

# Ashin Jinarakkhita

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**Ashin Jinarakkhita** (1923-2002),<sup>[web 1]</sup> born **Tee Boan-an**<sup>[1]</sup> 戴满安 was an Indonesian-born Chinese<sup>[1]</sup> who revived Buddhism in Indonesia.<sup>[web 1][2]</sup> He was also known as Bhante Ashin, Tizheng Lao Heshang 體正老和尚,<sup>[web 1]</sup> Teh-ching,<sup>[3]</sup> Sukong 師公<sup>[web 2]</sup> ("Grandmaster",<sup>[web 3]</sup> and The Flying Monk!<sup>[web 4]</sup>

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## Biography

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### Youth and early career

Jinarakkhita was born in Bogor, West Java on 23 January 1923<sup>[web 1]</sup> as Tee Boan-an 戴满安,<sup>[1]</sup> the third son of The Hong Gie and Tan Sep Moy.<sup>[web 4]</sup> According to Juangari, as a young boy Tee Boan-an was already interested in yoga and "mystic powers".<sup>[web 4]</sup> As a boy, he met a Theosophist from the Netherlands, who encouraged him to read "The Ancient Wisdom" and "The Secret Doctrines".<sup>[web 4]</sup> When he was a teenager, Tee Boan-an practiced meditation at Gede Mountain and Salak Mountain, and visited "virtuous people" and Mharas to gain spiritual knowledge.<sup>[web 4]</sup>

After attending the HBS at Jakarta and the Technical School in Bandung, he left in 1946 for the Netherlands to study chemistry at Groningen University.<sup>[web 1]</sup> There he also continued his interest in Theosophy.<sup>[web 4]</sup> He also learnt Pali and Sanskrit languages from Dr. Van Der Leeuw,<sup>[web 4]</sup> and acquired fluency in English, German, French, and Dutch.<sup>[web 4]</sup> During holidays, he went to France, where had the opportunity to attend lectures by Jiddu Krishnamurti.<sup>[web 4]</sup>

In 1951<sup>[web 4]</sup> he returned to Indonesia, where he worked as a teacher at several secondary schools in Jakarta,<sup>[web 1]</sup> but also took an active interest in religion.

### Buddhist ordination

Tee Boan-an became president of the Indonesian Sam Kauw Union<sup>[web 1][web 4][note 1]</sup> as well as the vice-president of the central committee of the Indonesian Theosophy Youth.<sup>[web 1][web 4][1]</sup> Buddhism was reintroduced in Indonesia in the beginning of the 20th century by the Theosophical Society,<sup>[1]</sup> which played a central role in the popularisation of Buddhism in the west, and the revival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka.<sup>[4]</sup> In Indonesia the Theosophical Society found adherents among the Dutch colonials, Chinese immigrants, and Indonesian noblemen.<sup>[1]</sup> Buddhism spread in the form of Theravada and Mahayana.<sup>[1]</sup> Theravada followers had contacts with Buddhist monasteries in Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand, while Chinese Mahayana priests were invited by the Indonesian-Chinese Buddhist communities.<sup>[1]</sup>

Tee Boan-an received ordination as a Mahayana Ch'an<sup>[web 5]</sup> novice monk on 29 July 1953, and received the name Tizheng 體正 (Te Cheng) from the Chinese Mahayana priest Benqing (Pen Ching/Pen Cheng) Lao Heshang,<sup>[web 1][1]</sup> from the Guanghua Monastery in Putian, China.<sup>[web 6][note 2]</sup> Eventually, Tizheng received dharma transmission from Benqing.<sup>[5][web 8]</sup>

After the Communists took over power in China in 1949, Buddhist monasteries were closed in China, and Indonesia tried to diminish Chinese influences in Indonesia.<sup>[5]</sup> For these reasons, further Ch'an-training in China was problematic,<sup>[5]</sup> and Benqing sent Tizheng to Burma in 1953, where he practiced satipatthana meditation under Mahasi Sayadaw.<sup>[web 5][5]</sup> Tizheng was ordained as a Theravada monk in 1954, and received the name Ashin Jinarakkhita.<sup>[1]</sup> The same year he returned to Indonesia,

## Buddhist Revival

Jinarakkhita was instrumental in the revival of Buddhism in Indonesia. He realised that Buddhism had to adapt to Indonesian culture to survive; otherwise it would remain a foreign "fremdkörper".<sup>[5][note 3]</sup>

In 1955 Jinarakkhita formed the first Indonesian Buddhist lay organisation, Persaudaraan Upasaka Upasika Indonesia (PUUI).<sup>[1]</sup> In 1957, the PUUI was integrated into the Indonesian Buddhist Association (Perhimpunan Buddhis Indonesia, Perbudi),<sup>[1]</sup> in which both Theravada and Mahayana priesthood were united.<sup>[1]</sup> Nowadays, the PUUI is called Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia (MBI).<sup>[web 9]</sup>

In 1960 Jinarakkhita established the Sangha Suci Indonesia, as a monastic organisation. In 1963 the name was changed to Maha Sangha of Indonesia, and in 1974 the name was change into Sangha Agung Indonesia. It is a community of monastics from the Theravada, Mahayana and Tantrayana traditions.<sup>[web 9][web 5][9]</sup>

In 1965, after a coup-attempt, Buddhist organisations had to comply with the first principle of the Indonesian state ideology, *Pancasila*, the belief in one supreme God.<sup>[2]</sup> All organisations that doubted or denied the existence of God were outlawed.<sup>[10]</sup> This posed a problem for Indonesian Buddhism, which was solved by Jinarakkhita by presenting nibbana as the Theravada "God", and Adi-Buddha, the primaeval Buddha of the region's previous Mantrayana Buddhism, as the Mahayana "God".<sup>[10]</sup> According to Jinarakkhita, the concept of *Adi Buddha* was found in the tenth-century Javanese Buddhist text *Sang Hyang Kamhayanikan*.<sup>[2]</sup>

Another important factor in the Buddhist Revival was the use of a new category of lay Buddhist teachers.<sup>[11]</sup> Those were older Buddhists without a formal dharma transmission or authorisation, but with a lot of life-experience. Those elder teachers were sanctioned by Jinarakkhita, and instituted new meditation-centers, and organised meetings and lectures.<sup>[11][note 4]</sup>

## Death

Jinarakkhita died on Thursday 18 April 2002 in Pluit Hospital, North Jakarta. His ashes and relics were brought back to Sakyavanaram Temple at Cipendawa Cliff, Pacet, Cianjur (between Jakarta and Bandung), West Java, where Jinarakkhita lived.<sup>[web 1]</sup>

## Teachings

Jinarakkhita had a liberal teaching on Buddhism.<sup>[11]</sup> According to Jinarakkhita, *orang suci* ("saints") can be found everywhere,<sup>[2]</sup> and religious experience is personal and unique.<sup>[2]</sup> Each person has to pursue his or her own path.<sup>[2]</sup> In his teachings he often quoted non-Buddhists, such as Ranggawarsita,<sup>[2]</sup> and he admired Sai Baba.<sup>[2][web 4]</sup>

Love, as represented by Guanyin, is essential:

Duty is most important. If you practice love, there is no war, no hate. Truth is love. Buddhism is a religion of love. Jesus Christ sacrificed his Life for the sake of love. All religions are based on love.<sup>[web 4]</sup>

## Students

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Jinarakkhita had students and followers in both Indonesia and other countries.<sup>[13]</sup> One of them is Ton Lathouwers, a Dutch lay student who received dharma transmission in the Rinzai-lineage in 1987,<sup>[5]</sup> and founded the *Maha Karuna Ch'an* organisation in the Netherlands.<sup>[web 10]</sup>

## See also

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- Buddhism in Indonesia
- Chinese Chán
- Guanghua Temple
- Hsu Yun
- Xuecheng (monk)
- Temple of Great Compassion
- Buddhism in the Netherlands
- Religion at Java
- Religion in Indonesia
- Javanese beliefs
- Subud

## Notes

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1. See <sup>[web 5]</sup> for more info on the Sam Kauw Union
2. 本清老和尚,<sup>[web 7]</sup> also known as Y.A. Mahasthavira Arya Mula,<sup>[web 4]</sup> Pen Ching Lau He Sang (pinyin: Benqing Lao Heshang),<sup>[1]</sup> Pun-Cheng,<sup>[3]</sup> and Pen Cheng,<sup>[5]</sup> Pen Cheng (1878<sup>[web 4]</sup> or 1887<sup>[5]</sup>-1962) was born at Wu Chen Li village, at Putian district, Fujian, China.<sup>[web 4]</sup> He was trained in Kuang Hua Ssu 廣化寺 (Kuang Hua, Guanghua Temple, "Vast Influence",<sup>[6]</sup> in Fo Tiën<sup>[5]</sup> (Fujian), a monastery which was influenced by Hsu Yun, abbot of Ku Shan Ssu (Gu Shan) monastery in Fo Tën (see also Charles Luk (Lu K'uan Yü), "Chan and Zen Teaching"<sup>[5]</sup>). Benqing came to Indonesia in the beginning of the 20th century.<sup>[5]</sup> This was in the time of the so-called Buddhist Revival, when, under influence of the western culture, attempt were being made to revitalize Chinese Buddhism.<sup>[7]</sup> Most notable were the Humanistic Buddhism of Taixu, and the revival of Chinese Chán by Hsu Yun.<sup>[7]</sup>
3. The same strategy was being followed by Catholic missionaries like the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) and the Jesuits, who were aware of the value of the Javanese culture and identity.<sup>[8]</sup>
4. The use of lay-teachers was not new in Indonesia. In conjunction with missionaries from the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) and the Jesuits, "lay-apostles" in the first half of the 20th century spread and practiced the Gospel.<sup>[12]</sup> Exemplary are the Schmutzer family who established the Catholic Ganjuran Church in Ganjuran, Bantul, Java.<sup>[12]</sup>

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2. Suryadinata 1995 p. 48.
3. Maha Karuna Ch'an & (year unknown) p. 42.
4. McMahan 2008
5. Verboven 1992
6. Hsüan Hua 2003 p. 189.

7. Huai-Chin 1999
8. Ricklefs 2007, p. 122-124.
9. Suryadinata 1995 p. 49.
10. Harvey 1995, p. 297.
11. Lathouwers 2008
12. Missiemuseum Steyl & year unknown
13. Suryadinata 1995 p. 48-49.

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2. Commemoration of Bhante Ashin's 10th Parinirwana Year ([http://www.kadamchoeling.orid/news.php?nav\\_id=1&lang=en&id=394&title=Commemoration%20of%20Bhante%20Ashin%E2%80%99s%2010th%20Parinirwana%20by%20Bhadra%20Ruci%29](http://www.kadamchoeling.orid/news.php?nav_id=1&lang=en&id=394&title=Commemoration%20of%20Bhante%20Ashin%E2%80%99s%2010th%20Parinirwana%20by%20Bhadra%20Ruci%29))
3. WITH HIS GRACE WE CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING. Buddha Poornima 13 May 2006 ([http://www.saibabaofindia.com/buddha\\_poornima\\_13th\\_may\\_speech\\_phoa\\_krishnaputra%20.htm](http://www.saibabaofindia.com/buddha_poornima_13th_may_speech_phoa_krishnaputra%20.htm))
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8. [Voice of Longquan, \*Ton Lathouwers\* \(http://eng.longquanzs.org/scholars/60599.htm\)](http://eng.longquanzs.org/scholars/60599.htm)
9. [Buddhayana \(http://gabveg.wordpress.com/budhhayana/\)](http://gabveg.wordpress.com/budhhayana/)
10. [Maha Karuna Ch'an \(http://www.mahakarunachan.be/welkom/intoduction-in-english/\)](http://www.mahakarunachan.be/welkom/intoduction-in-english/) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20120425150903/http://www.mahakarunachan.be/welkom/introduction-in-english/>)<sup>25 April 2012 at the Wayback Machine</sup>

## Further reading

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- Ton Lathouwers, *More than anyone can do* VU University Press (forthcoming)
- Charles Luk (Lu K'uan Yü), *Chan and Zen Teaching*

## External links

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### Organisations

- [Buddhayana \(English\)](#)
- [Buddhayana.org \(Indonesian\)](#)
- [ashinjinarakkhita.or \(Indonesian\)](#)
- [Ekayana Buddhist Centre \(Indonesian\)](#)
- [Dharma Center Kadam Choeling Indonesia \(English\)](#)

### Jinarakkhita's Parinirvana

- [The MahaSamadhi of Ashin Jinarakkhita part 1 on YouTube](#)
- [The MahaSamadhi of Ashin Jinarakkhita part 2 on YouTube](#)
- [Commemoration of Bhante Ashir's 10th Parinirwana Year](#)

### Religious pluralism

- [Nyoman Wijaya, \*Religious Pluralism in Bali in Historical Dimension\* \(Indonesian\)](#)

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