

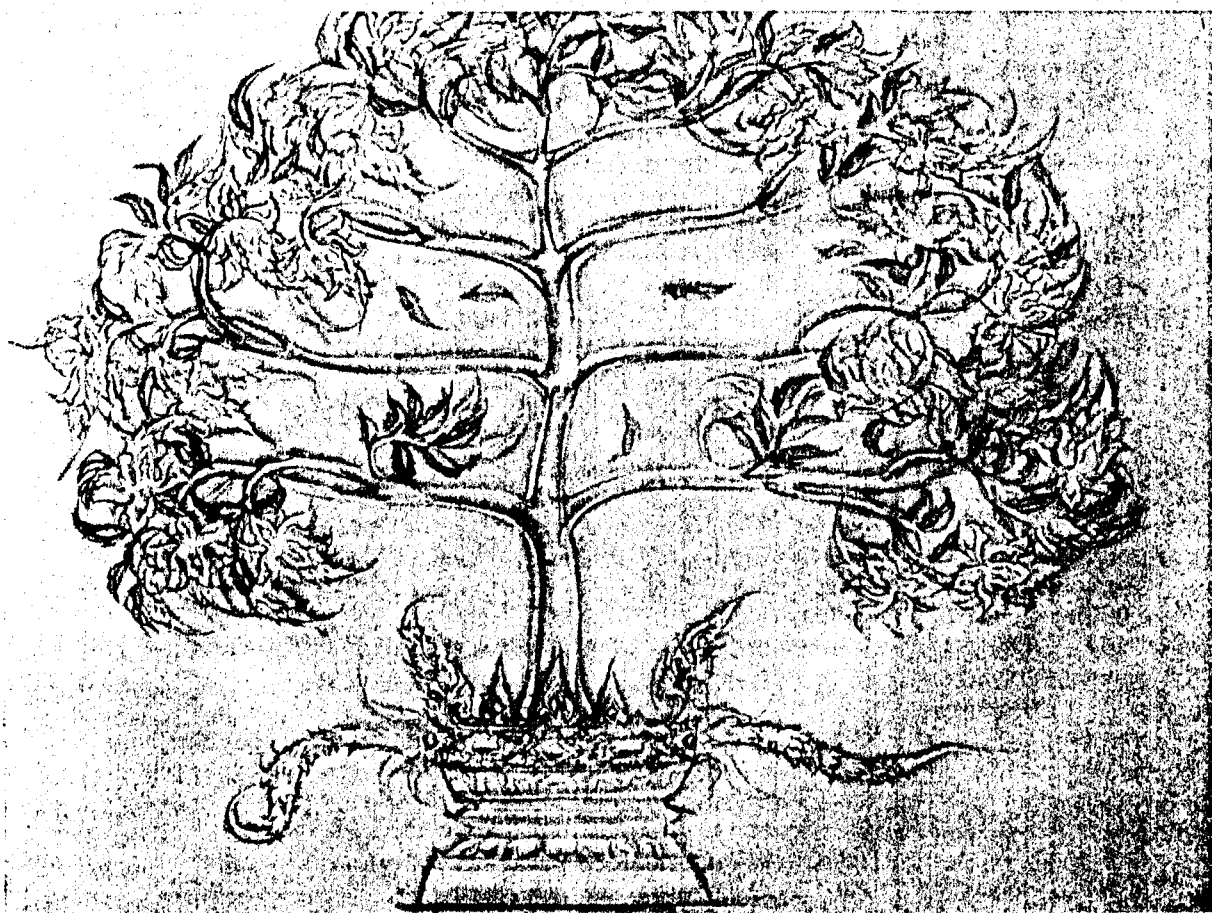
SEEDS OF PEACE

BUDDHISM IN LAOS

CHURCH IN ASIA

SEARCHING FOR A NEW LIFE STYLE

*THE LEADERS, THE LOTUS
AND THE SHADOW OF THE DOVE*



Seeds of Peace

is published twice annually in April and October, in order to promote the aim and objectives of the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development. For subscriptions and further information, please contact the Commission 4753/5 Soi Watthong-Noppakun, Somdej-Chaophya Road, Klongsan Bangkok 10600 Thailand G.P.O.BOX 1960 Bangkok 10501 Tel. 466-9445 Suggested subscription US\$ 6 per annum, postage included.

Objective of TICD

1. To coordinate work among individuals, groups of individuals and various agencies dealing with religions and development in course of working together.
2. To share experience in and knowledge of religions and development as well as exploring ways and means of working together.
3. To offer training and secure resources in terms of man-power and materials to support and enhance the agencies that need help.

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Editorial Note

Thai Inter Religious Commission for Development was formed in 1979 and has published its Newsletters since 1983. We now feel that the Newsletter should appear in a more permanent form twice annually.

In 1976 the Buddhist Association of Thailand produced **Seeds of Peace** as suppliment to its annual **Visakha Puja**. Unfortunately only two issues were published and it was discontinued.

We feel that we ought to preserve that name, as religious development should be for peace and justice. It must have peace on its aim and its means. And in this violent world, the more we sow the seeds of peace, the better it is to lessen suffering and to build harmony, reconciliation and happiness.

In 1976 the name **Seeds of Peace** was given to us by the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, Zen Buddhist monk from Vietnam, who is now in France. He is active in the International Fellowship for Reconciliation. His articles, poems and essays appeared in Buddhist and Christian publications alike.

In our first issue, to be published in April to coincide with the traditional Siamese New Year, we are happy to reprint the Venerable autor's short article, which appeared in the Info on Human Development, Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference.

Although our organization is Thai, what we publish need not be exclusively on this country. We try to deal with various aspects of hunam development in Asia personally as well as socially.

We trust our readers would appreciate our undertaking. We would indeed welcome your suggestions and criticism.

We plan to publish our second issue in October, to coincide with the end of Buddhist lent. We hope we shall be able to have the honors of printing some articles, letters, poems etc by our readers from different religious beliefs and nationalities.

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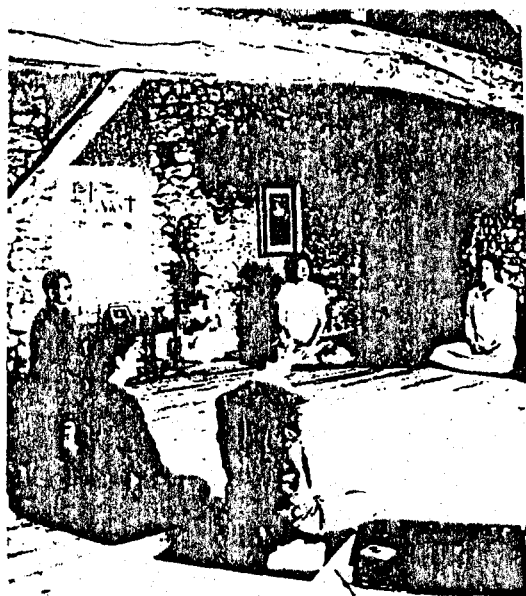
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Non-violence

practicing awareness

Thich Nhat Hanh



Drinking a cup of tea, picking up a newspaper, or using your toilet paper has to do with peace. Non-violence has another name, awareness. We should be aware of what we are, and of what we are doing. That is what I was taught the day I became a novice in a Buddhist monastery. They taught me to be aware of every act during the day. Since that day I have been practicing mindfulness and awareness. At first, I thought it was only for beginners, that advanced people would practice other things. But now I have found out that practicing awareness is for everybody all the time, including the abbot. The purpose of Buddhist meditation is to see into your own nature and to become a Buddha. That can be done only through awareness. If you are not aware of what is going on in yourself and in the world, how

can you see into your own nature and become a Buddha?

I would like to draw your attention to the word *Buddha*. It comes from the verb *Buddh* and means "awake". *Buddha* means nothing except "he who is awake" or "she who is awake." Are we really awake in our daily life? That is the question I would invite you to think about. Are we awake when we pick up our newspaper? Are we awake when we eat ice cream?

Society makes it difficult to be awake. I am sure that you know this, but you keep forgetting: Forty thousand children in the Third World die every day of hunger. Forty thousand of them. We know, but we keep forgetting because the kind of society in which we live makes us forgetful. That is why we need some exercise for mindfulness, for awareness. A number of Buddhists practice this — they refrain from eating a few times a week in order to be in communion with the Third World.

There are means to nourish awareness. For instance, to enjoy silence. To enjoy the world. We have lost our taste for silence. Every time we have some quarter of an hour or half an hour, we have to pick up a book to read, we have to pick up the telephone in order to talk, or we have to turn on our television set. We cannot be ourselves without anything to accompany us. We have lost our taste for being alone or silent.

If you are yourself, if you are your best, then you are a real person. And only with such a person, calm, lucid, aware, solid, can our situation change and our danger be avoided. So please, be yourself, and be that person.

BUDDHISM IN LAOS

an interview given by

John Paul Davidson

John Paul Davidson is working for B.B.C television. He has been there for six years. Recently, he has been working on a series called **Every Man**. It is concerned with how and what is happening to religions all over the world.

- Why are you interested in Buddhism in Southeast Asia?

- Well, partly I'm doing a series about religions of Southeast Asia and there will be four programmes in all—two on Buddhism and two on Islam. The Buddhist countries which I chose were Thailand and Laos to see how the Buddhist religion has coped with two very different ideological and belief patterns, i.e. Marxism and Capitalism also want to see how the religion has managed to intergrate or not integrate these belief patterns, and to look how the strength of the religion faces the tensions and the changes that are going on to see if religion can cope with these alien influences.

- How many days have you spent in Thailand and in Laos?

- All together I've spent three months, half in Laos, half in Thailand.

- Did you have a chance to talk to many people in Laos?

- It's a lot more difficult in Laos than it is here in Thailand. I had to wait for ten days before I could leave Vientien, because you're not allow to leave Vientien without permission from the government. Vientien, it is like a little village. You know that every one is there, five minutes away on a bicycle. But you cannot go to see them; you have to go



through public channel. Eventually, I managed to meet the head of the monks called Thongkun Anantasunthorn and the Minister of Education. The latter used to be a monk called Kamton Thepburi.

He is on the executive committee of the National Association for the Union of Buddhists in Laos. Then I talked to the governor of Luang Prabang. What was interesting about monks is that when I talked to them, they all said that from very early, or from 1945, they had been with the Prathedlao. In their spirit, they always wanted to work with the Prethedlao. After 1945, Kamton Thepburi actually fled into a liberated zone and worked as a monk, mainly as a teacher, for the political propaganda. When I asked him whether he actually fought with a gun, he said he didn't shoot anyone. But he worked actively for the Prathedlao on the political side, which was always considered the most important,

because if you have the villagers, if you have their hearts and minds, then you have their support. The same was true with Thongkun Anantasunthorn. He also fled into a liberated zone and then back to Vientien and worked within the sangha.

- What is your general opinion about the sangha in Laos?

- It's very difficult to get an accurate picture because they tell you what they think they should say, that is the problem. Compared with the Thais, it's much more difficult. In Thailand, you have a lot of different opinions within the sangha, but people talk about them. In Laos they made the sangha much more authoritarian. Anyway, they were quite proud of the fact that, before the revolution, each abbot was more or less independent or could do what he liked. Now they centralized this. So when they tell an abbot to do something, he does it. He obeys the order and they think that this is very important. They were also slightly ashamed of the animistic influences in Buddhism although in practice I know it's very important to them, because the first day I went there, I went to what they call **Bai Sri**.

However, I think that whether he is a politburo member or an ordinary person in Vientien, he sees the main role of the sangha as the National Union of Buddhists in Laos. Monks are still the most respected persons in the society, and they should use the monks to further the development of the country - for reconstruction. Initially, when they came to power in 1976, I think that they thought that they could get rid of the sangha. They should try to destroy its power like the Khmer Rouge did in Kampuchea. But then, very soon, they realized that that was counter-productive. If they did that, they would have nothing, no institution, to replace it. And one thing, one positive point about the government in Laos is that they are quite pragmatic. When they see that they made a mistake, they are not ashamed to say that they made a mistake. Now they see that the sangha is very important to the development of the country and that the monks should be used for teaching or as medical workers or even for helping building

new schools.

- Labour work?

- They do. I mean I saw a lot of monks rebuilding the temples. They tried to make the monks slightly less as the important figures so that they have the monks and the cadres working side by side; and if there is a decision to be made, I think it's the cadre who will make the decision.

But, at the same time, there are some Quakers working there who travel a great deal throughout the country. They have been much further north than I went. They went to villages with government people. They wanted to build a new clinic or a new school with money. When they ask the villagers, the villagers said: "*That is alright. No. We want to rebuild the Wat, first.*" Then they went back to Luang Prabang to discuss it. The Quakers thought that the government would say: "*No. No. you can't build the wat. You must build the new clinic or the house for party cadres.*" But they didn't. They said: "*O.K. They want to rebuild a wat, then rebuild a wat*". So, in a sense, they have accommodated Buddhism. But they have not quite done it intellectually. They have not accommodated the ideas of Buddhism with the ideas of Marxism. So when I asked the supreme patriarch, he said they are working on it at the present. They have the seminar to try to discuss how they could link the two together. I don't think they have much academic training in Laos. I don't sense a great tradition of study there. When the monks study in the school they follow the civilian education syllabus.

- What do the authorities think of the sangha now?

- I think it is very clear that they want to control it.

- Do they want to make the sangha meaningless?

- No, I don't think they do. It's very difficult to judge because that is so much inside people's minds, and one has to think that all the people, even the politburo or the member of the government, would be brought up as a Buddhist. So I don't think they want to crush the religion, but they want to use it for their own ends. They are

quite happy for the idea of Buddhism to go hand-in-hand with Maixism. They don't see a fundamental contradiction. It's a contradiction that you can live with. In the same way that you can live with animism and Buddhism. There is a contradiction, but there is no problem.

- Have you seen anything about meditation or something deeper in a religious sense?

- I asked a lot about meditation. Though most of the monks still practise meditation, they are not very serious about it. They practise it, I would say, as a part of the syllabus. I don't think they are very interested in it, because it's not their primary goal. When I asked if there were any similar *araññavāsi*, forest monks, they said they did not really have that. There might be a few of them, but they are not important. I think the role of the wat in Laos is much more similar to the role of the wat in Thai villages and that it is more integrated with the pattern of the spirit and social life.

- When you talk to the monk, do you notice anything that contradicts the basic teaching of the Buddha?

- No. If you like their propaganda, it's very good Buddhism. For about an hour everywhere I got a long speech about peace and nuclear war. It is surprising because with all the monks I talked to in Thailand, we haven't talked about nuclear war very much. But the first thing the chief monk said to me was about peace and nuclear, war, cruise missiles and the U.S. new arms that had been put in Western Europe.

- What about new ordination ?

- Well, now during raining seasons there are a lot of monks in the wats during *pansa* (lent) and a lot will leave after this. But still most families will expect their sons to become monks for three weeks or so. And another friend from the ministry said that he would become a monk for a week because his mother had died. Even the young ones, like my interpreter from the ministry of foreign affairs, when I asked him if his children would become monk, he said : "Well, for me, it isn't so important, but for their mother it is." So it is up to their parents to decide. I think probably one would only see the

change in the next generation, in ten years or fifteen years time.

The parallel with Thailand is quite similar again, because I think there's lessening of interest in religion. I mean whatever you say about the young people here, it is the same in Laos. It will become more secularized.

- What do you think about the conflict between Thailand and Laos?

- I hope that it will be solved. I am sure the current mood is that the Laos would like to be the more friendly with the Thai. It is a big threat to live with influence of either the Soviet Union or Vietnam. I think what I find quite sensible is that the government there is quite pragmatic and they want to mix. They want to have the Laotian way of socialism. Their model is more toward Burma. They don't want this big influence from outside. The only problem is, because they are such a weak country, they are nothing. As they have only 3 million or 4 million people, they feel they have to rely on big brother just to protect them.

- So they try to have their own way?

- Oh, yes, I think they would like that. That's partly why they changed their mind about the sangha because they realized that it was stupid to try to destroy what was Laotian. I mean it is as bad to make an imitation of the Soviet model as to make an imitation of the Western American model.

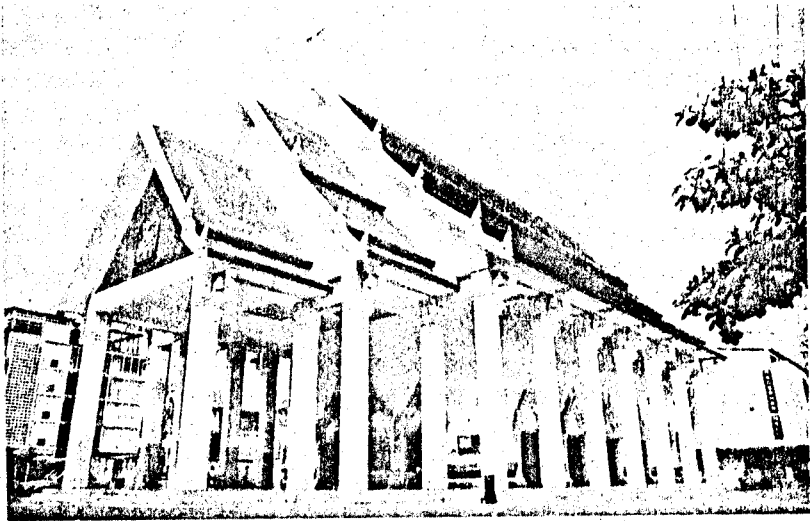
- They even look toward Burma?

- Yes, they approve of Burma. The monks in Laos have to go to Rangoon quite often for the meeting of the Union of Buddhists. They like the idea of a socialism based on their own culture. Let me tell you one interesting little point, They tried to change one of the religious festivals to be a secular festival. They tried to change the date of the boat race festival. Usually, that would be one day after lent, but they want to make it on Saturday and Sunday. In that way, they would secularize the boat race. But in the end everyone said no, and so they have it on the full moon day as before. So they haven't really managed. Likewise, their independence day is very low key. Nothing happens. It's not very important.

Church in Asia

Past, Present and Future

SERI PHONGPHIT



Asian Reality

Asia has many faces. They have been attracting outsiders throughout its history. As the original home of religions and cultures, Asia possesses a spirit, which has been inspiring for generations those who are in search of values, meaning and truth and it continues to do so even today.

It is true that waves of external influences have shaken this rock. Nevertheless they have not yet been able to uproot the fundament. The only thing that they succeeded in doing was to break the shell of this closed world. Colonial powers were the first and modernization the second. Economically, politically and socially the world may have become one and belong to the same structure, struggles and changes. But culturally, Asia remains Asian. This is not to say that culture is a separate element in man's life and has not

at all been affected by continuing changes in the world during these last centuries. Culture is a way of life, anointed by the spirit, with basic value judgements. Culture, as any other element of the society, undergoes continuing changes. But deep down at its root, the spirit of Asia keeps alive. Religions witness this statement. Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and other local religions and beliefs still play an important role in the daily life of Asian people and its society.

As for Christianity, it has never been considered as "Asian", although its native home was also Asia. In fact, Christianity has been known to the Asians since the 16th century, when the colonial powers started to invade this continent. Along with traders and military, missionaries started their preaching of "the Good News". Saint Francis Xavier was one of the pioneers, who signed the foundation of Christianity in Asia.

"Foreign Religion"

Among the 2,600 mio. people of Asia, the Christians count only about 65 mio. more than half of whom are in the Philippines, the only so-called "Christian" country in this area. The usual question is "Why has not evangelization been successful?" as in other continents. Many answers have been and can still be given. While risking to simplify history, it may be said in a few words that Asia is so much rooted in its tradition and culture that economic, political and social changes have not been able to overwhelm religion. The Asians may change their mode of production from sub-sistent economy to capitalism or socialism, their forms of government from absolute monarchy or feudalism to constitutional monarchy and democracy, their traditional social setting to the modernized one, but at the heart of everything remain "their" religions. Christianity has been and still is considered a "foreign religion". It belongs to Western civilization and culture. For the Asians, especially the Hindus and the Buddhists, who are known to be the most tolerant, all religions are equally good. They are a means for man to liberate himself from suffering and to reach salvation. However, in practice, the Hindus the Buddhists the Muslims as well as the Christians will always consider their religion as an absolute which is better than any other. A few may change their religion for economic, political and social reasons. This is the ordinary explanation of the Asians, while the Christians will refer to "*faith*" as the only explanation for the "*conversion*".

However, in order to have a deeper understanding of such phenomenon, a small trip into history may be helpful. This is because the fact that almost the whole continent of South America and a great part of Africa have become Christian does not mean that they had no culture and religion. But if the ways of evangelization in these two continents are considered, then it may be clear that the same "*conversion*" may also have happened in Asia. Missionaries were those who followed the military, who trod over local culture, which was almost totally destroyed. The conquest was then total, both

physical and spiritual. The only Asian country which fell under such a category was the Philippines, the Spanish colony.

In 1622, the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith was founded in Rome by Urban VIII. This was meant to liberate missionaries and evangelization from colonial powers. The new Congregation was supposed to coordinate the mission works in the newly discovered and colonial countries. Before the foundation, missionaries, though in theory belonging to Rome, in practice were under the control of the kings of their countries. Although the "*liberation*" was not that easy and the missionaries had then two "*masters*" at the same time, the process of evangelization became less "*destructive*" of local culture.

The Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith started its function with the admonition that missionaries should take with them only faith and not Western culture. They should acculturate to the local values and way of life. This admonition lay behind the "*Ricci case*" in China and the "*Lano case*" in Thailand. The latter was the first bishop of Siam, the former name of Thailand, who suggested missionaries sent by him to Laos should wear a yellow robe and have their hair shaved for the purpose of propagation of the faith. However, the admonition never materialized in practice. It was in Vatican Council II, three hundred years later, that the issue was taken up seriously again.

Christianity has never been known as an element separated from colonial powers. In fact, missionaries got involved all the time in the political, economic and social questions of the countries in Asia. A superiority complex in all aspects, including Christianity, has been unceasingly put into practice. "*Outside the Church there is no salvation*" was witnessed not only in proclaiming the Gospel, but also in condemning other religions and local values. If conflicts and persecution of the Christians happened in the course of the history of Asia, then they were due also to all the above mentioned factors. An example may be cited. During the Indochinese war in the early forties, between Thailand and France, all French

missionaries in the Northeast were sent out of the country. Churches were closed down. Seven Catholics were killed for not abandoning their faith. The Catholics were taken to be supporters of France, since they believed in a "foreign religion"

Asia Today

Asia has changed rapidly in the 20th century. In a few decades countries like Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea kept up a rapid pace of modernization and stand now on the front row of the industrialized countries of the world. Even though other countries are much behind, one can find in Bangkok, Manila, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and other metropolis as what one finds in New York, Paris, London and Rome. Asia has been opening itself to the Western sciences, technology and values. Yet she has never been and is not convinced that Christianity is better than her religions. One should go out to the provinces, into the villages and get in touch with the people, who form the majority of the population, in order to realize that Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam are still deep in the heart of the people, who express them in their daily life.

However, it is not true that modernization has had no significant impact on Asian culture and religion. Many values, especially those of community life are destroyed or being threatened. The mass of peasants have to leave their land and villages to seek for survival and to face an unknown fate in the cities. Their new home is the slums. There is no more temple, which used to be the center of their life when they were in the villages. A secularized society is the price of modernization.

Yet, to face this secularization, reform movements have come up one after another. This is the case with Buddhism and Hinduism in particular. Monks and priests have started to preach and talk the ordinary language of the man of today. On the other hand, while some monks will be engaged in social development, other will assist and promote meditation among the lay people as never before. Going back to the source, giving new interpretation of the doctrine and

finding out new expressions are characteristics of these movements.

Quest for Inculturation

The end of the colonial era seemed to be also the end of the propagation of the faith and the prestige of Christianity. Only Churches, schools, hospitals and welfare institutions still marked her past grandeur. The number of the converts reduced as well as the role of the Church in society.

With the Vatican Council II, Christianity, particularly the Catholic Church, is again resuscitated from its seeming decadence. The new era of "dialogue" has started. The local Church opens itself to other religions, appreciating what is "holy and true" and trying to live more in unity with local culture. The quest for inculturation has revived. Immediate action has been to use the vernacular language in the liturgy, local art and cultural expressions being also "baptized". Classic examples used to justify this process are St. John and St. Paul with Greek Philosophy, St. Augustine with Plato, St. Thomas Aquinas with Aristotle; examples of the Church's inculturation throughout its history.

After Vatican Council II, the main interest of Christians in other religions is to acquire a deeper understanding and to find out elements that could be "absorbed" into Christianity. In principle it has always been so, not only for Christianity but also for other religions. However, such a process, which is called "inculturation", may be seen in practice in two ways or two kinds which are different in nature.

Firstly, there have been efforts to "use" more local cultural elements in liturgy, rites and rituals, architecture and other external expressions. At the same time studies and researches in other religions and local cultures are being carried out in order to find out positive elements that could be "used", such as to "explain" Christian doctrine, making it more "understandable" and "acceptable" to other religions. Such a way has had rather negative result. It has been creating doubts on the part of other religions whether the Christians are sincerely trying to

understand and to respect them. They feel that they are not understood as they are, but they are being manipulated. In countries like India, Sri Lanka and Thailand, the Christians are accused of adopting a new strategy for the "propagation of the faith". The key word of this "kripto-proselitism" is "dialogue". Fearful that they will be gradually "absorbed" and finally destroyed, many groups in these countries have started to campaign against the Christians, the Catholics in particular. Some have even sent letters to the Pope, protesting that the Vatican is supposed to be the promoter of this new strategy.

Reactions from local Churches in Asia are all similar: they misunderstand us; no explanations will change their prejudice; we better keep silent and continue to give our witness; they are just small groups, which should not bother us too much.

Secondly, there have been also efforts to "dialogue" with other religions. This type of dialogue puts more emphasis on being in unity with other religions through ordinary human relationship, study and researches, cooperation in social action and direct experience of the essence of other religions through religions practice, such as meditation. The characteristic of this second kind of dialogue is that the Christians try to understand other religions as they are, without prejudices and pre-concepts, without superiority complex and triumphalism or fundamentalism.

For the Christians who take part in this dialogue, unfortunately a small number, there are hardly any problems or misunderstandings with those of other religions. The only problem they may have is from the Church itself, which considers such a way as going over the line. This is because this small number of Christians is also trying to reflect the faith using such experience of unity with other religions. They find that a relevant theology for the local Church has to be a contextual theology, which is based on an analysis of local reality and reflection of experiences. This cannot be done exclusively within the Church. It has to be worked out together with other people of other religions. This is precisely what this group will consider

as "respect for what is holy and true in other religions"

Future

Although the rapid increase of Christians in Korea during these past years has again somehow aroused the sense of triumphalism on the part of the Church, the fact is only exceptional and will be deceiving if the whole continent is taken into account. It will be not only an illusion but also erroneous to think that the future of the Church in Asia should depend on the increasing number of Christians. There are still many questions to be answered, many challenges to be met.

Has the Asian Church sincerely recognized values in other religions, cultures and ways of life as also redemptive due to the grace and Spirit of God? Are we not manipulating other religions, taking only parts of them for our own benefit? Does inculturation mean the reflection and expression of the Christian faith from "inside" other religions or from "outside" as the Church has been doing up to now? Has the Church liberated itself from the powers in the society (political, economic, and social) in order to take option for the poor, who form the great majority of the Asian people?

Answers of such questions should not be rationalized. Principles and words are not enough. Actions will certainly imply risks. And it seems that "security of the Church", which is a minority, has top priority for most religious leaders. Following Jesus, who took all the risks to life, on the way to the cross seems to be still far from reality. Isn't it here that the real security should be found?

The Church in Asia has still a long way to go in order to be an "Asian Church". A foreigner remains a foreigner even though he may change his clothes or dress. As long as he does not "speak the same language" as his host, he will never be considered as friend and partner. Finally, it is not his "clothes" and his "head" that he has to change first, but his heart.

Searching for a new Life Style

Appropriate Technology for a Just and Sustainable Socio-Economic Order

S.SIVARAKSA

In my limited experience, I have come across the search for a more alternative lifestyle from people in affluent countries who seem dissatisfied with the mainstream cultural value system in their societies. At present these people are mainly Western. Some individuals and groups have opted out from the Establishment in order to seek for personal freedom, either through their traditional religious beliefs or through new sects and religions. Their numbers, especially including youth, have increased significantly. Some observers have perceived this as a return to the sacred. However, it may be too premature yet to recognise this phenomena as an emerging consciousness for a just society. Indeed at present, there are only scattered pockets of such groups, seeking an alternative lifestyle, appropriate to the industrial or post-industrial era. For some young Americans, to possess only one car and refrigerator for a single family is already considered a search for an alternative lifestyle! They do not realize that refrigerators in USA consume more energy than those in China.

Most people who have opted out from the main affluent western development models seem to have little concern for a just and sustainable socio-economic order. In USA, one sees such groups as Movement for the New Society (based in Philadelphia), characterised by a Quaker traditional background focussing discussion an alter-

native life-style. In England, one sees the EF Schaumacher Foundation and magazines like **Resurgence** and **The Ecologist** which advocate a just and sustainable socio-economic order, through appropriate technology, with a decentralized political theory and real concern for appropriate environmental conditions. Their favourite **gurus** include Copra, Illich and Ariyaratne.

Although the above mentioned groups are small and have not yet achieved much in their search for a just society or for an alternative life-style, the impact of their efforts is fairly significant. Some observers perceive that, in the affluent west at least more and more people appear to have been conscientised and have become aware of a new socio-economic order and a more appropriate atmosphere for the masses. The Green Party in West Germany is an obvious political outcome of this direction.

Furthermore, the alarming fear of global Nuclear holocaust can be seen as a healthy and positive sign for people to move more towards a no-violent approach in solving political conflicts. It has also stimulated groups to lobby governments and demand the decrease of arms expenditures.

Unfortunately, however, most political leaders in affluent western countries have colluded with many religious leaders in the established churches who seek to maintain the **status quo**. While they pay lip service to the peoples' demands, they in fact work for



the benefit of the rich and powerful vested interests. Hence armament industries are still a most important function in USA, the Soviet Union as well as in some western European countries. It has been noted that 87% of armaments are sold to the Third World.

Indeed it is quite evident that the affluent west could perhaps maintain its **status quo**, if it could manipulate and control the political and intellectual leaders of the Third World to implement trickle-down development models, i.e. the poor must catch up with the rich, in order that the few rich people in the Third World will become richer and more powerful at the expense of the masses, and the leaders of the Third World will always have to depend on the First World. This is recognised as the new imperialist mentality.

If you ask most Asian peoples, which life-style they would choose, most would point out the western life-style. Japan of course is perceived as the perfect example of the success story. She imitates the west skilfully, integrating both positive and negative elements in their entirety. Hence Japan has now joined the Richman's Club. Like the west she exports "pollution" to South and Southeast Asia. Cheap labour is utilised relentlessly in those countries, raw materials are purchased and exported to many backward or so-called underdeveloped countries. It is believed that Japan will catch up with the west very soon

in exporting armaments to the world at large.

Despite Japan's exploitative process, especially in South East Asia, leaders of many Asian countries wish to imitate Japan through the so-called 'look East' policy. They do not realize that by so doing, a just and sustainable socio-economic order will not eventuate. In fact, there will be no search for alternative life style for people in this region. They will only end up with imitation. Furthermore this so-called development model degrades human beings, and leaves no room for spiritual development or respect for the indigenous local cultures. It seems that we are forced to drink Coca-cola, wear western dresses and have television sets in every household. Advertising for consumer culture is the new gospel for so-called progress on economic development.

How can people resist this trend? If Japan is the model for a new Life style in Asia, then we have the new gang of four, catching up with Japan very rapidly—namely, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore.

Indeed Singapore plays a leading role in the ASEAN context too. She is the smallest and the richest nation which exploits all other SE Asian nations, politically and economically.

Admittedly the peoples in this gang of four countries are on the whole economically better-off than other parts of the Asian region. However, these countries lack basic

human rights. There is no freedom of expression, especially no legitimate dissenting voices against the governments, and no questioning of the legitimacy of the multinational corporations and superpowers operating in these countries.

Although the Japanese enjoy rights and privileges similar to westerners, plus economic security and political freedom, they suffer from the economic exploitative and operative syndrome in the west. Despite the tea ceremonies and the Zen gardens, which should help to calm them down, they are on the whole restless and insecure. They are greed-oriented and hatred oriented, like most who wish to be successful in life.

The reason is very simple. Their lifestyle depends on an unjust and unsustainable socio-economic order. Japan does not only exploit the rest of Asia, but she also exploits the minorities of her own country, like the South Korean workers, the *buraku* and the farmers, especially those who have lost their lands to Narita airport.

Similarly, in North America the natives are just as oppressed as those in other parts of the third world, and most American citizens are not even aware that the USA is the source of world hunger and world poverty. She consumes more power and energy, wastes more food and dumps everything she does not want in the world market in the name of AID or trade both of which have short term profits as the main goal. It is rightly perceived that we in Asia are guinea pigs of the American medical trade. Exporting medicines and transferring of technologies to the third world are indeed very big and dangerous business enterprises. Witness the Union Carbide disaster in India, 1984.

Those of us in Southeast Asia have been penetrated so much by the Japanese and American models of so-called development that we have more or less lost our deeper consciousness, perhaps with the exception of Burma. Consumerism and complex systems of technology penetrate everywhere. Through advertisements and the mass media, we worship money, power and all the false values that go with them.

Education and the established religions teach us to conform to the *status quo* so that we may become the elites and have the chance to be rich and powerful too. As for the masses many seem deluded that this economic status will improve if they are more diligent, do not gamble, become intoxicants or fatalistic, without realizing that all these negative elements are part and parcel of the unjust socio-economic order, created by the First World. It is further exacerbated by the promotion of local warfare within the third world in order that the armaments industries will flourish and the masses will remain in suffering poverty and ignorance. This is indeed human degradation at its worst.

I used to look up to China and South Asia as alternative models for a just and sustainable socio-economic order. With the establishment of the People's Republic of China and her cultural revolution, one would think that there was a real search for an alternative Life-Style. Currently with the four Modernisations, China will certainly be catching up with Japan and western powers. Perhaps the 'New China' is accommodating herself to fit in comfortably with the Hong Kong situation in the near future and the Taiwan model in the not so near future.

People may not be alarmed that the Chinese are now drinking coca cola and giving up chopsticks. Yet one has to think how dangerous this is to indigenous local cultures and habits. We in SE Asia started with coca cola, then pepsi cola and numerous other soft-drink derivatives. Now all the junk food chains have come in. All these are not only harmful economically and culturally, but are also bad for our health system.

Worst of all in the four Modernisations is ofcourse Armaments. It is bad enough for Japan to be rearmed, but once the Chinese have caught up in this business, there will be no peace in Asia or the world. With the backward military set-up as it is, China is already interfering with Kampuchea and Vietnam.

As for South Asia, we thought the real search for a New Life Style by Gandhiji would have an everlasting impact. The In-

dian non-violent struggle for liberation is certainly, for a Buddhist at least, better than Mao's bloody victory in China. The spirit of non-alignment, the religious tradition which cares for social ethics and the respect for local cultures and customs, as well as a commitment to democracy, freedom and decentralization, would really contribute to an Asian model of a just society, with less affluence perhaps, but more with self respect and self reliance.

Admittedly India inherited a decadent British bureaucratic system and with the presence of Tartar and Bellah, socialism would find itself difficult to coexist with capitalism.

Yet, until recently many of us looked to South Asia, hoping that its leaders would struggle to break through for a just and sustainable socio-political and economic order.

Even with the loss of Pakistan, which opted out for an American consumer culture, through military dictatorship, while paying lip service to the ideal Islamic model, we still had India and Sri Lanka. Now even Sri Lanka wants to become little Singapore, to join the ASEAN club, and ofcourse the new Indian Prime Minister will soon be in Washington. He may maintain his Indian traditional dress, but the new life style for him and his people will be more like the Americans and the Japanese.

By imitating or joining the First World means that there is no development or support of appropriate technology. For the west, including Japan, technology means controlling and exploiting the masses. The more sophisticated technology becomes, it is more our master than our servant. In the beginning it may appear to serve the few at the expense of the many. Yet it will end up by exploiting the few who actually created it. Nuclear armaments are the perfect example of sophisticated technology.

Yet, technologies, like powers, riches and desires are usually those that people crave for. Once you have these, one may think to use them for the benefit of the masses. Indeed you could, but in most cases, they are very complicated and are bound to link with institutional factors which are

geared to oppress and exploit the masses as well as natural phenomena.

At least religious leaders who preach against greed, hatred and delusion, for love, compassion, collaboration, tolerance, detachment and justice should be aware of the danger from inappropriate technologies which are part and parcel of an unjust and unsustainable socio-economic order.

There is now a danger that just as scientists are seen as becoming more religious, theologians are leaving their medieval retreats to embrace materialism. One has to be aware that the quest for spiritual life in the west as well as in Asia, often-times goes against social justice.

With most cultures, religion plays two roles: the priestly and the prophetic. In times of peace, most priests have traditionally sought to maintain the **status quo** within a stable society. The priest has been portrayed as conservative, sometimes even reactionary. They are usually seen as resistant to change. In trouble times, however, they may become 'prophets'. The prophet seizes upon instability within society and uses it as an instrument. They are visionary Utopians, looking beyond the present to a future they believe may be attainable.

As Michael von Bruck rightly quoted Dom Helder Camara, that "*When somebody dreams alone, it is just a dream. But when we all dream together, it is the beginning of reality.*"

This brings to mind Martin Luther King, who really had a dream and his dream by and large has come true. At least he supported the Gandhian vision as a successful proof that non-violent struggle is even possible in the great and violent United States of America.

India certainly had a prophet in the Mahatma, who combined the best elements in Hinduisim, Buddhism and Christianity, for a new life style, which was rooted deeply in the Indian spiritual tradition. Ghandhiji really searched for a just and sustainable socio, political and economic order. Hence he rejected the western model of development and its arms of oppression — technology.

We need to go back to Gandhi, as we

should go back to the Buddha and to Christ, with proper historical perspectives and with critical awareness, for their messages to be perceived as relevant for a more just society.

Japan and the West need the other countries of Asia as we need them. It is especially with the fear of nuclear holocaust in the First World, that we should work with them for a nuclear free society in western Europe and North America. This process will not be possible unless those concerned for peace in the First World link themselves meaningfully to those of the Third World. Peace and alternative models of development must go hand in hand. For a short term policy, we must work together to stop, or at least to reduce, the 87% armaments export to this part of the world.

Together, we could perhaps build awareness of a more just society. Ideally we do not need technology. We only need techniques and applied sciences - natural science and social science - free from western domination. They will then be appropriate for our society. This will really be a new life style — a real return to the sacred, with social justice as the core for personal spiritual development — each to his or her religious and cultural traditions.

To put it in the Buddhist context, we must reconstitute our consciousness to be less selfish — less greedy, less hateful and less

unaware in order that together, we could reconstruct our society to be more just and participatory.

Our religious leaders with proper spiritual self criticism, could become more willing to learn from good friends in other religious traditions as well as from the Marxists and humanists in confronting the unjust socio-economic order of the day mindfully and meaningfully. The Theology of Liberation may be only practical in Latin America or the Philippines, but there is nothing wrong if the Buddhists and Hindus study this and try to integrate its methodology in their own struggles. While trying to solve our daily problems in the short term, we should also look for a common Asian religious approach to liberate ourselves and our society. We shall not overcome unjust systems easily. In turn we shall not be defeated, nor should we hate the oppressors, or become cynics. Daily we must work for our own liberation from desires, while we serve those who suffer like us and more than us, so that we shall sooner, rather than later, be all liberated.

An address at a conference of Asian Inter religious Concern on Emerging Consciousness for a New Humankind, at Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, Madras, 6 January 1985.

"Peace will be assured only if the underlying causes of the prevailing distrust and widespread conflict among nations are successfully dealt with; only if economic and social justice is furthered; and only if the United Nations and other multilateral institutions with responsibility for settling disputes and building the foundations of peace are strengthened and supported. We must dedicate ourselves anew to these objectives today. This is a time for resolution, not discouragement."

— From the message of the UN Secretary-General on the International Day of Peace: 18 September 1984

Reflections on Near-Death Experience and Rebirth

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It gives me very great pleasure indeed to be with you tonight. I'm conscious of the great privilege of speaking to you because I believe very deeply that progress in religion and psylosophy will only be possible if people of different cultures come closer together and learn from each other. During the past week I have been participating in a conference in Korea in which forty-two researchers in the field of near-death studies from many representatives of world religions participated and it was a tremendous experience for me and it opened my eye to be much more aware of development in other countries.

I would like to address myself to the question of near death experience and the idea of a mind-dependent world and what, perhaps, this may say to us.

For the past fourteen years my research has centered on beliefs about life after death and how such claims can be related to the well established knowledge that we have about the place of man within the natural order. If one confines one's attention to the normal evidence of the natural sciences, about what it means to be a person, the case against belief in a future life seems almost overwhelming, and yet if you turn your attention to some less known but very well established elements of human experience there are some well-attested facts which suggest that survival of bodily death is a real possibility of these unusual experiences. By far the most important are near-death experiences. By a near death experience, I mean a report made by a resuscitated person about what happened to him or her at the

moment of apparent death.

For in recent years, many thousands of people whose hearts have stopped beating, whose lungs have stopped breathing, have been resuscitated by the advances of modern medicine. Some of these resuscitated persons tell what happened to them between the moment of apparent death and their successful resuscitation. Furthermore these stories all follow a remarkably similar pattern.

Before commenting on this pattern I must stress that it is only a minority who have experienced anything at all. Most people who have had a close brush with death remember nothing. Secondly, I must make the obvious point that only those who eventually recover can possibly tell us anything. Therefore near-death experiences, however suggestive, can not be regarded as truth of a life after death, since the one thing that the witnesses have in common is that they did not actually die, however near to death they came in the course of their critical illness. But provided these qualifications are admitted it remains significant that almost all investigations of the near-death experience find them remarkably suggestive of the idea that life after bodily-death may be a real possibility. It is these factors that I would like to comment on.

The commonest feature of the near-death experience includes a sense of going out of the body and looking down with interest on the resuscitation attempt. A second stage is a sense of being greeted by deceased relatives and friends, or by a religious figure, or a beam of light. Then there is a sense of seeing incidents from one's past life in a kind of panoramic overview. Following that there is a sense of apparently approaching a frontier and of being sent back.

After recovery it is very common for people to lament being sent back. Sometimes they will say to the doctors, "Why did you drop me back. It was so wonderful there." And in almost all cases the experience leaves the person who had it with a sense of absolute certainty that life after death is real.

Now one may ask, what is one to be

made of these often reported claims. Let me take first the out-of-the-body experience treating it simply as an experience. It is easy to find all kinds of natural explanations as to why people should imagine themselves out of the body at the moment of apparent death; a change of blood pressure in the inner ear gives people a sensation of floating in space. Clearly, every one who has had a heart-attack will have this change of blood pressure in their inner ear. Again, psychologists tell us that in moments of crisis, people frequently visualize themselves as if they were outside their bodies. As we might well imagine, the experience of near-death must be a very intense emotion which can generate visual hallucinations of the out-of-the-body type. So it is easy to give a natural explanation as to why people should imagine themselves outside their bodies. But it is much more difficult to think of any natural explanation which can account for the fact that the persons in question make correct reports about what was going on while they were unconscious on that their observations are correct from the point of view of an observer looking down from above at the unconscious body.

Dr. R.A. Mody one of the pre-eminent researchers in this field comments that, "Physicians have reported to me that they just cannot understand how their patients could have described the thing they did describe unless they really were hovering just below the ceiling, looking down." And there are dozens of well-attested such cases where the ill person describes in detail and with absolute clarity precisely what the doctors and nurses were doing while the body lay apparently deeply, deeply unconscious. When a person has a heart-attack one of the first things that the hospital attendants do is, of course, to draw a curtain around the bed while the doctors and nurses continue with the resuscitation attempt. Yet many of the people who are apparently at the point of death seem to observe from way above the curtain drawn around the bed, and in fact describe, from which ward the nurse rushes in from, and precisely which doctor administered which injection. All kinds of

minute details are given about the resuscitation attempt and they are accurate, and accurate from the point of view of an observer from above. Actually it is this phenomena of accurate observation which is far more important than the act of people thinking themselves to be outside the body.

There is evidence which seems only to be accountable for-on the hypothesis that they really were outside their bodies. Of course, to concede that would make a very significant difference to an overall world view. For those interested in the evidence for all this, perhaps the best account of it is in Professor Micheal Sebonne's book **Recollections of Death**, in which he, as an experienced cardiologist, backed his knowledge of cardiology against the detailed descriptions his patients gave back to him and he concluded that the only way they could have got this data was if they really were observing. For he noted that cardiac patients who did not have the out-of-the-body experience never had any idea about what was going on in an intensive care unit.

But to accept this evidence has enormous implications. Many people nowadays, take for granted that what we call the mind is just a way of talking about our brains, that mind and brain are really identical. But if one single out-of-the-body experience is true, then the mind and brain cannot be identical. If a single person really does correctly report from a different vantage point from his body then the mind and the brain cannot be identical, and the mind must be something other than the brain to observe from a difficult location. Furthermore if the mind is something other than the brain, something capable of leaving the body and observing from a different position; and if a mind can do this, even if only for a couple of minutes near the point of death, the principle has then been established and there is no reason in principle why the mind should not permanently leave the body and survive the body's dissolution. Consequently, if a single out-of-the-body experience is verified and we have hundreds of apparently well-attested such cases, then the greatest obstacle across the road to immortality has been removed

and life after death has been shown to be a plausible possibility. I now turn to a second element in the near-death experience; the claim to be met by deceased relatives and friends. Now, obviously, these visions are hallucinatory, mind-dependent visions because the relatives are seen in the form they were remembered by the recipient. Yet almost all who had this experience are certain of their authenticity. One evidential feature of the experience is that only deceased relatives are seen. That fact might perhaps be accounted for on psychological grounds in many cases. But there are two cases where a psychological explanation will not suffice. The first of these cases is where the person claims to have been met by deceased relatives concerning whose death he was ignorant. For example, a relative who had died after the ill person had been admitted to hospital and concerning whose death he had never been informed of.

There are several cases on record where a person claims to have been met in the world beyond by someone who was dead but whose death he had not been informed-and that is an evidential feature.

A second evidential feature is where children apparently remember being greeted by deceased relatives whom they hardly knew. Now this is very significant because psychologists generally agree that children of say five, six or seven cannot understand about death. They do not know as they are dying that must only see visions of deceased relatives, they could not understand the distinction between the deceased relative person they knew and those who are still alive. And in moments of crisis little children would almost always, on a psychological understanding hallucinate comforting vision of their mother and father. Yet little children never have hallucinatory visions of their mother and father in the near-death experience unless the father or mother has actually died. Instead the children report being greeted by deceased relatives, sometimes by relatives whom they did not know. And these cases become particularly significant when afterwards the child correctly describes the relative to her bewildered parents.

Perhaps the best attested case of this is something which was recorded in the *British Doctor's Journal* where a child claimed to have been met by his grandfather's mother of whom she had no previous knowledge but whose photograph she recognised with enthusiasm a few weeks later, after her recovery, when she visited on uncle's home. Apparently she had never seen the photo before, because she had never visited her uncle's home before and no other member of the family had any photographs of the grandfather's mother. Nevertheless as soon as the child saw the photo, she rushed forward and said "The was the lady I was telling you about, who met me."

The mention of some people who have died meeting not only relatives but religious figures must at once arouse our suspicions. This we might feel is one of the most unlikely features of the near death experience. Why is it that some people who happen to be protestant Christians claim that Jesus met them. While Catholic Christians say that Mary met them or that Hindus are always met by Rama, the God of death, or that atheists see a beam of light. How can such culturally conditioned imaginations be regarded as evidential. Interestingly enough, whatever personage is seen its always described as being bathed in radiant light. Clearly these visions are culture-based hallucinations and the fact that each tradition identifies what they see with their own tradition indicates that there has to be a cultural element in the interpretation of the experience. But it is possible that the experience itself is not culture-bound. For the religious figure fulfills the same function in each case. Furthermore this is not the function which the religious traditions of the world have attributed to that figure.

For example, Jesus does not appear as either Judge or mediator. Mary does not appear as intercessor. Although named in accordance with each personal tradition the religious figure has a single and uniform function.

This is why atheists may see a beam of light, and Protestants, a radiant picture of Jesus, and Catholics, Mary, or angels. But the

heart of the experience is the same. And it is this uniformity of the experience rather than the difference in the interpretation which seems to be significant. That Jews, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians and Atheists have recognizably the same experience of meeting a transental figure is more important, I suggest then the fact that they describe that figure in the language of their own tradition, or as in the case of Atheists, in their lack of tradition in speaking about such matters.

I now turn to a final evidential feature of the near-death experience. This is the effect it has on those who have it. In virtually every case they become absolutely convinced of the reality of life after death. They believe on the basis of their experience that life after death exists. After the experience people entertain no longer any more doubts about their own survival and they treat their own survival not just as an abstract possibility but as something which is a living fact of their experience. It is this sense of certainty, which often influences those who research such cases. The famous American Pathologist, Dr Kublavas, has stated that after two decades of studying dying people she is now certain of a future life. She said, "Before I started working with the dying, I didn't believe in life after death. Now I believe beyond a shadow of a doubt." All who study this phenomena find it impressive, whatever their own personal views are.

Recently in Korea, I discussed this with Professor Kenneth Reng, the President of the International Association for Near-Death Studies. As a professor of psychology he experienced many difficulties with this phenomena, yet he states that for him the most impressive factor is the sense of certainty of those who had this experience. And he says "I do not believe that anyone can be unaffected if hundreds of people are profoundly certain that as a result of what has happened to them they know there is a life beyond", and he has ascertained that there is not any other psychological experience that people have which has so profound an effect on so high a proportion of people who undergo it. In virtually every case it

transforms a person, e.g. from an Atheist who has denied life after death, who didn't even consider it possible, into a person who takes for granted there is life after death. The utter change in those who have had this experience is perhaps one thing which suggests this experience is something absolutely real. But what is one to make of these strange tales, those of us who have not had the experience ourselves. We may be moved when people talk to us about it. But no one can make a judgement on second hand evidence. Nor can we always be swayed by the convictions of others. Those of us who merely observe the phenomena cannot take over the testimony of those who have had the experience. We might perhaps feel that there are medical psychological factors which could account for all of these things. After all we might think anyone hovering between life and death must be suffering very profound psychological and physical stress. A brain which is starved of oxygen, drugged by hallucinatory pain killers, or excited by fever is hardly likely to be functioning normally. Who knows what visions might not be accountable for by the bizarre condition of the dying brain?

I've already tried in part to reply to this kind of objection by indicating that, of course, there are good natural reasons to explain why people think they have the sensation of being out of the body and why people might have hallucinations. However this kind of explanation cannot do justice to correct observation from outside the body. Nor can it do justice to the features, the evidential features of the hallucinations to which I have drawn attention. But we can also give a fuller reply and say that detailed research has shown there is no psychological or physiological correlation between the state of the body and the actual event of a near-death experience.

Two leading researchers, Dr Zosis and Harroldson, have examined detailed questionnaires from 2,000 doctors and nurses in the U.S.A. and in India about the experiences of their dying patients. They have then related the claimed experience which the patients describe to their doctor or

nurse with what the doctor or nurse knew of the patients bio-medical and psychological state. The advantage of this procedure was that it ensured that all the data came from trained medical personnel who were in a position to correlate any claim to a near-death experience with the known facts of the person's medical condition and could describe this in a standard manner as an appropriate basis for detailed computer analysis. Their research published in book, *"At The Hour of Death"* established that no significant correlations could be found. All attempts to explain away near-death experience as the product of any particular physiological or psychological state breaks down when one actually looks at the medical records of the people involved.

Well now, what happens if we accept these travellers' tales from the dying as evidential. My own view is that if these experience cannot be related to the medical nature of the patient's terminal illness as they cannot be related to his psychological state as well.

That relatives are seen in the forms they are remembered, that a being of radiant light is visualised within their own religious tradition, that people have a review of their panoramic life, that people learn to evaluate their past life in a new way; all these features suggest the start of a mind-dependent existence. The idea of a mind dependent existence in Western science goes back to the influential paper by HH Price, Prof. at Oxford University. It was an attempt to describe what kind of future life might be regarded as intelligible. His basic theory was that our minds might survive bodily death and in the absence of any future sensory stimulation from our sense organs our minds would think into existence a world of mental images just as they do now when we dream. It is not true that we can only have experiences when sense data comes through because we all have experiences when we dream which are real to us while the dream lasts and perhaps this analogy might help us to see how the mind could have genuine experiences in the absence of any fresh physical stimuli. These post mortem dreams would naturally be

largely shaped by the memories and experience of our past life but they would also project into fulfillment our desires and longings, conscious or unconscious, as formed by our character. This might seem an idealistic prospect, but in practice it would probably prove to be profoundly disturbing. For if our ideas were uninhibited or fulfilled their true value would be revealed to us, and as we relived our memories and threw into light our inner most desires we might well re-evaluate the judgements and decisions of our past earthly life. Reliving our past or imagining out our deepest longings, projecting them into fulfillment might have a reformatory power over us. Some have objected that a mind dependent world would imprison us forever within the confines of our own memory and imagination however to meet this objection we can postulate the possibility of rapport with other minds through a process analogous to telepathy. At present, we receive such a flood of information through our senses that only on rare occasions such as times of great crisis does anyone receive direct impressions from other minds through telepathy but it is possible that if the supply of sensory data were cut off as it would be at death then perhaps telepathic rapport might come into its own and become vividly real to us, and through this channel there might be real communication in a mind-dependent world in which individuals would imagine others as they had known them and enter through telepathy into mutual recognition and exchange of ideas. It might perhaps be pointed out that only through some process as described could there be any communication across the generations, for each person would imagine the person as they had known them before and this would enable communication to take place across generations and between people who had moved frequently from one community to another. An added feature of this theory is that it can do justice to the claim that in the next world religious experience might be more dominant than it is at present. The witness of mystics of all religious traditions is that the practice of mental prayer and the life of contemplation has greatly enhanced a

sense of communication with the divine. These conditions would be particularly realized in a purely mental existence, where religious experience might be thought to come into its own. Now when Prof. Price put forth his theory he was postulating a logically possible philosophical speculation about what kind of next life could sensibly be discussed by an analytical philosopher. It was however realized later that this speculation coincided very well with the near death experiences which came to public cognizance from 1975 onwards. Public knowledge did not come about until popular literature came out in the mid 70's. Part of this is due to the fact that modern medicine is able to call an increasing proportion of people back from situations where in the past they would have died. A mind-dependent world is precisely the kind of world that the near-death experience seems to point to. In particular, the descriptions of being welcomed by deceased relatives and friends, descriptions of seeing a transcendent figure of light, a panoramic review of past life and evaluating it in a new way. All these elements fit the picture precisely. But how does this picture relate to the teachings of other world religious traditions? In my book I have tried to show how this data is compatible from an overall Christian perspective. "Bazate" with Muslims is an after death state shaped by the thoughts and memories of one's life and that also corresponds with this picture. Nevertheless, although a mind-dependent world may be reconciled with Christian or Muslim thought, it is in fact, very far removed from what is normally thought to be the teaching of these religions.

Among the worlds' religious scriptures the one which is closest to this picture is the Tibet and *Book of the Dead*. In recent years this has been increasingly studied by western philosophers and theologians who realize that in many respects the teaching given in this book seems to run parallel to what the latest research appears to be uncovering. For example, in the near-death experience almost all participants claim to look down on their apparently deceased corpse and watch the frantic efforts made by doctors and

nurses to revive it. They watch the lamentations and mourning of the immediate family gathered around the body while they differentiate between their true identity and the apparent corpse. This process fits very well the discription of the "Bardo" which states: When you look down on the immediate family wailing over the corpse and feel it odd that they cannot communicate the fact that they are not there, that they are outside the realm of that kind of activity. Then take the vision of the religious figure in radiant light, this corresponds amazingly closely to the radiant immutable light of the Amitabba Buddha with the statement that, "The clear light will appear in whatever shape will benefit all beings." This means appeals to "shivits" where the light appears in the form of "shiva." To a Buddhist, Buddha, to a Christian, Jesus, or, Mother Mary, and so on to many religious devotees or as Lama govinda. It also relates to illusory visions of the "Bardo" which vary in keeping with the religious and cultural traditions in which the participant has grown up. This seems remarkably close to the phenomena of an apparent universal experience among the newly dead which they interpret in their own tradition, but always remember that they see the religious figure as radiant light. Only in, *The Book of the Dead*, is the figure Buddha percieved to be described explicitly as that which people would observe. Then the Tibetan, *Book of the Dead*, explicitly describes the next life as being, "mind dependent", it uses the expression of a, "thought body", and it describes in detail the Karmic illusions which give expression to the inward thoughts and feelings of the participant's past life. Subsequent western speculation that a world of mental images might reflect a person's past character, is so close to this idea that vision produced Karmic illusions deriving from a past life and shaping the next is remarkbly perceptive. They them see this as a preparation for the world beyond, the person has this "mind dependent" world as a temporary stage in an ever onward journey. For in Tibetan Buddhism the mind dependent state is only one stage for reflection between successive lieves.

The picture for the Tibetan *Book of the Dead* has been given attention from Professor Hick, author of *Death and Eternal Life* which represent one of the first sustained global theologies. It is a global theology because Hick believes Theology in the future must include in the source of its experience the religious experience of mankind as a whole and seek to learn from any tradition which appears to have valid insights into the nature of reality. Hick also believes that science, psychic research and religious philosophy must be weighed carefully and that it can be woven along with the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*, into a speculation about a possible future life.

He also argues that the idea of rebirth or reincarnation is opened to serious objection when thought of as something which always takes place on this planet. But many Hindu and Buddhist writings make reference to rebirths normally taking place in other worlds.

Professor Hick suggests that given this modification, the theory would corresspond to a modern Christian understanding of the resurrection of the body in a resurrection world.

He further suggests that at death we temporarily enter into a "mind dependent" world as described by the speculation of H.H.Price and Tibetan *Book of the Dead*. We might then proceed into other embodied existences in a succession of other worlds. Professor Hick believes that such successive lives, with intervals for reflection and self-knowledge are a most suitable means for providing for man's spiritual pilgrimage towards God. The author puts this forward as a new speculation, drawing from insights of other world religious traditions and attempting to incorporate some Christian ideas and although these are new ideas, he points out that the man who wrote the final draft of the Christain's Communion Creed, St. Gregory of Nisa said "Moving from one new beginning to the next, the soul will make its way towards the transcendent."

The purpose of this discussion then is not just to commend Hick's findings or speculation, but to suggest one example

where a serious scholarly attempt has been made to draw into unity what he has learnt from Western and Eastern beliefs. Recognizing that the, *Tibetan Book of the Dead* has ideas and insights from which the West needs to study and learn and at the same time, ideas from the East which many may feel to be outmoded. All of these findings gain support from the latest medical research into near-death experience and also philosophical speculations as to what kind of

future life may be logically possible.

It is argued that the ideas of rebirth and reincarnation is opened to serious objections when believed to take place only on this planet. Many Hindu and Buddhist writings make references to rebirth normally taking place in other worlds. Professor Hicks suggests that given their modifications, this theory corresponds more to a modern Christian understanding of resurrection of the body in a resurrection world.

A Lecture delivered at the Siam Society 21 August 1984

The Leaders, The Lotus and The Shadow of The Dove: The Case of Thai Society

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According to the unbroken age-old tradition in Buddhist countries, to be a Buddhist means, among other things, to take 'The Triple-Gem' as one's refuge and to observe the Five Precepts (Panca-sila). These precepts are "the minimum moral obligations of a lay Buddhist." (Rahula 1962: 80) The first of these five precepts is : "I undertake the precept to abstain from the taking of life." (Saddhatissa 1970: 87) Observing this precept means that a Buddhist would abstain

from destroying, causing to be destroyed, or sanctioning the destruction of any living being. It should follow that a Buddhist society such as Thailand would have regarded "peace" very highly had the first precept been strictly adhered to.

This paper is an attempt to examine the position of "peace" in Thai society by utilizing Thailand's formal leaders as but a point of departure. If a leader can lead (Paige 1982:

1), then he or she should more or less reflect what his or her society is. In this paper, three Thai leaders will be selected as examples. They are Gen.Arthit Kamlang-ek, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief / Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army; Gen. Prem Tinasulanond, the Prime Minister of Thailand and Minister of Defence; and Somdej Phra Ariyawongsakatayan, the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand. These Leaders are chosen from a formal-positional perspective. These leaders cover three basic dimensions of Thai society, military-security, government-politics, and religion. The military has to be included because they have always been considered an integral element in Thai society. Recently, Gen.Arthit himself used the Army television stations to broadcast his emotionally-charged speech concerning his strong dissension against the Thai government's devaluation of the Thai currency¹. Besides, judging from modern Thai political history, to examine Thai society without taking the Thai military into serious consideration seems to be a grave mistake.

The leaders' most recent public speeches (during 1982-1984) will be used in order to delineate their positions on the idea of "peace"². It is important to point out that whether these leaders believe in what they spoke or not is besides the point. What is at issue is the message they wish to convey to their followers. If the followers are to be led, then analysing these messages may shed light on where they are led to. These data are merely indicators of the ways the Thai leaders portray their public images by leading the public to think of the ideas they regard as most significant. In this sense, public speech serves as a line of communication between the leaders and the led.

Finally, Buddhism itself will be questioned concerning its relationship with the concept of peace in the Thai social world.

From the position of "peace" in these leaders' thoughts it is possible to raise question concerning Buddhism and Peace. If the concept of peace is relatively absent in Buddhist society, there must be reasons. Historical examples will also be used to crystallize the analysis.

The Concept of Peace and Contemporary Thai Leaders.

The Military and Peace.

From an almost 400 pages of speeches delivered on different occasions, the General discusses a wide varieties of subjects ranging from school system, Buddhist temple as socializing agents, children today-adult tomorrow, business, to human development and pollution problems. From all there are only two places where the word "peace" appear in the text. (Kamlang-ek 1984: 200, 210) Interestingly enough, both appear in one of his speeches discussing national security. Gen. Arthit points out that the military has succeeded in fighting the communists by utilizing political means as the primary approach while military measures become secondary. He concludes, *"In fighting to conquer the communists, it can be seen that we have used peaceful means to create better understanding so that they (the jungle fighters) will come out to help us."* (Kamlang-ek 1984: 210) In any event, these statements should not lead to the conclusion that the Thai military is a peace-oriented organization which prefers nonviolent actions to military methods. Peaceful means are employed only because they are most appropriate under certain circumstances. Military measures will be immediately used whenever a situation requires. (Kamlang-ek 1984: 201)

Taken as a whole, Gen. Arthit's basic concepts center around the issues of security

¹ The way he spoke to the public is quite indicative of his self-understanding. He said: "While still abroad, I learned from the newspaper that the Government announced the devaluation of the baht. I felt sorry and hurt that my advice was not heeded, making me think about resigning from the service". (Bangkok Post, November 8, 1984 : 1)

² The quantity of each leader's public speech differs. Gen.Prem is quite well known for his mild-manner, and preference for silence, whereas Gen. Arthit is much more vocal. In addition, even data such as these public speeches are quite difficult to obtain. It is quite an experience to have to go all the way to Gen. Arthit himself to obtain a copy of his published speeches while Gen. Prem's speech have to be authorized by one of his deputy political secretaries before public accessibility.

and discipline. He points out in an interview on "Educational Trends in the School System during the 6th. and 7th. National Education Plans" on June 8, 1984 that, "Security does not only mean military matter, but it means an appropriate proportion of everything. Therefore, when speaking of security, we should include economic, political, international and military, all four types of security at the same time." (Kamlang-ek 1984: 80) But then when speaking on "military education in state universities" he points out straightforwardly that, "Everyone should favor military matters because without them, the country is no more." (Kamlang-ek 1984: 88)

Besides "security", "discipline" is another concept that is quite prevalent in his speeches. He indicates that consciousness for social responsibility can only be possible after discipline has been created. (*Ibid.* :119) A nation-state can only develop if its citizens possess virtue and discipline. (*Ibid.* :144) Most importantly, perhaps, is when he links the two concepts together. As he puts it tersely, "National security depends on understanding and discipline... Discipline enables the people to live with order and to be capable of following the rulers' commands effectively." (*Ibid.* : 158)

These examples are brought up to suggest that it is normal for a military leader to emphasize the notions of security and discipline. It is also logical that the notion of "peace" seldom appears in his public speeches. To be a soldier means, among other things, to live life that may have to take away others' lives. Such a life contradicts the notion of "right livelihood" in Buddhism. A Buddhist is supposed to abstain from making his/her living through a profession that brings harm to others, such as trading in arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks, killing animals and should live by a profession which is honourable, blameless and innocent of harm to others. (Rahula 1962 : 47) In Gen. Arthit's case, "peace" seems to be relatively absent from his thought process.

The Prime Minister and Peace³

From the three speeches delivered on New Year's Day (1983); September 14, 1984 when he went to the United States for a special medical check up and on September 26, 1984 when he returned from the said trip, the one problem that seems to concern Prime Minister Prem the most is poverty. The concepts that seem to be central to his thought process are happiness or well-being and tranquility. The Prime Minister underscores the significance of economic factors that would reduce the level of poverty in this country. In this sense, it is possible to suggest that Gen. Prem is working towards "positive peace" (i.e. towards and absence of structural violence such as poverty.) (Galtung 1969 : 1983) At the same time, the notion of "tranquility" somehow connotes an idea of a shady-cool refuge where one can safely reside.

Another characteristic that stands out saliently in Gen. Prem's public speeches is the bondage between himself and his followers. He said, "We care for one another, all kinsfolks must have cared for me. I do care for all of you too." Then towards the end of one of his speeches, he said, "I want to emphasize that I will not forget the love we had among all of us relatives. I will not forget the care you had given me." It should be noted that Gen. Prem is called "Pa" among the Thais. As suggested earlier, Gen. Prem is a soft-spoken, mild-mannered and normally quiet gentleman. Therefore, it seems that the few words he say to his followers may mean a great deal to them. Although a former military man himself, he has shown a remarkable capacity in relating to the Thais in a seemingly non-aggressive way.

Nevertheless, the word "peace" itself did not appear in his speeches at all. The fact that he emphasizes "positive peace" does not mean that nonviolent means will be used. Besides, it is also difficult to detect a

³ An official at the Prime Minister Office informed me that to obtain the Prime Minister's speeches one also needs authorization. In addition, there are very few public speeches available.

direct Buddhist influence in his speech. This difficulty may basically due to insufficient data, among other things. Nevertheless, it can still be argued that the existence of peace as a unity between both positive and negative qualities is still shadowy in his overall thought process.

The Supreme Patriarch and the Concept of Peace.

Based upon one collection of his writings (1982) and two small booklets (1982 and 1984), it is safe to suggest that his speeches are geared to educate the Thai Buddhists. At times, he went into detail to explain Buddhist rituals. (1982 b: 1-13) But the theme that occurs repeatedly from the available materials is to practice Buddhism. The Five Precepts have consistently been emphasized. What is most interesting, however, is the fact that he underscores what lies within the minds of men. (1984 : 7)

While acknowledging the discrepancy between Buddhist teachings and what the Thai Buddhists practice, he attributes this problem to causes within the minds of the Buddhists. He speaks, "One can easily see that killing is prohibited in Buddhism, yet we kill all over the country."... "Buddhism is not something we construct. It is a teaching. Teaching needs people to practice it otherwise it will become lifeless." (1984 : 5-6)

As a Buddhist monk preaching Buddhism to his followers, it is natural that he occasionally conveys the idea of the first precept to the public. Yet the concept of "peace" in the Supreme Patriarch's thought process is far from being a social one. He does speak about social ills but their solutions are basically personal. While it is quite true that Buddhism is interested in the happiness of men which will not be possible without leading a pure life based on moral and spiritual principles, the Buddha did not take life out of the context of its social and economic background. (Rahula 1962 : 81)

At this point, it seems legitimate to ask whether it is possible for a Buddhist leader in Thailand to publicly talk about "peace" from a social perspective. As a religion of nonviolence, it is only logical that a Buddhist

leader such as the Supreme Patriarch can be expected to contribute to the cause of peace more than the General or the Prime Minister. One way to solve this enigma is to look back into the recent past. There was a fascinating case which certainly points to the shadowy existence of peace in "Buddhist" Thailand.

A Buddhist Monk with a Message of Peace.

In the year 1915 during World War I, Thailand was under absolute monarchy with the British-trained Rama VI (1910-1925) as the King of Siam. A high ranking monk by the name of Phra Thep Moli Sirichantoe published a book for the cremation of the wife of one of Thailand many princes. One thousand copies of the book were distributed. The thesis of that small but significant book was : "*Good knowledge leads to progress while bad knowledge leads to corruption.*" (Phra Thep Moli Sirichantoe 1915 : 6)⁴

The above thesis sounds religious enough not to render any problem to its author. But then the unusual monk elaborated his thesis. He pointed out that an example of evil knowledge is military study. Knowledge in shooting to kill is also included as it entails lack of the compassion to other human beings. Knowledge how to make guns, swords, and all kinds of weapons such as man-of-war, aircrafts, submarines, explosions and torpedoes is evil knowledge which will certainly lead to ruin and corruption. (1915 : 18) The author also cited a then contemporary example of World War I. "*Each side did not want to solve the cause of the conflict. Instead, they intend on exercising their power which finally leads to violent war between each other. War then spreads all over the world. People die because of weapons of destruction or starvation or other*

⁴ This is an extremely rare document. I wish to express my gratitude to a colleague of mine, Chalong Suntharavanich, Department of History, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University for introducing me to this invaluable material.

It should be noted also that monks in Thailand can have rank depending on their qualifications. These ranks are bestowed upon them by the state. (e.g. Phra Thep)

diseases as a result of dirt and pollution. Not only soldiers die, but old people, women and children who flee for safety also die because of hunger. The number of people died in this war is impossible to count." (1915 : 20)

The monk then went on to explain to his followers that such was the atrocity of evil knowledge. People took pride in their knowledge of producing killing weapons and they went to battle without mercy. In the eyes of one another, they become just "meat" and "fish" (not human being). (ibid. : 21) The more human beings know about destructive technology, the more harm will befall humanity.

One would normally think that such insightful teaching was in accordance with the spirit of Buddhism itself. Therefore, in a Buddhist society with a Buddhist ruler, Phra Thep Moli should be duly rewarded. But what occurred to him afterwards reveals a great deal about the kind of "Buddhist society" examined here.

Phra Thep Moli (later on he was promoted to become Phra Ubali khunupamacharaya, abbot of Baromnivas Temple, Bangkok) briefly discussed the demotion incident in his *Autobiography*⁵ published in 1947. He wrote,

"That book was against the country's public policy because it was not in accordance with the royal wish. Therefore, when His Majesty the King (Rama VI) became aware of this book, he gave order to deprive me of my rank and then I was under house arrest (or, rather temple arrest) at Wat Bovornnives Wiharn". (1947 : 33)

Then on January 4, 1916, King Rama VI granted the monk his amnesty.

A proper question at this point could be : why is it that when revered Buddhist monk preached peace in accordance with the Buddha perennial message, he was demoted by the power of a "Buddhist" king? To meaningfully deal with this question, it is important to briefly discuss King Rama VI's idea concerning violence and nonviolence.

Rama VI and his inclination towards Peace?

Born in 1880, Rama VI was the 29th.

son of the great Rama V. When he was 13, he went abroad to enroll at the naval College, Great Britain. In 1894 he became the Crown Prince of Siam. Then he underwent a military training at Sandhurst and furthered his study by reading history at Christchurch College, Oxford. There, he chose to write a dissertation on, "**The War of Polish Succession**". Trevor Ling points out that, "*This Buddhist prince, Vajiravudh (Rama VI) did not drift into an army career : he chose it, and he enjoyed the life.*" (Ling 1979 : 138) As soon as he came down from Oxford, he went to the school of Musketry at Hythe and obtained a special certificate for marksmanship. He became the King of Siam in 1910. When the war broke out in 1914, Thailand was not in any military danger. Nevertheless, as an Anglophile, the King showed strong support for England and France by his extensive journalistic writings and with gifts of money to his old regiment, the Durham Light Infantry. In July 1917, Thailand entered the war and a small volunteer expeditionary force, about 1,200 strong, was sent to Europe. The troop arrived too late to take part in the actual fighting, but they were able to join in the victory parades in Paris and London, and then in Bangkok. (Ling 1979 : 138) The King himself was also a dramatist, a poet and a journalist. There was an abortive military uprising against the monarchical regime in 1911. But his reign continued until he passed away in 1925.

In spite of Prof. Ling's analysis of King Rama VI's attitude towards war and peace remains ambiguous. For example, the 1911 incident was a abortive attempt by a group of junior military officers to change the ancient Thai monarchical regime into either "**limited monarchy**" or "**republic**". (Noomnond 1979 : 88-90) The committee investigating the incident concluded that the 1911 group also planned to harm the King and the people.

⁵ It is also interesting to note that this book which was published in 1947 and had been in Thammasat University library for some time has been left undiscovered. From the library card, I seem to be the only one who borrowed this book out. It also points to the possibility of future research on the nonviolent or peaceful tradition in Thai society.

(Ibid. : 90) Such "crime" in an absolute monarchical state could only face capital punishment. (Ibid. : 111-112) From among the 91 military and civilian officers accused in this case, three were sentenced to death.

Two days after he was informed of this verdict, Rama VI gave the following comment: *"But one of their basic crimes is to harm me personally. However I do not hold personal grudges against them. Therefore, their punishment should be mercifully reduced which is within the domain of the royal power of a King."* (Noonond 1979 : 120) As a result, the three officers received life sentences. It should be noted that only 25 out of the 91 accused were really imprisoned. These prisoners were later on granted amnesty by King Rama VI. Taken together, they were imprisoned for 12 years 6 months and 6 days. (Ibid. : 129) This relatively mild punishment is quite unusual or even unthinkable in any Southeast Asian "absolutist state".

Besides this incident, some of his writings strongly connote the idea of peace and nonviolence. He has written some 100 pieces on a wide variety of issues using quite a few pseudonyms. Among these materials, his collection of proverbs titled "Assawabhasit" (Proverbs of the Horse) is of particular interest to those concerned with "peace". The followings are remarkable proverbs written and/or compiled by King Rama VI himself.

"Those who came to power through military force will be destroyed by military force."

"A tree planted with force, fertilized with force and nurtured with force, Fruits of this tree cannot be otherwise but violence."

"To take the life of an evil man is as sinful as to kill a good man"

"Peace can be easily maintained between and by equally civilized nations"

"If all the nations of the world agree to sign a contract abolishing all violence including wars, all of us human beings will be a lot happier." (Assawabhahu 1951)

The least one can say about the author of these proverbs is that he thinks of peace quite seriously. However, his consideration

does not seem to be influenced by Buddhism. Rather, one senses a strong Western influence which probably resulted from his long years of training in Europe.

A question arises : why is it that an intellectual-king who wrote seriously about peace punished a monk who delivered a similar message? Why was he not consistent in his thinking about peace and allowing other to promote the very idea he seemed to favor? There questions are traces which indicate that it is important to probe deeper into the complex relationship between a Buddhist leader, and the idea of peace in Buddhism.

Neither the Dove nor the Peaceful Lotus.

King Rama VI punished Phra Thep Moli for preaching peace not because he was against the idea of peace as evident from his own writings. Yet, the monk had to be punished because to preach something against the state policy is a challenge to the power of that state. In an absolute monarchical state, government policy was the King's wish. Again, how a given policy comes into being is besides the point. State policy or the King's degree was the direction the public should follow. Any challenge cannot be tolerated. In leading the followers, leaders often limit their choices. To criticize the direction taken is to invite the public to think about alternatives. With alternatives, the followers may cease to be loyal followers. As a result, the leadership of a leader could be undermined.

King Rama VI once wrote that to be a Thai means, among other things, to be loyal to the King of Siam. A true Thai must not prefer freedom of oneself to loyalty to the King. (Rama VI : 1963 : 141) In this sense, loyalty to the King without reservation is an equivalent to national loyalty. He also wrote that to destroy a nation is the utmost sin which would inhibit man's possibility to go to heaven and even to attain Nirvana. (Ibid. : 134)

Consequently, the concept of the state, be it manifested in the form of an absolute monarch or an abstract nation, seems to be

much more significant than peace. Here, a concrete example should be instructive.

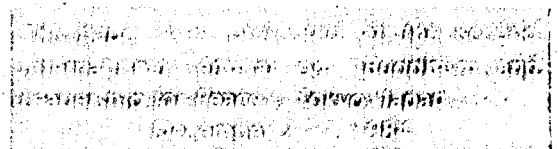
At the coronation of King Rama VI in 1910, the Buddhist Patriarch delivered an interesting sermon. Among other things, he said, "People who live in different countries in close neighbourhood must inevitably have disputes and quarrels, either on account of territory, or of the rights of the subjects thereof, or of commercial rivalry and so forth... Such being the case, each nation finds it necessary to organize some of its own citizens into a class whose duty it is to fight against its enemies." (Ling 1979 : 136) This monk also pointed out that since wars usually occur without warning, "Wars must be prepared for even in time of peace, otherwise one would not be in time, and one would be in a disadvantageous position towards one's foe" (Ibid. : 137) The Patriarch also lamented the fact that the citizens had "become totally inexperienced in warfare, and even the military were none too proficient." (Ibid.) It is fascinating to note that the preface to the printed edition of this sermon urges the reader to remember that it is "an erroneous idea to suppose that the Buddha condemned all wars and people whose business it was to wage war." (Ibid.)

The lengthy point made by the Patriarch in 1910 seems to be incomprehensible if viewed from canonical Buddhism. However, if the relationship between Buddhism and the state in Thailand has been construed, these forbidden statements will be understood. Throughout Thai history, Buddhism as personified in the form of the Sangha has not been separated from the state. The Sangha sought to secure the adherence of political rulers (such as the king or a government) to Buddhist values. For this would guarantee their virtual monopoly as "spiritual leaders and religious professionals of the state." On the other hand, political leaders needed to secure the cooperation of this Sangha. The state needs to be morally legitimized while the people need to be morally controlled. Such analysis leads Somboon Suksamran to conclude that, "It is very likely that the interests of the political rulers and the Sangha coincided — that an

ideology which needed supportive political power met a political ruler looking for a legitimating ideology. What developed was a peculiar type of state based on the reciprocal relationships between the political rulers and Sangha" (Suksamran 1982 : 158) To sustain such relationship, the state has never allowed the monks to govern themselves. Instead, the monks have been incorporated into the structure of the state. One of the results of this peculiar relationship which has been going on for centuries is that Buddhism has been deprived of the teachings that would not coincide with state policies. If one dares to be true to Buddhism and preach what he thinks is right, then he cannot be left unpunished. Consequently, Buddhist teachings in Thai society have generally been contained at the individual level. Significant social messages of Buddhism such as the issue of peace and war lose their visibility in the eyes of the Thai Buddhists.

This situation is also true concerning issues other than peace and war. One prominent Buddhist meritorical doctor in Thailand laments, "The temples have been almost cut off from useful social functions. Left with largely ceremonial roles, they have shifted more towards superstitious practices. The monks and the people are thus more stupefied both in religious principles and in social mechanisms." (Wasi 1984 : 60) This observation is quite common among serious scholars in search of new social meanings from Buddhism.

Messages concerning merit and sin at the individual level form themselves into a wall whereby a Buddhist can learn against while protecting him from venturing inside to find the hidden social messages. In a society such as this where Buddhism is deformed, peace becomes irrelevant.



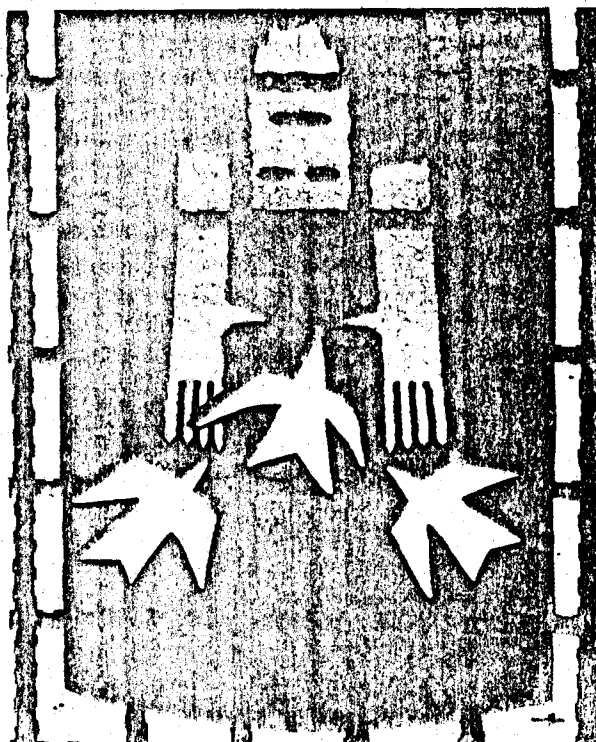
THAILAND

Military Factional Politics behind Arrests of "Communists" and Buddhist Scholar

In what Thai sources believe was an attempt to incite demonstrations that would serve as the pretext for a right-wing military coup, in July 1984 22 persons were arrested under the Anti-Communist Act and in August internationally well-known Buddhist scholar and social critic Sulak Sivaraksa, a university lecturer, and the printer of one of Sulak's books were charged with lese majesté for statements about the monarchy in Sulak's latest book, copies of which were confiscated by the police.....

Human rights activists in Thailand have criticized the Anti-Communist Act as violating civil rights and liberties, in violation of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Several lawyers, including noted human rights defender Thongbai Thongpao, pointed out that the Anti-Communist Act contradicts the 1980 amnesty policy, so that thousands of former students and others who fled to the jungle in 1976 and have returned to seek normal lives have no assurance they will not be prosecuted. They have urged the repeal of the Act and passage of an Amnesty Law.

Lt.General Chaovalit Yongjaiyut, Vice Military Chief of Staff, was instrumental in persuading the government to adopt the amnesty policy, and may be said to head the moderate military faction. He is well-placed to become the next Military Chief of Staff or Army Commander in Chief. Opposed to him is the militantly anti-communist faction,



which is believed to be behind the arrests. The daily newspaper *Matichon* reported on July 17 that the Director General of the Police Department called for former students and others who returned from the jungle to present themselves to the authorities.

Several members of Parliament, including the President of the elected lower house, called for abrogation of the Anti-Communist Act, which they said was a tool

used for the elimination of opposition politicians. The President charged that the Act is too broad, saying that anyone can be accused of being a communist for just smiling at a known communist.

On July 17, the Thammasat University Student Union sponsored a panel discussion on "Human Rights and Freedom in the Present Situation," which included as speakers the Vice Rector of Thammasat University and the Rector of Ramkhamhaeng University. The same day, the Special Branch police confiscated over 900 copies of a newly-published book by Sulak Sivaraksa, *Unmasking Thai Society*. On July 26, about 1,000 members of a right-wing organization, the Village Scouts, demonstrated in front of Government House in Bangkok, demanding Sulak's arrest. Police arrested Sulak on *lesé majesté* charges on August 5th. The Deputy Speaker of the Parliament asked the government for an explanation of this arrest, as well as those of the alleged communists, stating that in the past, arrests of communists took place in the name of national security, but the political regime has become increasingly dictatorial and individual liberty had deteriorated to the extent that even a university lecturer was arrested on this charge.

On August 8, when the law required the police to present Sulak before the court, the police refused to grant bail, citing as reasons that he might escape, he might not be safe while at liberty, and that he was a powerful person who might use his influence to alter the case in his behalf. On August 10 the Criminal Court, acting as a military tribunal, authorized the police to detain Sulak for 12 more days, a request that under the law may be repeated seven times. However, that evening the Chief Justice of the Criminal Court authorized bail of US\$ 23,000 (in baht).

The prosecutor's indictment, handed down on September 26, charged Sulak with libel, insult of the King, and conspiracy in printing, advertising and distribution of printed matter which violates the King. *Lesé majesté* carries a penalty of 3-15 years imprisonment, but the five charges against

Sulak could amount to 15-75 years. His co-defendants were Chittrakorn Tangkasemsuk, a lecturer at Udornthani Teachers College, who interviewed Sulak in 1983 about Thai education for a book commemorating the College's 60th anniversary, *Looking AT Thai Education: Past, Present and Future*, and the book's printer.

Soon after the book's publication, a former Minister of Education lodged a complaint that Sulak's interview contained defamatory remarks about King Rama VI and the present King, Rama IX. The Ministry ordered the College to remove Sulak's interview from the book, and the Special Branch police concluded after investigation that there was no case against the printer, the College (the publisher), or anyone else. Sulak was informed orally, however, that while he could make remarks about the monarchy as a private citizen, this time his views had been published by a government agency (the College), which implied that what he said was consistent with government policy. Hence it was better to leave remarks of this nature out of official publications.

On this basis, Sulak felt confident in having the deleted interview included in a new book published by the private Komol Keemthong Foundation, *Unmasking Thai Society*. In it he criticized past Thai rulers and the current King for not understanding the Thai people and culture, because they had been sent abroad for their education at an early age and thought like foreigners. The printer of this book was not arrested.

On November 6 and 7 the first hearing of Sulak's case took place in closed session before a military tribunal. Members of the local and foreign press, foreign embassy personnel and hundreds of representatives of Buddhist, Christian and Muslim faiths and human rights organizations were ordered to clear the courtroom. The judge, who had handed down a heavy prison sentence in another *lesé majesté* case prosecuted by the same Public Prosecutor, set December 20-21 as the date of the next hearing. However, on November 8 Sulak heard unofficially that his case would be withdrawn from court. Nothing happened until November 30,

when the judge informed Sulak and his co-defendants in closed session that the public prosecutors had asked the court to have the case withdrawn. This was the first time lese majesté charges had been dropped, and no reason was given. However, the Thai Government had been bombarded with protests from abroad. In a statement to the press, the Director-General of the Public

Prosecution Department said that he had been ordered "from above" to drop the case and had no choice in the matter, adding that he did not believe in Sulak's "innocence."

*From HRI Human Rights Internet Reports
Washington DC, USA 10: 1 & 2 (September-
December 1984)*

SPECIAL RELEASE ON LESE MAJESTE CASE

Santi Isrowuthakul

We are very pleased to inform you that Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa's case of Lese Majeste has been officially withdrawn from the Military Tribunal in Bangkok on November 30, 1984.

CG RS would like to thank you all, individually and organizationally, for all the help in campaigning for the release and the subsequent withdrawal of the case. This is the first in Thai legal history that a case of Lese Majeste was officially dropped from the military court.

Without any doubt, the outcome of this case was mainly the result of your sincere effort in sending letters, cables, telexes of appeals for his release. Never before that a Thai citizen accused for such crime had enjoyed such international support of this scale and nature. For this reason alone that we, as the organization, would like to express our utmost gratitude for your concern and sincere support for Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa, one of our most respected Committee Member.

However, Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa's triumph over serious charges must be considered as the triumph over injustice by all of us. Indeed, it is the case of victory for all who is working for the principle of human rights and freedom of expression.



Despite all the joy and the common sense of victory for the good cause, we, the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society, could not fully enjoy the celebration for Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa's release alone, simply because there are, at the moment, at least 20 more political prisoners still being detained without trial on various charges against the state in Bangkok.

Most of these political prisoners were detained even before Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa's arrest. They all have been denied of their rights for temporary release on bail by the Thai authorities, even when the investigation and interrogations carried out by the related authorities were fully completed.

*From Impact Asia Magazine for Human Transformation
Manila, Feb. - March 1985*

SULAK RELEASED

The charge of **Lese majeste** against Sulak Sivaraksa was dropped by the Military Tribunal in Bangkok on November 30. Special thanks go to all who sent appeals for his release. Never before has a Thai citizen accused of such a crime has such widespread international support. This is the first time in Thai legal history that a case of **lese majeste** was officially dropped by the military court.

In the midst of the feelings of joy at the outcome of this case, we are reminded of at least 20 other political prisoners still being held without trial, who lack the unusual international recognition and support which a prominent person such as Sulak enjoys.

*from Friends of the Orient Committee
Pacific Yearly Meeting, Religious Society
of Friends, Salem, Oregon, USA*

สัมภาษณ์
ส.ศิวัรักษ์

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Charges dropped against Sulak Sivaraksa

BPF, along with Amnesty International and other concerned groups, has been writing to the Thai authorities to ask that charges be dropped against Sulak, who is on the BPF International advisory panel. He was facing up to 30 years in jail for Lese Majeste - it was considered that he had written about the King with less than due respect.....

The charges of lese majeste have been dropped against Sulak Sivaraksa and his two co-defendants, but there are six people at present serving prison sentences for the same offence. They are : Anant Senakhant, Kant Kijkraiwan, Saman Kongsuphol, Thawan Saengkanchananon, Pongthep Manopipatpong and Rat Uttapan. They have been convicted of defaming the monarchy in writing or speech, but Amnesty International considers them to have been imprisoned on account of the peaceful expression of their nonviolent political opinion.. and has adopted them as prisoners of conscience. Letters written by Buddhists to a Buddhist monarch asking him to exercise his compassion and pardon these people, might just help.

Letter to : His Majesty the King of
Thailand,
Chitrlada Palace,
Bangkok,
Thailand.

*FROM DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE
Published by the BUDDHIST PEACE
FELLOWSHIP U.K. Summer Autumm
1984*

BOOKS

Siamese Resurgence: A Thai Buddhist Voice on Asia and a World of Change,

by S. Sivaraksa

464 + XVIII pp and illustrations

ACFOD, Bangkok (1985)

paperback US\$10, hard cover US\$15.

(postage included)

SIAMESE RESURGENCE



In his much-praised and perhaps the most outstanding books written in English, **SIAM IN CRISIS, A BUDDHIST VISION FOR RENEWING SOCIETY, RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT** etc., Professor Sulak Sivaraksa has described and expressed his deep and continuing concerns and insights on anguished realities of contemporary Asian and Thai society with his critical mind and constructive thought based on a Theravada Buddhist intellectual, moral and spiritual point of view.

Now, here, in his newest book in English, **Siamese Resurgence: A Thai Buddhist Voice on Asia and a World of Change**, he addresses again the question of contemporary crisis of society, culture, values, religion and qualitative human life in a world of rapid change and presents his Buddhist intellectual and beliefful perspective and vision on this question in the universal as well as South-east Asian regional context.

This volume is also a col-

lection of recent essays, lectures, public addresses and talks delivered by Professor Sivaraksa on many special occasions, which presents his comprehensive and cohesive view as a genuine Siamese eminent Buddhist social and cultural critic about depth realities of religion, society, and human life in today's Asian context.

The volume has six parts. The lecture texts and papers in the first part deal with the living issues of contemporary rapid historical change of societies and values in our world and cope with these issues in terms of the fundamental attitude, role, and tasks of Siamese Buddhist monks, Sangh Authority as well as Buddhist laymen and women in the midst of this changing world. Professor Sulak's own current, constructive, Buddhist thought on these matters is fully and explicitly revealed.

In the second part, the new and alternative paradigms of development in a Buddhist perspective based on Asian

realities are fervently pursued, not only in the realm of politico-socio-economic situation, but also in the view of quality of human life itself.

In Part III, Professor Sulak discusses a very important issues of culture and development based on his profound understanding of traditional Asian cultural values in the context of its cultural pluralism. The basic philosophy and idea of **The Asian Cultural Forum on Development** (ACFOD) is also clearly stated. The author comments that "it is time to *Think Again, and to Think People, to put people first in our political, social and economic life, and to examine some of the alternative development strategies which would encourage to this happen.*" (p.169)

In Part IV author's four series of lectures on some leading Siamese personalities given at **Siam Society** meetings held between September 1981 and April 1983 are compiled. And important historical and

present day's leading personalities and their contributions to Siamese cultural development are depicted in a form of unique analysis. In terms of depth-interpretation of Siamese history, culture and Buddhism, this part really reflects the author's epitome of wisdom. Especially the author's voice of the Buddhist conscience and response toward the poor, the oppressed, the exploited and the dominated vividly echoes throughout the pages of this part. And it is the result of his incredible, academic research into those biographies of leading personalities. Author's reference to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's latest contribution to the development of his thought on Dharmika Socialism is very much suggestive as an alternative future for new social order in Asian countries. (See p.244)

Eight miscellaneous collection of articles and essays in the fifth part includes also various kinds of cultural issues and bring out Professor Sulak's intellectual, critical thought on many concrete issues in contemporary Thai society.

And then, Part VI Appendices!! This part makes this volume the most historic documents for readers in English in relation to the suffering and unexpected experiences of a today's famous Siamese intellectual, that is, Professor Sivaraksa himself. As most of the conscientious intellectual people all over the world know it well, Professor Sulak Sivaraksa had gone through the tough trial and suffering on a charge of lese majeste almost four months last part of the year 2527 B.E.(1984). In spite of Millitary Court Prosecutor's strong charges against

Professor Sulak Sivaraksa's so-called offences of lese majeste, the case was finally withdrawn on the 30th of November, 2527(1984) just naturally because of his innocence and unchanging personal integrity as a conscientious Siamese thinker and man of justice. Several legal documents regarded with this case, chronicle of the events and author's own views as well as the various voices of supporters and friends of him are orderly compiled in this Appendix part.

Professor Sulak Sivaraksa is one of the most conscientious, social and cultural critics in contemporary Thai society. He is a famous writer and editor, and an exemplary Siamese Buddhist patriot. He wrote almost hundreds books and articles in Thai and in English. He is also internationally renowned and respected scholar, especially in his capacity as an advisor for the United Nations University.

I have had a great privilege to be acquainted with Professor S.Sivaraksa and enjoy his warmest friendship and guidance for many years since the days when my wife Kahoru and I were in Chiang Mai, teaching at Thailand Theological Seminary, Payap University and Chiang Mai University. I along with many other people see this newest book as a living witness of the truth and justice, vision and compassion, challenge and commitment which have been lived by his selfless devotion to true Buddhist teachings and even self-sacrificing commitment to the true development of people and culture in the great process of Siamese resurgence.

Kenichiro Mochizuki

*Professor, Keisen Jogakuen Junior College Tokyo, Japan
Visiting Researcher
Chulalongkorn University
Social Science Research Institute*

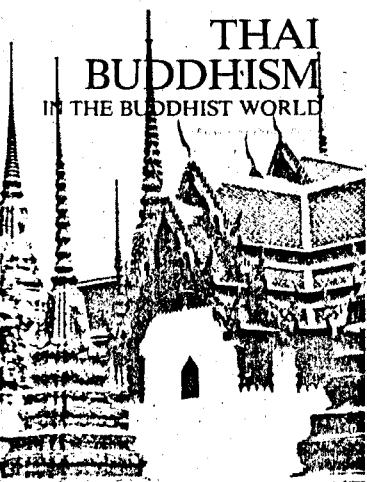
THAI BUDDHISM IN THE BUDDHIST WORLD :

**A survey of the Buddhist situation
against a historical Background.**

Phra Rajavaramuni (Prayudh Payutto)
*Makachulalongkorn Association,
Makachulalongkorn University,
Bagkok 1984 180 pages plus index*

Even if the author modestly said that this book was "intended for the beginners and meant to be a general survey of the Buddhist situation, not a scholarly treatment in depth of the mat-

ter", it is, in my view, a very important book for a serious student of Buddhism, be it Theravada or Mahayana. The value of this book lies not only in its content, but also in its ap-



proach to the matter. Indeed, if Buddhism (or any religion for that matter) is to be studied and understood as a living system rather than exclusively as a body of conomical doctrines, it must be studied in its historical and cultural contexts. Better still, if it can be studied in a comparative fashion.

This book was divides into four Parts, namely, Thai Buddhism; The Overall Picture; The Spread and Development of Buddhism; Buddhism in the Modern World; and Buddhism in the Western World.

For the readers who are unfamiliar with Buddhism and quickly want to know what Buddhism is all about, the topics on the Buddha and the basic teaching of Buddhism (Chapter 1.) are quite useful. In Chapter 2, the author presents the general situation of Buddhism in Thailand by discussing its historical development, its relationship with the state and its influence on the lives of Thai people.

Part Two is comprised of three chapters. The first chapter, early development of Buddhism (chapter 3) deals with the development of Buddhism of the southern school (ie. Theravada) in Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia,

Thailand and Laos. In addition, The origin of Mahayana (the Northern School) is also briefly discussed. Chapter 4 deals with the Indian Buddhism in later centuries which includes the spread and development of Buddhism in China and Tibet. Aslo, the decline of Indian Buddhism and the disappearance of Buddhism from India were discussed. Chapter 5 presents the emergence of Chinese and Korean Buddhism as well as the ups and downs of Japanese Buddhism.

Part Three consists of eight chapters. The discussion in these chapters centre around the situation of Buddhism in various modern Asian countries. The author critically looks at the revival and the struggle of Buddhism in India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, China, Korea, Japan and Thailand.

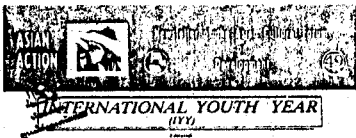
As a Buddhist Thai, I find the organization of this Part particularly interesting. The author begins his presentations with the situation in India. Followed by other Asian countries, and ends this Part with the discussion on Buddhism in contemporary Thailand. I believe that such organization is very useful to a Buddhist reader, be it a Thai or non-Thai, because the discussion in the foregoing chapters has laid down the background for comparison when the chapter on Thailand is read. Moreover, I find that by treating the matter in such order, he achieves his unstated aim. That is, a Buddhist reader is constantly, which reading this chapter, reminded that the fate of Buddhism in Thailand may be in serious trouble unless proper measures

are throghout and implemented in due course. And whatever measures to be used for the improvement of the country in general and of the situation of Thai Buddhism in partionlar, they must be based on the Middle Way. Since the Middle Way begins with Right understanding as its first factor, the critical discussion by the insider of the Sangha shrned help all the Buddhist rightly understand the situation in Thailand.

Part Four consists of three chapters, namely: The Scholarly Beginnings of Western Buddhism; Buddhism gains Public Interest, and Buddhism and the West: Subsequent to a Friendly encounter. The discussion in this Part centres around the spread and development of Buddhism in certain Western countries especially in Great Britain, West Germany and the United States of America.

By way of summing up, this book is markedly different from other publications on similar topics, particularly those published by the National Identity Board and the Tourist Organization of Thailand. This book, unlike those published by such agencies which usually treat the matter superficially and are meant for casual reading, is meant to help creat the Right Understanding of the situation of Buddhism and the socio-cultural environment in which Buddhism is interdependent. I sincerely hope that the book of this kind will be cherished amidst the influx of the sensual and sensational reading materials in Thailand today.

Uthai Dulyakasem
Silpakorn Universtiy
Nakorn Pathom



The Asian Student Movement: Realities and Challenges of the 80s

The newsletter is a bi-monthly publication prepared by different member countries and published by the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD), an organisation in consultative status with organisations of the United Nations like ECOSOC, FAO and UNICEF, aiming together to bring persons and groups in all countries of Asia and the Pacific region into a movement which participates in integral development.

Asian Action

The newsletter is a bi-monthly publication prepared by different member countries and published by the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD), an organisation in consultative status with organisations of the United Nations like ECOSOC, FAO and UNICEF, aiming together to bring persons and groups in all countries of Asia and the Pacific region into a movement which participates in integral development.

Subscription rate :

US\$ 15.- for developed countries.

US\$ 9.- for developing countries.

Address : GPO BOX 2930, Bangkok 10501, Thailand

Payment to be made by bank draft in favour of ACFOD.

Thai Development Newsletter

The newsletter is a quarterly publication jointly produced by Thai Development Support Committee (TDSC) and Thailand Development Information Service (TDIS) in order to promote understanding of social problems and support for non-governmental development work in Thailand.

The past four issues covered Thai NGOs in general, primary

health care, women's issues, current NGO's events and news, etc.

For subscription please contact:

Thai Development Support Committee (TDSC)

121/90 Near Chaloemla Bridge
Phyathai Road, Bangkok 10400
Thailand

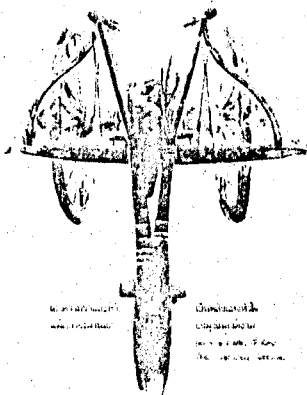
Subscription rate:

Individuals: US\$ 6.- per annum

Organisations: US\$ 12.- per annum

Students: US\$ 4.- per annum

Thai Development NEWSLETTER



Searching for Asian Paradigms

It is a collection of essays most of which were presented at a meeting sponsored jointly by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the World Council of Churches and the Asian Cultural Forum on Development.

It is an excellent well-organized and carefully edited anthology.

Edited by C.I. Itty, the former Director for the Commission of the Churches' Participation in Development of the World Council of Churches.

Price per copy:

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Human Rights in Thailand Report

Vol. 8 No. 3 July - December 1984



Human Rights in Thailand Report is a quarterly publication of the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society.

Address: 495/44 Soi Yok-omsin, Jaran-Sanitwong 40 Road, Bangkok 10700, Thailand

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SEARCHING FOR ASIAN PARADIGMS

Contribution of Youth to the Promotion of Social Goals and Cultural Values in the Development Process

Edited by
C.I. Itty

Human Rights in Thailand Report

The report is a quarterly publication of the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS).

For further details please contact CGRS, 495/44 Soi Yok-omsin, Jaran-Sanitwong 40 Road Bangkok 10700, Thailand.

UCL. NEWSLETTER

UCL. Newsletter is published quarterly by the Union for Civil Liberty.

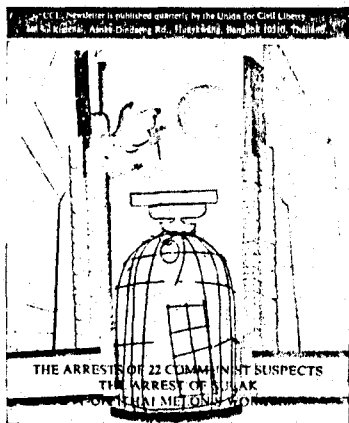
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446 Soi Kiatchai, Asoke-Dindaeng Rd., Huaykwang, Bangkok 10310, Thailand.

UCL. NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 1 NO. 1

JUL - SEP. 1984



The Siamese, Cambodian, and Laotian Buddhist Era seems to be one year later than that of Burma, Srilanka and India. In fact this is not so. The difference is that while the latter regards the year of the Maha Parinibbana as B.E.1, the former takes it to be the first anniversary after the Master's Passing Away. For example this year is B.E. 2528 according to the Siamese, Cambodian, and Laotian Calendar, but it is B.E. 2529 according to the Burmese, Ceylonese and Indian Calendar.



**THAI INTER - RELIGIOUS
COMMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT**

G.P.O. BOX 1960 BANGKOK 10501
THAILAND

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SEEDS OF PEACE

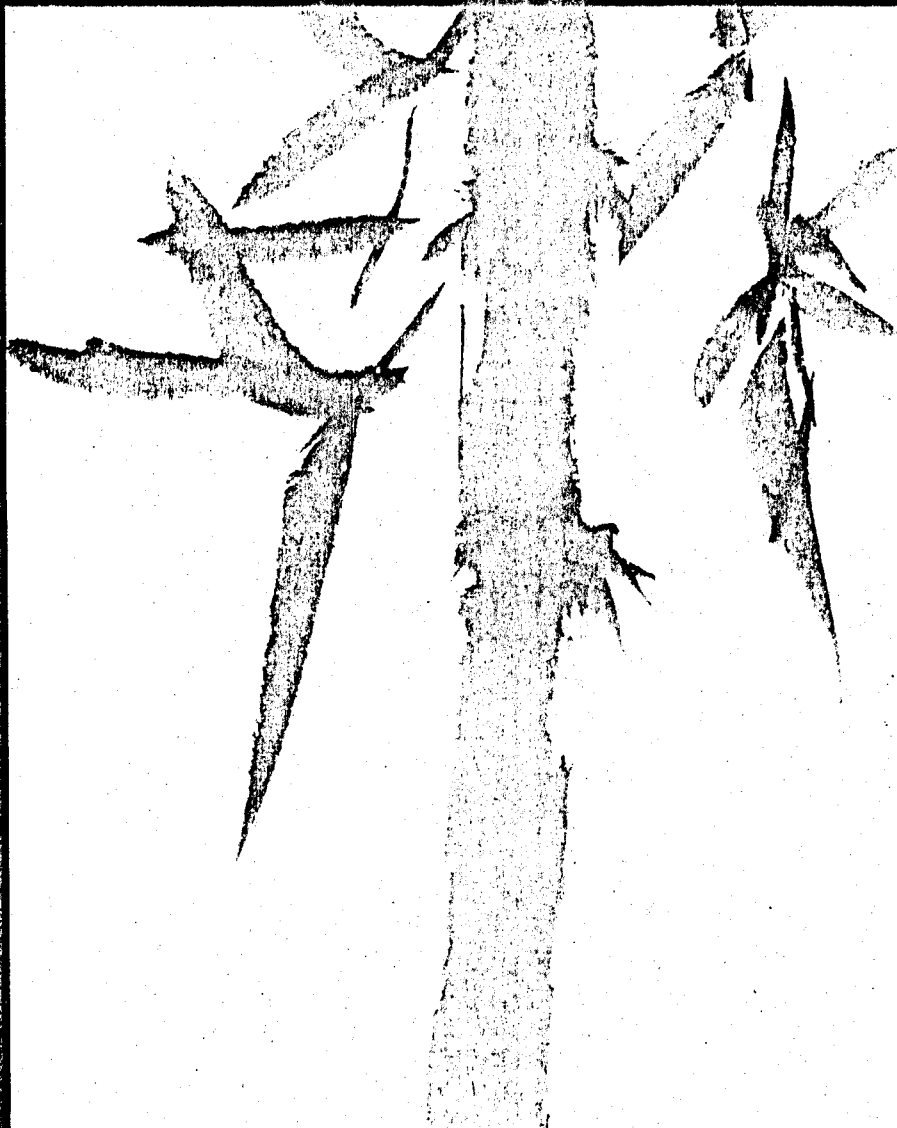
Vol. 1 No 2 OCTOBER 2528 (1985)

BUDDHISM AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS
IN THAILAND

AFFIRMATION OF WHOLENESS OF LIFE

ISLAM AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

BUDDHIST CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE



Seeds of Peace

is published twice annually in April and October, in order to promote the aim and objectives of the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD). For subscriptions and further information, please contact the Commission 4753/5 Soi Watthong-Noppakun, Somdej-Chaophya Road, Klongsan Bangkok 10600 Thailand G.P.O.BOX 1960 Bangkok 10501, Tel. 437-9445. Suggested subscription US\$ 6 per annum, postage included.

Objectives of TICD

1. To coordinate work among individuals, groups of individuals and various agencies dealing with religions and development in course of working together.
2. To share experience in and knowledge of religions and development as well as exploring ways and means of working together.
3. To offer training and secure resources in terms of man-power and materials to support and enhance the agencies that need help.

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Editorial Note

Our first issue of **Seeds of Peace** was well received beyond our expectation. We were forgiven for our shortcomings, especially the very many printing errors, and we received many letters of encouragement from abroad. Some suggested that we should publish more often. A good number of individuals and institutions have already enrolled as subscribers. The publication was sold locally in many bookshops, and some of the articles were translated into Thai.

We were fortunate to receive quite a number of articles for publication. Unfortunately space limited us to printing only a few, and even then we had to abridge some of them. We decided to reprint important articles from other periodicals, and we try to stick to material concerning peace and the objectives of TICD.

Staff members at both TICD and ACFOD helped us tremendously. Many friends, both ecclesiastic and lay alike, were willing to give us any assistance we needed. It has created a really wonderful spirit, for which we are grateful.

We hope our endeavour in publishing **Seeds of Peace** would bear fruit positively and we look forward to our readers' comments and suggestions.

If you would like the next issue of **Seeds of Peace** to be published in January instead of April, please let us know.

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Thailand Peace '85 Campaign

GOTHOM ARYA



"Walk for Peace."

"People in the Third World share a belief that the nuclear threat is still a remote problem that is far less pressing than immediate problems such as poverty, social injustices and dictatorial curtailment of human freedom. But it is our contention that only by seeing the nuclear danger as the logical conclusion of a world nurtured by a belief in violence as the solution to world problems,

can the public be sufficiently informed and their desire for world peace be raised meaningfully". This quotation is from the letter sent to the Secretary General of the United Nations during his passage to Bangkok in January 1985, by the Thailand Peace '85 Program. The letter was meant to explain the rationale of the Program while requesting "support in any form". But, the world body responsible for the promotion of peace did not even care to send a reply. This lack of action seems to be quite symptomatic of the state of world disarmament affairs.

There were some considerations when the Peace '85 Program was being planned. While the target group should be the public at large, there was a special consideration on how to get young people, i.e. students and development NGO's workers, involved. This did not only stem from the fact that 1985 is the international youth year but also from the assumption that this target group has already a background of social consciousness. There was no difficulty for the organisers to agree that religion should be a central theme in advocating peace but when they came to discuss about the scope of the campaign there was a split. One group of organisers, mainly young people, would like to make the campaign more relevant by focusing on military expenditures and domination and Indochinese conflict, for instance. Another group preferred to emphasize the nuclear arms race with the thinking that the criticism of superpowers would rally larger support and invite less unfavourable reactions. The ideas of the latter group were to prevail with an unfortunate side-effect of less active participation of the formerly mentioned group.

The idea of Peace Campaign is certainly not new to Thailand. The elder statesman, Pridi Banomyong, produced a film called the *King of White Elephants* exposing his ideas of war and peace when he foresaw an increasing danger of Thailand being involved in World War II. In 1952, the International Peace Committee, Thailand has collected more than 150,000 signatures of those urging for world peace and an early end to Korean war. Unfortunately, the members of that

committee were arrested and later sentenced to long imprisonment on charge of inciting discord. Last year, the Sub-committee on Peace and Human Rights, Ministry of Education, organised a Peace Week on August 6-9, 1984 at Thammasat University designed "to create and expand the Thai's understanding of the nuclear problems which also relates to their consciousness concerning the significance of human lives in general".

The proposal to organise Thailand Peace '85 Program was drafted in the beginning of the year by the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS) and later presented to an organising committee on the Valentine Day of February 14. The Program specified that "the senseless competition in the development of all types of nuclear weapons not only poses a direct threat to the existence of the whole human race, but consumes money that should be reallocated for human development, to raise the standard of living for millions and to feed millions of hungry people around the world."

The objectives of the Campaign were:

1. To commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
2. To call the attention of the Thai people to the problem of world peace which is being threatened by the nuclear arms race.
3. To contribute to the international campaign against nuclear arms race while promoting more human development and better livelihood for all.

The first committee meeting was attended by 70 persons from about 25 development NGO's and student organisations. This organising committee remains loosely structured. More time was spent on the activities than on the strengthening of the committee. About 15 development NGOs did participate actively by contributing money and/or manpower. Other committee members joined on their individual basis. The organising committee acted as a general assembly who set guidelines. There were 5 working committees in charge of the following activities: dissemination, film show, conference, concert, commemoration and coordination. But it has never been definitely

established that who was on which committee. In fact, 2-3 full time workers performed the essentials with the help of the CGRS workers and other friends.

The first two meetings of the organising committee spent a lot of time on the discussion about the scope of the campaign and on another issue, namely, what activity would be suitable to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Hiroshima - Nagasaki bombings. Some members proposed a walkathon or a peace parade, others preferred a concert or a conference. After lengthy discussions, a compromise, *a la Thai*, was reached. Nobody was really happy or unhappy. It was agreed that all the proposed activities could be organised in the same week of August 4-9, 1985. The conference proponents chose August 6, as this is the anniversary day. The concert proponents chose August 4 because it was Sunday. The proponents of a walk also chose Sunday but were rather hesitant as this would be a difficult activity to organise. The third committee meeting was delighted by a new proposal to organise a one day fast on Sunday August 4. A fast would be an impression of commitment as strong as a march and would be very peaceful and well in accordance to Buddhist tradition.

The dissemination work was considered essential to the Program. Five pamphlets were published and widely disseminated. Two sets of exhibitions were realised and shown to the public on 6-7 occasions. A book titled *The Arms Race* by John Turner was translated and published with the permission of the Cambridge University Press. Several posters were disseminated in the city. Few discussions and spots were broadcasted on radio. The access to TV broadcasting has proven to be more difficult. There were, however, few mentions and news coverage of the fast activity. The press gave a rather wide coverage of the peace concert and the fast day. Although there were some shortcomings, the dissemination was a success in bringing peace and nuclear arms race issues to the attention of the public.

In order to raise public awareness, several activities were organized that would lead to the peace week of August 4-9, 1985.



On May 22-25, two films, *The Muddy River* and *The Children of Nagasaki*, were shown at the auditorium of the Faculty of Engineering Chulalongkorn University along with many other Cultural activities. The film show had been planned to take place at the American University Alumni Association but its president, who is a general in the army, said that it would be inappropriate to do so. This ban gave the Peace'85 Program some unsolicited publicity.

On June 2, which was Visakha Puja day (the most sacred Buddhist holiday), music

poem reading and prayers were organized at Dhamma Sathan of Chulalongkorn University. Many speakers from different religious denominations appealed for peace on that day.

In July no activity had been planned but a student musical group, the Whiffenpoofs, from Yale University came to Bangkok on its regional tour. The Peace' 85 Program took the opportunity to join the committee which organized two Whiffenpoofs concerts, held on July 2 at Chulalongkorn University and at Montien Hotel. This has proven to be beneficial at least on two accounts. First it enhanced the public image of the Peace' 85 Program and it raised some fund.

The publicity of the peace concert was successful and the Thammasat auditorium was packed to an over-capacity of more than 3,000 persons on that day. The concert itself was well prepared and the audience was apparently satisfied. The publicity heavily stressed on the fact that this was the first time two popular musical groups: Caravan and Carabao, would perform on the same occasion. Surprisingly, it was a third group singing old popular songs which drew big applause on that day. The stress on Caravan and Carabao performances made one bewildered, how many came to the concert with the peace issue in mind and how many with simply the intention to listen to good music. Caravan did help by singing few special songs: Hiroshima and "santi-pab" (peace in Thai) which ended the concert in a high spirit.

The peace week at Dhamma Sathan was also successful, thanks largely to the Santi Asoke Buddhist group. The program started at 6 o'clock on August 4. A group of about 300 persons mainly from Santi Asoke walked peacefully in rows of two from the Victory Monument and covered few kilometers before arriving at Dhamma Sathan. In the morning, there were Buddhist, Protestant, Catholic and Muslim ceremonies.

The solemn moment came at 1 P.M. when Professor Sem Pringpuangkeow, Chairman of Peace'85 Campaign, gave a speech in commemoration to those fallen in Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as in other

wars. All stood in silence and then laid flowers in front of the pictures showing the consequences of the atomic bombings. A model of a peace sculpture was later unveiled and 40 doves were set free.

In the afternoon, group discussions and speeches were organized as well as allowing time for individual meditation. About four hundred persons participated in the fast and about 100 persons who did not come to Dhamma Sathan pledged to do so.

During the week, there was an exhibition covering the issues of peace, religion, development and war. On the other days of the week, until August 9, panel discussions and cultural activities were organized. Another highlight was the conference with the presentation of 3 research papers on August 6. But the invitation was sent out late and the audience was smaller than expected.

The peace week was successful in receiving media coverage but its publicity was not very strong and attracted fewer attendance than expected. One disappointment, though, was to see only few students despite the fact that they were one of the main target groups.

The money raised mainly from concerts, will be donated to the Working group on Children Development (70%) and to Peace Program next year.

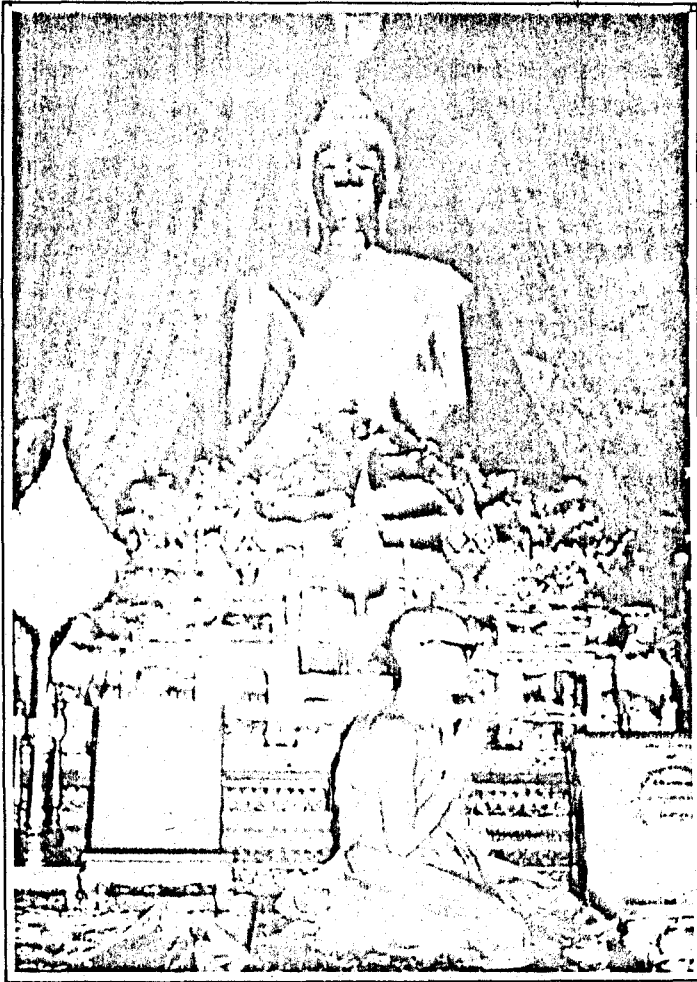
The Peace'85 Program advocated mainly two slogans namely: No More Hiroshima and Let's Declare a Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone. There is still a lot of work to be accomplished before these slogans be really heard and accounted for.

Peace'86 Program is now on a drawing board; it will start with a better asset than this year's program. But whether or not it will make an impact on the public still depends on the commitment of the people who will be involved.

A modest step has been accomplished, but the risk of nuclear disarmament and better allocation of resources towards human development remains in its entirety. Peace certainly needs a life long process for its promotion. Let's continue and invite other people to join us in the urgent striving for peace.

BUDDHISM AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN THAILAND

Prawase Wasi



VEN. PHRA DHAMMACETIYA (MARAJINO)

Who cared so much to improve social condition of the monkhood.

In discussing development and Buddhism, Thailand makes a very unique case for study. Historywise, Buddhism has taken deep root in this country for almost 10 centuries. There are approximately 29,000 Buddhist temples, over 200,000 Buddhist monks, more than 100,000 novices and over 90% declared Buddhists among its citizens. By tradition and by law the King is a Buddhist and the Chief Patronage of Buddhism. With all these components, no one can deny that, in general sense, Thailand is a Buddhist country.

Yet this country is beset with increasing social problems, many of them very serious. Crimes are rampant. Thefts, rapes and violence including murders are problems of common concern. High walls, iron window bars and locked doors speak for themselves. Corruption and bribery are a way of life. There are more prostitutes than monks; commercial sex and international sex tours to this country have made Bangkok one of the most sinful cities in the world. The country is poverty stricken. Rural people storm into Bangkok to work as labourers, housemaids, prostitutes, etc. The rural folks like to be together, but they cannot. It is like a house divided. Approximately 900,000 children are abused in factories. There are more than 300 slums behind main streets in Bangkok. About 70-80% of pre-school rural children are malnourished and 50-60% of children in the slums in Bangkok are similarly but more severely afflicted. At least 55,000 pre-school children die annually from causes related to malnutrition. This is violence in disguise. Violence due to ideological conflict has been with this country for over 10 years and has taken a tragic toll.

Such is Thailand—an allegedly deep-rooted Buddhist country, yet afflicted with so many social problems. Why is this so? Has Buddhism nothing to do with social development? Or have Buddhist principles not been appropriately applied in social development?

that all religions have occurred *because of* and *for* solving social problems. If and when men lived individually or in small groups they needed no religion or it would suffice for them to worship mountains, trees, ghosts or strange animals. By the time the great religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam emerged, men had already suffered complex social problems. These religions occurred *because of* and *for* solving those problems. Great problems breed great religions. Small problems breed small or no religious principles. Great religions did not occur and could not occur when people lived their lives as prehistoric hunters.

If the social problems of two thousand years ago, when the world was without capitalist/worker conflicts, guns, atomic weapons, and high monetary interest, are said to be complex, how can one describe the social problems of today? Can religions first created in peasant communities some two thousand years ago be applicable in today's technology-oriented and very complex societies? Though limited in knowledge, I see the religious prophets as superhuman beings who could see things that others could not. Although their teachings directly dealt with the problems of earlier days, their wisdom leads to general principles applicable even today, if correctly interpreted and applied.

Some Buddhist Principles

Lord Buddha's teachings may be divided into two main parts:

- I. Nature or Law of Nature—the natural truth.
- II. How men should behave according to the Law of Nature, so that the individuals and society will be at peace.

Nothing in the world or the universe is static, all being in a dynamic state. According to Lord Buddha's teaching on Anicca or impermanency, this is the ultimate Law of Nature from which stem other important principles.

How do things change? Things change according to causes. All phenomena are ac-

Religions and Society

Though limited in knowledge, I believe

tually a continuous sequence of causes. Nothing exists by itself, unrelated to other things or causes. This is *Idapaccayata* or the law of conditionality.

Men do not live by themselves, but are part of Nature. It is a natural process that things, living and non-living, are adjusted along certain balanced points. As men are a part of the natural balance, they should be very considerate of Nature all around them, living or non-living. Without this consideration men will suffer. When insects, birds, trees, etc., are excessively destroyed, Nature is unbalanced and this leads to environmental problems and natural disasters. When nonrenewable materials such as minerals and petroleum are excessively consumed, men will suffer from various problems such as high prices and pollution. To live a moderate life, consuming as little worldly materials as possible, and to treat the environment with kind gentleness are important in Buddha's teachings because of the very Law of Nature just described.

Technology and the Changing World

Things change. Since the days of the prophets, societies have tremendously changed. Animals and human societies differ greatly in rates of change. While the behaviour of tigers and elephants is little different from what it was ages ago, human behaviour today is much more complex than when *homo sapiens* first branched off from apes. This is due to technology. Without technology available to them, animals do not manifest much change in behaviour and social living. Technology, endowed to man because of the level of brain function, determines the evolution (and sometimes revolution) of human society. Plantation technology transformed prehistoric hunter groupings into village settlements. Specialisation in different technologies have led to caste formation. Formerly each individual made a living by his own hunting ability. There was no need for trading. Specialisation necessitated commodity exchanges which have created transnational

business corporations. Industrial technology has led to town and metropolitan settlements, a transformation from exclusively rural communities to 95% urban communities in certain countries. Life and behaviour of men before and after the creation of monetary system are tremendously different, not to mention the changes resulting from the development of a banking system.

In the prehistoric hunting life, men could differ perhaps only in the number of daily catches. In the modern technology-oriented society, the social gaps are unlimitedly widened. In the old days man depended very much on what he himself thought and did. But in today's society, man is greatly affected by the system in which he lives.

The Old and the New: Social Disruption

In old agricultural Thailand the society was self-sufficient: "In the fields plenty of rice, in the water plenty of fish". The climate was warm and there was little need for clothing and planning ahead for food and fuel in the winter. There was no need for social organization and country management. The central government did not have much to do with the people. Communities were left to run things very much by themselves. Actually it was decentralized administration by nature. As a result of this "community democracy", people were undoubtedly happier in those days than in the present overcentralized system. Buddhist temples served communities well in those days. They were centres for education, medicine and cultural activities. Collective resources available at the temples helped run community affairs in a most economical way, both for the people and the state. This led to a rather harmonious way of life with Nature.

Expansion of Western imperialistic powers possessing warships and munitions suddenly imposed technologies to conquered and semi-conquered countries like Thailand. These countries were caught unprepared. Technology-oriented societies

need adequate social mechanisms to protect the people from the adverse effects of technologies. Even the West does not have adequate social mechanisms to protect its people from the disturbing effects of modernization. Countries suddenly imposed with technologies, not at all prepared for them, suffer more. Vastly, secularization has led to bureaucratic overcentralization. This bureaucratic overcentralization, in addition to causing great problems to the government in terms of budget and personnel management, has paralysed community ability throughout the country while leaving a loophole for the rich to jeopardize the poor. The budget-strained government are forced to indulge in unscrupulous business activities. Over-centralization breeds more corruption.

The temples have been almost cut off from useful social functions. Left with largely ceremonial roles, they have shifted more towards superstitious practices. The monks and the people are thus more stupefied both in religious principles and in social mechanisms. The majority of Buddhists, monks and lay people fail to understand the true Buddhist principles and the changing world, although changes are the ultimate truth according to Lord Buddha. The mere wishful thought that "if only the mind is good everything will be all right" is far from adequate for solving today's social problems.

The world is disrupted by social gaps, crimes, violence, hatred, wars, etc., largely because of the lack of adequate social and international mechanisms to vent off technology-associated vices. Lord Buddha said that *Avijja* or ignorance leads to suffering. The world thus suffers because it is lacking in knowledge.

Goals and Process of Development

It is not possible to set the clock back some 2000 years. This is against the law of changes. The attempt to do that would lead to anarchy. Technology will continue to be developed and used. The question is how to reap its benefits and fend off its toxicity in

order to relieve human suffering.

Lord Buddha said that every man must have the four basic requisites or *Paccaya*, i.e. food, clothing, housing and medicine. Without these, further development is not possible. The primary goal of development is to meet the four basic human needs for everyone in the society. People should be able to live in peace, with nature as well as with each other. This social development is not easy to accomplish. In addition to religious values it needs appropriate national management and social mechanisms. The most important strategy is to create a *critical mass* who truly understand both religion and the technology-oriented world. This critical mass must be willing to work with others of different religious or ideological principles who are aiming at more or less the same social development.

Top priority strategy for the mass movement is not to impose strictly religious doctrines. This has low feasibility in the confused society and will divide the people or even the movement members themselves. It should address itself, above all, to the eradication of poverty. Monks and lay Buddhists should take more active roles in the eradication of poverty all around them. If successful, people will be more appreciative of religious workers and religious principles. If not, they will find other social mechanisms. This does not mean that eradication of poverty alone is adequate for social development. Nonetheless, it is a must and foremost strategy to gain wide public acceptability.

I would like to cite the Yokkrabutr development as a case in point. This community in Ban Paeo district, Samutsakorn Province used to be poverty-stricken and rampant with crimes, gamblings and other vices. There was no fresh water supply and crops were annually destroyed by flood. The new abbot of the community Buddhist temple, Prakrue Sakornsangvorakij, did not ask for donation from the people as monks usually do. He studied the many problems and decided that the land was suitable for a coconut plantation. He then studied coconut cultivation until he became an expert in it.

From the pulpit, besides preaching what was good and what was bad, he preached coconut plantation. The monks grew coconuts around the temple and the people made the community blossom with coconut trees. The abbot gave them good coconut breed which yields over two litres of sugar a night in contrast to the yield from the ordinary breed. Eventually everyone in the community earned 200 to 400 baht per day. The temple has also become wealthier and the monks have done further development for the community, including the construction of bridges, canals, roads, an earth dam to prevent flooding, improved water supply, etc. Crime and gambling are gone. There is still one addict in the community: monks have been around asking him to quit, but to no avail yet. However, the man does not cause problems to neighbours, because he, too, is earning 200-400 baht a day. This well illustrates that many social problems, such as crimes, prostitution, gambling, alcoholism and drug addiction cannot be solved by preaching alone or suppression, but by raising people's income. Young people in Yokkrabutr do not leave the community for Bangkok. They love their home. Looking at their faces you can detect a healthy state and happiness. I will say that their lives are better because of the abbot. They are ready to believe in what he says. He is smart enough to prevent capitalistic disruption of his self-sufficient community. He is now teaching meditation to the people. This is a small but most important example of development by religious workers. It is at the heart of country development and simultaneously solves both rural and urban problems. City problems cannot be solved without rural development.

Monks can and should be involved in solving other social problems. Bangkok people live in crowded concrete caves or in impossible slums without enough open space, trees and fresh air to breathe and relax. Children have no adequate space to play. Every available space has been used for commercial purposes; land prices are substantial. It is now impossible to build parks in Bangkok metropolis. Yet there are

over 300 temples in Bangkok. Each temple should clean up its ground and plant it with trees and flowers, suitable for people to rest their weary souls. Again Buddhists must be reminded that mere wishful thinking is not enough. To solve social problems there is a real need for action.

In 1976 Pra Dhammacetiya the Abbot of Thongnophakun temple ran a 3-week course in health care for rural monks with the support of the Komol Keemthong Foundation. It was so successful that monk training in health development now has greatly proliferated. One monk wrote, "Doctor, after my training with you I noticed that a lot of farmers were pale and weak. I gave them ferrous sulphate tablets and they became stronger. Now a lot of them come to me. Can you send me 20,000 more tablets?" Now regular courses for monk training in primary health care are being conducted at Samphraya temple.

If Buddhists remain passive toward social development, Buddhism in its institutionalized form will be an obstacle to the improvement of well-being of the people and humanity.

The described social activities in themselves are not adequate for social development. Men are very much affected by the system they live in. Thus social development must be associated with system development. Religious movements for social development must include mobilization for desirable results. This mobilisation will not be effective if carried out by religious people who use a language and scenario solely based 2000 years ago. There is a great need for workers who deeply understand and can articulate religious values in the present-day context of a changing world. According to the law of Aniccata or impermanency, nothing is static; development goals and processes must be dynamic.

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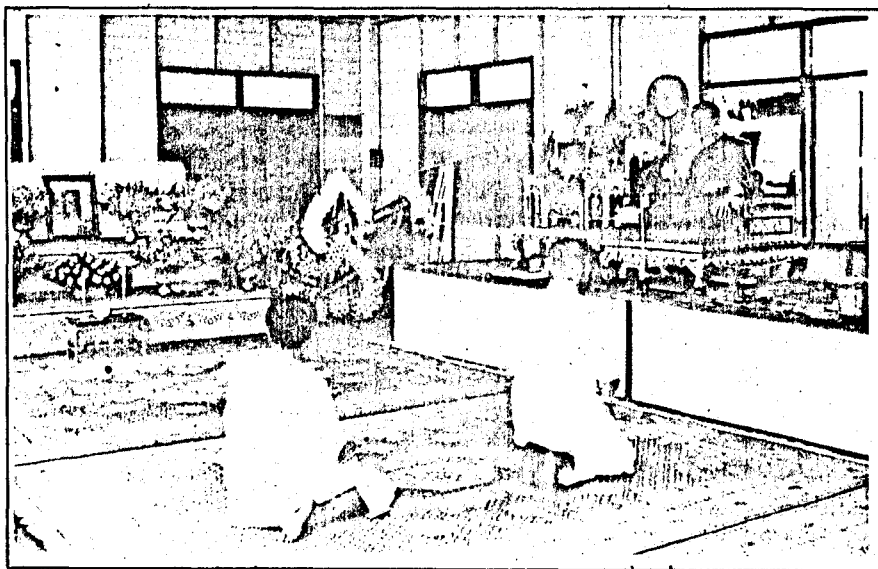
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Affirmation of Wholeness of Life:

A Buddhist View on Life and Death

S. Sivaraksa



VEN. PRA RAJAVARAMUNI (PAYUTTO) Giving a sermon on life and death.

The Buddhist attitude towards life and death can be characterized by the Four Signs, i.e. an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a holy man (wandering monk). It is said that upon perceiving these signs, Prince Siddharta realized that the path towards overcoming suffering and death required a life of spiritual purity. Hence he left the luxurious life of the palace to seek salvation, and eventually found Enlightenment. Thus he became Buddha—the Awakened One.

For those of us who follow the Buddha's

teachings, we should aim to cultivate the right view towards life and death, even though we may not reach the state of deathlessness. Unless we have reached a certain level of understanding, we tend to resist becoming old, sick, or lifeless. We do not wish to be departed from those who are dear to us; nor to confront with those who we detest. Indeed, for many of us it is good to have pleasurable feelings and to resist all that is suffering or unsatisfactory. From the Buddhist standpoint, however, this is not natural. Ac-

cording to the Buddha, there are five facts which everyone of us should contemplate again and again:

- (1) I am subject to decay, and I cannot escape it.
- (2) I am subject to disease, and I cannot escape it.
- (3) I am subject to death, and I cannot escape it.
- (4) There will be separation from all that are dear and beloved to me.
- (5) I am the owner of my deeds. Whatever deed I do, whether good or bad, I shall become heir to it.

Death is the natural outcome of birth; and birth is also the consequence of death. This is the cycle of life from which only those who have reached the state of deathlessness or Enlightenment can escape. Those of us still drawn within this cycle should therefore train ourselves to realize that death is a certainty. It is only uncertain as to when we will die; and whether we will have a relatively short life or a relatively long life. Hence we should be mindful not to make waste of our life. Whatever is right and proper, we should perform while we can, so that our life is valuable and wholesome. To be beneficial to ourselves and others makes our life meaningful. At the same time, we should not be afraid of death; nor be saddened by the death of those dear to us. In fact, practising Buddhists should think of death as a good reminder of the value of leading a life which is useful to fellow human and other beings, as well as to the whole natural environment.

So, the more we understand about death, the more we understand our own life. When we think about it, we realize that our whole life-span is actually very short; comparable to the life-span of a thought which disappears as soon as another thought arises. This does not mean that we should not take life seriously. On the contrary, the Buddha reminds us to take death as a condition to help us conduct our lives diligently, mindfully, meaningfully and usefully; both for our own welfare and for the welfare of others. In actual fact, our daily lives are also conditioned by many other factors. If we are not mindful, our lives become conditioned by greed, lust,

fame, riches, power, hatred, fear, undecisiveness, and delusion. Sometimes we cause much harm to ourselves and to others by deeds supposedly carried out in the name of our honour, religion, or nation; or for the sake of our children.

Ordinary weaklings on the whole lead a life of laziness, or just 'enjoy' themselves as their sensual feelings would guide them. They avoid thoughts about death or undesirable outcomes. Conditioned by fear, by fame, or the like; they work so hard to achieve 'success' or to be 'secure'. In other words, they do not lead their lives mindfully.

For those of us who wish to lead meaningful lives, we should be conditioned by righteousness (Dharma). In dealing with life we must have confidence; and in dealing with others, compassion and wisdom. Thinking of death mindfully leads to confidence in life; and to the realization that while we live we must not be conditioned by hatred, greed, or delusion. In fact our every thought, word and deed should be designed to overcome these three root causes of suffering.

Once we train ourselves to have a natural attitude towards death, we also achieve an understanding of life and its consequences. We realize that there is nothing unusual in the fact that we shall depart from our beloved; that we shall have union with those whom we dislike; or that we shall not achieve many things that we would like to achieve. We also develop a realistic attitude towards the chaos and multitude of suffering in the world around us. But possessing this understanding is by no means sufficient. We must also know how to actively deal with our situation. We must take the right path to overcome suffering.

Many Buddhists feel that it is sufficient to adjust one's inner self to be calm and to be aware of the archaic conditions of the external world. Although one may be deprived of certain rights and physical comforts, yet one should remain calm and content. Death will obviously come and the world may even be destroyed by a nuclear holocaust, yet one should remain in a state of equanimity. This is in fact a wrong view. It is a path of pure heedlessness, rooted in ignorance and

delusion. To take the right path, we should certainly be calm; but we must also try to understand the cause of death and destruction, and how to overcome them meaningfully.

In Buddhism, the key word for the affirmation of wholeness of life is "to walk on". When one is a weakling, one is afraid of death and suffering and cannot "walk on". Once one understands the Dharma, then one can adjust one's inner condition to have a detached view of the world; having less greed, hatred and delusion. One is fairly content. Yet the external world remains unjust and dangerous. A small group of rich and powerful people still ruthlessly exploit the natural environment. The majority of people are deprived of basic human rights. Starvation, malnutrition, unemployment, prostitution, robbery and drug addiction are still prevalent. According to the Buddha, to ignore such a situation is to fall into a state of heedlessness; to be trapped by a false happiness. This is not considered as "walking on".

In other words, we should adjust our inner condition, which should be calm and mindful, to be aware of the unjust external world. It is wrong to try to adjust the external world without training one's mind to be neutral and selfless. It is also wrong to be calm and detached without a proper concern to bring about better social conditions for all who share our planet earth as well as those who live in the same universe. In life it is our duty to restructure our consciousness to deal with the human society selflessly and harmoniously; with loving kindness, compassion, wisdom, and sympathetic joy. The Buddha encourages us to live mindfully all the time; to be free from hatred, greed and delusion as driving forces within ourselves; to be calm and critical, both of ourselves and our common situation; and to work with our brothers and sisters to bring about what is right and just to our world.

In Buddhism, individual perfection and social good are interdependent. A society that is comprised of people who can depend economically and intellectually on themselves can be a relatively peaceful, stable and secure society. Such a society is

ideally favourable to all efforts towards individual growth; physical, moral and spiritual. On the contrary, if a society is in turmoil, suffering from instability and insecurity, then it is difficult indeed to cultivate individual perfection. While there are some things in life which no one can do for others, and for which each individual is self-responsible; yet there are many things which everyone of us can do directly or indirectly for the benefit of others. Hence we should all take responsibility both for our own development and for the development of our common society; both of which are unseparably intertwined.

Traditional Buddhist Society was a society in which the population was highly self-reliant economically, culturally, ethically and intellectually. In the days of absolute monarchy, the rulers were expected to observe or possess sets of Buddhist virtues or qualities such as charity, high moral character, self-sacrifice, gentleness, non-indulgence, non-oppression, tolerance, and righteousness. Such rulers were expected to protect and care for all inhabitants of their kingdom, including beasts and birds. It was their duty to prevent and suppress unrighteous deeds, to see to the distribution of wealth among the poor, and to promote agriculture and other vocations. The strength of a monarch was considered to lie mainly in his wisdom in dealing with the affairs of his kingdom.

What is specially noteworthy about these virtues and royal duties was the emphasis on overcoming poverty. Poverty was regarded as the negation to the wholeness of life; and as the main source of crime and disorder. Economic self-sufficiency was considered a prerequisite for a happy, secure and stable society, favourable to the development of individual perfection; and it was required of the ruler to see that this desirable state of affairs prevailed in his kingdom.

Quite a number of people have the mis-conception that Buddhism regards poverty as a desirable quality. In this respect, poverty is confused with contentment, fewness of wishes, or non-indulgence; which are qualities much admired, as long as they

are accompanied by effort and diligence, not by passivity or idleness. Poverty as such is in no way praised or encouraged by the Buddha. On the contrary, possession of wealth by a king or an average householder can be praiseworthy; and even for a monk to receive frequent offerings (though monks are not expected to seek wealth) can be considered a virtue.

What is considered important in Buddhism is how wealth is gained and how it is made use of. It is considered evil to earn wealth in a dishonest or unlawful way. It is also completely wrong to become enslaved through clinging and attachment to wealth, thereby incurring suffering because of it. Equally blamable to the unlawful earning of wealth is to accumulate riches through stinginess; not spending such riches for the well-being of oneself, one's dependents, and other people. Again, it is also evil if one squanders wealth foolishly, indulgently, or uses it to cause suffering to others.

A good and praiseworthy Buddhist layman seeks wealth rightfully, and uses it for the good and happiness of himself and others. He devotes much or most of his wealth to support the Sangha (community of monks), and to alleviate the suffering and poverty of others. He also enjoys spiritual freedom—not being attached to, infatuated with, or enslaved by his wealth. This is where the mundane and the trans-mundane join together.

To be mundane, one seeks wealth lawfully and unarbitrarily, then makes oneself happy, does meritorious deeds, and shares one's wealth with others. Yet a Buddhist ought to 'walk on' beyond this stage, to be transmundane. This means he should use his wealth without greed, longing, and infatuation. He should be heedful of the dangers of possessing wealth, and have an insight which allows him spiritual freedom. Such a person is one who has made much progress towards individual perfection, thus affirming the wholeness of life through the unity of the mundane and the transmundane; just as birth and death complement one another to complete the integral cycle of life.

In an ideal Buddhist society, under

righteous and effective administration, there would be an absence of poverty. Everyone would enjoy economic self-reliance and self-sufficiency, except for the community of monks who would be purposely sustained by the surplus material supply of the lay society; in order that the lay people could be guided by the monks' life-style and spiritual progress over life and death. In the old days such an ideal Buddhist society might not have fully existed anywhere. Yet there were righteous rulers (Dhamma Raja) who tried to adhere to Buddhist virtues and qualities, though with shortcomings and imperfections; and their citizens did have a yardstick by which to measure their successes and failures.

Among the ordinary citizens there were also sets of virtues and guidelines to be observed. It was, for example, considered worthy to be wise, honest, moral, generous, tolerant, and confident. It was important to be energetic and industrious, skillful in management, to be watchful, to live in a good environment, to associate with good people, to have a balanced livelihood, and to aspire and direct oneself in the right way. On the social side, the individual was expected to maintain good relationships with other people and to make his contribution to the maintenance of a happy and favourable society by practising such virtues as giving and distributing, using kind and beneficial words, rendering useful services, and adhering to the principles of equality and impartiality.

Since the days of colonialism, Buddhist kingdoms have been replaced first by imperial rule, then by military dictatorship or a nominal form of western democracy. Most of the traditional Buddhist values and virtues have disappeared; replaced by western social norms and etiquettes, and ethical codes for the well-being of the Empire, the local elite, or the 'Company'. The local people do not really know how to make use of such western values for their personal well-being, or for the welfare of their own society, since they have been taught to look down upon their indigenous cultures, religions, and traditions.

Although Siam was never fully coloni

zed in a political sense, intellectually, she has never regained independence since imperialism made its mark. This is in fact the worst form of subjugation; to ape after western education, civilization and culture without a proper understanding of their implications. Blind admiration for western science and technology as if it were value-free is indeed the worst crime. Coupled with the loss of self respect and critical awareness of one's own spiritual and cultural heritage this leaves most Asian elite of the once-Buddhist lands in a spiritual crisis. On the one hand, they think they are Buddhists. Yet the Buddhism they adhere to is mostly just form and ritual (often outdated).

When the essence of Buddhist teaching is not properly understood, or purposely misinterpreted, a lot of harm can actually be carried out in its name. For instance, in Siam the usual cliché's about the Buddhist religion, the monarchy, and the Thai Nation are made use of to maintain the status quo; to help the rich get richer and the poor to remain poor, or even get poorer. Those who are suffering from poverty are told to be complacent about their situation, as this is the inevitable result of bad deeds performed in their previous lives. The Buddhist monkhood is even used to legitimize the military, who are the main forces of oppression, and who act as agents of the super powers and Transnational Corporations (TNC's) for exploitation of our natural resources.

So, our people have become victims of neo-colonialism and capitalism. Consumer culture and technology are being used, especially through the mass media, to create new values to replace Buddhist virtues. Greed and hatred are now encouraged. Even ill-gotten wealth and power are to be admired. Lust, indulgence, gambling and intoxicants seem to be the affirmation of life; which means that death must be avoided or postponed through plastic surgery and the like which, even if desirable are only available to the rich and powerful. For the multitudes, birth must be avoided. Hence family planning!

In order to overcome these false values created by materialism and so-called

economic development, we must go back to our spiritual roots and traditions. In the case of Buddhists, we must return to the essential teachings of the Buddha, which are universal and timeless, so that full human development once again becomes possible. Furthermore, we must also gain an in-depth understanding of the present realities of the world around us. It is not, however, right to hate our 'oppressors'—which are in fact unjust political and economic systems embodied by the super powers and TNC's. Hating them will make us hateful; and even if we could violently destroy them, we would be full of hatred ourselves.

To properly overcome such unjust and harmful systems, our internal condition must be calm and mindful. We should cultivate loving kindness and compassion to others—our 'enemies' as much as their victims. If possible we should help to enlighten those working in governments, bureaucracies, international banking, TNC's etc., to see that unjust economic systems and blind use of high technologies are as harmful to themselves as to others. Poisonous foods, dangerous medicines and arms races may give them much unethical wealth; but eventually they also will be the losers. Indeed, the wealthy and powerful people of the world are not at all happy. They are very insecure and afraid of death. Yet they cause so much death and suffering. Poverty and wretchedness increase everywhere, and eventually all life on our planet may be destroyed.

While trying to educate the rich and powerful, we must always communicate with the poor and oppressed. Indeed, if we must choose sides, we should be with the poor, at least in our culture and life-style. The more our livelihood is simple, the less natural resources will be exploited. The less we imitate the rich, the more will we be free from the harmful effects of consumer culture and high technology. If, together with the poor, we could become conscientised not to join the richman's club or any system of oppression, then that would be the first step away from 'economic development' and towards full human development, which is the real affirmation of wholeness of life.

in order to bring about a growing force of awareness throughout the world, it is important that we gain a good understanding of complex systems such as the TNC's, which have greed, hatred and delusion as their main driving forces. Hence we understand how human destruction at Bhopal became possible. But that event, and other great tragedies such as those at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, must not make us feel revengeful or helpless. We have to be mindful at all times. Wisdom and compassion must be our main driving forces. If the top people and their middle echelons will not learn any lessons from their destruction, then we will build up awareness with as many people as possible so that economic, political, cultural and technological oppression of every form is widely understood and opposed.

Such mass destruction as occurred at Bhopal due to the aggressiveness of modern technology and the uncontrollable power of the TNC's should help to make more and more of us aware of our lofty heritage prior to the colonial period and the Industrial Revolution. Despite our ancestors' shortcomings and savagery, they never had such destruction and disregard for life on so large a scale. On the contrary, their stress on self-

reliance, social harmony rather than competition, and their discouragement of greed, hatred and delusion should serve as an example to us for meaningful reapplication in the present day context. Then, for Buddhists at least, we should go back to the teachings of the Buddha on life and death; so as to strive for a peaceful and just society where individual moral and spiritual growth is nourished, and where the wholeness of life is truly affirmed.

When Prince Siddharta saw an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a wandering monk, he was moved to seek salvation and eventually became the Buddha, the Awakened One. Similarly, such suffering as that brought about at Bhopal should move many of us to think together and act together to overcome such death and destruction, so as to bring about the awakening of mankind as a truly free being, living in harmony with the universe.

A paper prepared for a Consultation in the Economic Justice Program of Christian Conference of Asia/Urban Rural Mission, 10-17 September 1985, New Delhi. (The author wishes to thank Ven. Phra Rajavaramuni and Mr. Jon Ungphakorn for helping him in writing this paper).

NEWS

Thai Peace Day Remembers

FORTY years after the end of World War II, surviving members of the Seri Thai (Free Thai) Movement remain a group of forgotten people.

There was no official ceremony to acknowledge the important role they played during the crucial period that helped Thailand avoid becoming a part of the Axis. There was no mention of them in the official media.

And it was with this grievance in their minds that about 60 members of the Seri Thai Movement got together for a quiet and solemn meeting at Wat Mahathat (Ta Phra Chan) last Friday. Their purpose was to remember the members of the movement that have passed away.

Thanpuying Poonsuk Banomyong, wife of the late Dr. Pridi Banomyong, who was the leader of the movement, presided over the ceremony.

She did not try to conceal her bitterness on how the occasion was completely ignored by the government.

She said in most other countries, it was the governments which sponsored the ceremonies to commemorate such occasions.

"After 40 years, people here may have forgotten all about it. Nobody seems to be interested," she said.

Other members of the movement also voiced similar complaints. "The government simply ignores the occasion," one of them said.

Most of the members of the movement are in their 70's and 80's.

Among those who joined the ceremony at Wat Mahathat was former prime minister Rear Adm. Thawal Thamrongnavasavat, who is now 84.

THE NATION, Monday, August 1

A CASE STUDY IN SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Buddhism & Ethnic Minorities : Wat Tam Krabok

N. Tapp



It is unfortunate that primarily as cultivators of the opium poppy the Hmong are known to the Thai public. The kind of political disaffection which spread among Hmong communities during the 1960's and early 1970's had its roots in the uncertain and difficult conditions associated with the local production of opium after it was officially banned in Thailand in 1959. The Hmong became the target of many Government programmes, such as the *tham-mācarik*, out of all proportion to their actual numbers; largely owing to the popular image of them as insurgents and opium producers. Rates of addiction to opium remain high in many Hmong villages (nine out of twenty-five household heads in the focal village of my own study, for example), and Hmong and

other upland opium addicts have frequent recourse to Thai hospitals seeking treatment for a variety of complaints.

The exact position of religion in society, and particularly in social development, is a problematic issue which has recently been widely discussed among Thai Buddhist intellectuals. Some would argue that traditionally, unlike his Christian counterpart, the Thai monk has always been closely involved in community life—acting as village teacher and doctor besides advising on a wide range of technical and emotional problems—and that he has largely lost this role owing to the rise of modern systems of medicine and education. The need to incorporate into modern development those spiritual values which are often provided by traditional

systems of belief has been argued powerfully, particularly with regard to dams. In Thailand there is a long tradition of autonomy at the level of the local temple which repeated attempts to centralise and hierarchalise the Sangha during the present century have failed to destroy completely. The Buddhist monkhood remains an important channel of social mobility, and in many cases local saints are popularly acclaimed before receiving legitimating through joining the Sangha. A good many temples (estimated at 3,000) remain outside the official ecclesiastical system. Known as *suan* or *samnak*, these are not registered by the Department of Religious Affairs, and may lack consecrated grounds on which to perform full ordination rites for monks (although often the monks within such centres have been fully ordained elsewhere).

Wat Tam Krabok, as it is popularly known, is a monastic centre located near a famous Buddha's Footprint shrine in the province of Saraburi, north of Bangkok on the edge of the Northeastern plain. It was founded in 1959, reportedly by nine *dhutanga* or ascetic monks who came to retreat in a nearby cave, although already by 1960 it contained as many as sixty monks. It is unique among Thai monastic communities in a number of different ways. Over the years it has become one of the most important and influential centres in Thailand for the treatment of opiate addiction. Moreover, its patients have included many Hmong and members of other upland minority groups.

Although its Abbot's activities have earned him the disapproval of those sectors of the Thai Sangha who feel that a monk's business should be confined to preaching, gradually he has received more and more public acclaim for his work with opiate addicts, and at weekends the centre is now visited by some tourists, benefactors from Bangkok, coteries of police and army cadets. Ācān Chamruun Parnchan, the father and pioneer of the centre, had worked with opium addicts before his ordination as a monk in the early 1950's, but the first addicts are said to have received treatment at the centre only after the opium ban of 1959.

Despite considerable opposition to the work of the monks, a Government grant of some land and funds totalling 400,000 baht was made in 1963. By 1983 it was claimed that over 48,000 patients had sought treatment there. In September 1984 the monastery housed 120 monks, although many of these were at a new site established just outside Lopburi, besides 160 addicts and nearly 100 other patients. New patients were being admitted at a rate of 20-30 a day.

Born in 1924 in neighbouring Lopburi, Ācān Chamruun is a charismatic leader who inspires loyalty and devotion among his followers. Before ordaining as a monk he had been a police officer, and one of the primary figures influential in establishing a national intelligence service in Thailand. Much of his wisdom is said to have been received by him from his aunt, a spiritually gifted woman of the kind who occasionally attain prominence in Buddhist communities. A photograph of *luang phō yai* (or 'great reverend father'), as she is known, is honoured in a small cave adjacent to the main buildings of the temple. Among the patients it is said that her spirit still inhabits another, more inaccessible cave. The photograph shows *luang phō yai* wearing a monk's robes, and when I asked about the oddity of this, I was told that she was something more than a woman; *tua pūying*, *cai pūchai*—the heart of a man in the body of a woman.

The centre is in fact administered by two *luang phō* (reverend fathers), rather than one, as is usually the case. These two are brothers, and while Ācān Chamruun acts as the spiritual mentor and administrator as well as spokesman to the outside world, his brother superintends the agricultural work at the centre; for, unlike most Thai monasteries, the monks at Tam Krabok cultivate maize and banana plantations on a large scale. The latter also supervises a large *sālā* or pavilion, which is entirely devoted to the reproduction of a special kind of music (again unusual in monastic communities). This music is derived from rubbings taken of natural objects such as trees or paths from all parts of Thailand. It is then transcribed, ac-

cording to a complicated system, into musical notation with the help, among others, of music students from Thammasat University, and recorded at three speeds on an electric organ.

In conversation Ācān Chamruun is keen to emphasise that the medical treatment offered by the monastery was the result of no deliberate decision on his part. Addicts came, and were treated; he, as a monk, felt that he could not refuse them treatment, and so the programme grew. Dr. Westermeyer (1982) has described how, as the result of the philanthropy of a Thai-Lao woman Sunthone Dhillavanh, resident in Vientiane, addicts began to be sent for treatment at Wat Tam Krabok from Laos after 1970. Between then and 1975 some 3,000 addicts, mostly from the refugee relocation zones of Laos, had received treatment at Tam Krabok with assistance from USAID, the Asia Foundation, the Lao Ministry of Social Welfare, and other groups. In 1975 Ācān Chamruun received the Magsaysay human rights award (with funds of 10,000 dollars) from the Philippines for his endeavours in the field of social action. Owing to the strict rules enjoined on the monks at the centre against the uses of modern technology and particularly mechanised transport, however, he was unable to fly to the Philippines to receive the award personally. I saw an example of this rule at the monastery when a group of monks caught in a downpour refused to accept a lift in a pick-up truck. Ācān Chamruun also emphasises that he treats every kind of addiction. The techniques employed at Wat Tam Krabok have been effective in curing addiction to pep-pills, valium, nicotine and alcohol, methadone (which he claims has earned him high-ranking enemies among supporters of multinational pharmaceutical companies), paint-thinner (Thailand's most recent scourge) and even 'Casanova-ism', as he puts it, besides other mental and physical disturbances. But it is as a treatment centre for opiate addiction that his centre is most widely known, and most important.

The treatment itself is unique, since it is based on herbal medicines and herbal

massage steam-baths (traditional remedies for addiction), together with a type of meditation based on the internal repetition of *mantras*. For three to five days new patients must ingest the herbal medicine, administered by the monks themselves at nine o'clock in the mornings, which induces vomiting and is said to purify the body of the poisons it has accumulated. Great secrecy surrounds the preparation of this medicine, which is described as composed of over a hundred types of herb, gathered from different parts of Thailand. Major ingredients include morning glory, citronella, cogon grass (*yā khā hōm*), ritnus and castor bean extract (*la hung*). The hot steam baths, which are taken by all patients in the mid afternoon in alternation with cold showers, relieve the abdominal cramps and aching symptoms associated with withdrawal. The day is also punctuated by the morning and evening chanting of the monks, and the three meals a day served to the patients, who wear a uniform of red shorts and a white shirt which distinguishes them from the brown robes of *thudong* ascetics worn by the monks.

What is regarded as the most important part of the cure, however, is the sincere desire on the part of the patient to rid himself of the cause of his craving, and to entrust himself to the Buddha's and the Abbot's care and protection. This is affirmed in a ritual vow (*satca*), taken with the Abbot by patients immediately after they have arrived. According to Ācān Chamruun, the treatment depends on the importance of being able to 'find a fact in one's life', and he himself sees the cure as '80% psychological'. A full course lasts only ten days, but patients are normally expected to remain on in the monastery for a period of rehabilitation or vocational training which may last several months.

Addiction is a serious illness, and withdrawal a highly dangerous process; *dukkha* in the full sense of the word. Even the memory of withdrawal is hard to escape. Several cured patients could not bear the sight or smell of the herbal medicine they had once had to take; a German monk told me his scalp literally crept to think of it.

Because many patients are of the *nakleng* or 'tough' type, the centre has to be run on strictly authoritarian lines. The Abbot's compound is strongly guarded for security against possible attack, and a stern, melancholy atmosphere pervades the grounds of the temple and the inhospitable landscape which surrounds it. Although an ex-patient sometimes performs dramatic enactments of heroin addiction, and a rock band has been formed by some of the convalescents which plays for the patients at weekends, the hard physical labour imposed on monks and convalescents alike allows little time for pleasure or idleness. Insanity seems to be a more frequent outcome of withdrawal than actual mortality. Particularly troublesome patients are placed in solitary confinement behind bars, as much for their own safety as for the safety for others. I visited one of these, who begged for tobacco. Sometimes the screams of newly admitted patients are clearly audible. One patient ran amok while I was at the centre, and fled away wrapped only in a blanket. He had no idea where he was running to, and was soon pacified and brought back.

It is difficult to evaluate the success of this treatment, since the names and addresses of former patients are, quite properly, not released. In general, addicts do not seem to come for treatment at Wat Tam Krabok of their own free will. They tend to be sent by their relatives, or from other medical centres, while for many years the Central Security Division of the police has sent addicts to Tam Krabok from the slum areas of Bangkok. According to another famous Magsaysay Award winner who works in those areas, patients returning from treatment usually relapse very swiftly. The centre itself, however, claims a 70% success rate, which is extremely high by international standards. Westermeyer's (1982) study of opiate addiction has made it very clear how problematic it is to measure success rates for curing addiction without extensive follow-up evaluation and outcome studies which should last a number of years. Westermeyer's data based on a study of patients from Laos who attended the monastery in 1974

and 1975, suggests a relatively high mortality rate among addicts undergoing treatment at Wat Tam Krabok. While nobody could doubt the sincerity of Ācān Chamruun after speaking with him or with those of his patients who have chosen to stay on in the centre as monks, it may be that the complete absence of the use of any opium substitute such as methadone can prove dangerous.

There were eight Hmong families in residence at the monastery at the time of my visit, numbering thirty-eight people in all, all with members who had undergone or were undergoing treatment for opium addiction. There was one Akha patient. Two of the Hmong had become monks, while the Hmong women and children seemed to do most of the cooking and preparation of food for the monastery. There was very little communication between the Hmong families and other inmates, from whom they were isolated in a *kutistule* bungalow. Most of the Hmong could speak no Thai, and communicated with the others through one or two spokesmen. Nobody else at the centre spoke any Hmong (or Akha), except for one Sino-Thai patient whom the Abbot had instructed to learn Hmong. One recent Hmong arrival, who suffered from a distended stomach as well as the opium addiction which had previously eased the pain of his stomach, begged me for money to escape, though he was not sure where he would go to.

Westermeyer's extensive study of Lao-tian, Hmong, Mien, Khmu', Caucasian and expatriate Asian addicts treated both in Laos and at Wat Tam Krabok concluded that 'The most negative patient evaluations came from virtually all tribal addicts going to Wat Tam Kha Bok' (*sic*). He talks of the 'strong negative emotion (ranging from disgust to outright anger)' which minority people expressed towards Wat Tam Krabok: 'Many said they felt tricked by the Ministry of Social Welfare into going for treatment, and several volunteered that they would die before ever going there again' Westermeyer attributes these reactions largely to differences of language (since the tribal people could not understand what was being said to them) and

of religion, since many of the rituals performed at Wat Tam Krabok would have no meaning for non-Buddhist patients, and compares these reactions with the generally favourable reactions of ethnic Lao patients.

Certainly the Hmong at this centre appeared far more withdrawn and depressed than any I have met in refugee camps or impoverished situations overseas. However, I am not qualified, nor do I have the data, to evaluate the treatment offered at Wat Tam Krabok. Ācān Chamruun has a great sympathy with and concern for the ethnic minorities, especially the Hmong. He supports the ideal of an autonomous state for the Hmong people, and claims to have a medicine effective against the chemical attacks said to have taken place against the Hmong in Laos. Although much of his information on the Hmong did tend to be inaccurate (he maintained for example that the Hmong numbered fifty million people and killed, deformed or maimed children), he showed a genuine curiosity to learn more about their social system, and a concern for their problems which he felt, as a Buddhist teacher, he could help resolve.

At Wat Tam Krabok, considerable importance is attached to birth-dates, prophecies and the interpretation of dreams. Both the Abbot and one of his patients said they had foreseen my coming to the temple, and when I was eventually pressed to say what kind of dreams I have had about the place, I recounted the following nightmare:-

I had seen a white-coated doctor enter a small room, and glance round to make sure

he was alone. On a table in the centre of the room, sat a tiny man, about four inches high, in a solution in a jar. He had no clothes on and sat on a small chair in the jar with his back to me. The doctor removed the lid from the top of the jar, and turned a dial which controlled the solution fully around. To my horror, all the blood ebbed out of the hominid's body, from his head to his toes, leaving him still sitting motionless upon the chair, although there was now no blood left in his body.

After I had told the Abbot of this dream, which I had been convinced related to him in some way, he paused only a second before giving me his interpretation. 'Yes' he said, 'that dream was about this place, and I am the doctor you saw in your dream. The little man represents the hillpeople, because they are smaller than we are. And the blood signifies their whole way of thinking, which must be radically changed if the opium problem is to be solved. For the hillpeople are the key to the opium problem'

I feel that through his interpretation, the Abbot expressed more about the relationship between Buddhism and ethnic minorities than a single paper could ever do. For, if not an indication of what a *Buddhist* attitude towards ethnic minorities might be, his interpretation certainly represented those *cultural* attitudes in which religion is so often embedded, and can perhaps never wholly escape.

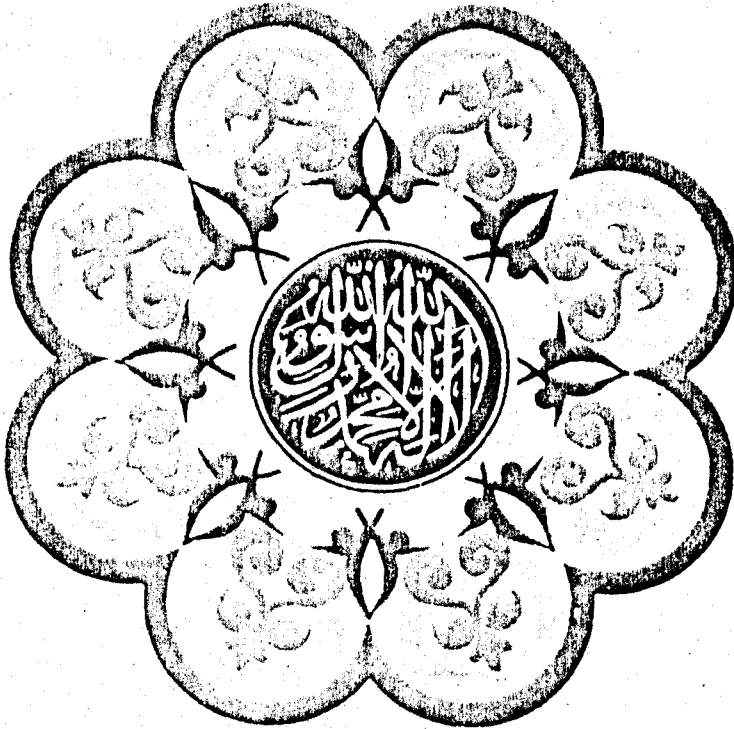
Late News

Moscow (Reuter)—Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev announced a five-month ban on nuclear weapons tests beginning on August 6 to mark the 40th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. The move came just after an announcement President Reagan had invited Soviet observers to witness an American underground nuclear test as a unilateral gesture to inspire an increase in trust between the superpowers.

Bangkok Post, 30 July 1985

ISLAM AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Cesar Adib Majul



Development as characterized in this paper has two aspects: the internal and the external. The first deals with both a humanistic and social dimension in that it deals with solutions to eliminate poverty, reduce unemployment, raise the standard of living and bring about all that this connotes, and to provide for a happier and healthier if not longer life. The second or external one has to do with the strengthening of a given society so as to preserve its national sovereignty or independence from other alien forces. In Islam, this generally means the preservation of the Muslim *umma* from external violence or falling under the power of non-Muslim powers. But since at present

the Muslim world is divided into different national entities, it means the strengthening of a particular Muslim country against any other country trying to dominate it or take away its Islamic identity.

Development if it is to be directed properly involves certain attitudes. The first fundamental attitude to be taken by a Muslim towards it is that it must be viewed within the Divine Plan. Needless to say, any secular idea towards development must be banished from the mind. Islam looks at all life, nature, and their process and transformations as an interrelated unity integrated by a Divine Plan. The life of man and his use of natural resources ought to be one of service

to Allah. Service here is not confined to rituals but involves a prescribed and ordered relationship between an individual and himself, an individual and other individuals, and an individual and his total environment, and, above all, between him and Allah.

Unfortunately, in the past, Muslims had not often distinguished the fundamentals of Islam from historical institutional accretions which were adopted in response to environmental changes as well as foreign intrusions. While it is more than desirable for Muslims to fully adhere to the fundamentals of Islam, it is imperative as well not to look at Islam as a closed and rigid system but as something continually renewing itself to meet the emerging changes, complexities and challenges of the modern world. Actually, innovations in science, education, technology, political administrative procedures, and social experiments will not imply a change in the basic Islamic values if they are done within the framework of man's service to Allah as traced out in the Qur'an. All these require an enlightened 'ulamā' who, while serving as guardians of the fundamental Islamic values, are also creative thinkers who refuse to adhere to blind tradition. It must be an 'ulamā' that will also be identical to an intellectual group that is well versed or at least cognizant of modern science, whether physical or biological or social, which enables its members to understand and be more responsive to the conditions of a changing world. In addition, what is required in a Muslim society is for those others who do not intend to be specialists in religious studies to be more educated in such studies in spite of their different professions or specializations. While the curricula of the traditional *madrasa* must be enriched by an increase of science (both natural and social) subjects in the schools of higher learning in the professions should likewise be enriched by courses in Islam.

The students of the above institutions of learning will not fall into the trap of secularism which clouds so much of Westernization. On the contrary, they will see the work of Allah in so much of science and technology provided they are directed to the social good

as a commandment of Allah. It must be hammered on students that the search for more knowledge is a commandment from Allah Himself when He asks us to pray to Him as follows: "My Lord! Increase me in knowledge."

Not only are the development of the mind and the search for more knowledge ordained religious duties, but also the preparation for a trade or profession in order that the material cares of man may not be neglected. Allah had given men the inner forces as well as outside resources as favors not only as tests but also as ingredients to lead righteous lives which by themselves are forms of worship and service to Allah. Unfortunately, it is the forgetting of such favors like giving the resources of earth to man as a trust that is leading to so much pollution, waste, and extinction of some species of flora and fauna. Already mankind is suffering from the effects of unbridled development.

Development if it is to be contributive to the social good and harmony so as to bring about greater cohesion to a country must never be used solely for the interest of a few individuals and families or a special group. What is vital to a well-ordered *umma* is for the individual to emancipate himself from individual and family interests or other narrow interests in order to conceive of a larger good — that of the *umma*. Islam is against the monopoly of wealth and therefore against the use of the earth's resources in favor of some as against others. It is against any form of human exploitation since this degrades the Allah-given inherent worth and dignity of the individual soul. Moreover, each person must normally have his adequate share of earth's resources if he is to make operative those very qualities which Allah gives him in order that Allah be better served.

The Qur'an requires that society should have an authority that is meant to bring about justice or the judgment of people along equitable principles. This refers to government. No development in society will succeed unless the government is serious about it. An aspect of development is an intimate involvement of the government in the

economic life of society. It is ultimately government that will protect both the political and economic rights of individuals and see to it that justice prevails. The best form of government is one that has the consent of the governed and this consent easily comes from consultation of the governed. Indeed, the people should be consulted on those matters which intimately affect them. This does not neglect the principle that those charged with governmental authority must have certain qualifications over and above those of the ordinary citizen.

Two Qur'anic principles should guide government in its actions regarding development. The first is that all political power ultimately belongs to and comes from Allah. He is the owner of all sovereignty but allows mankind to exercise some sovereignty as a trust. Political power among men is only a loan to be used in accordance with Allah's decrees. Strictly speaking, in Islam the people are not at all sovereign. Only Allah is Sovereign although the people may exercise sovereignty as a loan for which they are ultimately accountable. Thus is the exercise of political power a test to government authorities. The second principle is that all wealth belongs to Allah who bestows it upon man. This means that all property, whether private or public or state property, are to be held in trust and man is accountable finally to Allah on their use. The same principle applies to the usufruct of nature.

Adherence to the above two principles will avoid government arbitrariness, disregard of human rights, exploitation, and other negative elements. They will further direct development for the good not only of the individual but for society at large. No special classes or groups will be favored in society against those of the general public. Education and other social services or benefits will be universalized. In effect, a healthy and harmonious society will be the order of the day.

It is obvious that a healthy and harmonious Muslim country without fear of internal disorder or disruption will be in a better and stronger position to maintain its national integrity and sovereignty in the present world

of international rivalries and power struggles. The chronic resistance of smaller and weaker countries *vis à vis* bigger and stronger ones is still largely the contemporary situation. Not all forms of aggression consist of military violence. There are such things as cultural imperialism and ideological subversion as well as other forms of subtle infiltration to steal away the soul of a nation from its cultural heritage. Needless to repeat, development is one of the tools that best guarantees national and cultural integrity.

In concluding this paper, let it be stated that in the final analysis the quality of development in a Muslim society will depend largely on the individual Muslim's attitude towards it. Intellectuals, religious leaders, government leaders as well as policies or programs can only go so far.

There is an aspect in the worship of or service to Allah that has not been emphasized by Muslim jurists possibly on account of its too philosophical or theological basis. This has to do with the idea of man's soul partaking of the Divine Breath. If Allah's breathing into Adam of mankind for that matter means that all forms of life or energy, whether physical, biological, psychological and intellectual, come from Allah Himself, then it becomes a duty for man to develop all of these along the Divine prescriptions and injunctions. At bottom, the Divine breath in man represents, those capacities meant to exemplify in individual, family and social life, such qualities that are Divine-like. These qualities in social operation are the Islamic virtues. In Allah they are found in an infinite and absolute sense. For instance, Allah is the Knower and the source of all knowledge; but He gives knowledge to and allows man to have it while commanding him to increase it. Allah is the Compassionate and the Merciful; but He prescribes that persons be compassionate and forgiving of each other. Allah is the Truth and He commands that mankind be truthful in its words, oaths, and promises. Further examples will be too numerous to state. But what is suggested in them is that worship or service (*ibādāt*) must not be conceived in a narrow and restricted sense but in a more intended comprehensive manner.



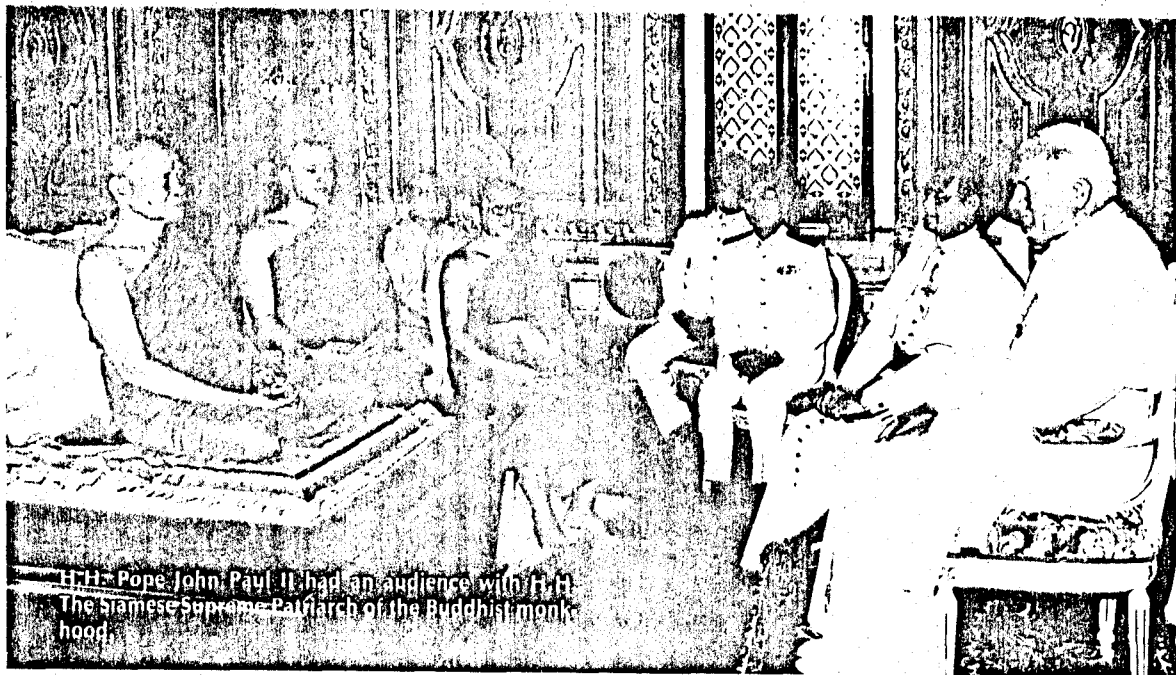
Muslims must view the natural sciences (both physical and biological) as attempts to understand more the signs of Allah in nature and in themselves. These are the signs for men of understanding to make them to know more of Allah while serving to remind them that Allah is the Creator and Lord of all things. Muslim students must view the social sciences not as mere descriptions of society and its manifestations but as data for study on how Islamic values can be progressively applied to society in order to improve the quality of individual, family and social life. In the humanities, too, the Muslim scholar and student ought to exert efforts to maximize his creativity by drawing inspiration from the Divine quality of *Al Musawwir* or Fashioner. Thus can life be made more beautiful or at least tolerable. It must be recalled again that Allah had breathed into man's soul the capacity to create and fashion beautiful things as evidenced in Islamic art, architecture, and calligraphy. *Ibâdat* will connote, among other things, like performing the pillars of Islam, the duty of man to develop his soul's faculties along intellectual premises as service to Allah. Consequently,

secularism and crass materialism will be banished from the mind of the Muslim thinker, scholar and student. They will not fear the data of and emerging discoveries in all scientific fields of study as long as these are related to and fall under the Divine umbrage — for only Allah is to be feared. On the contrary, science in its manifold aspects, modernization or development, and other results of man's creative efforts can all be harnessed as instruments and allies to further glorify Allah and attest to His Glory.

Needless to say, it is the Islamic duty of Muslim countries with more favored resources and with a higher rate of development than other Muslim countries to help the latter. Regardless of ethno-linguistic and geographical differences, all Muslims belong to one and only one *umma*. Moreover, when Muslim countries have become strong through mutual help, they have a duty to mankind as a whole. Different communities and countries can and must learn from each other. In the long run, the vast store of scientific and technological knowledge belongs to all men as a common heritage. It is not enough for Muslims to draw from this common fund—they are obliged to contribute to it as they had done in the past. Muslims should work for the welfare of all mankind without, however, losing their religious identity. Actually such work ought to be done as an Islamic duty and therefore Muslims will serve as witnesses of how their community or *umma* can be a model to other countries. With the fulfillment of its duties, Allah promises Muslims the following: "You are the best community (*umma*)—that has been raised for mankind. You enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and you believe in Allah."

Extracts from "Solidarity" (Current affairs, ideas and the arts) Vol. 4, 1983 Manila, Philippines.

Buddhist Christian Dialogue



Rt. Rev. Thienchai Samanchit

Catholic Bishop of Chandaburi

Today, I am very happy to meet with you. Would you please tell us about Buddhism so that the Christians will have the chance to study and learn Buddhism and come to know more about Buddhists. Especially the Christians in the Philippines are very interested because, over there, there is a School for the Great Religions of Asia. Would you please tell us what Buddhism is meant for you in your life?

Ven. Bhikkhu Khamkien Suvanno

Abbot of Wat Pa Sugato, Bhukhong, Chaiyapoom

Before, I was only a Buddhist in name. I did not really study well to the real core of the Dhamma teaching. But it was only when I came to learn by living in a Practising way of meditation they are doing them

right now (behind the video scene), that had impressed profoundly deep in my heart.

There was such a happening, a love for mankind. Before, we loved only our relatives. Since I came to know this life of real Buddhism, it made me able to love others. Love others' lives and love their whole beings, in what they are and what they have. Because of this, I decided to commit my life as a monk, not only for the Buddhist but for every human being who also yearns for *sukha* (happiness), dislike *dukkha* (sorrow, suffering), everyone alike. In a case such as this that I've found myself liberated from the life of selfishness, taking advantage of others. Now, as I've already been liberated from these, or in another word Dhamma has started to let me see life, seeing outward, far outward. This means to see other people's life and my life. For this, that I offer my life for mankind, to teach them to know about the elimination of *dukkha* where there would be no more sorrow.

Bishop Thienchai

We would like to hear further from you on how you live life according to the teaching of Buddhism, as a monk for the past 20 years.

Bhikkhu Khamkien

I live my life to serve other people. Live for other people, even when I am thinking, my thought would be for others, things that would be very useful for them, for mankind. I do not think much of sorrow, hardships, or even small things for my personal self, are not in my thought. My life, every day, every time, every minute is lived for others. Give my life for others. The expenses on living and eating and so forth are not for myself, but for others for the past 20 years. Before, my life was for myself, for my brothers and sisters and for relatives and my friends. Now, I live my life for others, anyone, brothers and sisters alike, everybody in the world alike. In short, I live my life for others.

In my way of thinking, it is to make use of your Pañña (wisdom or supreme intelligence), to see the world farther, outward. For example, when we were in the temple, we not only saw the people in the temple, but looked out to the parishioners, to the people. Do they have any problems? Supposing they are poor, are they really poor? Why are they poor? How are we going to help them? We must try to see right through their problems. We'll not only see people in the temple. In brief, I spend my life for others.

—We would like to know further how the Buddhist layman live according to the way of Buddha's teaching. We would like to know deeper.

—In fact, layman is only a name that is given and so is the name for the monk is a classification. The real truth according to the Dhamma is that we are all the same. We classify them as layman, as monk etc. These are how things are being classified: The fact is that the teaching of the Buddha enables us to teach all men to become monks, everyone to become monk (phra) which means excellence. To gain happiness, everyone alike.

To discard sorrow, everyone alike

The teaching of the Buddha (Dhamma) or any kind of religious teaching is good. This is the universal pillar suitable for men, women, young and old to lead their lives happily. If we really grasp deeply the teaching of the Buddha, we can apply it either in our everyday living, in our jobs, living together, solving problems together and helping one another.

As for myself as a monk, I like to say that my life is for others. I do not think of dividing people into different groupings, such as Christians, Muslims. I do not think as such. We are together, common humanity. We shall share what we have and practice charity amongst us. In fact, if we have touched the essence of the teaching, this is where much happiness is found. I do not think of this group, that group, that people, those people, do not think as such. I live my life for others. This is truly a universal teaching.

This teaching is suitable for everyone, every age. If everyone, in every nation of this world, who is a fellow human being could understand this essential teaching thoroughly, everyone will become brothers and sisters. I guarantee you this, for me, I will not be of harm to anyone, and I also think that others will not be harmful to me either. Even though they will scold or curse at me or try to kill me, I will still think that it is not him but something that lies behind.

According to this teaching, *Kilesa* (defilement) is the cause of evil and because of a better understanding of this "vice" that I am not in anger, jealousy, vengeance, no ... So I go on with this teaching.

According to the Dhamma, this "vice" is an emotional stage (not under control). Once we realize that we are not enemies to one another, we'll become very much calm, tranquil, and smooth. If everybody could understand this, any country, any language, men or women, in any foreign land, we shall be one. We shall become brothers and sisters who all want happiness, and dislike sorrow. There couldn't possibly be any persecution; there will be charity, if everybody comes to know this. Not only the monk, but

everyone who has spirit and body alike. *Dhamma* is suitable for every language, everybody; there is no exception. We must understand this. I used to tell people like this.

In the village where I live, there are more than 200 families. We do not belong to one family, but we are one. We are not each to his own family, but one family. Let us look deeper into this. We are one family, one family even though we are from different places, and from different lands. We are all alike. We love happiness, we dislike sorrow, because of this we do not persecute each other. We shall be a help to each other. We are brothers and sisters. This is what I am trying to make people understand.

—What do you get from Buddhism? We are impressed in your talk, and would like to hear from you so that it would be fruitful for us.

In this conversation, Bhikkhu Khamkien is conveying to us the fruits of his inner experiences (life of meditation).

—Before, it seemed to me that I was put in a cage or prison, being placed in one particular spot. It seemed as if I did not know much. I did not see, I did not understand about my own thought. When there was anger, I thought it was really me. In fact, it was not. When we come to really study it, especially the *satipatthana* (the ground of awareness, but whatever you may call it, the point is to be aware of yourself) if you are aware of yourself, then anger will disappear. You should develop awareness of yourself by being aware of all your bodily movements such as turning your hands, raising and lowering your forearms, walking forward and back, turning and nodding your head, blinking your eyes, opening your mouth, inhaling, exhaling, swallowing saliva, etc. You must be aware of all these movements, and this awareness is called *sati* (mindfulness). When you have awareness of yourself, the unawareness, which is called *moha* or delusion will disappear. When we are fully aware of ourselves, there arises a certain kind of *pañña* (wisdom) in the mind, that knows reality as it is (as seen in the video, they are doing it right now, walking and sitting.) Let's study into this.

If everybody sees his own life, speaking of this unhappiness, (sorrow) doing "*satipatthana*", it seemed as if there are no more work, no more burden to do, no worry, nor anguish, ...none (burden lightened), no duty anymore, no more other things. Before, there was anxiety, this and that, anguished, thinking of this and that, happiness, sorrow, sometimes sad, sometimes happy, but, now no more. It is constantly calm, constant calmness, as if I have no more burden to carry. I've found already that my whole life will be spent for others and not for myself. If everybody comes to understand this, that we are one in one land, one in brotherhood and sisterhood and then love ...is born. Charity, compassion,is born, and also helping each other, these become a reality and not only that, there is still more. We shall not help only relatives, but we help everyone, every nation, every language, with no exception. Nothing for our own benefit. There will be no more sorrow, no more problems, either in body or in spirit ...no more. Wherever I'll be, there will be calmness. Whether I live in the forest, or in the village, or in the temple, I find calmness, ...calmness. It is as if it is oneness. There will be no difference whether I'll be in the house, in the temple, or wherever it is, there will be no problem, no anxiety. In the spiritual sense how are we going to do to help other people to reach this stage? We must help one another. There must be cooperation among us. We must help each other in our Buddhist way. Also the Christians, the Muslims whatever their cultural or religious affiliations, they could help each other in their own ways. The teaching of each religion is very useful, helping each other for the good of common humanity.

I am interested in Christianity. There were some whom I had met. Sometimes we learn from them. Next week, I'm going to Chiangrai. I am going to meet one person, a Christian. I learned from him also, especially as regards the rural development. I do not have experience of some work that are academic but I have experience of inner aspect, that is *liberation*, but in terms of rural development, I have yet more to learn.

In the inner spiritual sense I think we are adequate.

—We would like to ask you how do you work out your spiritual aspect concerning prayer and helping the villagers?

—In my village, I used to teach them spiritually beforehand, so that when they are ready to do whatever they want to do, we teach them to earn their living. They learned the basic steps first. I taught them the walking meditation, to begin with. Then we shall bring mindfulness into their work, whether they are farmers; traders, policemen, soldiers, teachers or the general public, they have used this method of meditation "*satipatthana*". To have awareness, constant consciousness, (if you practice this meditation continuously like a chain that is to develop sati-awareness or consciousness, then in at most 3 years sorrow will be diminished by 60% and in some cases completely eliminated. Some may achieve this in as little as one year or even 90 days) so that anytime that this emotion (an uncontrolled vice or negative motion) comes up, they would be aware of it. Then they shall learn the stages of this emotion or the mood of the mind. The villagers then would have the actual experiences and they will bring this into their own daily life such as, how to live together in group.

Before, they did not know the stages of their own stability of mind. So, we brought this method to them "*the way*" and how to live together. When they know each other, they could become brothers and sisters, forgive one another, and work together; then fruits are born consequently. They have cooperatives, rice bank, other agricultural ventures together, because of working closely together, compassion is born amongst them and the more they feel to become brothers and sisters, help each other in rural development and public utilities. Anything that will be useful they will start to put into practice from their own life experiences and bring "*the way*" into their other works. Those who come here are teachers, farmers, soldiers, policemen, fathers, mothers, etc. They all adopt this method of meditation. It is suitable to every career, for all ages, male or female alike. I've already mentioned in the

beginning that the Dhamma teaching is very suitable for every one. Sometimes, when we see the problem, we help to solve the problem.

—We are very impressed with your talk. Before ending this talk, we would like Than Archarn (teacher) to give us some thoughts or something special for us as a Christian.

—I have said many times in the subject of teaching of any religion. I really had this feeling, not because I am talking in front of you or not talking to all of you, it's this. This thought always had been with me, when I eventually came to understand the real Dhamma. Oh, everyone is alike. One who loves happiness, dislikes *dukkha* (sorrow). One does not want to persecute others. Whatever religion, it teaches people to do good, to avoid evil, making merits. I have both taught spiritual growth and material development to the rural villages. There were times, that I have met Christians and Muslims. From my heart, I do not mind whether they were Buddhists, Christians or Muslims. I wish we have a mutual cooperation. Let us help mankind away from *dukkha* (sorrow). We should not persecute each other, there should be no jealousy amongst us. I teach them all about this whether they are Christians, Muslims or Buddhists, that we are all human beings.

So, let us spend our life together, not only in this country. To love oneself, to love one's family, to love men and women of the world, ... the whole world, taking responsibility of the world.

To spread this teaching, to help your fellowmen, it is our direct responsibility. It is not a question of asking or begging... The real teaching of religion is in the present moment. If any problem arises, we help to solve, and find the solution. Help each other solve the problem. If they do not yet see the problem and if we have seen the problem before them, we should gently point out, and give advice to enable them to realize what the problem is. Sometimes, people are so immersed in their own mistakes, that they do not see they are at fault. We should help them to realize, telling them, whether it was right to behave like that.

Sometimes disputes arise among the people. I listen and understand their problem whether it is a family quarrel or social conflicts. I have come to know and listen to their problems. Sometimes I could help them to find also in earning their living. If only we could understand how to live together really as fellowmen!

Not so long ago, I heard an unpleasant news between Christians and Buddhists. I do not see, why we took some supposed words... so seriously and create hatred. If only everyone understands reality words created to classify people cannot rule over us. Some people are thinking that the Christians are getting more people to join their creed. Actually, it is good, if anyone can teach or is able to teach anyone how to liberate from sorrow, how to live in unity like brothers and sisters, then why was it not good? It is good as well. It is not a question of religion in being a Christian or a Buddhist, never, never. Now, I'd see that everything is improving.

For some people like you ... (pointed to the Bishop and people around him) could be like Bodhisattvas that is if you sacrifice your lives for the benefit of others. Not so long ago, there were young people, young boys and girls who came to help the villagers in many things, who have been granted some funds from abroad, ... to give a hand, help.... They really sacrificed themselves for the people. We are monks, we cannot just sit and sleep. We have privileges. They gave us free rice. They gave us free food. The house is free. The medicine is also free. Someone is behind these scenes to make life convenient for us. We just cannot bear doing nothing, we have to help mankind. As I told you, I offer my life for others, not acquiring my own personal benefits. Some people see the monk, even some Buddhists do not understand these questions. There are many more... many more. They become monks just to do some ritual ceremonies only and to obtain fortune and respect, praise and flattery from others. But a few of them, about 5%, would go and cooperate with the people and suffer with them.

I have some friends, they misunderstood me of having no position. I

am not a religious superior over the district or the commune. I am none of these. Since the day I was ordained... spiritual inner things are the only things I was searching for. The rest are not important. Few people would come to realize enough that one's life must have meaning, useful, valuable, and that there is only these things ... to help each other, and to give charity.

Supposing we are able to teach one friend to become educated, it is like making merit. It is like gaining great merit to be able to teach an uneducated person to become a little bit educated. To be able to convert a criminal to be a good person, to be able to stop people that are going to kill each other to lay down their weapons. This is making merit, the highest merit. Not only by words. To teach one who does not know what is right and what is wrong and to teach them what is sin and what is merit. To teach them living in the right path. This is what I, myself, would like to do. There are many other activities that are already performed by other monks in different ways. But, this is my path. I would liberate them from sorrow so that they would become wiser. To become more like brothers and sisters.

This is what I have in mind. I would like to spend the rest of my life to work at this task until my life ends.

We, in Thailand, entrust to you, missionary, who came to Thailand, (pointed to Norma) to help people to understand one another. Each one giving a helping hand to all. It does not matter if you are a Christian or Muslim, we must help one another ... This is what is in my thought.

—After listening to your answers, we feel that Christianity or Buddhism, every religion alike, teaches us to be brothers and sisters, to avoid bad, by doing good. To live together in peace.

On this occasion, we wish to thank you very much, for your sharing and spiritual food for thought for us Christians, especially Christians in the Philippines who want to know more about Buddhism. For sure, that we have gained much from your talk, although we are having different religions, we should be in good rapport with one

another, as you have said. We shall keep on and go ahead with this relationship. As you have mentioned, let us help each other in this way, so that our country will be in progress. The world will have no war, if there is no racial discrimination, no division amongst the west and the east, the north and the south which exist now at present, then we could live in real peace.

We wish you all the best of strength for your health and mind and rich in wisdom, so that you will be beneficial to the country, Thailand, so that everything will be according to your teaching. Thank you very much.

—I am also very happy to come to meet with Christians and elders of the Christian community. I have never hoped that I would have the chance to come and meet with you. It is my good fortune. Those things which I have said, perhaps, there might be some things which are not suitable. We ask for your forgiveness at this moment. And if

anything is beneficial, then, let this blessing come to you, to everyone of you, in the west, in the east.

Let us be brothers and sisters until the end of our lives. We must not come into dispute. If we really work hard in our teachings, our home would not be in need of keys, no need to close doors, no thieves. I dare say to you, if one knows the way to liberation, there is no need of prison, no policeman, no soldier ... no need. There will be only brothers and sisters.

To be able to succeed in this, how are we going to do?

We entrust this to the leaders of each religion to sacrifice their lives to spread the teachings of their masters. Give a hand, with our patience, our perseverance, it will probably succeed one of these days.

May you be happy and sawasdee to all of us.

WESTERN MAIL, TUESDAY,
MAY 14, 1985

WALES AND THE WORLD

Fond memories

One of Lampeter's most distinguished former students, Thai scholar Sulak Sivaraksa went back to college to say thank you to the friends who rallied round him when he stood trial last year.

Sulak, a lawyer and social reform campaigner in Thailand, faced a maximum gaol sentence of 30 years on a charge of high treason following the publication of his book *Unmasking Thai Society*.

But following an energetic campaign backed by Amnesty International, and led by St. David's University College's principal, Professor Brian Morris, and a fellow former Lampeter student, Bob McCloy, who is now director of education and recreation at Kingston upon Thames, Sulak was freed and the case against him dropped.

"No official reasons for the decision have ever been given, but I believe it was because of International pressure," Sulak told me.

"It was wonderful to have the support of so many people, and coming back to

Lampeter is just like coming home. To me, the place means friendship."

Sulak has fond memories of his days in Lampeter in the Fifties and was the college's first Asian student. He took his studies seriously, but joined Bob McCloy, the then president of the students' union, in organising the famous Cheese Pie rebellion which saw the once staple dish on the college's menu banished for ever.

After lunch with Professor Morris, Sulak revealed, he attributed his popularity during his student days to the fact that he had a ground floor room on the college's campus.

"In those days we had a strict evening curfew, and I was always being woken up by students knocking on the window so they could crawl in through my room," he explained.

Today's students enjoy a far freer life at the university, and yesterday Sulak told them about life and the social conflict of his home country.

From Lampeter, Sulak will travel to London and then on to Europe where he will give several lectures for Amnesty International.

Westgate

Visit in Tübingen

Sulak Sivaraksa Buddha as an Example

In our country when we think of a Buddhist, we tend to think of a monk in saffron robe retired into himself rather than a social reformer. Sulak Sivaraksa is a convinced Buddhist and a committed democrat. The 52-year-old guest comes from Thailand, prefers, however, to call it Siam according to the old custom. In his opinion, the name "Thailand" is "undemocratic". It was not until 1939 when a fascist military dictator of the Pan Thai Movement converted this country in Southeast Asia to a new name with which the territorial claim for almost the whole Southeast Asia is linked.

Sivaraksa is one of the most prominent representatives of the Buddhist laymen and coordinator of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, an organization active in 17 Asian countries. Among other things ACFOD trains community workers for rural population in the region. At present he takes part in a Buddhist-Christian Dialogue in Bad Boll. Monday evening, on invitation of the Institute for Ecumenical Research, he gave a speech in lecture room 22, Kupfer Building.

In his fight for social justice and democracy in a country ruled by military regime, Sivaraksa looks up to "Buddha as an example". One must try, "to be calm, not to hurt the enemy", and always "keep the attitude of active compassion", especially

towards the poor. In Siam there are enough poor people. "We have twice as many prostitutes as monks. There is plenty to eat. Rice is exported; yet sixty percents of the population are malnourished". The government works for its own pocket and not for the people's well-being. Ordinary people could develop a self-consciousness against that only when they "rouse what is really Siamese" against the overflow of western culture. That is where the Buddhist spirituality plays a role.

The community workers trained by Sivaraksa's organization are practical examples of this program. These young people go to live with the farmers for one or two years, learn from them and at the same time teach them. They should help the farmers, for example, with book-keeping or with contract deals, and should see to it that the goods or medicine they get distributed free of charge really go to those in need and do not disappear into the pockets of corrupted civil servants.

This way of confronting capitalization of the country holds Sivaraksa far more proper than the way the young Siamese used to do in the seventies, "They went to the jungle thinking that Marxism was the answer". Nothing against the analytical method of Marxism, "it is very helpful," but the practical model of class-struggle only leads to situations, "in which the oppressed become the oppressors. Just have a look at Vietnam, for example"

He has sympathy for Christian theologians who fight for liberation in the Philippines. The fact that one sides with the op-

pressed means for him the beginning of a dialogue between different religions. He can understand why the Christians in the Philippines take up arms to fight the dictator there. Sivaraksa however, chooses another way.

Despite his advocacy for non-violence, he had to flee abroad for 2 years for the first time after the military coup d'état in 1976. One of his books in which the king, among others, is criticized, was confiscated last year; he himself was arrested. He thanks friends abroad whose intervention had, last but not least, helped his case so that he was free again.

A success that Sivaraksa can already cite with certainty: the following: The medical methods of the Buddhist monk which once were forbidden by the Ministry of Public Health in favor of westernization, and which were replaced by imported medicine too expensive for most people, are now being accepted again. Even medical students are sent to learn from the monks. "So just as there are barefoot doctors in China, we will have bareheaded doctors in Siam"

*From: Tübingen/Lokale Kultur
Saturday, May 4, 1985*



Sulak speaks

At a recent meeting in London, co-sponsored by the Thai Development Information Service and *Inside Asia*, Sulak Svaraksa, director of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, outlined his views on recent events in Thai political society. Sulak himself was arrested last year, and held for several weeks before his case was finally dropped (see *Inside Asia*, No. 1, Nov./Dec. 1984). A shortened version of his talk is given below.

THE FORTUNATE or unfortunate thing about my case is that I was well known. But what about those who are not known? They are being repressed much more ruthlessly. And they are not mentioned—not even by the local press. Local reporters, if they report these things, are even shot dead; this is not mentioned in the national press either. For this reason we need friends abroad, who know us and relate to us, and can apply some pressure.

The main obstacle in development or humanitarian work in Asia is, without fail, the powers-that-be. They think that when you work with grassroots people—the farmers and fishermen—you will teach them to rebel against the government. For instance my organization, SCFOD, the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, brings small people together from across Asia. (The rich people in my case get together by themselves). Recently we had an international meeting of small fishermen, in Rayong in eastern Sam. It was attended by a man from Songkhla. As soon as

he returned, the police questioned him: 'You are just a fisherman; why did you go to a meeting? Why do you meet people from other countries? To rebel?' This is not an isolated instance, it's usual.

Army factions

As I predicted last May, things began to get rough. Prem retired from the army, so he had no real power base—he must be supported by somebody in the army. The army has been running Siam uninterrupted since 1947. Of course, we have had 'democratic' window-dressing—a cabinet and civilian ministers—but they don't mean a great deal. Since the military is the real power, the trouble starts when it is not united: then it is not clear who succeeds whom.

Prem is a very clever politician and has links with enough power in the army to support him. But now General Arthit is impatient to succeed Prem. Arthit tried to have the constitution amended because at present it doesn't allow a serving military officer or civil servant to hold a political post, but he failed. So, for Arthit to topple Prem, a coup is necessary.

In July, 22 suspected communists in Bangkok were arrested. There was disagreement within the army about this. Prem had offered an amnesty to the communists, saying in effect 'Although you have communist sympathies, if you come back to our fold you will be forgiven. And for those who have not yet decided, we will give you time to think about it, then you can come back.' In late June or early July there were supposedly a number of top communist ac-

tivists in town; and part of the army (particularly Arthit's faction) said 'We must arrest those people', while another group, associated with Prem, said 'No, let them be—they may decide to join us.' While the argument was going on, those who were supposed to be the big shots in the CPT (Communist Party of Thailand) escaped, so they felt they had to arrest the others, 22 in all.

Arthit's group felt that Prem's faction had made a big mistake in letting the big shots escape, and Prem's assistant, Chaowalit, was even accused of being a communist sympathizer himself.

Excuse for a coup

As the arrests did not produce any dramatic events more ensued. That was when I entered the arena. At first they were going to charge me with being a communist; but when they consulted the Special Branch police, the CID and the Public Prosecutor's Department, they were told: 'You can't accuse Sulak of being a communist, people will just laugh!' That's why the *lèse majesté* charge was trumped up. Even so, all these three departments (and Prem) felt that I should not be arrested, but the other side argued 'You people are too legalistic, too cautious: last time, those leaders escaped, so now we should go ahead.' And I was arrested. I felt they were trying to stir up an excuse for a coup; but it didn't work.

They were thinking of further arrests. Kraisak Chunchavan was threatened...and the directors of the Social Science Research Institutes at Thammasat and Chulalongkorn Universities, and even the Rector of Thammasat

was threatened with arrest. Why? The army people are no fools—they wanted to stir up popular demonstrations and disorder.

Prem was now politically and physically very weak, but the Americans came to his aid. He went to the USA for an operation—I think on political grounds as well as medical grounds. Before his departure, Prem gave strict instructions to Arthit not to interfere with the government—and insisted that the case against me should be dropped. At least, so I was told. But Arthit is supreme commander, army commander-in-chief and also the *puraksa phranakorn* (commander-in-charge of security in the capital) and so has a lot of authority, especially since Bangkok is under a declared 'state of emergency'. He simply ignored Prem's instructions and so the case went on.

To be blunt, I think Prem wasn't quite sure where the Palace stood. Arthit is supposed to be very close to the Palace, and Prem may have thought that the Palace was backing Arthit. And Arthit played that game very cleverly.

Royal rebuttal

On the day Prem returned from America, I appeared in court. We shared the headlines. I heard afterwards that Arthit and Prem had a heated argument for over two hours about poor Sulak—not that either of them like me! I think that it was at this point that international pressure was influential. The King let it be known that he was not backing Arthit in my particular case. He felt embarrassed that his name had been used for political

reasons. Prem derived support from this, and in any event was getting stronger, and the case against me was dropped.

Then Arthit blundered by criticizing the devaluation of the baht, and many people thought that he was finished, that he might not even have his term as supreme commander extended. But those who thought that don't understand Thai subtlety. Of course, Arthit's remark was a bit extreme. But he still had his factional support, and perhaps even Prem needs Arthit's faction to balance some of the people around him. And people high above Prem may need other factions around as a counter-balance too. So Arthit has now reemerged and has had his term extended.

When you look at politics at the top, they are just trying to balance power—and meanwhile the people suffer more and more. Economically things are much worse; politically things are no better; and if you try to do something yourselves, they watch you.

Which way for us?

But for those of us who feel that the only alternative future for the country is with the people, at the grassroots, it is essential to build up the base. The top people—look up at them, try to understand them, keep them (in Buddhist terms) in 'sympathetic joy'—that is, hope they won't kill each other too much! Meanwhile we try to protect ourselves from being killed, and do something so that our people can live meaningfully, with dignity.

At one time, we thought Western capitalism would be an

answer. When John Bowring came and forced King Mongkut to open the country, we were proud that we retained our independence unlike all our neighbours—but I think it was false independence. This is in fact what I went to gaol for: I said I thought the princes and king later on admired the West too much, and thought that Western technology would help us. I didn't. Now the poor and the middle class imitate the rich—and the rich imitate the West. The result, I think, is a muddle.

Many of us feel communism is not an answer either, though marxist analysis may be useful. In the 1970s our youngsters thought that communism would be the answer. Many went into the jungle, though perhaps too they didn't have a choice. Now many of them are disillusioned. We will have to go along the capitalist road for many years to come. We must not just abandon one road for the other, like Deng Xiaoping abandoning Marxism in favour of capitalism, or vice versa.

For many of us, particularly Thai Buddhists, we feel that we must go back to our own cultural roots, to translate and transform them to the modern period. Buddhism is important for us, but we must not be pure, absolutist Buddhists. We must work with Christian and Muslim friends, and put our hearts and minds together to solve our problems indigenously, and yet learn from beyond our national and beyond our cultural and religious traditions.

Sulak Sivaraksa is co-ordinator of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, Bangkok.

in Bangkok. He is a prolific writer on social and philosophical subjects and has played a prominent role in building links between voluntary organizations in

Thailand and Europe.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Siamese Resurgence :

by S. Sivaraksa, ACFOD

1985 (463 pp) Distributed

by Suksit Siam, Bangkok

The sub-title: "A Thai Buddhist Voice on Asia and a World of Change" indicates the direction of the contents of the book. It actually is a collection of papers, addresses and notes of interviews Mr. Sivaraksa had given between November 1980 and December 1984, relevantly grouped into five sections viz: (i) Buddhism and Society; (ii) Buddhist Perspectives and Development; (iii) Culture and Asia; (iv) Some Leading Siamese Personalities, and (v) Miscellaneous..

Archarn Sulak is a man of strong convictions and he brings his scholarship to bear on the courageous arguments he gives drawing on history, religion and current affairs of his beloved nation. He would not allow himself to be swayed by majority opinion or even usage when he insists on referring to his country as Siam and not as "Thailand" which he disapproves at the outset as being a hybrid, anglicised word. Accordingly the title of the publication is based on the historical name: Siam rather than the imposed innovation after the 1947 coup d'etat.

The hard-hitting dissents Archarn Sulak expressed either in interpreting national history or in expounding religious concepts are significant indications of the role he plays in society often at great personal and material costs. In many ways he makes his mark as an orthodox traditionalist and his explanations about Buddhism are straight communication of the canons even in terms of the vocabulary and imagery. This makes it all the more interesting for the reader as one invariably hears the orthodox interpreter of the age old religion on the one hand and the refreshing thinker who takes seriously the application of the faith to contemporary social and human challenges on the other.

In the opening section on Buddhism and society, the very first chapter went straight to the core of Buddhist teachings viz. the four noble truths, the three signs of being, the chain of causation, the eightfold path and the four states of sublime conditions.

Having established the fundamental doctrines, the stimulating arrangement of the contents brings the reader face to face with the hard knocks Archarn Sulak administered against the malpractices in Buddhism. The usual impressions of many

about Buddhism as an other-worldly religion seeking personal escape from involvement in society was disproved by his concrete case-stories of social service rendered by the monks including an old monk in his neighbourhood, who looks after the poor of his native region and those who are in serious struggles of life after migrating to the metropolis. Such concern for society instead of turning one's back on it and the concern for politics or economics were explained as being based on Buddhist religion.

His discerning comments and study are not only for his own religion but also for Christianity as he addresses western audiences. For someone outside another faith (in this case the Christian faith) to courageously declare that western civilization is eroding Christianity (as he did in his chapter on "Quality of Life") manifests the keenness of his observations and the degree of his discerning mind.

The sections on "Culture and Asia" and "Leading Siamese Personalities" contain important scholarly corrections to readings in Siamese history and these will help later Thai generations to assess persons and events in their history with alertness. The closing section though made up of miscellaneous topics still contribute to the theme of the publication.

The reader after going through the last pages of the collection may still entertain the question why the term "resurgence" appears in the title of the book. One may argue that the religious and social critic's pen might have pointed out more of 'degeneration' than of 'resur-

gence' among his people as he scans national history and the horizon. But there is no doubt that the author is seeking to highlight the philosophical, cultural and historical distinctions of the Thai heritage. In so doing he is also challenging his own people and at the same time his fellow Asians, to manifest and bring about the "resurgence" that is indicated both as a heritage and an investment. The accounts narrated and the thoughts shared are surely worthy of deep reflection and consideration for serious application.

Kyaw Than
Mahidol University
Bangkok

Puey Ungphakorn, A Siamese for All Seasons

(*Komol Keemthong Foundation, Bangkok, 6 October 1981*), pp. 351

Puey Ungphakorn, A Siamese for All Seasons is a collection of articles by and about Dr. Puey Ungphakorn, one of the outstanding leaders of present-day Thailand. The book takes the reader on an exciting journey through recent Thai history, starting with Dr. Puey's experiences in the Free Thai Movement during World War II, his struggles to help build a truly democratic Thailand with a strong and just economy, and his deeply personal views of the events that led up to and through the events of October 1976.

For serious students of Thailand who wish to better

understand recent Thai history, and who would like to better know one of the figures who played such an important part in that history, this book is a must.

Dr. Puey is an economist, and served as Governor of the Bank of Thailand from 1959 to 1971 and later as economic adviser to the government of Mr. Sanya Dharmasakti. He was later to also serve as the Rector of Thammasat University, a post which he was holding when the university was put to siege by rightist elements and many students killed, hanged and burned. Dr. Puey left the country at that time and went to England where he now lives. Included in this book is an article written by a Thai journalist who recently visited Dr. Puey in England, and through that article one can see the fierce love and loyalty which Dr. Puey still holds for his beloved Thailand.

Dr. Puey's clear and strong analysis of the Thai situation, and his welcome sense of humor make this book easy reading, yet powerful and thought-provoking.

Max Ediger

*Church of Christ in Thailand
From Journal of the Siam Society
1982*

ภาพพุทธประวัติ วัดทองนพคุณ

*Painted Sculpture on the
Life of the Buddha-folk Art
at Wat Thongnopakun
(Matichon Publishing
House, Bangkok, 1983)*

This is a beautiful book of

folk art created in 1915 by a group of independent craftsmen at Ban Chang Lor in Thonburi which was and still is a community specialized in producing Buddhist sculpture. It was the Honorable Mrs. Lom Hemjayati, benefactress of Wat Thongnopakun who paid for the series of 90 painted sculptures decorating the Preaching Hall of the Wat, which she helped in reconstruction. Mrs. Lom was a millionairess and a close friend of King Chulalongkorn.

Last year, the old Preaching Hall was in a declining state beyond repair, so the Abbot had it removed and rebuilt on a new site. The painted sculpture were well preserved and photographs were taken of them by members of the Thai Inter Religious Commission for Development before they were redecorated in the new Preaching Hall.

Last year being the Bangkok Bicentennial Anniversary, the Association of Siamese Architects decided to ask the Honorary Member, H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn to present awards to those who preserved their buildings properly, especially the buildings with artistic and historical value. Wat Thongnopakun was the only temple which received the award for looking after the consecrated Assembly Hall as deserved.

As a consequence, the Association of Siamese Architects in collaboration with the Siam Society asked H.R.H., who also Vice Patron of the Society to present the Kathina Robes to the temple, which the Princess did on 5th November 1983.

On this occasion, she a

presented the *Pha Pa* (Forest Robes) to the Abbot and raised the *Chow Fa* (Sky Tassel) of the new Preaching Hall. This book was published on that special occasion, with some financial assistance from the descendant of the Hon. Mrs. Lom Hemajayati and from the Jim Thompson Foundation.

The book, however, does not mention who the editor was but it is not difficult to guess about this anonymous editor. As the book was produced in a hurry in order to present it in time to Her Royal Highness, it is not without major printing errors. Let us hope that the Publishing House will take its time to present a new edition to the public with no printing errors at all.

Mr. Pong Sengking of Silpakorn University was responsible for the Thai text, which he did very well. He traced the uniqueness of this type of folk art from this Wat to another at Samudrasongkram province to find out that it was the same benefactress, through a monk at Wat Thongnopakun, that a series of 84 pictures were executed three years later at the temple of that monk's birthplace.

The English text is much shorter and was the responsibility of a few Thai scholars who tried their best to present the Thai narration on the life of the Buddha written in the archaic style of the early Bangkok period to the English reading public. The photographers and designers of the book should indeed be commended in producing a beautiful book for us.

Had all these people taken their time in producing the book, we would really have a wonder-

ful gift similar to the gift of Dhamma as expressed through the allegorical life of the Buddha decorating the Preaching Hall of Wat Thongnopakun. As it is, it shows human imperfection,

which can be improved.

Phra Pracha Pasannadhammo

Suan Mokh Kao,

Pumriang, Jaiya

From Journal of the Siam Society
1983

Please call me by my true names

Do not say that I'll depart tomorrow
because even today I still arrive.

Look deeply: I arrive in every second
to be a bud on a spring branch,
to be a tiny bird, with wings still fragile,
learning to sing in my new nest,
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry,
in order to fear and to hope,
the rhythm of my heart is the birth and death
of all that are alive.

I am the mayfly metamorphosing on the
surface of the river,
and I am the bird which, when spring comes,
arrives in time to eat the mayfly.

I am a frog swimming happily in the clear water
of a pond,
and I am the grass-snake who, approaching
in silence, feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,
my legs as thin as bamboo sticks,
and I am the arms merchant, selling deadly
weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve year-old girl, refugee on a
small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean after being
raped by a sea pirate,
and I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable
of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the politburo, with plenty
of power in my hands,
and I am the man who has to pay his "debt
of blood" to my people,
dying slowly in a forced labor camp.

My joy is like spring, so warm it makes
flowers bloom in all walks of life.
My pain is like a river of tears, so full it fills
all four oceans.

Please call me by my true names, so I can hear
all my cries and laughs at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

Please call me by my true names, so I can wake
up and so the door of my heart can be left
open, the door of compassion.

Thich Nhat Hanh

The Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian Buddhist Era seems to be one year later than that of Burma, Srilanka and India. In fact this is not so. The difference is that while the latter regards the year of the Maha Parinibbana as B.E.I, the former takes it to be the first anniversary after the Master's Passing Away. For example this year is B.E. 2528 according to the Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian Calendar, but it is B.E. 2529 according to the Burmese, Ceylonese and Indian Calendar.



**THAI INTER - RELIGIOUS
COMMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT**

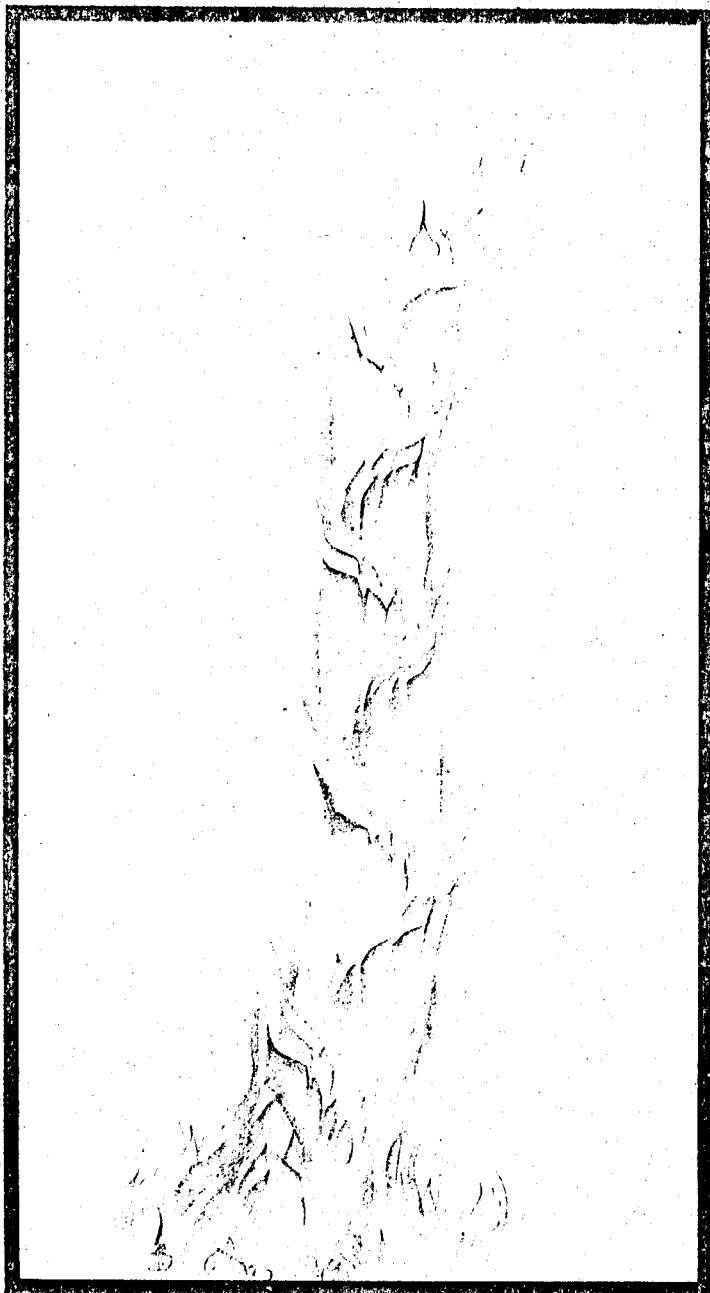
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SEEDS OF PEACE

NO. 1 NOVEMBER 1996

BUDDHISM FOR PEACE
DIALOGUE AND DEVELOPMENT
POST INDUSTRIAL BUDDHISM



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Objectives of TICD

1. To coordinate work among individuals, groups of individuals and various agencies dealing with religions and development in course of working together.
2. To share experience in and knowledge of religions and development as well as exploring ways and means of working together.
3. To offer training and secure resources in terms of man-power and materials to support and enhance the agencies that need help.

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Editorial Note

We were fortunate that the last issues of our publication were presented to the Pope and the Supreme Patriarch.

Many readers encouraged us to produce **Seeds of Peace** more often than hitherto. Hence from now on it will appear in January, May and September, instead of twice annually as previously.

We received a number of articles and books for review as well as encouraging letters. We are indeed grateful.

As the United Nations has declared 1986 to be International Peace Year, we will definitely concentrate on that topic, which is also our own concern.

We wish to thank ACFOD staff and board members of TICD for being so helpful in producing and promoting **Seeds of Peace**.

We will dedicate the next issue to the Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, as it will be his 80th birthday anniversary, and he has done so much for what we stand for, and more. Hopefully vol. II no 2 will give you some ideas about the most important Thai monk of the century.

Please support us by sending to us your criticisms, articles and financial contributions so that we in our small way can spread seeds of peace more effectively in order that peace will be a reality in our daily lives—not a wishful thinking.

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The Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian Buddhist Era seems to be one year later than that of Burma, Srilanka and India. In fact this is not so. The difference is that while the latter regards the year of the Mahā Parinibbāna as B.E.1, the former takes it to be the first anniversary after the Master's Passing Away. For example this year is B.E. 2529 according to the Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian Calendar, but it is B.E. 2530 according to the Burmese, Ceylonese and Indian Calendar.

Buddhism for Peace

David L. Gosling

Director of Church and Society, World Council of Churches



During the summer of 1980 a peace movement began in two holding centres for Kampuchean refugees in Thailand. It reached a climax on two separate days of prayer and meditation for peace attended by a quarter of a million Khmer refugees, mostly Buddhists but including Muslims and Christians, and momentarily captured the imagination of sections of the world's Press. Messages of goodwill were received from the Pope, the Dalai Lama, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the World Council of Churches, and Mother Teresa.

The movement was centred on Sa-Kaeo and Khao-I-Dang, two holding centres within about an hour's drive of Aranya Prathet on

the Thai/Kampuchean border to the east of Bangkok. It also involved a group of young Thai monks from Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University in Bangkok and a remarkable Khmer monk, Phra Maha Chosananda, who had been living in Thailand prior to Pol Pot's excesses and the advent of the Vietnamese.

The following events describe the response of a group of Thai and Khmer Theravada Buddhist monks to the plight of the refugees. Their initiatives became the focal point of the refugees' hopes and sparked off a movement which, had it been allowed to continue, might have received international acclaim.

Buddhist Beginnings

Ordination to the monkhood in Thailand presupposes that the candidate is not in breach of the law. Thus it could be argued that a refugee who is not legally permitted to remain in the country should not be allowed to ordain. Furthermore, Thai monks are traditionally free to move from wat to wat (except during the rainy season or Buddhist Lent), so presumably refugee monks would have to be allowed to move in and out of the holding centres. This prospect raised problems.

The deference shown by the Thais to monks made the issue of refugee ordinations more difficult than it might at first appear. It is not "appropriate", for example, for a soldier to stop a monk and ask him where he is going. Nor is it "appropriate" for a monk to be associated in any way with violence, which is why Thai Military Chaplains are laymen (usually monks who have disrobed—which is very easy and socially acceptable). But once the situation in the camps had stabilized, what was there to stop monks from outside from visiting the refugees and setting up a wat or at least a sala inside the camp?

There were a small number of Khmer monks among the refugees at Khao-I-Dang plus many more former monks who had disrobed to avoid execution by the Khmer Rouge. Pol Pot had been ruthless in attempting to suppress Buddhism, and the Cambodian Supreme Patriarch had been publicly disembowelled.

The Thai military were initially enthusiastic about having a wat in each camp, and helped to build them. They were simple bamboo structures consisting of a large covered awning with a raised platform for the monks. Thai monks from two local wats were permitted to move in and out of the camps and participate in daily morning and evening prayers with the Khmer monks (*suadmonchaw* and *suadmonjen*).

In December 1979 a Thai Captain at Khao-I-Dang agreed to sponsor some refugees for ordination, and the local abbot gave his consent. There were a few ordina-

tions to the noviciate (*samanera*, or *neen* in the Northeast), and a small number to the monkhood (*bhikkhu* or *phraa*). But the Department of Religious Affairs subsequently questioned these ordinations on the grounds that the refugees were illegally in the country. Consequently no further full ordinations took place in any of the camps (though the monks and novices were not required to disrobe). By January 1980 several hundred refugees were attending daily prayers at both camps.

Undergraduate monks from Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University started to visit Sa-Kaeo in December 1979, and Khao-I-Dang the following month. Their work was part of their practical training and needs to be understood within the context of the development programmes for monks which have become increasingly prominent in the past few years. These scholar monks, many of them originally from poor families in the Northeast, spent one day a week in the camps constructing *dhamma-salas* for meetings and cultural programmes (including *likae* or folk dramas), organizing schools and adult education programmes in Thai and English, and teaching crafts, physical education, music, and classical ballet.

The involvement of Thai monks in development work raises a number of problems associated with the *Vinaya* or *Patimokkha* rules which regulate the behaviour of members of the Sangha (the community of monks). For example, a monk may not cut down a tree or dig a hole in the ground, because both these actions may destroy life. In practice such strictures are increasingly ignored, though most monks only do so provided they can find a positive Buddhist injunction to justify their actions.

None of the Thai monks in the Buddhism and Culture Programme appeared to have significant problems with regard to the *Vinaya*, though the *farang* monk reverted to the noviciate because he felt unable to organize the financial side of the handicrafts work as a *bhikkhu*. (Novices are subject to only ten of the 227 rules which a monk must observe.) This same monk, a talented Australian, once got into serious trouble from

an orthodox Buddhist visitor for playing the flute to entertain a Khmer child! The other monks had no such difficulties, though they fell out with the local monks at the Wat Baan Kaeng. These local monks—"bandit monks"—as one Bangkok-educated novice rudely called them, played transistor radios and watched noisy Thai movies far into the night, preventing the visiting monks from sleeping. Matters came to a head when the UNHCR installed a new water pump outside the wat, stipulating that only refugee-related personnel (that is, the visiting monks) could use it. The local monks were furious, and incited the abbot to confiscate the key to the communal lavatories!

At Khao-I-Dang there were fewer tensions between the Mahachulalongkorn volunteers and the local monks. This may be because some of the local monks had been trained under the government-sponsored Phra Dhammatuta scheme. Forty-two Khao-I-Dang refugees were ordained *phaa khao* (white robe), a compromise eventually worked out between the military and the Department of Religious Affairs.

Both camps contained several dozen *mae chi*, sometimes regarded as nuns. As Jane Bunnag points out, there is no national hierarchy of nuns, though some exercise considerable influence at individual wats. They observe eight precepts. The three injunctions additional to the five observed by all Buddhists forbid the taking of evening meals, sleeping on soft beds, and wearing any kind of personal adornment. They shave their heads and wear white robes.

At both camps the *mae chi* exercised considerable though unobtrusive influence. They attended all the daily prayer gatherings and took a lively pastoral interest in their fellow refugees, especially the orphans. When the Abbot of the Wat Baan Kaeng confiscated the washroom key it was the silent indignation of the *mae chi* at the disrespect thereby shown to the Bangkok monks that compelled him to return it. (Their indignation did not similarly induce the visiting monks to share the U.N. well with the "bandit monks"!)

When the Khmer Rouge began to actively oppose the Bud-

dhism programme and some Khmer monks disrobed, the *mae chi* resolutely remained in their orders and continued to attend the daily prayers.

The military lay chaplains appeared at the camps from time to time and seemed generally appreciative of the Buddhism programme, though their arrival in smart military vehicles bristling with automatic weapons seemed somewhat incongruous! Visits to Khao-I-Dang were also made by the emissaries of Phra Kittiwutto, the politically extreme Director of Chittapavan College near Chon Buri. They seem to have had little difficulty in recruiting Khmer Seri refugees and transferring them to their headquarters. Sections of the Thai Press accused Kittiwutto of "gun running" for militant Khmer Seri factions via the Young Buddhists' Association.

Roman Catholic Khmers were visited by Catholic clergy from Bangkok, and Catholic relief organizations were prominent in most of the camps. Protestant Christians and fringe groups were also very much in evidence. Initially they worked harmoniously with other volunteers, but in time they began to use relief supplies and promises of prompt resettlement in "Christian" third countries to induce Khmer Buddhists to convert to Christianity. Prominent among them were "Karma" and World Vision International.

The Prince of Peace

"Prince of Peace" was the Khmer title given by children at Khao-I-Dang to a remarkable monk who first came to the camps in November 1979.

Phra Maha Ghosananda, to give him his full honorific title (or "Ajan" (teacher) as most people preferred to call him), was a fifty-eight-year-old Khmer monk. Ordained as a young man in Cambodia he had obtained the highest Pali grades before leaving for India in 1965 to work for a doctorate. He became fluent in seven languages, including Thai, French, and English, and in 1967 worked with a relief team in the Bihar famine. After fifteen years in India he moved to a wat at

Nakorn Si Thammarat in southern Thailand, and then moved north where he gravitated between the prestigious Wat Bovornives in Bangkok and the less illustrious Wat Baan Kaeng outside the Sa-Kaeo camp. At some stage of his career he was sponsored by the Phra Dhammatuta Programme.

Ajan's first triumph was to resolve the vexed question of ordinations at Khao-I-Dang. He recognized that ordination to the noviciate implies further ordination to monkhood and that this was unacceptable to the Thais. On the other hand mere lay status did not satisfy the religious aspirations of many of the refugees. He therefore put forward the idea of ordination as *phaa khao* (white robe).

Phaa khao, like *mae chi*, wore white robes and observed eight precepts. They were not novices, and hence were not expected to ordain as monks. But they were among the "religious", and eligible to undertake special responsibilities in the camp wats. A general Buddhist precedent for such ordinations is *anagarika*, which also involves eight precepts. But this is not really what Ajan had in mind, and in any case there is often a vast difference between mainstream Buddhism and Thai practice. The nearest Thai equivalent is probably *khon thi ma thu sin* or "those who come to observe the precepts". The military were happy with Ajan's solution to the ordination problem as was also the Somdet of the Wat Bovornives when he visited the camps. The Department of Religious Affairs was less agreeable, though probably more for bureaucratic than for religious reasons.

At Sa-Kaeo Ajan met with considerable initial opposition. In January he began to hold regular weekly meetings for Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian section leaders and representatives of other groups from both camps, urging them to work together for peace, non-violence, and reconciliation. This was particularly difficult for the Khmer Seri at Khao-I-Dang, who had bitter memories of Khmer Rouge atrocities.

Ghosananda's basic attitude to the Vinaya rules was that although a monk must try to observe them at all times, he should

recognize that their exact form reflects conditions which prevailed when the Buddha was alive and which may be different today. A monk's primary task is to preach the *Dhamma*, and to practice the *Brahmavihara*, particularly *metta* and *karuna* (loving kindness and compassion), which are exemplified in the lives of numerous *bodhisattvas*, especially Avalokita, the compassionate Buddha of the *Heart Sutra*. Like Buddhadasa Ghosananda interpreted *Nibbāna* in terms of the present life and the way we live it.

The Buddhism programme proceeded smoothly under Ajan's direction, and in March the two camps were placed under the jurisdiction of Task Force 80. On 16 March a joint conference of Kampuchean leaders sponsored by the temple officials at Sa-Kaeo and Khao-I-Dang issued a statement condemning continuing violence in Kampuchea and calling for a united day of prayer and meditation.

The day of prayer was fixed for 16 April, and an ecumenical organizing committee was set up consisting of Ghosananda and some Mahachulalongkorn monks, Major General Chana Samudavanija (formerly Thai Ambassador to Cambodia), Canon John Taylor of Christ Church, Bangkok, another British Anglican, and an American who will be referred to as Paul. The Church of Christ in Thailand and the Roman Catholic Church sent representatives to some of the planning meetings.

The military had no objections to the first day of prayer, and the Supreme Command requested Task Force 80 to issue permits for visitors to enter the two camps.

Witnessing for Peace

The first day of prayer on 16 April began at Sa-Kaeo. A cheerful procession of visitors led by Phra Maha Ghosananda and Roman Catholic Archbishop Michael Michai Kitboonchu entered the camp through lines of flag-waving children.

At Khao-I-Dang the refugees had erected a single platform, and the visitors had no choice other than to worship together. There were some uneasy moments.

A second day of prayer was planned for early June, and at the refugees' request the organizing committee wrote to the world's religious leaders inviting them to attend or send a message. The Khmer Council of Religion for Peace, consisting of section leaders and representatives of various groups, began to meet each week in the camps.

Following a request to the Thai Sangharaja (Supreme Patriarch) to attend the second day of prayer, three members of the organizing committee met the Director-General of Religious Affairs, Khun Pinij Sombutsiri, on 1 May 1980. The Director General had consulted the Maha Thera Sama Khom (Sangha Council of Elders), who did not think it appropriate for religious leaders to be present on the same platform at the same time. If so, he said, who would "wai" whom first? Could a Roman Catholic be expected to cross himself before a Buddha image?

Khun Pinij went on to stipulate that the different religious leaders should present themselves at different times for prayer or meditation, and that only refugees from the corresponding religious community should be present. But the religious leaders could initially be greeted together by the refugees, and if international figures such as Mother Teresa or the Dalai Lama were to take part, then the Sangharaja would be very happy to meet with them in private in Bangkok for as long as they wished. The Sangha Council recognized that the World Federation of Buddhists brought representatives of different religions together for seminars, but prayer and worship were another matter. Even lay members of different religions could not meaningfully take part in acts of worship with members of other religious traditions, and in any case the refugees would want to be blessed by monks. Subject to these conditions the Maha Thera Sama Khom and the Department of Religious Affairs saw no reason why the Sangharaja could not take part in acts of worship in the camps, and they would advise the Military Supreme Command to this effect.

The refugees supported their request to

the world's religious leaders by writing a quarter of a million letters of invitation.

But there were other forces at work in the camps. American Evangelical pastors at Khao-I-Dang urged their followers to have nothing to do with the peace movement, and at Sa-Kaeo the Khmer Rouge leaders became uneasy about the prospect of another day of prayer. Certain sections of the Thai military began to feel that the appearance of major religious leaders such as the Sangharaja or the Chula Rajmontri (the religious head of Thailand's Muslims) would appear to legitimize the presence of the refugees on Thai soil.

On 7 May General Tuantong Suwanatut, head of the Joint Operations Centre of the Supreme Command, informed the Director-General of Religious Affairs of the alleged existence of a group of people who were using religion as a cover for their own political ends. For some reason no action was taken on the basis of this letter until after the second day of prayer. General Tuantong's allegations, in retrospect, were particularly unfair in that the organizing committees in Bangkok and at the camps were scrupulously careful to prevent political interests from gaining a foothold. Had this not been the case the ultra-conservative Church of Christ in Thailand would never have sent a representative to the meetings or taken part in the days of prayer.

The second day of prayer followed much the same pattern as the first except that the acts of prayer and witness occurred consecutively. All the religious leaders stood on the same platform at both camps throughout, and all the refugees were present for the different ceremonies.

None of the international religious leaders came — no one really expected them at six weeks notice — but they all sent personal messages which were read out in Khmer, Thai, and English.

The Khmers expressed their gratitude to all religious leaders for their support and repeated their call for peace, reconciliation, and an end to the violence. They called for disarmament in Kampuchea supervised by the U.N., a continuation of Thailand's

"open-door" policy, enhanced prospects for resettlement in third countries, more efficient distribution of aid within Kampuchea and along the Thai border to both Khmers and displaced Thais, and better chances for training and education following resettlement.

Approximately 28,000 refugees took part in the Sa-Kaeo act of witness, and at Khao-I-Dang the crowd had grown to more than 100,000 by evening. Eventually the buses carrying the visitors moved away from the vast waving crowds en route for Bangkok. Ajan stayed behind, firmly identified with his people, in order to conduct evening prayers at the wat. "The Prince of Peace," the children had said.

Peace Eclipsed

The following day a dramatically different sequence of events occurred.

Nearly 10,000 grim faced, fist raising refugees of Sa-Kaeo gathered at two p.m. that day in demonstration in support of freedom fighters against the "Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia", an event staged by the Khmer Rouge leaders of Sa-Kaeo. The militant demonstration was in stark contrast to the Day of Peace meeting held one day before when prayer and meditation called for non-violence and the creation of a "Switzerland of South East Asia" as an answer to Cambodia's problems. The long rows of children saluting and chanting slogans were reminiscent of pictures taken of the Pol Pot regime in 1975. Many Thai and foreign volunteers were shocked that such a demonstration was permitted by the authorities.

Not only were the Khmer Rouge leaders unhappy about the Day of Prayer (which drew three times as many refugees as their own demonstration), but they were becoming increasingly militant over the UNHCR and Thai Government's plans for voluntary repatriation. The Khmer Rouge wanted as many as possible back across the border to fight the Vietnamese. The Thais saw Pol Pot's army as an effective buffer

between themselves and their traditional enemies and also wanted the refugees off their sovereign territory. The United States and most of its European allies were still caught up in the euphoria of the Vietnam War and remained conveniently oblivious to Pol Pot's atrocities. Meanwhile, the Vietnamese themselves were becoming increasingly angry at what they regarded as the rearming of their enemies. The last thing anybody wanted was peace and "voluntary" repatriation.

On Wednesday, 11 June, there was a meeting of the Khmer Council of Religion for Peace at Khao-I-Dang, and a moving and exceptionally well attended *suadmonjen* at the Sa-Kaeo wat. During the evening prayers Ajan read the Sermon on the Mount. He then proceeded to declare the wat a sanctuary to which the refugees could go to avoid intimidation.

Meanwhile, the monks and other volunteers including an American, Paul, had been translating and printing a summary of UNHCR official policy on repatriation in Khmer so that the refugees would know their rights. (It seems extraordinary, in retrospect, that the UNHCR thought that the refugees would have sufficient English to know that they had a choice!)

The UNHCR Coordinator read and approved the two statements declaring the wat a sanctuary and explaining official policy with regard to repatriation.

The Khmer translations were duly collected from the Wat Baan Kaeng and brought via the camp wat to the office of Colonel Kittiporn, commander of the Thai military division, Task Force 80. But some of them were accidentally or perhaps deliberately distributed en route. Thus before the leaflets arrived, a Khmer Rouge leader called Leo demanded to know what was happening. Fist fighting then broke out between Khmer Rouge strongmen and the lay leaders of the wat.

Late on Thursday night, 12 June, "Paul" returned from Bangkok, and attempted to enter the camp. He was promptly arrested and escorted to the wat with a gun pointing at his head. There he deposited his belong-

ings, including some items for the handicrafts programme, and a folder containing his camp pass.

On Saturday, 14 June, one of the two British members of the organizing committee entered Sa-Kao camp in a water truck, recovered Paul's pass (which was the only evidence that he had authority from the military to enter the camp), and hid it in the Wat Baan Kaeng. Later in the day it was decided that the pass was not safe in the wat and should be taken to Bangkok and shown to the authorities.

This time Ajan went to collect it. Fearing that the printing press might have been found and the wat sealed off, he hid the folder containing the pass in his *sabong*, and sat on it in the car all the way back to Bangkok. Twice the vehicle was stopped by the police, probably for routine reasons, but Ajan, a monk, was not searched.

On the same day as these events were taking place the *Bangkok Post* carried news about the leaflets and Paul's detention. It also referred to the fact that a member of Paul's family had been a prominent diplomat in Thailand.

The political storm over the leaflets continued as it became clear that news of the incident had been picked up in Hanoi and Phnom Penh. Vietnam was, in actual fact, on the point of launching an air strike across the Thai border. This occurred a few days later.

The UNHCR's camp co-ordinator denied having seen the leaflets, but resigned shortly afterwards and left Thailand. The mass repatriation began on Tuesday, 18 June, after considerable acrimony between all parties concerned. Many more refugees at Sa-Kao elected to stay in Thailand than had been expected, and they were transferred to another camp.

Paul was released on bail, and was given an opportunity to defend his actions at an informal meeting with General Saiyud Kerdphol, Chief of Staff of the Supreme Command. His innocence of the charges of trespass and distribution of the leaflets was established, though they do not appear to have been subsequently dropped. He

returned to the United States shortly afterwards.

On 19 June the ~~Director~~ General of Religious Affairs wrote to the Secretariat of the Sangha Council of Elders advising them of the contents of General Tuantorn Suwannatut's letter of 7 May. In his letter, which was ultimately sent to all provincial Sangha governors, he described the Committee of Religions for Peace in Kampuchea as a "badly-intentioned group who use religion as a cover in searching for their own or their group's political activities"

The Peace Programme had come to an end.

Postscript

In spite of strenuous efforts to keep politics out of the Peace Programme, the organizers were catapulted into the centre of a major political row. The deliberate focusing of the attention of international religious leaders on the refugees' suffering together with the physical presence of the leaders of Thailand's religious communities inside the camps was a potent combination which was bound to provoke a strong reaction. The violence unleashed by the peace programme was implicit in the refugees' situation long before Phra Maha Ghosananda began his visits to the camps.

The revolutionary potential of Ajan's formula for peace, non-violence, and reconciliation lay essentially in the fact that nobody could disagree with it. What could be more universally admirable than for a group of respected religious figures to pray and meditate with the refugees for peace? And yet, as we have seen, the strength of Ghosananda's peace formula was bound up with its unassailable innocence.

Ultimately the days of prayer challenged each and every one of the suffocating vested interests surrounding the refugees. The Thais saw them as subversive to their territorial integrity and hopes for a robust "third force" between themselves and their traditional enemies, the Vietnamese. The Khmer Rouge camp leaders were worried about their recruitment campaign. Mis-

sionaries and some of the aid agencies felt their sectarian interests and autonomy to be at risk. And further afield, the Great Powers, each in their own way, stood to gain from the continued manipulation of the refugees' hopes. As pointed out earlier, the Khmer refugees are unique in that their suffering over the past ten years is attributable to the excesses and failures of all the major political "-isms" — capitalism, nationalism, and both Russian and Chinese communism.

The diminutive, Gandhi-like figure of Ghosananda was a threat to these forces

precisely because it offered to fulfil what none of them could achieve. It was not surprising, therefore, that the peace movement failed. But while it lasted it pointed in a new direction and gave the refugees hope and a sense of identity and self-respect intimately bound up with their religious beliefs — which are arguably more precious than all the material aid poured into the camps from outside, and the specious political sentiments which accompanied much of it.

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UN UNIVERSITY

Anne Bancroft writes: Last March I made the long journey to **Bangkok** at the invitation of the United Nations University to spend 3 days discussing what a desirable Buddhist society should be. The topic was subdivided into three sections: 1. A critical assessment of present society from Buddhist perspectives; 2. Buddhist responses and alternatives to current problems; 3. Proposed means and processes. There were 18 of us: a number of bhikkhus, including **Ajahn Sumedho** and the **Ven. Rewata Dhamma** from **Birmingham**; and Buddhists from **China, Sri Lanka, America South Korea, India and Sikkim**; in addition scholars such as **Dr. Sulak Sivaraksa**, who arranged the meeting, and bhikkhus resident in Bangkok joined the sessions, as well as interested observers such as **Noy Thomson**.

The **Rector of the United Nations University**, although a Moslem, was our chairman: an unusual occurrence to say the least. Under his skilful direction, we were able to present our views and, finally, on the third day, to arrive at the really vital questions which must be asked about Buddhism, such as:

1. Is there such a thing as Buddhism apart from the cultures in which it has grown up? If we accept that principles cannot change, is it time for understanding to move on? Is there a place for traditional Buddhism anywhere?
2. People are particularly concerned about not being involved in politics, but what is not politics? To refuse to be political is to make a decision with political consequences. Do Buddhists protect themselves and push away concern for

the rest of the world? Is Buddhism a world unto itself or is it part and parcel of society? Would the Buddha seal himself from current concerns or would he make a world contribution?

3. What contributions can Buddhists make towards solving the problem of religious intolerance, the exploitation of nature, the growth of world violence and cruelty, the problem of 'obsolete' people as machines take over many jobs? Should Buddhists stand silent, concentrating only on inner realisation and trusting that this will manifest itself outwardly? Or should they, as well as developing inner peace, engage in outer problems?

4. How do Mahayana Buddhists manifest Bodhisattva nature? Should Buddhists turn their back on technology and return to a people-oriented rather than machine-oriented world?

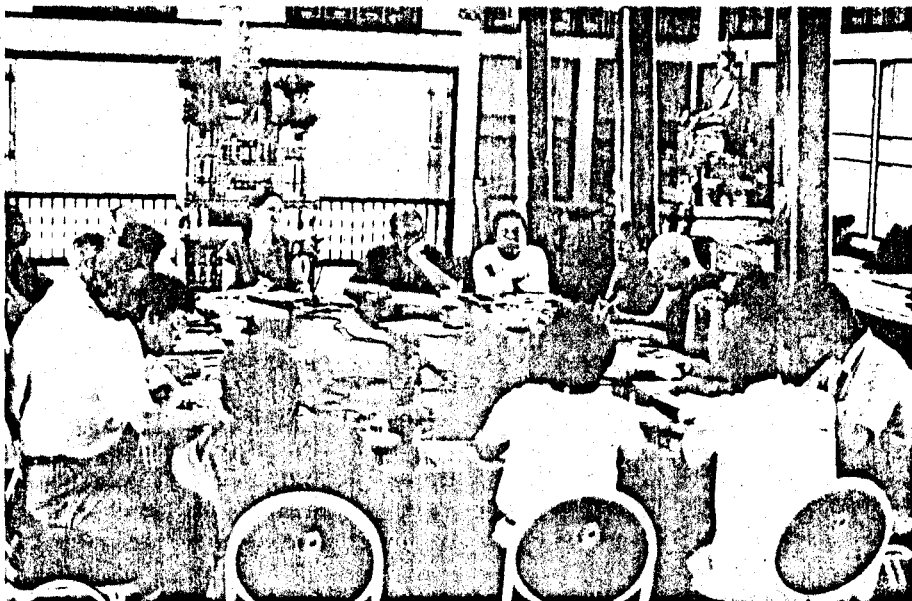
5. What vision and model do we have of Buddhism working as a world religion? How would the Buddha envisage a Buddhist society today?

The Rector believed that we should not be so concerned with finding the answers as with asking the most probing questions. A book will eventually come out of this project and, since the questions asked affect all of us who call ourselves Buddhists, I thought it would be a good idea to make it known through *The Middle Way* so that anyone who feels sufficiently interested can write to me. **Anne Bancroft, 1 Grange Villas, The Street, Charmouth, Bridport, Dorset DT6 6QQ.**

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A Buddhist Perception of Desirable Society

S. SIVARAKSA



Introduction

Those who have not made a profound study of Buddhism tend to think of Buddhism as merely a way of personal salvation for those who wish to escape from the mundane world to seek spiritual enlightenment.

Unlike other great world religions, Buddhists have no acknowledged international religious leaders like the pope who pronounces specific dogmas on social justice for the faithful, nor do Buddhists have an international organization like the World Council of Churches or the World Muslim League, whose resolutions on racial discrimination often have an impact on various local religious communities. Although the present Dalai Lama is greatly revered, he is the spiritual head of the

Tibetan tradition only. Similar to the Supreme Patriarch of Siam up to whom people would look only if the spiritual leaders' way of life is perceived as exemplary and their teachings are considered so profound that they would be followed even by non-Buddhists.

Although the World Fellowship of Buddhists exists with its headquarters in Bangkok, it is none of a social organization without very much meaningful perception of desirable models of society. Indeed it has never been known to make any statement against social injustice anywhere, nor did it ever demand government intervention for Buddhist victims in certain countries like Bangladesh. It has never been known to send a peace delegation to reconcile differences among Buddhists or between Buddhists and

other religious groups as in Sri Lanka. It is obvious therefore that his organization has never pursued policies on world disarmament, unemployment, over population or ecological un-balances.

Many of the most prestigious western universities have philosophy departments or Divinity Schools which often challenge people to think more deeply about their role in modern society. Some progressive theological seminaries prepare their seminarians for the industrial or even post-industrial society. Medical ethics and the problems of life and death are often studied by leading theologians and physicians. While in the Middle East, some leading Muslims want to pursue their own model of a desirable society, minus western influences, which need not be necessarily Christian. Unfortunately many scholars in Buddhist Asia follow the West blindly even in their study of Buddhism as if it were a laboratory specimen, without any social application whatsoever. It seems that leading Buddhist scholars, especially in Japan, have lost the forest for the trees. Actually people need to know how the Four Noble Truth and the Noble Eightfold Path are applicable today or how these methods help direct people to the creation of a desirable society in the near future.

It has even been said that the Buddhist Middle Path is in fact a slippery path. It has been seen as accommodating anything whatsoever; as most established Buddhist leaders tend to sit on the fence although they claim to be in the middle-avoiding comment either on the right wing reactionary perspective or the revolutionary left. Yet, many of the same Buddhists are content or even claim spiritual happiness—despite the fact that in many of the so-called Buddhist countries, the majority of people face enormous suffering. At best only scattered pockets of calm atmosphere or peaceful environments exist. Yet even those so-called places may in fact disguise a lot of suffering or undesirable elements. Anyone who studies the internal structures of most Buddhist temples assiduously may accumulate certain alarming facts not usually available to the casual observers.

Contradictions

The above paragraphs should not discourage those who wish to understand Buddhism thoroughly. Although some aspects are true, Buddhism has its contradictions as do all other religions. The message of the Buddha is in fact so radical that most so-called leaders and scholars find it difficult to follow, therefore they compromise, carrying out their own pursuits by ignoring social injustice or by not bothering about paying the way for the "desirable society". Often they quote certain scriptural passages to support their particular way of life.

Yet Buddhism is not the religion of the Sacred Books; the Buddhists are discouraged from paying respect to the Buddha's words uncritically. There are in fact many interpretations, many schools of thought and different religious traditions. However, it is generally agreed that if the Buddhists are serious about the Buddha's teachings they would agree on certain basic fundamental principles. For example, one of the key elements in Buddhism is found in the following passage:

"Whatever are the states of which you, Gotami, may know: these states lead to passion, not to passionlessness; they lead to bondage, not to absence of bondage; they lead to piling up (of rebirths), not to the absence of piling; they lead to wanting much, not to wanting little, not to solitude; they lead to indolence, not to putting forth of energy; they lead to difficulty in supporting oneself; not to ease in supporting oneself; of such states you should know with certainty, Gotami: this is not Dhamma, this is not Discipline, this is not the Teacher's instruction."

Again to follow that passage precisely, one needs to be radicalised which most Buddhists are not, even monks and nuns who belong to the **Sangha** or are supposed to form an exemplary society. The Buddha's teachings allow compromise even in the **Sangha**. This is the strength and weakness of Buddhism. Indeed, throughout Buddhist

history, only the enlightened disciples and the radically committed Buddhists rely entirely on the teaching of the Buddha, which is seen as supremely righteous, understand, rational, meaningful, spiritual and self-reliant, the teachings are also full of compassion and selflessness, which in social terms means democratic, tolerant and egalitarian.

The majority of people combine the Buddha's teaching with other religious traditions and local customs, relying on appropriate political and economic models, as well as the sciences and new technologies. The Buddha spoke very little on economics and politics. There is no record of his words in science and technology; in fact, it is believed that the Buddha even discouraged the faithful from pursuing the disciplines seriously. Yet he did not condemn them outright.

If Buddhist leaders have "skillful means", that is if they are aware of and practise the essence of Buddhism, they would know how to apply it for their own happiness and the happiness of others, bearing in mind the principles cited in the above quotation, for less greed, less hatred and less ignorance. In other words, righteousness or ethics would be the key word in adjusting human behaviour for the benefit of the world, which would in turn effect the whole natural phenomena, as is said in a discourse of the Buddha, thus:

"When kings are righteous, the ministers of kings are righteous. When ministers are righteous, brahmins and householders also are righteous. The townsfolk and villagers are righteous. This being so, moon and sun go right in their course. This being so, constellations and stars do likewise; days and nights, months and fortnights, seasons and years go on their course regularly; winds blow regularly and in due season... Rains falling seasonably, the crops ripen in due season... when crops ripen in due season, men who live on these crops are long-lived, well-favoured, strong and free from

sickness."

Indeed the Buddha even spoke about an ideal society thus: *"If people are righteous, mindful, using enlightenment as guidelines for their way of life, they could achieve the 'desirable society'":*

"O Bhikkhus, in the city of Benares there would be a kingdom named Ketumati, which would be prosperous, wealthy and highly populated, with an abundance of food."

"O Bhikkhus, in this land of India, there would be eighty four thousand cities which would take Ketumati as its model and the guide."

"A righteous King Chakravatti would be born in this kingdom."

"They would then live in peace and justice throughout this earth that has the great seas as their boundaries."

For most Buddhists, such an ideal state would not be possible in our aeon, so they believe that only during the time of the future Buddha-Maitreya would this be possible. Some post canonical texts have been stated that the teaching of the present Buddha-Gotama would last only 5000 years. The decline was supposed to begin with the year 2500 and for many people the year 2528 after the passing away of the Buddha has already been reached. Hence there is no hope for any "desirable" society in the near future. Even if the entire earth is destroyed by nuclear powers, it is understandable, since greed, hatred and delusion seem to be in control of world affairs. Small groups scattered around the world who share the Buddhist interpretation of "Right View" based on self-reliance, non-exploitation of others and mindfulness about self and society are preparing themselves for Enlightenment here and now or hope for rebirth in the time of the future Buddha.

Buddhism, like any other world religion, would support the status quo if the society were on the whole righteous. If it lost that legitimacy, Buddhism would use its

prophetic element to vouch for social upheaval, hence the millennium movements in Buddhist history. Even the existence of independent states around the thirteenth century of the Christian Era on mainland Southeast Asia was in part due to Theravada Buddhist influences. Those small states rebelled against Srivijaya and Khmer Empires, which mixed Mahayana Buddhism with Hinduism for the benefits of the ruling elites at the expense of the peoples and the vassal states. Once they became independent, those states used the **Sangha** as a model for righteous democracy, freedom and egalitarianism, with elements of local beliefs, technologies and some forms of feudalism. It was as late as the 1850s that King Mongkut of Siam said that the sovereign only had the right to be on the throne as long as the people wanted him to be there. Otherwise the people had the right to dethrone him. Consequently, every Siamese King's first announcement on the day of his coronation is "We shall reign righteously." Without righteousness, society could not exist.

Different Aspects

Another contradiction in the Buddha's teaching is contained in the following quote:

"So long as the brethren shall establish nothing that has not been already prescribed, and abrogate nothing that has been already established, and act in accordance with the rules of the order as now laid down," the Sangha (or Holy Order) will last for ever.

At the same time, he also said

"When I am gone, Ananda, let the Order, if it should so wish, abolish all the lesser and minor precepts."

Even with such guidelines, only one month after the Master's passing away, the committee of 500 monks, all of whom were Enlightened (Arahats), could not decide what were the major and what were the minor rules. Out of respect for the Buddha, they decided unanimously not to alter any rule at all.

Unfortunately this decision caused the

first schism about one hundred years afterward. The Southern School, which is now known as Theravada, claims to follow the dictum of the Elders who held the First Council immediately after the cremation of the body of the Buddha, while the Northern School, which is now known as Mahayana, claims to follow the general advice of the Buddha, instead of adhering strictly to rules and regulations which may be out of date.

Despite the two main schools of thought, the Buddhists, whichever school they belong to, would agree that the teaching could be divided into two main categories-1-**Ādibhramacāriya** the Essence of the Noble Life, and 2-**Abhisamācāra**, rules of conduct appropriate for local customs of certain times and places.

Although Theravadins claim to adhere strictly to the rules laid down over 2500 years ago, they adapted their lifestyle all the time too. For instance, robes for monks are supposed to be the same as those disciples who were contemporaries of the Buddha, today however most monks' lodgings would have chairs, desks, clocks, wireless sets, electric fans, some even have telephones, televisions, refrigerators, air conditioning and motor cars. At the same time, there are those who vow for austerity practices and refuse transportation, electricity and other modern conveniences. Some refuse money altogether. Others would not touch it, but would not mind having an account in the bank, while the majority feel that in this day and age one might as well keep some money for practical purposes. Although one may break the rule, it is a minor rule and minor rules are to be broken anyhow. Once the minor rules are broken, the monk could always confess to his brothers in the community and would be forgiven. Not only in personal conduct, do Theravadin monks differ, but also in their social and political views. In former times, since the time of Emperor Ashoka, there existed a Dhammaraja theory i.e. if the king was righteous, he had the right to rule; at the same time he had the duty to support the Sangha, the community of monks, who in turn would legitimate Kingship and were the middle

men between the rulers and the ruled, by applying simple Buddhist ethical conduct for a fairly flexible society which was ~~not too~~ exploitative. Although some Kings were quite oppressive, they lacked mechanisms or technologies to implement their wishes entirely. Besides the Sangha, well supported by the people, could be a good opposition party and could ultimately encourage the people indirectly to depose wicked kings, despite the fact that this rarely happened. Besides Theravada Buddhism had no theory for the Just War, nor could monks be directly implicated in political affairs.

However, when most Theravadin countries were colonized by non-Buddhist Governments from the West, some political leaders became champions of the struggle for independence and looked for the good old times of the Dhammaraja period, despite the fact that the kings in the past might not have been righteous.

Once independence was established, although it was not possible to reestablish the monarchical system, some political leaders saw themselves as Dhammaraja, for instance, U Nu of Burma and the present President of Sri Lanka. Unfortunately politicians—whether they be Buddhist, Muslim or Christian—seem to work only for their own political ends. They use certain passages of the scriptures to support their position, rather than seeking the essence of the Noble Life.

Although Siam was not colonized by the West, the Absolute Monarchical system came to an end in 1932. After that, each Government used the Monarchy to legitimize them as if the Government were carrying on the Dhammaraja concept. Yet all Buddhist countries are no different from secular or other proclaimed religious countries in the Third World i.e. the rich get richer while the poor remain poor or even become poorer. Those with power become even more powerful, while the common people are really powerless. This is much worse than during the so-called Dhammaraja period, because now modern transportation and technologies as well as centralized bureaucracies are in collaboration with

multinational corporations to exploit the people more effectively. Their concept of a desirable society is to imitate the First World, ignoring the negative elements in those countries entirely or thought that they could avoid them successfully.

In Siam which was formally known as the Rice Bowl of Asia, there are more prostitutes (half a million) than monks (two hundred and fifty thousand); child labour and malnutrition are widespread. Almost no guarantee exists for basic human rights and the rule of law. It is feared that Siam is not alone in these unpleasant aspects of humanity. Since Sri Lanka expressed the wish to join ASEAN, she is now more and more like Siam. Burma, Laos and Kampuchea may not have many prostitutes, but the citizens in those countries hardly enjoy any political freedom. The same could be said of Vietnam and China, which were once Buddhist countries.

In China, Buddhism has been mixed with Taoism and Confucianism for so many centuries that they have become the Three Ways. Buddhism itself is only a spiritual path which has lost most of its past contributions to Chinese culture.

As for Japan, a Buddhist priest was asked as to how traditional Japanese religion had responded to the tremendous winds of change in that country; he smiled and gave a small shrug. Both Shintoism and Buddhism, he said, have simply not quarrelled with technology and development—even with militarism. They have been very flexible i.e. Japan has shown a unique tendency to avoid any great clash between the pull of religion and the push of the modern age. If so, has religion lost its influence in Japan? The same Buddhist priest demurred cheerfully, by saying, *"Being Japanese is itself a kind of religion."*

In the past, when Indian Buddhism mixed so much with Hinduism, it lost its essence. Hence, it disappeared from the subcontinent, although Buddhist historians claimed that the disappearance of Buddhism was due to the Muslim invasion. But one must question the survival of Jainism in India today. Indeed when Dr. Ambekkar led the

multitudes of untouchables to embrace Buddhism on the eve of Indian independence, there was a good chance for Buddhist revival in the land of its birth place. But after the untimely death of Ambekkar, the Buddhists had no spiritual leader, intellectually and socially for a desirable society, especially for the poorest of the poor. Hence the Buddhists in India are still on the margin of that subcontinent, finding it hard even to exist from day to day—let alone to look for a desirable society in the future.

Hopeful Signs

Buddhists have been taught to look at things as they really are. So when they see things negatively, they are encouraged to look at the positive side also. For instance, when the Tibetans were driven out of their country, they established themselves in India and many western countries. Their sufferings helped them to understand the modern world more than other Buddhist leaders, most of whom have been co-opted by the **status quo**. The Tibetan presence in India contributed greatly to the revival of Indian Buddhism. They also propagated Buddhism in the west assiduously.

The interest of Buddhism in the West started with the British conquest of Ceylon and later with the Foundation of the Pali Text Society in London in 1881 and the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 1907. However, until recently, their scope was limited to scholarly pursuit or individual practice, without any involvement in the society at large. Now, with the forming of Buddhist Peace Fellowships in many western cities, the BPF seems to put the Buddhist study and practice in its proper perspective, namely they wish to improve their members personally as well as to improve their societies collectively. They no longer sit on the fence, but have a definite Buddhist stand for justice through loving kindness and non-violence.

Some Japanese Buddhist monks have indeed been very active against armaments and nuclear war. They walked around the island of Sri Lanka for reconciliation between

the Sinhalese Buddhists and Tamil Hindus. They stood firm with the native North Americans who refused to be driven out of their lands, despite the fact that American police threatened to shoot them all. In Japan itself the lay Buddhist organization (Rishokosakai) has established the Niwano Peace prize and the Niwano Foundation which have encouraged studies towards a peaceful world. This foundation together with other leading institutions help support the World Conference on Religion and Peace, which could be very positive indeed. These are but a few examples that show the positive and active aspects of Japanese Buddhism.

In China, Buddhist leaders suffered for the faith during the cultural revolution. Now they have managed to implement the law for religious practices to be guaranteed. The Buddhist Association is active in making Buddhism viable in China and the Institute for the Study of World Religions has a strong Buddhist chapter, which collaborates with scholars on Buddhism abroad in trying to promote Buddhist studies at their best.

Vietnamese Buddhists suffered similar fates as did their Tibetan counterparts. Yet the Vietnamese exiles helped the West tremendously to understand suffering and how to find their cause as well as their cure, through the Noble Eightfold Path. In Vietnam itself, although Van Hanh Buddhist University was nationalized as a secular place of learning, the Government allowed the Buddhist Institute to exist in order to do serious research work. This Institute is quite unique for it has sprung out from both the Theravada and Mahayana traditions. Some of its scholars know Pali, Sanskrit and Chinese besides Vietnamese, English, French and German. Appropriate contacts through the UN University could establish many benefits for all concerned.

Hong Kong may not look very Buddhist. Yet many Buddhist nuns in the colony have a more profound scholarship than any that I have come across in Southeast Asia. In Sri Lanka too some research has been conducted by leading Buddhist women regarding the role of these Buddhist sisters.

Here we have contradictions again vis-a-vis the position of women in Buddhism. We should not gross over them or become defensive. At the same time we need to examine some feminists' position in condemning Buddhism for the exploitation of women in Asia. We need more advanced studies on this subject as on many others.

In Siam like many other Buddhist countries, young intellectuals have returned to the sacred with a good sense of criticism. And they want to have our own Buddhist politics, economics and social sciences away from western domination on our intellectual framework. Buddhist monks like Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and Phra Rajavaramuni (Payutto) are not only leading lights within the kingdom, but are also known abroad, especially to those interested in social aspects of Buddhism.

I could mention more positive signs of which the UN University could be a platform to link them together for appropriate studies on desirable societies in the future.

Proposals

In this position paper, I wish to incorporate the traditional *Sila* or basic rules for Buddhist morality as a framework for building desirable societies.

They are

- (1) To abstain from killing.
- (2) To abstain from stealing.
- (3) To abstain from sexual misconduct.
- (4) To abstain from false speech.
- (5) To abstain from intoxicants causing heedlessness.

These are not commandments but guidelines for a good life and social justice. Practising these, one should not want to exploit oneself or others. As a result of the practice, one is supposed to be endowed with five ennobling virtues, namely

- (1) Loving kindness and compassion.
- (2) Right means of livelihood and generosity.
- (3) Sexual restraint.
- (4) Truthfulness and sincerity.
- (5) Mindfulness and heedfulness.

From the Buddhist point of view, social

and personal equilibrium are possible only when people develop a spiritual dimension simultaneously, otherwise one becomes easily conceited and thinks that one has done one's best already for oneself and for others. It is therefore not surprising that the so-called Buddhist leaders who do not practise *samādhi* meditation seriously, claim that they have done everything possible for their society and humankind.

To grow spiritually, first of all, one has to be calm and impartial so that one can find out what sort of a person one is. On the whole, one does not know or admit that one is lustful or greedy, although one would like to become rich at the expense of others. If one lacks that negative quality, one is normally ambitious and would like to play with power—in the name of social justice or serving the poor. Beyond this, one is fairly ignorant about oneself as well as about the world in which one would normally dare to be involved and claim that one would solve those worldly problems.

One tends to know or to think of one's positive qualities only. One feels hurt when people are not grateful to one, although one has been generous to them already. One is angry when people deceive one, as one thinks one has been sincere and honest all the time. Besides one feels that one has been good and hard working, yet one is not rewarded sufficiently, while the crooked and second rate people seem to do very well in the world.

All these symptoms show that one is not calm. Hence one has not penetrated inwardly to find out what is one's spiritual strength and weakness, what one should overcome and what one should strengthen.

In Buddhism, meditation or mindfulness is essential for spiritual development. There are so many techniques in order to teach one to sit still, to be calm, alert and awake from selfishness and self-conceit.

Once one knows one's own ego and finds out how false it is to cling to it, then one would have a prescription to restructure one's consciousness in order that one would grow spiritually.

In essence, spiritual development

(**Samādhi**) is a means to cleanse the mind so that it would be calm and impartial. Once one has less self-interest, one will be ready for Intellectual Growth in its fullest sense of the word.

Intellectual growth here does not mean that one is clever or intelligent, but it has the sense of Gnostic or Wisdom (**Paññā** or **Prajñā**) i.e. "one sees things as they really are." In other words, only through wisdom can one synchronize one's intellect or one's mind with one's heart. It is not difficult intellectually to argue that exploitation of the poor is evil but through Spiritual and Intellectual Development in this way, one might be convinced once and for all how not to exploit others in a multitude of devious ways. One may then be in a position to solve problems as one understands them through one's wisdom or knowledge. One does not use any theory, ideology, preconceived idea, or self motive to tackle any situation.

From the Buddhist point of view, development must aim at the reduction of craving, the avoidance of violence, and the development of the spirit rather than of materialism. As each individual progresses, he increasingly helps others without waiting for the millennium, or for the ideal socialist society. Cooperation is better than competition, whether capitalism which favors the capitalist, or some forms of socialism which favor the working class.

From the standpoint of Buddhism, the goal can be attained by stages as evil desires are overcome. Goals are then perceived in two days. From the worldly standpoint, the more desires are increased or satisfied the further development can proceed. From the religious standpoint, the more desires can be reduced, the further development can proceed.

Western civilization erodes Christianity, or at least real Christian spiritual values, and becomes merely capitalistic or socialistic, aiming to increase material goods in order to satisfy craving. The capitalist variety wants to raise the material standard of living of other groups, if possible, providing the capitalists themselves can stay on top. The socialist variety reverses it and wants the

majority, or those who act in the name of the majority, to oppress the minority or those who are opposed to them.

The value scale of Western-type development emphasizes extremes. The richer the better; the capitalists apply this idea for the better-off groups and the socialists to the workers. The quicker the better. The bigger the better. The more knowledge the better. Buddhism, on the other hand, emphasizes the middle way between extremes, a moderation which strikes a balance appropriate to the balance of nature itself. Knowledge must be a complete knowledge of nature, in order to be wisdom; otherwise, knowledge is ignorance. Partial knowledge leads to delusion, and encourages the growth of greed and hate. These are the roots of evil that lead to ruin. The remedy is the threefold way of self-knowledge, leading to right speech and action and right relations to other people and things (morality), consideration of the inner truth of one's own spirit and of nature (meditation), leading finally to enlightenment or complete knowledge (wisdom). It is an awakening, and a complete awareness of the world.

When one understands this, one understands the three characteristics of all things from the Buddhist point of view: their unsatisfactoriness or suffering (*dukkha*), their impermanence (*aniccā*), and their lack of a permanent selfhood or ego (*anattā*).

True development will arrange for the rhythm of life and movement to be in accordance with the facts, while maintaining an awareness that man is but a part of the universe, and that ways must be found to integrate mankind with the laws of nature. There must be no boasting, no proud self-centred attempts to master nature, no emphasis placed on the creation of material things to the point where people become slaves to things and have no time left for themselves to search after the truth which is out beyond the realm of material things.

The Buddhist contribution to the modern world, especially through meditation, has been much acknowledged, even by leading Christians like Thomas Merton, who

really cared for a just world order. The Buddhists themselves, however, are not at the forefront in proposing to the world guidelines for desirable societies in the near future, nor has any Buddhist community offered an ideal example for such a desirable outcome.

The Buddhists have been effective in small communities here and there, without any larger impact. We must acknowledge new sects in Japan like Sogakakai use Buddhism effectively to serve their members, especially in modern industrial society, but they lack the all embracing aspects of the Master that other established Buddhist organizations would be reluctant to collaborate with, let alone to follow their example.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka tries to apply Buddhist principles to awake the people individually, then at village level and national level so that eventually all mankind would be awakened to live together by depending on self-reliance using appropriate technology, while the people would not be in competition but be harmonious, with brotherly love, without self-conceit and exploitation. Yet the movement has been criticized because it seems to rest more in rhetoric than practice even at the village level. Besides the leadership has been co-opted by the government and international organizations that the majority in the movement are still oppressed. Besides the movement has done nothing to solve the Sinhalaese-Tamil conflicts on the island.

Such criticism may be too harsh, but the movement has no philosophers or intellectuals who could vouch for a better society in concrete terms. Its vision and philosophy sound good in the abstract, but some practical questions remain to be answered, such as

(1) Should one accept or deny foreign aid to help a self reliant movement?

(2) How close should an indigenous NGO collaborate with the Government?

(3) How should the leadership be elected through the charismatic quality of a few persons at the top, without rotating the

responsibility, or should one use the bottom-up approach and decentralized policy?

This dilemma is also a Buddhist contradiction. On the one hand the Sangha is democratic, egalitarian and socialistic—even communistic. Yet the Buddha appointed chief Disciples and those excelled in various superhuman qualities. Although the Buddha did not appoint anyone as his successor, most national Sanghas are very heirachical.

Besides, Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia has been successful for so long in serving the traditional agrarian society, with the simple moral code for villagers, who used Buddhist values to guide their lives, but at the same time relied on other animistic and Hinduistic beliefs as well as using traditional technologies to ease their livelihood. On the whole they were not radical. They compromised here and there. Those who took Buddhism more seriously, would compromise less with the world.

For instance, the first precept is not to kill. For all Buddhists killing our parents and the Enlightened Disciples would be unforgiveable crimes. And for most practising Buddhists, killing a human being would be a great sin indeed. Yet warfares took place between the so-called Buddhist states. Their justification was to maintain the Buddhist religion and for a just cause. Yet, with such a strong belief in nonviolence, the Buddhists never developed a Just War Theory. In fact, from the Theravada point of view, all killing is bad as it will not cause one to be compassionate and will lack loving kindness. To put it bluntly, it is better to be killed than to kill.

In the Mahayana tradition, it was argued that if a robber is to kill 500 good persons, it is better to kill him first. Yet the act of killing that robber is still a sin. Mahayanists however are willing to commit sinful act against oneself in order to save other beings. Hence Vietnamese monks who burnt themselves thought that such acts would contribute to the ending of the Vietnam War.

In the Theravada tradition, to be pure is essential, otherwise wisdom and compassion would not be possible. So serious Therava-

dians cannot condone killing at all.

Since the Buddhists wish to be compassionate, so they could not kill any living being whatsoever. For Theravada monks, to cut trees or to cultivate the land would also be regarded as killing. However, for most people, they have to compromise. An American Buddhist said that he chose to be a vegetarian because cows cry louder than cabbages.

Until recently, Sinhala Buddhists would not even eat eggs. Fishermen in Ceylon were mostly Muslims and Christians. As for the Siamese, they ate fish as the main diet, refusing animals with legs if they could help it. Even so to be a fisherman was regarded lowly as to be the man who sold meat, armaments, liquor or slaves.

For Mahayanists, if they could not be vegetarians all the year round, they would eat only vegetables for 10 days in the year. During that period, they would meditate and recite Buddhist prayers seriously. As for Mahayana monks, most of them are vegetarians but they could till their own land. Since Theravada monks depend their livelihood on lay supporters, they eat whatever is offered to them including meat, but once they know that those animals were killed especially to serve the monks, they are not allowed to eat them.

From the above facts, one could see quite clearly, that the concept of killing and meat eating was then appropriate for a simple agrarian society or village life. Once complicated marketing comes into existence, one has to reexamine the first precept thoroughly. And what about the concept of economic growth when money and international trade become so important.

This leads to the second precept on stealing. For instance if one puts one's money in multinational corporations or international bankings which exploit the poor and invest in armament business, does not one break the two Buddhist precepts simultaneously. At least by so doing one lacks loving kindness and one's means of livelihood is certainly not commendable.

In this aspect, the Buddhists could do

well to study the concept of Islamic Bank to see how it operates to serve the Muslims in the meaningful religious wholesomeness. When the Quakers started banking business, it was out of Christian conviction. It is worth noting also whether such ventures remain truly Christian or whether it has become part and parcel of the International Banking Corporation which try to mint interests out of the poor and the unfortunate as much as possible.

Although Gandhi was a Hindu, his nonviolence practices in politics were so Buddhistic. Yet no Buddhists took his examples seriously in order to imitate and improve upon them for our social ethics, economics and political thoughts. For we were so blinded in following only western concepts. In fact, E.F. Schumaker, the British Catholic, was the first to remind us how serious could we follow Gandhi and how Buddhist economics could be examples for those who regard human beings more highly than money. So far, no Buddhist scholars have made any real contributions in this field.

I therefore propose that taking the five Buddhist precepts as a base, one could have studies and discussions on

(1) The problem of killing, which would include war, racial disharmony, peace and disarmament. The style of living, including vegetarianism in the modern world, which should not only be traditional, but must be really compassionate and must understand the way animals are bred just to serve human markets, including insecticide on vegetables that are really harmful to humankind as well as harmful to the whole ecological environment. Nuclear dumping and industrial pollution are not only ecological problems in the Third World. They are also linked to nuclear armaments. How should we resist this positively and help create a desirable society without war through a non-violence means.

How could one use the first precept and its ennobling virtues to shape the world politically to be just and merciful.

(2) Concerning right means of livelihood and generosity versus traditional

stealing and robbery, people should be encouraged to study and comment upon the New World Order and economic system from the Buddhist perspective, especially appropriate and inappropriate development models; right and wrong consumption; unequal and just marketing, leading to dilapidation and degradation of natural resources and the way to cure them.

How do Buddhists stand for principles of a new economic ethic on a national and international scale?

Many Christian groups have done studies on multinational corporations and international banking. We ought to learn from them and use their findings for our own Buddhist position.

(3) On sex issues, people should not only be encouraged to study the role of the weaker sex who have been exploited by their male counterparts throughout our history. Studies should also be concentrated on the rights of all human beings.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, good and useful though they are, were thought out from a limited western perception only. Even the UN Charter itself has no Buddhist input whatsoever.

What are the Buddhist theories on justice, equality and equity? How could the doctrine of past lives and rebirth be applied here? The sex issues should also involve population problems. And the Buddhist concept on birth control as well.

This again would lead us back to the first precept of the Buddhist respect for life and death. How far would we allow western science and technology to interfere with birth and death—including the Buddhist concept of health and medicine?

The Tibetan Book of Death is a guideline from a traditional belief, as are indigenous medicines practised by Buddhist monks in many countries all of which should be taken note of seriously, but we must be able to translate these to be applicable for industrial and post industrial society, bearing in mind the modern therapeutic treatment and social cost—the perception of a new responsibility,

and that of taking the decision not to prolong life.

(4) On truth and falsehood, we need to take mass media and education seriously. The Buddhists are far behind their Muslim and Christian brothers and sisters in this aspect. The **Pesantren** educational institutions in Indonesia should be examined by Buddhists to see how they remain Islamic and traditional principles in the light of modern society and also project a vision for the future. We need a workable Buddhist education which should not only sound good in theory nor should it only be limited to the classroom. We need to expand the Right View through the mass media so that truth will triumph over falsehood. The dignity of human beings should be more important than consumers' culture, which encourage people to have more, to eat more etc. than they really need.

We must also use the fourth precept on sincerity to encourage dialogue among different schools of Buddhism, among different views of Buddhists in the same and different traditions, we also need meaningful dialogues with those of other faiths.

The best way to discover spiritual development is to test it in society or to hear the voices of others (Paratogasha). Hence the Buddhist concept of good friends (Kalayan-mittā) is very important.

In this day and age, some Christians and Muslims could really be our good friends, even though they differ from us, provided that they are sincere. Indeed we can learn a great deal from them.

Using truthfulness as the guideline, a lot of research work at university level should be conducted for the happiness of all mankind—rather than for the rich and powerful in the establishments. We should also use this precept to curb political propaganda and commercial advertisements, which promote hatred, greed, lust and really intoxicating people. However, unless we have alternatives to what is available, we shall not be able to overcome falsehood and indoctrination in the name of national security and the

cultural well-being of mankind.

(5) The fifth precept should encourage us not only to study drug problems and find solutions in order to make a better world in the near future. We should also study how to overcome intoxication. The usual religious preaching against intoxicants do not get us anywhere. We must examine the whole beer, wine, spirit and drug industries to identify their power base before a solution.

At the same time, one should use this precept to have a study done on the practice of mindfulness in order to develop and share over spiritual critical awareness (**Yonisoma-nasikāra**) or self-criticism, which will help us to the common sense and to be humble without false pretense. With this awareness, one would be natural in one's dealing with other beings— human or otherwise.

Conclusion

The above proposals are just examples that Buddhist scholars should agree on certain topics to be discussed and have serious studies upon some of them. Or they may use different approaches, e.g. taking the Sangha

as a model for desirable society and see how could it be adapted to the laypeople's organizations in the present and the future.

Since Buddhists have never been brought together to discuss this vital aspect of Buddhism, we need certain agreement or some basic framework first, before we can proceed to the desirable society e.g. whether revolutionary or reformist approach is possible, if revolutionary, how could it be through the non-violence means.

What I have written is from a limited Theravadin southeast Asian perspective, what we need is at least a Mahayanist comment. Then someone should pull some salient points out so that serious discussions would be possible at our first meeting. At the meeting, further studies should be commissioned for a more definite guideline towards a desirable society in the future from Buddhist Perspectives.

A paper submitted to the United Nations University Sub Project on Religious Perceptions on Desirable Societies, Bangkok 20-22 March 1985



*If we are to reach
real peace in the world
...we shall have to
begin with children; and if they
will grow up in their natural
innocence, we won't have to
struggle; we won't have to pass
fruitless ideal resolutions, but
we shall go from love to love
and peace to peace,
until at last all the corners of
the world are covered with that
peace and love for which
consciously or unconsciously
the whole world is hungering.*

—Gandhi

Dialogue and Development :

A Buddhist- Christian Search for Alternative Model of Development in Thailand*

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Introduction

Everywhere in the so-called "Third World" today the struggle for liberation has assumed a new phase. The trend of macro analysis of the roots of social problems has shifted to reflection of experiences on the micro level. The violent revolution of the masses has had inappropriate results in most situations. Focus has been turned to peoples' organizations at the community level. Language itself reflects such phenomenon—a peoples' participation; self-reliance; faith in

the people; organic intellectuals; rural and community leadership. Religion has also been playing an important role in this process.

In every Thai community, considered now structurally as a "society" in itself, temple and Buddhist monks are still the centre of cultural life of the people. Development process has a particular feature where monks are active and participate also in social activities. During this last decade, more and more monks have been engaged in social action and the socio-economic aspects of the community. Although the process is only at its initial phase, some of the monks have succeeded to some extent to put Buddhist principle into practice. The integral concept of development is made visible in the successful combination of "spiritual" and "material" aspects of community development.

As for the Catholics, who form a minority group in Thailand, the openness for dialogue with their Buddhist counterparts has been expressed during this last decade more and more in the practice of Buddhist meditation and in development activities. Besides the many private initiatives, exchange and cooperation happen through different interreligious forums, founded by leading members of both Buddhism and Christianity.

If interreligious dialogue is possible in the field of development today, an important reason could be that both Buddhists and Christians are searching for an alternative model of development, one which is relevant to Thai society. The dialogue keeps on development because both partners have a common ground. They both believe that religion and culture are essential factors for an integral development which liberates man from all kinds of oppression. This is nothing new. It exists, yet needs to be recognized, appreciated and renewed.

Culture and Development

Development process is known today as a "conscientization". Here, there should be no "raiser" nor one who is "raised". The

people must be the subject, who may have some external assistance, but remain the main actors of the whole process. Such an understanding resulted from reassessment of development experiences which conclude that there is no real development if the people themselves do not fully participate in the process. However, distinctions must be made.

There is real and false consciousness. Real consciousness is that which is transmitted through the history of the community, the tribe or the ethnic group. In many traditional Thai communities such consciousness still exists to different extents. This consciousness coincides with reality. The mode of production remains more or less subsistent. There is no accumulation of surplus. Exchange, sharing, mutual assistance and care are real values. Decision making are elders who link the present to the past, to the ancestors. Man is related to nature and the environment in a way that he is to be one with it, since this relationship is not separated from that of the supernatural. The spirit is everywhere. This spirit makes everything one.

Such traditional Thai communities, which are little impacted by modern society, remain only a few today. The majority of Thai communities are more or less and in a different way on the way to modernization. Economy is semi-subsistent. Production is also for sale in order to have means to acquire conveniences offered by the modern consumer society. Decision makers are outsiders, be they traders, administrators or even social workers in many cases. Relationship with nature and environment is broken. Pragmatic purpose and profit are the new values. Spiritual values give way to material greed. Here enters false consciousness. Real consciousness become suppressed. Part of the old consciousness is integrated into the new one.

The process of conscientization means also to foster or renew positive or real consciousness in order to be able to go against the current of new values and to integrate in a more appropriate way into changing society.

This is not an anachronism; it is not go-

ing against the time. It is not a romantic yearning for the lost paradise. Not all the values in the past are positive or relevant to the changing community. There is a need for conscious reproduction.

In such a process, religion has an essential role, as religion is the principle for value judgement and meaning. Yet, it is precisely this sector of culture which is being much effected by changing society. For many, religion serves only to satisfy one's personal needs. Rites and rituals have lost their social and original meaning. Temples are no more centres for the social life of the community. Monks are limited only to performing religious ceremonies and preaching. Monks have no place in the new schooling system, even for ethics or religious education.

Since the second world war, although many monks have been engaged in social activities and development, it is only during this last decade that some alternative models of development have been pointed out more and more explicitly. This happens after a long period of trial and error. Many times, some have strengthened not a simple Bud-

dhist way of life and community but a capitalistic and consumeristic one, by adding to conditions which foster the sense of profit and accumulation among the people. Now more and more monks realize that integral development must not be one-sided. Increase of income does not necessarily mean development. Without religious principle and practice no real development can happen.

Without renewing cultural values and raising the consciousness of the community, there will be no new forms relevant to Thai society. Here is a new phase of development.

Besides Buddhist monks, Catholic priests, religious and lay organizers and social workers, together with lay Buddhists, realize more and more that up to now many development projects failed. Most of them were economic projects, introduced into or imposed on communities. They did not solve any problems. On the contrary, many of them made the situation worse. Finally many of the social workers took more time to learn

more about the peoples' way of life in every aspect. Many have been conducting research as a conscientizing process. They join the villagers in discovering their lost or suppressed values, their potential, which can be and should be developed if conditions are conducive. Once being conscious of their values and heritage, the people start to be more self-confident. They realize in what society they are and how they should cope with it. They regain their self-respect and their way of life, their religious and cultural heritage. They become themselves subjects of their history and of the society they live in.

The Role of the Catholic Church

Since its foundation in 1973, the Catholic Council of Thailand for Development has been working not only in Catholic communities, but also in the Buddhist ones. Development activities numbered more than 500 in economic projects, not including vocational training and educational programmes, spread all over the country. They are implemented more in Buddhist communities than in Catholic ones. This is logical due to the fact that the Catholics number not even 1 percent of the Thai population.

In 1983, an evaluation of the first ten years of CCTD's activities was made. Experiences in working with Buddhist communities were analyzed. It was clear that the image of the Catholic Church projected by CCTD has been that of a rich Church. The Social Action Centres of the dioceses are regarded as financial resources for various projects. Catholics were suspected of adopting development projects as new means for evangelization, or rather proselytism. In fact there have been some converts. There were conflicts among those who were members of the projects and those who were not. CCTD used the same approach in Buddhist communities as in the Catholic ones. They did not take into consideration the cultural and religious differences.

The real interest in Buddhism and efforts to apply it to development activities happened only during these last years, as interest in the relevance of culture and religion

to development expanded from a very limited Buddhist and Christian social workers to those who up to then had only the socio-economic approach in their engagement with community development. A passage from a 10 years evaluation of CCTD reflects the new trend:

"In the work that we have done, did we abandon the culture of the community?. This question arises because of the differences between us and the villagers. We come from an urban society where we receive a western-type education. We use logic as western people to look at, analyze and give value to everything. Quite often we take the ideas and ways of life of the villagers as stupid...Difference of culture appears in everything which we relate to. If we are aware of the difference and respect their culture without thinking that ours is the standard, the villagers will be more friendly... So the problem is how can we make the villagers' culture the basis for doing development work"

The term "culture" as used here means the whole set of values and their expression in the daily life of the people. Buddhism is one of the main factors of Thai culture, though there are also others. Yet, all these factors are integrated and complement one another. This means in a few words that there has been lack of dialogue with the partners, i.e. the villagers, in development activities. It has been taken for granted by most social workers that they already know and understand the culture and religion of the people. The new trend thus results from the recognition of this failure of the past. However, it does not mean that previous approaches have no more value. The conditions of the target groups and circumstances will determine the means to be used. In case of emergency and relief there should not be prolonged discussion. Economic and socio-economic projects still have their place if the cultural dimension is also included. This means in a particular way people's participation in decision-making and their awareness of their own religio-cultural

heritage should be the basis for development activities.

Since a cultural approach in development is now given priority, CCTD cooperates now more and more with other Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), especially those who have a similar standpoint, in order to rediscover the cultural values of the communities. The process of learning together with the people has started. Religious and lay leaders in Buddhist communities are the main cooperations. Many exchange forums have been initiated. Dialogue and development are now being carried on continuously. Three partners of dialogue have been chosen by the Catholic Council of Thailand for Development during these past months.

Three cases of partners in dialogue

The Catholic Council of Thailand for Development has 35 member organizations. Ten of them are diocesan social action centres. Another 25 are Catholic action groups, associations and religious congregations, who directly or indirectly are involved in development activities in cities or rural areas. Every year there is a general assembly, which is attended by representatives of the member organizations. It has been a tradition for several years that at the same time of the General Assembly, educational programmes are organized. There have always been exposure programmes and seminars. In 1984 the theme selected for common learning and exchange was culture and development. This year (1985) the theme is "Spirituality and Development". The programme consists of a week of exposure and a 2 day seminar. The locations were three Buddhist communities, where CCTD has no development project implemented. About 50 priests, nuns, lay leaders and social workers from member organizations took part in these programmes.

The difference between the 1985 programme and the previous ones is that it is not only an "exposure" but also an "immersion" Members of the group spent

more time in the community and participated in the daily life of the people, especially their leaders. Efforts were made in order to be "immersed" in the people's experience. Openness of mind and heart were stressed from the beginning of the programme. The aim was to share religious experiences of the leader and community members and learn about their spirituality.

Huay Hin Village - Mr. Vibul

The first exposure site was Huay Hin village, Cha Choeng Sao province, situated about 120 kilometres East of Bangkok. The village was chosen because of its leader, Mr. Vibul, who is himself head of the community. Mr. Vibul has a lot of experience. After elementary school, he went to find work in Bangkok. At the age of 20 he became a monk and continued his studies in secondary school. After that he went back to his village and worked in the field like other villagers. He acted at the same time as middleman who also struggled for the benefit of the farmers. After long years of struggle, he found that there was no more hope to make things better. In the meantime he, like most farmers, had debts and found no way to get rid of them. He decided finally about 6 years ago to sell a great part of his field to pay his debts. The small piece of land he now has yields enough rice and other crops for his family. Productions for sale was turned to productions for one's own needs. A small surplus is also sold in order to earn some

money for other needs in the family. He has opted for "self-reliance" in all aspects of life. He says he is happy now and lives a very simple life, cutting out all non-necessities offered by the consumeristic society. He finds "small is beautiful"

Besides rice and fruits, Mr. Vibul also grows herbs, which he learnt from his father. A small farm of herbs proves so beneficial that he and the neighbors seldom need to go to hospital or to search for medical doctors. More and more people are attracted by the example of Mr. Vibul and have started to lead the same way of life. They are now building a small group, which has the same philosophy and which tries to implement various projects together. Mr. Vibul told the exposure group of his life:

"I did like other farmers. I have invested, cultivating cassava, soya bean, corn. Talking about cash crops, I dare say that I have ever grown every crop, and I do also have some theoretical knowledge. From getting in touch with some intellectuals, going between urban and rural areas have given me opportunity to share and to learn from others' experiences. From these learning and sharing, I applied this knowledge in my farming, be they soya bean, corn or other rotating crops. I have faced only same problem, from all these crops, of loss. From the last 5 years, I have had nearly 200,000 Baht of debt. It is only the last few years that I have had some free time to think, since I was so weary. This reflection has given me new hope. I don't cultivate and invest a lot as before, but to reduce the cultivation. I cultivate primarily for subsistence. After 2-3 years of trial, I think my life would be better. At the same time, I do not stop at subsistent production only, but to think of others. Normally, I have surplus, but I don't emphasize investment, that is the investment in technology. I emphasize the manual work turning back to nature for support, like utilizing the natural device to prevent insects".

Behind all these experiences and efforts lie Buddhist and cultural values. Mr. Vibul is a committed Buddhist, though not in



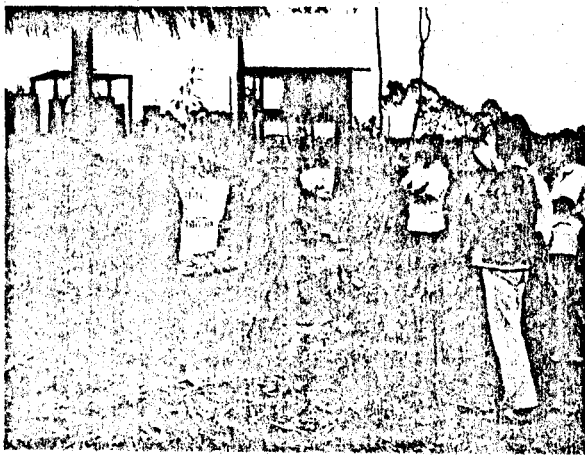
an ordinary and traditional way, which is concerned more about rites and rituals without too much existential meaning and impact on ordinary daily experience. He started years ago to practice meditation, which he found necessary in order to keep mindfulness and get rid of greed and desires for unnecessary things. He still keep practising many rites and rituals, but adapts them to serve integral human development. His initiatives are also accepted by most of his neighbors.

Mr. Vibul's personal life and that of others in his community have struck most of the participants of the exposure-immersion programme so that many started to reflect on their own way of life and make some changes. They realized that it is necessary to lead a more simple life and to be more conscious of the problem of consumerism today. A Catholic nun confessed that now she understood better what poverty means. She thought that her religious life was already simple enough. She needed to do more in order to put into practice her vow of poverty.

As for Mr. Vibul's attitude towards other religions it is open for dialogue. In fact, he has been participating in many workshops and seminars organized by different NGOs and Church organizations such as CCTD. He says as most Buddhists in Thailand, that all religions are good, since they are means for man's liberation from suffering. Yet more than most ordinary Buddhists, Mr. Vibul feels religions must be practised in a way that they may respond to the real need of the people today. They must be integrated into the ordinary life of the people, not be separated as they mostly are today.

Tha Mafaiwan Village - Luang Por Khamkhien

The second community visited by a group from CCTD was Tha Mafaiwan village, Chaiyaphum province, situated about 400 km. Northeast of Bangkok. The person, the group wanted to meet and have dialogue with was the eminent monk Khamkhien Suwanno.



The village is situated on a small mount. The communication with the other villages and town is still difficult. Economically the village is poor. They have not enough rice even for their families, since there is hardly enough land for rice growing. The eminent monk used to move from place to place as ordinary "forest monks" do, until he was asked about 15 years ago to stop and become abbot in the temple of that village. He started to assist the people not only in religious rites and ceremonies, but also in their material needs. From medical assistance by means of herbs to social organizer, the eminent monk integrated his activities. However, he remains the meditation master, who requires such practice also from the people, who willingly cooperate.

Luang Por (Father) Khamkhien is also well known to students and educated intellectuals in the cities. Many go to practice meditation in his temple on the mountain or in a temple in Bangkok, where he comes every now and then to assist another well-known meditation master, who is also his master. His reputation is due to his simple way of life and simple language to communicate his message. Some years ago, an interreligious organization in Bangkok campaigned for a rice cooperative and a sum for development projects in his village. Those who joined the project by contributing rice and other means were mostly students and middle class people in cities such as Bangkok. It was a kind of application of a Buddhist traditional ceremony, which is repeated often even today. Besides a rice

cooperative, there are other development projects initiated by Luang Por Khamkhien, such as a youth group and centre for children similar to kindergarten, cooperative shop and medicine cooperative.

The eminent monk is himself a broad-minded person who is open for dialogue with other religions. Interviewed by a Thai bishop and filmed on video tape he said:

"As for myself as a monk, I like to say that my life is for others. I do not think of dividing people into different groupings, such as you are a Christian, you are a Muslim. I do not think as such. We are together, humanity. We shall share what people, those people, do not think as such. I live my life for others. It is truly a universal pillar teaching"

"I am interested in Christians. There were some whom I had met. Sometimes we learn from each other. Next week I'm going to Chiangrai. I am going to meet one person, a Christian. I learned from them also especially as regards to the rural development. Some work that are academic I do not have yet experiences but I have experiences of inner aspect, that is "liberation"; but in terms of rural development of which I have yet more to learn. In the inner spiritual sense I think that we are adequate".

"Not so long ago, I heard about an unpleasant news between Christians and Buddhists. I do not see, eh, how we took some supposed words... so seriously and create hatred. If only everyone understands about this (Liberation) supposed words cannot govern us. Some people are thinking this way that Christians are getting people or something similar to this. Actually, it is good, if anyone can teach or is able to teach anyone how to liberate from sorrow, how to live in unity like brothers and sisters, then why was it not good? It is good as well. It is not a question of religion in being a Christian or a Buddhist, never, never. Now, I'd see that everything is improving"

The group from CCTD who went to be exposed and to be immersed in a Buddhist experience of Tha Mafaiwan village, also had opportunity to practice meditation. Some

found that they had thought that Buddhist meditation was not different from a Christian meditation they practiced everyday and during retreat. But they changed their mind when introduced by Luang Por Khamkhien to another experience. Some wish to return to the temple again and to spend more time with the monk, in order to gain a more in-depth experience. Most of the participants realize that the kind of development implemented in that village has an integrative aspect. There can be no real development without the soil being prepared. The preparation is done through practice of meditation, which puts man into the right position of mind. This is the basis for the whole process, without which the course of development will be merely a "modernization", but without "development"

Tha Sawang Village—Luang Por Nan

The third site for exposure-immersion was Tha Sawang village, Surin province, located about 450 km. northeast of Bangkok at the border of Kampuchea. The name of Luang Por (Father) Nan is probably more well known than the temple and village where he is abbot. His experience is similar to Luang Por Khamkhien's but of a longer duration. Tha Sawang is his native village. After study and ordination in another village, he came back to be abbot in his own temple 26 years ago. He started immediately to be



engaged in development projects in the village. Through his initiatives, many infrastructures have been set up, such as roads and irrigation, also provision to buy fertilizer for the farmers. He started to set up a rice bank in a very unique way. Part of the rice in the silo is collected through some traditional Buddhist ritual adapted for the new purpose; another part is contributed by the farmers themselves.

In 1983, Luang Por Nan had another initiative, which brought him and the villagers around Tha Sawang village to grow rice on a farm which belongs to the temple. They could finish the first phase of planting in a few days. They continued working together until the huge paddy field was harvested. The yield of this common work was distributed to different villagers for their rice banks. Local authorities, who could not claim such "development" process as their own, started to put the eminent monk and villagers under fire. They were suspected of adopting a communist ideology. Even though such an accusation is ridiculous, Luang Por Nan changed his strategy, but continues his promotion of development through cooperation among the villagers themselves. The way of growing rice together has changed, but the new one is not much different from before. Villagers go to pick up young rice plants and transplant them in their own field. This portion will then be contributed to the village rice bank.

Besides the rice bank or rice cooperative, there are many other projects initiated by the eminent monk, such as vocational training for young people, cooperative shops and a mobile team for training in Buddhism and development activities in many villages in nearby provinces.

Luang Por Nan admitted that development is not an easy task. He took time until he succeeded in introducing some new ideas into the communities. There are many problems and sometimes also trouble. He never gives up. This consistency rises from his commitment to the people. He gives every thing he received from the people back to them, when they are in need. The people used to spend money on construc-

tion of new temples and facilities for the monks. He found it more relevant to build a silo for the people who are in need. He said:

"I am convinced of one thing : whatever you do, if it is good for the people, for the benefit of the people, not immoral and against religious principles, even if my head will be cut off, I will not stop doing so. I realize this truth in myself. I am not worrying about problems. You are happy when you have virtue, i.e. Dhamma, patience and sacrifice. It is enough for me and I find life worth living once I give all my ideas, mind, strength and belongings to others. If you love others, then you realize the value of your life..."

Again here, as with Luang Por Khamkhien, it is found that the power behind such courage and commitment is practiced faith in Buddhism. Luang Por Nan practices meditation and makes his villagers and those in other villages who ask for his assistance also practice meditation. He renews traditional Buddhist customs, rites and rituals for the purpose of integral human development. He keeps on telling everybody that development is a long process; one should keep on practicing and working together. Likewise is the practice of meditation, which must be consistent and progress gradually with a right methodology. Spiritual and material are different aspects, but they are not to be separated from each other.

The Catholic members of the exposure-immersion programme were surprised to listen to Luang Por Nan's words accompanying the practice of meditation, in which the group also participated. He started with asking the members to think of the presence of Jesus Christ, as the Buddhist should think of the Lord Buddha. He did not impose Buddhist doctrine on those who are of different faith. The eminent monk thinks only of other people, and tries to communicate with them in their own "language", not only the villagers but also intellectuals and members of other religions.

Reflection

Although there is a Buddhist militant

group campaigning against the Catholic Church in Thailand today, accusing it of adopting a new strategy of proselytism, the majority of Buddhists still keep an open mind and have tolerance towards other religions. Partners of dialogue are many in different fields. The above-mentioned persons are only examples in development circles. Reflection has been made after the exposure-immersion in these three communities with their leaders.

Firstly it has become clearer what "*Buddhist economy*" and "*small is beautiful*" mean in the practice of daily life of those who live this philosophy. Schumacher has reflected on his experience on the macro level, while the three Thai leaders practice it. They have the same process. The starting point is oneself. Words are of no meaning if the speakers do not live what they say. The simple way of life and search only for the welfare of others attract most people, who can no longer resist the invitation to join the movement. The process expands from individual to community and communities. It is evident that principle, life and works are all united in one person, who witnesses his faith in all its dimensions. This process goes against the actual currents of a consumeristic society. The challenge of "conversion" of the heart happens every day. It is a hard and long struggle, which can resist obstacle only in solidarity with others who also join this movement.

Secondly, in such cases of exposure-immersion, the Catholic partners have learnt many things, although it is for many only the beginning. They learn to know and understand more of Buddhism, which is not only a written doctrine, but practiced in daily life; not only by individuals, but also by communities. They learnt to understand more of their own religion, Christianity: that Jesus' life and preaching are not fully lived and followed; that Christianity is not only the structure of a Church and sets of doctrines, it is a heritage lived and transmitted through generations who, for their part, witnessed through history. They learnt to understand more the society we are living in. The simplicity and "poverty" of the three leaders

are stronger than words to criticize the society and way of life of modern man today. There are too many false values which must be identified. The first condition is that one has to be mindful and reduce greed and desire for all non-necessities presented them as actual needs.

They learnt to understand more of their works, especially the ones called "*development*", that they need to be reviewed; they need to be more adapted to the real situation of the people, taking into account their cultural values.

Finally they learnt to understand more of their own selves, that up to now they have separated principle, life and works from one another. They need more conversion and must start with themselves before they expect from others. They have to be more open to other religions and recognize existing values, which are practiced and lived in daily life by many. They have to be humble and ready to learn from ordinary people in order to walk with them along the way to liberation.

Dialogue and development have been continuing in Thailand for more than a decade. We are now at a very important phase. Yet nobody should be able to give a ready made answer of what an alternative model of society should be. Experiences are still limited at the community level. Here it has become clearer what community development is in perspective; what kind of dialogue is still to be developed, so that both Buddhists and Christians may witness their faith in the most integral and appropriate way in a changing society today.

Besides experiences at the community level, there are individuals and groups of Buddhist monks and laity, together with some Christian leaders, who continue reflecting on these experiences. They all are engaged in one way or another in development activities. "*Buddhist Philosophy*" and "*Christian Theology*" are being developed alongside in the same context of Thai society. There is much hope that action and reflection in this Buddhist-Christian dialogue will lead to real integral human development.

POST- INDUSTRIAL BUDDHISM

J. HUGHES

One of the central insights of the Buddha was that all things change. My contention in this essay is that this principle applies even to Buddhism itself. "Tathata", or the experience of reality "such-as-it-is", is the only unchanging thing according to Buddha. All the worldly manifestations of tathata, such as the Buddha, his teachings, and the institution of the Sangha which he founded, are subject to change. These forms will be different from place to place, time to time, conditioned by their changing environment. Based on my experience with Western Buddhism, I would like to suggest that Buddhism is changing as it takes root in the advanced industrial West. Further, that these changes have implications for the future of Sarvodaya.

First, from both a Buddhist and a Sarvodaya point-of-view, material, cultural, and spiritual aspects of life influence or "co-condition" one another. Therefore, major conditioning factor for the development of the Sasana* will be the way a society produces its necessities; the technology and production of food, shelter, clothing, tools, etc. Consequently, it can be suggested that, historically, the cultures which have adopted a monastic or priestly institution for "religious professionals" have been agricultural-based. In the more nomadic "hunting and gathering" societies the usual "religious professional" has been the shaman, while in the urbanized, industrializing, societies (capitalist and socialist Europe, America and Japan), the influence of the priestly institutions has been giving way to more lay-centered forms of religion or pseudo-religion. Especially in Japan, the rapid growth of lay "Buddhisms" after WWII illustrates the influence of in-

dustrial culture on Buddhism.

Being an historian of neither Japan, Europe or Sri Lanka, I should like to confine my remarks to the peculiarities of American Buddhism. My assumption is that America since WWII has been entering a new stage of social evolution, a new organization of population, production and culture, which has been dubbed "post-industrial society". In our post-industrial society, fewer people are involved in direct material production (1% agricultural laborers; 30% manual of factory laborers) and the rest are performing some non-manual labor such as secretarial, trade or technical work. Even more importantly, the sectors of the economy that demand higher education have been expanding, absorbing the one-third of Americans with some college education and the more than half of young Americans with post-secondary education.

The rise of the American Buddha-Sasana is directly related to the rise of this "new class" of highly-educated intellectuals. Almost all "indigenous" Buddhist communities (as opposed to immigrant Asian Buddhists) are made up of college-educated people.**

* *Sasana here refers to the total culture of Buddhism in a given society.*

** *Buddhists in Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Asian immigrants in Australia, N. America and Europe tend to be dominated by an "industrial" or "reformation" Protestant Buddhism, emphasizing lay ethics and leadership, sometimes directly modeled on Christianity. There is little relationship between native, converted, European Buddhists and Asian immigrant groups, and Asian missionary monks are usually successful with one or the other. Certainly the integration of industrial, pre- and post-industrial adaptations should be at the top of the world Buddhist agenda.*

One explanation for the rise of interest in Asian religious and Buddhism, in particular among the educated, is the intellectual trend of the West since the Protestant Reformation. Some of these currents have been:

A) Atheism and existentialism, or more generally a thorough cynicism toward unprovable, moral/philosophical absolutes. This critical spirit has gradually eroded the intellectual bases of ethics, reason and ultimately, conceptual reality itself. This intellectual tendency is very compatible with Buddhism's rejection of eternal, unchanging, unobservable absolutes, and Buddhism's demand that beliefs and ethics be tested and experienced as right (see especially the Kalama Sutta). Like existentialism, Buddhism points to one's inherently correct Buddha-nature, which, if we are able to discover and allow it to lead us, takes us even beyond dependence on Buddha, his teachings and his church.

B) Scientific rationalism, and scientism in general, encouraged Asian and Western Buddhists to re-emphasize those aspects of Buddhism which were scientific. The law of cause-and-effect is enshrined in the concept of karma. Emphasis on meditation and insight as the solution to suffering brings Buddhism closer to modern psychology than most religious traditions, and Buddhism is the only religion with a detailed psychological model as a part of its scriptures. The principle of "co-conditioned origination" corresponds to the most advanced theory in cybernetics, evolution, and systems analysis while the principle of "no-self" directly corresponds to the findings of quantum mechanics (see, for instance, *Fritjof Capra's The Tao of Physics*). In general, divorced from cultural accretions, Buddhism is very attractive to those with a scientific worldview.

C) The mysticism of experience, such as the use of drugs, psycho-therapies, and bio-feedback, have generally encouraged an interest in meditation in the West. Many attribute this interest to the intellectual trend of frustration with sterile rationality; Buddhism therefore becomes for the intellectual the

ideal combination of rational and supra-rational, verbal and inexplicable. For whatever reasons, many members of the American Buddha Sasana are veterans of experimentation with marijuana, LSD, psychotherapy and sexuality, who discovered that meditation deepened and sustained the insights that they had gained through other means.

Indeed, the emphasis on meditation in the American BuddhaSasana is so strong, that to be a practicing Buddhist is first and foremost to practice meditation. To agree with Buddhist philosophy or have taken refuge in the Buddha-Dharma-Sangha is only considered an inferior secondary qualification, and the practice of sila (morality) or Buddhist ritual is barely important at all.

For the post-industrial Buddhist in a pre-industrial country, this is one of the jarring discontinuities; the great emphasis on morality, while meditation is assumed to be too difficult for even monks. In America, few Buddhists seek to collect "merit", but rather are seeking that profound awareness in which our actions create no karma, good or bad. Rather than rebirth in the god-realm, we seek enlightenment in this life, moment-to-moment, in every activity.

On the other hand, the consumer-capitalist society in which the American BuddhaSasana has grown has also taken its toll. An unwritten ethical code, based on intuition rather than rules (which American Buddhists identify with Christianity), flows easily into a have-your-cake-and-eat-it-too attitude, a belief that hedonistic, aggressive and uncompassionate lifestyles make no difference if one practices meditation. Much can be learned from the pre-industrial BhikkhuSangha about the value of laying a firm ground of sane behavior before one sows seeds of mindfulness.

The New Class

Buddhism, when first entering a society, is most attractive to those who have the time and ability to penetrate the ignorance of their social conditioning. In Buddha's time, these privileged thinkers were Brahmins and

warrior caste and even more so, Buddha's comrades, the wandering ascetics. These were the first disciples, after which men and women from every part of society joined. The propagation of Buddhism in Tibet, Japan, Sri Lanka and China has always seen a critical role played by the conversion of the royal and noble classes, as patrons and converts to the monastic life. Today, in the West, the New Class of intellectual laborers are the fertile ground of the Dharma. Especially susceptible are those who are well-educated, but who have rejected the productive roles the American economy offers them.

There have always been those who thought, spoke, wrote, divined, managed, taught, designed, ruled or meditated (intellectual labor) and those who have farmed, fished, hunted, soldiered, or made things (physical labor) for a living. Usually the intellectual laborers have been subordinate to and tied into "the system", having an inflexible role in the division of labor, living under the hegemony of the ruling classes, and not given the opportunity or encouragement to free themselves from the alienated conditioning of this system. Buddhism calls this system "samsara", and the ideal Buddhist strives to free him/herself (and ultimately all beings) from habitual, limited and unenlightened social roles and class-consciousness. The role of the bhikkhu (monk) ideally is a way of setting oneself apart from samsara, not to be just another cog in the social machine, but to search for, and seek to manifest in the world, pure, unconditioned awareness.

Similarly, in the West, those intellectuals who work for multinational corporations, the military, government, universities, and even the non-profit sector, because of their vested social and economic interests, face obstacles in the realization of truth. The leaders of the BuddhaSasana in the West are the highly-educated under-, un-, anti-, or alternatively employed. This is not to say that the employed or socially-involved person cannot live an aware, karma-free, skillful life: did not the Buddha acknowledge that lay people can become highly enlightened,

though the bhikkhu life is more ideal. Nor is it to say that the educated, unemployed person will necessarily be more enlightened, as the visible decadence among privileged classes, and violence among unemployed youth, illustrate; rather that "surplus consciousness" will be there, wasted or not.

Based on this concept of "surplus consciousness", a new approach to the question of unemployment can be made. "Right livelihood" can be understood as doing work which liberates oneself and others. Under all previous economic systems, there has been little possibility for the masses of people to work as voluntary labor, free from considerations of need or coercion; not to mention labor which was intrinsically rewarding.

Today, however, there is the possibility of reducing, within planned economies, the numbers of hours one must work in order to live. Few societies today are either wealthy enough, or "satisfied" enough, to contemplate a planned reduction of labor-hours, and would do well to use all their resources towards the satisfaction of the world's basic human needs which are still unmet. But nonetheless as we all work towards a world a general fulfillment of basic human needs we should plan for the expansion of the realm of voluntary, enlightening activity. The expansion of this realm will hopefully in turn free creative and humanistic resources which will increase social wealth and contribute to world peace and justice. On the other hand, the alienation from work in modern industrial culture encourages escape into materialist consumption, and the manufacturing of needs as a refuge from spiritual hunger.

The Buddha Sangha was designed to liberate beings within a specific historic context, a society in which awakened consciousness needed to be specially concentrated and protected. This was necessary because the level of technology could only support marginal numbers of non-laborers, and those it did produce were largely needed by the state or economy. But today, the reduction of necessary labor through technological advance, free and equal access to education, and efforts towards peace and

equality, can begin to break down this most fundamental class division, that between the physical and intellectual laborer.

The Western BuddhaSasana is based in this New Class, and in its shadow-twin the "non-class of non-laborers", which together appear to provide the class-basis for a global anti-alienation revolution, though also for a slide into technocratic authoritarianism. The Western BuddhaSasana thus reflects a different structure than the agricultural Sasana, one in which the divisions between monk and laity become blurred. In the abundance of post-industrial society new forms of lay-Buddhist community life have blossomed representing a lay-monasticism; lay people, single and married, celibate and sexual, living and working in community, with their lives structured around meditation, self-criticism and a common discipline.

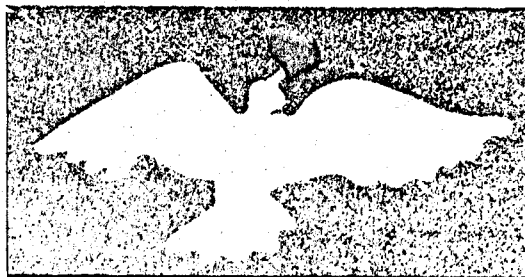
Again I am not suggesting that Western Buddhism is the only important trend in Western or Third World societies, or even that it will ever become a widespread phenomenon. Not all members of the New Class are expected to become Buddhists, though its base in this rising class does give it an increasing influence. Further, Buddhism is not the only reflection of these deep social changes; according to Buddhism all things manifest the underlying unity in their own way. Many New Class groups share the insights and discontents of Buddhism without being aware of Buddhism, and among the wide community aware of and sympathetic to Buddhism itself, many consider the use of the term "*Buddhism*" attachment to "*name-and-form*". Some of the movements which reflect Buddhist insights today are, for instance:

A) The ecology and voluntary simplicity movements, perhaps represented most brilliantly by the West German Greens, quite consciously reflect a Buddhist and generally religious idea. In their rejection of capitalist/communist materialism, and its unending creation of needs, they emphasize the world's resources' impermanence, and that the human race is co-dependent with the environment. Indeed, ecological mysticism emphasizes the organic oneness of humanity

and nature, while voluntary simplicity is the way to manifest this understanding in one's life, a middle way lifestyle between asceticism and decadence, poverty and gluttony.

B) The civil rights movements for blacks, women, gays, the handicapped, and the movements against torture and political repression represent the strivings of the oppressed and their New Class champions to abolish privilege based on name and form, for all societies to treat beings as equal, and allow all beings to be happy. As counterposed to the Marxist formula that the self-interest of the oppressed is the only motor of change, the New Class acts more on the basis of an innate human sympathy (*karuna*) and abstract ideals such as justice.

C) The peace and internationalist movements reflect, especially in the West, the rising New Class demand that national borders are illusions, and that they as the geo-political expression of our ignorance and selfishness, be transcended. The Bodhisattva today is called to think in global terms; today there are no longer progressive nationalist movements. A commitment to world salvation has become an increasingly concrete commitment. Efforts to transcend the US-Soviet dualism, such as the Non-Aligned Movement (geo-political "*uppekha*" or "*compassionate non-attachment*") and the anti-nuclear weapons movement, oppose imperialism (national ego) and the use of force in world affairs (the dharmaraja conquers his enemies through righteousness). The democratic socialist movements and grassroots initiatives of many kinds (such as Sarvodaya) search for a middle way between the tyranny of the state-party system and the capitalist-economic system towards a world community with both justice and freedom.



Nation Builders Are The People

By Hiroshi Nagai



Youths — social workers, teachers, students and journalists—from ASEAN countries said in unison that "true" nation-building cannot be achieved without full participation of people, particularly young people, in their Southeast Asian countries.

National development should not be "monopolized" by a privileged minority, the ASEAN youths said, since such monopolies have been obstructing true development in their countries, and also deviates from "participation, development and peace," three main themes advocated in the current International Year of Youth.

Fifteen youths from the five-member ASEAN countries made these and other remarks at the Second Pacific Youth Forum held late last month at Takisawa Village at the foot of snow-capped Mt. Iwate in Iwate Prefecture.

I, as an observer at the symposium, thought that their remarks "rang out" strains of apprehension over the future development of their countries.

People, particularly young people, have been joining hands in an action for reform—to the extent of political reform—as seen in political unrest in the Philippines.

ASEAN youth speak out and act in all seriousness...

In addition to the 15 ASEAN panelists, 10 Japanese and six youths from the United States, China and Burma took part in the seminar which was held Oct. 21-26 under the joint sponsorship of the International House of Japan and the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, based in Bangkok, Thailand.

All the participants were social workers, teachers, students and journalists under 35 years of age, especially selected by the organizations to represent their views freely and candidly.

The panelists discussed various matters of mutual concern in line with the three main themes, "participation, development and peace," while enjoying field trips to local schools and welfare homes.

What impressed me most during the week-long forum was the definition of "development" made by ASEAN panelists.

As a rule, both Americans and Japanese define development as promotion of living standards, equal opportunities and growth of the GNP.

Southeast Asian people have modeled themselves after Americans and Japanese in developing their countries. But the question the ASEAN youth made at the forum was "What Happened to Their Countries and Themselves As a Result?"

A Philippine panelist said that the Philippine people have benefited from economic development "to a certain extent." But, the panelist noted, most benefits have been "monopolized" by a pro-Marcos minority, throwing the ordinary people deeper into poverty.

Development projects have been decided on only by the pro-Marcos people who are dependent on U.S. and Japanese capitals. The panelist went on to say that, worse still, these people have "connived at" social injustice in order to "monopolize" their rights and interests.

"The development we aim at is not just economic development," he said. "It means equal sharing of riches, social justice, national independence, life and security."

Other ASEAN panelists from Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia expressed similar views, saying that "their governments have been trying to suppress popular opinions against contradictions caused by economic development in their countries.

"True development cannot be achieved without full participation of people," they said.

Japanese Style

Another panelist from Singapore remarked that Singaporeans have succeeded in building their island nation in a Japanese-style economic development.

But, she said, they have lost part of humanity as a result of economic development.

The Singapore government refused to accept Indochinese refugees. "Some people even pushed boat people into sea," she said. "I think the Singaporean people have lost something most important. Humanity."

A Thai panelist said that "development should be made inseparably in the fields of economy, politics, education and culture."

The panelist, who teaches in Bangkok, said, "I want to tell my school children to

study hard and become persons who can tell right from wrong without depending on the government to do it for them."

Another Philippine social worker said that she always tell children to celebrate Christmas in the Philippine way, not the American way in a bid to raise their awareness as Philippine people.

A Malaysian youth said that the current political unrest in the Philippines shows that the Philippine people are going "in the right direction."

An Indonesian youth also opined that it is no wonder the Western media always reports a quest for democracy in Southeast Asia as political unrest.

The Thai panelist said that it was very significant that both ASEAN and other panelists discussed various problems of mutual concern and interest in Japan.

"Exchanges started in ASEAN countries in the late 1960s," he said. "But those exchanges were limited to leading scholars, politicians and businessmen.

"But we can discuss various matters at this forum freely at own level."

During the week-long forum, all the panelists from ASEAN countries, Japan, China, Burma and the U.S. talked, exchanged information and promoted friendship in a lively and trust-worthy manner.

"They are looking at the coming 21st century," a Thai observer said. "They will assume responsibility for their countries in the 21st century."

"I wonder how many Japanese youths are also looking at the new century in the same manner as they are," he said.

The United Nations has designated 1986 as the International Year of Peace.

The Pacific Youth Forum plans to hold a symposium in Hiroshima, the world's first A-bombed city, next year.

Organizers hope both panelists and local people will discuss peace—peace for Asia and Japan—from a long-range point of view.

*From Mainichi Daily News
17 November 1985*

BOOK REVIEWS

Phra Rajavaramuni Prayudh), A Dictionary of Buddhism (Bangkok, Mahachula Buddhist University, 1985, Baht 100.

The book under review, while basically written for the Thai public, should be of interest and value to foreign scholars who understand the Thai language. The Dictionary is divided into three parts. Part I deals with Dhamma in numerical groups, e.g. groups of wo--"Kāma : A subjective sensuality กิเลสขาม (and) an objective sensuality วิตุขาม" Theravada Buddhism tends to approach the teaching of the Buddha from numerical aspects; and His late holiness Prince Patriarch Vajirakīrtiāvorasa's well-known **Navakovada** had a section on the topic. The technique is of particular value to teaching, as it enables people to learn more easily. In this book, our compiler has collected many more items and has given a brief explanation in Thai to each, as well as giving its English translation. Each entry is given a cross-reference, and every single technical term could be traced back to the exact page in the Pali Canon and its commentaries. Obviously this is the work of a very serious scholar.

Part II deals with a Thai-English Buddhist dictionary. Part III is the English-Thai Section, plus an appendix on taking the Five Precepts, etc. Those two parts are not so extensive as the first one, yet they can familiarize students with exact Buddhist terminology, at least with terminology which Buddhist scholars

tend to use, e.g. "vanity มหะ" and "นิมนต์ invitation."

Dictionaries like the latter two parts have been attempted before by other Thai scholars like Sujeep Bunyanupap of Maha Makut Buddhist University. Had our compiler had the time, he might have been able to do a more complete job.

When reading the book under review, the reader may not realize that the author received his formal education entirely within the traditional Pali system; having graduated from Maha Chulalongkorn Buddhist University, he became a lecturer there as well as its Assistant Secretary-General, besides being an abbot of his own monastery. With so much administrative work, a large teaching load and "priestly" duties, **Chao Khun** has yet managed to find the time to write such a scholarly work and compile such a dictionary.

S.S.S.

(*Abridged from Journal of the Siam Society* - July 1976, Vol 64. Part 2)

Siamese Resurgence: A Thai Buddhist Voice on Asia and a World of Change

by Sulak Sivaraksa.

Published by Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD) 1985.

Distributed by Suksit Siam, 1715 Rama IV Road, Bangkok.

Sulak Sivaraksa is one of Thailand's most well-known intellectuals and social critics. His

earlier books include 'Siam in Crisis' and 'A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society'. In August last year, once again he became an international cause celebre, after his arrest on charges of Lese Majeste (defaming the much-revered Thai monarchy). A charge that made him liable to an imprisonment of three to fifteen years. However because of the appeals and protests from a wide section of scholars, community organizations, the diplomatic corps and international organizations the world over, the charges against him were dropped on November 30th.

This book is a collection of more than twenty lectures, speeches and articles which provide an important contribution to the understanding of Buddhism, history of Siam and beyond. The articles on Buddhism give new insights while those on history explain the ways of the administration and the exercise of authority over states in the different periods of Thai history and during the rule of the different kings and princes.

There is also a series of appendices dealing with Sulak's arrest on charges of Lese Majeste. These appendices do provide some insights on contemporary Thai politics, the power struggles within the ruling circles and the role of the military which basically controls the State. Not only is the book a must for all libraries but also anyone concerned about development, justice and interested in Buddhist ethics will find it of great value to possess a copy.

Religion and Asian Politics - An Islamic Perspective

*Published by the Christian
Conference of Asia — Inter-
national Affairs.*

This publication is a report of the Consultation on Religion and Asian Politics, with a focus on Islam, organized by the International Affairs Desk of the Christian Conference of Asia. The consultation was held in November 1984, in Hong Kong and had the participation of some of the leading Islamic scholars in the region and from countries where Muslims are a majority of the population such as, Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan. Among the papers presented at the Consultation and which are included in the publication are papers covering such diverse topics such as Islam in Malaysia: Resurgence and Response by Chandra Muzaffar, Pluriformity in the Development of Islam and Religious Revival by Dawam Rahardjo, The Religious Dimension of the Moro Problem (in the Philippines) by Carmen Abubakar, Islamic Fundamentalism and Communalism in India by Asghar Ali Engineer, Role of Islam in South Asian Politics by Latif Chaudri and Religion and Politics in Pakistan by Mohammad Safdar Mir.

The Executive Secretary of the International Affairs Desk of the Christian Conference of Asia, Mr. Clement John who organized the consultation says in his introduction to the publication, "The discussion of State and religion has a purpose if it enables us to break down the dehumanising structures and build Asian societies anew" He also adds that with this objective

in view, the Consultation on Islam is the first in the series to be followed by similar studies on Buddhism, Christianity and Militant Hinduism. This first volume on Islam is highly recommended reading for all those concerned with contemporary development in Asia.

*from Asian Exchange, Hong
Kong, Vol.III, No.4, 1985*

Buddhism and the Bombs *by Ken Jones (Buddhist Peace Fellowship) U.K. 1985, £0.60.*

When I first joined the Buddhist Society in London about thirty years ago, I noticed the lack of social concern among western Buddhists. Lately there was a growth of Buddhist social activism in the west, especially since the founding of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, western Buddhists contribute meaningfully to the restructuring of the outward society as well as for the inner 'self'. We in the East could learn much from our western friends.

Ken Jones is one of those friends who has been trying to communicate to us about 'inner and outer peace making', which is the sub title of the pamphlet under review. In fact this is an appreciation rather than a review.

Especially in view of so much concern over the bombs by many peace movements in the West, it is timely that a Buddhist voice should also be heard. Such a voice would help a lot of people, Buddhists or otherwise, to have more effective peace work from within, in order to face the planetary crisis and the heart-failure of the imagination. We

need a new person, as much as a new society and a peaceful world.

Within 25 pages, the author gave us so much facts and encouragements on peace making. His style is lively and challenging. He may be a little weak on SE Asia and we need to go one step further to link peace with alternative models of development. Yet we in this part of the world can learn much about Buddhist contributions towards peace in Japan, Sri Lanka, Europe and North America. The pamphlet should really be translated into Thai, and there should be more books on this topics, which should also be more profound. What Ken has started in each chapter should be taken up in depth so that the Buddhist could really be in a position to give some answer to various aspects of modern dilemmas in our contemporary era.

S. Sivaraksa



Pilgrim Kamanita:

A Legendary Buddhist Romance
by Nobel Prize Winner Kaj
Gjellerup, translated by John F.
Logie. New Edition in Thai and
English with beautiful illustration
by Matichon Press, Bangkok 1983.
200 Baht or US\$ 10.- plus postage.
You can order it through TICE
GPO Box 1960, Bangkok 105.

SEEDS OF PEACE

Vol. 2 No. 2 May 2529 (1986)

THE VISION OF BHIKKHU BUDDHADASA

CHRISTIANITY IN THE REFLECTION OF BUDDHISM

THE PALI LANGUAGE AND SCRIPTURES

BUDDHIST PERCEPTIONS OF DESIRABLE SOCIETIES



Seeds of Peace

is published thrice annually in January, May and September, in order to promote the aim and objectives of the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD). For subscriptions and further information, please contact the Commission 4753/5 Soi Watthong Noppakun, Somdej Chaophya Road, Klongsan, Thonburi, Bangkok 10600, Thailand. Tel. 437-9445. Suggested minimum donation US\$ 10 per annum, postage included.

Objectives of TICD

1. To coordinate work among individuals, groups of individuals and various agencies dealing with religions and development in course of working together.
2. To share experience in and knowledge of religions and development as well as exploring ways and means of working together.
3. To offer training and secure resources in terms of man-power and materials to support and enhance the agencies that need help.

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THE VEDCHHI STATEMENT

Peace Brigades International, established in 1981, to undertake peace keeping, peacemaking and peace building initiatives under a discipline of nonviolence and humanitarian service, is now enriched with insights gained from experiences, particularly from its courageous and prudent activities in Central America. Based on this experience, we the Council members and the invitees at Vedchhi reaffirm that:

Our faith in peace and justice is strengthened when we witness the darkness of structural and organized violence and unorganized violence around us.

Truth, justice and peace attained through nonviolent means are fundamental to our commitment.

We believe that a nonpartisan attitude is important, but not fundamental to nonviolent functioning. Nonpartisanship in certain situations where a PBI team could be a third party, would include the following principles:

- a. Dealing with all parties with an open mind;
- b. Reporting as objectively as possible;
- c. Refraining from judgmental responses;
- d. Voicing our concerns to those responsible.

PBI intends to continue to support and protect nonviolent groups.

We respect the humanness of every person and are convinced that conflicts between and within nations can and should be resolved by active nonviolent methods. We are dedicated to the defense of human rights and would strive to place unarmed peace teams at local, regional and international levels. We believe that all conflicts are within the purview of the Peace Brigades, despite the present human and material limits of the organization.

Approved by PBI Council in session Vedchhi, India, January 11, 1986.

Editorial Note

The International Year of Peace as proclaimed by UN General Assembly had a good beginning, with the War Resisters' International XVIII Triennial at Swaraj Ashram, Vedchhi, India, which was followed by Peace Brigades International Council Meeting, at Institute for Total Revolution of the same village. Our representative from TICD attended both meetings. It was very appropriate that the events took place in rural Gujarat, where Gandhian spirit of peace and Satyagraha still prevail. Although India is no longer Buddhist, the Buddha's influence could be found meaningfully in many aspects of Indian culture.

Here, it is regarded as a Buddhist Kingdom—the last on earth perhaps. Yet, we need to apply more Buddhadhamma to be the light and the guide of our contemporary society, which means that we must be broad-minded towards other religious beliefs. We must also be more serious on our spiritual growth and ethical conducts, rather than making use of Buddhist ceremonies for our material manifestation, stressing on economic and technological development, which could lead to more violence and natural destruction.

The one who has done more than any Thai in raising our consciousness on peace and social justice in the Dhammic way is Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, who will celebrate his 80th birthday anniversary on 27th May. We therefore wish to dedicate this issue of our publication as a humble token of our respect and admiration to the Servant of the Buddha, who is much admired by many Thai Christians and Muslims. Unfortunately some reactionary Buddhists find him too progressive or too lenient to those of other living faiths and ideologies. However, there are two other books in English about him and by him coming out at this time. Let those non-Thai who wish to know him and his work, beyond our publication, read them. They are **Buddhadasa and the Reform of Theravada Buddhism** by Peter Jackson and **Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's Dhammic Socialism** edited and translated by Donald K. Swearer.

Our sister organization, the Coordinating Group for Religion and Society, also celebrated its tenth anniversary in April. We wish them well and hope to collaborate with them as with other organizations for peace, non violence and better understanding between different religions.

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THE VISION OF BHIKKHU BUDDHADASA



WITH PROF. GENE SHARP, FROM HARVARD UNIVERSITY

In February 1986/2529 I made my third pilgrimage to Wat Suan Mokh (The Garden of Liberation) to visit Acharn Buddhadasa Bhikkhu in honor of his 80th birthday. Since I first visited Suan Mokh twenty years ago many changes have taken place. Sounds from trucks hurtling along the southern superhighway disturb the quiet of this forested retreat. Two decades ago relatively few lay devotees found their way to this

remote hermitage seven kilometers along a dirt road outside of the small, forgettable town of Chaiya. Today the grounds of Suan Mokh harbour several guest houses to accommodate the 800 people who are often there at any one time, a total of nearly 100,000 visitors a year. A special meditation retreat during the first ten days of every month has been established for the increasing numbers of foreigners coming to Suan



Mokh, and ground has been broken for a meditation center to be known as Suan Mokh International. Over 1000 trainees a year receive instruction from Acharn Buddhadasa and Acharn Bodhi, the assistant abbot, who has been at Suan Mokh for 22 years. Furthermore, the small collection of books written by Bhikkhu Buddhadasa given to me by students at Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University 30 years ago has been dwarfed by what has become the largest corpus of thought ever published by a single Theravada thinker in the entire history of the tradition. For years to come students of Thai Buddhism will be summarizing, distilling, and interpreting Buddhadasa's contribution to Buddhist Thought. History may well judge him as the most seminal Theravada thinker since Buddhagosha, and may evaluate Buddhadasa's role within the Buddhist tradition to be on a par with such great Indian Buddhist thinkers as Nāgārjuna with whom he has been compared.

Buddhadasa's place in Thai Buddhism has certainly been assured, but the nature and extent of his contribution will continue to be clarified and developed for years to come. Like many original thinkers, Buddhadasa has been criticized from several fronts—by meditation practitioners for the prolixity of his writing, by traditional Abhidhamma philosophers for the unorthodoxy of his thought, by political activists

for his social idealism, and so on. In particular, because he has chosen to teach from Suan Mokh, a forest hermitage removed from the hustle and bustle of modern urban life, Buddhadasa has been misperceived as one who epitomizes an otherworldly Buddhism, or as one who advocates a practice aiming at personal rather than social transformation. Nothing could be further from the truth. To be sure, Buddhadasa emphasizes the importance of right understanding and individual practice, but Suan Mokh, itself, represents an ideal **community** rather than an individualistic retreat from the world. There monk and laity, men and women, young and elderly, humans and all kinds of animals and plants live together in harmonious balance. Buddhadasa teaches under the trees surrounded by attentive listeners, sleeping dogs and pecking chickens. Accommodations are adequate but not excessive. The simplicity of Suan Mokh represents an ideal balance (**prakati**), not a return to primitiveness but a state of Nature (**dhammajāti**) in which all sentient beings recognizing their common humanity act out of mutual concern and respect for the good of whole. Buddhadasa calls such a community a dhammic socialism (**dhammika sanghaniyama**).

It seems appropriate in this day and age when the superpowers threaten the world with nuclear holocaust that in honor of Buddhadasa's 80th year his political philosophy be given special emphasis and attention. To be sure, his view of dhammic socialism cannot be divorced from the seminal themes of Buddhadasa's thought which emphasize, in particular, the overcoming of attachment to self, to "me and mine" (Thai: **tua kū khong kū**). In the most profound sense both personal and social wellbeing stem from a transformation of self-attachment and self-love to selflessness and love of others. A socialist society is a community based on a fundamental sense of the equality of all beings. Such a view does not deny the existence of differences but all, regardless of position and status, recognize their place within the economy of the whole. Thus, the man of wealth should not be a 'capitalist'

who hoards for his own pleasure but a *śreshi*, one whose high position enables him to be a benefactor to laborers, workers and common folk.

Buddhadasa's vision of the good and just society coincides with his view of an original state of nature or an original human condition, one of mutual interdependence, harmony and balance. By its very nature this state of nature is selfless—individuals are not attached to self for its own sake. But with the loss of this state of innocence individuals are subject to the bondage of attachment (*upadana*) and unquenchable thirst (*tanha*). Consequently, sentient beings need to find ways to return or restore this condition of mutual interdependence and harmony, love and respect. On the personal level the attainment of wisdom (*bodhi*) through the methods of awareness (*sati*), continuous attention (*sampajāna*) and focused concentration (*samadhi*) serve to break through the conditions of greed, ignorance and lust (*kilesa*); while on the social level those in positions of power promote economic and political policies which after meeting basic physical needs promote a balanced development in which matters of spirit (*citta*) assume their rightful dominance.

Buddhadasa's notion of a truly human community is a universal vision shared by all religions. This socialistic society is one governed by love (*mettā*). In the language of Buddhist millenarian expectations, it is the age of the Buddha Maitreya. But Buddhadasa's teachings regarding Buddhist Socialism cannot be consigned to an other-worldly messianism. His vision serves as a critique of Western political theories of capitalism and communism, and provides the basic principles for a political philosophy with the potential to guide not only Thailand in the coming years, but all societies struggling to create a just and equitable social, political and economic order.

During my two day visit to Suan Mokh Acharn Buddhadasa was giving special lectures to a group of students from the Teachers College in Bangkok on the theme, A New Life (Thai: *Chiwit Mai*). Upon the conclusion of his last lecture the head of the

group prepared to approach Buddhadasa with the traditional Thai expression of respect and gratitude to the wise teacher. Buddhadasa interrupted her in midsentence saying, "No, don't thank me, let me thank you for your sacrifice of time and money to come to Suan Mokh to share this instruction in the *dhamma*. I hope you will go forth to be lamps to this truth." I, among thousands of others representing the several world religions, have been deeply influenced by Buddhadasa's message. He challenges us to respond not by becoming attached to him, but by going forth to help humankind strive toward its rightful condition of mutual love and respect, harmony and balance, a *dhammika sanghaniyama*.

Donald K. Swearer
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PEACE 86

The "Peace 85" group will be continuing its activities as part of the 1986 International Year of Peace. You may remember that last year's events included a film festival, two concerts for peace, seminars, a fast for Peace, exhibitions on Peace and Religion, and on the Nuclear Arms Race. Via the grapevine, we have heard of some exciting plans for 1986, more of the details when we hear them!

In the meantime, Peace 86 would like examples of media resources available from different countries, such as booklets, posters, badges, slides etc that could be used to stage exhibitions in schools, universities and for the general public. Peace 86 has pamphlets and posters that they could exchange. Please contact:

Peace 86,
c/o TICD,
4753/5 Soi Watthongnoppakun, Somdej
Chaophya Road, Klongsan, Bangkok 10600
Thailand.

by Editorial Staff, TDSC.

Christianity in the Reflection of Buddhism

S. SIVARAKSA

*From Concilium Revue Internationale de
Théologie (Holland) February 1986.*



The Dalai lama leading meditation practice at a Christian Chapel in Madras, India.

When the first missionary went to Tibet to propagate the Gospel, the Tibetan Buddhist monks heard about God, Salvation, Liberation, suffering, Eternal Life and the like. They concluded that the teaching of Christ was similar to that of the Buddha.

The strength and weakness of Buddhism is that it tends to find similarity with other religions.

Hence it finds no difficulty to coexist with Hinduism and Animism. The differences are not stressed. The argument is that for the majority, if they find any religious rites and

rituals helpful to them, they should practice them. For instance, Shrines, Images and Gods could be refuges to those who are in need of spiritual protection or security, at least temporarily. Once one develops oneself more maturely, one will have inner strength to solve one's own difficulty, to be really one with oneself, as well as with all beings and with the ultimate reality. For those who wish to develop further towards Selflessness in order to get to the state of Oneness, or Nothingness, then they can take the Buddha's Middle Path seriously. Yet Buddhism does not claim that it is the only

one that knows the answer to the problem of suffering and how to overcome it — to reach the final Liberation or Nirvana.

Unlike the Hindus, the Christians found it difficult to admit that Buddhism could also be a true religion. The missionary in Tibet told the Lamas frankly that Buddhism was a false religion or the religion of the demons, and only by following Jesus Christ could one be saved or attain a blissful state of the eternal life.

Unfortunately this kind of belief is still widespread in many Christian circles. Despite Vatican Council II, some documents from the Secretariat for the Non-Christians still make many Buddhists believe that the official Vatican policy towards Buddhism is still not clear. There is an implication that now Christians should learn more about Buddhism and show outward sign of respect to Buddhist ceremony in order to understand Buddhist teaching and culture, which will perhaps be easier to convert Buddhists to Christianity, or to Christianize Buddhism as St. Thomas Aquinas had Christianized Aristotle.

At least in Siam, the leading Catholic seminary still publishes articles saying that the Buddha was at best a prophet, pointing the way to Jesus Christ, or that Buddhism was dead historically as soon as Christ was born 543 years after the Buddha had passed away.

This kind of assertion or accusation may annoy many uneducated Buddhists. But for those who practise Buddhism seriously, they take no interest in ignorant utterance from anyone: why should one quarrel over misunderstanding or propaganda. Indeed there are so many lofty ideas in Christianity that Buddhism could reflect upon.

God is obviously the utmost important issue in Christianity. If the Buddhists look at the word God unsympathetically, they will automatically deny His existence. They may even go further as to say that blind faith in the Unknown which equates to the Ultimate Reality is in fact Ignorance (AVIJJĀ) — the root cause of all evils. Especially the incarnation of God the Father, through human history in his begotten Son would be beyond any Buddhist imagination — not to mention

the Holy Spirit, or the doctrine of the Trinity.

At best the Buddhists will say God as expressed in Christianity has no role in Buddhism. We are not interested in Monotheism, Polytheism or Atheism. Yet, Buddhism is not Agnosticism. If the Buddhists are concerned about the ultimate reality or Noble Truth (ARIYA SACCA) the righteous law which control or operates the Universe (SADA DHAMMA) which means that whatever one does, one will reap the fruit of one's action (KAMMA), then we must reflect upon this in the light of the Christian concept of God also.

The Christians explain about God from the Hebraic historical perspective of a tribe, so God becomes so personal to them. He was even conceived as a God of anger. This was purely human interpretation. Only in the New Testament could we conceive HIM as the God of love, and he was for all mankind — beyond the Jewish people. As Meister Eckardt said any definition or understanding of God is bound to fail, unless you have experienced Him.

In Buddhism, we could not explain or define NIRVANA either. We can give some negative indications that NIRVANA is not this, is not that, and we can give some positive indications that NIRVANA is the perfect state of peace and happiness. Yet it is also a state beyond happiness.

When Gautama became Buddha, he was enlightened. Although he still remained man, but he already united with the Ultimate Reality—God, so the Buddha is God—not in the personification sense but in a normative sense. Hence the ultimate reality in Buddhism is Buddha Dhamma — not merely Dharma in the traditional Brahministic sense of the word. Indeed in the Mahayana tradition, the concept of Adi Buddha or Dyanī Buddha is really the creator of the universe and the universal law.

From the Buddhist perspective, only Sakayamuni Buddha or Gautama Buddha is the only one which could be verified by history as we understand it, for he was born about 6th to 7th century B.C. Other Buddhas before him could not be verified by history and Dyanī Buddha is even beyond history. Is

Dyani Buddha a myth or a reality? Only those who are enlightend or those with religious experience with God or Buddha Dhamma could really answer this.

Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, a well-known Thai monk, helps us, who have no religious experience to understand this problem by pointing out that in any religion, Buddhism included, there are always two kinds of language (1) the religious or Dhammic language and (2) the ordinary or worldly language. We tend to mix these two kinds of language and make so much misunderstanding unnecessarily. If the Christians hear that the Buddhists claim that their Buddha equals to the Christian God, they become angry. The Buddhists likewise feel that his Buddha must be superior to Jesus Christ. This is childish and tribal; it is a misuse of Dhammic language. In fact there is no equality nor superiority or inferiority among different religions. We are different but we ought to respect the others and try to understand the essential concept of our friends' religions as sympathetically and as respectfully as we can. Even so, we may make mistakes. Then we should ask for forgiveness.

It is difficult enough to understand our own religion clearly and thoroughly. Yet in this day and age, we must admit the limitation of our own religious tradition, and try to understand other religions in the light of our understanding of our own religion. A Buddhist could only reflect on Christianity from a Buddhist perspective, he could do no more. If the Buddhists understand that the Christian love of God makes him love his neighbours, his submission to God makes him selfless and is compassionate to all beings — human or otherwise, (like St. Francis of Assisi for instance) his understanding will make him reflect that to him the Buddha is indeed the Compassionate One and the Enlightend One. By following the Buddha's foot-step, could he understand himself and the society as well as the natural phenomena around him. His understanding in fact arises from his non-exploitation of himself and others. The more selfless he is, the more compassionate he is.

The more he sees that others are suffering, the more he would like to share their suffering and together with them to eliminate the cuse of suffering. By so doing, he takes a Bodhisattva vow to be compassionate like the past Buddhas or the Buddha-to-be.

If he has encounters with Christianity, he sees the cross as a sign that will strengthen him to share suffering — not only with his Christian friends but also with all God's creatures. Being a Buddhist, he will want to find the cause of suffering in order to get rid of it for his own liberation as well as the liberation of all others.

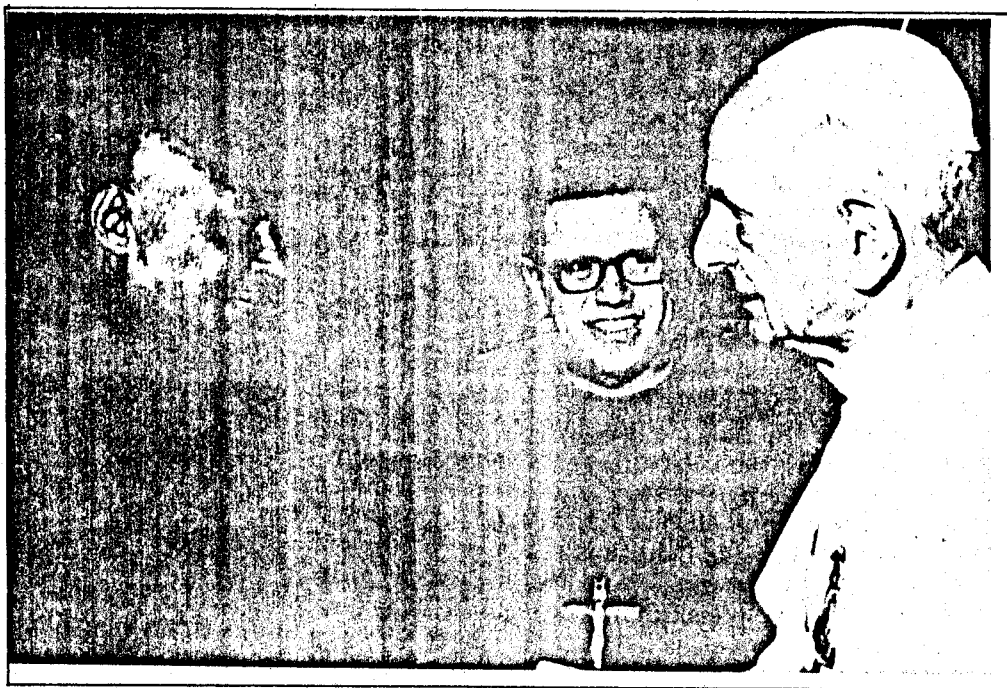
When the Buddhist reflects on Christian teaching or suffering, salvation and liberation, he finds all these meaningful from his Buddhist context. His Christian friends may seek salvation through Jesus Christ, but being Buddhist he finds Christ's teachings, especially the sermon on the Mount, and Christ's livelihood in obeying God the Father and serving God's people very meaningful. This meaning he gets through his understanding of the Dhammic language, which is obviously different from the Orthodox Christian interpretation. The Buddhist therefore feels that once a Christian fulfills his duty by firmly believing in God as he understands Him and acts according to God's commandments by loving his neighbours, sharing suffering with them and try to overcome the cause of that suffering, he will surely be liberated. For the Buddhist that state of liberation will be without hatred, greed and delusion — in other words it is a state of enlightenment.

The Christian may call this an eternal life. The Buddhist would not quarrel with the use of terminology, whether there is a permanent soul or not is left to the worldly language to tackle. If eternal life means perfect happiness, beyond word or description, it may also mean NIRVANA.

This is my personal reflection which is not scholarly. We need more serious research than an article of this nature warrants in order to develop deeply into the Buddhist reflection on Christianity — a fascinating subject.

"Thoughts from a Christian in Thailand"

Michael G. Fonner
Mahidol University



Pope Paul 6 and Ven. Saddhatissa Maha Thera

For the Christian, the Good News of God revealed in Jesus Christ is unchanging. The truth of this statement is something to which the Bible and the tradition of the Church bear witness. Equally, it is the source of great hope as Christians are impelled and drawn into the future. Another way of saying the same might be: the Kingdom of God in which Jesus lived and for which he died is unquestionably central to the convictions

which Christians live and proclaim. This was true yesterday; it is true today; and it will be true tomorrow.

At the same time, the manner in which Christians understand this truth and articulate it does change. The gospel takes on the flesh and blood of everyday life as Christians go through their days—in towns and cities and rural areas; in offices and homes and schools; in countries far and wide—and

in these different settings, Christians prayerfully seek to understand how the Kingdom of God revealed in and through Jesus Christ is to be lived and proclaimed. The Christian farmer in a rural area, the Christian office worker in the city and the Christian academic in the university all are witnessing to the same Kingdom and yet the words and actions will differ. St. Paul, I suspect, had precisely this in mind when he spoke of the many gifts but the one body (I Corinthians 12). According to where God has placed us, we each exercise our own gifts.

I came to Thailand two years ago. To be a Christian here, I am finding to my great enthusiasm, is to live the life of a religious minority. I know in making that observation that I am not saying anything new or startling to the reader of such a journal as this. The beautiful and profound signs of Buddhism are virtually everywhere: stunning wats nestled among Bangkok sky-scrapers and among verdant rice fields, orange-robed bhikkhus silently walking through streets and lanes each morning as dawn breaks, and the sacred space of "hông phrá" in the homes of many fine people. I revel in the many manifestations of another religious tradition which have come to fill my days with rich meaning and new insights.

Similarly, the homes of Christians here are many in number which I have visited in which some piece of art or statue or article of Buddhist origin has been on open display. Just as the number of Christians, both residents and visitors to this land, are many who enjoy a visit to a wat or participation in a cremation ceremony or just an early morning walk to observe the humble beauty of Thai Buddhists offering gifts of food and flowers to bare-footed monks.

And yet, I wonder how many Christians ever stop to consider the questions which Buddhism ought to raise in their lives. After all, Jesus in John's gospel proclaims unambiguously about himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me." These are words which are drilled into the minds of Christians since early childhood with no degree of uncertainty. Or to go even further, to how

we view the Church, the "People of God", do we not generally, as with a finely sharpened knife, carve out a special place for ourselves in terms of salvation and relationship with God and truth? And do we not, perhaps unintentionally, in doing so, exclude or cut away and separate those outside the Church? At times it is not all that unintentional but done with a vigor and gusto and zest for the gospel which, in my estimation, wreaks of nothing more than a religious fanaticism and sense of imperialism which is both theologically unsound and morally reprehensible.

Since coming to Thailand, I have worshipped in many different churches. To my chagrin, a common thrust of much of the preaching which I have heard has been anti-Buddhist. I have heard criticisms of Buddhist teachings, rituals, daily practices, even though these have manifested love and compassion toward others. As one who hears the voice of the Lord commanding me to love my brother and sister and to be an instrument of peace and reconciliation, I have been saddened many times. Why, I ask, must Christians lift up their truth by putting down the beliefs and lives of others? Is the criticism of persons of other religious traditions an unavoidable part of the Christian proclamation? What I have found, in other words, is that in this place, as a Christian among many Buddhists, I have been impel



eed to seek new understandings and ways of proclaiming the central, unchanging truth of the Kingdom of God.

I think Christians often forget that there is no Buddhism apart from Buddhists, that is, apart from other persons. If you take the Buddhists out of Buddhism just as if you take the Christians out of Christianity or Muslims out of Islam, it collapses. There will be nothing there. So a comment made with a less than generous heart about Buddhism is nothing more nor nothing less than a comment made with a less than generous heart about Buddhists. For most if not all Christians in Thailand, these are the persons with whom we work and play, with whom we share friendship, perhaps the person with whom we will share our next meal. So I ask: can we, as Christians, afford morally to make such statements about Buddhism? It seems to me that to live the Christian life here in the context of another religious tradition, we are summoned to seek new understandings of God, of the Church, and of our own selves which promote nothing less than honest love and integrity toward all of God's children.

A true story is told about an exchange between the great 20th century Swiss theologian, Karl Barth, and the ecumenical leader, D.T. Niles. Barth's theology was based on the unwavering conviction that God has made himself known in Jesus Christ-period. We encounter God, Barth says, we find God only in and through Christ. As a consequence, his attitude toward other religious traditions was not very sympathetic. He branded them "unbelief." D.T. Niles, a Christian from Sri Lanka, in conversation with Barth, once asked him how he knew that Hinduism was unbelief if he, Barth, had never known a Hindu. Barth replied, "A priori." In other words, it has to be! If God is known in Christ and in the Church then God cannot be known apart from Christ and outside the Church. The logic of Barth's argument, and I think we can also say, the logic of most of the Christian thinking which we have inherited necessitates our condemnation or at least a second class rating to other religious traditions.

I would question this on at least two

grounds. First, theologically, that is, how we understand God. Do we have a God who creates some of his children only to then relegate them to some darkness where their knowledge of Him is inadequate or even non-existent? Is that the Christian idea of God? But in a more practical way: Does not the integrity of other religious traditions—Buddhism after all is over 2500 years old and never has an ounce of blood been shed in its name—and especially the integrity of the individual lives of Buddhists merit a positive appraisal of the claims by which they live? I submit to you that this city and this country are filled with persons who live lives of charity and compassion and justice and love and hope, all those virtues by which Christians understand wholeness and authentic existence and salvation in the here-and-now. Christians have no corner on that market.

So we come to the question: how are Christians to understand their own faith, and the proclamations and understandings which grow out of it? Do we discard our tradition and begin all over again? No, I think not. Rather I would propose at least for a beginner that we seek to understand how we speak as persons of religious faith. Our question should be, I think: how does what we say and think as Christians find its meaning and purpose? I think herein will lie the beginning of an answer. Let me explain using an example.

An afternoon not long ago, I had reason to say to my wife that she is the most wonderful of mothers and indeed the most beautiful of women in all the world. I meant what I said, every word of it. But in saying that, I most certainly did not mean the implications which they have for other mothers and other women. For me to say that my wife is the most wonderful of mothers is not a comment on any other mothers; and to say that she is the most beautiful of women is not a comment on any other woman's beauty or lack thereof. It would be silly to think otherwise. To proclaim that Christ is Lord over all of creation and to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is coming which Christians far and wide are beholden to do, likewise, does not need to have within it anything

negative or perjorative about our Buddhist neighbor and the claims by which he or she lives. Stated otherwise, truth to be truth and to have meaning does not necessarily need to be exclusive. The Christian conviction that God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ does not need to mean that God is not known elsewhere. The ways in which God leads people in paths of truth and wholeness are, I suspect, innumerable rich and many, just as is his love. Surely we do not think that our finite minds can comprehend all the ways of God. What we say and proclaim ought to reflect this.

I often think that the legacy which much of the Church has inherited in emphasizing our faith as a key to salvation has hidden within it a danger. Much of Christian teachings have us saying that our faith is integral in saving us more so than our good actions or deeds. And yet in stressing faith, we still, I believe, stress something which is too human-centered. What we ought to say is that our God in whom we have our faith, he saves us.

A story is told of an aging woman in a small rural village known for some distance of her fervent Christian trust and hope in the Lord. Another woman, much younger in age and troubled with many problems in her life, goes to this old woman to seek counsel and assurance. Upon meeting her for the first time, the younger woman asks, "Are you the woman with the great faith?" "No," the older one replied, "I am not the

woman with the great faith. But I am the woman with the small faith in the great God."

Is this not the point of the Christian scriptures and the point of the Church's witness and the point of the life and death of Jesus Christ? It is not us or anything we have or do which saves us. It is God, God alone. He saves us. I think we often miss that.

Christians are christian only inasmuch as Christ claims their lives and impels them in his footsteps to serve the Father. And we serve him humbly, searchingly, in lives of peace with and reconciliation among all of God's creation. In this way, we live as his instruments in the mystery of fashioning the Kingdom for which the Son died.

This brief essay is, I am well aware, more interested in raising issues and questions than it is providing answers. I know that. I know of no Christian person either here in Thailand or in my homeland who knows all the answers all the time. Yet I do know many Christian persons whose lives are claimed by Jesus Christ and who experience a deep commitment to bear witness to the Kingdom in ways according to God's loving will. This call for prayer, for honest seeking and for an openness to the leading of the One in whose footsteps we are called to follow. In this fine land, this call means to walk humbly before all persons, to seek understanding, to promote love and peace, to foster reconciliation, and indeed to see in that Buddhist another child of God. It is here that the Kingdom is to be found.

I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, try the following expedient:

Recall the face of the poorest and the most helpless man whom you may have seen and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he be able to gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj or self rule for the hungry and also spiritually starved millions of your countrymen?

Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away.

M.K. GANDHI

NON-VIOLENCE ACTION TRAINING SEMINAR

MS Laddawan Tantivitayapitak



"Go unto all lands and preach this gospel. Tell them that the poor and the lowly, the rich and the high, all are one, and that all castes unite in this religion as do the rivers of the sea."

Buddha revealed the universal scope of his compassion.

In challenging the value of violence, He taught that hatreds are not quenched by hatred but by love, and defined a "truth-finder" as one who lays aside the sword, *"lives a life of innocence and mercy... heals divisions and cements friendship...for in peace is his delight"*.

Non-violence, according to Jean-Hildegard Goss-Mayr, former secretary of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation for which is an ecumenical peace movement, is defined as the force of truth, of love and justice. They consider the life of man as the highest created value which must not be destroyed. IFOR's aim is to produce justice and the possibility for fraternal relationships and reconciliation. It aims at liberating the oppressed and the oppressor through persuasion, moral pressure and manifold forms of non-violent resistance.

Jean-Hildegard Goss came to Thailand through the invitation of CGRS, (Coordinating Group for Religion in Society), an organization working actively towards a just and peaceful society through the belief in religion and non-violent mission. CGRS organized this training workshop on non-violence with its attention to expand the ideas of authentic non-violent action and to give inclusive training to the young generation. There were 12 Buddhist monks, 1 novice, and 17 laymen and women participating in the workshop which was held at Wat Plankmaiglai, Nakorn Pathom province on 23-26 January, 1986.

The training process was practical in the sense that it started from the actual nature of human beings. It was an experienced learning process since it signified the being of persons through the process of bringing out the violence and non-violence within each person without judgement. One and a half days out of four days were given for self-sharing to let one open up their mind and bring out their non-violent value through the way of realization, understanding an absolute respect of herself/himself in body and in spirit. In bringing up these attitudes, the non-violence was conceptualized by the sharing of Jean Goss on his life spent in the prison where he gave himself following the word of Jesus by prov-

ing to himself his real love to his fellow-men. *"It's only truth and love in yourself that can bring you to the belief that there are no separations in human beings despite race, religions, nationality, etc.; for human is universe. It's only this that you can give up your life even for your enemies, for there are no enemies, only the ones whom you love."*

Phra Paisal Visalo, Phra Pracha Pasana-dhammo, Arjan Sulak Sivaraksa and Arjan Chaiwat Sta-ana also enriched the workshop in conceptualizing the non-violent perspective in the Thai vision.

The last two essential parts of the seminar were the method of non-violent action. The non-violent methods were clearly elaborating by Hildegard's impressive analysis through the case of Alagamar, a non-violent land struggle in Brazil where the peasants bore in their mind the five principles of struggling. *"First, never kill; Second, never hurt; Third, commit yourself incessantly and with perseverance; Fourth, remain always united; Fifth, disobey the orders of the authorities that violate or destroy us."*

Together with this example, Hildegard explained the peasant's struggling by dividing it into two parts ie.

I. Preparation

- a. analysis of the conflict
- b. preparation of groups (education process)
- c. development of strategy

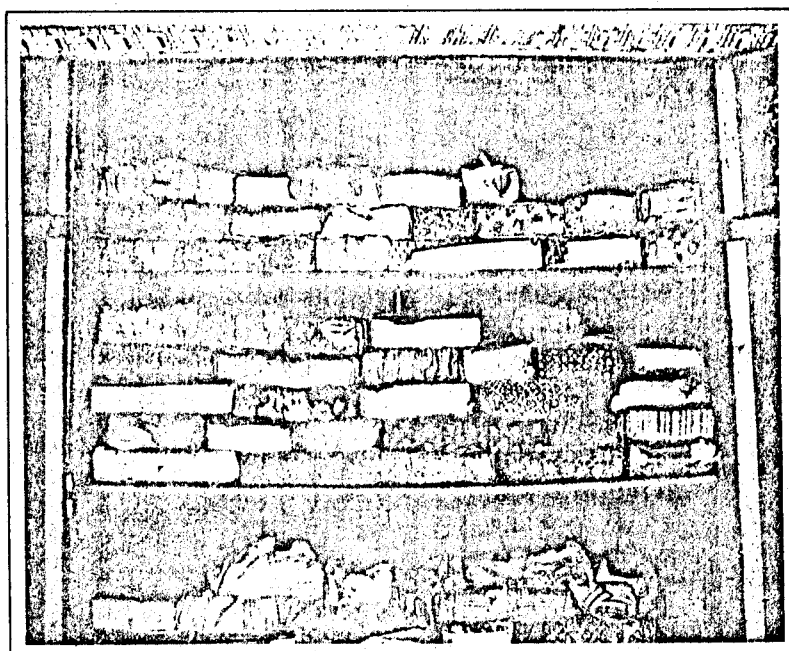
II. Methods of NVA.

- a. dialogue (negotiation)
- b. direct action
- c. non-cooperation and civil disobedience
- e. fasting and hunger strike
- f. constructive programme

The participants ended up the training programme by presenting non-violent role-plays and set up plan for further non-violent training.

To wipe up this reflection as one participant said after the training that monk as its role should be encouraged to take a leading role in reconciling conflict-confrontation or in other words, why depend on human illusions in making decision.

The Pali Language and Scriptures



Pali Scriptures written on palm leaves.

1. Introduction

Although there is considerable doubt about the meaning of a somewhat cryptic phrase which the Buddha used when giving permission to his followers to recite his teachings, it is generally agreed that the Buddha did not teach in Sanskrit, but preferred to use the vernaculars of the common people, presumably using the dialect or language of the area in which he found himself on any particular occasion.

We may assume that his sermons and utterances were remembered by his followers and audiences as they heard them, and were repeated to other followers. That the memorising of sermons in this way was not restricted to ordained monks is shown by the fact that the Buddha himself spoke of the possibility of a layman inviting the monks to come and learn a sermon from him before it was lost at his death.

2. The early councils

All the sects of Buddhism agree that there was a council held immediately after the Buddha's death. According to what is probably the oldest account we have of this, 500 monks came together, and in their presence the senior elder asked the elder who knew about the rules of discipline when the various rules were laid down, in what circumstances, etc. He then asked the elder who knew about the doctrine about the sermons preached by the Buddha, going right through the collections of long, middle length and short sermons. As two experts expounded these matters, the other elders repeated their words after them.

Although we may have reservations about the texts which were dealt with at this first council, and in particular may doubt whether these collections were already in the form which they held in later centuries, nevertheless there is no reason to doubt the general

way in which the council was held. The chosen expert in each section of the Buddha's teachings recited what he could remember, and when it had been approved as a genuine utterance of the Buddha, the assembly as a whole confirmed their approval of it by repeating it together. The later commentaries state that the words "Thus have I heard" which come at the beginning of each sermon in the collections are the words which the elder reciting them, used at the council to introduce his recitation. Because the tradition was handed down by the elders in this way it gained the name "Teaching of the elders" (the *theras*), i.e. Theravāda.

The account goes on to relate how, following a dispute over certain points of discipline 100 years after the death of the Buddha, a second council was held. In the presence of 700 monks the expert in the discipline at that time was consulted about the problems which had arisen, and, as at the first council, the whole collection of texts on the discipline and the doctrine was recited in its entirety.

At some time after this second council, the dissident monks split off from the Theravadins and held their own "great council" as a result of which they were called the "great councillors" (*Mahāsaṅgītikas* or *Mahāsaṅghikas*).

The Theravadin sources, but not those of the other Buddhist traditions (who presumably were by that time no longer in contact with them) state that a third council was held during the reign of king Aśoka in the middle of the 3rd century B.C., after the expulsion of certain heretics from the Order (*sangha*). This time, the recitation of the texts took place in the presence of 1000 monks.

Although the lack of supporting evidence in the other traditions casts doubt upon the precise nature of this third council, it is not unreasonable to suppose that whenever the Theravadin tradition had been rent by schism there would be gatherings at which recitations of the texts would take place, the validity of the Theravadin tradition upheld, and the approval of the Order bestowed upon the texts which had been recited.

3. The schools of reciters

The account which we have of the first council states that when it was finished the rules of discipline were entrusted to one elder and his pupils for safe keeping the collection of long sermons to another elder, the middle length sermons to a third, and so on. Although we may have doubts, as I mentioned earlier, that these collections were already in this form, it seems very likely that the task of collecting the Buddha's sermons together was begun during his lifetime and continued after his death. We know from inscriptions that the collections had received their names by the 2nd century B.C., and it is therefore probable that from the earliest period, of Buddhism the collecting was carried out on the basis of length, and that text were handed over to different groups of monks for remembering and transmitting to their followers. This was the beginning of the system of schools of reciters (*bhānakas*).

It sometimes happens that one and the same sermon or utterance appears in more than one collection. Sometimes they are identical when they are repeated in this way, but from the fact that sometimes they vary we can deduce that the reciters who were responsible for the transmission of each text were quite independent, and were not influenced by the traditions of the reciters of other collections. The existence of varying versions does not, of course, necessarily mean that one school of reciters had in some way a more authentic tradition than another. It is possible that the accounts of events handed down by different schools of reciters were incomplete, and some schools had information not available to others. When an elder's verses, as recorded in one collection, differ from the version in another, it is possible that he recited his verses, in different ways, on more than one occasion.

The views of the reciters were not confined to the form of the texts for which they were responsible. They also had their own ideas about details of the Buddha's life, or the early history of Buddhism. We read, for example, that different schools had varying opinions as to whether the Buddha before his enlightenment saw the four signs which

led him to renounce the world, on one and the same day, or on four different days.

4. The early language of the Theravadins

If it is correct to assume that the Buddha used local dialects when he taught, then it is probable that from the very beginning of Buddhism the corpus of Buddhist sermons was in several dialects.

In the centuries after the death of the Buddha, translations of his sermons must have been made as the need arose, either because the collections were being taken into areas where different dialects were spoken, or because (as time went by) the collections became more difficult to understand as their language became more archaic.

As Buddhism became established in various parts of North India, presumably centred around monasteries, there must have been attempts made to render all the holdings of any particular monastery roughly homogeneous in language, at least to the extent that they were made intelligible to all the monks in the monastery. The recitation of texts at the various councils must also have imposed a certain amount of normalisation of language upon them.

We have no direct knowledge of the precise features of the dialects and languages of North India before the 3rd century B.C., and there is not sufficient evidence available to make deductions about the languages used by Buddhist sects other than the Theravadins. By extrapolation from the language of the Theravadin texts in later years, we can deduce that by the time of Aśoka, those texts were in a mixed language, which represented an incomplete translation into a western dialect from an Eastern dialect which we might expect to have been spoken round and about the area of Magadha (modern Bihar) where the Buddha spent much of his preaching life. There are also, however, traces of other dialects, which probably represent the remnants of dialects through

which the teachings had been translated at an earlier stage, as well as what we call "hyper-forms," the product of an incorrect translation system, whereby a translator over-compensates for a dialect peculiarity.

5. The influence of Sanskrit

At some unknown date, probably around the end of the reign of Aśoka, the importance of Sanskrit, which had been in eclipse, began to rise again, and as can be paralleled from the progressive Sanskritisation which is attested in inscriptions during the centuries after Aśoka, an attempt was made to translate the texts into Sanskrit from the non-Sanskrit dialects of Indo-Aryan, the so-called Middle Indo-Aryan dialects, in which the early Buddhist texts had been remembered and handed down. It is probably that this was done in a haphazard way at first, perhaps depending upon the translating abilities of each individual monk as he recited a text, but later the use of Sanskritised forms probably became more standardised.

6. The introduction of Buddhism to Ceylon and the writing down of the canon

The Sinhalese chronicles, written in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. but based on earlier materials, tell how during the reign of Aśoka missionaries introduced Buddhism into Ceylon. During the 1st century B.C. the monks there who had previously recited the texts and the commentaries upon them orally, wrote them down in books. The reason for this was doubtless the threat posed by famine, war, and the growing power of a dissident sect of Buddhism in Ceylon which enjoyed the king's favour. The number of Theravadin monks had clearly dropped to so small a number that the old system of reciters could no longer continue. We read for example, that one text was known to one monk alone. If he died, then all knowledge of "his" text would die with him. The early chronicles merely state that the texts were written

down. The later chronicles state that this committing to writing was the result of the holding of another council, to which some sources allocate the number "fourth".

Either at the time it was written down, or perhaps already at an earlier date, the corpus of Theravadin texts was called *pali*, which means "canon", and the language of the texts was called **pali-bhasa** ("the language of the canon"). It seems likely that the increasing Sanskritisation of this canon, which had already begun in North India before the introduction of the texts into Ceylon, was virtually fixed at the stage which it had reached at the time of writing the canon down, and except for any changes made later for the sake of consistency by the scribes who were now responsible for the accurate transmission of the texts, no further progress was made with the fairly limited introduction of Sanskrit features into the language of the Theravadin canon.

The consistency and accuracy of this Sanskritisation depended entirely upon the degree to which the monks who introduced the changes understood the language of the canon, as they had inherited it. This, in turn, depended upon the accuracy of the reciters' tradition which had preserved the form of the texts, and upon the value of whatever commentarial tradition had accompanied them. The phonological structure of the Middle Indo-Aryan dialects was such that many words which were clearly distinct in Sanskrit looked the same ("were homonyms") in Middle Indo-Aryan. Many forms were, therefore, ambiguous, and the way in which they were Sanskritised was not always consistent and, moreover, not always correct.

7. The language of the Theravadin canon

The Theravadins' own tradition is that the language of the Buddha was Magadhi, the language of Magadha, where the Buddha did much of his preaching. It is clear that the commentators assumed that the language of the canon, as they had inherited it, was also Magadhi. What we know about that dialect tells us that that cannot be so, although it is

possible that some of the Eastern features found in the canon do go back to Magadhi. The reason for the commentators' belief is not clear. Since the Buddha preached some of his sermons in Magadha, he probably preached them in the form of Magadhi current at that time. This might have led to the idea that all his teachings had been, and still were, in that dialect. Alternatively, it is possible that the growing prestige of the Magadhi dialect as the administrative language of the Mauryan empire led to the name being taken over by the Theravadins and applied to their language for reasons of prestige, although the two dialects were quite dissimilar. A third possibility, perhaps the most likely, is that the dialect of this by the Theravadins was known as Magadhi before it was taken to Ceylon simply because it developed in an area somewhere around the region of Magadha.

A number of modern scholars have tried to identify the language of the Theravadin canon, as we have it, with various dialects of North India for which we have epigraphical evidence from the 3rd or 2nd centuries B.C.

Nevertheless, the heterogeneous nature of the features, which I have already mentioned as being found in that canon make it very unlikely that a genuine spoken language could have existed with precisely those features. Much of the restoration of Sanskrit forms seems to have been done in an entirely mechanical way, and I do not believe that the canonical language can be regarded as coinciding with any historical language or dialect.

It is not clear what label we should give to this canonical language. Some call it "artificial", and certainly there are artificial features, such as the incorrect Sanskritisations which I have mentioned. The English language, however, has similar artificial features, such as the spelling of the word ISLAND with an S, or SOVEREIGN with G. but no one regards English as an artificial language because of that preferring to reserve the term for such invented languages as Esperanto. Others call the language "Literary", and certainly it is the language of

a literature, although it is not literary in the sense that it represents the refined form of a popular dialect. Other language used for Buddhist purposes which represent the restoration of a number of Sanskrit features into a dialect of Middle Indo-Aryan are usually referred to as "Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit", and it is perhaps most appropriate to regard the language of the Theravadin canon as a dialect of that type of Sanskrit.

8. The later history of the canon in Ceylon

Once the Theravadin canon had been committed to writing in Ceylon, it seems that very little further change was made to it. The language shows little sign of any borrowings from the Sinhalese language being inserted into it, and most of the borrowings which some have thought than could see, can be explained otherwise. Nevertheless, the explanations given by the commentaries in later centuries show that the canon was not fixed absolutely by the process of writing down. The system of reciting and approving the form of the sermons at councils should have resulted in the elimination of all variant readings, but it is clear from those recorded by the commentators that somehow the tradition kept alive readings which had presumably not been approved, possibly because scribes remembered older "unapproved" readings which they retained in the commentarial tradition, or even introduced into the cononical texts in the course of copying them out.

Sometimes we find a variant reading quoted in the later commentaries which shows all the signs of being old. Although such variants may not be found in the canonical texts or the earlier commentaries, we can deduce that they are not late inventions made up in Ceylon but are identifiably North Indian in form, perhaps even introduced from India when the canonical texts were introduced. They simply did not gain canonical status.

Despite the geographical separation of the Sinhalese Buddhists from the home territory of Buddhism in North India, it seems that literary material continued to reach

Ceylon from the mainland, but there is no evidence for the addition of any text to the canon after it had been written down in the 1st century B.C. An origin in North India is postulated for several texts which were highly regarded by commentators in Ceylon, but not counted as canonical. It would seem that they arrived in Ceylon too late to be admitted to the canon, but were nevertheless early enough to have some sort of semi-canonical status, and some, in fact, are said to be regarded as canonical in Burma. Their post-canonical arrival is confirmed by the fact that several of them contain verses and other utterances ascribed either to the Buddha or to various eminent elders, which do not occur in the canon. Nevertheless, no attempt was made to insert them there, although there are several texts to which they could have been added without difficulty.

Although the chronicles state that the canon and the commentaries were all written down together in the 1st century B.C., it is clear that the commentaries were not closed in the way in which the canon was. There are references in them to elders who can be shown to have lived as late as the 1st century A.D., and it is therefore obvious that material continued to be added to the commentaries at least until that date. It is, in fact, quite likely that the commentarial material continued to be reworked and added to until the time of the great commentators in the 5th and 6th centuries. They took over all the material available to them, assimilated together and translated from the Sinhalese dialect into the canonical language. The commentaries were then fixed in this translated form, and the older Sinhalese commentaries (upon which they had been based) fell into disuse and disappeared. The fixing of the form of the commentaries also had the result of fixing the form of the texts on which they commented. The canon as we have it now is essentially that commented upon in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D.

9. The Theravadin tradition in South-East Asia

The same chronicles which tell us of

the missionaries going to Ceylon, state that at the same time other missionaries went to Burma. There is no direct evidence to support this statement, but there is evidence of the existence of Buddhism in both Burma and Thailand by the 7th century A.D., and a number of Buddhist texts were certainly known in Burma by the 8th century, although it is not certain whether the whole of the Theravadin canon was known there at that time. A later Burmese Chronicle tells of a king in the 11th century establishing Buddhism after gaining a victory there and having the canonical texts brought from Ceylon to compare with those available in Burma. In return he sent monks to Ceylon to re-establish the Buddhist ordination there, since there were so few monks in Ceylon that they were unable to carry out the ceremonies unaided.

As the Theravadin tradition was taken by missionaries to South-East Asia, the language of the canon and commentaries might have been expected to change under the influence of the various indigenous languages but except for a number of orthographical features, continued to be transmitted in much the same form as in Ceylon. The influence of the underlying languages is more easily seen, however, in the following centuries texts written in Ceylon, Burma and Thailand, where quite considerable changes in orthography, grammar and syntax are to be observed.

10. The influence of the grammarians

Although the chances of **major** changes being made to the language of the Theravadin canon must have been reduced, once the texts had been written down, nevertheless, a certain amount of minor emendation did take place during the course of the centuries-long scribal tradition. Under the influence of the Sanskrit grammarians, Theravadin grammarians began to describe and classify the features of the canonical language, and their writings inevitably had an effect upon the scribes who were responsible for copying out the manuscripts. It is likely that, in origin, the grammars were intended to describe the forms which **occurred**, but before long they

were regarded, by some scribes at least, as decreeing the forms which **should** occur. There was consequently a tendency to "correct" readings in the light of the grammarians' rules.

The fact that the canonical language had been partially Sanskritised, when it was written down, led to a situation where scribes who knew Sanskrit thought that the non-Sanskrit forms which remained were errors, and a powerful Sanskritising force began to operate, to such an extent that some grammarians actually stated that certain forms were permissible in the canon simply because they were Sanskrit. There is evidence that sometimes the **explanations** put forward by commentators were sometimes inserted into the texts in place of the readings they were explaining. We know that some of the commentators knew Sanskrit, and it is possible that their knowledge of Sanskrit led in a comparable way to the insertion of Sanskrit forms. It has been stated (with some justification) that the language of the Theravada canon, as we have it, is a direct reflection of its form in the 12th century, when the influence of the grammarians was at its highest.

11. The later councils

We read in the later chronicles, written in Ceylon, Burma and Thailand, that as a result of disputes among the various sections of the Buddhist Order in those countries, councils were held from time to time at which the canon was cleansed of scribal errors, and comparisons were made with versions of the canon from other countries. When the numbers of ordained monks fell, it became necessary to invite monks from elsewhere to re-establish the ordination, and such visiting monks often brought books with them which were not available in the country they were visiting.

Towards the end of the 19th century, King Min-don of Burma convened a fifth council (1868-71), at which eminent monks and teachers read or recited the canonical texts to establish the best readings. The complete text of the canon as approved at this council was engraved on 729 stone slabs

around the Kuthodaw Pagoda in Mandalay. These slabs were re-inked and copied for the sixth council which was held in Rangoon in 1954-56, to mark the 2,500th anniversary of the death of the Buddha (by the oriental system of dating). A draft edition of the canon, based on the fifth council edition, which had been revised after comparison with editions from other countries, was prepared by a body of scholars. After checking and re-editing by a board of Burmese, Sinhalese and Thai monks, the final version, recited and formally confirmed during the two years of the council, was printed and published.

12. The "Pāli" language

The modern usage of the word "Pāli" as the name of the **language** of the Theravadin canon, rather than (as originally) the canon itself, is probably due to a misunderstanding, which would seem to be at least several centuries old. In his **Dictionary of the Pali Language**, published in 1875, Childers stated that the English usage was taken from the Sinhalese, who used the word in the same way. This probably accounts for the adoption of the name by other European scholars, earlier than Childers, who based their work on Sinhalese sources. The French scholar Burnouf, however, in his survey of early Pāli studies published in 1826 pointed out that the first person known to him to mention Pāli by name was Simon de La Loubère, who visited Thailand in 1687-88 and published a description of the kingdom of Siam in 1691, which was translated into English in 1693.

It is clear from his account that in Thailand in the late 17th century the name "Pāli" (spelt "Balie" or "Baly") was already used in the language of the Theravadin canonical texts. This is now confirmed by a slightly earlier reference which has recently become known. A contemporary French account of the work of their missionaries states that in 1672 M. Laneau studied Siamese and Baly and wrote a dictionary and grammar of both languages, now unfortunately lost. The work of these early French missionaries did much to make the Pāli language known in the West, and there were Pāli MSS in French libraries by 1739.

There is also a reference to Pāli in a late 19th century Burmese chronicle, in a context where it seems to be the name of a language, and it is likely that this text is merely repeating a statement found in an earlier work, so that the usage in Burma is probably older than might appear. It seems improbable that the error whereby the compound **pāli-bhasa** was understood to mean "Pāli language", rather than "language of the canon", could have arisen independently in all three countries, but in the present state of our knowledge it does not seem possible to determine where the misunderstanding first took place.

13. The development of Western scholarship

The knowledge and study of Pāli continued to grow in Europe in the early 19th century, helped to some extent by the growing interest in the newly discovered field of Indo European philology. Texts began to be published, and by 1870 there were enough of these to enable Childers to publish his dictionary in 1875, as I have already stated. In 1881 Rhys Davids founded the Pāli Text Society with the aim of publishing all the Pāli texts which were lying unedited in the libraries of the Orient and the West.

Meanwhile in 1837 B.H. Hodgson had begun to send Sanskrit Buddhist Manuscripts back to Europe from Nepal. This brought European scholars for the first time into contact with Sanskrit works belonging to the "Great Vehicle division of Buddhism—the Theravadins belonging to the "Little Vehicle" division. Burnouf, whom I have already mentioned as an early student of Pāli, was of the opinion that a true picture of Buddhism could only emerge from the comparative study of Pali and Sanskrit. Unfortunately he died after completing his study of the Sanskrit material available to him. His failure to deal with the Pāli works seems to have led to an idea upon the Continent of Europe that only Sanskrit sources mattered for the study of Buddhism.

Consequently, the early days of Buddhist studies in Europe were bedevilled by quarrels about the relative merits of Pali ver-

sus Sanskrit, the more miraculous elements of the latter being held by some, mostly British, scholars who upheld the merits of Pāli, to invalidate the more factual parts. Claims were made for the Pāli canon that "it must always remain our most reliable authority" There are still adherents to this view. Quite recently the Theravada principles have been declared to contain "... all that we can know of the authentic doctrine laid down by Gotama himself"

14. Variations in the Theravadin tradition

The early European editors of Pāli texts soon discovered that there was no one Pāli tradition. They found that each Theravadin country had its own tradition of canonical texts (or perhaps we should say sub-tradition of the main Theravadin tradition) and although the differences between their versions of the texts were for the most part of no great consequence, there were sometimes significant differences between them, which involved the editors in the task of choosing between the readings transmitted in the various versions.

It is not, in fact, inappropriate to talk of a Burmese or Siamese or Sinhalese tradition (or sub-tradition) for the transmission of a particular text, and we must assume that the differences which can be seen between the readings in the MSS which belong to these different traditions go back to the various councils which have been held from time to time in these different countries. The value to be placed upon the readings handed down by each tradition will depend upon the care with which the evidence for each reading was sifted, and upon the criteria which were adopted as the basis for the decisions which were made. There is, of course, no way of discovering this for the earlier councils. The way in which the preliminary work for the sixth council was carried out, should have resulted in an elective edition of the canon and commentaries, incorporating what were thought to be the best readings from all the oriental editions. It is, however, probable that the Sixth Council edition is based predominantly upon the Burmese fifth

Council edition, but it is not possible to be certain about this, without carrying out a detail comparison between the two editions.

The way in which the ordination was re-introduced from one Buddhist country to another, and books were brought by visiting monks, led to a situation where the sub-traditions of each country became to some extent interwoven, and the ease of communication in more recent years has led to the versions of canonical texts in one country becoming influenced by the forms found in another, so that they are no longer truly representative of the tradition of that country. It is nevertheless possible that MSS are still extant in libraries in Ceylon, Burma and Thailand which are based upon a tradition which pre-dates, and therefore perhaps contains readings which are older than more recent councils and editions.

15. Non-Theravadin traditions

The discovery within the last 100 years of Sanskrit texts which belonged to the (mainly) Little Vehicle sects of Buddhism which were wiped out by the invading Muslims in Central Asia and North India a millennium or so ago, has shown clearly that at one time there existed in Chinese Turkestan, Afghanistan and Kashmir canons belonging to other Buddhist traditions which were the direct parallels of the Pāli canon which had been thought to be so superior. Careful examination of these Sanskrit texts has shown that neither the Sanskrit nor the Pāli version can be held to be consistently superior to the other and, as Burnouf stated many years ago, any attempt to establish an "original" text must take account of both Pāli and Sanskrit source material.

Such examinations as have been made, reveal that the relationship between Pāli and Sanskrit versions of the same text is sometimes very complex. It is clear that just as the Theravadin canon is based upon material translated from various dialects of Middle Indo-Aryan, so all the other "Little Vehicle" canonical texts also show signs of being based upon earlier versions in similar dialects.

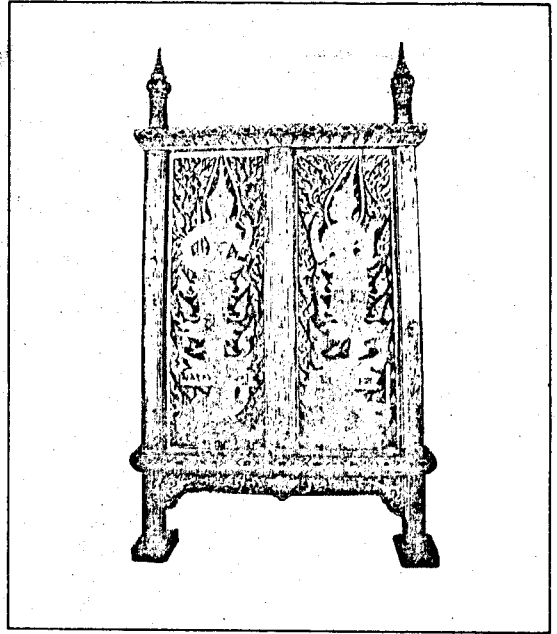
Although not as well documented as the Theravada tradition, it must be assumed that the other traditions followed a similar pattern of recitation, and validation as canonical, by assemblies of monks, and there is no reason to doubt that the transmission system must have been much the same for all sects.

16. Theravadin and non-Theravadin traditions

I have already mentioned the differences which are found in the various branches of the Theravadin tradition. They probably arose as the result of faulty or varying memory, but having been recited and confirmed by a particular council they were accepted as canonical by the various branches. Such differences may be nothing more than a variation in vocabulary, but sometimes they are found in respect of historical matters, such as the precise form of the Buddha's death, or the details about the disposal of his relics.

A survey of the other traditions shows that they too have their own versions of such events, and the differences between them are also due, in all probability, to some form of system of reciters. When the varying Theravadin tradition is placed beside the varying non-Theravadin tradition, the resultant diversity of views is sometimes so great that it is impossible to deduce what the original state of affairs might have been. If, for example, we examine the various versions of the first words uttered by the Buddha after his enlightenment, we find that the Theravadin canon gives two different versions, while various Sanskrit texts give another four.

Sometimes, however, the Sanskrit version agrees with one Pāli version as opposed to another, and sometimes the commentarial tradition of one sect agrees with the canonical tradition of another. This suggests that, in some cases at least, both the commentarial and the canonical readings are of great antiquity, both perhaps going back to the earlier period of Buddhism. This may mean that in the early Buddhist community both readings were of



A bookcase for Pāli Scriptures

equal validity, so that it was a matter of chance which sect or school chose which reading as their canonical reading.

17. Pāli studies in Europe

For the most part the aim of the Theravadin reciters, grammarians and commentators was to ensure that the texts they had received from their predecessors were handed on to their successors in as correct a form as possible, together with the traditional explanation of their meaning. The aim of Western scholars, however, has been more than this. They have tried to search back through all the inherited material to find the earliest form of the teaching.

As part of this attempt, recent work by Western scholars in the field of Pāli studies has included the examination of the teachings of the grammarians and commentators, in an attempt to assess and remove any changes introduced into the canon as a result of that teaching; some have tried to use metrical criteria to correct corrupt passages; there have been comparative studies with parallel Sanskrit texts, to decide between varying Theravadin sub-traditions, or to correct the Pāli in the light of the Sanskrit; some have

Thai monks editing Pali Scriptures in 1986 at Wat Mahadhatu, Bangkok, where the 9th Council took place 200 years ago.



succeeded in identifying, by philological means, archaic nominal and verbal forms which were not recognised by the scribes, and were consequently corrupted in the course of transmission; comparative studies have been made with Jain and brahmanical texts, in which parallel verses and common terminology are sometimes found.

Conclusions

We are now in a position to define terms more clearly. If **pāli** originally meant "canon" and **pāli-bhasā** meant "the language of the canon", then, if we talk about the Pali language and scriptures, we are talking about the Theravadin canon and the language in which it was written down, probably, in the 1st century B.C.

We can now, within limits, define the influence which the later commentators and grammarians had upon the language of that canon, and we can remove many of the features which their teachings imposed upon that language. This should enable us to identify the form of the canon which was commented upon by the great commentators of the 5th and 6th centuries, which was clearly, in some places, already corrupt. We must now aim at gaining the necessary ability to penetrate behind their form of the texts and identify an earlier form of the language.

The first editors of the Critical Pali Dictionary stated that their aim was confined to the "lower criticism", in as much as they were working exclusively with the pali canon and the younger books pertaining to it. They were providing verified material for that higher criticism which could check the

Theravadin canon with the documents left by other Buddhist sects, as well as the deeper strata of Jain lore. More recently scholars have begun to make use of that material in the comparative studies I have mentioned, and as a result of their comparisons of the Theravadin canon with other Buddhist canons, or with Jain texts, they have been able to give some idea of what those texts must have looked like in their pre-Pāli form. It is not too far-fetched to say that certain aspects of the Theravadin canon have only become clear, after more than 2,000 years of obscurity, as a result of such work.

Whether this means that we now know the form in which the texts under examination were composed, and whether this represents the authentic word of the Buddha, are questions which we are not yet in a position to answer. Whether such methods can be applied to the whole of the Theravadin canon is even more difficult to say.

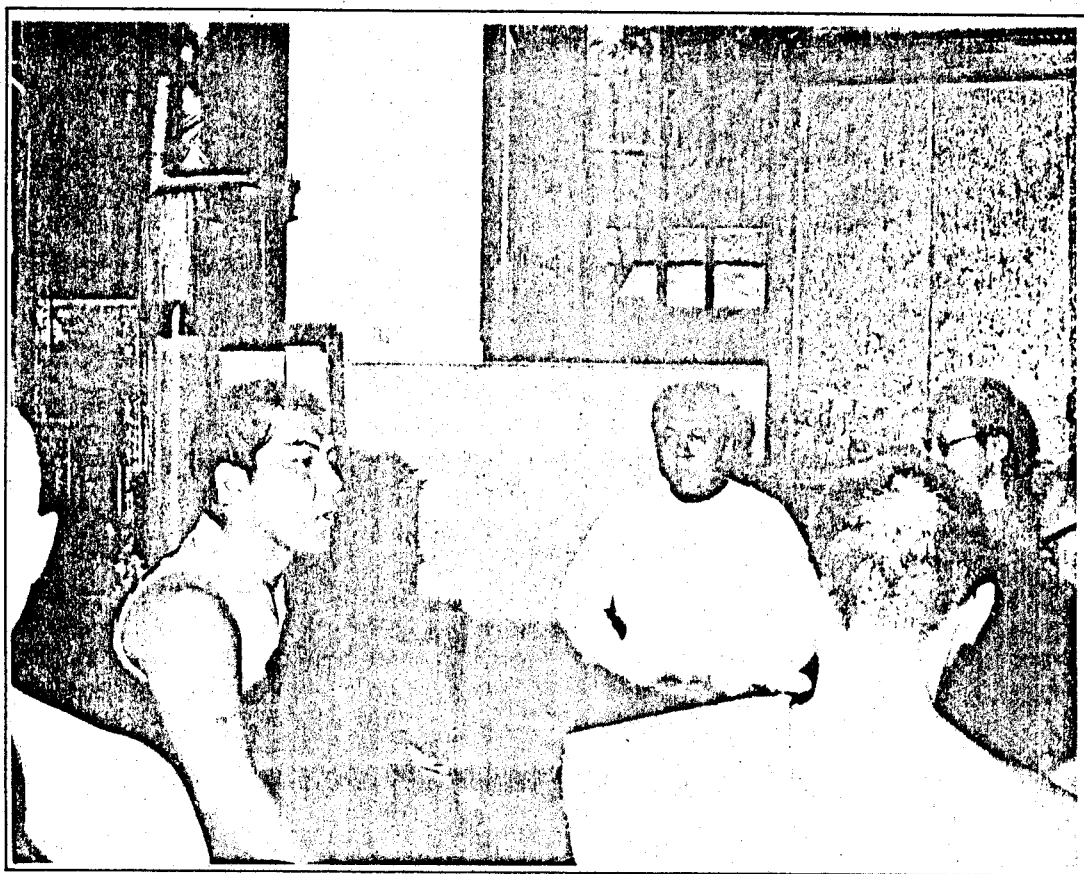
K.R. Norman
President
The Pali Text Society

(Portions of this paper have already appeared in **Pali Literature** (History of Indian Literature (ed. J. Gonda), VII.2) Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 1983, and I am grateful to the publishers for giving permission for me to reproduce them here)

**A summary note on the
proceedings of the planning
meeting for the UNU Subproject on
Buddhist Perceptions of Desirable
Societies 20-22 March, 1985**

Wat Thong Noppakhun Bangkok, Thailand

by
Kathleen Newland



1. The planning meeting was held on March 20, 21 and 22 at Wat Thong Noppakhun, a Buddhist temple across the Chao Praya river from the central area of Bangkok. There were fifteen participants from eight countries, in addition to Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa, the sub-project co-ordinator, and Rector Soedjatmoko and Kathleen Newland of the United Nations University. Five of the participants were Buddhist monks. Staff members of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD), the Thai Khadi Research Institute and the Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development; several of the monks from Wat Thong Noppakhun and five other observers also attended parts of the meeting.

2. The meeting opened with a brief service conducted by the Abbot of Wat Thong, who then welcomed the participants and expressed his great regret that because he could not speak English he could not join the discussions. Mr. Sivaraksa interpreted his remarks for the participants.

3. Short speeches of welcome were also given by Mr. Sivaraksa, Prof. Saneh Chamarik of the Thai Khadi Institute (which assisted in arranging the meeting), and Rector Soedjatmoko. All the participants then introduced themselves and said a few words about their own areas of expertise and experience.

4. Rector Soedjatmoko initiated the substantive discussion by describing the background and the concept of the overall project on Perceptions of Desirable Societies, and explaining what he hoped the outcome of this meeting would be. The general purpose of the project is to examine how religious thinkers and activists perceive the human predicament of our time. It operates within a three-part framework, the first part being a diagnosis of current problems, the second an examination of specifically Buddhist responses to these problems, and the third a projection of how it might be possible to progress from the contemporary situation toward a more desirable society consistent with Buddhist principles. In this kind of study, it is

necessary to deal with religion on two levels: the level of faith, principles and ideas on the one hand; and the level of historical experience and social expression on the other.

5. Sulak Sivaraksa introduced the paper he had written as a framework for the Buddhist segment of the project, which was very much the product of a social-activist orientation. He was critical of the Thai Buddhist establishment for distancing itself from the real concerns of ordinary people and from its own tradition of asceticism; he was equally critical of Thai society in general for turning away from its own endogenous sources of inspiration (such as Buddhism) and looking elsewhere, particularly to the West, for its goals and values.

He asserted that no present-day society can truly call itself a Buddhist society. Part of the fault lies in Westernization, with both positive and negative effects on non-Western societies. Modern science and technology, in particular, have encouraged humans to see themselves as god-like, able to dominate and control nature and other people. He also pointed to the erosion of Buddhist lay society, for example through the secularization of education. Contradictions of the basic precepts of Buddhism abound.

The response from Buddhists, in his opinion, should be an attempt to build up awareness, and to break what he saw as a false segregation of religion and politics. Simply stated, the Buddhist should attempt to see the suffering that is part of social reality, to look for the causes of this suffering, and then seek the cure for it. He pointed out that there has never been an attempt to develop a Buddhist politics.

6. Mr. Nelson Foster commented on Sulak's presentation, making reference to a discussion paper that he had prepared. He gave particular emphasis to the Buddhist teachings on non-violence, and what these implied for the relationship between humanity and nature.

7. Ven. Rajavaramuni spoke about the basic Buddhist outlook on life. It regards all beings, not just human beings, as friends, because all are subject to the same laws of nature. But friends can be good or evil

friends. A Buddhist concept of a desirable society is of a society of good friends. The achievement of such a society is a matter of development, which if it is of the right kind, brings freedom in four dimensions:

- 1) Physical freedom (freedom from want and deprivation)
- 2) Social freedom (freedom from oppression, persecution, and exploitation)
- 3) Mental freedom (freedom from fear)
- 4) Freedom of spirit (freedom from illusion)

Buddhism gives some guidelines for the achievement of these freedoms, both in the individual, spiritual sphere and in the social, concrete sphere.

8. Sumendho Bhikkhu identified apathy, confusion, and selfishness as the roots of people's hopelessness, and pointed out that these three were not explicitly related to religion. He recalled the slogans of the French Revolution: liberty, equality, fraternity. Why did the Buddha not preach these instead of the four Noble Truths? The three slogans are idealistic, but Buddha taught people to come to terms with and surmount the reality of human existence—the existential problems of pain, loss, suffering, sickness and death. He felt that this approach, of Theravada Buddhism, has a great deal to offer contemporary society.

9. Dr. Paliawadana commented on Sulak's introductory paper, noting that it pointed a strong accusing finger at Western technology. Yet this technology was not entirely thrust upon the non-Western countries. It has brought great benefits as well as damage, and its damaging affects have also been felt in the West. The rejection of technology is not a necessary precept for a Buddhist desirable society; rather, the imperative is to humanize technology.

He also drew attention to the fact that in his country, Sri Lanka, there has been a massive outbreak of ethnic violence every 200-300 years. Why has the Buddhist teaching of compassion and non-violence failed to be absorbed? The Sinhalese Buddhists have adopted a nationalist ideology based on a racial concept, despite the fact

that the Buddha explicitly rejected the division of humanity into separate races. The traditional terms of reference and categories of thought in Buddhism have not been translated into modern language and ways of thinking. The Buddha himself was a strong critic of Brahmin society in his time, but this aspect of his thinking has not been enshrined in those parts of the canon that are endlessly repeated and taught. Both the clergy and the laity have failed to bring out the social implications of Buddhist teachings.

10. Mr. Foster noted several points of agreement that had emerged in the discussion up to this point: that modern society is in some way sick, and that a Buddhist diagnosis of its disease is not so different from that made by clear-sighted people from other faiths. Each person has to work for the improvement of his own understanding and compassion.

He also noted some points of contention. To what degree is our own search for perfection an adequate response to the problems of the world? Are we obligated to go beyond the strictly religious sphere of action, into political and social action? How much should we be concerned with non-human beings and the inanimate environment, and why—because they are instrumental to the continuation and quality of human life, or rather because they have an independent claim on our consciousness? Is technology a source of evil in itself, or evil only to the extent that it magnifies the weaknesses and flaws that exist in humans? What is the religious importance of political power and the rule of law, since they do not change people's hearts and minds but only, sometimes, their behavior?

11. Bancroft asserted that many individuals in the West have lost the sense that there is any meaning in life, and have lost with it the sense of higher responsibility. She welcomed the prospect of Buddhists becoming more socially active, though not necessarily in a sectarian way.

12. Prof. Saeng recalled Buddhism's emphasis on the laws of causation: if a condition exists, there is a reason behind it.

13. Dr. Somboon noted that in the

villages of Thailand, one finds many monks who are helping the people. They help people to identify the causes of their mundane suffering, and to overcome their suffering. The monks see that the main cause of suffering in most cases is poverty, lack of education or vocational training, lack of health care, and so forth. Their methods are often very simple, and rely on the Buddha's teachings. They advise people to form cooperatives, to refrain from drinking and gambling, and to take other measures that build self-confidence. In building a desirable society, the monkhood can be a real resource. This is consistent with the Buddha's teaching that the role of the monk is to help pave the people's way to salvation.

14. Mr. Sivaraksa pointed out that only two kinds of monks are mentioned in Thai tradition: village monks and forest monks. He wondered about the role of city monks. In today's large and cosmopolitan cities, the *sangha* does not know what to do or how to operate in a more complex and international setting. He urged the monkhood to be more self-critical and humble.

15. On the morning of March 21, the participants attended the morning service of the monks of Wat Thong. Mr. Sivaraksa had thoughtfully provided a guide to the service and a translation of the scriptures that were recited. Afterward, the Ven. Sumedho Bhikkhu, an American monk from a monastery in England, and an acknowledged mediation master with a considerable following in Thailand, conducted a meditation service in English for the UNU group.

16. Rector Soedjatmoko noted that the previous day's discussion had had a strong Theravada orientation, and asked the participants from Mahayana countries to speak from their own perspectives in order to bring out both differences and common concerns.

17. Dr. Xu spoke about the development of Chinese Buddhism from an historical perspective, and about the state of the religion in contemporary China and the attitude of the authorities toward it. He reminded the group that Buddhism was only one part of the Chinese cultural heritage, which also had been influenced by Taoism,

Confucianism and other religions.

In the last century, the study of the philosophy of religion had been consolidated, he noted. In Buddhist philosophy, human misery is held to the everlasting. There are two approaches to misery: one is to remove the cause of suffering, and the other is to relieve the pain of those who suffer. The second approach is that of Mahayana Buddhism. It holds that the Buddha was not concerned with sociological analysis, but with the relief of suffering. Ignorance is the major cause of suffering, but education alone is not the cure for ignorance. So far, education has utterly failed to transform human nature.

18. Mr. Sivaraksa queried how Buddhism survives in the modern socialist state. In Vietnam, he noted, there are two distinct streams: official Buddhism which receives the sponsorship and approval of the state, and independent Buddhism which is severely repressed. He pointed to the need to challenge both capitalist and socialist models from a Buddhist perspective.

19. Dr. Xu responded that China is in a period of sweeping change. In the contemporary socialist society, however, Buddhism remains very much alive. Chinese academics, with official approval, are engaged in a great search through the Buddhist literature of all ages. He was sure that the great religions of China cannot be destroyed. The truth exists, and on that score the future gives room for optimism.

20. Dr. Shim spoke about the differences in social attitudes found among adherents of different religions in South Korea today. He noted that in relation to other religions, Buddhism was declining in popularity, and seemed to have little influence on social issues. He ascribed this trend to a tendency toward formalism and obscurantism among the monks, and an uncritical endorsement of government actions and policies by the clergy. He felt that there is room, however, for the clergy to take a more active role in social and charitable works, and to provide more spiritual and moral guidance to the people.

21. Jamgon Kongtrul Rimpoche then spoke at considerable length, through his interpreter, about Tibetan Buddhism, giving an extremely thoughtful and illuminating presentation of its attitudes toward material vs. spiritual well-being, science and technology, the involvement of religion in politics, cultural relativism as opposed to immutable truths, and the weaknesses of Buddhism especially in the face of temporal misery and violence. He identified one obstacle to the implementation of religious principles as being the mixing of religion and culture. Of course, religion is a major influence on culture, but when culture influences religion or is equated with religion the result is often sectarianism, leading to violence and killing in the name of religion. Literalism and idolatry in religion are also the products of cultural influences.

Religion itself has no permanence of form. The principles are unchanging, but the practice must evolve. In teaching Buddhism in the West, for example, he would not dream of establishing Tibetan Buddhism as it existed in Tibet. But one can still teach Buddhism, of course. He did not mean to say that culture should be rejected, but that it should be carefully distinguished from religion. The Thai, for example, should cling to their own culture, but they should not expect others who want to come to Buddhism to adopt Thai culture too.

Western science and technology, in the Rimpoche's view, are not necessarily detrimental to religion, but religion must be able to influence them. Science and technology are concerned with material matters, and therefore have limitations. The Mahayana tradition teaches that there are two kinds of truth: relative and absolute. The first is the science of material things, the truth of things that can be observed. But in reality, there is no permanence, no absolute existence of things in the material world. Western science has progressed enormously in understanding the material world, but has made little contribution beyond that. The science of absolute truth is religion.

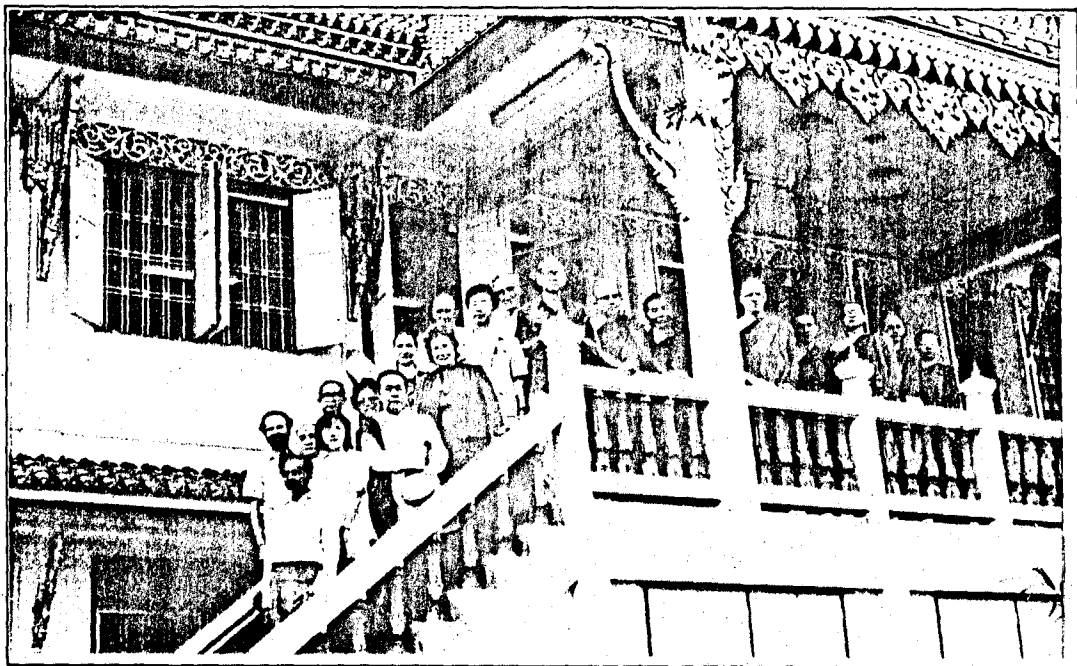
The Buddha never said that people must throw away or reject material things.

He taught, rather, that one should not form attachments to them. Being inanimate objects, they will not form attachments to one! What must be renounced is the desire to own and hold onto things—not the things themselves.

He identified three factors that may in part account for Buddhism's failure to come forward as a major force in various world crises, such as famines, wars, etc. One is a lack of capacity owing to the absence of a single hierarchy and "church" organization. A second is the preoccupation of religious Buddhists with their own enlightenment. A third is the fear on the part of the clergy that engagement with worldly problems would involve them in politics, along with the feeling that politics and religion are incompatible in their basic premises and cannot go together. Religion is universal; politics is concerned with what is mine or ours—that is, with protecting possession and keeping others at bay. If politics is mixed with religion, religion cannot then be a refuge from the woes of the material world. He emphasized, however, the importance of communication between the monks and the lay people. Without this communication, an erosion of religious values sets in.

22. The Rector invited interventions from two participants who were not identified with either of the two major Buddhist traditions, but were rather involved with a more syncretic study and practice. The Ven. U Rewata Dhamma, a Burmese monk now teaching from a base in England, was conversant with all three traditions discussed thus far (the Mahayana, the Theravada and the Tibetan), as well as with western religious traditions. He had been asked by the Pope, for example, to teach meditation in a Catholic monastery. He argued that the basic truths of Buddhism are immutable, and virtually independent of any profession of the religion as such. He felt that religion is not just for individuals, but should also form the moral basis of society; since this is also a concern of politics, politics and religion are not entirely separate.

23. Mrs. Bancroft, a Buddhist layperson from England with a Zen orientation, raised



the question of whether Buddhism has any place for the development of a "liberation theology" in the Catholic sense. She also called attention to the need for an elaboration of Buddhist institutions (colleges, policy institutes, etc) to develop the application of Buddhist values to modern problems. She felt personal insight must be cultivated, but seen within the perspective of the whole giving life of the Buddha. She was critical of Buddhist organizations in England that were so rigorously non-political that they refused, for example, to get involved with the peace movement.

24. Sumedho Bhikku gave an account of his own spiritual development in the Northeast of Thailand, which was very much in the monastic tradition of separation from the affairs of the world. He felt that religion's contribution to solving worldly problems should be an ethical and moral standard that can be widely shared between the people and their leaders. Thus, ethics could be religion's major offering to the problems of the world.

25. One of the observers of the meeting, a young Thai monk named Pasanadhammo, took exception to the rather other-worldly orientation of some of the

monks who had spoken, particularly to the argument that while religion should offer a set of moral values, the religious establishment should not be directly involved in politics. Speaking from a Thai perspective, he said that morality for the individual and morality for the society cannot be separated, and that both are a proper concern for political activists. Professor Saneh added that Buddhism has become too much confined to the clergy and the monkhood (the *sangha*), and needs to become more pluralistic, secularized and decentralized.

26. As the afternoon session drew to a close, Ms. Newland asked the participants to take another look at the three-part objective of the meeting that was presented in the letter of invitation to this meeting: the diagnosis of current ills from a Buddhist perspective, the Buddhist response to these ills, and a notion of some course of action to bring society closer to a state consistent with the values that inform Buddhism.

27. On the morning of March 22, Jamgon Kongtrul Rimpoché conducted a Tibetan puja ceremony for the monks of Wat Thong and the members of the meeting. Ven. Rewata Dhamma followed it with a short meditation practice.

28. Reconvening the meeting, Rector Soedjatmoko drew attention to the need to channel the discussion toward the organization of a volume of essays on Buddhist perceptions of desirable societies.

29. Prof. Saneh pointed out that Buddhist studies tend to be separated between the Buddhist scholars and the social scientists. In the UNU study of Perceptions of Desirable Societies, there should be collaboration between them. He suggested that it might be useful to conduct some case studies of lessons learned from Buddhism's responses to its environment, in the West as well as the Third World.

30. Prof. Palihawadana took up the question of Buddhism's relation to the scientific enterprise, where he saw no essential conflict. He also discussed the relationship with politics and secular ideologies, contrasting the ends-means justification found in, for example, Marxism, with the absolute morality of Buddhism. He also identified four precepts that in his mind belong to the core of Buddhist teaching: mercy, the impermissibility of the use of force, equality among people, and intellectual liberty (since truth can only be sought and grasped personally).

31. Mr. Foster asked what was meant by politics, especially Buddhist politics. He defined it as socially purposive action leading to an end. In this sense, almost every act is political. He also questioned the degree of responsibility the moral individual must accept in order to practice Buddhist teachings. In the practice of *ahimsa*, for example, is it enough to refrain from killing personally, or does one have an obligation to try to prevent others from killing?

32. Dr. Shim proposed three different issues for analysis: the perception of human nature, the assessment of Buddhism's interaction with other religions and ideologies, and alternative ways of developing society.

33. Mrs. Bancroft asked how Buddhism can help to restore the sense of human dignity, worth and responsibility in all individuals, so that they can exercise a sense of respect for themselves and the other beings of the world. The teaching of Buddhism now is

a rather leisurely affair, she said, whereas the problems of the world are urgent. How can this incompatibility be resolved?

34. Ms. Kapilasingh asserted that in Thailand, there is no consensus on spiritual goals, even among the Buddhists.

35. Prof. Saeng noted that Buddhism is more than a religion, it is really a philosophy of life. To such questions as 1) what is life?, 2) what is man's place in the universe?, 3) what is the ultimate goal of life?, and 4) what is the right way to the ultimate goal?, Buddhism has given elaborate answers. But to what extent are the truths of Buddhism instilled in the minds of the people? He thought that the Thai people had some basic understanding of Buddhism, but that the gap between understanding and practice was a large one.

Noting that Communist ideology does present a vision of a desirable society, and that this is one of its great strengths, he questioned whether there is such a vision in Buddhism. What would the role of the state be in a Buddhist desirable society, for example, and what would be the role of the *sangha*?

36. The Rimpoché expressed the concern that Buddhists today are more interested in attaining enlightenment for themselves rather than in helping others toward enlightenment. One of the biggest problems in the world today is, for example, disease and ill health. Buddha's teachings include much about medicine and other things relevant to modern ills. And in Tibet, medicine is very much a part of religious practice. But Buddhists have not done research and devised technologies to develop this teaching. Buddha himself said that his followers should not just blindly follow his teachings but should search for their meaning. Failure to pursue this injunction through science and other forms of learning is one of Buddhism's weaknesses, he felt.

He also reiterated his own view that religion and politics are fundamentally incompatible. Politics is grasping, concerned with power over others, and even implies the willingness to take life, which is against Buddhism. He had been shocked to hear

one of the Thai monks earlier say that monks do engage directly in political activity in Thailand.

37. Ven. Rewata Dhamma endorsed the need for extensive research on Buddhist responses to science and technology, stressing the emphasis in Buddhism on coming to grips with reality. The search for enlightenment in Buddhism is an attempt to understand one's own real nature. It does bring bliss and liberation to the individual, but this is not mysticism, he insisted. Rather it is the reality experienced by the individual as he/she progresses in understanding.

On the question of Buddhism and politics, he felt that Buddhist philosophy can and should pervade political positions, giving moral guidance to political action.

38. Sumedho Bhikkhu saw no obstacle to religion and science working together. The intellectual and the spiritual, the empirical and the mythical or symbolic appeal to different aspects of human nature. They should not be seen as contradictory.

On the sociopolitical question, he felt that Buddhism can offer an alternative vision to either capitalism or communism. The cosmology of Buddhism assists our understanding of hierarchy in nature. Buddhism helps people to operate in society in a mindful way, rather than reacting in a prejudiced or hostile way. Buddhist concepts can operate through politics, economics, science, technology, the mass media, and so forth. It instructs us to think in terms of the human family rather than in terms of attachment to the nation, sect, school of thought, or set of symbols. The differences among such things lose their meaning as one approaches true understanding.

39. Ven. Khemapali pointed out that discussion alone cannot solve problems. The important thing is to put the right principles into practice. Technologies themselves are nothing—a thing is just a thing. What is important is the person who controls the technologies. He or she will determine whether the thing is put to good or bad use.

40. The Ven. Rajavaramuni said that we do not have a very clear notion of development. It is usually understood to

imply movement toward a better state. But in the last 20-30 years, during which Thailand has ceased to be an "underdeveloped country", many undesirable factors have sprung up or have been strengthened. It is important to distinguish between development of the mind and the human being (internal development) and development of the environment and the society (external development). The latter should be carried out in a way that is conducive to the former, but in reality it must arise out of the former.

He referred to the Pali terms that indicate 1) physical development, 2) moral development (in the social sense, that is in relation to other people), 3) mental development and 4) the development of wisdom, or the knowledge of things as they really are. The first of these does not mean merely bodily health, but also the development of the whole relationship between man and nature. If we understand our relationship with food, then we understand why we eat: to live, to work, to be healthy. But many people eat for another reason—for indulgence—and this is to have a bad relationship with food, one that is wasteful and adds to poverty. The same logic applies to other necessities of life. The **sangha** sets up an order of proper relationships between humankind and its environment, and should also provide an example of proper relationships.

The idea of the righteous state and the righteous ruler is to see that the **dhmma** or the code of Buddhist principles is put into practice in society. If we accept the Rimpoché's view that religion and politics should be separate, then it must follow at least that the politicians must be a primary concern of the monks, for if the rulers are not righteous, they will not order the state in a way that is conducive to the development of the people.

Tolerance is a primary concern of moral development. People differ; even the **arhats** (perfected beings) differ among themselves. Buddhism has both the principles and a long history of toleration. It would be well for Buddhists to study this great tradition of their



own. So, for that matter, should adherents of other religions.

Ven. Rajavaramuni agreed with Prof. Nakamura's paper in that every effort should be made to avert war. But even without war, he pointed out, there is much killing. What should a Buddhist say in response to this fact? Killing is always evil; one should never speak of a just war, much less a holy war. But nonetheless, there will sometimes be wars of necessity. The Buddhist should recognize that war is still evil even when it is necessary. We may decide that we must kill, but we should understand that making such a decision means sacrificing ourselves to suffer in hell for the evil that we do. The Buddhist, in his opinion, cannot accept the idea that it is good to kill an enemy, even an enemy of Buddhism.

41. Pasanadhammo noted that in the past (in Thailand), religious people have avoided social activism, and that as a result activism has suffered from confusion, lack of focus, lack of coherent values. Spiritual leadership is needed by the activists. He also pointed out that without bringing his special training into play, the activist monk is no different from other political activists, who may act out of hatred or envy or greed rather than out of compassion.

42. Dr. Suwanne suggested that it would be worthwhile to investigate the status of Buddhism in specific countries. In each national setting, relationships among the **sangha**, the state, and the people are different. Before trying to construct an ideal model, one should learn about the actual

situation in specific settings.

43. Mr. Sivaraksa called for an interdisciplinary approach to basic Buddhist concepts, and for the development of a Buddhist methodology. He suggested that one must look at the **sangha** seriously in order to have a proper notion of Buddhism in the modern world. By this he did not mean only the monkhood, but the lay society as well.

44. Mrs. Bancroft suggested that a study of Buddhism should take up the issue of corruption in Buddhist society, and explore the meaning of the Buddhist notion of corruption. Mr. Sivaraksa differed slightly in thinking that the issue was not necessarily corruption in society but rather corruption of the religion, while Mr. Soedjatmoko felt that corruption was not peculiar to Buddhism in this sense but was a universal indication of the gap between aspiration and reality.

45. Sumedho Bhikkhu spoke about the need to define and clarify terms. He felt that the traditional Pali terms were perhaps too much revered, and that their real meanings needed to be worked out and communicated. Buddhism, he said, works from observed reality, not from speculation. Realization must progress from the microcosm of the self to the macrocosm of the universal.

46. Dr. Palihawadana suggested several topics for inclusion in a study of a Buddhist "desirable society". They included:

- Buddhism in a multireligious society
- The role of women in Buddhist society
- Communicating Buddhism to the modern world
- War and violence
- Buddhism and the spirit of science
- Buddhism and culture

Mr. Foster suggested adding to this list:

- Buddhist theories of social change.

47. Mr. Soedjatmoko posed a number of questions about the possible qualities of a "desirable society" as envisioned by Buddhists. Would it be a semi-monastic society? Would it be one of sufficiency rather than affluence and growth? Of cooperative sharing rather than competition? Of course, even within Buddhism there is not just a single vi-



sion of a desirable society. How would studies of economics, politics, psychology, technology and so forth from a Buddhist perspective relate to existing studies of these subjects? In other words, what would characterize them as distinctively Buddhist?

He identified the heart of the problem with science and technology as having two aspects: the humanization of science and the link with transcendence. Too much emphasis on human control of science and technology is a limited approach. How can Buddhists respond to the new ethical questions arising from the enormous extension of human capabilities? These questions are very complex. Does Buddhism have a contribution to make to the humanization of science and technology, as opposed to the humanization of the scientist? Can Buddhism relink science and spirituality? This would require loosening the bonds between the desire for knowledge and the thirst for power and destructive capability, and forging or strengthening the link between the desire for knowledge and the longing for truth.

Soedjatmoko also raised the question of transcendence. What is the significance of

meditative practices in the modern world? From where would leadership come that could lead people back (or onward) to their transcendent nature?

Soedjatmoko explained that the UNU project on "Perceptions of Desirable Societies" and the volumes that will be published of its observations, are only the beginning of a process. That process, he hoped, would be one of revitalization of the major religions and their re-engagement with the major social issues of the day. The purpose of the UNU project is to trigger new reflection and thought within religions, across sectarian and cultural lines.

Why, he asked, is the study of Buddhism so important in this context now? Buddhism has, perhaps uniquely, counterposed the stubborn realities of the historical process to eternal truths. How to deal constructively with the former while continuing to strive for the latter is one of the central questions of human existence.

48. The planning meeting closed with a prayer service conducted by the Abbot of Wat Thong Noppakhun, in the main hall of worship of the temple.

Reflections on Sulak Sivarakasa's Working Paper

(As appeared in *Seeds of Peace* Vol II No.1)

The World Fellowship of Buddhists is structurally crippled. It cannot express a progressive Buddhist vision because it is mainly representative of Asian political and economic elites, in particular the Thai royal family and ruling circle, and the Sri Lankan Buddhist nationalist "old boys". Its representatives from communist countries are hand-picked by the Party, and its representatives from the West are not even representative of the Asian Buddhist communities there, much less the much more active converted Buddhists. The reform of the closed nature of the WFB and/or the creation of new international Buddhist organizations, such as the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, is indeed necessary if Buddhists are to address the problems of the modern world. This is inevitable as the body of Buddhist intellectuals, and Buddhist higher education, grows in the world. The number of Buddhist intellectuals has always been small compared to the rich West with its Christian thinkers in and out of seminaries.

Buddhist scholars would indeed do well to learn from the critical trends in Christian theological study. One trend has been the redefinition of scriptural mythology to understand the underlying message it had for the people of that time, examining the state of mind Buddhist teachings were trying to create

rather than what the literal meaning of the message was itself tying the intellectual history of Buddhism to their social roots. Linguistic analysis should be tied to questions such as "Why did Buddhist philosophers in that time and place choose these images to express the Dharma?" or "Can certain Buddhist texts in the Pali canon be shown to have been added later for particular sectarian reasons?". The contradictions and schisms in Buddhist philosophy are rooted in social reality.

Based on the central insight of Buddhism of *paticca-samuppada* it doesn't seem correct to say that Buddhist social ethics posits that "everyone should strive for their own individual liberation and this will naturally create a better world". The environment of our practices is just as important as our individual efforts. Buddhist practice should be redefined to express the fact that inner change

doesn't automatically create outer change, and vice versa: true Buddhist practice strives to create an enlightened world at the same time as an enlightened mind. Indeed our bodhisattva work for other beings is a necessary part of our individual practices.

The more I practice as a socially-aware Buddhist, the more clear the subversive nature of the precepts become. Only through continual practice and re-examination can the social dimensions of Buddhism be rediscovered and expressed.

James J. Hughes

The official Xinhua press agency reported the attendance of more than 10,000 people at the opening of a traditional Tibetan Buddhist prayer ceremony in Lhasa, held for the first time in 20 years. The ceremony had been banned during the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, when mosques, temples, synagogues and churches were closed.

From index April 1986.

*Peace is the essence of happiness
and that essence is the true nature of all beings.
May the absolute truth, the Dhamma
radiate the blessing of happiness to this
universe and all the ten directions through out all time.
May all beings be free from ignorance
passion and anger;
May all beings live in the limitless light
of loving kindness and compassion, joy
and universal oneness.
May you receive the blessings of the
Buddha, the teacher of gods and men;
May you receive the blessings of the
Dhamma, the universal truth;
May you receive the blessings of the
Sangha, the perfect spiritual companions.*

BOOK REVIEWS

Thailand's Muslims

Islam and Malay Nationalism: a case study of the Malay-Muslims in Southern Thailand

by Surin Pitsuwan. Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University, Bangkok, 1985. Baht 150 (paper)

For a long time Thailand has been viewed as a homogeneous society with a pervasive Thai-Buddhist culture which has successfully assimilated and absorbed other non-Thai cultures. The case of the Chinese minority in Thailand is all too often cited to uphold this premise. Yet, during the past decade, several works by social scientists on this and related issues, previously neglected, have revealed the extent of the dissent and resistance—at times even rebellions—by peoples of different cultures and values against the central government, and the threat to the national integrity by the resulting instability. Surin's *Islam and Malay Nationalism* is precisely such a work that addresses itself to these issues.

The focal point of his investigation is the search, or rather the 'struggle', for 'political and cultural autonomy' of the Malay-Muslims in southern Thailand. Surin believes that, in their resistance against the Thais, the Malay-Muslims have relied on Islam and ethnicity, the style and form of both of which have changed in parallel with the various stages of Thai political transformation. However, to the author, the root of the conflict goes deeper than the superficial cultural differences

between the two peoples; rather it originates from the 'differences of perception of the role of the religious leadership in the state, the ultimate origin of the law, and the role and authority of the state in the affairs of the religious hierarchies in the Buddhist and Islamic societies'. What needs to be explored, therefore, is the 'deeper dimension of the theoretical and cosmological foundations of the two societies'. To this aim Surin combines the theoretical approaches of Clifford Geertz's work on Morocco and Indonesia and S.J. Tambiah's work on Thailand. His resulting thesis is that while the secular power in a Theravada Buddhist society such as that of Thailand 'always wins over' the support of the Sangha (the Buddhist clergy) and creates a 'high degree of social and political harmony', the same polity, in trying to encroach on the Malay-Muslims, meets with persistent revolts. On the Muslim side, Islamic purification leads to the need for political consciousness prior to such opposition, which has resulted in Malay ethnic nationalism.

In tracing the historical background of the Malay-Muslims—72% of the population of the former 'Patani region', the four southern Thai provinces adjacent to the Malaysian border—the author stresses the cultural identity of the people, related to their view of the historical role of Patani as the 'cradle of Islam', and to their shared sense of community with the rest of the Muslim world. This identity, together with the *ulamas* (religious

leaders), the nobilities and the royal families, have continued to serve as symbols of independence for Thailand from the time of incorporation in 1901. In essence, according to Surin, the core of the problem between the Malay-Muslims and the Thai people is an ethnic one.

Resistance to incorporation

From incorporation into the Thai state in 1901 onwards, the Malay-Muslims' response has varied from sporadic revolts, through demands for limited autonomy and 'restrained' political participation, to overt rebellions and subversive separatist movements. The leaderships of these groups and movements have also changed, from the former rulers and their distant descendants, through the *ulamas*, to the younger, modern and more educated students. While one could argue with the author's interpretation of Thai policy towards the Malay-Muslims during the reigns of Rama V and VI, and with the reliability of his selected sources, it is true that forced assimilationist policies under the autocratic Thai government before the Second World War did taint the trust that the Malay-Muslims had towards the Thais.

The resulting *Ulamas' Rebellion* (1947-48) ended in the birth of a range of separatist movements, which in the beginning found few sympathizers in British Malaya, though later they became associated with the pan-Islamic bond which united them to the emerging Malay na-

tionalism in Malaya and Indonesia, and the 'Patani issue' subsequently came to the fore internationally. At present there is a whole spectrum of separatist movements of varying natures and ideologies, ranging from the armed separatist movements, such as the BNPP and the PULO, to the Islamic fundamentalist and militant groups. Present day Thailand is thus confronted with both internal subversive activities and international campaigns from these dissident Malay-Muslims, at times threatening the country's national integrity.

The book was originally a doctoral dissertation, yet it is extraordinarily eloquent and rhetorical in style. It is easy, though, for the reader to become overwhelmed by the tone of fervent religious sentiment. Many of the facts quoted seem dubious, and there is inadequate substantiation of statements put forward. For example, writing on the Islamic courts and legal autonomy in the reigns of Rama V and VI, the author states that 'efforts have been made to promote more access to education for the Malay-Muslims who have shown their loyalty and affiliation with the Thai state.' With his fixed interpretation of Thai policies, and his branding of them as 'political attempts' at 'Muslim integration', the writer uncompromisingly rejects all the political experiments that have been attempted to date, short of any full autonomy.

State and religion

However, the book is to be given credit for its insight into the Islamic view of the relations between state and religion. One would like, though, to know

more on how local Malay intellectuals and religious leaders in Patani itself feel on this matter, rather than have abstract theories quoted from the *Cambridge History of Islam*. As Geertz has noted in *Islam Observed*, 'religious faith, even when it is fed from a common source, is as much a particularizing force as a generalizing one.' Furthermore, 'in Indonesia Islam has taken many forms, not all of them Koranic, and whatever it brought to the sprawling archipelago, it was not uniformity.' Lacking any tangible local substantiation, how can one analyse, least of all lay claim to, any general beliefs or practices in Patani?

There are also problems posed by the author's interpretation and application of the theoretical framework of the Malay-Muslim context and these raise questions as to the validity of some of the work. The 'Islamic purification' issue is vague, ambiguous and loosely analysed. At times it is not even clear whether it is Thai purification of Islam, or Malay religious self-purification which is being discussed, the latter being presumably the source of Malay political consciousness against Thai authority. On the other hand, the Sarekat Islam, considered by Geertz as the first mass nationalist organization, clearly expressed religious self-purification as well as political self-assertion. The Malay-Muslim case in Thailand has very similar aspects.

As regards the relations between the Thai polity and the Buddhist Sangha, the author fails to take into account the observation of Tambiah regarding the difference between the normative

formulation of the relation and that which pertains in abnormal circumstances. By over-generalizing that Thai secular society 'always (sic) won over the support of the church and achieved a high degree of social and political harmony, Surin evades the fundamental question of legitimacy underlying Thai polity which is related to the aegis of a Dharma-practising Buddhist king, or 'righteous monarch'. He also ignores some of the major historical conflicts between state and Sangha that occurred when such a legitimacy was not available.

In the final analysis, the theoretical approach of the book can not be applied in the case of the Malay-Muslims in Satun, since they have played too little part in the whole struggle. Nor can the limitation of the framework explain the different course taken there. More research to account for the deeper socio-political and cross-cultural differences among the Malay-Muslims themselves in the locality will be needed before a clearer picture of the Malay-Muslim minority can be achieved. All the same, this book is an interesting and provocative work on the minority in southern Thailand, and it deserves serious attention.

Ms. Phan-ngam Gothamasan

from INSIDE ASIA

A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society : S. Sivaraksa

pp.243: 1st printing 1981;
2nd printing 1986. Bahts
120.00 Tienwan Publishing
House Part. Ltd.

(collected articles by a concerned
Thai intellectual)

Coming out of Thai background the title of the book may at first glance sound anomalous as it announces the concern for renewing **society** which Theravada Buddhists are exhorted to **cast behind**. First published in 1981 by Thai Watana Press, the Thai version came out two years later. The Japanese translation is presently in progress. The limited number of copies printed at the outset was clearly insufficient to meet the desire of those who wanted to get acquainted with the author's thinking.

The articles were written or the speeches delivered over the past decade in various countries and were grouped under four general topics dealing with the concern for renewing Thai society. The chapters covered themes such as: the role of a critic; the issues of national development; religion and social justice; and future goals; all as envisioned by Acharn Sulak.

In addition to these the publication is enriched by his English translation of valuable documented presentations of three leading Buddhist monks on special occasions. Further, an appreciation of the author by W.L. Bradley, the president of Hazen Foundation in U.S.A., and an introduction by D.W. Chapell of the Department of Religion, University of Hawaii, who helped as editor, as well as brief introductory remarks for each chapter served as useful contextual material to understand the background and thrust of each article.

In dealing with the need for intellectual and cultural freedom in Thai society the author at the outset referred to three kinds of

grouping within the small intelligentsia. He identified them as conservative Royal Traditionalists; liberal Social Technician; and culturally conservative yet socially progressive intellectuals. He saw the contribution of the intellectual in terms of not joining the establishment but pointing out to it the failure to serve the moral, material and social needs of the general population.

Remembering that the author had to stay outside his country to avoid being muzzled and incarcerated he managed to speak to the existential issues his nation was then facing. Of course some of the issues which the Thai people faced due to the U.S. presence in his country are not there **now** in those forms. But the basic questions raised about the integrity of Thai society are still relevant for due reflection and action.

The contents of the book deal with understanding of Buddhism, of Development, and of Justice. In all these three important themes there will surely be agreements as well as differences of interpretation. On Theravada Buddhism there are obviously different understandings even among Buddhist scholars themselves. The scope of Acharn Sulak's interpretation becomes evident when interestingly enough he disagreed with the Buddhism as explained by the Asian interpreter T.R.V. Murti (p.161-162) and endorsed its understanding by Trevor Ling, an English Christian! (p.163)

Similarly in his challenge to the usual concept of 'development' in terms of quantity and the failure to take into account the importance of 'quality',

many planners of national development will rise up to protest that their national development plans surely reckon with the dangers being pointed out. Others will support the analysis he had made. Ironically, according to his analysis, he sees the danger of capitalistic values beginning to flourish in a Buddhist society such as the Thai while he advised his readers or audience to consider the non-acquisitive society such as that of Burma, though under a socialist system. He argued that the egalitarian nature of Burmese society is due to the continuation of Burma's Buddhist culture. (p.196). Again there is much material for patient and sustained dialogue in his presentations.

He also turned to the issue of social justice specially in reflecting on the goals and means of achieving it. His concern for non-violence on the one hand and his passion for social justice could be appreciated as we examine his views. For the youth he possibly was often both an inspiration and an enigma (or even a disappointment?) on occasions. They may be impatient to achieve immediate results while he may, out of his convictions, eschew short-cuts which could involve violence.

On all these three concerns his thinking will prove to be stimulating as one thumbs through the pages of this publication. He is a patriot but also an internationalist. He is a proponent yet a critic of Buddhism at the same time. He is a traditionalist but also a reformist. He is for development but also voices protest where distributive justice is not forthcoming.

Though the statements col-

lected in this volume are related to happenings spread over the past decade the basic premises can still be relevant for continuing issues of similar nature in Thai as well as neighbouring societies. The publication carries the title "A Buddhist vision for renewing society". But it is not a classical religious stereotype he was propagating. He made his statements out of the experience or his dialogue with Christian friends as well as fellow Buddhists. He shared insights arising out of his risky involvement with concerns facing his nation. As such, people of different faiths specially Buddhists and Christians, political as well as social scientists, and young people as well as the older folk will find much in this book to reflect on, and also to engage in creative dialogue regarding the contents of the various articles of this collection.

For western readers the present price of the book fixed at the equivalent of U.S.\$ 6.00 is a rare bargain.

Prof. Kyaw Than
Mahidol University

A GUIDE TO WALKING MEDITATION" by Thich Nhat Hanh £4 incl p&p from BPF Publications.

An excellent introduction by Robert Aitken Roshi precedes this profound and beautiful booklet on the way of walking meditating. Thich Nhat Hanh has drawn on fifteen years of practising this particular way to describe its technique, which is simplicity itself. Its basis is to coordinate one's steps with one's breath, and to learn to smile. All

of us walk every day, but here it is suggested we set aside a time when we can be alone and experience to the full "walking on the green planet", becoming aware of what one's foot is doing, and seeing "the great sphere upon which it rests"

Thich Nhat Hanh's easy to follow instructions are given to us in the personal context of his own reflections and memories. He believes that we should be happy; that we should shake away our self-absorption and self-pity like raindrops off a coat. To be happy is to make others happy and this brings benefit to animals and all living things—happiness is an ecological necessity.

But happiness is not the goal (as it is in the hedonistic West). It is a method, a way. Perhaps the real goal cannot be put into words. But one aspect of it—equal to being happy—is to suffer. For when we are unhappy, we can truly realise what suffering is and learn how to be compassionate—and for this activity the world is an ideal place! But it is easy to escape from suffering into a mindless unawareness. Then we may look to "nirvana" for an ultimate happiness, which is yet another escape. It is necessary, says Thich Nhat Hanh, to accept our greed, hatred and ignorance and "this samsaric world is the best training ground for our practice." Everything in this world is touched by suffering as well as by joy and beauty. It we wake up to our own suffering, we wake up to everybody else's and then "every path in the world is your walking meditation path"

To become 'a sensitive conscious being' (the Chinese translation of Bodhisattva) is to enter

the path of the 'invincible Bodhisattvas' and walking meditation is the way of taking the first steps.

Anne Bancroft.

"THE PATH OF COMPASSION":

CONTEMPORARY WRITINGS ON ENGAGED BUDDHISM edited by Fred Eppsteiner and Dennis Maloney. £5.50 incl. p&p from: BPF Publications, 36, Victoria Parade, Ashton, Nr Preston, Lancs

The Path of Compassion is a collection of contemporary writings on the engagement of Buddhism and Buddhists in the social, political, and economic affairs of society. Included are pieces by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on political action and social progress, Thich Nhat Hanh on mindfulness in activity, Robert Aitken Roshi on ecology and Gary Snyder on planetary culture. Robert Thurmond writes on historical events and contemporary guidelines for Buddhist social action, Joanna Macy on empowerment in the face of the threat of nuclear war, and Jack Kornfield on compassion and social action. Other selections describe the relevance of the Buddhist Jataka Tales to modern life, a Vietnamese nun's response to the war and conflict in Southeast Asia, and a Buddhist woman's response to rape.

To the non-Buddhist who believes that all Buddhists feel the worldly arena is to be shunned, *The Path of Compassion* offers explanation and clarity. To the Buddhist who feels unclear about the interpersonal and social implications of the Buddha's teaching, these writings offer guidance and inspiration.

SEEDS OF PEACE

Vol. 2 No. 3 September 2529 (1986)

ISLAM AND NONVIOLENCE
ROLE OF WOMEN IN BUDDHISM
BUDDHISM AND THAI POLITICS
BUDDHADASA ON PRIDI BANOMYONG



Seeds of Peace

is published thrice annually in January, May and September, in order to promote the aim and objectives of the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD). For subscriptions and further information, please contact the Commission 4753/5 Soi Watthong Noppakun, Somdej Chaophya Road, Klongsan, Thonburi, Bangkok 10600, Thailand. Tel. 437-9445. Suggested minimum donation US\$ 10 per annum, postage included.

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1. To coordinate work among individuals, groups of individuals and various agencies dealing with religions and development in course of working together.
2. To share experience in and knowledge of religions and development as well as exploring ways and means of working together.
3. To offer training and secure resources in terms of man-power and materials to support and enhance the agencies that need help.

Editorial Staff

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Editorial Note

The Thai Government and NGOs are taking the International Year of Peace seriously at least for the time being. Particularly in August, there were many meetings, seminars, — exhibitions at many campuses. Buddhist and Christian Universities took part ecumenically. Muslims too were involved positively, at national as well as international levels. In some provincial towns local events also took place. There is an effort to have 16th August as a national day of peace. If that could be achieved, Thai militaism may be decreased and real democracy may be the order of the day.

More significantly, the Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu devoted the whole Buddhist Lent (from 21 July—17 October) to give a series of lectures every Saturday on the theme of peace. And the Pridi Banomyong Foundation has a wonderful research project on Peace Studies Programme 1986—1987 : A Quest for Peace in Thai Society. Hopefully these will help stimulating seeds of peace to grow as trees of peace in the jungle of violent atmosphere.

The United Nations University has a Sub-Programme on Peace and Global Transformation. Under its Regional and Global Studies Division, one of the activities is Visions of Desirable Societies of Religious and Ethical System. In our last two issues, we have already mentioned some of the Buddhist Visions. Hopefully, more will be forth-coming from other religious traditions.

Our last issue was well received in many quarters. Some articles were translated into Thai and other languages. Some churches announced to their congregation as to where **Seeds of Peace** could be bought and subscribed. Our Organization, too, has been mentioned favourably by **Inter-Religio**, a network of Christian Organizations for Inter-religious encounter in Eastern Asia, with its Headquarters at Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, Nagoya, Japan.

Indeed our foreign friends gave us much encouragement. For those who wish to read something similar, may we recommend (a) **Buddhist Peace Fellowship Newsletter** especially Vol.8 No.3 Summer 1986, which could be subscribed through the BPF, P.O. Box 4650 Berkeley, Cal. 94704, U.S.A. (b) **Peace News** for Nonviolent Revolution, 8 Elm Av., Nottingham NG3 4GF, U.K (c) **Asian Action** by our sister organization, Asian Cultural Forum On Development, (G.P.O. Box 2930, Bangkok 10501, (d) **Gandhi Marg**, 221-223 Deen Dayal, Upadhyaya Marg, New Delhi 110002, India. Last but not least is the **IYP Newsletter** which could be had from the International Year of Peace, United Nations, N.Y. 10017 U.S.A.

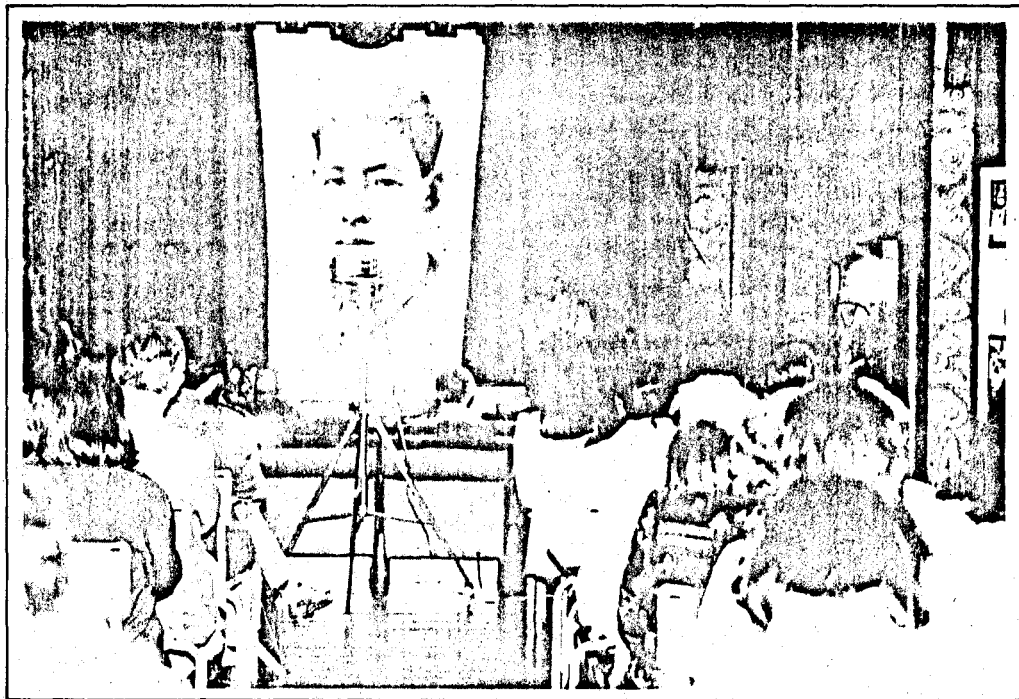
For those who wish to have ideas for action fundamentally different from the prevailing materialistic and violent ways of development, you may find these and a few other publications useful platforms.

You are encouraged to write to us as well as to them. The more seeds of peace are planted, the better it is for all concerned for the survival of humankind and for a just and peaceful world.



BUDDHADASA BHIKKHU

on PRIDI BANOMYONG



To all of us gathered here to make merit in memory of the Elder Statesman, Pridi Banomyong,

I would like to take the opportunity to join you in saying a few words in blessing today in his memory. I believe the Elder Statesman took an interest in Buddhism, and in adapting Buddhism to suit modern life. He was impressed with the activities at Suan Mokh and consequently asked me to look for a location in Ayuthaya where another Suan Mokh could be set up. I searched to the best of my ability but could find nowhere suitable, so the project was abandoned. If such a location had been found, there would have been another Suan Mokh in Ayuthaya for sure.

He asked me to do everything I could to spread modern Buddhism. I complied, trying to produce books on every angle on Buddhism to meet his request, as can be seen

now. I also responded by giving a lecture on "Buddhadhamma and Democracy". The Elder Statesman listened throughout. Some of the books received special interest, for example, **"Life of the Buddha for Young People"**. He asked how I could write in such detail even though I had never experienced married life. I did not reply because I felt inhibited. Now that he is not here I can reply as if I were replying then. I have lived a married life. I married Vani. The Vani they call a Goddess. That is, the Tripitaka, that was born from the lotus flower — the mouth of the Lord Buddha, the greatest sage, I was tied gladly and unwaveringly, and so I was married. I still lead a married life now with the person called Vani. Therefore let it be said that I can speak about this feeling as well as anyone.

The Elder Statesman asked me to write songs so that Buddhists could have religious

music in the same way that people of other religions do. On this point I was stuck. I could not do it. I do not know how to compose music.

Therefore my contacts with him mean so much that I felt compelled to come and join in this commemoration with genuine feelings.

In national affairs it is recognised that the Elder Statesman acted and led actions to give concrete expression to the spirit of democracy in Siam. In particular, he altered the government system from absolute monarchy to democracy. Everyone knows that. In addition, he reformed the law from an imperfect legal system, unrecognised internationally, into a complete legal system recognised as equal to that of civilised nations. That was the highest achievement. He also abolished completely the commitment to fight on Japan's side, and Siam was released from the status of a country defeated in the War, escaping from danger as has happened from time to time in our history. That was even more valuable than is summed up in the term 'Elder Statesman'.

Another highly important thing that should be remembered is that the Elder Statesman had to suffer from banishment because he advocated socialism as a basis of governing the country. Others did not agree because they did not understand the meaning of the term. So he was defeated. On this point I am suffering the same fate. I have proposed that socialism is the heart of every religion, that every religion preaches socialism so that people can love each other as companions in the cycle of birth, age, sickness, and death, that capitalists love workers, and workers love capitalists, that the rich love the poor and the poor love the rich. This is called Dhammic Socialism. I reiterate that it is the heart of every religion. The Elder Statesman said the same but he was rewarded with banishment. It was strange, unbelievable, tragic and much more. I would like to express these feelings in his memory. I shall continue to try to introduce Dhammic Socialism into the hearts of the



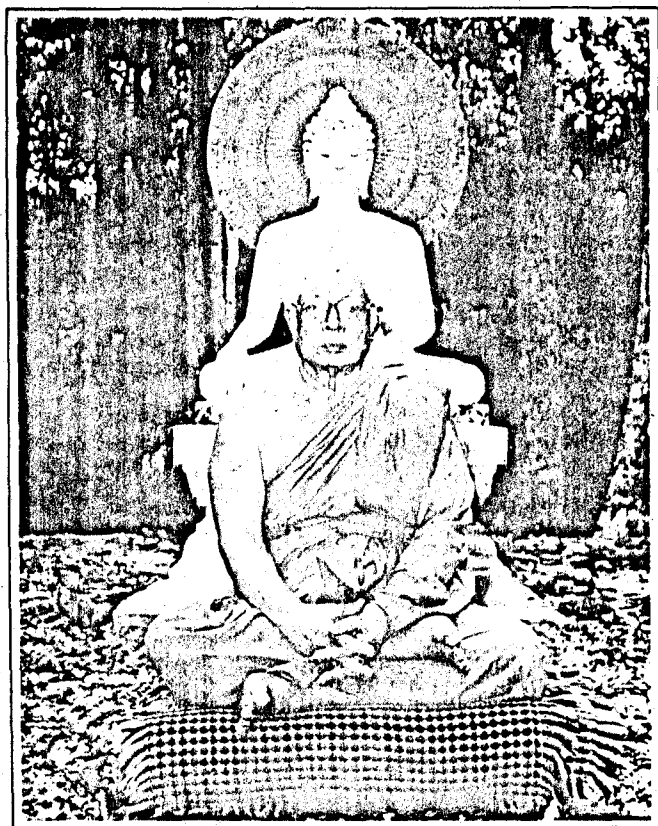
people so that it can be a principle for humanity throughout the world, so that they can be companions in the cycle of birth, age, sickness and death.

It is this that I would like to commemorate as the highest sacrifice made by the Elder Statesman. It should be seen clearly above all. I would like us to feel as if the Elder Statesman has warned us all that we should adopt the spirit of socialism and love all living creatures as companions in the cycle of birth, age, sickness and death, until the workers love the capitalists and the capitalists love the workers, the rich love the poor and the poor love the rich. Love should extend to animals and other living beings such as trees. With the spirit of Dhammic Socialism there should be no more destructions of life out of stupidity.

Let us all commemorate his sacrifices. I would like to do this by saying, may the four blessings — long life, good complexion, happiness and strength (physical and spiritual), — flourish in those who do their duties unfailingly. This is my commemoration.

(Transcribed and translated by Peter Mytri Ungphakorn from taped sermon given at Suan Mokh, and played before the ashes of Elder Statesman Pridi Banomyong were strewn over the Gulf of Siam on May 11, 1986.)

BUDDHISM AND MEDITATION AT SUAN MOKH: THE PERSPECTIVE OF AN AMERICAN STUDENT



By a fortunate set of events, and with the help of some very kind people, I enrolled in a ten day meditation course at Suan Mok last summer. It was a lay course for Westerners organized by the Ven. Achan Po and others at Suan Mok under the auspices of the Ven. Achan Buddhadasa. Although ordaining seems very romantic, Suan Mok's lay program probably provides a better introduction to the Dhamma for someone short on time and unable to speak Thai.

My stay in Thailand was less than a month long, and my stay at Suan Mok but two weeks. My experience with Buddhist practice is thus quite limited. Rather than attempt a scholarly analysis of the interaction of Buddhism and the Occidental Psyche, a task at which I, unlike some others, would fail, I will write about my own experience as an American encountering Buddhism for the first time. I will try to identify which of my beliefs are shared with other Americans.

Almost all of the thoughts expressed below come directly out of my experience at Suan Mok. I hope that the Thai reader will see and tell me things which I, as a young American, have been unable to see.

What about Buddhism appeals to Americans? My attraction to Buddhism began with feelings of agitation and unsettledness. This is common in Americans, at least among highschool and college students, and undoubtedly accounts in part for why many (but not enough) of them travel to Buddhist countries each year. In my case the unsettledness was probably not so much understanding of the First Noble Truth as it was being unsure of my role in the world. I lacked the coherent view of life provided by religion.

In retrospect, I was looking for something to **add** to life; life seemed in most respects quite good. The feeling was not "something is wrong," but rather "something is missing." Off I went to Siam to acquire things — good food, friends, gifts, photographs, and the Wisdom of the East.

I was keenly interested in Buddhism, yet one of my first reactions at Suan Mok was suspicion. We were asked not to speak to each other, and not to read or write for the entire ten days. What better way to brainwash students than to let them converse only with their instructors? And how could one hope to sort through the muck of one's thoughts with neither books leading the way, nor paper and pen to record fleeting ideas? On a more humorous level, have you ever seen a group of people wash dishes without talking? Some dishes get washed several times.

It doesn't take long to discover the benefits of Noble Silence. One is soon glad to be free of verbal intrusions from the everyday world. Going without my journal was more difficult; it was odd to discover the extent to which I had become dependent on writing. Without the journal, an insight had to be a true insight to be remembered.

The first thing I discovered when trying to meditate was how creative the mind can

be. Alas, my mind was especially creative when it came to food, and these thoughts tormented me mercilessly. Food is cheap and good in Bangkok and I was used to a life of gluttony. In this condition, it can be quite a while before eating once a day **freed** the mind of food thoughts.

I was surprised by the extent to which my experiences while meditating agreed with what our teachers described. The description is recognized after the fact, just as the taste of durian can be recognized from verbal description only by those who have tasted it. These experiences can be very pleasant, but striving to attain them is like waiting to notice when you've fallen asleep in that it prevents you from getting there.

Let me now turn to the rational, analytical side of my encounter with Buddhism. I was looking for a religious foundation. Clearly, religion works best if it is taken seriously. The Ven. Bhuddadasa Bhikkhu has argued for an essential sameness of Christianity and Buddhism (1), but to get started in practice, perhaps it is best to pick one or the other. My prior beliefs, especially in the scientific methods, made faith in Christian dogma unattainable. The Buddha stressed the importance of seeing reality for oneself, an approach which many feel to be more honest and more consonant with science (2). One should try to follow this advice of the Buddha's, even if the result is not always traditional Buddhist doctrine.

For example, we have learned things since the Buddha's time. That the world is composed of the Four Great Elements: heat, wind, air and movement (3) is no longer amenable to literal interpretation given the success of modern chemistry.

Another alteration is much more drastic — the concept of reincarnation is foreign to American culture, and most Americans would probably have difficulty accepting it. Certainly, there is no more scientific evidence that I know of to support reincarnation than there is to support the Christian Heaven and Hell. When an American atheist dies, that's the End. One could interpret **samsara**

metaphorically, noting that each generation conditions the next. Or one could simply avoid interpretation. But it is hard to escape the conclusion that to the American atheist, release from **samsāra** comes with death.

Yet the Four Noble Truths survive this cultural transplantation; **dukkha** in the present life may not be so bad as **dukkha** forever, but it is reason enough to follow the Noble Eightfold Path. The doctrine of **Anattā** or No-soul still yields its tremendous insight (4). As one practices Buddhism, one doesn't yet know what Enlightenment is. Thus the decision to follow the Buddha is best made as a commitment to practice, and Americans are capable of this.

Grant me for now that belief in reincarnation supports, but is not essential to the practice of Buddhism. There are other cultural supports for Buddhism in Southeast Asia that are missing in the West — we have no established Sangha, no Buddhist holidays, and no stories about the Buddha to tell our children. Enlightenment itself is a foreign concept.

There seem to be both advantages and disadvantages in approaching Buddhism as an American. On one hand, the Westerner is less likely to confuse rituals and the emotions they induce with the essence of the Buddha's teaching, because he or she has never experienced any Buddhist rituals (5). On the other hand, the American lacks the familiarity with Buddhism supplied by Thai culture. Also, to practice Buddhism requires self-discipline, and Thai culture surely supports the individual in his or her efforts more than does U.S. culture.

Many elements of American culture directly conflict with traditional Theravada Buddhism. Some of them I readily give up, such as the worship of bodily and military strength (have you seen the popular movie **Rambo**?) and the belief that in order to remain healthy, people must express anger "to get it out of their systems." But other cultural values are harder to shed. The ideal American "lives life to the fullest," for example. He or she is playful and creative. That monks give up dancing and singing

seems odd to me, because these channels for creative expression are widely accepted as activities through which one can "get in touch with oneself." Have you insights to resolve this issue?

It has been pointed out that Americans who adopt Buddhism sometimes do so as part of a search for "self-fulfilment" (6), meaning approximately "living a life of maximum potential." Such an approach to Buddhism can be seductive; why not have it all? Here again is the notion of adding more to life in the form of religion. It is a trap which Americans must take special care to avoid if they are to practice in anything like the traditional spirit of Buddhism.

Some aspects of American culture can be reconciled with Buddhism in very useful ways. An example: Americans are taught that in order to be happy, they must form mutual attachments with other people, and learn how to depend on them. The easiest thing is to stay by oneself, but to "take the risk" of falling in love is regarded positively. In apparent contrast, the Buddha's basic lesson was detachment. Are not the three refuges places to hide from real life, a cowardly retreat?

Of course a Buddhist would say the opposite: to give up one's attachments is the noblest thing, and requires great emotional strength. The important step for me was to make the distinction between attachment and commitment. Achan Ranjuan advised us one evening that if we get married, we should remember that it will not last forever. The best thing is to be able to make a commitment without becoming emotionally dependent. Thus the fear of losing what one becomes attached to can keep a person from making a commitment.

Suan Mokh is a wonderful place for Western students of Buddhism. There are peaceful meditation platforms scattered about the hill to the west, and a hot springs amid a coconut grove behind the hill to the east. But my clearest memories are of the people. Ven. Buddhadasa, despite the physical difficulty, spoke to us with an equanimity that pervaded our stay. Ven.



Achan Po is a patient teacher, an energetic and wise monk whose example is highly inspiring. Achan Ranjuan's lessons always succeeded in connecting Buddhist thought with everyday life. Phra Pacha at the old Suan Mok had very good advice on meditation and keen insight into the role of Buddhism in the modern world. And several foreign monks and lay persons led our daily practice very well. These people have been so kind that I can hardly thank them enough. When one has far to go in one's mental development, one is very glad that a place so helpful and inspiring as Suan Mok exists.

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NOTES

- 1 Ven. Bhikkhu Buddhadasa Indpañño, **Sinclair Thompson Memorial Lecture**, Feb. 1967. Translated into English by

Donald K. Swearer.

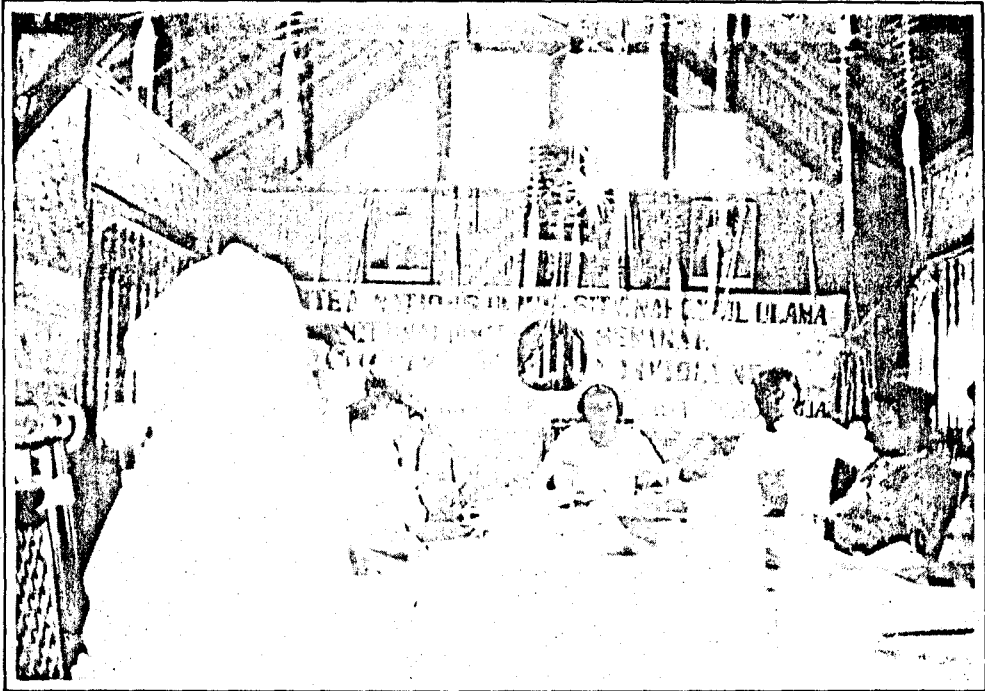
- 2 See eg. Phra Rajavaramuni, **Thai Buddhism in the Buddhist World**, Bangkok: Unity Progress Press, 1984, p. 136.
- 3 Samyutta-nikāya III (PTS edition) p. 158. Cited by Rahula, Walpola, **What the Buddha Taught**, London: Gordon Fraser Gallery Ltd. 1959, p.20.
- 4 I am not quite sure what happens to the Five Aggregates when they come to America. It is interesting to note, however, the failure of Scientific Reductionism to account for mental life in purely material terms. Modern psychologists and computer scientists now agree that other levels of analysis are required to understand mental processes. Physical processes in the brain are still assumed to underlie all mental activity, but the best description of that activity is not in physical terms, but rather in terms of information-processing, perception, and consciousness, though the last two are rather poorly defined. Perhaps there will some day correspond a level of analysis to each of the Five Aggregates.
- 5 Sulak Sivalaksa has argued that ceremony can get in the way of Buddhist practice in his book **Siamese Resurgence**, 1985.
- 6 Piker, Steven, comment made at the conference **Buddhism Today** (University of Pennsylvania Museum, March 1986).

Woman has been suppressed under custom and law for which man was responsible and in shaping of which she had no hand. In a plan of life based on nonviolence, woman has as much right to shape her own destiny as man has to shape his.

M.K.GANDHI

ISLAM AND NON VIOLENCE

*A Reflective Report on a United Nations
Seminar in Bali,
February 14-19, 1986*



INTRODUCTION: A Man and a Dream

A seminar on Islam and Nonviolence, to many, sounds unimaginable in a world where the term "Islam" ceases to be a simple description. Instead, it means a lot of "unpleasant" things to some non-Muslims. Edward Said, a Columbia University professor, writes, "For the right, Islam represents barbarism; for the left, medieval theocracy; for the center, a kind of distasteful exoticism. In all camps, however, there is agreement that even though little enough is known about the Islamic world there is not much to be approved of there." Needless to say, concerning the issues of violence and nonviolence, Islam is normally perceived as heavily oriented towards the former.

But Glenn D. Paige, a professor of Political Science at the University of Hawaii

thinks differently. The American professor is not a Muslim. People who are around him sense that he has a strong inclination towards Buddhism. The most significant bond between Buddhism and Prof. Paige is, perhaps, the precept that instruct sentient beings to abstain from taking the lives of other living things. He endears this very principle because he is an extremely rare breed of political scientists. He claims to be a nonviolent (or to be more precise — non-killing) political scientist. He has taught and is still teaching a course on "Nonviolent Political Alternatives". Glenn D. Paige is the temporary convenor of the UNU exploratory seminar on "Islam and Nonviolence" held in Bali this past February.

The idea of this seminar grew out of a special relationship between him and one of his students, Qader Muheideen. In 1978, they met in Hawaii where young Muheideen

was being trained as a Ph.D. student in Political Science. It all began when the young Muslim student registered for the course on "Nonviolent Political Alternatives" with Professor Paige.

Muheideen, a Muslim minority from a country in Southeast Asia left his home country one year after a bloody episode of political history in that country took place in his own university. So, the young student went abroad in search of political alternatives to violence. The American professor was read. Together they strolled along the relatively virgin academic path of nonviolence. In the professor, the student found the training in academic sophistication on nonviolence. In the student, the professor found a case of Muslim reception to nonviolence that radically altered his former perception of Islam. Subsequently, the professor met another nonviolent Muslim political scientist, Syed Sikander Mehdi, a University of Karachi professor at the Inter-University Centre for Post Graduate Studies, Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia in 1983.

The meeting of these two Muslim political scientists who took nonviolence seriously primarily led Prof. Paige to dream of a seminar, a meeting place, a forum where those keenly interested in developing Islamic contributions to peaceful global transformation to meet, exchange ideas, and to try to identify feasible future projects of common interests.

Prof. Paige then put his dream into writing and sent a proposal to the Rector of the United Nations University for consideration. It was approved on December 6, 1984. First, it was scheduled to be held in Sabah, Malaysia in May 1985. But the seminar had to be cancelled because of a change of the Sabah Government in April 1985. Then it was rescheduled for Bali, Indonesia in December 1985 only to be again postponed at the Indonesian Government's request until early 1986 so that the Minister of Religious Affairs could officially open it.

Prof. Paige's dream was finally realized when the seminar was successfully held at

Ashram Canti Dasa, Bali, Indonesia from 14 to 19 February 1986. With seventeen participants from India, Jordan (although he is an American), Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Egypt and the United States,—there were 13 Muslim participants altogether. It must be pointed out that Mrs. Gedong Bagoes Oka, the famous Gandhian in Bali and head of the Bali Canti Dasa, provided all the participants with the rare motherly cares that was unforgettable.

The Exploration

Ten papers were presented although only nine written ones were distributed. These papers covered a wide range of issues. Nevertheless, these varied issues can be grouped into three categories, namely — theoretical, theological and instrumental. Papers by Qader Muheideen's "The Nonviolent Crescent" and Hasan Hanafis (an Egyptian philosopher) "On Coercion" are basically theoretical. The former tries to argue for the Muslim's sacred obligation to fight for justice using nonviolent actions in the modern world. The latter, on the contrary, attempts to explore the origin of violence, or to use Hanafi's term — "coercion", in contemporary Islam.

Papers by Razi Ahmad's "Islam, Nonviolence and Global Transformation" (an Indian historian), Abdulrahman Wahid's "Islam, Nonviolence and National Transformation" (an Indonesian political leader/writer), and Mamoon-al-Rasheed's "Islam, Nonviolence and Rural Transformation" (a rural development activist from Bangladesh), deal primarily from a theological dimension. Taking the issues of social transformation at the global, national and rural levels, these authors attempt to show how Islam is indispensable for human change. Some argue that such transformations need to be carried out nonviolently and there are ample Islamic injunctions which condone peaceful change. One author, however, points out that nonviolence will only be realized in contemporary world when equality becomes a reality. Since Islam values equality very

highly, it can contribute to a nonviolent world. In addition, Islam deals with the root of violence by fighting injustices and seeks to reconstruct the human mind for nonviolence.

Papers by Khalijah Mohd. Salleh (a Malaysian physicist) and Baroroh Baried (an Indonesian professor) share the same title: "Islam, Nonviolence and Women", while Yusof Yatim's (a community development officer from Malaysia) paper is on "Islam, Nonviolence and Youth". These three papers together look at Muslim women and youths' potentials for "nonviolence" as well as looking at these two significant groups as agents for social change. Dr. Salleh's analysis in particular, heavily influenced by her training as a physicist, provides a fresh insight into the issue of women and nonviolence. She points out that for Muslim women to work effectively towards nonviolence, Islamic knowledge is badly needed. She concludes, "The contribution of a woman may be small but no matter how small it is, it has a place in society – just like a key to the car, it is small but without it the car cannot run." M. Mazzahin Mohideen's (a Sri Lankan from Marga Institute) paper on "Islam, Non-violence and Inter-Faith Relations" looks at the relationship between Islam and other faiths. It seeks to discern commonalities of perceptions, teaching, or practices as bases for on-going dialogue "for the promotion of inter-faith harmony, human development and global peace and order." Emphasizing the primacy of human beings in the physical universe, he claims that this assertion is shared by people of all persuasions.

These papers together constitute an endeavour to bring into focus a number of issues. First, for the Muslims, Islam is definitely a repertoire of solutions for social ills that is still waiting to be fully realized. Second, even among the Muslims, there is still a severe case of a lack of comprehensive Islamic knowledge. Therefore, the search for more Islamic knowledge assumes paramount importance. Third, on the levels of image, the Muslims must try to project an image of Islam that is genuine and closer to the Muslims' understanding rather than passively

accepting the image portrayed by popular writers whose knowledge about Islam and the Muslims leaves much to be desired.² The message of Islam as appeared in the following verse of the Holy **Qur'an** needs to be widely shared. In Surah (Chapter) V, Ayat (verse) 35, The Almighty says:

"And if any one saved a life;
It would be as if he saved
The life of the whole people."

It should also be noted that amidst brotherly and sisterly atmosphere, heated debates sometimes did take place. But such "heated debates" signified the seriousness which the participants accorded the discussion. Yet, what does one get out of such an exploratory seminar?

Of Discrepancies and Solace

This seminar, like so many others that are taking place everywhere at the moment, was attended by participants who are basically different. True, many of them are Muslims. But each of them came from a distinctive social background, class and culture. Even books they read differ. As a result, their perceptions of an issue are at times dissimilar. Moreover, even the terms used in presentations and informal communications sometimes differed. For example, it has been pointed out that the terms "violence" and "nonviolence" are not **Qur'anic** terms. Therefore the term "coercion" is selected for discussion in one particular paper. There are at least two problems, however. First, if a term is **non-Qur'anic**, can't it be discussed? It is certain that "nuclear weapons" is not a **Qur'anic** term. But isn't it a part of human reality at present and therefore should be taken seriously by the Muslims? Second, judging from a sociological standpoint, coercion and violence are two different concepts. Coercion, in fact, can be both violent and nonviolent.³

In the discussion, there was a clear case of a lack of knowledge both about Islam as well as nonviolence. For example, most

participants are not familiar with literature on nonviolence. Consequently, they failed to see the fact that nonviolent actions is a form of fightings. As a matter of fact, quite a few thought that nonviolence is an equivalence of submission or passivity. Or, when some of the participants quoted a **Hadith** (Tradition of Prophet Muhammad) horizon, glimpses own argument, the authenticity of that **Hadith** has been questioned. Some participants raised concern about the absence of any genuine Islamic scholar. But it has also been pointed out that what was needed was not a petrified textual exegesis. Instead as ordinary Muslims, it is inspirations from the Words of God and the Traditions of the Prophet that should be embraced.

Despite some of the shortcomings, the UNU exploratory seminar on Islam and Nonviolence accomplishes at least three things. First, it indicates to the world that Islam can indeed offer a peaceful solution to social ills. Second, it provides an opportunity for a broad spectrum of Muslim social activists, academics, and concerned non-Muslims to join forces and penetrates deep into the depth of the problems of violence and alternatives to politics. Third, it helps construct a human bond that would otherwise be nonexistent. This human bond is supported by a strong religious conviction. For the Muslims, Islam provides a comfortable basis relevant to the discussion of the issues related to social and human problems in general. Differences which emerged among the participants, though significant, are primarily hermeneutical. As such the commonality was already there. Conflicts which arose were, then, truly instructive and healthy.

What is more important, perhaps, was a non-Muslim's unusual remark. He told other participants that never before had he experienced the immanence of the Spirit among mortals. The seminar was just the beginning. A lot more works such as research, study and further seminars need to be conducted. But the faith is there, the beginning made and the supportive human relationship established.

NOTES

1. Edward Said, *Covering Islam*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), p. xv.
2. See for example, V.S. Naipaul, *Among the Believers*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1981).
3. See for example, Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Actions*. (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973).

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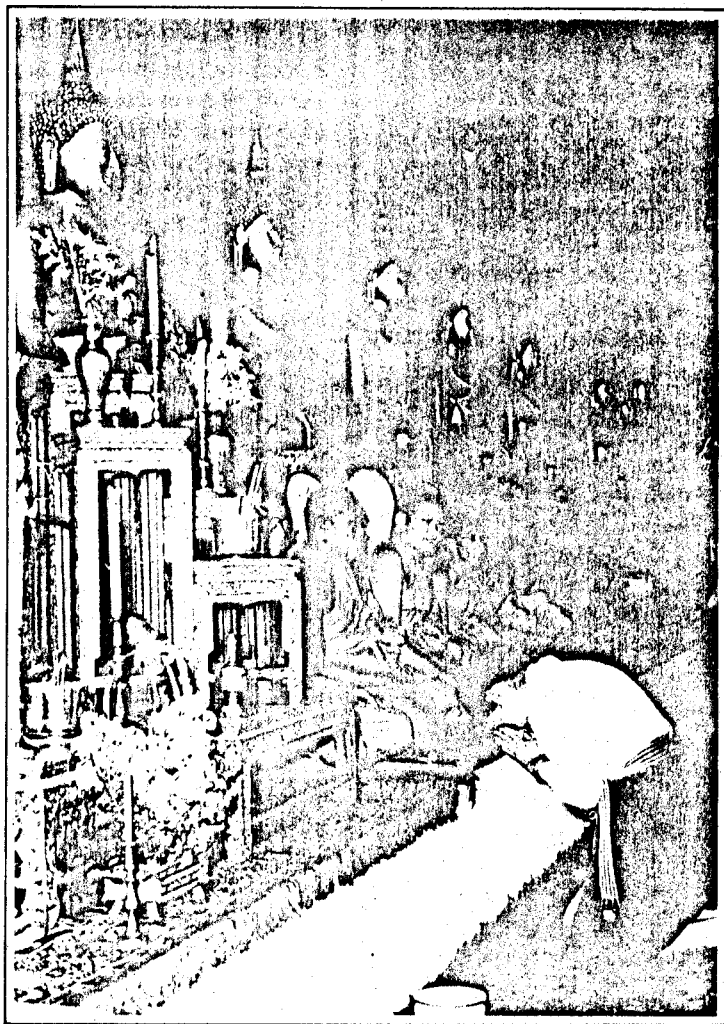
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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN BUDDHISM*



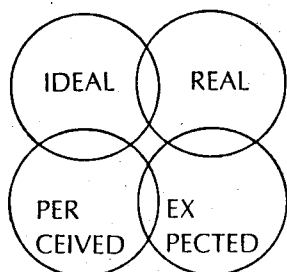
The given topic gives us a wide horizon to look at the issue at hand. We will not be able to cover the whole horizon, but I'll try to give you glimpses here and there of the whole picture. And I expect, in the discussion period I will be able to share more of your

concerns and interests. In an audience like this the discussion is very important and enjoyable because it will really bring out many more hidden issues. At times, the importance lies not in the answers but in the questions themselves. Again in this case, the

*A public speech given at the Department of Religion, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. November 21, 1985.

discussion should be very interesting because I am from the east and most of you are from the west with few quasi-westerners. Here, I am actually looking forward to have a real cross-cultural exchange of dialogues to enrich our knowledge on women in Buddhism.

Our concern is really women in Buddhism now, in the present days. In psychology, they talk about the real self, the perceived self and the ideal self. In a perfect person these 3 selves should emerge into one. When we come to look the selves of a Buddhist woman, I would like to add one more, that is the expected self.



The problem here lies in the fact that they do not often know their ideal selves and they are hung up with their expected selves. To make it worse, more often than not, the perceived selves are usually perceived distortedly.

In order to understand the ideal self of a Buddhist woman, we cannot help but to take a time machine back some 2500 years to the time of the Buddha.

With time limitation I will not go into detail, but will discuss only certain points of controversy. Buddhism is the first religion in the world to establish community of ordained women on the basis that women can achieve equal spiritual salvation as men. From the present context, we tend to under-estimate this significant value. But try to imagine yourself in India at that time, when Indian society followed closely to the law of Manu, women were to be under protection of fathers when young, then husbands when married and later on under the protection of their sons. Women were taken as objective possessions to be handed down under the

protection of the menfolk. The birth of sons became religious and social compulsory for women, failing of which would entitle their husbands to take new wives. Women could not perform any ritual on their own etc. Within this social context, Buddhism opened up a new horizon. Women under Buddhism stepped out from their expected role to fulfil their ideal role. Not only as wives and mothers but now as propagators of the new religion in the same capacity as their male partners.

This social and spiritual uplift was not a step but a leap ahead of the time. Hence there were many objections from their counterpart — namely the monks. The Buddha was well aware of this, therefore he was hesitant when his foster mother, Queen Maha Pajapati approached him for ordination. The fact that the Buddha was hesitant to admit women to the Order was often misinterpreted that he never wanted to accept the Order of nuns. This is clearly a bias and using double standard, because the Buddha was hesitant before, yet it was never interpreted that the action he chose to take afterwards was unwanted. If I am allowed to repeat the incident: when the Buddha became enlightened, he hesitated whether he should preach or not because the dharma was so subtle that people might not be able to understand it. He pondered over it for few days and later only decided to teach dharma to people; he continued to do so for the rest of his life for 45 more years. I have not heard anyone saying that because the Buddha was hesitant, therefore the fact that he decided to preach was unwanted!

During his life time, many women from all walks of life, joined the Order. Many of them were capable and successful in learning and preaching. Some of them were good propagators, not ordinary ones, but eloquent preachers, among their frequent listeners were the kings and ministers. As you are well aware in the study of history of religions, royal support has always been one among the key factors responsible for the growth of religions. Here we see Buddhist nuns were as good as monks in the role of propagators

raising faith from the royal families and the people in general. Some of the nuns received special praise from the Buddha—they were outstanding in remembering past lives, in insight knowledge, in observing vinaya (moral code), in eloquent preaching, etc.

In brief one can say that the role of ordained women was as at least intended to be equal to the monks. Subjecting to the prevalent social norms, the Buddha still put the nuns under the protection of the monks, as sisters to be protected by elder brothers. But in the past history we have witnessed numerous incidents revealing that what actually happened was not quite as intended. The Buddha intended that the nuns should be subordinated to the monks like sisters to brothers, not slaves to masters.

The monks, we have to realise, many came from Brahmanical social background. When they joined the Order they often treated the nuns as their servants. The nuns had to wash their robes, their seats, their quarters, etc. until they had no time to attend to their own spiritual practice. When this was brought to the Buddha's attention, he set down rules forbidding the monks to take advantage of the nuns. One particular case was very moving. A young monk was too lazy to go for almsround, so he took food from an old nun; she was 120 years old, for 3 days continuously. The old nun, having given her share of meal had to go without food; on the third day she collapsed. When the Buddha came to know, again he set down the rule that monks are not to take almsfood from the nuns. These, and many more incidents showed how women even after having joined the Order were still often taken advantage of. But as long as the Buddha was alive, he was there to rectify the rules and to protect the well-being of the nuns. He was concerned about the fact that the nuns got lesser support from the society. This was clearly seen in one of the rules set down in regard to the division of offerings between the two communities. If a donor offers 10 robes to both the Sanghas (communities), the robes must be divided equally among the Sanghas. The Buddha

was aware that the nuns usually get lesser chance of invitation and offerings than the monks. But when he passed away, the Order was again guided by the community of monks. The first set of incidents against the nuns may be seen as early as the first council, only 3 months after the passing away of the Buddha.

The council consisted of 500 enlightened monks, no nun was invited inspite of the fact that there were still many learned and enlightened ones. Ananda, the Buddha's attendant and cousin was blamed by the members of council for many things. One among the blames was that Ananda allowed the nuns to pay respect to the body of the Buddha before the community of the monks! Another one was that Ananda was mediator and helped the women to approach the Buddha for the establishment of the Order of nuns. Ananda did not protest but made it clear to the assembly that he did not think that he was wrong.

We see clearly, that the community of monks were not happy with the existence of nuns by their side. These negative feelings were brought out and displayed in public soon after the Buddha's passing away. Their objections indeed, reflected the mentality of the monks then. And we should not be surprised to find such trend of mentality still persist through thousands of years into the present age. Egoism is very strong inspite of the fact that the central teaching of Buddhism is egolessness!

The community of nuns continued in India, in the 3rd century B.C. During the time of King Asoka, an Order of nuns was established in Sri Lanka under royal patronage. Later in 434 A.D. Sri Lankan Nuns in turn established an Order of nuns in China. Through passage of time, the Order of nuns in India died out after the invasion of Muslims. The Order of monks and nuns in Sri Lanka died out with the invasion of south Indian ruler in 1017 A.D. The Order of the monks was soon revived but not the nuns. Only Chinese lineage survived in China, Japan, Korea. When China went through years of suppression during the cultural

revolution in 1940s, majority of nuns escaped and resettled in Taiwan where they are now the strongest hold of the fully ordained Buddhist nuns.

I should mention here also the main reason responsible for the strong establishment of the nuns in Taiwan. Before the communists took over China, many nuns came to settle in Taiwan. The monks remained behind and thought that they would be able to survive under Communism. But as the situation worsen, they had to flee to Taiwan also, some of them from whom I have heard the stories personally escaped without any possession, literally what they had on them were only their underwears. The nuns who had established themselves earlier helped these monks to get settled on the island. The monks, being obligated to the nuns in assisting them with their early establishment, are therefore grateful and in turn pay due respect to the community of nuns. This was the inside story responsible for the success of the nuns on that island.

In other Buddhist countries, the Order of nuns never existed. Countries like Burma, Thailand, Nepal, Laos, Cambodia never had Order of nuns. In Tibet, due to geographical limitation they have only ordination of female novices (samneri, samanerika)

We are now turning to the situation in this present century. There is a strange religious phenomena which repeats itself in each and every Buddhist country in more or less the same form. That is, Buddhist women expressed their desire to lead religious lives. In each country, there developed a group of ordained women. Not to confuse these women with those fully ordained ones which we have discussed earlier, we shall call the earlier group – the bhikshunis and the latter group – contemporary nuns.

In Nepal, they are called Anagarikas, they wear pink robe with a brown robe folded on the right shoulders, they observe 10 precepts. In Burma, Cambodia and Thailand, they wear white robes with 8 precepts. In Sri Lanka, they are called dasasil matas, wearing yellow robes much like the monks and observe 10 precepts. All of them

with shaven heads, a sign of leaving family lives. Among them, the Sri Lankan nuns seem to be holding the highest respect from society. Recently Sri Lankan government showed sign of interest in them and has so far issued identity card as a first step of formal recognition. There is also a movement to bring about the revival of bhikshuni order in Sri Lanka.

In order to understand their status, we should first look at the 4 groups of Buddhist as mentioned by the Buddha. They are monks (bhikshus), nuns (bhikshunis), laymen and laywomen. These 4 groups of Buddhist are responsible both for the development and for the decline of Buddhism. Now where do these contemporary nuns fit in this grouping? They do not really fit anywhere. They are not the bhikshunis as they have no ordination lineage. Generally they are grouped with laywomen. But again we see that they are not laywomen in the full sense for they have left their homes to lead committed religious lives. In my country, they are not accepted legally, they are not propagators; they, therefore, do not belong to the community. In short, they are just a group of awkward minority.

bhikshus (monks)	bhikshunis (nuns)
laymen	laywomen

The next question you will ask, why can't they become bhikshuni? The Theravada Buddhists insist that the lineage is now extinct. The people who can authorise the ordination are only community of monks and nuns. The community of monks is not ready to commit themselves, as it is, it seems, they are only too happy for the extinction of their capable counterparts.

Alright, what happens to the existing Chinese lineage I mentioned earlier? The Theravada Sangha does not accept Chinese lineage taking them to belong to Mahayana. I did some study on this objection and found out that the vinaya lineage as practised by the Chinese Sangha belongs to Dharmagupta

school. If you look up the Sri Lankan Chronicle you will find a list of 18 schools as prevalent during King Asoka's time around 3rd century B.C. you will see that Dharmagupta is subsect of Theravada. So the objection is again groundless.

We see now that Buddhist women are struggling to achieve the ideal self to play the role of propagators and have their equal share in bringing about understanding of Buddhism to the world. But they are much obstructed by the role of expected selves. (I mean the kind of roles expected of them by society often covered with traditional bias)

There is also some other phenomena which I should mention here. That is the spread of Buddhism to the west within the past few decades. When China took over Tibet 25 years ago, there is something positive in it as it forced the Tibetans to spread to different part of the world taking with them Buddhism. In north America now, Buddhism is much better known than say, twenty years ago. As a result many westerners have accepted Buddhism and some of the women wanted to lead a more committed lives. They slowly seek full ordination from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Korea. In 1983 for the first time in Buddhist history, an ordination ceremony for nuns was given in United States. And here in Halifax, there is a Tibetan centre to train both monks and nuns.

The movements and activities of these western Buddhist nuns will eventually be of great impact on the revival of nuns in the east.

We see then, that Buddhist women have been playing the expected roles of supporters, practitioners and are now aspiring to play the role of propagators and teachers of the dharma as they try to attain their ideal selves.

The lives of bhikshunis are serious and very committed, will not fit and will not be advisable for just any woman. But women who join the Order are of different and unique type, therefore they will be few in numbers. But those who have chosen such path of life could really be of great value not

only to Buddhist community only but also to the world at large.

To let the door open for the benefit of mankind, the monks will have to develop compassion to perceive the genuine religious need and commitment of women's part, they will have to be broadminded to accept the possibility of capable women who can actually bring much benefit to the womenfolk and society.

Let the door be opened to them so that the 4 groups of Buddhists be completed, so that the spirit of equality prevails. Give the women the place they have been entitled. What authority do we have to obstruct the religious growth of women as a community — the privilege given to them by the Buddha himself?

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This kingdom was known as Siam until 1939, when its name was changed to Thailand. Then it reverted to the original name again in 1946. Two years after the coup d'état of 1947 it was decreed that the country would be called Thailand, and it remains so officially. Ironically the kingdom has since been ruled by one dictator after another—with very brief liberal democratic intervals. The name, Thailand, signifies the crisis of traditional Siamese Buddhist values. By removing from the nation the name it had carried all its history is in fact the first step in the psychic dehumanization of its citizens, especially when its original name was replaced by a hybrid, Anglicized word. This new name also implies chauvinism and irredentism.



The Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian Buddhist Era seems to be one year later than that of Burma, Srilanka and India. In fact this is not so. The difference is that while the latter regards the year of the Maha Parinibbana as B.E. 1, the former takes it to be the first anniversary after the Master's Passing Away. For example this year is B.E. 2529 according to the Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian Calendar, but it is B.E. 2530 according to the Burmese, Ceylonese and Indian Calendar

Buddhism and Thai Politics



Since the focal point of Buddha's teaching is "nirvana", or the ultimate liberation of self, many people have been drawn to conclude that Buddhism is an individual, personal matter, with little concern about this 'worldly' world, least of all politics. But, if religion, as Durkheim asserts, is a vast symbolic system encompassing every aspect of society, both stabilizing and maintaining its continuity, social effect rather than individualistic aspect should be the center of our explaining religious phenomena. Taking Christianity in such light, Weber has discovered the inherent motivation for 'work ethics'—the source from which western capitalism has sprung. He, however, has rejected that there scarcely exists any teaching pertaining such significant social revolution in Buddhism. Yet, a prominent anthropologist on Southeast Asia has noted that ".....in all the societies where Theravada Buddhism become dominant, Buddhism has been construed as fundamental to the legitimacy of power". Moreover, in time of social crises, there have arisen in these

societies men who have claimed to possess exceptional Buddhist merit to restore the world back to peace (Keyes 1978:147).

From the point of view of our interest, the Thai case will be taken to illustrate the above premise. The attempt will be to examine the position of Buddhism in its interaction with the existing political establishments i.e. the monarchy and various regimes at various times in history. Significant political concepts, systems and phenomena with Buddhistic influences will be discussed in order to understand the underlying beliefs, factors or motivations and the system that have accommodated change through time. It is hoped that certain data and some fruitful implications would be gained, and further discussion in the direction of a well-balanced relationship between religion and politics in Thai society will be pursued.

Traditional Thai Concept of Righteous Ruler/ "Dhammarājā"

It is generally known that up until fifty three years ago when western style democracy was introduced, the monarchy was the absolute ruling institution in Thai society. There were basically three models which the Thai monarchy selectively followed at each period of history, generally with one dominant over the other. And all three were differently affected by Buddhism.

The first model was the patriarchy which existed in some of the early Thai communities before the 15th century. What was significant about such a state lay in the principle of its righteous ruler. Not only that the welfare of the people was the prime concern of the king, but the king himself had to follow the five Buddhist precepts. On the Sabbath days, Ramkamhaeng practiced charity and led his people to listen to the Dhamma teaching, preached by a venerable monk invited from a far away land. Obvious-

ly, the king acted as royal patron of Buddhism as well as the moral leader of the people. Since this type of government was in contrast to the **Devarājā**, Hinduistic Khmer autocracy of the time, Professor Sulak has rightly put that Ramkamhaeng's inscription was "...a legitimization of a new state to be created with the backing of Theravada Buddhism". (Sivaraksa 1985 : 30).

The **Ngen Yang Chieng Saen** chronicle of a northern Thai state revealed a similar condition. The title of the ruler of that old state was evidently Khun Chom Dharm (Lord of Supreme Dhamma). The lord was taught by an angel to predict the future of his state by keeping watch on 3 conditions :

1) whether the ruler kept the five and eight Buddhist precepts, learned the traditional laws and brought prosperity to the people and the Buddhist order.

2) whether there were good ministers and

3) whether there were good monks and sages.

So long as these three conditions were in practice, the state would be prosperous. In addition, Khun Chom Dharm instructed his ministers and officials to profess Traditional Laws (Prapeni Dharm) and Vajji Dhamma (Apparihanīyadhamma) (Chandravongs and Smudhavanit 1980:40-45). Both Traditional Law and Vajji Dhamma, in fact, dealt with righteous society.

The Traditional Laws indicated the duties of just rulers i.e. having loving-kindness towards the people, giving alms, keeping law, respecting the people's rights, treating all people equally, providing patronage to deserving ministers and refraining from taking property from 3 groups of people: doctors, astrologers and magistrates. The Vajji Dhamma, on the other hand, emphasizes people's role in keeping the cohesion of their society by preserving seven conditions i.e. frequent meeting, acting in unison, respecting traditional laws, respecting the elder and their advice, refraining from taking or confining women, revering holy places and providing protection to arhats and monks (Ra-

javaramuni, *Dictionary of Buddhist Science* 1984).

The above-mentioned evidences of moral or Dhamma codes ruled in early Thai patriarchal communities render us some points of interest here. First, the state's destiny was tied up with the conduct of the ruler : only a moral-practiced and just ruler could assure the well-being of his people. And second, it was essential that the people uphold the representatives of Dhamma : monks and sages to keep the stability and prosperity of the state. These two points would continue to be the ideal principle of **Dhammarājā** (King of Righteousness) to develop later on.

Now, we turn to the second and evidently the most significant model of monarchy in Thailand, that is the **Dhammarājā**. The core of this principle was the ideal monarch who was described as righteous king, elected by the people due to his merit and his ten kingly virtues i.e. alms giving, morality, liberality, rectitude, gentleness, self-restriction, non-obstruction. Along with these rules of conduct was the concept of "**Chakravartin**", the universal sovereign, drawn from a Pali Buddhist canon (Digha Nikāya). As it appeared, a king, by keeping the rules of conduct, justified himself as a righteous king or **Dhammarājā**, and thus could attain the status of **Chakravartin** (Rabibadhana 1969 : 40-43).

This concept of Chakravartin, the wheel-turning monarch, the monarch who conquers not to expand his kingdom, but to teach Dhamma has become the ideal Thai kingship from the Sukhothai period of the 14th century. It was synthesized along with Buddhist cosmology and the concept of karma and first appeared in "**Trai Phum**" (The Three Worlds According to Phra Ruang). This **Trai Phum** which was written by King Li Thai, the grandson of Ramkamhaeng, has become the first comprehensive treatise of Buddhist cosmology in Theravada tradition, and has been of great influence on the beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of the Thai regarding the interwoven relationship between merit and power, religion/morality,

ethics and kingship/state.

Within the scope of our interest, the **Trai Phum** is significant on 3 points. First, it propagated the principle of ideal universal monarch who conquers through Dhamma. Second, considering that many of Li Thai's inscriptions were identical in their moral teachings to those of King Asoka who was regarded as exemplar of the ideal king in many Theravada states, Li Thai's **Trai Phum** can be seen as having been written with the intention to justify himself to the same image. As Andaya has noted, "Added weight was lent to Li Thai's claim to authority by emphasizing the less tangible sources of power, his spiritual attainments and moral excellence" (Andaya 1978:9). Some contemporary critics even went further in suggesting that Li Thai intended to use the **Trai Phum** for his political aims, in other words, to socialize people to accept his power. The latter based their theory primarily on the interpretation of our third point, that is the **Trai Phum**, by glorifying happy conditions in heaven, and horribly depicting life in hell as the results of Bun (Merit) and Bab (Sin) from the previous life has led to the fatalistic attitude of the people. People were persuaded to do merit in this life in order to be better off in the next life. And as far as politics is concerned, they were led to believe that the king justified his power and status because he had accumulated considerable merit in his previous life. Thus power has become equivalent to merit. The interpretation of this type has become the well-known explanation of Thai political passiveness. However, as a Buddhist authority argues, the description of heaven and hell when concluded in the universal, wholistic objective of the book shows the path from which man must free himself before he can attain Nirvana: the ultimate liberation (Rajavaramuni 1983:17-18).

Now, let's come to the third model of Thai monarchy : the **Devarājā** divine kingship which the Thai derived from their contact with the Khmer in the early-Ayudhya period. Since a **Devarājā** king was regarded

as the incarnation of Hindu Gods (Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma), he was thus held sacred and with the majestic aura of mystery provided by Brahmanic elements (i.e. the coronation ceremony). The status of a god-like king at the highest Brahmanical influences during the Ayudhya period was put in the Royal Decree to be "*the highest in the land*".....and his orders were "*..like the axes of heaven "which" trees and mountains.... cannot withstand...and will be destroyed*" (Rabibadhana 1969:44). Nevertheless, the Khmer concept of **Devarājā** was modified by Buddhist moral principles to insure that he should be measured against the law" (Ibid, 43).

Therefore, we witness King Baromatrai-loknat who tries to follow King Li Thai's Dhammarājā image and King Naresuan who refrained from punishing his war commanders according to the Buddhist patriarch's sanction.

The early Bangkok period showed a less apparent **devarājā** influence and an innovative role of kingship in their patronage of Buddhism. Both Rama I and King Monkut (Rama IV) were well-known for their intellectual interest in Buddhism and their quests for clarification and new interpretations from the Buddhist Pali canon. As a result, Rama I had ordered the eradication of certain Hinduistic elements from traditional Ayudhya rituals i.e. in the oath of allegiance ceremony, and emphasized instead Buddhist implications. Of more significance was his purification of the Sangha, sponsorship of a revised canon and rewriting the legal codes. These acts may suggest Rama I's concern on his duty as protector of Buddhism. Their political implications should be noted for loyalty of the Buddhist orders was a political necessity after destructive wars with Burma and ecclesiastical dissents during King Taksin's reign. The reform of the legal codes using the Pali canon as its "*charter*" has, in fact, set a new direction on legal evolution of the country: it was thus legitimized, as Tambiah put, "*in self-consciously Buddhist politics*" (Tambiah 1978:118). As for King Mongkut, the founding of a new sect :

Dhammayut with the revived orthodox practices, has rendered him, as a scholar terms, "a champion of scripturalism." There is no question that his well-versed knowledge of Pali text including the inspirations from dialogue with the missionaries contributed to his religious and political reforms. Many of his decrees showed the effort to return to the Dharmmarājā principle while doing away with superstition and impure ritual accretions.

Buddhistic Claims in Modern Thai Politics

The encounter with the west in the late 19th century and early 20th century has led to internal political systemization in modern Thai society, and increasing political control of the Buddhist order. The three Sangha Acts promulgated since, though in a different political context, all reinforced the centralization and creation of ecclesiastical hierarchy along its civil administrative structure (Tambiah, *ibid*, 120). In effect, considering the structural-functional relationship between the Buddhist order and the state, the former tends to be subjugated to the latter (See Suksamran 1981). Never-the-less, due to its being the deep-rooted traditional source of power legitimation as already discussed, Buddhism was revived by King Rama VI's nationalistic fervor, to be propagated as a kind of "civic religion", incorporated in the new national ideologies comprising : **Chāt** (The Nation), **Sāssana** (Religion) and **Phra Mahākasat** (the Monarchy). This triad has since been held as the 3 pillars of modern Thai identity, the sources of Thai cohesion and stability. The exact inter-relationship between the three corner stones is however ambiguous, variedly changed at different political contexts.

For Rama VI, the nation and monarchy are identical. He once wrote that to be a true Thai is to be loyal to the king. In such light, it was not inconsistent that he once deposed a high ranking monk for having published a book with elaborations against militarism and World War I. Yet, here Rama VI was not

against the idea of peace *per se* for he himself used to advocate peace. But when his wish became the state's policy, criticism, even in accordance with buddhist teachings, must be abolished. With such analysis, Satha-Anand was led to conclude that "One of the results of this peculiar relationship which has been going for centuries is that Buddhism has been deprived of the teaching that would not coincide with state policies. Consequently Buddhist teachings in Thai society have generally been contained at the individual level. Significant social messages of Buddhism such as the issue of peace and war lose their visibility in the eyes of Thai Buddhists". (Satha-Anand 1985:30).

My argument here is that, on the contrary, Thai history from the Ayudhyan period up to the Bangkok time has witnessed several uprisings with close relationship with traditional Buddhist beliefs. Since there are several research both by Thai and western scholars on the topic i.e. Millenialism or the "Holy Man" movement (See Huntrakul and Kamutpitsmai 1984), only some notes on its characteristics suffice to be mentioned here as follows.

First, as Keyes has pointed out, the "Holy Man" movements in Thai society were always related to the concept of power and "Phu Mee Bun" (Holy Man). However, though generally the king was regarded as the one who had accumulated great merit in the previous life, **Phu Mee Bun** could be anybody besides the king i.e. religious men, **setthi** or **kahabodi** (wealthy men) (see Keyes 1977, and Kasetsiri 1976:44-7). The latter could claim legitimation of power on the basis of their "merit".

Second, though the concept of Sri Ariyamettrai Bodhisatta, the coming of the Buddha-to-be, was evident in most "Holy Man" movements, it has also been used to support kingship in Buddhist societies i.e. Thailand and Ceylon. Therefore, we need to know more about other related factors i.e. socio-political and economic before we can explain particular phenomena.

Third, the concept of millenialism was apparently propagated through the Buddhist

Pali canon and literature i.e. Phra Malai Chant which were in popularity in the central plain. Yet, this area witnessed none of the Holy Man rebellions. On the contrary, the area of the Korat plateau was the core of at least 6 Holy rebellions (Suntharavanit in Huntrakul 1984:15).

All these points seem to suggest that the viability of any political system depends on the ability of the ruler to justify its legitimization. In the central plain, the rulers were successful in making its system acceptable to the mass. One of their achievements lay in the creation of certain political ideology that would sustain and propagate its system i.e. the political ideology supported by religious motivations....The concept of Dhammarājā kingship which is tied to the law of karma and merit as it appeared in **Trai Phum**. The **Trai Phum**, though includes the Sri Ariyamettrai idea and indicates the inequality between the ruler and the ruled, emphasizes the virtues of the good government and points out that the wrong could be corrected. The millenialism, on the other hand, suggests the overthrow of the existing system for a better utopia (ibid., 26-28). At the final analysis, it should be reminded that the government in the central plain had taken considerable measures (i.e. state ceremonies) to assure that no major social, economic or political unrests would occur to disrupt its status quo.

To conclude, the discussion on the Holy Man rebellions in Thai society has illustrated that it is important to consider Buddhism both in its universalistic and individual aspects. For Thai society, in the normal condition, Buddhism serves as individual's rule of conduct and provides the context within which political order is conceptualized and maintained. But in circumstances faced with societal dissents and disorders, certain traditional Buddhist beliefs could be used to accommodate for changes, through force. Though all Holy Man rebellions failed, evidences of militant Buddhism have survived in contemporary Thai politics. The case of Kittivudho, a famous monk who, at the highest political tension in

1976, advocated a holy war on "communists", justifying with the analogy drawn from the Pali canon that "to kill communists is not a sin" attests to the inherent vitality of political exploitation of Buddhism (see Keyes 1978).

This paper examined the force which Buddhism has exerted in Thai society. It is significant that any attempt to envisage the course of Thai politics cannot discard a thorough understanding of the role Buddhism has had in relation to other Thai institutions.

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BUDDHIST INFLUENCE **ON THAI EDUCATION**



Buddhism had played the most important part on Thai education for more than seven centuries. That is from the early Kingdom of Sukhothai in the 12th century up to the late 19th century when King Rama IV and Rama V brought Thailand to the new era of modernization. We can say that throughout this long history Buddhism was the way of life of Thai people. A temple was the center of a village and town. It served the community on religious, educational and recreational purposes; contributed facilities for the townfolks in festive occasions. Apart from being a leader in intellectual activities a monk was also able to treat those who suffered from both mental and physical illness

by applying Buddhism, superstition and the simple way of medical care that is the using of herbs and so on. A temple used to be everything either a school, a playground, a clinic or an art center for the Thais.

However, after the introduction of the secular education in the reign of King Rama V the role of Buddhist institutions continually declined. Modern schools and universities are run by the state. The needs to prepare man power to serve many sectors of the state organs and new jobs force those in charge of national education to emphasize school and university syllabus on technical and skilled knowledge.

Now after a century of trial, we learn

that this modern education naturally has considerably served Thai society at the time when we had to tackle problems brought by colonialism in the late 19th century. But now quite a lot of the Thais begin to question the value of this modernized or westernized education system. Don't we give too much importance to the advancement of knowledge and academic excellence and ignore the traditional Buddhist way of educating people?

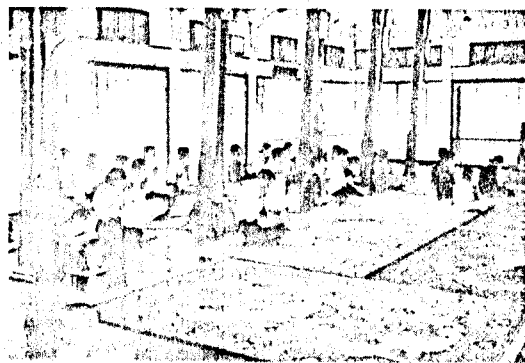
From the decade of 1970's to 1980's onwards scholars, educators and man from other fields of interest have paid much attention to Thai system of education. Never before have these people asked themselves and the society as much as this about the outcome of our education system today.

Why come these voices? We can summarize as these.

Now our society is facing with bundle of problems. Like the mainstream of the world today, Thai people are trapped in a competitive society with quite high exploitation. People are confronted with new disease that is frustration and alienation, not necessary to mention those of poverty and the gap between the rich and the poor. Many wonder whether the education system we have now has any responsibility with this crippled society.

This awakening is a good sign for the Thai to get up, to retrospect and to seek the right path for their society. The first thing to look at is the education system we exercise now. This has brought to many disputes and discussion. Among those concerned with seeking the way out for the Thai society are the two leading Buddhist scholars, the Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and the Venerable Phra Rajvaramuni. They see that the right mean to solve the problems we are facing now is to go back to our traditional Buddhism and the Buddhist way of learning.

In his **Thai Philosophy of Education** (Kled Thai, 1975) the Venerable Phra Rajvaramuni clearly stated that the roots of evils in our society now are that we neither know ourselves nor our society. We are excited with all the new things from the



West, we appreciate technology and all sorts of extravagant life style. So we are trapped all the time to the advancement of ourselves materially and are less concerned with other people. This phenomena is prevailing. He tries to point out that the real education must be the process that makes man free, free from the surrounding factors and can choose the way of living by himself as much as he can. In details he said that education must help man to understand the mechanics of his life, to understand the mystery of the surrounding natures and to know the means to cope with those natures harmoniously. He said that this is the basic freedom of life. And for the social reform, he said "man must learn to live together, learn to help each other and contribute good things to the society, co-work for the creation of a just and peaceful society. Only when a society come to this state can we call it a free society: freed from oppression. It is great in itself, great in creating and enjoying the fruits of its prosperity. People in this kind of society are the real socially free ones."

According to him free people and free society could come out only when man are rightly educated. There are two factors that will be helpful for education which is free and full of wisdom. The first is **paratoghosa** which means learning from others through good company and good surroundings including friends, teachers, all kinds of mass media and physical surroundings. Another Buddhist term for these is **kalayānamitta**. The other one is what he calls **yonisomanasikāra**; systematic attention or analytical reflection.

Those who are surrounded with a good

paratoghosa and empowered with **yonisomanasikāra** would be the one who can free himself and free the society. The real education must aim at this goal. Education must empower man with wisdom (not academic knowledge): and with this wisdom the loving kindness (**mettā**) will shine, one has a mind for others.

This analysis attacks at the heart of the mismanaged education system in Thailand. I don't think many educators in my country disagree with this interpretation of the Buddhist thought of education.

After years of seeking, many sectors in Thailand now realize that it's time to go back to our roots. To learn the Buddhist way of learning and to live the Buddhist way of life. However, even this trend which grows with firm steps to bring it into practice is rather limited. But this idea is increasingly accepted.

The present time is a highlight of Buddhist movements in Thailand. Apart from the scientific study of Dhamma led by the Venerable Buddhadhassa Bhikkhu and the Venerable Phra Rajvaramuni, there are other monks and groups of religious believers who call for Buddhism as the way of social reform with their own way of interpretation of Buddhism.

Schools as well as universities have improved their syllabus, and Buddhism is widely taught. But we cannot highly hope for the society with wisdom just because of these movements. Misinterpretation of Buddhism might lead to more ignorance.

To implant the Buddha Dhamma and ethics to the young people is a duty every Thai should concern. The three main social organs, a family, the sangha and an education system, are directly responsible for the deed. But the real situation today, each of these organs is going with its own way. Each with its problems and all are lack of proper co-operation. If we take a look at a family life, how far could parents bring the Dhamma to their children? As I have said from the start, Buddhism had strongly been our way of life, but not now. Nowadays, many Thais say that they are only registered Buddhists. They rarely know the Lord

Buddha's words. And less still is to bring them into practice. Sure, a lot of parents now rear up their children with the guidance of Dhamma. But most of them touch only at the racial level of the five moral precepts. That is to avoid committing evil and to do good. Don't kill because it is a sin etc. The struggle in life for the economic needs always take away parents' time. More and more people turn their back to a temple. They don't see and don't quite understand whether the religion has any thing to do with their life. When they think of Buddhism the things that come to their mind are the religious rituals which are less and less practical for this modernized society. So we could not expect much from a family though it is the closest institution to the children and should be the best **kalayānamitta** to them. In the former time children were encouraged by the Buddhist atmosphere. They could follow their parents to the temple. Therefore young people had more opportunity to be near a good **paratoghosa**. But now due to a new mode of living their attention are shifted away. Fewer and fewer young people go to a temple. Why? Some say because of the lack of time while others because a temple can not help them much in solving problems they face. Now the society has changed but monks remain as ever. They are not well-informed, so how could they talk and share the problems of those in the wordly society.

Monks, the ones who used to bridge the people's gap in education, are now behind those secular ones in many fields of knowledges. Therefore, the role of the sangha in the field of education is lessened, especially in towns and cities. The situation is a little better in a village, but it cannot be compared with that in the past.

So what contributions Buddhist institutions can offer now in the area of education? Statistically, the sangha annually helps educate about 130,000 novices, most of whom come from a poor family. Each year only 43% of students from elementary schools go on studying in secondary level.

The 400,000 monks and novices

(Department of Religious Affairs, 1984) can do much for the Thai society if they themselves realize the real situation and learn to develop themselves in accord with the Dhamma and the needs of society. Thus education for monks is necessary as well.

While fewer people pay attention to the religion, old way of thinking and belief are still significant in the way parents instruct their children especially those in rural areas. They believe in **kamma** and rebirth. So they socialize their children with this belief too, i.e. you shouldn't do that because it would cause a bad result in the next life. This old way of teaching Dhamma is still dominant in Thai society. Anyway, for those who are educated, the interpretation of Buddhahassa Bhikkhu about the **kamma** according to the law of conditionality, **Idappaccayatā**,¹ also is widely accepted now.

Idappaccayatā or the Chain of Causation or Dependent Origination, i.e.

Conditioned by ignorance is the Will-to-Action;
 conditioned by the Will-to-Action is Consciousness;
 conditioned by Consciousness is Psychophysical Existence;
 conditioned by Psychophysical Existence are the Six-sense-fields;
 conditioned by the Six-sense-fields is Contact;
 conditioned by Contact is Feeling;
 conditioned by Feeling is Craving;
 conditioned by Craving is Grasping;
 conditioned by Grasping is Becoming;
 conditioned by Becoming is Birth;
 conditioned by Birth there come into Being,
 Aging and Dying, Grief, Sorrow, (Bodily) Suffering,
 Lamentation and Despair. Thus is the origin of the whole mass of suffering.

This scientific way of teaching Buddhism attracts the young generation more and more. Side by side with the Venerable Buddhahassa Bhikkhu, the Venerable Phra Rajvaramuni represents the new era of Buddhist learning. They have greatly influenced Thai intellectuals and educators to realize and to introduce the Buddhist way of learning to the education system of Thailand today.

One example of a school which proceeds along this Buddhist line is the Children's Village School in Karnchanaburi. While most schools and universities are drifting away with the western philosophy of education, emphasizing on academic achievements, the Children's Village School (founded in 1979) is looking deep down into the Buddhist way of education. In my talk with Mr. Pibhop Thongchai, the director of the school (4 April

1986) he said that the school started off as a boarding school with an inspiration from A.S. Neill's Summer Hill School in England. But the most important influence now has come from Buddhism, which emphasizes the need for a good environment and the importance of human relationships (**kalayānamitta** or good **paratoghosa**). The school sets up favorable environmental conditions for the growth of **kusalāmūla** or the root cause of natural inclination for goodness in man and help it to overcome the **akusalāmūla** or the natural inclination for evils. So they give the importance to the arrangement of the school surroundings to fit in with the students, not moulding the students to fit the school. The students here are brought up freely among lovely nature. They grow up without pressure. Though most of them came from poor families, bearing with emotional problems and violent background, they can live happily here in the atmosphere full of friendliness. Mr. Pibhop said that a person with happiness in his heart will not kill or harm himself and others.

Apart from being a school, the Children's Village School is now on its way to an ideal Buddhist community. That is a community with self-sufficiency. On some parts of the 38 acres of land, they now grow plants and trees and raise poultry for their own need. The next to come is a cow farm and other necessary cultivation. They are stepping forward along the line of the Right Livelihood of the Buddhist teaching.

The Children's Village School is one of the communities growing up with the Buddhist view and practice. It naturally is a fruit of the seeking for the better educational and social systems of a group of people who still have a faith in Buddhist way of solving personal and social problems.

What I have said is only example of the rising consciousness of self-education and self-help according to a Buddhist proverb "One must rely on oneself". There also are other groups and individuals who try to educate the mass to be less dependent neither on the misleading social values nor technology. The Folk Doctor Foundation distributes a monthly magazine informing the folks how to treat and look after themselves when they get sick, not to rush to a doctor. Few farmers are looking back toward the simple ways of farming, and avoid using high technology which often bring them to debt. There also are monks with social spirit who work with perseverance in the development of villages; namely Luang Paw Nan an abbot in Surin province, Prakru Mongkol Silawongse and Phra Devakavi in Chiangmai. They educate and encourage people to improve their farming, education and the way of living in accordance with Buddhist condition. Their successes are remarkable.

All these are only some aspects of Buddhist movement in Thailand today. They really are a new trend of implanting a social education to the society with an ever increasing aspiration for the generation to come.

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MY PERSONAL VIEWS ON EDUCATION



A French Catholic teacher with his former Thai students.

My formal education was spent mostly in Christian institutions, for which I am grateful. I think Christian education helped me to be a good Buddhist and my encounter with Christian friends assisted me in evaluating my own religion and culture as well as preparing me for my ecumenical works later in life.

Let me give you a brief sketch of my family and up-bringing, as well as a Thai historical background.

My father was the first generation to be exposed to missionary schools, as western education or Christian schooling for non Christians only started in Siam just over one hundred years ago.

Before that, when King Mongkut started employing English teachers to coach his children to be aware of western scientific

knowledge and technical knowhows, he made it clear that no Christian teaching would be allowed in the Grand Palace.

Before ascending the throne, as Rama IV, when he was a Buddhist monk for 26 years, Mongkut learned English from American Protestants and Latin from a French Roman Catholic Bishop, Vicar Apostolic of Bangkok. Hence he was the first oriental monarch to master the English language and knew quite enough of western mathematics and astronomy. Yet he felt that western science and technology made sense and they confirmed logically his own faith in Buddhism, whereas he felt that Christianity, as presented to him by the missionaries, were fictitious and yet they were put to him with so much arrogant as if his own religion was a false one. Unfortunately this tendency has

not been improved very much by many so-called Thai Christians.

When Chulalongkorn succeeded his father as Rama V, he expanded the Palace School for the public and he welcomed missionaries to establish educational institutions for his subjects, provided that they did not use education as a means of converting the Thais to Christianity. By and large, the missionaries respected the King's wish; and even if they did not, not many Thais were converted through formal educational institutions.

As I said, my father's generation was the first to benefit from this new venture, as it was the Government's policy that Thais must be educated to show to the western imperialists that we could run our own country — be it our bureaucracy or our commerce. If need be, westerners would be employed in key positions — but certainly not ministerial ranks which were reserved for the top Thai elites — and those positions occupied by westerners would eventually be replaced by Thai nationals.

My father, for instance, went to both American Protestant and French Catholic schools. Although he came from a Sino-Thai family background, I think Christian schooling made him more aware of his Thai Buddhist heritage.

After graduation from the most senior class of the Assumption College, he was regarded as one of the best educated persons within the country, as there was no university education available then. Besides most of his contemporaries left school long before reaching the final year, as they were in demand by the Government as well as by foreign firms.

My father started his career as a clerk in a German company, eventually he became chief clerk in the British American Tobacco Monopoly which was perhaps the biggest foreign enterprise in Siam. When the company was bought by the Thai government, my father replaced his former British boss as the Chief Accountant of the Thai Tobacco Monopoly.

My father's career was an example of a

middle-class Bangkok society, which must have appealed to the public that to be educated in Christian schools, meant (1) you could have the command of a foreign language (2) you knew somewhat, perhaps not too inferior to a westerner (3) with diligence, ability and honesty, you might even end up as a westerner.

Christianity does not come to the mind of the average Thai who goes to Christian schools. Yet Protestant ethics may influence subconsciously, especially to the Sino-Thai, who want worldly success, through hardworking and honest dealing.

And that, which was never acknowledged openly is that Christian rites, rituals and preaching which were so western and hence so foreign to us, made many of us dig deep into our own culture — at least to reply to their arrogant charges against our religion and way of life.

My father, for instance, felt that Christian education (or western education run by missionaries) was good for him and he sent me to both Protestant and Catholic schools. Then he felt that I might not be strong enough to resist Christian postilization. Hence he sent me to be ordained as a novice, living with monks in Buddhist monasteries after my graduation from primary schools. To me this is an everlasting influence, without being exposed to Christian institutions before or after; would it have the same impact on me or not, I have no idea.

Take another example from my own family. My cousin who was two years younger than my father, went to a boarding school run by Miss Cole, the famous American Protestant educationalist, in Bangkok and became her favourite. Later she joined teaching staff of the Anglican mission and was converted to Anglicanism. Her opinion, fifty or sixty years ago, was that Buddhism was superstitious, and Thai culture was something decadent. To be a Christian meant to be educated, to be westernised, to speak English and to belong to the one and only true religion. We who were her cousins were not bad but had to be redeemed through Jesus Christ, the one and only



At Children's Village School

Redeemer of the World.

Later in life, she changed her opinion. She is still grateful to her Christian education, but she feels that to go back to her own root in Buddhism and Thai culture is not a sin. She finds mindfulness in Buddhist practice and generosity as well as compassion great Buddhist virtues. Although she calls herself Buddhist, she never repudiates her Christian upbringing. She still finds those Christian friends **KALAYĀNAMITTA** in the Buddhist context.

To me the storeis of my family, although not of significant, are relevent to the topics of our discussion. At least I have often been thinking about them and draw some conclusions that there is not one single superior religion, or superior educational system.

Although I am a Buddhist, and find Buddhism most helpful to me, I see that improvement must also be made to make Buddhism alive to serve mankind right now and in the future. Indeed we could learn a great deal from Christian and even materialistic non-Christian education..

Unfortunately for people like us, we

equate Christian education with western education, which may be partly true only. More unfortunate however was that Christianity was used to formalize public school education and university education in Britain, which became part and parcel of the Empire i.e. the British were educated to serve their God, King and Country, so that Ruld Britannia.

Britain rule the waves. So when the First World War broke out, the Germans who worshipped the same God also sacrificed their lives for their God, King and Country.

Although this concept has more or less gone from Europe, the Thais have inherited it in the name of the Thai Nation, the Buddhist religion and the Monarchy. If we trace this sacrilege Trinity, it all goes back to British education, whether minus Christianity or not, through nationalism and chauvinism.

The unfortunate aspect of Christian education is that when it went along with the empire, God became the Whiteman, and Christianity meant arrogance, aggression, superiority, materialism and militarism.

Now, we inherited this negative elements in Siam, in Sri Lanka and in Burma

too.

Christians as well as Buddhists need to go back to our respective roots to be more humble, to be more mindful, to work for our own spiritual growth or salvation by serving the society so that social justice would be possible with compassion and nonviolence.

People like Adam Curle, with his brilliant book **Education for Liberation** could speak both for Buddhists and Christians. Although Curle is a practising Quaker, we Buddhists would find the education prescribed there could also be authentic Buddhist, or if I may say so, it could be Buddhist with a small b i.e. the essential message of the Buddha for liberating oneself and one's society is much more meaningful than those institutions – whether Buddhist or Christian – which try to maintain themselves, sometimes oppressively in the name of Buddha or Christ.

For Buddhism, education or **Sikkhā** is the keyword. Everyone must be educated to be liberated from the three root causes of suffering, namely greed, hatred and delusion.

To be able to do this, one must first of all take the minimum precepts not to exploit oneself and not to exploit others – human, animal or ecological phenomena. These precepts or **SĪLA** are possible as much as one is aware of oneself – knowing one's potentiality, one's strength, and one's weakness. Hence one must cultivate mindfulness, through meditation practices or **SAMĀDHI** in order to be calm so that one really knows who one is critically, deeply, subconsciously – no false modesty, no pretension, no arrogance – leading to no conceitedness or selfishness.

Right concentration helps one to be normal. Normality should be ethical standard for all in clearing with oneself as well as with others. This normality is only possible if concentration or mindfulness is developed towards wisdom **PANNA** or **PRAJNA** i.e. knowing reality, understanding things as they really are. The whole natural phenomena is indeed **PATICA-SAMUPPADA** or interdependent origination. Each individual is interdependent on society and vice versa.

If our thought is clouded by greed, hatred or delusion, our speeches and actions will be likewise. Unskillful means will be the result, hence suffering.

If our thought could be educated or conditioned towards wisdom instead of ignorance, we could train our mind, hence our words and actions to be skillful, i.e. wisdom will produce compassion, which will overcome suffering.

Hate is overcome by love, lie is overcome by truthfulness, stinginess is overcome by charity, arrogance is overcome by humility and honesty. Competition is overcome by collaboration and friendliness.

This may sound too idealistic. Many of my compatriots also complained that there was no such ideal Buddhist education or society anywhere. Unfortunately those critics were brought up in western educational institutions, without real exposures to Buddhist culture.

I think for Christianity, without Christian witness, without the community of the saints and the ideal Christian individual as well as ideal Christian society, there could not be Christianity. Likewise, in Buddhism, the **Ariya Sangha** was and still is the ideal society.

We realize of course that our **Sangha** or Buddhist society existing on the whole is not yet ideal, but we strive to our **summum bonum**. Even if the society has imperfection and shortcoming, it allows its members to achieve personal liberation and that liberation brings compassion and wisdom to other members in society.

I maintain that prior to colonial expansion, Buddhist education prevailed in most Buddhist societies in Asia, with many drawbacks and imperfections. There were even exploitations and social unjust every now and again. In the past Buddhism mixed too much with Confucianism in East Asia and too much with Hinduism and animism in South and Southeast Asia – sometimes with positive result, and often-times with very negative result. Indeed Buddhism disappeared from India because of inappropriate mixing up with Hinduism rather than because of Muslim conquest.

Yet by not resisting Muslim conquest violently it also gives credit to Buddhism. The recent events that the Tibetan positively withdrew at the Chinese aggression and expansion should also be taken note of.

The Tibetans may have lost their country and their independence as a nation state, but they have helped the world by propagating Buddhist mindfulness, through Buddhist education, more than any single ethnic entity. They do so with humility and sincerity, without wanting to convert anybody to Buddhism. They could do it because they suffered so much at the hands of the Chinese, and, although their country was regarded as backward economically, it was well advanced spiritually and educationally that there are still many enlightened beings, who have liberated themselves from greed, hatred and delusion. Hence they could help us all towards wisdom and compassion.

In my country, prior to western expansion in the reigns of Rama IV and V, we might not be as backward economically and politically as Tibet, measuring from western materialistic standpoint, and perhaps we did not have as many enlightened gurus as in Tibet. Yet our Buddhist societies and education made us happy, generally proud and humble.

Although we did not lose our independence politically, we lost it intellectually, that most of our top elites are still aping after the west, without real awakening to our own spiritual and cultural heritage. They only use Buddhism, nationalism and Monarchism as political tools to oppress those who challenge the legitimacy and legality of Thai military which is of course unBuddhist.

However, more and more of the younger generations have realized that western education as applied to our primary, secondary and higher education is a failure. Christian educational institutions in our country have also become so materialistic and worldly that they all become inferior to public education. So many of us are now seeking alternative Buddhist education – not

only by going back to the past, but also for bringing the timeless message of the Buddha to be relevant to contemporary Siam and our future. We are now learning from our abbots and our village headmen upcountry, and with them, we hope to educate our own public to be more self reliance, to be less dependent on western technologies, materialism and consumer culture, using our own indigenous Buddhist culture, Buddhist values and Buddhist ways of life, give us much strength to build our own education and our society.

Although our nation was not taken over as in Tibet or Vietnam, our people suffer so much from malnutrition, from prostitution, from child labour – indeed from social unjust system.

The good thing about Buddhism is that when we face so much suffering, we will find out the root cause of it and then we want the elimination of suffering. The Buddhist approach to overcoming individual suffering as well as social suffering is through Buddhist education – the Middle Way – to be normal physically, mentally, socially and spiritually, so that wisdom and compassion will be possible.

We are now also learning from our Tibetan brothers and sisters, as well as from our Vietnamese friends in exile. They have done admirably to educate their own people as well as others who need not be Buddhist. We are also hoping to work with our friends in Sri Lanka, Burma, Lao and Cambodia to share our common heritage and to lessen suffering in the name of chauvinist Buddhism.

Last but not least we want to learn from our Christian friends who could help us avoiding their past mistakes and now learn from each other as well as strengthening each other from our different religious perspectives in order that education will really be less institutional but be more to liberate humankind.

S. Sivaraksa
A talk at Bad Boll Academy
Germany 13 April 1986]

THICH NHAT HANH—AN APPRECIATION

BY ANDY COOPER

A Zen Master, poet and peace worker, Thich Nhat Hanh is a leading exponent of "engaged Buddhism"—the actualization of the twin ideals of insight and compassion through the integration of meditation and work for the peace and protection of all beings.

As war engulfed their country, a nonviolent movement developed within Vietnam's Buddhist community that responded to the devastation and misery with projects that both brought relief to the war's victims and demonstrated a refusal to cooperate with the machinery of the war itself. In the course of their work, thousands of Buddhists were executed or imprisoned.

Nhat Hanh was instrumental in the emergence and development of the Buddhist nonviolent movement. He helped found and direct two of its principle bases — Van Hanh University and the School of Youth for Social Service — out of which grew such activities as antiwar demonstrations, an underground press, village reconstruction projects, anti-draft counseling, an underground for draft resisters, and care for countless innocents suffering in the wake of war.

In the foreword to Nhat Hanh's *Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire*, Thomas Merton wrote:

"While many of his countrymen are divided and find themselves, through choice or through compulsion, supporting the Saigon government and the Americans, or formally and explicitly committed to communism, Nhat Hanh speaks for the vast majority who know little of politics but who seek to preserve something of Vietnam's traditional identity as an Asian and largely Buddhist culture. Above all, they want to live and see an end to a brutal and useless war."

In 1966, Nhat Hanh came to the U.S. to speak to the American public on behalf of the Vietnamese people and their wish for peace. As he told an American audience at

that time, "If you want the tree to grow it won't help to water the leaves. You have to water the roots. Many of the roots of the war are here in your own country. To help the people who are to be bombed, to try to protect them from this suffering, I have come here."

In a letter written in 1965 to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Nhat Hanh sought to demonstrate the underlying unity of the struggles for peace in Vietnam and justice in America:

"I believe with all my heart that the monks who burned themselves did not aim at the death of the oppressors but only at a change in their policy. Their enemies are not man. They are intolerance, fanaticism, dictatorship, stupidity, hatred, and discrimination which lie within the heart of man. I also believe with all my being that the struggle for equality and freedom you led in Birmingham, Alabama, is not really aimed at the whites but only at intolerance, hatred, and discrimination. These are real enemies of man — not man himself. In our unfortunate fatherland we are trying to plead desperately: do not kill man, even in man's name. Please kill the real enemies of man which are present everywhere, in our very hearts and minds."

One year later, during Nhat Hanh's speaking tour, he met with Dr. King. At a press conference following the meeting, Dr. King, ignoring the advice of many opposed to his "mixing issues," announced his opposition to the war. In 1968, three months before he was assassinated, Dr. King nominated Nhat Hanh for the Nobel Peace Prize.

For sixteen years, through regimes of the right and left, Nhat Hanh has lived in exile from his homeland. Living in France, he has continued to work for peace and reconciliation as head of the Vietnamese Buddhist Peace Delegation in Paris and as

vice-chairperson of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. A prolific and versatile writer, he has authored many books, both in Vietnamese and English, among them: *Zen*

Keys (Doubleday), *The Cry of Vietnam* (Unicorn Press), *The Miracle of Mindfulness* (Beacon), and as coauthor with Daniel Berrigan, *The Raft Is Not the Shore* (Beacon).

THE OLD MENDICANT

BY THICH NHAT HANH

Translated from the Vietnamese by the author.

Being rock, being gas, being mist, being Mind.

Being the mesons traveling among galaxies with the speed of light,

You have come here, my beloved one, your blue eyes shine, so beautiful and deep.

You have taken the path traced for you by both the non-beginning and the never-ending.

You say that on your way here you have gone through millions of births and deaths;

Innumerable times you have been transformed into fire-storms in outer-space;

You have used your own body to measure the age of the mountains and rivers.

You have manifested yourself as trees, as grass, as butterflies, as single celled beings, and of chrysanthemums;

But the eyes with which you looked at me this morning tell me you have never died.

Your smile invites me into the game whose beginning no one knows, the game of hide-and-seek.

Oh, green caterpillar, you are solemnly using your body to measure the length of the rose branch that grew last summer.

Everyone says that you, my dear one, were just born this spring.

But tell me, how long have you been around?

Your deep and silent smile – why wait until this moment to reveal yourself to me?

O, caterpillar, suns, moons, and stars flow

out each time I exhale,

Who knows that the infinitely large must be found in your tiny body?

Upon each point on your body thousands of Buddha-fields have been established.

And with each stretch of your body, you measure time from the non-beginning to the never-ending.

The Great Mendicant of old is still there, on the Vulture Peak, contemplating the ever-splendid sunset.

Gotama! How strange! Who said that the Udumbara flower blooms only once every three thousand years?

That sound of the rising tide – you cannot help hearing it if you have an attentive ear.



AMINAH KALYANOND (1943? - 1986)

An Obituary

It is with much sadness and an inevitable sense of loss that we record the death of Aminah Kalyanond who, after a long illness cheerfully and patiently borne, passed away peacefully at Amaravati in the early hours of Wednesday, 5th February, 1986, shortly after her 43rd birthday.

Aminah came from an Islamic background in Thailand and left home, as so many have before and since, with a youthful curiosity and sense of adventure to see something of the West and England in particular. Reading one day some advice given by Queen Sirikit of Thailand for Students overseas, she began to visit the Buddhapadipa Temple at Wimbledon. Here her love of the Dharma was kindled and deepened as time passed. By now seriously ill with cancer, she joined the Chithurst Community under the guidance of the Ven. Sumedho and remained there for about one year. At various times when she felt able to, she also took part in a number of retreats,

both here and abroad, as well as in other functions, and attended the Society where members and friends will remember her radiant smile. It was in this period of her deepening love for the Dharma that she effort-lessly made so many friends. To meet her was to become her immediate and cherished friend. Brim full of love, compassion, joy in the lives of others, and peace, we saw in her life the meaning of the Brahma Vihara, the four sublime or divine states of mind. She was, in a word, good – good by the highest standards of any religion and of any age. Catherine Hewitt, who knew her well, has dedicated the following beautiful lines to her memory – lines which remind us of some of these sublime qualities – and perhaps these should serve as her epitaph:—

RON MADDOX
from *The Middle Way*
May 1986

REVIEWS

DHAMMIC SOCIALISM,

By Bhikkhu Buddhadasa.

Translated, edited and introduced by Donald K Swearer. (Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development, Bangkok, 1986) 142 pp. Baht 80 (Distributed in the UK by Buddhist Peace Fellowship Publications, 36 Victoria Parade, Preston, Lancs PR2 1DT at £3.50 incl. postage).

'Bhikkhu Buddhadasa has been and continues to be the most influential Buddhist thinker in Thailand, and he has certainly been the most creative and controversial Theravada interpreter in the modern period of world history'. However Dr Swearer's

claim is estimated, **Ajahn** Buddhadasa's writing certainly deserves to be much better known in the West than it appears to be. A few readers may have come across his excellent little **Handbook for Mankind: Principles of Buddhism Explained** (Bangkok, 1984), informally published and distributed. Also, available from libraries, there is his **Towards the Truth** (Philadelphia: Westminster P., 1971), edited by Dr Swearer. The present volume comprises four essays and a valuable 43pp **Introduction**. Most of the **Ajahn's** extensive output consists of taped talks given on various occasions and are the suggestive and inspirational guidance of the sage rather than the rigorous and specific exposition of (in this case) the social scientist.

Buddhadasa's Dhamma teaching is experientially and meditatively based and is much concerned with the crisis in traditional

Thai Buddhism. Eroded and devitalised by Western secularism, this, beyond the fringe of forest monasticism, appears to be an increasingly empty shell of public ceremonial combined with quasi-magical ritual designed to bring personal good fortune (p25).

Dhammic socialism is to be distinguished from the earlier Asian 'Buddhist socialism', which Swearer defines as 'an attempt to integrate a sense of cultural-national identity represented by Buddhism...into the political and economic structures and programmes of the modern West' (p20). Dhammic socialism, on the contrary, claims to be a direct application of Dhamma, and part of the goal of every religion, (which is) to put an end to self-centredness, to a "me" and "mine" kind of thinking' (Buddhadasa, p67). 'To be freed from the preoccupations which define one as a self separated from and over against others opens one to the fundamental inter-relatedness of life..*paticca-samuppāda*' (p27). The morality (*sila*) of nature (*dharmajāti*) is an ethic of sufficiency and moderation which is readily observable in the natural order, but from which mankind has become alienated by the defilements (*kilesa*) of delusion. Dhammic socialism is the political and economic restoration and manifestation of this natural order of things, which Buddhadasa equates with Dhamma, God, Tao (p48). A Dhammic society is sustained by the three principles of the good of the community in place of selfish individualism; a pervasive spirit of restraint and generosity; and mutual respect and loving-kindness (*mettā*) among its members.

For Buddhadasa 'politics is a moral system addressing the problems arising from the need for social co-operation, (and) since a political system should be essentially a system of morality (*sila-dhamma*), politics and religion share a common ground' (pp 78-9). The 80-year-old socially conservative Thai *bhikkhu* writes – quite independently – in the same vein as the Buddhist Peace Fellowships in the West: 'If we hold fast to Buddhism we shall have a socialist disposition in our flesh and blood,

we shall see our fellow humans as friends in suffering...and hence we cannot abandon them... Buddhists, in particular, have the responsibility of bringing the light of dhammic socialism into a world in which the forces of communism and liberal democratic capitalism seem poised on the edge of world destruction' (pp29 and 31).

For socially engaged Buddhists in both East and West the above thinking logically points towards some kind of egalitarian democratic and decentralised commonwealth which we can begin to create here and now, through the active and creative practice of *sila* in our relationships and in the various organisations and projects to which we belong. Such a *sangha* comomwealth of modest individual wealth and power would oblige each to take full responsibility for herself or himself and to relate positively to others, without the present encouragements to deny, exploit or just walk away. Exceptionally, however, *Ajahn* Buddhadasa harks back to the Asokan paternalism of the enlightened despot (*dhammarājā*), 'This kind of government', he believes, 'an enlightened ruling class..is in fact the kind of socialism which can save the world' (p99). Given the corrupting power of the modern State apparatus, surely in the last hundred years the world has suffered enough from the benevolent intentions of Platonic ayatollahs and other saviours-turned-monsters? 'If you see someone striding towards you with the fixed determination to do you some good, make off in all haste', was the advice of that great dhamma-farer Anton Tchekhov. Even the term 'socialism' has for many of us heavy **adhammic** overtones of ideology, polarisation and authoritarian collectivism.

The above contentious point arises in fact only in the closing pages of one of the essays in the book. It has not been possible in this brief review to do full justice to the impressive sweep of *Ajahn* Buddhadasa's thinking. **Dhammic Socialism** will be of interest to all concerned with contemporary developments in Theravada Buddhism and to all who wish to explore the social

implications of the **Buddhadhamma**.

Ken Jones
from *The Middle Way*,
London

AMPORN SAMOSORN reviews a collection of essays by one of the country's leading – and most controversial – intellectuals.

The indomitable and inimitable author, Sulak Sivaraksa, had his new publication in English, "A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society," sent to us to be reviewed before this year's Visakha Puja Day.

The book, a collection of articles and lectures by this eloquent writer, was first published in 1981 by Thai Wattana Press. This reprint was undertaken by Tienwan Publishing House Part Ltd., which obtained permission from the author. Although an improved edition was not made possible, the publisher decided to go ahead with the reprint, due to increasing demand for the publication from many quarters.

A resumé on the inside of the front cover, which shows the author at a Lama monastery in Shigatse, Tibet, reads: "In this volume, the author pleads for a more democratic, more equalitarian society. He is withering in his criticism of privilege, abuse of power, exploitation and corruption. He rebukes the posturing, the pretense, the posing so much a part of grasping materialistic society. And yet he often postures and poses, uses hyperbole and sometimes intemperate language. Granted it is for effect, for he often takes a somewhat extreme position so as to elicit reaction, to create intellectual controversy.

"The author displays a deep knowledge and appreciation of Buddhist philosophy, disciplines, ritual, education, and art. He is concerned that Buddha-Dhamma be made meaningful to the younger generation. He wants to have 'A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society'."

To appreciate the articles and lectures, one needs to know about the author and to be truly objective and open concerning

norms and set ideas. William L. Bradley of the Edward W. Hazen Foundation, great grandson of Dr Dan Beach Bradley, the physician-missionary who was the first publisher in Siam, makes a valuable appreciation of Sulak and his works on pages XI-XVII, starting with: "The road that Sulak travels is one with few companions, for he is an intellectual in a land of pragmatists. As such he walks in the footsteps of a sparse but distinguished company of seers who have deepened their countrymen's understanding of the Thai ethos, and in so doing have contributed as well to the universal culture of mankind."

Bill Bradley proved himself a keen and informed observer of Thai society, with strong, though subtle, links established by his great grandfather who spent a good part of his life in this country. He analyses the dilemma of Thai intellectuals and the path chosen by Sulak Sivaraksa, who, he points out, chose to maintain the freedom of an outside while exerting his influence on the inside. The author gives the clue to this decision in his essay on "The Role of Siamese Intellectuals," written for the Philippine journal, *Solidarity*, in 1971, also included in this book. As Bradley points out, Sulak distinguishes the intellectual community in Thailand into three types: the Royal Traditionalists, who are conservative, the Social Technicians, who are liberal, and a third group that is conservative regarding cultural values and progressive in respect to social change. Bradley goes on to say that while Sulak did not mention names, M.R. Kukrit Pramoj, a leading journalist and former prime minister, would represent the first type, the cadre of foreign-trained economists and social scientists within government ministries and universities would represent the second group, and Dr Puey Ungphakorn, former governor of the Bank of Thailand and former rector of Thammasat University, would represent the third type. Likewise, Bradley says, so would Sulak.

Bill Bradley says in his analysis: "We see in Sulak's writings a constant attempt to come to terms with modernization, and an

increasing preoccupation with religion as a means of dealing with this problem. Two influences seem to have been at work on him: the one indigenous and the other international. On the one hand he has been profoundly influenced by a learned monk in the south of Thailand, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, who has reinterpreted the traditionally individualistic teachings of Theravada Buddhism to include important elements of social activism customarily associated with Mahayana. On the other hand, as a member of an international body of intellectuals, Sulak has been influenced by Gandhian and Quaker social theory based upon the principle of non-violence."

The content of the book is in four sections. The first, under the title "The Role of a Critic in Thai Society," has two articles under it: "The Role of Siamese Intellectuals" and "Cultural Freedom in Thai Society."

Section two "Underdeveloped-Overdeveloped" deals with "Thai-US Relations," "A Thai Image of Japan" and "Buddhism and Development." Section three on "Religion and Social Justice" looks at "Some Aspects of Youth in Asia," "Declaration by CGRS - the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society" and "Buddhism and Non-Violence." And Section four entitled "Future Goals" tackles "Tasks for Modern Buddhists," "Religion and Development," and "Buddhism and Society." Sources of the materials are given on page 209, with appendices as the final chapter giving samples of Buddhist writing by learned Thai Bhikkhu translated by Sulak Sivaraksa. The appendices are "The Right Approach to Dhamma" by the Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu "Bahusaccadikatha" by Somde Phra Yarnasamvara of Wat Bovornnivesviharn, and "Ordination" by His Holiness Prince Vajiranavamsa the late Supreme Patriarch.

Reading the articles in this collection, one finds Sulak as he is, has been, and will always be - thoughtful, eloquent and provocative in his speech and writings. Talking about "Cultural Freedom in Thai Society," he asserted, "We Thais are in the

habit of boasting that we have never been subjects of the rule of any Western country. It is admitted that this is something to be proud of, but conversely, not having been a colony means we have not been exposed to the worthwhile aspects of independence as practised in the West. Thai society is still feudalistic, a society in which everybody must think alike and act alike, making individuality virtually a fluke.

"Money and power are therefore the paramount wishes of all persons, for each is a factor dependent on the other. Thai society, at present, is furiously in pursuit of these two ideals. Whoever is outside the circle of affluence and power, if he is poor and lives quietly as such, well and good for him; if he expresses views antagonistic to persons in the two circles, though the views be in the common interest, in the interest of a minority or merely creative, the person expressing them may well be branded a traitor to his country, a communist, or a person who cannot be trusted in anything."

As already mentioned, his is a lonely path, and to really appreciate the book, one needs to know the author well enough, and to be in the right frame of mind. Intellectuals cannot hope to be generally understood and appreciated. A man of vision, wisdom and courage such as Sulak Sivaraksa is a rare person in any society. His book, "A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society," clearly testifies to this point. It is available in all major bookstores and at Suksit Siam bookshop at 120 baht per copy.

(from *The Nation* 20 April 1986)

A STILL FOREST POOL: The Insight Meditation of Ven. Achaan Cha. Compiled and edited by Jack Kornfield and Paul Breiter. (Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Ill. U.S.A.). 192 pp. £5.96.

Ven. Achaan Cha is of immense importance to Buddhism in England, and ultimately probably in the whole of the West, for it was he who trained Ven. Achaan Sumedho, Abbot of Amaravati and President of this Society, and almost all of his bold and

persevering group of about 25 monks and 15 nuns, that is growing all the time.

Reading this book recalled to me vividly my own discovery of Ven. Achaan Cha and his splendid pupils. This radically altered my picture of Theravada Buddhism. Previously every good book on Buddhism originating in the Far East had turned out to be by a German or Englishman with a Pali name. Buddhist monks in Thailand had struck me as being indolent and uninspired, their sermons parrot-talk. Then came the Forest Monks of Ven Achaan Cha, who "know and see for themselves", guided by the Buddha's Dhamma, and talk from what they themselves have learnt.

The editors have done a good deal more than merely transcribing and translating the talks: having both studied under Ven. Achaan Cha, they have been skilful in their editing, and kept the items brief. The message comes across with extra force as a consequence.

Perhaps it should be irrelevant, but it does make a difference to have a book in hand as well produced as this. And particular thanks to the anonymous illustrator.

Garry Thomson
from *Middle Way*
May 1986

Popular Buddhism in Siam & other Essays on Thai Studies

By Phya Anuman Rajadhon

(TRCD,, Bangkok 1986) US\$10 post free.

Phya Anuman was an authority on various aspects of Thai studies. Despite the fact that he passed away almost two decades ago, his writing is still useful to those who wish to understand Thai culture.

Many scholars have written about Buddhism as it should be, but the late Phya wrote on what it was — very useful and fascinating. He described the temple, the ordination, life of a monk as well as different Buddhist ceremonies and festivals.

In this volume, the learned author also

introduced animistic belief to the readers. Unless one understands the *Phii* properly, one would never understand the Thai people. Here Phya Anuman helped us a great deal.

You may order a copy for yourself or for your library through us by making your cheque payable to TICD.

PILGRIM KAMANITA: A Legendary Romance by Karl Gjellerup, translated by John E. Logie. New edition in Thai and English by Matichon Press, Bangkok 1985 pp 646 Baht 200.

This is an unusual book with a still more unusual history. The author was Danish and originally published his book in German around the beginning of this century. It was then translated and published in English and sometime after rendered into Thai by the two famous literary figures Sathirakoses (Phya Anuman Rajadhon) and Nagapradipa (Phra Saraprasert).

After its translation into Thai it proved so very popular that it was eventually adapted for Buddhist sermons which to this day can be bought in Bangkok printed on the traditional palm-leaves. The Thai version is also a prescribed textbook on modern literature for secondary school students. This is high praise indeed for a Western novel on the Buddha's times. It has now been presented in a bilingual edition, which may be ordered through TICD at US\$10, including postage.



Ecology and Buddhism : A Thai perspective

- 20—minute color slideshow
- Purchase Price : US\$ 65
- Each slideshow set contains :
 - 90 color slides
 - 18 minute English cassette
 - English script

Since the Buddhist era and according to the Buddhist values, people lived in harmony with nature. They earned their living by the barter system which meant they had only the minimum necessities for their existence.

Times have passed, when the colonial powers came into Thailand, the Buddhist values have changed to modernized values. Lifestyle of people was changed to cope with the new technology which draws people close to artificial things and to be unaware of human potentials to live with nature. Meanwhile, forests and streams are destroyed in order to extend the areas to build tall buildings and also roads for various kinds of vehicles. When there are no forests, there are no wild animals. So Thailand becomes a desert. It brings about the drought and floods which destroy the crops and causes erosion of the soil. So the impact of this calamity makes the farmers whose lives depend on nature get into deep debt because the yield of the crops is not enough for earning their living. The Government and some private sectors realize this situation but they cannot solve the problem since Thailand has the policy to make the country developed by new technology. Hence, it cannot avoid doing away with the natural resources.

As a result, some monks, who are held in much reverence by the people, take interest and start working on conserving the ecology. They want the people to turn back to live closer to nature and follow the Buddhist values as before. Some try to preserve

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the grounds of the temples to be forests such as Buddhadasa Bikkhu of Suan Mokhapalaram. Others try to grow the forests on their temple grounds and feed wild animals, hoping that once the forests are restored, there will be wild animals which will find their homes there. If monks and lay persons join together to perform good deeds, an ecologically sound environment will not be an impossibility.

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Following is the story of two Buddhist monks, who have only a traditional education, and have started rural community development in their own Buddhist way.

The first monk is Prakrusakorn Sangvorakit, the abbot of Yokabat temple. He succeeded in helping the villagers to have a more viable economic base by planting coconut trees besides growing rice. But afterwards he faced the problem that the villagers who became rich separated themselves from those who were poor. As a result, it created selfishness among villagers. So he thought that he should develop their spirit by returning to the spiritual pillar of the Buddha together with the development of the economic aspect.

The other is Luangpaw Nan, the spiritual father of the Northeast of Thailand. Since the material development invaded into the village such as new roads, electricity, radios, mobile film shows, chemical fertilizers and so on, it made the villagers fall into debt. They became alcoholics

to forget their sorrowful fate. He felt that material and spiritual development should move together. He emphasized the inner self development by meditation which is the key element in learning to understand oneself. So he organized a meditation course. It slowly built up a strong sense of community and made many of the villagers give up their addiction to alcohol and work more constructively for the common good. Meanwhile he initiated to organize a rice bank as sometimes the villagers have no rice for their own consumption. They had to borrow rice from a middle man at a high rate of interest. This drove them into debt. He also helped other villages to organize rice banks. At the same time, he emphasized to the people that the rice bank was not for profit making, but was to help each other reduce their debts so they could become self-sufficient. The effort of Luangpaw Nan shows that harmonizing material progress with spiritual progress can prove successful, even in the poorest village.

Angkarn Kalyanapong : A Contemporary Siamese Poet (Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation) Bangkok 1986.

Angkarn's collection of poetry was highly acclaimed for its richness in both the style and content. It talks about the universe, the world and local society, reflecting human's faith in Buddhism as well as belief in the immortality of art and literature in particular.

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