

**Speaker: Prof. Dr. Ian Harris**

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**Summary:**

*The Agganna Sutta from the Digha-Nikaya provides the mythological origins of humanity. There are no social-distinctions like a sort of primitive communism. The evolving society elects a Mahasamata – elected by the people and if he doesn't perform the people can dispose of him. This is an important concept as formulated in later times and made famous in Rousseau's social contract. There is also the Samanapala Sutta which distinguished between two separate domains: the Domain of the Sangha and the Domain of the Kings - they cannot impose on each other but they can exchange advice. King Asoka, though, overturned this concept because: as a powerful ruler he could use coercive power or decide to impose change on the Sangha. Asoka could purify the Sangha, tell them what to read, eliminate groups that do not accept his growing sphere of authority – shaping statecraft – under his model. Various kings in South/Southeast Asia try to model their kingship based on Asoka. Only Thailand and Cambodia have kingship now, but neither exercise any power. Thailand is falling more under the secular realm.*