

C  
210  
MEN

(Thesis)

RITUAL DIMENSION IN RELIGION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO  
BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

By  
D. Valence Mendis  
2

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of Philosophy and Psychology of  
the University of Peradeniya Sri Lanka in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

October  
1990

429870

PERMANENT REFERENCE  
FOR USE IN THE  
LIBRARY ONLY

## ABSTRACT

The question of ritual and its dynamics in religion with special reference to Buddhism and Christianity is discussed in this dissertation from the point of view of comparative religion. It is argued that the periodic performance of ritual expresses and maintains the mythical and philosophical foundations of religious worlds. Its capacity to articulate the 'ethos' of a particular religious group is examined. Whilst establishing the 'ethos' and world view ritual also establishes a moral order. This analysis reveals that the dynamics of ritual strongly motivates the participant to act in coherence with the reality it signifies. It is shown that in ritual the participant creates time. Ritual Time demonstrates the 'summum bonum' in one's religious world. Thus, in ritual, future becomes present and existential. The Christian and Buddhist religious traditions are examined. In these two traditions there are rituals that punctuate time signifying a constant religious need of being in ritual contact with the sacred. Ritual is not an end in itself but a means of establishing order. This argument stands throughout this dissertation.