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## TOLERANCE IN BUDDHISM

The aim of the following article is to show a number of different qualities of Buddhist tolerance which can be observed in its history.

Tolerance may mean many things: patience, forbearance, open-mindedness, impartiality, liberality, allowance, variation, lenity, and compassion. “Tolerance is the quality of being patient, accepting, and forgiving”.<sup>1</sup> According to United Nations Declaration: “Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world’s cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. Tolerance is harmony in difference”.<sup>2</sup>

According to Hajime Nakamura, an eminent Japanese scholar and buddhologist: “Tolerance is the most characteristic quality of Indian culture”.<sup>3</sup> In the whole history of India no king led his army to offensive war outside India. No Buddhist (or Jaina) king persecuted other religions.<sup>4</sup>

Tolerance is strictly connected with other values. According to A.K. Warder: “Truth, non-violence, freedom, toleration and other principles are inseparable. If

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<sup>1</sup> P.G. Just, *Tolerance*, 2000, <http://www.nanhua.co.za/nanhua/Column/Peter%20Just/Tolerance.htm> (01.03.2007).

<sup>2</sup> “The Declaration of Principles on Tolerance”, signed by the Member States of UNESCO on 16 November 1995, quoted in K. and V. Kawasaki, *Tolerance in Buddhism*, [http://home.earthlink.net/~brelief/tol\\_1.html](http://home.earthlink.net/~brelief/tol_1.html) (06.07.2011).

<sup>3</sup> H. Nakamura, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India – China – Tibet – Japan*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu 1964. [Polish translation *Systemy myślenia ludów Wschodu: Indie, Chiny, Tybet, Japonia*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2005, p. 174.]

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174–175.

we lose one, we lose all. The Doctrine (...) [of Buddha – J.S.] shows the mutual consistency and solidarity of all these aspects of the ‘good’ very clearly”.<sup>5</sup>

Buddhists accept two of three types of tolerance as specified by Ija Lazari-Pawłowska: “The first one understands tolerance as the lack of interference despite a negative appraisal of somebody’s views or actions. The second concept defines tolerance as acceptance of somebody’s dissimilarity as regards views and actions”.<sup>6</sup>

Some Buddhists discern between passive and active tolerance. “Passive tolerance is indifference to others’ happiness; it is the lack of compassion”. Contrary to it genuine tolerance “is an active concern and respect for the happiness of others”.<sup>7</sup>

Tolerance in Buddhism is a manifestation of inclusive tolerance of Hinduism, which accepts every aspect of cult (from cults of natural forces and stones through the cult of many gods and one God, down to the cult of the divine nature of one’s individual). Religion of the Hindus recognizes all gods as manifestations of one divine, universal ground. In 12th Major Edict of Aśoka we read: “On each occasion one should honour another man’s sect, for by doing so one increases the influence of one’s own sect and benefits that of the other man; while by doing otherwise one diminishes the influence of one’s own sect and harms the other man’s”.<sup>8</sup>

Tolerance for Buddhists excludes converting non-Buddhists by force. As pointed out by Buddhist monk and scholar Walpola Rahula: “spirit of tolerance and understanding had been from the beginning one of the most cherished ideals of Buddhist culture and civilization. That is why there is not a single example of persecution or the shedding of a drop of blood in converting people to Buddhism, or in its propagation during its long history of 2500 years”.<sup>9</sup>

Buddhism easily adapts to circumstances existing in a country: it adjusted to Indian Hinduism, the cults of spirits in South-Eastern Asia, Chinese Confucianism and Taoism, Japanese Shintō, Tibetan Bön and Mongolian Shamanism. In the 20th century Buddhism adapted to Marxism (for example in Birma), to Christianity and to Western liberal humanism.

According to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki Mahayana, Buddhists in the ecumenical spirit of Hinduism are capable to perceive Buddha, or at least advance bod-

<sup>5</sup> A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 1997, p. 520.

<sup>6</sup> I. Lazari-Pawłowska, *Trzy pojęcia tolerancji [Three Concepts of Tolerance]*, “Studia Filozoficzne”, Warsaw, 1984, No 8, p. 118.

<sup>7</sup> S. Yatomi, *Buddhism in New Light*, “World Tribune”, 15.02.2002, [http://sokaspirit.org/study/monthly\\_study/materials/chap5.shtml](http://sokaspirit.org/study/monthly_study/materials/chap5.shtml) (06.07.2011).

<sup>8</sup> *12th Major Rock Edict*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka1.html> (06.07.2011).

<sup>9</sup> W. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, Gordon Fraser, London 1978, p. 19.

hisattva, in persons of Socrates, Confucius, Lao-tzu, Jesus Christ, Francis of Assisi and even in Muhammad.<sup>10</sup>

This paper shows some characteristic manifestations of tolerance in Buddhism. Buddhism postulate synoecism or peaceful coexistence of different religions on the same territory under care of one state. This approach has theoretical and practical aspects. It contains many issues which will be described shortly.

**1. Supporting by Buddhist rulers not only their own religion, but also other religions; it includes supporting even such teachings which maintained to be harmful**

That means sponsorship of building of shrines, monasteries, and subsidize cells for ascetics. This postulate precedes of more than two thousand years one of the ideals of modern liberal democracy. It grew up from wish of Buddha Śākyamuni. When in Vaiśali Buddha introduced to the Dharma path householder Upali, a nobleman from the house of Licchavi who previously was a follower of Jina Mahawira, he told him that when became a Buddhist, he should still give alms to Jaina ascetics.<sup>11</sup>

In *Udumbarika-Sihanada Sutta* (§ 23) Buddha is seen to say:

Nigrodha, you may think: ‘The ascetic Gotama says this in order to get disciples’. But you should not regard it like that. Let him who is your teacher remain your teacher. Or you may think: ‘He wants us to abandon our rules’. But you should not regard it like that. Let your rules remain as they are. Or you may think: ‘He wants us to abandon our way of life’. But you should not regard it like that. Let your way of life remain as it was.<sup>12</sup>

Michael Walshe called the fragment example of “extreme tolerance of Buddhism”.<sup>13</sup>

The idea of religious tolerance was continued later by the great Buddhist emperor Aśoka (3rd Cent. B.C.), and other Indian rulers. Aśoka in an equal way provided funds to all religions “In the same way as I bring happiness to my relatives, both close and distant and work for it, so do I provide for all sects.

<sup>10</sup> D.T. Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*, London 1907, p. 63, quoted in A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publications, New Delhi 1974, p. 152.

<sup>11</sup> *Mahavagga* VI 31.11, in I.B. Horner (transl.), *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-pitaka)*, vol. 4, Pali Text Society, Oxford 1996, p. 323.

<sup>12</sup> M. Walshe (transl.), *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha (Digha Nikaya)*, Wisdom Publications, London 1987, p. 393.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 600, n. 777.

I honour all sects with various kinds of reference, and I consider visiting them in person to be most important".<sup>14</sup> He sponsored not only Buddhist, but also Hindu Brahmanas, Jains and Ajivikas.<sup>15</sup> He gave at least three caves for Ajivika ascetics.<sup>16</sup>

Kanishka, Buddhist king of India (1st–2nd Cent.) led the politics of tolerance towards all religions. On coins minted at the time of Kanishka one can find Buddha, the gods of Brahmanism, Zoroastrianism and of Greek religion.<sup>17</sup> The first year of Kanishka's rule was the beginning of Śaka epoch. This was also beginning of Indian calendar which is still in use now. Indian state becomes one of the greatest empires in history. It contained not only the area of present India Central, West and North, modern Pakistan and Afghanistan, but also almost whole Central Asia, including modern Uzbekistan, Kirghizia and Tajikistan.

But, on the other hand, Buddhists were and are deeply convinced that only by practicing the Dharma path one can reach enlightenment. Religious tolerance in Buddhism does not mean accepting all religions as equally true. Buddha says it clearly in *Pasadika Sutta* (§ 4).<sup>18</sup> The same approach one can find in the words of Theravada monk Nagita: "Outside this (order) the road of the many who profess another doctrine does not lead to quenching as this one does; so indeed the blessed teacher instructs the Order himself, truly showing the palms of his hands".<sup>19</sup>

Tolerance is also an attribute of Buddhist Tantrayana: "The one who practices teachings of Buddha, should be always tolerant and appreciate those who practice other religions", said Tibetan monk Beru Khyentse Rinpoche.<sup>20</sup>

## 2. Treatment of other religions as manifestations of one's religion

The treatment of other religions as manifestations of one's religion consists mainly in incorporating to Buddhist pantheon gods of other religions. Buddhology of the monks treats the ones as bodhisattvas or Dharma protectors pursuing enlightenment. Japanese Buddhists were successful in making alliance of Bud-

<sup>14</sup> *6th Pillar Edict*, in *A Translation of the Edicts of Asoka*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka2.html>. Concerning tolerance in Aśoka's edicts comp. A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 254, 259–264.

<sup>15</sup> *7th Pillar Edict*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka2.html>.

<sup>16</sup> *Barabar Cave Inscription*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka2.html>.

<sup>17</sup> A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 345.

<sup>18</sup> M. Walshe (transl.), *Thus Have I Heard*, p. 428.

<sup>19</sup> K.R. Norman (transl.), *Poems of Early Buddhist Monks (Theragatha)*, Pali Text Society, Oxford 1997, p. 13, verse 86.

<sup>20</sup> Beru Khyentse Rinpoche, *Milująca dobroć i współczucie [Loving Kindness and Compassion]*, in *Wykłady z Teatru "Stu". Autobiografia [Teachings Given in Stu Theatre. Autobiography]*, Kraków 1994, p. 3. Translated into English by the Author.

dhism with the root tradition of Shintō. In the same way as in Japan, some Tibetan Bönpo deities were included to Buddhist Tantrayana as Dharma protectors. This politics was first introduced by Padmasambhava (8th–9th cent.), founder of Buddhist Tantrism in Tibet. He made “covenant” with Bönpo deities. They promised not to harm Buddhist practitioners (what they did previously), and in exchange for it great tantric promised that yogis and monks will perform meditations and pujas for them. His was a historical compromise reminding us those of Israel covenant with god Yahweh. According to Padmasambhava, perfect tolerance is an indispensable component of realization of buddhahood.<sup>21</sup> In 1977 16th Karmapa, head of Karma Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, recognize – in the spirit of courtesy and tolerance – Bön as the fifth school of Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. Syncretism enriching Buddhism

Here we can give one example from China and one from Japan. A group of Chinese Buddhists who wanted to contrast anti-Buddhist propaganda of Taoists, have identified Ju-t’ung with Confucius and Mahakaśyapa with Lao-tzu. In this way they wanted not only to refute their arguments, but also pointed out essential similarities between three Chinese religions. They identified them in the spirit of tolerance. As a result of their activity some time later appeared specific Chinese 33 manifestations of Avalokiteśvara.<sup>23</sup>

Gyogi (668/70–749), a Japanese Buddhist from the school of Hosso, emphasized tolerance. He propagated the lack of essential differences between Buddhism and Shintō. In this way he contributed to the emergence of Ryōbu Shintō, a syncretic movement linking Buddhism with national traditions of Shintō.

### 4. Nepalese Hindu-Buddhist syncretism

The main features of Nepalese religion are syncretism and toleration. There are many examples of mutual cooperation and toleration between Nepalese Hinduists and Buddhists:

<sup>21</sup> Padmasambhava, *Tajemne wyjaśnienie w girlandzie wizji: Specjalnie skondensowany dodatek do wizji i pojazdu* [Padmasambhava, *Secret Explaining in Garland of the Visions: Special Condensed Supplement to Vision and Vehicle*], Kraków 1995, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> *Interview with His Holiness The XVI Gyalwa Karmapa, San Francisco, 1977*, “Densal”, 1988, No 2, p. 4. From the point of view of Bön is similar. Bönpo teacher Tenzin Wangyal said that those who previously practised Buddhism and now have decided to practice Bön, still can practice Buddhist meditation as their daily practice (oral information from Tenzin Wangyal).

<sup>23</sup> A. Matsunaga, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation: The Historical Development of the Honjū-Suijaku Theory*, Sophia University, Tokyo 1969, p. 102, 286.

– Most Newari people (84,1% in 2001) declared as both Hindu and Buddhists.<sup>24</sup>

– Some Buddhists who take part in Buddhist festivals, in private worship Hindu deities and *vice versa*.

– Buddhist *Swayambhu-purana* advises the cult of Śīva, and Hinduists are encouraged by their gurus to practicing in the Buddhist temple of Vajrayogini in Sankhu sadhanas according to Buddhist traditions.

– The same deities are worshipped under different names by different inhabitants of Nepal. Both Buddhist Avalokiteśvara and Hindu god Śīva are worshipped as Lokanatha or Lokeśvara (“Lord of the World”). Nepalese Hindus recognize Buddha Śākyamuni as an incarnation of Vishnu, and Buddhists worship Vishnu and Śīva as bodhisattvas. For Hindus Buddhist guardian Mahakala is a form of the Hindu god Śīva. A huge statue of Padmasambhava near Parphing is for Nepalese god Śīva. In Buddhist Tantric texts, *Guhyasamaja-tantra* and *Hevajra-tantra*, trimurti of Hindu gods (Brahma/Vishnu/Śīva) received Buddhist meaning.

– The same dharamśālas (places of rest) are used by pilgrims of both traditions.

– The presence of a temple of the Hindu goddess Hariti in the heart of the Nepalese Buddhist cult, Swayambhunath stupa in Kathmandu, and of the Hindu god Śīva (in form of Halahala Lokeśvara) in Buddhist Golden Temple in Patan (Lokeśvara is also epithet of Avalokiteśvara)

– The same temple (of Tara/Ganeśa in Parphing) is used by both Hindu worshippers of Ganeśa and Buddhist followers of Tara. The same also concerns the temple of Adi Natha Lokeśvara in Chobar. It is in fact a temple of Avalokiteśvara, but Hindus regard it as a temple of Śīva or Ganeśa.<sup>25</sup>

– The same handprint on a wall of Asura cave in Parphing which Buddhists recognize as a handprint of Padmasambhava, for Hindu is a handprint of their deified yogi Matsyendranath. But Matsyendranath is also included on the list of 84 Buddhist Mahasiddhas, realized Tantric yogis.

## 5. Inclusion of methods taken from other religions to Buddhist practice

In Tibet Buddhists included some Bönpo practices into Buddhist mainstream. As a result Tantric practitioners until now make use of oracles, astrology

<sup>24</sup> *Newa people*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newa\\_people#Religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newa_people#Religion) (28.02.2013); N. Dangol, *Sana Guthi and the Newars: Impacts of Modernization on Traditional Social Organization*, M.D. Thesis, Tromsø: University of Tromsø 2010, p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> The information given in this paragraph comes from the author’s observations made during his field research in Nepal in November 2012 – January 2013.

and shamanic healing methods. With time the practices have been recognized as integral part of Tibetan Buddhism.

#### **6. Inclusion of methods of other Buddhist schools to practice of one's lineage of transmission**

Hung-jen (601–674), the 5th patriarch of Ch'an, introduced the practice of nien-fo ch'an which added to Ch'an meditation recitation of mantra nien-fo. Recitation of nien-fo was the main activity of practitioners in Chinese Pure Land school, Ching-t'u.<sup>26</sup> Almost 1000 years later Zen masters Suzuki Shosan (1579–1655) and Ungo Kiyo (1583–1659) popularized the Japanese version of nien-fo ch'an known as nembutsu zen.

Followers of the 19th century Tibetan movement Rime collected and popularized practices of different lineages of transmission which existed in their times. It has been a point of honor of most outstanding teachers of Tibetan Buddhism to receive initiations and teachings of all lineages of transmission.<sup>27</sup>

An exemplar of mutual tolerance and harmonious coexistence of different Buddhist lineages of transmission is the situation existing in Buddhist monasteries in modern Korea. Monks practice Son, a Korean version of Chinese Ch'an, read Theravada and Mahayana Sutras, and recite the name of Buddha Amitabha. Some of them even recite Tantric dharanis (long mantras).

There are also other aspects of tolerance in Buddhism, known in India from the time of Aśoka:

#### **7. Reluctant authorizing death penalties ever for most serious crimes**

We know that both Aśoka and Wu-ti of Liang dynasty (ruled 502–549), the greatest Buddhist emperor in China, very reluctantly authorized death penalties.

#### **8. Tortures *made illegal***

Tortures were outlawed by Aśoka.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> H. Ui, *The Nembutsu Zen of the Disciples of the Fifth Patriarch*, "Eastern Buddhist", Vol. 29, 1996, p. 210.

<sup>27</sup> On rime movement as an example of tolerance wrote Chime Rinpoche. Comp. his *Życie szesnastu Karmapów [Life of the Sixteen Karmapas]*, Kraków 1994, p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> *1st Separate Edict (Dhauhi and Jaugada)*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka2.html>.

## 9. Nature preservation

Tolerance of Buddhism is extended to all living beings: humans, animals and spirits. Aśoka prohibited sacrificing animals and killing most species of animals.<sup>29</sup> He reduced the number of animals killed in palatial kitchen to “two peacocks and a deer, and the deer not invariably. Even these three animal will not be killed in the future”.<sup>30</sup> He prohibited fishing,<sup>31</sup> set on fire forests and chaff which contain living beings,<sup>32</sup> feeding animals with the meat of other animals,<sup>33</sup> castrate of cattle,<sup>34</sup> and branding of cattle and horses during festival days.<sup>35</sup> More than 2250 years ago he issued an edict ordering to dug wells along the roads, to plant trees, fruits, medicinal herbs and roots “useful to men or to beast”.<sup>36</sup>

Sulak Sivaraksa, Thai Theravada monk and activist of Social Engaged Buddhism, maintained tolerance as a manifestation of loving kindness and compassion towards all beings: “if we concentrates on religious aspects of universal love, we shall all become more humble, tolerant and truly respectful of other beings – not only humans, but animal, and all natural phenomena as well. From this our social and economical development will be nonviolent”.<sup>37</sup>

Also Mahayana Buddhists emphasize the meaning of non-violent attitude not only towards people, but also towards animals. According to Mahayana doctrine animals too have the potential of Buddhahood and in one of their future lives after reborning in a human form they will have chance to realize it.

## 10. Outlawing of vivisection

Emperor Wu-ti forbidded vivisection.

## 11. Abolition of national army

In Japan there was no army at all from the time of emperor Kammu (781–806)

<sup>29</sup> *1st Major Rock Edict*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka1.html>; *5th Phillar Edict*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka2.html>.

<sup>30</sup> *Bilingual Rock Inscription*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka1.html>.

<sup>31</sup> *Kandahar Bilingual Rock Inscription*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka2.html>.

<sup>32</sup> *5th Phillar Edict*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka2.html>.

<sup>33</sup> *5th Phillar Edict*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka2.html>.

<sup>34</sup> *5th Phillar Edict*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka2.html>.

<sup>35</sup> *5th Phillar Edict*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka2.html>.

<sup>36</sup> *2nd Major Rock Edict*, <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/asoka1.html>.

<sup>37</sup> Sulak Sivaraksa, *Buddhism and Tolerance for Diversity of Religion and Belief*, [http://www.buddhistinformation.com/buddhism\\_and\\_tolerance\\_for\\_diver.htm](http://www.buddhistinformation.com/buddhism_and_tolerance_for_diver.htm) (06.07.2011).



till the Kamakura Shogunate (1192–1333). Demilitarization was also realized in 17th-century Tibet.<sup>38</sup> Here one can mention that though Buddhists waged wars, both defensive and offensive, in contrast to Christians and Muslims, they never forced others to accept their own doctrinal opinions.<sup>39</sup>

## 12. Ban on death penalty and constraint of vegetarianism

Ban on death penalty and decree on vegetarianism for the residents of the royal court issued by Aśoka were observed as late as in the 5th century C.E. in Punjab.<sup>40</sup> Abolition of death penalty lasted in Japan from the 9th century till 1156.<sup>41</sup>

## 13. Recognizing that one's school do not monopolize salvation

A unique opinion, even in the context of Buddhism, was presented by Shoku (1177–1247), the founder of subschool Seizan in Japanese Pure Land school Jōdō who believed that one can reborn in Pure Land not only by reciting *nembutsu*, but also practicing other methods. He was convinced that one can reborn there also by maintaining vows and performing positive actions.

In Buddhism tolerance is a manifestation of loving kindness (Sanskrit *maitrī*; Pali *metta*) and compassion (*karuna*). Monks of Therevada recite verses of canonical Pali *Metta Sutta* everyday:

May all beings be happy and secure, may their hearts be wholesome! Whatever living beings there be: feeble or strong, tall, stout or medium, short, small or large, without exception; seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born or those who are to be born, may all beings be happy! Let none deceive another, not despise any person whatsoever in any place. Let him not wish any harm to another out of anger or ill-will. Just as mother who protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so, let him cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> S. Weeraratna, Review of S. Inoue, *Putting Buddhism to Work: A New Approach to Management and Business*, Kodansha International, Tokyo 1997, “Buddha Net’s Magazine Articles”, <http://buddhanet.net/budwork.htm> (06.07.2011).

<sup>39</sup> Compare my texts: *Buddyzm a wojna [Buddhism and War]*, Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, “Studia Religioznologiczne”, Kraków 2003, no 36, p. 119–132, and *Buddyzm a fundamentalizm i przemoc [Buddhism and fundamentalism and violence]*, “Nomos”, 2004, no 47/48, p. 33–50.

<sup>40</sup> Fa-hsien, *Record of Buddhist countries* 21, published in 416. Comp. R.S. Tripathi, *Religious toleration under the Imperial Guptas*, “Indian Historical Quarterly”, 1939, p. 1–12.

<sup>41</sup> H. Nakamura, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples*. [Polish translation *Systemy myślenia ludów Wschodu*, p. 376.]

<sup>42</sup> *Metta sutta* 3–7, *Sutta-nipāta* 145–149, H. Saddhatissa (transl.), *The Sutta-nipāta*, Curzon Press, Richmond 1998, p. 16.

Tolerance is also a manifestation of patience. In *Dhammapada* we read: “For-bearing patience is the highest austerity. Nibbāna is supreme, say the Buddhas. He, verily, is not a recluse who harms another. Nor is he an ascetic who oppresses others”.<sup>43</sup> Another canonical Pali text says: “Who indeed, being strong, forbears with one who is weak – that is called the highest toleration”.<sup>44</sup> Sanskrit word *kshanti* usually translated as “patience”, “forbearance”, “acceptance” or “tolerance”,<sup>45</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk and activist of Social Engaged Buddhism, translates as “inclusiveness”. In his interpretation Buddhist *kshanti* is all-inclusive, because in the spirit of solidarity it embraces all people, especially those discriminated for any reason.<sup>46</sup>

A combination of tolerance and patience is also one of the features of Tibetan Buddhism. As Tibetologist R. Thurman wrote: “From tolerance and patience grew out creativity, our imagination, our concentration, and our wisdom and broader knowledge of reality”.<sup>47</sup>

According to K.P. Aleaz, Buddhism is a non-violence attitude because it is the “spirituality of pluralism”. Buddhist spirit of tolerance is rooted in respecting the opinion of others. It is also based on the Buddhist idea of coemergent origination (Sanskrit: *pratītyasamutpāda*, according to which all phenomena in the world are correlated one with the other), and removal of the self idea (*anātman*), and because of that, of the idea of clinging to ego.<sup>48</sup>

Coemergent origination of all phenomena and non-existing of personal self allows Buddhists to perceive all apparitions as equivalent. Canonical Pali *Sutta-nipāta* says: “The experts say that it is a bond to depend on what one associates with and to see everything else as inferior. Therefore, the disciplined one should not trust in things seen, heard or felt or in rules and rites”.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Narada Thera, *The Dhammapada: Pali Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*, Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei 1999, p. 165–166, verse 184.

<sup>44</sup> *Samyutta-nikāya* I 50, quoted in A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 282.

<sup>45</sup> Buddhistologist A.K. Warder translated the word by *toleration* or *tolerance* (*Indian Buddhism*, p. 357, 410, 621).

<sup>46</sup> P. Hunt-Perry, L. Fine, *All Buddhism Is Engaged: Thich Nhat Hanh and the Order of Interbeing*, in C.S. Queen (ed.), *Engaged Buddhism in the West*, Wisdom Publications, Boston 2000, p. 53–54.

<sup>47</sup> R. Thurman, *The Jewel Tree of Tibet: The Enlightenment Engine of Tibetan Buddhism*, Free Press, New York 2006, p. 67.

<sup>48</sup> K.P. Aleaz, *Indian Contribution to a Spirituality of Pluralism*, “CTC Bulletin”, <http://www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc06-01/ctc06-01k.htm> (06.07.2011).

<sup>49</sup> H. Saddhatissa (transl.), *The Sutta-nipata*, Curzon Press, Richmond 1998, p. 94, verse 798.

Buddhism beneficially influences Islam. There is evidence that in Sindh, which was ruled by Buddhist kings up to the 7th century, after the emergence of Islam started peaceful coexistence of Muslims and Buddhists.<sup>50</sup>

Buddhism also had positive influence on Mongols, who were one of the most bloody people of medieval times. After converting to Buddhism Mongols changed into one of the most tolerant people. The politics of tolerance was initiated by Genghis Khan (ruled 1206–1227). In his edict he made all religions to be treated with the same respect. Tolerance dominated during the rule of Möngke Khan (ruled 1251–1259). In the capital there existed 12 Buddhist shrines, two mosques and a church of Nestorians. Kublai Khan (ruled 1260–1294), the grandson of Genghis, patroned not only Buddhism, but also Islam, Nestorianism and Manichaeism.<sup>51</sup>

On 31 May 1254 Möngke Khan in the spirit of tolerance summoned the first interfaith dialogue between Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims in order to decide which religion is the best. Christianity was represented by Franciscan monk William of Rubruck. He said that Christians believed in God who is “one in a perfect unity”. He asked a Buddhist monk in what he believed. The monk answered: “It is fools who claim there is one God. Wise men say that there are several. Are there not great rulers in your country, and is not Möngke Khan the chief lord here? It is the same with gods, inasmuch as there are different gods in different regions”.<sup>52</sup> The intolerant position of the Franciscan monk made Khan angry and he expelled William from his court.

Lastly, as to the question of education of children, tolerance means the lack of what Alice Miller called Black Pedagogy. That means not only physical and psychical child abuse, but also their indoctrination. According to Miller one of the main features of Black Pedagogy is “*inculcation* in a child right from the beginning of his or her life *false knowledge and false beliefs*”.<sup>53</sup> Compulsion made in childhood on child’s mind, inculcation of rigid, doctrinal opinions stimulates his or her mind to violence and has closed it for many years or frequently the whole life from the possibility of spontaneous experience of the world. As Thich Nhat Hanh wrote: “Do not force others, even children, to accept your ideas with the aid of power, threats, money, propaganda or even education. Rather

<sup>50</sup> A. Skilton, *A Concise History of Buddhism*, Curzon, London 1998, p. 202.

<sup>51</sup> J. Man, *Genghis Khan: Life, Death and Resurrection*, Bantam Press, New York 2004; J. Man, *Kublai Khan*, Bantam Press, New York 2007.

<sup>52</sup> S. Batchelor, *The Awakening of the West: The Encounter of the Buddhism and Western Culture 543 BCE – 1992*, Thorsons, London 1995, p. 91.

<sup>53</sup> A. Miller. *Zniewolone dzieciństwo: Ukryte źródła tyranii* [*Violated childhood: Hidden sources of tyranny*]. Media Rodzina, Poznań 1999, p. 77. Translated into English by the Author.

through compassionate dialogue help others in abandonment fanaticism and narrow views".<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, *Zasady wzajemnego współistnienia [Rules of mutual coexistence]*, "Droga Zen", 1987, no 4, p. 7, quoted in P. Zieliński, *Zen wobec problemów współczesnego świata [Zen facing the problems of modern world]*, in J. Sieradzan (ed.), *Buddologia w Polsce [Buddhology in Poland]*, Wydawnictwo Miniatura, Kraków 1993, p. 111. Translated into English by the Author.

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### Summary

This paper outlines some characteristic manifestations of tolerance in Buddhism. Buddhism postulates peaceful coexistence of different religions on the same territory under the state protection. Tolerance in Buddhism has both theoretical and practical aspects.

1. Supporting by Buddhist absolute rulers not only their own, Buddhist religion, but also other ones, including those maintained to be harmful.
2. Treatment of other religions as manifestations of one's religion.
3. Including practices of other religions into Buddhist practice.
4. Including practices of other Buddhist schools into the practice of one's own lineage of transmission.
5. Reluctant authorization of death penalties ever for most serious crimes
6. State ban on tortures.
7. Wildlife protection in a broad sense.
8. Ban on vivisection, death penalty and constraint of vegetarianism
9. Abolition of national army.

**Key words:** tolerance, Buddhism, compassion, power, war, army, vegetarianism

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