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E. Stanley Jones School
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Abstract

This dissertation is research about contextualization which will help the Thai be Christian and Thai in the Thai way. The study defends the thesis that the Thai way of meekness is the best method by which to contextualize Christian discipling in Thailand. Moreover, the Thai way of meekness is compatible with scriptural teaching on meekness. Effective approaches to influence Thai non-believers, to nurture believers, and to discipline wrongdoers can be founded upon the Thai way of meekness.

Relying on the insights of Suntaree Komin (1991) about Thai characteristics, I seek to investigate the characteristics of the Thai way of meekness. The theoretical framework is used to analyze the data from: library research, the Wessandorn Jataka myth, the Pai Dang (The Red Bamboo) novel, four case studies, research interviews among non-Christians, Thai Christians, and missionaries, Jesus' meekness and discipling in the Gospels, and missiological applications.

The research affirms the thesis statement. Inquiry indicates that the Thai way of meekness is an important core of Thai culture. The research discovers the following: Thai worldview, the sources of the Thai way of meekness, the structure of Thai society, Thai understanding of religion, religious discipling, and religious discipling tools. The research confirms Suntaree Komin's nine Thai value clusters and illustrates Jesus' meekness and discipling for the Thai context. I propose new approaches for the Thai indigenous discipling which will help the Thai be Christian and Thai in the Thai way.
This dissertation, entitled
THE WAY OF MEEKNESS:
BEING CHRISTIAN AND THAI IN THE THAI WAY

written by
Ubolwan Mejudhon

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Missiology

has been read and approved by the undersigned members of the
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November 11, 1997
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CHAPTER 1

The Spiritual Suffering and the Search for Solutions

Background of the Problem

Thailand is my beloved country. Outsiders call Thailand "the land of smiles," but I call her "my mother land." I think Thailand smiles at outsiders, but Thailand sobs, cries and laughs with me because we belong to each other. That sense of belonging between Thailand and me gives me a good cultural identity.

Buddhism embraced me from birth. I learned Buddhism through persons whose lives pointed to Buddha's teaching. I remember how my mother cared for the poor and faced suffering with quiet courage. Suffering never harmed her but created in her more empathy and understanding for others. I remember the day my father passed away; Abbot Kliank hurried to my home to sit quietly with our family. The abbot was not eloquent, but the sorrow in his eyes told a thirteen-year-old girl that he cared for our family. He was not only our abbot but also our teacher because he taught my mother and my aunts when they were young. He was the abbot of a rich monastery, but he cared for our small family left alone without a father. He allowed our family to rent a piece of land from the monastery for only two dollars a month for several years. My mother and Abbot Kliank taught me the Thai way of meekness, and I learned about Buddhism by observing people.

Buddhism taught me through sight, sound, and stories. I remember vividly an important Thai rite of passage in 1960. The time between the full moon of July and September was our nation's sacred time, Khao Pansa-Ork Pansa (entering and exiting the rainy season). It was a time of peace, of joy. There were no drunkards on the street or gun-firing in my hometown,
Cholburee. Young men entered monkhood, and many lay people vowed to keep the five Buddhist precepts. Specialists chanted the goodness of mothers to novices, and people wept. Relatives and friends shouted and danced with joy, leading novices to Buddhist temples. In the city, high school bands marched through the town, celebrating with gigantic candles. Most people watched and celebrated. Candles were lit all through the sacred time. At six o'clock in the evening, monks beat drums and bells in special rhythms—ta-loom-toom-meng—repeatedly. My heart leaped with joy, absorbing Buddhism in the Thai way, the way of meekness. I learned about Buddhism through the communities that participated in Buddhist rituals, a relational and inductive education.

At the end of the rite of passage, I ventured alone into a Buddhist temple near my house. I loved listening to the myth of Buddha, Maha Chat or the Wessandorn Jataka myth. The meekness of Wessandorn fascinated me. He sought the truth of Dharma (the religious principles for life and faith) by becoming lowly and meek even though he was a prince. He gave away his precious belongings, including his children and wife. What generosity! As a result, in his next life he became Buddha. The myth was beautifully written. It brought tears and laughter, and I came back home longing to reach nirvana (the extinction of all desires and suffering). Most exciting of all, my father named me "Ubolwan," the name of the first woman monk of Buddha. Buddhism bonded me to spiritual truth in a meek way, a Thai way. For Buddhists, story was life and life was story. Where there was no story, there was no life. Thailand allowed me to seek and find truth by my own initiative.

Thailand has a wonderful definition of "teacher" or krue in Thai. It means someone who is heavily laden with responsibility. True teachers not
only pass on information, but they care for their students' whole being because students are like their children. The students consider true teachers their parents. Mrs. Somboon was my krue. She sat with me in her free time and asked me how much of a stipend I got from my mother, and could my mother manage the family when my father was gone? Mrs. Somboon raised my self-esteem when, as a junior high school student, I was too short to play basketball and volleyball. Her gentleness and kindness taught me that good Thai teachers were meek. Therefore I became a teacher, teaching Buddhist philosophy to engineering students in a university, beginning in 1968. The students listened to me, and I listened to them, about their lives, suffering, and joy. I tried to be a teacher in a meek way, a Thai way. Good Thai teachers taught me that education was doing and being. It was both academic and relational. Teaching was not only passing on information but also helping to create strong identity in students.

In 1971, I was sent to study "Teaching English as a Second Language" at Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand. There were more sheep than people in New Zealand. I got lost in the streets, feeling confused, frightened and sad. I realized I did not belong in this land. I was a sojourner, losing my mental map. I held fast to my Buddhism and Thai culture. I gently discipled people around me with acts of kindness, knowing that they were sad, too. When an Indonesian lady lost her costly train ticket, I loaned her some money. When another Indonesian teacher needed American dollars to send to his poor family, I exchanged my American dollar bills for his New Zealand dollars, which I did not need. When my Thai roommate was sad and confused, I brought her a bunch of daffodils and asked permission to read a portion of Buddhist scripture to her. I found that Thai meekness effectively eased the pain of living abroad.
Then one day I met a Christian from Korea. I was surprised. "He should be a Buddhist, not a Christian," I thought. I observed that he spoke loudly when he talked about Christianity and Jesus, in season and out of season. I felt offended and planned to convert him to Buddhism. Therefore I invited him to dialogue with me about religions. It turned out I did not have any chance to speak. He talked long and loudly. I listened to him, learning good things from Christianity which I could apply to my life. I was truly surprised that Hong Sung Chul expected me to believe in Jesus so soon. I wanted to discuss his religion; I did not want to be converted. I showed him pictures of my country so we could change the topic. I was offended when his face showed disgust as he looked at a picture of a gorgeous gold statue of Buddha. He said it was an idol. I tried to explain I did not bow down to the statues of Buddha even though I was a Buddhist, but I respected them as signs pointing to Buddha and his teaching. He kept quiet. That evening I learned Christians were not meek but assertive. Through Hong Song Chul, I met many Christians. Most of them were eager to share with me how to be saved. Most of them had negative ideas about Buddha and Buddhism. I felt like a lone lamb among wolves. The things that helped me keep fellowship with them were their sincerity and honesty, which Buddhism and Thai culture taught me to detect. Moreover, God did reveal to me personally that he existed. I wanted to learn who Jesus was. I read the Bible, some Christian books, some atheistic books, and observed Christian lives.

Nine days before I returned to Thailand, I met a meek Christian, Mr. Gordon Junck. He didn't witness to me, but I became a Christian. The elderly missionary spoke positively about Buddha and Buddhism. He simply said, "Buddha is a very good man, but Jesus is God, daughter." Then he gently hugged me and said good-by. He said the word "daughter" gently, and his
grandfatherly hug linked me to the Heavenly Father. The way of meekness led me to Christ. That night, October 28, 1971, I became a Christian myself.

My heart was filled with joy because of my renewed relationship with God. I believed I was Thai, and I loved my country even more. I wanted to share with my people that Jesus was the true, living God, and he could help us fulfill all Buddhist precepts. He could transform lives, because he was God of all nations. However, when I returned to Thailand at the end of 1971, I found I could not be Christian and Thai.

If my heart was a cup containing water which was Thai, Jesus had expanded that cup to love humankind beyond nationalities and races. However, Western Christianity filled my cup with oil and fire above the water. These three elements struggled within me. I learned that witnessing was very important for Christians in Thailand. I learned how to witness from other Christians in Thailand, using Western forms of witnessing which they saw as the one and only way. I argued with the Thai on the basis of rational, propositional truth about Christianity, but most Thais refused to argue with me. They are meek. Distributing tracts was an alternative. Day in and day out, I roamed the streets, giving tracts to the Thai. Policemen used to stop me, suspecting I was a leftist. Leftists stopped me, thinking I was one of them. I gave tracts to both policemen and leftists. Many times I went to Buddhist monasteries to persuade monks to become Christians. The sympathetic look on their faces told me they considered me eccentric. I kept on witnessing in various ways. I wanted monks to read the Bible. When monks asked for food in the morning, I put small Bibles in their sacred bowls.

My relatives and friends complained that my ways of witnessing were weird. At that time I praised the Lord, thinking Christians should be accused and persecuted. I thought these people did not understand. I simply did the
good things all Christians in the world were doing in order that this perishing
world would be saved. From time to time, however, a small, still voice
seemed to ask me, "Where has the gracious Ubolwan gone? Why have you
become like a crusader?" I pushed those questions out of my mind because
they disturbed me. I thought Thais could not be Thai and Christian. That
thought disrupted my cultural identity because I forsook the Thai way of
meekness.

At present, Thai Christians lose their cultural identity because they
cannot be Christian and Thai in the Thai way of meekness (Davis 1994). Thai
Christianity follows Western methods of discipling which alienate Thai
Christians from the Thai way of meekness, a dominant value of Thai culture.
As a result, the spreading of the gospel suffers when Christians, Christianity,
and churches are perceived by the Thai as violating the Thai way of meekness
in their presentation of the gospel, discipling, and disciplining. Such
evangelizing violates self-identity, grateful relationships, smooth
interpersonal relationships, and flexibility and adaptation in Thai culture.
Thai Christian converts cannot fit in with their social networks and kinsmen
because of their aggressive ways of witnessing influenced by Western
methods rooted in a different cultural context.

The discipling and disciplining of Christian churches in Thailand
follow the same route. Discipleship training is direct, cognitively oriented,
instantaneous, passing on information without significant relational
bonding. Thai Christians find it hard to move progressively to Jesus Christ,
who is the center of their faith in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, as they lack
living models of Christ in their Christian lives. They lose their cultural
identity, their ties with social networks and kinsmen, and they cannot quite
understand how to live victorious lives as Christians. When they fall due to
secularism and temptations, the churches discipline them in such a way that they lose face and the ties with their Christian brethren. As a result, they lose almost all their identity. It is difficult for Thai Christians to keep their faith in Jesus Christ, whom they love, when they cut themselves off from their cultural, natural, and social roots. The spreading of the gospel has experienced difficulty for more than 150 years in Thailand because Christians in Thailand do not practice the Thai way of meekness.

Christians in Thailand do not study Thai culture to find out what Thai identity is, what creates Thai identity, or what successful ways Thai people use to introduce change in ideology and behavior. Christians in Thailand do not question the intelligibility, validity, and credibility of the methods used in discipling. They simply suffer the consequences; Christians are less than one percent of the population in Thailand after more than 150 years of witnessing.

After twenty-three years of faithfully following Western methods of discipleship, I struggle with many questions. Are these the methods Thai Christians have used for more than 150 years since Protestantism entered Thailand? What has been the result? How do non-Christian Thais perceive and explain Christians, Christianity, and the churches? Has not the time come for us Christians to evaluate our past and present? Would Jesus use Western methods in the Thai cultural context? Can one be Thai and Christian at the same time? Why or why not? What makes one a Thai? Is it the Thai way of meekness? What are the characteristics of the Thai way of meekness? How can one be both Christian and Thai? How can Thai Christians construct their own ways of discipling, which are key factors in spreading the gospel in Thailand? Lastly, what is the role of the Thai way of meekness for Christian mission in Thailand?
Thesis Statement

In this dissertation I will defend the thesis that: (1) the Thai way of meekness is the best method by which to contextualize Christian discipling in Thailand, and (2) the Thai way of meekness is compatible with Scripture teaching on meekness. New ways of discipling the Thai from a Thai perspective, using the Thai way of meekness will be suggested. As a result, Christian Thais can preserve their cultural and spiritual identity, and Thai indigenous Christian churches will be founded in Jesus and the Scripture and rooted in the Thai cultural context. Then Thais can be both Christian and Thai in the Thai way. I will discuss the Thai way of meekness in chapter 2, show how it is confirmed by classical and modern literature in chapter 3 and 4, provide case studies of Christian discipling in Thailand that illustrate and violate the Thai way of meekness in chapter 5, present the results of my field research in Thailand in chapter 6, and summarize the findings of the dissertation in chapter 7. In chapter 8, I present my case for the compatibility of the Thai way of meekness with the teaching of the Bible. Chapter 9 offers suggestions for a discipling process that is truly Thai and reflects on the implications of the overall study for the discipline of missiology.

A heated debate about culture and contextualization circulates among Christians in Thailand. Most missionaries and Thai Christians have either totally negative or totally positive ideas about Thai culture. Some are skeptical of the Thai way of meekness. They believe humankind is desperately sinful and there is nothing good in them. Others believe that God created men and women in God's image, therefore there is a divine image in all human beings which nothing can quench. The arguments derive from subjective epistemology rather than objective analysis of Scripture and Thai
culture. I will attempt to analyze Scripture and Thai culture in my research so that we will know the truth and the truth can set us free. I think positive, negative, and neutral elements exist in each culture and the gospel must preserve and develop, as well as confront all cultures.

Moreover, misconceptions abound about contextualization in Thailand. Many Christians consider contextualization redundant, risky of syncretism, and theologically liberal. In their minds, contextualization is about making people sit on the floor, using Thai musical instruments, performing Thai dances in worship service, substituting sticky rice for bread in the communion services, and building churches in the style of Buddhist temples. However, when we try to analyze Thai culture and discover the characteristics of Thai culture, Christian discipling can flow intelligibly and naturally with the cultural grain. The Thai can absorb the word of God into their worldview. Then Thailand and the Thai can benefit ideologically, socially, and economically from the gospel. By discipling, in this dissertation, I include evangelizing, nurturing, and disciplining— one process of spiritual growth. More information about the definition of discipling is in "Definition of Terms" of this chapter.

Experiences during the past 168 years confirm that Thai Christians could not grow spiritually when they had problems with social relationships and economics. Ideology, social relationships, and economics influence each other and create chain reactions when one area is affected. Culture is a dynamic, integrative system. Contextualization appeals to holistic felt needs of the Thai in the Thai way. It also helps Christians find a natural bridge over which Christian Thais can intelligibly communicate the gospel to the Thai.

Without contextualization Christians have unconsciously introduced syncretism. If the word of God is not intelligible to the Thai, their worldview,
hearts, minds, and beings cannot be transformed. The conversion may take place only at the level of outward Christian forms but many converts will be trapped in sexual sins, greed, fear, and love of the world. I believe contextualization, which emphasizes the analysis of the word of God and Thai culture will shed light on God's methods and manner of discipling the Thai, and that Thai Christians can walk with Christ on the road to the way of meekness.

Data Collection and Methodology

The following five areas of data collection require several methodologies:

1. Methodology in Collecting Data Concerning the Thai Way of Meekness

In chapter 2, I present the result of library research in order to get at the Thai worldview, values, behavior patterns, the structure of Thai society, and Thai relational bonding.

I conducted library research among outsiders and Thai insiders concerning the characteristics of the Thai way of meekness. I investigated two groups of outside researchers whose analysis of the Thai culture and society results in contrasting conclusions of the characteristics of the Thai. However, the research of insiders, especially that of Suntaree Komin (1991) is the key that provides answers to the confusion. Her research is the result of ten years of extensive empirical study. The library research concerning the characteristics of the Thai way of meekness aims to investigate and draw conclusions about the Thai worldview, values, behavior patterns, the structure of Thai society, and Thai relational bonding. However, the sociocultural change is dynamic; therefore I tested the validity of my research findings by interviewing Thai non-Christians, Thai Christians, and Western missionaries. These results are laid out in chapter 6.
2. **Methodology in Collecting Data Concerning the Thai Way of Meekness in a Classical Myth and Modern Literature**

Chapter 3 and chapter 4 represent the result of my critical analysis of two significant Thai literary works of art.

**Data collection from literary criticism: Wessandorn Jataka.** In order to understand the Thai way of meekness, I conducted literary criticism of the text and the ritual of the *Wessandorn Jataka* myth. In Thailand, three myths are important; *Tripoonpraruang, Pramalai Jataka,* and *Wessandorn Jataka.* However, *Wessandorn Jataka* has played a significant role religiously, socially, and politically for more than 700 years. The Thai know most about this myth. In investigating the *Wessandorn Jataka* text and its religious performance, I expected to learn about the Thai way of meekness and Thai religio-psychical orientation in the area of religious functions of rites of passage and liminality.

**Data collection from literary criticism: Pai Dan (The Red Bamboo).** *Pai Dan (The Red Bamboo)* is a unique novel because it is the only book that illustrates how the Thai convert people from other ideologies. In this case, the ideology was communism and the context of dialectic interaction was in the everyday life of Thai peasants. This book is a manual for discipling the Thai in modern times. Moreover, the writer was one of the rare scholars of Thai culture. The style of writing and the content illuminate the Thai way of meekness. The investigation of *Pai Dan (The Red Bamboo)* confirms the Thai way of meekness and extends the understanding of Thai discipling from the use of religious symbols and ceremonies into the use of individuals and the community as living symbols in words and deeds to point to the meaning of faith in Buddhism and values of Thai culture. The findings from *Pai Dan*
(The Red Bamboo) add more characteristics to the Thai way of meekness in discipling.

3. Methodology in Collecting Data Concerning the Violation and Vindication of the Thai Way of Meekness in Christian Mission

In chapter 5, I used two methods in conducting data collection: (1) the case study approach, and (2) the research interview. I used the case study approach with all four case studies but only used the research interview for the fourth case study.

Data collection from case studies. The principle of case studies stated in Alan Neely's (1995) *Christian Mission: A Case Study Approach* was used to collect data concerning the problem of the old approaches and the possibilities of the new approaches concerning violation and vindication of the Thai way of meekness in Christian mission in four case studies. Neely suggests that a case is a carefully written description of an actual situation or event fraught with ambiguity in which a person must make a decision based upon the information at hand (Neely 1995). The methodology should lead to a conclusion from case studies as to why violation of the Thai way of meekness caused problems in Christian discipling. Moreover, it should demonstrate how vindication of the Thai way of meekness blessed Christian discipling. Analysis should also test the characteristics of the Thai way of meekness, and the work of the Holy Spirit in discipling the Thai.

Data collection from the research interview. In chapter 5, the fourth case study, I conducted the research interview concerning the traditional way and new ways of disciplining in the Muangthai Church. The interview questions aimed to gather data concerning the problems and possibilities of using the traditional way, which is the Western way of disciplining exercised in Thailand, as opposed to the Thai way of disciplining as well as the
characteristics of the Thai way of meekness and Thai understanding of disciplining. Thirteen members of the Muangthai Church in Bangkok were interviewed or wrote their ideas concerning the ways of disciplining in their church. These interviewees were selected because they were mature Christians who had good knowledge of Scripture and Thai culture.


Chapter 6 represents the heart of my research. In this chapter I present the results of my interviewing of Thai non-Christians, Thai Christians, and missionaries in five urban areas and in four small villages. Fifty-seven non-Christian Thais were interviewed. The criteria for choosing the non-Christian interviewees were: (1) they have considerable knowledge of the gospel, the Christian church, and know Christians for more than three years; (2) they have good understanding of Thai culture; (3) they are opinion leaders of the Thai in the four regions of Thailand where the local cultural context is different.

I interviewed 48 Thai Christians, and 25 Western missionaries. The missionaries represented various denominations: the Southern Baptist Mission in Thailand, the Overseas Missionary Fellowship Mission (O.M.F.), the Christian and Missionary Alliance Mission (C.M.A.), the Church of Christ in Thailand, and the Campus Outreach Ministry. Fourty-eight Thai Christians represented some denominations: Wesleyan independent churches, as well as the C.M.A., Presbyterian, and Pentecostal churches. The criteria for the Christian prospects I interviewed were: (1) active Christians, (2) had a good understanding and knowledge of Thai culture, (3) had served more than three years in Thailand, and (4) were opinion leaders. The
prospects represented Christians from four regions of Thailand where the local cultural context is different.

Interviewees were contacted in many ways. Gracious pastors who knew us personally selected some respondents. Two Christian schools kindly selected both Christians and non-Christians for research interviews. Some Christian friends contacted many good interviewees for the study. Many Christians and non-Christians interviewed were our friends. Four seminaries selected for us insightful respondents. We officially contacted and asked for interviewees from the Southern Baptist Mission in Thailand, the C.M.A., O.M.F. Mission, and a Presbyterian school. They were graciously cooperative with us. Relying on insights of interviewees, the research endeavored to find the constant elements in the present Thai worldview, values, behavior patterns, the structure of Thai society, and Thai relational bonding.

The interviewees also voiced their feeling, thinking, and value of the local communities about Thai religious discipling and the previous tradition of the Thai churches. The research interview intended to discover their perspectives toward Christians, churches, and Christianity in Thailand as well as their understanding of the functions of religion in Thai society. The interview also aimed to learn their ideas concerning effective Christian discipling which will help Christians in Thailand be Christian and Thai in the Thai way.

If the perceptions of this diverse set of interviewees are congruent with the insider and outsider research identified in chapter 2, as confirmed by myth and literature in chapters 3 and 4, and as amplified by the experiences recorded in the case studies of chapter 5, then I have supported the first half of
the thesis that drives this research: the Thai way of meekness is the best way to contextualize Christian discipling in Thailand.

5. **Methodology in Collecting Data Concerning Biblical Meekness**

In chapter 8, I used four methods in collecting data: (1) the study of Jesus' incarnation; (2) word studies of biblical Hebrew, Greek, and Thai meekness; (3) library research of literature concerning biblical meekness, and (4) Thai biblical exegesis of the Scripture concerning Jesus' meekness. If the perception of biblical meekness is congruent with the Thai way of meekness then I have supported the second half of the thesis that drives this research: the Thai way of meekness is compatible with scriptural teaching on meekness.

**Definition of Terms**

The list of terms to be defined are as follows: biblical meekness, Thai meekness, Thai relational boundary, the Thai way of relational bonding, contextualization, Buddhist terms, Thai religious discipling, and discipling.

**Biblical Meekness**

Biblical meekness is the quality of life of those with a humble attitude toward God and humankind. This humble attitude helps the meek renounce power, prestige, position, rights, and status and to live simple lives. The humble attitude inspires the meek to identify with others by bearing their burdens (Numbers 12:3; Psalms 22:26; Isaiah 11:4; Zephaniah 2:3; Matthew 11:29a; *The Willowbank Report* 1978). Meekness produces considerate, gentle, forbearing, submissive, and kind behavior patterns. In social interaction, the meek are caring, serving others. They are not quarrelsome but kind and patient when wronged (Philippians 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:7). However, the meek dare to gently or boldly correct others (Isaiah 40:10; Hebrews 5:2; John
2:13-16). Biblical meekness comes from deep relational bonding with God, the Holy Spirit, and other people (Acts 24:4; 2 Corinthians 10:1; Galatians 5:23; Matthew 11:29a). Jesus is the model of biblical meekness. The meek reveal courage and strong self-identity. They view reality around them and in them as power through weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

The Thai Way of Meekness

Meekness is the quality of life of those who are humble inwardly and outwardly toward others. The Thai way of meekness consists of a humble attitude which helps the meek respect the self-identity of other people. The humble attitude in the Thai way of meekness makes the Thai renounce power, prestige, position, right, and status to deal warmly, calmly and kindly with other people as long as their self-identity is not violated. The meek identify with the suffering of other people. They are quick to detect the deep felt needs of other people and quick to behave accordingly in order that relational harmony will be kept.

The Thai way of meekness emphasizes the gentle behavior pattern in social interaction. Meek manners manifest themselves in gentle, tender, beautiful, and respectful body movements as well as verbal communication. The voice must show the quality of gentleness, tenderness, softness, submission, dependence and no arguing. The Thai way of meekness in social interaction practices compromise, consideration, friendliness, generosity, time and occasion awareness, as well as hierarchical awareness, aiming to cherish self-identity, grateful and smooth relationships, flexibility, interdependence, and fun and pleasure. The Thai way of meekness is modeled after Buddha's view and way of life and the norms of the relational culture of the Thai. The meek have strong self-identity and their worldview is structured with power through weakness (Hamilton 1952; Komin 1991;

Thai Relational Boundary

Thai relational boundary is the unseen wall which separates between insiders and outsiders in Thai society. The wall is Thai worldview and values which are the mental map for the Thai to travel along the road of cultural norms and behavior patterns in the framework of hierarchy, relationship, and individualism. Krukrit Pramoj, a prophetic voice of Thai cultural scholars, explains about Thai relational boundaries thus: "Thai are very tribal, closed communities; foreigners are not allowed. Well, they are allowed but there is a wall there somewhere, a dividing line they never really get inside" (Beek 1983:205).

In order to detect the Thai relational boundary one has to understand the Thai’s affective domain and Thai non-verbal signs. Thai culture is hierarchical and relational, therefore space, time, actions, tone of voice, and facial expressions play important roles in social interaction and communication. Thais know they are accepted if both persons feel at ease, and smooth in social interaction and communication. The criterion is affective. The Thai time of testing the credibility of outsiders is long according to Western time. In Thai culture one must enter the Thai relational boundary before discussing religion.

Thai Relational Bonding

The Thai dictionary explains Thai bonding as being accepted to enter into deep relational groups which are kinsmanlike without a natural blood relationship. The Thai word "entering" is kao; puak means a kinsmanlike group. The method of Thai bonding is unique because it is not explicit in a surface relation but in a deep unconscious relation. Words may not be said
and rituals are not performed except in the North and Northeast of Thailand, but somehow insiders and outsiders realize that strangers are allowed to break through the relational boundary when the bonding takes place.

Krukrit Pramoj describes how one can be a Thai:

A Thai is not a person born by blood . . . but if you do something to yourself, then you become a Thai. Do something to yourself means you accept Thai values, Thai ideals, mostly you become a Buddhist . . . And you respect your parents, you respect your teachers, you worship the King . . . and you are loyal to the nation . . . and you have the same sort of Thai escape mechanisms when troubles arise. (Beek 1983:203)

Lauriston Sharp and Lucian M. Hanks showed that Thais accept other Thais outside their groups in three ways: (1) they must share the same experiences and liminality in the natural patterns of living, (2) they must exchange service and favor, and (3) they must accept commitment of fixed obligations beneath the easily contracted arrangement (Sharp 1978).

Liminality

Liminality is used in two ways in this study: liminality in the rites of passage, and liminality in the natural pattern of Thai lives. Arnold van Gennep (1960) described liminality in the rites of passage as a transition period when people move from one stage to another, for example, puberty rites in primal societies. Victor Turner (1969) explained the liminal stage in rites of passage as "betwixt and between." He believed that initiates bonded themselves to their communities during the liminal stage. Mathias Zahnisser (1997) thought that initiates bonded both to their community and religious meanings during the liminal stage in the rites of passage. Liminality occurs also in the natural pattern of Thai lives. It occurs when two people or more bear together the burden of hardship, and difficulties during life crises. The liminal stage creates deep relational bonding among the Thai. For example,
help given to a Thai during one's life crisis will be usually remembered for good.

Contextualization

Darrell Whiteman describes contextualization as indigenization; he puts the definition into focus when he notes:

Indigenization is a cultural process in which the indigenes attempt to take something borrowed from outside their culture and make it their own. The word indigene, from the French, literally means "inborn." Thus something that is indigenous to a society is something that originates there, is created in that culture and is thus native to it. Indigenization therefore is a process in which indigenes (not foreigners) attempt consciously or unconsciously to take something borrowed from another culture and to alter it in such a way that it becomes adapted to their culture and truly their own. (1983:412)

Whiteman defines indigenous Christianity as "the expression of Christian beliefs and meaning in forms that are culturally appropriate for the adherents of that faith" (1983:415). Whiteman (1997) asserts that contextualization functions as follows: (1) it creates the Christian church which makes sense to the local people and establishes the indigenous Christianity which helps meet the deepest felt needs of their society. Christians can be Christian and members of their society, absorbing the word of God in their worldview; (2) contextualization offends the wicked structure of the local society and culture because Christian believers' lives are transformed and they know God's standard, and (3) contextualization contributes to the universal Church a clearer picture of the Kingdom of God from different cultural perspectives because it links indigenous churches to the Universal Church.
Buddhist Terms

**Nirvana.** As a noun, it is the extinction of all desires and suffering. As a verb, it means to quench desires and suffering. It is also a hierarchical term used with Arahats (ones who reach nirvana) when they died (Thai Royal Scholar Academy of Thailand 1992:448).

**Dharma.** There are three definitions for dharma: (1) righteousness; (2) the religious principles for life and faith, and (3) truths in religion and society (Thai Royal Scholar Academy of Thailand 1992:420).

**Karma.** There are five definitions for karma: (1) the law of action which affects the present and future lives of the actors; (2) sins or bad luck; (3) death; (4) actions, activities and (5) ceremonies or rituals (Thai Royal Scholar Academy of Thailand 1992:12).

**Kama-Ahosikarma.** Kama is defined as to apologize or to forgive when wrong doers confess their sins. Ahosikarma means (1) the law of action which no longer works or the act of forgiving and forgetting, the reconciliation, and (2) to forgive and to forget (Thai Royal Scholar Academy of Thailand 1992:127; 924).

The Thai Religious Discipling

Western Christians usually believe that disciples are made, not born. It is their duty to make disciples. Thais perceive discipling differently. The Thai Christian word for making disciples is sarng-sawok (make disciple), but to make disciples is not a Thai expression but a direct translation from the Western way of discipling. Thais have a word for disciples, sawok, but the definition is different from that in English. It means students or youngsters who are under the care and protection of their teachers and belong to their teachers (Thai Royal Scholar Academy of Thailand 1992). The word elucidates the relational bonding between the one who teaches and the one
who is taught. From the Thai perspective, discipling cannot be initiated by teachers in the Thai religious context; instead the students must search for good spiritual teachers and beg those teachers to accept them as students. Therefore, in Thai culture, disciples are not made or born but are the result of seeking, finding, accepting, bonding, and learning by doing. Liminality in the natural pattern of life creates deep relational bonding between disciples and disciplers. Discipling in Thai culture is the religious process which includes evangelizing, discipling, and disciplining according to Western understanding.

**Discipling**

By discipling in this dissertation, I mean evangelizing, nurturing, and disciplining. That is, I am including under discipling all Christian efforts to influence, help, and guide both non-Christians and Christians, both young Christians and mature Christians, both faithful Christians and wayward ones. It is the thesis of this dissertation that all Christian ministry in Thailand would be enhanced if carried out in the Thai way of meekness—a way of discipling congruent with biblical discipling. A. H. Mathias Zahniser (1997:23) holds that God's discipling of individuals has already begun before their birth. Although he never mentions the disciplining and reconciling of wayward believers, his view of discipling would seem to include this painful and necessary process also.

**Theoretical Framework**

The chapters that follow are devoted to the task of testing whether Christian discipling can best be carried out in the Thai way of meekness. The procedure will be: (1) to identify what the Thai way of meekness is (chapter 2), (2) to probe for manifestations of the Thai way in classical Thai myth and in
modern Thai literature, (chapters 3 and 4), (3) to examine the history of mission in Thailand for examples of the use and abuse of the Thai way in Christian discipling, and (4) finally to test its validity for modern Thais through interviews with Thai non-Christians, Thai Christians, and missionaries in Thailand (chapter 6).

I devote chapter 2 to a presentation of the work of Suntaree Komin (1991) as a suitable theoretical framework for the research.

Suntaree Komin is an associate professor of social and cross-cultural psychology and former ISEAS Research Fellow in Singapore. She was selected for the Senior Fulbright Scholar Award to lecture in the United States. Psychology of the Thai People: Value and Behavior Patterns (1991) is the result of Komin's ten plus years of empirical research in the area of values study. Her empirical research reveals the Thai national character in the form of nine value clusters: (1) ego orientation, (2) grateful relationship orientation, (3) smooth interpersonal relationship orientation, (4) flexible and adjustment orientation, (5) religio-psychical orientation, (6) education and competence orientation, (7) interdependence orientation, (8) fun and pleasure orientation, and (9) achievement-task orientation. Anyone who violates these nine value clusters is considered aggressive.

Komin presents the Thai as a people who have a strong self-identity and use the Thai way of meekness to avoid confrontation to keep smooth relationships, and to protect their identity. Komin's theory presents the way of Thai meekness as the avoidance mechanism that fends off unnecessary clashes. Thai meekness is not performed out of fear, but the Thai are first and foremost ego-oriented, characterized by the highest ego value; they are independent and have a very high value of self-esteem. Moreover, the Thai emphasize relationships. Therefore the Thai way of meekness is socially
performed in self-identity, grateful relationships, smooth interpersonal relationships, flexibility and adjustment, interdependence as well as fun and pleasure. It seems to me that these values mentioned above exhibited themselves also in religio-psychical orientation, education and competence orientation, and achievement-task orientation. Although Komin does not mention much about the Thai worldview her research findings of nine Thai national value clusters seem to point to the Thai worldview of power through weakness which is exhibited by strong self-identity as well as by the gentle and indirect ways of Thai social interaction.

Komin also presents Thai behavior patterns as follows: (1) Thais can react aggressively if their self-identity is violated; (2) Thais use indirect ways to soften a negative assertion in order to avoid public confrontation which challenges the inferior, the equal, and the superior; (3) Thais use reciprocity of kindness between givers and receivers; (4) the Thai cherish a non-assertive, polite, humble personality expressed through appearance, manners, and interpersonal approach; (5) Thais have compromising and warm personalities but are lax in principles; (6) the Thai learn religion from ceremonies, rituals, and festivals; (7) Thais emphasize forms in education more than knowledge; (8) Thais cherish assimilation and communal cooperation; (9) the Thai enjoy fun and pleasure but are able to work hard, and (10) successful working depends on the ability to balance between hierarchy and relationship.

Komin's research seems to suggest that Thai society is structured with hierarchy, relationship, and individualism. Moreover, she proposes that Thai characteristics come from Thai culture and not from Buddhism, because Thai Muslims and Thai Christians demonstrate the same traits of meekness. Since Buddhism arrived in Thailand first, it could have been the source of
meekness in all three groups. Her research also demonstrates that the Thai believe more in Buddhist folk religion than in the high religion. This assumption can be argued from the point of view of religious studies. Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, and traditional religion emphasize the concept of meekness. Buddhism confirms the middle way. Islam elucidates submission to God. Hinduism emphasizes unity and nonviolence. Christianity cherishes love toward God and humankind, and traditional religion suggests harmony with nature, supernatural beings, and powers. Therefore it is partly true that the Thai way of meekness comes from culture. Geography, history, and economics in the past provided tranquility for the Thai way. However, it is possible that the syncretism of various religions mentioned before are important sources of the Thai way of meekness because the mentality of a people is affected by worldview, religion, and mythology (Luzbetak 1988:252).

Komin's findings of the Thai characteristics which I call the Thai way of meekness will be the criteria for investigating outsiders' and insiders' research about Thai culture and society, and the analysis of the manifestation of the Thai way of meekness in classical Thai myth, modern Thai literature, case studies of the history of mission in Thailand, and the research interview. Moreover, it will suggest the proper application of biblical discipling in the Thai context.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I proposed the thesis that will be tested by my research, namely that: (1) the Thai way of meekness is the best method by which to contextualize Christian discipling in Thailand, and (2) the Thai way of meekness is compatible with Scripture teaching on meekness. I introduced
the methodologies I have used to collect and interpret the data and defined my terms. I ended the chapter with a brief introduction to my theoretical framework, the model according to which my data will be interpreted. We turn now to a more thorough discussion of Komin's model.
CHAPTER 2

The Thai Way of Meekness: The Theoretical Model

In this chapter, I will present characteristics of the Thai way of meekness according to scholars who have studied Thai culture. After setting her work against the background of other scholars, I present Suntaree Komin's nine value clusters, seven of which can be considered characteristics of the Thai way of meekness. It will be against her analysis that we shall measure the results of the chapters to follow.

Outsiders' Research Concerning Thai Characteristics

Outsiders' research was done by: Ruth Benedict (1952), John Embree (1950), Eliezer B. Ayal (1962), Neils Mulder (1985), and John Paul Fieg (1989). I will present and analyze their significant findings as follows: worldview, values, behavior pattern, social structure, and the sources of the Thai way of meekness. Some researchers do not include all areas in their study.

Ruth Benedict

Ruth Benedict, a prominent psychological anthropologist studied the Thai during World War II in 1943. Her research was unpublished. Lauriston Sharp identifies a weakness of Benedict's research:

She relies heavily on material more relevant to the Lao of the north than to the majority of Thais. . . . Tales may be told and enjoyed which do not necessarily express Thai attitudes or behavior which would be approved . . . the author systematically using conclusions regarding a culture in which she had no first hand experience. (Benedict 1952:i)

However, Benedict detects some Thai characteristics.

Thai worldview. Benedict detects the way the Thai deal with their opponents by showing them up for brutes and giving in to them. Benedict
interprets this significant defense mechanism according to her Western world view and value. Therefore she judges that the Thai are sangfroid, accepting their lot. The Thai explain their action differently according to Thai worldview. The Thai believe that giving in first for later victory is a sign of inner strength, courage, and wisdom because power comes through weakness. It is Thai wisdom not to confront the drunkard and the eccentric but let them do crazy things that demonstrate their ignorance (Klausner 1993). A Thai saying suggests, "Do not take seriously the drunkard and the eccentric."

A Thai proverb also reminds, "The later laughter is louder." Thai are like water, willing to be boiled over the fire in order to reach the point when heat and energy eject powerfully. The fire will be soon powerless after it burns out. Coldness freezes water but later on the ice destroys big rocks. These are reasons why Thais fend off colonialism, Communism, and Protestantism.

**Thai values.** Benedict suggests that sanguine and sangfroid are values of the Thai. Analyzing Thai folktales, Benedict presents the Thai as sanguine people who value the enjoyment of life and the cool heart (as opposed to quick-tempered). The researcher asserts that Thais value the cool heart. Being "cool" means several things:

In the first place, it means not being an anxious person and thus refers to enjoying life in the sense just described. As Alabaster says, being "warm" is "inability to rest at ease." . . . Bearing a grudge makes you "warm" and so does quarreling. But being "cool" means, in addition, a kind of "sangfroid." The term implies coolness of attitude toward work, responsibility, or trouble. (1952:39)
However, Benedict's research seems to present an incomplete picture of the Thai from the perspective of insiders. Namsirichai found aggressiveness in social interaction among Thais, determination and overt outbursts of violent emotions over minor issues. These characteristics are as intrinsic to the Thai culture and personality as their opposites (Namsirichai 1973). Komin's research also reveals this fact about hard work among the Thai:

Data revealed that the rural peasants showed a higher preference of "material possession" to "fun or Sanuk." It revealed that "fun" or "Sanuk" is more a characteristic of the Bangkokians, the government officials, students, and the higher educated, definitely not the less advantaged classes. (Komin 1991:205)

Thai proverbs coincide with the ethnographic fact Komin found. The proverbs emphasize hard work (Ngamdee 1993). My research interview recorded many respondents' advice, "Do not teach my children to depend on God in order to get an A. They will be lazy. I want them to work hard."

Benedict's interpretation reflects her Western either/or worldview which judges that people who are fun and pleasure loving cannot work hard. Thais hold a both/and worldview. Thais can laugh hard and work hard. However, flexibility causes Thais to play when they should work and work when they should play. Their flexibility disturbs the orderly minds of Westerners. As a result, Thais and Westerners judge each other. "Thais are lazy!" Westerners accuse. "Westerners are poor in caring and consideration!" Thais whisper to each other. John Paul Fieg observes Thais and understands them. He discusses the Thai both/and worldview as follows:

They see the Thai as relaxed, pleasant people who don't seem to have the same level of self-discipline and drive that Americans do. Then suddenly they are caught off guard when a hierarchical demand is placed on a Thai and he responds with a
seriousness and apparent obsequiousness which seems rigid and formal in the extreme. (1989:29)

Thai behavior patterns. Benedict explains that the Thai do not think it necessary to strive mightily to make life good; it is good if it is accepted. Patience with one’s lot and in one’s projects is a great human virtue. One who experiences patience can rest in peace.

Benedict thinks anger is a prime disturber of the good life. She asserts that the Thai, by nature, are a quiet people. The idea of mass movements against authority seems foreign to their nature. Anger is considered by Thais as the least advantageous method of meeting a difficult situation.

Benedict points out that there is a lack of vengeance among the Thai because they believe that goodness is more powerful than evil. Even when enticing the spirits, they use gentle methods, offering food, and music, not violence. The researcher puts her idea about the Thai in focus saying, "The behavior used toward the spirit is only that behavior which the Thai also rely upon in their dealing with their fellowmen" (Benedict 1952:38).

Benedict is right about the gentle behavior pattern of Thais but she cannot explain away the way the Thai quietly but confidently take the bull by the horns in Thai folktales she analyzed. The spectacles of Western culture that Benedict wears focus her perception only on one side of Thai behavior pattern, that of gentleness.

Benedict also talks about Thai ideas of politeness. They like to ask interesting strangers a running fire of questions about the stranger’s private affairs. Benedict says, "If a stranger is not asked these questions it means that he is of no interest, and the Thai feel strongly that anyone who has nothing to hide will respond freely" (1952:14). In fact, Benedict encounters Thai relational culture but the behavior is contrary to her Western norms of
conduct and she cannot analyze beyond the behavior to the root of Thai
culture, but merely comments in an amusing manner.

**The sources of Thai gentle behavior.** Benedict describes correctly that
most Thai believe more in merit-making than noble truth and *nirvana* (the
extinction of all desires). Traditional religion plays an important role among
the people. In Benedict's own words:

> Acts and prayers of propitiation in Thailand are made not in
> the Buddhist worship but to the *phe*. Even a peasant hardly
> makes an appeal for specific help in Buddhist worship, but the
> *phe* are propitiated and besought. These are spirits of the dead;
> not the soul, which represents man's full character and passes
> on into endless reincarnations. (Benedict 1952:17)

Suntaree Komin's empirical research confirms that primal religion
prevails in Thailand, but there are other contrary elements in the Thai
personality. I believe that outside and inside researchers cannot explain away
the influence of high Buddhism if researchers analyze religious education
from the perspective of religious studies (Zahniser 1997). Westerners define
education as, "the process of direct learning." Laird explains, "Its synonyms
are schooling, studying, training, direction, instruction, guidance, teaching,
tutelage, learning, reading, enlightenment, edification, inculcation, discipline,
tuition, preparation, adult education, book learning, information,

People in the Eastern world learn religion differently. Thais learn
Buddhism through symbols, ceremonies, living models, liminality in rites of
passage and in natural pattern of lives, informal and formal teaching. My
research interviews reveal that Thais learn religion mostly from non-verbal
messages. An interviewee spoke negatively about verbal messages, "The
Christian sermons hurt my head." If researchers ask them about the
doctrines of *dharma* (religious truths) or *nirvana* (the extinction of all desires
and suffering), they do not care much about these doctrines. However, they
know how to observe and imitate the life of Buddha as told in stories and
myths.

The Thai gentleness in behavior pattern reflects Buddha's character.
Even though Komin proposes the evidences that Thai culture and traditional
religion are the sources of Thais' behavior pattern--not Buddhism--because
Thais practice traditional religion more than Buddhism. She points out that
few monks want to reach *nirvana* (the extinction of all desires) and Moslems,
as well as Christians behave like Thai Buddhists. However, my research
interviews exhibited the fact that Protestant Thai Christians think and behave
more like Westerners. Moreover, all religions bestow their believers with
strong self-identity and gentleness. The self-identity and gentleness of the
Thai are probably outstanding because of the synthesis of traditional religion,
Hinduism, folk Buddhism, high Buddhism, Thai history, and the peaceful
location of the country where people seldom experience natural disasters.

**Summary.** Benedict rightly observes a Thai defense mechanism in
dealing with problems, power through meekness, but she misinterprets it.
She also correctly detects an important value of the Thai, fun and pleasure,
but she makes too much of it. She contributes most significantly about Thai
gentleness. Benedict proposes accurately that traditional religion is an
important source of Thai values and behavior patterns.

Benedict's perception of Thai coolness should challenge Thais to
improve the concept of avoidance of confrontation, which may cause a
negative effect on Thai society, especially in work and education.

**John Embree**

John Embree (1950) characterizes Thailand as a culture with a loosely
structured social system, using culture and personality studies as his
theoretical framework. He observes and analyzes the behavior of the Thai at random and concludes it reflects Thai social institutions and culture.

**Thai value.** Embree seems to discover individualism and flexibility as important characteristics of Thai society. He thinks Thais are self-exploited, being indulgent in individual freedom. The people practice flexibility and non-commitment in rights, duties, and obligations to kin networks. Embree asserts that Thais hold fun and pleasure attitudes toward life and work. They face the crises of life with calmness and indifference. His interpretation suggests the influence of Benedict's research and Western worldview and values. Embree said about Thailand's social system:

The first characteristic of Thai culture to strike an observer from the West, or from Japan or Vietnam, is the individualistic behavior of the people. The longer one resides in Thailand the more one is struck by the almost determined lack of regularity, discipline and regimentation. In contrast to Japan, Thailand lacks neatness and discipline; in contrast to Americans, the Thai lack respect for administrative regularity and have no industrial time sense. (1950:182)

In fact, Embree observed two important characteristics of the Thai which Benedict did not; individualism and flexibility. Individualism for Thais can be defined as love of freedom, self-identity, and self-confidence; but they believe in interdependence among families and friends. Life is not an isolated island, but rather a bunch of bananas for the Thai. Life is not fixed rules. Life flips and flops. Life flows like streams of rivers. However, Embree judges Thai individualism as self-indulgence because it mixes with Thai flexibility and interdependence. It is interesting that Embree viewed individualism positively among Westerners and cherish this characteristic, but define the same thing differently among the Thai. Embree's Western worldview detests interdependence and flexibility because it disturbs orders and principles. As a result, he interprets Thai characteristics negatively.
Thai behavior pattern. Embree suggests that Thais are skillful in delay and double-talk which saves Thailand from being colonized. Embree cannot understand that power through weakness is an alternative for problem-solving in a land often victimized by the countries powerful in technology, science, and military might. Power through weakness is the wisdom that the oppressor cannot comprehend.

Thai social system. Embree concludes that Thai society is loosely structured. Thai people are nebulous in Embree's mental map. Later on, his theory is challenged by Tambiah (1970), and Koichi Mizuno (1971) as well as by Potter (1976). However, Embree's theory is widely accepted, and the Thai way of meekness is perceived as the skill of delay and double-talk. Thais have been understood by foreigners since then as individualistic, self-indulgent, and carefree people.

Summary. Embree finds two important characteristics of the Thai; individualism and flexibility. He also finds an element of Thai social structure, the loose structure, which comes from relationships that Embree overlooks. He defines Thai individualism as self-indulgence.

In spite of negative analysis by Embree, his detesting of the lack of discipline, regularities, and principles in society should challenge the Thai to improve the negative effect of flexibility in our society in order to balance it with warm relationships.

Eliezer B. Ayal

Ayal studied the Thai value system in 1962. His study is affected by Embree. He thinks Thais are individualistic. He defines Thai individualism as did Embree. He adds new dimensions to the research concerning the Thai, emphasizing the influence of Theravada Buddhism on Thai values and
suggesting hierarchy and individualism as important elements of the structure of Thai society.

Thai values. Ayal observes the characteristic of gentleness in the Thai value system apart from individualism and flexibility. He suggests that Theravada Buddhism gives the model of the ideal personality as having compassion, loving kindness, empathic joy, and equanimity which involves impartiality and non-attachment. These four qualities are formalized in the Buddhist Brahman Vihara precepts for lay people. As I argued before, I conclude that Thai gentleness does not come from the learning of Brahman Vihara, the precepts for lay people, but rather from imitating Buddha's life.

Thai behavior pattern. Ayal does not see much economic profit in doing business in Thailand. He later makes a conclusion about the people, "The Thai value highly those who are quick to take advantage of opportunities when these present themselves, but seldom would they take the trouble to create such opportunities, or cooperate with others in such an endeavor (1962:50)."

David Davis (1973) describes his Thai students as shy individually, but together they are powerful. Fieg (1989) affirms the same fact, that Thais practice both individualism and interdependence according to the situations and the demands of life. Ayal also discusses Thai innovation and initiatives, "As for the propensity to innovate, there is little to suggest that the Thai value system opposes absorption of new ideas. At the same time, it does not provide the incentives to seek them" (Ayal 1962:50).

History and my interview research elicit the fact that Thais know well the theory of introducing change. They use indirect and progressive patterns of change to fit the pace of their people (Anumanrajathon 1988, Wyatt 1994).

David Wilson discusses how the Thai change:
Westernization has been important among educated Thai. Yet it is Westernization with a difference, resulting from design and from milieu. Westernization was consciously chosen by their leaders, not thrust upon them by a politically dominant power. Westernization was taken selectively in terms of both elements and sources. The result has been a peculiarly Thai form of Westernization which today many Thai do not recognize as such. It is in fact a Thai way of life. (1962:67)

In fact, Ayal discovers both gentleness, individualism, and the flexibility of the Thai, but his either/or worldview prevents him from understanding the both/and worldview of the Thai. He judges Thais as opportunists who lack creativity, cooperation, and innovation.

**Thai social structure.** Ayal also finds important elements in the structure of Thai society which are hierarchy and individualism. He explains:

> in seeming contradiction to the most anarchistic individualism of the Thai, one finds the Thai society has a very definite status hierarchy. . . .
> Thus Thai society was (and is) built on a superior-subordinate relationship which was fixed in terms of status levels, but fluid in terms of the individuals occupying them. (1962:49)

The research of Henry Holmes and Suchada Tangtongtavy (1995) indicate that Thai society is hierarchically and relationally structured. They assert:

> And indeed, in Thailand there are two norms which can confidently be said to exist:
> _ that Thai work hard to build and maintain relationships among a wide and complex network of people, and
> _ that Thais' interaction are more or less controlled within the context of a strong hierarchical system. (1995:17)

Fieg observed self-identity as an important element in the structure of Thai society. In Thai society the subordinate submits to the superior and the
superiors submit to serve their subordinates with respect to their self-identity. Fieg observes:

The Thai relationship tends to be more of a total one, with the boss—by the mere fact of being boss—necessarily more involved in the after-work life of a subordinate, serving, for example, as the host or master of ceremonies at the employer's wedding or assisting with a personal problem. (Fieg 1989:87)

Summary. Ayal recognizes both gentleness and individualism in Thai values, as well as the both/and structures of Thai society, which are hierarchy and individualism. He also thinks that Theravada Buddhism is the main influence on Thai culture. Ayal's analysis should challenge Thais to improve on the Thai ideal of gentleness, innovation, and creativity.

Neils Mulder

Neils Mulder (1985) challenges the loose structure, the individualism, and the Buddhist models of other Western researchers. He uses religious studies to find the system of meaning in Thai society. His analysis of everyday life in Thailand makes him the first outsider who investigated specifically the Thai worldview.

Thai worldview. Mulder is the first researcher who recognizes the both/and worldview of the Thai, which is structured on power-goodness (amoral and moral). What he misses is the self-identity of the Thai. He proposes that Thais have a world outside and a world inside. The world outside holds amoral power while the world inside offers moral goodness. In order to fend off the dangerous power, the Thai value pleasant, submissive, affiliative behavior in social interaction. Their gentle behavior pattern comes from fear and insecurity.

He voices his idea concerning this matter:
The Thai ethos appears to be highly instrumental and wise in dealing with a world full of power and its concrete hierarchies. It is an ethos that deals with the suspicion and fear of power by the avoidance of confrontation with it ("do not get involved where you have no business"), by consistent efforts to keep interaction pleasant, smooth, and superficial while not giving offense, and the wisdom to look for the pleasant side of things. (Mulder 1985:82)

I agree with Beek (1983) that Thais have relational boundaries where they differentiate insiders and outsiders. However, Thais value assimilation because the Thai relational culture values flexibility, interdependence, and generosity (Komin 1991). Thais provide ways for outsiders to experience deep relational bonding with them (Sharp 1948-1949; Kaufman 1977; Beek 1983). My research interviews also indicated the generosity of the Thai. The interviewees repeatedly reminded me, "In Thailand, we have only Thais. We do not differentiate among Buddhists, Moslems, or Christians." "Christians are narrow-minded; they do not want to have deep relational bonding with other people outside their groups," a university housewife mentioned. Moreover, Thais address strangers with kin pronouns which indicate the importance of relationship rather than fear.

I agree with Mulder that Thais have both/and worldview structured with power and goodness but I call it power and weakness and I interpret the elements differently. Power in itself is weak, according to the Thai value of gentleness. Weakness has power in itself and only those who have strong self-identity can act humble, gentle, and weak. Those who act aggressive and oppressive usually have weak identity. Therefore, the gentleness of the Thai does not come from cowardice because the Thai have strong self-identity. Komin's empirical research (1991) presented the fact that first and foremost the Thai have strong self-identity and self-esteem. Her research asserted that Thais could act violently if their self-identity was violated. Komin also
pointed out that Mulder's conclusion depended heavily on the unreliable source of Wichiarachote's affiliative society interpretation. Wichiarajote cited evidence from Srisang-ngam's (1977) and Sitasuwan's (1976) research. Komin proved that these two sources were misinterpreted and misquoted (Komin 1991:11, 14). The research of Sharp (1943-1943) and Fieg (1989) confirm that Thais have strong self-identity and self-image.

**Thai behavior pattern.** Mulder observes aggressiveness and gentleness in Thai behavior pattern. He also detects aggression among some patrons, social elites, government officials, moneylenders, merchants, outsiders, police, politicians, gangsters, and toughs but they are not the majority of Thai population which consists of farmers. Mulder believes that the direction of Thai aggression is related to being ego-centric. Fieg asserts that equality of opportunity is the central theme in the American social structure; hierarchical relations form the heart of Thai society. Thais use the elaborate system of pronouns to help their people show the right amount of respect, deference, and intimacy. However, Thais also have equality of opportunity in their hierarchy of relations. Fieg observes correctly this Thai egalitarianism:

> Khun Chin was a special kind of boss. He never punished his subordinates for errors they made. Instead, he gave encouragement, instructing us to learn from our mistakes. His subordinates repaid this kindness by selflessly dedicating themselves to their work. (1989:21)

Fieg observes that the true power of Thai bosses comes from their servanthood.

> Mulder presents the means of Thai gentleness as love, sympathy, and gratefulness; its motives are peace, continuity, psychological identity and its direction is ego orientation. Mulder also proposes Thai gentle behavior as
being familial, caring, sharing, obliging, intimate, cooperative, responsible, committed, spontaneous and continuous.

Mulder’s conclusion that the meek presentation of the Thai is a defense mechanism for their suppressed fear and low self-confidence does not fit either the semantic domain of Thai languages in which at least 66 words and expressions deal with "meekness" (self-identity and gentleness). The Thai are not fearful but courageous, demonstrated by the 38 Thai words dealing with "courage" and eleven words dealing with "fear" (Thai Royal Scholar Academy of Thailand 1992).

Mulder hypothesizes correctly that a deep seated satisfaction with presentation is an essential trait of Thai life. He thinks Thai society is a presentational society par excellence. Suntaree Komin’s (1991) empirical research of the psychology of the Thai people affirms that the Thai cherish form more than meaning in education and competence orientation.

The sources of the Thai worldview. Mulder seems to believe that Thai traditional religion and psychological fear and insecurity affect the Thai more than Buddhism. I noted above that Thais learn Buddhism from symbols, ceremonies, living models, informal and formal teaching, and are concerned less with doctrines or theology. The Thai gentle method in dealing with problems is important evidence of Buddhist influence. Moreover, Thai society is peasant more than tribal. People harmonize traditional religion, Hinduism, folk Buddhism, and high Buddhism to serve holistically their deeply felt needs.

Summary. Mulder has done some of the most thorough research concerning Thai worldview. He was the first researcher to detect the structure and anti-structure of Thai worldview, which are power and goodness. He also discovered the Thai relational boundary. He recognizes
that Thais emphasize forms in social interaction. Mulder proposes Thai gentle behavior as being familial, caring, sharing, obliging, intimate, cooperative, responsible, committed, spontaneous and continuity. He also observes that Thais can be aggressive.

John Paul Fieg

John Paul Fieg (1989) studies the commonalities and differences between Americans and Thais. They share some similar qualities; both are independent, practical, down-to-earth, and well-intentioned.

Thai values. Fieg suggests that Thai culture is relational. Thais emphasize the relationship of land and people while Americans lack this emphasis. Moreover, Americans enjoy challenging authority and power but Thais accept authority and power as a natural way of life. Fieg says, "The wealth and power of the ruler and the splendor of the court and temples have been considered a symbol of cultural well-being and a projection of the peasantry's own greatness" (1989:16).

Fieg also proposes the differences between Americans and Thais concerning time. As for the concept of time, Americans say, "My watch is running fast." Thais say, "My watch is walking fast." Edward T. Hall in The Silent Language (1959), believes the American concept of time is monochronic; they like to do one thing at a time, and they do not want to be interrupted while in the midst of one activity. Thais live mostly in the present; they enjoy every passing moment.

Fieg thinks flexibility is an important characteristic of Thai culture. Even though Thais are sanguine and sangfroid they can nevertheless work vigorously under a good relational atmosphere of grateful relationship and interdependence, as I noted above.
Fieg correctly detects individualism and interdependence in Thai values. He indicates that like Americans, however, Thais believe good people should look first to themselves, to their own intellectual and material resources to solve problems and crises. Fieg defines Thai individualism as self-reliance, self-confidence, and self-identity. Nevertheless, Thai individuals prefer group harmony, especially close family ties and smooth interpersonal relations, while American children are taught at an early age to be assertive, self-expressive, and individualistic so they will fit well with their egalitarian system. Thai children are taught to be obedient, polite, and subdued, so that they live smoothly in their own hierarchical social order.

Fieg discovers important values of Thai culture, which are relationship, flexibility, individualism, and interdependence. Thai time is cyclical.

Thai behavior pattern. In order to understand Thai behavior patterns, Fieg suggests that one must understand Thai patterns of status. The Thai have unequal status; they classify people according to age difference, family role, or occupational positions. American status is determined by occupation and earnings. At the same time, achievement confers status even if it does not produce earnings. Moreover, an egalitarian ethos blurs American status.

Fieg also contrasts the expression of emotion, conduct, concept of friends, humor and laughter between Americans and Thais. He explains that the expression of emotion by Americans and Thais is different. Americans are direct and forceful; Thais are subtle and indirect. Komin's (1991) research demonstrates that Thais use indirect patterns of emotional expression to smooth relationships, but Thais are capable of being impulsive, impatient, and quick-tempered when their identity is violated. A Thai saying confirms
Komin's explanation asserting, "You can kill me but you cannot violate my identity." Fieg points out that the timeliness of appropriate conduct is important for Thais who emphasize the importance of form and they equate form with meanings. Wrong use of form leads to dissonance among Thais. Americans are more concerned with the meaning of things than with the forms for expressing that meaning. They tend to be more self-critical and social-critical.

Both Americans and Thais believe in "fair-weather friends" and "tried and true friends." However, the Thai decline to form friendships with someone whom they do not like. It is difficult for friends who quarrel to restore their relationship. Americans and Thais both enjoy humor and laughter. However, the smile in Thailand covers a multitude of emotions. Thais learn to laugh off sorrow, disappointment, and crisis, while Americans do not. Thais belong to a shame culture while Americans are motivated more by guilt.

Fieg discovers some important behavior patterns of the Thai such as: unequal status, subtle and indirect expression of emotion, forms of appropriate conduct, correlation between friendship and smooth relationship, the multi-purposes of Thai smiles and laughs.

Thai social structure. Fieg points out that American social structure is egalitarian but Thai social structure is hierarchical and individualistic. Fieg puts the idea in focus, saying,

Despite the obvious emphasis given to status and position in individual face to face relationships, there is an underlying idea --not unlike the American concept of equality of opportunity-- which allows individuals to climb the social ladder and attain some of the highest social positions of the land. (1989:22)
Fieg advises that Thai society is both/and, is hierarchically structured as well as loosely structured due to individualism. He explains his point:

Our task, then, is to take these two opposing strands which run through Thai society—great freedom and diversity of individual behavior on the one hand and scrupulous attention to the demands of the social hierarchy on the other—and try to weave them together so that a clearer rhythm or pattern will emerge. (1989:25)

Fieg's observation is congruent with Ayal's conclusion. However, Holmes and Tangtongtavy (1995) believe that the cornerstones of Thai society are relationships and hierarchy. My investigation of outsider and insider research concerning Thai people and Thai society seems to indicate that Thai society is constructed with three important structures; hierarchy, individualism, and relationship. Outsider's research confirms the structure of hierarchy and individualism in Thai society. Insider's research detects hierarchy and relationships as two structures of Thai society. However, Komin (1991) also asserts that individualism or self-identity is the most important value of the Thai. I believe hierarchy, individualism, and relationships smooth the equilibrium of Thai social interaction. Hierarchy helps the people recognize the acquired and ascribed roles and status of other fellow men. Individualism demands respectful and humble attitudes toward dignity and the faces of others. Relationships suggest proper conduct and communication in Thai social interaction.

Therefore Fieg suggests hierarchy and individualism as Thai social structure. However, information indicates that hierarchy, individualism, and relationships are the three important elements of Thai society.

The sources of the Thai way of meekness. Fieg seems to miss the point, stating that Thai emotional expression results from the Buddhist teaching of total detachment of the self from feelings and desires. Many other researchers
agree that while Thais are influenced by primal religion, Hinduism, and Buddhism, primal religion more than other religions has the most impact upon the Thai (Benedict 1952, Reginald 1962, Tambiah 1970, Gustafson 1970, Komin 1991). However, Thais seem to learn about the Thai way of meekness from Buddha's life due to their mode of religious learning which emphasizes modeling and storytelling not doctrines as I mentioned before.

**Summary.** Fieg accurately concludes that Thai culture is relational. It accepts authority and power with dignity. Thai time is cyclical. Thais are individualists who have strong self-identity but value group harmony. Thais do not have social equals but Thai hierarchy makes the superior humble themselves to serve and to create social equality. Thai people's expression of emotion is subtle and indirect. Thais emphasize forms of conduct and will not make friends with someone they do not approve of. The broken relationship is difficult to restore. Fieg suggests that Thai smiles and laughter carry multiple purposes. He recommends hierarchy and individualism as the structure of Thai society.

Fieg's findings elicit the important fact that worldview, values, behavior patterns, and social system are produced by the people of each culture in order that they can survive and maintain their self-identity in their cultural context. Culture is relative and carries within itself good, bad, and neutral elements. Universal cultural forms do not exist. Western culture contributes to the world science, technology, principles and order in the physical world, but Eastern culture contributes inner science, world religions, relationships, and simplicity out of the complexity of life.
Outside Research Concerning Thai Relational Bonding

Few Western researchers and writers observe the Thai relational boundary and Thai relational bonding which are crucial to the relational culture. However, Howard Keva Kaufman (1977), Lauriston Sharp (1948-1949), and Carol Hollinger (1965) offer findings concerning these two concepts. Howard Keva Kaufman (1977) recorded in Bangkhaud: A Community Study in Thailand how outsiders can be integrated into the inner relational boundary of the Thais. It takes a long time; outsiders have to prove themselves to the community by their integrity and ability to serve local needs. Aggressiveness, loudness of speech, and boasting are all condemned by the community.

Kaufman's findings propose the cyclical concept of time of the Thai. True friendship takes a long time to prove its sincerity, honesty, and integrity. Deep relational bonding is holistic, and must benefit the local physical and social needs. Morality and ethical standards play an important role in entering Thai relational boundary. The humble inward quality must harmonize with outward conduct and behavior.

Lauriston Sharp and his team (1948-1949) record in Siamese Rice Village: A Preliminary Study of Bang Chan how outsiders are assimilated with the villagers. Sharp says in his discussion of this relational bonding:

a person's social interaction with others in Bang Chan is primarily defined in terms of his age and sex, his position in an immediate family and kindred, his friendships, his economic relations, and his position in relation to the three formal social structures--the local government, the temple, and school--which have extension out beyond and above the community. (1948-1949:33)

Sharp suggests that establishing oneself on a superior status rather than subordinate status will help build up the prestige of newcomers. The
community will judge newcomers' behavior by their prestige rating, beneficence, good fellowship, progressiveness, industrial and technical skill, economic independence, and cleanliness. To be really integrated into the village social system, newcomers must establish relationships of mutual respect. Sharp observes correctly the fundamental Thai attitudes that all persons are worthy of respect; a human individual's dignity is recognized; and no person should be placed in a position of embarrassment or shame.

Sharp also believes newcomers build friendships on the basis of neighborhood membership, economic ties, special interests, or simply mutual compatibility. Sharp thinks the Thai have a deep bonding relationship, "A few friendships may eventually develop into formal, adoptive elder-and-younger brother (or sister) relationships . . . , which may involve a mutual bond stronger than that existing between real brothers and sisters (1948-1949:32-33)."

Sharp explains more about this deep relational bonding in Bang Chan: Social History of a Rural Community in Thailand (1978). The Thai at Bang Chan have a value system of kin or kin-like relationship, an assemblage of individually contracted and variable agreements that provide participants with basic needs. The Thai kinship system offers hundreds of potential kinsmen. The birth ritual indicates, "Thus kinship, instead of being a set of relationships given by birth, is acquired" (Sharp 1978:54).

The Thai kinship system selects potential kinsmen in three ways: (1) they must share some experiences or liminalities in the natural ways of living; (2) they must exchange service and favor to the extent that an investor in or reciprocator of services lays aside all conditions for ensuring his gain; love and respect dominate the relationship, and (3) they must accept a long term commitment of fixed obligations beneath the easily contracted
arrangement. Then two people, whatever their origin, become kinsmen (Sharp 1978).

Sharp's finding explains away many researcher's suggestions that Thais have only superficial relationships. Mulder (1985) commented that he did not have any close friends after staying many years in Thailand. Sharp seems to propose that two kinds of relational bonding exist in Thai culture; (1) friendly relational bonding, and (2) deep relational bonding. Thai relational bonding is a progressive process.

Entering into a new Thai relational boundary, one must realize the integrative function of the local culture. It means outsiders must fit in to the physical, social, and ethical needs of the local people. Outsiders should know how to contribute their economics, knowledge, and ability to local people. They must recognize the important figures of the community, and their neighbors. Newcomers should fit in with the hierarchical, individualistic, and relational structure of the local culture they enter. Outsiders should have respectable roles and statuses which help them interact with others. They must value the self-identity of individuals. Mutual compatibility and communal participation will provide newcomers with friendly relational bonding.

Liminality in the natural pattern of lives is the key for deep relational bonding. It is unplanned and is not something people work toward. This kind of liminality flows from the being. Therefore it does not possess a hidden agenda. It waives rights, schedules, and immunity to bear the burden of others; to speak up for their rights and benefits as if the problems were personal. Love, respect, and long term commitment evidence deep relational bonding among Thais.
Kaufman and Sharp's findings are confirmed by my interview research. The Buddhist Thais emphasize deep relational bonding to fellow men and communities. One housewife related, "Christians did not create deep relational bonding. They casually came in and out of my life. They can not be counted as my true friends."

Hollinger (1965) was an instructor in the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. She shares her experiences in bonding with her Thai helpers, university students, different people, and British colleagues. Hollinger carried her servant's child, who was critically ill, to her car and drove to a hospital. Hollinger sat with the mother there until the child was safe. Since then she had no problems with Thai servants that other Westerners experienced. She listened and tried her best to understand strange Thai perspectives even when she did not agree, and the Thai accepted her. The incidents below related by Hollinger explain her way of relational bonding:

"Acharn," he said to me, "I am very afraid that my friend will fail your course."
"I have the same fear," I said.
"If you would be so good as to tell him some of the questions on the examination, perhaps he could pass."
I spluttered for moments before I finally managed a jumble of protest. "Whatever do you think I am? I do not understand how he became a fourth year man. I would not have passed him in the first year."
Two sorrowful pairs of brown eyes stared at me and then Best Student spoke softly, "In the first three years, Acharn, I sat next to him and helped him to understand but now the investigators are very strict and I am not able to help him."
"But that is dishonest!"
"No," said Best Student firmly, "It is for the honor of my friend. His family will be in disgrace if he does not graduate. I squirmed uncomfortably under their candid and hopeful eyes. "Why doesn't he study if passing is so important to him?"
Best Student answered sweetly while Worst Student nodded agreeably, although he obviously was not comprehending more
than a fourth of the conversation, "Oh, he tries, Acharn, because he loves you very much, but English is hard for him and hurts his head."

At that moment, they both hurt my head, but this was only the first of many similar episodes. Academic honesty was only a minor virtue in Thailand, and loyalty to human beings was always paramount. I was so confused by the lack of sharp Western delineation between black and white that I became very cautious about leveling accusatory fingers at people and insisting "This is evil. That is wrong." Vaguely, in the back of my mind, I think I began to feel that it was sweet of the bright to help the stupid. Naturally, I kept this capricious thought carefully under wraps. (Hollinger 1965:100-102)

In another incident, Hollinger listened to a Thai lady's comment concerning the United States:

"Also," added Khun Chern, "there is no freedom in America." The flat statement dumped a hemisphere between us. Even in the short time I had been in Thailand, I had been sensitive to the ravages of dictatorship, and I was dumbfounded that she could have found America wanting in comparison. "Everywhere," continued my hostess, "Americans are told what to do, what not to do—worry, worry—always rules. Even signs saying 'DO NOT SPIT.' I am scared to move. No freedom at all." This was my initial, shocking contact with an Eastern view of my own country. I remember thinking passionately at the time, how can she be so oblivious to the real meaning of freedom? . . . By the end of our tour I knew, and sadly, that I agreed with her. (Hollinger 1965:62)

Hollinger was not accepted by British male lecturers. While listening to their criticism of the United States, she directly confronted them. Then she was accepted as one of their team. The poles of the Eastern and the Western worldview are far apart. Hollinger's attitude helps her to have deep relational bonding with her Thai helpers and Thai students. She held back criticism of Thai conduct which was bizarre to her. She sought the positive side of strange behavior and shared liminality with her helpers without a hidden agenda. Her action flowed from her being, sympathy, and empathy.
Trying to walk in Thai shoes resulted in her appreciation of Thai logic. A respectful and humble attitude, empathizing heart, and listening ears brought many Thai friends into Hollinger's life. She seemed to carry in her the incarnational spirit.

Conclusion of Outside Research

Most outside research investigates and interprets Thai culture according to Western culture. As a result, each research finding recognizes specific worldviews, values, behavior patterns, social structures, and social interactions but they miss the total picture. Analysis of outside research can be concluded as follows: (1) affirmation of the structure of the characteristics of the Thai way of meekness, (2) new information.

First, outside research confirms the structure of the characteristics in the Thai worldview, values, and behavior pattern of Komin's research (1991). Benedict recognizes power through weakness among the Thai in dealing with fellow men and the spirit world. Mulder asserts that Thais have a both/and worldview and structured on amoral and moral, which are power and goodness.

Second, all researchers detect some of the specific characteristics of Thai values mentioned in the nine value clusters of Suntaree Komin. Benedict finds fun and pleasure, as well as cool-heart. Embree, Ayal and Fieg find individualism but they define it differently. Fieg also discovers relationship and group harmony which other outside researchers do not mention.

Third, outside researchers confirm the structure of Thai behavior patterns which are built on self-identity and gentleness. Sharp and Fieg discover the self-identity of the Thai.

Benedict observes Thai gentleness in dealing with spirits and fellow men. She thinks Thais are quiet, calm, and fun-loving. Ayal suggests the
Thai ideal personality qualities as; compassion, loving, kind, joyful, and equanimity which involves impartiality and detachment. Mulder proposes that Thai gentleness is loving, sympathetic, grateful, and good. Fieg describes Thais as relational people, submissive to authority and power. The Thai live in the present, enjoying every passing moment. They have self-confidence but believe in interdependence. Children are obedient, polite, and subdued. Thai are flexible people who can work hard and play hard. Thai respect people according to their status, and are subtle and indirect in expressing their emotion. Thais cherish proper conduct and etiquette, as well as smooth relationships.

The study of outside research adds new information to the findings in the areas of the sources of the Thai way of meekness, Thai social structure, Thai relational bonding, and the concept of time.

First, outside research suggests traditional religion as well as high religion as the sources of the Thai way of meekness. Benedict suggests that people turn to traditional religion during their life crises. Mulder suggests that people fear good and bad spirits but Ayal and Fieg think high Buddhism affects the Thai personality.

Second, outside research adds individualism to the hierarchical and relational social structure of Thai society. Hierarchy helps people interact with each other properly according to roles and statuses. Individualism cherishes self-identity and demands a respectful and humble attitude in Thai social interaction. Relationships advise gentle manners, indirect communication, and gentle ways of solving problems for the Thai's behavior patterns.

Third, outside research suggests that Thai relational boundary, friendly relational bonding, and deep relational bonding exist in Thai culture.
Outsiders must learn to fit into the norms of the integrative function of the local culture by contributing to their physical, social, and ideological needs. Outsiders must have suitable roles and status which will help them participate well in the community. Liminality creates deep relational bonding. Respectful, non-judgmental attitudes, empathizing hearts, and listening ears will bond outsiders to the Thais. The criteria of deep relational bonding are love, respect, and long-term commitment.

Fourth, Thai time is cyclical but Western time is linear. Thai time is synchronic but Western time is monochronic. Thai time is much longer than Western time.

**Insiders' Research Concerning the Thai Way of Meekness: Suntaree Komin**

_**Psychology of the Thai People: Value and Behavior Patterns** (1991) is the result of Komin's ten plus years of empirical research in the study of the Thai's value system. Her research is more reliable and valid because of its base of extensive diachronic and synchronic data, and its use of the reliable theory of Milton Rokeach (1968, 1969, 1973) in researching. This book gives crucial data for understanding the Thai way of meekness and, thus, will serve as the central theoretical model for the dissertation.

Komin's empirical research reveals the Thai national character in the form of nine value clusters: (1) ego orientation, (2) grateful relationship orientation, (3) smooth interpersonal orientation, (4) flexible and adjustment orientation, (5) religio-psychical orientation, (6) education and competence orientation, (7) interdependence orientation, (8) fun and pleasure orientation, and (9) achievement task orientation. Her research explains away many myths about the Thai culture. Thai society is well structured with hierarchy, relationships, and individualism. Komin proposed that primal religion has
more impact upon the Thai than high Buddhism. Thais are highly independent, yet they cherish interdependence among families and friends. Thais are not only fun and pleasure lovers. Though they are humorous, they work hard. Most of all, Thais are not fearful. They react aggressively to those who violate their identity. Komin's theory presents gentleness, kindness, and the smile as the avoidance mechanism that fends off unnecessary clashes in interpersonal relationships. Let us consider the nine value clusters from Komin's (1991) research.

**Ego-Orientatio**n

Komin says in her discussion about Thai ego-orientation:

The Thai are first and foremost ego oriented, characterized by the highest ego value of being independent—being oneself . . . , and a very high value of self esteem. . . . Thai people have a very big ego, a deep sense of independence, pride and dignity. They cannot tolerate any violation of the "ego" self. Despite the cool and calm front, they can be easily provoked to strong emotional reactions, if the "self", like one's father or mother, is insulted. (1991: 133)

Her discovery of Thai ego-orientation is accurate and the best I have ever read. She says it well:

This "ego" orientation is the root value underlying various key values of the Thai, such as "face-saving," criticism-avoidance, and the Kreng jai attitude which roughly means "feeling considerate for another person, not wanting to impose or cause the other person trouble, or hurt his/her feelings" . . ., preserving one another's "ego" is the basic rule of all Thai interactions both on the continuum of familiarity-unfamiliarity, and the continuum of superior-inferior, with difference only in degree. (1991:135)

Therefore, the Thai usually find indirect ways to soften a negative message and to avoid public confrontation with an inferior, an equal, or a superior. My interviews also reveal that Thais will not push others against
the wall with logical reasoning; they prefer to approach others affectively in their first contact.

As for criticism-avoidance, because of ego-orientation the Thai do not disassociate the criticism from the self. Thai criticism-avoidance cuts across all roles and statuses to protect the self-image and dignity of others. It does not come from fear as Mulder understands for Thais can react boldly to those who violate their identity, even though they value consideration. Komin asserts:

*Kreng jai* concept is a very difficult concept for Westerners to understand. *Kreng jai*: feel reluctant to impose upon another person, to take another person's feeling (and ego) into account, or to take every measure not to cause discomfort or inconvenience for another person. (1991:136)

*Kreng Jai* concept is crucial for interpersonal communication and relationships among the Thai. The *krieng jai* concept is exactly like Matthew 7:12 (NASB), "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets." The equivalent of *krieng jai* is *thanom namjai*, hold other hearts with care.

The following incident may explain how Thais use ego-orientation in their communication. When I was seventeen years old, I learned from my family that our next door neighbor betrayed our trust and cheated us financially. My mother and aunts managed to accept her behavior, believing that what she sowed she would certainly reap. They forgave and kept the relationship but I could not. I showed my anger toward her by ignoring her and I did not talk with her. My action challenged her identity. To vent her anger, she said to my dog in my presence, pretending I was that dog. "Doggie, do you know how I feel? I have heartburn when I see you. Don't you know that you are just a girl?"
One way Thais avoid confrontation is by directing their negative feelings toward animals, especially cats and dogs. This is done in the presence of the individual with whom they are angry or upset. Usually, this results in humor, and the persons involved can reconcile without the direct expression of anger.

At that time, I shot back, boomeranging her strategy, "Doggie, behave yourself. You are quite of age. Don't try to dramatize." Her nephew who was watching laughed, and I could not hold my laughter. She made an angry face, and then she smiled. Later on, we reconciled.

Grateful Relationship Orientation

The Thai culture elucidates relationships. Grateful relationship is more highly valued by the Thai than by Americans. Therefore a chasm yawns between the two cognitive systems. Komin explains about grateful relationship orientation:

In general, the presentation of most Thai interactions are honest and sincere, and the Thai are bound for sincere and deep reciprocal relationships. And the deepest one is the psychologically invested Bunkhun relationship, as opposed to the "etiquettical" or "transactional" relationship. Bunkhun (indebted goodness) is a psychological bond between someone who, out of sheer kindness and sincerity, renders another person needed helps and favors, and the latter's remembering of the goodness done and his ever-readiness to reciprocate the kindness. (1991:139)

This reciprocity of kindness is performed continuously in various ways; the kindness is not measured quantitatively, and it transcends time and space. The following example will explain how grateful relationship works among the Thai.

Our family had a Northeast helper who came to stay with us when she was thirteen years old. We treated her like a member of our family. We took care of her father's sickness and sent her to study adult education. When
three burglars broke into our home, she fought against them. They ran away without taking anything, but she was stabbed in one of her lungs. She survived, and after twenty years have past, we still keep in fellowship with her. She knows she can turn to us in times of trouble as long as we live. In fact, my husband and I want to devote the rest of our lives to people in Northeast Thailand.

**Smooth Interpersonal Relationship Orientation**

Komin says in her discussion concerning smooth interpersonal relationship:

This orientation is characterized by the preference for a non-assertive, polite and humble type of personality (expressed through appearance, manners, and interpersonal approach), as well as the preference for a relaxed, and pleasant interaction which accounts for the "smiling" and "friendly" aspects of the Thai people. (1991:143)

This smooth interpersonal relationship is projected by the following values, listed in order of importance: (1) caring and considerate, (2) kind and helpful, (3) responsive to situations and opportunities, (4) self-controlled, tolerant-restrained, (5) polite and humble, (6) calm and cautious, (7) contented, and (8) socially related. Komin found that Americans miss five of these Thai values in their value list; caring and considerate, responsive to situations and opportunities, calm and cautious, content, and socially related. These values are perceived and practiced by Thais of all walks of life, roles, status, education, and economic levels, and are deeply internalized and practiced in the everyday life of Thai people.

The following incident will help clarify the application of smooth relationship orientation. Once a foreigner visited our home. He was quite a character, because all he could talk about was himself and his excellence, but the Thai detest boasting. My husband and I listened to him for half an hour
but my smiling face was diminishing. I was about to cut him short when my husband whispered to me in Thai, "If he thinks he is so great, would he win if he fought with a dog?" My husband's humor relaxed me, and we entertained our visitor by listening to him more with broad smiles.

**Flexibility and Adjustment Orientation**

Komin points out that this value does not emerge in the American value list. She gives an explanation of flexibility and adjustment, "It is the ability of balancing ego, power, and situations that count, not ideology, nor even law and order. Evidently, besides ego and smooth interpersonal relation values, the Thai are flexible and situation-oriented" (1991:161).

This value is higher among government officials than for peasants, because officials risk more in violating the ego and power of others. The data of Komin's research indicates that while most Thai favor sincere interactions, they expect flexibility, and unbendable, unchangeable, rigid characters are not welcomed. However, this orientation brings about laxness in principles, decision-shifting behavioral patterns, and corruption. Komin puts the idea into focus saying, "Principles, rules, policies, and even agreements might not be upheld when weighed against personal relations. Instead, they are dispensable and will be overruled by self and in-group interests" (1991:167).

This Thai value disturbs most Westerners who believe in law, order, and principles. It is of no surprise that many Westerners labeled Thais as unpredictable, non-committing, irresponsible, selfish, and opportunistic.

An incident was repeatedly recited during the time of the late Prime Minister Sarit Thanarat who issued a law that Thai pedestrians who did not cross the street at the zebra line would be fined twenty baht, the equivalent of eighty cents. An old Chinese granny was stopped by a young policeman as she crossed a street where she pleased.
"You are fined twenty baht," the policeman told her.

The granny did not agree, but put her hand into her pocket, handed him some money, and said, "Take this forty baht, because I will cross back soon."

This value of flexibility can be seen in the way Thai men use a piece of cloth called *pakhaoma*. This one piece of cloth can be used in a hundred different ways. It is used as a loin cloth, a hat, a belt, an umbrella, a towel, a scarf, a swimming suit, a pillow, a blanket, an overnight bag, a lunch-box, a cradle, and even a rope with which one might hang himself.

**Religio-Psychical Orientation**

Komin's research indicates that the Thai pay more attention to Buddhist rituals, ceremonies, and festivals than Buddhist doctrinal concepts. Komin states, "In general, the Thai do not make a conscious effort to reach *nirvana*, nor do they fully and succinctly believe in reincarnation" (1991:178). My interview research indicates that Thais believe mostly that "you reap what you sow" in the present life. Komin affirms part of my finding:

the use of religious rationale for purposive activity has been shown with serious doubts as to the truth and validity of those "other-worldly" doctrines or notions such as rebirth, *nirvana*, and to a lesser extent, *karma*. They aren't taken very seriously. The Thai are more of a "this-worldly" orientation. (1991:176)

The Thai use the concept of *karma* as "after-event" rationalization. Komin states, "the concept of *karma* as a religious preaching to build a better life cycle is not in reality a guiding force in regulating Thai social behavior, but rather it serves psychologically as a defense mechanism for a whole range of negative experiences" (1991:178).

Komin discovered that popular Buddhism has a significant impact upon the Buddhist laity. Thais in urban areas practice more widely
unreasonable belief. Komin concludes from the data that, "Buddhism serves a psychological function for the Thai more than anything. . . . Psychologically, in times of crisis, even the most skeptical would appeal for supernatural assistance" (1991:185).

Perhaps an excerpt from Boontawee's (1994) A Child of the Northeast clarifies better the Thai religio-psychical orientation of using karma as a defense mechanism for a negative experience. Tid-joon and Kamgong, a couple in the Northeast committed fornication, and their friend, Tid-hod, requested an explanation:

and it was at the moment that Tid-hod the drunk came struggling up the house ladder with the chicken under one arm, and stood steadily on the porch. "Kamgong! What is this, letting that big water buffalo into the garden? Ha ha ha!"

"It is my karma, Tid-hod," said Kamgong in a small, shaky voice, not raising her head. (1994:90)

Education and Competence Orientation

The Thai perceive education as a means to climb the social ladder, earning more money and prestige. Thais seldom acquire knowledge for its own sake. People value form more than meaning in education. As a result, spending beyond one's means is a problem in Thai society and modernization brought about this problem in both urban and rural areas. Komin talks about the problem of form and the perception of development:

The story of a Buddhist monk's work in a poor village in the Northeastern region is very illustrative. The monk used to think development means roads and electricity, etc. Determined to fight poverty and backwardness, he convinced the villagers to give up their land to build a new road that would link their homes to the city. "Development" did quickly stream in. Motorcycles started roaring into the village. Refrigerators replaced earthen jars for keeping drinking water. Electric rice cookers, television, jeans, lipsticks, shampoo, fragrant soaps and
other consumer goods advertised on television became an integral part of the villagers' lives, while gambling and drinking become more widespread. And the villagers plunged deeper into debt. Disillusioned, the monk changed his views, and that was when real change began to take place in this small Northeastern village of Surin Province. Through meditation and Buddhist teachings, he got the villagers to analyze and identify the chronic disease of their poverty, to understand that their gambling, drinking and uneccessary expenses had worsened their situations, and helped them think out means to ease their problems. The villagers made religious vows to decrease expenses on uneccessary products, and they revitalized their community spirits, and collaborated on a series of projects such as the village's Rice Bank, Fertilizer Bank, "Friendship farming", etc. And now the village has regained their self-reliance. (Bangkok Post, October 11, 1989 as quoted in Komin 1991:189)

Interdependence Orientation

Komin's research indicates that Thai rural communities value collaborative behavior, and two values that distinguish the rural Thai from the urban Thai are the religious and community-oriented values. They help each other in times of crisis and participate in the rites of passage of members of the community regardless of faith. This orientation coupled with ego-orientation, smooth interpersonal relationship, and flexibility orientation make Thailand a model of successful assimilation of various ethnic groups and religions.

The event recorded below illustrates the spirit of brotherhood in helping one another in a life crisis, this one of a couple who committed fornication:

Koon's father sent Auntie Kao off to fetch Tid-Joon's mother and father. Then he dressed and went to tell Auntie Bua-si and Uncle Kem. There were more distant relatives, but in any important family matter, all of the family gathered—which was to say, almost the whole village. (Boontawee 1994:85)
Fun and Pleasure Orientation

The findings of Komin's research suggest that the fun, leisure, and smiling aspects of the Thai function to serve two purposes: (1) to keep a pleasant and smooth relationship, and (2) to project the basic inclination of being kind, generous, and sympathetic toward other human beings, strangers and foreigners included. Komin does not agree with Mulder who suggests that the fun and pleasure orientation of the Thai is a defense mechanism originating from fear. Komin comments on this matter, "Definitely, the Thai are not xenophobic, which could possibly be due to the fact that the Thai have never been colonized, thus adding to the friendly interaction with foreigners" (1991:192). Komin records the forms of social fun and pleasure among the Thai as follows:

Joyful behaviors can be observed in any Thai party, which is usually characterized by small talk, gossip, jokes, teasing one another, making fun of all kinds of non-personal, inconsequential things and events, including playing with words, using puns and *Kham phuan* (reversal of syllables for taboo words), etc. in a clever, humorous and amusing fashion. (1991:192)

Her research demonstrates the fact that peasants worry about problems in farming, business, security, and development, while the government officials are more concerned about their personal problems and more highly value fun and pleasure. The incident below indicates how humor keeps a pleasant and smooth relationship as a Thai seminary student shared in his small group about the power of prayer.

"One of my members got pregnant, and everything went well. Then one day, a doctor had the lady x-rayed and found an extraordinary thing. The baby had no head. Her husband was overwhelmed with sorrow and ran to me, pleading with me to pray for the baby. Oh, how I fasted and prayed for an
entire day. God answered my prayers. The baby was born with a head. Praise the Lord," he testified proudly.

One of his instructors said solemnly, "I am sure that your prayer is very powerful, and I am so glad that you did not continue to pray for the baby. If you continued, the baby would have many heads."

Achievement-Task Orientation

Komin concludes about achievement-task orientation among the Thai:

Task achievement value is usually inhibited by social relationship values. While submissiveness and good relations, with or without work, has always paid-off, tasks per se or worse still, tasks which serve as threats or are without submissive relation to superiors, do not lead to success in life. In the Thai cultural context, achievement in the Western sense would not fit, nor all those management theories that have no place for a culture of larger power distance with strong social relations. (1991:212-213)

Analysis and Summary

I will analyze and summarize Komin's research in the following categories; worldview, values, behavior patterns, social structure, and the sources of the Thai way of meekness.

Thai worldview. Komin's research demonstrates the both/and worldview of the Thai where a strong ego lives with gentleness in grateful relationship, smooth interpersonal relationship, flexibility, interdependency and fun and pleasure in social interaction. Power through weakness is an expression of the Thai worldview. This worldview and value system indicate the importance of the affective domain among the Thai to which few researchers, except Philip Hughes (1984), pay attention. It is difficult for Westerners to understand the Thai, because Westerners emphasize the cognitive domain. Westerners use their head to classify people, into categories and move people up or down the civilization or moral
development scale. The Thai use their hearts to classify people, friends or foes, insiders or outsiders. Everything is an end in itself for Westerners; everything is a means to an end to preserve self-identity and relationship for the Thai. As a result, Westerners are outward explorers. They visited the moon and stars. Easterners are inward explorers; all world religions originated in the East.

The Thai way of meekness does not come from fear or an inferiority complex. Psychologically and religiously, people who are truly meek have strong self-identity and self-esteem. The meek are not gullible or naive. They are able to be bold when things go wrong; their responses to situations depend on their culture, roles and status in society as well as on personality. I agree with Komin concerning Thai identity, but her suggestion of Thai violence seems to fit more the hooligan circles and only some types of personality. Komin uses events in newspapers to elicit her point. It seems to me newspapers usually report violence, not meekness and gentleness. I agree with Ruth Benedict that the Thai prefer to deal with others in gentle and indirect ways. However, I think when their self-identity is at bay, they can be very bold in confrontation. The only two bloody riots between Thai soldiers and civilians in Thai modern history should affirm my point. My analysis of Thai proverbs and the interview research also point in this direction.

Violating the Thai self is perceived not only when one’s father or mother is insulted but also when the nation, Buddhism, and the king are insulted (Beek 1983). An interviewee shared with me, "If Christians go to a market and insult Lord Buddha in public, someone will kill them even though Buddhism teaches not to kill." My study reveals that most interviewees perceived Christian witness as a personal insult to Buddha, Buddhism, and their personal belief but they reacted indirectly with passive-
aggression. Perhaps, Komin wants to disprove the Western theory of Buddhism which says that the Thai "rarely live at, or even reach, a high emotional pitch" (Phillips 1965:60). Therefore she emphasizes another extremity.

**Thai values.** Komin discovered nine value clusters of Thai people. Each root value underlies various related values: (1) ego orientation underlies face-saving, criticism avoidance and consideration; (2) grateful relationship orientation carries with it reciprocal indebted goodness; (3) smooth interpersonal relationship orientation holds the values of being caring and considerate, kind and helpful, responsive to situations and opportunities, self-controlled, tolerant-restrained, polite and humble, calm and cautious, content and socially related; (4) flexibility and adjustment orientation underlies the values of harmony which balances ego, power, and situations; (5) religio-psychical orientation carries this-worldly orientation and the value of religious forms of rituals, celebrations, and festivals; (6) education and competence orientation values forms more than meaning; (7) interdependent orientation values community collaboration and assimilation; (8) fun and pleasure orientation underlies the value of pleasant and smooth relationship, as well as kindness, generosity, and sympathy toward other human beings, strangers, and foreigners; and (9) achievement-task orientation values social relationships where submissiveness and good relations pay off.

Tables 1 and 2 show the relationship, according to Komin's analysis, between her nine value clusters and the values and behavioral patterns related to them. Table 1, below presents nine Thai value clusters and related values of the Thai value system.
### Table 1

Komin's Nine Value Clusters and Related Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Komin's Nine Value Clusters</th>
<th>Related Values</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ego-orientation</td>
<td>face-saving</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>criticism avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. grateful relationship</td>
<td>reciprocal indebted goodness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. smooth interpersonal</td>
<td>being caring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship orientation</td>
<td>considerate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kind and helpful</td>
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<td></td>
<td>responsive to situation and opportunities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>self-controlled</td>
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<td></td>
<td>tolerant-restrained</td>
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<td></td>
<td>polite</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>humble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>calm and cautious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>content, and socially related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. flexibility and adjustment</td>
<td>harmony which balances ego, power, and situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. religio-psychical</td>
<td>this worldly orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation</td>
<td>religious forms of rituals, celebration, and assimilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. education and competence</td>
<td>a means to economic end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. interdependent</td>
<td>community collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation</td>
<td>assimilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. fun and pleasure</td>
<td>pleasant and smooth relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation</td>
<td>kindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>generosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sympathy toward others, strangers, and foreigners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. achievement-task</td>
<td>submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation</td>
<td>good relation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Komin's findings of Thai values are the best among all research efforts conducted by outsiders and insiders. It sheds light upon Thai behavior patterns.
Thai behavior patterns. Thai worldview and values produce Thai behavior patterns. Ego orientation, face-saving, criticism avoidance, and consideration drive Thais to use indirect ways to soften a negative assertion, to avoid public confrontation, and challenging the inferior, the equal, and the superior. The Thai care much about the hearts of their fellowmen. Grateful relationship and indebted goodness bring forth reciprocity of kindness between givers and receivers. Smooth interpersonal relationships produce a non-assertive, polite, humble personality expressed through appearance, manner, and an interpersonal approach. It requires smiling and being friendly, as well as having relaxed and pleasant social interaction.

Flexibility and adjustment produce laxness in principles, laws, orders, and decision-shifting because of self and in-group interest. Flexibility and adjustment also generate compromise and a warm character. Religio-psychical orientation makes Thais learn religions from rituals, ceremonies, festivals and stories rather than doctrinal concepts. The emphasis on forms in education and competence makes Thais understand development as modernization. Most Thais study in order to climb the social ladder and to gain economically. People spend beyond their means in order to be modernized and to keep up their faces. Interdependence brings forth communal cooperation in life crises in the rural areas. This brotherhood supersedes faith and races. Fun and pleasure produce small talk, gossip, jokes, teasing one another, making fun of all kinds of non-personal, inconsequential things and events, including playing with words, using puns and reversal of syllables for taboo words. Achievement-task orientation requires submission and good relations in working. Table 2 shows Thai behavior patterns.
Table 2
Komin's Nine Value Clusters and Thai Behavior Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Komin's Nine Value Clusters</th>
<th>Related Behavior Patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ego orientation</td>
<td>using indirect way to soften a negative assertion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>caring for the heart of others; maintaining self-reliance, self-confidence, and self-worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reciprocity of kindness between givers and receivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>avoiding confrontation and challenging the inferior, the equal, and the superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>avoiding criticizing close kinship, Buddhism, the nation, and the king</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. grateful relationship</td>
<td>long-term reciprocity of kindness between givers and receivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. smooth interpersonal</td>
<td>Humble Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation</td>
<td>humble (in heart and body movement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-boastful in attitude toward others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>warm and calm in heart and mind</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kind in heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gentle Social Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>compromising, flexible, make no big thing of a small matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>considerate toward the hearts of others, do to others as you want them to do to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>friendly, adapting, assimilating, smiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>generous in heart, hospitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>time and occasion awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hierarchical awareness (The powerless create loving kindness in the authority, and respectable people, and the powerful must demonstrate mercy and kind help with respect to the self-identity of the powerless.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. flexibility and adjustment orientation</td>
<td>Gentle Manner and Etiquette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. religio-psychical orientation</td>
<td>gentle, tender, soft, smooth, and beautiful ways of moving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. education and competence orientation</td>
<td>humble manner (moving with humble and respectful manners before authority and respectable persons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. interdependent orientation</td>
<td>Gentle Forms of Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. fun and pleasure orientation</td>
<td>gentle, tender, and soft in speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. achievement-task orientation</td>
<td>humble manner in speaking, showing dependency and respect to the powerful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Gentle Manner and Etiquette
- gentle, tender, soft, smooth, and beautiful ways of moving
- humble manner (moving with humble and respectful manners before authority and respectable persons)

### Gentle Forms of Speaking
- gentle, tender, and soft in speaking
- humble manner in speaking, showing dependency and respect to the powerful
- no arguing

### 4. flexibility and adjustment orientation
- people oriented, self and in-group interest
- laxness in principles

### 5. religio-psychical orientation
- learning religion from symbols, ceremonies, and life models rather than doctrinal concepts
- seldom acquire knowledge for its own sake
- value form more than meaning
- spending beyond one's means
- development is modernization

### 6. education and competence orientation
- communal cooperation
- assimilation among faiths and races

### 7. interdependent orientation
- small talk
- gossip
- jokes
- teasing one another
- making fun of all kinds of non-personal, inconsequential things and events
- play with words
- using puns and reversal of syllables for taboo words

### 8. fun and pleasure orientation
- ability and capability go hand in hand with submission and good relations
Thai social structure. Komin seems to believe that Thai society is structured with hierarchy and relationships as she mentions briefly in achievement orientation. Her research demonstrates uniquely the importance of ego-orientation which demonstrates Thai self-identity and self-esteem, as well as self-confidence. Thai individualism is an important element in Thai society. The Thai behavior pattern is practiced in order to keep Thai self-identity. Therefore I think hierarchy, individualism, and relationships contribute important elements in Thai society.

The sources of the Thai way of meekness. Komin believes that smooth relationship orientation did not come from Buddhism, because no significant differences appear between Thai Buddhists and Thai Muslims. Therefore she concludes that:

Evidently, these over-claimed, religious related values are thus more of the socio-cultural traits that have no direct relationship with Buddhist religion. They, together with other "social smoothing" values, are elements of Thai culture, that through socialization, have been internalized by all Thai--be it Thai Buddhists, Thai Muslims or Thai Christians. (1991:145)

This assumption can be challenged from the point of view of religious studies. Various research demonstrates that traditional religion, Hinduism and Buddhism impact the religious beliefs of the Thai. The core of these religions emphasizes the concept of smooth relationship orientation, as does Islam and Christianity. Traditional religion suggests harmony with nature, supernatural beings, and powers. Hinduism emphasizes unity and nonviolence. Buddhism confirms the middle way. Christianity cherishes love toward God and humankind. Therefore it is only partly true that the Thai way of meekness comes from Thai traditional culture. Geography, history, and economics in the past provided tranquillity for the Thai way.
However, it is possible that the syncretism from the various religions mentioned is an important cause of smooth relationship orientation among the Thai, because the mentality of a people is affected by worldview, religion, and mythology (Luzbetak 1988).

Thais use religions to meet their holistic deep felt needs. Therefore Thais blend together the meaning of meekness in traditional religion, Hinduism, folk Buddhism, and high Buddhism, as well as Thai culture to elucidate power through weakness. As a result, the people survive and keep their identity in their cultural context. Traditional religion helps meet their intimate issues of life in crisis, Hinduism provides rituals, ceremonies, and festivals, as well as rites of passage. Folk Buddhism creates rites of passage and high Buddhism brings forth the living model of Buddha.

**The Structure of the Thai Way of Meekness: The Komin Model**

In Chapter 1, I presented the definition of the Thai way of meekness, the findings of Komin (1991) about values, as well as my proposal concerning the Thai worldview, the sources of the Thai way of meekness and Thai social structure along with the characteristics of Thai relational bonding of Kaufman (1977), and Sharp (1948-1949). Komin's research, concerning the Thai value system which she proposes as nine value clusters, seems to suggest that the Thai worldview is power through weakness. Komin also points out that the Thai characteristics come from Thai relational culture. Komin's finding probably suggests that hierarchy, relationship as well as individualism are important elements in the structure of Thai society.

This chapter shows that outsiders' research confirms Komin's findings concerning the nine Thai value clusters and my proposals concerning the
Thai worldview: power through weakness, as well as sources of the Thai way of meekness, and the structure of Thai society.

Therefore, the structure of characteristics of the Thai way of meekness is presented below. The structure is our theoretical model for evaluating data from chapters 3-6, 8 and for evaluating missiological applications in chapter 9.

Figure 1
The Structure of Characteristics of the Thai Way of Meekness

Thais have a both/and worldview structured as power through weakness. See the center circle in figure 1. This is the mental eyeglasses
Thais use to see the world around them. Closely related to this center worldview are arranged the nine value cluster, represented by the next concentric circle in figure 1. The Thai value system carries nine value clusters: (1) ego orientation, (2) grateful relationship orientation, (3) smooth interpersonal relationship orientation, (4) flexibility and adjustment orientation, (5) religio-psychical orientation, (6) education and competence orientation, (7) interdependence orientation, (8) fun and pleasure orientation, and (9) achievement-task orientation.

Moving out to the next concentric circle we come to Thai behavior patterns. The purpose of practicing Thai behavior patterns is to keep the Thai nine value clusters intact, especially self-identity. The worldview of power through weakness influences the Thai to use humble attitudes and gentle behavior patterns in Thai social interaction. However, when Thais' self-identity is violated they react aggressively.

The next concentric circle in figure 1, contains the sources of the Thai way of meekness. Primal religion, Buddha's life model, Hinduism, and Thai relational culture have each made an impact on the Thai way of meekness. The final circle represents Thai society, structured as it is by the elements of hierarchy, relationship, and individualism.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have presented and illustrated the characteristics of the Thai way of meekness. I have presented the Komin model of Thai worldview, values, behavioral patterns, sources of influence, and social structure as a model of the Thai way of meekness and as a model for evaluating the interview data that I have gathered and will present in chapter 6.
But before we go directly to the analysis of that data, we will test our model in three ways. We will look at a myth and ritual structure that represents a significant window into the Thai worldview. Moving from this classical expression of Thai culture to more modern times, we look at a novel for confirmation of Komin's model. Both the classic myth and the modern novel also exhibit patterns of influence, nurture, and the disciplining that we call discipling. Discipling comes into central focus in chapter 5. There four case studies of old and new forms of Christian discipling assist us in knowing how valuable our theoretical framework is.
CHAPTER 3

The Thai Way of Meekness Confirmed in Classic Myth and Ritual

In this chapter, in order to investigate the Thai way of meekness, I will focus on analyzing and interpreting a classic Thai myth and accompanying ritual. One of the three most important Thai myths, Wessandorn Jataka, should exhibit the major motifs of the Thai culture, and if Suntaree Komin's analysis is as adequate a model as we have shown it to be, the myth should provide an example of the Thai way of meekness.

The Wessandorn Jataka Myth

Wessandorn Jataka, a tale of the model king Wessandorn, is one of the three most important myths of Thailand. The other two myths are Tri-Phum Cosmology and Pramalai Jataka. Tri-Phum Cosmology describes hell and heaven from a Thai perspective. Pramalai Jataka predicts the Messiah to come at the end of time, describing the new heaven and the new age. I will investigate, analyze, and interpret Wessandorn Jataka in the following areas: (1) the Wessandorn Jataka text, and (2) the Wessandorn Jataka rite.

The Wessandorn Jataka Text

Background. The Wessandorn Jataka myth was under the patronage of great kings in each golden period of Thai history. These kings were King Luthai, King Barommatrailokanart, King Songdharm, and King Chulalongkorn.

King Luthai was one of the greatest kings of the Sukothai kingdom, the first kingdom of Thailand (1200-1351 A.D.). He ruled in the mid-fourteenth century. King Luthai modeled his life after Buddha. He vowed to work for
the salvation of all beings. The king seemed to believe that he was Wessandorn reborn. Wessandorn was believed in Sri Lanka to be a universal emperor who vowed to be the guide of the world, teacher of lesser gods and man (Brereton 1992). King Luthai wrote the first and only cosmology of Buddhism to teach his mother like Buddha did. The King expressed great concern that Wessandorn Jataka would disappear.

King Barommatrailokanart ruled from 1441-1487 A.D. during the Ayuthaya period. He lived his kingly life according to the Buddha model exemplified by the Wessandorn Jataka text. He entered monkhood at a monastery he built and named "Wat Chulamanee" where the future Buddha, Maitriya, went to worship (Brereton 1992).

He reformed the writing of the Wessandorn Jataka text around 1482. Sombat Chantornvong (1981), a Thai political scientist, pointed out that the version was aimed to be used for political benefit. Looking from other perspectives, Forrest McGill suggests that the year 2000 B.E. (Buddhist Era) was approaching, and the king wanted to prevent the loss of the Wessandorn Jataka myth which was prophesied as the first to be lost. McGill notes the integrative function of Wessandorn Jataka:

> If a king were to prevent or mitigate the fulfillment of this prediction, and thereby succeed in affecting the course of cosmic history, it would show him to have the power of great accumulated merit. Such a demonstration of merit would substantially enhance a ruler's charisma both within and without his kingdom. (quoted in Kemp 1969:44)

King Songdharm ruled during the Ayuthaya period from 1610-1628. He composed a new version of the Wessandorn Jataka text. G.E Gerini wrote about the king.

> He employs all his leisure in composing a poem based on the subject of Jataka, which he named Maha Chat (The Greatest Reincarnation). By means of this poem... vested in an epic
form and thus more likely to remain impressed on the minds of the people... he proposed to hand down to the coming generation the story... in the hope of preventing, or at least, mitigating the effect of the prophecy. (Gerini 1892:24)

Gerini believed that the style of recitation started at that time.

King Chulalongkorn ruled Thailand from 1868-1910 during the Chakri dynasty when Bangkok became the capital of Thailand. King Chulalongkorn wrote literature widely. Another beautiful version of the Wessandorn Jataka was written and the rite flourished during this time. Gerini witnessed the power of the rites of Wessandorn Jataka during that time and recorded how people flooded to hear it recited.

The analysis of the functions of Wessandorn Jataka all through the history of Thailand seems to elucidate the integrative functions of Wessandorn Jataka in politics, economics, sociology, and ideology. These functions fit the cultural system in Thailand, and Wessandorn Jataka affected Thai culture and society and vice versa. Under the patronage of the kings, Wessandorn Jataka flourished, and it promoted the kings’ authority.

**Personalities.** The main characters are Prince Wessandorn, Princess Matsi, Prince Charlee and Princess Kanha, King Sanchai, and the people of the Sewee kingdom.

Wessandorn was born to King Sanchai and Queen Phussadee of the Sewee kingdom at the lane of merchants. Upon his birth, the prince proclaimed that he would renounce his royal status and became an ascetic. Then, he gave alms generously to the poor on the day that he was born.

When he was eight years old, he thought:

The alms that I gave so far were outward alms which could not fulfill my contentment. Now, I want to give inward alms. If anyone asks for my heart I will give it. If others request my eyes I will give them my
eyes. If someone seeks to have my flesh they will get it. I will shed my blood for them. If anyone demands me to be their slave I am willing. (Sakdanuwat 1988:27-28)

When he was sixteen, he married Princess Matsi, and Prince Charlee and Princess Kanha were born to them.

Generosity and giving alms were Wessandom's behavior patterns and his worldview was power through weakness. He gave away his children and his wife. Giving sacrificially for the sake of reaching nirvana (the extinction of all desires) in order to save the world points to his values of self sacrifice, self-emptying, and self-confidence. It also points to his belief in high Buddhism. An example of his pleading to his children when the wicked old man, Chuchoke, asked for his children makes clear the point:

My beloved children, don't you know that I long for nirvana so that I can help troubled mankind to break away from the rebirth circle? I long to reach the bank of nirvana over which few can cross. Please help me. Do not let me down at this crucial moment, my dear children. (Sakdanuwat 1988:189)

His two children obeyed him and gave themselves up as slaves of the wicked old man.

Princess Matsi was an exemplary woman. She was not excommunicated but she was willing to incarnate her life in her husband's suffering. She left the royal palace to live with her husband and children in the land of exile, taking upon herself a hermit lifestyle. Princess Matsi took good care of her husband and the children. Everyday she went into the jungle to find fruits for her family.

One day, when she returned home and could not find the children she panicked and searched the jungle for them, overwhelmed by sorrow. As soon as she discovered her husband had given the children away, she rejoiced and confirmed his action: "My dear brother, I take the best care of Prince
Charlee, and Princess Kanha because they are my heart. I rejoice with you in this alms giving. You should rejoice and trust that I am for you even in greater alms giving" (Sakdanuwat 1988:214).

Later on, Prince Wessandorn gave her to an old Brahman who was Indra (a god of heavenly host) in disguise. Matsi acclaimed, "My dear brother, I belong to you and you have the perfect right to give me to anyone. I surrender to your will" (Sakdanuwat 1988:221). Princess Matsi became one of Prince Wessandorn's disciples. In the next life, she reached nirvana (the extinction of all desires). Princess Matsi valued the noble truth. Her behavior patterns also point to her self-sacrifice, self-emptying, and self-confidence as well as the worldview of power through weakness.

Prince Charlee and Princess Kanha were Prince Wessandorn and Princess Matsi's children. They were first disciples of Prince Wessandorn, being obedient to the point of self-sacrifice and self-denial with strong self-identity. They joined in the exile of their father and learned the religious truth from their father's living model. At first, they hid themselves under lotus leaves in a pond when they knew the wicked old man asked for them. However, they gave themselves up at their father's request. Their way of living demonstrated their view of life. Both of them believed in high Buddhism and they valued the noble truth. Their worldview was power through weakness. In their next life, both reached the noble truth.

King Sanchai was a great king of the Sewee kingdom. He was a man of strong personality. He was also a democratic king who listened to the request of his people. The king was much more concerned for his kingdom than for the spiritual realm. He was a politician king who pleased the masses. Therefore, he excommunicated Prince Wessandorn, his only son for the sake of his kingdom. He kept his word even though his wife pleaded with him.
and the departure of his son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren was difficult for him. He simply said, "I am a king and I have to keep my word." The witness of the suffering of his grandchildren under the hand of the wicked old man made him change his mind. He repented and apologized to his son and welcomed him back to the throne. He became the first man to convert from worldly values to religious values. The living witness observed in his son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren who suffered the consequences of going against the tide, seeking the noble truth for others and loving others as themselves, had a great impact upon his life.

Sewee people were influenced by materialism and were blind to the spiritual truth of nirvana (the extinction of all desires) and to generosity toward those who suffered. They did not know how to give but sought to gain. Therefore when they had to give they were extremely angry. They had strong self-confidence and knew how to deal with the king. However, the suffering of Prince Charlee and Princess Kanha made them repent, because they had the worldview of power through weakness. The suffering of vulnerable little children still in need of their mother helped them repent and turn away from their sins. At long last, they apologized and reconciled with Prince Wessandorn, becoming his disciples.

The story of Wessandorn and his discipling. Long, long ago before the beginning of time, Prince Wessandorn was born to give. He loved giving alms. At the peak of his power and happiness, he was excommunicated by his people because of his generosity. Wessandorn's people were outraged, because he gave his magic white elephant, which was the rainmaker, to a neighboring country which suffered severe drought and famine. The people were afraid they would starve. Wessandorn's father excommunicated him.
Wessandorn's generosity put his family, his people and himself "betwixt and between."

Wessandorn and his family went on foot to live in the mysterious jungle of exile. Wessandorn carried their young boy, while his wife, Matsi, carried their young daughter in her arms. They lived ascetic lives as hermits there. Then an old Brahman, Chuchoke, was forced by his young and beautiful wife to ask for the two children of Wessandorn in order to have two slaves she could enjoy. Using many vile tricks, the old man reached Wessandorn. Wessandorn pleaded with his children to help him accomplish this benevolence of giving his beloved children away, so he would reach nirvana in his next life and the world would know how to overcome suffering. The old, wicked Brahman got his children, dragging them away and beating them. The children, Matsi, Wessandorn and the cosmos were "betwixt and between." Indra, a god of the heavenly host, had to come down and pretend to ask for Matsi and give her back to Wessandorn with the request not to give her away.

The old man who took the little prince and princess lost his way and wandered into Wessandorn's kingdom. The grandparents recognized the agonizing little prince and princess. The king redeemed his grandchildren from the old Brahman. Enjoying his bliss, the old man died of gluttony. The people of Wessandorn's kingdom and the king repented. The king and the people went to apologize and reincorporated Wessandorn as their king.

Wessandorn's life demonstrated the structure of the rite of passage. Wessandorn's ritual of separation began as soon as the verdict of excommunication was announced. He drove his family in his chariot to have one last look at the city. Then he gave away his chariot and horses, traveling on foot to the land of exile. There he spent his life "betwixt and
between." He was a prince but not a prince in the full sense. He was a hermit
but reached not the noble truth. He had a wife, but she was not his wife in a
full sense, for they had no intimate relationship physically. He also had
children, but they were given away to be slaves of the old man. He seemed to
have plenty but had nothing. In his liminality, he found the religious truth:
nirvana (the extinction of all desires) came through sacrificial lives. He
learned the preciousness of his family ties and of his country. When he lost
them, he lost part of his life. He said, "Giving away my children is like giving
away my own eyes" (Awootpanyo 1996:1). When his parents and people
reincorporated him to reign in his kingdom again, he became the king and
Bhodhisatawa (the one who knows), the hermit of hermits.

His wife and children participated in his liminality. They grasped the
spiritual truth about the importance of nirvana and reached it in their next
lives. Wessandorn's father observed the liminality of his son, daughter-in-
law, and grandchildren and repented of his greed. The people did the same
thing.

Wessandorn's liminality seemed to declare the sin of wrongfully
disciplining the righteous out of greedy motivation. A sinful purpose
for disciplining brought about a shameful method of disciplining that broke
the relationships between father and son, prince and people and brought on
suffering of the innocent. From a Thai perspective, Wessandorn indirectly
disciplined and converted his father and his people by humbling himself to
suffer liminality. As a result, his father and his people asked for forgiveness
and restored the broken relationships, repenting of their sin of greed.
Wessandorn implicitly indicated that disciplining was forgiving, helping the
wrongdoer repent and restoring the broken relationship.
In all of this, Wessandorn never lectured about any nirvana theology; he knew too well that his family and people could not understand. He knew that liminality and righteous behavior would work in the Thai way of meekness in religious discipling. In the next life, Wessandorn was born as Buddha.

**Analysis of the Wessandorn Jataka text.** The Wessandorn Jataka text demonstrated the worldview, values, and behavior patterns of the Thai way of meekness. Wessandorn and his family perceived the world outside them with the worldview of power through weakness. All of them reached nirvana (the extinction of all desires) through self-sacrifice and self-emptying; for it was in suffering, that they satisfied their souls. It was in giving that they gained. It was in losing that they won. Moreover, two weak children, the suffering Prince Charlee and Princess Kanha won the heart and mind of a strong king and the masses.

Wessandorn and his family elicited the ego-orientation of the Thai way of meekness. They had strong self-identity and self-worth therefore, they avoided confrontation against the king and the masses. They quietly submitted to the king's verdict with dignity and self-confidence. The masses of the Sewee kingdom acted aggressively when they felt that Wessandorn violated their self-identity by giving away their magic elephant.

Wessandorn and his family valued smooth interpersonal relationships. They were generous in heart; humble in attitude and considerate toward the hearts of others. Wessandorn used humble manners and speaking in pleading for his children to give themselves up to the old Brahman, Chuchoke. The old man behaved according to the Thai cultural grain of hierarchy awareness and he created loving kindness in the authority. Then he got what his young wife wanted.
The Wessandorn Jataka text also demonstrated flexibility and adjustment orientation. Wessandorn and his family adjusted well as a royal family or as outcasts. King Sanchai was also flexible. He vowed to keep his verdict but the pain of his grandchildren affected him and he changed his mind and converted himself to the religious truth.

Religio-psychical orientation of the Thai way of meekness showed itself in the way the people learned religious truth from life models instead of religious doctrines. Princess Matsi, Prince Charlee, and Princess Kanha learned about the noble truth of nirvana from Wessandorn's life. The text also revealed that although the truth in the other worldliness was important, this worldliness was also important. A good religion should meet the felt needs of the people. The Wessandorn Jataka text affirmed the influence of primal religion therefore it was a source of the Thai way of meekness. However, the text unexpectedly confirmed that Buddha's life was an important source that influenced the Thai way of meekness. Moreover, the mention of Indra and the old Brahman, Chuchoke, revealed the influence of Hinduism upon the Thai way of meekness.

The Wessandorn Jataka text also unexpectedly expanded the understanding of Komin's religio-psychical orientation in the area of discipling. The investigation of Wessandorn and his discipling has rendered some important implications. Due to Wessandorn's worldview of power through weakness, he understood religious discipling as a progressive process. Deep relational bonding set a stage for discipling non-believers and believers as well as wrongdoers. Wessandorn had deep relational bonding with his people, his wife, his children, and his father. Wessandorn's discipling is being and doing rather than speaking. Wessandorn's faith harmonized with his life therefore his words had power to convince and
convict others. His Buddhist good news showed in his good life. He was not only the announcer of this good news but also a reflection of it.

Wessandorn was born among ordinary people even though he was a prince. He lived among the ordinary folks, bearing their burden of needs. He incarnated his life to be the poorest of the poor, a hermit. He seemed to use liminality in the natural pattern of life as his religious discipling tool. His words and deeds influenced non-believers and believers. Wessandorn's discipling also illustrated that discipling was a cooperative effort, and discipling was unconscious and unplanned. Discipling flowed from lives which deeply abide in the meaning of truth and community.

The Wessandorn Jataka text carried with it interdependent orientation of the Thai way of meekness. The story demonstrated the assimilation among the royal family, the masses, a Brahman, and hermits. They were aware of hierarchy but also practiced egalitarianism. The text revealed the elements of hierarchy, relationship, and individualism of Thai social structure.

The text held the value of fun and pleasure of the Thai way of meekness in the story of Chuchoke. He was an awkward, unbecoming old man who possessed a young manipulative wife. His life reflected a secret desire of many old men. He died of overeating sticky rice and durians (a thorny fruit with strong smell and yellow creamy meat).

Lastly, the text also confirmed Thai achievement-task orientation. Wessandorn achieved his spiritual goal through his submission to the authority as well as the masses and through deep relational bonding with his family rather than being work oriented. The Wessandorn Jataka myth confirmed characteristics of the Thai way of meekness of our theoretical model.
The Wessandorn Jataka Rite

Background. The Wessandorn Jataka rite has been performed in Northern Thailand since the twelfth century when Theravada Buddhism entered Burma. G.H. Luce discovered an inscription in Burma stating in the year 1201 A.D.:

The great monk Non up . . . , after completing his work of merit, on Sunday the fourteenth day of the waxing of the month of Tagu (Caitra), listening to the recitation of Malan (The Burmese name for Malai). On Monday, the full moon, he listens to the Pisamantra [a word that Luce believed to be a form of the Vessanfaru Jataka]. On Tuesday, the last waxing, he listened to the Dhammacakka (Sutta).

(Brereton 1992:53)

Bonnie Pacala Brereton pointed out that Wessandorn Jataka was one of the most common written religious treatises found in manuscript collections in Lan Na Thai (Northern part) temples (1992:85). Pra Malai Jataka, recited before the Wessandorn Jataka rite recorded the Maitreya (Lord of Mercy) promise concerning the reward for those who listen to Wessandorn Jataka:

All those who wish to meet me when I become enlightened should listen to the recitation of the Maha Vessantara Jataka in one day and worship with a thousand lanterns, a thousand green lotuses . . . and they will attain the state of arhat. They will meet me face to face when I attain enlightenment.

(Makchange 1982:209)

The text of Pra Malai Jataka implied that those who met Maitreya would reach nirvana. Therefore, Wessandorn Jataka became one of the most important religious rites in Thai Buddhism.

Practice of the rite. In ancient times, people celebrated the Wessandorn Jataka rite in October at the exit of the rainy season. Rice grains formed and matured, the rain ended and the weather cooled down. The food was plenty, and various flowers were blooming. It was the time when monks left their monkhood and returned to the secular world. In the North, at present, they
combine this ritual with the Loy Krathong festival in November when they apologize to the goddess of waterways, Mother Kongka. During the reign of King Rama IV (1868-1910) of Bangkok, G. E. Gerini recorded how the monks in Bangkok used special effects in their recitations to attract a large number of listeners. Gerini wrote:

All sorts of tricks calculated to excite laughter in the multitude were resorted to. The blaring of trumpets, the ringing of bells, the whistling of birds . . . , the noises of a storm and the pealing of thunder were imitated almost to perfection and given . . . to relieve the monotony of the entertainment. Reformists, led by King Mongkut, were highly critical of those members of the Sangha who were particularly talented entertainers, viewing them as self-serving opportunists. (1892: 35)

Tambiah observed the Wessandorn Jataka rite at Praan Muan village in 1961-1962. He suggested that religious ceremony rites agreed with the agricultural cycle. The Wessandorn Jataka rite was called Bun Praawes (merit-making for Praawes). It celebrated harvesting. Tambiah observed three major rituals in the Wessandorn Jataka rite: (1) the invitation of Phraa Uppalu-ut, whom Tambiah interpreted as a symbol for rain or the water realm to fight against Mara (Satan). Then Pramalai Jataka was preached, (2) the homage to 'theweda' (Buddhist angels). Tambiah recorded, "It was said that if the Buddhist angels were invited and worshipped, they in turn would make the villagers live well and in health, that rain would fall as usual, and much rainfall might be expected" (1985:165); and (3) recitation of Wessandorn Jataka which was preceded by Buddha's renunciation and the temptation of Buddha caused by three daughters of Mara (Satan). At the conclusion of the recitation, villagers brought money trees and made offerings to the monks and the temple. Villagers took sacred water the monks made to sprinkle on their buffaloes to bring them good health.
Tod Steven Chambers acted as a participant observer of Wessandorn Jataka in a Northeast Thai village in 1992. He gave his insight interpreting Thai religious storytelling:

I had envisioned storytelling as analogous to language as broken into three basic components: sender--object--receiver . . . , and I came to recognize that the story is not an object passed from person to person but an occasion begetting an array of performed codes. The actual telling of the Maha Chat [Wessandorn Jataka] story was but one part of a montage, encompassing both story and performance, dancing and chanting, singing and eating, staging and drinking. (Chambers 1992:100)

Chambers made an important conclusion that "Thai communities blend their cultural stories with a range of physical sensations: tastes, smells, visions, textures, movements and sounds" (1992:101).

Chambers observed similar kinds of performances among monks who acted as ritual-clown storytellers of Wessandorn Jataka in Central Thailand. A group of monks stood at microphones and chanted, sang, dialogued, and competed with each other in a teasing manner. The monks also added the problems of daily issues to their storytelling. Lay people, dressed as the characters in the story, pleaded for alms for the temple. The musicians played traditional Thai music at the onset, and at the conclusion of the performance, wrapped up the mood of each chapter of Wessandorn Jataka.

People in the North hang their symbolic lanterns in front of their homes. The Ping River is lit with candles in floating banana leaf cups decorated in the form of lotus, symbolizing the floating away of the sins committed against waterways. The North supplies water for the whole Central part of Thailand. Too much rainfall causes flooding, and not enough rainfall causes drought. Perhaps, this is an important reason why people in the North coupled the Wessandorn Jataka rite with the worship of Mother Kongka, the goddess of waterways. During that time, people do not need rain
anymore if they have a good harvest. Rain will destroy the rice and bring about poverty.

**Structure of the rite.** The Wessandorn Jataka rite exhibits the features of a rite of passage: rites of separation, period of liminality, and rites of reincorporation (Turner 1969; Zahniser 1997: 91-97).

The rite of Wessandorn Jataka is not performed in the sacred sanctuary but in an all purpose pavilion decorated, by the lay people, like a jungle, where Wessandorn lived in exile as a hermit. The ritual objects used in every part of Thailand in the Wessandorn Jataka rite are banana tree trunks set up at the four corners of the preaching pavilion. These banana trunks also symbolize the wishing trees which will blossom at the four corners of the city in which the Maitriya (Messiah) will be born. The place of performance signifies that Wessandorn Jataka is probably popular Buddhism which teaches lay people practical ways of living a moral life. However, the message presented non-verbally and verbally can be analyzed and interpreted by Thai audiences according to their level of spirituality. Some may learn about *nirvana* (the extinction of all desires) while others may learn only about generosity.

Donation plays an important role in the Wessandorn Jataka rite. Individuals make offerings of various things for monastic use, collectively totaling one thousand items. This action symbolizes the fulfillment of the prophecy recorded in *Pra Malai Jataka* mentioned above. After the donation is prepared, people will process around the sacred temple. The procession symbolizes another significant truth. In the Northeast and the South, people make procession twice. The first time, people are solemn, and monks walk with lay people. This signifies the separation of Prince Wessandorn from the secular world into the sacred world. After the procession, the rites of
separation are completed, and people return to the pavilion. Then liminality starts with the telling of the Wessandorn Jataka myth.

The use of music, storytelling, and joking is anti-structural for Buddhism which generally prohibits monks from singing, listening to music and laughing. These symbolic actions are Thai not Buddhist. I believe the Thai make the Wessandorn Jataka rite Thai and Buddhist by using monk performances as anti-structure in order to maintain the stability of the structure of the Thai society where the sacred and the lay people both play important roles. When the sacred monks incarnate their lives into the lay context, the lay people better understand the meaning of the sacred realm. Both of them understand more fully the interdependence and importance of community. The monks and the lay people participate in the liminality of the Wessandorn Jataka rite. Chambers explained liminality as follows:

In Arnold van Gennep's original formulation of the concept, liminality is a stage within a rite of passage; it entails a period of threshold in which one stands within the frame of the doorway, concurrently being in two spaces. Liminality signifies a transitional period, and liminal characters, likewise must always be appreciated within the larger social process. (1992: 223)

In Victor Turner's words, liminality is "rather a matter of giving recognition to an essential and generic human bond, without which there could not be high unless the low existed, and he who is high must experience what it is like to be low" (Turner 1969:97). The story of Wessandorn is full of life conflict: the king, his nation and dharma (the truths), husband and wife; parents and children; brother and sister; the rich and the poor. I also agree with Chambers who interpreted the symbolic, ritual-clown storytelling as a liminality of a temporal "betwixt and between," reflecting transitional rites in Wessandorn's life. Wessandorn left his kingdom because he was unjustly excommunicated. He experienced liminality with his family for seven
months. Then he and his family were reincorporated to reign over his kingdom.

I believe also the monks use a concrete way of teaching spiritual truth by modeling and imitating. Lay people observe the monks "betwixt and between," incarnating Wessandorn's life, setting aside their sacred status. The monks' performances are symbols which point to spiritual truths, sacrifice, generosity, dedication and commitment to the noble truth, the nirvana of Wessandorn. This is a powerful way of teaching and learning spiritual truth for the Thai; the method makes people feel and think. As Robert S. Ellwood, Jr. said, "Religious symbols are magic doorways into worlds where religious meaning becomes the overt and apparent meaning of things rather than the hidden meaning as in our ordinary world" (1983:123).

Monks in urban areas still use their talents of storytelling effectively to reenact the Wessandorn Jataka myth. I listened to a Wessandorn Jataka recitation produced by the Ministry of Education of Thailand and was amazed at the great impact of the storytelling upon my affective domain. The monks emptied themselves temporarily of their sacred status and took on the roles of storytellers and main characters. Each one vocalized the emotion of the character he portrayed. They chanted, sang, agonized and dialogued. A monk vocalized the manners and voices of animals in the jungle as well as the sound of the whole set of musical instruments. I recognized that the Thai make Wessandorn Jataka Thai and Buddhist by the Thai way of storytelling and rituals even though the story originated in Sri Lanka.

In liminality, monks and audience are bonded to the meaning of Buddhism and the community of Buddhist faith. Monks who are about to leave the sacred status and return to the secular world are initiated as mature men. They are ready for marriage. They will be called kon sook (the ripened
man as contrary to the raw man, kon dip). After the whole story of the Wessandorn myth is told, people celebrate the Wessandorn Jataka rite with rites of reincorporation.

People celebrate rites of reincorporation by processing for the second time. In the second time, lay people walk alone while the music is playing in a festive tune. The processions point to the rite of reincorporation of Wessandorn when he returned to the secular world to rule his kingdom and the monks who enter monkhood and then leave it at the end of this rite.

**Analysis of the Wessandorn Jataka rite.** The information concerning the Wessandorn Jataka rite guided me to investigate the following functions of the rite: (1) the educational functions; (2) the sociocultural functions.

First, the Wessandorn Jataka rite reveals Thai behavior patterns, values, and worldview. The rite demonstrates the strong identity of the Thai. The sacred humble themselves to serve the secular, and the secular dare to invade the sacred boundary. As a result, the sacred and the secular are able to protect their identity and uplift the identity of each other. Since the Thai contextualize the Wessandorn Jataka rite to be Thai and Buddhist, it seems to me that the liminality of the rite confirms the value system of Thai culture. The monks and lay people learn about the values of interdependence, flexibility, relationship, fun and pleasure, and most of all self-identity. The lay people learn they should respect the monks and vice versa.

The forms and functions of the rite indicate the Thai worldview of power through weakness. The religious leaders must be servant leaders. Religious leaders should be all things to all people in order to pass on some spiritual lessons. This amounts to discipling according to the Thai way of meekness.
Second, the Wessandorn Jataka rite affirms the religio-psychical orientation of Komin (1991) which proposes that the Thai practice and learn religion through ceremonies and rituals. Moreover, religion of the Thai functions to meet felt needs and provides answers in time of crisis. The analysis demonstrates an important lesson that the Thai learn religion differently from Westernized Christians in Thailand. From my perspective, the Wessandorn Jataka rite is a lay training program of Thai Buddhists moving them closer to the truth of Buddhism, integrating discipling of non-believers and believers in the rite. The lay training program includes both non-verbal and verbal aspects of the rite. Analysis adds more unexpected information about rites of passage.

Non-verbal aspects of the rite have a great impact upon the affective domain of the Thai. Festivals, ceremonies, and rituals are important for the Thai in learning religion. Rites of passage play an important role in discipling the Thai. Liminality in rites of passage indirectly, implicitly, and smoothly bonds Thai Buddhists to the religious and cultural meaning of the Thai worldview and Thai community. Mathias Zahniser (1997:94-97) suggests that rites of passage create "bonding to meaning" of spiritual truth, personal identity, and community to initiates through experiences in liminality. He believes rites of passage are a powerful means of discipling.

In ancient times, the liminality of the Wessandorn Jataka rite educated people about religious ideals: nirvana and religious ideal characters, sacrificial life, non-attachment, and generosity. Liminality taught the monks about the role of servant leaders, while the lay people learned to look forward to the coming of Maitriya (Lord of mercy). Today, lay people learn more about practical dharmas from the Wessandorn Jataka rite. The research interview demonstrates that few Thais have any knowledge of Maitriya.
The Wessandorn Jataka rite demonstrates the powerful contextualization of religion by the Thai. They keep the meaning of the religion but make the religion Thai and Buddhist. The people learn about the Thai culture as well as the meaning of beliefs. They seem to be sensitive to sociocultural change as well as to contextualizing Buddhism.

The Wessandorn Jataka rite functioned holistically. It served the economic needs of Buddhist monasteries and the political needs of the monarchy in ancient times. At present, the rite is a powerful means of raising funds for Buddhist temples. The Wessandorn Jataka rite lost its political function because of democracy and modernity. The Wessandorn Jataka rite provided social relationship to the Thai nationwide. In 1932, the political power of Thai monarchy was overthrown by a military army, and modernity flooded in. Since then, the Wessandorn Jataka rite declined in the function of bonding the Thai together. At present, the rite bonds people to religious communities and local communities in rural areas.

The way the Thai have used the Wessandorn Jataka rite reveals the Thai worldview and value system. The Thai perceive religion as having the integrative functions of serving the ideological and sociological felt needs of their people. Therefore, Wessandorn Jataka originated in Sri Lanka, but the Thai made it Buddhist and Thai, so their people could be bonded to the meaning of the beliefs in the Thai cultural text. Moreover, the Thai also contextualized the Wessandorn Jataka rite to serve the sociocultural needs of the people. As a result, the rite spread fast and has endured for seven hundred years.

Storytelling plays an important role in Thai religious pedagogy. The style of storytelling is contextualized to fit Thai culture and sociocultural change. I observed that not only the content of the story but the being of the
story-tellers reveals the content of the story from a Thai perspective. The storytellers themselves are symbols pointing to the meaning of the stories. They are concrete examples of the meaning of the story told. The style of storytelling appeals to the affective domain and is performed with appropriate audio-visual technology. Religious stories are to be told in the structure of the rite of passage of life.

Summary of the Wessandorn Jataka text and rite. Investigation from both the text and the rite exhibited the major evidence for the Thai way of meekness. They were: the worldview of power through weakness, the nine value clusters, gentle behavior as well as aggressive behavior expressed when self-identity was violated, Buddha's life model, primal, Hinduism, and Thai relational culture as sources that influenced the Thai way of meekness, and hierarchy, relationships and individualism as the major features of Thai social structure. Analysis unexpectedly found some Thai understanding of discipling and Thai discipling tools in addition to Komin's analysis of Thai religio-psychical orientation. Analysis of the text and the rite confirmed the adequacy of our theoretical model in the ancient and present time.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have tested our theoretical model against the myth and ritual structure of Wessandorn Jataka. Analysis confirmed Komin's analysis of the Thai worldview, values, behavior patterns, sources of influence and social structure as a model of the Thai way of meekness. Analysis unexpectedly adds more information in the area of discipling to Komin's religio-psychical orientation. The classic myth exhibited a model of the Thai way of meekness as well as some patterns of influence, nurture, and disciplining that we call discipling. In chapter 6, Komin's theoretical
framework will also be used to evaluate the data of the research interview I collected in 1996.

However, before we go to the investigation of that data, in chapter 4, we will further test our model against a modern novel to detect any inadequacy in our theoretical model in the sociocultural sphere. Perhaps the modern novel will also add more information concerning discipling. In chapter 5, we study four cases, two historical and two contemporary, of discipling looking for vindication and violation of the Thai way of meekness. Now, we will turn to *The Thai Way of Meekness Illustrated in Modern Fiction*. 
CHAPTER 4

The Thai Way of Meekness Illustrated in Modern Fiction

In the last chapter we found the Thai way of meekness represented in one of the three most significant Thai myths. The question we try to answer in this chapter is, "Is the Thai way of meekness currently shaping the Thai worldview and ethos?" To get at this we look at a popular novel, Kukrit Pramoj's (1955) Pai Dang (The Red Bamboo), for evidences of the Thai way of meekness.

**Pai Dang (The Red Bamboo)**

*Pai Dang* is the story of a Buddhist discipling among Thais in modern times. The writer, M.L Krukrit Pramoj, graduated from Oxford University in England with degrees in economics and political philosophy. He was a prime minister of Thailand and a prominent scholar of Thai culture. Pramoj's life shone with love, commitment, and his pride in being Thai and he was faithful to the nation, the kings, and Buddhism from beginning to end.

*Pai Dang* was first published in book form in 1955 and was printed fifteen times. Pramoj explained the purpose of his book as follows, "I wrote *Pai Dang* to demonstrate the internal reaction, among some groups of people, against a new ideology or new thing being introduced" (1955:i).

**Background**

*Pai Dang* was a typical village in the central part of Thailand where green paddy-fields touched the end of the blue sky which turned crimson at dawn. Fish in the canal jumped up, while herons swooped down; ducks quacked and children laughed, picking red, yellow or blue water lilies. Two hundred simple people lived their simple lives in this simple village until
Kwan introduced Communism, painting Pai Dang's paddy fields, blue sky, fish, herons, ducks, children and water-lilies red. Kwan expanded the world of the Pai Dang village to Bangkok, Peking, and Moscow. The villagers tried hard to understand Kwan's ideas, but paddy-fields were always green, the sky always blue and water-lilies always red, yellow or blue for the Pai-Dang villagers. How the people introduced change consciously and unconsciously to the Communists was amusing yet stirring. It caused the Thai to remember where they came from, who they were and what they should do to disciple non-believers and believers.

**Personalities**

The main characters are the Abbot Krang, Kwan, a Thai Communist leader, and Jerm, the chief of the village.

Abbot Krang was 38 years old; he had been a monk for eighteen years and wanted to stay in the monkhood always. His decision showed the impact of the affective domain upon his life, "His mother died while he was in the monkhood, setting her eyes on his yellow robe. Whenever the Abbot wanted to leave the monkhood, he remembered those eyes" (1955:2). Before entering the monkhood Krang was a hooligan, teaming up with Kwan. Therefore, he was quite a character in the Pai Dang context. He listened calmly to criticism of Kwan which accused him of doing nothing except eating and sleeping. Yet, when Kwan refused to bring his dying son to a government health center, Krang knocked Kwan down and brought Kwan's son to the center, saving his life. Krang's love for the country, Buddhism, and the Pai Dang community was obvious.

The Abbot's worldview of Buddhism was interesting. When he suffered, he went to pour out his heart to a Buddha image in the main sanctuary, and one night the image talked with him. He respected the image,
because it pointed to the attributes of Buddha and the excellency of dharmas (Pramoj 1955:70-72). He believed in the law of karma: do good, receive good, and give alms with generosity and a humble spirit. He did not quite understand nirvana. Krang had a distaste for low Buddhism, predicting lottery numbers, worshipping idols of animals, yogis and mysterious experiences in meditation. Yet, he gave amulets and small Buddha images to comfort people who were in danger. It seemed that the Abbot believed in popular Buddhism but not high Buddhism.

The Abbot struggled to preach, because people slept during his sermons when he taught abstract dharmas. To wake them up, he told exciting stories integrated with dharmas when he preached. The Abbot believed most in living a model life, trying to accomplish his duties at all times and in all kinds of situations. He was not a religious legalist but he was rather practical and witty, outsmarting others in such a way that they did not even recognize they were being challenged.

The Abbot had many roles and statuses in the Pai Dang context. As a monk, he taught dharmas through lifestyle, ceremonies, rituals and sermons. He acted like a social worker to meet the integrative felt-needs of villagers, serving as their middle man in solving daily life problems, distributed donated food in times of starvation, was a folk veterinarian for water-buffaloes when an epidemic broke out, and even coached a boxer who represented the Pai Dang village. The Abbot performed a holistic and incarnational mission.

Kwan was a born leader; he always had followers because of his love for reading and his strong determination. He was converted to Communism through books he read. He preached his belief in a Western style, attacking the old system and rationalizing the benefits of Communism. However,
Communist terminology confused the villagers, and they remembered only the words "social justice." Kwan was frustrated as a result. Though Kwan was argumentative, stubborn, indignant and disrespectful, he was generous to the poor and loved his people dearly. Tears always softened his heart as they did the Thais'. When the Abbot pleaded with him in tears to let his comrades go and receive the donated food from the government, he agreed. When Kwan's son cried, begging him not to kill his beloved buffalo, Kwan swallowed his pride and secretly took the sick animal to the folk veterinarian, the Abbot.

Kwan struggled to hate the Abbot, his true friend, and Jerm, the chief of the village, whom he considered by the Communist Manifesto as enemies of marginal people. Thirty years of relational bonding caused him to become a split-level Communist, whose heart and head worked separately. For example, Jerm, the chief of the Pai Dang village was a respectable personality but the Communist Manifesto taught Kwan to disregard and challenge Jerm because Jerm was a government official. Kwan reflected, "but Jerm was like his uncle. He was a true friend of his father. He should love him and respect him more than anyone else... Krang was his close friend for thirty years" (Pramoj 1955:15).

Kwan was westernized in his head but remained Thai in his heart. Kwan aimed to convert the Abbot. While Kwan was propagating the Communist Manifesto, his right hand man, Thom, converted himself to Buddhism.

Jerm was the chief of the Pai Dang village to whom the villagers looked for holistic advice because of his age, wisdom, and prosperity. Jerm loved the villagers, and he loved the Abbot and Kwan. The Abbot was his consultant concerning the welfare of the villagers, and Kwan was like a son,
because Kwan's father was his close friend. Jerm reacted against Communism in the Thai way of meekness. When he was accused by Kwan as the oppressor of the working class, he did not want to argue with the strange ideas of the Communist Manifesto. He simply allowed Kwan, Kwan's followers, and the villagers to get the rice in his barn, as much as they wanted because Jerm reasoned that was what the harvest was for. His generosity shamed Kwan, Kwan's followers, and the villagers.

I will now look for the major evidences in support of our theoretical model from the incidents concerning discipling. Then I will draw conclusion about the Thai way of meekness.

**Incidents**

Incidents were gleaned from the areas of discipling non believers, believers, and wrongdoers in the literature. Our theoretical model is used to analyze the information. Inquiry probably helps us breathe in the fragrance of the way of meekness permeated in Thai fabric of life.

Discipling non-believers. The Abbot and the Pai Dang villagers demonstrated unintentionally and intentionally through their lives the ways in which they tried to disciple two non-believers, Thom and Kwan.

Thom was a hooligan Communist; he wanted to hang the Abbot and the chief of the village. He became sick, and his mother made a vow to a Buddha image that Thom would become a monk if he recovered from his sickness. He pulled through the sickness, and his mother pushed and pulled, picked and pecked at him to keep her vow until Thom gave up his protest. Thom agreed to be a monk for fifteen days, considering the period as a sleeping vacation. The Abbot was worried and anxious to learn about Thom's decision. When the cares of his heart were many, he got consolation from the Buddha image which asked:
Do you have faith? Do you have faith and believe that your religion is good and powerful with truth and that goodness is resistible to any untrue ideologies? . . . Don't let your heart be troubled. Thom was far away from religion. Now, it is your good chance, because he will come closer to religion by himself. Take the opportunity. Perhaps, he will be a better person. (Pramoj 1955: 106)

During the monk's ordination, Thom's contempt for Buddhism and Buddhists was challenged by a simple old lady. In the ceremony of ordination, novice monks can be rejected if anyone opposes them in public and declares their behavior unbecoming. This symbolic action sets apart monk ordination as holy. As Thom was about to be inducted as a monk, an old lady, Kloy, the owner of a Pai Dang pub entered the sanctuary. She announced loudly in public with her hands raised in a saluting position, "I am against this novice! Mr. Thom is in debt for the alcohol bought from me, one hundred and seventeen baht and fifty stangs. If he does not pay me, I will not allow him to be a monk" (Pramoj 1955: 109).

People were angry at Granny Kloy. Kwan immediately stood up to give a short discourse, attacking the old system where the rich oppressed the poor. The Abbot pleaded with him to stop so he could handle the situation. He asked all the villagers to help pay the debt which was beyond Thom's family's ability. Each villager gave some money; Granny Kloy counted every cent and disappeared. The ceremony continued and Thom was ordained. While the people celebrated the newly ordained monk by giving gifts, Granny Kloy reentered and everybody kept silent. Granny carried a big tray containing personal gifts for a monk. She knelt down to the monk and said in tears, "How can I let you be a monk when you are in debt? You cannot be a holy monk. I have your money, and I bring all these things, young man. You will be holy and learn the precepts and meditation" (Pramoj 1955: 113).
Granny Kloy's anti-climax demonstrated her love and concern for Thom's spiritual life in this courageous, symbolic action. She did not need his money, but she wanted him to know the sacredness of monkhood and held great expectations for his transformed life. Tears came to Thom's eyes, and Kwan looked away because he understood Kloy's Thai way of instruction. He had underestimated her. Granny Kloy did love this poor monk, Thom.

The Abbot observed the transformation in the life of this monk that night. Thom absorbed the dharmas he taught in great length and with deep concentration. The Abbot wondered whether it was the miracle of the yellow robe or of Granny Kloy.

After fifteen days Thom refused to leave the monkhood when Kwan and his comrades came to accompany him home. Kwan was outraged and quoted what Thom said to him before entering the monkhood:

Brother Kwan, believe me. I will never change my heart. I accepted your ideology for good. Just consider me on business leave for fifteen days, so that I will return without any anxiety. I will stand beside you for our victory. A personality like that of the Abbot Krang cannot win my heart. (Pramoj 1955:118)

However, Thom confirmed his decision to remain in the monkhood and gave the following reason:

At first I thought I would leave the monkhood within fifteen days . . . but after four or five days of monkhood, my heart changed. I saw that fifteen days were not enough . . . I made a decision to remain a monk . . . I stayed closely with the Abbot and I saw in him many qualities I did not have. Therefore I want to remain for a long period of time in the monkhood. Perhaps I will own qualities like his. (Pramoj 1955:119)

When Kwan accused the Abbot of converting Thom, Thom explained that the Abbot did not teach him much. He converted himself by what he felt and saw. When Thom expressed spiritual hunger, the Abbot began teaching
dharmas in depth. Thom demonstrated his discipleship when he bore all kinds of persecution from his comrades for six more months before he left his monkhood. He remained Buddhist in his heart and kept fellowship with his comrades, the villagers, and the Abbot.

Kwan’s self-derationalizing of Communism was another unique incident. By self-derationalizing of Communism, we mean the process of self-education which helps Kwan reject Communism because his daily experiences declared the lack of validity and credibility of the Communist Manifesto. Kwan had deep relational bonding with the Abbot for thirty years. Because of Communist ideology, Kwan rationalized with himself to cut this bonding, to perceive the Abbot as an enemy, and to try to convert the Abbot by verbally rationalizing in the Western way. The Abbot bonded himself to Kwan on the common ground they shared. By doing this, the Abbot created self-derationalizing in Kwan through the Abbot’s life and those of the villagers, as well as through the Thai way of solving problems.

The Abbot knew the commonalties he and Kwan shared; love for country, the poor, the Pai-Dang village and villagers. Therefore the Abbot refused to argue with Kwan concerning the propositional truth of Communism; he explained, "I prefer to argue with sins in me." Instead, he encouraged Kwan to take leadership in solving the social and economic problems of the Pai-Dang village, which Kwan gladly accepted. Together, they fought against social injustice, a religious cult, and built a school for two villages.

Moreover, the Abbot helped Kwan to think through Communism with the unconscious living witness of the villagers and himself while they worked together. First of all, the Abbot took time to listen to Kwan’s ideology in order to understand Kwan’s new pattern of thought, since for thirty years
he had thoroughly understood Kwan's affective domain. The Abbot not only listened to Kwan's Communist Manifesto but also put the principles into practice to test their reliability. He allowed the Communist Manifesto to impress him without being afraid of its influence, for he believed firmly in Buddhism. His action convinced Kwan of his integrity in ideological studies.

One day, Kwan explained the origin of sin:

"I want to explain to the Abbot about the principle of sinful actions, corruption, cheating, robbery and stealing. The cause of these sinful actions comes from materialism... Nobody will steal if they have enough materials... You will have no more duty because people will need no more sermons or precepts. Who will desire to sin when they have enough materials?" Kwan said.

"I really want to believe in you," the Abbot said "But I am very confused and need to take time to think." (Pramoj 1955:153)

After that, the Abbot's small boat was stolen. Under the spell of Kwan's Communist Manifesto, the Abbot gave his boat away but the thief refused to accept. The Abbot offered the thief the job of repairing his bell tower for a good sum of money. The night the man left, he stole a precious vase from the temple, and the Abbot was convinced that the origin of sin went deeper than the principle mentioned in the Communist Manifesto. The Abbot did not challenge Kwan with this incident, but as his faith in Buddhism deepened, the Abbot listened more to Kwan's ideology, aiming to help his friend.

One day, Kwan aggressively criticized the Thai government, exalting Russia and China. Then Kwan began this dialogue:

"Abbot, are you tired of listening?"
"Kwan, I am truly tired of listening," the Abbot frankly shared.
"I am deadly sick of listening but please continue talking; I can endure it. If you talk like this to others you will be arrested; you better talk to me; it is safe..." (Pramoj 1955:164)
After that, the Abbot went to Bangkok and sent a mock letter to Kwan, inviting Kwan to leave his family and the Pai Dang village and to come to Moscow to stay. At first, the invitation thrilled Kwan. As the appointed time approached, fear gripped Kwan. He did not realize before how much he loved his family and his village. He went to consult with the Abbot who firmly insisted that Kwan go, because Moscow was the sacred place for Communists. Kwan was very unhappy as he was encountered with the truth in his heart that he loved his family and Thailand more than Moscow. Much to his relief, he received another "letter" from Moscow postponing his trip. Kwan learned to doubt himself and his ideas.

At least seven incidents took place in this same pattern. Each incident made Kwan doubt himself and Communism; this showed Kwan there were many alternatives available, and the Thai way of solving a problem was better than the Communist Manifesto's.

One last incident shamed Kwan and his ideology. Kwan wanted to build a school, but he could not convince the villagers by his eloquent speech. The Abbot donated all that the villagers gave during a festival for the school's construction. However, people from Pai Dang village and Pai Ton village could not agree where the school should be situated. They were afraid that one village would have more advantage and privilege. Kwan tried to lecture them about compromise and flexibility, but the villagers used Kwan's Communist idea of social injustice to argue with him. Every advantage ought to be shared equally and exactly. Kwan was at bay. The Abbot's advice was consulted and he suggested building the school on the canal which separated the two villages so that social justice would be done. The school came to symbolize the uncompromising spirit of the Communist Manifesto. After that, Kwan gave up Communism. In all of these incidents the Abbot
did not use theological arguments but deeds in the natural pattern of living to help Kwan derationalize Communism and appreciate the Thai way of meekness and Buddhism.

Discipling believers. Investigation will use the discipling incidents of of the Abbot by "Luang Por" (Great Father) and Kwan's discipling of his followers as the sources. Who discipled the Abbot? The answer was obviously demonstrated in the book; the Buddha image discipled the Abbot. "The Abbot Krang heard his own sacred conscience from the Buddha image, but his natural voice in this secular world comes out of his own lips. Therefore, no one ever knows or hears the dialogues" (Pramoj 1955:247). In fact, the Abbot discipled himself through the dialectics between his religious conscience and his own desire, emotion, and thought. This Buddha image reflected his ideal for a perfect discipler in the moments of loneliness, anxiety, and trouble. It reflected the Abbot's concrete way of learning religion. As for Kwan, he was an opinion leader of the villagers with excessive energy. His style of discipling seems to reflect the Thai secular way of discipling which fit mostly hooligan circles whose relational bonding was especially deep.

As the Abbot turned to the Buddha image in times of trouble, villagers could turn to Kwan and ask for help because he had both credibility and capability. The Abbot also knew that the Buddha image, whom he called "Luang Por" (Great Father), would be available whenever he turned to him. Kwan's comrades spent time with him day and night and called him "Look Pee" (Big Brother). His home was their home; these comrades often ate, drank, slept, and learned there. "Great Father" and "Big Brother" had great faith, vision, and mission with deep dedication to their ideologies.

"Great Father" confided to the Abbot:
I am glad because Kwan's personality is hard to find. What he believed, he committed his life to, willing to fight or die for that faith. We should respect this kind of personality. If you know how to persuade Kwan to be closer to Buddhism, he will be of a great use to our religion. (Pramoj 1955: 259-260)

"Big Brother," Kwan, talked to himself, "There's a long way to go . . . a long way before the dawn of the new day will come. . . . I will fight unceasingly, because the darkest moment of the night is before the coming of the dawn. Continue to fight. . . . I will not give in" (Pramoj 1955:39).

"Great Father" and Kwan were powerful, yet both were humorous and warm in their hearts. "Great Father" speaking to the Abbot about the Communist monk Thom said, "Come now! Don't act discouraged. Be a hooligan. Your Teacher preached about ten minutes and people reached nirvana. Won't fifteen days as a monk be more than enough for conversion?" (Pramoj 1955:107). As for Kwan, in order to thank the Abbot for the large amount of money he donated for the construction of a school, Kwan gave him a monk robe. However, it was not a yellow robe but a red one which identified the Abbot as a Communist monk from Kwan's perspective.

"Great Father" and Kwan had similar roles. Both were teachers. "Great Father" answered the Abbot's questions concerning daily problems and difficult dramas of lives. Kwan, "Big Brother," lectured on the Communist Manifesto the best he could to his comrades. They were givers of advice and counsel without hidden agendas. "Great Father" and "Big Brother" were trainers; they discipled their followers with different methods. Most of all, they were friends of their followers.

In the Pai Dang village, people also used the following Thai religious discipling tools: liminality, symbols, ceremonies, dialogues, narration, contextualization of terminology, and empowering. "Great Father" and "Big Brother" used liminality in the natural patterns of life as an important
method of discipling. "Big Brother" and his comrades shared their liminality together. There was the time when Big Brother's son was dying, and all his comrades surrounded him, bearing his burden and suffering. "Big Brother" could not send his son to the government health center in the district because he would lose face and defile his Communist Manifesto. His words and deeds against the government must go together and it was painful for him and his comrades. Therefore one of his friends secretly sent his wife to the Abbot, asking him to come and save the boy's life as well as Big Brother's face.

"Great Father" always read the Abbot's facial expressions, and he asked frequently, "Why do you look unhappy?" Then the Abbot would pour out his heart, fear, anger and frustration. "Great Father" would listen attentively. He answered the questions which were beyond the Abbot's wisdom. For the problems "Great Father" knew the Abbot could solve by himself, he gave no answer but told the Abbot to wait for the mystery to unfold itself. More than once, "Great Father" refused to be used as a short cut. The following dialogue made the point clear:

"What are you doing, Abbot?"
"May I have some sacred water? If you bless the sacred water in this bottle, it can heal Kwan's son. Perhaps, his father could then be converted to Buddhism."
"Wow! You are such a good Abbot." 'Great Father' laughed. "Do you want to save the boy's life or convert him?"
"The boy's life is more important, 'Great Father'." the Abbot answered.
"If it is so then hurry up. You have been monk for a long time but still act like missionaries, healing the sick and trying to convert them. Hurry up. Don't waste time with sacred water." (Pramoj 1955:96)

Liminality creates relational bonding between disciplers and disciples. It also helps the discipler to know the felt need, the heart and mind as well as the intellect and spiritual wisdom of the disciples. As a result, the discipler
can tailor his lessons and methods of teaching his students. Liminality also opens the hearts and minds of disciples to accept, obey, and discuss with their disciplers. Liminality is like sunlight that opens a blooming lotus.

The Abbot learned to differentiate between the form and meaning of religion from symbols and ceremonies. The Abbot showed disgust for a Buddha image, Pra Beow (The Distorted Face Monk). He consulted "Great Father," "Great Father please give me wisdom. What should I do with Pra Beow. Don't you feel irritated that his statue is so ugly? His name and his distorted face shame me. I truly do not want anyone to call Buddha, the distorted face one" (Pramoj 1955:71).

Even though "Great Father" tried to teach him the truth about form and meaning in religion, the Abbot did not listen. "Great Father" explained, "Appearance does not beautify Buddha; his beauty is in the dharmas (truths). His dharmas are eternal. . . People who bow down before that image do not worship the image but they worship Buddha's dharmas" (Pramoj 1955:71).

The Abbot listened but he had another plan that would naturally destroy the ugly image during the Hae Pra ceremony in which people celebrate Pra Beow by putting him in one of the boat processions. Hae Pra is a fertility ritual in which people pray for a bountiful year. This particular year, the Abbot came up with the idea that Pra Beow should be put on a beautiful buffalo cart and returned to the temple via a walking route after the boat procession reached the edge of the Pai Dang village.

On that day after Pra Beow was put on the cart, the Abbot also sat on the cart and asked the driver to strike the buffaloes hard. The animals ran fast through the field. Then the cart ran into paddy dams time and again until the cement that covered the image was broken. The story continued as follows:
The Abbot stood at the back of the cart, staring at the broken cement in a state of shock. The cement was destroyed, but Pra Beow was still there. A concealed statue of Buddha emerged, a sitting Buddha image made of gold and copper. At first glance, the Abbot knew that the image was hidden in the cement statute for more than three hundred years. It was an invaluable antique. (Pramoj 1955:75)

The Abbot knelt and bowed down to the broken pieces of cement. He mumbled, "You hid the beauty of Buddha from the hands of our enemies for more than three hundred years."

How did "Great Father" teach? "Great Father" seemed to use various methods, but the method he used most frequently was dialoguing. "Great Father" also used narration and contextualization. "Great Father" empowered the Abbot to have vision, to think for himself and to stand on his own two feet.

Dialoguing is ingrained in the Thai culture and Buddhism and it is an important discipling tool. The Thai culture is relational; without dialoguing we cannot have relationship. Monologue violates self-identity in daily living and should be used only at proper times. Buddhist dialoguing is called pootcha wisajjana (questions and answers) when two persons officially dialogue about religious matters. The Abbot invited Kwan to dialogue with him concerning Buddhism and Communism. The Abbot said, "I think Kwan, you should study your text and then come and preach together with me. If you "pootchawisajjana"(questions and answers) today, I will have an advantage because I have invested time in studying my text thoroughly (Pramoj 1955:121).

The Abbot learned religion from dialoguing. He commented:

I understand clearly. 'Great Father' you found easy ways to help me understand. You did not monologue. You investigated and asked me questions. I listened, answered
and thought. Very soon, I realized the truth. I will use your method with Kwan!"

"Oh no, Abbot" "Great Father" laughed. "Kwan called this method dialectics. He thought he found a new thing. In fact, Buddha and ancient philosophers before Buddha used it for thousands of years. However, don't tell Kwan, he will feel sorry." (Pramoj 1955:223)

"Great Father" used narration to comfort the Abbot who could not understand why Thom left the monkhood when his girlfriend dated another man. "Great Father" told a story, and the Abbot found the answer by himself. The narration went like this. Two brothers entered the monkhood. The older brother forsook worldly things and went to meditate in a jungle. His younger brother practiced religion in town. Many years went past; evil spirits tried to persuade the older monk to leave his monkhood by various strategies, but the evil spirits failed. Satan passed by and tried his strategy with the monk. To the monk, Satan said:

"The reverend, why do you spend time in meditation? Your brother who entered the monkhood became a bishop." Suddenly the old monk's face fell because of jealousy. Satan went away; he told other evil spirits, "Continue to fight, comrades, but use my strategy more often. It works." (Pramoj 1955:126)

Giving direct answers violates the identity and quenches the thinking ability of disciples. Kwan used monologue, not narration, because Communism originated from Western culture where narration played no important part. Westerners prefer lecturing, critiquing, confronting, and challenging.

"Great Father" contextualized his terminology to fit the time and context. Cold war, for instance, he called hot peace. The Thai are in a hot climate, they perceive coldness as good and warmness as bad, but Westerners, living in a cold climate, perceive warmness as good and coolness as bad. The Thai do not understand why cold war is bad.
"Great Father" explained the law of Karma using the interest system of banks. To the Abbot he said:

Those who sin will certainly receive the results, sooner or later. The longer they sin, the more dangerous the result. The doer is careless, enjoys sinning. Before the doer comes to his or her senses, the result is cumulative interest. Do you understand, Abbot? (Pramoj 1955:222)

Twenty years later "Great Father" adjusted his vocabulary to fit the more modern time. The dialogue between the Abbot and "Great Father" is recorded as follows:

"I don't mind, I anticipated that the Abbot would 'saow' (friendly ridicule) since we had been with each other so long. So probably we can 'saow'(friendly ridicule) each other once in a while."

"Wow!" The Abbot erupted in excitement 'Great Father' is a modern man. 'Saow'(friendly ridicule) is a modern language of youngsters now."

"Don't worry. A personality like mine should be modern always, shouldn't I? Let those who want to be ancient be, but you and I cannot be ancient. We still have a lot of work to accomplish." (Pramoj 1955:258)

"Big Brother," Kwan, translated Communist words literally into Thai. The Pai Dang villagers could not understand para-dorn-rapearp (fraternity), rang-ngarn-suan-kern (redundant labor), nai-toon (capitalists), karma-cheep (laborers), pati-ki-ri-ya (activists). They had none of these words in their worldview to help them understand. Therefore they interpreted these words through their old frame of mind. They related justice with the judgment of the governmental court. Everything must be exact, no flexibility, no compromising. As a result of the villagers' interpretation of Communist social justice, the school was built in the middle of the canal!

"Great Father" empowered the Abbot with vision, mission, and the ability to think. "Great Father" helped the Abbot see the possibility of Thom's
and Kwan's conversion. He also encouraged the Abbot to realize the unceasing great responsibility he carried for the village. "Great Father" helped the Abbot recognize the sociocultural change in his village and the need to adapt his religious strategies to fit the change in the local context. The dialogue at the end of the book paints the picture well:

"So... now you can see the world from a different perspective. Recognizing your enemies you'll no longer be bored as before."
"... I have other enemies."
"Who?"
"Those sinful millionaires who sow their money and cause moral people to be greedy, cheating and corrupted."
"The same people Kwan used to fight with?"
"Yes, Great Father..." (Pramoj 1955:269)

Kwan used only monologue as a method of discipling. He rejected narration, contextualization, and empowering disciples because he thought these methods belonged to addictive, sinful Buddhism. As a result, he failed in spreading the Communist Manifesto.

What did Kwan teach? Kwan taught the Communist theory, the Communist Manifesto designed in Moscow. "Great Father" let the Abbot design the curriculum as the Abbot's felt needs, problematic doctrines, and dharmas came up. "Great Father" taught the principles of Buddhist nirvana, the law of karma, and he let the Abbot apply the principles to the Pai Dang context. "Great Father" taught the Abbot to use the middle way of Buddha which helped the Abbot accept the commonalty of Kwan's Communist ideas without agreeing with them all. The Great Father's wisdom is evident in the following dialogue:

"I am only a country monk. I am not a scholar." The Abbot excused himself. "As for ideology, I think it is like a lit lamp which guides us from inward darkness or ignorance. All are in darkness and all need light to guide their paths. Therefore each one lights a lamp."
"Listen to me, a country monk," "Great Father" spoke in a merciful voice. "What you said is close to reality. Suppose fifty people sit in this sanctuary at night. It is dark. One person lights a candle. People can recognize faces of their friends. Then each person lights a candle. Now, all can see the detail in the sanctuary. When fifty candles are lit, we see everything clearly. Nothing is in darkness. Each candle is the light of fifty candles which help people see dharmas or reality of life. If we are satisfied, your world will not be in trouble. However, people are not like that. Each believes what each one sees comes only from his or her own candle. Therefore, each tries to protect his or her candle from being blown out. Each walks far apart from each other, and the sanctuary becomes dark again. . . ." (Pramoj 1955:189)

Kwan taught principles and applied them within the Pai Dang context for his followers. Many times his comrades politely argued the irrelevance and incomprehensiveness of his application. His explanation of the cause of starvation as being from the oppression of the hierarchical system was challenged by a comrade who said, "But, Big Brother, I thought starvation at Pai Dang came from the sky and rain" (Pramoj 1955:43).

The world was Kwan's classroom. He took his followers with him. They watched how he argued with the Abbot and the chief of the village. Kwan used every incident of life to teach them about the Communist Manifesto. It was learning by doing. Kwan's comrades imitated Kwan's modeling. "Great Father" limited his classroom to the sanctuary. His disciple, the Abbot, learned to feel, reflect, and think about the principles of dharmas and went out to apply them in daily living. The world was also the Abbot's classroom.

**Disciplining wrongdoers.** People discipline insiders for secular wrongdoing in a family, ritual-like, casual manner, aiming to bond the disciplined back into relational boundaries. The form seems aggressive to outsiders but funny for insiders, and those disciplined have no hard feelings.
When his comrades did something wrong, Kwan punished them with a fatherly kicking. This kind of kicking signifies a real relational bonding which other people could not do. The punishment is an honorary action, symbolizing a real family-like fellowship. The Abbot, Kwan, and his comrades all used this kind of disciplining:

The Abbot, Krang, raised up his right foot and kicked at the bottom of Thom with full strength. Thom stumbled into his boat .... Thom complained.

What an unlucky day!
Why? The Abbot asked.
This morning I told, Big Brother, Kwan about Sorn; he kicked me and, now the Abbot Krang kicked me again. I was kicked all in all, too bad! (Pramoj 1955:54)

The Abbot also shared with "Great Father" how two of Kwan's comrades asked for forgiveness from him:

I sympathized with them because before they died, they sent for me to see them at a hospital. They apologized to me and asked me to forgive them. I held no grudge against them. I forgave them and taught them to accept death; I blessed them to go to the good place. (Pramoj 1955:261)

In religious circles disciplining is confessional, forgiving, and private. The monk who commits sin is convicted of his sin and confesses them by himself. No one disciplines him but himself. "Great Father" asked the Abbot to confess his sin to another monk when the Abbot distributed Buddha images and sacred objects to villagers who were about to fight against the hooligans of a godfather.

Analysis of Pai Dang

Thom's conversion demonstrates the villagers' worldview of power through weakness. His conversion was the result of "being" rather than "talking." Deeds broke the ice in Thom's heart before he would listen to theological doctrines. Nonverbal actions appealed to Thom's affective
domain. These actions were love, forgiveness, sacrifice, and faith
demonstrated to Thom without a hidden agenda. In life crises, Thom
realized the excellency of Buddhism by the way its believers responded to his
felt needs. Thom was convinced of the excellency of Buddhism rather than
Communism because Kwan paid no attention to his need during the
ordination but used the opportunity to preach his ideology. Buddhists shared
his liminality and shame, lifting up his identity and forgiving his delinquent
behavior in the past. They gave sacrificially and loved unconditionally.
Their unspoken rationalization of the goodness of Buddhist ideology helped
Thom consider conversion. Thai relational bonding sets a stage for self-
decision. It is a conversion of grace and free will. Thom converted himself
along the grain of the Thai way of meekness.

The worldview of power through weakness helped the Thai in the Pai
Dang village intuitively realize that change agents could not change anyone
but rather good change agents changed first their own attitude toward non-
believers and their faith. They accepted non-believers and their faith and
allowed them to come to their religion as they were. The Pai Dang villagers
accepted hooligan Communist Thom, and his ideology, concentrating on
their commonalty; Thom was Thai, a Pai Dang child. The initiative to change
belonged to non-believers and believers are stepping stones for them. The
Thai knew this theory of change because they valued self-identity and
relationships. Moreover, the Thai worldview of power through weakness
motivated the Pai Dang villagers and the Abbot to act with strong self-identity
and gentleness. Thom was discipled along the grain of the Thai way of
meekness.

The ways the Abbot and the villagers discipled Kwan indicated the
Thai worldview of power through weakness. Conversion is perceived by the
Thai as helping non-believers derationalize their old beliefs through believers' lives. Believers paid deep attention to the whole being of non-believers, their affective and cognitive domains, behavior, and personality as well as their cultural way of learning religion, and their felt needs. Proper manners and methods of interaction resulted from a loving and respectful attitude toward Kwan coupled with a deep understanding of his being and cultural context with a serving rather than manipulating spirit. Discipling Kwan was a loving, respectful, progressive process. Conversion is by grace and free will. The behavior patterns of the Abbot and the Pai Dang villagers pointed to the worldview of power through weakness, winning by serving.

The personality of good disciplers of believers also exhibited the Thai worldview of power through weakness. The disciplers, "Great Father" and "Kwan" were powerful, yet both were friendly, generous, serving, giving, humorous and warm in their hearts. Their usage of liminality in a natural pattern of life as an important method of discipling also pointed to the worldview of power through weakness. The Abbot and Kwan's understanding of disciplining as bonding the disciplined back into relational boundaries confirmed the Thai worldview. Most of all the Abbot and Kwan's affection illustrated well the power of the weak. The eyes of a dying mother focused on his yellow robe influenced the Abbot to remain in monkhood for good. Tears softened the heart of Kwan. These incidents illustrated the Thai worldview of power through weakness.

Incidents manifested the value of ego-orientation. Thom converted himself to Buddhism because his people cherished his self-identity. Kwan forsook the Communist Manifesto because the Abbot, Jerm, and the villagers did not violate his self-identity even when he violated their cultural norms. They always tried to bond him back into their relational boundaries. "Great
Father" lifted the Abbot's self-identity by listening to him, answering his questions, giving him vision and empowering him to think and fight in the Thai way of meekness against the wicked structure threatening the Thai. Manners of discipling believers in the Pai Dang context expressed themselves in the Thai way of meekness. Messengers knew they were servant leaders who could not change anyone, because human beings had a strong identity. Forcing change broke interpersonal relationships and disregarded people's initiatives and self-identity. People changed voluntarily when they saw, felt, experienced, and understood by themselves. Messengers understood the ego-orientation in the Thai way of meekness. They knew exactly when they should be gentle and kind. On the other hand, they also knew when to be strong, stern, and strict. The friendly way the Abbot and Kwan disciplined wrongdoers kept the wayward believers' self-identity intact and they were bonded back into the fellowship. People in the Pai Dang villager's discipling flowed with the cultural grain of the Thai way of meekness.

Grateful relationship orientation also represents itself in the incidents. Thom forsook Communism in response to the gracious actions of Granny Kloy, the Abbot and the villagers of the Pai Dang village shown during his life-crisis. Kwan and his disciples also demonstrated grateful relationships to each other. Kwan was always generous to his disciples. Therefore, in his life-crisis the disciples bore his burden. One of his disciples took a risk in saving the life of Kwan's only son by secretly asking for help from the Abbot. As a result, the boy's life was saved and Kwan was grateful to the Abbot. Grateful relationships affected the disciplined. The wayward believers disciplined in the Thai way of meekness were grateful to their gracious disciplers and they changed their behavior to harmonize with the disciplers' teaching. Moreover, the Abbot and Kwan's lives demonstrated grateful relationship
orientation. The Abbot was grateful to his mother and Kwan found it hard to rebel against gracious Jerm who loved him and had been the closest friend of his father. Grateful relationships influenced Thai social interaction to move along the way of meekness.

Incidents also revealed smooth relationship orientation of the Thai way of meekness. The tools that the people in the Pai Dang village used to disciple Thom and Kwan confirmed this value. Moreover, the discipling tools for believers and wayward believers affirmed this smooth relationship orientation. The people did not confront or argue but they showed the goodness of Buddhism through word and deed. They used a lot of nonverbal actions and indirect ways of communication. In order to introduce ideological change in others, the people of the Pai Dang village used deep relational bonding, caring, listening, dialogue and narration.

The villagers carried smooth relationship orientation in their respectful attitude as well as the spirit of assimilation toward others. The Thai in the Pai Dang village believed that people of different faiths were not enemies. They were interested in commonalities rather than differences. People of different faiths could cooperate in commonalities so they could learn about other faiths. Thais believed true faith manifested the power of goodness that would intrigue others to evaluate themselves and their own faith. The Abbot listened to the Communist Manifesto and was even intrigued by its teaching, but when he put the teaching into practice, it failed him. Then he believed more fervently in Buddhism. Sharing and discussing faiths seemed to strengthen the truth and reveal the liar to the villagers. Smooth interpersonal relationship bonded the Thai together in the Thai way of meekness.
Flexibility and adjustment orientation exhibited itself in the disciplers' roles and their perception about classrooms and curriculums. The roles of disciplers in the Pai Dang context were teachers, givers, advisors, and counselors. Flexibility was used to determine methods of discipling the Thai. The world was the classroom. Situations, felt needs, and individual spiritual and intellectual levels dictated the curriculum, breaking through the affective domain to be understood and preserved in the black box of cognition thus producing proper behavior. Therefore the methods emphasize two-way communication, shaping two persons in the giving and receiving process of learning. The villagers of the Pai Dang village did not use any fixed manual of instruction. Flexibility and adjustment orientation helps shape the worldview and ethos of the Thai to flow with the cultural grain of meekness.

Analysis confirmed Komin's "religio-psychical orientation." The Thai learn religion more from ceremonies and rituals than from doctrines. The people use religion to provide answers in their life-crisis. Religion is used in Thai society to serve the present felt needs. Moreover, our analysis added new information to Komin's religio-psychical orientation in the area of religious discipling.

Thom's conversion suggests that the Thai in the Pai Dang village defined discipling as seeking, finding, and bonding. The disciples sought and found their spiritual teachers whose being convinced the seeker of the teacher's trustworthiness and capability. Then the relational bonding started. Discipling was like creating a precious pearl in an oyster. The spiritual teachers waited for the right time and as soon as the oysters opened their shells, the teachers put grains of sand in, one for each oyster. The oysters produced pearls by themselves, learning from their life context. Discipling non-believers, believers and wrongdoers was a progressive process.
The Thai in the Pai Dang village knew the power of religious ceremonies and rituals which offered indirect instruction to Thai hearts. Religion was learned through feeling, seeing, touching, and participating; it was religion of the heart and senses. Going through the monk ordination, Thom passed through a religious audio-visual aid passage where he was the point of attention. In that passage, he was literally incensed with the fragrance of self-identity and relational bonding. The booming drums, the blaring trumpets, the ringing bells, and the beating xylophone were for him. The shaven head and eyebrows, as well as the yellow robe, changed his status from a hooligan Communist to a holy monk. For once in his life he made his mother happy. The ceremonies and rituals touched his identity and bonded him to the love of these simple folks. They told Thom without words, "You are one of us." Rites of passage are important tools in the Thai way of meekness in religious discipling.

Symbols and ceremonies played important roles in Kwan's rejection of Communism. He learned about generosity and grateful relationships with others from a rite of passage, Thom's ordination into the monastic community. Kwan saw the failure of the Communist Manifesto from the school which divided the hearts and minds of people from two villages who believed in his teaching about Communist justice. He then learned the Thai values of smooth interpersonal relationships and flexibility. The Abbot also learned the true meaning of Buddha from the statue of Pra Beow (The Distorted Faced Monk).

The villagers also used life modeling as a powerful religious discipling tool. Thom sought dharmas (truths) on his own as he observed the Abbot's lifestyle. Thom was greatly influenced by Granny Kloy and the community's act of loving kindness which he did not deserve. Therefore, Thom's
conversion was a cooperative effort of the community and individuals. The purpose of discipling Thom was to bond him to the community of the Pai Dang village and to the ways and views of Buddha.

Incidents revealed that the Thai way of meekness has a great impact on Thai religious discipling. Moreover, incidents confirmed sources which influenced the Thai way of meekness as Buddha's life model, primal religion, and Hinduism as stated in our theoretical model.

Incidents confirmed Komin's "education and competence orientation. The Abbot never wanted to study seriously about nirvana. He preferred practical Buddhism to high Buddhism. Kwan studied the Communist Manifesto by himself. He did not commit himself to it even though he preached about it. Education was not the end in itself but was a means to an end for both the Abbot and Kwan.

Incidents carried within them interdependence orientation of the Thai way of meekness. The conversion of Thom and Kwan was a cooperative effort and no one claimed the conversion as his or her own work. They committed the convert to the community at large and the community of faith. Converts contributed to their own community and remained closely tied to their social and kinship networks. Most of all the teaching of "Great Father" concerning the middle way in Buddhism revealed interdependence orientation in Thai culture.

Fun and pleasure orientation made the villagers Thai. The ways the Abbot and the villagers solved problems were usually sprinkled with elements of fun and pleasure. The school situated in the middle of a canal, the ritual kicking, and the red robe Kwan gave to the Abbot exemplified fun and pleasure orientation in the Thai way of meekness.
The story of Pai Dang (The Red Bamboo) proposed that the Abbot accomplished his work through deep relational bonding, submission to the authority of Buddha's life model, and his people, yet he also worked hard creatively. Analysis of Pai Dang (The Red Bamboo) confirmed achievement-task orientation as well as hierarchy, relationship, and individualism as main elements of Thai social structure.

Summary

Therefore, in this chapter we found the Thai way of meekness represented in analysis of Pai Dam (The Red Bamboo). Investigation confirmed the adequacy of our theoretical model in the modern sociocultural sphere. The Thai carry with them the worldview of power through weakness. They exhibited the nine value clusters in their behavior patterns: ego-orientation, grateful relationship orientation, smooth interpersonal relationship orientation, flexibility and adjustment orientation, religio-psychical orientation, education-competence orientation, interdependence orientation, fun and pleasure orientation, and achievement-task orientation. The sources of the Thai way of meekness are primal religion, Buddha's life model, Hinduism, and Thai relational culture. Thai social structure is constructed as it is with the crucial elements of hierarchy, relationships, and individualism.

Moreover, analysis unexpectedly provided more information in religio-psychical orientation. Analysis indicated Thai religious discipling tools as follows: the rite of passage in rituals and ceremonies, life-models, symbols, dialogue, narration, contextualization, and empowerment. Analysis proposed that good Thai disciplers must have credibility, capability, and availability. They are people of great faith, vision, mission, and dedication. Disciplers are powerful, yet humorous and warm. The proper roles of
disciplers are teachers, givers, advisers, and counselors. Good, effective disciplers share in the liminalities of natural life with their disciples and the world is their classroom. Disciples plan and suggest the curriculum to their disciplers according to their felt needs. The Thai way of meekness definitely has great impact upon Thai religious discipling tools.

Analysis also demonstrated that deep relational bonding is more effective than lecturing propositional truths without having developed deep relationships. Discipling involves relational bonding between disciplers and disciples as well as relational bonding with ideological truth. Discipling functions as a means to an end to help disciples actualize their identity and their ability to bond themselves with ideological truth and other people, both believers and non-believers. Discipling is a holistic mission in which the disciplers and disciples care for each other as well as for the community, its economics, social relationships, and ideology.

Conclusion

In this chapter we found that the Thai way of meekness is currently shaping the Thai worldview and ethos. As a result, the Thai way of meekness also shape Thai understanding of religious discipling, and Thai discipling tools. Analysis confirmed the adequacy of our theoretical model to account for realities in the present sociocultural sphere. In chapter 6, we will use this theoretical model to evaluate the Thai way of meekness as found in the research interview data gathered. However before moving to chapter 6, we will investigate the Thai way of meekness exemplified in relation to four cases of Christian discipling: two of which are historical and two contemporary. We will find in the cases both the violation and vindication
of the Thai way of meekness in the influencing, nurturing, and disciplining process which we call discipling.
CHAPTER 5

The Case Studies: The Thai Way of Meekness Violated and Vindicated

Through the case studies of Nantachai Mejudhon's conversion, Dr. Dan Beach Bradley and the Mattoons' discipling, and the disciplining in the Muangthai Church, I attempt to illustrate both the violation and vindication of the old approaches and of new approaches in influencing, nurturing, and disciplining process which we call discipling. I will demonstrate through four case studies the following: (1) Western ways of discipling the Thai, both non-Christians, Christians, and wayward Christians, (2) confirmation of the Thai way of meekness, and (3) the Holy Spirit and the discipling of the Thai.

The Case Study of Nantachai Mejudhon's Conversion:
From Aggression to Meekness in Influencing a Non-Christian Thai

The Issue

In 1970, Nantachai Mejudhon and I decided to marry, but at about the same time both of us secured scholarships to study abroad. Nantachai pursued graduate studies in the United States. In 1971, I went to the University of Victoria in Wellington, New Zealand. Both of us intended to be Buddhist missionaries during our years abroad. However, at the end of that same year I dedicated my life to Jesus Christ. My conversion initiated an airmail letter debate in which Nantachai and I exchanged about 600 letters, trying to convince each other of our beliefs. Nantachai's conversion to Christ in 1972 raised important questions. What is the Western way of discipling non-Christian Thais? What is confirmation of the Thai way of meekness? What is the way of the Holy Spirit in discipling non-Christian Thais?
The Background of Nantachai Mejudhon

Nantachai is completely Thai in the fabric of his life. One of the glorious moments of his childhood was his encounter with the Queen of King Rama VII. He always tells his children:

My parents brought me to the King's palace when I was four years old. They wanted me to officially submit myself as the King's subject. I sat still waiting for the Queen so long that finally I ran and climbed up to sit on the King's throne. At that moment, the Queen walked down the staircase and saw me. My parents were shocked because I had committed one of the greatest crimes and I was doomed to death. The Queen Rampapipannee smiled graciously and said "What a cute boy! You are bold." She gave me gold jewelry with her name on it.

The gentle way the Queen dealt with him caused Nantachai to be totally loyal to the Thai monarchy.

His parents also taught him to love kings and country through their lives. Nantachai was proud to learn about his father's integrity. His father rejected bribes and corruption, preferring to be poor and faithful to his king and country. Tipparatana and Saneh taught their first son to have hope and bring hope to their country.

His country also gently shaped his worldview. Nantachai was born in 1945 and grew up when cultural revitalization ran high. During that time, songs that encouraged nationalism and classical plays concerning the great kings, Thai heroes, and ideal concepts of love and sacrifice saturated the country. Unconsciously Nantachai absorbed Thai values through the words and deeds of his parents and the atmosphere of his nation, Thailand.

Nantachai’s life took a sharp turn from carefree boyhood to a young manhood because of his father’s untimely death in 1956. At age eleven, Nantachai was left with questions; "Where has my father gone? Could I meet him again? Why is there suffering and death?" His mother took him to
meet many good monks to learn dharmas (truths in religion) and meditation. Each summer, when other young men enjoyed beaches and traveling, Nantachai enjoyed the quietness and serenity of a mountain, learning to meditate in an isolated monastery.

Nantachai was not a good student when he was young, but the kindness of his mother and a teacher, Maha Wichai, changed his attitude toward studying. At age thirteen, he excitedly showed the result of his final exam to his mother. He got 55 percent, the highest mark he had ever attained. The weary widow praised him. She was excited. She told Nantachai, "I know you are smart. I know you can do it. Next time, you can make it 60 percent I am sure." And Nantachai did. His score began to rise through his mother's encouragement. However, he got zero for his mathematics. Maha Wichai had just resigned from his monkhood and became Nantachai's teacher. He took Nantachai to his humble place and taught him mathematics for free. After that Nantachai's love for mathematics grew, and he became the top student in college.

Nantachai met me when he was a member of the Faculty of Engineering, Prince of Songkla University. Nantachai taught Mechanical Engineering and I taught English and Buddhist Philosophy. When he first saw me, he thought, "A lovely lady! Good for a girlfriend! How can I get to know her?" He soon pushed the thought out of his mind, however, because I was always busy with my job. Later, though, he asked me to help him with his English, and I consulted him about Buddhism. Nantachai observed that I loved to pick wild flowers to fill my tiny vase, so he left flowers on my desk every morning. As our fellowship grew, Nantachai found we shared much in common, love for the king, the nation, Buddhism, classical music, nature, flowers, and the poor. At long last Nantachai proposed and planned to marry
me when he returned from the United States in 1972. He urged me to be a missionary of Buddhism while I studied in New Zealand in 1971.

The Background of Ubolwan Hachawanich

King Rama VI gave "Hachawanich" as the surname of my family because my uncle was a governor of a province. This background gives me pride and identity. As a result, from a young age I read many biographies about Thai royalty. I listened to stories from my mother and aunts concerning the goodness of our kings. My eyes glowed with excitement; my heart swelled with gratitude as I absorbed the gracious sacrifices of our good kings.

When I went to a pre-university school, my excellent teacher of history made me proud of our nation. She told us how our country disarmed colonialism with gentleness, gracious generosity, and graceful strategies. Some Western scholars call the Thai mechanism of escape cowardly or full of double talk, but the Thai call it a Thai way of meekness. It takes great courage for a Thai leader to appear weak and intimidated for the sake of the country. The Thai mechanism of escape kept our country free for more than 800 years, and I am proud to be part of its heritage.

Buddhism is the other heritage Thailand tenderly passed on to me. Buddhism was one of my mother's lifelines, and going to temples was a joyful time for me. My father died when I was thirteen years old. His death left me with questions: "Where is he now? Is he happy or sad? How can I escape from hell? What will guarantee that I will be born in the age of the Lord of Mercy, Maitreya." In 1967, my oldest brother, age twenty-one, was killed in an accident. His death caused great pain and created more questions about life. What is the purpose of living? I took a course in Buddhist philosophy to find the answers. However, my Buddhist professor left a
challenge with me. "We cannot explain away the existence of God philosophically," he commented. I kept on asking myself, "Why not?"

During my time in the university, I stayed with a Catholic family. Their loving kindness made an everlasting loving memory for me. I did not agree with their belief, but I deeply admired their way of life. My friend invited me to attend a mass once; after that she never asked me again. During the mass, all of them knelt on the floor to worship Mary's image. I figured that since Catholic people never bow to Buddha's image, I should not bow to Mary's. Therefore I sat alone on the bench, looking eye-to-eye with the priest. My friend did not talk to me for two days. I guessed my manner made her lose face. My friend's younger brother tried to explain to me the existence of God. I did not believe him, but I admired his gentleness and kindness in communication.

Then I taught Buddhist philosophy at Prince of Songkla University. I met Nantachai there, and he seemed to stand out among other colleagues. He never found time to chat with me when we met in the hall but he looked away, holding a hydraulic jack in one of his hands. However, I heard he was very religious and kind to poor custodians. Moreover, he was the first one who dated me and I always felt secure and relaxed getting to know him. We soon realized we loved each other.

Before his departure for the States he proposed to me and suggested that we marry as soon as he returned in 1972. I gladly accepted his proposal and his challenge to be Buddha's missionary during my time abroad. In 1971 I attended the University of Victoria in Wellington, New Zealand. At that time sheep and the gospel of Jesus filled the land. In one of our final exams we were asked to paraphrase the biblical story of the Good Samaritan. Various external readings in literature were filled with 'Jesus died for your
When we went shopping we saw Salvation Army officers singing songs on a street. My friends and I always wondered what kind of soldiers they were. While we stopped to talk on the street, a Salvation Army member approached us with "Do you know Jesus..." I quickly and proudly finished his line, "... died for your sins?" He walked away. Back in the classroom, at least two students made their Christian faith known. One came from Indonesia; the other from Korea.

I heard about Jesus on July 21, 1971, from my Korean friend, Hong Sung Chul. I considered his witness assertive, aggressive, and boastful because I realized he wanted to convert me as did other evangelical Christians I came to know. However, at the end of July, I heard the sad news of the murder of the President of Prince of Songkla University, in Thailand. Then a riot broke out in my university during August 12-14, 1971. Some students attacked their teachers and were put in jail. The situation was chaotic. The worst news came unexpectedly. Nantachai was accused as a main activist. The only evidence came from a sentence in his personal letter to some friends, "It does not matter who lives or dies. Study hard and come back to serve our university." Seeing Nantachai being used as the scapegoat broke my heart. "How can it be that the righteous suffer and the wicked ones escape?" I moaned. I needed extraordinary strength and forgiveness to resume my work in the beginning of November. During that time God revealed himself to me. While I looked at nature, I heard a still, small voice say to me "God is the Creator. He is wonderful." Then my search began for this God who spoke to me.

However, aggressive witness turned me off even though I loved Christians' honesty and high ethical conduct. I became a Christian through a meek Christian who let God win my soul. He cooperated with God by saying
the right thing at the right time in the right tone with a proper manner that fit my Thai worldview. I became a Christian on October 28, 1971.

The Thai Context of Discipling Non-Believers

Since the Thai perception of discipling non-believers is different from the Western perception of evangelism, I will use the Thai semantic system to clarify the differences. The Thai never use the word "witness" in regard to religious expansion. The Thai use the word pey-pair-dharmas, spreading the teaching of Buddha. From the beginning to the present, Buddhist monks have spread Buddha's teaching through word and deed, incarnating themselves with people from all walks of life. They do not intend to convert anyone; they believe people convert themselves to live according to Buddha's dharmas. Enlightenment in high Buddhism does not come from believing in the person of Buddha or in any doctrines and dogmas; rather, it is a personal existential experience of Buddha's teaching.

Incidents: Excerpts from Correspondence

The leaves of the trees in San Luis Obispo, California, slowly transformed their dresses from green to yellow, red, and brown. An old leaf danced in the wind and gently fell on the pavement where a young engineer from Thailand was heading home. For Nantachai Mejudhon, two things mattered in all seasons; a postman and a mail box. That day he got four letters from his girlfriend, Ubolwan Hachawanich, studying in Wellington, New Zealand. He eagerly sat down at his study desk to read those precious letters. However, the exuberant joy on his face slowly changed into glaring shock as his eyes moved across those lines. He lay down and reread them. Then he walked around the bedroom rereading these pages. He locked himself in the bathroom rereading those letters many more times. Each time
the haunting message ate up more of his heart and mind. He felt he was
dying inside. The letter said:

Y.W.C.A Hostel
Wellington, New Zealand
31 October, 1971

My Dearest Brother,

It took me such a long time to write this letter. I'm afraid with all of my heart that my letter will cause you great pain. However, I can no longer hold it to myself because I have never lied to you. I have to share the truth that I experienced. I have to share it with you because you are my love and we should hold no secret between us.

All your life, you always ask three questions: (1) Where do we come from? (2) What is the purpose of life? and (3) What is life after death? These are your questions and my questions, our questions. Now I have found all the answers in Jesus Christ. . . . You may wonder how these things took place. Malee and I had met many New Zealanders who were true Christians. We had exchanged our religious points of views. I came to realize that even though Buddhism and Christianity are different religions there were many things in common but the terms were different. However, the way of reaching the truth in Christianity is different from ours. The realization and understanding of Dharma (God) takes place in the heart, not only in the head. As a result, our spirits are tamed automatically and Dharma (God) remains always in us. . . .

Their philosophy is similar to ours, but their way of teaching is more applicable psychologically. Their principles are as follows: (a) We have to truly contemplate our sins and the sinful nature. (b) Jesus died on the cross to open human spiritual eyes to see Dharma (God) through Him. Anybody who understands the symbol of the crucifixion will see Dharma (God). (c) We have to sincerely open our hearts to accept Jesus Christ as our Savior.

On Sunday night of 25 October, I attended the evening service with Mrs. Smyth. I knew later on that people at the church prayed that I could understand the Dharma (God). That night I could not sleep, heart and mind were aggressively disturbed by some spiritual waves. On Tuesday night after I returned from Mr. and Mrs. Junck's place (Mr. Junck was the preacher of the
last Sunday evening service), I felt like sincerely praying as Christians suggested. Early morning of 28 October around five o'clock in morning, I felt deep happiness such as I had never experienced before. I felt clean inside. I had the feeling of mercy and kindness toward others. I no longer feel the sinful nature in me. I simply know that I had the power to live out various dharmas... Please do not feel sorrowful or angry... Please find some time to read Peace with God by Billy Graham and Good News for Modern Man, the chapters of John and Romans. May the Dharma (God) protect you and bless you with happiness, peace, calm and a warm heart.

Lots of love,
Ubolwan

Nantachai's heart was like a falling leaf. He was desperately confused. Many questions rushed through his mind. He questioned, "Is she converted to be Christian? Why did she keep on studying Christianity when I asked her to stop? What is her hidden agenda? Is there any man behind this? Who deceived her? What will happen to our love and marriage? Who is this Jesus who steals Ubolwan from me? How did he dare to share Ubolwan's heart with me? How dare Jesus, Christians and Ubolwan put me in an unsolved dilemma? If I am against her, I probably will lose her. If I agree with her, I lose my identity. I will be a disgrace to my family and a laughing stock to my friends." All of his dreams seemed to disappear in thin air. He became a living dead person, carrying the burden of study and unsolved questions. However, Nantachai answered my letter with tenderness and gentleness, with firm Buddhist advice, yet, with persuasive suggestions.

126 G Mustang village
Foothill Blvd. SLO,
CA 93401
November 3, 1971

My Dearest Sister,

I am surely glad that you have a peaceful mind... I think I understand the feeling you experienced that night and that
morning. I know how you feel. I understand the state of your mind—how deep and how peaceful. I know and understand because I received it before when I was seventeen years old.

It was not Jesus or Christians, prayers or the image of the cross... but you, yourself caused it to happen. Your heart and feeling did it. Whoever tries to understand Jesus’ mercy to human kind and use one’s heart and mind to depend on him, taking refuge in him, meditating and concentrating as much as possible on his grace, that one will absorb more of his goodness... Those who are enlightened in Buddha’s knowledge, seeing the light of life, must be intellectual, patient exceedingly in various qualities and they must take his truth seriously...

If you walked that way and it helped you to understand life, more easily you should be proud and take courage to accept that way. It doesn’t matter whether you believe in Buddha, Jesus or other religious founders or even in nothing. The improvement of yourself is what counts... I want you to understand this one thing—you did it yourself. No one causes this experience. Jesus Christ did not do it. You suggested to me to try this experience... Even though I believe firmly in Buddhism, I do not close the door of my heart. Truth is truth and it challenges searching and reasonable dialogue... I shall try to contact Protestant churches and try it myself. It will be rather difficult for me because Buddhism is my barrier... However, I will try to accept Jesus Christ as my Savior. I think I can try and see what will take place... Meditating Jesus' grace, endurance, perseverance and sacrifice to realize his graciousness is good...

I want to share with you about my personality. I am a man of strong determination. If I want to do something, I will accomplish it no matter how much I will suffer... If I believe I should accomplish a certain thing by certain methods, none can stop me, my mother, you or anybody...

I cannot let anything be more important than our love. Love is more important than anything. Whenever I reach the truth of life, Dharma (God), I will immediately leave laymanhood...

Those who are in love must share a lot in common... Therefore we should follow changes in each of us. We share one good quality, speaking truthfully to each other. When you or I change for better or for worse, we must not hide it from each other. We should try to follow up and keep the similarity between us. Do not let misunderstanding, distant places cause gaps between us.
Gaps in marriage occur when one fails to compromise, to be flexible and to assimilate with another. . . . What is your idea about this?

Miss you most,
Nantachai

I returned to Thailand and stayed in my home in Cholburi, looking forward to my next move to Prince of Songkla University in the South of Thailand. Nantachai's letter reached me. The dialogue continued as I wrote back as follows:

Cholburi, Thailand
13 November, 1971

Dearest Brother,

I have just received your letter dated 3 November with a thankful heart. I both agree and am against some of your ideas and would love to express my opinions. . . .

You explained that the experience I had was normal. It occurred because I had faith in Jesus' goodness; therefore his goodness entered my heart. Your argument is probably true, but when I studied Buddha's dharma for a long time, having firm faith in him, I did not have such a quality in my heart. Why? I affirm that something took place in my heart. It is not gradual improvement of my heart as I usually tried to practice. . . . but I had no purity of mind. When sufferings attacked I could not help myself. However, now I have confidence that I can face all things with happiness. . . .

I plead with you not to forsake your proving. If we don't know whether God or the Holy Spirit exists we should prove. Without proving, all we can do is assume some probabilities. If we would love to know the truth we should prove it.

You also mentioned the truth of life. I asked myself why we were born. We are born with a purpose. For Buddha, the search for nirvana (the extinction of all desires) was the noble truth. The highest purpose in Christianity is knowing God. The Bible gave three meanings of God: God is love, God is spirit and God is personal. . . .
Seeking for the truth in Buddhism starts with forsaking sins, doing good, creating the peaceful mind. How can we forsake sins completely when we know that we are full of avidya (ignorance). We, therefore, cannot forsake sins and do good with purity of heart. . . . You and I know how much we long for purity of hearts. . . . Christians seek first the peaceful mind. Then they proceed to practice the precepts and dharmas with the help of Jesus. Perhaps, my saying needs proving because it seems unreasonable. However, I think the longing to act righteously does not ignite within us but the righteousness we see in others ignites it. Therefore it should be all right when Christians bond their hearts and minds to God who probably is Buddhism's nirvana (the extinction of all desires and suffering) or the Holy Spirit, which is the living dharmas (truths). All my sayings need proving. . . .

On November 17 of 1971, Hong visited me to follow up my newfound faith. He gave me Proverbs 29:13a, "Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained" (NASB). Hong encouraged me to win souls of the Thai to Christ. He suggested that I seriously try to win Nantachai to Christ. He said, "It is better for Nantachai to be saved but lose his mind than perish in hell." My heart went out for Nantachai's suffering. However, I did not want him to perish. I had none to turn to except this Hong whom I respected as a spiritual teacher. He explained to me that marriage between Christians and non-Christians will not work. He asked me to promise not to marry any non-Christians. After the visitation of Hong, my words to Nantachai reflected a new set of mind well expressed in the following excerpts:

19 November 1971

You asked me whether I have changed my religion. I apologize for my lack of clarity in this matter. I have to share with you honestly that I did change my religion to Christianity. I have firm beliefs in three things: (1) I am a sinner, (2) Jesus Christ died on the cross as my Savior. (3) My understanding about Buddhism is that all dharmas (truths) Buddha taught he wanted us to put into practice. Now, I am a Protestant Christian. I affirm that I feel no regret about my conversion. I am glad and proud that I receive the good thing so that I can serve others.
spiritually. . . . If our heart is not clean, no matter how clever we are we cannot help others well. . . .

I appreciate your mention of gaps in marriage. I am afraid of these gaps. I am truly afraid. If we marry and we have to divorce because of these gaps, I think I better be single. I will wait for you all of my life if you truly seek the truth without putting off the search. Each day predicts our future. If we have the gaps today, to-morrow we cannot marry and be happy.

May God bless you.

Love you most,
Ubolwan

My letter postponing the engagement deeply hurt Nantachai. The loss of leadership and spiritual trust from me was beyond his ability to cope. His life became very stressful. From then on, my letters were forceful and oppressive; I tried to convert Nantachai through indoctrination. I simply followed the way I was trained by other Christians. Nantachai's friend had to keep my letters away while Nantachai had his examination. Many nights he drank himself to sleep. His love for me mattered most. Any slight chance of losing me was unbearable. He responded with frustration.

USA
November 29, 1971

Don't let the differences of our religions destroy our wisdom. Use wisdom and the power of love to solve every problem. You told me that you chose Christianity and walked that way for me and our love. You used to write to me asking for my love and understanding, and I granted that honestly. I still love you and I am not angry at you, but I understand you. Later on, you asked me to study so that I would get the experience. Even though I was a devoted Buddhist, I did my searching. On my two feet I searched Christianity. . . . You should understand how hard it was. . . . What's next. . . . Please tell me directly. What is in your heart?

November 30, 1971
This morning I walked downtown and sat alone in the church. I felt peaceful and I walked toward the altar. With more sincerity than ever, I talked to Jesus Christ. "Lord Jesus, I open the door of my life and accept you as my Savior. Please make me the kind of person that you want me to be."

I was afraid that others would overhear my prayer and consider me eccentric. . . . I know that you want me to be happy at all times with a peaceful mind. Therefore, you try hard. . . . you try to be my leader in religion.

USA.
November 31, 1971

The time between January 3 and March 17 was critical. You alone can help me. . . . I need encouragement, which you may not know. I would give you an example. I do not lie to you. When I received the letter telling me to postpone the engagement and marriage until I had a peaceful mind, knowing Christ, I could not do the examination the following day.

Then, I asked my friend to collect letters from the mail box. He kept your letters, being afraid I could not sleep and talked in my sleep.

Nantachai's Thai friends were angry with me as well as his relatives. The Thai community in San Luis Obispo discussed my conversion and witness. They concluded that I used my conversion to break my relationship with Nantachai who was facing a crisis at the University or I had a new boyfriend who was a Christian. Most of Nantachai's friends suggested that he find a new girlfriend. Nantachai's mother wrote a negative letter about me for the first time, considering me a woman without gratitude to our country.

On December 20, 1971, I received the confirmation from the Holy Spirit that Nantachai would be my life partner, and I wrote to Nantachai:

Songkla, Thailand
December 20, 1971
My new year gift for you is given from God. I do hope that you will be happy and satisfied. God confirmed to me that He created you to be my life partner. . . . I therefore believe that you will find him soon. . . .

God is with us everywhere in the creation. He is in the high mountains, the beautiful sky, cool wind and blooming flowers. He loves us and gives us freedom to believe. He does not force us to believe or plead with us to believe. . . . Please do not think I force you because I have a reason. Life is uncertain. Who can tell when death comes? Who can be certain that our hopes and dreams will come true? Therefore, our priority is to hold on to the truth and the time is now. I will talk about this for the last time. I will cause no more trouble.

God's confirmation created in me a sensible spirit. Now my letters were not as pushy as those in the past. My correspondence during this period demonstrated gentle ways of sharing the goodness of God in the creation and in answering prayers. While I gently witnessed, Nantachai made good progress, as an excerpt below demonstrates:

U.S.A
December 31, 1971

Today, I went to downtown and bought three books: World Aflame, My Answer, and Billy Graham and Seven Who Were Saved. My Answer is a very good book. . . . I received knowledge, experience and Christian regulations from you, My Answer, the Bible and Youth Asks Why Bother about God. . . . I believe more in the existence of God. I should have more faith if I clearly find him. I believe because of the following reasons: (1) I receive peace when I read the Bible. It seems to me that not the lettering but God is teaching me. (2) I understand more about his love toward us sinful people for whom he died on the cross. It makes me feel that I should love him and love others as he loves us. (3) Now he is one of my refuges. When I am weak, it seems that he knows and encourages me to walk in the way of righteousness . . . I know he loves me and I have another wonderful refuge, and (4) I understand more about love.

However, the time between January to April, 1972 was a struggling time for Nantachai. He was torn between his deep love for Buddha and
Christianity. In one letter he explained how Buddhism helped him to see the goodness in Christianity.

U.S.A
January 1, 1972

Buddha's Dharma opens ways for human beings to find the truth of the world and the truth of life. His teaching helps me appreciate Christianity and study the truth in the Bible.

January 5, 1972

Reading Buddhism with faith caused no happiness. Reading the Bible with reasons caused no joy. I have to use the right tool with the right thing.

January 15, 1972

I was moved when I read books about Christianity, Billy Graham's books or the Bible. After I finished reading my heart remains the same.

January 18, 1972

My process of learning in the past and at present is different from yours; this is why I find it's hard to believe in many things. I have to study step by step. I have to study thoroughly. My mind asks many questions until I am satisfied with answers I can believe. The thing which I firmly believe can not be pulled out. Buddhism cannot be taken from me. As days go by, Buddhism gets deeper because the more I study the more I realize how precious it is to my life. Buddhism has no master. Buddhists who study Christianity do not serve two masters. Other religions have their masters. I know what Buddhism is. I am happy to accept Buddhism and Christianity one hundred percent.

January 20, 1972

I sit and reflect about the action of the monks and the teaching in the Bible. I am proud of the monks' behavior. They confess sins to each other every evening. They live their lives according to "If you have two shirts, give one to your neighbors," "Sell your properties and distribute them and follow me." (Acts 2: 44-45). There are many teaching in the Bible
which the monks lived up to. . . Therefore the monks live up to dharmas (truths in religion) in the Bible more than many professing Christians.

January 28, 1972

I am not a non-believer. I simply am not a one hundred percent believer.

February 14, 1972

I agree with you that the way of Christianity is more practical. It is not ignorant, but it is beyond reason. The Bible says that men and nature are finite. We cannot understand everything about God who is infinite. . . I sent you books about Buddhism in order for you to understand me. My wording is the reflection of my personal belief of Buddhism. If you perceive me with your worldview which is based on Christianity, our thought patterns are not in one accord. However, if we try to understand the feeling of the one we love and continue to help one another, we will feel much better.

During this time Nantachai prayed to accept Christ every time Campus Crusade for Christ's staff approached him. Nothing happened. Every night he meditated about Jesus Christ, lived by Christian ethics, and studied the Bible in a cell-group and nothing happened. The effective witnesses were unaware of their impact. At the cell-group, Nantachai experienced a powerful way of witnessing, a vulnerable kind of non-verbal witnessing. One evening while Nantachai was waiting for the leader of the cell-group, he found the leader was crawling into the room. He was out of his mind because he got drunk. Nantachai felt sorry for the man and for himself. He questioned seriously, "Is the spiritual search worthy of all my energy and effort?" The next morning he found the leader at the university library. The man walked to him and apologized for his misbehavior. His deep sorrow and sincerity challenged Nantachai to feel the other dimension of
Christianity, the repentance and confession of sin. After that he made up his mind to attend a church on Sunday.

In that small Presbyterian Church, Nantachai sat on the back pew. He wanted to observe everything. At the beginning of the service, two African students sang "Amazing Grace." Nantachai was stunned by the radiant, shining faces of his African friends. "I thought all Africans believe in primal religion . . . what a radiant, beaming spirit!" He reflected. Then people turned to hug each other saying, "I love you." Nantachai froze when a man beside him said, "I love you, Nantachai," and hugged him. Nantachai felt a clean, moving spirit in that church. "Perhaps this is the Holy Spirit Ubolwan mentioned," he thought on his way back home.

On April 24, I freely committed Nantachai to my Savior, Jesus Christ. The following is an excerpt from the record of my experience:

During the past six months, I was full of worries and anxiety concerning you. . . .when I walked in quiet places, tears found their way on my face. It seemed to me that salvation was far away from you. Tonight I received four of your letters claiming your firm belief in Buddhism. I was deeply discouraged. At last I found a verse in the Bible, "I do not want anyone else because God is enough." I asked myself about my faith in Him and my understanding of His grace. I asked myself whether I could accept this Scripture with all my heart. I found that I did not have much faith in God. I used my own ability to persuade you, but I have never committed you to Him, who is our guidance. I demanded things to serve my own will. Therefore I knelt down and prayed honestly, "I commit Nantachai into your hands. I am willing to receive all the consequences according to your will. I will not make any decision unless your will is clear." Since then I made the decision not to write to you or get your letters. I felt such peace in my heart. There is no more anxiety.

The incident occurred on April 24, 1972, and my letter reached Nantachai after his conversion. Nantachai described his conversion in the following excerpts from his correspondence.
May 2, 1972

This letter will bring you much happiness. It is the letter you have waited for such a long time. My dear sister, I met God. I committed everything in my life to Christ. I experience joy which I had never received before. It is such a different kind of joy. It occurs by itself in my heart. I only accept that I am a sinner and I cannot help myself from suffering; therefore I accept him as my only Savior. That joy overflows my heart. While writing the letter I still feel that joy. It is so different from the happiness which comes from peace in Buddhism. It is joy and hope in my heart which will lead me to do all things with confidence in him. Dear sister, I had never dreamed that I would receive these things. I had tried like this for so many nights, many months. I was stubborn and arguing using my personal reasons. . . . Now I understand how much you love me. I write this letter with tears in my eyes, remembering your love and understanding towards me, when I could not understand and argued seriously. Please forgive me.

Now He gives me life. I feel my life is purer. I feel that God is within me. . . . I used to think that we can live righteously and that happiness resulting from living righteously is the same in all religions. Buddhism could teach us as well as Christianity. However, joy comes from purity of heart when one receives Christ and commits one’s life to Him. Then we can live holy lives. I know that when I share this with others they will not understand. But I will keep on telling them and trying to explain this to everyone as you did to me. . . .

That night, I read a book written by Billy Graham, _Billy Graham Talks To Teenagers_. While reading, I felt great joy and understood Christianity better. My heart was soften and I felt great sincerity within my heart. Before I went to bed I experienced joy, and I prayed to Him. "I am a sinner and I cannot get rid of all sins with my ability. I accept you as my Savior who saved me from these sins. Please open my heart for me to feel more flooding joy." I know He has accepted me and has opened my heart.

Analysis

The findings from this case study can be divided into three categories: (1) the Western way of discipling non-Christian Thais, (2) confirmation of the Thai way of meekness, and (3) the Holy Spirit and the discipling non-
Christian Thais. By the Western way I mean the way of Westernized Christians who tried to influence Nantachai.

The Western way of discipling non-Christian Thais. The analysis investigates the following: (1) the characteristics of westernized Christians concerning worldview, self-identity, attitudes, behavior patterns, and sources of the Western characteristics, (2) the Western understanding of discipling non-Christian Thais, and (3) the tools of Westernized Christians in discipling non-Christian Thais.

The witness of Hong, a Salvation Army officer, and the ten staff members of Campus Crusade for Christ reflects the either/or worldview of westernized Christians where power reigns. Even though Hong is a Korean Christian, Korean Christianity was greatly influenced by Westerners making him more like them in his methods. Western Christianity coupled up with Korean sincerity and shamanism results in his extreme either/or worldview. Hong singled out on Nantachai's spirituality and ignored Nantachai's physical, mental, and social needs. Hong believed that it was better for Nantachai to have a mental breakdown but be saved rather than to perish in hell. Westernized Christians also carry with them strong self-identity to the point of aggression as the evidence below demonstrates.

Christian superior and negative attitudes toward non-Christians exhibited themselves in my letter of November 19, 1971 which I wrote after being discipled by Hong. I no longer thought that I could learn anything from Nantachai but that he had to learn from me. I considered myself a crusader who endeavored to save his soul. Therefore my correspondence became forceful, and threatening. I confronted Nantachai and tried to indoctrinate him with information, using our future marriage to condition him. I disregarded his pleading to leave him alone for awhile so he could study for
the examination. My behavior pattern of witness derived from the fear that Nantachai would go to hell if he did not believe in Jesus. I did what Christians taught me to do.

As a result, Nantachai stopped reading my letters and asked his friends to take away the letters for awhile. Nantachai’s friends and relatives are angry with me to this day. His roommate, who is Nantachai’s best friend, refused to attend our wedding. Friends and folks considered Christians and Christianity unkind, selfish, and fanatic. This either/or worldview of Christians drove Nantachai to the brink of breakdown.

Apart from the either/or worldview, strong, aggressive self-confidence and superior attitudes, westernized Christians’ behavior pattern was forceful and confrontive, ignoring deep relational bonding. The sources of these characteristics are as follows: (1) Western culture influences them more than Scripture, (2) their theology of mission cherishes manifest destiny, (3) belief in the theology of redemption and the rejection of the theology of creation, and (4) individual strong personalities.

The witness of Hong, a Salvation Army officer, the ten staff members of Campus Crusade for Christ, and myself illustrated that westernized Christians understood discipling non-Christian Thais as instantaneous. Discipling did not depend on interpersonal bonding but information about the gospel. Living models were not as important as indoctrination. Discipling non-Christian Thais was not a process for Westernized Christians.

The main tool was information about the gospel. Cognition played an important role. The force behind this tool was Western culture which emphasizes information and systematic theology. Discipling non-Christian Thais was the product of individuals and not a communal effort. Individualism reflects Western culture which prefers efficiency, technology,
and mass production. Westernized Christians consider the form of praying to accept Jesus more than the reality of bonding to the meaning of faith in Christ and of bonding to the community of faith.

Confirmation of the Thai way of meekness. The case study confirms the structure of characteristics of the Thai way of meekness. The evidences elucidate the worldview of the Thai as power through weakness. This worldview shaped Nantachai's life and conversion. The kindness of Nantachai's mother and Maha Wichai changed Nantachai's attitude toward studying and turned him to be a good student. The queen forgave him and even gave him gold jewelry for his anti-structure behavior, sitting on the king's throne. Affection of the Thai worldview is important to the Thai. The confession of a Christian who had become drunk helped Nantachai understand Christian honesty, repentance, and confession of sin. The power of weakness ignited its dynamic power when I stopped pushing him to make decision for Christ and committed him to God. Nantachai was free to choose his faith and he chose Christ. Nantachai's conversion flowed with Thai cultural grain of the Thai way of meekness.

Ego-orientation had a great impact upon Nantachai and myself. The atmosphere of our country during Nantachai's young age influenced Nantachai to have strong self-identity because of the pride in the freedom of our country and Thai heroes. He also absorbed this value from words and deeds of his parents. His father rejected bribery and corruption, preferring to be poor and faithful to his king and country. His sophisticated knowledge in high Buddhism gave him peace of mind, contentment, and strong self-identity. In his own words, he wrote in his letter November 3, 1971:

I want to share with you about my personality. I am a man of strong determination. If I want to do something, I will accomplish it no matter how much I will suffer. . . . If I believe I
should accomplish a certain thing by certain methods, none can stop me, my mother, you or anybody.

Extracts from correspondence revealed that Nantachai reacted aggressively when I violated his self-identity by manipulating him to be Christian.

Thais have strong self-identity. Nantachai and I did not feel inferior to Western Christians before our conversion. We had confidence in ourselves and our religion, Buddhism, before our conversion. It is interesting to observe that I lost self-confidence and self-identity, humanly speaking, after the conversion. I relied heavily on Christians' instruction and I did not question their suggestions. Nantachai demonstrated firmness of his identity under spiritual oppression. Nantachai's personality and behavior patterns revealed the ego-orientation of the Thai way of meekness. As our model suggests the Thai are first and foremost ego-oriented, having strong self-esteem and the love for freedom.

Grateful relationship orientation exhibited itself in Nantachai and me. The gentle way that the queen dealt with him caused Nantachai to be totally loyal to the Thai royal monarchy. Nantachai's parents brought him up with grateful relationships toward his country, Thailand. Grateful relationships toward Buddhism permeated Nantachai's being and he expressed it in his correspondence. His letter written after his conversion stated his gratefulness for my love and understanding. I was grateful to the Thai royal monarchy because King Rama VI bestowed on me the family's surname. I was grateful to Buddhism which comforted me in time of loss and so I dedicated myself to teach Buddhist philosophy. The loving kindness of a Catholic family was alive in my memory. However, this grateful relationship orientation influenced me to blindly follow Westernized Christian's suggestions without
critical thinking. Apart from this negative effect, grateful relationship orientation mingles in the fabric of Thai ethos elucidating the Thai way of meekness.

Our analysis revealed smooth interpersonal relationships in incidents. My correspondence to Nantachai in the beginning of my conversion, dated October 31 of 1971 to November 13 of 1971 demonstrated my non-assertive, polite, humble approach. My witness carried a caring, considerate, kind and helpful spirit. I encouraged Nantachai to seek the truth and he gave me suggestions. However, after November 17, 1971, being indoctrinated about evangelism by my Korean discipler, my letters ejected aggression and violation of smooth interpersonal relationships because it forcefully presented the cutting edge of the gospel. In all of these situations, Nantachai remained gentle and calm. He tried his best to maintain smooth interpersonal relationships between us and was calm, cautious, and loving in communicating his ideas and feeling to me. Nantachai quietly bore pain and hurt. Nantachai's friends and relatives also valued smooth interpersonal relationships. Therefore they considered me a woman without gratitude and grace. Smooth interpersonal relationship orientation influences Thai social interaction to move along the cultural grain of the Thai way of meekness.

Analysis confirmed flexibility and adjustment orientation of our theoretical model. Nantachai wrote in his letter dated November 3 of 1971, "Gaps in marriage occur when one fails to compromise, to be flexible and to assimilate with another. . . . What is your idea about this?" Nantachai was annoyed with my lack of flexibility and adjustment to his requests. When he asked me not to write about Christianity during his preparation for examination I disregarded his request being afraid that he might lose his life any minute. He then stopped reading my letters. When I learned to be
flexible, getting confirmation from the Holy Spirit on December 20, 1971, Nantachai made good progress in his spiritual search. Flexibility demonstrated itself also in various ways that had impact on Nantachai's conversion: symbols, ceremonies, a vulnerable Christian, living models of African Christians, Scripture, books and the work of the Holy Spirit. These tools confirmed the value of flexibility and adjustment orientation in Thai culture in which the one and only fixed model of discipling failed. Flexibility and adjustment abound in the Thai way of meekness.

The case study also affirmed Komin's religio-psychical orientation. Nantachai's practice of Buddhism flowed along the cultural grain. He turned to Buddhism after his father's untimely death. He did not seek nirvana (the extinct of all desires). He learned religion more from Christian worship rather than from Christian doctrines. However, our analysis unexpectedly included additional information concerning Thai religious discipling. The evidence recorded in the case study proposes that discipling is a progressive process in Thai religious discipling. The initial process is deep relational bonding between Christians and non-Christians. Nantachai and I were colleagues for four years before Nantachai proposed. The relationship paved the way for me to share my spiritual discovery with Nantachai. Nantachai's conversion was also progressive. His letter of November 3, 1971, revealed that he was an affirmed Buddhist. The letter of January 18, 1972, stated, "I am happy to accept both Buddhism and Christianity one hundred percent." The letter of January 28, 1972, said, "I am not a non-believer. I simply am not a one hundred percent believer." Then on May 1, 1972, Nantachai believed in Jesus as his God and Savior. His conversion is the result of the progressive nature of God's grace and free will.
Nantachai's conversion and mine demonstrate that discipling non-believers requires seeking, finding, and bonding. I sought the truth of Christ and initiated the religious discussion with Hong. I agreed to go and discuss with Mr. Gordon Junck. When Nantachai determined to seek Christ by himself, he found the truth in Jesus Christ.

The case study demonstrates the power of symbols in discipling. Personal letters are important affective symbols for Thais because they point beyond themselves to love and commitment between two people. When King Rama V visited Europe, he wrote to one of his daughters everyday. His letters became two big volumes of precious literature, Klai Ban (Far Away From Home) (1984). Henry Theodore Cheever (1885) researched how Madame Jeanne Marie Bouvier de la Guyon effectively used correspondences to communicate her faith. Henry J. M. Nouwen (1988) witnessed to the gospel to his nephew through letters. Carolyn Kitch proposed that letters help teenagers listen (The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1997). Letters are good tools in Thai religious discipling.

Analysis points to the important role of ceremonies and the participation of the community of faith. Nantachai was deeply touched by a worship service in which he observed the congruity between words and deeds of Christian faith. However, the investigation reveals some unique characteristics of Thai religious discipling tools of living models, formal and informal teaching. I was touched by the meekness of Gordon Junck and Nantachai was moved by the joy of two African believers. Billy Graham's books communicated the information concerning the gospel, especially the one which was presented in the form of questions and answers as well as testimonies. Informal dialogue, discussion, and sharing of religious experiences are well accepted. Starting with the common ground between
Buddhism and Christianity brings positive results. In the beginning I learned to contextualize my language to fit the Buddhist worldview. I automatically used the words *Dharma* and *Nirvana* for God and I compared the Holy Spirit with the living *dharmas* (the living truths) because I realized how hard it was for Buddhists to understand Christian terms. However, after being taught by some westernized Christians, I no longer cared for Nantachai's difficulty. I took for granted that it was his duty to understand and accept my Christian terminology. Nantachai's letters also revealed that the Thai way of meekness came from the view and way of life of Buddha as well as from the Thai relational culture. Religio-psychical orientation is a solid value of Thai culture. Now we move forward to other value clusters of the Thai way of meekness.

The case study also revealed education and competence orientation of our theoretical model. Nantachai and I furthered our studying aboard because education was a means to climb the Thai social ladder. However, due to our upbringing, we both studied hard to gain knowledge which would benefit our country.

The fact that Nantachai's friends and relatives bore the burden of Nantachai's sorrow illustrated interdependence orientation of the Thai way of meekness. Their community oriented value influenced them to help Nantachai in times of life crisis by providing him comfort, advice and companionship. For the Thai life is not like an isolated island but a bunch of bananas in which interdependence plays an important role. Nantachai and his friends cooperative effort in solving a life crisis flowed along the cultural grain of the Thai way of meekness.

Fun and pleasure orientation was part of Nantachai and myself. We often talked and laughed about the way I sat alone on a bench in a Catholic
church, looking eye-to-eye with a Catholic priest while others knelt on the floor. That priest who was fearfully respected by hundreds of his members was challenged in public by a Buddhist girl. He looked awkward but did not know what to do with me. Nantachai outsmarted his friends who wanted to get to know me by publicly paying me no attention but secretly gave me flowers. In order to successfully date me he persuaded that I should go to listen to classical music with him to learn more about music appreciation and I agreed. Fun and pleasure is an important element in Thai ethos and it mingle in my relationships with Nantachai. The process of witnessing was a painful anti-structure in our relationships.

Nantachai's conversion suggested that achievement in Thai culture demanded respect for authority and interpersonal relationship. Non-believers are authority. They have their own right to accept or reject the gospel. My friendship with Nantachai helped him realize that I discovered something extraordinary that he did not understand yet. My respect for his individualism at long last encouraged him to press on the spiritual search. This evidence confirms hierarchy, relationship, and individualism as important elements of Thai social structure.

**The Holy Spirit and the Discipling of Non-Christian Thais**

The evidence recorded in the background and incidents points out that the Holy Spirit worked through the Thai way of meekness. The Spirit used a gentle servant of God like Gordon Junck to lead me to Christ. The Holy Spirit led me to forsake the aggressive way of witness and to trust fully in him by telling me ahead of time about Nantachai's conversion. The Holy Spirit used the community of faith in worship, two African singers, the confession of a Christian who had become drunk, and Billy Graham's books to lead Nantachai to know the living Savior.
The Holy Spirit is above culture but he chooses to work through the culture as Charles Kraft (1979) asserts. The Holy Spirit worked through the Thai worldview of power through weakness. He certified the unplanned witness and made use of vulnerable but honest Christians to reveal himself to Nantachai. The Holy Spirit worked through those whose attitudes were humble and who practiced gentle behavior patterns. In short, those Christians who follow the incarnational model of Christ are powerful instruments of God for the Thai. The Holy Spirit did contextualize the theology of discipling for the Thai. He acknowledged that discipling is a progressive process for Thais. He also used Thai tools in discipling such as symbols, ceremonies, living models, formal and informal teaching.

The analysis challenges me. "What will happen if missionaries and Thai Christians follow the way of the Holy Spirit and allow the gospel to flow along the Thai cultural grain? Why do I refuse to use the way of the Scripture and the Holy Spirit? Whom do I follow?"

Summary

Westernized Christians failed in influencing Nantachai because they considered Christianization as westernization. They failed because they violated the Thai way of meekness and Thai religious discipling as well as the way of the Holy Spirit. The case study confirms the structure of the Thai way of meekness of Komin (1991): the worldview of power through weakness; the nine value clusters; and strong self-identity and gentleness in behavior patterns. It affirms that the Thai way of meekness comes from the way and view of life of Buddha as well as Thai relational culture. Analysis also affirms the important role of the affective domain among the Thai and certifies that hierarchy, relationships, and individualism are crucial features of Thai social structure.
The case study also suggests some principles of discipling as well as some new discipling tools appropriate for the Thai context. Thais perceive discipling non-believers as a process in which deep relational bonding plays an important role between Christians and non-Christians in the initial process. Thais understand discipling of non-Christian Thais as the process of seeking, finding, and bonding initiated by disciples. Thais view conversion to Christian faith as the result of the progressive demonstration of God's grace and free will. Thai discipling exhibit symbols, ceremonies, living models, informal teaching, formal teaching, and individual and communal participation as the important tools of the Thai way of meekness in religious discipling.

The case also offers some new suggestions for the practices of informal teaching. Correspondence, dialogue, and discussion should start first at the common ground between Buddhism and Christianity before moving into differences. The language in teaching must be contextualized to fit the Thai worldview. Vulnerable forms of witnessing are powerful due to the central feature of the Thai worldview: power through weakness. As for formal teaching, literature which appeals to the affective domain is suitable to the Thai. The worship in which the community of faith demonstrates words and deeds of Scripture has great impact upon the Thai. The analysis shows that the Holy Spirit approves the Thai way of meekness and the Thai religious discipling.

The experiences of witness in the case of Nantachai Mejudhon's conversion would seem to support the incarnation of Jesus as a model for discipling non-Christian Thais, demonstrate the weakness of a "manifest destiny" theology of discipling and the strength of a *missio dei* approach. The inquiry of the case study suggests the effectiveness of holistic theology and
holistic mission, where Christians combine the theology of redemption and creation to serve the deepest felt needs of the Thai.

We now go back in time to study the ministry of an American physician who served as a missionary in Thailand.

**The Case Study of Dr. Dan Beach Bradley:**

**From Aggression to Aggression in Nurturing Thai Christians**

**The Issue**

The Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, M.D., was a medical missionary in Siam between 1835 and 1873. He introduced science, technology, and modernization to Siam, but at the end of his career as a missionary there were only one or two Christian believers. This case study tries to clarify the problems in discipling Thai converts of this great and groaning giant of faith.

**Historical Background: Caught in the Cloud of Siam Revitalization**

The Siam Kingdom was in turmoil when the Bradleys arrived. The conservative King Rama III knew changes were in the making for Siam. On his deathbed he remarked to the Minister of Military Affairs:

> There will be no more war in Vietnam and Burma. We will have war only with the west. Take care, and do not lose any opportunities to them. Anything that they propose should be held up to close scrutiny before accepting it. Do not blindly trust them. (Wyatt 1994:180)

Changes seemed promising in the reign of King Rama IV. Having been a devout Buddhist monk, he was a scholar of Pali as well as English and science. He knew the problems of his people because he traveled far and wide as a monk, mixing with common people. He prepared himself, the princes, and the ministers to talk with Western diplomats and to civilize the Siam Kingdom from inside out. In all the ebb and flow of change, King Rama IV was a great innovator. He adopted and adapted Western civilization at the
proper pace. He led his country to be half civilized, as he mentioned in his letter to President Franklin Pierce, February 14, 1861, "Half civilized, where [the people] are acquainted with some Code of Laws and their manner and customs are good" (McFarland 1928). King Rama IV paved the way for his son, King Chulalongkorn. A revitalization movement came to struggling Siam in the reign of King Rama V, who is called the Father of the modern Thai.

Two missionaries were King Rama IV’s teachers, Jesse Caswell and Dan Beach Bradley. Thai historians unanimously agree that the two Americans had a paramount effect upon the mind of King Rama IV. However, he remained a devout Buddhist, reforming Buddhism and founding the Thamayuti Denomination, which remains devoted to Buddha’s teaching to this day. Dr. Bradley recorded the King’s comment about Christianity, "I hate the Bible mostly. You must not think that any of my party will ever become Christian. We will not embrace what we think a foolish religion" (Bradley 1936:283).

During his thirty-eight years of ministry, Dr. Bradley wrote repeatedly in his diary of despair, sorrow, and disappointment. He often felt useless and fruitless:

But, oh, my leanness, my leanness in the missionary work. I am almost horrified with the thought of it. When shall I become a fruitful missionary? When shall I win some poor heathen to Christ? Oh, that I might have some such joy. My greater desire ought to be, and I hope is, to do and suffer the will of God. (1936:166)

It was an honest groaning of a great saint. How can a Thai use any other word except "great" for a stranger who laid down his life to save thousands of Thai lives? Dr. Bradley is a great missionary for the Thai because he also prepared our king to advocate changes effectively in the Siam
Kingdom. From the Thai’s perspective, Bradley witnessed successfully for Jesus through his deeds and life. He paved the way for a good harvesting of souls in the latter days. Many Westerners did not perceive Bradley’s social work as discipling of non-Christians but the Thai remember his acts of mercy. Honhuay, an important Buddhist Thai, recently managed an excellent exhibition honoring Bradley’s sacrificial acts of love at Thamasart University. Bradley was still a great missionary for the Thai even though he spoke aggressively; he was kind and died loving Thais in deeds, not in words.

The Background of Dr. Dan Beach Bradley

Dan Beach Bradley was born in Marcellus, New York, July 18, 1804, to the Rev. Dan Bradley and Eunice Beach. During his teen years, he described his religious experiences as "from fear to hope, from hope to fear." In his pursuit of medical studies he came in contact with the Rev. Charles G. Finney in 1832. At the end of that same year, he applied to be a missionary with the A.B.C.F.M (American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Mission). Though Dr. Bradley did not have formal theological education, he studied theology by himself. Later, he believed in the doctrine of Christian perfection as set forth by Rev. Charles G. Finney, who asserted that Christians could no longer sin after their lives were entirely sanctified. Finney (1899) divided mankind into two classes, the perfectly holy and the perfectly wicked. He taught that it was impossible for sin and holiness to coexist in the heart. The change in theological perspective caused Bradley’s resignation from A.B.C.F.M in 1874. Later he affiliated himself with the A.M.A (American Missionary Association). He lived what he believed. A Thai noble commented on Bradley’s character by stating, "There must be something in your religion different from ours to create such a man, one who never showed anger no matter how badly he was abused by the Thai" (Lord 1969:207).
His love toward the Thai was beyond question, but he had little respect for non-Christians, other religions, and cultures. An excerpt from his diaries, February 22, 1835, affirms his attitude, "I spoke out boldly against the folly and sin of Buddhism and the uselessness and wickedness of making idols, temples and becoming priests of Buddha" (1936:135).

The Sociocultural Background: Caught between Siamese and Western Sociocultural Systems

Dr. Bradley and the Siamese were caught between drastically different Siamese and Western sociocultural systems. Both parties were confused. The Siamese had lived peacefully united through their beliefs in the nation, Buddhism, and the kings. They did not expect changes in these three institutions which had provided them security for generations, yet King Rama IV, the princes, and high officers preferred changes to some degree in the areas of technology, education, and medical science. The Siamese, high and low, opened their hearts and homes to welcome Dr. Bradley, expecting to learn new technology, medical science, English and etiquette, but Dr. Bradley gave them a special course, Christianity, which was hard for the Thai to digest. The Siamese loved Dr. Bradley dearly as their doctor and teacher, yet in the missionary role Dr. Bradley became a stranger.

Furthermore, Western force lay behind every Westerner. Western colonialism caused pain, fear, and humiliation to the nation and the king. Missionaries reacted similarly against Buddhism. The damages caused by England in politics and economics hindered the ideology presented by Western missionaries. Missionaries could not understand the pain of the Siamese. A conversation between Dr. Bradley and a chief's son from the North confirms this idea:
I had had several talks with him before on religious topics and found him very smart to comprehend the ideas I presented to him. In the course of my remarks to him today I had occasion to say to him the word of God: "That, that people who have Jehovah for their God is a happy people and that nation which persists in rejecting Him will be destroyed." In reply to this he wished me to explain how it was that England being a Christian nation, sends out many wicked men into Siam and Burma. (1936:238)

Bradley ignored the question of a local person. However, the question remains in Thai minds at present. Thais believe they have the right to ask why Christians live split-level lives. An example of Sir John Bowring, a contemporary British politician of Bradley, will put my point in focus.

In 1855, Bowring was chosen as the British envoy to force Siam to open up the country to foreign trade that benefited solely Great Britain. Bowring was as exemplary Christian and his words illustrated his mind:

Almighty One, I bend in dust before Thee;
   Even so veiled cherubs bend;
In calm and still devotion I adore Thee,
   All-wise, all-present Friend!

Thou to the earth its emerald robes hast given,
   Or curtained it in snow;
And the bright sun, and the soft moon in heaven,
   Before Thy presence bow.

Thou Power sublime! whose throne is firmly seated
   On stars and glowing suns;
O, could I praise Thee,--could I bring Thee
   An offering worthy Thee,--
In what bright notes of glory would I sing Thee,
   Blest notes of ecstasy!

Eternity! Eternity! how solemn,
   How terrible the sound!
Here, leaning on Thy promises,--a column
   Of strength,--may I be found,
O, let my heart be ever Thine, while beating,
   As when 'twill cease to beat!
Be Thou my portion, till that awful meeting
When I my God shall greet!
Sir John Bowring, 1792-1872 (Tozer 1963:3)

Siamese remembered Bowring differently. David K. Wyatt who studied Thai history recorded Bowring's deeds as follows:

Bowring came to Bangkok with impressive pomp and the threat of force behind him. . . . Within two weeks an agreement emerged that provided for the opening up of Siam to foreign trade and that met London's chief conditions. . . . British subjects were allowed to reside and own land in Siam, enjoying rights of extraterritorial under the protection of a resident representative of Her Majesty's government. Taxes on their land and activities were restricted to a low level. The government commodity and trading monopolies, long the mainstay of the Siamese financial system, were abolished except in the case of opium. . . . At the stroke of a pen, old Siam faced the thrust of a surging economic and political power with which they were unprepared to contend or compete. (1994:183)

The Bowring treaty left Siamese in chaos. People became addicted to opium, gambling, and drinking which became the main income of Siam kingdom's taxation. The incongruity between the words and deeds of a Christian like Bowring raised unsolved questions among the Siamese, "Why do Christians love their God but do not love their neighbors? How dare they preach the gospel of love when their people are greedy. Do they consider us human-beings or animals who are unable to think or feel like them?" Then Thais have expressions mue tue sark park tue sin (The lips speak commandments, holding stone mortars in their hands) and peesart park karp komepee (The devil who bites a Bible between his teeth). The Siamese realized religion functioned in such a way that believers should live in harmony between words and deeds as individuals and communities of faith especially when they wanted to convert others. Dr. Bradley was not convinced, but there are many reasons why an intelligent person like him could not understand the system.
Dr. Bradley was a product of the Enlightenment of the nineteenth century. The grand theory of evolution had affected Western ways of thinking. Modern technology and modeling after Western countries was the highest form of evolution. Manifest destiny and the theology of redemption were Bradley's motivation. Zimmerman and McFarland, missionaries to Thailand, reported in 1931, "Christianity came to Siam as a Western cultural system. . . . So the first attempts of the church were largely to Westernize and to denationalise the converts" (Davis 1994:88).

Dr. Bradley's Personality

His diary seems to present Dr. Bradley as an introvert and a thinker. It is hard to know about his emotional life, because he did not write much in that area, though he expressed deep sorrow when his first wife, Emily Bradley, died, "I sorely missed my beloved wife, and my waking thoughts and nightly dreams turned to God as my Savior (Bradley 1981:17)."

Dr. Bradley had great ability to judge, though many of his friends did not like him too well because of his judgmental spirit. He refused to join the party of Mr. Hunter, the secretary of Phra Klang, and offended him by letter:

First we have long had the impression that dinner parties conducted after the manner of the Europeans in the East are not calculated to benefit the host, the guest or the community; but that they are too often powerfully efficient in fostering intemperance both in eating and drinking and a host of consecutive evils. (1936:16)

Dr. Bradley conflicted with other missionaries because of his strong personality. His diary records this accusation of a couple toward him:

A month before Emily's death, my conscience had been sorely tried when Brother and Sister Robinson reminded me of old transgressions against them and said that they could not forgive me for conduct so aggravated, so long continued and so persistent. (Bradley 1981:71)
Bradley had his own idea about evangelism and incarnational mission. His mission combined social action with evangelism. However, he did not consider social action as witnessing but a tool that conditioned people to listen to the information of the gospel. Bradley lived apart from indigenous people. He did not allow his children to play with native children. He disregarded the questions and suggestions of local people. On January 9, 1851, he recorded:

My teacher told me yesterday that there were two insuperable obstacles to the Siamese receiving our religion. The one is, that they cannot be made to understand that there is a maker, proprietor and sustainer of the world. The second is, they cannot see the least evidence that men live, move, and have their being in a living God. He said that the fear of masters and lords was no obstacle to the propagation of the Gospel among this people, that all classes are very desirous to find the truth on religion as well as on all subjects and that when they discover the truth they will follow it. (1936:133)

Bradley ignored Siamese suggestions and the Thai religious way of discipling.

Thai Religious Discipling

The Thai had great respect for their teachers. Dr. McFarland recorded:

H.R.H. Prince Chao Fah Mongkut attended the funeral of his beloved teacher and in observance of Siamese custom, presented a roll of white silk to Mrs. Caswell. After he became king he erected a handsome stone over his teacher's remains and sent to Mrs. Caswell, who had returned with her children to the United States in February, 1849, a gift of one thousand dollars and subsequently five hundred dollars more, as token of his regard for his former teacher. (1928:21)

In the semantic domain, the Thai have the following expression explaining various aspects of discipling training: wai-krue, krop-krue. Wai-krue is a Thai ritual performed yearly to acknowledge students' gratitude to their teachers. Krop-krue is an initiation ritual participated in by actors and dancers. Thais perceived the role of disciplers as parents-teachers.
During Dr. Bradley's time, the Thai used two ways of discipling. The upper-class committed their daughters to the care of royal ladies in various palaces. The girls learned to read and write, and received instruction as well in home economics. The upper class boys studied at the Palace Thai School for the Royal Pages Bodyguard Regiment or they studied aboard. The lower class girls learned from their mothers, or their parents sent them to stay with the rich or high-class families. Poor families gave their children away for adoption. The lower class boys became novices to climb the role and status ladder in order to be educated and at long last work for the government. Thai boys and girls at that time learned through observing and modeling. The relationship between teachers and students was very close.

Another Thai way of discipling during that time came from rites of passage, religious festivals, ceremonies, rituals and pilgrimage. The children were initiated into their puberty through the rituals of cutting their top knots. Men reached maturity by entering monkhood. Each year the Thai joined the Prabath pilgrimage where they climbed a high hill to worship at a sacred place.

Buddhism, Hinduism, and traditional religion provide the Thai with religious festivals. For example, April is the Thai traditional new year; in May, the Thai commemorate the birth, enlightenment, and death of Buddha. August is the sacred time for entering the rainy season. In October Thais celebrated the exiting of the rainy season with the Wessandorn Jataka myth and the royal barge procession. In the full moon of November, Thais celebrate the ritual of reconciliation to goddess of waterways, Mother Kongka.

Now, we turn to excerpts from Dr. Bradley's diary.
Incidents: Excerpts from Dr. Bradley's Diary

As the longboat entered the Chao Praya River of the Siam Kingdom in the darkness of July 18, 1835, Dr. Dan Beach Bradley and Emily Bradley were greeted by the gigantic Pagoda of the Temple of the Dawn. Little did Dr. Bradley know he would settle down in a house near this temple for thirty-eight years and finally lie at rest in the soil of Siam. The dream of this young medical doctor came true that night, "I hope and pray that the Lord will open a way for me to go to a missionary field soon after I shall have graduated. I am anxious to be in the field of actual labor for the salvation of poor heathens" (Bradley 1936:1).

August 26, 1839

An interesting inquirer came to my house today. I had no recollection of having seen him before. He had obtained the Evangelical Catechism. He introduced himself by a letter which he wrote before he came. The following is the translation of the letter: "I who had read this book have seen your blessing coming in the book, saying, 'Let those who read and those who hear it remember of the words of the Lord Jesus.' I remember those words but I have no teacher who shall expound, giving me to know the deep things. I am daily embarrassed in mind. I desire to seek a teacher to lead me..." (1936:62)

Dr. Bradley did not seem to understand the significance of the encounter. The story ended abruptly there.

September 21, 1839

Bua, the hopeful Siamese convert now in the service of the Mission, was flogged a few days since by his master for having taught some of the principles of the Gospel which condemned the worship of angels and the useless ceremony of the dead. The master had a short time before been bereaved by the death of a son and was then in the process of performing the funeral rites. Bua took occasion probably from a good motive to inform the domestic of the house and some in the neighborhood what was the custom of Christians under such circumstances. It seems to
have been misunderstood. The master was angry when he
heard of it and vented his feeling by the use of the rod. Bua
confessed to me that he was imprudent.

I am informed that Bua has long been in the habit of teaching
the Gospel in his neighborhood and that all call him "Teacher
Bua." He is exceedingly fond of singing some of the spiritual
songs and by this means attracts much attention. He has learned
several of our tunes and sings them very well. His voice is
heavy and melodious. I have much hope that he is indeed
preaching the Gospel. He prefers to postpone being baptized
until he has paid his debt and comes to abide together in our
company. (1936:63)

December 26, 1852
Sabbath. In the evening a Siamese nobleman named Kudan, a
maternal uncle of the late Queen of Siam, paid me a visit. He
had visited me several times before. He had said that he was a
firm believer in the Lord Jesus, had abandoned idolatry and so
on. He now reaffirmed the same and talked in a very intelligent
manner, showing that he had learned much of the Gospel and
had the theory of the plan of salvation by Christ quite clear in his
mind. I could not but hope that it was in his heart too. Miss and
Mrs. Bradley who heard his conversation were greatly cheered
and comforted by what he appeared to manifest of the true spirit
of a Christian. I asked him if he prayed. He told how he offered
prayers and the spirit of his prayers. It seemed as if he has been
truly taught by the Holy Spirit. He requested more tracts. I gave
him John’s Gospel, the Acts of the Apostles, Catechism on
prayer, Romans, Corinthians and Hebrew and the Holy Angel. I
entertained the cheering hope that I may under God lead him
fully into the Kingdom, if indeed he is not already there.
(1936:158)

Dr. Bradley recorded with great joy the conversion of his family maid
who was obedient to all suggestions. The following excerpt ends in quite a
sad tone.

January 27, 1858

Muan, the young woman serving as a waiting maid in my
family has for several months indulged a lively hope in
Christ and now is quite anxious to join the Church of Christ
and seems willing to take up her cross that she thinks the
desire that she would change the style of her dress from that which the Siamese females are accustomed to wear, as that is very indecent and improper for Christian women. The change would make her appear very singular and odd among her own people and would no doubt bring down upon her, often times, derision and ridicule. She thought to herself but she decidedly proposed to have the change made and actually began today to practice accordingly, to the heartfelt pleasure of all my family and boarders. She does indeed appear to be a hearty believer in Christ and wishes to please Him in every particular. She seems to have the impression that she may die soon and she told Mrs. Bradley that she wishes to have a Christian burial and not have her body burned. (1936:205)

The description of Muan's pilgrimage with Christ ended there. We do not know what happened to her. Dr. Bradley mentioned neither Bua, Kudan, or Muan as members of his small church in 1868.

Donald C. Lord recorded that Dr. Bradley lost one convert in 1857:

Four years later, when Bradley had only one convert, he was equally depressed. He consoled himself with the thought that it was "seed time in Thailand." But even this one convert, however, was soon lost to Bradley when the social ostracism occasioned by her conversion drove her insane. (1969:145)

Bradley constantly recorded his frustration with his disciples.

Feb. 1, 1868

I was severely tempted with discouragement in view of the desolation of my little church and the apparent barrenness of my missionary life. Sampan appears to have entirely left us. Sawat says that he is still halting between two opinions, whether Buddhism or Christianity is the better religion. Boon professes to be somewhat penitent but does not evidence it in his life. Ooan has been quarreling with his wife since his return from Raheng, four or five days since he has grieved me very much. (1936:268)
July 2, 1868

Held a church meeting in the evening and had Mr. Graham and his wife, Pung and Poop together with my own family. Sawat settled the matter with regard to himself in the afternoon when I insisted upon his saying whether he meant to follow the Christian religion or the Buddhist. He said after some hesitation that he thought it would be better for him to follow the path of his forefathers. This man was one of the first Siamese who joined our church. I have no more hope of Boon or Ooan or Sampan than of him. They have almost apparently apostatized, leaving us only two Siamese members of our church, the woman Pung and the man Chooi. (1936:269)

Analysis

I will investigate the case study of Bradley in three areas: (1) the Western way of discipling Thai Christians, (2) confirmation of the Thai way of meekness, and (3) the Holy Spirit and the discipling of Thai Christians. By the Western way I mean the way Bradley nurtured Thai Christians.

The Western way of discipling Thai Christians. Analysis in this area includes the following: (1) characteristics of Westerners including worldview, self-identity, attitude, behavior pattern, and the sources of the Western way of discipling; (2) Western understanding of discipling Thai Christians, and Western tools in discipling Thai Christians.

Bradley seems to have an either/or worldview. He judged that Thai Christians should be sinless. He forbade Ooan from quarreling with his wife. Bua had to pay all his debts and isolate himself from Thai social networks in order to be Christian. Power prevails in Bradley's worldview, as well as the cognitive domain.

Bradley's missionary prayer reflected his self-confidence and the manifest destiny spirit. He determined to save the poor heathen in Siam with a negative attitude toward Buddhism and Thai culture. The words he used to refer to Buddhism and Thai culture were negative for he spoke of the
folly and sins of Buddhism, and the rottenness of the religion. Bradley found it hard to follow the suggestion of local people, and his teachers. He doubted the conversion of some Siamese who believed in Jesus according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. His doubt cost him some precious souls like Kudan, Bua, and an inquirer. Due to his worldview, self-confidence, and negative attitude toward Buddhism, Thai culture, and Thais, Bradley discipled aggressively. Bradley was strict, forcing Western religious rules and forms upon Thai Christians. At the end of his career, he lost almost all of his believers, yet he was kind, and studious as a medical doctor.

The drive behind Bradley's belief system came from Western culture, Western theology, and his strong personality more than Scripture and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Western culture of his day believed in the grand theory of evolution which put westernization at the apex and despised other cultures and religions as barbarian or savage. Thus it was unthinkable for Dr. Bradley to recognize any good thing in Buddhism and Thai culture. He wanted to wipe them away and force Christ upon the "poor heathens."

Therefore he used approaches which ignited anger and uneasiness in the Thai because they perceived these approaches as improper, aggressive, and unkind. Perhaps the approaches demonstrated the colonial spirit from the Thai perspective. Dr. Bradley’s enlightened worldview prevented him from listening to his Thai teacher’s suggestion. This worldview closed his eyes and ears to the Thai way of discipling which provided natural bridges in Christian discipleship training.

Bradley emphasized Christian sinlessness and viewed non-Christians as corrupt and sinful. His belief in Christian perfection, emphasizing sinless Christian behavior, caused problems in the Thai context where people had different definitions of sin. Dr. Bradley rejected a Thai who wanted to believe
in Jesus because he repented of the sin of killing many animals. Forcing the Western view of sin upon believers without understanding their former definition of sin obstructed the biblical understanding of the converts.

He emphasized the theology of redemption and rejected theology of creation. His theology of redemption helped him to believe in the authority of the Scripture and the uniqueness of Christ. Bradley endured all hardship and loss in his life because of his theology. The theology kept him faithful during thirty-eight years of almost fruitless discipling. His lack of formal training in theological education however, might have deprived him of broader perspectives and alternatives.

Bradley’s strong personality added more problems. Though dependable, able, and trustworthy, he was also stubborn and rigid. He could not compromise with anyone or anything which opposed his frame of mind. The way he raised his children was stern and rigid. He had problems with his friends in the mission. Even though he was one of King Rama IV’s teachers, the king did not demonstrate his gratitude to Dr. Bradley as much as to Jesse Caswell.

Bradley understood discipling as instantaneous and definite forms of Western Christianity. The purpose of Bradley’s discipling was to westernize and denationalize Thai Christians with good attention to theology but with ignorance in social relationships and the physical culture of human beings. Westernization as Christianization was his only criterion. The visible and instant measurement satisfied Bradley and made him safeguard believers from syncretism and heresy according to his understanding. Strange enough, most of Bradley’s converts succumbed to syncretism and sin.

Indoctrination and Scripture were important tools. Bradley indoctrinated his disciples through Scripture and catechism on prayers. He
put all new believers into a Western mold. Bradley punished Christian wrongdoers with Western forms of disciplining. He conducted his church like a legal court and the poor believers were disciplined with Western discipline which they did not quite understand and were deeply hurt. They cut themselves off from people they loved most, kin and friends, to bond with strangers but were rejected and punished by these strangers whom they trusted like parents.

Confirmation of the Thai way of meekness. The incidents and the background illustrated the Thai worldview as power through weakness. This worldview influenced Thai converts' understanding of discipling. These inquirers sought Bradley to be their disciplers whom they would commit their lives to obey. When Bradley paid no attention to their requests they quietly went away. Bradley's teachers also exhibited the Thai worldview: power through weakness. They had courage to suggest alternatives in doing Christian mission even though they were not Christians. Bradley paid no attention and the teachers kept quiet. They were put in jail by King Rama III because of their association with Bradley. They quietly received the consequences with courage and faithfulness. Most of all the powerful king submitted himself to be Bradley's student of science in order to prepare himself and his people against the tide of colonization. Bradley encountered people whose worldview is power through weakness which was not part of his life. Incidents confirmed our theoretical framework concerning the worldview of the Thai way of meekness.

Analysis revealed Komin's ego-orientation through the words of Siamese, high and low. The king straightforwardly rejected the Bible and the gospel when Bradley aggressively proclaimed the gospel and criticized him. The chief's son from the North talked back to Bradley when he felt Bradley
was blindly boastful of Christianity. The young man pointed out the incomprehensiveness and irrelevance of Christianity which produced great nations but greedy people who took advantages of the poor countries.

Bradley recorded his teachers' suggestion:

He said that the fear of masters and lords was no obstacle to the propagation of the Gospel among these people, that all classes are very desirous to find the truth on religion as well as on all subjects and that when they discover the truth they will follow it. (1936:133)

The incident confirmed an important role of the ego-orientation among the Thai.

The case study also exhibited grateful relationship orientation of our theoretical model. King Rama IV was grateful to Jesse Caswell, his teacher, and supported his family when Caswell passed away. It was recorded that the king and his relatives took good care of Mrs. Bradley after Bradley died (McFarland 1928). The fact that Honhuay, a well-known Thai writer, recently arranged an important exhibition in honor of Bradley elicited Thai grateful relationships. Moreover, the Siamese were grateful for Bradley's sacrifice in saving thousands of Thais through his medical skill. Therefore they did not touch Bradley when he violated Thai culture, Buddha, Buddhism, and the kings. In fact, history records that monks beat up a foreigner who went to hunt crows in the boundary of a Buddhist temple while the monks were reciting dharmas (truths). Siamese were not afraid of Westerners but they pretended to be deaf and dumb to the ignorance of their doctor, Bradley.

Thai defense mechanism against British colonialism demonstrated Komin's smooth interpersonal orientation of our theoretical model. All countries in the South-East Asia had fallen under colonialism except Siam. King Rama IV protected the Siam Kingdom from colonialism by signing the
Bowring treaty within two weeks. He maintained good relationships with British and French governments. Siamese did not act in a hostile way to their enemies but excellently treated the British convoy with great hospitality. The king personally communicated with Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and President Abraham Lincoln. He even comforted Queen Victoria in her widowhood with Buddhist philosophy of life and death (Landon 1944).

Smooth interpersonal relationships exemplified in the case study confirms that the Thai way of meekness is characteristics of the Thai.

Our analysis revealed flexibility and adjustment orientation in Siamese education in Bradley's time. The system provided education which fit roles and statuses of children from various classes and economic levels. Royal and rich children went abroad or studied at the royal court. Poor boys studied at various Buddhist temples. Ordinary girls studied at home or submitted themselves to learn in prosperous families. Girls from prosperous families were sent to stay and learn practical knowledge in the royal court. Siamese educational system elicited hierarchy, relationships, and individualism as crucial features of Thai social structure.

Buddhist religious practice in the time of Bradley confirmed Komin's religio-psychnical orientation. Thai powerful tools of discipling were symbols and ceremonies practiced in rituals, festivals, and pilgrimages. These religious symbols and ceremonies bonded the Thai to the Thai way of meekness and the religious meaning of Buddhism, as well as Thai communities. Bradley overlooked these symbols and ceremonies. The use of symbols and ceremonies in religion among the Thai also confirmed my proposal that Buddha's life model, primal religion, Hinduism are also sources of the Thai way of meekness apart from Komin's suggestion that
primal religion and Thai relational culture are the sources. Bradley failed because he despised Thai religio-psychical orientation.

Our analysis also offered new information concerning principles for discipling Thai believers as well as new information about Thai religious discipling tools. The Thais during that time discipled their children by seeking to commit their children under the care of respectable disciplers who were both monks and lay people. Bradley's diary of August 26, 1839, and December 26, 1852, demonstrates the Thai religious discipling. Two inquirers sought to be Bradley's disciples. Both of them became Christians by themselves. Bradley could not believe their words because their forms of conversion were different from Bradley's frame of reference. He lost both of them.

Incidents during Bradley's time demonstrated education orientation of the Thai way of meekness. Education was a means to an economic end. Poor young men entered monkhood to climb the status and role ladder in order to be educated and at long last worked for the government. High-class girls entered the royal court seeking the king's favor or social status in the royal networks. Children learned practical knowledge that would help them survive with good identity. Knowledge provided prestige, power, and position for Siamese and was not knowledge for knowledge sake.

Bradley's discipling of Christian believers violated interdependence orientation of Thai culture. His disciples could not maintain their faith because they were isolated from their community and kinship networks which were their cultural and natural roots. Bradley ignorantly influenced his disciples to commit a serious cultural sin: violating interdependence orientation. Bradley could not detect this value even though he saw the community significantly bonded together during religious rituals,
cere monies, festivals, and rites of passage. Bradley's discipling drastically violated the Thai way of meekness of our theoretical model. His discipling cut across the grain of Thai culture.

Under siege of colonialism and the spirit of Christian manifest destiny, Siamese did not lack fun and pleasure orientation of our model. They used expressions which made fun of those foreigners in order to entertain themselves. *Mue-tue-sak-park-tue-sin* (the lips speak commandments, holding stone mortars in their hands) brought forth smiles and giggling among Siamese because stone mortars carried humorous and rough meaning. Fun and pleasure orientation among the Thai helped them laugh away real difficulties and moved on with their lives. It made a Thai Thai in the Thai way of meekness.

The success of Bradley's medical service demonstrated achievement-task orientation of our theoretical model. He had good relationships with the royal monarchy and served their felt needs. However, Bradley did not create deep relational bonding with the masses before presenting them the good news of Jesus Christ. His family lived apart from the indigenous people and did not allow their children to mix with Siamese children. Moreover, he violated religious hierarchy by attacking unceasingly Buddhist belief system and practice. Bradley should have succeeded in his Christian mission if he had not overlook Thai achievement task orientation of the Thai way of meekness.

**The Holy Spirit and the Discipling of Thai Christians**

The Holy Spirit did convert many Thais to believe in Jesus by themselves. The Holy Spirit used Thai culture to lead these new Christians to his servant, Bradley. However, Bradley was not too excited and failed to
cooperate with the Holy Spirit because the Spirit disguised himself in the Thai cultural form of the Thai religious discipling.

Summary

Even though the time span between Bradley's mission and Nantachai's conversion is one hundred and thirty-six years, analysis confirms the unchanged patterns of Western characteristics, Western understanding of discipling, Western discipling tools and characteristics of the Thai way of meekness. The Holy Spirit is above culture but works through the Thai way of meekness in discipling Christian Thais.

The case study confirms the structure of the Thai way of meekness of Komin (1991): the worldview of power through weakness, the nine-value clusters, and strong self-identity and gentleness in behavior patterns. It affirms that the Thai way of meekness comes from the way and view of life of Buddha as well as Thai relational culture, Hinduism, and primal religion. Analysis also affirms the important role of the affective domain among the Thai. Inquiry certifies that hierarchy, relationships, and individualism are crucial features of Thai social structure.

The case study also offers some principles of discipling as well as some new discipling tools appropriate for the Thai context. Thais perceive discipling believers as a process in which deep relational bonding plays an important role between disciplers and disciples in the initial process. Thais understand discipling of Christian Thais as the process of seeking, finding, and bonding initiated by disciples. Thais view nurturing of Christian faith as the progressive process of God's grace and free will. Thai discipling tools exhibit the important role of symbols, and ceremonies. Thais also perceive acts of mercy as a powerful witness for Jesus; the Thai believe in holistic theology and holistic mission. Therefore, the synthesis of the theology of
redemption and creation works better for the Thai, whose self-identity is strong. Mission as the mission of God is more effective than the manifest destiny spirit because of aggressive colonialism in Thai history. Moreover, the incarnational mission of Jesus is an appropriate model of Christian discipling in Thai cultural context.

Now, we will also go back in time and learn about the Rev. and Mrs. Mattoon's mission.

**The Case Study of the Rev. and Mrs. Mattoon:**

**From Meekness to Meekness In Nurturing Thai Christians**

**The Issue**

The Rev. and Mrs. Mattoon were missionaries in Siam from 1847 to 1867. Neither was thought of as a great missionary. However, when they left Thailand twenty years later, they left a good number of fine Christian disciples and the mission work was expanding. More faithful disciples and their families were added to the churches, including Ter Pradipasena and her husband, Naa. After 117 years, the Pradipasena family is faithful to their Savior, Jesus. The case study of the Rev. and Mrs. Mattoon provides important information on the issue concerning the Thai way of meekness.

**Historical Background: Delighted in the Dawn of Siam Revitalization**

Dr. McFarland wrote of the Rev. and Mrs. Mattoon's arrival into the Gulf of Siam:

In February 1847, Dr. Bradley and his three motherless children left on a visit to the U.S.A., his ship passing in the Gulf of Siam the boat on which were traveling the newly appointed missionaries of the Presbyterian Board, the Rev. and Mrs. Stephen Mattoon and Samuel House, M.D., who were on their way to re-open Presbyterian work which had been closed since 1844. (McFarland 1928:20)
The Mattoons arrived four years before King Rama IV, the missionaries' friend, came to the throne. They arrived with Dr. Samuel House who became the only medical doctor left in Siam Kingdom after Dr. Bradley left on furlough. In July 1849, Asiatic cholera swept away a full thirty or forty thousand of the population of Bangkok. McFarland put the relational bonding between the Thai and missionaries into focus during the crisis:

Fortunately none of the mission families was attacked, but the time and strength of the missionary doctor was entirely consumed in caring for the stricken in palaces and in bamboo huts. Many lives were thus spared and many life-long friendships resulted. (1928:45)

The accession of King Mongkut to the throne in 1851 was the turning point in the affairs of the Presbyterian mission and Siam. On July 21, 1851, Presbyterian missionaries were allowed to lease land near the Temple of the Dawn and to build houses for themselves.

The Background of the Rev. and Mrs. Mattoon

The Rev. and Mrs. Mattoon did not record their family background. We only know that the Mattoons and Dr. House sailed from New York for China in the ship Grafton in July, 1846. This little party established permanent Presbyterian work in Thailand. Their mission grew up on the foundations of various pioneer missionaries.

The Rev. Mattoon studied the Thai language successfully and distributed tracts at various Buddhist temples. On August 31, 1849, the first Presbyterian church of Bangkok was organized. Eight days later Sinsaa Ki-eng Qua-Sean, the Chinese teacher who had been baptized in the A.B.C.F.M church which was closed, was received as an assistant and went about talking with his countrymen concerning the gospel while the Rev. Mattoon spent time preaching in the mission chapel and distributing tracts. Each afternoon
he received those who called at the station for books. In May, 1856, the Rev. Mattoon became American Consul until 1859. The Rev. Mattoon completed his revision of the New Testament in 1860. This Thai edition was used by the church for many years thereafter (Well 1958).

McFarland recorded that on August 14, 1851, H. M. King Mongkut requested the three American missions that the three missionary women, Mrs. D.B. Bradley, Mrs. S. Mattoon, and Mrs. J.T. Jones, teach the women in his palace the English language. Each missionary taught two days a week. This plan continued for about three years. Their teaching presumably caused King Mongkut to issue an announcement that the ladies of the court were free to stay or leave the court as they wished.

In 1848, Mrs. Mattoon began to teach some little girls and boys; and later she opened a school in Seguan village near the mission compound. According to McFarland's record, at one time this school had an enrollment of twenty-seven students. Later, Mrs. Mattoon transferred her students to Samrai school, which was under the leadership of Sinsaa Ki-eng Qua-Sean in 1857. In 1860, the language used in the school was changed from Chinese to Siamese because Sinsaa Ki-eng Qua-Sean had died and his successor, Krue Keo, was Siamese. On August 5, 1859, the first Siamese Christian convert was baptized, nineteen years after the arrival of the first Presbyterian missionaries.

**Personalities**

The Mattoons did not leave any personal diary that would give clues regarding their personalities. My conclusions about their characters can be drawn only from missionaries' and indigenes' comments and behavior toward them.

McFarland called the time between 1847 and 1860 the pioneer period. He believed that the history of the Presbyterian mission in Thailand during
the pioneer period centered around three persons, the Rev. Mattoon and his wife and Dr. House. McFarland put these characters in focus:

These three had borne the burden and heat of the day; they had shaped the policy of the Presbyterian mission; they had much of the time faced all of the problems and discouragements alone. Three other families had been connected with the mission at various times, but in no case did any of them remain long enough to accomplish anything permanent. To Mr. and Mrs. Mattoon and Dr. House belongs the praise for sticking to their post through everything and planting the seed in faith. The pioneers . . . they were brave and patient and persevering. (1928:51)

Kenneth E. Well recorded that on the eve of sailing after twelve years on the field, Rev. Mattoon received a gift of five hundred U.S. dollars to buy a silver tea service, to be inscribed:

Presented to the Reverend Stephen Mattoon by the American community in Bangkok, Siam, as a token of their respect and esteem for his kind and courteous manner while acting as United States Consul at Bangkok from May 1856 to January 1859. (1958:26)

The fact that the Mattoons and Dr. House were asked by Thai parents to adopt their children explicitly demonstrates the credibility of the missionaries from the Thai's perspective. These three missionaries did not force Naa and Ter to believe in Christ but each of them made the decision alone. Ter was converted seven years after the adoption. Naa's conversion also took about seven years. The Mattoons even allowed Ter to marry Naa, who was not a Christian yet, but who later became the first elder of the Presbyterian mission after his conversion. Naa and Ter were faithful to death. Ter called the Mattoons "father" and "mother" and wanted to have their pictures put in her coffin. Ter's word elicited special relational bonding which superseded race, role, and status. Surely the Mattoons did not treat Ter as their slave or housemaid.
Therefore the Mattoons seemingly dealt with their disciples more gently than Dr. Bradley, creating lasting relationships with many of their disciples because the Mattoons also believed in the theology of creation as most Presbyterian Christians did, "God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures" (Boyd 1856:41). Dr. Bradley and the Mattoons were evangelical Christians, believing in the theology of redemption, but the Mattoons seemingly had a higher view of the indigenous culture and religion because of the influence of the theology of creation. The Mattoons' theology seem to indicate that evangelical-ecumenical theology, which is the combination of the theology of creation and redemption, works in Thailand.

Incidents

The sick little girl Ter was frightened. As soon as her father, Phra Chand, gave her to Mrs. Mattoon, he walked away. Ter doubted her father's love, but the tender look on his face explained all. It was far better for her to stay with these two foreigners because she was hopelessly ill. The caring hearts and hands as well as the loving home of the Mattoons slowly restored Ter to health, and she learned to trust these strangers.

Some Thais gossiped, "Wait and see. Ter will soon be the Mattoons' slave. She will be forced to be Christian and become snobbish." However, the Mattoons confused them. Ter was free. She was neither slave nor Christian, but she grew up happy. She learned the best home economics and was able to read and write, but she was not forced to be Christian.

Mrs. Mattoon became seriously ill and Ter knew how her mother felt. She understood the pain when Mrs. Mattoon said good-bye to the Rev. Mattoon on the day of her return to the United States, for she remembered the day her own father walked away. Ter was Thai in the core of her being.
and grateful relationship stirred the depths of her soul. She would leave Siam for the United States to take the best care of her mother. Love was reciprocal for Ter. There was time to take and now it was time to give. The difficult time and hardship was a significant liminality of life which bonded Mrs. Mattoon, Ter, and the Rev. Mattoon to the meaning of love, life, death, and Christ. On the way home, Ter made the decision to follow Christ and be baptized.

Kenneth E. Well described Ter’s life as follows:

Early missionaries were frequently asked to adopt children, or at least take them into their homes and provide for them. In 1853, a dying father gave his son Naa to Dr. House, and an astrologer named Phra Chand gave his sickly daughter of nine to Mr. and Mrs. Mattoon. Mrs. Mattoon named the girl Esther, restored her to health, and in 1857 took her to America for three years. During this time Esther was an apt pupil and acquired a great deal of skill in nursing. During the return voyage on the sailing vessel Maury, she decided to accept Christianity, and after her arrival in Bangkok in 1860 she joined the church. Thus it took the Presbyterians nineteen years to win the first Siamese male convert, and one more year to obtain the first Siamese woman Christian.

Esther continued to live with the Mattoons until her marriage, about 1864, to Nai Naa, the protege of Dr. House. On Nov. 2, 1867 Nai Naa became the first elder to be ordained by the Presbyterians. Meanwhile Mae Esther gained a reputation as the first trained midwife among her people and was in demand in the homes and palaces of those who knew her. She died in 1929 at the age of eighty-five, outliving her four children but survived by over a hundred grandchildren and great-grandchildren. On her eighty-fourth birthday, seven cycles of twelve years, relatives and friends held a testimonial reception at Phya Thai Palace in her honor. Queen Rambaibarni, who as a baby had been cared for by Mae Esther, gave her a brooch of gold and enamel with the royal monogram studded with diamonds.

1928 marked the centennial of Protestant missions in Thailand, and in May Mae Esther received from the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. a message:
"The General Assembly sends greeting to you, the first woman of Siam to profess faith in Jesus Christ, and through you, sends congratulations to the Christian women of Siam. . . . " Galatians 3:27-29.

Years before, she and her husband translated Pilgrim’s Progress into Siamese. Shortly before her death she said, "I am going to where John Bunyan is; I am going home. Put the pictures of Father and Mother Mattoon in my coffin." (1958:27-28)

McFarland had fond memories of Ter’s faithfulness to Christ and her Christian ministry in the Thai cultural context.

Nang Esther Pradipasena likewise entered at an early age upon the training in the home of Mrs. Mattoon that prepared her for her long service as a Christian witness. When she united with the church in 1860, it was as the first Siamese woman to vow allegiance to Christ. Her faithfulness throughout already nearly seventy years of subsequent life has had an influence, which, while it will never be fully revealed in this world, has to its credit substantial gains to the church which can be reckoned. (1928:297)

Nang Esther has the distinction of being the first trained midwife and practical nurse among the Siamese people. For years she was called to the palaces and homes of those who knew her--both Siamese and foreigners--where she was much in demand as a nurse and midwife. As a skilled laundress, expert seamstress, and housekeeper she had no equal among her own people. A very wonderful opportunity was hers to bear witness for her Lord—a testimony which always rang clear and true. Nang Esther is still living—at the age of eighty-four, having outlived her four children but honored and cared for by over a hundred grand-children and great-grand-children, the first woman convert and the oldest living Protestant Christian in Siam. (1928:46)

Analysis

I will investigate this case study in three areas: (1) the Mattoons’ discipling of a Thai Christian, (2) confirmation of the Thai way of meekness, and (3) the Holy Spirit and the discipling of Thai Christians.
The Mattoons' discipling a Thai Christian. Analysis in this matter will be categorized as follows: (1) the characteristics of the Mattoons which include worldview, self-identity, attitudes, behavior pattern, and sources; (2) the Mattoons' understanding of discipling Thai Christians, and (3) the Mattoons' tools in discipling a Thai.

Even though the Mattoons were Westerners, their lives demonstrated Christianness more than westernness. Their worldview elicited power through weakness. Mrs. Mattoon was weak physically and she was willing to depend on a Siamese non-Christian girl as our Lord asked for water from a Samaritan woman. Rev. Mattoon experienced the vulnerability of being separated from his wife because of her sickness. Through the weakness he was a witness of gentleness among his own people and non-Christian Thais. Both of them were not famous missionaries in the eyes of the world. They were known among the poor, and the desperate more than the royal families. As two weak persons who depended on God and people both Christians and non-Christians, the seeds of their ministry fell into the soil of Siam and died. Then the seeds bore much fruit. The Mattoons showed the harmonized living between cognition and affection.

The Mattoons had strong self-identity because they had courage to take risks and walked against the tide of traditional ways of doing mission. Their attitudes were different from that of Bradley's. They respected and trusted Thai non-Christians as well as Christians. Mrs. Mattoon started a home school for Thai children and she transferred the students and the leadership to Sinsaa Ki-eng Qua-Sean and Krue Keo in order that the Mattoons would be free to plant churches.

The Mattoons did not bring up Ter as a slave but as one of their children and Ter knew it. They did not force Ter to be Christian. Ter came at
her own pace. When she truly understood Christ, Ter made her own decision, a conversion of grace and free will. The Mattoons trusted Ter to marry Naa even though he was not a Christian. They seemed to trust in Ter and Naa's words and believed that Naa would soon be Christian because he was raised by Dr. House, a good missionary. Naa became a Christian, the first elder of the Presbyterian mission in Siam. The Mattoons' attitude of faith and trust paid off with hundreds of Christians from Ter and Naa's family.

The Mattoons also had a good attitude toward Thai culture. They allowed Ter to be a citizen of her community and Thai society. They prepared a good status and role for Ter that she could serve her people and Ter became an example of a modern Thai lady in the Siam Kingdom. The Mattoons did not force Ter to dress like a Western lady. Ter was perceived by Thais as being Christian and Thai in the Thai way of meekness.

The Mattoons' behavior pattern was like a breath of fresh air which brought the fruit of the Holy Spirit; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22) through the examples of their sacrificial lives in vulnerable conditions.

What are the sources of the Mattoons' worldview, self-identity, attitudes, and behavior pattern? Western culture was not the main force but the commandments to love, the Great Commission, the incarnation of Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit, and their gentle personality.

Their theology played an important part in their ministry. They believed both in the theology of redemption and of creation. They viewed social work and liberation of the oppressed as ministry because they committed their lives to the sick, the poor, and oppressed women and girls in Siam. The Mattoons believed in holistic mission as the two hands of the cross of Jesus. They also believed in indigenous churches and empowered
local people to take initiative and leadership. They also introduced lay people, and women in ministry. Ter, Naa, and Krue Keo did not attend any seminaries but they were effective Christians among the Thais. Bradley recorded in his diary with surprise that the Mattoons allowed indigenous people to conduct prayer meetings without interference.

The Mattoons understood discipling Thai Christians as a progressive process. Their approach in discipling started even before Ter's conversion. It was a relational, affective approach which fits the characteristics of the Thai culture. The Rev. and Mrs. Mattoon naturally bonded themselves to Ter's kinship and social network when they served their felt needs at the critical time. They incarnated themselves into the hearts of the Thai by taking the roles of parents and teachers, respectful roles in the Thai culture. The Mattoons understood discipling differently from Bradley.

The Mattoons followed Thai religious discipling they probably observed from the life of ordinary and royal Thais they served. Both of them bonded themselves naturally to Ter in liminality of life. The Mattoons' discipling was unplanned but responsive to the life context which was a characteristic of Thai culture.

Their lives were living models for Ter and they used informal and indirect teaching. Ter's full name, Esther, helped her to know she was important to her people in the same way as Esther of the Bible. She did not understand but she loved the story. Her heart soared with joy and her self-image flew high. The Mattoons used the Thai way of teaching biblical truth. Their discipling lifted the self-identity of the disciple. Scripture was a formal discipling tool of the Mattoons. Well (1958) recorded that Rev. Mattoon translated the New Testament and the translation was used for a long time by the church in Thailand.
The differences in discipleship training between Bradley and the Mattoons are obvious and the results are different. Questions remain to be researched as to why Christians in Thailand later discontinued the Thai way of discipling that the Rev. and Mrs. Mattoon had followed.

**Confirmation of the Thai way of meekness.** Ter's life demonstrated the Thai way of meekness. Her worldview was power through weakness. She won the love of the Mattoons through her weakness, the failing health. The practice of giving away the children for adoption derived from the worldview of power through weakness. The superior helped when the marginal pleaded for help. The superior could not look away because the power of weakness was too strong for their affective domain. The Mattoons fit themselves to the Thai way of meekness.

Incidents also demonstrated ego-orientation of our theoretical model. Even though Ter was a poor girl, she had strong self-identity. Ter was not a rice Christian who would change her faith for material gain. She knew Buddhism from her father who was a Buddhist and she had the courage to refuse Christianity during the first seven years. Naa exhibited his strong self-identity in the same way. Ter's and Naa's conversion was the conversion of a progressive process of grace and free will which fit their self-identity and self-esteem. Sinsaa Ki-eng Qua-Sean, Krue Keo demonstrated their self-confidence in leading the school and conducting prayer meetings on their own. The evidence confirmed that the Thai have strong self-identity and ego-orientation which is an important value in the Thai way of meekness.

Analysis confirmed Komin's model of grateful relationship orientation. In July 1849, Asiatic cholera swept away a large number of the population in Bangkok. Dr. House spared many lives and his act of mercy resulted in many life-long friendships. Ter also practiced this value. She
gave back to the Mattoons in time of life crisis. Ter was grateful to the Mattoons to the end of her life. She requested that the picture of the Mattoons be put into her coffin. Moreover, a Thai queen also practiced this value in her relationships with Ter. The queen showed her gratitude to Ter who took care of her as a baby by giving her a broach of gold and enamel with the royal monogram studded with diamonds.

Smooth interpersonal relationships of our model mingled in Ter's being. She was caring, considerate, helpful, and humble. She adapted herself well in various situations having deep relational bonding with others from different faiths. Her calling of the Mattoons as father and mother elicited special relational bonding which superseded race, role, and status. Ter's behavior patterns flowed along the grain of the Thai way of meekness.

Inquiry offered confirmation of flexibility and adjustment orientation of the Thai way of meekness. Ter adapted herself well to various life contexts. She worked and lived her life in Siam, the United States, in palace, and in bamboo hut. She took upon her many roles in Thai society. She was the first trained midwife, a nurse, a skilled laundress, an expert seamstress and an excellent housekeeper. Flexibility and adjustment orientation in Ter's life confirms the Thai way of meekness in our theoretical model.

Investigation also confirmed Komin's model of religio-psychical orientation of our theoretical framework. Buddhist religious practice in the time of the Mattoons confirmed that Thai powerful tools of discipling were symbols and ceremonies practiced in rituals, festivals, and pilgrimages as it was stated in the case of Bradley's mission in Siam.

Moreover, it provided more information in the area of religious discipling. The case study confirms the progressive process of Thai religious discipling. Ter's father sought and found the Mattoons and asked them to
disciple his daughter. He committed Ter to learn from and to serve the missionaries. Thais perceive discipling as a process in which deep relational bonding between disciplers and disciples is important. Ter's conversion also demonstrates God's grace and her free will.

The case study elicits the unique role of liminality in the natural pattern of life as a forceful tool in bonding and discipling. The analysis also proposed the role of parents-teachers to Christian disciplers. It means that disciplers of Thai Christians must have authority and maintain a respectable hierarchy. However, they should provide deep relational bonding with disciples in the liminalities of their lives in order that the disciples will bond to communities of faith and to the meaning of faith. As a result, disciples will have strong self-identity.

The case study also exhibits the important tools of living models, informal and formal teaching, and individual and communal participation in discipling the Thai. The Mattoons' life models were powerful witnesses to the Thai. For the Thai, believing came first from seeing, touching, tasting before listening. Ter also grew in her faith through literature, Pilgrim's Progress, which presented Christian life in the familiar structure of a rite of passage. Thai religious tools exhibited in the case study affirmed that Thai social structure consisted of the crucial features of hierarchy, relationship, and individualism. Inquiry pointed to Thai relational culture and Buddha's life model as sources of the Thai way of meekness. The discipling of Ter flowed with the cultural grain of the Thai way of meekness.

Incidents carried the element of education and competence orientation of our theoretical model. Ter studied in order to serve the felt needs of her mother and the Siamese. The early training she received from the Mattoons helped her excel in her work. Ter seemed to do small things with great love.
Her education-competence moved along the Thai cultural grain and Christian virtue.

Ter's life illustrated well interdependence orientation of our theoretical model. Her life showed reciprocity of gracious giving and taking between her and the Mattoons, the Queen and the Siamese. Ter incarnated her life in Thai society and she was perceived as being Christian and Thai in the Thai way of meekness.

Incidents did not explain much about Ter's fun and pleasure due to limited sources. However, Ter's pleasure in serving her God and people was explicit. Of course, her family, children, and grandchildren gave her plenty of joy in the Thai way of meekness. She outlived her four children but was cared for by over a hundred grand-children and great-grand-children. A Thai saying attests, "me-look-tem-barn-me-larn-tem-muang" (your children and grand-children are in full houses and towns). Ter's fun and pleasure sprang from the stream of life in the Thai way of meekness.

Inquiry attested Thai achievement-task orientation of our model in incidents. Ter worked hard and her achievements flourished as the result of her successful adaptation to hierarchy, relationships, and individualism in Thai social interaction. She got along with the rich and the poor as well as the high and the low. However, she was different from other Thais in the way that she tried her best to excel in her work. In this area of life, Ter revealed the influence of Christian virtue. Her achievement-task flowed along the cultural grain of the Thai way of meekness with Christian virtue.

The Holy Spirit and the Discipling of Thai Christians

The Holy Spirit is above all cultures and is not conditioned by any culture, but chooses to work along the cultural grain. The Holy Spirit brought Ter to the Mattoons and the missionaries cooperated with God, even though
he disguised his work in a Thai cultural method. Therefore, the Holy Spirit could manifest his power and love in a mighty way. The Holy Spirit was with the missionaries who risked much to serve Jesus and the deep needs of his people according to God's will. The Holy Spirit blessed the risk of the Mattoons who initiated woman, and lay ministry, as well as indigenous churches in Siam according to Thai culture, which cherishes self-identity. The analysis confronts me with a small, still voice; "Is it good to serve your living God without any risks, secure in the traditional framework without the touch and guidance of the Holy Spirit? Is it worthwhile to hold positions given by people, seeing little evidence of transformed lives and societies that match the standard of the kingdom of God? What does God think about me as his servant?"

Summary

Why did the Mattoons succeed in discipling Thai Christians? They succeeded because they allowed their believers to be Christians and Thai in the Thai way of meekness by contextualizing their understanding and discipling tools in order that the words of God could penetrate the Thai worldview. The Mattoons could do that because they incarnated their lives and ministry to the Thai cultural context, being obedient to Scripture, the Holy Spirit, Thais, and the Thai way of meekness. They allowed Scripture, the Holy Spirit, Thais, and Thai culture instead of Western culture and Westernized Christianity to shape their worldview, self-identity, attitudes, and behavior. They succeeded because they risked walking against the tide when they observed that the old ways did not work. I think they had a wise foreign mission board without which they could not freely follow their Lord.
For our last case study we turn to a modern context of disciplining. Here, as in the case of the conversion of Nantachai Mejudhon, we discover both vindication and violation of the Thai way of meekness.

**The Case Study of the Muangthai Church's Disciplining:**

**From Shame to Reconciliation in Disciplining Wayward Christians**

**The Issue**

The Muangthai Church, Bangkok, Thailand, is an indigenous church started in the beginning by a small group of university instructors and lay people in 1973. The founder of the Muangthai Church is the Rev. Nantachai Mejudhon. The church is the first one in Thailand which holds John Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification and all ministers are Asbury Theological Seminary graduates. The church has used two methods of disciplining, Western ways and Thai ways. The results of disciplining were obviously different. This case study aims to discover the problems of the Western way of disciplining and the possibilities of the Thai way of disciplining.

**History of Christian Disciplining in Thailand**

The history of Christian disciplining in Thailand seems to put forth the Western way of Christian disciplining as the one and only way. The first record of Christian disciplining appears in Bradley's diary, recorded in March 29, 1868. It is the same as the Christian disciplining of the Muangthai Church Bangkok, which began disciplining her members in 1985. Bradley recorded that four out of six members of his small church were suspended from communion service, but they showed no evidence of repentance from sins after many months of being disciplined.
The way Christian churches in Thailand exercise disciplining affected the growth and unity of the churches. Herbert R. Swanson gives good examples concerning this issue. His research of a Thai church in the nineteenth century demonstrates that when Thai Christians perceived church discipline as harsh and aggressive, attendance dwindled. Furthermore, the church split. Swanson describes two different ways of disciplining of the Rev. Eugene P. Dunlap (1878-1879) and the Rev. C. S. McClelland (1881-1882). The Presbyterian church of Petburi experienced good growth during the time of the Rev. Dunlap:

McClelland justified his apparently harsh measures against the gamblers by insisting that he had to protect the purity of the congregation. He stated, "I feel that the church must be kept pure even at the expense of their numbers. . . ."

McClelland’s stance on church discipline and his strong personality provoked an immediate response from the church’s membership. Attendance at worship dwindled, and Nai Klai, the leading elder, refused to cooperate with McClelland to the extent that he eventually withdrew from the church entirely—taking a significant number of members with him--and began to harass the missionaries. . . . (1991:7-8)

Dunlap did not eschew church discipline per se, but he argued that the church should exercise discipline on the basis of its value to the person disciplined. He acknowledged that missionaries had a responsibility to discipline church members, but he felt that discipline must be mixed with love and grace. (1991:10)

Personal interviews of missionaries and Thai Christians elucidates the struggle to find the answer for the tension between the traditional way of Christian disciplining and the loss of members. Some churches stop disciplining; others persist stubbornly in the traditional way of disciplining as the one and only biblical way. They do not like the consequences, however.
History of the Thai Way of Disciplining

Thais call the Thai way of disciplining *Kama* and *Ahosikarma*, which mean reconciliation. Thai people do not perceive disciplining as punishment but as giving a chance for relational bonding back to those who break interpersonal relationships. Few scholars have researched this ritual. However, the words and actions are practical in daily living, and Thai literature mentions the ritual frequently. The ritual of reconciliation is important because the Thai cherish smooth relationships.

The interview research I carried out in connection with my field research, discussed in both chapters 1 and 6, reveals that in four parts of the country the Thai hold a clear idea of reconciliation. Most Thai Christians know about it. However, of 25 missionaries interviewed about this ritual of reconciliation, only one knew about it. When she listened to a description concerning *Kama* and *Ahosikarma*, her face broke into a joy of discovery. "I know it. A boy who broke into my house performed that ritual to me after I reported his behavior to his mother. He cried a lot, bowing down before me and I taught him to behave well." The missionary participated intuitively in the ritual.

This ritual is recorded in Buddha's life story. A murderer, Ongkuleemarn repented of trying to kill Buddha, and Buddha forgave him and accepted him as one of his followers. This ritual is also practiced in Thai primal religion. People ask for forgiveness from ancestors and lesser gods for sins committed against them and other people. Hinduism in Thailand performs this ritual, too. It is a festival in Thailand, demonstrating repentance for sins committed against Mother Kongka, the goddess of water ways, the Loy-Kratong festival. Thai culture utilizes the core of meaning in
the Kama and Ahosikarma ritual to renew relational bonding between the offender and the offended as well as with the community.

The Kama and Ahosikarma ritual consists of four elements: repentance, an act of apologizing, forgiving, and bonding. At present, many Thais do not understand the meaning of the ritual of reconciliation even while they use the form.

Disciplining According to Research Interviews of 13 Members of the Muangthai Church

The interview questions were as follows:

1. In our church, there are two ways of disciplining, the old way and the new way. Please describe your feelings and thoughts when you observed the disciplining. Do you know why you feel and think as you do?

2. Do you know why all who are disciplined in the new way never leave the church and why they become good Christians?

3. In what way does the use of the Kama and Ahosikarma ritual (the ritual of reconciliation) in disciplining Christians conform to the Thai way of meekness?

These 13 members were selected for interviews because they are mature and have good knowledge of Scripture and Thai culture. Most of them wrote and spoke extensively, expressing their ideas in detail. Only one was for the traditional way; twelve of them were strongly against it. I carefully studied their responses and categorized the themes which emerged as follows: (1) characteristics of the Thai way of meekness, (2) characteristics of Thai religious disciplining, and (3) reasons for the strength of the Thai way of disciplining and the weakness of the traditional way.
In order to analyze and interpret these themes, I recorded the frequency of the ideas and the semantic domains expressed to detect the characteristics in each theme. The comparison and contrast among members demonstrated no differences in ideas. The same ideas and reasons cut across age, education, sex, roles and status. The findings follow:

**Characteristics of the Thai Way of Meekness**

The people interviewed were concerned about the identity of the offender and the interrelationship between the offender and the body of Christ. They agreed that the form of disciplining should not violate the offenders' identity, putting them to shame or causing them to move outside the fold. At the same time, the disciplines should keep the hierarchy of Thai culture where people respect authority and receive kindness, grace, and forgiveness in return. An interviewee answered, "Thais love courage and peace. Apologizing on their own demonstrates courage, and brings back reconciliation." Another member reminded, "Thais do not appreciate direct criticism or admiration." A medical doctor suggested, "Thais love softness, indirect suggestions which require patience and time, and flexibility in methods which use the following principles: gentleness, the local culture, patience, calmness, and close observation are good."

**Thai Religious Disciplining**

Research reveals the members' unique understanding of disciplining as a process of discipling. One respondent pointed out, "The functions of disciplining are meeting the needs of the offender, the authority of the church, and the body of Christ. The offenders need victory over their sins and are able to walk in purity with the assistance of their brothers and sisters in Christ." Another interviewee proposed,
Wrongdoers need much understanding, courage, grace, and love from others in order to convict themselves of sin, and repent. The generous love of the body of Christ encourages the offender to apologize sincerely without shame and to start life all over again. Mature Christians need to help the offender meet spiritual and social needs. They should assist the offender in reconciling with God, the offenders, and the body of Christ. Mature Christians must see to it that the offenders are bonded back into the fold, because their sins violated their relationship with God and people.

The interview confirms the meaning of disciplining as bonding the offenders to Christ and bonding the body of Christ in one mind and one spirit. A lay leader advises, "Disciplining aims to help wrongdoers repent, change, and be bonded back into the church."

**Strengths of the New Way of Disciplining and Weaknesses of the Old**

Respondents preferred the Thai way of disciplining to the Western way. By the Western way I mean the Western disciplining exercised in Thailand. Their reasons are categorized into form, function, and meaning of the Kama and Ahosikarma ritual. First, the form of the ritual was familiar. They understood the function of each object and manner, which were signs pointing to humility, repentance, forgiveness, and acceptance. An interviewee said, "Thais say, 'I am sorry' but they do not change, because words do not mean much. When they perform the ritual of reconciliation, they understand the meanings behind the actions." Second, the form was also performed in a family manner which was less threatening and provided a loving and warm atmosphere. A respondent voiced, "The ritual of reconciliation performed personally and informally in family-like atmosphere gives confirmation that the church loves wrongdoers no matter what they do." Third, the form expressed loving kindness, which helped the offenders to initiate internal change. The trust, love, understanding, and encouragement perceived, and the identity and dignity preserved offered the
offender freedom from guilt and made the offender willing to receive the consequences. A respondent wrote, "The ritual of reconciliation helped offenders stop disappointing those who loved them. They would not run away from the church, because they realized they belonged to the church and vice versa." Therefore, the Kama and Ahosikama ritual bonded the offender to the meaning of Christ's love and forgiveness as well as to the meaning of the community of faith. The purpose of the disciplining was accomplished.

A member suggested, "Kama and Ahosikarma is a ritual which helps wrongdoers repent fast, because they repent by themselves. The action of repentance requires true, humble action which wrongdoers cannot fake. The humble action naturally initiates forgiveness from the offended." Another member reminded me, "The disciplined initiated confession, apologizing by themselves. They asked for another chance and acceptance whether the other party would forgive or not. The ritual helps wrongdoers repent."

The respondents expressed confusion regarding the Western way of disciplining. They perceived it as harsh punishment which caused the offender to lose face and bring shame to the family. This disciplining drove people away from the church, because the hurt was beyond healing. They perceived the Western way of disciplining as judging, deserting, isolating, and embarrassing. They considered the old way of disciplining as unjust, because those who committed sins secretly were not publicly disciplined. The Western way of disciplining was perceived as damaging to one's self-image, self-esteem, and self-respect. The offenders could not feel that their sins were forgiven and forgotten. They felt suspicious of the church and considered the church unfriendly, hostile, and undependable. Ultimately, the respondents felt the church unwisely pushed the offenders to the land of no return.
An elderly member mumbled, "The old approach makes me feel that the church is cruel, heartless, abusive, and unkind." Her friend vented her hurt, "The church punished the disciplined and forbade the wrongdoers from borrowing the church kitchen utensils for their wedding. I donated those utensils but they had to borrow what they needed from a Buddhist temple." "It violated the self-identity of wrongdoers and caused them to be shamed, to lose face, and to be unaccepted. They became the outcast against whom all others turn their backs," a respondent pointed out. A disciplined member advised, "The old approach presented the image of disciplining as punishing. The disciplined were not accepted in the church. Disciplining is not helping but adding more problems. It caused rejection and uncaring and provoked the wrongdoer to more wicked extremes." A Sunday school teacher responded, "It was strong, direct and more concerned about justice than love. It hurt both the disciplined and the discipliner."

However, one member gave a different perspective: "I personally believe that the old approach is very good. I came from another church which did not exercise disciplining and Christians felt free to sin. If we want to emphasize that we are all one in the body of Christ, we have to confess our sins to all members. This will teach all members that their behavior, whether good or bad, affects the community of faith."

**Incidents**

In a twenty-five year span of the Muangthai Church, eight members were disciplined, four of them publicly. As a result of the public discipline, about twenty members were lost, and the gossip brought chaotic misunderstanding. The memory of each incident is haunting and hurtful. These dramas were tragedies performed in our churches. The procedure followed a pattern like this:
"After our Sunday service, we will have a special meeting for all full members of the church," a pastor or elder would announce. His face was usually exhausted, worried, and sad because of the long Saturday elders' meeting.

Most members were surprised, because they had no idea what was going on, and they enjoyed chatting with each other. Then, the speaker would say with a stammering voice, "The church is deeply sorry to announce that Mr . . . (or Mrs. or Miss) needs to be disciplined by the church. The church asks Mr . . . (or Mrs. or Miss) to apologize publicly. Please forgive Mr . . . (or Mrs. or Miss) and love him (or her). The church will dismiss Mr . . . (or Mrs. or Miss) from leadership, and he (or she) is not allowed to participate in the communion service during the disciplinary period. Any questions are welcomed now."

Silence would fall upon the congregation. Some tried to ask for the description of the wrongdoing but were turned down. The silence was terrible; people were shocked. They could not quite hear the apology. Their hearts went out to the offender, because he or she lost face in public, the greatest shame of life. The members followed the procedure of the church, lining up to hold the hand of the offender, murmuring "I love you," looking down at the floor, while the offender looked into space with a blank face. It was an awkward moment. That Sunday worship was tedious, stressful, and shameful.

The silence of the members broke into negative and positive discussion: "The pastor and elders conducted the discipline biblically. Other churches discipline with this procedure. However, will the offender change because of the shame imposed upon him or her?" Discussion turned into gossip. The offender's social network or kin in the church usually felt hurt.
They considered the discipline unhelpful. Sometimes the offended’s social networks required more severe disciplining. They even suggested excommunication in some cases. The church was blamed by both parties.

In one of these cases, I was empowered to handle the discipline because the pastor was abroad. It was a nightmare. I kept the offended, who was in a shocked state and contemplating suicide, in my home together with my three little children. Each day, I got about ten phone calls from both parties. Each one lasted at least half an hour, accusing each other. I confronted the offender publicly, and the church lost about ten new converts. The church also lost seven members who were for the offended. The result of my handling was damaging, and it left wounds upon many as well as on me.

This incident was a stepping stone to the search for an alternative. My husband and I spent time in prayer and contemplation. The Thai ritual of reconciliation flashed into our minds, and we believed it would provide an alternative. I will always remember one offender.

It was a Sunday afternoon and most members returned home. A group of elderly people in our church, the elders, and ministers gathered in the pastor’s study room. All were quiet and solemn as if they were participating in an important ritual. They sat on chairs, waiting. The pastor acted as the middleman.

The door opened slowly. The offenders walked in and immediately knelt down. In their hands, they carried a brass tray of a bonded jasmine and rose lei, a symbol of bonding fellowship. Both of them sat hunched over, staring at the floor.

The pastor broke the silence and explained the offenders’ repentance of the sin and the longing for reconciliation.
"What you all long to say, you can say now because after the ritual we will never again mention this misbehavior," pastor Nantachai urged. No one replied. Then I spoke. I looked at both of them and vented out my pain and sorrow concerning their sin.

"I am your teacher and I love you dearly. I taught you for a long time and shared Christ with you. Didn't I talk to you twice recently about this matter? I am deeply disappointed." I could no longer continue because the gentleman cried his heart out listening to me.

"I want to die. I want to die. Now I lose everything." He cried like a child, and I had to put my hand on his shoulder.

"I love you; I always will but I cannot truly forgive you without this honest sharing," I affirmed. His groaning subsided into sobbing.

Then the pastor asked if all were willing to forgive. When all participants affirmed, he signaled the offenders to continue the ritual. Both crept on their knees toward the mother, and they bent low and bowed before her, offering the lei. The mother accepted the lei, wiping her tears.

"You know I love you and I feel sorrowful for what you have done. I hope you will learn to be good, this time," she taught. Both of them bowed again before the mother and each participant. Each one confirmed forgiveness and offered short suggestions. The pastor hugged the man, and he wept again.

Since then, the man's life has changed; he has been a faithful Christian who is rich in forgiving.

Analysis

In this analysis, I categorize my findings as follows: (1) the Western way of disciplining which includes Western characteristics, Western understanding of disciplining, and Western tools of disciplining, (2)
confirmation of the Thai way of meekness, and (3) the Holy Spirit and the
disciplining of Thai Christians. By the Western way I mean the Western way
of disciplining exercised in Thailand.

The Western way of disciplining Thai Christians. The Western way of
disciplining Thai Christians reflects the Western characteristics, the Western
understanding of disciplining, and Western tools for disciplining.

The Western way of disciplining utilizes the either/or worldview of
Western culture which emphasizes cognition. The church is perceived as an
institution which exercises authority in order to keep laws, order, and purity.
Wrongdoers must receive the consequences and those who challenge the
authority of the church must be disciplined. Repentance from sins, relational
bonding, and unity among members are not as important as punishment.
The traditional way of disciplining reflects the influence of Western culture.
Evidence can be seen from the way Bradley and McClelland disciplined Thai
Christians in their churches. Westerners view order as good and exhibit
negative perception about chaos (Hiebert 1994).

Bradley, McClelland, and the Muangthai church in the early period had
over-self-confidence. All of them ignored the emotional lives of Thai
Christians but were mostly concerned with cognition. None of them
consulted with the church members concerning the method for disciplining.
They guided the churches according to traditional rules. The leaders did not
dig out Scripture and Thai culture to find the principle, the purpose of
disciplining, and its function. The leaders took for granted that Western
Christianity was universal Christianity and the Western form of disciplining
was the biblical form of disciplining. Therefore they used confrontation and
correction even though it violated the face and relationships of Thai culture.
Their disciplining was perceived as aggressive.
The causes are the following: (1) westernization was assumed to be the same as Christianization; (2) lack of biblical and cultural knowledge about disciplining. The causes influenced Christians to follow the tradition of disciplining rather than Scripture. More detail about the principle, purpose and function of biblical disciplining follows in chapter 8.

In reality, disciplining means punishing for Westernized Christians. They do not view disciplining as a process of discipling, helping Thai Christians grow. Disciplining is instantaneous, dealing with chaotic situations. Wrongdoers receive what they deserve. Justice reigns. Justice is for justice's sake and few care about the results or the biblical purpose of disciplining, because work is more important than people.

Their tools are direct and confrontive, verbal communication which is exercised in public. The tools violate smooth relationships, and grateful relationships. Westernized Christians ignore Jesus' disciplining of Peter. He used an informal and private method in helping Peter repent and bond back to the community of disciples.

Confirmation of the Thai way of meekness. Incidents confirmed the Thai worldview, power through weakness, in the inquiry of the ritual of reconciliation. The ritual helped the wayward Christians act weak by bowing down at the feet of the offended. The action was the most vulnerable manner according to Thai culture. Wrongdoers could not perform the action without real repentance of their sin because of their strong self-identity. Feet are perceived as low organs while heads are high organs. Allowing ones' heads to touch others' feet is an act of true repentance in Thai culture. As a result, the vulnerable action motivates true forgiveness from the offended. Therefore, the ritual of reconciliation flows with the worldview of power through weakness.
Analysis validated ego-orientation of Komin's model. The interviewees in the Muangthai church were concerned about the self-identity of the offender. Respondents agreed that the ritual of reconciliation gave confirmation that the church loved wrongdoers no matter what they did. The trust, love, understanding, and encouragement perceived, and identity and dignity preserved helped the offender repent. They were against the traditional way of disciplining because it caused unbearable shame to wayward Christians and violated their identity. The analysis indicates that self-identity is a crucial characteristic of the Thai way of meekness. The Thai will not violate others' self-identity; therefore they avoid direct confrontation. Disciplining church members should flow with the cultural grain of the Thai way of meekness.

The analysis also detects grateful relationship orientation of our theoretical model in incidents. Interviewees attested that the ritual of reconciliation would create grateful relationships between wrongdoers and the community of faith. Offenders would stop sinning because they felt obligated to pay back the love and forgiveness of the church. They did not want to disappoint those who loved them and gave them a second chance. The couple who were disciplined in the Thai way of meekness demonstrated grateful relationships to their Savior and the church. Their lives were transformed.

The ritual of reconciliation flows along the Thai cultural grain of the smooth interpersonal relationship orientation of Komin's model. Thai interviewees noticed disciplining as bonding back wayward Christians into Thai relational boundary instead of punishing them for their sin. Relationship is very important for the Thai and the ritual elucidates smooth interpersonal relationships. The ritual of reconciliation carries caring,
considerate and helpful spirit in its procedure. It also prevents two parties from aggressively violating smooth interpersonal relationships in the community of faith. The ritual reconciles Christians. It heals the broken relationship in the body of Christ along the stream of the Thai way of meekness. It makes relationships as smooth as Thai silk.

Inquiry attests flexibility and adjustment orientation of our theoretical model. Thais reject rigid principles and persons who overlooked the hearts and interpersonal relationships. Nai Klai of Petburi Presbyterian church rebelled against Rev. McClelland because the missionary violated flexibility and adjustment of the Thai way of meekness. However, the church grew under Rev. Dunlap who was more flexible. The ritual of reconciliation was perceived by the members of the Muangthai church as a tool which provides flexibility and adjustment in solving problems in the church. The flexibility and adjustment orientation of the ritual of reconciliation confirm the validity of our theoretical model.

Study endorsed religio-psychical orientation of our theoretical framework. The Muangthai church's disciplining of the wayward Christians in the modern times confirms Komin's proposal that the Thai use religion to serve their present felt needs and they still make use of symbols and ceremonies as the practice of Kama and Ahosikarma ritual illustrated.

Inquiry unexpectedly offered new information in the area of disciplining. Thais understand disciplining as a process of discipling. They interpret the meaning of disciplining as bonding the offenders back to Christ and bonding the body of Christ into one mind and one spirit. Thai Christians believe that the church should function to help offenders meet spiritual and social needs. According to Thais, disciplining reconciles offenders to God, to the offended, and to the body of Christ. Their understanding of discipling
indicates their theology of the church as home, or hospital for believers where holy love reigns. The tools which the Thai use to discipline the offender are the ritual of reconciliation. Investigation affirmed sources of the Thai way of meekness as Buddha's life model, primal religion, Hinduism and Thai relational culture.

The case study exhibited interdependence in incidents and research interviews. Some interviewees were upset because the church did not consult elderly members for the practice of disciplining. They perceived the church as violating interdependence orientation of Thai culture. The members perceived the community of faith as family where interdependence abounded. When the church took the role of a sacred institution in disciplining her members, she violated interdependence in the Thai way of meekness. As a result, the church experienced negative responses in the consequences.

The ritual of reconciliation brought about fun and pleasure of the Thai way of meekness. Usually, the members rejoiced after the ritual was performed and the wayward Christians were bonded back into the fellowship. Usually, their kinship or social networks would celebrate the moment. The festivity symbolized the new phase of lives for the offenders.

Research interviews among the members of the Muangthai church also validated the crucial features of Thai social structure as hierarchy, relationship, and individualism. Respondents proposed that the disciplining should hold the hierarchy of the Thai culture where people respect authority and receive kindness, grace, and forgiveness in return. However, they are greatly concerned about the offender's identity and interpersonal relationship with the body of Christ. Analysis proved that good disciplining should proceed along the cultural fiber of the Thai way of meekness.
The Holy Spirit and the Disciplining of the Wayward Thai Christians

The Holy Spirit moved mightily to help the disciplined repent and forsake their sins when the Muangthai church disciplined their members in the Thai way of meekness. The unity of the church was preserved and the offender's lives were transformed. The Holy Spirit works through good elements of Thai culture. The Holy Spirit grieves when his churches split. Should Thai churches keep on using the form of disciplining which grieves the Holy Spirit?

Summary

The case study validates the structure of the Thai way of meekness of Komin (1991): the worldview of power through weakness; the nine value clusters; and strong self-identity and gentleness in behavior patterns. It affirms that the Thai way of meekness comes from the way and view of life of Buddha, Hinduism, primal religion as well as Thai relational culture. Analysis also reveals the important role of the affective domain among the Thai. Inquiry certifies that hierarchy, relationships, and individualism are crucial features of Thai social structure.

The case study also suggests some principles of disciplining as well as some new disciplining tools appropriate for the Thai context. Thais perceive disciplining as a process of discipling believers. The purpose of Thai disciplining is to heal the broken relationship and to bond back the offender to the community and the religious meaning of the community. The Thai hold a different theology of disciplining. It is a process of discipling, not punishment. Its purpose is to help the disciplined repent and forsake sins through the loving kindness of their Christian brethren. Thai discipling functions to bond wrongdoers back to God, to the offended, and to the body of
Christ. Therefore, Thai Christians view their churches as their second home or hospital and they expect that Christians will deal with each other in a family-like manner. They understand the churches as the body of Christ where when one member fails, all fail and all should bear the burdens of each other in words and deeds.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, we investigated the Thai way of meekness exemplified in relation to four cases of Christian discipling; two of which are historical and two are contemporary. We found both the violation and vindication of the Thai way of meekness in the influencing, nurturing, and disciplining process which we call discipling. We found in our analysis that the Thai way of meekness has shaped the Thai worldview and ethos both in historical and contemporary times. As a result, the Thai way of meekness has shaped Thai understanding of religious discipling, and Thai discipling tools. Inquiry confirmed the adequacy of our theoretical model to account for realities in the past and present sociocultural sphere in discipling. In chapter 6, we will use this theoretical model to evaluate the Thai way of meekness for connection with the research interview data gathered among Thai Buddhists, Thai Christians, and Western missionaries in Thailand.
CHAPTER 6

The Thai Way of Meekness: The Interview Results

Suntaree Komin's research presented in chapter 2 and essentially confirmed and illustrated in chapters 3 through 5 demonstrates the needs for emic and etic interpretation in researching any culture. Outsiders misinterpret Thai individualism and gentleness but are sharp in pointing out the negative parts that need improvement. Insiders interpret correctly the data and understand why people did what they did. However insiders tend to disregard the negative parts in their culture. This chapter further develops our understanding of the perspectives of insiders and outsiders through interviews conducted in my field work in 1996. These interviews of Thai non-Christians, Thai Christians, and missionaries are an attempt to validate the structure of characteristics of the Thai way of meekness.

Purpose and Procedures of the Research Interviews

The interview questions aimed at surveying two kinds of information: (1) characteristics of the Thai way of meekness, and (2) Thai religious discipling from Thai non-Christians, Thai Christians, and missionaries. Page 13 above gave the criteria for selecting the persons interviewed and the numbers of the interviewees in each category. Fifty-seven non-Christian Thais were interviewed. The criteria for choosing the non-Christian interviewees were: (1) they had considerable knowledge of the gospel, the Christian church, and knew Christians for more than three years; (2) they had good understanding of Thai culture; (3) they were opinion leaders of the Thai in the four regions of Thailand where the local cultural context is different.
I interviewed 48 Thai Christians, and 25 Western missionaries. The missionaries represented various denominations: the Southern Baptist Mission in Thailand, the Overseas Missionary Fellowship Mission (O.M.F.), the Christian and Missionary Alliance Mission (C.M.A.), the Church of Christ in Thailand, and the Campus Outreach Ministry. Forty-eight Thai Christians represented some denominations: Wesleyan independent churches, as well as the C.M.A., Presbyterian, and Pentecostal churches. The criteria for the Christian prospects I interviewed were: (1) active Christians; (2) had a good understanding and knowledge of Thai culture; (3) had served more than three years in Thailand, and (4) were opinion leaders. The prospects represented Christians from four regions of Thailand where the local cultural context is different.

Data Collection

The data collection was conducted by designing the places and the people to be interviewed. As for the places, I interviewed people both in urban areas and in small villages from four regions of Thailand. I conducted interview research in five urban areas and in four villages in Thailand. The interviewees' distribution is shown in Table 3.
Table 3

Distribution of the Interviewees

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**Methodology**

I talked with the interviewees myself, recording both their verbal and non-verbal messages on the interview paper. I read through the information and categorized the information into various areas as data emerged from the Buddhist, Thai Christian, and missionary interviewees.

I compiled the data into three main categories: (1) the Thai way of meekness; (2) the Buddhist and Christian perceptions of religion, Christians, churches, and Christianity, and (3) the suggestions concerning discipling. The details of each segment are listed below:
1. The Thai way of meekness
   a. the Thai values
   b. Thai relational bonding

2. Thai religious discipling
   a. the Thai way of effective communication, i.e. meek manner, meek attitude, and meek verbal communication
   b. the Thai concept of religion
   c. the Thais' perceptions of Christians, churches and Christianity
      --Christian life, Christian witness, Christian relational bonding
      --Christian rituals, ceremonies, preachers and preaching, medium of discipling non-Christians and Christians
      --Their questions
   d. the Thais' suggestion concerning being Thai and Christian
      --Discipling non-Christians
      --Discipling Christians
      --Discipling wrongdoers

Then I analyzed the frequency of the ideas and semantic domains present or absent among Thai Buddhists, Thai Christians, and missionaries interviewed in order to compare and contrast their understanding of Thai worldview, values, and practices. For example, in investigating functions of Thai religion, I found that Thai Buddhist interviewees repeatedly expressed words concerning their feelings. They rarely expressed words in their cognitive semantic domain. I studied the frequency of the words that represented the affective domain which Thai interviewees used concerning religious functions. Then I listed the words in order of the frequency
mentioned with the highest number first. Relying on the insights of Komin's research (1991) in interpreting the data, I investigated the characteristics of the Thai way of meekness and Thai religious discipling.

The following text will describe the findings from the interviews. This data is then summarized in a comprehensive table at the end of the chapter, showing the stark contrast between Thai Buddhists on the one hand and Thai Christians and missionaries interviewed on the other about some significant interview results.

The chapter is divided into two main sections. In this first section, I report on data collected from my interviews relating directly to the perceptions of the interviewees about the Thai way of meekness itself. In the second main section, I report on the perception of the interviewees of religious discipling.

**Research Interviews: The Thai Way of Meekness**

**Thai Buddhists**

Fifty-seven non-Christian Thais were interviewed. The criteria for choosing the non-Christian interviewees were: (1) they had considerable knowledge of the gospel, the Christian church, and knew Christians for more than three years; (2) they had good understanding of Thai culture; (3) they were opinion leaders of the Thai in the four regions of Thailand where the local cultural context was different. My sample is an effort to be representative but statements of analysis are about my sample. The interview questions follow.

Fill in the blank format for collecting data from non-Christians concerning the Thai way of meekness. Please complete the following sentences:
a. Non-Christians will love and respect Christians

b. Non-Christians will love and respect Christian churches

c. Non-Christians will love and respect the Christian religion

d. Will you please describe Thai relational bonding?

It is interesting to observe that non-Christian Thais took the research interview seriously. They gave plenty of time and thoughtful answers. I will present the data from non-Christian Thais concerning the Thai way of meekness as follows:

**Thai characteristics.** The data concerning Thai characteristics indicates that the interviewees value the following qualities of life: (1) the nine value clusters, and (2) Thai relational bonding.

First, the research interviews suggest that Thais interviewed (100%) believe in self-worth, the equality of identity. Everybody is worthy of being respected, because all are human beings. One ex-university instructor mused, "Do not think that Westerners are better than Thais. We are equal, because we are human beings alike. I feel that Thai Christians worship Westerners." A respondent confirmed, "Thais respect all religions. Our king honors all faiths."

Respondents have strong self-confidence. An engineer declared, "Christians are boring. They have no self-identity or self-confidence. They throw all kinds of problems to God and use no brain or abilities." A high
school girl agreed, "I think God is very important to Christians. In all things, Christians refer to God, God, God. I feel that Christians do not depend on themselves."

Thai Buddhists interviewed admire self-confidence. They like those who try their best to solve their immediate problems before turning to unseen powers. They believe lives should have purpose, and those who do not first stand on their own feet lack confidence are lazy and sick psychologically. A Buddhist engineer manager voiced the caring concern:

It is obvious that Christians can never get many strong leaders as long as the leaders of Christians in Thailand do not clarify the expressions, "trust completely in God," "in everything turn to God," and "everything will be fine if you trust in God." The Thai interpret these expressions as doing nothing, hanging your destiny on fate.

Thai interviewees' self-identity and self-confidence suggested the following taboos: (1) do not trample Buddhism, (2) do not force or persuade Thais to make an instant decision, (3) do not challenge Thais, and (4) do not contrast religions.

A Buddhist who worked with Christians for more than fifteen years calmly advised:

Christians attack Buddha images which Buddhists respect. My mother taught me to respect Christianity, their churches, and crosses. I listen to my young staff members blaspheme the sacred protector of Thailand whom I love. I feel despised. Christians did not give me a chance to speak up when we had religious disagreements. . . . Why can't these aggressive, new Christians learn from the gentleness and politeness of old, ecumenical Christians whom I admire?

Another young man from a slum community related:

Ten of my friends and I received Protestant scholarships for ten years. We were forced to attend a church every Sunday. In the church, the pastor forced us to be Christian. As long as the scholarships continued to flow, we could stand being forced.
When the scholarships were terminated, we attended a Catholic school where the priest did not force or give any scholarships. Many of my friends became Catholic priests.

An interviewee lamented, "I do not like missionaries who distribute many things to Thai youngsters and persuade them to be Christian." A university graduate confided, "Usually, I respect Christians, but I always feel a bondage whenever I invade a Christian boundary. Buddhism creates no bondage. Christianity requires me to attend church every Sunday. I am tired. I want to be free!"

While Americans enjoy challenge, Thai interviewees detest the word. A man complained about a Christian lady who said to him, "I want to challenge you to support this organization." He mumbled, "Challenge! That is a sensuous, sexual stimulating word." A school teacher taught me, "If Christians challenge me, I will challenge them back. Don't ever dare to challenge Thais."

The interviewees detested the contrast between religions, although, they like to compare good teachings in various faiths. Most of them responded like this one respondent, "Don't contrast religions. Don't be boastful of your own religion."

Non-Christian interviewees concluded that Christians should be Christian and Thai. Thainess gave self-identity to the Thai. As one respondent pointed out, "People of all faiths in Thailand must be good Thai citizens. We do not segregate people because of their faith." A high school girl proposed, "People in Thailand must cherish Thai culture regardless of their faith. They must respect hierarchy. Elderly people, parents, and teachers must be respected."

Second, respondents (65%) valued the grateful relationship orientation. An administrator voiced his confusion about a Christian, "I
don't understand why she always thanks God but never thanks me."
Another teacher commented about his Christian brother, "I prepared a meal for him. He did not take time to thank me, but he thanked God."

An interviewee suggested, "Good persons must help others with honesty and sincerity and without hidden agendas." A respondent added, "Thais cherish generosity. Generosity in time of crisis brings about grateful relationships."

Third, next to self-identity and grateful relationships, interviewees (70%) emphasized smooth relationships. A non-Christian commented, "I observe that Christians are ego-centric. Leaders lack reasons. Christians do not hold my heart in good consideration. Christians lack trust in non-Christians." Another interviewee vented his anger, "Christians are aggressive and threatening. If you do not believe in Jesus, you'll go to hell. Why do Christians attack other religions?" A lady shared her feelings, "I cannot help but ask myself why Christians are extremely aggressive, and act unbecomingly." A manager voiced his perception, "The voice, the tone of Christian preachers are aggressive. I feel oppressed, unhappy, and manipulated. They do not respect time, place, and persons." One respondent gives the following advice:

We are Thais, we can communicate smoothly. We don't have to confront each other. A good person must have a smooth relationship with other fellowmen. Thais who have religion in their hearts will be humble, gentle and are not rough or rude.

Fourth, the interviewees (47%) confirmed the important role of flexibility and adjustment orientation. A Buddhist teacher in a Christian school expressed her concept of Thai's flexibility and adjustment, "I believe in both religions, Buddhism and Christianity. I bring some needs to Buddha; I
bring other needs to Jesus." A Buddhist bluntly said, "Christians are narrow
minded. Their world is narrow and suitable for legalists." Another
respondent suggested, "Christians should dialogue with Buddhists and listen
to their ideas and needs, because each religion is unique. Christians should
listen to Buddhists' agreements and disagreements. Then we should learn to
adapt ourselves." A scholar related, "When my friend is critically ill, I ask a
spirit to help her. Will you please pray for her too? Perhaps God will listen
to his servant?"

Fifth, the interviewees (70%) confirmed our model that Thai religion
functions holistically to meet the present physical, social and ideological
needs. Thai interviewees learn religion from rituals and ceremonies because
Thai religion is affective, experiential, concrete, and practical, but Thais do not
like extreme or fanatic forms of worship. The interviewees enjoyed rites of
passage, and ceremonies. One respondent said, "Religious participation
blesses me with happiness, calmness, and a quiet mind." Interviewees also
demonstrated through their responses various origins of Thai religion. High
Buddhism influences Thais to value the congruity between words and deeds,
faith and life. Traditional religion meets their felt needs. Folk Buddhism and
Hinduism give them rites of passage, ceremonies, rituals, and festivals to
enjoy.

The following is the presentation of some responses in their own
words. A student pointed out, "Religion should help promote education,
adult counseling, and the poor in slum communities." Another student
voiced, "Religion should bridge social gaps, and solve drug problems among
adolescents." Another lady advised, "Christianity should not break unity
among social and kinship networks." A teacher said, "Religion is the anchor
of our hearts."
Inquiry also unexpectedly offered some new information. Devout Buddhists emphasize the harmony between words and deeds. An educator lamented, "It is very obvious that Christians live split level lives between words and deeds." More research interviews concerning Thai religion will be presented in the second section of this chapter.

Sixth, Thai non-Christians (44%) interviewed confirm the value of interdependence in Thai society. A housewife reminded me:

Christians do not get along with others, or live simple lives as ordinary folks who cooperate with others. Christians call themselves brethren, but call others non-believers, secular people, and the lost. They separate themselves from us. They segregate people. How can they call us to come to their faith?

A respondent in the South expressed her disappointment, "Christians provide no activities in which Buddhists can participate." An interviewee in the Northeast voiced, "Christians detest Buddhist ceremonies, and they do not hide their disgust." A student in Bangkok suggested, "Christian churches should not isolate themselves from outside society. Christians should not perceive outsiders as strangers or people outside their fellowship."

Seventh, the answers of respondents (24%) mentioned about the value of fun and pleasure. The fun and pleasure they related came from participating in religious festival and worship. A high school kid related, "I like Christmas eve. The school provides a lot of cookies and communal activities to enjoy." A lady shared, "I like Christian worship. It is fun to sing. We also like humorous preachers who tell us funny stories." I observed that all non-Christians responded to the interview questions seriously, and the lack of small talk was obvious during interviewing.
The research interview did not carry much data about education and competence orientation and achievement-task orientation among non-Christians.

**Summary.** The research interviews concerning the Thai way of meekness from non-Christians confirmed mostly the nine-value clusters of Komin (1991). They added more information to the definition of ego-orientation and its taboo behavior patterns. Ego orientation includes self-identity, self worth, self-confidence and self-reliance. In order to keep Thai ego orientation intact people should practice the following: (1) do not trample Buddhism; (2) do not force or persuade Thais to make decisions; (3) do not challenge Thais, and (4) do not contrast religions.

**Thai relational bonding.** The interviewees valued relational bonding. They suggested two kinds of relational bonding: communal bonding (70%), and personal bonding (65%).

First, outsiders will be accepted by the community if they go to pay respect and introduce themselves to important people in the community when they first enter into the boundary of the rural community. A housewife suggested, "Before you interview me, you should go and visit the chief of the village." I followed her suggestion and was warmly welcomed by the old man. The chief shared with me the villagers' needs and the wicked structure which oppressed the poor. Strange as it may seem, when I first arrived, our minister pointed to the chief's house and advised us, "Do not mess with him. He is against our religion."

Most non-Christians (70%) suggested that Christian churches should participate in the communal activities as far as they can. A businessman related:

I attend a Christian church with my friend. I stand up, sit down, and sing with Christians. Christians never participate
in communal activities. I observe that Christians are good musicians. Why don't they play music for people in the community so they would be a part of the community?

Another teacher in the Northeast shared:

I like a Roman Catholic priest in my village. He brings his Buddhist students to listen to dharmas (truths) in Buddhist temples. Then he also invites them to attend Catholic mass. He allows his students to choose on their own. Many turn to the Catholic faith. They are devout, worshipping in their church before they go to school and before they go to bed.

Second, as for personal relational bonding, they suggested two kinds, friendly (63%) and deep (68%). Thai Buddhists explained that friendly relational bonding took place through shared experiences, and deep bonding occurred through the sharing of liminality in the natural pattern of life and the long term commitment to each other. An interviewee gave the advice:

People bond together in a relationship when they spend time together. They do things together and travel together. Togetherness is an important key to creating true fellowship and bonds between two Thais. We attend social activities together. The other characteristic of the friendly friendship is sharing. We will share things generously especially food, clothes, and even kitchen utensils. One will offer time to accompany another in order that the other will have companionship and feel no embarrassment in joining social activities. We join in the community's rites of passage together, funeral ceremonies, wedding ceremonies, and monk ordinations. We care for each other, reciprocally listening to each other's problems and taking the concerns to heart. We consult each other in making decisions; our conversations include every topic.

Third, the relational bonding in depth starts with togetherness, and the sharing and caring in liminality in the natural pattern of life. They draw on each other's strength during times of crisis. They help each other go through difficulties and hardships even to the point of sacrificing. Thai sayings confirm this spirit; ruam-took-ruam-sook (share happiness and suffering); ruam-pen-ruam-tai (share life and death). A lady acclaimed, "In my life, I
have had respect for one Christian. He cared for one eccentric boy by bringing him to see a psychiatrist in a suburb of Bangkok. The journey took him many tedious hours. The Christian man cared while the family did not care for the boy."

Characteristics of true deep relational bonding are the long term commitment and the reversal of formal Thai behavior. At this stage, the relationship will be lasting, and two people will be what the Thai call "friends to death." They will consider themselves blood brothers and sisters, and they know the kinship and social networks of their friends and vice versa.

At this stage, violating the identity of each other is a sign of bonding. Men scold each other, mentioning the mothers' or ancestors' names of their friends. Touching the head is acceptable. People will directly confront each other with great concern for the welfare of their friends. Westerners who do not understand the Thai system of addressing will be confused, because Thai hooligans use the same low language in addressing each other. An interviewee pointed out, "There is deep relational bonding among hooligans."

A teacher related,

"When your minister planted the church here, he was lonely and isolated himself and the church from others. I took interest in him and his family, because his son is my student. Then your minister was oppressed by a Christian "big wheel." He was cheated and had nowhere to go. I shared in his liminality and looked for a place for him to live and to use as a place of worship. I knew all his hardship, but I admired his spirit and endurement. Now, I have some troubles and I shared with him. We are true friends."

Summary. Research interviews lend support to Sharp's (1948-1949) and Kaufman's (1977) research concerning Thai relational boundaries. The research interviews added new information by recommending Thai behavior
patterns in communal bonding and personal relational bonding. Communal bonding exhibited itself in bonding with respectable people of communities and in attending communal rites of passage. Personal relational bonding expressed itself through togetherness, the sharing and caring in liminality of lives. Long term commitment, reversal of formal Thai behavior, and violating the identity of each other are signs of deep relational bonding.

Thai Christians

Forty-eight Thai Christians represented some denominations: Wesleyan independent churches, as well as the C.M.A., Presbyterian, and Pentecostal churches. The criteria for the Christian prospects I interviewed were: (1) active Christians; (2) had a good understanding and knowledge of Thai culture; (3) had served more than three years in Thailand, and (4) were opinion leaders. The prospects represented Christians from four regions of Thailand where the local cultural context is different. My sample is an effort to be representative but statements of analysis are about my sample. The interview question was structured as follows:

1. Dr. George B. McFarland, a well-known missionary to Thailand recorded Prince Damrongrachanuparp's comment about Mr. Boon Itt at his memorial service in 1928:

I am glad to help in the memorial to that splendid man. Boon Itt was a true Christian. You may not know that I offered him a position which would have led to high titles of nobility from the King of Siam, to the governership of a large province, and to a large increase in his income. Yet, he declined these high honors and financial benefit that he might continue in the service of Jesus Christ. The ten short years Boon Itt worked in Siam were years of most fruitful endeavor. His death occurred before he was forty, yet he had already become the acknowledged leader of the Christian church in Siam. Christians and non-Christians loved and respected him, and his influence on behalf of God was unbounded. (1928:15)
In what way did Boon Itt's life illustrate the dominant values of Thai culture? Why?

It is interesting to observe that most Thai Christians' responses to research interviews concerning Thai characteristics and other topics were shorter than those of non-Christians. Most Thai Christians simply answered, "I don't know Thai culture." One seminarian acclaimed, "Thai Christians know very little about Thai characteristics, and we pay no attention to them."

Analysis of the responses can be categorized as follows: (1) self-identity 30%, (2) Thai ideal religious leaders (48%), (3) Thai relational bonding (22%), and (4) Christian confession (72%). Of the nine-value clusters of Komin (1991), only self-identity, and smooth interpersonal relationships emerged from the research interview.

Self-identity. Interviewees (30%) perceived Thai self-identity as having goals, determination, and courage concerning their work. Thai self-identity is the dignity in oneself which is not for sale. It is also a courage to live a counter-culture life-style which is against the worldly norms. Thai self-identity is self-reliance, standing firm on what one believes. A seminarian senior spoke well, "When Thais have faith in anything, they devote their lives sacrificially to it. Thais are fighters who are willing to die rather than to give in." A secretary confirmed, "No one could force Boon-Itt to do anything. If he believed in his work, he committed himself to it. He was not greedy for money, power or position but lived a simple lifestyle." Another teacher pointed out, "Boon-Itt had goals, determination, and dignity which could not be bought by money or fame."

One Thai Christian leader viewed Boon-Itt's self-identity in the opposite way. He responded,

The important characteristics of Thai culture that Boon-Itt
expressed were as follows: being good, righteous, gracious, helping fellowmen in their physical suffering. Surely, he must be a good Christian! However, if he was a Christian on fire and doing Christ's ministry like the apostles, he must receive persecution!

In fact, this leader did not know Boon-Itt's ministry. Boon-Itt did plant churches. He died while he carried on the ministry of planting churches. A church he planted lasts until this day, expressing its solid faith in Christ in Pitsanuloke province.

Thai ideal religious leaders. The result of the research interviews in this area focused on: (1) sacrificial life as a living model (26%), and (2) humility (98%).

First, a seminary professor explained about sacrificial life as a living model:

Father Koon, a Buddhist monk, is well admired because of his sacrificial lifestyle more than his teaching. Boon-Itt was willing to dive into dirty water in order that a church would be built. He chose dharma (the Truth) rather than materialism. His dharma was simple living. Missionaries live luxuriously. For example, I know a mission which never lacks any good materials, but they are not successful in their mission, because people do not see saintly lifestyles.

Another high school teacher proposed, "Everybody saw that Boon-Itt turned down honor and fame. People had faith in him, because he was a living model for others." The respondents obviously proposed the incarnational model for Thai ideal religious leaders. Another characteristic mentioned by respondents was humility.

Second, many interviewees (98%) gave the advice that Thai religious leaders should be humble like Boon-Itt. A lady instructor advised, "Contentment is an important characteristic of the Thai. Good Thai religious leaders should not be greedy. They should be patient and consistent in their long-term commitment. People should see humility in their lives."
Third, a number of respondents (19%) expressed dependency upon leaders as a Thai value. An interviewee confirmed, "The Thai want to depend on leaders." Another said, "Boon-Itt was a leader upon whom others could depend." When Thai Christians interviewed (19%) emphasized following leaders, I suspect they did not value self-identity and self-confidence. Most Thai non-Christians emphasized standing on their own but keeping interdependence in relationships among families and friends. Thai Christian responses seemed to point to paternalism introduced by Westernized Christian missions more than Thai culture. Few respondents knew about Thai relational bonding

**Thai relational bonding.** Thai Christians detected the important role of relationship among the Thai. Some interviewees (17%) pointed out that Christians lacked communal bonding. Twenty-eight percent believed that Christians lacked friendly relational bonding with non-Christians. A pastor's wife voiced her idea:

An important character of Thai culture is interdependence. It means we bond ourselves to our neighbors and reciprocally help each other. Even though we come from different faiths, we assimilate ourselves with each other, because Thai culture is extensive, family-like society.

A university student reminded me:

As Christians, we should not isolate ourselves and stick solely among Christians. We need to participate in Thai social activities. At present, we scarcely open ourselves up to other social groups. I think Christian behavior patterns come from fear. We fear others will know that we are Christian. We fear persecution and our parents. We fear to witness. I think Thai non-Christians are not as fierce as we imagine. If we bond ourselves to our parents before we witness, they will not be angry. We have to change ourselves, our attitudes, and overlook differences and bond ourselves with them. Christians think bonding with non-Christians will destroy our faith which is not true. If we have courage to bond with them, we will find
our faith strengthened. If we live cowardly, our faith will diminish.

An ecumenical and evangelical pastor related:

I combined ecumenical and evangelical ways in dealing with non-Christians. I bonded myself with the community. Non-Christians love our church and help us take good care of it. The villagers received their water supply, because our church invested our money for them. The villagers benefit greatly from the church. They have roads and electricity, because our church cooperates with them without hidden agendas.

A teacher talked about the power of liminality in the natural pattern of living in personal relational bonding,

I live my life in such a way that makes non-Christians raise the question, "Why are you so kind to us?" When their child was sick, I carried the sick boy to see the doctor. I helped a granny carry a heavy load on my back in the heat of the sun. I was exhausted, but my action made the granny think about my God. When the granny worried about me I told her, "Don't worry, Granny. My God has been here before."

However, most Thai Christians who detected the value and behavior patterns mentioned above agreed there was split-level Christian lives among Thai Christians.

Thai Christian Interviewed confessions. Interviewees (72%) confessed that majority of Christians in Thailand did not live what they preached. Even though Thai Christians know that self-identity is the most important value among the Thai, they realize that many Thai Christians lack the kind of self-identity that Boon-Itt possessed. A seminarian related,

What I always hear from many Thai pastors is that they do not have high enough salaries. I do not understand why many pastors leave their churches to work with Christian organizations which offer them positions. However, I do confess that I myself am also greedy. I want to be rich and have a good position.
Another important evangelist pointed out, "Only ten percent of Thai Christian leaders are like Boon-Itt. If Thai Christians lived like him, the gospel would spread all over Thailand."

A professor commented about humility:

At present, Thai Christians are competitive. We have become like Westerners. We are not as patient as our forefathers. We are not humble. As soon as the students graduate from seminaries, they want to be professors. They do not want to work hard for the sake of the work and the people. They have nothing which can be compared to Boon-Itt. They do not take God and the work seriously. They are influenced by materialism and tend to be more like secular people.

The research interviews also revealed other notable points. Only two interviewees identified grateful relationships as an important value of Thai culture. The lack of emphasis on grateful relationship demonstrates that Thai Christians are more like Westerners than Thais, because Westerners lack this value (Komin 1991). It explains chaotic situations of Christendom in Thailand where "dollar missions" of Western and Asian missions steal leaders from other missions in order to promote their own missions. By dollar mission I mean missions which use money in transferring pastors and workers from other missions to their missions. They violate grateful relationships of Thai culture and create disunity among churches, turning missions into secular business.

Only one interviewee identified flexibility. It is obvious that Thai Christians have lost their uniqueness of flexibility and adjustment concerning life, faith, and ministry. Thai Christians stick to old approaches. One can imagine how Thai Christians are alien to their own culture which cherishes grateful relationship and flexibility.

However, Thai Christian interviewees (30%) who were able to detect Thai value of self-identity and 98% who detected Thai value of humility
indicated the fact that most of them were Thai in the depth of their being, however Thainess was covered with Westernness. If the Thai spark shone out, Thailand would have many living Boon-Itts.

**Missionaries**

As already mentioned above, I interviewed 25 Western missionaries. The missionaries represented various denominations: the Southern Baptist Mission in Thailand, the Overseas Missionary Fellowship Mission (O.M.F.), the Christian and Missionary Alliance Mission (C.M.A.), the Church of Christ in Thailand, and the Campus Outreach Ministry. The criteria for the Christian prospects I interviewed were: (1) active Christians, (2) had a good understanding and knowledge of Thai culture, (3) had served more than three years in Thailand, and (4) were opinion leaders. The prospects represented Christians from four regions of Thailand where the local cultural context is different. My sample is an effort to be representative but statements of analysis are about my sample.

Findings indicated that most missionaries did not pay serious attention to the Thai culture or the Thai. Few missionaries who stayed in Thailand many years spoke well about the Thai from their experiences. Most of them excused themselves from talking about the culture, saying that they were not Thai and had no time to study culture. Many of them did not observe much difference between Thais and Westerners because of the impact of modernization. One missionary shared that she had no problem discipling a Thai convert. They got along fine. The missionary said, "My disciple went to see a Thai doctor, and the medical doctor wondered why she spoke Thai with such a strange American accent."

It was also remarkable that the majority of missionaries could not detect the nine value clusters of the Thai (Komin 1991). They only had some
opaque glimpse of smooth interpersonal relationship and some behavior
patterns of the Thai. Analysis of missionaries' responses was as follows: (1)
sacrificial life (40%); (2) humility (24%); (3) leadership (16%), and (4) Thai
relational bonding (18%). Only 4% of missionaries mentioned self-identity as
a characteristic of the Thai. Thirty-two percent of missionaries thought that
all Boon-Itt's goodness derived from Christian virtues not Thai culture.

Sacrificial life. Most missionaries (40%) mentioned the characteristic of
a sacrificial life. Thirty-two percent of them believed that this behavior
pattern was a Christian virtue and was not one of the Thai's characteristics. A
missionary advised:

Boon-Itt did not take the high position because he would
have to perform a lot of Buddhist ceremonies. His dominant
values were Christian. The prince saw the servanthood of
the man which was contrary to other non-Christians who valued
selfishness.

Another missionary was perplexed, "I am confused how Boon-Itt's life
could express Thai characteristics. Thais love honor and value hierarchy. He
was so opposite."

The other fifty percent of missionaries believed that even though Thais
love money, position, and power, they value sacrificial lifestyle. An O.M.F.
missionary pointed out:

Typical Thais respect rich people but I observe that they
respect more those who turn their back on material greed.
Thais seem to know that more valuable things abound
than money. Thais also respect good people; they are influential.
Thais also admire patience.

Another O.M.F. missionary suggested, "The living models of Thais are
the kings and teachers in high schools. Boon-Itt's lifestyle reflected these
living models. His life demonstrated sacrifice in giving, living, and
leadership."
Twenty-four percent of missionaries agreed about humble behavior patterns of the Thai.

**Humility.** Missionaries (24%) believed that humility was an important Thai character. A young missionary proposed, "Boon-Itt wanted to be with the common people. Humility is the real dominant value of the Thai. Thais are very humble. Westerners respect humility but they do not want it."

A C.M.A. missionary confirmed, "Outward humility and humble attitude are very much a part of Thai culture which is opposite to Americans."

**Leadership.** Some missionaries (16%) recognized leadership in Boon-Itt and believed that leadership was an important characteristic of the Thai. A missionary proposed, "Boon-Itt had commitment to his people and culture as opposed to self-advantage. He was an acknowledged leader at a very young age. Character is important for the Thai. They have a willingness to follow the individual leader." Another missionary confirmed, "He was young but was the leader." A young missionary suggested, "He was the only acknowledged leader of the Siam Church at that time."

**Thai relational bonding.** Few missionaries identified Thai relational bonding. Missionaries (24%) observed that Boon-Itt had good relationships with Thai communities, the prince and the common people. Twelve percent of missionaries thought Boon-Itt had smooth interpersonal relationships with most people. These missionaries seemed to have some understanding of Thai relational culture which most missionaries disregard.

A lady missionary from a C.M.A. mission related, "He loved both Christians and non-Christians. People felt loved by him. People needed to be loved and appreciated. There is no 'I really care about you' evangelism. Non-verbal communication of the gospel is important for the Thai."
A Southern Baptist missionary summarized Thai relational bonding with one word, "Love." Another missionary pointed out, "People saw the level of relationship with people Boon-Itt worked with." One missionary viewed Thai relational bonding indifferently, "Thais accept people and make people happy. They are friendly. They tell you what you want to hear."

**Summary.** Western missionaries found it hard to detect Thai values and worldview. They missed the nine-value clusters of Komin (1991). They could not detect the Thai self-identity which Thai Christians detected. Missionaries' responses revealed that they could only detect some Thai behavior patterns. Interviewees could find only one virtue in Thai culture, humility. It is interesting to observe that missionaries and Thai Christians interviewed followed the same thought pattern concerning leadership. Thai Christians interviewed believe in dependence on leaders, and missionaries think Thais want to follow leaders, but non-Christian Thais believe in self-reliance. Analysis indicates that many Thai Christians and missionaries interviewed lack knowledge in depth about Thai characteristics, therefore they do not understand the Thai or their culture. They cannot understand why the Thai do what they do and what are the drives behind Thai behavior patterns. Moreover, the research revealed some degree of paternalism between most missionaries and Thai Christians interviewed which violated self-identity, the main dominant value of the Thai people.

**Research Interviews: The Thai Way of Meekness in Religious Discipling**

In this section, I will present the analysis of the findings of the research interviews concerning the Thai way of meekness in religious discipling from Thai non-Christians, Thai Christians, and missionaries. My sample is an effort to be representative but statements of analysis are about my sample.
The presentation will focus on: (1) the function of religion, (2) verbal communication concerning religion, (3) non-verbal communication concerning religion, (4) perceptions of Christians, churches, and Christianity from Thai Buddhists, Thai Christians, and missionaries, (5) perception of Buddhists and Buddhism from Thai Christians and missionaries, and (6) how to be Thai and Christian in the Thai way.

Thai Buddhists

Interview questions concerning the function of religion follows.

a. In what way should good religions benefit their believers?

b. In what way can Christian Thais contribute to the Thai and the nation?

The function of religion. The interviewees perceived religion as: (1) an affective religion (78%), (2) a religion applicable to the present felt needs (56%), (3) a practical religion, solving life problems (77%), (4) a religion of rituals, ceremonies, and festivals (70%), (5) a religion of integrative functions (61%), (6) a concrete, experiential religion (74%), (7) a bonding religion (70%), and (8) a religion that does not force faith (65%).

While Christianity in Thailand emphasizes the cognitive aspect of religion, the Thai interviewees (78%) perceive the function of religion differently. First and foremost, religion is feeling, not reasoning. The semantic expressions the interviewees used heavily emphasize the word jai which means heart. The words are listed in order of the frequency mentioned with the highest number first:

1. sa-bai-jai: (feel happy)
2. sa-ngop-jai: (feel calm and serene)
3. yert-niew-jai: (an anchor of heart)
4. sook-kai -sook-jai: (physical and affective happiness)
5. *jai-m e-santi-sook*: (peace of heart)
6. *tan-jai*: (immediately appeal to heart)
7. *yen-jai*: (cool in heart)
8. *mekamlang-jai*: (courage in heart)
9. *man-jai*: (confidence in heart)
10. *mot-para-jai*: (burden rolls away from heart)
12. *kert-kwamrak-kwam-manjai*: (create love and sincerity in heart)
13. *kert-jai-ur-pur-pair*: (create generosity in heart)

An interviewee explained, "A good religion gives peace and contentment to my heart. Whenever I practice the rituals like merit making or meditation, I am convinced that I am doing the right things. Religion is an anchor of the heart."

Second, interviewees (56%) thought that religion should communicate with immediate and present concerns. It should benefit the present life, not focus on other-worldliness. Some Buddhists observe Christianity as irrelevant because they would lose the benefit of the present life if they believed. "Christian believers have to attend church every Sunday. They also isolate themselves from kinship networks," many Thais mention. Another man replied, "I want to be saved from sufferings more than from sins. Right now, I suffer and I want to be delivered from this suffering. I am not interested in salvation from sins."

Third, respondents (77%) indicated that religion should create reality and ethical values in believers, giving everyday *dharmas* which solve the problems of life. The ethical values are love, sacrifice, satisfaction in what one has, unselfishness, and peaceful living with others. Religion also provides ways of living and self-confidence. The founder of religion is not as
important as the dharmas he teaches. Believing in dharmas comes from seeing dharmas practiced by other people. A lady related:

Religion should edify the quality of life and give happiness and peace. Religion develops our thought patterns and characters. It gives us self-control. I am not interested in salvation from sins. I am interested in this world more than in life after death.

Fourth, Thai interviewees (70%) learned dharmas from rituals, ceremonies, and festivals. Participation in these religious activities helps the Thais feel dharmas and understand dharmas as the needs in their affective domain are met. Religious rituals also provide social relationships for their believers. Thai people suggest that the inductive ways of teaching and learning dharmas is effective. Learning spiritual lessons comes from seeing ethical lives, dialoguing, sharing experiences, watching religious films, or reading dharmas. An interviewee suggested, "The best way to teach dharmas is to allow dharmas to challenge the learners. Spiritual teachers who try to challenge their learners will fail." They believed dharmas were powerful in themselves, therefore good teachers should not be forceful or challenging. Teachers told stories and allowed stories to speak to listeners. For the Thais stories create people; people do not create stories.

A respondent said, "Religion creates faith; believers can immediately experience the reality of contentment. I am a Buddhist, and I very much experience faith and contentment in going to temples. Buddhist teaching also encourages me."

Fifth, respondents (61%) pointed out that religion should serve society and economics as well as ideology. A farmer confirmed, "Religion should help people have enough to eat, and it should provide friends to death."
Thais believe people should be able to use religion to solve economic and family problems. Good religion provides good, successful lives.

Sixth, Thai Buddhists interviewed (74%) believed that religion should be concrete and true when someone practiced it. An interviewee told me, "I believed 'do good receive good; do bad receive bad' of Buddha. I saw a Buddhist son scold his father and the next day, the son became mute. Buddhist teaching shows me the immediate consequence, and I was fearful." Thais disdain abstract religion and explanations about something that does not exist in their worldview and that they cannot experience with their five senses. Perhaps, this can explain why most Thai do not try to reach nirvana. Most of them do not believe in hell, heaven, reincarnation, and miracles in religion. Those who have lost loved ones seem to pay more attention to hell and heaven. A Buddhist explained to me, "Miracles in Buddhism are not true. They are parables which try to communicate spiritual lessons."

Seventh, Thai Buddhists interviewed (70%) believed religion should create relational bonding between believers and their kinsmen and social networks. Buddhism wants to bond with other religions and utilizes good things from them. A woman supported the idea:

Religion should help us help each other. It helps us open the doors of our home to others in life crisis. It helps us pay attention to the community welfare. I admire rich people who forsake their prosperity and commit their lives and time to help the poor.

Eighth, Thai Buddhists interviewed (65%) perceive that faith comes first from seeing and feeling, then experiencing will lead to seeking and thinking. Believing is self-initiated. Persuaded faith is not true faith, because it creates doubt in Thais' hearts. A university student explained, "If I believed because I was persuaded, I would always doubt my belief. True faith comes from my own seeking and understanding." Faith must be free from being
forced, persuaded, imposed, or planned for the Thai. A teacher in a Christian school suggested, "If Christians want others to believe in Jesus, they should let others see their good deeds. Good words are easy to say but difficult to put into practice."

**Verbal communication concerning religion.** Interview questions about verbal and non-verbal communication concerning religion follow.

a. What would you answer if a stranger approached you and asked you the following questions?

"If you were to die tonight, are you sure that you would go to heaven?"
"If you were to die tonight, and stand at the gate of heaven, what would you answer if Jesus asked you this question? Why should I allow you to go to heaven?" (Kennedy 1983:85)

How would you describe that Christian's approach?

b. What would you answer if a stranger approached you and asked you the following questions?

"Have you heard of the four spiritual laws? Just as there are physical laws that govern the physical universe, so are there spiritual laws that govern your relationship with God." (Bright 1968:1)

How would you describe that Christian's approach?

c. If you want to be a disciple of a Buddhist monk, whom will you choose? Why?

d. Many Christians were disciplined in Christian churches in the Western way, confessing their sins in front of their churches and being excluded from the communion service. Many of them left their churches. Some who were disciplined by the Thai way, using the *Kama* and *Ahosikarma* ritual, did not leave the churches and became better Christians.
In your opinion, why do the different methods of disciplining result in different responses?

The research interviews present the interviewees' ideas concerning the following aspects of religious communication: (1) the messengers, the message, and methods; (2) the natural bridge, and (3) the presentation of the gospel.

First, Thai Buddhists interviewed (100%) feel an overwhelming distaste for forceful communication, chatterboxes who ignore time, place and situation; over-persuasive communicators; challenging, controlling, aggressive messages, and messages which violate their personal lives if they are boastful, proud, unintelligible, disuniting, and pin others against the wall. All Thai non-Christians interviewed spoke negatively about the approaches designed to witness in questions a and b above by Evangelism Explosion III of James Kennedy and Campus Crusade for Christ International of Bill Bright.

A high school girl responded to the Evangelism Explosion III approach. "I would be upset. It is ridiculous and strange. I do not know who will die first, the interrogator or me. I would be angry and not want to have anything to do with that Christian. I would simply walk away. I do not want anyone to talk about death. It is a depressive issue."

Another Buddhist who attended a Christian church for ten years answered about question b with these words, "Are you crazy? Out of the blue, you come to talk with me about religion. That is attacking, really attacking. I do not trust strangers who ask these kinds of questions, especially Westerners. I would walk away."

Another lady voiced her ideas about question b:

What this Christian said is impossible. What is his logic? I feel he is unreasonable. When Buddhists spread dharmas (truths), they help
others in life crisis. Those who are interested in truths seek and accept truths by themselves. Buddhists witness indirectly.

Thai Buddhist interviewees (95%) perceive that good messages should appeal to the affective domain and be concretely transmitted with pictorial language, parables, proverbs, mottoes, comparisons, and riddles if one wants to introduce change to the minds of others. Good messages transmit the middle way suggestion, optimism; the messages are audience oriented. Thais perceive that the inductive pattern and way of communication help others to initiate changes by themselves. A lady who worked with Christians gave this advice:

In preaching the gospel, Christians should explain the teaching of the Bible without contrasting it with that of Buddhism. Buddhists will do the contrasting on their own. Christians should proclaim the goodness of Christianity showing a harmony between their lives and faith which should be above Buddhist behavior patterns. Then non-Christians will ask themselves, "Why?" Christians should leave non-Christians free to think on their own and avoid arguing which will only shadow the Christian image from the Thai perspective.

Second, non-Christians interviewed (93%) believed that the teaching of dharmas (truths) and Thainess are the natural bridge for Christian and Buddhist dialogue. They suggested that Christians should start with Christian teachings which are not against Buddhist teaching before moving to abstract theology and doctrines. All interviewees agree that Buddhist dharmas (truths) and Christian dharmas shared a lot in common. They perceive ethical teachings as the most natural bridge to dialogue between Thai Buddhists and Thai Christians. Most Thais observed that Christians started sharing their faith by using dharmas which are contradictory to Buddhist dharmas. A Buddhist asked impatiently "Can't you start first with something we understand? We believe in doing good and receiving good, but Christians witness that people who do bad can receive good if they believe
in Jesus. Cheap grace and cheap propaganda." An interviewee said, "I love the ten commandments, love, and forgiving in the Bible."

A respondent suggested:

When Christians have deep relational bonding with non-Christians, the Thai will come and talk with Christians when experiencing a life crisis. At that point, Christians should give them dharmas (truths) in Christianity which comfort them. For example, when Buddhists face bereavement, Christians should talk about Christian ideas concerning death.

The other powerful natural bridge is the "Thainess." Non-Christians interviewed said repeatedly, "Thailand does not have Thai Buddhists, Thai Moslems, or Thai Christians. We have just Thais. Christianity differentiates people as Thai Buddhists and Thai Christians. Thailand does not segregate people. All are Thais." Whenever I started the interview with the topic concerning the goodness of Thainess, Thai culture, Thailand, the dialogue flowed. Interviewees and I seemed to be in one mind and one spirit. Non-Christian Thais' main concern was, "Christianity destroys our culture. The children disobey the parents when they convert and they act fanatic, and aggressive."

Third, Buddhist interviewees (60%) suggested that Christians should pay attention to Buddhist questions concerning Jesus and God. Thai Buddhists do not like the description of Jesus' crucifixion, but they love Jesus' sacrificial love. A respondent said, "The description of Jesus' death is dreadful, but I admire his sacrificial life." Thais believed Christians should present Jesus as a helper in times of trouble. The Thai asserted that the story of the life of Jesus should be presented in full scale before Christians call non-Christians to make a decision to follow Christ.

A university student of religious study suggested:
Christians cannot explain the existence of God with doctrines to the Thai. Understanding about the concept of God comes from seeing first the harmony between Christians' views and their way of life. Dialoguing is helpful. I do not want to know about the attributes and miracles of God or his redemption but I want to know about what he taught concerning morality. Then naturally the issue will turn to God's existence. The Thai accept the ten commandments, but Christians start with redemption which blows our minds, because we do not understand that concept. If Christians continue to approach the Thai like that, they waste their time, and good things in Christianity will be rejected.

Fourth, few Thais remembered the story of Maitreya, the Lord of mercy. Those who still remember can be approached personally with this concept of the Messiah to come. The Thai were displeased if Christians made public claims that Jesus was Maitreya (the Lord of mercy) to come. Only three respondents knew about Maitreya. One of them said, "I believe he will come."

Fifth, in discipling believers, Thai non-Christians interviewed (87%) perceive that good disciplers are people like Buddha, Buddhatas (a monk), forest monks, Pra Prayom (a monk), and good teachers. Buddhatas was well-known for his belief in high Buddhism and he did not worship Buddha's images. His faith was congruent with his life until he passed away. Forest monks are well-known for their ascetic lifestyle and social work for communities. Pra Prayom lives a harmonious life in word and deed. He teaches practical dharmas in Thai styles of religious verbal communication to modern people. The Thai learn from life models.

A respondent acclaimed, "I will choose every good and trustworthy monk as my discipler, because they hold fast to the truths of Buddhism. I like Luangpor (Great Father) Chan. He is a real giver, giving without any hidden agenda. He helps the sick and built many roads."
Thai non-Christians interviewed cherished the following personality traits of disciplers: being humble, gentle and kind in attitude and behavior patterns, being congruent in word and deed, dependable, and being humorous but authoritative. They perceived the roles of disciplers as givers, counselors in life crisis, teachers, friends, older brothers, and fathers. An interviewee related, "A discipler should be righteous inwardly and outwardly. Disciplers love their disciples and teach them well with a deep understanding of their being. Good disciplers give all and always give without expecting benefits in return."

Thai non-Christians interviewed suggested the Thai way of meekness in religious discipling tools includes as follows: ceremonies (70%), rituals (70%), life models (50%), practical and experiential teaching (40%), and books (10%). They talk extensively about the good methods of formal and informal teaching. They mention that deep relational bonding by being together and the availability of disciplers set the stage for effective discipling. They also suggested: dialoging/teaching, counseling/teaching, and flexible methods of teaching which fit the learning styles of disciples. They believed that good disciplers should help disciples think on their own.

A lady said, "Ceremonies and rituals provide peace of mind and make me learn truths on my own." Another student replied, "Good discipling comes from deep relational bonding. Disciplers and disciples take time to care and share suffering and happiness." A man suggested, "Good disciplers teach their disciples to think on their own; afterward, the disciples observe and absorb the ethical, living models of disciplers." Another respondent gave this advice, "Good disciplers use proverbs and mottoes in teaching. My teacher said, 'Look into the future with hope; look into the past with dignity.' He inspired me to think on my own."
Sixth, Thai non-Christians interviewed (96%) understood disciplining as disciplining wrongdoers to repent on their own by providing them a second chance in life. A respondent affirmed, "To err is to be a human being. To give a second chance is Thai culture." However, respondents think that people who keep on sinning after the second chance is given should be punished by the community by cutting them off from relational bonding.

A respondent suggested that discipling wrongdoers should fit the Thai culture and should not violate wrongdoers' self-identity. An interviewee affirmed:

When wrongdoers commit sins we should not hurt their feelings. Scolding or criticizing will not help. We should try to understand that they might not know what they did. Perhaps they were careless and did it on the spur of the moment. We should encourage them to turn away from their sin in private.

Ninty-six percent of respondents agree with the use of the KaRKa and Ahosikarrna ritual in the Christian discipling of wrongdoers.

Non-verbal communication concerning religion. The following suggestions are listed according to the frequency mentioned by Buddhist interviewees: (1) congruence of words and deeds (93%); (2) manners and attitude (95%), and (3) relational bonding to non-Christians (65%).

First, Thai Buddhists interviewed (93%) valued deeds and words. Deeds speak louder and clearer than words. Sacrifice, love, and generosity must be shown in deeds and words. They despised people who talked well but did nothing. Words and deeds should go together. The Thai interviewed demanded that sacrifice, love, and generosity should be done generously, in sincerity and in purity without any hidden agenda; benevolence should be done out of true mercy and kindness. The Buddhist monks help people from all walks of life and faiths, and they require no conversion. As a result, the Thai interviewed perceived Christian acts of mercy with caution, suspecting a
Christian hidden agenda of converting. Through the lens of worldview, Thais interviewed perceived Christians' good intentions and motives differently.

Thai Buddhist interviewees perceived that good deeds and good words should be performed without religious boundaries. They perceived that Thainess is more important than different religions; those who set up a religious boundary acted contrary to the teaching of their religion. The Thai interviewed understood that good words and deeds should be performed in a friendly, gentle, and humble spirit without pride. They were deeply grateful for the help of others in their crises when they could not help themselves. Help that flowed out of real, continuous concern according to the needs of receivers would create deep relational bonding and reciprocal grateful relationships initiated by the receivers.

A non-Christian pointed out, "True loving kindness given in honesty and sincerity to non-Christians without hidden agendas of converting them makes non-Christians trust in Christians. As they trust in the person, they follow the person's footsteps. They and their parents will be Christians." A parent said, "Those who are close to Christians watch whether their lives and faith are congruent. They watch whether Christians have anger, responsibility, or love toward their neighbors. Deeds are more important than words. Buddhists quietly watch and evaluate Christians from their lives not their words."

Second, the Thai Buddhist interviewed (95%) perceived that others had good manners in communicating when they learned to share crucial issues only after a good relational bond was created. The communicator should know the proper time, the tone, and places for communicating with others. Humble communicators would realize they could not change anyone, and...
listeners had authority. From the Thai Buddhist interviewees' perspective, good communicators should be friendly, smiling, and not angry when others do things differently or disagree with their point of view. Serious, controlling facial expressions, mannerisms and tone of voice were bad manners. Thais Buddhists interviewed did not like those, especially women, who were courageous in witnessing beyond the beauty of Thai etiquette, and the Thai did not like legalists.

The Thai interviewed perceived good attitudes in communication in the following ways: (1) do to others as you want them to do to you; (2) forgive generously when others misunderstand your message, and (3) do not communicate with a hidden agenda.

A respondent suggested, "Christians can bring up religious issues only when they have deep relational bonding with non-believers. They should be sensitive to time, place, and occasion. Most of all, they should learn to be vulnerable." A teacher gave advice about improper manners in communication concerning religion, "When Christians disagree with non-Christians, Christians should not show disruptive emotion with their facial expressions, body movement, tone of voice, or eye movements. They should stop showing disgust when people with whom Christians dialogue do things differently."

Third, non-Christians interviewed (65%) suggested that Christians should open up Christian boundaries and considered non-Christians as friends. They suggested that Christians should introduce themselves to their community, and make effort to get to know kinship networks and social networks of those whom Christians contacted. The interviewees believed non-Christians would be less suspicious of Christians when Christians were sincere and honest.
A man gave this advice:

Christians should understand family ties in Thai culture. Christians should be willing to wait until children reach maturity or fathers retire from government jobs before baptizing them into the Christian faith, instead of creating chaos in the Thai family and receiving no converts. Christians should understand Thai culture.

Their perceptions of Thai Christians, churches and Christianity.

Buddhist Thais' perceptions of Thai Christians are described in various categories. These categories are listed according to the frequency mentioned by the interviewees: (1) Thai Christians separate words from deeds (63%); (2) Thai Christians do not respect other religions and their believers (77%); (3) Thai Christians create boundaries around themselves (96%), and (4) Christian messengers are aggressive (79%) and the message is unintelligible (89%). A teacher concluded her interview, "Christians should not be aggressive, forceful, overly persuasive, or boastful, insisting on decision making from non-Christians, and challenging my personal right and life."

Interviewees (63%) complained that Thai Christians did not practice what they preached. The few Christians who practiced it did not share their faith but those who did share their faith communicated the message so forcefully that their aggressive persistence overshadowed their goodness. A Christian told us about a Christian teacher who slapped a student because he did not pay attention to the preaching. In California, a student from that school shared the memory of the same incident and said, "That incident caused me to be a staunch Buddhist." He observed the split-level of "love your neighbor" in Christians.

Thai Buddhist interviewed (77%) viewed that Christians did not respect other faiths and their believers. A woman related, "Some Christians are narrow-minded. They show favoritism and in-group interest. They do
not understand that all are equal and all have equal rights in getting help. I am sick of Christians who always threaten us non-believers. A Christian said to my face, "This is a Christian place. It belongs to God and to us, Christians. I am not afraid of anyone. Who wants to challenge me?"

Thai Buddhists interviewed (96%) perceived Christians as created boundaries around themselves. Many Buddhists interviewed complained that Thai Christians were not considerate, and they pointed out that Christian semantic expressions and words hurt their identity and segregated Thai Christians from believers of other faiths. The words they mentioned were listed below:

1. *chao-loke*: (secular people)
5. *look-kwam-mert*: (children of the darkness)
6. *kone-barp*: (sinners)
7. *kon-long-hai*: (the lost)
8. *kon-rot-laow*: (the saved)

These words were contrary to the concept of meekness. They also indicated their disapproval of the following words used by Christians as unintelligible and foreign:

1. *ronrone*: It means "energetic" for Christians. This Thai word is the combination of hot and hurry in Thai, and Thais understand this word as fanatic.

2. *ta-tai*: It means "challenge" for Christians, but it means sexual appeal or an invitation to fight for Thais.

3. *sa-dut*: It means "stumble" among Christians, but Thais define this word as an unbecoming manner of walking.
Interviewees (79%) thought Christian messengers were aggressive and 89% of interviewees perceived Christian message unintelligible. A lady complained, "Christians did not take my heart into consideration. Some are good people but when they open their lips unkind and aggressive words pour out. Some gentle Christians never witness to me about Christ. The ones who did offended me."

Christians are obviously perceived by Buddhist Thais interviewed first of all as salesmen and saleswomen. Preachers are perceived as salesmen, lecturers, politicians, debaters, and even magicians. All Christians can talk about is religion at all times, in all places, to all people, and they are perceived as weird and foreign.

A young man pointed out:

Christian preachers confuse me. I do not really know who they are. What are their roles and statuses in Thai society? At the pulpit, they shout like politicians or public salesmen. When they come down, they joke and act like ordinary people, very ordinary, too ordinary. They are not monks because they wear no special robes. Who are they? I do not know what kind of pronouns I should use when talking with them.

Most Thais interviewed liked Christian weddings and Christian funerals in Christian churches. One of my close friends who is a Buddhist seriously pleaded with me to perform a Christian funeral for her when she died. "I am afraid to sleep in a Buddhist temple. My Christian cousin died, and his ceremony was beautiful." However, she believed most Christian churches created psychological war when comforting those who are in crisis. People of weak personality would become Christians at this point. She implicitly voiced her idea that Christians' concern was not genuine. Another Buddhist suggested the same thing. "They love non-Christians most when we attend their church for the first time. Their love subsides in the second
and third time. I am afraid to attend the church any longer because of their repeated questions, 'When will you convert?'

Interviewees related various ideas concerning the church as a sacred place, Christianity as religion and speaking in tongue in worship services. Many Thais interviewed observed that Christians did not consider their churches sacred places. "The church is just a meeting hall for Protestant Christians. They play ping-pong in the church after the service. Their church is not a sacred place like Buddhist temples," a non-Christian man expressed his concern. Many Thais interviewed thought Christianity was an abstract religion. Christians emphasized things that were abstract: God, Savior, hell, heaven, salvation from sins and theology. Christianity emphasized the past and the future, ignoring the present. Speaking in tongues and singing in the spirit were perceived by many Thais as childish, driving them away from seeking. Business managers and farmers alike voiced these opinions. A business man said, "The practice is childish and ridiculous. I will not join with such a church."

Buddhist Thais question most that "Jesus died for our sins." A man wanted to know, "Why did Jesus not stay in hell if he died for our sins. If we continue to sin who else will die to save us from sin? Why could Jesus die for our sins? What are the meanings of "Jesus is God" and "Jesus is the Son of God?" Many wondered why Christians forced people to believe in Jesus when they did not have enough evidence and information about Jesus. Next to those questions about Jesus, they had many questions concerning God. A non-Christian asked, "Christianity came into being after Buddhism. How could a Christian God create the world for Buddha? Does God exist? Who is he, and what does he look like? How can I see God? Believing in God causes
the loss of identity because I have to depend totally on him; I cannot stand on my own feet. Did God create us or did we create God?"

**Being Christian and Thai in the Thai way.** An interview question concerning how to be Christian and Thai follows.

Buddhism originated in India, but the Thai made it Thai. People can be Buddhist and Thai. However, Zimmerman and McFarland, missionaries to Thailand reported in 1931: "Christianity came to Siam as a Western cultural system. . . . So the first attempts of the Church were largely to Westernize and to denationalize the converts" (Davis 1994:88).

Would you be kind enough to suggest some ways that Christian Thais can be both Christian and Thai?

All non-Christian Thais interviewed believed Thais can be Christian and Thai in the Thai way if they learn to do the following: (1) demonstrate the congruence between words and deeds (93%); (2) create deep relational bonding with non-Christians and their communities without a hidden agenda before sharing the gospel (65%); (3) communicate the gospel with Thai manners and methods, following the suggestions they gave concerning messengers and messages as well as the Thai perception of religion (96%), and (4) dialogue the gospel without forcing (65%).

Non-Christian Thais interviewed (87%) suggested that disciplers must have credibility, availability, and ability. They must be helpers, advisors, teachers, parents, and friends. Learning takes place inside and outside the classroom. Teachers and learners must have deep relational bonding. Spiritual teachers must know how to teach dharmas in such a way that learners can think by themselves. Non-Christians interviewed (70%) advised that ceremonies and rituals were good tools for religious discipling as well.
Ninety-nine percent of non-Christians interviewed believed that the *Kama* and *Ahosikarma* ritual (the ritual of reconciliation) could be used in disciplining Thai Christians. A high school girl said, "Whatever faiths people hold in my country—Buddhism, Islam or Christianity—believers must be Thai according to Thai culture."

**Thai Christians**

Interview questions concerning influencing non-believers, nurturing believers, and disciplining wayward Christians in the process we call discipling follow.

Interview questions for collecting data from Thai Christians and missionaries concerning the Western way and the Thai way of meekness as related to discipling non-believers. Dr. McFarland also recorded Prince Damrongrachanuparp's observation of Christian mission in 1928:

Speaking from my observation, the present work of the American missions in this country has prospered beyond comparison with the work of their pioneers. The reason appears to me to be this: that the missionaries, having lived long enough in Siam, have come to appreciate the character of her inhabitants, and have changed their methods to suit such character. Thus, instead of abusing Buddhism as a first step to the extolling of Christianity, they set about to exhibit Christian virtue, and thus inspire faith in a religion which possesses such good points. Aggressive works have been abandoned in favor of a gentler method, and the results must surely be more satisfactory from the missionary viewpoint. (1928:15)

a. Do you agree with the prince? Why or why not?

An interview question for collecting data from Thai Christians and missionaries concerning the Thai way and the Western way of discipling believers. Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, a missionary to Thailand between 1835-1873, recorded the following in his diary about a Thai convert:

Muan, the young woman serving as a waiting maid in my family, has for several months indulged a lively hope in Christ
and now is quite anxious to join the church of Christ and be Christian. . . . Mrs. Bradley expressed to her a desire that she should change the style of her dress from that which the Siamese females are accustomed to wear, as that is very indelicate and improper for a Christian woman. (1936:205)

What would be your reaction to Mrs. Bradley's suggestion if you were in Muan's place?

An interview question for collecting data from Thai Christians and missionaries concerning the Thai way of meekness as related to discipling wrongdoers. Many Christians were disciplined in Christian churches in the Western way, confessing their sins in front of their churches and being excluded from the communion service. Many of them left their churches. Some who were disciplined the Thai way, using the Kama and Ahosikarma ritual, did not leave the churches and became better Christians. In your opinion, why do the different methods of disciplining result in different responses?

Interview Questions for Collecting Data from Thai Christians and Missionaries Concerning How to be Christian and Thai. Buddhism originated in India, but the Thai made it Thai. People can be Buddhist and Thai in the Thai way. However, Zimmerman and McFarland, missionaries to Thailand, reported in 1931, "Christianity came to Siam as a Western cultural system. . . . So the first attempts of the Church were largely to Westernize and to denationalize the converts" (Davis 1994:88).

a. Do you think the Thai can be Christian and Thai? Why or why not? How?

b. Should Christian converts be bonded to their kinsmen and social networks who are non-Christians? Why or why not? How?

The function of religion. The research finding indicates that the practice of Thai Christians interviewed points to the function of religion as
follows: (1) religion is cognitive (89%); (2) religion is not cultural and revelational but revelational alone (86%); (3) religious communication is vertical (67%); (4) religion is verbal (89%), and (5) religion functions ideologically (86%).

Thai Christians interviewed's concepts of religion were obviously influenced by Western Christianity. All of them realized that Thai Christianity was westernized in its forms of worship. They did not realize it was being westernized in its theology of discipling non-believers, believers, and Christian wrongdoers, even though most of them used Western ways of discipling. Therefore, the functions of religion Thai Christians apply came from Western perception. This finding presented a conflict in the heads and hearts of Thai Christians. Being asked about their theology, they recited Western doctrines and practices. Sharing from their hearts, however, revealed some understanding of the Thai concept of religion, but when they practiced they used Western ways and were frustrated with the result, working day and night.

First, the finding indicates that many Thai Christians interviewed (89%) paid no attention to the affective function of religion when they witnessed but concentrated on the method of spreading the gospel. Most of them believed that faith came from hearing, therefore, they concentrated on speaking the gospel of Jesus Christ. "We must be faithful; our duty is to speak," a Christian friend said. They emphasized the cognitive domain of the gospel, verbally passing on information, paying no attention to the affective domain of religion when they witnessed.

A respondent shared:

I know that the Thai do not want to listen to my verbal witness, however, when I witness I use verbal communication as the primary method, because Farangs [missionaries] told me that speaking
the gospel was a must. I think attacking Buddhism comes from a salesperson's attitude. In order to sell our goods, we have to criticize the other brand. We think people enjoy listening to our sharing of the gospel, therefore, we keep on speaking. We observe the method from missionaries and the Scripture says, "Faith comes from hearing."

Second, the research demonstrated that the result of spreading the gospel and discipling depended totally upon God for Thai Christian interviewed (86%). An interviewee said, "Once I share the information of the gospel I accomplish my duty, because the result is up to God." The respondents thought that there was no need to understand Thai culture and Thai characteristics because religious discipling was one-way communication. A Thai leader explained:

Thai Christians cannot differentiate between religion and culture, therefore, we get rid of all good cultural elements. Christians think that we must not use Thai culture because it makes us similar to Thai Buddhists. Christians should be different in form. Thai Christians do not yet understand how understanding Thai culture can help spread the gospel.

Third, Thai Christians interviewed (67%) did not pay attention to the questions of non-Christians. Few of them remembered the questions the Thai ask. All of them could remember only one complaint from non-Christians, "I do not understand about Jesus' redemption."

Fourth, Thai Christians interviewed (89%) overlooked the importance of non-verbal aspects of religion which impact the affective domain of the Thai, the Christian life, the rituals, ceremonies, and festivals. Only one Christian pointed out, "The Thai like rituals because rituals appeal to the Thai affective domain, but Christians do not use a lot of rituals, because they will create syncretism."

Fifth, Thai Christians interviewed (86%) did not discuss the function of religion in economics and social relationships. Most of them emphasized ideology in discipling and they equated social action with liberal theology.
They practiced social relationships superficially in order to pass on the information of the gospel. A seminarian explained:

I observe that people in the Northeast of Thailand do not want much information about religion. They simply determine whether the message makes sense, benefiting them economically and is able to be an anchor for their hearts. Christians only emphasize sharing information about the gospel.

**Verbal communication about religion.** The research findings illustrated most Thai Christians interviewed as follows: (1) they hold split-level lives between what they know and what they practice; (2) they are westernized in Christian discipling of non-believers and believers, and (3) they are westernized in discipling Christian wrongdoers.

First, Thai Christians interviewed (98%) perceived that the Thai did not like aggressive verbal communication which was boastful, comparing, despising, argumentative, pointed, and confrontive. Thais would react aggressively or keep their mouths shut, cutting the communication line and closing their hearts. Thai Christians interviewed (98%) perceived good verbal communication as meek, sweet, and indirect. Few Thai Christians interviewed mentioned that speaking the truth in gentleness is an art. A Thai Christian shared with me:

I agree that Thai Christians should approach non-Christians in the Thai way of meekness in order to present the gospel which is not alien to the Thai. In persuasion, Thai Christians should be sophisticated and take time. We should not be aggressive or force others. However, I think it is quite all right to be aggressive and lose Thai identity because people need to be saved.

When I asked Thai Christians interviewed how they communicated the gospel, 89% of them said they used direct communication, and they only created relationship in order to accomplish the goal of witnessing. They used
the four spiritual laws of Campus Crusade for Christ or Evangelism Explosion III of James Kennedy which majority of non-Christians, most Thai Christians, and missionaries interviewed admitted communicate an unintelligible message within the Thai worldview. The research findings seem to indicate that Thai Christians interviewed are split-level. A minister shared:

I always used "the four spiritual laws" of Campus Crusade for Christ in Thailand and Evangelism Explosion III for five years. I feel like I am buying into lotteries which I always lose. Ten non-Christians may pray to accept Christ, but if I could get one member out of these ten people in a year I would count it as winning a big game.

A conversation with a Thai Christian put my finding about the split-level Thai Christians in focus. She suggested to me:

We should not criticize Buddhist Thais about their beliefs and practices. I attend Buddhist temples with them, so that they can attend my church. I do not participate in any Buddhist practices. I will not criticize them when they criticize me. Some of my relatives ask me why I do not make merit. I answer them that I make merit by giving a tithe at my church. Then I ask them whether they are sure that the food they offer the monks goes to their ancestors. I point out that their belief seems like nonsense.

This lady did not seem to be aware that she was directly confronting her Buddhist relatives.

Second, Thai Christians interviewed (89%) were conscious that they used Western ways in discipling believers because that was the only way they knew. They had no alternatives, and they did not know the Thai way of meekness in discipling. Two independent ministers shared extensively about the Thai way of meekness in religious discipling. They indicated the following: deep relational bonding, sharing liminality in the natural pattern of life and life modeling were important tools in Thai religious discipling.

A minister kindly shared:
Our discipleship training followed Western Christianity, because Thai Christians adopted Western forms of Christianity from the very beginning in worship services, music, and ways of living. We use a lot of Western textbooks even though some books violate Thai culture, explaining explicitly sexual education.

One seminarian gave the answer which was contrary to the norm of Christian discipling:

Discipling starts with seeking attitude on the part of disciples. Disciples spend time with their prospective disciplers in order to test the disciplers' credibility, and availability. Disciples try to detect disciplers' motives and attitudes toward discipling. If disciples trust disciplers, they commit themselves completely to them. They do what their disciplers ask. They will suffer all hardship to fulfill their disciplers' teaching. The disciplers will surrender to their disciplers' authority with complete obedience. Thai religious discipling is not classroom lecturing but disciplers and disciples walking together while disciples observe and learn from life models and teaching. Disciplers will teach disciples how to do things and let them do it on their own. As for me, I harvest in the paddy fields with my disciples. I answer their questions and help them ask more questions. It is a kind of dialogue teaching.

Third, only two Thai Christians interviewed liked the Western way of disciplining Christian wrongdoers. One responded, "The Western way of disciplining is good. It takes sins seriously. I do not care if wrongdoers leave the church. The Western way of disciplining tests wrongdoers' love toward God. If they truly love God, they will return to the church." Other Christians (96%) opposed the old approach in disciplining. They pointed out that the old approach violates deep relational bonding between the wrongdoer and other members of the church. It also destroyed face among wrongdoers and was unbiblical and unjust. A respondent said, "Jesus did not discipline Peter according to the Western way. The church disciplines beyond Jesus' way of
love. The church judged deadly sins and other sins alike. The old approach did not help wrongdoers repent."

Most Christian respondents (98%) could not think of alternatives in discipling Christian wrongdoers, and had only vague ideas about the Kama and Ahosikarma ritual. When the practice of the ritual was explained, most of them (98%) agreed that Christians could use this ritual with some adaptation. Those who knew this ritual well were excited and suggested that in this ritual, pastors should be the middlemen instead of the judges. The community of faith, elders, and deacons should be the judges. A pastor confirmed:

Discipling Christian wrongdoers should create self-repentance. The Kama and Ahosikarma ritual is the best gentle way for forgiving wrongdoers. They will be willing to repent and apologize to the offended and the offended will forgive and comfort wrongdoers to start life all over again. The ritual represents a good element in Thai culture.

Non-verbal communication about religion. The data also indicated that Thai Christians interviewed valued these qualities of life: (1) ethical ways of living (100%); (2) relational bonding to accomplish the witnessing purpose (50%); (3) self-identity (40%); (4) loving God (10%), and (5) mannerly attitudes (98%). One hundred percent of the interviewees mentioned about ethical ways of living. Fifty percent of them stressed the importance of relational bonding for successful witness. Forty percent emphasized self-identity. Only 10 percent of the interviewees mentioned loving God. "Loving your neighbor" was not frequently mentioned by the interviewees. The research findings revealed that most Thai Christians interviewed were split-level Christians who separated their faith and lives in the five areas mentioned above. Their practice indicated the influence of Western Christianity.
However, their hearts held some vague understanding of the way of Thai meekness.

First, the ethical ways of living valued by Thai Christians interviewed (100%) were listed in order of the frequency mentioned with the highest number first:

1. Do not covet fortune, praises, and positions.
2. Live a model life.
3. Be humble, polite, and gentle.
4. Live a sacrificial life.
5. Be faithful.
7. Love your neighbors.
8. Love your fellow Christians.

However, most Thai Christians interviewed admitted that very few Christians lived up to their esteemed values. They believed that if all Christians lived what they preached, the gospel of Christ would spread across the land. The research indicated that, first and foremost, Christians wanted high positions. Second, many lived unethical lives. Third, they separated words and deeds and emphasized words. Lastly, they were forceful and aggressive in witnessing, and those who were gentle did not witness. A Christian explained:

Ecumenical Christians are not aggressive but they do not witness. Many of them who hold high positions forsake the faith. Evangelical Christians witness aggressively with direct confrontation. As a result, the Thai do not believe either of them. Moreover, many so-called Christians cause disgrace to Jesus' name: smoking, drinking alcohol, stabbing others with knives, being involved in the drug traffic and prostitute business.
Second, the interview research (50%) indicated that at present Thai Christians interviewed realized the importance of relational bonding with other Thais to some degree, because cold-turkey witnessing had not worked among the Thai for more than 150 years. The data demonstrated four kinds of relational bonding: (1) primary relationship; (2) intermediate relationship; (3) incarnational relationship; (4) relational bonding among Thai Christians interviewed. Most Christians interviewed had a hidden agenda of converting when they created relationships.

Most Thai Christians interviewed used primary relationships but their primary relationship was different from that of the Thais. They made contact with non-Christians in order to witness. If non-Christians became Christians, they left the converts and moved on to contact other non-Christians. If non-Christians showed no interest in the gospel as time passes by, they terminated the fellowship. A seminary student related:

I observe that most Christians created friendship in order that we can immediately witness. Christians feel relieved after sharing the information because we have done our part and God will make it fruitful in his time no matter what we sow and how we sow.

About 10 percent of Thai Christians interviewed practiced the intermediate relationship which was similar to the Thai's primary relational bonding. They spent time with non-Christians letting their lives shone, but they did not talk much about the gospel. Usually, they used an affective approach: nam-jai: having a heart for others, hen-ok-hen-jai: empathetic heart, kao-jai: understanding heart, rue-jai: recognizing the affective needs of others and wang-jai: trusting heart. Then Christians and non-Christians would share their problems and help each other reciprocally. Usually non-
Christians would feel free to ask about the Christian faith at this stage. A lady pastor shared:

I visit non-believers regularly in vulnerability and humility, being patient to their unkind words. I do good to people they love, because I love them without wanting to convert them. I feel God will convert them if I truly love them. It takes about four to five months of constant visitation before they ask about Christ and the Scripture. Before that time, I take care of their children like my own sisters and I never teach them Scripture until their parents give permission for me to teach them. Usually, the family becomes Christian.

Less than 5 percent of Thai Christians interviewed created incarnational bonding with non-Christians which was similar to the deep relational bonding of the Thais. They knew the vernacular; they ate local food and stayed in local homes, getting to know their networks. They shared the liminalities of life with the people and shared the burden of the local people’s needs. They won the trust of the local people before they witnessed verbally to the gospel. An elder shared about his incarnational ministry:

I met the man at the market, because he asked me about Christianity. I took him to my home and introduced him to all my family. It took some months of acquaintance before I asked his permission to visit his village and his kinship networks. He allowed me to visit his family and I stayed in his home, eating his food, learning about their characteristics, their dialect, and the local culture. While I learned about them, I did not preach the gospel. If I witnessed immediately I would turn them off. When the man asked me to preach to his folks I did, and seventeen of them believed. Many years have passed and twelve of them remain faithful Christians.

It is interesting that most Thai Christians interviewed obviously knew the effectiveness of incarnational bonding and knew how to do it, but few Christians spent time to create incarnational bonding. The other thing Thai Christians interviewed mentioned repeatedly was the effectiveness of creating a relationship simply for relationship’s sake, but only one or two
interviewees practiced that belief. Thai Christians interviewed also knew that new converts should be bonded with their families and friends, but in reality new converts were taught that their best friends were Christians. A Thai Christian whose idea was different from the norm suggested, "Pastors and elders should visit the parents of new converts and explain about new life in Christ. If the family sees that life in their children, they will accept the conversion. The parents love their children much more than religion."

Christians interviewed bonded well with each other in a local church, causing many non-Christians to comment, "They love each other, but they do not love us." However, Christian workers in organizations had some problems with relational bonding.

Third, some Thai Christians interviewed (40%) valued self-identity. They valued being themselves, self-determination, single-mindedness, dignity, and standing on firm ground, and having courage to go against the tide. This value of self-identity was well expressed in their courageous, aggressive witness to Buddhist Thais who are the majority of the population in Thailand. A Christian leader said, "Thai Christians interviewed must witness aggressively because we are involved in spiritual warfare. We cannot be gentle to the evil spirit of the days." Few Christians interviewed who understood the true self-identity of the Thai use gentle and vulnerable methods. An important evangelist of Thailand related:

I approach non-Christians through kinship networks. I often visit those who are sick with the AIDS virus. I sit among their relatives. We share the burden of their hearts, and we share food. We become friends. I take good care of their children, and they wonder why I love them. I help patients sit up when their relatives are afraid even to touch them. I do it out of my heart. It is not a program of evangelism.
Fourth, only 10 percent of Thai Christians interviewed valued loving God as important. Their love toward God was expressed by witnessing and thanking God. A Thai Christian said, "If we love God we must serve Him by witnessing. I always thank God for every small thing."

Fifth, Thai Christians interviewed (98%) commented concerning manners, attitudes, and message in religious communication. Thai Christians interviewed perceived that gentleness, humility, and politeness were the characteristics of good manners. Few of them mentioned flexibility and the hierarchical aspect. Even though Thai Christians interviewed knew something about Thai good manners and attitudes in communication of the gospel, 87% of them admitted that when they witnessed they behaved contrary to what they know. A respondent confessed, "I know I should be gentle, but I was trained to witness according to the four spiritual laws and E.E. 3 which provided no chance for the Thai way of gentleness."

The fact that Thai Christians interviewed lacked various attitudes about communication was interesting. The only attitude emphasized was accomplishing the goal of communication. This finding presented an image of most Thai Christians interviewed as work-oriented, not people-oriented, in communicating religion to non-believers like the Thai in general.

Buddhism and Thai Buddhists. The data indicates that most Thai Christian respondents did not have a deep knowledge of high Buddhism. They knew about popular Buddhism (80%). They observed good things in Buddhism such as dharmas which taught the Thai to be meek and generous. Thai Christians interviewed realized that Thais at present did not practice high Buddhism. Thais believed in religion at formal levels as their ancestors did. Some of them observed that what Buddhism taught many Buddhists could not do. Thai Christian respondents (14%) were concerned that Satan
persuaded people to turn from dharmas (truths) to superstitions, evil spirits, and idol worship. Buddhism prevented people from coming to know God because Buddhists did not believe in the existence of God. Their understanding of Buddhism and Thai Buddhists harmonized with those of missionaries, but Thai Christians interviewed demonstrated much milder attitudes toward them. A young man said, "I think Buddhism holds a lot of good teaching, and Christians should not show contempt toward Buddhism. However, I learned from other Christians that Satan uses Buddhism to prevent the Thai from coming to Christ."

**Thai Christians, Christianity, and church.** Thai Christian respondents (72%) observed split-level lives among themselves. They agreed that if Thai Christians practiced what they preached, the gospel would spread. They thought most Christian leaders fought for position, power, and prestige and had few model leaders. Thai Christians interviewed realized the influence of westernization as Christianization but they had no alternatives. Christianity and churches were westernized in their form of worship. Thai Christians interviewed realized the Western ways of discipling non-Christians and Christians as well as Christian wrongdoers did not work but they found no alternatives. Only three Thai Christians interviewed found some indigenous ways of sharing the gospel.

Thai Christians interviewed admired the missionaries' dedication and commitment. Most Thai Christians perceived missionaries as aggressive. A Thai Christian pointed out:

*The typical manner of communication of Westerners is aggressive, principle oriented, and individualistic. The forms of Westerners are violating, forcing, controlling, confronting, directing, and outspoken, ignoring affection and relationship, being too much concerned with principle. They emphasize the verbal and cognitive domains. Short-term missionaries need to*
know their limitations. Thai Christian ministers lose time and energy taking care of these short-term missionaries.

Most evangelical Thai Christians interviewed made no comment about churches. I observed that evangelical Christian interviewees considered churches as conference rooms, not as sacred places. Many evangelical churches were in small, dingy rooms. Ecumenical Christian interviewed seemed to understand churches as sacred places.

**Being Christian and Thai in the Thai way.** All Thai Christian interviewed knew that they could be Christian and Thai, but they did not know how to disciple non-believers, believers, and wrongdoers in the Thai way due to their lack of knowledge about Thai culture. Lay Christians interviewed understood the concept of being Christian and Thai better than most ministers interviewed because lay people live closer to the Thai culture. A lay Christian shared:

> The Thai do not want to change their religion, because being Christian without being Thai is a great loss of self-identity, which Christianity in Thailand does not seem to understand. Americans do not have mythology but American dreams, but Thais have Thai mythology. Being Thai and Christian in the Thai way will bond Thai Christians to Thai Buddhists. Non-Christians will understand better that Christians are also Thais. Most Thai Buddhists understand that missionaries hire Thai Christians to work for them and whoever believes in Jesus will get money. Therefore, they think that we betray our country. However, I do not know yet in detail how to be Thai and Christian. I think relationship is important.

I observed that new converts contextualized well the methods of discipling non-believers if they were allowed to think. Some new converts shared with me how they contextualized Christian theology to fit the Thai context. I am confident that Thai Christians are capable of initiating the Thai ways of being Christian and Thai, and we should encourage them to think. Most of them emphasized deep relational bonding. Thai Christians
interviewed need to be Christian and Thai in the Thai way of meekness. The "Boon-Itt" in Thai Christians is sleeping and needs to be awakened by missionaries and Thai leaders who care for God's Kingdom.

Missionaries

**Function of religion.**

Missionaries viewed functions of religion as follows: ideological (88%), cognitive (88%), theological (88%), relational bonding with a hidden agenda of converting (100%), meeting felt needs with a hidden agenda of converting (52%). In influencing non-Christians, nurturing Christians, and disciplining wayward Thai Christians which is the process of spiritual growth we call discipling, missionaries interviewed (90%) used Western encapsulated methods.

Exactly like most Thai Christians interviewed, missionaries interviewed (88%) paid no attention to other functions of religion except the ideological. Religion served only an ideological purposes rather than a social relational or economic purpose. Even though a few missionaries interviewed observed the various functions of Buddhism, their frame of mind prevented them from discovering new ways that Christianity might spread and function effectively in the Thai context. Their religion was strictly cognitive and theologically oriented (88%). A missionary shared, "Christians must keep the cutting edge of the gospel, and the correct theology." Even though missionaries interviewed thought relationship was important to the Thai, most missionaries interviewed communicated religion according to Western systematic theology without creating significant relational bonding. A missionary voiced, "The main function of religion is to save the lost. Religion is not ethical, but it is worshipping." Another missionary said, "Religion is believing in the truth, the right doctrines, and joining the
community of faith. However, I think the concept of conversion is not an indigenous invention."

**Verbal communication.** The research interviews among 25 missionaries revealed three important factors: (1) the goal of communication needs to be accomplished (100%), (2) many missionaries interviewed (96%) lacked concern for intelligible verbal messages that fit the Thai worldview, and (3) missionaries interviewed (90%) used encapsulated systems in discipling non-believers, believers, and Christian wrongdoers. The findings were interestingly similar to those of the Thai Christians.

It seemed to me that missionaries interviewed paid no attention to the way the Thai communicate verbally, which missionaries interviewed described most often as gentle and polite. However, they described in detail the manner, the attitude, and the way Westerners verbalized. A missionary who committed her life to incarnational mission articulated what she observed among most Western missionaries about verbal communication:

Westerners come to people with an agenda, aiming to get some results. They come straight on, showing no outward humility and are aggressively outspoken. Westerners insist on being right and like to ridicule. They are against "being cool." The Westerners are proud of their superiority in education and experience. They have pride in their culture and believe in the exclusiveness of Christianity. They are success-oriented, truth-oriented and cognitive-oriented. They believe in individualism.

Christian missionaries interviewed explained the ways they spoke as rational, logical, and direct. They tended to despise other religions at least in their minds, and they liked to pin down others. Even though missionaries interviewed believed in humility as an important quality of life, they did not practice it in verbal communication because of the impact of their cultural worldview.
In discipling believers, missionaries interviewed did not want conversion at the form level which resulted in unchanged lifestyles, worldview and values. However, they observed that many Thai Christians were converted to the forms of religion. A missionary reflected:

Many converts who accept Jesus still think and operate in Buddhist frames of reference. For example, the act of going to the church is a form of making merit. Baptism is not a testimony but a merit making ceremony. Jesus spent more time teaching disciples to think biblically than Jewishly. It is a lifetime process. We do not take enough time to teach them.

Missionaries interviewed did not realize that they Westernized Thai Christians when they imposed Western textbooks of discipleship training programs upon them. A missionary said, "Now only one percent of missionaries teach Thai Christians. Ninety-nine percent of discipleship training is done by Thai Christian leaders. Therefore, the work is already indigenous."

The majority of missionaries interviewed admitted their struggle in teaching new converts to have vision. Even though they knew that discipleship training should transform the Buddhist worldview; they did not find other ways of training new converts except the Western way. The shortcut they knew was hiring Thai leaders from other churches or organizations to do the job for them. A missionary asked my husband during a research interview, "Would you like to work for us?"

Missionaries interviewed paid no attention to the Thai way of meekness in religious discipling. Usually missionaries designed the lessons and passed them on to Thai Christians. Only one young missionary recognized that missionaries should teach scriptural principles and left the applications to Thai believers. Two missionaries observed that the Thai had a different concept of sin.
Most missionaries interviewed did not realize that breaking new converts away from their kinship networks stopped the natural flow of the gospel. Half of missionaries interviewed acted as if new believers belonged to them and to Christian churches rather than to their families after their conversion. New converts spent much more time at church than at home. A missionary shared about this matter and I was surprised by the terminology he used. He said:

At first, I forced new converts to tell their parents right away about their conversion, but we had much opposition. Now, we train new converts for about two months. Then we allow them to tell their parents. They are accompanied by one of our American staff on that occasion in order to prevent their family from scolding them. I know the Thai will be polite if a Western guest visits their house.

Missionaries interviewed who behaved in the manner mentioned above did not consider the feelings of those parents, and they did not show care for Thai parents because of their own worldview and values which cherished individualism and lack of dependence upon family. Success seems to be the goal of their organizations and denominations.

Missionaries interviewed (96%) also struggled to disciple Christian wrongdoers. A missionary explained, "When the church does not discipline people, they live in sin. If the church disciplines them severely, they leave the church." Two missionaries interviewed believed that Western disciplining worked in Canada and the United States because it was the biblical way. Missionaries interviewed (96%) did not know about the Kama and Ahosikarma ritual (the ritual of reconciliation). They seemed to be confused between being Thai and Thai culture. A missionary shared, "We do not know enough of Thai culture. It is a lifetime process. American individualism and aggressiveness keep us from studying and knowing Thai culture." Missionaries interviewed were concerned that the use of the Thai
ritual would introduce syncretism in Christianity even though they did not
know yet what the Thai ritual of reconciliation was all about.

**Non-verbal communication about religion.** Missionaries interviewed
(72%) believed that a good person must be ethical. They do not place
emphasis on self-identity, a main characteristic of both the Thai and
Americans. The moral ethics they emphasize are walking against the tide
and commitment. Next to these two qualities of life are commitment (72%),
humility (28%) and the absence of covetousness (76%). Missionaries' ideas
were similar to Thai Christians' ideas.

Most missionaries interviewed knew that good relationships came
before verbal communication. However, ninety percent of them created only
casual relational bonding with the people in order to witness. The average
relational time span ran from fifteen minutes to three months. Four
missionaries created strong relational bonding before witnessing, while only
two families of missionaries practiced incarnational bonding with people in
villages.

Most missionaries interviewed (72%) practiced walking against the tide
and commitment in doing mission. No one mentioned Thai manners,
methods, or attitude in communicating the gospel. Most of them were
frustrated when they witnessed. A missionary related:

I firmly believe that missionaries can make friends with
Thais. As friendships grow, the Thai will ask about Christianity.
If they do not ask, something is wrong with our lifestyle. I have
many Thai friends, but every week I preach the gospel
aggressively in order to keep up with my faith. We have many
converts from aggressive public preaching.

**Thai Christians, churches, and Christianity.** Missionaries interviewed
(48%) were impressed with the courage and evangelical spirit of Thai
Christians, but missionaries interviewed (88%) worried about their split-level
conduct, separating words from deeds. They were concerned about integrity, honesty, and sexual morality among the Thai Christians. Two missionaries were aware of syncretism between Christianity and Buddhism or primal religion in the frame of mind of Thai Christians, because the religious forms of Thai Christians were not syncretized. Split-level conduct was not syncretism in the missionaries' perspective. A missionary responded:

I am concerned about split-level lives among Thai Christians. Many of them do not harmonize their faith and lives. I find it hard to trust them. Many Thai Christians have problems with integrity, honesty, and sexual sins. They gossip and try their best to keep their faces from shattering into pieces.

Only one missionary agreed that Thai Christians were westernized in form and theology and were unintentionally denationalized to some degree. Majority of missionaries agreed that there were few texts written in Thai about the Thai way of discipling non-believers, believers, and wrong-doers. However, they did not consider that fact as an evidence of westernization as Christianization in the modern time. They accepted that pioneer missionaries believed that westernizing was Christianizing. However, they could not understand why the gospel of Christ could not spread through westernized Thai Christians, westernized American and Korean missionaries. One-third of missionaries interviewed knew that the traditional way of doing mission did not work but they found no alternatives. They were concerned that Thai and Korean Christians were aggressive in witnessing, using the traditional ways.

Majority of missionaries interviewed understood contextualization as using Thai traditional music in worship service or sitting on the floor while worshipping. A missionary who practiced contextualization mused, "I asked them to sit on the floor, but the church did not grow. Using Thai traditional
music in the Northeast areas was good. However, at last I lost most of my members to a Pentecostal church."

**Buddhism and Buddhists.** All missionaries interviewed lacked the knowledge of religious study which would help them analyze Thai Buddhism. Most of them (32%) believed some ethical teaching of Buddhism was good. However, 80% of them believed Buddhism prevented the Thai from coming to know Christ and came from Satan. I find it hard to follow the logic. Can Satan teach good precepts? A missionary shared:

The core of Buddhism derives from evil. It serves as a hindrance in leading the people to Christ. Buddhism, animism and materialism close the minds of the Thai. The devil uses Buddhism to guide non-Christians away from God. Though we should respect Buddhism, but it is a stumbling block for the Thai to come to know God.

**To Be Christian and Thai in the Thai way.** Four missionaries who practiced incarnational mission firmly believed the Thai could be Christian and Thai. Four missionaries who studied sociology and anthropology supported the idea. However, eight of them did not yet know how to be Christian and Thai. Thirteen missionaries believed that to be Thai was to be Buddhist. Missionaries' ideas were contrary to those of non-Christian Thais and Christian Thais at this point. Four missionaries and two Thai ministers who believed that Thai Christians could be Thai and Christian held an evangelical-ecumenical perspective. Most of them suggested deep relational bonding as an effective tool in discipling, but they did not know about the *Kama* and *Ahosikarma* ritual (the ritual of reconciliation). A missionary confided:

I do not know how to be Thai and Christian in the Thai way because I am not a Thai. I do not have time to study Thai culture. Someone else should study and give guidelines for Thai Christians
about Thai culture. In fact, I do not think that the Thai in the urban areas are much different from Westerners.

**Summary.** The interview results validates our theoretical model. Thai non-Christian interviewees affirm Komin's (1991) nine value clusters as characteristics of the Thai. Most Thai Christians and missionaries admitted their lack of deep knowledge about Thai culture. However, those who knew the Thai culture reveal some knowledge of the Thai way of meekness and its discipling tools. Confirmation of nine value clusters implies affirmation of Thai worldview of power through weakness and behavior patterns of strength and gentleness. Inquiry among Thai Buddhists also confirms Buddha's life model, primal religion, Hinduism, and Thai relational culture as sources of the Thai way of meekness. Research findings implicitly accentuate hierarchy, relationships, and individualism as the crucial features of Thai social structure.

The interview results also offers new information in the area of discipling for the religio-psychical orientation of our theoretical model. Investigation reveals that Thai understanding of religion, religious discipling, and discipling tools flow along the cultural grain of the Thai way of meekness. The Thai way of meekness affects Thai belief system. Most of all, research findings open the hearts of Thai Christians as well as non-Christians interviewed and presents their calling for Christian discipling that is carried out in the Thai way.

A comprehensive table, Table 4, will show the stark contrast between Thai Buddhists on the one hand and Thai Christians and missionaries interviewed on the other concerning some important issues of the interview results.
Table 4
The Percentage of the Interview Results from Three Groups of Interviewees Concerning Two Major Categories of Results, the Thai Way of Meekness and the Thai Way of Meekness in Religious Discipling, Using Thai Buddhist Responses as Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Issues</th>
<th>Thai Buddhists percent</th>
<th>Thai Christians percent</th>
<th>Missionaries percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Thai Way of Meekness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai Value Clusters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ego-orientation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grateful relationship orientation</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Smooth interpersonal orientation</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Flexibility and adjustment orientation</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Religio-psychical orientation</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Interdependence orientation</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Fun and pleasure orientation</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thai Relational Bonding</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Communal bonding</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Friendly relational bonding</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Deep relational bonding</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Issues</th>
<th>Thai Buddhists percent</th>
<th>Thai Christians percent</th>
<th>Missionaries percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Thai Way of Meekness in Religious Discipling</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Function of Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. An affective religion</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A religion applicable to the present felt needs</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A practical religion, solving life problems</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A religion of rituals, ceremonies and festivals</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A religion of integrative functions</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A concrete, experiential religion</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A bonding religion</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. A religion that does not force faith</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Perceptions of Thai Christians and Christianity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Thai Christians separate words from deeds.</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thai Christians do not respect other religion and their believers.</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Thai Christians create boundaries around them.</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Christian messengers are aggressive.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Christian message is unintelligible.</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

In chapter 1, we presented and illustrated the characteristics of the Thai way of meekness. Chapter 2 presented the Komin model of Thai worldview, values, behavioral patterns, sources of influence, and social structure as a model of the Thai way of meekness. In chapter 3, a classic myth and ritual structure that represents a significant window into the Thai worldview validated our theoretical model. In chapter 4, a modern novel offered confirmation of the Komin model for the Thai way of meekness. In chapter 5, four case studies of Christian discipling, two of which are historical and two contemporary, assisted us in knowing the validity of our theoretical model. Here, in chapter 6, the interview results attested reliability and validity of our model of the Thai way of meekness in the present sociocultural sphere. Our research has confirmed the first half of the thesis: the Thai way of meekness is the best method by which to contextualize Christian discipling in Thailand.

Before we move forward to study the second half of the thesis, I will impart a summary of research findings in the next chapter. After that an answer to the question, "Is the Thai way of meekness biblical?" will be offered in chapter 8. Chapter 9 is the end note of our research charting brief applications of discipling in the Thai way of meekness.
CHAPTER 7

The Thai Way of Meekness Exemplified: A Summary of Findings

At this point, our research demonstrated that myth and ritual since the 13th century, the history of mission in Thailand in the 19th century, and contemporary literature as well as Thai non-Christians and Thai Christians confirmed our theoretical model as illustrated in figure 1 below.

Figure 1
The Structure of Characteristics of the Thai Way of Meekness

As noted in chapter 2, Thais have a both/and worldview structured as power through weakness. See the center circle in figure 1. This is the mental eyeglass Thais use to see the world around them. Closely related to this center worldview are arranged the nine value clusters, represented by the
next concentric circle in figure 1. The Thai value system carries nine-value clusters: (1) ego orientation, (2) grateful relationship orientation, (3) smooth interpersonal relationship orientation, (4) flexibility and adjustment orientation, (5) religio-psychical orientation, (6) education and competence orientation, (7) interdependence orientation, (8) fun and pleasure orientation, and (9) achievement-task orientation.

Moving out to the next concentric circle we come to Thai behavior patterns. The purpose of practicing Thai behavior patterns is to keep the Thai nine-value clusters intact, especially self-identity. The worldview of power through weakness influences the Thai to use humble attitudes and gentle behavior patterns in Thai social interaction. However, when Thais' self-identity is violated they react aggressively.

The next concentric circle in figure 1 contains the sources of the Thai way of meekness. Primal religion, Buddha's life model, Hinduism, and Thai relational culture have each made an impact on the Thai way of meekness. The final circle represents Thai society, structured as it is by the elements of hierarchy, relationship, and individualism.

**The Thai Way of Meekness Exemplified**

My interpretation of Komin's (1991) research findings of nine value clusters proposed power through weakness as the Thai worldview. Power through weakness is the uttermost drive of Thai values and behavior patterns as well as social structure. By this I mean that the Thai hold the both/and worldview where a strong ego lives with gentleness in grateful relationship, smooth interpersonal relationship, flexibility, interdependency and fun and pleasure in social interaction. The Thai believe that giving in first for later victory is a sign of inner strength, courage, and wisdom because
power comes through weakness. The worldview of power through weakness flows along the span of time from the 13th century to the 20th century. We can apprehend examples of Thai worldview from some incidents gleaned from our research findings from chapters 3-6.

Prince Wessandorn and his family reached *nirvana* (the extinction of all desires) through self-sacrifice and self-emptying; for it was in suffering, that they satisfied their souls. It was in giving that they gained. It was in losing that they won. Moreover, two weakest children, the suffering Prince Charlee and Princess Kanha won the heart and mind of a strong king and the masses.

The worldview of power through weakness helped the Thai in the Pai Dang village intuitively realize that change agents could not change anyone but rather good change agents changed first their own attitude toward non-believers and their faith. They accepted non-believers and their faith and allowed them to come to their religion as they were. The Pai Dang villagers accepted hooligan Communist Thom, and his ideology, concentrating on their commonalty; Thom was Thai, a Pai Dang child. The initiative to change belonged to non-believers and believers are stepping stones for them.

In the case of Nantachai 's conversion, the power of weakness ignited its dynamic power when the confession of a Christian who had become drunk helped Nantachai understand Christian honesty, repentance, and confession of sin. In the case study of Dr. Bradley's mission in Siam, the Thai worldview of power through weakness also influenced Thai converts' understanding of discipling. These inquirers sought Bradley to be their disciplers whom they would commit their lives to obey. When Bradley paid no attention to their requests they quietly went away. In the case study of Rev. and Mrs. Mattoon's mission in Siam, Ter's life demonstrated the
worldview of power through weakness. She won the love of the Mattoons through her weakness, her failing health.

In the case of the Muangthai church's disciplining, the ritual of reconciliation allowed the wayward Christians to act weak by bowing down at the feet of the offended. The action was the most vulnerable manner according to Thai culture. Wrongdoers could not perform the action without real repentance of their sin because of their strong self-identity. According to the hierarchy scale, feet are perceived as low organs while heads are high organs. Allowing one's heads to touch others' feet is an act of true repentance in Thai culture. As a result, the vulnerable action motivates true forgiveness from the offended.

Research interviews recorded a gentle yet, powerful challenge of a Buddhist: "Christians attack Buddha images which Buddhists respect. My mother taught me to respect Christianity, their churches, and crosses."

Research findings from chapters 3-6 illustrate well the examples that enhance the validity and reliability of the Thai worldview of power through weakness.

Ego-Orientation

Ego-orientation mingles in the fabric of Thai life. Komin explains that the Thai are ego-oriented. They have the highest ego value of being independent--being oneself, and a very high value of self-esteem. They cannot tolerate any violation of the "ego" self. Despite the cool and calm behavior patterns, they can react with strong emotion if one's fathers or mothers are insulted (1991: 133). Analysis from chapters 3-6 provides us with some important examples.

Wessandorn and his family elicited the ego-orientation of the Thai way of meekness. They had strong self-identity and self-worth therefore, they
avoided confrontation against the king and the masses. They quietly submitted to the king’s verdict with dignity and self-confidence.

Thom in Pai Dang converted himself to Buddhism because his people cherished his self-identity. Kwan forsook the Communist Manifesto because the Abbot, Jerm, and the villagers did not violate his self-identity even when he violated their cultural norms.

Nantachai wrote about his ego-orientation in the letter dated November 3 of 1971:

I want to share with you about my personality. I am a man of strong determination. If I want to do something, I will accomplish it no matter how much I will suffer. . . . If I believe I should accomplish a certain thing by certain methods, none can stop me, my mother, you or anybody.

In the case of the Mattoons’ mission, even though Ter was a poor girl, she had strong self-identity. Ter was not a rice Christian who would change her faith for material gain. She knew Buddhism from her father who was a Buddhist monk and she had the courage to refuse Christianity during the first seven years, living in a missionary family.

In the case study of disciplining, the interviewees in the Muangthai church were concerned about the self-identity of the offender. Respondents agreed that the ritual of reconciliation gave confirmation that the church loved wrongdoers no matter what they did. The trust, love, understanding, and encouragement perceived, and identity and dignity preserved, helped the offender repent. They were against the traditional way of disciplining because it caused unbearable shame to wayward Christians and violated their identity.

When I interviewed Thai non-Christians, a young man challenged me. He said:

Ten of my friends and I received Protestant scholarships for ten years. We were forced to attend a church every Sunday. In the church, the pastor forced us to be Christian. As long as
the scholarships continued to flow, we could stand being forced. When the scholarships were terminated, we attended a Catholic school where the priest did not force or give any scholarships. Many of my friends became Catholic priests.

Grateful Relationship Orientation

Grateful relation orientation creates deep relational bonding between givers and receivers. Komin defines grateful relationships as:

a psychological bond between someone who, out of sheer kindness and sincerity, renders another person needed helps and favors, the latter's remembering of the goodness done and his ever-readiness to reciprocate the kindness. (1991:139)

The myth exhibited grateful relationship orientation in Wessandorn and his family. Prince Charlee and Princess Kanha were grateful to their father and they gave up themselves to the wicked old man in response to their father's request. The Wessandorn Jataka rite helps the lay people learn they should respect the monks and vice versa.

In Pai Dang, Thom forsook Communism in response to the gracious actions of Granny Kloy. The Abbot and Kwan's lives demonstrated grateful relationship orientation. The Abbot was grateful to his mother and stayed in monkhood for good for his mother sake. Kwan found it hard to rebel against gracious Jerm who loved him and had been the closest friend of his father.

Nantachai is a man of grateful heart. The gentle way that the queen dealt with him caused Nantachai to be totally loyal to Thai royal monarchy. Nantachai's parents brought him up with grateful relationships toward his country, Thailand. Grateful relationships toward Buddhism permeated Nantachai's being and he expressed it in his correspondence.

In the case study of Dr. Bradley, King Rama IV was grateful to Jesse Caswell, his teacher, and supported his family when Caswell passed away. It
was recorded that the king and his relatives took good care of Mrs. Bradley after Bradley died (McFarland 1928).

Ter also practiced this value with the Mattoons. She gave back to the Mattoons in their time of life crisis. Ter was grateful to the Mattoons to the end of her life. She requested that the picture of the Mattoons be put into her coffin.

Interviewees in the Muangthai church attested that the ritual of reconciliation would create grateful relationships between wrongdoers and the community of faith. Offenders would stop sinning because they felt obligated to pay back the love and forgiveness of the church. They did not want to disappoint those who loved them and gave them a second chance.

Smooth Interpersonal Relationship Orientation

Smooth interpersonal relationship orientation helps the Thai walk together in peace on the Thai road. Komin explains:

This orientation is characterized by the preference for a non-assertive, polite and humble type of personality (expressed through appearance, manners, and interpersonal approach), as well as the preference for a relaxed, and pleasant interaction which accounts for the "smiling" and "friendly" aspects of the Thai people. (1991:143)

We can see the practice of this value from Wessandorn's word:

My beloved children, don't you know that I long for nirvana so that I can help troubled mankind to break away from the rebirth circle? I long to reach the bank of nirvana over which few can cross. Please help me. Do not let me down at this crucial moment, my dear children. (Sakdanuwat 1988:189)

In the case of Nantachai's conversion, even though I aggressively witnessed for Christ to him, Nantachai remained gentle and calm. He tried his best to maintain smooth interpersonal relationships between us and was
calm, cautious, and loving in communicating his ideas and feeling to me. Nantachai quietly bore pain and hurt.

Our country successfully fended off colonialism because our kings practiced this grateful relationship orientation. King Rama IV protected the Siam Kingdom from colonialism by signing the Bowring treaty within two weeks. He maintained good relationships with British and French governments. The Siamese did not act in a hostile way to their enemies but excellently treated the British convoy with great hospitality. The king personally communicated with Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and President Abraham Lincoln.

Not only the king but a simple Thai lady like Ter also practiced smooth interpersonal relationships. She was caring, considerate, helpful, and humble. She adapted herself well in various situations having deep relational bonding with others from different faiths. Her calling of the Mattoons as father and mother elicited special relational bonding which superseded race, role, and status.

Both the Thai individual and the Thai community practice this important value of smooth interpersonal relationships. Thai interviewees in the Muangthai church noticed disciplining as bonding back wayward Christians into the Thai relational boundary instead of punishing them for their sin. Relationships are very important for the Thai and the ritual elucidates smooth interpersonal relationships. The ritual of reconciliation carries a caring, considerate and helpful spirit in its procedure.

A real Thai must practice smooth interpersonal relationships. A Thai Buddhist advised during the research interview:

We are Thais, we can communicate smoothly. We don't have to confront each other. A good person must have a smooth relationship with other fellowmen. Thais who have
religion in their hearts will be humble, gentle and are not rough or rude.

Flexibility and Adjustment Orientation

Flexibility and adjustment orientation influence Thai ethos in social interaction and in problem solving. Kornin explains, "It is the ability of balancing ego, power, and situations that count, not ideology, nor even law and order. Evidently, besides ego and smooth interpersonal relation values, the Thai are flexible and situation-oriented" (1991:161). Thais practice flexibility and adjustment since the ancient time.

The Wessandorn Jataka text also demonstrated flexibility and adjustment orientation. Wessandorn and his family adjusted well as a royal family or as outcasts. In the Wessandorn Jataka rite, the sacred humble themselves to serve the secular, and the secular dare to invade the sacred boundary. As a result, the sacred and the secular are able to protect their identity and uplift the identity of each other through flexibility and adjustment orientation.

As it was said in the analysis of Pai Dang in Chapter 4, flexibility and adjustment orientation exhibited itself in the disciplers' roles and their perception about classrooms and curriculums. The roles of disciplers in the Pai Dang context were teachers, givers, advisors, and counselors. Flexibility was used to determine methods of discipling the Thai. The world was the classroom. Situations, felt needs, and individual spiritual and intellectual levels dictated the curriculum, breaking through the affective domain to be understood and preserved in the black box of cognition thus producing proper behavior.
Nantachai also believed in flexibility. He wrote in his letter dated November 3, 1971, "Gaps in marriage occur when one fails to compromise, to be flexible and to assimilate with another... What is your idea about this?"

Not only Thai individuals cherish flexibility and adjustment but our education system in the time of Bradley also confirmed the value of flexibility and adjustment. The system provided education which fit roles and statuses of children from various classes and economic levels. Royal and rich children went abroad or studied at the royal court. Poor boys studied at various Buddhist temples.

In the case of Rev. Mattoon and Mrs. Mattoon, another lady also cherished flexibility and adjustment. Ter adapted herself well to various life contexts. She worked and lived her life in Siam, the United States, in a palace, and in a bamboo hut. She took upon herself many roles in Thai society. Ter lived more than one hundred years ago but her value of flexibility and adjustment is also shared by most Thai in the modern time.

A Buddhist teacher in a Christian school expressed her concept of Thai's flexibility and adjustment, "I believe in both religions, Buddhism and Christianity. I bring some needs to Buddha; I bring other needs to Jesus."

Now, we turn to another important value of the Thai, the religio-psychical orientation.

Religio-Psychical Orientation

Komin indicates in her explanation of religio-psychical orientation that the Thai pay more attention to Buddhist rituals, ceremonies, and festivals than Buddhist doctrinal concepts. The Thai use religion to serve their felt needs and provide answers in times of life crises. Komin discovered that popular Buddhism has a significant impact upon Thai Buddhist laity.
The practice of the **Wessandorn Jataka** myth confirms Komin's explanation of this value. The **Wessandorn Jataka** myth provides a Thai religious rite which the Thai have enjoyed for more than seven hundred years. The rite is the most important means that provided financial resource for Buddhist temples in ancient times. It also enhanced the royal power and authority. Nowadays, it bonds local communities together during the rite. The myth carries with it the influence of primal religion.

The practice of monk ordinations in **Pai Dan** followed the same pattern. As it was said in the analysis of **Pai Dan**, going through the monk ordination, Thom passed through a religious audio-visual aid passage where he was the point of attention. In that passage, he was literally incensed with the fragrance of self-identity and relational bonding. The ceremonies and rituals touched his identity and bonded him to the love of these simple folks. They told Thom without words, "You are one of us."

**Nantachai's practice of Buddhism flowed along the cultural grain.** He turned to Buddhism after his father's untimely death. He did not seek **nirvana** (the extinction of all desires). Nantachai learned religion more from Christian worship than from Christian doctrines.

**Buddhist religious practice in the time of Bradley and Rev. Mattoon confirmed Komin's religio-psychical orientation.** Thai powerful tools of discipling were symbols and ceremonies practiced in rituals, festivals, and pilgrimages. The Muangthai church's disciplining of the wayward Christians in the modern time confirms Komin's proposal that the Thai use religion to serve their present felt needs and they still make use of symbols and ceremonies as the practice of the **kama** and **ahosikarma** ritual illustrated.

The research interviews gathered during 1996 confirmed our model that Thai religion functions holistically to meet the present felt needs. A
student pointed out, "Religion should help promote education, adult counseling, and the poor in slum communities." Interviewees confirmed that Thais learn religion from rituals and ceremonies because Thai religion is affective, experiential, concrete, and practical, but Thais do not like extreme or fanatic forms of worship. The interviewees enjoyed rites of passage, and ceremonies. One respondent said, "Religious participation blesses me with happiness, calmness, and a quiet mind. Moreover, the belief and practice of the Wessandorn Jataka myth, monk ordinations, and the Kama and Ahosikarma ritual exemplified the life of Buddha, primal religion, Hinduism, and Thai relational culture as sources of the Thai way of meekness. At this point we will turn to another value, education-competence orientation.

**Education and Competence Orientation**

Komin explains about education-competence orientation that the Thai perceive education as a means to climb the social ladder, earning more money and prestige. Thais seldom practice knowledge for its own sake. Nantachai and I furthered our studying abroad because education was a means to climb the Thai social ladder. During Bradley’s and the Mattoons’ time education was also a means to an economic end for the Thai. Poor young men entered monkhood to climb the role and status ladder in order to be educated and at long last work for the government.

**Interdependence Orientation**

Interdependence is in the fabric of Thai life. Komin’s description of this value was mentioned in chapter 2. Komin indicates that Thai rural communities value collaborative behavior, and two values that distinguish the rural Thai from the urban Thai are the religious and community-oriented
values. They help each other in times of crisis and participate in the rites of passage of members of the community regardless of faith.

The *Wessandorn Jataka* text, the *Wessandorn Jataka* rite, and Pai Dang exemplified the value of interdependence. The story in the *Wessandorn Jataka* text carried with it interdependent orientation of the Thai way of meekness demonstrating the assimilation among the royal family, the masses, a Brahman, and hermits. They were aware of hierarchy but also practiced egalitarianism. The text revealed the elements of hierarchy, relationship, and individualism of Thai social structure. The *Wessandorn Jataka* rite illustrated how the monks and the laity depended on each other. In Pai Dang, the conversion of Thom and Kwan was a cooperative effort and no one claimed the conversion as his or her own work. They committed the convert to the community at large and the community of faith.

Nantachai's friends and relatives cherished interdependence orientation of the Thai way of meekness. Therefore, they bore the burden of Nantachai's sorrow. Their community-oriented value influenced them to help Nantachai in a time of life crisis by providing him comfort, advice and companionship.

Ter's life showed reciprocity of gracious giving and taking between her and the Mattoons, the Queen, and the Siamese. Ter incarnated her life in Thai society and she was perceived as being Christian and Thai in the Thai way of meekness.

Members of the Muangthai church perceived the community of faith as family where interdependence abounded. When the church took the role of a sacred institution in disciplining her members, she violated interdependence in the Thai way of meekness. As a result, the church experienced negative responses.
Thai non-Christian interviewees also confirm the value of interdependence in Thai society. A housewife reminded me:

Christians do not get along with others, or live simple lives as ordinary folks who cooperate with others. Christians call themselves brethren, but call others non-believers, secular people, and the lost. They separate themselves from us. They segregate people. How can they call us to come to their faith?

Fun and Pleasure Orientation

Komin's research findings affirm that Thais enjoy fun and pleasure but they work hard. The Wessandorn Jataka text held the value of fun and pleasure of the Thai way of meekness in the story of Chuchoke. He was an awkward, unbecoming old man who possessed a young manipulative wife. The Wessandorn Jataka rite is sprinkled with fun and pleasure. The monks entertain people through their storytelling techniques.

Fun and pleasure orientation among the Thai, who were under the pressure of colonialism and the spirit of Christian manifest destiny in the 19th century, helped them laugh away real difficulties and moved on with their lives. They used expressions which made fun of those foreigners in order to entertain themselves. Mue-tue-sark-park-tue-sin (the lips speak commandments, holding stone mortars in their hands). Stone mortars are funny for the Thai because it is a favorite low word for scolding.

The ritual of reconciliation brought about fun and pleasure of the Thai way of meekness. Usually, the members rejoiced after the ritual was performed and the wayward Christians were bonded back into the fellowship. Usually, their kinship or social networks would celebrate the moment. The festivity symbolized the new phase of lives for the offenders. Since the Kama and Ahosikarma ritual is also structured in the pattern of the rites of passage, the celebration is like rites of reincorporation. Now, we will turn to the last
value of our model of the Thai way of meekness, achievement-task orientation.

**Achievement-Task Orientation**

Komin explains that in Thai society successful achievement-task orientation is directly proportional to one's understanding of Thai hierarchy and relational culture. To work is not for work's sake in Thai society. Achievement-task orientation of our model flows along the cultural grain of the Thai way of meekness since the ancient time.

Wessandorn achieved his spiritual goal through his submission to the authority as well as the masses and through deep relational bonding with his family rather than being work oriented. Moreover, the story of Pai Dang (The Red Bamboo) proposed that the Abbot accomplished his work through deep relational bonding, submission to the authority of Buddha's life model, and his people, yet he also worked hard creatively. Bradley failed in his mission in Siam because he did not create deep relational bonding with the masses before presenting them the good news of Jesus Christ. His family lived apart from the indigenous people and he did not allow his children to mix with Siamese children. Moreover, he violated religious hierarchy by attacking unceasingly Buddhist belief system and practice. Ter worked hard and her achievement flourished as the result of her good adaptation to hierarchy, relationships, and individualism in Thai social interaction. She got along with the rich and the poor as well as the high and the low.

My interpretation of Komin's research findings suggests that hierarchy, relationships, and individualism are crucial features of Thai social structure. One can see this fact elicited in the examples mentioned above. Achievement and task orientation reveals the important roles of hierarchy, relationships, and individualism. Many more examples from myth, ritual, history of
mission in 19th century and contemporary literature, Thai non-Christians, and non-Christians exemplified the representation of these elements in Thai social structure.

**The Strength of the Research Findings**

Our research findings introduce some new powerful information concerning the Thai worldview, sources of the Thai way of meekness, Thai social structure, the criteria of Thainess, and Thai religious discipling.

Our research findings enhance my interpretation and proposals of Komin’s research which are included as follows: the Thai worldview is power through weakness; sources of the Thai way of meekness are Buddha’s life model, primal religion, Hinduism, and Thai relational culture; hierarchy, relationships, and individualism are crucial elements of Thai social structure.

Our research findings present the mental map of the Thai. The findings offer criteria for measuring the degree of Thainess among the Thai and foreigners who want to incarnate their lives to live and work among the Thai. Our theoretical model exhibits the core of the Thai and Thai society which carried on these unique characteristics against time and tide for more than 700 years. The core of the Thai way of meekness persists even though the fluid forms of Thai culture flow fast according to the Western wind. At heart, we belong to the call of our mother land and she to us, the Thai.

Moreover, our research findings unexpectedly find new information about Thai religious discipling which includes Thai understanding of religion, Thai understanding of discipling, and Thai religious discipling tools. **Thai Understanding of Religion**

For the Thai, religion is affective. By this I mean that religion should appeal to Thai hearts. The examples from the *Wessandorn Jataka* text
revealed that king Sanchai and the masses in his kingdom converted themselves to the truth of Buddhism because of the suffering of the little prince and princess they saw. Thom and Kwan of the Pai Dang village forsook Communism because of the love that the Abbot and the villagers offered to them. Nantachai was touched by the humility of a drunk Christian's confession. Ter made a decision to follow Christ because of the Mattoons' love and sacrifice. The wayward Christians repent through the Kama and Ahosikarma ritual because they were loved. The research interviews overwhelmingly confirm that, for the Thai, religion is affective.

The research findings expand Komin's explanation about Thai religion. She only emphasized that Thais use religion to serve their material felt needs and to explain away their bad actions. Our research findings suggest that the Thai perceive religion to be holistic. Religion should function holistically to meet the present physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs of the Thai. Examples from myth, Pai Dang, the case studies, and research interviews illustrate well the point. Wessandorn gave alms to the poor. The Wessandorn Jataka rite offers political, economical, and spiritual support to the believers. The Abbot of the Pai Dang village provided holistic help to his people. Nantachai sought and found spiritual need fulfilled. Ter's physical, social, and spiritual needs were met by the Mattoons. The Kama and Ahosikarma ritual helped mend the social and spiritual needs of the wayward Christians and the community of faith. Research interviews confirm that, for the Thai, religion is holistic.

Thai Understanding of Religious Discipling

First Thai understand that the process of influencing non-believers, nurturing believers, and disciplining wayward Christians is discipling. Examples from chapters 3-6 make clear the point. This can be seen from the
Wessandorn Jataka text how he discipled his people by disciplining, influencing, and nurturing the king and the masses in his kingdom. Thom, Kwan, and the Abbot of the Pai Dang village confirm this understanding. Ter's life elucidates this idea as well as the Kama and Ahosikarma ritual of the Muangthai church. The research interviewees agreed that disciplining was not punishing but discipling. Moreover, interviewees believed that discipling started even when the Thai were not yet committed to the faith. They emphasized deep relational bonding as setting the stage for discipling.

Second, for the Thai discipling is seeking, finding, and bonding which is initiated by non-believers and believers. Examples from chapters 3-6 elucidate this concept. Wessandorn and his family's reaching nirvana (the extinction of all desires), Thom, Nantachai and Ter's conversion elicited the fact that discipling cannot be forced. It is done by grace and free will. Research interviewees were upset when Christians aggressively try to convert them or impose Western ways of discipling on them.

Third, discipling is a progressive process as well as instantaneous. Moments of truths come and continue as demonstrated in Wessandorn and his family's process of discipling. Thom, Kwan, the Abbot, Nantachai, and Ter exhibited this understanding.

Fourth, for the Thai, discipling is contextualizing. Wessandorn used the Thai way of discipling even though Buddhism came from India. The Wessandorn Jataka rite contextualized the truth written in an Indian context to be Thai and Buddhist. The Mattoons contextualized their discipling to flow with the Thai cultural grain and helped Ter be Christian and Thai in the Thai way. The Muangthai church contextualized disciplining to be Christian and Thai. Research interviews carry the call of Thai non-Christians and Thai Christians for Christians to disciple in the Thai way.
Fifth, discipling is a cooperative effort between the community of faith and individuals. The Wessandorn Jataka rite affirms this as well as the villagers in the Pai Dang village, Nantachai's conversion, and people who participated in the Kama and Ahosikarma ritual. The interviewees cherish faith seen and expressed in Christian worship and festivals as well as in Christian individuals.

Sixth, discipling is both unconscious, unplanned, and planned. Discipling cannot be forced but it is the process of sincerely helping others to find by themselves the defects of their old beliefs. Goodness in disciplers is not planned but is the fragrance of life which flows from the inner most part of one's being. However, formal teaching springs from a deep understanding of affection, cognition, intellect, and problems of learners as well as their personalities. Evidence from the words and deeds of Wessandorn, Thom, the Abbot, the great Father, Nantachai, Ter, the Muangthai church's interviewees, and Thai interviewees harmonized with the concept: for the Thai discipling is both unconscious, unplanned, and planned.

Thai Religious Discipling Tools

For the Thai religious discipling tools are as follows: liminality in the natural pattern of lives, the living models, informal and formal teaching, and ceremonies. Examples of this concept exhibit themselves from chapters 3-6.

First the Wessandorn Jataka text demonstrated liminality in the natural pattern of life of Wessandorn and his family in the land of exile before they reach nirvana. Thom, Kwan, Nantachai, Ter, and the wayward Thai Christians experienced liminality in the natural pattern of life in the process of discipling in order to grow in faith. Interviewees suggested that liminality during a life crisis bonds two people together in the deepest way
and sets the stage for future discipling. Liminality in the natural pattern of life is a powerful tool in Thai discipling.

Second, the Thai learn religion from living models. The ideal personality characteristics of the living model are vulnerable, gentle, sacrificial, benevolent, merciful, loving, generous without hidden agendas, congruent in words and deeds. These living models can be seen in our study in chapters 3-6: Wessandorn, the Abbot, the Great father, Kwan, the Mattoons, and the Muangthai church's disciplining. Thai interviewees elucidated the same preference concerning their ideal personality who were Buddhatas, the forest monks, and Pra Prayom. These monks' life models flow with the Thai ideal personality.

Third, informal and formal teaching are Thai religious tools. The roles of disciples are parents-teachers, servant-leaders, teachers, givers, fathers, brothers, counselors, and advisors. Wessandorn, the Abbot, the Great Father, Kwan, Jerm, the Mattoons, the Muangthai church, Buddhatas, the forest monks, and Pra Prayom took these roles upon themselves. These people were people who had credibility, capability, availability, great faith, and great vision. They were mission-oriented, dedicated, powerful, humorous, warm, humble, and gentle. These disciplers had also strong self-identity, self-sacrifice, and congruence in words and deeds.

Fourth, the research findings reveal the role of rites of passage in ceremonies and in the pattern of religious leaders' lives. Rites of passage structure in ceremonies can be seen from the Wessandorn Jatake rite, monk ordinations in Pai Dang, the role of worship service in Nantachai's conversion, and most of all the Kama and Ahosikarma ritual. The interview research conducted among non-Christians indicated that they like Christian weddings, funerals and festivals more than preaching. These ceremonies are
structured in the pattern of the rites of passage: the rites of separation, the stage of liminality, and the rites of reincorporation. The pattern of the rites of passage structure is seen in the lives of Wessandorn, and the Abbot of the Pai Dang village. Their lives are structured in the pattern of the rites of passage mentioned above. In the next chapter, chapter 8, we will taste and see the rites of passage pattern in the life of Jesus.

**Conclusion**

At this point we accomplished our defending of the first half of our thesis: the Thai way of meekness is the best method by which to contextualize Christian discipling in Thailand. In this chapter, chapter 7, we reviewed our research findings according to our theoretical model and reiterated the strength of these research findings. We also learned about some unexpected, additional information concerning Thai religious discipling. Now, we are ready to move toward the crescendo of our research to answer the question: is the Thai way of meekness biblical? Then, in the last chapter our research will orchestrate some suggestions for missiological applications.
CHAPTER 8

The Thai Way of Meekness: Is it Biblical?

In chapters 3-6, we defended the first half of our thesis that the Thai way of meekness is the best method for contextualizing Christian discipling. We concluded a summary of research findings in chapter 7. In this chapter, we will defend the second half of our thesis: the Thai way of meekness is compatible with scriptural teaching on meekness. Therefore, I exegete the meekness of Jesus in the four Gospels. Moreover, I pay attention to the way Jesus discipled Peter as a non-believer, a believer, and a wrongdoer in order to learn more about biblical religio-psychical orientation. I exegeted the portions of Scripture from a Thai perspective using my own exegesis. Then, I drew conclusions concerning the compatibility of the biblical and the Thai way of meekness. Our analysis relies on the insights from our theoretical model in figure 1.

A Christian friend asked, "How can the Thai way of meekness and Thai religious discipling be compatible with biblical meekness and discipling? Where do the good elements in non-Christian cultures come from?"

Genesis 1:26-27 provides an answer. The Scripture said, "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (NRSV). Even though sin caused us to be God's prodigal children, we all bear our Father's image, rejecting or receiving God. God in his grace left his image in every creature so it could be a natural bridge for his children to communicate intelligibly to each other the Father's sacrificial love. As a result, runaway children can return home, loving God, one another and themselves. Perhaps the Thai way of meekness partially reflects God's image even though it is contaminated by the sinful nature of
the Thai and Western modernization. The Thai way of meekness builds a nature bridge between human hearts which will link the Thai to the very heart of God. Perhaps God accepts the Thai way of meekness for he said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5 NKJV)."

In this chapter, I investigate characteristics of biblical meekness and discipling through the analysis of: (1) the rites of passage structure of Jesus' incarnation; (2) Jesus, the fulfillment of the Thai way of meekness, and (3) the carpenter and the fisherman.

**The Rites of Passage in Jesus' Incarnation**

From heaven Jesus came and to heaven Jesus returned. From the mansion of heaven Jesus came to be born in a manger. From his heavenly home, Jesus came to be homeless. The sovereign Savior came to be a man of sorrow. The Creator of life came to taste the venom of death. Jesus turned judgment into joy. The Messiah twisted failure into faith. The Savior changed hurt into hope; the lion of Judah spun lassitude into love and the Redeemer transformed sins into salvation. Finally, in a curtain of cloud, heaven welcomed Jesus home.

**Glory of Glories**

In the beginning, Jesus was surrounded by the glory of his creation, the sun, the moon, and the stars:

The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;
yet their voice goes out through
all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,
which comes out like a bridegroom
from his wedding canopy,
and like a strong man runs its
course with joy.
Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and nothing is hidden from its heat. (Psalm 19:1-6 NRSV)
He determines the number of the stars;
he gives to all of them their names. (Psalm 147:4 NRSV)

when the morning stars sang
   together
and all the heavenly beings
   shouted for joy? (Job 38:7 NRSV)

Praise him, sun and moon;
   praise him, all you shining stars!
Praise him, you highest heavens,
   and you waters above the
      heavens! (Psalm 148:3-4 NRSV)

God commissioned Jesus to be the first missionary to humankind and

Jesus humbled himself to carry on this labor of love. The rite of separation

was celebrated on the nativity night:

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping
watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood
before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and
they were terrified. But the angel said to them "Do not be afraid;
for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the
people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who
is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will
find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."
And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the
heavenly host, praising God and saying,
   "Glory to God in the highest
   heaven,
   and on earth peace among those
      whom he favors!" (Luke 2:8-14 NRSV)

Grace Upon Grace

The liminality of the man of sorrow was inaugurated:

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in the
bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no
place for them in the inn. (Luke 1:7 NRSV)
There was no room for the child Jesus in the inn or in Israel. Jesus bonded himself immediately to the homeless and refugee:

an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." (Matthew 2:13b NRSV).

For thirty years the incarnate Christ was concealed as a carpenter, working with wood and stone (Arndt 1952:816). He identified himself with laborers, blue collar workers who were called by modern people "beasts of burden, doormats and chain gaugers" (Laird 1971:423). Those were the first thirty years of Jesus' betwixt and between, being the majestic God and a marginal man. What God and the people said about Jesus demonstrated the man of sorrow's betwixt and between.

And a voice from heaven said, "This is my son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17 NIV).

"The spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for
the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:18-21 NIV)

A Samaritan woman shouted, "Come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ? (John 4:29 NIV). Martha confirmed, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16 NIV). Thomas confessed, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28; NIV). The masses designated Jesus variously, "some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."
Others said, "Surely this man is the prophet" (John 7:40-41NIV). The great crowd went out to greet Jesus in his last entry into Jerusalem. They shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel! (John 12:13b NIV).

However, others elucidated Jesus differently:

When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." And the teacher of the Law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebub. By the prince of demons he is driving out demons." (Mark 3:21-22 NIV)

When Jesus taught in his hometown, his people were amazed:

"Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What is this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him." (Mark 6:2b-3 NIV)

Jesus' brothers said to him:

"You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." For even his own brothers did not believe in him. (John 7:3-4 NIV)

Many of them said, "He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him . . . ."

"We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God." (John 10: 19, 33 NIV)

The Jewish priests and scribes wanted to kill him:

The chief priest and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the crowd was amazed at his teaching. (Mark 11:18 NIV)
One of Jesus' disciples, Judas Iscariot, agreed to betray his master. "And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus" (Luke 22:4 NIV). The masses who exalted him turned against him. They kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" (Luke 23:11NIV). His inner circle disciple, Peter, denied knowing him. The Bible records:

She looked closely at him and said, "This man [Peter] was with him." But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, "You are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. About one hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" (Luke 22:56b-60a NIV)

In all of these, Jesus was incarnate among human injustice, disappointment, frustration, discouragement, and loneliness. The man of sorrow empathized with the human emotional domain. He bonded himself to his Father and demonstrated with the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. His words and deeds were bountiful with them.

On the cross, he showed his love, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34 NIV). His promises illustrated the fruit of the Spirit as follows:

"Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." (John 16:24 NIV)

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27 NIV)

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28 NIV)
"Forgive us our debt, as we also have forgiven our debtors." (Matthew 6:12 NIV)

"But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-- justice, mercy and faithfulness." (Matthew 23:23c NIV)

Jesus exemplified all the fruits of the Spirit, especially gentleness and self-control. Jesus forgave an adulteress (John 8:11); he comforted a widow of Nain (Luke 7:13). He accepted Zacchaeus, the tax-collector (Luke 19: 9-10). He gently asked the poor blind beggar, Bartimaeus, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mark 10:5 NIV). His prayer in Gethsemane manifested his self-control; "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42 NIV). In his liminality, Jesus illustrated his meekness in word and deed.

Jesus' betwixt and between intensified when his incarnational mission was coming to an end. He tasted the venom of death and hell, the bottomless pit of betwixt and between. He took upon himself mankind's ultimate suffering and judgments. As Jesus freed mankind from death and judgment, he freed himself from the earthly incarnation. The rite of reincorporation began.

God of Gods

The resurrection of Jesus declared the meaning of his mission and bonded him to the community of his disciples. The ascension wrapped up the earthly ministry of Jesus and announced his divinity. The ascension to heaven bonded Jesus back into the heavenly community. The resurrection and ascension were the rites of reincorporation. The Bible described the episode as follows:

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and going to the tomb, rolled back the stone
and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. (Matthew 28:2-3 NIV)

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the door locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" (John 20:19 NIV)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he said this he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

"Men of Galilee," they said, "Why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him going to heaven. (Acts 1:8-11NIV)

The rite of passage of Jesus' meekness in his incarnational mission is encapsulated in Philippians 2:6-11 (NIV) through the words of the apostle Paul:

Who, being in very nature God,
    did not consider equality with God
    something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
    taking the very nature of a servant
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance like a
    man,
    he humbled himself
    and became obedient to death--
even death on a cross!
Therefore, God exalted him to the
    highest place
    and gave him the name that is above
    every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee
    should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under
    the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus
    Christ is Lord,
Analysis of the Rite of Passage of Jesus' Life

First, analysis confirms the definition of biblical meekness in Chapter 1 which emphasizes the worldview of the meek as the power through meekness, the humble attitudes, the gentle behavior patterns, the strong self-emptying and self-identity, and the deep relational bonding between God and humankind as the causes of biblical meekness. Analysis of the rite of passage of Jesus' life adds more information to characteristics of biblical meekness and discipling as follows: (1) biblical meekness is incarnational, (2) biblical meekness is holistic, and (3) incarnational model is an important tool for biblical discipling.

Incarnational meekness is the quality of the life of Christ who emptied himself to identify with the people in the Jewish context. He was willing to walk, talk, and think like a Jew. He was willing to share the liminality in the natural pattern of life with the Jews in his time and to bond himself with the meaning of Jewish religion and the local community. As a result, he communicated the gospel which was divine and Jewish fitting to the time, places, and people of his time.

Holistic meekness comes from Christ's strong identity, self-esteem, self-image and self-respect. A strong identity helped him to set aside his own glory and be willing to serve others with grace and humble attitudes, manners, and methods in an ideological, material, and social culture. He cared and responded to others' needs emotionally, physically, socially, and religiously. Biblical meekness offers an integrative function. It comes from deep relational bonding with God and people. Biblical meekness and deep relational bonding go hand in hand. Disciples cannot be meek if they choose to serve either God or people in either the spiritual realm or secular realm.
alone. Biblical meekness comes from knowing God and knowing people. The Bible uses the Greek word \( \nu\nu\nu - ov\nu - ov\) for "to know." This word implies a very intimate relationship not a casual one (Arndt 1952). Word studies of Hebrew and Greek meekness confirm the finding mentioned above.

**Hebrew Meekness in the Old Testament**

Three Hebrew words contain important elements of meekness in the Old Testament: 'anav, 'anah, and la (Strong 1990; Balz 1994).

'\( \text{'anav} \)` being interpreted from contexts clarifies the meaning of the meek. They are the ones whom God knows and who know God intimately. The meek are faithful to God and men, willing to be afflicted unjustly for God's people according to God's will and greatly courageous. They put their trust in God; their delight is in God; they wait on God for justice. The meek are poor and afflicted but God is their supporter. They have carried out God's ordinances, and God can teach, lead, and save them (Numbers 12:3; Psalms 22:26; Psalms 25:9; Psalms 37:11; 76:9; 147:6; 149:4; Isaiah 11:4, 29:19; Zephaniah 2:3).

'anah is the way in which God deals with his people. God humbles them to test them and bless them. People after God's own heart call this process God's gentleness and they rejoice (Exodus 10:3; Deuteronomy 8:2,16).

la demonstrates the gentle ways God deals with his people and suggests that people should treat each other softly (II Samuel 18:5; Isaiah 40:10).

Hebrew meekness in the Old Testament confirms that biblical meekness is incarnational and holistic. It also confirms all the finding mentioned before. It emphasizes self-sacrifice for others with complete obedience in word and deed to God.
Greek Meekness in the New Testament

The following list of Greek semantic domains of "gentleness" and "humility" are gleaned from the Greek New Testament: πραυτης, πραυς, ἐπεκης, ἐπεικεω, ἡμιος, μετριοπαθεω, ταπεινοφροσυνη, ταπεινος, ταπεινοω, ταπεινοφρων, πτωξος τω τνειματι, ποδας νιπτω (Moulton 1978; Louw 1988).

The contexts of πραυτης in the New Testament suggest the gentleness of attitude and behavior which come from the Spirit of Jesus and a humble attitude toward the Word of God. The behavior toward others is considerate, gentle in correcting and respectful to non-Christians (I Corinthians 4:21; II Corinthians 10:1; Galatians 5:23; 6:1; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12; II Timothy 2:25; Titus 3:2; James 1:21; 3:13).

A context of πραυς suggests gentleness in attitude, willingness to share the burden and weariness of others (Matthew 11:29a). The word also suggests persons who are meek and willing to take lower positions (Matthew 21:5).

The contexts of ἐπεκης demonstrate gentleness which is considerate, forbearing, submissive and respectful in dealing with others (Philippians 4:5; Titus 3:2; James 3:17 and I Peter 2:18).

The context of ἐπεικεω elicits kindness which comes from Christ (Acts 24:4; II Corinthians 10:1).

The contexts of ἡμιος suggest caring and serving attitude and behavior. The word depicts those who are not quarrelsome but kind and patient when wronged (I Thessalonians 2:7; II Timothy 2:24).

Μετριοπαθεω is gentleness in correcting those who are ignorant and make mistakes (Hebrew 5:2).

The contexts of ταπεινοφροσυνη illustrate gentleness in suffering wrongdoing without pride (Acts 20:19; I Peter 5:5).

Ταπεινοφρων is being humble in attitude (I Peter 3:8).
Ταισευνω is willingness to choose a simple way of life and a humble status for the sake of others and salvation (Matthew 18:4, 23:2; Luke 3:5, 14:11, 18:14; II Corinthians 11:7, 12:21; Philippians 2:8, 4:12; James 4:10; I Peter 5:6).

Πτωξος το πεμματι is realizing one's need for God's salvation.

Ποδος νππω is showing humble spirit by doing humble work for others.

Greek meekness in the New Testament confirms all findings mentioned above concerning biblical meekness. It also gives new information to the characteristics of biblical meekness. Meekness is the fruit of the Spirit of the living Christ who helps believers perfectly love God and others. It also points out that incarnational meekness is the willingness to choose a simple way of life, a humble status, and humble work for the sake of others and salvation.

Thai meekness shares only the horizontal worldview, values, and behavior patterns of the biblical way of meekness. Biblical meekness is divine in origin while the Thai way of meekness is human effort inspired by God's grace in creation. Since Jesus is the Creator and the Thai are a reflection of his image, the Thai way of meekness seems to be the grace of God's image left among the Thai. However, biblical meekness holds a divine purpose of loving God and others with God's love, by God's dynamic power, for God's glory (1 Corinthians 13). Thai meekness lacks the meaning which comes from a vertical relationship with God.

Nevertheless, the Thai hold a precious heritage to share with other cultures which disregard human relationships. The Thai deserve to be called a people whom God loves, respects, and cares for. They do not deserve to be labeled as Satan's children or the children of darkness. They try their best to follow after God's own heart, the God who is yet unknown to them. The
Thai understand deeply the horizontal meaning of meekness. Biblical meekness can help perfect the Thai way of meekness and lead the people to know the true and loving God. Christians can learn from the Thai and to walk across this natural bridge left by God in the Thai culture long before any missionaries came. With respect for the people and with thankful hearts to God, missionaries can be accepted into Thai relational boundaries as one of them and share intelligibly the gospel of Jesus, the meek and the majestic.

Analysis demonstrates the important role of presenting Jesus' life in the structure of the rites of passage. Both Christian Scripture and Buddhist texts illustrate religious founders' lives in the pattern of rites of passage. The stories of Abraham, Moses, David, and Ruth elicit this point well. The stories of Buddha in Wessandorn Jataka and Pramalai Jataka follow the pattern of the rites of passage.

**Jesus, the Fulfillment of the Thai Way of Meekness**

**The Cultural Context in the Time of Christ**

Jesus invited the Jews in his time:

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30 KJV)

His invitation refreshed the hearts of the Jews in his time. Jews knew they were the chosen people of the Almighty God. However, life was extremely hard for them because they were under the political yoke of the Roman Empire. David J. Bosch explained, "The already poor peasants were soon transformed, into a labor pool for the estate owners and managers; they were the 'day laborers' we frequently meet in the gospel parables" (Bosch 1993:25).
People were exhausted physically and emotionally. The work fatigued them, and oppression caused them endless poverty under heavy taxation. Most of all, their self-identity was violated. Furthermore, ordinary Jews were religiously burdened and oppressed by the Pharisees. Everett Ferguson articulated this:

Jesus and the early church lived in an atmosphere entirely permeated with the concept of tradition. Rabbinic interpretation of Scripture had been placed more and more as a norm alongside and even above Scripture. (1933:113)

People were hopeless because they found no comfort from their faith. The religion they held oppressed them with legalistic commandments. The Jews in Jesus' time were distressed within and without. They were like bruised reeds and smoldering wicks (Isaiah 42:3). Jesus' words restored their broken hearts and lit up the flame of hope. They found a man, incarnate in their distress and fatigue, who offered them a better alternative. This man, Jesus, humbled himself to take away their problems of exhaustion, depression, and spiritual burnout and to help meet their need with the yoke of freedom from spiritual slavery (Galatians 5:1; Acts 15:10). Jesus' yoke was light because it consisted of only two commandments, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your strength. ... Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31 NIV). When loving is beyond their strength, Jesus helps, because he is love (I John 4:8 NIV). The simple Jewish folks listened to Jesus' words with gladness because his words refreshed and rested their hearts and minds.

Perhaps these oppressed Jews did not know why their strength returned. Jesus made them realize they were precious, and God knew their groaning hearts and failing health. Jesus also revealed to them his divinity. Jesus said:
"I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except to reveal him." (Matthew 11:25-27 NIV)

Jesus displayed in his words his availability, capability, and his loving heart through the role of servant leader in the status of the Son of God.

Jesus’ Self-Identity

The Bible demonstrates that while Jesus said he was meek and lowly in heart, he expressed his strong self-identity. He knew who he was. The Bible records Jesus’ declaration of “I am” as follows:

1. "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"
   (Matthew 28:20 NIV)
2. "I am the bread of life . . ." (John 6:35 NIV)
3. "I am the light of the world . . . ." (John 8:12b NIV)
4. "Before Abraham was born, I am!" (John 8:58b NIV)
5. " . . . I am the light of the world" (John 9:5b NIV)
6. " . . . I am the gate for the sheep . . ." (John 10:7b NIV)
7. "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved . . ." (John 10:9a NIV)
8. "I am the good shepherd." (John 10:11-14a NIV)
9. "I am God’s Son." (John 10:36b NIV)
10. "I am the resurrection and the life . . . " (John 11:25a NIV)
11. "I am the way and the truth and the life . . . " (John 14:6a NIV)
12. Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? (John 14:10a NIV)
13. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener." (John 15:1 NIV)

14. "I am the vine; you are the branches" (John 15:5a NIV)

15. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8 NIV)

16. ". . . Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last." (Revelation 1:17c NIV)

17. "I am the living one: I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!" (Revelation 1:18a NIV)

18. "I am coming soon . . . " (Revelation 3:11a NIV)

19. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 21:6a NIV)

20. "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star" (Revelation 22:16b NIV)

Jesus made clear with his life that his meekness consisted of a humble attitude, gentle manners and methods in serving the marginal, the oppressed, and sinners, as well as courage and boldness in standing against the corrupted relational bonding between people and their God (John 2:12-16). He cleared the temple when Jewish people did not use God's temple as the house of prayer, a sacred place. He confronted the Pharisees and the experts in the law with six woes (Luke 11:39-52). Jesus also confronted his inner circle, Peter, in the same manner (Matthew 16:23).

**Jesus and the Other Thai National Characteristics**

Jesus illustrated in his life the perfection of other elements of the Thai way of meekness: grateful relationship orientation, smooth relationship orientation, flexibility orientation, religio-psychical orientation, education
and competence orientation, interdependence orientation, fun-pleasure orientation and, achievement task orientation.

Jesus demonstrated his supreme grateful relationships for his mother. Near the cross, Jesus saw his mother and John. Most of his disciples fled away, but John and his mother lingered there. In these moments, John and Mary demonstrated the power of love. John wrote, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear." (1 John 4:18a NIV). Perhaps, John learned this truth when he stood under the cross. Mary had been with Jesus from the very beginning. At that moment, the prophecy of Simon came true: "And a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:35b NIV). Though Jesus suffered greatly, he remembered her love and was grateful to Mary. Jesus committed his mother to the care of John who outlived the other disciples. Jesus bonded Mary and John as mother and son, and they bonded themselves to the meaning of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

Jesus maintained smooth relationships with his twelve disciples whom he called to be with him. He loved them and showed them the full extent of his love by washing their feet. He washed the feet of Peter who would soon deny him. Jesus also washed the feet of Judas who would betray him. Then he taught them to love one another (John 13:34-35) by humbly serving each other. By doing this, they would bond themselves to Jesus, to non-Christians and to each other. Jesus also confronted his disciples. He asked Judas, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48 NIV).

Jesus was flexible to meet the felt needs of people around him. As he was approaching Jericho, on his last journey to Jerusalem to be crucified, he stopped to minister to a blind beggar who shouted loudly, asking for his mercy. Observing Jesus' personal witnessing demonstrates clearly his
flexibility. Jesus confronted Nicodemus, the Pharisee. Jesus explained the salvation plan to Nicodemus, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3 NIV). Jesus created rapport with the Samaritan woman and gently led her to realize her spiritual needs. He illustrated salvation by saying, "... but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:13 NIV). To a man born blind, Jesus initially redeemed his self-identity, then he ministered to his physical and spiritual needs (John 9:1-3). Jesus' flexibility always bonded people to God and to their community unless the community rejected them.

Jesus' religio-psychical orientation was influenced by the Jewish culture. Alan Unterman, a Jewish writer, advised that, "The Hebrew language is a very concrete mode of expression, preferring stories and images to express an idea rather than more abstract concepts" (1997: 24).

Sapir and Whorf claimed, "Thought patterns are based on language. Linguistic categories are not the result of a process of thinking. Rather, the thought is dependent on already existing, arbitrary linguistic categories" (Grunlan 1979:97).

George Jackson described Jesus' language:

How the short, pithy, sententious sayings cling to the memory like ours! It was not the authority of powerful reasoning over the intellect, reasoning which we cannot choose but obey; it was authority of perfect intuition. (1903:11)

Jackson also said of Jesus' way of communication:

He never sought to carry Himself to win them, mind, heart, and will by slow siege. He lived before them and with them, saying little directly about Himself, and yet always revealing Himself, day by day training them often perhaps unconsciously to
themselves, to trust Him with the sort of trust which can be
legitimately given to God only. (1903:39)

Jesus also learned religion from the rites of passage, rituals,
ceremonies, and Jewish festivals. Jesus' religion leaned toward the affective
rather than cognitive domain. Jesus' religion still has integrative functions,
meeting the felt needs of people in a material, social, and ideological culture.
It is the religion of the past, present, and future.

The only Scripture that describes Jesus' education and competence
orientation is Luke 2:40; 51-52 NIV:

And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with
wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him . . . . Then he went
down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his
mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew
in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Everett Ferguson thought Jesus was educated from five years of age up
to twenty-five. From five to fifteen, Jesus studied Jewish Scripture and
interpretation. At eighteen years of age, Jesus learned about marriage and he
studied to pursue a trade at twenty years of age (Ferguson 1933b). Home was
the center of religious education and an elementary education in reading and
writing. The other place of studying was the synagogue in his hometown.
Jews in Jesus' time learned through memorization and were eloquent in
speaking.

The passage of Scripture mentioned above documents Jesus' education
and competence at the age of twelve. He was filled with spiritual wisdom
which amazed the Jewish religious scholars of his time. Though he insisted
in his identity as the Son of God, he submitted himself to his parents. The
New Interpreter's Bible says it well: "The son who was both divine and
human was shaped by the experience of the grace of others and the grace of
God" (Keck 1994:78).
Though Jesus was the Son of God, he was a man of sorrow in his incarnation. Jesus' interdependence orientation was obvious in Scripture. He asked for water from the Samaritan woman and shelter from Zacchaeus. His disciples prepared food for Jesus. A group of women supported Jesus and his disciples. Jesus borrowed an ass to ride in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In his death he borrowed a grave for his burial. Yet he ministered to the multitudes physically, socially, and spiritually. He supported and taught his disciples and ministered to their social networks day and night. The disciples also offered him deep relational friendship. Even though Jesus respected individualism because of his strong self-identity, his individualism co-existed with a sense of interdependence and community. It was a good paradox.

Jesus lived his life; he had time for fun and pleasure even when he worked hard. Jesus loved flowers. He observed and absorbed the beauty of abundant flowers during springtime in Palestine which grew mostly in open fields. In summer, yellow and white daisy-like chrysanthemums bloomed for a short period of time. Jesus was acquainted with the pink almond blossom. He breathed scented campfire flowers in the wind. Jesus looked at the purplish red cockle flowers that grew plentifully in Palestinian grain fields. Crocus bloomed close to the Palestinian soil, while nutmeg flowers shot in the air two feet high with bright blue flowers swinging in the breeze. Jesus loved most the lilies of the field which dominated the landscape in various shades of red and pink (Gwinn 1990; Butler 1991). He thought they were more beautiful than King Solomon's splendid dress.

Jesus had no home. The sky was his roof. Stars were his lamps and grains of sand his bed. The murmuring olive leaves in the Gethsemane garden were his music. He spent his mornings in solitude while the dawn
broke through the night and dew slept on green grass. He loved nature because he created it. Jesus also enjoyed social activities, the wedding feast and the love feast. Jesus bonded himself with God and people in his fun and pleasure orientation.

Jesus accomplished his missionary goal. The Scripture inscribes, "Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."... When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19:28-30 NIV).

He empowered his disciples and believers to continue his mission, using the commandment to love and the great commission as their framework:

"The most important one," answered Jesus "Is this: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31 NN)

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20 NIV)

Analysis of Jesus, the Fulfillment of the Thai Way of Meekness

Jesus' way of meekness speaks for itself that he is the fulfillment of the Thai way of meekness. The Thai way of meekness shares strong similarities with Jesus' way of meekness at the core of meaning. Jesus' worldview is power through weakness. Being the Victim he is the Victor. His meekness demonstrated in a gentle attitude, and humble and courageous behavior originating from a strong self-identity. The difference is in their self-identity.
Jesus had perfect self-identity; the Thai have only a slight image of godly self-identity.

Jesus' way of meekness is different in function to some degree from the Thai way of meekness. Jesus' way of meekness functions to bond humankind to God, to others, and to themselves. Jesus' purpose was meeting the spiritual, social, and material needs. The Thai way of meekness functions first and foremost for social and material purposes rather than spiritual ones. Yet the Thai realize the integrative function of religion as Jesus did.

The form of Jesus' way of meekness and the Thai way of meekness follows the cultural grain concerning manners, methods, messages, and messengers. The Thai culture reflects a similar image of Jesus' forms of meekness in grateful relationship, smooth relationship, flexibility, interdependence, and affective religious worldview. In education and competence, the Thai emphasize the form of education, and urban Thais prefer fun and pleasure to hard work. The Thai interdependence is very close to Jesus' interdependence in form. Jesus seemed to balance quiet fun and pleasure with festivity. The Thai ways of fun and pleasure tend to be mostly festive, enjoying people more than nature. Jesus finished the work assigned to him through his deep bonding with the Father and the people with whom he was incarnate. The Thai work hardest when they have deep relational bonding with their bosses and colleagues.

Evidence concerning the Thai and biblical ways of meekness mentioned in Jesus, the fulfillment of the Thai way of meekness, indicate that the Thai way of meekness is compatible with the Scripture teaching on meekness. Jesus is the fulfillment of Thai meekness as Jesus is the Creator and the Thai are his created. The Thai way of meekness is a powerful partial
reflection of Jesus' meekness. Therefore the Thai way of meekness creates a
natural cultural bridge over which the Thai can accept outsiders as insiders,
having deep relational bonding. The gospel can thus be communicated
intelligibly, and Thai Christians can be effectively discipled to be Christian
and Thai in the Thai way. Jesus also helped Peter to be Jewish and Christian
in the way of meekness.

The Carpenter and the Fisherman

Background

Jesus and Peter were Jews. To understand a Jew, one must understand
the Jews' relational bonding with their people, land, God, and the Torah.
Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin stated, "... Jews everywhere have regarded
themselves as members of a family, an expanded family to be sure ..."
(1972:8). He also added, "This sense of kinship felt by the Jewish people may
be more of a mystical experience than a rationally definable one" (1972:9).
Donin also explained the Jews' relational bonding to the land of Israel as
having deep religious sentiment for relational bonding with God. Jews
conclude the night of Passover and the service of the Day of Atonement, with
the cry "Next year in Jerusalem." Exodus 34:6-7 provides the attributes of God
from a Jewish perspective:

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." (NIV)

The Jew rejected the notion of God's incarnation. Jewish people
believe that God communicated his will and his commandments through the
Torah. "Torah is the embodiment of the Jewish faith. It contains the terms of
his Covenant with God. It is what makes a Jew a Jew," Donin affirmed (1972:27).

Jesus and Peter knew well the traditional laws and customs of Judaism: the Sabbath, dietary laws, the synagogue, the holy days and festivals, Hanukkah, Purim and Passover. At twelve years of age, Jesus and Peter joined their families in the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover (of unleavened bread) each April. Chas S. Robinson believed that the Passover molded young Jewish lads and bonded them with self-identity, Jewish history, and the nation. Robinson painted a lively picture of how a young lad, Peter, joined his first Passover:

Some of the ancient Rabbis used to say: "He that never saw Jerusalem in its splendor, never saw a beautiful city; and he that never saw the Temple, never saw the noblest fabric under the sun!" The dispositions of children are molded and the elements of their characters are tied under pressure of such training as this. (1889:39)
Thus we understand that these scenes of the Passover we are seeking to describe were reproduced each season in the most comfortable and beautiful portion of the year. The night was warm and dry, the moon was coming up to the full, the journey was easy, the spring harvests waved in the fields, the blossoms shone, the birds kept singing.

Out there on the hillside stands the wondering Simon. . . . And we must seem to see a bright lad in his simple garment of light stuff, the substantial plainness of which is relieved by a high-colored scarf, or perhaps covered with a tunic of silk, his head wearing the small red fez, with its graceful tassel of dark fringe. (1889:46)

Both Jesus and Peter participated in the Passover feast. They knew the rituals of standing with their loins girded, of reclining on long couches. They participated in the blessing of the wine when their fathers lifted a cup of wine in their hands and praised God. After their fathers tasted the first cup of wine, Jesus and Peter would followed the example. Jesus and Peter knew
how to sing Psalms 115 to 118 before the feast was concluded with a fourth
and final cup.

Theodore Herzl Gaster perceived the different meanings of the
Passover. He viewed it as a rite of communion between people and people
and between people and God. He proposed that the Passover rite came from
the rite of family reunion. Gaster says:

But, if Passover was a rite of family reunion, it was also
automatically something more; for in primitive societies the
family consisted not only of its human members but also of its
god. He too, therefore, was present at the meal, and he was
bound by the obligations of kinship which it imposed. The idea
that gods can be united to men by means of a sacramental meal
is well attested in ancient religions. (1949:19)

Gaster thought the slaughtered lamb was a ransom for the people and
their livestock as well. He explained:

The reason for this was that the animal had come to serve as a
symbol of the entire herd and a propitiatory offering to God.
Accordingly (so it was believed), if it were maimed, a similar
defect would befall the entire herd during the course of the year.
(1949:22)

Gaster pointed out that the Hebrew name for the festival, *Pesach*, can
be derived from a word meaning "to limp," as the priest of Baal limped beside
the altar on Mount Carmel (1 King 18:26). Gaster proposed the idea that:

It is therefore contended by some scholars that, in origin, *Pesach*
was a limping ceremony performed in connection with the
spring festival. . . . The limping, then, would have been a form
of mourning exercise. . . . Ancient and primitive people often
represent the cycle of the seasons as the career of a god or spirit
who dies annually during the dry and languid summer or
during the bleak and barren winter but who is miraculously
resurrected in the first flush of spring. (1949:24-25)
This understanding of Passover was the natural bridge over which Moses and Jesus contextualized its meaning in order to communicate their spiritual truths to the people of their time.

**The Fisherman's Personality**

Peter's contrasting character is like the difference between a rock and a reed. Judging from his manners and methods of social interaction, Peter was impulsive, irregular, and uncertain. He was also awkward, indiscreet, and unsophisticated. Peter's temperamental disposition caused him to blunder without intending to; he could be reliable one minute and uncertain the next. Excessive self-confidence, boastfulness, and rashness were weaknesses of his character. However, Jesus trusted Peter and commissioned this fisherman to shepherd his followers. Jesus saw the rock-like character of Peter. Peter had spiritual hunger; he sought the Messiah. Peter slowly but persistently learned to know and love Jesus. He was humble to Jesus' rebuke. Peter's humility helped him to repent after his denial. This fisherman had courage and commitment to forsake his business and follow Jesus to an unknown future. Peter wore no mask. He was sincere, honest, and genuine without hypocrisy. Peter was a fisherman with a big heart. He loved God and other people generously (Taylor 1876; Robinson 1889; Macartney 1937; Thiede 1986).

**The Fisherman's Role and Status**

Peter rose from a fisherman of Capernaum to be an apostle of Jesus. Peter was a son of Jona, and Andrew was his brother. They came from Bethsaida, a fishing town. Carsen P. Thiede commented about Bethsaida:

Thus the area in which Peter was brought up and set up business had been thoroughly permeated by Greek language and culture for several centuries, and all strata of society had been influenced by it. He was fluent in Greek . . . . With his mother tongue, Aramaic, and Hebrew, the liturgical elementary school, also at
his disposal, Peter must have come close to being what we might call orally trilingual. (1986:21)

William M. Taylor thought Peter had built up a considerable business with John, James, and Andrew. "They were in comfortable circumstances." (1876:22). Peter was married (Mark 1:29-31) and had a good relationship with his mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14; Mark 1:30; Luke 4:38). Before becoming Jesus' disciples, Peter and Andrew had been influenced by John the Baptist's teaching.

Peter was the spokesman of the twelve disciples. He was one of the three inner circle disciples; Peter, John, and James. Jesus often singled Peter out and gave him the privileged responsibility of leading the community of believers during Jesus' time. Peter was entrusted with power to act on Christ's behalf. He exercised Christ's verdict of death on Ananias and Sapphira (Thiede 1986). Jesus also prayed for Peter that his faith might not fail. He designated to Peter the mission of encouraging his brethren (Luke 22:31). Jesus assigned Peter to feed his followers as a shepherd of sheep and lambs (John 21:15-17).

However, Peter entrusted the leadership role of the Jerusalem church to James, the brother of Jesus. Though Peter was active in the Gentile mission, Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. Peter's words and deeds fulfilled Jesus' empowering upon him, and Peter sought no fame. Mikeal C. Parsons concluded about Peter:

Peter probably sacrificed his chances to be the leader of either one of these groups because of his commitment to serve as a bridge in the early church, doing more than any other to hold together the diverse strands of primitive Christianity. (Butler 1991:1099)

Peter probably died as a martyr in Rome in the 60's (1 Clement 5:1-6:1).
Rites of Passage in the Life of Peter

Peter first met Jesus during Passover in Bethany by the invitation of Andrew, his brother. His first encounter with Jesus was the prelude of Peter's rite of separation.

Jesus' invitation to Andrew was short, "Come and you will see" (John 1:39 NIRV). When Nathaniel wondered whether anything good could come from Nazareth, Philip said, "Come and see." After the dialogue with Jesus, the Samaritan woman went back to town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" "Come and see" seems to a method that initiated spiritual seeking during the time of Jesus. Although there was no record of lengthy dialogue between Jesus and Andrew, the first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon. Andrew said, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ) (John 1:41NIV).

Charles S. Robinson wisely recommended, "Seeing is believing; come and see!" Pascal has been quoted as saying very suggestively, "Human things must be known to be loved, but divine things must be loved first before they can be known." (Robinson 1889:102).

The Bible documents Peter's first encounter with Jesus briefly: "You are Simon, son of John, you will be called Cephas" (which when translated, is Peter) (John 1:42b). Jesus followed the Old Testament precedent. Abram was renamed Abraham; Jacob was renamed Israel. Robinson explained:

Names were all designed to express an idea. Hopes and reminiscences, wishes and intentions and plans for the future were embodied in them. To alter an adult's name, therefore, was equivalent to the assertion of a modification of the individual, to a changing in some way of the purpose or direction of his entire life. It became a memorial of that change. (1889:113)
Jesus uplifted Peter's identity. He helped Peter set goals for his personal character. Peter would learn to change himself progressively from fluctuation to firmness in character. Jesus helped Peter learn by himself for three years.

After that first encounter, Peter went back to his business. The second encounter separated Peter from his business; it turned Peter from a fisherman to become a fisher of men. William M. Taylor described the atmosphere of Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 2:16-20:

It is morning by the Lake of Gennesaret, and the cities and villages around its bank have awakened to the activities of life. The hills on its eastern shore are baring their heads to greet the day; and the water rippling under the early breeze are reflecting, in myriad flashes, the gay sunbeams. To the right, as we look across the lake, lies the city of Capernaum, so near us that we may almost hear the hum of its inhabitants; and to the left, the fleet of fishing-boats, which have been out all night, are standing in toward Bethsaida. Far away along the shining beach the eye catches a glimpse of Magdala and Tiberias, while everywhere there are indications of stirring energy among the people . . . . See how they throng him now! . . . he got into Simon's boat, and getting him to push off a few yards, "he sat down and taught the people out of the ship" . . . . we are not told what was the subject of his discourse. But, whatever it was, it gathered in upon him the eager attention of the listeners, while the fishermen by his side, forgetting their nets, would cease their work for a time, as they listened to his words. (1876: 37-39)

Jesus knew Peter's felt need; he and his friends worked hard all night and caught nothing. The carpenter taught the fisherman to fish in the morning. The fisherman swallowed his pride and let down the net as he was told. They caught such a large amount of fish that their net began to break. When Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me Lord; I am a sinful man. . . . Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men" (Luke 5:8,10c).
The rite of separation in the life of Peter was completed. Peter left his business and followed Jesus. Peter was convinced that this simple carpenter was not simple at all. Peter started his liminality with Jesus in the pilgrimage of life; Peter learned more about Jesus, others and himself. In Jesus' school, the world was the classroom; life context, felt needs, and spiritual principles of Jesus' identity, the commandments to love and the great commission were the curriculum. Jesus taught with his being, doing and saying, because he incarnated his life with his disciples. They spent a lot of time together. Peter learned most through his liminality of life.

The first incident happened about one year after Peter followed Jesus on an inland sea of Tiberias. Taylor described the causes of the sudden and violent tempest in the Lake of Tiberias:

The lake lies low--six hundred feet lower than the ocean; the vast and naked plateaus of the Jaulan rise to a great height, spreading backward to the wilds of the Hauran, and upward to snowy Hermon; the water-courses have cut out profound ravines and wild gorges, converging to the head of this lake; and these act like gigantic funnels to draw down the cold winds from the mountains. (1876:54)

The tempest spun the disciples' frolic into fear. They had just witnessed the great miracle of feeding five thousand men with two fish and five loaves of bread. Suddenly the sea, the wind and the waves were against them. Jesus was not with them. He spent time alone in the solitude after his exhausting ministry and the anguishing loss of his friend and relative, John the Baptist (Matthew 14:1-24). The disciples were terrified. In the dawn, they saw a phantom walking on the lake toward them. The disciples were desperate, because they imagined they saw a ghost. When they heard Jesus' voice, Peter impulsively tested Jesus' credibility and reliability with his life. Peter replied, "Tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said
Peter sank when he came close to Jesus, about a hand's reach away. Peter learned about Jesus and himself. His self-confidence wavered but in his weakness, he found Jesus' strength. He realized Jesus was near in times of trouble. The impulse of the moment intimidated Peter and he slowly learned to devalue it.

Later on, Jesus predicted his death to the disciples, preparing them for his coming suffering and death. Peter took him aside and rebuked Jesus. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." (Matthew 16:23 NIV). Peter learned to derationalize his over-confidence and the impulsiveness which was truly hard to overcome.

Matthew 26:31-35 (NIV) recorded Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial:

Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, . . . Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "This very night before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times," But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you."

That night, Jesus' prophecy concerning Peter came true. Luke documented Peter's denial:

Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside, and wept bitterly. (Luke 22:60-62 NIV)

Jesus' look took away Peter's impulsive temperamental disposition. After that, Peter was quick to listen and slower to speak boastfully. Then Jesus orchestrated the rites of reincorporation to bond Peter back to him, to the
community of faith and to Peter’s people, the Jews of his time. Jesus made use of many symbols to gently discipline Peter. The time was the dawn when roosters crowed. The space was the seashore where Peter met him the second time, confessed his sins and followed Jesus. The symbolic objects were a boat, a net, fish, a fire of burning coals and Jesus’ scarred hands. The symbolic actions were hauling the net with a large amount of fish and the three questions. Jesus probably reactivated Peter’s painful memories in order to heal them. Peter and his friends waited for a rebuke, but Jesus did the reverse. He fed them and asked Peter about his love for his Savior. Peter was no longer boastful. Jesus reappointed Peter to feed his sheep and lambs. Peter accepted the mission even though he knew he would die as a martyr. Peter knew then the perfect love that casts out all fear. From that moment on, Peter bonded himself in the deepest way to Jesus, the community of faith in his time, and other people who need Jesus’ love and salvation. The Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost to anoint Peter and other disciples as the apostles of Christ. This reed became a rock, and this fisherman became a spiritual shepherd.

Analysis of the Carpenter and the Fisherman

Investigation confirms that Jesus’ discipling of Peter shared the same understanding with Thai religious discipling in the areas of understanding religion, understanding religious discipling, and religious discipling tools.

Understanding religion. It is obvious that Jesus understood that religion functioned integratively. Jesus met Peter’s economic needs, social needs, and spiritual needs. Jesus performed a miracle which provided a large amount of fish for Peter. He healed Peter’s mother-in-law. Peter was bonded to his people because he served their needs together with Jesus and preached the good news of the Kingdom of God. Jesus seemed to understand that for
the Jew religion was felt not rationalized. His discipling tools which we will discuss later on attests this suggestion.

**Understanding religious discipling.** First, Jesus understood religious discipling as a progressive process in which influencing non-believers, nurturing believers, and disciplining wrongdoers are the one process of discipling. The analysis indicates that discipling non-believers, believers, and wrongdoers is one process of spiritual growth. Peter was Jesus' disciple when he came to Jesus. The Scripture does not differentiate between new believers and disciples. Robert Sloan believed the word "disciple" became an equivalent to "Christian" (Butler 1991:366). Yet the Bible does differentiate disciples from apostles.

Through the process of discipling which included influencing, nurturing, and disciplining, Peter came to be an apostle of Jesus. Peter slowly understood who Jesus was, how important the community of faith and non-Christians were. Peter moved back and forth in his faith. Charles S. Robinson asked an important question a century ago, "When did Simon become experimentally a Christian?" Perhaps if I asked Peter this question during the time of Christ, he might answer, "I am not a Christian. I am a Jew, but I have allegiance to Jesus." "Believers were called Christians first in Antioch, because their behavior, activity, and speech were like Christ," commented Darrell W. Robinson (Butler 1991:252). It seems to me that Peter's life disturbed the criteria scale of the modern Christian discipleship training program, moving people from being non-believers to new believers, mature disciples, and ministers. Christian disciplining in modern times is used to punish the delinquent. Peter probably would have been puzzled with the Western Christian scale. Perhaps Peter did not want to be anything or
anyone. He simply wanted to know Jesus and know him more, to love Jesus and love him more.

Jesus used discipline as a tool to disciple Peter. Jesus realized Peter's weaknesses, and knew the road to Christian maturity ran through vulnerability. Discipling the wrongdoers in the spirit of love bonded Peter to Jesus and his friends. Jesus used praises and correction in discipling Peter according to Jewish culture. James Berryman asserted:

Isaiah chose some Judeans who would learn his message through living with him (Isaiah 8:16). This pattern was followed by the Jewish rabbis. The rabbis would discipline their disciples (talmidim) through a procedure of praise and correction.

(Butler 1991:366)

Jesus disciplined Peter indirectly with his loving being; Jesus healed Peter's wound and led him to restoration. Don Baker exegeted various scriptures dealing with disciplining wrongdoers. He considered the purpose of biblical disciplining as caring for the wounded and helping them to restoration (Baker 1984). James Berryman's explanation of discipline supported Jesus' way of discipling Peter, the wrongdoer. Berryman proposed:

Discipline comes from a Latin word "disco" which means to learn, to get to know, a direct kind of acquaintance with something or someone. Discipline refers to the process by which one learns a way of life. A disciple was like an apprentice who was learning a trade or craft from a master. Such learning required a relationship between the master who knew the way of life (discipline) and a learner (a disciple). Within this relationship, the master led a learner through a process (the discipline) until the learner could imitate or live like the master.

(Butler 1991:366)

Peter wore no mask when telling his story. He was slow to learn about Jesus but quick to disown him. Jesus' disciplining healed their broken relationship and restored Peter to a higher status to be like Jesus, a shepherd of non-believers and believers. Peter would always appreciate the
community of faith, because he never grew beyond their support and loving correction. Likewise, the community appreciated Peter, because he was a broken rock, giving opportunities for the community of faith to manifest the commandment to love and to carry out together the great commission. For Peter, discipling non-believers, believers, and wrongdoers was instantaneous and progressive like the nature of the Greek aorist tense. There were moments when Peter had exuberant illuminations of truth but soon he realized he did not know much.

It is interesting to observe that Jesus disciplined his parents, brothers, and sisters before they were his followers. His parents looked for him, and his mother admonished him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." Jesus reprimanded them, "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. Didn't you know I had to be in my father's house?" (Luke 2:48b, 49b NIV). When the crowd told him that his mother and brothers were outside looking for him:

"Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3:33-35 NIV)

Jesus could discipline them because they had a close relationship. In that situation, admonition was a sign of deep concern. Proverbs 27:6a asserts, "Wounds from a friend can be trusted." Disciple non-believers when they are wrong can be used as a tool in witnessing when Jesus developed deep relational bonding with non-believers in the Jewish cultures.

Second, Jesus understood that religious discipling was cooperative. Jesus' ministry to Peter was a cooperative labor of love. Many people cooperated with Jesus in discipling Peter. John the Baptist prepared Peter's heart. Andrew brought him to Jesus. The disciples received Peter back into
their fellowship after his denial. John offered a close relationship to Peter in the process of discipling. The process was reciprocal. Peter offered Jesus his home, boat, and friendship. Peter shaped the community of the disciples and vice versa.

Third, Jesus also believed that religious discipling was contextualized. Jesus contextualized his message with the cultural grain in order to make the message intelligible to Peter's heart. Jesus' role as a messenger fit the Jewish role of a prophet, a rabbi, and a scribe. Jesus' personality made the people perceive him as a respected teacher. He taught with authority and wisdom, yet with meekness. Nicodemus considered Jesus to be a teacher come from God because he performed miraculous signs. Jesus knew his learners. Peter recognized Jesus' teaching as the words of eternal life. Peter also called him "teacher" at the transfiguration because God's glory and affirmation were with Jesus. Jesus also used various methods in communicating the spiritual message.

**Religious disciplining tools.** First, life-model and deep relational bonding functions significantly in Jesus' way of reaching out to Peter. Jesus' way was the incarnational mission, not a crusading mission. Jesus was familiar with Peter's kinship and social networks. Signs of their deep relational bonding were obvious. They spent enormous amounts of time with each other. Jesus borrowed Peter's boat to be his pulpit. Carsen P. Thiede pointed out that Jesus used Peter's house as a center of activity. Thiede described:

No other house than this one, where Jesus himself had lived and preached, could have claimed such preferential treatment from the first to at least the sixth century, when we find an Italian "Pilgrim of Piacenza" reporting that he came to Capernaum to the house of St. Peter, which is now a basilica." (1986:25)
Jesus confronted Peter critically, but Peter took it well as the loving and true concern of a dear master-friend. Jesus called Peter friend (John 15:15). Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13 NIV). Jesus laid down his life for Peter and vice versa. Their relationship was an abiding, loving bond.

Jesus had many followers. Seventy of them served him by ministering to the sick and the poor as well as proclaiming the good news of God’s kingdom. Twelve disciples left everything and followed Jesus closely. However, Peter, James and John were Jesus’ inner circle disciples. Peter and Jesus shared the liminality of life together, the rejection of friends and foes, economic difficulty, life threats from the Pharisees, and natural tempests. Jesus’ liminality, love, and look made everlasting imprints upon Peter’s memory.

Jesus molded Peter with his being. Jesus used "come and see" discipling. Allan Coppedge (1988) described Jesus’ way of discipling as "life transference" where one life is shared with another on the concept of modeling. Coppedge believed that learning could take place in informal situations during normal everyday living.

Second, Jesus used informal teaching as his discipling tools. Jesus used dialogue, questions, and answers (John 6:60-70; Matthew 16:13-28; John 21:15-23), "So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My lambs' " (John 21:15 NASV).

Jesus employed narrations, parables, and examples which helped Peter understand abstract concepts. When Peter wanted to know how many times he should forgive those who sinned against him, Jesus answered 7x70 and he
told Peter the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:23-35). Peter asked Jesus, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" (Matthew 19:27 NIV). Jesus told him the parable of the worker in the vineyard. These narrations, parables, and examples helped Peter think for himself.

Jesus used miracles and prophecies as audio-visual aids in teaching Peter about divinity and weakness. At the transfiguration, Peter realized more of Jesus' divinity and his own awkwardness (Matthew 17:1-13). Miracles helped meet the needs of the marginal people as well. Reaching out to serve the people kept the disciples from being ingrown and put them in touch with people and society.

Third, Jesus also used formal teaching as his discipling tools. Jesus also used discourses when his ministry on earth was coming to an end. Jesus' message in the discourse appealed to the affective domain of his Jewish disciples, for He gave comfort, courage, and hope with promises. The discourse opened with a promise and comfort and ended with victory notes, saying:

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (John 14:1-3 NIV)

I have told you all these things, so that in me you will have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33 NIV)

The discourse promised power (John 14:12), peace (John 14:27), and the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:5-16). It was full of the concept of the deep relational bonding suggestion: love, friends, abiding. However, Jesus also warned his disciples about the problems to come, their causes, and how to solve the problems with love, faith, prayer, and the word of God.
Fourth, Jesus used ceremonies as religious discipling tools. Jesus' way of introducing ideological change upon Peter appealed to the affective domain of Peter as a Jew. At each religious festival, Peter learned more about who Jesus was. Jesus related the spiritual meaning concerning himself to each Jewish ritual and ceremony. At the Feast of Tabernacles, which celebrated the completion of harvest and commemorated God's goodness to the people during the desert wandering, Jesus stood up and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him" (John 7:37b-38 NIV). Jesus connected his saying with the ceremony of drawing water from Siloam and pouring it out at the altar (Lenski 1942). Some scholars believe that Jesus' proclamation, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (John 8:12b NIV)," relates to "a notable ceremony that was observed during the festival that has just ended. A grand candelabra with four vessels of oil were placed in the inner court" (Lenski 1942:543). Chas S. Robinson proposed that the institution of the Lord's supper was an adaptation of the Jewish Passover Feast, and the washing of the disciples' feet was performed as part of the Passover meal where guests washed their hands. Jesus made use of Jewish culture and religious rituals and ceremonies in discipling Peter.

Fifth, Jesus had many purposes in discipling which were similar to Thai discipling purposes. Jesus encouraged Peter to think and make decisions for himself. Jesus taught Peter at his level of understanding and walked through problems with him. Peter learned to discredit his over-confidence, careless impulsiveness, boastfulness, and pride. The picture of Jesus as the spiritual Savior illuminated in Peter's heart as time passed by. As Peter knew Jesus better, he knew more about others and himself.
Jesus knew how to deal with Peter’s identity, lifting Peter’s self-identity from an unstable reed to a stable rock. When Peter began to create a false self, Jesus confronted him. The denial shattered Peter’s self-identity. Jesus restored Peter’s self-image, self-identity, self-esteem and self-respect through gentle confrontation and forgiveness. Jesus gave him another chance, and Peter never turned back. He belonged completely to his master in his weakness.

Jesus empowered Peter by helping him set goals in his life. In their first visitation Jesus encouraged Peter indirectly to work on his unstable character. In their second encounter he helped Peter realize his spiritual role in the future, being a blessed fisher of men. After Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus empowered him for his future status as a leader of the community of faith and for the deeds he would perform. Then Jesus prayed that Peter would have victory over trial and become a comforter to would-be backsliders. Here Jesus empowered Peter to accept failure in his walk with Jesus but also turned that failure into a flame of faith. At last Jesus empowered Peter to be meek like his master. Peter was full of power and authority, but he would serve humbly as a good shepherd of sheep and lambs like his master, Jesus.

Study confirmed that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Thai way of meekness. Inquiry into Jesus’ way of discipling Peter indicated that biblical worldview and values of meekness influence biblical discipling. Analysis demonstrates that the Thai way of meekness in religious discipling shares all the common structures of biblical discipling: understanding of religion, understanding of religious discipling, and discipling tools. Though biblical and Thai meekness use different cultural forms, the function and meaning of
their religious discipling shares common ground. We therefore draw the conclusion that the Thai way of meekness is biblical.

Summary

Through analysis of biblical meekness, we learned that biblical meekness is the fulfillment of the Thai way of meekness. Biblical meekness as illustrated in Jesus exhibited the perfection of the worldview of power through meekness and nine Thai value clusters. Sources of biblical meekness are deep relational bonding between Jesus to God the Father as well as to his people in his time. Therefore Jesus' meekness is the fulfillment of the Thai way of meekness whose sources come from Thai relational culture, Buddha's life model, primal religion, and Hinduism. Our study concerning biblical religio-psychical orientation revealed that Thai religious discipling which is one process of influencing, nurturing, and disciplining shared commonalty with biblical discipling in the areas of understanding of religion, understanding of religious discipling, and disciplining tools. Analysis helps us answer the question: is the Thai way of meekness biblical? Inquiry defended the thesis that the Thai way of meekness is compatible with scriptural teaching on meekness.

Conclusion

In chapters 3-6, we defended the first half of our thesis that the Thai way of meekness is the best method for contextualizing Christian discipling. We concluded a summary of research findings in chapter 7. In this chapter, we defended the second half of our thesis: the Thai way of meekness is compatible with scriptural teaching on meekness. The analysis also confirms the adequacy of our theoretical model. Moreover, inquiry also offered new information in the area of biblical discipling. In chapter 9, we will develop
the Thai indigenous discipling from a Thai perspective, using our theoretical framework and some findings of Thai and biblical discipling in chapters 7-8 as the framework of reference. From now on we will learn some suggestions how Thai Christians can be Christian and Thai in the Thai cultural grain of meekness.
CHAPTER 9

Toward the Thai Indigenous Discipling

This chapter presents the implications of the findings of this dissertation in the form of a guide for new approaches in discipling Thai non-Christians, Christians, and Christian wrongdoers. In addition to the findings from my research and Suntaree Komin's (1991) theoretical model, I use the focus on contextualizing indigenous ceremonies in Christian discipling of A.H. Mathias Zahniser (1991; 1997), based in religious studies, and the critical contextualization process of anthropologist Paul G. Hiebert (1994).

A Guide for New Approaches

Relying on Hiebert (1994) who warns against syncretism, I carefully tested my suggestions concerning the new approaches against the Scripture and waited on the Holy Spirit in prayer. I also discussed the new approaches with Christians and non-Christians. Moreover, Komin (1991) gives a foundation for people to understand the Thai. The extensive study about the Thai way of meekness in Chapter 2 should be a guide for missionaries and Thai Christians to find ways to the hearts and minds of the Thai. In this guide, I focus on the following: (1) discipling non-believers through anti-structure role and status; (2) discipling Christian believers through the Kama and Ahosikarma ritual and bonding with kinship networks; (3) discipling believers through informal and formal teaching; (4) discipling wrongdoers: reconciliation between Christians and the Thai, and (5) general missiological applications.
Some Important Insights from the Research

Thai worldview: power through weakness. The research reveals in Chapters 1-6 that the Thai worldview is power through weakness. This worldview influences Thai cognitive, affective, and evaluative values. It also shapes the Thai's religious behavior patterns. Power through weakness impacts the Thai understanding of religion, religious discipling, and religious discipling tools. The Thai worldview is an impartial reflection of Christ, the Victim and Victor. Therefore I believe Thai Christians and missionaries should develop their worldview into Christ's power through weakness. Roy Lessin reflects, "No one is stronger than the weakest person who is totally dependent on God," a reflection I found on a small plaque in a Baptist bookstore.

Liminality. Moreover, Thai worldview, nine Thai value clusters, Thai behavior patterns, and Thai social structure elucidate the role of liminality in the rites of passage and in the natural pattern of life among the Thai. Thai Christians and missionaries cannot disregard liminality in ceremonies and ways of life. Liminality in the rites of passage marks the sacred moments of life transition: puberty, marriage, birth, and death. Liminality in the natural pattern of life embraces people together in the bond of love and humanity. Jesus shares our liminality yesterday, today, and tomorrow. As a result, we taste the power of his resurrection, love, and wisdom.

Life-modeling. The Thai way of meekness influences life modeling as a powerful religious tool. The Thai accept messengers before they accept messages. Messengers prove their honesty and sincerity through their humble attitudes and gentle manners and methods of approach. The Thai test the excellency of any faith through its believers' lives. They do not care whether the message is rational, logical, or true, but the messengers must be
trustworthy, and the message must holistically meet the present needs. After the heart is satisfied, the mind will work vigorously. The Thai way of meekness and Thai relational bonding in Chapter 2 are guides for messengers, manners and methods of approach.

**Communal discipling.** Individuals and communities are disciplers, because discipling is a cooperative process. Converts are the product of many hearts and hands; first and foremost, they are the fruit of God’s dynamic love. Converts belong to God, their families, kinship, and social networks as well as communities of faith. Only cultists and Christians who work for their own glory and organizations feel and think that converts are their belongings. Christ values family because it was the first institution he established. In fact, family was born before church. What God establishes Christians should not destroy. Christians who teach that believers should hate their families in order to love Jesus should not be missionaries in Thailand because they do not understand the Scripture.

**Bonding to meaning.** The goals of discipling are to bond non-believers, new believers, believers and Christian wrongdoers to the meaning of Christ, the community at large, and the community of faith. Discipling is not counting the heads of those who pray to accept Christ or the heads of those who attend discipleship training programs. Knowing the intimacy and ultimacy of Jesus Christ and the harmony of faith and lives signals successful discipling (Zahniser 1997).

We turn now to suggestions for discipling based on our findings. We will look at these according to the three categories of discipling: discipling non-Christians, discipling Christian believers, and discipling Christian wrongdoers.
Discipling Non-Believers:

Anti-Structure of the Traditional Roles and Statuses

In discipling Thai non-Christians, the depth of the relationship determines the degree of success. The relationship has potential to break through the ice and be a powerful persuasion. Deep relational bonding brings about acceptance of the messenger and the message. Westerners emphasize information and words in mission while the Thai accentuate relationship and being. The anti-structure of traditional evangelizing is the way of being Christian and Thai in the Thai way of discipling non-Christians. Anti-structure means Christians should take the Christ-like role of victor-victim, the incarnate role and status in the Thai relational culture. The liminality of betwixt and between that Christians face with non-Christian Thais will create relationships between Christians and non-Christian Thai in natural ways.

The Thai are merciful and friendly to outsiders who are weak, but they intimidate those who are strong and powerful. People who always give, help, suggest, guide but never show weakness, vulnerability, or fail to ask for help cannot create strong and deep relational bonds with the Thai. A businessman suggested to me, "Christians should learn to be ordinary people, the simple ones." He shared his perspective of Christians in Thailand as strange, trying to be conquerors, or super people until he doubted the Western motivation of doing mission.

Christians can prepare themselves by spending time observing, asking questions, and serving rather than talking religion all the time. They should go to the marginal people and serve, holding their tongues and wait to see how long it will take for those served to ask about religious things. Christians should record how people accept them, how their encounters impact their emotional and spiritual lives and what non-Christians taught them about
how to share Christianity intelligibly. Then they should share the data received with each other to draw some principles. The process of emptying oneself will prepare one well to utilize effectively the following suggestions.

Second, Christians should find the roles which will help them be in the status of learners, dependers, and listeners. These roles will create betwixt and between situations for Christians, so they can create friendships. For example, missionaries and Thai ministers might apply for adult education, night classes in various universities or English speaking institutes, or other ways of learning about the Thai culture. If the Thai know you are Christian through your being, they will ask about Christianity. If the Thai know it only through your verbal witness, they will be on guard. The norm of Christian witnessing has made the Thai feel uneasy for a long time.

Third, when Thai friends ask about religion, they should not be given more than they can swallow. Thais find overly persuasive Christians distasteful. Trying to listen, observe, and ask questions to become familiar with their affective, cognitive lives, personalities, and religious worldview is a better approach. Their questions should be taken seriously because their questions reflect their worldview. Christians should dialogue, discuss, and ask about their beliefs with understanding hearts, realizing that these beliefs affirm their identity and provide for their survival. If Christians talk about the good points of Thai beliefs, they will be perceived as generous and respectful. This will show the goodness of your faith without persuasive words.

Fourth, when friends casually ask about Christianity, Christians can share some wisdom Scriptures from Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Matthew 5-7, or stories in the Scripture that demonstrate wise ways of solving problems: the prodigal son, the good Samaritan, the persistent widow. It is advisable to use
Scripture verses and stories that are not contrary to the Buddhist teaching of the law of karma (the law of action: do good, receive good). These verses give guidance for daily living, and the Thai will accept these verses because they can put them into practice.

When they face a crisis with their limited strength, Christians should share the promises of God which fit their needs. Thai friends will be receptive to God's help, because they realize at that point that they cannot help themselves. The Psalms are good for helping those who suffer to pray to God by themselves. Then the stories of Jesus' life and being should be shared in the pattern of the rites of passage. The interview research indicates clearly that the Thai do not like vivid descriptions of Jesus' death on the cross. "It was horrible, dreadful and so terrifying that I did not want to think about it" were familiar comments frequently mentioned. When Thai churches performed a drama imitating the scene of Jesus carrying the cross, people made many negative comments about the scene. The Thai do not have the concept of blood sacrifice but they have the concept of self-emptying, self-sacrifice, and incarnation. People are greatly moved with Jesus' loneliness and emotional suffering in the Nativity, in the Garden of Gethsemane and in his prayer for the enemies on the cross. Thais seemingly understand more of the living water cleansing rather than blood cleansing because the explanation fits their worldview.

Teaching of Scripture should initially provide comfort in daily suffering. The death of Christ fulfilled the commandments of all religious precepts and freed humankind from their sinful nature or ignorance (avidya). His resurrection declared the end of the law of reincarnation. Jesus is the Creator, and we relate to him because he created us. We are his children. He is our father. Jesus is passionately attached to us and wants to help us when
we cannot help ourselves. He wants to be with us always and therefore gives his Holy Spirit to be with those who believe in him. A true story clarifies my proposal.

The Conversion Story of a Group of Gangster Leaders

Our church settled near a slum in Bangkok, Thailand in 1986. Children and teenagers from the slum enjoyed playing soccer and basketball games in the church ground. I observed a group of hippie hooligans who came to play soccer regularly. People were scared to bother with them. However, I was curious to know who they were and why they ended up with drugs and alcohol at such a young age. The town where I was born was famous for hooligans and god-fathers. When I was young, our family moved into a new area and my father invited a god-father of the area to our home and introduced all of the family members to him. I observed him closely; he was much like other people. Since then I have been curious as to how a person turns into a hooligan. Therefore, one evening I approached the most horrible looking one. I clumsily asked him for a suggestion about how to tell the children to collect all the garbage they threw on the ground before they went home. The man shouted, and immediately all the children cleaned the church garden.

Then I made it a point to talk with them every evening. I asked about their work, families, and education. They told me they cleaned the windows of a high-rise building but were cheated out of their pay. They always looked for jobs and were available to work most of the time. All of them were high school graduates and they wanted to learn English so it would be easier for them to find jobs. I offered to teach them English at no cost. We were a funny mix of students and teacher. I lost most of my voice and found it painful to teach English pronunciation; my students took drugs and got
drunk, swaying into the classroom, but they attended the class regularly. I never talked about Jesus or religious things. I wanted them to improve God's image within them. They were clever and polite. I taught them for two hours after work, using the best air-conditioned classroom. I asked their team to guard our church when we invited the Thai traditional drama team from Payap University to perform during Christmas eve, because thousands of people would flood in. They received good pay, but one church member voiced his concern, "Sister you are making friends with hooligans."

Almost a year passed by and I still never talked about Jesus but kept teaching them English. One day I lost my voice almost completely, and it was very painful to talk. One of them said, "Teacher why do you try so hard to teach us; we are stupid. We can't learn a thing. Why don't you just stop teaching?" I did not know what to say. I just looked at them, because I loved them. Then I offered to test their personality types, so they would know their skills and find the right kinds of jobs. We sat and worked on the test. The leader of the team broke down and wept openly, pouring his heart out. He came from a good family, but his father left the family when he was young. The leader was shocked and ran away to live by himself in the jungle for a year before he returned to live with his friends. I didn't know what to do or say, so I just listened. That night I asked permission to pray for them and I told them briefly about how Jesus had helped me in my difficulty. They asked me for Bibles. I gave them the books of Matthew and John. After that they often came to discuss the Bible after playing soccer.

Somjit was the first one to join our prayer meeting. That was a special night, because we tried to contextualize our Wednesday worship in the Thai style. We tried to imitate the Thai folk music rhythm. The opening song should start with the booming of a gong which we did not have. Therefore,
we all beat the table to make it boom like a gong. The Thai song traditionally
starts with a prolonged chanting--ho-he-ho-he-ho-he-ho-he-ho-hew three
times, but none of us knew how to do it. Somjit helped with the howling.
Then we sang a lively song, invited all to pray, and beat the table drum. A
lady spontaneously stood up and danced to the music. She bowed to me
inviting me to dance with her, so we danced to the rhythm in a worshipping
spirit. Everybody prayed their hearts out. Somjit told me later that it was an
awesome night; the Christian prayer meeting was festive. At the end of the
prayer meeting we celebrated with a special song and another dance. Then we
meditated silently. Somjit did the opposite. He prayed out loud, "God, if you
exist, you know I need a job. Please give me a job within one week. Then I
will believe in you."

The following week, Somjit returned. He said, "God gave me a job at
the City Bank as a manager's driver. They chose me because my English was
better than the other applicants." Then another student came to believe and
told his mother. His mother came to watch the Thai traditional drama from
Payap University. A member of our church happened to sit next to her and
prayed for her painful legs. She was healed and later on became a believer
and witnessed to another widow who was all by herself. The widow had no
place to live, so the church built her a small home even though she was not a
Christian. Recently a fire broke out in the slum area and she shared her
small place in Christ-like ways with individuals who had lost everything.
Within two years, four of them accepted Christ and have remained faithful
believers.

The testimony of Somjit's life demonstrates that Jesus' meekness
fulfills the Thai ideal of meekness in Thai converts. Moreover, the Holy
Spirit also helps Thai Christians progressively bond with Jesus, their living God, in their worldview and ethos.

Discipling New Believers: The Bonding with the Kinship Networks

The relational bonding with new converts' friends, social-networks, and kinship networks promises success for a people movement. Christians and missionaries have believed that Christian seekers should hide their spiritual search of Christ from their families. However, the interview research indicates differently. Non-Christian Thais say that the more their children hide the secret from them, the more they are angry and suspicious of the honesty of Christians and the goodness of Christianity. They view Christians negatively.

Christians violate the grateful relationship, smooth interpersonal relationship as well as flexibility and adjustment, and interdependence values in Thai culture when new converts hide their search for Jesus from their parents and abruptly tell them of their conversion later on. The Thai like the phrase "slowly but surely." They hate abrupt change. Change is a slow process for them. They have a saying, "slowly, slowly change" (koy-pen-koy-pai), "I need time to prepare my heart and my mind." (tong-tiam-toi-tiam-jai). The Thai concept of time is cyclical (Feig 1989:23-24).

When new converts witness aggressively to their parents and relatives, they violate the avoidance of confrontation value as well as the hierarchy value of the culture which Feig considers as important characteristics of the Thai (1989:76,37). New converts often act as though they are under the spell of the theology of redemption, according to which they believe their parents and relatives are lost and will go to hell. Out of love they are even more
aggressive but their parents and relatives respond at first to their witness kindly and quietly, or with teasing humorous remarks. As days pass by, new converts become more aggressive in witnessing. They overlook the ego-orientation value of their parents who have strong self-esteem and strong self-identity as Thais. In order to keep their children meek and quiet, the parents fight back by scolding and criticizing. When the children talk back, their parents are enraged and ignore their existence. Then the new converts withdraw into Christian communities, and their other relationship ties are broken.

As a result, these new converts lose their identity as Thais, which inhibits their spiritual growth. It seems that if converts remained bonded to their natural community and to Thai culture, it would affect the new converts' identity and their bonding to Christian meaning because Thai culture educates spiritual meaning to the Thai through the relational bonding as the research demonstrated in chapter 4. Because this does not happen, we believe Christian churches in Thailand have many weak Christians.

The parents of the new converts might act as if they ignore their children completely, but as Thai parents, they love their children dearly. They long to bond with their children and know what is going on in their lives so they can help. This is an important duty of Thai parents, but they cannot do this if they feel the churches steal their children away. They invested their lives in their children, they reason, yet now the children belong to the Christian church which has invested nothing in them. As a result many Thai families are wounded because Christians violate Thai values and break family relationship ties. I, therefore, present the Christian rite of passage for the new converts' initiation to solve this problem and I
think it is an anti-structure to the traditional way of witnessing. It is necessary to take a risk in order to be successful and God’s servants in the ancient Bible took the leap of faith with God.

The rite is divided into three stages: (1) separation, (2) liminality, and (3) reincorporation (Zahniser 1991:4, 6).

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According to the figure above, separation and liminality take one year each. Due to the Thai values of grateful relationship, smooth interpersonal relationship, flexibility and adjustment orientation, the prolonged time provides a shock-absorber, allowing new converts to throw away their idols and tell their parents of their conversion to Christianity as acts of separation from Buddhism. At the same time, it provides a shock-absorber for parents to be informed by their children of this important separation. During the liminal stage, the prolonged time allows the initiates to be bonded to the meaning of reconciliation to other persons, to God, to cultural communities, and to Christian communities so they will be both Christian and Thai. This will result in a good identity for new converts. They will grow as Thais and Christians because they have good relationship ties with their natural and
cultural social networks as well as with their Christian community. They will have both good identity and good roots.

Due to the importance of this issue, I would like to concentrate on the bonding of the new converts and their relatives in each phase of the rite of passage. I will design the bonding in parallel to the pattern of the rite of passage, using the nine value clusters of the Thai and the concepts of hierarchy, cyclical time, and life models of the Thai as the framework, in the stages of separation, liminality, and reincorporation which my husband and I researched together (Mejudhon 1996).

Separation

3. putting away idols
4. informing the family about conversion
5. negotiation

Preparation for Separation

Figure 3

The Rites of Separation

There are five steps in the rite of separation: (1) religious dialogues between the new converts and their relatives; (2) preparation for the new converts to understand the concept of reconciliation; (3) putting away idols;
(4) informing the families of the conversion, and (5) negotiating for confession and forgiveness. The religious dialogues between the new converts and their relatives form an important foundation. Religious dialogues demand trust, respect, and love for parents on the part of the new converts. The Apostle John wrote, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment, and the one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us "(I John 4:18-19 NIV).

This kind of attitude will help new converts communicate their contact with Christianity to their parents from the very beginning. The style of the communication will be effective only when it fits Thai cultural values. The parents will feel respected, trusted, and loved if the new converts ask for permission to go to church and report what they learn there. Going to the church is better than going to night clubs and bars. The parents are willing to discuss religion with their children if the children's behavior cherishes the parents' identity, their concept of hierarchy, grateful relationship orientation, smooth interpersonal relationship orientation, and interdependence orientation. The interview research of non Christian Thais confirms this suggestion. New converts should also introduce Christians who are well aware of Thai culture to their social networks, too. This will ease the fear and anxiety of Thai parents and give them a clearer view of Christians. They have various myths about Christians and churches. These myths should be refuted through the Christians' goodness.

New converts must pay attention to their family's problems and needs and must cooperate with their relatives to solve them, because collectivism is important for the Thai. This kind of behavior will prevent new converts from alienating themselves from their relatives, and both sides will be
prepared for the religious separation. The meekness and vulnerability on the part of the new converts will prepare their social networks to negotiate in the liminality and in the reincorporation as well.

**Liminality**

The Liminal Stage

![Diagram](image)

The Liminal Stage

Liminality creates deeper bonding between new converts and their social and kinship networks. The bonding is divided into three steps: (1) confession and forgiveness, (2) probation, and (3) the baptismal service.

The first step is the formal act of confession in which the new converts, who committed the cultural sin of bringing shame to their immediate families and relatives because of their conversion, ask for forgiveness and bow down at the feet of their parents. The meekness of communication, the sacred indigenous objects, and the sacred ceremony all speak to the hearts and minds of the Thai and they will respond positively to the new converts.

This ritual of confession and forgiveness provides a way for the parents and relatives to vent their anguish, anger, frustration, disappointment, and concern before they proceed further to grant forgiveness to the new converts. Their forgiveness is an action of reciprocity. When new converts take the
initiative to value the interdependent orientation in Thai culture by asking for forgiveness, they show respect for Thai culture and their parents' pain. As a result, the parents respect their decision of conversion. Respecting interdependence brings about bonding between new converts and their kinship networks, and the bonding will go deeper in the period of probation and the baptismal service.

In the period of probation (Figure 4, No.7), the families receive back their authority over the new converts. They set criteria together with the local churches for the new converts to prove their accountability in preparation for their baptismal service. The Thai learn about religion from life models therefore, families will require accountability of being from the new converts and are happy they can maintain authority over them. If the new converts submit themselves to their families' authority, there will be deeper bonding because Thai culture requires authority to be merciful to the submissive, as a famous Thai proverb suggests, "The meek bow down with burden; they shall be blessed at the end" (Ngamdee 1993:36). This bonding will prepare the parents and relatives for the hardest time to come which is the baptismal service (Figure 4, No.8).

Liminality will end soon for the new converts, but liminality is at its peak for the new converts' parents and relatives. The bonding will go deepest if new converts are sensitive to the pain of their parents, because from their viewpoint the baptismal service signifies a complete separation from Buddhism and full identification with Christianity. The children can comfort the parents in attitude and in action according to the Thai value of grateful relationship orientation. Gratitude is expressed through obedience, serving, and giving in Thai culture.
As the time for the baptismal service approaches, new converts should dialogue with their kinship networks about the concept of death and resurrection in the baptismal service, using familiar experiences from daily living and familiar concepts from Buddhism as stepping stones. Eliade suggests that the moon symbolizes death and resurrection (Eliade 1958:156-157). Professor Wit Wisawate lectured that in Buddhism, life was continuous death and rebirth like electricity (Wissawate 1967). This will help the kinship networks understand the deep religious meaning of the ritual, and they will be more appreciative. They should be led to understand the ritual not as a departure from Buddhism but as a fulfillment of Buddhist self-emptying. The baptismal service should symbolize perfect bonding to the concept of self-emptying in Buddhism through Christ. The families should be officially invited to attend the ritual.

Reincorporation

9. parents' discourse  
10. symbolic serving  
11. the feast

Figure 5

The Rites of Reincorporation

The rite of reincorporation is divided into three steps: (1) parents' discourse, (2) symbolic serving, and (3) the feast. The bonding between the kinship networks and the new converts takes place in the first step when the parents are invited to give words of wisdom which urge their children to fulfill their Christian duties to their families, communities, and nation. The
Thai like participating in formal ceremonies because of their value of hierarchy; they usually agree to participate in religious ceremonies if invited officially.

The feast provides another chance for bonding. Parents should sit at the head of the table together with other elderly relatives and the church elders while their children attend the table. The food being served should symbolize bonding and blessings. The rite of reincorporation ends in joy and fellowship, but the bonding continues as does the discipling of the new converts.

The bonding between the new converts and their kinship networks is not a side-line but their life-line, and lasts for a life time. If the bonding is life-long, the discipling of the new converts will last long, and the church will have strong Christians and many good friends who are candidates for the kingdom. A life story will make clear this suggestion.

The Conversion of A Thai Chinese Family

The Kama and Akosikarma ritual can be used also to heal the broken relational bonding between new converts and their families. Our church informally performed this ritual of reconciliation with a Thai Chinese family whose father punished his children severely, to the point of shooting them, when they became Christians. During a Chinese sacred time, the two leaders of our church carried Chinese sacred objects, four yellow pears, on a plate to his door. The action signified the willingness to pay respect to a respectable authority. The symbolic action softened the father's heart and he allowed the leaders of the church to salute him, which signified forgiveness granted to some degree. Not many words were said, but the meaning was understood.

Later on, his shop was robbed, and he was wounded in the fighting.
The pastor was the first one to visit him, and eventually he and the whole family became Christian through the cooperative work of many Christians.

**Discipling Believers: Informal and Formal Teaching**

The kind of discipling non-believers mentioned above will make discipling believers a labor of joy. The discipling is divided into non-verbal and verbal communication. My suggestions result from a synthesis of the concepts of the sacred place, time, persons, actions, and the structure of the rite of passage of Zahniser (1997). It also takes the sight, sound, senses, and performance as well as the preaching, teaching, and characteristics of Thai way of meekness into consideration.

**Wai Krue Ritual**

I would like to suggest using the Thai ritual of initiating students before any teaching is officially performed. This ritual is *wai krue* (salute to teachers). The ceremony signifies a covenant made between the teachers and the students. Praya Anumanrajathon speaks of the origin of this ritual:

According to the Thai tradition, the *wai krue* ritual must be performed before studying any subject. The study will be empowered and sacred. The flowers brought to show respect to teachers are usually eggplant flowers and needle flowers (*dok-ma-kua; dok-kem*) together with a handful of white grass. These are symbols which stress the prayer, "May my wisdom grow like eggplant flowers and needle flowers [These two things grow fast]. May my wisdom be sharp like needles and as salty as salt." When monks accept the sacred objects, children will bow down to commit themselves to the authority of the teachers. (1967:148)

At present, this is an important cultural ritual. The students chant in sacred language and describe the goodness of their teachers. Their representatives bring trays of decorated flowers to present to the school president and bow down before him or her. This ritual can be used in
Christian discipling with some adaptations to initiate the concept of deep relational bonding and covenant between teachers and students.

**Good Teachers**

Good teachers live liminality as a natural pattern of life. Teachers can empower students to have a holistic vision of mission when students see their teachers practice what they teach. Usually, liminality in a natural pattern of life takes place in the holistic mission. In my interview research, I met two gracious ministers, the Rev. Boonsri Klinhom who is an ecumenical evangelical pastor and Acharn Kampan Sanit who is an ecumenical evangelical evangelist. Both are greatly used by God and their ministry is fruitful. The interview about their discipling affirms the effectiveness of the integrative mission mentioned above. Both of them share similar personalities. They are Thai in attitude and manners. Rev. Boonsri and Acharn Kampan live sacrificial lives and have courage to follow God's will and way.

Rev. Boonsri resigned from a good job to plant a church when the Presbyterian denomination stopped planting churches. Acharn Kampan resigned from a seminary teaching career to be an evangelist. They invested their lives, property, and money into God's kingdom. They incarnated their lives with non-Christians. Reverend Boonsri created strong relationships with the community surrounding the church. The church brought electricity and a good road to the community. On their children's birthdays, non-Christian neighbors often requested that Rev. Boonsri pray for them. Acharn Kampan bonded himself with the social and kinship networks of Buddhist AIDS patients, taking good care of them, even though he is an excellent evangelist.
Acharn Kampan disciples his students by using life transference. They often travel together. The students first observe their teachers, then they learn to do the ministry little by little. Acharn Kampan shared liminality with his students. They worked in the fields together, growing and harvesting rice. The interview research confirms that discipling in rural areas takes place naturally when teachers and learners spend time working together, incarnating their lives in social activities. With the Thais' both and worldview they enjoy doing many things at a time. Doing one thing at a time is boring.

The Worship

Most non-Christians feel negative feeling about attending Christian Sunday service. A lady voiced her feeling toward Christian worship, "I feel happy when I attend a Buddhist temple. It's cool, calm, and peaceful. Christian worship and its message make me so unhappy. The sermon hurts my head." Christian worship often loses the concept of the sacred place, time, and action which are biblical and Thai. With an understanding of the Thai culture and biblical concept, each local people should design their own worship that fits their worldview. This can be done by researching non-Christian local people, Christians, and missionaries.

The Thai culture recognizes the importance of symbols, sight, sound, senses, and the rites of passage which are illustrated in the Bible. Non-Christian Thais are most impressed with Christian wedding and funeral ceremonies. Other rites of passage should be designed to meet affective felt needs, actualize self-identity, and promote deep relational bonding.

The Preaching

The interview research presents a negative perception by non-Christians toward preachers. A man said, "I don't think a Christian God will
judge me to perish. I attended a Christian church for many years but I could not understand what the preacher preached. Shouldn't God judge the preacher who cannot help non-Christians understand?" Preachers are perceived as spiritual salesmen, lecturers, politicians, and employees who perform their duties due to their aggressive manners of preaching. Drawing insights from the Thai culture, better roles for preachers should be servant-leaders, parent-teachers, performance-preachers, and storyteller-preachers. The messages should be applicable, fresh, and relate holistically to the integrative function of the culture, appealing to the affective domain. Communication should be indirect and encourage listeners to think for themselves. Instead of challenging his members to forsake sin, a pastor allowed them to think through the issue, "Ask yourself what our church would look like if everybody behaved like you." That Thai pastor also indirectly encouraged his members to love one another, by making the concept of love concrete. He explained, "Jesus grew the tree of love in our hearts. Can we make the tree grow healthy?"

There should be public dialoguing after the sermon, following the example of the Buddhist question and answer method (pootcha-wisajjana). People can ask difficult questions they do not understand. They can inject ideas or testify about various ideas in the sermon.

The Teaching

The research findings indicate alternatives in discipling through teaching. I will categorize my suggestions into seven areas: the new philosophy of teaching, the objectives, the curriculum, teachers-learners, methods, manners, and criteria.

The philosophy of teaching. Discipling is not Christian programs initiated by instructors aiming to pass on information about Scripture, and
theology. Discipling is primarily relational bonding, aiming to bond teachers, learners, churches, kinship and social networks as well as local communities to Jesus and to each other. Discipling alerts learners, teachers, and churches to respond to the holistic commandments of the Scripture: to love and in the great commission to go to the world, serving non-Christians physically, mentally, and spiritually. Discipling is two-way communication. Teachers and learners allow the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, other Christians, churches, and non-Christians to shape their view and way of life to move progressively toward Jesus, being fully Christian and Thai. Discipling takes place when disciples want to learn and want to change to become more like Christ. Disciplers can not change anyone; they can only encourage and empower learners to desire to be more like Christ. Spiritual maturity is the cooperative work of God and disciples with which disciplers have the privilege to serve.

The objectives. Discipling aims to encourage learners to adopt the way of meekness as their way and view of life, having strong self-identity yet practicing self-surrender toward God and people in order that the Thai will know Jesus Christ and introduce changes physically, socially, and spiritually to Thailand.

Discipling aims to provide ways that will encourage teachers and learners to bond with Jesus, kinship, social networks, communities, and churches because self-identity and self-surrendering come from relational bonding between Christians with Jesus, and Christians with people.

Discipling aims to provide ways that will encourage learners to experience the intimacy of the ultimacy of God through affective and cognitive domains. It also helps learners absorb the Word of God into their worldview. Learners can feel the living Word and participate in the
reenacting of the living Word in their being and rituals as well as exegete the Word in the Thai inductive way.

**Curriculum.** In the new way of teaching, there are no fixed curriculum or encapsulated lessons. The learners' personalities, roles and statuses, their life context, the local context, and the cultural context shape the content of the curriculum. Curriculum tends to be a mix of impromptu and prepared lessons. Classrooms are inside and outside churches. Curriculum results from the exegesis of learners, the local context, the cultural context, and most of all, the Scripture. This kind of curriculum depends on God, people, and the Holy Spirit.

**Teachers and learners.** Teaching is a cooperative work. The new approach includes many kinds of teachers. The Holy Spirit, Scripture, the communities of faith, non-Christians, disciplers, and learners are all teachers. Disciplers have faith in these teachers and provide ways for teachers to contribute their knowledge and wisdom to learners in order that learners can understand spiritual, material, and social realms in wide perspective. However, scriptural principles must be the foundation of learners' view and way of life.

**The methods.** I divide the methods into three aspects: (1) the incarnational aspect, (2) the non-verbal aspect, and (3) the verbal aspect. Incarnational teaching helps disciplers exegete learners' lives, affectively, cognitively, and evaluatively. Incarnational teaching will also help teachers bond with learners' kinship and social networks. The exegesis of learners' lives will help teachers know how to group their learners, how to prepare lessons, and how to teach.

The non-verbal aspect of teaching helps disciplers design rituals, rites of passage, pilgrimages, various kinds of liminality for learners and teachers
to participate in. The good designs come from the cooperative insights of Christians and non-Christians who understand well Thai culture. Cooperation will bond Christians and non-Christians together naturally.

The verbal teaching should make use of narration, dialogue, questions-answers, role-plays, and case-studies as well as Thai inductive Bible exegesis. These methods fit the Thai worldview and encourage them to feel, participate, and think by themselves.

**Manners.** Teachers must be filled with the Holy Spirit and their lives demonstrate the fruit of the Holy spirit and practice the Thai way of meekness. Disciples can learn from life transference, and acceptable manners will create trust and motivate learners to surrender to Christ and to other people. Then the Holy Spirit can transform the learners' lives. The study in chapter 2 holds a guide to good manners in Thai culture.

**The criteria.** First, the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the nine value clusters of Komin can be used to measure the way of meekness of learners. Reflection papers and journal keeping will help learners realize their self-identity, self-surrendering in their sojourn with Christ. The open-heart session and case studies will help learners and their groups evaluate their friends and themselves. The evaluation should be given confidentially. The evaluation from non-Christian kinship and social networks will help Christians grow wholesomely.

Second, learners should record the number of their non-Christian friends, the quality of friendship, the development of friendship. Learners should record their feelings and thoughts about the relationship as well as the strength and weakness of their friendship. Learners should share and discuss about how to create deep relational friendship with the Thai in various life contexts.
Third, learners should record their observation and interview research of people's needs in their community and create their own mission according to the supervision of the local people and the church. Their effort should be evaluated by their group, local people, and the church.

Fourth, successful learners should be able to initiate various kinds of Thai methods of discipling that fit their local context. Learners should have the privilege in seeing their kinship and social network come to Christ. A true life story from my own ministry will clarify my suggestions.

Two kinds of discipling. I believed I had the gift of teaching but the students in the church and in the seminary demonstrated the qualities of split-level Christians when I used Western systems of discipleship training. I was challenged to evaluate myself and my teaching. I observed the frequency of their comment, "I remember most your lifestyle and some of your words." I designed experiments with two groups of people: (1) young professional members of the church and (2) four secretaries who worked with us. I met with the young professional group every Sunday afternoon from two to four o'clock p.m. We had a good fellowship, laughed a lot, ate a lot, discussed, critiqued, and counseled each other. We also studied the Bible and prayed. The learners told me what they wanted to learn and set their own curriculum. I adjusted my teaching-counseling program to fit their various personality types.

The secretaries and I had no concrete curriculum. We got together because of our felt needs and the relational bonding created between us. The first secretary listened to my preaching in a seminar for women. When she moved to Bangkok, she came to me looking for a job. She did not know how to type, so the committee of the church did not want to hire her. While they looked for someone else, I urged her to practice typing at the church. She
came every day and patiently learned how to type until she excelled. She became an excellent secretary for our church. I observed that she always fasted and prayed and studied the Bible seriously. Later on, she confided how her husband was facing injustice in the civil court. We got together with other secretaries and prayed. They lost in the primary and secondary civil courts, but then a miracle happened, and they won in the supreme court. The church and the secretary team had shared the liminality of our beloved sister and we rejoiced together greatly that day.

Our second secretary came from a broken home. She became a Christian in our church but would sometimes disappear. Then she would return with a hunger for God and make good progress in knowing the Savior. We chatted during our free time. She shared about her dreams and her family life.

The third secretary came to study English with me when she was a freshman at a university. After one year she became a Christian. In her fourth year, she struggled to graduate, but could not pass one subject. Her family wanted to hire her into the family business at a high salary but she preferred to be a secretary for the church. She reasoned, "I want to learn from God's servants' lives."

The fourth secretary was a new convert. She became a Christian while trying to help a bewildered Christian student register in a university. They became good friends, and the secretary was later converted. When she faced a crisis about a residence, the church invited her to share a room with seminary students as well as secretaries two and three. Therefore, all of them were close.

We got together to pray before work, after lunch, and as urgent needs demanded. We shared what God had shown us in our lives from Scripture.
We followed no procedure; we simply enjoyed fellowship with God and with each other for about half an hour. If we knew about a serious crisis, we would come together and pray in one mind and spirit.

The differences between the two experiment groups were: (1) the lack of liminality sharing and experiences within the professional group—we laughed more than we cried; (2) the secretary group spent more time together in the natural pattern of living; (3) the secretary group had the deep relational bonding; (4) the professional group leaned toward being program oriented while the secretary group was more oriented toward people and needs, (5) the second group gave help for physical and material needs which created grateful relationship, interdependence, and smooth relationship, and (6) the method of teaching in the secretary group appealed more to the affective domain and the Thai way of discipling.

During the first three years, the professional group became ingrown. They followed the leader with Western input about ministry. All of them were good Christians; capable, creative, faithful, honest, and sincere. They had much knowledge about the Word of God but found it hard to apply the Scriptures to the crises of daily life. Perhaps the way I taught them did not pave the way for the Holy Spirit to put the word of God into their worldview.

The secretary group was more independent in making decisions. Out of the blue, the second secretary resigned and went to carry on church work in the southern part of Thailand. The church tripled while she was there for she showed her gifts of discipling non-believers. The first and third secretaries demonstrated maturity in Christ, standing firm on God's word through difficult times. The first one always held to the commandments to love, fast, and quietly pray. All of them stood firm against various winds of Western Christian fads. The third one identified herself with people in the
slum and created her own incarnational mission. She taught children from the slum area and got to know the parents, sharing Christ first in deeds rather than in words. She observed how I interviewed and she imitated, listening to people in the slum criticize the aggressive ways our church propagated the gospel. She apologized to them and listened. Non-Christians in the slum loved her.

**Discipling Wrongdoers: Reconciliation**

The concept of discipling wrongdoers as reconciliation can be used in various ways: (1) bonding back the wrongdoers with Christian fellowship, (2) reconciling with the family of new converts, (3) reconciling with the Thai, and (4) reconciling Christians with Christians. I think the *Kama* and *Ahosikarma* ritual (the ritual of reconciliation) works well in disciplining Thai Christians as the case study of the Muangthai Church demonstrated in Chapter 5. It is effective in reconciliation with new converts' families as the conversion of a Thai Chinese family demonstrated. Before discussing other functions of this concept I think Christians should learn about the origin of this ritual.

The *Kama* and *Ahosikarma* ritual uses archaic words which come from Pali. *Kama* means "to ask for pardon; to humbly apologize." *Ahosikarma* means "forgiveness of the offense is granted." (Thai Royal Academy 1995: 128, 925). Nowadays, the words *kama* and *ahosikama* are frequently used in the Thai language when relationships between persons are challenged. The word *ahosikarma* is shortened to *hosi*, a vernacular expression. The action of the *Kama* and *Ahosikarma* ritual is still widely practiced in Thai culture. When hooligans, god-fathers, and gangsters reconcile and stop fighting, they perform this ritual in public. When
someone elopes, when students act unbecomingly toward their teachers, or when children shame their parents, the Thai culture requires the performance of this reconciliation ritual. It must be done formally if the wrongdoer shames others publicly. Figure 6 illustrates the core function and meaning of the ritual.

During the interview research, a teacher in the Northeast shared with me that the students who were addicted to drugs had to apologize to their parents with this ritual. The Thai perform this ritual before a novice enters the monkhood. It is also a rite of separation between the dead and the living. Few Thai Christians and no missionaries interviewed knew about this ritual or understood its core meaning.

Most missionaries and a few Thai Christians are afraid of using this *Kama* and *Ahosikarma* ritual because of the fear of syncretism. They are not sure about using sacred objects and the sacred action of bowing down before
others. A Thai pastor voiced his concern, "Doesn't the Bible say we should not bow down to other people?" In fact, Revelation 19:10 (NTV) says, "Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!" Peter tried to worship the angel, but he was forbidden. The act of bowing down before those whom we have wronged in the Kama Ahosikarma ritual is not worshipping. It is a cultural action of deep repentance of our sin and evidence of the longing to be forgiven by others.

A Thai Christian whose major is Thai language and culture heartily confirmed the use of the Kama-Ahosikarma ritual. He said, "It is a beautiful ritual. The sacred objects are beautiful. The formality of the ritual causes meaningful awe and sacredness of action. It leans to culture more than Buddhism." His comment is correct. The objects, a lei of jasmine and rose petals and a bonded bunch of apology incense and candles, are cultural symbols which have nothing to do with Buddhism. The objects elicit relational bonding. The incenses sticks cannot be lit because they are as big as thumbs without wicks. They are not made for worship but for apologizing and forgiving. Majority of non-Christian Thais interviewed affirm the effectiveness of the Kama-Ahosikarma ritual in Thai Christian disciplining.

I already discussed the first and the second functions. In this section, I will apply the biblical concept of disciplining in the third and the fourth functions.

Why should Christians in Thailand reconcile with the Thai? The research interview confirmed the unspoken, broken relationship between Christians in Thailand and the Thai. Colonization, modernization, the Vietnam war, and Christian aggressive forms of mission wounded the smooth relationships between the Thai and Christians. Colonization took
away many parts of the kingdom of Thailand and drained Thailand financially. Modernization destroyed rural communities and Thai culture. The Vietnam war brought about the problems of prostitution and the change in the value system wherever American military bases were located. The problem lingers to this day. At present Americans, both non-Christians and Christians, attack Thailand without mentioning the problem American armies created. A Korean missionary smashed Buddha images and ran away, leaving the wounded relationships for Thai Christians to bear. Another group of Japanese missionaries shouted the gospel into a Buddhist temple and posted the gospel messages on trees all over Thailand, believing that they were doing God's will. The research interview reveals the anger and negative attitudes toward the gospel and Christians in Thailand because of these aggressive missions.

Many parents have deep resentment and bitterness toward Christianity, Christians, and churches because a church in Bangkok manipulates and brainwashes their children in the name of Jesus. Thai Christians are to be blamed because we related closely from the very beginning to Westerners and to the name of Jesus. Missionaries come and go, Thai Christians grieve. The church which uses fear motivation grows, many Thai parents and Thai Christians grieve.

The research findings demonstrate that reconciliation to the Thai is important for Christians in Thailand because reconciliation is an important element in Thai relational culture. Indifference shown toward broken fellowship or wounded relationships will block the smoothness of the gospel communication. Christians in Thailand should stop offensive kinds of mission and try the way of meekness, which fits biblical standard and Thai culture. Christians should think and pray about the problems. Christians in
Thailand should ask about the feeling of non-Christians concerning these matters and apologize. Books should be written for the purpose of apologizing and reconciling Christians in Thailand with the Thai. Christians may ask, "why should we apologize for the sins we never committed? Why did Jesus incarnate himself to reconcile Christians with God? Why did the Scripture say:

> If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. (Matthew 5:23-24)

Why should Christians in Thailand reconcile with Christians? The research interviews present Christians in Thailand as spilt-level, separating words from deeds. Many Christian leaders aim for power, prestige, and position. I think the problem stems from modernization, frustration of the ministry in Thailand, loss of identity, and spiritual problems. Power, prestige, and position are easy answers for the problems mentioned above. However, I never lose my hope in Jesus because he is in control. He knows how to manage all kinds of problems. Those who want to see the revitalization of God should forsake our ways and follow God's way, reconciling to each other.

Christians should set a goal to find the Thai way of discipling non-Christians, Christians, and wrongdoers. During its 168 years, Christian mission in Thailand has imported Western ways of doing ministry and mission. Thai Christians exegete the Scripture, believe in development, and speak in tongues, healing the sick and performing miracles according to Western Christianity's suggestions. Then Thai Christians try the church growth theory. They test "the four spiritual laws", evangelism exposition III, spiritual warfare, and falling down in the Vineyard manner. However, Thai
churches grow with painful slowness. However, we should be thankful to our Western brethren who tried their best to help us. We should cooperate more to press forward with the high calling. Thai Christians and missionaries in Thailand should also contribute to Western Christianity. There is hope for our future.

**General Missiological Applications**

The research findings point out some alternatives for missiology in a relational culture where the both/and worldview dominates the people's perception. The research confirms the effectiveness of the indigenous church and contextualization. However, the research findings indicate that new approaches, which seem anti-structural to traditional ways of doing mission, are biblical.

**The Indigenous Church**

The research confirms the effectiveness of the indigenous church. By the indigenous church, I mean the church where local converts can be both indigenes and Christians living out the gospel in their cultural, biblical way. The indigenous church can function holistically in the sociocultural, integrative functions of each individual culture, introducing the gospel of Jesus to meet the felt needs of people in social relationships, physical needs, and ideology. The indigenous church fits the local culture with regard to the value system, the affective, cognitive, and practical domain of the belief system as well as the local acceptable roles and status. The indigenous church encourages members to be more like Christ in their personality within their Thai culture.

The indigenous church liberates local Christians and missionaries from the either/or worldview, holding alone to Western Christianity. It
helps Christians to have a both/and worldview, combining biblical, cultural, and traditional Christianity together, relying on the insight of contextualization. The indigenous church enhances cooperation between indigenes and missionaries in confronting the negative elements of the local culture and developing the positive ones. Insiders and outsiders exegete the Scripture to find the principles of problematic issues and encourage indigenous Christians to consider the application of biblical principles in the local context.

The indigenous church and its members seriously listen to the culture, finding the unique characteristics of each context, and withholding contempt and a judging spirit. The church understands that each culture and religion gives identity and survival to the people. Culture and religion have both goodness and infirmity due to the defects of humankind. Local Christians should learn to appreciate the good parts of their culture, religion, and history, and learn to contribute good things to their country. Members of the indigenous church never isolate themselves from their social and kinship networks because they know it is a deadly cultural sin, and Christ requests that we take care of them.

As a result, the indigenous church has the best self-propagating, self-governing, self-supporting, and most of all self-theologizing qualities following the cultural grain. The churches, Christians, and Christianity are not alienated from the local context. The word of God is intelligible, and the manners and methods of communicating the gospel are acceptable to the local people. The indigenous church pays attention to sociocultural change as well. They allow the change to shape the manner, method, and message to the degree that they are still true to the Scripture but intelligibly understood
by non-Christians. The church also reshapes and changes the bad elements of the sociocultural change the best they can, individually and communally.

The indigenous church gives the most important roles to indigenous people and guides missionaries to find suitable roles in the local context. The church seeks to encourage Western and Asian missionaries to set aside the Western framework of doing mission and to look up to local Christians and non-Christians to make them effective messengers of Christ in the role of victim-victor. The indigenous church also seeks to encourage indigenous Christians to find their identity in Christ, ministry, and culture; to find Christ in their culture and create their own ways of discipling interacting with the Western framework of doing mission. The indigenous church makes use of contextualization.

**Contextualization**

This dissertation indicates that contextualization plays an important role in the indigenous church. Contextualization in a relational culture must exegese the non-verbal communication of the local culture: (1) characteristics of the local people, (2) how the local people accept outsiders into their relational boundary in order to find the characteristics and criteria for measuring the various levels of relationship, (3) what is the local people's understanding of religion and discipling, and (4) what are the local people's religious discipling tools.

In contextualizing, non-Christians are Christians' teachers. They give much useful information concerning their perception of Christianity, Christians, and churches which will help Christians evaluate their mission and apologize for mistakes Christians made in the past. The local worldview and functions of religion will help Christians contextualize the message and the non-verbal aspects of communication.
In a culture where the local people do not allow Christians to use the form of their religion, Christians must find the underlying meaning of the familiar forms of the local religion. Contextualization must be done at the meaning level but must use different, acceptable forms. The Thai are offended when Christians build their churches like Buddhist temples. Christians should exegete the meaning of the sacred place in the Thai worldview. The research describes the sacred place as the place where they encounter inner happiness, calmness, and peace of mind. This finding suggests that Christian churches in Thailand should give the Thai a sacred atmosphere of happiness, calmness, and peace of mind where there are symbols, signs, and pictures that point to Jesus. The worship service should be rich with sight, sound, sense, smell, participation, and performance because these are sacred actions and atmosphere that the Thai long for in the sacred realm, and they are not unbiblical. Following the grain of culture will help people encounter the revelation in the word of God and the Holy Spirit, because they will come to God through a familiar road instead of reducing the sacred place to a conference room.

Contextualization in a relational culture must seriously consider the affective domain of the local people. The translation of the Bible is an important key because the work of discipling will be easier if the people enjoy reading the Bible because they understand the message. Many Christians complained to me that they did not understand the Bible, but I did not understand their frustration. I was frustrated that I had to help them understand for such a long time. Now I know how the Bible incorporated Jewish culture into the message. Similarly, Thai Christians read the word of God through the Thai worldview. The local way of exegeting the Bible is also important. The Western Christians emphasize word study because they like
information. Relational culture emphasizes life study. It took me a long time to develop my Thai way of exegeting the Scripture. I think it is important to encourage local people to develop their own way of exegesis before turning to the Western way, so that the Scripture will be viewed from all angles of applications, and we can share various perspectives of Christ from the four corners of the earth. Contextualization widens the kingdom of God.

Suggestions for Further Research

My research lays down a foundation for further study. Much is yet to be accomplished to make Christianity more contextualized in Thailand. I venture to do this research because few Thai Christians are trained in Thai culture, theology, and missiology. Therefore it is my privilege to be a doormat for many Christians who are capable of furthering research in other fields. I would like to suggest further research in the following areas: (1) religious studies, (2) development, and (3) the way of modernization.

Research in religious studies of the Thais is very important. Further research about the sacred, the sacred place, time, actions, and objects as well as the Thai concept of rituals and purification will help Christians contextualize Christian worship, Christian rituals and rites of passage that appeal to the Thai worldview and the local context.

Development goes hand in hand with discipling. It provides ways for Christians to bond naturally with non-Christians. Traditional development equates development with modernization and the Thai in the rural areas cannot catch up with the pace of modernization. People lose the sense of community and face an identity crisis. The traditional way of development ignores the potential of local people in local contexts. Research about the problems and the solution of development in Thailand will result in
contextualization of Christian development which will affect the material, social, and spiritual culture of the Thai. Research should pay attention to the local initiative in various places and find ways to revitalize the identity of people in Thai rural communities which are negatively affected by modernization. The research should study, contrast and compare the development introduced by outsiders and insiders.

Christians should research the forms, functions and meaning of modernization because it is a special kind of culture. Modernization provides technology to the world but it takes away religions, communal spirit, and interpersonal relational bonding. I believe modernization has its sacred dimensions, the sacred time, place, objects, and actions as well as rituals. Understanding modernization will help Christians know how to communicate the gospel to the modern mind and how to disciple Christians. I believe Christians should learn how to keep our belief alive by contextualizing, using Scripture, local culture, religious studies, development and modernization as the general framework.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, we defended the thesis that the Thai way of meekness is the best method by which to contextualize Christianity in Thailand. Moreover, the Thai way of meekness is compatible with scriptural teaching on meekness. Effective approaches to discipling Thai non-believers, believers, and wrongdoers can be founded upon the Thai way of meekness. I developed some new ways of discipling the Thai from a Thai perspective, using the Thai way of meekness and relying on insights from Komin (1991), Hiebert (1994), and Zahniser (1991, 1997). As a result, I believe Christian Thais can preserve their cultural and spiritual identity, and Thai indigenous
Christian churches will be founded in Jesus and the Scripture and rooted in the Thai cultural context. Then Thais can be both Christian and Thai in the Thai way.
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