

THAILAND CHAPTER REPORT

April 2018

Religions for Peace: Thailand

Thailand, a peace loving country in Asia, composed of multi-religious beliefs and practices: Buddhism, Muslim, Christianity, Hindu, Sikh, and others. The majority of population is Buddhists. Our king is the patron of all religions in Thailand according to our Constitution. The Department of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Culture has full responsibility in supporting all religions of Thai people in equal right, harmony and solidarity, mutual respect and practices as well as education and social welfares. We have inter-faith groups which formed officially by The Department of Religions Affairs.

We are, at present, try to re-organize the organ of our Chapter. To strengthen our National Chapter in activities and for worldwide collaboration, we decided to integrate two parts of Religions for peace: ACRP National Chapter and RfP – Inter-religious Council for Peace Thailand (which having its secretariat at Mahidol University) together. We do hope in the future we could co-operate with you closely and efficiently.

Collaboration with government sector, UN and NGO projects and activities

- With government sector in Thailand, we did join the activities of the inter faith groups in different occasions. It is the national policy to promote equal right, harmony and solidarity among the various religions in Thailand. Department of Religions Affairs, Ministry of Culture takes responsibility in conducting the national gatherings of different religions

and aims to promote unity, harmony and peace among the people from different faiths in the country.

- We also, have realized the importance of implanting peace education, compassion, unity among youths and adults in the country. The interfaith youth camps were held in local communities. In the camps, religious leaders try to create mutual understanding by exchanging ideas and knowledge of common history and traditions of participants from different religions. They finally realized how to perform activities together peacefully harmoniously.

- During the past years, our members have participated in UNESCO meeting which having the same objectives of our organization. We co-operate closely with the World Fellowship of Buddhists and the Buddhist Association of Thailand under Royal Patronage, as our ACRP Executive Member is the Executive Member of the two organizations as well.

Since last year, our staff has concentrated on collaborating with the Royal Academy of Sciences Thailand to compose in Thai Language "An Encyclopaedia of World Religion" with the intention to create the material for the religious study to promote the coexistence of the Thai citizens. Occasions are offered to the Thai experts on Religions as Buddhism (Theravada and Hinayana), Christianity (Catholic and Protestant), Islam(Sunni and Shiah), Judaism of the Old Testament), Indian Religion(Brahmanism, Hinduism, Sikhism). All the composers aim at the same success: to highlight the essence of each faith that brings peace. The program will

last for 5 years. After that we hope to have an official edition of a very important instrument for the education of Religion for Peace.

On March 26, 2018, the National Sikh Council of Thailand invited the editors of "An Encyclopaedia of World Religion" for a consultation at the Thailand's National Sikh Center in Bangkok to discuss on some problems of the Thai version of some key terms from the Panjabi into Thai language. Many Sikh religious terms are similar to the Buddhist ones, they have, however, particular meanings only for the Sikh religion. To solve the problem for such particular cases, the decision is made to show the particular meanings approved by the Sikh Council of Thailand. The meeting end happily by an "agape and interfaith lunch" offered by the Sikh Community of Bangkok. We do hope that this Encyclopaedia, once published, will be an excellent tool for educating the Thai youth to approach the ideal of Religion for Peace of all Faiths in Thailand.

We would like to express our gratitude and sincere thanks to all our ACRP members for their devotions for peace.

Prof. Kirti Bunchua and Kanchana B. Soonsawad

ACRP Committee

Prof. Kriti Bunchua

Chairman, Doctoral Degree Program on Philosophy and Ethics

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Kanchana Bandharangshi Soonsawad

Executive Council Member

World Fellowship of Buddhists

WFB Headquarters

616 Sukhumvit 24, Bangkok 10110, Thailand

Dr. Nirarapa Tongdhamachart

Dean of Suan Sunandha International School of Art

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University