

SEEDS OF PEACE

Vol. 2 No. 1 JANUARY 2529 (1986)

BUDDHISM FOR PEACE
DIALOGUE AND DEVELOPMENT
POST INDUSTRIAL BUDDHISM



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 Bangkok 10600 Thailand G.P.O.Box 1960 Bangkok 10501, 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.

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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.

Contents

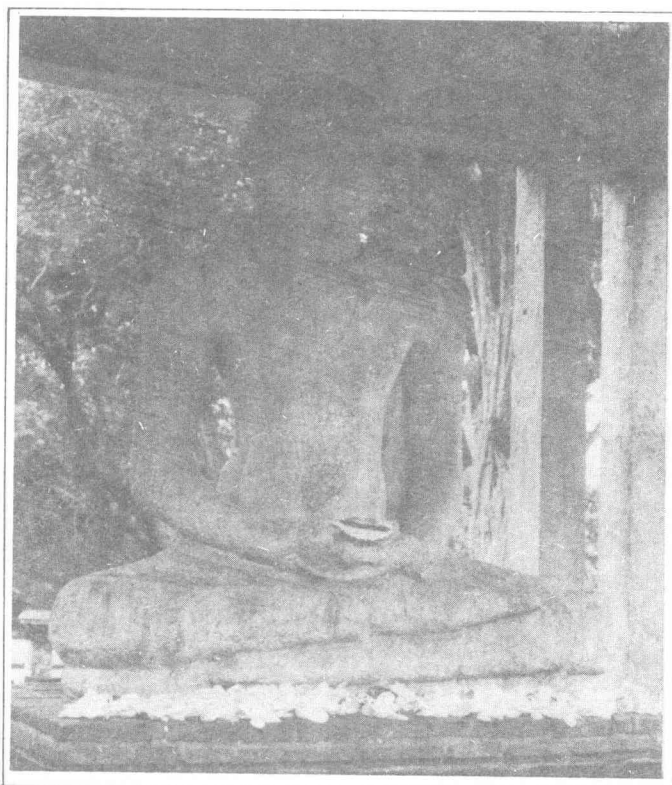
Buddhism for Peace	(4)	David Gosling
UN University	(11)	Anne Bancroft
Buddhist Perception for Desirable Society	(12)	S.Sivaraksa
Dialogue and Development	(24)	Seri Phongphit
Post Industrial Buddhism	(33)	J.Hughes
Nation Builders are the People	(37)	H.Nagai
Book Reviews	(38)	Dictionary of Buddhism Siamese Resurgence Religion and Asian Politics Buddhism and the Bombs

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 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 Ghosananda, 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 (*suaadmonchaw* and *suaadmonjen*).

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 *dharmasalas* 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 régime 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 Tuantong 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.

(Southeast Asian Journal of SOCIAL SCIENCE - Vol. 12, No. 1, 1984)

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?

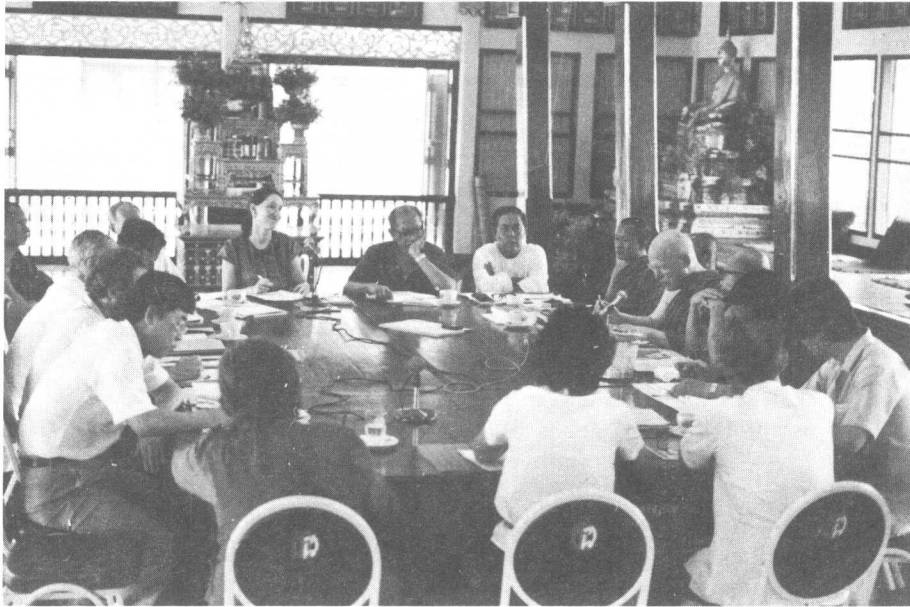
The Rector believed that we should not be so concerned with finding the answers as with asking the most probing questions. A book will eventually come out of this project and, since the questions asked affect all of us who call ourselves Buddhists, I thought it would be a good idea to make it known through *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.**

From The Middle Way

Vol. 60 No 2 August, 1985

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 accomodating 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 undersirable 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 paving 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 "skilful 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, brahmans 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, which-ever 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 gloss 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 heirarchical.

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-mitta) 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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* Paper presented in an interreligious seminar at Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, Nanzan University, Japan, 6-10 September 1985

* I would like to thank Angela Donnelly for her kind help not only in correcting my English script, but also in discussing some unclear points with deep interest.

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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

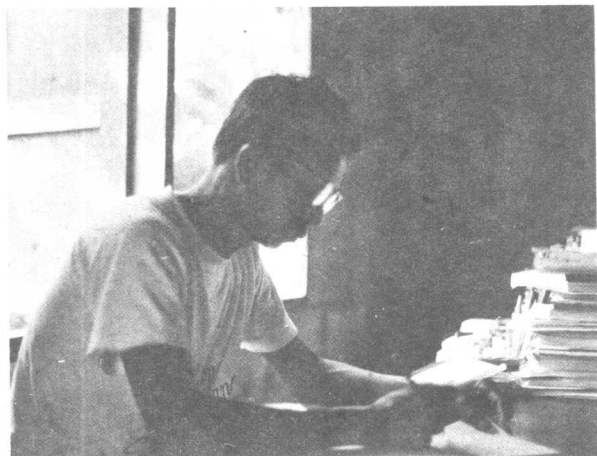
The Catholic Council of Thailand for Development has 35 member organizations. Ten of them are diocesan social action centres. Another 25 are Catholic action groups, associations and religious congregations, who directly or indirectly are involved in development activities in cities or rural areas. Every 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 keeps 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".

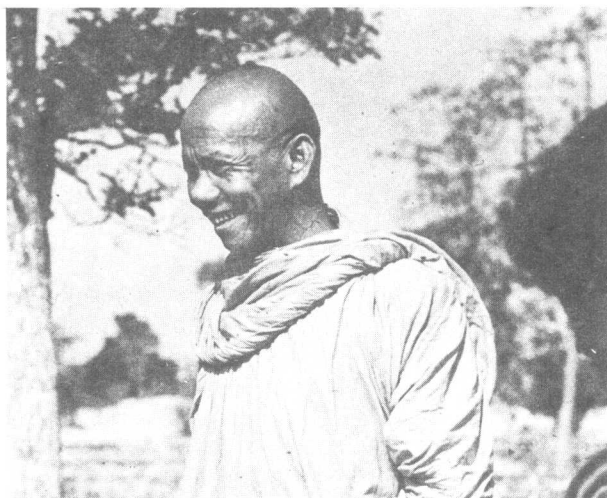
"Not so long ago, I heard about an unpleasant news between Christians and Buddhists. I do not see, eh, how we took some supposed words... so seriously and create hatred. If only everyone understands about this (Liberation) supposed words cannot govern us. Some people are thinking this way that Christians 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 Buddhature, 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 suprarational, 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 Buddha Sasana 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 Buddha Sasana 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 Bhikkhu Sangha 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 two--"Kāma : A subjective sensuality กิเลสขาม (and) an objective sensuality วัตถุขาม" Theravada Buddhism tends to approach the Teaching of the Buddha from numerical aspects; and His late Holiness Prince Patriarch Vajirāñānavorasā'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 — International 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.

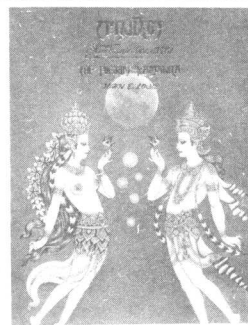
Ken Jones is one of those friends who has been trying to communicate to us about 'inner and outer peace making', which is the sub title of the pamphlet under review. In fact this is an appreciation rather than a review.

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 Karl Gjellerup, translated by John E. Logie. New Edition in Thai and English with beautiful illustrations by Matichon Press, Bangkok 1985 200 Baht or US\$ 10.- plus postage. You can order it through TICD, GPO Box 1960, Bangkok 10501