of Islam	51
3. Rights and freedom under Islam.....	51
4. Islam and terrorism.....	51
5. Islam and justice in society.....	51
BIOGRAPHY.....	53
Mr. Heng Monychenda	53
Venerable Khy Sovannratana	53
His Excellency Peter Weiss	54
Friar Un Son	55
His Excellency Ung Ty	55
His Excellency Vann Mat	56

INTRODUCING INTERESTS AND CONVICTIONS OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA

H.E. Peter Weiss
Member of the German Bundestag

1. Historical Development

In order to understand the relationship between the state and the church in Germany today, one has to take into account a long historical process and the peculiarity of the Christian occidental cultural region. In pre-Christian cultures, state and religion were united. The distinction between church and state has only developed under the influence of Christianity.

In the Middle Ages (between the 4th and 15th century AD) church and state were tightly interwoven. Even after the reformation which divided Christianity into Catholics and Protestants (circa AD 1600), the principalities were headed by Christian rulers whose subjects had to adopt their chiefs' religious denomination. To move, for example, from a Protestant to a Catholic principality meant also to change denomination. Furthermore, the Catholic bishops had also been secular rulers since the early Middle Ages. They ruled mostly small areas where they were the secular and spiritual leaders. This was reflected in many small German principalities, which were formed after the split of the Christian church into Protestant and Roman Catholic institutions.

Following the French Revolution of 1789, the churches were expropriated. This was an expression of the process of secularisation, which had begun during the enlightenment, based on the desire to entirely separate the church and the state. In 1803 came the secularisation of all religious domains including the Reich's monasteries. The former religious realms became integrated into the newly created small German states that had been formed under pressure from Napoleon, who intended to forge a new Europe.

In the second half of the 19th century, the German Reich's chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, had a confrontation with the Roman Catholic Church in what is now known as the Culture War, to reduce the influence of the church. He introduced punishments for clergy who made negative comments about the state (called the Pulpit Clause), he outlawed the Jesuit order, placed ecclesiastical law on school supervision in the hands of the Prussian state and introduced civil marriage laws. Bismarck's measures did not, however, harm the churches and resulted in the strengthening of a German Roman Catholic party called the Centre Party. Fifteen years of negotiations with Rome resulted

in the Peace Laws. Bismarck's measures were later rescinded. However, civil marriage and state supervision of schools have remained unchanged to this day.

In 1919 the division of the church and state were enshrined in Germany's constitution. The Weimar constitution stated: "there is no state church". Because of this it was necessary to find a relationship between church and state to compensate for the radical demands of a strict separation, and the requirement of protection and privileges for the church and the Christian foundation of society. The Weimar National Assembly worked out a programme of regulations based on religious freedom, ideological neutrality of the state and self-determination of all religious communities. The practice of religion was withdrawn from the state; it remained however, a public matter. This relationship of church and state in Germany is described as a "limping" separation. Despite the ideological neutrality of the state, the separation of church and state was not complete. On the contrary, church and state acted in partnership over a wide sphere of public and cultural matters – *res mixtae*. This became obvious with the recognition in the constitution of the church's role in public affairs. This meant that the churches had been given the responsibility to help people, to share responsibility for world affairs and to collaborate for the common good. The articles of the Weimar constitution, in regards to the relationship of church and state, proved to be such durable and flexible models and standards that they were taken unchanged into the Bonn constitution in 1949 (Article 140 German Constitution).

2. Today's relationship of Church and State

Since the Second World War a new relationship between church and state has taken shape in the Federal Republic of Germany, in a satisfying form for everyone involved. This relationship has made more than a small contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of the Federal Republic. Our community today accepts the fact that churches are not just involved in their own affairs. Their cooperation with the state is based on a partnership. It is also necessary to take this into account against the background of European unification.

The relationship of church and state in Germany is regulated by the state canon law. The regulations are found in the constitution, in concordats and Protestant church contracts, as well as in a variety of laws and ordinances in different fields of law. The state and the church system of laws remain separate in the state canon law. The state cannot interfere with their own internal affairs, their missions or definition of their ideals. The churches have no jurisdiction over the state. Similarly the state does not supervise churches and respects their mission and public service.

The constitution respects the principle of subsidiarity and with that the state's duty to not only tolerate freedom in society but to actively support and develop it. It is true that the state performs some sovereign tasks for the church, for example the regulation and levying of church taxes, which members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches pay. The state collects these taxes and passes them on to the churches. Furthermore the state ensures the practice of religious support in various institutions, which would not be possible without state assistance. For example in hospitals, the defence forces, the federal border guard and prisons. It also financially safeguards church activities by providing state payments. There exists a particularly close cooperation between the church and state in the field of social help in youth welfare and education. The church runs about 10% of the schools in Germany. Other areas of cooperation between the church and state include religious instruction in public schools and the running of theological faculties at state universities and church educational institutions, whose education programmes and degrees are given official state recognition.

In the area of social services the state guarantees priorities to private care providers, this includes the church, in accordance with the proven principles of subsidiarity. Public bodies only take action when stalwarts such as the church cannot offer social services.

3. Influence of the church on politics

The church also influences politics in Germany. Through their representation in the state authorities and legislative organs, the two churches have set up representational organisations to the federation and to the states: the commissioner's department of the German bishops (the Roman Catholic Office) and the representative office of the council of the Protestant Church in Germany. Their task, on behalf of their respective church authorities, is to become involved in political questions for the federation, parties, organisations that represent civil society on a national level and international organisations.

The commissioner's department of the German bishops and the representative office of the council of the Protestant church in Germany observe the overall development of the political and social areas and the legislative plans of the federation. They also participate in the preparation of legislation and political decisions including the issuing of statements as well as the execution of resolutions of their own bodies. The commissioner's office works in conjunction with the bodies and committees of the German bishops' conference, the association of the dioceses of Germany, the archbishoprics and dioceses, the other offices of the German bishops conference, the central committee of German Roman Catholics, the apostolic nuncio, the Roman

Catholic offices in the federal states, the assignee of the council of the Protestant church in Germany, the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union.

4. Relationship of church and state in Europe

In the countries of Europe the relationship between church and state is very diverse. There is for example the Protestant state or people's church in Scandinavia. There is the unusual feature of the Anglican state church in England (the Church of England). There is the Greek orthodox special relationship between church and state, under which the constitution guarantees that the wording of the Holy Scripture remains unchanged. There is the Polish agreement between church and state and the German practice of a "limping separation". Besides that there is the French constitution, which declares France a secular republic.

5. Church and state in the draft of the European constitution

These diverse expressions of the relationship between church and state have provided the substance for much discussion in the European debate of a draft constitution. In particular the question was discussed whether the preamble should contain a reference to God. The result of these endeavours was that a reference to God represents an exception rather than the rule in the European constitutions and therefore would not be included. Only five European member states (Germany, Denmark, Greece, Ireland and Poland) have a reference to God in their constitutions. Resistance came particularly from secular France but also from Spain due to the close connection between the church and state under the Franco dictatorship (1936 - 1977). The statement that basic European values, besides cultural and humanistic heritage, also belonged to a Christian heritage did not attract a majority. So the wording "religious heritage" was withdrawn. Even the wording of the concept of "spiritual inheritance" needed to be defended.

The arrangement of the relationship between church and state at a European level is written into the draft constitution as the Church Article, which says that "the union respects the status which churches and religious associations or communities enjoy in their member states according to their legal provisions and does not impair it" (Article 51, Paragraph 1, EU draft constitution). Historically the European Union is of course a secular organisation, so has a neutral stance on religion and other philosophies. It is not a religion-free region, but neither is it against religion. The union does not accept the churches and religious communities merely as expressions of individual religious freedom, and it does not banish religion to private observance; rather churches and religious sects can practice their beliefs in public and its interference in European matters is even desired. This is

expressed in the Church Article: "The union entertains an open, transparent and regular dialogue with the churches (and communities) in recognition of their identity and their special contribution" (Article 51, Paragraph 3, EU draft constitution). The two churches in Germany have firmly insisted on this. The union is dependent on the churches and religious communities, as supranational organisations in their own right, to bring their ideas and values to society.

The special position and rights of the churches in the political dialogue in Germany are unusual and are not typical of the majority of the member states of the European Union. After all, such clauses are not found in their constitutions even though they may exist in church contracts and concordats. With regard to the institutionalized dialogue between religion and politics, the draft constitution is more church-friendly than the majority of national constitutions.

CONCEPT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN BUDDHISM¹

Venerable **Khy Sovannratanak**
Lecturer, Buddhist Institute Preah Sihanouk Reach

1. Introduction

Social justice means right and fair behavior or treatment to all people in a given society. It refers to a concept of a just society, where "justice" refers to more than just the administration of laws². It is based on the idea of a society which gives individuals and groups fair treatment and a just share of the benefits of society. Different proponents of social justice have developed different interpretations of what constitutes *fair treatment* and a *just share*.

Social justice is both a philosophical problem and an important issue in politics and economics such as binary economics. It can be argued that everyone wishes to live in a just society, but different political ideologies have different conceptions of what a 'just society' actually is. The term "social justice" itself tends to be used by those ideologies who believe that present day society is highly unjust - and these are usually left-wing ideologies, advocating a more extensive use of income redistribution, a more egalitarian society. The right-wing has its own conception of social justice, but generally believes that it is best achieved through the operation of a free market, and the promotion of philanthropy and charity. Both right and left tend to agree on the importance of rule of law, human rights, and some form of a welfare safety net.

Social justice is a subject widely talked about and very much needed but yet so elusive. Most people want to have justice done to them; unfortunately they hardly stop and ponder for a while if what they are doing is justice to other people. This is, in accordance with Buddhist teaching, due to their selfishness and delusion.

In today's world, though the advancement of technology is unprecedented, yet men are facing numerous problems such as the increase of crime rates and violence in developed countries and also the serious violation of Human

1 Paper presented to a interreligious seminar on "Concept of Social Justice in Religions" organized by Cambodian Interreligious Council and Konrad Adenauer Foundation, August 17, 2007, Sunway Hotel, Phnom Penh. The author would like to express his profound thanks to the organizers for the warm invitation.

2 Social justice; internet search, www.wikipedia.com

Rights and social injustice in all corners of the world. If we just tune in to the news now, we will see that such violations are indeed occurring everywhere. Although, the Buddha taught the development of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity among living beings, we also see that the countries in which the majority of people are Buddhists have been suffering from the abuse of their Human Rights and social justice. The people in these countries have been deprived of their fundamental rights and justice for many decades. In fact, if they truly practice the Buddha's teachings and fulfill their duties and responsibilities as Buddhists, there would not be violation of Human Rights and injustice, instead the people would live in harmony and enjoy justice and their rights fully. Let us now discuss some salient features of the Buddha's teaching with regard to social justice.

2. Men are born equal

Brahmanism taught that men were created by the Almighty Brahma from different parts of his body, and according to their castes they are assigned duties to perform. Those who were born into low castes had to do all the menial jobs and were downtrodden by the high caste people. The Buddha taught that men are born equal but their actions alone which distinguish them:

*“One is not a brahmin by birth,
Nor by birth is one a non-brahmin
By action (kamma) is one a brahmin.
By action is one a non-brahmin.
For men are farmers by their acts
And by their acts are craftsmen too.
And men are merchants by their acts
And by their acts are servants too.
And men are priests by their acts
And by their acts are rulers too.” (Vasetthasutta, MN)*

3. Buddhism and Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights promotes universal respect for, and the observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. The purpose of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are development of freedom, equality, dignity, justice, rights and the spirit of brotherhood in the world. These are in complete accord with Buddhist principle and we have to say that these are nothing new to Buddhism. The Human Rights ideal in Buddhism emerges from two basic assumptions: philosophical and ethical. In fact, according to the Buddhist view, human beings are born with complete freedom and responsibility. They are subject only to non-deterministic causal laws, but not being the creations of a Creator, their destinies are therefore in their own

hands. The Dhamma taught by the Buddha has various implications and meanings. It includes the philosophical and ethical doctrines which consider moral principles, rights and duties. The Buddha did not teach any politics but taught domestic and social ethics, which offered individuals the opportunity to acquire status in society regardless of caste, class or gender without discrimination between householders or ordained monks. If we study the Buddha Dhamma thoroughly we see that the Dhamma means the universal law which is applicable to all mankind.

4. Equality and Dignity

At the time of the Buddha, the religious and philosophical situation in India was not yet one of a clearly established system, it was in fact chaotic. There were many teachers, sages and recluses, who declared their own philosophies and 'ultimate realities', but all differing from each other, so that religious and philosophical debates were very common. If we look at the social situation at that time we discover that the concept of social equality did not exist. There were at least four classes in society, a large percentage of the people belonging to the lowest castes or untouchables; these people were deprived of all spiritual, social rights and justice. The status of women at that time was also very low, and they knew no equality. It was common for animals to be killed in sacrifice in the name of religion for the sake of particular people. In those days, acceptance of the caste system and the sacrificial killings in the name of a god represented adherence to a religion or a doctrinal practice. The Buddha, after his Enlightenment, discovered the truth for himself and taught the Dhamma which contradicted these traditional concepts. The Buddha himself said that his teachings were against the prevalent current of belief (patisota gami). It is, in deed, vital to understand that the Buddha's Dhamma is not a kind of religious sermon given to please or appease super beings or God, but a path to develop wisdom and compassion towards all living beings.

In Buddhism, the freedom of human begins at their birth itself. Therefore, Buddhism recognized human equality in dignity and rights and responsibilities. The Buddha said; "Oneself is one's own refuge; what other refuge can there be?" "Purity and impurity depend on oneself. No one can purify another."

5. The Position of Man

After His Enlightenment the Buddha taught the Middle Path, free from the two extremes of sensual indulgence and self-mortification or excessive ascetic practices, which He himself had followed before he discovered the Middle Path. The Middle Path is not a kind of religious teaching but the way to freedom from human suffering and the attainment of Enlightenment. He attributed all His realizations, attainments and achievements to human

endeavor and practice. The Buddha-dhamma is applicable to all classes of men and women: kings and peasants, high castes and low castes, bankers and beggars, holy men and robbers without any distinction between them, it is opened to all men and women who are ready to understand and to follow it. The Buddha was not born as a Buddha, but he was born as a human person. He understood human problems; then he discovered the truth and became a Buddha. Every man has within himself the potentiality of becoming a Buddha, if he so wills it and endeavors. The Buddha, unlike other founders of religion, did not claim himself to be anything other than human or assign himself a special role in Buddhism. According to Christianity, Christ claimed himself as the Messiah of Christianity and the son of God. One must accept Christ as the Son of God, if not, one is not entitled to the salvation he offered. In Islam, Mohammad claimed that he was last prophet sent by God, there is no salvation unless one accepts him as the last prophet. But the Buddha said that I am a guide to show you the path (*magga data*) but not the One who gives salvation (*mokkha data*). Man's position, therefore, according to Buddhism, is supreme. Man is his own master, and there is no higher being or power that sits in judgment over his destiny. The Buddha spoke of individual responsibility, and encouraged and stimulated each person to develop himself or herself to work out one's own emancipation, for man himself has the power to liberate himself from all bondages through his own personal effort and intelligence. Thus, Buddhism offers full human rights, justices and responsibilities.

*“You should work for your own liberation,
for the Tathagatas only show the way”*

6. Rights and Equality

Hinduism traditionally prohibited women, low caste members and untouchables from practising for their spiritual attainment and salvation. But the Buddha gave permission to ordain women and practice the Dhamma. There were many low castes, untouchables and criminals who entered into the Sangha and achieved their final goal, to name as example; Upali-the barber, Sunita- the sweeper, Sopaka and Suppiya- the untouchables, Angulimala- the robber etc. Though the status of women in Buddhist countries, in these days, is not yet satisfactory, however, because of Buddhism women have come to enjoy more equality, greater respect and authority than ever before. The exclusive supremacy of men has begun to give way before the increasing emancipation of women. This change was also accelerated by the innate intelligence of women who showed that they were responsible, rational beings with intelligence. This caused women to cease regarding themselves as inferior and to grow more aware of the similarities between men and women, and the position of women became honorable. The great service to humanity

of the Buddha was his condemnation of the caste system which makes distinctions between men based on birth or racial origins. The Buddha asserted that all men are equal in their right to an open path to the highest truth they could all attain. He taught that men become noble by virtuous conduct and charitable deeds and they become outcastes only by misconduct and miserliness, not by birth. Thus Buddhism offered rights, responsibilities, justice and human dignity to society.

7. The Path of Purification

Buddhism, truly speaking, is not a religion in the sense commonly understood, but it is a path of purification open for all without any discrimination. Whether one accepts the Buddha or not, it doesn't matter for the Buddha's compassion is extended equally to all living beings. The main cause of human problems and suffering, according to Buddhism, is the human mind itself in which greed, anger and delusion are latent as mental dispositions, because of these one cannot understand right or wrong and then accumulates unwholesome actions. If the mind is pure and influenced by loving kindness, compassion and wisdom, one's actions become pure and wholesome. The sad truth is that the human mind is not always filled with loving kindness, compassion and wisdom, whether one likes it or not, the mind always has reacted according to its mental dispositions. As the Buddha fully aware of this situation, said:

*“Not to do any evil,
To cultivate good,
To purify one's mind.
This is the teaching of the Buddhas”*

With regard to the concept and practice of human rights, which is no less susceptible to do good or to do evil according to the states of mind on the part of particular individuals, classes, and nations. And as with the human heart, the concept of human rights no less needs to be cleansed of all the parochialism and sectarian prejudices so as to be able not to do any evil and to cultivate good. This is the most basic problem with which the Buddha was concerned. The Buddha explained further the reason for the human situation and the violation of human rights, justice and dignity as being rooted in attachment (*Upadana*). There are four kinds of attachments: attachment to sensual objects, to ideas or view, to rites and rituals and to self or personality. To eradicate these attachments and purify the mind he laid down three kinds of training: sila- morality, samadhi- controlling of the mind and Panna- wisdom or purification of the mind.

8. The Three fold Training

The main goal of Buddhism is to attain the state of Nibbana through the path of purification. This goal is not easily attained, but one has to reach it by treading the path gradually. The Buddha said:

“I, o monks, do not say that the attainment of profound knowledge comes straight away; nevertheless, monks, the attainment of profound knowledge comes by a gradual training, a gradual doing, a gradual course.”

Sila- morality, the foundation of training, includes all the virtues of the honest respectable person, it has been identified with virtues in general, and purification of the body, speech and mind by refraining from unwholesome actions. It is usually understood as five moral precepts (*Pancasila*) which constitute the layman's definitive code of practical ethics. Man is a social being and develops his character in relation to the society in which he belongs, so whatever he does, leaves its impression not only on himself but also on his society. The practice of the moral precepts must, therefore, also leave their impression. The five fundamental moral precepts are:

1. Abstaining from the harming or taking of life
2. Abstaining from taking what is not given
3. Abstaining from misusing the senses or sexual misconduct
4. Abstaining from false speech
5. Abstaining from taking intoxicating drinks or drugs.

The moral conduct or precepts are built on the vast conception of loving-kindness and universal compassion. It will establish friendliness and the value of life not only between men, but also with all living beings.

Samadhi- concentration is purity of the mind (*citta-visuddhi*). Through the practice of concentration one can maintain a good standard of morality. It is a very essential practice to discipline one's own mind. Whatever crimes, violence or cruelty happen in the world are because of untrained or untamed minds. So the practice of concentration is very important to live harmoniously in society.

Panna- wisdom is the right understanding of life as being impermanent, suffering and as the absence of a soul or ego, through wisdom one can uproot all traces of impurities which are latent in the mind as mental dispositions. It, therefore, is total purification of the mind. When the mind is pure and free from ignorance, then one experiences the bliss of Nibbana and realises the truth within.

9. Wisdom and Morality

It is true to say that wisdom is necessary, but morality is more necessary. For wisdom without morality is dangerous, mere wisdom is dangerous. Wisdom is like a sword in the hand of a man. In the hand of a man with morality it may be used for saving a man from danger. But in the hand of a man without morality it may be used for murder. That is why morality is more important than wisdom. The reason why the Buddha gave greater importance to morality than to wisdom is obvious. The use of wisdom depends upon a man's morality. Apart from morality, wisdom has no value. Nowadays, we see immorality or injustice, crime and violence are due to a lack of morality. According to the Buddha, Sila, morality is incomparable in this world. And the Blessed One said:

"Sila is the beginning and the refuge. Sila is the mother of all good. It is the foremost of all good conditions. Therefore, purify your Sila".

10. Wisdom and Compassion

There are some different opinions in Buddhism which have divided its followers into two schools. One says that only wisdom is the foundation of Buddhism and the other says only compassion is the foundation. In fact, if we study the teachings of the Buddha in detail, we will see that one should develop in order to perfect two essential qualities equally, compassion on the one side, and wisdom on the other. Here compassion represents love, charity, kindness, tolerance and such noble qualities on the emotional side, or qualities of the heart, while wisdom would stand for the intellectual side or the qualities of the mind. If one develops only emotional qualities and neglects the intellectual ones, one may become a good-hearted fool; while to develop only the intellectual side neglecting the emotional may turn one into a hard-hearted intellectual without feeling for others. Therefore, to perfect oneself one has to develop both equally. That is the aim of the Buddhist way of life.

Nevertheless, in Mahayana Buddhism, a Bodhisattva is said to be dominated by two forces: compassion and wisdom. Compassion governs his conduct towards his fellow beings, wisdom is his attitude to reality. So that it is essential to develop both compassion and wisdom. Furthermore, Compassion and Wisdom are two sides of reality. Without wisdom there will be no compassion, without compassion, no wisdom. Wisdom is not the same as discursive knowledge, it is intuitive knowledge, which perceives through experience; it is also called transcendent wisdom, which realized the oneness of the universe. We speak of wisdom and compassion as two different things, in fact, there is no dualism here, for wisdom is compassion and compassion is wisdom. Therefore it is said in the Lankavatara Sutra: "Great wisdom is

absolute compassion. Compassion comes out of wisdom, Wisdom is compassion." This is the essence of Mahayana teaching.

11. The Law of Kamma

There is an order in the physical world; i.e there is a certain order in the movements and actions of the starry bodies, a certain order by which seasons come and go in regular sequence and by which seeds grow into trees and trees yield fruits and fruits give seed. Buddhists named them as Niyamas, laws which produce an orderly sequence such as Ritu, Bija niyama. Similarly, there is a moral order in human society. How it is produced? How is it maintained? Those who believe in a creator God have no difficulty answering these questions. For them the moral order is maintained by God. He is the creator and the supreme Governor of the world. He is also the author of moral as well as of physical laws. According to the Buddha it is the Kamma niyama and not God which maintains the moral order in the universe. The moral order of the universe may be good or it may be bad, it depends on man and no one else. If man does good actions (*kusala-kamma*), the moral order is good. If the moral order is bad it is because man does bad actions (*akusala-kamma*). This is the law of kamma (*kamma-niyama*). Kamma means man's actions and Vipaka means its result. According to this law the effect of the deed was bound to follow the deed, as surely as night follows day.

According to the Buddhist doctrine of causal relations, phenomena or events are not the product of a single cause, but of a multiplicity of causes or conditions. There is no single cause, nor first cause which conditions any particular effect. The question of the cause of a first event does not arise because a first event did not ever exist.

12. Inequality

According to Buddhism, the inequality one sees in the world is due not only to heredity, environment, nature and nurture, but also to the operation of the law of kamma, or in other words, it is result of our own inherited past actions and as well as our present doings. We ourselves are responsible for our own happiness and misery. We create our own heaven and our own hell. We are the architects of our own fate. We ourselves, in short, are our own kamma. As the Buddha said:- "Every living being has kamma as its owner, its inheritance, its origin, its kinsman, its refuge. Kamma also differentiates beings into low and high states."

Kamma literally means action, the Buddha defined it as mental volition (*cetana*). He said: " It is volition, o monks, that I call kamma. Having willed one acts through body, speech or mind."

Any action one performs with pure intention, is called wholesome kamma, if the intention is impure, then it is called unwholesome kamma. Kamma, therefore, is not merely the affair of external or visible deeds, but it is the motive or volition involved in thinking, speaking or doing. Any deed devoid of will or intention cannot properly be called kamma. Any kamma one performs intentionally has its result of happiness or sorrow which will follow according to the nature of one's intention as the law of kamma.

13. Freedom of Thought

It is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 18) that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Buddhism from its very inception, commenced with recognition of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The freedom of thought allowed by the Buddha is unheard of elsewhere in the history of religions. The Buddha-dhamma is open to all without any discriminating of castes, class or colour and is not to be accepted on blind faith, but it invites one to come and see - Ehipassiko to test its truth and validity before accepting it. Although the Buddha said " ekayano maggo, this is the only path" to emancipation, but if its claims are disproved or unsubstantiated, one is free to search for the truth elsewhere. A doctrine calling upon the peoples of the world to test its truth for themselves certainly stands for freedom of thought. The Dhamma taught by the Buddha is 'to be understood individually by the wise.' This also is not possible without freedom of thought.

Conscience is the moral sense of right and wrong and is recognized as such in Buddhism as well. Conscience has a role to play in deciding the moral worth of an action. Buddhism measures the moral worth of an action in terms of its results. Thus one's conscience must be free to take all possible consequences of one's actions into account. The Buddha advised Rahula: "To make sure that a proposed course of action should always lead to good and never to harmful results either to oneself or to others or to both."

The most important teaching on the freedom of thought and conscience is also to be found in the Buddha's advice to the Kalamas: "Come, o Kalamas, do not be led by report, by tradition or by hearsay or by the authority of religious texts; or by claims of knowledge and truth that are based on any type of reasoning or speculation, or on the basis of the reliability of the person, or by the respect for your teacher. Rather, Kalamas, when you know for yourself these things are unprofitable, blameworthy and conducive to loss and sorrow, then, indeed, you should reject them. And when you know for yourself that certain things are profitable, blameless and conducive to profit and happiness, then indeed you should accept them and abide by them."

14. Freedom of Religion

The right to the freedom of religion and tolerance allowed by the Buddha is astonishing to those who study the history of religion. The Buddha advised his followers to respect all other religious orders. Upali, for instance, a prominent, wealthy householder and well-known lay disciple of Nigantha Nathaputta, was convinced after discussing them that the views of the Buddha were right and those of his teacher were wrong, So he begged the Buddha to accept him as one of his lay disciples (Upasaka). But the Buddha asked him to reconsider it, not to be in a hurry, for 'considering carefully is good for well-known men like you'. When Upali expressed his desire again, the Buddha requested him to continue to respect and support his old religious teachers as he was used to.

General Siha of Vesali who was also a disciple of Nigantha Nathaputta, after having conversed with the Buddha declared himself a follower of the Buddha, but the Buddha accepted him only on condition that Siha would continue to support his former teacher too. This attitude of the Buddha made Siha respect the Buddha even more. This shows clearly that Buddhism is also concerned with the social impact of religion and considers that religion should serve not as a divisive but as a unifying force for spiritual uplift, the immediate happiness and well-being of people. Therefore, there should be no conflicts in the name of religion, or because of religion.

In the third century BC, the Buddhist Emperor Asoka honored and supported all other religions in his vast empire. Intending his subject to follow the noble example of tolerance and understanding, he had carved on rock one of his Edicts, the original of which one may read even today. The Emperor declared; "the one who doesn't honor others religions, does not honor his own; the one who does honor others, honors his own."

Nowadays, we are working with other faiths, learning to live together with neighbors in harmony, so we should apply this spirit of sympathetic understanding and tolerance. This spirit of tolerance and understanding has been from the beginning one of the most cherished ideals of Buddhist culture and civilization.

15. The Sublime States (*Brahma-vihara*)

There are four sublime states which are called Brahma-vihara, the literal meaning is living as Brahma. According to Buddhist cosmology Brahma is the highest being in the order of beings. As a result of the attainment of meditative absorptions one is reborn into the Brahma realm, who always practises metta-loving kindness, karuna-compassion, mudita-sympathetic joy and upekkha-equanimity. Any one, in this world, who practises these meditations is said to be living as Brahma or sublime living (*Brahma-vihara*).

The human mind is latent with both virtuous and evil tendencies. Whenever one accumulates any virtuous deeds, these pure volitional forces lie latent in the mind as perfections (*paramita*); if one accumulates any evil actions, then impure forces lie latent in the mind as defilements (*kilesa*). Those who wish to be great, noble and service, who wish to sublimate themselves in order to serve humanity, endeavour their best to remove the latent vices and to cultivate the perfections with persistent effort and enduring patience. The Buddha, therefore, taught these sublime meditations to get rid of the latent impurities and develop love, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, so that one can live happily, peacefully with oneself and with others.

- **Loving kindness (Metta)** is pure love, infinite love, boundless love and unconditioned love. If the love is based on some kinds of selfishness or attachment, that is not metta. Metta should be given freely, without expectation of some thing in return and it should not be discriminated or limited to only a few people. There are many kinds of love in human society; a husband's love for his wife, a wife's love for her husband; a parent's love for their children, children's love for their parents; brotherly love, sisterly love. Love between men and women and between friends, none of these forms of love can be called metta, because all of these loves are based on attachment and selfishness. Metta can be developed properly if one gives it to boundless beings. The object of metta meditation should be infinite beings, it also called illimitable (*appamañña*). Therefore metta should be extended towards all beings without exception. May all living beings be well and happy, it embraces all living beings. Through metta meditation one softens one's heart. It is defined as the sincere wish for the welfare and genuine happiness of all living beings without exception. There are at least forty kinds of meditation object described in Theravada Buddhism, according to the individual temperament and need. Some of them are suitable or beneficial for some people depending on their own temperament, but the metta meditation is suitable for all kinds of temperament and all time.

- **Compassion (Karuna)** is pure compassion, infinite compassion; it is boundless and unconditioned compassion. If compassion is based on selfishness or attachment, that is not karuna. It should be developed toward all beings without exception, or limitation. Whatever compassion one develops toward certain people, such as parents, friends, family etc. is not Karuna, because it is discriminatory. The object of karuna meditation should be boundless beings, it also called illimitable (*appamanna*). So that karuna should be extended toward all living beings. "May all living beings without exception be free from all kinds of suffering", it therefore embraces all beings. The practice of karuna, makes one's good heart quiver when others are seen to be subject to suffering. It is the wish to remove the woes of others and compels

one to serve others with altruistic motives. The one who practises compassion lives not for himself but for others. He always seeks opportunities to serve others expecting nothing in return, not even gratitude.

- **Sympathetic Joy (Mudita)** is pure sympathetic joy, and boundless, infinite and unconditioned sympathetic joy. If we feel sympathetic-joy or happiness when our nearest and dearest are successful and happy, then that is not mudita, for it is based on selfishness and attachment, and it also limited. Therefore we should practise sympathetic joy towards all living beings without exception. This is a very effective practice to destroy our jealousy. It is jealousy that endangers our whole social constitution. In one way mudita is concerned more with oneself than with others as it tends to eradicate jealousy which ruins oneself. It is true that the practice of metta and karuna is easier than the practice of mudita which demands great personal effort and strong will power. Therefore, one should practise sympathetic joy if one wishes to uplift oneself and be internally happy.

- **Equanimity (Upekkha)** is the most difficult and the most essential sublime state. It is the highest state of the mind which one can experience after the attainment of the meditative absorptions. However, the etymological meaning of the term Upekkha is 'discerning rightly,' 'viewing justly,' or 'looking impartially', that is without attachment or aversion. This is a very effective meditation practice for those who have to live in an unbalanced society amidst fluctuating circumstances. Society is so constituted that the good and the virtuous are often subject to unjust criticism and attack. The worldly vicissitudes of loss and gain, fame and defame, praise and blame, pain and happiness, affect all humanity. The one who practises equanimity, amidst these vicissitudes of life, stands unshakeable, sorrowless, stainless and secure, this is highest blessing in life. Thus, Metta embraces all beings, karuna embraces all suffering beings, mudita embraces the prosperous, and upekkha embraces the good and the bad, the loved and the unloved, the pleasant and the unpleasant. The one who wishes to be divine in this life itself must cultivate these four sublime virtues daily.

16. Shunning Prejudices

It is an acknowledged fact that injustice occurs with varying degrees in every society and nation. According to Buddhist teaching, this kind of social evil happens due to craving in the mind of men. The Buddha said, "from craving springs sorrow, from craving springs fear; when craving ceases, there is no sorrow and from where does fear." The Buddha also pointed out four causes which make people have prejudice (*agati*) in making decisions or in social dealings. As they have prejudice, they commit injustice in society. The four causes are:

1. Prejudice due to love
2. Prejudice due to hatred
3. Prejudice due to delusion, and
4. Prejudice due to fear.

When people have these four causes, their actions will always end up in committing injustice. As one has love for somebody, one will look for reasons to do him a favor. When a person harbors hatred toward somebody, he will try to cause troubles or inflict injury upon him. Delusion makes one blind, unable to see clearly whether things are right or wrong, good or bad, wholesome or unwholesome, etc. Therefore, we all have to eradicate these four causes of prejudice if we want to establish justice in our society.

The Buddhist practice of caring and sharing is a very important element of social justice. In order to have social harmony and justice, Buddhism teaches to us practice four principles i.e., generosity, kindly speech, useful conduct and equal treatment. If these four principles, particularly the principle of equal treatment, are strictly adhered to by all the people, there will not be any injustice carried out in society.

17. Conclusion

The Buddha appreciated democratic practices and taught the means to develop equality of status, civil rights and justice within society. As people develop greed, hatred and mental delusion more and more, social morality has declined alarmingly. It would be unfair to lay blame on any individual or group alone, we all have to be responsible and start practicing the principles of justice here and now.

The main cause of all the problems is the human mind; the impure or wicked mind is the creator of all the world's crimes, violence and undesirable situations. So it is necessary for us to practice the Buddha's main teachings of not harming any living being, doing good and purifying our minds through the practice of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. The Buddha said:-

*"Hatreds never cease through hatred in this world;
through love alone they cease. This is an eternal law."*

What humanity needs today is not hatred or anger, but loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic-joy and equanimity, so that every living being in the world can live happily and harmoniously enjoying fully their rights, social justice and human dignity.

H.E Ung Ty Member of Board of Directors
of the Cambodian Inter-Religious Council for
the Cambodian Christian-Protestant Community

1. Introduction

Each society needs peace and development so that everyone is happy, and can live in peace and with dignity based on social justice.

In order to achieve peace and development, leaders of the society allow people to follow and practice the religion of their choice. All religions are based on the morality that human beings act in a way that helps them and society at large. Conversely, if a society does not allow its people religious freedom, there will be a moral deficit in the spirit, mentality and emotions of its members.

Christianity contains precise instructions on morality based on social justice and on God's peace, which he gives to those who follow the faith properly and respect his laws. As the Bible says: "Everyone must respect and follow the state authorities since the authorities are created by God. Therefore, those who oppose the authorities oppose the order of God and are inevitably punished" (Romans: 13:1-2). So Christian belief is that God creates society's leaders to guide people towards socially just behaviour.

Christianity directs human beings to pay much attention to being at peace with God so they can live in peace with their families and within society as a whole. Ultimately, producing a developed and socially just society.

Many religious faiths base their rules on sacred texts. In the Christian faith, the key book is called the Bible. It is the basis of faith for all Christians.

2. Education on Social Morality

Christianity is a belief in which moral instruction is based on social justice with the idea of being at peace with God and other members of society. The God of the Bible is immortal. He was not born and he will not die. He provides 10 commandments for human beings. These 10 commandments are the basis of Christian belief:

1. No other Gods
2. No bowing before or worshipping of idols
3. No misusing the name of God
4. Remembering the Sabbath day

5. Respecting your parents
6. No killing human life
7. No committing adultery
8. No stealing
9. No giving false testimony
10. No greediness

(Exodus 20:3-17)

The 10 commandments provide the foundation for living in a socially just society created by God.

Jesus Christ divided the 10 commandments into 2 major parts based on the idea of social justice:

1st part : “Love God with all your heart, your soul, your entire mind and with all your energy” (Mark 12:30).

2nd part : “Love your neighbour as much as yourself” (Mark 12:31).

When human beings, whose life was created by God, love God, as stated in the 1st part, they will respect him and follow his will leading to a moral life. Those who love their neighbours, as stated in the 2nd part, will lead a moral life with others.

3. Basis of Social Injustice

Everyone wants justice in their society. Without justice, there is no respect for human rights in the society.

The faith of Christians is based the Holy Bible. According to its teachings God created humanity. God is full of love and God is the love. Love can be divided into two different types. One type of love is the love of human beings and such love always disappoints because it seeks personal gain. The second type of love is made by God. The love of God is a faithful and true love. Without true love in a society there can be no justice. Christians believe true love comes from God, as stated in Corinthians 13:4-6: “Love is patience, generosity, compassion, humility, friendliness, politeness, no personal interest, good temper, forgiveness, unhappy with evil actions but happy with faithfulness.”

Clauses 1 and 3, chapter 13, of Corinthians state: “If I can speak languages of human beings and of angels without love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I give all I possess to the poor, and surrender my body to the flames, but with no love, I gain nothing”. The meaning of the Bible is clear: if someone has no love for God, they cannot help create social justice in their society.

A. Source of Social Justice

Some people say social justice refers only to the making of laws and rules in a society; but these in themselves do not create social justice. Social justice is the product of free will, not from words or appearance. In order to find social justice it is necessary to believe in God as the creator. Pascal Boyer, a famous anthropologist, said, “There is a niche in people’s mind. The niche cannot be filled, but God creates the human mind so God can fill the niche.”

When talking about the trueness of God, the concept of social justice can be clearly understood in every society. This is because God creates human beings in his own form. We can assume he wants them to be intelligent, to have purpose and emotions so that they are aware of what is right and what is wrong. Their purpose is to freely choose what is good for their emotions, the love of God who creates them, and the love of others.

B. Lack of Social Justice

Sins are evidence of disobedience to God. Many human beings live separately from their creator. Romans 3:23 states that sinning causes people to lose their intelligence and the love of God: “Because everyone commits sins and cannot reach the good splendour of God”. This results in an absence of social justice.

Many people claim to have justice in daily life without the help of God. However, their society lacks social justice. Moral instruction guides people behave properly, and to love and help each other. The importance and application of such instruction requires God’s assistance.

4. Implementation of Social Justice

The implementation of social justice can be divided into two major parts. The first part is that each society tries to make laws and rules to control its people, and if anyone breaks the laws they will be punished. Social justice provided by humans has limited success because it relies solely on the fear of punishment. Anyone not caught for an offence is free from punishment.

A second scenario is to implement social justice with a good mind. Human beings generally want to live in a just society but they do not know what makes a just society. Each society is a collection of human beings. A just society requires all members to behave properly and justly. The Holy Bible states that by committing sin, people leave God. No sinner can be just until they are free from their sins.

Romans 3:23 states: “The spark of sin is death” which I take to mean that human beings cannot find any answer to sin other than the help of God. Protestant Christians believe the death of Jesus Christ on the cross was the

only way to help humanity escape from sin and re-establish its relationship with God the creator. God grants people free will. When released from sin they can lead a good life. Those who believe in God and allow him to lead their life, live by following the advice of God. God's advice is seen as the law. Mark 12:30-31 states:

1. "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength."
2. "Love your neighbour as much as yourself."

When people love God from the heart, they respect God and following his advice.

"Love your neighbour as much as yourself" implies the application of social justice in daily life.

Loving others as yourself means not treating others badly. It is a natural method to respect, help, forgive and value others. When people in a society do not respect and value each other there will be injustice.

Bragging and seeking personal gain are harmful to the implementation of social justice because braggarts violate the rights of others. In the Bible, Philippe 2:3.4 states: "Do not do anything with disagreement or with useless bragging, but make friends with and be humble to others. Everyone shall not seek personal interest; they shall share the gained interest with others. Everyone shall have the same idea as Jesus Christ, even if he is God he does not describe what is equal to the status of God as the absolute rule." The Bible teaches Christians that Jesus Christ was sacrificed to release humans from sin. His sacrifice was selfless. Christians should live without bragging and without personal interest in the interests of social justice.

Christians should follow the advice of Jesus Christ who told his students: "All powers in heaven and on earth have been given to me. Therefore you all go and create disciples in all nations, baptizing them in the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have given to you. And surely I am always with you forever." (Matthew 28:19-20).

Telling others about the salvation of God is not seeking personal interest because when everyone believes in Jesus Christ, they will benefit from God's salvation. According to John 14:1-3: "Jesus Christ said you all should not be much worried. Once you believe in God you should believe in me too. In my Father's place there are many residences, as I told you, I go and organize places for you, and when I finish my job, I will come back and take you to the places where I used to go, and where I can offer interest to you."

If Christians do not tell others about the eternal salvation offered by Jesus Christ, they could be seen as braggarts who only seek their own interests because they do not share with others. They are not following God's order to love neighbours as much as themselves.

God provides gifts to those who believe in him, and asks them to redistribute the gifts to others. Some gifts are for helping others. That is why there are many Christians who believe and love Jesus Christ. They have established many humanitarian organizations to help the poor by building hospitals or school. Others give donations to reduce poverty.

Jesus Christ has pity on the poor and he is against those who violate the rights of weak people such as orphans and widows, as stated in James 1:27: "To know if the religion of God Father is pure and proper, ask orphans and widows especially when they are in hardship and they are able to keep themselves from any sins in the world."

When you believe in Jesus Christ and follow his advice by taking him as an example, you will live in a just society. By contrast, if you believe in Jesus Christ but do not respect his advice, a just society is difficult to implement.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations for the Implementation of Social Justice

The Cambodian Christian-Protestant Community's mission is to unify Christian communities, which are organized into different denominations, to extend the faith of Christianity. The Cambodian Christian-Protestant Community has established centres for orphans, widows and the elderly; built schools, hospitals, and Christian training centres; and made some social contributions to alleviating poverty in the Kingdom of Cambodia. The Cambodian Christian-Protestant Community respects and follows the advice of Jesus Christ with the Bible as its basis. After Jesus was resurrected, he told his disciples: "All powers in heaven and on earth have been given to me. Therefore go and create disciples in all nations, baptizing them in the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have given to you. And surely I am always with you forever." (Matthew 28:19-20)

The Cambodian Christian-Protestant Community is a founding member of the Cambodian Inter-Religious Council, which was created at the Chaktomouk Conference Hall on 10 October 2002. It is organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Cults, and presided over by H.E. Kong Sam-Ol, Deputy Prime Minister and Representative of His Majesty the King of Cambodia, who read the royal message at the ceremony.

The Cambodian Christian-Protestant Community would like to call on the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Cults to allow the Protestant denomination

to perform its role in implementing social justice in the Kingdom of Cambodia; and would like the ministry to instruct all Protestants, Christian organizations and communities, which are legally permitted by the Ministry to work in the Kingdom of Cambodia, to fulfil their duties within their communities for the sake of unity and the development of social justice in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Since the creation of the Cambodian Inter-Religious Council, the Cambodian Christian-Protestant Community has instructed its members to join social activities and express their views on social justice. The Cambodian Christian-Protestant Community would like the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Cults to allow all Christians and people of the other religions on the council to follow the instructions of their respective schools, as stated in the ministry's joint statement and recognized by the United Nations.

The Cambodian Christian-Protestant Community believes the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Cults will not ignore the efforts of the 6 religious communities in the Inter-Religious Council. These can make important contributions to society on morality, social development and social justice in the Kingdom of Cambodia. The Ministry of the Interior has authorized the Cambodian Christian-Protestant Community to install offices in all provinces of the country as the agents of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Cults.

In conclusion, if each religious community does not obtain recognition from the ministry in charge of religions, they may not work together for the national interest. The implementation of social justice by The Cambodian Christian-Protestant Community and of other religious communities in the Cambodian Inter-Religious Council depends on the help of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Cults. In that way all parties can work together for peace, order, development and the implementation of social justice in Cambodia.

Father **Un Son**, Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh
Member of Cambodian Inter-Religious Council

1. Introduction

Society continues to search for physical and spiritual peace. The former, though, is not enough when there is a simultaneous spiritual crisis and vice versa. So everyone tries to work together to form a society in which they can rely on each other to follow laws, traditions and respect the rights and freedom of others.

Social injustice exists everywhere. The rich and powerful violate the weak. The land worked by poor farmers is illegally grabbed. Workers are deceived by employers and have no rights to express their will. In the home, domestic violence tears families apart and leads to divorce and often creates homeless orphans with no access to education. They become beggars and drug users with many trafficked from one country to another. We also have to include ethnic terrorism and the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Middle East and other corners of the world. Human beings not circumstances create misery and hardship to themselves and society. For instance, social injustice causes turmoil and unrest, which are contrary to the desire for peace. Why do human beings who want peace commit injustices? Can we dare hope that human beings can change their behaviour and live together in a just society? There are many answers based on the concept of individual religions and personal views.

2. The Concept of Social Justice

Historically, when human beings created communities they developed physically and spiritually and improved their societies. Human interaction is the key, but with people of different capacities and abilities the stronger and more powerful always arbitrarily use their power over the weak and poor. Consequently, society's development is hampered.

The answer is to develop a society that proceeds with a proper manner and justice. Without justice, society is doomed.

3. What is Justice?

Justice is what is fair. Social justice refers to a society in which human beings interact with each other in a fair manner. Fairness is based on social laws and all people, the powerful and the poor, shall respect the law.

Such respect also implies responsibility to it. Nobody can escape or be exempt from punishment when they break the law.

Proper laws stem from the will of the people in general, none should be framed to benefit any group, small or large, of people.

Society only flourishes if it proceeds with justice.

4. Christian Concept of Social Justice

Christians follow Jesus Christ, who advised them to contact God the Father through him. Christians follow the advice of God as enunciated in the Bible of Solemn Friendship. God's advice is the torch of life, a guide towards Him, a source of all lives and the Father who loves human beings the most. He is the trueness, offering life forever.

Christians live together in the community of God. We join adapting our life by taking God as an example and we follow his advice.

Historically the Catholic Community:

- Constantly Demands Freedom and Social Justice

From the earliest times the Catholic Community has always expressed its sympathy and compassion for the poor, the miserable, the indigents and orphans. According to world history, the Christian community has built hospitals, orphanages, schools for poor children and given food to hungry people. The community always does it in accordance with the instructions of Jesus Christ who advised that when a disciple respects, loves and helps others, that means he respects, loves and helps God, because everyone represents Jesus Christ.

Since the 19th century, the community has worked hard to achieve social justice, which society considers its main task. Some Christians were killed because they bravely demanded justice and freedom from state dictatorship and they are respected as dead witnesses and martyrs, Christian models who sacrificed their lives for their faith. We Christians live under the advice of God whom we respect as the Father of all human beings of different races. Upon our belief, therefore, everyone has the same value of dignity: the rich, poor, powerful and weak are all the children of God. It is the basis for community, which demands social justice.

- The Community and Industry in the 19th Century

In the mid-19th century in Britain, France, and Germany, metal ores and coal were discovered and led to the invention of advanced technology and machinery. An industrialised society was born, which largely replaced the

agrarian model. Textile factories proliferated and farmers abandoned their fields to live in cities and become factory workers. Many factory employers oppressed their workers and tried to exploit them for big profits, based on unlimited liberalism. The situation in Europe in the mid-19th century is not so different from the current situation in Cambodia, where farmers have become city dwellers and factory workers.

This gave rise to new social castes, specifically capitalists and the proletariat, with the former exploiting their workers without mercy or justice. In 1848, Karl Max witnessed these developments and wrote two books entitled “Capitalism” and “Declaration of Communism”. In them he analysed European society and saw only that a social class struggle could create justice and freedom for all. He later invented a doctrine that was detrimental to many nations and people around the world, including Cambodia. This is a clear example of a social injustice creating conflicts that destroyed countries.

In the 19th century, state authorities, people and Christians had never thought of social justice because the industrial society was too new. They used to think about the previous social situations of an agrarian society and a corporate society that included employers and employees.

Christians knew neither their social and political roles nor their new relationships in the industrial society. Some community leaders advised workers to endure injustice, telling them if they followed the order of their unfair employers in this world, and respected such social order, that meant they led their life as Jesus Christ when he suffered hardship, and they would meet peacefulness in the next world. As a consequence, Karl Max described all religions as opiates that confused people by advising them to endure the hardship rather than struggle for justice.

However, some Christians initiated the demand for justice by suggesting state authorities managed industry democratically. They not only wanted workers to receive humanitarian wages or salaries but also justice.

Frédéric Ozanam was one of these Christians who in 1845 wrote:

“Workers neither wanted their employers to make donations, nor humanitarily pitied them as they were not beggars. They were seen as slaves and worked only for food. People asked for roles in the grand human family by asking rulers to recognise their rights in giving advice on state affairs. People demanded freedom to harvest what they grew themselves and for the dissolution of the monopoly of the rich, and asked a small group of people to no longer confiscate public assets for their extravagance.”

Late 19th-century leaders of the Catholic community, especially the Pope, released many documents on social justice.

In 1881, Pope Leo the 13th, governor of Rome, was very worried about the development of socialism and anarchy in Europe. In 1890 many workers, who went on strike, were killed by the state authorities.

He saw that the social situation was different. Capitalists increased their accumulation of property while the workers lived in extreme hardship. He blamed socialism, seeing that its doctrine abolished private ownership. He rejected the idea of the class struggle and believed that state authorities had to distribute resources appropriately in accordance with the people's working hours, make a law that workers had weekends off and provide adequate salaries to support families. He asked for the adoption of labour law and blamed economic liberalism, which allowed state rulers and rich people to freely oppress poor people. He called on workers to form associations and asked for the creation of corporations similar to those that previously existed, where employers and employees worked together. He did not oppose Christians who created trade unions.

In 1891 he wrote about *Rerum Novarum* (the new situation):

"We believe effective measures shall be taken immediately in order to save low-caste people as they live inappropriately in hardship with no fault. In earlier centuries, corporations that protected workers disappeared, and nothing replaced them. Therefore, sooner or later, workers had no support and were sent into the fist of inhuman employers who were fiercely greedy and competitive. The extreme interest rate increased the workers' hardship. In the past the community banned many times excessive interest rates, but the greediness was unlimited and the interest rate was imposed in many ways. In addition, a small number of the rich and the powerful jointly took control of industry and trade. They put a severe yoke on the shoulder of the poor who lived in slavery."

His pronouncement indicated the community's position on social justice during that time and signaled Christianity's earliest foray into calling for social justice.

In 1887, Christian workers created a trade union and set up various groups and associations that analysed social situations in conformity with The Bible Solemn Friendship and with the advice of the Pope.

- Most Importantly the Global Economy Will Put Society into a New Order to Ensure the Future

In the 1929 Wall Street crash, the global economic crisis prompted the governor of Lille in France to stand up publicly for the workers against the employers.

In 1931 Pope Pius the 11th wrote an article on the “40th Anniversary (Quadragesimo)” to call on Christians to think of the article written by Pope Leo in 1891 and called on the world’s governments to manage the global economy and create a new order in society. He also enlarged the position of the social doctrine within Christianity.

“ . . . the economic situation and the world federation altered continuously, and urged those involved in economic activities and world federation to fully perform their duties. Some people had stubborn conscience and saw they are entitled to use all means to gain profits and secure their property. ”

“The anarchy in the market place made some people gain profit easily, other people get benefits very quickly, by working less or doing nothing . . . ”

“The new economic regime occurred when people depended on their intelligence, regardless of religion. Thus, sociology existed separately from moral discipline and indulgent human passion. ”

The Non-Living Things Manufactured by Factories Gained a Reputation, but Humans Working in the Factories Were Degraded

In 1963, Pope John the 23rd wrote about Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris):

“Sciences gradually developed, what was technically produced indicated that all creatures and natural effects shall have been properly organised. ”

“People with honour could discover order and produce materials so that the natural energy could be used for personal purpose... ”

“Everyone has the right to life, physical respect and everything needed sufficiently for decent living, notably food, clothing, shelter, leisure, medical treatment, and is benefited from social affairs . . . ”

“Everyone has legal right and freedom to respect God upon their conscience, and can practice any religion privately or publicly . . . Everyone has the right and freedom to be single or married . . . Everyone has the right to work and is responsible for the national economy . . . ”

“We found that the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, dated

10 December 1948, was a step to put human communities in the world into a proper order. Therefore we do believe the United Nations is able to achieve structures and seek measures to fulfill its role in accordance with its comprehensive, valuable and huge missions.”

“May the United Nations effectively ensure the rights and freedom for everyone soon.”

“Those, who have goodwill exercise a comprehensive task to organise interactions in society, by retaking reality, justice, love and freedom as a basis, that is, interactions between people, between citizens and authorities and, finally, interactions between states.”

From 1939 to 1965, governors of the Catholic Communities met in Vatican City for a Congress known as “Vatican the Second”. They advised Christians to pay attention to human living, especially the demand for social justice.

“Human beings at the present, particularly poor people and indigents, suffer hardship, enjoy happiness, hope and get other worries; so do the Christian disciples. The Christian disciples are also interested in what is truly related to mankind.”

“The Congress strongly respected what was really true and proper in terms of structures that were created and continued to be created by human beings. The Congress also announced the community was aimed at helping extend the structures as possible, until they meet its missions.”

“The Congress recalled Christians, citizens of the two cities, to carefully perform their work on Earth with industriousness, honesty and reliance on the Bible Solemn Friendship. We realise we do not have an eternal city in the world. We go to the future city. Those, who think differently for the fact and do not behave humanely are really confused because they cannot see the faith, can urge them to actively perform their duties with the call of God.”

“By contrast, those who think they can freely and actively fulfill their work in the world, without any relevance to religious life are also confused. They just think religions refer only to ceremonies, morals and disciplines. Many people break their faith and behaviour every day. The violations of faith and behaviour shall be included into serious confusions at this time.”

In 1967, Pope the 6th wrote on “Progressive Population (Populorum Progressio).” He asserted “a difficult problem in a society causes a big problem in the whole world.” Nations shall be advanced for all people in all fields including economy, culture and sense. Consequently, there shall be laws to indicate international trade relations so as to prevent weaker countries from

being deceived by richer countries, which used to conduct unfair business activities.

“Today we shall recall a tense situation in a society can be a big question in the entire world. ‘Shout for help from God’ when there is an extreme injustice. Some people who do not have valuable traits lead their life inferior to others, cannot do anything for themselves and do not have the right to self-determination. Then humans tried to persuade and use violence to eliminate what degrades their reputations.”

“Such an advance should not only be made on the economy but also on human beings on the right track, that is, what human beings have, and human beings themselves shall be in the same advance.”

“The world shall be constructed for all humans regardless of races, religions and national origins, where people can live humanely, free from slavery of others or natural slaves who cannot work independently. If the development is a new name for peace, everyone shall accept to develop it at their best.”

This document has a strong impact on the leadership of the Catholic Community in various countries. Christians in northern continents started to criticise state authorities and their societies that consume a lot of the world’s natural resources.

Today we realise injustice is not only a social issue in one country but also in the world, because if there is no justice in international trade there will be a world war. Poor countries will provoke insecurities in order to demand justice. The world is transformed into a village and people shall unify, especially in rich countries that will offer justice to poor countries. Governments of each nation shall provide justice to poorer people, then real peace will inevitably prevail.

- Basis of Christianity on Justice

The Christian-Catholic Community is interested in building up social justice upon their faith, in particular on three levels:

A- Human life has its value and we are the children of God. We are siblings of a big family. The rich are not better than the poor. A better society takes care of the vulnerable.

We Christians believe human life is valuable as it is part of the age of God whom we respect. Human life is compared to a bright star of the age of God. We also believe there is only one God who is the Father of all humans. Nobody can degrade human life. The rich and the poor, the

powerful and the powerless are equal in rights and freedoms. All human beings have the right to a decent life. They have the right to sufficient food, shelter and work from which they can make money for a decent living and education for their children.

Therefore, the Catholic Community has created many organisations to help the poor in society so that they have equal rights to the rich and powerful. But humanitarian activities are not enough. Christians intend to establish general political structures to lead citizens to equal rights. "Politics" implies "the organising of living in society."

Then some Christians call "politics" the new name for "love", because it is a social organisation with regard to common interest, notably justice.

B- God provides the world to human beings for them to manage and maintain. The world and the Earth as well as its resources are for all human beings.

We Christians believe God is the world's creator who has put the world and resources under human control and maintenance. Thus, the world's resources belong to all humans. No ruler or country is entitled to use these resources for their own interest.

C- Social structures are important for social and common interest

The social structures are extremely important. Public servants have a role to consider common interest, especially the interests of the weak. An African scholar asserted "a better society takes care of the weak."

Freedom is also important for citizens to express their opinion in building a fair society.

The three positions mentioned above are the basis of the Catholic Community on social justice and justice in the world.

Extract of the Congress Vatican II
"Joy and Hope"

- 64. Economic Development is useful for Human Beings

Today people try to produce more agricultural and industrial goods than before and try to create more jobs to meet various needs. Their actions are right. In order to respond to the constant growth of population and human desire, modern ideas on the invention of advanced techniques, numerous industries and other new methods shall be supported and the great efforts of producers shall be advocated.

To sum up, people shall support what is conducive to the development of all fields for all people, not only for the rich who make profit or who are powerful. These productions have one goal – the interest for all human beings. People need commodities and their production not only serves one group of people, but also all mankind regardless of race, position and national origin. Both traditional and legal economic activities are also morally done to fulfill the plans of God on humanity (Martyre 16.26 Luca 16.1-31 Colos 3.17).

- 65. Human beings shall take control of economic development

- A- By not allowing one group of people to do freely – or a small group of powerful people, or politicians, or great powers – are not allowed to control the economy. By contrast, there shall be as many people as possible from all walks of life and national origins to participate in the direction of development. The private sector that wants to join with the ideals of their liberal associations are allowed to co-operate with the state authorities and create relationships between them.
- B- State authorities and the private sector, whose activities are related to the economy, are not allowed to take control of the economic development. False opinions and some doctrines contrary to social reform by misusing freedom shall be denied. Any doctrine violating human rights and the rights of other groups shall be banned. The productions shall be jointly organised for the collective good.
- C- Citizens shall think they have rights and duties to join the development of their community of their own free will. State authorities shall recognise these rights and duties, too, especially in developing countries where everything shall be used so that they can be developed rapidly and necessarily. In the developing countries, those who do not use their reserved assets severely destroy the common interest. Those who do not help their community in offering materials and spirit also destroy the common interest. People are thought to have the rights and freedoms to leave their countries and live in other countries.

- 69. Property in this world is useful for human utilization

God provided the Earth and its resources for the use of all mankind. Thus, all human beings shall fairly receive these resources. But justice is not only the treatment with a proper manner but also with love as God loves humanity and as Jesus Christ so loved us that he sacrificed his life. Even though there is a law to protect ownership in conformity with the constant evolution of each national regime and circumstance, human beings shall always remember that all assets are for human use. So those who use their legal property shall not think they are the only owners of the property, instead they should

understand that the property is a common asset and everyone can use those resources. All human beings are entitled to receive appropriate property for themselves and their families.

Since the earliest times, all instructors and advisers of the Catholic Community had the same ideas. They advised Christians to share their belongings with the poor, but only those things the poor needed in order to meet their requirements.

Seeing that there were so many hungry people in the world, the Congress Vatican II called on all human beings, especially rulers, to recall the old saying: "Feed the dying hungry people, if you do not feed them, you seem killing them." All human beings shall as much as possible share their belongings with the poor, individually or collectively, so that they can fulfill their needs and, to some extent, the living conditions of the poor can be improved.

5. Do we hope our religious faith can be applied with the concept of daily life social justice?

- What Impact Does the Faith in One Father Have over the Followers?

Based on faith, Christians are optimistic that social justice will inevitably exist in the world. Christians believe the Sense of God stimulates human beings of all races to know the valuable goal of their lives and jointly settle any issue peacefully, promoting human rights from being degraded by illiteracy and poverty etc. All human beings shall build as much social justice as possible.

In Cambodia, the Catholic Community co-operates with the Royal Government to build social justice and eliminate the suffering, worry and hopelessness of Cambodians, and working along with a number of organisations, such as:

1. Caritas Cambodia
2. Maryknoll Cambodia
3. JESUS SAHAK CHIVIT
4. New Human Beings
5. Australian Catholic Relief Cambodia (ACR)
6. Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
7. Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE)
8. Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR)
9. Japan Lay Missionary Movement (JLMM)
10. International Committee of the Order of Malta (COMAL)
11. Christian Couple
12. Group of Priest Family SALESAN DONBOSCO

13. Group of Daughter Family of Mercy
14. Group of Brother Family following Preneang Mary
15. Group of religious Messengers of Mercy

As we believe in only one Father, we have Jesus as a senior, so all of us are siblings. Because of the faith, we absolutely cannot commit any crime against others; we see them as our brotherhood. Then, if we are the sellers we cannot deceive our clients; as they are our siblings. If we are high-ranking officials, we shall be responsible for our roles, loyal to our nation and to people with love, but we do not use our role to embezzle national assets or treat our subordinates badly, because we have one Father; so we are all siblings. If we are factory employers we think of the common good and interest of workers. We must consider the appropriate wages that enable workers to feed their families and send their children to schools because all the workers are our siblings. If we are factory workers we work hard and do not steal anything from the factories, because all things within the factories belong to our siblings.

We all try to change our living and social interactions. With the faith we can change our living style as our conduct stems from our belief in one Father.

We know human beings carry inherent greediness, aggressiveness and ignorance. Greediness, aggressiveness and ignorance exceed our forces. They have control over all of us and detract us far from our desired destination. They are called sins in all religions.

- Are We Helpless?

Jesus told us: "I come to the Earth to save people from their sins." He instructed people full of greed, aggressiveness and ignorance to realise the direction of their lives and led them away from that direction. When we are Christians we think of social justice, but we are helpless in terms of our ability to change others.

However, we are not helpless forever. We have Jesus Christ, who overcame all types of sins and guides us eternally. As he told us: "I am the way, the life and the truth."

6. Conclusion

We Christians believe justice is a vital need for human life in society and it is the goal of our faith. We try to work with fairness. This is not because we wanted a good image, reputation or social status but because we believe in God the Father and try to respond to the love of God, who loves all human beings most.

We hope, together with followers of other religions including Buddhists who are the majority in this country, Muslims, Christians of different denominations and other religious followers, and along with the Royal Government, we will turn into an effective force promoting more social justice in Cambodia, which was torn by civil war. May the pure sense help us have energy to overcome all sins in our spirit, and may our mind be full of love, compassion and solidarity and collectively build up social justice forever.

H.E. **Vann Math**, President of Cambodia Islamic Association
Advisory Council Member of the Cambodian Inter Religious Council

1. Definition of Islam

Islam is an Arabic religion and its name is derived from the Arabic “salaam” meaning “submission”. Islam is recognised as one of the world’s largest religions. An adherent of Islam is called a Muslim – “one who submits”. All Muslims are compelled to follow the laws written down in the Koran – the Islamic bible. The Koran was written some 200 years after the death of Mohammad in the 7th century AD. The Koran consists of 114 chapters known as Surahs, and is separated into 6,236 verses known as Ayahs. In addition to the Koran, further oral principles of Islam are written in the Hadiths, which, unlike those of the Koran, are still open to interpretation. The true path of Islam is believed by Muslims to be one of peace, family and harmony.

2. The role of Islam

It is the duty of Muslims to do everything they can to ensure peace for themselves, their families and their society. If they fail to follow this duty they are not considered to be true Muslims.

3. Rights and freedom under Islam

Islam uses the Arabic word “Allah” – “the god” – to refer to God. Islamic rights are outlined in the Koran and supported by the Hadiths. Islam cannot violate the human rights of others whatever their beliefs, nor force others to follow the religion.

4. Islam and terrorism

Islam prohibits terrorism, murder and destruction of property. Despite the number of groups and individuals using the name of Islam to commit terrorist acts, Islam forbids the murder of all living things. Thus, people committing such acts are not members of the religion of Islam.

5. Islam and justice in society

Justice, “adalah” in Arabic, is a term that appears frequently in the Koran and the Hadiths.

Justice is particularly important to Muslims in terms of the family. The Koran allows a Muslim to take more than one wife if he can deal justly – in an equivalent manner – with all his subsequent wives.

Muslims believe that this in no way violates the rights of females because it prevents their husbands from having extramarital relationships – they marry the women instead. Islam strictly forbids adultery.

In short, where you have a society of people you have religion. Where you have religion you should have justice. To Muslims, justice and society are derived from God. People who are members of a just society are happy.

BIOGRAPHY

Mr. Heng Monychenda **Director of Buddhism for Development**

After living under the Khmer Rouge regime for nearly 4 years, Heng Monychenda moved to the Cambodian-Thai border and lived with other displaced Cambodians in the refugee camps. At this time he became a Buddhist monk, a calling that he followed for 17 years, until 1997. From 1985 to 1992 he was director of the Khmer Buddhist Research Centre in Site 2 camp. He studied the relationship between Buddhism and Khmer society and how the Buddhist way could prevent a repeat of the tragedies that had befallen Cambodia. In 1990, while still in the camp, he founded Buddhism for Development (BFD), an organisation aimed at promoting socially engaged Buddhism in Cambodia. When he returned to Cambodia in 1993 under the UN's repatriation programme, he established BFD at Wat Anlongvil in Battambang province. From its simple beginnings under difficult conditions, BFD now has over 150 staff and seven branches located in Battambang, Pailin, Banteay Meanchey, Oddor Meanchey, Siemreap, Kampong Thom, and Preah Vihear.

He studied management skills at the Klausenhoff Academy in Germany in 1989, and received his MA in public administration from the John F Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University in 1998.

Widely recognised as an authority on Buddhism in Cambodia, he has written many books and papers on the relevance of Buddhist values for peaceful government, reconciliation, the family and development.

KAF and Heng Monychenda have been partners since his days in Site 2 camp in the 1980s.

Venerable Khy Sovannratana **Lecturer at Buddhist Institute Preah Sihanouk Reach**

Khy Sovannratana was born in 1973 in Koksney village, Samproch commune, Stuong district, Kampong Thom province. After enduring the hardships of the Khmer Rouge regime, he became a monk in 1991, and a junior monk in his hometown in 1992.

After graduating from Preah Suramarith Buddhist University, he won a scholarship to study Buddhism in Sri Lanka where he received a high

diploma, a BA and an MA from the Kelaniya University. He is now studying a post-graduate degree in law at the Royal University of Law and Economics in Phnom Penh. He works as a professor at Preah Sihanouk Reach Buddhist University and Pannasastra University. He is personal advisor to the Great Supreme Buddhist Patriarch of Cambodia, vice-rector of the Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University and head of the Mangkulvan pagoda. He is recognised nationally and internationally as an authority on Buddhism.

In 2006, he was awarded the rank of Preah Tep Satha number four from the Royal Committee by royal decree from Preah Bath Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihanouk, King of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

His Excellency Peter Weiss Member of the German Bundestag

His Excellency Peter Weiss was born in 1956 at Freiburg. He is a Roman-Catholic, and is married with three children. He studied Catholic theology in Freiburg and Tübingen and has published a book on training and editing. In 1985 he worked for Caritas Germany in Freiburg. In 1998 he became member of the German parliament, the Bundestag, for the constituency Emmendingen-Lahr.

His political mandates include: member of the Committee on Labour and Social Affairs; deputy member of the Budget Committee; deputy member of the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance; deputy chairman of the group representing employees' interests within the CDU/CSU parliamentary group; deputy member of the Parliamentary Friendship Group for Relations with the states of Southeastern Europe; member of the Executive Committee of the district branch of the CDU in South Baden; and chairman of the district branch of the Christian-Democratic employees (CDA), South Baden.

He is also: member of the Planning Committee of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation; member of the Central Committee of the German Catholics and of the Diocese Council of the Freiburg Archbishopric; speaker for International Solidarity and Development Assistance; member of the Catholic Agency for Development Policy and of the German Commission of Justitia et Pax; board member of the charity "Action for Mental Health"; deputy chairman of Caritas Germany for the Diocese of Freiburg; member of the Board of Trustees of the Peter Hesse Foundation; member of Parliamentary Advisory Council of the German Foundation for World Population; member of the Administrative Council of the German Development Agency; member of the Advisory

Council of the “Exposure and Dialogue” programme; and member of the Advisory Council of Pax-Bank.

Friar Un Son

Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh

Member of Cambodian Inter-Religious Council

“Being grateful for abundant grace and giving oneself to God in return”

Friar Un Son was born to a Buddhist farming family in 1960, in Chamkathien, Tramkok district, Takeo province. In 1975, at the beginning of the Khmer Rouge regime, he went to Thailand and stayed there for five years. He served as a Buddhist monk for three years, before living in a refugee camp in Arraya Prathet for a year. In 1980, he left to join a small Catholic community in Montreal, Canada. Impressed by the Christian notions of unconditional love and sharing with those most in need, he found his new vocation.

After a year in the seminary of Vienna, in France, he returned to Cambodia in 1992. In 2001, he completed his Catholic formation and, together with three fellow Cambodians, became a Catholic priest. His responsibilities as a priest include celebrating the Holy Sacrament of the Catholic Church, proclaiming the Good News, helping the sick and poor and promoting Catholicism in Kampot and other Christian communities. He is also president of the Cambodian Inter-Religious Council, which aims to help build the foundations of social justice in Cambodia.

“In a dark night, I saw a great light inviting everyone to be enlightened. Amidst wickedness, I have experienced God’s unconditional love. Where there is charity, there is love, and where there is love, there is God.” – Friar Un Son.

His Excellency Ung Ty

Senator, Member of Board of Directors of the Cambodian Inter-Religious Council for the Cambodian Christian-Protestant Community

His Excellency Ung Ty was born in 1949 in Kampot province. He received doctorates in theology from the Colorado Springs University in 1985, and in law from the Point Loma University in 1987.

He became senior pastor of the New Life Church of the Nazarene in Long Beach, California, and works to promote the building of Protestant Churches in the United States, Thailand and Cambodia.

He is now head of the Protestant Community in Cambodia for the Evangelical Church and senator of the second mandate of the Kingdom of Cambodia. He is also a member of the board of directors of the Cambodian Inter-Religious Council.

His Excellency Vann Mat

Senator, President of Cambodia Islamic Association

Advisory Council Member of the Cambodian Inter Religious Council

His Excellency Vann Mat was born in Kampong Cham province. He studied religion in his hometown and served as a professor of Islam from 1970 to 1974. He was a soldier during the Khmer Rouge regime. Using his knowledge of Islam, and of the Malaysian, Indonesian and Arabic languages, he worked in the department of ethics in 1981 and has been a senator since 1999. Mr. Vann Mat was selected as president of the Cambodian Muslim Association due to his active involvement in supporting Islamic ethics and teachings following the fall of Democratic Kampuchea in 1979.

A Khmer language version of this paper is available. It may be obtained from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation office in Phnom Penh

The English text was edited by Mr. **PAUL BRISBY**, Reporter for SE Globe magazine

www.kas.de/kambodscha

House No. 04, Street 462,
Khan Chamkor Mon, P.O.Box: 944
Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia

