

(Translation)

Office of the Council of State

Sangha Act 2505 B.E.

Bhumibol Adulyadej, Rex

Enacted on the 25th Day of December of 2505 B.E.,

in the 17th year of the present reign

By His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's royal command, it is proclaimed that since it is deemed appropriate to make amendments to the law stipulating the Sangha, His Majesty the King therefore orders the promulgation of an Act following the advice and consent of the Constitution Drafting Assembly in its capacity as the Parliament, as follows.

Section 1: This Act is called the "Sangha Act, 2505 B.E.".

Section 2: ¹ This Act will be in effect one day after the day it is published in the Government Gazette.

Section 3: The Sangha Act 2484 B.E., is annulled.

Section 4: Within a period of one year after the enforcement of this Act, ministerial regulations, the Sangha mandates, the Sangha rules, rules of organizations, orders of the Supreme Patriarch, rules and regulations concerning the Sangha, which have already been enforced on the day when this Act is published in the Government Gazette, will continue to be in effect as long as they are not in conflict with or contradictory to this Act until there are ministerial regulations, regulations of the Sangha Supreme Council, orders of the Supreme Patriarch, rules and regulations of the Sangha Supreme Council that cancel them or share the same content with them or are in conflict with or contradictory to them or are stated in other ways.

Section 5: To benefit from Section 4, for all powers, stipulated in the Sangha mandates, the Sangha rules, rules of organizations, orders of the Supreme Patriarch as well as rules and regulations concerning the Sangha to be the powers of a monk in any position or any Sangha Committee which are not included in this Act, the Sangha Supreme Council, under the rules of the Council, has the authority to assign those powers to any monk in any position or a number of monks that assemble into a group, as deemed appropriate.

¹ The Government Gazette, Vol. 7, Part 115, Special Edition, Page 29, 31st December 2505 B.E.



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(Translation)

Section 5 bis²: In this Act

“The Sangha” means all monks who have been ordained by their preceptors under this Act or other laws enforced before the enactment of this Act, whether they perform religious activities inside or outside the Kingdom.

“Other Sangha” means monks of the Chinese or the Annamese Sect.

“Phra Raja Khana” means monks who are appointed to and decorated with ecclesiastical honorific ranks, from the Common rank to the rank of Somdetch Phra Raja Khana.

“The most senior ranking Somdetch Phra Raja Khana” is a Somdetch Phra Raja Khana who has been appointed to the rank before other Somdetch Phra Raja Khana. If they are appointed on the same day, the one who is appointed first on the list will be considered the most senior.

Section 5 ter³: To provide patronage and protection to Buddhism as well supervising the Sangha administration to promote the dissemination of Buddhist Teachings for spiritual and intellectual development and to strictly maintain the accuracy of the Dhamma-Vinaya (the Doctrine and the Discipline) of the Sangha to win faith and respect from lay Buddhists in general, the King, under this Act, has the power to appoint, establish and remove the ecclesiastical rank of a monk in the Sangha and appoint the members of the Sangha Supreme Council.

Section 6: The Prime Minister*shall have charge and control of this Act and shall be empowered to issue ministerial regulations for execution that abides by it.

Ministerial regulations shall be in effect only after they are published in the Government Gazette.

Chapter 1

The Supreme Patriarch

Section 7⁴: The King establishes the Supreme Patriarch and the Prime Minister countersigns the royal command.

Section 8: The Supreme Patriarch is Chief of the entire Sangha Community, commanding the Sangha and issuing orders which are not in conflict with or contradictory to the law, the Dhamma-Vinaya or the rules of the Sangha Supreme Council.

² Section 5 bis added by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

³ Section 5 ter amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 4) 2561 B.E.

⁴ Section 7 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 3) 2560 B.E.



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Section 9⁵: In cases where the Supreme Patriarch resigns from office or is removed by the King's royal command, the King may appoint him Advisor to the Supreme Patriarch or any other position as he pleases.

Section 10⁶: While there is no Supreme Patriarch, the most senior ranking Somdetch Phra Raja Khana shall be Supreme Patriarch *pro tempore*.

If the most senior ranking Somdetch Phra Raja Khana cannot perform the function, the remaining members of the Sangha Supreme Council shall select a Somdetch Phra Raja Khana, who is less senior ranked in line and is able to fulfil the function, Supreme Patriarch *pro tempore*.

When the Supreme Patriarch is not staying in the Kingdom or cannot perform his functions, he will appoint one of the Somdetch Phra Raja Khana to act in lieu of himself.

In cases where, under Paragraph 3, the Supreme Patriarch does not appoint anyone to act in lieu of himself, or the appointed Somdetch Phra Raja Khana cannot perform the function of the Supreme Patriarch, the statements in Paragraphs 1 and 2 are to be enforced *mutatis mutandis*.

In appointing Supreme Patriarch *pro tempore* under this Section, if the Supreme Patriarch considers it appropriate when there is a case as in Paragraph 3, or the remaining members of the Sangha Supreme Council consider it appropriate when there are cases as in Paragraph 1, Paragraph 2 or Paragraph 4, it may be suitable to select a group of Somdetch Phra Raja Khana who are able to fulfil the function to act in place of the Supreme Patriarch, instead of selecting one person in accordance with Paragraph 1, or proceeding in accordance with Paragraph 2, Paragraph 3 or Paragraph 4, as the case applies, and there may be assistants or advisors to perform such function. The execution process of a group of Somdetch Phra Raja Khana who are selected Supreme Patriarch *pro tempore* will comply with what they themselves specify. ⁷

When the Supreme Patriarch *pro tempore* or a group of Somdetch Phra Raja Khana who act for the Supreme Patriarch are appointed or selected under this Section, the Prime Minister will report this to the King. ⁸

⁵ Section 9 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

⁶ Section 10 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

⁷ Section 10, Paragraph 5, amended by the Royal Ordinance Stipulating Amendments to the Sangha Act 2505 B.E., 2547 B.E.

⁸ Section 10, Paragraph 6, added by the Royal Promulgation Stipulating Amendments to the Sangha Act 2505 B.E., 2547 B.E.



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That which is promulgated in this Section will not affect the King's power to approve the appointment or selection and he may decide to have it executed in another way.⁹

Section 11: The Supreme Patriarch will be out of office when

- 1) He dies.
- 2) His monkhood is terminated.
- 3) He resigns.
- 4) He is removed by royal command.

Chapter 2

The Sangha Supreme Council

Section 12¹⁰: The Sangha Supreme Council consists of the Supreme Patriarch, who *ex officio* chairs the Council, and not more than twenty members who are appointed by the King, selected from Somdetch Phra Raja Khana, Phra Raja Khana or monks who have been ordained for a reasonable period of time and whose behaviour observes what is specified in the Dhamma-Vinaya as suitable to rule the Sangha.

The appointment under Paragraph 1 and the execution under Section 15 (4) and Paragraph 2 will comply with royal disposition; the King may consult with the Supreme Patriarch beforehand.

Section 13: The Director of the National Office of Buddhism* is the *ex officio* Secretary-General of the Sangha Supreme Council and the National Office of Buddhism* will serve as the office of the Secretary-General of the Sangha Supreme Council.

Section 14¹¹: The members of the Sangha Supreme Council, appointed by the King, are in office for two years and they may be reappointed after their term of office ends.

Section 15¹²: As well as leaving office when their term of office ends under Section 14, the members of the Sangha Supreme Council, appointed by the King, must leave office when

⁹ Section 10, Paragraph 7 added by the Sangha Act (Vol 4) 2561 B.E.

¹⁰ Section 12 added by the Sangha Act (Vol 4) 2561 B.E.

¹¹ Section 14 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 4) 2561 B.E.

¹² Section 15 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 4) 2561 B.E.



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- 1) They die.
- 2) Their monkhood is terminated.
- 3) They resign.
- 4) They are removed by royal command.

In cases where any member of the Sangha Supreme Council leaves office before his term ends, the King may, under Section 12, appoint a monk to replace him.

The member who is appointed under Paragraph 2 will be in office for the rest of the time in office of the member he replaces.

Section 15 bis¹³ : The royal command under Section 10, Paragraph 7, the appointment of the members of the Sangha Supreme Council under Section 10 and the removal of the members of the Sangha Supreme Council under Section 15 will be countersigned by the Prime Minister.

Section 15 ter¹⁴: The Sangha Supreme Council has the following powers:

- 1) Governing the Sangha to ensure order and propriety,
- 2) Governing and scheduling the ordination of novices,
- 3) Controlling and promoting religious studies, educational welfare, the dissemination of public assistance and the public welfare of the Sangha.
- 4) Preserving the principles of the Dhamma-Vinaya of Buddhism.
- 5) Performing other duties as issued in this Act or other laws.

In this respect, the Sangha Supreme Council is authorized to issue those rules, regulations, schedules, orders, consent or announcements which are not in conflict with or contradictory to the law and the Dhamma-Vinaya which are enforced. One monk or a committee or a sub-committee, under Section 19, will be assigned to exercise the power in accordance with Paragraph 1.

Section 15 quarter¹⁵: In order to conserve the principles of the Dhamma-Vinaya and for the order and refinement of the Sangha, the Sangha Supreme Council is entitled to legislate its own law to set degrees of punishment or methods to execute administrative punishment on monks and novices whose behaviour has caused damage to Buddhism and the Sangha administration.

¹³ Section 15 bis amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 4) 2561 B.E.

¹⁴ Section 15 ter added by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

¹⁵ Section 15 quarter added by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.



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A monk and a novice whose punishment is, under Paragraph 1, to the extent of renouncing the ascetic life must be disrobed within three days after he has acknowledged the punishment order.

Section 16¹⁶: In cases where the Chairman of the Sangha Supreme Council is unable to attend a meeting or is not present at a meeting and he does not assign any Somdetch Phra Raja Khana to act in his lieu, the most senior ranking Somdetch Phra Raja Khana who is present at the meeting will perform the duties of Chairman.

Section 17: A meeting of the Sangha Supreme Council must be attended by not less than one-half of the total number of the *ex officio* members and the appointed members to constitute a quorum.

The agenda of a meeting of the Sangha Supreme Council will abide by its rules.

Section 18¹⁷: In cases where no member has yet been appointed to the Sangha Supreme Court to fill the vacant position under Section 15, Paragraph 2, it is understood that the Sangha Supreme Council consists of the number of members left at that particular moment.

Section 19¹⁸ : By consent of the Sangha Supreme Council, the Supreme Patriarch appoints committees or sub-committees, consisting of a number of monks or other people. Working directly under the Sangha Supreme Council, they have to consider and screen what to submit to the Sangha Supreme Council and perform other duties assigned by the Council.

Creating committees and sub-committees, appointing members of the committees or sub-committees, termination of office of the committee and subcommittee members and meeting agendas will comply with the regulations of the Sangha Supreme Council.

Chapter 3

Administration of the Sangha

Section 20¹⁹: The Sangha is under the Sangha Supreme Council administration.

Regulating the administration of the Sangha must comply with what is stipulated in the rules of the Sangha Supreme Council.

Section 20/1²⁰: For the benefit of the administration of the Sangha in the Central Area and in the Provinces, Ecclesiastical Governors-General are appointed to perform the duty in each Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction.

¹⁶ Section 16 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

¹⁷ Section 18 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

¹⁸ Section 19 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

¹⁹ Section 20 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

²⁰ Section 20/1 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 4) 2561 B.E.



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By enforcement of Section 20/2, appointing Ecclesiastical Governors-General and assigning their powers must comply with the criteria and methods stipulated in the rules of the Sangha Supreme Council.

Section 20/2 ²¹ : If there is any royal opinion on appointing and removing Ecclesiastical Governors-General and Ecclesiastical Regional Governors, the execution will proceed after the royal opinion.

Appointing and removing monks from other ecclesiastical positions must comply with this Act, except when there is a dissenting royal opinion.

Section 21: Provincial Administration of the Sangha is divided into the following administrative areas:

- 1) Region,
- 2) Province,
- 3) District,
- 4) Sub-district.

The number of administrative areas must comply with what is stipulated in the rules of the Sangha Supreme Council.

Section 22: Provincial administration of the Sangha is the responsibility of monks on the ecclesiastical hierarchy list as follows:

- 1) Ecclesiastical Regional Governor,
- 2) Ecclesiastical Provincial Governor,
- 3) Ecclesiastical District Officer,
- 4) Ecclesiastical Sub-district Head.

The Sangha Supreme Council may consider it appropriate to have a Deputy-Ecclesiastical Regional Governor, a Deputy-Ecclesiastical Provincial Governor, a Deputy-Ecclesiastical District Officer and a Deputy-Ecclesiastical Sub-district Head to help the Governor.

Section 23: Appointing and removing a preceptor, an abbot, a deputy-abbot, an assistant to the abbot, a monk who holds an administrative position of the Sangha and a monks' agent must comply with the criteria and methods stipulated by the rules of the Sangha Supreme Council.

²¹ Section 20/2 added by the Sangha Act (Vol 4) 2561 B.E.



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Chapter 4 Punishment and Renouncing the Monkhood

Section 24: A monk must be punished when he violates the Dhamma-Vinaya and his punishment has to be in accordance with the Dhamma-Vinaya.

Section 25: By enforcement of Section 24, the Sangha Supreme Council has the power to define its rules to stipulate the criteria and methods to make any punishment correct, convenient, quick and fair. It is deemed as legal for the Sangha Supreme Council to specify in its laws the power of the Council or of a monk in any administrative position to punish a monk who violates the Dhamma-Vinaya as well as to specify that the judgment of his punishment is final at any specific stage.

Section 26: Any monk who violates the Dhamma-Vinaya and a final judgment is to receive punishment by means of disrobement, has to be disrobed within twenty-four hours after he has acknowledged the judgment.

Section 27 ²²: Any monk who is involved in one of the following issues:

- 1) Being judged under Section 24 to receive a punishment less severe than being disrobed but refusing to accept that punishment,
- 2) Behaving himself in the way that violates the Dhamma-Vinaya on a regular basis,
- 3) Not being affiliated to any Buddhist monastery,
- 4) Not taking domicile in any particular Buddhist monastery,

This monk will be made to renounce the monkhood in accordance with the criteria and methods stipulated in the rules of the Sangha Supreme Council.

A monk who is sentenced to renunciation of the monkhood under Paragraph 2 has to be disrobed within three days of acknowledging the judgment.

Section 28: Any monk who is sentenced by final judgment as a bankrupt person must be disrobed within three days of the case being finalized.

Section 29: Any monk who is arrested in a criminal case, when an investigation officer or an attorney officer considers it inappropriate to temporarily release him and the abbot of the monastery of his affiliation declines to accept him under his control or the investigation officer does not consider it appropriate for the abbot to take this monk under his control or the monk is not affiliated to any monastery, the investigation officer has the authority to proceed with compelling the monk to renounce the monkhood.

Section 30: When a monk is to be imprisoned, confined or detained in accordance with a court judgment or a court order, the officers who are authorized to proceed according to the court judgment or the court order have the authority to compel that monk to renounce the monkhood and he is required to report this renunciation to the court.

²² Section 27 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

(Translation)

Chapter 5 Buddhist Monasteries

Section 33 ²³: There are two types of Buddhist monastery.

- 1) Monasteries which have been granted royal consecrated boundaries.
- 2) Monastic residences.

A monastery is a juristic entity. The abbot is the representative of the monastery in all general activities.

Section 32: Building, establishing, combining, moving and abolishing a monastery as well as requesting a consecrated boundary from the King must abide by the methods stipulated in ministerial regulations.

In cases of abolishing a monastery, the property of the monastery will become central ecclesiastical property.

Section 32 bis²⁴: For any deserted monastery lacking any monk to take residence and during the time when it has not yet been abolished, the National Office of Buddhism* will have the duty of governing and taking care of it. This is extended to include its land, estates and property.

To upgrade a deserted monastery to become a monastery where monks reside must comply with the criteria and methods stipulated in ministerial regulations.

Section 33: Land of a monastery and land managed by a monastery are as follows:

- 1) Land of a monastery is the land where the monastery is located, together with its boundaries.
- 2) Monastery estates are the lands which are a monastery's property.
- 3) Land dedicated by people to a monastery or Buddhism to make profit from.

Section 34²⁵: Transferring the ownership of monastery land, monastery estates or central ecclesiastical property can be done under this Act, except in cases specified in Paragraph 2.

The ownership of monastery land, monastery estates and central ecclesiastical property can be transferred to the government sector, state enterprises or other state offices if the Sangha Supreme Council does not object and the Council has received an improvement fee from the government sector, state enterprises or other state offices. This process proceeds through Royal Decree.

²³ Section 31 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

²⁴ Section 32 bis added by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

²⁵ Section 34 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.



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It is prohibited for any person to cite the statute of limitations in filing a lawsuit with a monastery or the National Office of Buddhism*, as the case applies, concerning property in the form of monastery land, monastery estates or central ecclesiastical land.

Section 35 ²⁶: Monastery land, monastery estates and central ecclesiastical land are properties that are not liable to execution.

Section 36: One monastery will have one abbot and, if it is deemed appropriate, a deputy-abbot and an assistant to the abbot may be appointed.

Section 37: An abbot has the following duties:

- 1) Maintaining the monastery, organizing activities and managing the monastery property to keep it in a good condition.
- 2) Governing and carefully watching the clergymen and laymen who have their own dwelling places or live on the monastery grounds to ensure that they behave according to the Dhamma-Vinaya, the rules of the Sangha Supreme Council as well as their regulations and orders.
- 3) Taking trouble in teaching and imparting the Dhamma-Vinaya to clergymen and laymen.
- 4) Providing appropriate conveniences to those who come to make merit.

Section 38: An abbot has the following authority:

- 1) Prohibiting clergymen and laymen who have not been given his permission to stay in the monastery.
- 2) Ordering clergymen and laymen who disobey his words to leave the monastery.
- 3) Ordering clergymen and laymen who have their own dwelling places or live on the monastery grounds to work in the monastery or to be on parole or to apologize when they have failed to follow the abbot's orders which have rightfully been given according to the Dhamma-Vinaya, the rules of the Sangha Supreme Council and the laws, regulations or orders of the Council.

Section 39: In cases where there is no abbot or the abbot cannot perform his functions, an acting abbot will be appointed and he is entitled to the powers and functions of the abbot.

The appointment of an acting abbot will comply with the criteria and methods stipulated in the rules of the Sangha Supreme Council.

²⁶ Section 35 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

(Translation)

Chapter 6

Ecclesiastical Property

Section 40: Ecclesiastical property is divided into two types.

- 1) Central ecclesiastical property is the property belonging to Buddhism, not any particular monastery.
- 2) Monastery property is the property of one particular monastery.

The National Office of Buddhism* is authorized to take care of and manage central ecclesiastical property; in this respect, the National Office of Buddhism* is taken as the owner of central ecclesiastical property.

Taking care of and managing central ecclesiastical property will follow methods stipulated in the ministerial regulations.

Section 41: By consent of the Sangha Supreme Council, the National Office of Buddhism* is to prepare an annual budget of central ecclesiastical property and after being published in the Government Gazette, the budget can be used.

Chapter 7

Punishments

Section 42²⁷: Anyone who has not been appointed a preceptor or who has been removed from preceptorship under Section 23 and who ordains someone a Buddhist monk, is subject to not more than one year's imprisonment.

Section 43²⁸: Anyone who violates Section 15 ter, Paragraph 2; Section 26; Section 27, Paragraph 3 or Section 28 is subject to not more than one year's imprisonment.

Section 44²⁹: Anyone who is expelled from the monkhood because he has committed a major offence, whether or not there has been a judgment under Section 25, but has been ordained as a monk by making false statements or concealing the truth from the preceptor, is subject to not more than one year's imprisonment.

Section 22 bis³⁰: Anyone who insults, disparages or is vengeful to the Supreme Patriarch, is subject to not more than one year's imprisonment or a fine of not more than 20,000 Baht or both.

²⁷ Section 42 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

²⁸ Section 43 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

²⁹ Section 44 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

³⁰ Section 44 bis added by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.



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Section 44 ter ³¹: Anyone who imputes the Sangha or other Sangha, causing disgrace or disunity, is subject to not more than one year's imprisonment or a fine of not more than 20,000 Baht or both.

Chapter 8

Miscellaneous

Section 45: A monk who is appointed to administer the Sangha and the monks' agent is taken as an official according to what is stipulated in the Criminal Code.

Section 46³²: The administration of other Sangha complies with the criteria and methods stipulated in ministerial regulations.

Co-signing the royal command

Field Marshal S. Thanarat

Prime Minister

NB: The reason for the promulgation of this Act is that the power of executing the activities of the Sangha should not be divided with the aim of creating a balance of power as it appears in the current law. As such a system results in weakening the efficiency of the execution of activities, it is thus deemed appropriate to improve the Sangha Act by having the Supreme Patriarch govern the Sangha through the Sangha Supreme Council under the law and the Dhamma-Vinaya. This is to ensure the progress and prosperity of Buddhism.

The Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.³³

Section 18: All ministerial regulations, the rules of the Sangha Supreme Council, the procedures, regulations or orders of the Sangha Supreme Council which are promulgated by the Sangha Act, 2505 B.E., will remain in effect as long as they are not in conflict with or contradictory to this Act.

³¹Section 44 ter added by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

³² Section 46 amended by the Sangha Act (Vol 2) 2535 B.E.

³³ The Government Gazette, Vol 109, Part 16, Page 5, 4 March 2535 B.E.



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Section 19: A monastery holding the position of a juristic entity under the Civil and Commercial Code will hold the position of a juristic entity under the Sangha Act 2505 B.E., which is amended by this Act.

Section 20: A monk who has been appointed to or established with an Ecclesiastical rank before the day this Act is stipulated will retain that Ecclesiastical rank.

Those who are appointed members of the Sangha Supreme Council, Ecclesiastical Governors-General, members of any committees or sub-committees, under the Sangha Act, 2505 B.E., or ministerial regulations, the rules of the Sangha Supreme Council, the regulations, procedures or orders of the Sangha Supreme Council which are promulgated by virtue of the Sangha Act 2505 B.E., are to remain in those positions or perform those duties until the term of office ends or until the Sangha Supreme Council passes different resolution.

Section 21: The Prime Minister* shall have charge and control of this Act.

NB: The reason for the promulgation of this Act is that the Sangha Act 2505 B.E., has been enforced for a long time, so it is deemed appropriate to improve the provisions stipulating the establishment of the Supreme Patriarch and the appointment of a person to act in lieu of the Supreme Patriarch, the appointment and removal of ecclesiastical ranks, powers and duties of the Sangha Supreme Council, administration, renouncing the monkhood of the Sangha and other Sangha, monasteries, maintaining monasteries, monastery property and central ecclesiastical property. The provision on punishments has been improved in accordance with the current situation. It is therefore necessary to promulgate this Act.

*The Royal Decree for the change of the provisions to bring them in line with the power transfer of the government offices under the Improvement of Ministries, Bureaux and Departments Act, 2545 B.E.³⁴

Section 42: In the Sangha Act 2505 B.E., “The Ministry of Education” and “The Department of Religions” are changed to the “National Office of Buddhism”; “the Minister of Education” is changed to “the Prime Minister” and “the Director-General of the Department of Religions” is changed to “the Director of the National Office of Buddhism”.

NB: The reason for the promulgation of this Royal Decree is because the Improvement of Ministries, Bureaux and Departments Act 2545 B.E., prescribes the establishment of new government offices with new missions. The Royal Decree on the Transfer of Administration and Powers of Government Offices has already been stipulated under the Improvement of Ministries, Bureaux and Departments Act. Because this Act legislates the transfer of powers of government offices, the Ministers in office or those who worked in the former offices are to become parts of the new government offices while changes are made to the provisions to bring them in line with the powers that have been transferred. Therefore, to conform to

³⁴ The Government Gazette, Vol 119, Part 102 a, Page 66, 8 October 2545 B.E.



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the principles that appear in this Act and in this Royal Decree, it is deemed appropriate to change the legal provisions to bring them in line with the transfer of the government offices. This will help those involved to be clear in using the laws without having to look up for the laws that stipulate the power transfer to find what law has enforced such transfer of offices or what office or who the legal responsibility has been transferred to. Changes made to the legal provisions are in the form of the office's name change, the change of the title of the Minister in office or responsible officers of the government offices in order to make them correspond with the transfer of power. Additional government representatives are to be appointed to the Committee to make it correspond with the missions which are transferred from the former government office to the new one. The former government office which has been abolished is removed. To make corrections that correspond with the aforementioned Act and Royal Decree, it is necessary to promulgate this Act.

Royal Ordinance Amending the Sangha Act 2505 B.E. 2547 B.E.³⁵

NB: The reason for the promulgation of this Royal Ordinance is that in appointing a person Supreme Patriarch *pro tempore* in cases where there is no Supreme Patriarch or he is not staying in the Kingdom or he is not able to perform the function, the law of the Sangha allows the appointment or the selection of merely one Somdetch Phra Raja Khana. This may cause some hindrances that may result in disorder in the Sangha administration and the circle of Buddhist worshippers and may eventually lead to public lack of safety, which may be caused by the disunity in the Sangha. It is thus deemed appropriate to appoint a group of Somdetch Phra Raja Khana Supreme Patriarch *pro tempore*; they will co-exercise the power to command the Sangha for greater peace and order as well as, in one way, to create more unity. As at present, the Supreme Patriarch is advanced in age and is now receiving medical care, the doctors have agreed that he should rest and be under the care of a team of doctors. There is therefore the immediate need to have a person or a group of people who act in lieu of the Supreme Patriarch. It is deemed appropriate to solve the problem in order to quickly create peace and order to the country. This is an emergency that unavoidably requires the immediate promulgation of this Royal Ordinance.

The Sangha Act (Vol 3) 2560³⁶

Section 2: This Act will be in effect one day after it is announced in the Government Gazette.

³⁵ The Government Gazette, Vol 121, Part 34 a, Page 1, 17 July 2547 B.E.

³⁶ The Government Gazette, Vol 134, Part 2 a, Page 1, 6 January 2560 B.E.

(Translation)

NB: The reason for the promulgation of this Act is that according to royal custom that was practised for a long time in the olden days, it was in the royal power of the King to appoint the Supreme Patriarch. Later, since the time when written law started in Section 5 of the Sangha Act 2484 B.E., onwards, it was considered as appropriate to issue a law to continue and maintain the royal custom, having the Prime Minister to countersign the royal command; this Act has therefore been promulgated.

The Sangha Act (Vol 4) 2561 ³⁷

Section 2: This Act will be in effect one day after it is published in the Government Gazette onwards.

Section 11: The members of the Sangha Supreme Council who have been in office before this Act is enforced will remain in office until the King appoints new members of the Sangha Supreme Council under the Sangha Act 2505 B.E, which is amended by this Act.

NB: The reason for the promulgation of this Act is because the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand stipulates that the King is a Buddhist and Upholder of all Faiths. According to royal custom that has been practised for a long time, the King will be the patron and protector of Buddhism as well as the caretaker of the Sangha to ensure its progress and security according to the traditional standards in order to boost the prosperity and sustainability of the Buddhist Faith so as to be revered by Buddhist worshippers. This will result in their good behaviour, peace and happiness in the people, which will benefit the nation. It is appropriate to issue a law to continue and maintain royal power in accordance with royal custom. There is thus the need to promulgate this Act.

³⁷ The Government Gazette, Vol 135, Part 50 a, Page 1, 17 July 2561 B.E.

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Royal Insignia
Buddhist Scriptures Study Act 2562 B.E

His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun
Enacted on the Day of 15th April, 2562 B.E.,
Being the 4th year of the present reign

His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun orders the announcement that, as it is appropriate to legislate a law stipulating the study of Buddhist Scriptures, the King therefore has an Act promulgated following the advice and consent of the National Legislative Assembly in its capacity as the Parliament, as follows:

Section 1: This Act is entitled the “Buddhist Scriptures Study Act 2562 B.E.”.

Section 2: This Act will be in effect one day after it is published in the Government Gazette.

Section 3: The following are cancelled:

- 1) Academic Standing for Graduates in Buddhist Studies Act 2527 B.E.
- 2) Academic Standing for Graduates in Buddhist Studies Act (Vol 2) 2540 B.E.

Section 4: In this Act,

“Buddhist Scriptures Study” means the study of Buddhist Teachings that appear in the Tipitaka Buddhist Canon.

“A monastery” means a monastery under the law concerning the Sangha.

“A place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures” is an academic institute, an institute for religious studies or a school.

“An academic institute” means a place where a monastery organizes the study of Buddhist Scriptures in the Department of the Pali Central Examination or the Department of the Dhamma Central Examination, organized by an announcement of the Sangha Supreme Council.

“An institute for religious studies” means a place where a monastery organizes the study of Buddhist Scriptures in the Department of the Pali Central Examination or the Department of the Dhamma Central Examination, be it in the form of a learning centre, an



(Translation)

educational institute of a monastery, a sub-district educational institute or a district educational institute.

“A school” means a place where a monastery organizes the study of Buddhist Scriptures in the Department of General Education.

“The Office” means “the National Office of Buddhism”.

“The Director” means the Director of the National Office of Buddhism.

“The Committee” means the Committee on the Study of Buddhist Scriptures.

Section 5: The study of Buddhist Scriptures is organized with the following objectives:

- 1) To make the study of Buddhist Scriptures comply with the principles of Buddhism as they appear in the Tipitaka Buddhist Canon, royal customs and in line with the national educational standards.
- 2) To enable Buddhist monks and novices to use Buddhist principles to develop their minds and intellect as well as to strictly protect the Dhamma-Vinaya to keep it accurate and fine so as to be revered by Buddhists in general.
- 3) To enable Buddhists to correctly apply Buddhist principles to their way of life.

Section 6: The study of Buddhist Scriptures consists of three departments as follows:

- 1) The study of Buddhist Scriptures in the Department of the Pali Central Examination being the study of Buddhism in the Pali language.
- 2) The study of Buddhist Scriptures in the Department of the Dhamma Central Examination being the study of Buddhism in Thai.
- 3) The study of Buddhist Scriptures in the Department of General Education being the study of Buddhism of both the Department of the Pali Central Examination and the Department of the Dhamma Central Examination, together with the basic educational syllabus of the Ministry of Education.

The study of Buddhist Scriptures according to (1), (2) and (3) may also be conducted in other languages.

Section 7: In order to help the study of Buddhists Scriptures to achieve its objectives in accordance with Section 5, the Office, by consent of the Committee, should prepare a lesson plan for the study of Buddhist Scriptures, the standards for a place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures and a budget plan for managing the study to submit to the Sangha Supreme Council for approval.



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(Translation)

To operate in accordance with the plan for the study of Buddhist Scriptures under Paragraph 1, the Government must allocate a budget for managing it as appropriate and necessary.

Section 8: A Committee on the Study of Buddhist Scriptures is to be formed, consisting of

- 1) The Chairman of the Committee, appointed by the Supreme Patriarch with the approval of the Sangha Supreme Council.
- 2) A Minister assigned by the Prime Minister, serving as Vice Chairman of the Committee.
- 3) Ex officio members who are, namely, the Head of the Pali Central Examination Department, the Head of the Dhamma Central Examination Department, the Chairman of the Committee on Buddhist Scriptures Study in the General Education Department, the President of Maha Chulalongkornrajawitthayalai University, the President of Maha Makut-rajawitthayalai University, the Permanent-Secretary to the Ministry of Education, the Secretary-General of the Civil Servant Commission, the Secretary-General of the Basic Education Commission, the Secretary-General of the Higher Education Commission, the Director-General of the Budget Bureau and the Secretary- General of the Office of the Teacher Civil Service and Educational Personnel Commission (OTEPC).
- 4) Six scholarly members, who can either be clergymen or laymen, appointed by the Supreme Patriarch with the approval of the Sangha Supreme Council.

The Director of the National Office of Buddhism serves as a Member and Secretary of the Committee and the Director of the Buddhist Studies Division as a Member and Assistant Secretary.

Section 9: Under Section 8(4), the term of office of the Chairman of the Committee and the scholarly members is three years and they may be reappointed.

When the term of office has been completed under Paragraph 1, and the Chairman of the Committee and the scholarly members have not been appointed under Section 8 (4), the Chairman of the Committee and the members whose terms of office end are to remain in office to perform their duties until the Chairman of the Committee or the scholarly members who are appointed under 8(4) take office.

Section 10: As well as being out of office due to the end of the term of office under Section 9, the Chairman of the Committee and the scholarly members under Section 8(4) will leave office when



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- 1) They die.
- 2) They resign.
- 3) Their monkhood is terminated.
- 4) The Supreme Patriarch orders their removal from the position with the approval of the Sangha Supreme Council.
- 5) They have gone bankrupt or are dishonest.
- 6) They become disabled persons or are just the same as disabled persons.
- 7) They are imprisoned by a final court verdict.

Section 11: In cases where the Chair of the Committee or any scholarly member, under Section 8 (4), is out of office before their term of office ends, the person appointed to the vacant position will be in office for as long as the rest of the term of office of the Chairman of the Committee or the scholarly member that he replaces, except when fewer than ninety days are left to the term of office and there may not be appointment to fill the vacant position.

In cases where the Chairman of the Council or any scholarly member, under Section 8 (4), is out of office before their term of office ends, the members of the Council which consist of all the rest will continue to perform the duties until there is the appointment of the Chairman of the Council or a scholarly member to fill the vacant position. In cases where the Chairman of the Council is out of office before the end of his term of office, the Vice Chairman must temporarily perform the duties of the Chairman.

Section 12: The members of the Council have the following duties and powers:

- 1) Setting up a policy, a plan for managing the study of Buddhist Scriptures and the standards of a place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures, supervising and monitoring the management of the study of Buddhist Scriptures to keep it in line with the objectives in Section 5.
- 2) Stipulating the standards for the study of Buddhist Scriptures and accrediting academic quality.
- 3) Approving the syllabuses for the study of Buddhist Scriptures; in this respect, the syllabus for the study of Buddhist Scriptures of the Pali Central Examination Department and that of the Dhamma Central Examination Department must comply with the requirements of the Sangha Supreme Council. The study of Buddhist Scriptures of the Department of General Education must comply with the basic education syllabus of the Ministry of Education and what is specified by the Sangha Supreme Council.



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(Translation)

- 4) Assigning background knowledge, qualifications, criteria for admission to a school and conditions for graduation.
- 5) Approving the granting of degrees and certificates.
- 6) Assigning duties and powers as well the criteria for work management of the Head of the Pali Central Examination Department, the Head of the Dhamma Central Examination Department and the Chairman of the Committee on the Study of Buddhist Scriptures in the Department of General Education.
- 7) Assigning the core standards of personnel administration for those who work under Section 18, concerning the appointment of positions, manpower rates, salaries, position allowances, academic standing allowances, remuneration, wages, welfare and other benefits, recruitment, placement, appointment, development, removal from the position, enforcement of disciplines, taking disciplinary action, complaints, appeals and punishments. In this respect, the part dealing with the specification of salaries, position allowances, academic standing allowances, remuneration, wages, welfare and other benefits must be approved by the Ministry of Finance.
- 8) Issuing rules, regulations or announcements concerning establishing an institute for the study of Buddhist Scriptures, its administrative structure, the management of the study of Buddhist Scriptures and a place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures.
- 9) Issuing regulations concerning the administration and management of money matters, materials and property of a place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures, including accounting and disposing of items from the inventory list as null.
- 10) Issuing regulations concerning the duties of the internal auditor.
- 11) Issuing rules, regulations or announcements for execution in accordance with this Act.
- 12) Appointing a sub-committee or a working group to work as assigned.
- 13) Preparing an executive report to present for the acknowledgement of the Sangha Supreme Council.
- 14) Continuing to do other necessary things in order to achieve the objectives of the administration of the study of Buddhist Scriptures or what is assigned by the Sangha Supreme Council.

Section 13: A meeting of the Committee must be attended by not less than one-half of the total number of the members to constitute a quorum.

(Translation)

The Chairman of the Committee is to chair the meeting. If the Chairman does not attend the meeting or is not able to perform the duty, the Vice Chairman is to chair the meeting. If the Vice Chairman does not attend the meeting or is not able to perform the duty, the meeting will choose a member to chair the meeting.

Majority votes are taken as the final judgment; each member, be it a clergyman or a layman, will have one vote. If the votes are even, the Chairman of the meeting will cast one more vote as the final judgment.

Each year, the Committee must hold at least four meetings.

Section 14: The Office is the central work unit to promote, support and coordinate the study of Buddhist Scriptures and serves as the Office of the Secretariat of the Committee whose duties are involved with clerical work and supplying academic work to the Committee as well as other duties stipulated by the law and other duties assigned by the Committee.

Section 15: In administering the study of Buddhist Scriptures under Sections 6 (1), (2) and (3), the Head of the Pali Central Examination Department, the Head of the Dhamma Central Examination Department and the Chairman of the Committee on the Study of Buddhist Scriptures in the Department of General Education, as the case applies, is assigned by the Sangha Supreme Council to be responsible for administering the study of Buddhist Scriptures of each Department.

Section 16: A monastery is entitled to establish a place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures according to the criteria stipulated by the Committee.

A place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures established by a monastery under Paragraph 1 must administer the study in accordance with the objectives in Section 5 and must take the following into consideration.

- 1) Providing knowledge in Buddhist academic matters for excellence in Buddhism intelligence.
- 2) Promoting knowledge in and the understanding of the values of Buddhist Teachings.
- 3) Producing students whose virtues guide knowledge, who are good heirs of the Buddhist Faith, aware of their being Thai and who love and have ties to their locale.
- 4) Educational standards of the nation and the procedures in educational administration according to the law stipulating national education.



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(Translation)

Section 17: A place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures must aim to instil the following characteristics in its students.

- 1) Being good heirs of the Buddhist Faith and good citizens of society.
- 2) Having knowledge and skills in Buddhism.
- 3) Searching for more knowledge, complying with the laws, regulations and disciplines of the Sangha.
- 4) Being physically and mentally healthy.
- 5) Knowing how to maintain and take care of ecclesiastical property, conserve and promote the surrounding environment.
- 6) Being proud of the monkhood and loyal to the nation, the religion and the monarch.
- 7) Being creative; promoting and supporting practical ways that bring about progress to the community, society and Buddhism.

Section 18: In a place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures, there are two types of staff as follows.

- 1) Teaching staff are teachers of Buddhist Scriptures and teachers in the Department of General Education of a school of Buddhist Scriptures.
- 2) Support staff which include personnel in education, administrators of the institute, those who are responsible for academic affairs, who provide services or are involved with organizing the process of teaching and learning, supervising and administering education in a place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures. These people are, for example, librarians, counsellors, educational technology officers, registration officers, general administrative officers or those who perform other duties as assigned by the Committee.

Section 19: A place for the study of Buddhist Scripture must prepare accounts according to the criteria specified by the Committee and it must arrange internal auditing concerning its money matters, accounting and inventory as well as reporting the auditing results to the Committee at least once a year.

For internal auditing, the staff of a place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures must particularly perform the duties of internal auditors in accordance with the regulations specified by the Committee.



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(Translation)

Section 20: A place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures must assess the results of work operations of its staff in accordance with the criteria, methods and duration of time specified by the Committee.

Section 21: The study of Buddhist Scriptures, which is organized for novices who are juvenile by the law concerning compulsory education, have educational background at not a lower level than Pathom Suksa (Grade) 6 or equivalent and have taken additional general courses in accordance with the criteria and conditions of the Basic Education Commission under the law concerning national education and by the advice of the Sangha Supreme Council, shall constitute fundamental education as follows.

- 1) The Department of the Dhamma Central Examination: a Nak Dhamma Ek level is the study at a lower secondary school or a lower Mattayom Suksa level.
- 2) The Department of the Pali Central Examination: a three- grade Parien Dhamma level is the study at a higher secondary school or a higher Mattayom Suksa level.

Section 22: Those who have completed compulsory education and have finished the study of Buddhist Scriptures in the Department of the Dhamma Central Examination and in the Department of the Pali Central Examination will hold the following academic standing.

- 1) The Department of the Dhamma Central Examination: A Nak Dhamma Ek level holding academic standing at a lower secondary school level.
- 2) The Department of the Pali Central Examination: A three-grade Parien Dhamma level holding academic standing at a higher secondary school level.

Section 23: The study of Buddhist Scriptures in the Department of General Education which is organized for monks and novices is either the study at a lower or a higher secondary school level, as the case applies.

Section 24: Graduates who have finished the Ninth-Grade in the Study of Buddhist Scriptures from the Dhamma or the Pali Central Examination Department will hold academic standing at a bachelor's degree level, called "the Ninth- Grade Dhamma Graduate" ("the Parien Dhamma Kao Prayok," or "Por Thor 9" in brief).

In cases where a graduate who has finished any grade of the Pali study furthers his study according to the criteria specified by the Committee, his new academic standing must be approved by the Sangha Supreme Council and be in accordance with the criteria of the Higher Education Commission, stipulated by the law concerning national education.

Section 25: Under the stipulation of Section 21, Section 22, Section 23 and Section 24, graduates in Buddhist Scriptures are entitled to a certificate, a degree and a certificate of confirmation of teaching and learning activities, which is granted to them in accordance with the criteria and conditions specified by the Committee.



(Translation)

Section 26: The Committee may create a badge of academic standing and specify its use by graduates.

The badge of academic standing in Paragraph 1 shall be published in the Government Gazette.

Section 27: A place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures may create its own badge, mark or symbol and may specify the use of the badge, mark or symbol it has created.

The badge, mark or symbol in Paragraph 1 shall be published in the Government Gazette.

Section 28: Anyone who uses an academic badge, seal, mark or symbol of a place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures without the right to do so or shows in whatever manner that he, with no right, has a certificate, degree or position of the place for the study of Buddhist Scriptures to make others believe that he has the right to use it or to hold such academic standing or position, is subject to not more than six months imprisonment or not more than a 50,000 Baht fine, or both.

Section 29: A graduate with academic standing at a bachelor's degree level under the law concerning assigning academic standings to graduates in Buddhist Studies will hold the academic standing at a bachelor's degree level under this Act.

Those who have been studying in the Buddhist Scriptures syllabuses, both in the Dhamma Central Examination Department and the Pali Central Examination Department, before this Act is enforced, are considered students under this Act.

Section 30: The Head of the Pali Central Examination Department, the Head of the Dhamma Central Examination Department and the Chairman of the Committee on the Study of Buddhist Scriptures in the Department of General Education who have been in office before this Act is enforced are to remain in those positions under this Act, as the case applies.

Section 31: The academic institutions, the institutes for religious studies under the announcement of the Sangha Supreme Council concerning the Administration of Buddhist Scriptures Studies in the Dhamma and the Pali Department, 2555 B.E. and schools under the announcement of the Sangha Supreme Council concerning Buddhist Scriptures Schools, the Department of General Education, 2553 B.E, that have been permitted to establish before this Act is enforced are considered the places for the study of Buddhist Scriptures under this Act.

Section 32: During the time when laws, rules, regulations, orders, consent and announcements have not yet been issued to execute under this Act, the laws, rules, regulations, orders, consent and announcements of the Sangha Supreme Council concerning

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the administration of the study of Buddhist Scriptures will be in effect *mutatis mutandis* as long as they are not in conflict with or contradictory to this Act.

Section 33: The Prime Minister shall have charge and control of this Act.

Countersigned by

General Prayut Chan-o-cha

Prime Minister

NB: The reason why this Act is promulgated is that, according to royal custom, Buddhism is an institution that has played an important role in administering the country's education. The Sangha has administered the study of Buddhist Scriptures, which are particular parts of the education for the Sangha, along with the study of general education. In order to enable the administration of the study of Buddhist Scriptures to gain support and promotion from the government sector and the educational administration to be efficient, fully responding to the policy in educational administration of the Sangha and the nation, it is necessary to have this Act promulgated.




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