SEEDS OF PEACE

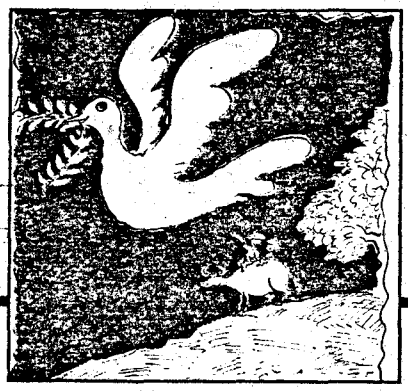
Vol.7 No.1 January - April 2534 (1991)



Third INEB Conference

Siam-Burma-India

16-28 February 1991 (2534)



SEEDS OF

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2. To share
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3. To offer training
nd secure resources in
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Dr.Ambedkar Centenary



This year marks the centennial anniversary of the birth of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, father of the present Buddhist renaissance in India. Dr. Ambedkar was born in Konkan province, India, on April 14, 1891. Born an Untouchable, the lowest position in the Hindu Caste System, Dr. Ambedkar faced a childhood of discrimination and closed doors. These formidable experiences of his youth led him to a life of service to the Depressed Castes of India.

After years of studying abroad in which he earned an M.A., a Ph.D., a D.Sc., and Barrister-at-Law, Dr. Ambedkar returned to India to begin to lead the Untouchable class in a fight for equal rights. The movement went through several highs and lows. At the same time as Gandhi's fight for Indian Home Rule, the Untouchable movement had difficulty in finding a sympathetic ear. Dr. Ambedkar's untiring vigilance in forwarding the Untouchable Uplift Movement often found him at odds with the Gandhian-led Independence Movement which downplayed the Untouchable cause in favor of the larger goal of Indian independence.

Ultimately, Dr. Ambedkar won a status that led to his drafting of the independent Indian constitution. However, continued ambivalence to the Untouchable cause by the state led him to lead a vast number of Untouchables to convert to Buddhism. Shortly before his death in 1956, Dr. Ambedkar himself, along with thousands of Untouchables, officially converted to Buddhism at a mass outdoor service. The tireless work of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar to lead an entire class of people in what he viewed as a return to their Buddhist roots has provided a burning flame for the resurgence of Buddhism in the country of its birth. It is this year that we celebrate the birth of the man they called Babasaheb.

EDITORIAL NOTE

As the new year begins, we are busy preparing for the 3rd International Conference of INEB, to be held in February near Bangkok, and much news is reaching us regarding our continuing concerns in the local area of Asia and other, international events as well.

The INEB 3rd International Conference will be taking place February 21-23, 1991 at Nakorn Pathom, with a pre-conference seminar February 16-20 which is being organized under the supervision of Paula Green. This will be held at the Ashram for Life and Society outside of Bangkok. The details of this seminar sent out earlier are largely incorrect–sorry!! Following the conference an exposure trip is being organized to travel to the Burmese border to witness the situation there and meet with those resisting the SLORC government, and an exposure trip to India is also being organized.

Many interesting developments have been reaching us through the news. In Asia the situation in Sri Lanka continues to be tense, both with fighting between the government and the LTTE and internal violence in the South–the refugees living in Bangkok see little hope of return in the near future. India has been prominent in the news lately as Hindu groups mounted a massive campaign to raise a mosque in Ayodhya and place a Hindu shrine in its stead, and there have been many reports of anti-Muslim violence. In Bangladesh, partially in reponse to events in India, there has been a spate of anti-Hindu violence. Also in Bangladesh, the situation of the indigenous popuation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts remains precarious, with increasing tension and violence between the tribal ethnics native to the region and increasing numbers of Bengali settlers who have the implicit support of the army.

The Kingdom of Nepal, in response to a successful series of demonstrations and protest in May, promulgated a democratic constitution on Nov. 9 and is at a very delicate stage in its political evolution–while in the nearby, rarely visited Kingdom of Bhutan there were protests by ethnic Nepalis who feel that the strong program towards preserving Bhutanese culture has been discriminatory. The situation in Nepal is explored further in this issue.

In regards to Burma, both the SLORC and the opposition have demonstrated a talent for attracting negative coverage in the world press, the SLORC first by arresting monks and storming temples in response to a refusal by some monks to receive alms from the military, as well as continuing to arrest members of the National League of Democracy (NLD) and consolidating its hold on power. This has driven some of the NLD members to seek refuge with the rebels, and they have been urged to form a government-in-exile. The latest Burmese additions to the media circus has been the much-publicised and completely obstructed visit of a UN investigator on Human Rights to Yangoon (Rangoon), where she was denied access to most areas and prevented from meeting dissidents, and at the same time the hijacking of a THAI Airways flight by two Burmese students, a move intended to publicize Burma's plight to the world but will more likely only succeed in making the Thai government restrict the freedom of action of the many Burmese in exile in Thailand. The Thai government has told the UN to stop all aid to the Burmese students and is considering placing them in "holding camps" on the border so that their actions may be more closely supervised. It seems the Burmese, both SLORC and otherwise, are at this time either completely ignorant of the function of the world press or simply just do not care about it.

Regarding Laos there has been little in the press but we carry two reports on ongoing projects, while in Cambodia the situation seems, unfortunately, unchanged. A statement of the Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation, an organization based at the border refugee camps in Thailand, is included.

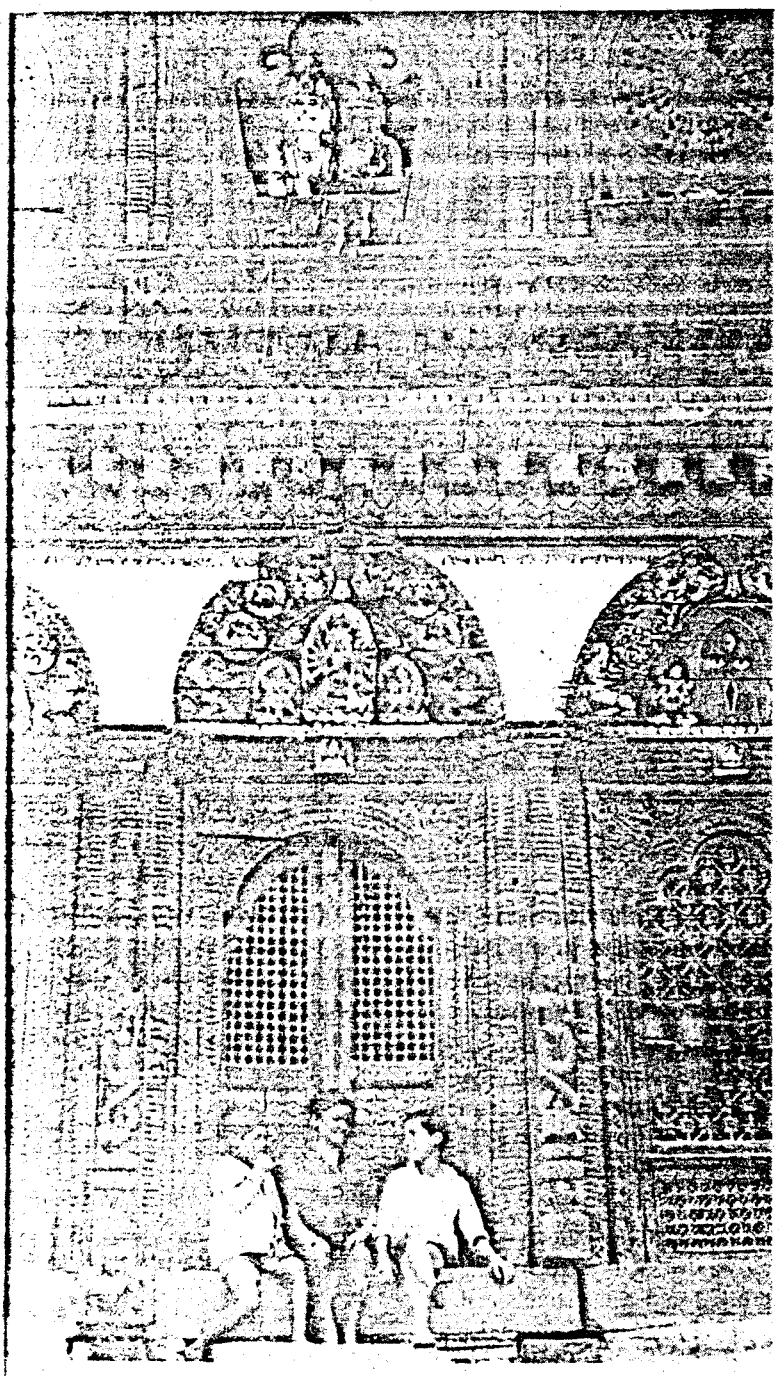
On the international front, the biggest news continues to be the situation regarding the fate of Kuwait, and media reports are, at the time of this writing, ranging from mere-certain predictions of war to encouraging hope for a peaceful solution. The situation will be more clear by the time this is published, but the hope is the conflict can be resolved with justice and without bloodshed.

We are looking forward to meeting with many of you in February, and please continue to keep us informed.

On a more mundane level, there are the two following announcements. The Office of INEB is moving and the new address is: 113-115 Fuangnakhon Rd, Bangkok 10200 THAILAND Tel. 222-5696-8 Fax: 222-5188

And, finally, we regret that the yearly subscription rate is being raised to minimum of US $15.00 due to printing costs. Even, or especially, non-profit organizations are subject to the whims of the economy.

Nepal
at a Critical Turning Point



I recently went on vacation in Nepal, as a respite from the tropical heat of Bangkok and a chance to see the Himalayas and trek in the remote mountains. Also, it had been in the news lately, since protests for democracy in May, 1990 had been successful, and I was interested in the mood of the people during this period of transition.

Arriving a little more than a month before the new, democratic constitution was to be promulgated on Nov. 9, the tension and energy of the situation was easily apparent. There were demonstrations, rallies, and strikes large and small nearly every day, reminders to the king that he must keep his promise of democracy. I was to meet with some locals who were involved in the fight for the overthrow of the earlier Panchayat system, but was unable to do so before I had to leave Kathmandu for my long walk.

Even in the mountains, days walk from any road and surrounded by steep valleys cut with rivers now swollen at the end of monsoon season, people were excited about the political situation.

"Are you a democrat or a communist?" a young boy asked me--apparently being a foreigner he figured that there was no way I was a royalist, the third main political faction.

"I'm a tourist." I answered.

The boy was unimpressed "We want democracy!" said the boy, making a fist.

"I hear democracy is very nice." I said, wondering whether I was a democrat or a communist. He seemed satisfied and let me go on.

What strikes one particularly when trekking through the mountains is the poverty and sheer difficulty of transportation in the country. There are few roads, and those are in serious disrepair. For



most of the people, if you want to go anywhere you walk, often for many days before your destination is reached. All very beautiful, but also an explanation for the lack of material wealth of the local inhabitants. Nepal has few natural resources, is land-locked and dependent on India for most of its trade, and is facing a severe ecological crisis of deforestation and erosion. The geography also serves to divide the population and contributes to ethnic inequality. The majority Nepalis, almost all Hindu, live in the lower altitudes, more fertile and accessible to transport, and have much greater economic, cultural, and political power than the varied minority groups, who inhabit the more remote and inaccessible regions but make up a large portion of the population. These minority groups are mainly Animist or Buddhist by tradition, and have been sorely discriminated against in the past.

On my return to Kathmandu, the charming and weathered capital, I managed to meet up with members of the local Buddhist Youth Group and the leaders of a couple of the emerging ethnic associations. They are very concerned about the outcome of the evolving situation, especially in regard to religious and cultural freedom, which previously had been severely curtailed. All agreed that the situation had improved, but were eagerly awaiting the publication of the new constitution. Like many others they feared that the king would somehow attempt to retain power, or that the democratic reforms wouldn't go far enough and would create a system which would lead to problems later. Their emphasis was on the freedom of language, ethnic identity, and religion, and a major concern was that the constitution



declare Nepal a secular state. The fear was that, if this wasn't done and Nepal remained officially Hindu, situations of discrimination coud easily continue or worsen in the future--an easy fear to have at a time when in nearby northern India fanatical Hindus were swarming to Ayodhya to avowedly dismantle a mosque and re-erect a Hindu temple on the site.

My meeting with these activists ended with a trading of addresses and a decision on their part to form a broad group to help coordinate minority interests. The constitution was to be published the following week and INEB would use its network to raise international attention to the situation.

The following week, on Friday November 9th, the new, democratic constitution was published by King Birendra, and as feared it did not make Nepal a secular state--it remained a Hindu state but now with declared freedom of religion and culture. How closely the reality of Nepal's politics maintains this avowed freedom remains to be seen.

At the present Nepal is a country with only minor internal problems. Although it is certainly in very bad shape economically speaking (one of the "least-developed" countries in the world according to the U.N.), it is not marked by the violent internal strife such as in India, Burma, and Sri Lanka. That is, not yet. The situation is now such that it could go either way as a new democracy, toward greater equality for all or toward increasing sectarianism. The ethnic groups are for the first time discovering that they have a measure of power, and will not be easily satisfied. At the same time, the Hindu-dominated elites in turn will not easily release their control of the country and its few resources. How the conflicting interests are settled, either peacefully in a democratic framework or in some future struggle, will in a large part determine the future development of the dramatically mountainous country.

Nick Kohler

Peace Brigades International .. Working Towards Reconciliation

For the later half of the month of October 1990, 30 individuals from a variety of nongovernmental organisations and institutions gathered for a working seminar under the auspices of Peace Brigades International. This event was held in Gandhi's homeland of Gujirat, in Vedchhi India to look for achievable, people-oriented responses to the bloody conflict in their homelands.

The Working Seminar for Reconciliation in Sri Lanka brought together workers and activists from the Sinhala region of the island to dialogue with their counter parts in the plantation, Jaffna, and South Indian Tamil communities.

Participants were immediately confronted with their own preconceptions and prejudices. Some even stated surprise that anyone from "the other side" would even show up for a seminar on reconciliation! All of the participants were meeting for the first time, although most of them had been born on an island barely 100 miles wide. But they were seperated by language, religion, customs, history, and for the last 15 years an intermittent but horrible war.

We brought the participants away from their homeland to neutral ground for this working seminar. It was held at the Institute for Total Revolution in Vedchhi India, near Surat. ITR is a school for the training of constructive workers in the Gandhian tradition. Young men and women from various parts of India can come and attend a 10 month residential course here, after which they have skills to help them work in their home area amongst the poorest to rebuild society along Gandhian lines.

The Seminar programme paralleled the Institute's schedule, and participants joined the Institute students in a morning manual labor period, for meals, and in the evening for a time of cooperative games and cultural sharing. These times of "not talking together" but being together were very valuable in the trust and respect building process that had to happen to allow the working seminar to succeed.

In the early days of the seminar, participants shared their histories, and it became evident that a lot of problems lie here. We had about as many versions of history as we had participants, who often violently disagreed!

Through analysis of the causes of current conflicts in the different communities the participants came to the realization that the root causes in all of their communities were virtually the same. This was very liberating for the participants to discover that current violence plays out at a level of reaction from one event to another, never addressing the root cause.

Through analysis of the power structures within their community they were able to see ways to begin to apply their own power and design projects to work towards reconciliation at the people's level, and not be reliant on "the powers that be" to begin working for peace.

At the end of the seminar the participants left with a better understnding of the "other side", and a commitment on the part of several to apply themselves in the Gandhian method.

We hope to follow this seminar up with an exchange programme of workers amongst nongovernmental groups in Tamil and Sinahala communities.

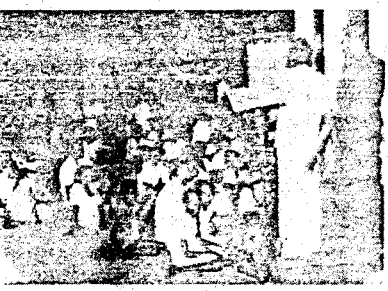
This Seminar was organized by Peace Brigades International and facilitated by Narayan Desai and the ITR staff.

Yeshua Moser



Dharmavedi Institute For Mass Communication And Social Development

The Brief Report of our Institutional Activities



1. 80 Buddhist monks study and follow the courses in the Institute these days.

A) Higher Diploma in Mass Communication Course

There are six written examination papers and three practical examinations. The Course is desirous in teaching Early Stages of Buddhism, Buddhist History, Present Social Patterns and Historical Development of Communication and Mass Communication. Practically we coach them to utilise paper, radio and TV medias.

B) Mass Communication and Social Development Course

This is desirous in teaching modern communication media and Social Development, Man, Environment, Society, Third World and Rural Development and Theoretical sides.

2. Dhammavedi Buddhist monks participated in two workshops held in rural areas.

3. Ruwanwella Workshop

Ruwanwella is situated 50 Km from Colombo. 30 Buddhist monks were engaged in it from the 28th to 31st August 1990. This temple is devoted for meditation. The Dhammavedi monks understand the simple Bhikku life and the value of rural development processes and their activities. These monks realised that their services should be with the poor people.



4. Yabaraluwa Workshop

This village is situated 20 Km from Colombo. This is a neglected village when compared with the other villages, because the Yabaraluwa is a village with low caste and very poor people, most of them are addicted to liquor. They don't get good water and they are not getting proper sanitary facilities. Very often they are subjected to various dreadful diseases. Our monks visited that area from house to house and had a good study of their living conditions and obtained social research on it.

3. Samanera Institute

We decided to begin a Samanera Institute for training young boys to attain Bhikkuhood. Samanera Education is a failure in Sri Lanka now. Later I will inform you with more details regarding this project.

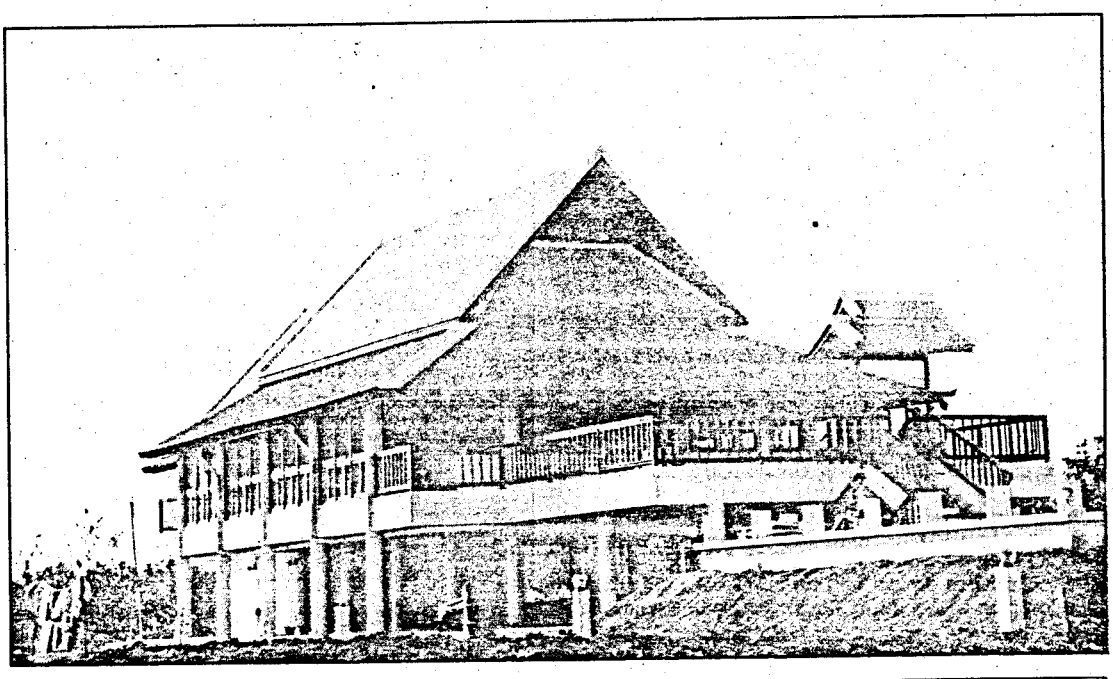
We are now completing the poster programme.

Raja Dharmapala





Buddha Madala, Nagara Pathama Province where Third INEB Conference will take place Feb. 21-23, 1991.



Phya Anuman-Phra Saraprasert Memorial Hall, Wongsanit Ashram, Nagara Nayaka Province where training will take place pre INEB meeting Feb. 16-20, 1991.

Organizations and Addresses

Buddhist Peace Fellowship
Margaret Howe (National Coordinator), Box 4650, Berkeley, CA 94704, USA.

Butsuman
Buddhist Newspaper and Catalog for the Buddhist Bookstore. 1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109, USA.

Campaign to Oppose the Return of the Khmer Rouge
318 Fourth St. NE, Washington DC 20002, USA.

Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation
P.O. Box 1, Sanampao, Bangkok 10406, Thailand.
Organization dedicated to the nonviolent resolution of the Cambodian conflict and the reconciliation of the warring factions.

Institute for Oriental Philosophy
1-236 Tangi-cho, Hachioji-shi, Tokyo, 192 Japan.
Publishes scholarly journal and books, recent titles include *The Environmental Problem and Buddhism,* and *Thoughts on the Problem of Brain Death,* by Daisaku Ikeda, president Soka Gakkai International.

International Network of Engaged Buddhists–Japan
81 Honyashiki Minowa Anjo, Aichi 446 Japan

The Karuna Trust & Aid for India
186 Cowley Rd., Oxford OX4 1UE, United Kingdom.
Buddhist charity working with ex- "Untouchables" and others in need in India, funds self-help development projects.

Minority Rights Group Ltd.
29 Craven St., London WC2N 5NT, United Kingdom.

Nanzan Institue for Religion and Culture
Nanzan University, 18 Yamazato-cho, Showa-ku, Nagoya, Japan 466.
Publish a yearly bulletin and scholarly works.

Network of Engaged Buddhists
Ken Jones (Secretary), Plas Plwca, Cwmrheidol, Aberystwyth, Wales, SY23 3NB, United Kingdom.

Snow Lion Publications
PO Box 6483, Ithaca, NY 14851, USA
Aiming to protect and further Tibet's religious and philosophic traditions, publications include a newsletter and books.

Society for Participatory Research in Asia
45, Sainik Farm, Khanpur, New Delhi-110 062.

Southeast Asian Forum for Development Alternatives (SEAFDA)
SEAFDA Secretariat, c/o Achmed Rofi'ie, Secretariat Coordinator, LSP, Setiabudi Building 1, Fl. 2, B 3-4, 62 Jalan Rasuna Said, Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia.
A regional network engaged in promoting sustainable development alternatives.

RECOMMENDED READING

Aliran Monthly
Magazine published in Penang, Malaysia, dedicated to the struggle for Freedom, Justice, and Solidarity, concentrating on Malaysian affairs with other issues from related international events is a non-sectarian and multi-ethnic perspective.
1 year's subscription $10.50, to Aliran, Distribution Bureau, P.O. Box 1049, 10830 Penang, Malaysia.

The Alliance Bulletin
Bulletin of the Democratic Alliance of Burma, a coalition of groups working in opposition to the Rangoon-based SLORC regime. Provides information on the continued struggle against oppression in Burma and the fight for freedom of the DAB.
Donations to P.O. Box 13, Mae Sot, Tak 63110, Thailand, published every two months.

Book of Puja
Compiled by B. Dhammaratan Thero. Buddhist Research Society, Kreta Ayer Post Office, P.O. Box 324, Singapore 9108.

Buddhism and Its Relation to Religion and Science
By R. G. de S. Wettimuny. The Buddhist Research Society, Singapore.

Buddhist Analysis of Matter
By Y. Karunadasa. Buddhist Research Society, Singapore.

A Buddhist Critique of the Christian Concept of God
By Gunapala Dharmasiri. Buddhist Research Society, Singapore.

Buddhist Prayer
By Ven. Piyasilo. The Friends of Buddhism Malaysia, 29 Jalan 12/21A, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.

Buddhist Psychology
By Ven. Piyasilo. The Friends of Buddhism Malaysia.

Christian Worker
Quarterly of the Christian Workers Fellowship in Sri lanka, combines concern with the struggle against oppression of all types in Sri Lanka and abroad with up-to-date and informative news and analysis.
Annual Subsription–Asia US$8.00, Other

US$15.00, Christian Worker's Fellowship, 39, Bristol Street, Colombo 1–Sri Lanka

Christianity and Buddhism

By Robert H. Thouless. Buddhist Research Society, Singapore.

Contours

Quarterly newsletter of the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Toursm. Focusing on tourism in the 3rd World and the effect it has a local populations, it aims to promote awa reness of the role of tourism in development, provide a forum for the poor to discuss their experiences, denounce unfair tourism practices, and stimulate the search for alternate, equitable tourism development.

Suggested donation/1 yr $12.00 to the Editor, Contours, P.O. Box 24 Chorakhebua, Bangkok 10230, Thailand.

Crossroads

Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, two issues a year for US$10.00. Crossroads, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 140 Carroll Ave., Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, IL 60115, USA.

Dhamma, Man and Law

By K. N. Jayatilleke. Published by the Buddhist Research Society, Singapore.

Earth Light

Magazine which explores the connections between Spirituality and Ecology, seeking to provide insight, inspiration, and information regarding the environment and planet.

1991, 4 issues US$15.00 to Earth Light, 684 Benicia Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95409, USA.

Economics in Buddhist Perspective

By Senatrat Wijnyasudara. Buddhist Research Society, Singapore.

Ethics of Environment and Development

Subtitled "Global Challenge, International Response", this book provides a multi-cultural perspective of the ethical issues raised by development and environmental degradation and aims toward the creation of a just sustainable development.

US$29.95 (postage not included) The University of Arizona Press, 1230 N. Park Ave., Tucson AZ 85719, USA.

Fellowship

Published 8 times a year by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, discusses issues related to the FOR's work towards peace and reconciliation throughout the world. Includes historical examinations and aims to apply the power of peace and truth in resolving conflict.

$23.00 a year outside the US, published by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, 523 N. Broadway, Nyack, NY 10960 USA.

Free Philippines News Service

Published by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, this reports developments in the revolutionary struggles in the Philippines and messages of solidarity for other related movements around the world. Dedicated to the establishment of a truly free and democratic Philippines.

For more information write:BMP, NDF International office, P.O. Box 19195, 3501 DD Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Freedom: Individual and Social

By Phra Debvedi. Published by the Buddhadhamma Foundation, Bangkok.

Fundamentals of Buddhist Ethics

By Gunapala Dharmasiri. Buddhist Research Society, Singapore.

Helping Yourself to Help Others

By Phra Debvedi, trans. by Puriso Bhikkhu. Buddhadhamma Foundation Publications, 812/71 Soi Kwonthip 2, Prachachuen Rd., Dusit, Bangkok 10800, Thailand.

Is It Too Late? The longest letter I've ever written.

By Taeko Kansha, trans. by Aiko Doden. A Japanese housewife's letter and consideration of nuclear power. Jiyusha, 12-1 Kanda-Higashimatsushita-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 101 Japan.

Life of Gotama the Buddha

By B. Dhammaratana and Senarath Vijayasundara. Buddhist Research Society, Singapore.

Life on the Mountain

Newsletter sponsored by the Mountain Peoples Culture and Development Project in Thailand, it aims to serve as a means of expression of concerns in working for true development among the

Hill Peoples and cooperation among themselves and between them and the Thai lowland majority, as well as a means of preserving their cultural values.

Inquiries to MPCD, 137/1 Nantharam Rd., Chiang Mai 50000, Thailand.

No Life Without Roots: Culture and Development

by Thierry Verhelst, translated by Bob Cumming. An excellent critique of development policies and practices which in the past have ignored the cultural aspects of the area in which they operate. Aimed mainly at Western NGO's, this book points to the dangers of ignoring local culture and some of the ways in which it is now being re-emphasized. A must read for anyone interested in true "development."

Published by Zed Books Ltd, London and New Jersey.

Nonviolence Today

Published every two months, this magazine promotes the understanding and use of nonviolence, focusing on events taking place in Australia, as well as theoretical nonviolence and international events.

Overseas Airmail $30.00/year to Nonviolence Today, P.O. Box 292, West End Q4101, Australia.

Peace News Bulletin

Published by the World Peace Council, details peace action, arms reports, conscientious objection, human rights, as well as detailing UN activity and International Conferences.

Contact the World Peace Council Liason Office, Lonnrotinkatu 25 A, SF-00180 Helsinki, Finland.

Peacework

"A New England Peace and Social Justice Newsletter", working for social justice and peace locally and internationally and dedicated to grassroots action in connection with global issues.

Foreign Subscription US$ 12.00, $20.00 Airmail, Peacework, American Friends Service Committee, 2161 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140, USA.

Raft

Journal of England's Buddhist Hospice Trust, it discusses the efforts and concerns of the group, which focuses on the issues of death, dying, and bereavement in a non-sectarian manner.

Twice annually by the Buddhist Hospice Trust, P.O. Box 51, Herne Bay, Kent CT66TP, Great Britain. 3 pounds annually, not including overseas postage.

SIPRI Yearbook 1990--World Armaments and Disarmament

By the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Pipers vag 28, S-171 73 Solna, Sweden. All the information about the international arms situation and efforts at disarmmament one would wish, or, indeed, not wish, to know. Published by the Oxford University Press.

Solutions for a Troubled World

Edited by Mark Macy. Earthview Press Inc., PO Box 11036, Boulder, CO 80301.

Tibetan Bulletin

Official Journal of the Tibetan Administration, distributed bi-monthly.

Queries and donations to: The Editor, Tibetan Bulletin, Office of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Secretariat, Dharamsala, 176215, Himachal Pradesh, India.

To Dwell in Peace

By Daniel Berrign. Autobiography of American Jesuit peace activist whose actions for peace began with the anti-war protest in America in the sixties and have continued to the present.

Harper & Row Publishers, San Francisco, $19.95.

Torch

Quarterly newsletter of the South East Asian Forum for Development Alternatives, which provides news and analysis connected with the Forum's work in searching for new and more successful types of development.

Correspondence to: SEAFDA Secretariat, c/o Achmad Rofi'ie, Secretariat Coordinator, LSP, Setiabudi Building 1, F1.3, B 3-4, 62 Jalan Rasuna Said, Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia.

Transnational Perspectives

Looking toward compassion and cooperation in the international arena, this magazine is published three times a year and a positive, independent voice of analysis and policy proposals regarding international development and peace.

US$10.00 a year, to Transnational Perspectives, Case Postale 161, 1211 Geneva 16, Switzerland.

Ethical Issues and the Buddhist Dhamma in Dealing with AIDS



Distinguished participants and colleagues, what I want to do in the next 10 minutes is to give a brief discussion of the AIDS situation in Thailand and the roles or the failing roles of Buddhism in dealing with this problem.

The first AIDS case reported in Thailand in September 1984 was that of a young Thai man who had returned from the United States and was found to be affected by AIDS; the patient died two months later. The case history of the patient showed active homosexuality. A lot of other subsequent cases of AIDS were also found to be associated with homosexuality.

Since 1987, the HIV positive blood test numbers were found increasing among drug addicts, which resulted mostly from the shared common use of needles. Up to 15 October 1989, among the HIV positive blood test cases of 10,871, about 86% or 9,075 were related to drug injection directly into veins. Among this number only 392 or 4.3% were female. Since the middle of 1989, AIDS has spread into the prostitutes of Thailand. In some high risk areas, as high as 40% of prostitutes show positive HIV blood tests. The danger of the widespread of AIDS into the general public in Thailand is now very real.

The case of major interest is the twenty-fifth case of AIDS in Thailand found in August 1989 –a hill tribe girl in the North, aged one year and five months. It was found that after her mother was seven months pregnant, her father returned from Chiangmai, a famous tourist city in the North, and on having sexual relations with her mother transmitted AIDS to her. This implied that about two years earlier or some time in later 1987, AIDS had already spread among the prostitutes in Chiangmai and so available to low income groups. It is now commonly accepted in Thailand that AIDS is no longer a problem of the middle and upper classes, but is now more of the problem of the poor majority of Thais. The Deputy Minister of Public Health reported the following figures on May 31, 1990. There were 43 full blown cases of AIDS. Only eleven of them were then still living. There were 142 AIDS-related patients, and 119 of them were still living then. The ones showing HIV positive were 17,313, and 17,198 were still living. The most alarming figure during the same period was that two per cent of the draftees for military services were HIV positive.

Apart from the general recognition that religion and cul-

ture are highly important factors in changing the attitudes and behaviour of people in relation to AIDS, virtually nothing has been done in Thailand in this direction so far.

The London Convention on the Prevention of AIDS in January 1987 recognized the socio-economic differences of people, and the role of religious leaders. Unfortunately, its interest is confined to how to get these religious leaders well-informed about AIDS, and to use them only as a medium for a wider spread of information.

The WHO Global Programme on AIDS declared as one of the seven points of the 1988-89 work plan the making of a cultural survey on sexual and drug-injection behaviour as well as how people manage with AIDS. It is interesting to observe that both the London Convention and the WHO GPA are only interested in culture more or less from the point of view of medical profession, namely, AIDS is a technical problem and that the fighting of AIDS should be the responsibilities of professional people only. None has touched much on the ethical aspect or issues of religion in case of the AIDS.

In Thailand, Buddhist monks are only thought of as important agents to spread information to the public on AIDS. It is a great pity that the ethical aspect of Buddhism is grossly overlooked. Quite a few books on AIDS in Thailand have become available to the public within quite a short period of time. However, most of them were written by people in medical or related professions, with a lot of emphasis on encouraging people to avoid getting infected by AIDS through so-called "safe sexual relationship".

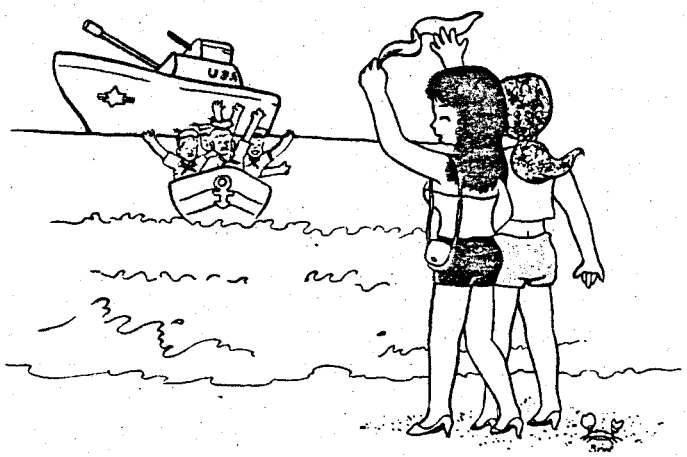
Evidence indicates Buddhist monks themselves understand very little about AIDS. Last year the question was raised among a few senior monks in Thailand, as to whether to exclude AIDS affected persons from ordination as monks. Clearly, AIDS cannot spread among Buddhist monks who keep their righteous behaviour intact. This fact clearly indicates the lack of understanding of AIDS among Buddhist monks in Thailand. Also, as a Buddhist monk, the former AIDS patient can be completely "cured" spiritually, the aspect that has been grossly over-looked by most people in the medical profession and Buddhist monks themselves.

I shall now move to Part II of my talk on the ethical issues of Buddhism regarding AIDS. In this regard, one should divide people into three groups. The first group are the ones that have not yet been affected by AIDS; here Buddhism can be used as a preventive device. The second group are the ones who are already affected by AIDS; Buddhism in this case can be used as a curative device. The last group are the ones who are not affected by AIDS, but must coexist with AIDS affected persons. Buddhism can be used to enlighten people of this group and to teach compassion towards AIDS affected persons.

As for preventive devices, there are two levels of practice; one for lay-persons who probably do not understand much. However, taking Buddhism on faith or even face value, the Five Precepts are already very useful, especially, the prominent two out of five, namely those in the ***third*** and the ***fifth, to abstain from sexual misconduct*** and ***to abstain from intoxicants causing heedlessness.*** These two precepts will prevent any person from two major causes of contraction of the disease namely, from sexual relationship and from drug injection. Of course, they cannot prevent a person from contracting disease from blood transfusion and other unexpected causes, such as being raped or receiving the affected blood from various accidental means as well as the common use of AIDS affected materials from barber shops or beauty salons.

In order to help a person to be effectively safe, a person must understand the Buddhist Dhamma at a higher level. First a person must have **Vijjā** or right information and knowledge. Second, a person must have **Paññā** reason, or wisdom. The wisdom must be controlled by **Appamāda**, earnestness or heedfulness or **Sati**, or awareness, all the time. If a person is aware all the time of what he/she is doing or being effected by others, then he/she has sufficient knowledge and information, and has wisdom and ability to analyze. So such a person can be almost hundred per cent certain on avoiding AIDS contraction.

The main controlling factor is that of being aware or



alert all the time. This will include all other possible contractions of the disease apart from sexual relationship and drugs. This set of Buddhist Dhamma are much more effective than emphasis only on "safe sexual relationship" and so-called "safe drugs". In fact, these two devices also include the concept of awareness but they are not extensive enough.

As a curative measure, the Buddhist Dhamma will always be very useful. The AIDS affected persons should practice Dhamma for a spiritual cure. At the lay level, one should recognize Aniccatā or impermanence as a fact of life. Life is governed by the four principles of impermanence namely, ***birth, aging, sickness*** and ***death***. Death is an eventual consequence of birth for everyone. If one can accept that death is an eventual consequence of birth, and not be afraid of it, at least the spirit of a person will be cured from undue anxiety and tension. At a higher level of Dhamma, a person must understand Paticcasamuppāda, the law of causation or chain of phenomenal cause and effect. A person must understand that there is a series or chain of actions before a person is infected by AIDS. If one actually tries to trace to the root cause of AIDS and its series of consequences, no individuals are to blame for the spread or for having the disease. The question of "why me?" is actually not a useful one.

Of course, at this level the concepts of Vijjā, Paññā and Sati, information, knowledge and wisdom, as well as awareness are still very useful. The most important Sati of all is the Maraṇasati, meditation on death. At a much higher level of Dhamma is Anattā, non-self, no soul. If nothing is permanent, there should not be self and even soul. If a person who is affected by AIDS can contemplate that it is the physical body that is affected by AIDS, the soul will be freed from the physical body. All the pain experienced by the physical body is irrelevant to the soul. If one moves to the highest level, close to Nibbbāna or Nirvāṇa, the extinction of all defilements and suffering, one will reach the state of Anattaṭa, soullessness. At this state, the spiritual cure of the AIDS patient is completed. This is why the AIDS-affected persons should use Dhamma as a treatment rather than the medical one. In fact, medical treatment does not cure anything, it only helps prolong physical life, and keeps a person in this state tortured and stressed much longer, causing much more anxiety without any real spiritual uplift. In fact it can hardly be called "cure" at all. A person is tortured for a longer period of time, and nothing else.

The last part is for a non-infected person to coexist happily and peacefully with the AIDS affected ones. At the very lay level is a basic Mettā, loving-kindness, friendliness and goodwill, a rather general principle for everyone. This concept should also be accompanied by Karuṇā, or compassion. To understand these two well, one must move to the higher level of Dhamma, namely, the understanding of Paticcasamuppāda, the chain of phenomenal cause and effect.

A person must understand thoroughly that how AIDS affected persons contracted the disease is not their own fault. The typical Dhamma, of Vijjā, Paññā and Sati information, knowledge, wisdom and ability to analyze and awareness are all the ones that will help the non-AIDS infected persons to coexist peacefully with AIDS affected persons, and so be kind to them and have compassion for them.

The above Dhamma of Buddhism are capable of dealing with AIDS quite efficiently and effectively. Unfortunately, the whole concept is not yet well understood by many people in the medical profession, as well as the Buddhist monks themselves. These ethical issues, and Buddhist Dhamma, should receive better attention and be propagated more widely. The practical challenge is how to educate the majority of Buddhist monks in Thailand to understand all the medical aspects, and related information about AIDS, as well as all related Dhamma that is capable of fighting AIDS effectively. The next step is how to spread such knowledge in a form easily understood by the majority of both urban and rural poor who will be most effected by the new wave of the spread of AIDS.

Apichai Puntasen

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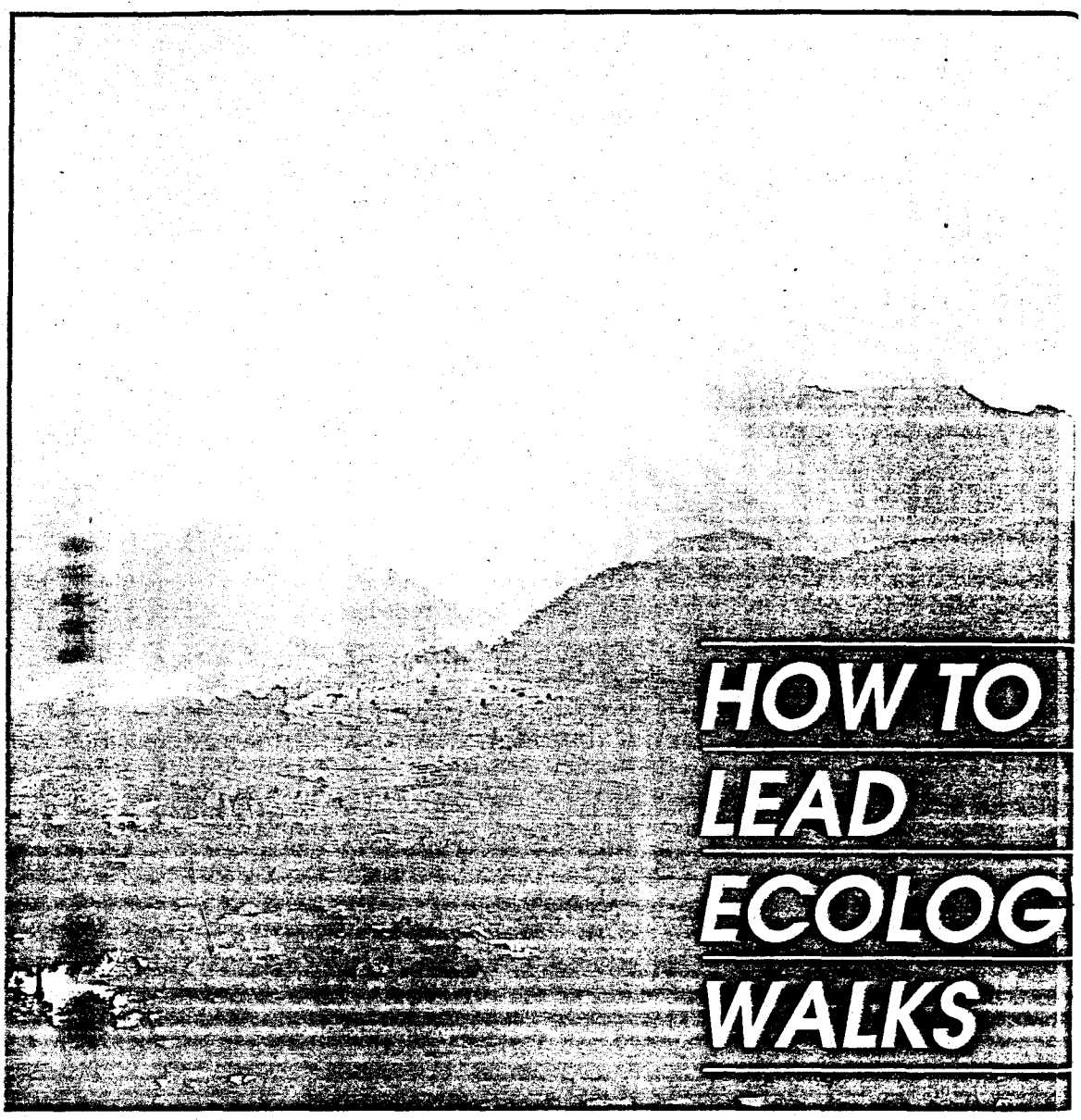
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*A paper presented to a panel on Religious and Ethical Issues of a Conference on **AIDS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC.***

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HOW TO LEAD ECOLOG WALKS

When visiting the outdoors with others, excellent opportunities and experiences through short walks are right at hand to learn a great deal about ecology and nature. Yet many potential leaders of ecology walks fail to conduct them because they feel that they are not "experts." Consequently, a very valuable way for first hand experiences with ecology and nature remains untapped. Nature enjoyment and appreciation as well as ecological understanding with environmental perspectives and responsibility are only some of the values and attitudes which can result from ecology walks. Moreover, experiences like this draw the group closer together with everyone mutually involved and participating in the natural world around them.

All the above takes a little time and effort on your part. It will also take a sense of humor because even the most experienced naturalist or ecologist will "goof" at times. But with the "right" attitude by the leader and group, each walk can be a very enjoyable and learning experience. In fact, after a couple of "attempts," there probably will be a lot of enthusiasm, help, and interest to try new walks in other areas. And the potential is unlimited in that every area has its own unique form of life and ecology with a lot to learn and experience. Also, the same area can be used continually as one learns and grows in his understanding of ecology and nature. But let us now consider some of the ideas and information that you, as an actual leader of an ecology walk can use.

Planning

In planning the walks, one should do some background reading on ecology in that the walks should have this as a central focus or theme. Ecology supplies the perspective and understanding to the walks on a unifying basis. Otherwise, a group walk may simply end with being exposed to a random bunch of names of plants and animals. And the individuals involved will have little insight or understanding of the processes of life in the area, or the stories behind the mysteries of nature not to mention the depth and richness that they should get from the experience. Within the last several years, most university and governmental field trips have become oriented toward ecology, e.g. biology courses, naturalist programs of the Forest Service, National Park Service, etc., with many advantages for the participants.

Ecology, which is the study of interrelationships between plants and animals and their environment, provides a central focus for the walks and offers a means for illustrating the interdependencies of man and nature. Thus a basic understanding of elementary ecology principles is essential. Literature on the subject can be obtained at almost every library and there are now large numbers of paperbacks available. Two excellent and easy-to-read paperbacks are: John H. Storer's ***The Web of Life*** (Signekey Books) and Shelly and Mary Louise Grossman's ***Ecology*** (Wonder Books).

Although many ecology relationships are complex, there are elementary ideas and principles that can be understood by anyone with an interest in the subject. Moreover, man's relationship with nature should be based on an understanding of ecology principles because all living things, including man, in some manner are related to each other. And what effects or influences one form of life will, directly or indirectly, affect others. Some of these ecology principles which can be applied to walks are: habitats, food chains or pyramids, territories, succession, competition, niche, biomes, energy flows, and so forth. With a little imagination, they can be reduced to simple ideas that a small child can understand without difficulty. Further, every area will contain ample examples for these ecology ideas. To illustrate this point, ask someone who is familiar with ecology to take you for a short nature walk. Chances are that he will be able to bring in several ecological ideas and examples into a short space of time and distance. And you will be amazed at how much your understanding of the how's, why's, and wonders of the area and its life has increased. Too often, without ecology understanding, we walk cut off from this.

Planning also involves some familiarity with the area and its life. A wealth of information and literature is usually available for most general localities through libraries, natural history museums, and government agencies as the Forest Service, State Conservation Departments, and so forth. Generally speaking, it is wise to avoid complicated and detailed identifications or "Key." It is best to use field books that have pictures and simple identifications so that everyone can get involved in looking up the name of that "new" wild flower, tree, or animal.

Conducting

With the emphasis on ecology, it is helpful to formulate and define the general objectives of the walk with the group before departing. People usually see only what they are looking for. Moreover, a sound environmental attitude is built by having effective objectives. These objectives should relate to the interdependence and interrelations of living things as well as man's role and responsibility. If several walks are planned for one area, each walk might stress a particular or general form of life, e.g., water. Other aspects then can be related to it: the relationships of water to plant life, the relationships of water to wildlife, and so forth. Relative to this, it would be interesting to have a walk with the objectives centering strictly on the influences and history of man on a given area in terms of environmental quality. Nevertheless, the objectives



should not be strictly adhered to. Flexibility, fun, interest, and the "unexpected" should also be guiding principles in this family experience.

It is perfectly proper to say, "I don't know," when necessary although an effort should be made to find out. Attention should be directed to what one does know as well as leading the group in possible explanations. It is essential to keep one's objectives in mind throughout the walk in reference to: (a) showing the interrelationships of different forms of life, (b) stressing the interdependence of life, (c) introducing ecology ideas, and (d) pointing out man's role and responsibilities on the basis of the above. The names of plants and animals need not be over-emphasized in the above. "One should not lose sight of the forest because of the trees."

A good learning situation should be created. A leader should be enthusiastic in helping other members of the group to enjoy the natural wonders. Questions and humor should be encouraged. Informal conversation on the walk should be directed toward ecology and environmental responsibility with special reference to involvement and participation. The leader should walk at the head of the group, keeping the members together at all times. When stopping to make explanations, eye contact with all members of the group is important. The group should experience the various forms of life encountered through all senses, e.g., listening for sounds of wildlife, feeling soil texture, touching, tasting, and smelling plant and tree life as well as seeing.

It is often interesting, particularly for the children, to tell a brief story or pioneer use about a plant or animal. Much of this type of information can be obtained from the previous sources mentioned. For example, Arnica, a yellow wild flower in the Rocky Mountains, was used by pioneer women as a liniment to ease the sore and bruised muscles of their menfolk. White Yarrow, another wild flower, makes a good mosquito repellent when its juices are rubbed on. Porcupines will eat axe handles because of the salt deposited by sweat. Beavers will sometimes give themselves mud or "beauty" packs with the objective of getting rid of fleas when the mud is removed.

After the Walk

At the conclusion of the walk, a brief summary by the group should be made to review the observations and their related experiences for an understanding and appreciation of ecology and the given objectives. Basically, the walk should be judged in terms of enjoyment and learning as well as each member's conviction of a responsibility for the environment. Educators know that most people will forget a lot of the facts and details of a given experience, but that they will usually remember the major ideas. This is why it is important to bring in various ideas on ecology or the processes and interrelations of life. And one will be surprised how even small children can readily understand these ideas. (After all, many children are now getting exposed to ecology ideas in elementary school today.) Also, there is now plenty of ecology literature around at various levels to do follow-up study.

The ecology walk should also contribute toward values and citizenship for the environment. Our earth-home or environment is made of all living things which are related to each other and man, as the dominant species, has responsibilities and interdependencies with other life. However, many people, particulary those from urban settings, think of themselves as "apart" from this environment or natural world. Good ecology walks can do a lot for increasing one's value or environment perspective. Yet numerous educators agree that values cannot be taught, but that they must be learned by the individual through inspiration and experience. Ecology walks are natural vehicles for this inspiration and experience with opportunities for all to grow in the process: by this sharing, the individuals involved become a more solid group.

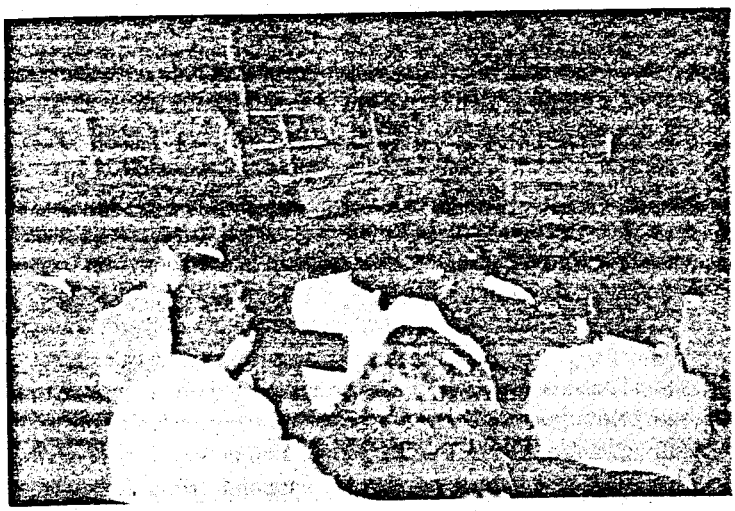
With this value change and growth, environmental responsibilities for citizenship usually follow the walk. Children and young people, particularly, have a sense of honesty and openness which becomes aroused when abuses to the environment and its living forms occur. In fact, philosophers note that some values do not emerge until one becomes angry by having certain sensibilities affected, as an example, by seeing the results of a bulldozer plow through a scenic natural area or observing the abuses of littering to a stream or forest. Active citizenship can then result by writing letters to public officials or by joining an environmental organization.

Well, now it is up to you. Opportunities are right at hand to provide your group and yourself with enjoyable, and learning experiences through ecology walks. They will give you a great deal in short and long range terms, including environmental perspective and values which we need very badly today. Try one next time your group is outdoors.

Daniel H. Henning

Buddhist Spiritual Foundations :

The Roots of Conscience And Witness Against War



The essential teaching of the Buddha is the Four Noble Truths–concerning suffering, the cause of suffering, the elimination of suffering, and the nonviolent means to achieve that end. [Known as the Noble Eightfold Path (which is Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration).]

Since war is directly connected with suffering, Buddhism opposes it entirely. There is no just war theory, or any compromise for warfare whatsoever.

Yet, to oppose war is just like to oppose one kind of suffering which is not enough. In Buddhism, one has to find the cause of suffering which is always linked with greed, hatred and delusion.

During the time of the Buddha, some 2,500 years or so ago, there were two royal clans, both related to the Buddha through his father and his mother. They quarrelled over the use of water from the river, and the dispute became so serious that the people of each clan not only abused the other with harsh words, but they were about to go to war.

At that very moment, the Buddha, their enlightened kinsman,appeared and asked the kings of both sides about the value of water and of warriors.

They both replied that a warrior is beyond price. Then the Buddha said, "It is not right that for a little water, you should kill warriors who are beyond price." They were all silent and agreed with him.

Thus, he found the cause of their war and helped them to their senses. He went on to say, "Were I not here today, you would have caused a river of blood to flow. Your actions are unworthy. You live in hatred. I live full of love. You live sick with passion. I live free from sickness. You live chasing after sense pleasures. I live in peace and contentment."

Another historical case is that of Emperor Asoka, about 300 years after the time of the Buddha. He waged war against the Kalinga and killed more than one hundred thousand people. He was so remorsed that he was converted to Buddhism and tried his best to establish peace with justice and mercy.

The Mongolians and the Tibetans were very warlike until they embraced Buddhism, and the whole people changed to be so peaceful that often they have been taken advantage of. Yet even now H.H. the Dalai Lama never said one harsh word against the Chinese despite the atrocious acts committed by them against his people almost all the time.

For Buddhism, to witness against war is first to build peace within each one of us. To restructure our consciousness from a selfish being to be a selfless being starts by being aware of not exploiting oneself. Then one will cultivate enough loving kindness not to exploit others. One can then develop oneself to be compassionate, i.e. to share suffering with others, and to try to find the cause of that suffering in order to eradicate the root cause of it through nonviolent means.

Even those who oppress us, we should try to understand, forgive, and practise loving kindness towards them.

The first Buddhist precept is : not to kill. Do not let others kill. Find whatever nonviolent means possible to protect life. Do not live with a vocation that is harmful to human, animals and nature.

To be able to practise this precept, one has to teach one's mind to be free of biased views and prejudices. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese meditation master, once said, "If you have a gun, you may be able to kill one, two, three,...five people. But if you have an ideology and stick to it, feeling that you are so damned right, you may kill millions!"

In Buddhism, we are encouraged not to accept easily any sacred texts or holy words. Even words of the Buddha must be scrutinized seriously and calmly whether or not they are conducive to peace, happiness and liberation.

We should, therefore, pay close attention to the minute particulars in our thoughts and actions, as well as to the giant web of all life.

Buddhism particularly stresses non-dualism and speaks of ***being peace*** in the moments in one's own life, as part of making peace in the world. We should stress the continuity of inner and outer; we should call the world our "large self," and we should become it actively and care for it.

When I look at this sheet of paper, I should also be aware of the tree, the tree cutter, the sun, the earth, water...you and I; "I am; therefore, you are. You are; therefore, I am." In fact, ***we inter-are.***

Inter-being or the Buddhist teaching on "Dependent Origination" is designed explicitly to address social justice and peace issues, without which warfare takes place within every country and society although they may not be an overt declaration of war. If we understand the concept of ***inter-being***, it would sensitize us to test our behaviours in relation to the needs of the larger community, while freeing ourselves from limiting patterns of the ***status quo,*** most of which are violent, harmful and unjust.

I have already mentioned the first precept of not killing, which is but a root of conscience. Traditionally, we have five precepts.

The second one is not to steal. Possess nothing that should belong to others. Respect the property of others, and prevent others from enriching themselves from human suffering of other species on earth.

We should not live luxuriously and try to acquire more wealth while others are so poor and are deprived of basic necessity.

The third precept deals with sexual expression, which should not take place without love and commitment. We must be fully aware of the sufferings we may cause others as a result of our misconduct. To preserve our happiness and that of others, we should respect the rights and commitments of others.

Fourthly, do not say untruthful things. Do not spread news that we do not know to be certain. Do not criticize or condemn things that we are unsure of. Do not utter words that cause division and hatred that can create discord and cause the family, the community or the nation to break. An effort should be made to reconcile and resolve all conflicts.

The fifth one deals with alcohol and any intoxicants, which may lead to the breaking of all other precepts.

These precepts create a consciousness of, and a precedent for social justice and peace work, grounded firmly in Buddhist principles in our individual beings and in our practice of mindfulness. We should remind ourselves not to lose ourselves in dispersion and in our surroundings. Learn to practise breathing in order to regain composure of body and mind, to practise mindfulness, and to develop concentration and understanding.

The Buddhist witness against war is to direct our attention to focus on our interconnection with other beings so that we may experience the continuity between the inner and the outer world, to act in collaboration, in mutuality with others in the dynamic unfolding of the truth that nurtures justice and creates peace.

Only with justice and peace, can war between nations, within our society and within ourselves be eliminated, and it can only be eliminated nonviolently, with love and wisdom.

Unfortunately, Buddhism, as established in many countries, sometimes ignores these essential elements. We should, therefore, strengthen and extend the liberation potential within the Buddhist tradition to allow each local community to gain a global perspective on war and peace, making each aware of global problems which are directly linked with local and personal problems, especially the suffering of the poor and the alienation of the rich, as well as the meaningless social struggle of the middle classes. If more people are conscious of the problem, it can be solved more efficiently.

I feel that we should also promote exchange and learning between Buddhists and non-Buddhists in order that they can cooperate meaningfully in a common struggle against the oppressive social forces that cause suffering.

(A talk delivered *by* ***S. Sivaraksa*** at a conference on Celebration of Conscience, Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania USA. August 1990.)

COMPASSIONATE LISTENING

The first step toward Reconciliation

For most of my forty years with the peace movement, I felt something was missing; something was out of harmony. Somehow we peace people, who wanted no enemy, always seemed to have one. In our country it's been mostly our government. But there were the Nazis, the anti-communists, the Military-Industrial Complex, the torturers, the Contras - and most recently, the Israelis...

Some time ago I recognized that terrorists were people who had grievances, who thought their grievances would never be heard, and certainly never addressed. Later I saw that all parties to every conflict were wounded, and that at the heart of every act of violence is an unhealed wound. I began to search for a way we peace people might help heal these violence-causing wounds.

Because of my long experience with psychotherapy, (I have been a client, an experimental group leader on a Psychiatric Unit,, and one of my professions is as a Pastoral Counsellor.) I discovered that caring, non-judgemental listening was a great healer. So, about twelve years ago I began practicing and writing about listening as a reconciling process. As I proceeded with my explorations, people began to join me. Last February I presented a proposal for a Compassionate Listening Project to the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, and last year US/FOR experimented with a modified version of it in "The Libyan Listening Project".

Three of us have been working on its' development: Adam Curle, Senior Quaker Mediator, teacher, Author, and President of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship in England, Herb Walters, founder of the Rural Southern Voice for Peace (RSVP), listener to the Contras and the Palauans, and I. We shall have a meeting at IFOR in September training for and discussing the proposed project.

The focus is adaptable to any conflict. RSVP has had remarkable experiences using it in projects ranging from listening to both sides of a community on an AIDS HOSPICE HOUSE, to listening to the Palauans over maintenance of US bases on that South Pacific Island. In most areas where listeners go, they train the people involved in the conflict to listen to one another and so the projects increase.

This listening requires a particular mode. The questions are non-adversarial. The listening is non-judgemental. The listener seeks the truth of the person questioned and seeks to see through any masks of hostility and fear to the sacredness of the individual, and to discern the wounds at the heart of any violence. Listeners do not defend themselves, but accept whatever others say as ***their*** perception and validate their right to it.

A Compassionate Listening Team is not meant to supercede other methods of nonviolence, but it may well be a prelude to them. Hopefully, it will comprise people skilled in listening to grievances.

It may well be brought into play before demonstrations or other such witnesses are set in



motion. We believe Compassionate Listening can open new avenues of communication and enables both those listened to and those listening to hear what they think and often change their opinion.

I'm not talking about listening with the "human ear". I'm talking about "discerning". To discern means "to perceive something hidden or obscure." We must listen with our "spiritual ear." This is very different from deciding in advance who is right and who is wrong, then seeking to rectify it.

Here are two definitions of reconciliation we used. Thich Nhat Hanh describes it as "understanding both sides." To Adam Curle it means "We work for harmony wherever we are, to strive to bring together what is sundered by fear, ignorance, hatred, resentment, injustice – any conditions which divide us."

To do this work, Adam feels we must have a particular perception of human beings. He writes "I begin with a concept of human nature based on the belief in a divine element within each of us..which is ever available, awaiting our call to help us restore harmony. ..we must remember this good exists in those we oppose."

I agree with Adam and perceive as well that all parties to any conflict are wounded, and our charge is to care for the wounded on both sides of all conflicts. I agree with John Woolman, Quaker abolitionist, who did not condemn slaveholders, but spoke to them out of such tenderness and deep humility that they could not take offense, for it was clear that he sympathized with them as he did with the slaves.

The call, as I see it, is for us to see that within all life is the mystery - God. It is within the Contra, the Nazi, the Afrikaaner, the Israeli, and the American. By compassionate listening, we may awaken it and thus learn of the ***partial truth*** the other is carrying. For another aspect of being human is that we each carry some portion of the Truth. To reconcile, we must listen for, discern, and acknowledge this partial truth in ***everyone***.

Here are some "partial" processes. Thich Nhat Hanh asks this of us: "In South Africa the black people suffer enormously, but the white people also suffer. If we take one side, we cannot fulfill our task of reconciliation. Can you be in touch with both sides, understanding the suffering and fears of each, telling each side about the other? Can you understand deeply the suffering of both sides?"

Longfellow wrote "If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find, in each person's life, sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility." Central to reconciliation is to maintain a relationship with all sides. Compassionate listening is the way of maintaining that contact – listening to the grievances of both sides, affirming the partial truth of each by recognizing each party's suffering and describing it to the other.

Again, Adam Curle writes: "Listening, coupled with ***befriending*** is the unquestionable basis of all mediation efforts. ...When I started, I was told to 'just listen quietly'; words like mediation and negotiation were never mentioned, and still are not in our actual dealings with our embattled friends."

Herb Walters explored such possibilities when, in 1988 he and a friend went to Honduras to listen to the Contras because they and the US peace movement were not communicating. Neither of them were naive enough to think that everything they heard was true, but both were impressed with the sincerity and depth of conviction many Contras held. When he returned, Herb wrote: "The Contra Listening Project has raised new questions for me. One is: Why weren't we peace people calling for dialogue between the Contras and Sandinistas? My answeres are - one reason was, we didn't trust the Contra leadership. Another is that we saw the Contras only as the enemy, therefore not worthy of talking to. What we know was part of the truth – but we failed to seek the whole truth. At least I did."

Then Herb asked a key question: "Is there a place for an organization that could be trusted by both sides – that could find the human faces of 'the enemy' and carry that message across the battle lines? I am convinced now more than ever that my job as peacemaker is not to take sides. It is to seek the truth. It is to humanize, rather than de-humanize the 'enemy'. It is to understand and seek out the best in all sides.."

Adam recommends: "Do not make any rigid decisions about the design of this listening-reconciliation body. Keep flexible. Keep your eye on the conflict scene to see what is needed, then meet to see what is feasible. Do not have preconceived ideas of what you will do or the results you want. There are constantly new possibilities. What is most important is to find the people – people of understanding and compassion who are tactful and who don't talk too much!

Last I will give you a talisman which inspires me. Gandhi reminded us that there exists within each person an energy equal to the force of an atom bomb - a loving power, a caring power, a healing power for peace. I believe it is time to release this power in new ways and this is one of the new ways.

Gene Knudsen Hoffman



Monks and Ecology

A seminar on monks and ecology was held in Vientiane during December 7-9, 1990. It was organized by the Lao Committee for Social Sciences in cooperation with the Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute. About 36 participants attended. Seven of them were monks from different regions and 19 were lay people from various Lao governmental sections and Thai speakers.

Than Nu Phan, the Deputy Minister of the Lao Committee for Social Sciences, and the Most Ven. Thongkoune Anantasounthone, President of the Lao National Center of ABCP, together presided over the seminar.

The most Ven. Thongkoune Anantasounthone pointed out that for a long time the monks have had a role in conservation. As we learn, there are 2 types of monastery, the urban monastery and the forest monastery. Therefore, the forest monasteries always safeguard a very large area of forestland. These monks have to protect and improve the environment. According to the Lord Buddha's teaching, monks are not allowed to take away leaves from the trees.

The Most Ven. moved onto a further point related to the cycle of life, such as the cremation ceremony in which the monks have a role. The graveyards are still green and thick with trees since belief or superstitution makes people fear to destroy them. It's significant that perhaps graveryards are the only real green now.

He spoke of tradition of PUTA in which lay people worship the spirit who protects the land. This spirit of grandparents, "PUTA", as analyzed, is the value of gratitude underneath which is very important. In this area of forest, it is forbidden to cut down the trees.

People nowadays don't understand this point; therefore, they lack respect for the forest.

The Most Ven. Thongkoune ended up with the hope that this seminar will produce knowledge of modern conservation for the monks so that monks will be able to spread the knowledge to the community.

In fact, this seminar was recently organized. This time, it was focused on the monk's role with the purpose of raising the awareness of monks towards ecology, the destruction of the natural environment and looking at the Buddhist perception of Nature.

Uncle Pin, the head of the ecology protection department said, "It's a very important seminar since our environmental disaster has brought us to the point of calling on the compassion of Buddhist principles to protect our ecology."

"In former times, human beings lived in harmony with nature. Animals and plants live together cooperatively, not hurting and destroying each other."

His team, including another 2 experts, showed a video and slides on the deforestation and its impact which strongly impressed the participants.

After that, an expert of the Public Health Ministry gave an overview of how an unhealthy environment effects the health problems of Lao.

The following day, a Thai ecologist raised the question of whether it's worthwhile selling logs when later we have to spend even greater amounts of money to prevent disaster. He also drew the attention of participants to look back at a local way to protect our ecology. According to the Buddhist principles, if we Buddhists practise the 5 basic precepts, deforestation won't happen since it's wrong to take life.

Also in Thailand, one possibility now is to "ordain" trees (put a safron around a tree) which means to bring back the belief that each tree has its god to protect its life. We have to pay respect to the ordained trees.

A Thai monk interested

in ecology also pinpointed the Buddhist principles which guide monks to live their lives not doing harm to nature. For example, he portrayed the temples which have a campaign to improve the environment.

To bring the participants a picture of the international ecological situation, the expert from Thailand highlighted that in the last 2 years, the world has become alert to the environmental crisis.

We have already destroyed the world's ecology.

Even if every Laotion stopped any action which violated the nature at this moment, still we could not stop the impact of environmental disaster. It may be a small proportion of the world population, for example 25%, who caused the trouble but the rest of the world has to confront its result.

The evaluation of the seminar was given by the feedback from 2 representative monks. They said that Lao monks' knowledge of ecology is at primary school level. But any good theory with no practice means nothing. The seminar should set up a group to produce the national rules. Therefore, monks can put these in sermons to wake up the lay people.

The representative monk from Suwannaket said the same thing and warned the participants not to ignore the rules which already relate to ecology. Don't forget that religion and tradition are also ecology. Our ancestors have done well to protect the environment by simply following the tradition. Ecologists may speak of the "community forest"; however, for the monks, this concept has long been a part of the tradition. It is the present generation who is in danger of forgetting this teaching.

When environmental writer Nancy Nash launched her "Buddhist Perception of Nature" project in 1985, her objective was to protect nature wherever Buddhism was practised. Her winning the Rolex Award for the project in 1987 made her famous, and her life has never been the same since.

Fresh from an interdenominational congregation attended by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Vermont, USA, she stopped in Hong Kong, where she lives, only for a week and then off she flew again, this time to Bangkok for the ESCAP conference on Environment and Development. A meeting of journalists and representatives of non-government organisations was held in the middle of last month in conjunction with that conference, and she coauthored the "Citizens' Code of Conduct for Protection of the Environment", which was adopted at the end of the meeting.

Before the Vermont congregation Nancy was invited to speak at a conference in Singapore, and before that in Mexico... or was it in San Jose, Costa Rica? And as you are reading this she is back in the United States, where she is scheduled to speak at yet another meeting in San Francisco, California.

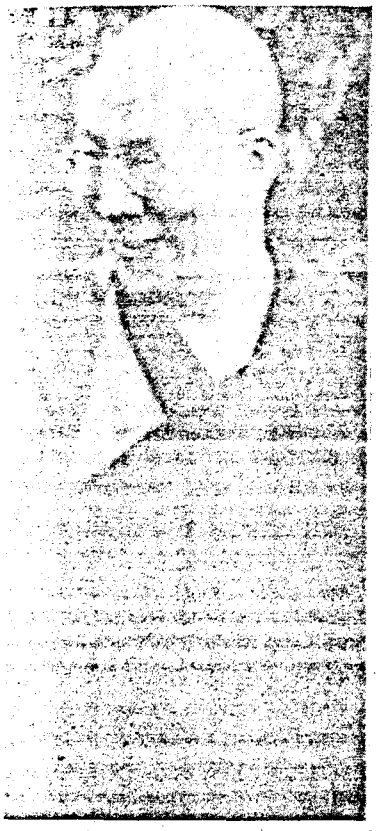
"I had a vision that Buddhist Perception of Nature would have an impact wherever Buddhism is practised, and maybe used as a model for several projects, but I did not expect it to the degree that it has come about," says Nancy. "Since the project was announced, we discovered that at least 50 other projects around the world are using religion and nature in their teachings. We have had people contacting us from Burma, Cambodia, Laos and India and countries in Europe, including the Eastern Bloc.



While environmentalists in India wanted to inform her that they have similar projects using religion to protect nature, the rest wanted to know how she established the project, says Nancy, who helped form the Future Generations Network at the University of Malta and the Earth Ethics Research Group in Florida.

The germ of an idea of using Buddhism to protect nature took shape in Nancy's head while she was visiting Thailand in the late 1970s. Her friend, Thailand's foremost environmentalist Dr Boonsong Lekagul, took her to Wat Phailom, which serves as a haven for thousands of migratory birds. Dr Boonsong told her that the reason the birds were safe was that they were in the grounds of a Buddhist temple.

But it was the Dalai Lama, whom she interviewed in 1979, who inspired her to carry on



The Buddhist mission to protect nature

with the idea. His words, "The world grows smaller and smaller, more and more interdependent ...today, more than ever before, life must be characterised by a sense of universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life," nurtured the seed into fruition as the Buddhist Perception of Nature, a conservation education project aimed to improve awareness, attitudes, and actions concerning the natural environment.

The project, however, did not start at once. At the time Nancy was involved with the World Wildlife Fund, with whom she negotiated support for the protection of the giant panda, as well as the endangered snow leopard and Siberian tiger, and until 1984 she was so involved with conservation work in China that she did not have the time for the project except to do a little bit of research here and there for a document she intended to write as a sort of thesis. But she visited the Dalai Lama two or three times to keep His Holiness abreast of what she was trying to do.

When she completed the document in January 1985, she went to Dharamsala, India, to obtain the blessing of the Dalai Lama. She then went to work enlisting help from Tibetan monks to do project research for Mahayana studies, and on the way back to Hong Kong she stopped in Bangkok to enlist the cooperation of Wildlife Fund Thailand, in association with experts from the Ministry of Education and Thammasat University, for research on the Theravada tradition.

What came out from that cooperation was a book, "A Cry from the Forest," published in Thai and English by the Wildlife Fund Thailand in 1987, in addition to Nancy's own Tree of Life. That same year, Nancy was awarded the Rolex Award for her project, which met all the award's categories, i.e. that it should be a new initiative; that it should have a good chance of succeeding; and that it should be helpful to the environment.

Naturally, she was thrilled to receive the award. But it brought an avalanche of letters, "and if you live in Hong Kong and you send books and letters all over the world, the bulk of the prize money goes to paying for postage."

Now the international coordinator of the project, Nancy gives the credit for the success of her Buddhist Perception of Nature to the Dalai Lama.

Nancy had travelled with the Dalai Lama and had seen how he was warmly welcomed in the places he visited to deliver his message for world peace. But although she is a great admirer of the Dalai Lama and her Buddhist Perception of Nature won her an invitation from the Soviet Academy of Sciences to give lectures in the Soviet Union, Christian Nancy has never thought of becoming a born again Buddhist.

"I don't think you have to be a Buddhist to admire Buddhism," she remarks. "The Dalai Lama himself said that people should think carefully before they convert into a different religion, for there must be a purpose why they were born to a certain religion. A lot of people who work with the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan exiles in India are not Buddhists, only sympathisers."

By Normita Thongtham
Bangkok Post,
8 November 1990

PEACE

Peace is the state in which we are in accord with God, the earth, others, and ourselves. It comes to us only when we submit to the Spirit found within us.

We know that true, lasting peace among us can finally be attained only by unity in the life of the spirit. We work to create conditions of peace, such as freedom, justice, cooperation, and ***the integrity of all creation through a sustainable use*** and the right sharing of the world's resources.

As we work for peace in the world, we search out the seeds of war in ourselves and in our way of life. We refuse to join in actions which lead to ***human death or to destruction of the fragile web of life on earth.*** We seek ways to cooperate to save life, to strengthen the bonds of unity among all people, ***and to live in unity with nature.***

Do we live in the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all war?

Do we refrain from taking part in war ***or the destruction of the environment*** as inconsistent with the spirit of Christ?

What are we doing to remove the causes of war and to bring about the conditions of peace? Where there is hatred, division, strife, ***and destruction of the environment,*** how are we instruments of reconciliation, love, ***and healing*** ?

How do we communicate to others an understanding of the basis of our peace testimony?

As we work for peace ***among humans and for unity with the natural world,*** are we nourished by peace ***and unity*** within ourselves?

Prepared by the Committee on Unity with Nature, Pacific Yearly Meeting, 1990

SOEDJATMOKO-AN APPRECIATION

Apart from Siamese, Soedjatmoko was the first and only Asian to be elected an Honorary Member of the Siam Society.

His passing away at the age of 67 on 21 December 1989 was not only a loss for us in Asia, but throughout the world of learning, for he was also the first Asian to be appointed Rector of the United Nations University despite the fact that he never finished his formal undergraduate studies in his own country.

Soedjatmoko was born in Sumatra in 1922. His father was very religious but not in the formal sense. In fact, he was a mystic whose son had the benefit of an ecumenical religious upbringing. Although he remained a Muslim, he was interested in Buddhism and Christianity. Indeed, he even invited the present Pope to address the United Nations University when he was the Rector and he inaugurated a project on the relevance of religion in the creation of desirable societies in the future. He appointed me to be the coordinator of the Buddhist segment of this imaginative project.

In his youth, he studied medical sciences but he relinquished his university studies to join the clandestine movement against the Japanese occupation during the Second World War. This group became the nucleus of the forces demanding full independence for Indonesia. Among the younger generation, Soedjatmoko became a favored intellectual close to Sukarno. In 1950, he represented the Father of Indonesia at the United Nations in a New York debate against the Dutch in the fight for the destiny of his own country. Again in 1955, he played a crucial role in the Bandung Conference on non-alliance in Asia at which H.R.H. Prince Wan represented the Thai government.

When Sukarno became better known for his dictatorship at the expense of democracy and for his corruption at the expense of socialism, Soedjatmoko left a bright career in the government at the early age of 30. Unlike his peers who actively opposed the Father of the Nation, such as Mochtar Lubis, he was never put in gaol.

When President Suharto toppled Sukarno in 1965, Soedjatmoko was asked to rejoin the government and was sent to negotiate with the United States to improve diplomatic relations and to obtain economic aid.

Soedjatmoko was Indonesian Ambassador in Washington, D.C. from 1969-1971. He did so much for his country diplomatically, economically, and culturally. He was popular at the White House as well as on Capitol Hill, and in business as well as academic circles. He received quite a number of honorary degrees, e.g. from Yale to the University of Hawaii (just one year before he died). Cornell published his work on South East Asian historians and U.C. Berkeley published his collected articles on religion, edited by Bellah.

I first met Soedjatmoko at Princeton University when he was Indonesian Ambassador. We both attended a symposium on the Vietnam War organized by the International Association for Cultural Freedom, and we quickly became friends.

He was asked by the Edward Hazen Foundation in New Haven, Connecticut to formulate a new education policy to influence U.S. philanthropic organizations as well as the American Government so that cultural relations would not be only one-way traffic from North to South or West to East. He proposed that the Hazen Foundation set up various autonomous committees in different parts of the world, with nominal financial backing so that each region would define cultural relations for the future–within our own region and vis-a-vis other regions, beyond the context of only the North-South dilemma. I was then asked to be the first chairman of the South-East Asian group. I was later succeeded by a Singaporean and a Filippino, but remained a member of the group until the very end in 1979. After his return to Indonesia, Soedjatmoko regularly attended the group's meetings which took place in every South-East Asian country.

Despite his great service abroad, at home no position of distinction was offered to him. Soedjatmoko remained popular in the U.S.A. He became the first

Asian trustee of the Ford Foundation. It is interesting to note that when he was asked to join the Foundation, he said, "It was a great honour for me, but as you know, I am no longer in America. Besides, I may be offered a cabinet post or be put in gaol in Indonesia any time." The reply was, "We will, of course, give you first-class airfares to attend our Board meetings. If you become a cabinet minister, then you will have to resign from our Foundation, but if you are in gaol, we will still regard you as our trustee."

Later, Soedjatmoko joined the Executive Board of the Aspen Institute and other prestigious philanthropic organizations in North America. In Europe, he was elected a member of the Club of Rome. In Asia, he received the Magsaysay award from the Philippines.

Although busy with many intellectual pursuits, Soedjatmoko always had the time to listen to members of the younger generation. He inspired young idealists. Indeed, he was Chairman of the Pacific Youth Forum of which I was Executive Secretary for many years. He also took his family to visit many Thai temples so that his daughters could have the opportunity to learn Buddhism and Siamese culture at first hand.

Soedjatmoko was known to most leading intellectuals in the world. He was often invited to make keynote addresses at important gatherings. In January, 1989, he was elected an Honorary President of the World Conference on Religion and Peace at its meeting in Australia.

His last, alas unfinished, task was to be at a seminar in Jokjakarta, where he was scheduled to give a lecture on the survival of humankind in the twenty-first century. Unfortunately, on 21 December 1989, he had a sudden stroke at the meeting and was rushed to the hospital. On arrival, the doctor pronounced him dead.

Although he did not write much, he read a great deal and followed the shifts in development paradigms with great interest. His thought was deep and penetrating. He was very much concerned with the welfare of humankind and the environment in which we exist. As both a mystic and an intellectual, he was sensitive to the spiritual growth of man.

He was survived by a charming wife and three lovely daughters. He will certainly be long remembered by those who knew him. And even those of the generation to come, if they care for the survival of humanity and social justice and a harmonious natural environment, i.e. human development at its best, will no doubt have much to learn from Soedjatmoko.

Sulak Sivaraksa
from JSS vol 78 Pt.1 1990

Religions and the Economic Life



The Present International Economic System

Representatives of the regligions of Asia from Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, have been brought together here in Thailand through a common concern for our people and our planet faced as we are by global crises characterized by the ever increasing exploitation of human beings, their fellow creatures, and the evironment.

Ills spawned by capitalism

The ascendancy of the consumerism and growth fixation of the international capitalist system has been further bolstered by the demise of Communist systems in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. While we welcome the opportunity the latter development provides in establishing truly democratic and representative political systems, we fear that the negative consequences of such an international economic system are thus extended and are likely to be exacerbated. The impoverization of the masses of the Third World, and the increasing gap between rich and poor within and between countries, the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of an elite are trends that can be expected to continue. In addition, the traditional cultures of many countries – cultures which arose out of the original religious vision nurtured in these countries - are being distorted by the imposition of consumerist and competitive values promoted by the market economy.

The oppression of women

Women are still forced to occupy a disadvantaged position in all societies and Asia is replete with examples of the oppression of women economically, socially, and politically. And even religiously. The oppression of women is an essential prerequisite for all the efficient operation of the international economic system. It has sacralized and legitimized the secondary class character of women in society inasmuch as such a social praxis tremendously bolsters its power to amass profits.

The exploitation of children

Children in the Third World bear a heavy load under the present international economic system. They are exploited as sources of cheap, uncomplaining labor, and are discarded like waste products when they are no longer useful to industries. A lot of them are coerced into prostitution as sources of cheap and vulgar pleasure of those who ride the whirlwind of the free market, while in the process the deadly disease, AIDS creep over unsuspecting populations.

The debt burden

The burden of debt which is crushing many Third World economies will not respond to palliative measures but can only be lifted by the establishment of a fair trading system between the rich and the poor countries and the building of trade relations among the poor countries themselves. To write off the debts of countries which could really never get out of the debt hole without sacrificing their patrimony and future generations ought to be a moral burden placed on the banks as well as the search for new solutions that would abolish indebtedness and create healthy economies at the same time.

Spin off wars

Despite the reduction in tension between the superpowers the arms race continues to consume huge amounts of resources and the arms trade flourishes unabated feeding the many violent conflicts which ravage the Third World and equipping repressive state machinery in many countries. Peace may have broken out among the superpowers but internicine ideological conflicts continue to take a heavy toll among the poor people of poor societies which are carried with arms purchased from or supplied by the superpowers or manufacturers of weapons. People are killed by the hundreds, and the countryside is transmogrified into a wasteland.

Radical alteration of the ecosystem

The threat posed to the well-being of the planet by the poisoning of its air and water systems, by deforestation, desertification and the concommitant change that are the consequences of the rapacious international economic systems, make the need for action extremely urgent. There is no possibility that the lifestyle of the elite in the rich countries can be a reality for all of humankind since it is predicated on the exploitation of the mass of the poor and dictates a profligate use of the earth's resources. It is already quite evident that a radical alteration of the earth's eco-system has taken place and temperatures have begun to soar as a sign of the Greenhouse Effect. In the Third World mountains are bald, normal rainfall floods cities and countrysides, and the lakes, rivers and beaches are dirty. Rampant tourism, made possible by wealth pumped out from the Third World by the free market system, is destroying cultures, people, and the environment in the Third World. The groaning of the earth witnesses to a radical contradiction between an economy geared towards profit and consumerism on the one hand, and the perpetuation of a living, healthy, and life-sustaining environment. The earth's body tells us that the present international economic system can go on only at our own peril.

The South – The new enemy of the North?

It may be that with the decline of Communism, the traditional enemy of capitalism, opposition to which has bolstered cultures and economies in the West, a new enemy has to be created to continue to prop up ideologically the industrial-military complex in the West. Who will be the new enemy of Capitalism, now that Communism has collapsed? Will it not be the great masses of the Third World seeking to have their place in the sun and be able to live like human beings. Should we be not sensitive to the move being made by the centers of the affluent and powerful West to perpetuate their supremacy over the rest of the world. What about Europe 1992? We should not allow a repetition of the brutal and inhuman domination by the West of the weaker peoples of the world that took place some 500 years ago. The lesson of our tragic histories should not be lost upon us.

Our resolve

We, as the representatives of the religions in Asia, are ready to face this challenge, and we urge our sisters and brothers to join in action across religious divides to combat the ills of the international economic system. We must transcend the narrow and bigoted fundamentalisms that goad us to kill each other and bring to expression the native genius of our religions to put a stop to the march of this economy and politics of death and move our peoples to a vision of a new humankind which all of our peoples can share. We must begin with a critical examination of the roles of our religions which have played in accommodating and perpetuating this unjust eco-

nomic system. We also look to our religions for the resources to challenge and counter this economic system which objectifies and commodifies human beings, their fellow creatures, and the environment. Drawing on these resources we seek to put forward an alternative vision of a new economic order and strategies which can be used by religious individuals, institutions, and movements to bring about the realization of this vision.

Critique of the Roles of Religion in the International Economic System.

Religions as part of the problem

Religious institutions and leaders have often proved themselves to be willing to be co-opted by the prevailing economic system. They have provided legitimation to the system, misrepresenting and misinterpreting religious scriptures or condone, or at best to tolerate, the exploitation of their people and their planet. In return they have received protection and patronage and access to wealth and power, religious institutions and members of the clergy have amassed wealth, and by word and deed offer religious legitimation to structures of injustice that inflict so much misery to their own peoples. Examples of these can be found in all religions. The challenging teaching of our prophets has been conveniently forgotten and mere lip service is paid to it but a great many decline to follow the example of the great religious teachers.

So often religion is reduced to the performative rites and rituals and all spiritual content is lost. These rituals are adapted to the prevailing economic system and we find the sad spectacle of clergy blessing business enterprises that are designed to exploit people for the sake of profits as well as industries that manufacture deadly weapons of war. This is a naked prostitution of religion.

The rampant growth of consumerism and economic exploitation has been met with attempts to ease the tensions created by the system in the life of the individual. Religion becomes a personal matter with no relevance to society. All our religions have been guilty of inaction and acceptance of the status quo. By reference to the"will of God" or "karma" they have sidestepped their responsibility and induced a fatalism which has facilitated economic and social injustice.

Divisive conflicts within religions

Religion has created division within its own ranks and in society and oftentimes sanctify socio-political and cultural injustice in society as in the case of the caste system in Hinduism. Islam and Christianity have each in its own way fostered the spirit of sectarianism that sow division and conflict in society. Conservative variants of religions have through narrow conservative interpretations which stress the letter than the spritit of the Scritptures have set us against one another obscuring the common problems that we face and hindering our cooperation to combat them.

Religion and the oppression of women

Each of the religions represented here have been a willing tool in the oppression of women in society and have been used to justify, enforce and perpetuate male domination. The potentialities of women have, as a result, been stifled in all spheres of life and their humanity has not been fully recognized. In spite of all these the women have made and continued to make significant contributions to the life, thought, and general culture of humankind but the dominant patriarchal culture has been slow in recognizing them.

Religion and the rape of the earth

Islam, Judaism and Christianity have fostered a view of human domination over nature, an arrogance and ignorance which has already brought ecological disaster to huge areas of our planet and which threatens to undermine the earth's entire eco-system. The radical objectivization of nature which took place and has been nurtured in the Christian tradition has created a deep ontological alienation between the human reality and his environment which provided the right kind of seed bed for much of the plunder and rape of nature which has been acccelerating at a mad pace in our own time and is causing deep and radical alterations in our planet's ecosystem.

However, this is not the whole story. We have shared with each other the rich resources embodied in our different religious traditions which can give us courage and power to combat the evils of this economic system and help us evolve an alternative which reflects the deep spiritual values that arise from within our religions.

Religious Resource

Religions have rich but untapped resources. Religions accept, welcome and work for a sufficient material life but warn us against the danger of a one-dimensional life and excessive indulgence and extravagance in which other dimensions of life are forgotten. Human beings cannot live by bread alone, though they cannot live without bread either. Everything has been created by and belongs to God, and thus everything is to be shared by all, and no one can claim anything exclusively for oneself.

On property: Trusteeship, stewardship

The different religions speak of trusteeship and stewardship in sharp contrast to the institution of private property which confers to individuals absolute ownership of the things they possess. This means that things, particularly land and various means of production, are to be administered for and in behalf of our fellow human beings and with a genuine concern for Creation. We have to find a way of institutionalizing these fundamental religious ideas in the new political economic system we are seeking to create. Our religions also teach limits to material acquisition and wealth and advocate the restraining of wants and the use of excess for the benefit of others. Is it not possible to set a ceiling to wealth accumulation and to obligate government to care for those who cannot really care for themselves, and work to the able-bodied? Religious communities themselves should take the lead in making experiments in the economic life that are based on the basic teachings of their faith. Much of the teachings of religions on the economic life are unenforceable such as forbidding wealth caused by exploitation, refusing to use wealth for selfish purposes or luxurious living and on such issues the religious communities would have incarnate within themselves such teachings.

A new seed bed of values

In its mildest form such approaches may do nothing more than maintain the status quo while softening its most evil effect through charity. However, when its more radical forms are enacted it will redirect economic activity that could provide for the basic needs of all, and prohibit exploitation. Such approaches could create the seed-bed for new values – particularly in the light of the fact that the present economic system, not only enslaves the many, but is sucking the whole of humankind as well as planet to certain death – and that consciousness could provide a shock of recognition that could lead humankind to an active and serious search for a new, just and humane political economy.

A common denomination: struggle against suffering and injustice

Our various religions declare their concern for the poor and of their sympathy and identification with those who are victims of injustice and those who struggle for justice. This basic bias of our religions for the poor and the oppressed should be made prominent to give more and spiritual power to great masses of humanity which seek to undermine, overcome forces of domination and injustice and to build a more truly human and communitarian society. Peoples' movements for justice should be studied with great care for the harnessing of their tremendous potential for change.

Our martyrs - examples of authentic humanity

Our critical situation calls for great moral and spritual leadership. Indeed, there have been religious leaders who have exemplified the genius of their religion in a radical way and have given rise to movements that have transformed our societies. There have been numerous unknown and unsung martyrs of various faiths who have given all that they have including their very lives for the sake of justice. Religious leaders would do very well if they could ride on the whirlwind these martyrs generate and direct it towards the transformation of our political economies.

The messianic Age - the Ramarajah

The various religions, each in its own way, speak of a coming new age. The Jews are waiting for a Messiah, the Christians await the second coming of Christ and that of the Kingdom of God; Islam speaks of the emergence of a new prophet, and Buddhism in a more personal way speak of nirvana. The vision of the dissolution of the dark age and the ushering in of a golden age or the kingdom of God or Ramarajah are powerful religious symbols that exert a tremendous pull towards socio-political transformation and they offer a radical contradiction of the values and ways of the present age. Ideologies that arise from peoples' movements could be incorporated with these religious visions of the future both as a source of empowerment and self-criticism.

A Family of God

In varying ways religions emphasize unity and interrelatedness. In Judaism, Christianity, and Islam everything has been created by One God, and human beings are understood as stewards of God's creation. In Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, tribal religions as well as mystical Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the whole of reality is infused by an absolute force referred to as God, Truth, the Ground of Being, the Ultimate, etc. Thus, everything is contained and united by the same Spirit and everything partakes of a sacral nature. Today, this religious insight is being confirmed, on the physical plane by physics, biology and ecology. Religion and science can reenforce and assist each other in generating an understanding that the pain of any part of Creation is suffered and felt by all. But on another level, religion should strive in pushing for the creation of a new technology - or new forms of scientific technology – that work in harmony with the life-sustaining processes in Creation and its cycles of renewal and transformation. The harnessing of solar energy is a good illustration of this. The care and respect of our fellow human beings should lead to our genuine care for our environment, and our genuine care for our environment

is an expression of our respect and care of our fellow human beings. Sharing, dialogue, creative processes of interchange are the authentic forms of relationship of human life under God, and this religious way of being could have very beneficial effects on our economic life.

Vision

There are liberating and transforming dimensions in all of our religions though these have been downplayed and even covered up by our own accommodation to the values of consumerism, and love of power and luxury. It is time for us to set free these liberating forces in our religious beliefs such as - a deep commitment to justice, care and concern for the poor and the needy, radical opposition to injustice, the priority of our humanity over all other earthly values, authentic human well-being as something that issue not out of our power and wealth but out of our works of justice, compassion, and sharing - in creating an entirely new value-system that could issue in new human institutions that would embody such values. The humanity of human beings, beings that thrive only in a context of justice, freedom and peace, and genuine sharing of resources, ought to be the principle for interrogating our present economic realities and for constructing our vision for a new political economy.

In constructing the new vision, each of the religions should look back at the authentic human possibilities that had been actualized in their own history, dream of a future that would embody such human possibilities, and begin working on them in the present. There are tens of millions of peoples in Third World societies that are awaiting for religions to give a new and fresh historical articulation of the power that is in them.

Strategies

Religions and peoples' movements

We welcome the fact that there are already numerous groups that are working for socio-political change on the basis of the religious and human values we have mentioned earlier on. We would urge churches, religious communities, religious theologians, philosophers to be sensitive to the spiritual reality that prompts, empowers, and directs these groups as we are certain that they would encounter the aboriginal power that brought forth the originators of their religion. Religious institutions should legitimize their struggles, stand in solidarity with them, and take up their cause.

Religious institutions should cooperate with grassroots organizations to work for development with the well-being of the individual person and the social whole as the primary critical principle. The primary business of any nation-state is the creation of a socio-political context that contributes to the growth of genuine human relationships and genuine human personalities – and our religions should see to it that they play a positive role in this regard. Perhaps a worldwide movement with competent organization and effective communications is needed to combat injustice on the scale of the present international economic order.

Disengaging from oppressive and exploitative structures

Religious institutions should de-link themselves from oppressive structures in society. They should try to develop alternative economies processes within the larger economic system that allow small enterprises to flourish – and widen and deepen their reach until it begins to challenge the dominant economy. The efforts of the small at seeking to survive must be promoted, propagated, intensified. It can come about only through a daring break-up with the values and ways of the dominant system. There is also the ever-present possibility of evolving a new life-style that could, by degrees, undermine the dominant economic system and promote a truly authentic human existence.

People's participation

Religious institutions should support the struggle for democracy and people's participation in economic, social, and political life. To help people live in a human way that is, in the context of justice, freedom, peace, and security is the goal of any political economy. As totalitarian systems collapse, we should grasp the opportunity to inject deep human values into the new economic and political systems that rise to replace the old and resist the simplicistic tendency to equate genuine participatory democracy with capitalism.

Full equality and immunity for women

Almost all religions are tradition bound and this is true particularly in their attitutde to and treatment of women, and more so when it comes to being channels of God's grace and blessings. All religious bodies should engage in a thorough analysis and interrogation of every item of their belief, tradition, attitude and practice on the principle of the absolute equality of women and men before the eyes of God and of society. Religious communities are still hobbled by a religiously sanctioned discrimination against women, an attitude and practice that go against the fundamental essence of all religions. When women's full equality with men is recognized by all religions, then the work towards a truly just

and humane socio-political order can proceed with deliberate speed. And our youth must not be considered to "too young" to participate in decision-making processes in either the religious community or the larger society for usually they are first one to take up the cause of justice for the poor and the oppressed. The enthusiasm, liveliness, joie de vivre of youth as well as their boundless energy and their inherent tendency to dream of a new day must not be lost to our efforts to project a vision which all human beings– no matter what race, creed, or culture they bear can truly share.

Religious values

Religions should lend their efforts to the evolution of new and just economic relationships that embody genuine human values. God has entrusted the world and we are stewards; work must be in harmony with our physical well-being and psychological make-up, and the products of our labor - physical and mental- are for the enrichment of our life together as human beings. Whatever new models towards a humane political economy when put into practice are always manipulated by greedy and selfish persons to their own self-aggrandizement, and it is at this particular instance when the influence and power of religion can rise to restrain them. Religion must always serve as a powerful critique of anything inhuman and unjust in society.

A new ecumenism

We call on Asian religions to engage a major effort to rise above their narrow expressions of fundamentalisms and engage in an ecumenism that cuts across the divides of the various religious traditions, and join together in the struggle for justice, peace, freedom and common security. We dream of seeing the birth of a indigenous religious event in Asia, an ecumenical movement among its many religions that would seek the unity of humankind in their common struggle for a truly just and human world that cares for all creatures as fulfilling in one way or another the will of God.

We perceive huge, godlike powers to be the enemy of human beings. They draw the morally weak to idolatrous practices – giving ultimate value to relative things. We would therefore promote economies where the small, the weak, the simple can find their place and meaningfully participate in the building of the human society while they are able to satisfy their own needs, express their creativity, and find joy in being alive.

■ The Participants of the Bangkok Consultation on *"Religions and the Economic Life"*, Viengtai Hotel, July 24-27, 1990

Thai Buddhists and Forest Conservation



Dhammanatha Foundation and Thai Inter-Religions Commission for Development (TICD) held a workshop on Buddhism and Forest Conservation at Wat Palad, Chiangmai from 27 October - 3 November, in order that monks and Lay persons could meet and exchange ideas on ecological issues, stressing on the alarming fact that our forests are being destroyed very rapidly. They also looked for solution for the monkhood and lay supporters to be more conscious and take more active part in forest conservation.

37 leading monks came from many parts of the country. Lay persons included ecologists, scholars, government officials and activists from various NGOs.

Ven. Phra Pongsak, abbot of Wat Palad, took a leading role and the workshop was presided over by Ven. Phra Bodhirangsi, Ecclesiastical deputy chief of Chiangmai.

OPPOSE U.S.-LED WAR PREPARATIONS IN THE GULF

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines condemns the US-led massive military build-up in the Gulf and the war threats emanating from Washington and other Western capitals.

The deployment of tens of thousands of US troops in the Gulf and the positioning of deadly high-technology US war machines are intended for offensive operations to implement the US agenda to get rid of Saddam Hussein through "surgical" opera-

tions. The rapid military build-up is meant to terrorize the Arab people and all those who dare question and resist US domination and control of the oil and other vital resources of the Arab and Middle East countries. The US is callously trying to take advantage of the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council to legitimize its unilateralist and interventionist policy.

It should be recalled that long before the current Gulf crisis, the US organized its Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) with the sole mission of intervention in the Middle East and other Third World countries. The US has also instigated and supported aggression against and illegal occupation of the Palestinian homeland and other Arab lands.

Contrary to its posturing, US policy and its military build-up in the Gulf fuel the escalation of tension, obstruct the search for a viable comprehensive settlement of the crisis and increase the danger of war, which will certainly have disastrous consequences. History shows that the US has shamefully invoked "international law" and "principles" to camouflage its brutal intervention and aggression in Grenada, Panama, Libya, Lebanon, the Philippines and other countries. The strategic alliance between the US and Israel for regional hegemony in the Middle East, the US support for Israeli expansionism, possession of nuclear weapons and brutal repression of the Intifada unmask the real US intention in the Gulf and the Middle East: access to and control of cheap oil through constant diplomatic, political and military pressure to weaken and divide the Arab people.

On the other hand, the NDF welcomes and supports the Arab initiatives to arrive at an Arab solution to the Gulf crisis without foreign intervention. Undeterred by US arrogance and intransigence, the peace advocates offer hope for a comprehensive political settlement of the Gulf crisis.

The NDF reiterates its warning to the Aquino government not to allow the US to use its military bases and facilities in the Philippines on whatever pretext as a staging ground for military operations in the Gulf. Any such use of the bases will be vigorously opposed by the Filipino people and will only give further impetus to the powerful movement for the immediate dismantling of these bases.

The Aquino government's support for US policy in the Middle East seriously jeopardizes the safety of tens of thousands of Filipino contract workers. The NDF denounces the Aquino government's inadequate measures to ensure the safety and rights of the Filipino workers affected by the crisis and calls on the Iraqi authorities to take all necessary steps to protect these.

The NDF calls on all peace-loving forces in the world to expose and oppose US war intentions and preparations in the Gulf and to support the search for a lasting comprehensive peace in the Gulf and the Middle East.

SLORC trampling on religion

Burma's military junta has used martial law measures to force Buddhist monks in Mandalay to end their non-violent boycott of soldiers. This reflects an excessive paranoia on the part of military leaders in that it has driven them to commit a deed inconceivable in a Buddhist society.

The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) sent troops to raid monasteries and arrest dissident monks for refusing to accept alms from, and to perform religious services for soldiers and their families. The boycott was in protest against the alleged killing of some monks in August.

The SLORC also issued an ultimatum for the monks to end their boycott or face legal action.

In undertaking such a move, SLORC has blatantly offended the Buddhist culture of Burma, where the Sangha or Ecclesiastical Council has been at the centre of the people's faith during their lengthy period of political suppression and economic hardship.

The rationale behind this imprudent crackdown was that this latent yet most powerful sector - which could be a catalyst for political change among a long-repressed people – had to be dealt with.

The crackdown has only served to jeopardise SLORC's meagre legitimacy to rule the country. And herein lies what may later unfold as an irony working against SLORC's intention to stay in power. As much as SLORC saw red over the boycott staged by over 50,000 monks, the people could be provoked to rise in defence against the sacrilege committed upon their faith.

A people's uprising as a result of widespread resentment most dreaded by SLORC might erupt sooner that expected under the pretext provided by SLORC itself.

Ever since it brutally crushed the pro-democracy movement in September 1988, SLORC has staked its claim to power by keeping the people in its gunsights, all the while shrugging off international outcry and economic sanctions instituted by the world community, with the exception of Thailand.

The Burmese people's voice of defiance as echoed in the landslide electoral victory of the opposition national League for Democracy in May has remained unheeded, with SLORC employing all possible tactics to put off transferring power to the elected representatives.

And now SLORC has shown it cannot tolerate the silent protest from the monks, numbering around 300,000 throughout the country where 80 percent of

the people are Buddhist.

According to Thai social critic and Buddhist scholar Sulak Sivaraksa, the boycott by Burmese monks represented "the ultimate form of peaceful condemnation accorded to a thorn in religion's side." In this context, the military rulers were in no position to disregard this expression from an important segment of the society.

Similar to Thailand, Theravada Buddhism in Burma incorporates animism, in addition to the core Buddhist teaching and meditation in which Burmese monks reputedly excel. Given Burma's long seclusion, Buddhism there remains relatively untainted by external influences of "consumer culture." The people's religious faith and reverence extended to monks still run deep and is even more pervasive throughout the country than in "modernised" Thailand.

Is it against Buddhist teachings for monks to involve themselves in politics?

Burmese Ambassador to Thailand U Nyunt Swe said SLORC's crackdown only applied to "some young people" who, under the mantle of religion, were engaged in political activism in connection with "communist insurgent elements" in Burma.

The ambassador contended that in keeping law and order, especially in Mandalay where "elements of communist insurgents" were still active, SLORC had issued a directive where by politically active monks, as well as any political party using monks in their movements, were liable to face legal action. And as of midnight last Saturday, any monk found violating this directive would be treated as "ordinary people who undermine stability."

SLORC has identified the Sangha Samakkhi (United Monks), Yahan Pyo (Group of Young Monks) and Sangha Samakkha (Monks' Union) as three among other illegal organisations formed by militant monks and said to be engaged in underground movements.

According to Radio Rangoon, troops raiding monasteries found and captured anti-government documents, duplicating machines, ammunition as well as "illegal flags of the NLD." This was to underscore the official allegation that the Opposition had joined hands with monks to challenge the powers-that-be.

While most of the Burmese monks follow the Buddhist tradition, "some young monks who are not real monks are moving against the authorities," said the ambassador, and the "clearing of monasteries" by Burmese troops in Mandalay had been conducted peacefully "without any shooting."

Burmese monks have been involved in politics since the independence struggle. Phra Uttama, a revered Burmese monk who died in prison, spearheaded the call for independence from Britain. During the September 1988 revolt, monks took to the streets alongside students and people. Many of them fled to Thailand.

Mr Sulak said Thai monks, like their Burmese counterpart, are involved in politics albeit in a different manner and under different circumstances. Buddhist teaching states that monks cannot engage in the sale of arms or assume political positions, but it does not prohibit monks from any form of indirect political participation.

"The ethical dimension of some issues may stand out, while others may be blurred. But in such a blatant case as SLORC, the monks come out."

In Buddhist belief, those who will rule must be a "Dharmaraja," a defender of religion and must take good care of the religious institution. In Thailand, any government must profess its fealty with the stated intention to defend and preserve the Monarchy, the Nation and Religion.

"But monks in Burma, through their boycott, are making a statement that the junta is not a Dharmaraja and has violated the code of ethics. The only thing monks can do under Buddhist tradition is to ***khwam bart*** (literally, inverting the alms-bowl), meaning the Burmese monks have refused to accept alms from the military. This constitutes a statement by the monks that the military has no worth, that the military is harbouring Micchaditthi, (persistence on a mistaken notion)," Mr Sulak said.

The outspoken scholar said SLORC had done "the most stupid thing," an act prompted by utmost desperation. SLORC's crackdown on monks has sent shockwaves across the entire nation and the junta will have a hard time getting away with what it has done.

by Supapohn Kanwerayotin
Bangkok Post
25/10/90

COALITION FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

The Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation is a coalition of interested individuals with membership open to all who share the common goal to seek peace and reconciliation for Cambodia by peaceful non-violent means. These means include education and information-sharing, advocacy and networking with other interested groups. The idea of this organization originated on the Thai-Cambodian border amongst Khmer and foreign relief workers. From there it is growing outward to all who would like to share in this endeavor.

In February of this year, two monks, a Cambodian Buddhist and an American Christian, went to Jakarta for the second Jakarta Informal Meeting of Cambodian leaders. There, with other Buddhist monks, they held meditations for peace, spoke privately with the world press and media of the suffering of the people on all sides. They encouraged all parties to work with an urgency towards a political solution to the conflict. Thus the Coalition was born, as the two monks agreed to formalize their efforts and the group on their way back to Bangkok.

Since then, the Coalition has grown, with about 1000 members on both sides of the Cambodian border as well as in countries world-wide. Information exchange has remained a priority, as we regularly send news from the border to individuals and organizations around the world as well as to Cambodia. This is in the form of a "border update" sent once a month, accompanied by relevant news articles from the Thai English-language press. We also have a news fax-service, through which we fax important articles from the Thai papers and urgent information to groups working in various countries. As for the relief workers on the border, we have a resource library of articles and information on Cambodia from world-wide sources which is constantly updated. Copies are made available to individuals and organizations upon request. Articles from the international press are circulated among the relief workers and the Khmers in the camps. Stories written by CPR members are also published in the Khmer newspaper in the camps.

Emphasizing 'peace and reconciliation' as the discerning light for all future decision making, we write letters to policy makers of all sides, encouraging all parties to free themselves from the trapping of various ideologies and say No to further war and conflict. In the past, we have written to: all of the Cambodian leaders, the five Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council, ambassadors in Thailand to all donor countries of the UN Kampuchean Humanitarian Assistance Programmes, American congressional leaders, various government leaders world-wide and former Nobel Peace Prize winners. We encourage all CPR members to bring the plight of the Khmer people to their various publics through the media.

Believing in active non-violence as our manner of proceeding, we held a seminar on reconciliation on the Thai-Cambodian border in July. 19 Cambodians from three different refugee camps participated, as well as Burmese students, Thai environmental and social activists and relief workers. The seminar was led by Fr Jose Blanco and two colleagues from the Philippines' branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. A follow-up in Cambodia is being pursued with the Mennonites, who sponsored similar activities in Cambodia last year.

We are supported entirely through private donations. Our expenses include photocopying, postage and salaries for two full-time staff members, which total approximately $1500 per month. Other extraneous one-time costs include the non-violent seminar and airfares for trips to Jakarta and New Delhi for international peace conferences.

The CPR is truly a humble effort. We would welcome any suggestions, recommendations and advice you might offer. If we can be of any help to you or your organization, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Prevent the Dumping of European Arms in the Developing World

The current Middle East crisis should place the issue of arms transfers squarely in the center of the international agenda. The destabilizing role of trade in conventional weapons, primarily between the major industrialized nations in the north and the developing nations in the south, can no longer be ignored. The Gulf crisis provides concrete evidence of the dangers and contradictions of a global open market in instruments of war:

> The Scope of Iraq's military power is a direct result of the arms export policies of the USSR, France, and other industrialized states.
>
> Only after the invasion of Kuwait did the Soviet Union and France pledge to suspend arms deliveries to Iraq.
>
> In response to the Gulf crisis the US has promised billions of dollars worth of new arms to Egypt, Israel, and Saudi Arabia.
>
> The United Nations has subsequently been called upon by the USSR to keep a world register of arms sales and to convene negotiations between supplier and recipient states on arms transfer limitations.

It is high time that the question of global arms transfers is openly addressed. Silence surrounding the issue must be broken. All nations have an interest in stemming the flow of conventional arms into regions of conflict. With increasing attention being brought to bear on the issue it is an opportune moment for movements for peace and development to act.

In the coming two months there is a specific and urgent issue to raise:

From 19-21 November 1990 the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) will convene a thirty-five-nation summit meeting in Paris. It is expected that the Paris summit will include the signing of a landmark agreement on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) dramatically reducing tanks, artillery, armoured personnel carriers, combat aircraft, and combat helicopters held in Europe by 23 of the 35 participating states. It is crucial that the end of the cold war in Europe does not lead to the diversion of European and North American arms production to Third World markets.

Hans Dietrich Genscher (FRG Minister for Foreign Affairs) state last November that it is crucial that nations, both east and west, "ensure that military capacity released through disarmament is not misused for arms exports. Disarmament treaties should be supplemented by a ban on transferring to the Third World any military capacity that has become superfluous". Unfortunately, Genscher's proposal was not pursued by the FRG or other governments.

Despite its many benefits for Europe, the CFE Agreement will not contain any provision prohibiting increased transfer of armaments form European and North American arms industries into the developing world.

Signs of a CFE-related arms flow to developing states have already begun to appear:

> In the lead-up to the CFE Agreement the USA has sold 700 M-60 tanks, which would have to be destroyed under the treaty, to Egypt. (Jerusalem Post 30, March 1990)
>
> A spolesman for General Dynamics, the producer of M-1 Abrams tanks, Alvin A. Spivak, has stated that increased foreign business, combined with just a small number of sales to the US Army would prevent the shutdown of four of the company's tank prodction plants. In addition, the company's March 1990 report stated that foreign sales of M-1 tanks "are projected to increase dramatically." (NY Times, 25 March 1990)
>
> The Vice-President of the Aerospace Industries Association of America (a trade association of 53 companies), Joel L. Johnson, has stated that "foreign arms sales will become increasingly important to American arms manufacturers as Pentagon purchases decline." (NY Times, 25 March 1990)

ACTION:

Public pressure is needed now to ensure that political leaders at the Paris Summit will make a commitment to convert rather than divert surplus arms production capacity.

We encourage concerned goups and individuals to lobby parties to the CFE Agreement (all NATO and Warsaw Pact member states) and neutral European states prior to the November summit, calling on them:

> to make a political commitment at the CSCE summit to convert military industries affected by the CFE Agreement to civilian based production and not to increase arms sales to the developing world;
>
> to support the proposal for an international register of arms transfers under UN auspices at the autumn 1990 UN General Assembly;
>
> to require that major arms export deals be subject to parliamentary scrutiny;
>
> to support negotiations between supplier and recipient nations on arms transfer limitations.

Penny Duckworth, Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva, September 1990

AN APPEAL FROM THE VOICELESS MASSES

The frightening events of the North-Eastem Province urge us to make a fervent appeal on behalf of the voiceless masses, be they Sinhalese, Tamils or Muslims, to all Sri Lankans of good will. After years of death and destruction of lives and property, we are hoping and praying that the lives, already shortened by fears and terrors of war, may still have some chance of peace and stability through the talks which were going on between the LTTE and the Government. In spite of criticism and opposition from selfish politicians and others, both sides did well to trust each other and seek a solution in the interest of peace. But unfortunately the worst has happened and once again a war of death and destruction is at out door, if not on our head.

We have survived much strangulation of our lives through months of curfew, shortages of the essentials of life, communication and transport. We have survived shells, mortars, helicopter-firings and aerial bombings. Our surivival is a miracle. We are proud of our faith – be it Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist or Christian – that has kept alive in us an undying hope about a better tomorrow for justice and peace. But have we the physical and moral strength to go through another war? The signs and voices from the top give us only a mortal fear but no assurance of life.

We are already in a coma with minimum facilities of life. We do not even have the strength to speak up for ourselves! Silence in suffering has become the style of our life. We have only one question: Do we still have a future?

It is not our intention here to blame anyone or try to find out who or what went wrong to reverse the valuable dialogue for peace into a war of this magnitude. But amidst the noise of shells, helicopter-firings and aerial bombings, we are fast losing sight of values like truth, justice. and respect for life. And time is running out.

Forgive us if we sound too demanding on those who are fortunate to live away from these war-torn territories. But to whom shall we appeal, if not to you our brothers and sisters? With death and destruction at our door, we appeal to all peace loving citizens of this country to listen to the feeble voice of the voiceless masses who are still on their wounds but not yet succumbed to death, to the voiceless masses whose left-over properties have been burnt by the fires of hatred, to the voiceless masses who are screaming into kovils, temples, mosques and schools and spend their days looking up for some food and their nights searching for a safe place to rest.

Some of us may try to wave victory flags from one post or the other. We may try our best to cover up or pretend not to hear the cry of the voiceless lest our celebrations be disturbed, lest we be forced to sacrifice some of our comforts. But can we really run away from our conscience.

Much harm is done in this world, not by the activity of the bad people, but by the passivity of the good peple. The good citizens of this countgry have surely much more to do for peace and stability than a mere vote at the elections. The silence of these days in the face of massive death and destruction urges us to ask, 'What has happened to the moral conscience of our leaders? What has happened to our religious leaders who have an obligation to be the makers of peace? What has happened to the professionals and intellectuals who are so enlightened about the rights and duties of citizens? What has happened to the business magnates who are so influential in electing governments? Have they all done their best?

Without communications (no newspapers), without transport facilities, not even hospitals for the dying, we are thirsting for truth as well as for peace. We are gripped with fear and the warring factions only terrify us of a worse future. We see only fear and agony written large on the faces of these masses. We do not even have that sufficient hope to share among us.

Are we all going to stand by and helplessly witness in silence the horrors of death and destruction? Are we not obliged to cry out that you, who are outside these dark territories of death and destruction, may hear and come to our aid? You, who are fortunate to be living in some peaceful area of this island, you who are privileged to have a say with those who are in power, please consider your obligation for those who are still in pain, if not in a state of coma, for those who are still very young and have a right for the future. Please do not cordon off our areas as troubled spots and continue your lives undisturbed. Please do not allow a descision that amounts to 'operation successful but patient (Population) died'.

We beg all men of good will in this country, as well as all those who ably represent other countries which can influence our decision-makers, to do their best to stop this senseless war in favour of a meaningful dialogue. We have no confidence in the victory of a war. It can only leave behind a wounded conqueror without even the conquered. We have confidence only in your good will to work for peace. As we close this appeal to you around the early hours of Monday (25/6/90) moring, bombs are falling for the last four hours and the population is literally groaning and dying. We may not live to thank you but we hope that this letter reaches you for your moment of action for a noble cause LIFE.

■ (Instead of our usual comment, we consider it appropriate to adopt and repreduce the appeal from *Tamil Times* by Rev. Dr. S.J. Emmanuel on behalf of the Centre for Better Society based in Jaffna)

Ashram for Life and Society Opens

The Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute's Ashram for Life & Sociey was officially opened on Dec. 14, 2533 (1990). Construction was begun on the memorial hall and park after a ground breaking ceremony on the 20th of April. This was presided over by the Maha Thera in charge of Nakorn Nayok province.





A Pha Pa (forest robe) ceremony to raise funds for the tree planting in the memorial park took place on the 25th of November. Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu kindly agreed to be patron of the event.

The memorial hall was officially opened by Ven. Phra Debvedi (Payutto) on the morning of December 14th. That afternoon, at the auditorium of the National Museum, Dr. Uthai Dulyakasem, Deputy Director of the Santi Pracha Dhamma Institue, delivered the Phya Anuman Rajadhon memorial lecture on the subject "the role of Thai NGO's in the rapidly changing society".

The memorial hall and park will be a center for the training of Sri Lankan Bhikkhus on the principles of Buddhist Nonviolence for 6 weeks beginning in mid-March. This training is designed to impart skills to effectively and nonviolently work toward the resolution of conflict.

Any individuals or organizations wishing to use the Ashram as a spiritual retreat and place to build awareness toward peace and social justice should contact the Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute at: 113-115 Fuangnakhon Rd., Bangkok 10200. Tel. 222-5696-8; Fax 222-5188.

Hilltribes a scapegoat ?

The everpresent dispute between the lowland population and the hilltribes of Thialand was again brought to attention in an article in the Bangkok Post entitled "Battle between Highland and Lowland."

The ever-growing pressure on the farmland in Thailand has often led to accusations against the hilltribes as destroying forest, causing erosion, and polluting water catchment areas with pesticides for farming. This article was along the same lines, detailing the growing of cabbage on Doi Inthanon–Thailand's highest mountain–and in areas near it, and the negative effects this has on the surrounding environment, especially because of the pesticides used.

The hilltribes, who grow the cabbage (part of a "cabbagemafia"), are blamed for the negative effects, but the article fails to point out that the hilltribes were asked to grow the cabbage. It's cultivation is part of a crop substitution program to replace the planting of opium poppies. Behind this crop-substitution program are International aid agencies and the Thai military and government. Other crops are also grown, but difficulties and problems have arisen because the opium poppy required little land and no chemical inputs to grow – crop substitution has inevitably led to a deterioration of the environment, though no doubt it has also improved the local economy, at least for the lowland Thai majority who reap the benefits of fertilizer and pesticide sales and the middle-men in the sale of the new crops.

To place the blame on the hilltribes, whose freedom of action is severely limited both by Thai government policy and by the restrictions of their environment, is to miss the point. It is a situation where blame cannot be assigned, and instead a workable solution, involving all concerned parties, should be sought for.

The Visit of Thai Buddhist Monks to Cambodia

Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute in collaboration with the American Friends Service Committee/ Combodia organized a visit of 4 Thai senior monks and 2 laymen to Cambodia to see the situation of Buddhism there and reestablish the relations between the two sanghas – Thai and Cambodia. As the delegation travelled via Hochiminh City, they had a chance to visit Buddhist temples there too.

The delegation left Bangkok on November 5, 1990 for Hochiminh City and on November 6th they visited the biggest Buddhist University in Vietnam at Chua Vinh Nghiem Pagoda, and Cao Cup Phat Hoe Pali School and met Ven. Thich Minh Chao, the Gerneral Secretary of Vietnamese Sangha. On November 7th, they left Hochiminh City for Phnom Penh and stayed there from November 7th-13th. In Phnom Penh, they met the Most Ven. Tep Vong, the Cambodian Head monk at Onalom Pagoda and discussed with him about the visit of Cambodian senior monks to Siam. The delegation also visited other temples in Phnom Penh and in the provinces outlying the capital city, such as Prey Veng, Kandal, Svay Rieng and Kampong Chnang. Then, during 14th-17th, they visited Siem Reap Province, met monks and people there, and had sightseeing tour of Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom Ancient City.

On November 19th, the delegation came back to Siam directly from Phnom Penh to Bangkok.

From Burma

7th Aug, 1990
Dear Professor Sulak

According to the arrangement of your institute, I got a chance to attend the training programme in Canada sponsored by Canadian Human Rights Foundation from 9th July to 4th August, 1990. I'm very grateful to you and your institute for your remarkable contribution to me, my organization and the people of Burma.

I left Bangkok for Canada on 6th July and got to Charlottetown on 7th July. The training started on 9th July. It took for two weeks in Charlottetown. Professor John P. Humphrey, who drafted the Universal Declartion of Human Rights in United Nation and other professors from law universities gave the lectures to the participants who came from various foreign countries. It was a good chance for us because on the programme of workshop, I presented the situation of Burma to the participants. I was told that they felt something and they sympathized us more.

The lecture and teaching of professors are very nice. And then, Foundation distributed us many documents on human rights. The participants can frankly discuss and exchange information not only in the classroom but outside it. I have got the new friends from various countries, knowledge on human rights to some extent and knowledge on international law. I could enjoy the picturesque view of Charlottetown and beautiful summer.

In the training programme, I learned the following subjects.

1. International Human Rights Law
   (Prof. John P. Humphrey)
2. Philosophy and Framework of Human Rights
   (Prof. Suzanne Bisrks)
3. Strategies for the International Implementation of Human Rights
   (Prof. Best Ramcharan)
4. Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom
   (Prof. Gerald Gall)
5. Aboriginal Rights
   (Prof. Mary Ellen Tuspel)
6. Human rights and the Third World
   (Prof. Vitit Muntarbhorn)

After the second week, we moved to Ottawa, the Capital of Canada. Foundation arranged for us to stay in the Guesthouse of Switzerland on 89 Daly Street. From 23rd July to 1st Aug, we went to the following governmental and non-governmental organizations, studied their functions and discussed with the persons concerned. It is very effective, too.

(a) External Affairs of Canadian Government.
(b) Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa
(c) Refugee Board
(d) Department of Justice
(e) Secretary of State
(f) Assembly of First Nations
(g) The North-south Institute
(h) Canadian International Development Agency

In the evening of 1st Aug, we moved to Montreal, the Capital of Quebec Province. On Thursday, we went sight seeing around the town. On Friday, we went to the International Centre for Human Rights and Development which was founded by Canadian Government.

When the training programme was about to finish, a government consultant officer of Canada asked each and every participant for comment on training. I also made a comment of the strong points and weakness of the training programme.

The followings are the strong points:

(a) The teachers (professors) are clever, patient and active in teaching. The courses are generally nice.
(b) The Foundation has planned the definite programme one after another for the participants.
(c) The staff members of the Foundation are generous and work hard. They try to solve the problems of participants and make everything complete for the participants.

The followings are the weaknesses:

(a) In the course on human rights, there is no subject which study systematically when and where human rights violations happened in the world.
(b) According to teaching of Buddha and great philosophers, the theory of the relations of cause and effect is the universal truth. Nevertheless, the training did not emphasize or specialize on the basic cause and reasons of human rights violations.
(c) There is no definite plan and network for the future for achieving human rights in the world in different situations (or) circumstances in different times.

The other question of consultant is how I know about the human rights training and how I had a contact with Canadian Human Rights Foundation. "Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute" is my answer.

On 4th Aug, I left Montreal for Bangkok bringing a lot of documents issued by the teachers of Canadian Human Rights Foundation.

Anyhow, in conclusion, what I would like to inform you is that the training programme is very effective for me and for my organization.

Thank you very much for everything.

Yours Sincerely,
Aung Htoo
Secretary
ABSDF

From University of Hawaii

Dear Friends Sulak and Pracha,

With deep gratitude we have received the excellent planning information you have sent on the 3rd International Conference of INEB during February 21-23, 1991 as well as the Puala Green Burma Peace Witness project for April.

Unfortunately I cannot now assure you of being able to respond to the honor of your kind invitation to join the 3rd conference. As you know, I will be busy in the Jain-convened 2nd International Conference on Peace and Nonviolent Action to be held in Rajsamand-Udaipur (Rajasthan) India during February 17-21, 1991. Additionally, I will be teaching two courses on political leadership here at that time (one with former U.S. presidential candidate Michael Dukakis) and may have to return as quickly as possible from India.

But even if for a day or a few hours I might be able to enjoy a reunion and learn from you either enroute or on return from India. It cannot be seen clearly now and in any case it need not place any burden of arrangements upon you. I will just "drop in" if anyway possible.

We keenly missed Sulak at the 20th ABCP Anniversary Conference of the ABCP in Ulan Bator during September 18-23, 1990 where some 120 gathered from 24 countries. As you surely know the renaissance of Buddhism in Mongolia is amazing as compared with our visit there just a year ago in 1989: e.g. from one temple to 47 with 1000 lamas; from one party to at least five opposition parties; from few to many newspapers; from religious control to religious freedom – the post of Minister for Religious Affairs has been abolished. We met with 39-year old President Achirbat of Mongolia who strongly affirmed the new policy of religious freedom. Another extraordinary happening is the appointment of the Most Ven. Kushok Bakula (Buddhist from Ladakh) as India's Ambassador to Mongolia. He also was elected the new ABCP President. Dr. G. Lubsantseren remains as Secretary-General.

Please accept profound respect for all your energetic contributions to transforming leadership for a nonviolent world in Southeast Asia and wherever you journey.

With warmest aloha,
Glenn D. Paige
Professor

From Sweden

First of all, thank you for a most inspiring talk in Uppsala. It gives me some hope for the future of the Dhamma even in Thailand.

To give you some idea of the past Buddhist situation in Sweden seen from my own perspective, I also send you a copy of an old paper I delivered in Helsinki ten years ago. Much has happened in Sweden since then, especially since the Ven. Chutintaro arrived here from Thailand in 1984 and the Ven. Sumanaratana from Sri Lanka in 1985, so I would have phrased some parts differently today, but this is the way it came out - it was written during a period of much controversy among Swedish Buddhists.

I've given some thought to the coming INEB conference. I hope to be able to come, and there are a couple of issues which I would propose for the agenda, since I happen to be involved in them myself.

Firstly, the death penalty. I suppose you've read my public letter to the WFB about the matter in 1987, printed in Karma nr. 2/89 (in English). As I mentioned to you, I haven't as yet got an answer, but there is something which I don't know if it's a pure coincidence, or if there might be some casual connection - since I sent this letter, Amnesty International hasn't, as far as I know, got any reports about death sentences or executions in Thailand. (I'm active in the Action Group Against the DeathPenalty of the Swedish A. I. section.) Of course, a Royal Amnesty came in december 1987, but that one concerned only those death prisoners who had already had their sentences confirmed at the highest level.

Nevertheless, both Sri Lanka (where there haven't been any legal executions since the fall of Sirima, I think) and Thailand still have the death penalty in their law books, although both governments make deep bows to the Dhamma. Taiwan is also a bad case (as well as Mainland China, of course, but Beijing will hardly listen to Buddhist arguments). I think something has to be done - maybe INEB could at least make some kind of statement?

Secondly: the situation of handicapped people. Some years ago, I was asked by some friends of mine to join as a board member a non-profit foundation in support of a hospital for physically handicapped children in southern Poland, and I didn't quite manage to say no, so there I am - I send you a copy of the manuscript for a coming information folder. Same as you, its directors always tried to be as independent as possible in relation to the state, and to the church as well, which I think will prove

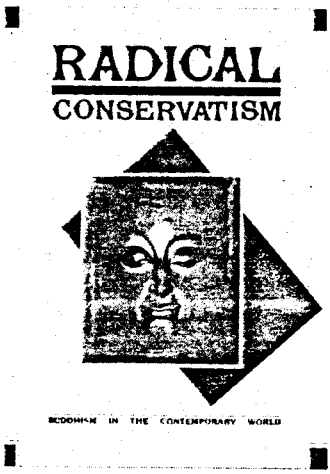
wise in the long run, but which has at periods given them serious problems - the Communist Party didn't like hospital directors who refused to join it... (Now, there's no more Communist Party in Poland, but there's no more money either.)

In October-November 1989, I was sent on behalf of the Gorka foundation to a seminar about handicap information, arranged in Tunis by the ***Association des Parents et Amis des Handicapés de Tunisie*** (postal adress B.P. 35 Tunis, 1015 R. P. Tunisie; visiting adress Boulevard 9 Avril, Immeuble SNIT Local 6 C 8, 1006 Tunis, tel. 564 442 and 567 961, chairman Hichem Mansour). This seminar might become the starting point of some kind of network dealing with this kind of information problems. Only countries from Europe and the Arabic-speaking world were represented, plus one or two delegates from Quebec (it seems that the world seen from Tunisia's horizon consists mainly of the French Empire plus the Califate), but a second seminar is planned for 1992 in France – so if there are members of the Network engaged in this field, maybe a contact could prove useful?

Regarding the social aspect of Buddhism in general - do you know if there has ever been made any comparative study of Buddhism and Socialist Anarchism? I always felt that there are some interesting parallells in the general attitude towards power (see e.g. the Mugapakkhajataka, or the words of the Brahmans about the new-born Bodhisatta - **cakkavattī vā buddho vā**, either or) and in the over-all principle that the means must harmonize with the goal (which the Anarchists are argumenting against the Marxists, and – on another level – the Buddhists against the Jains). Interestingly enough, I saw in Sangkarakshita's biography of the Anagarika Dharmapa, that Dharmapala and Peter Kropotkin met in London at the beginning of the century, and in any case, I think that if we want at all to compare Buddhism with Socialism, or to talk about a Dhammic Socialism, our view would be very much lopsided if we were to take no regard of those Libertarian Socialists who were thrown out of the First International, and only care about those Authoritarian Socialists (Karl Marx et consortes) who did the throwing.

Hope to hear from you soon,
in the Dhamma,
Stefan Lindgren

RADICAL CONSERVATISM: BUDDHISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD



Jointly published by the Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists. 7"x9.5". 560 pages. 750 Baht Softcover; 1,200 Baht Hardcover (Thailand). US$38 Softcover ,US$ 60.00 Hardcover Overseas (Postage included).

The variety of essays which form ***Radical Conservatism,*** a special tribute to the Ven. Thai monk Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's 84th birhtday or seventh 12-year life, paints a vast landscape of Buddhist thoughts. From philosophy to history to ethics to development, this fine collection of works from scholars all over the globe gives the readers a perspective on Buddhism's roots and direction in the modern world. In celebration of Buddhadasa's birthday, the joint publishers have called upon an impressive array of scholars, such as the Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, Donald Swearer, Phra Debvedi, and Louis Gabaude, to create this volume. Many of the essays naturally concentrate on Thai Buddhism; however, there are also a number of essays which give the readers a broader view of Buddhism in the West and the rest of Asia. In addition, Thailand's rich Buddhist heritage also serves as an excellent microcosm for the problems which Buddhists and all of mankind face in present modernization, development, and environmental crisis. Above all, the one common theme which runs through the myriad of writings is how Buddhism can present a paradigm within which to face the

new difficult challenges of the post-modern world. This idea of a socially engaged Buddhism offers a central platform upon which the essays communicate to a host of ideas.

The book contains five sections which attempt to give focus to the material although there is a great variety of themes within each section.

Section I, "Buddhist Thought in the Contemporary World," generally gives reflections on Buddhist philosophy and history. As Buddhist philosophical texts can often be, some of these essays are quite dense for the average readers. However, most of them give penetrating insights into Buddhist thoughts, and for the lay readers. The Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh's essay, "Seeding the Unconscious: New Views on Buddhism and Psychotherapy," clearly, simply, and beautifully addresses its topic in the Ven. Bhikkhu's inimitable style. The section concludes with an extremely well-written and concise history of Buddhism from ancient India to present day America by the well-known Thai scholar Ven. Phra Debvedi. In sum, this section is one of the strongest of the book and a compelling way to begin the readings.

Section II, "Socially Engaged Buddhism," addresses the present day problems of development in the Third World, violence as the prevalent means of solving conflict, and the deterioration of the earth's environment. These themes are discussed from a Buddhist viewpoint and how Buddhism can offer an active method to confront these urgent crises. The Thai perspective, in addition, offers an excellent forum for the discussion of development and ecological problems seeing that these are so imminent in Thailand today. Prawase Wasi, a medical doctor in Bangkok, writes one particularly compelling essay, "Alternative Buddhist Agriculture," detailing the efforts being made by some like Japan's Masanobu Fukuoka in this area. This section offers a good dive into the practical social aspects of present day Buddhism after the theoretical essays of Section I.

Section III, "Buddhadasa and Siamese Buddhism," as its title suggests, is a look at the man himself, trends and difficulties in Thai society and Buddhism, and Buddhadasa's often controversial relationship to these developments. The section opens with an excellent essay by one of the foremost scholars on Buddhadasa, Louis Gabaude, who sets the proper tone for the rest of the section. The section then continues through the theoretical and philosophical ideas of Buddhadasa onto life at his forest monastery, Suan Mokkh, and the role of the forest monastery in modern Thai society. Finally, the section ends with an interesting yet, somewhat, seemingly out-of-place essay on women and Buddhism in Thailand. Ultimately, however, the section provides a good introduction to the world of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, his teachings, and his ideas for the future of Thai Buddhism.

Section IV, "Perspectives on Buddhist Practice," expands the landscape on Buddhism in the modern world with essays on Buddhism in India, Sri Lanka, Kampuchea, Mongolia, Malaysia, Europe, and America. This section provides much illumination, as well. Outside of the Thai perspective, the reader sees how the Mahayana tradition (Thailand is a Theravada nation) has also influenced the world and, especially, the West. In addition, we are given other cultural perspectives, such as Bhikkhu Piyasilo's thoughts on Buddhist music in Malaysia. There are other compelling essays, such as one on the resurgence of Khmer Buddhism and another on ethnic conflict in Ladakh, India, between Buddhists and Muslims. In sum, Section IV, provides a further unfolding of the role of Buddhism in the modern world and indicates that it is witnessing a renaissance in many places, such as the West, India, and, possibly, Kampuchea.

Finally, Section V, "Inter-religious Dialogues toward Human Development," addresses a final and important point of how Buddhism relates to other world faiths. This is an essential section in completing the general theme of the book, a socially engaged Buddhism. Finding harmony between a Buddhist vision of society in a world that is not all Buddhist is, perhaps, Buddhism's most vital dilemma. Considering the theme of ***Radical Conservatism*** , as a whole, the book would be myopic and irresponsible if it did not address this point. Therefore, Section V is the essential conclusion to this collection of essays. In addition, it is performed well. In five different essays, the authors attempt to find a harmony of "Middle Way" for Buddhism and other religions to discover a common ground for world problem-solving. In this vein, Section V also presents a final view on Buddhadasa's thinking. His ideas of "ordinary language" and "Dhamma language" help to illustrate where the common ground can be found among religions. On the "ordinary" level, religions need to keep their respective identities, yet there is this "Dhamma" or higher level where the religions and mankind, in general, can meet and form a consensus on solving world problems. This allows for coming to terms with the aforementioned problems of develop-

ment, environmental destruction, and violence without the sacrificing of one's own or one's society's identity. The essays in Section V do not bring *Radical Conservatism* to a triumphant end. This is not their goal. Rather, they forge more area for inter-religious and interhuman dialogue. In sum, this forms a fitting conclusion to the series of writings and fulfills the tribute to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu which the authors of the essays wished with their contributions.

Jonathan Watts

The Social Face of Buddhism: An Approach to Social and Political Activism

by Ken Jones Wisdom Publications; London, 1989. 9.95, $18.95

This wise and learned book is essential reading for all interested in the relationship between concern for spiritual development and, concern for the well-being of society and its members. Is not the former, some may ask, the prime task of all Buddhists for without it all else is meaningless; yet may it not degenerate into self-absorption, into what Zen Mastser Rinzai describes as 'the darkest abyss of tranquility, purity, serenity - this is indeed what one has to shudder at'? On the other hand some may stress the latter as an imperative of compassion; yet it may degenerate into secular materialism.

Ken Jones, himself both a Buddhist and an activist involved, for example, with nuclear disarmament and the welfare of prisoners, believes the two are not incompatible and explores this issue with sensitivity and subtlety.

His book is divided into two main sections, Understanding, which is the shorter, and Action. The first is subdivided into three parts, the first discussing the 'Buddha's diagnosis of the human condition's, and the next two 'the Mahayana implications for our understanding of social phenomena'. Action, the second section, is again subdivided, into five parts: 'training and life style', 'the rationale and forms of Buddhist activism', 'engaged Buddhism: the Asian experience', 'violence and anxiety', and 'the making of the good society'. There are Introductions by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Venerable Ajahn Tiradhammo Thera, and an Epilogue, 'not hope but possibilities', a title which well represents the balanced way characteristic of the whole book – not optimistic, not pessimistic, but in accord with the spirit of the Middle Way which exemplifies the tenor of the book.

Of course we need not rely on the historical example of Asoka to demonstrate that Buddhism and social and political engagement can mix. In our own day has not the Dalai Lama been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work for peace and justice, and not only in relation to Tibet? Is not Sulak Sivaraksa internationally known for similar socio-political activism? Are not many of the Sri Lanka Bikkhus much involved, some might say excessively, in the affairs of their own society and its development? Does Zen Master Robert Aitkin, quoted by Ken Jones, not believe that: 'before one can work for the protection of animals, forests and small family farms – or for world peace – one must be completely realised, compassionate and peaceful. There is no end to the process of perfection, and so the perfectionist cannot begin Bodhisattva work. Compassion and peace are a practice, on cushion in the meditation hall, within the family, on the job, and at political forums. Do your best with what you have and you will mature in the process'.

But this view is not universal. In Britain, for example, although there are some thousands of Buddhists of different persuasions, the British Network of Engaged Buddhists (until recently called the Buddhist Peace Fellowship) of which Ken Jones is a leading member, has only less than two hundred members; luminaries of the national Buddhist 'establishment' view it with disapproval.

The study of these and many other aspects of engaged Buddhism, plus most pertinent and helpful analyses of Buddhist thought in general, take place within the broad context of an examination of the pains, problems and potentialities of today's samsaric world. I know of no other work of the sort so comprehensive or written with such elegant lucidity.

Adam Curle

What the Buddha never taught

by Timothy Ward. Element Books (Great Britain), 1990. 6.95/$11.95.242pp.

This is more than the entertaining and well-written inside story of a stay at Pah Nanachat, the famous international forest Monastery in Thailand.

It is a case study of a young Canadian's experience of Thai forest monasticism, what he felt about it, the daily incidents, and the pen portraits of the ex-gospel singer, the ex-real estate

tycoon, the applied physics drop-out and the other immates. Readers are left to make what they will (if they will) from the rumpled and contradictory reality which the author wisely leaves in their lap. The book can be the more instructive if we do not hasten to tidy up after him to our own particular satisfaction. For monasticism lends itself all too readily to extremes of idealisation or of ridicule.

What the author sees as the systematic "suffocation of ego" certainly turns out to be a grim business for some, like Ven. Ycnaviro: "If a monk makes a mistake he can really suffer for it. In a community this small, everybody knows everything. You don't keep many secrets. The smallest things make you miserable for weeks. There's no escape. Sometimes the other monks make you want to quit. If you break a rule they look down on you. It can drive you crazy".

The community falls far short of the author's ideals. Sitting in his **kuti** with his friend Jim, he laments its hypocrsy, complacency and exclusiveness. "The question which remains is, does it work? Has the training borne fruit in any of the Western monks?...I'd rather be a **samadhi**-suicide than turn out like any of [the senior monks]. The only life with any of the joy of liberation in it is Ruk's. But his gentleness and laughter could be due to his natural disposition... I hope his beautiful soul does not suffocate". Nevertheless, the author's own meditative practice bears fruit, and his gratitude to **Ajahn** Chah, the founder-teacher of this monastic tradition, is sincere and profound. He comes to realise how much of our deeply unsatisfactory reality we create from within ourselves. "Do you know what is craziest about my bad feelings towards Pah Nanachat? I can only see complacency and manipulation here, and I hate it. But I think it will change my life. No matter what happens now, if I get depressed, I can't blame it on the conditions. I know I can't escape... There is no way out. If I can accept that maybe I'll stop trying to run. It won't make me happy. Happy or unhappy doesn't seem to make a difference any more".

This book can serve as a reminder of how insight and deeper understanding ***can*** grow precisely from those very points which contradict our self-confirming picture of how it should all ***really*** be. If we are able to give our discomfiture no more nor less than a strong and bare attention, so that we become as one with it, then we need have no fear of falling into an ethical limbo! On the contrary, the release we shall be given from off our opinionated and affronted hook will leave us with the clarity and space to respond more skilfully and effectively to what the situation requires.

It is this empowerment through humility which also lies at the very heart of socially-engaged spirituality. A reflective reading of this book can provide a nice little exercise in that direction. It will also certainly give much enjoyment both to you and the many friends who will want to borrow it...

Ken Jones

The King of the White Elephant

by Pridi Banom- yong, 2nd edition, 1990, 170 pages, published by the Thammasat Association, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. US$ 10.00 Available at Kled Thai Co., Ltd. and Song Sayam Col, Ltd., Bangkok.



Pridi Banomyong was a Senior Statesman with experiences in different fields--as the Finance Minister in 1940; the first Rector of the University of Moral and Political Sciences; the Regent of His Majesty the King Anada Mahidol; a very busy person with many affairs of great responsibility to the nation; yet, he found time to write this novel from his historical imagination. The purpose of this publication was to propagate his anti-war and anti-violence concepts during the pre-World War II period, thus, encouraging the loving-kindness principle of religion to be used effectively to problem-solving, instead of violence among human beings, and that ***"Right is always victorious over Might."***

By giving an account of glories of the old capital, Ayodaya, the lives and the ways of living of its people were indeed very interesting. Although the King him-

self was still very young when he came to the throne, he felt the ceremonies and splendours of the court were disagreeable to him. He stuck to his own simple ways and severe tasks. He loved peace and welfare of his nation other than anything else. He defended his country in a single combat risking his own life against the king of the neighbouring country and won everlasting peace. In this way, incessant sufferings of people were released.

Historical views in this novel are very obvious. The morals are for people to live in peace, love, and understnanding, which will, eventually, bring about unity to people and the society in which they live.

The book was first published half a century ago, together with a black-and-white film directed and produced by the late Senior Stateman himself. It was reprinted in August 1990 to commemorate the 45th anniversary of Thai Peace Day celebration. Without his direct involvement in the Free Thai Movement carried out clandestinely against the Japanese occupation of Thailand, the allies would not have agreed with him that the Thai declaration of war against Great Britain and U.S.A. was null and void. Hence the Kingdom managed to maintain its independence all through. Yet, the powers that be in Thailand still ignore his valuable contribution which started with bringing democracy to Siam in 1932.

Hopefully, this new edition of ***The King of the White Elephant*** will remind the readers that, besides being a Statesman, Mr. P. Banomyong was also a good prose writer, and his vision of Buddhist socialism was a little too far ahead of his contemporaries.

T.T.T.

DHARMA GAIA

A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology. Edited by Allan Hunt Badiner. Parallax Press, 1990. $15.00.

Dharma Gaia is a compendium of numerous essays by twenty-nine different authors. There are some fine, thoughtful articles with provocative ideas. The topic is timely, and this is one of the first books to tie together these two subjects. Unfortunately, with such a diversity of thought the book never seems to find a consistent focus or primary thread.

Dharma Gaia is divided into six parts: "Green Buddhism," "Shifting Views of Perception," "Experiencing Extended Mind," "Becoming Sangha," "Meditations on Earth as a Sentient Being," and "A Call to Action."

Part one, "Green Buddhism," gives an historical perspective of early Buddhist views on nature. The clearest essay is provided by Chatsumarn Kabilsingh's "Green Buddhism." Her focus is on the direct and immediate relationship of early Buddhists with the environment. Teachings from the Buddha to the Dalai Lama are provided as examples of our ecological interrelatedness.

The second section, "Shifting Views of Perception," is particularly confusing and lacks a clear perspective. Joanna Macy's "The Greening of the Self" is wordy and spends much time on the sense of self(the big "I"). Her initial statement that, "Something is happening to the self!" is an attempt to make the self something meaningful and central to the issue. She believes that this self is "...being replaced by the ecological self or the eco-self...co-extensive with other beings and the life of our planet." So, Macy finds us in the process of "greening the self." Such jargon confuses Buddhist teachings regarding the self with New Age concepts. If the self inherently doesn't exist, what is it that Joanna macy is turning green?

Martin Pitt's "The Pebble and the Tide" is the clearest and most focused piece of the third section, "Experiencing Extended Mind." Pitt's words are straightforward and cut through the complexities and confusion of the eco-fog. His premise is elegant in its simplicity: "Ecology is right here, in our practice, it is all around and in us." Pitt doesn't distance humans from ecology. Ecology is not something other, it is this moment. For Pitt, "Ecology is right here." Understand this and the self-made line between humans and the planet disappears. He clarifies this further with, "Morality, then, is not a question of piously doing the right thing but of being (and hence doing) what we truly are.." this is the perspective from which humans can develop an active and participatory relationship with the environment.

Part four, "Becoming Sangha," has two well-developed essays: Sulak Sivaraksa's "True Development" and Ken Jones' "Getting Out of Our Own Light." Sivaraksa's searing statement, "For the most part, materialism diminishes the quality of human life and fosters violence," aggressively forces a review of our relationships with all humans. It is the stick, to the ego, leading to an awakening that, "cultivation must first develop from within."

Jones' essay investigates Buddhism's possible contributions to a spirituality that is both ecologically and socially grounded. His activism is apparent throughout his writing, and his knowledge is based on involvement with planetary social issues. He questions Buddhist practitioners who

involve themselves with "ethnically unproblematic issues"rather than "with the militant wretched of the Earth (especially close to home), and with the structural violence of our social system." Is it safer to save the whales than to clean up our own backyards? Jones asks us to get dirty, participatory and engaged with the realities of this earth rather than the "safer" and "cleaner" aspects of ecology. Ken Jones' meaningful analysis may be to engaged Buddhism what Ken Wilbur's writings have been to transpersonal and Buddhist psychology.

Part five, "Meditations on Earth as a Sentient Being" ends with Allen Ginsberg's "Do the Meditation Rock." Ginsberg's poem is the jewel of the book, no matter whether you read it down or across.

Part six, "A Call to Action," is the focal point of Dharma Gaia. Aitken Roshi's "Right Livelihood for the Western Buddhist" brings the notion of engaged Buddhism full circle. He quotes Zen teacher Yung-chia, "We are here only briefly, and we are parts of each other." What more would be needed in understanding our relationship with this planet?

Dharma Gaia has essays clear like space and essays cloudy as mud. The book has many paths; some will lead to action, some to understanding, and others will lead to further words and confusion.

Tony Somlai
from Practice and Ecology
Summer 1990

Siam in Crisis

by Sulak Sikvaraksa.
Revised 2nd edition. Bangkok: Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute and Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development (TICD), 1990. 371 pp. $20, cloth; $15, paper.



Most of Sulak's books, as well as those he has sponsored or edited, begin with the suggestion of a crisis: "This kingdom was known as Siam until 1939, when it was changed to Thailand...The name, Thailand, signifies the crisis of traditional Siamese Buddhist values." It is the gap between the preservation of traditional Siamese values and evolution or development along the lines of modern "Thai-land" that constitutes Sulak's crisis. Sulak is critical of thoughtless breaks with the past – symbolized by the Westernization of the country's name – and the general unquestioning acceptance of Western values in Thailand and other parts of Asia. He would prefer to go back to the use of the term Siam, even though the origins of this term are likely non-Thai (Tai).

This volume is an excellent introduction to Sulak's perception of a crisis in values in Thai (Siamese) society today. In Sulak's notes to the second, revised edition, he states that "There would seem to be no more need to reprint Siam in Crisis, but quite a few guidebooks mention this book, so foreign visitors keep asking for it." But this is not a book for the casual tourist to Thailand; it is one of the more provocative primers on Sulak's often controversial thought, and so deserves republication for that reason alone. The revised edition is, for the most part, an improved, expanded, and updated version of the earlier edition.

The first major section of essays introduces us to some of Sulak's selection of major historical personalities in Siamese life. In the original volume, these personalities were presented as literary figures, ranging from Prince Naris to Anuman Rajadhon and Kukrit Pramoj. This revised edition has added seven more short biographies to what has now become a more general "personality section," which has come to include Westerners, such as Thomas Merton, whose life ended abruptly in Bangkok in 1968, and the follower of Tibetan Buddhism, Alexandra David-Neil. The section ends with the sketch of Shigeharu Masumoto, who founded the International House of Japan and fostered an intellectual exchange program between Japan and Southeast Asia and increased mutual friendship between Japan and the international community.

The revised edition maintains two sections: 1) the background to understanding Thai politics, and 2) Western contributions to Thai studies. The former contains essays on the problems of elites versus the common people, the students' role in society,the avoidance of basic social problems, the prospects of

democracy, and Siam versus the West. The latter section discusses the influence of America on books, magazines, and newspapers in Thailand, and gives a Siamese response to Western political science.

The section in the earlier edition entitled "Siam in the Wider World 1966-1970," which discussed some of Siam's neighbors, including Laos and Vietnam, has been replaced with sections on "Siam-SE Asia-Japan" and "New Crisis: Viewpoint from the Late 1980s." These new sections raise issues concerning Japan in Southeast Asia and a comparison of ethnic minorities in Burma and Siam. since the publication of the earlier Crisis and this revised edition, it is clear that a good portion of Sulak's attention has been focused on Japan. The latter section also includes a telling interview with Western Buddhist Christopher Titmuss on the "Religion of Consumerism" in modern Siam, in which Sulak expresses his Buddhist views that problems and development in society are increasingly attributable to greed ("Development is another word for greed," p.178) to be tempered by Buddhist skillful means (upāya, p.180).

In publications that have followed the original version of Siam in Crisis, such as A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society (1981) and Siamese Resurgence (1985), Sulak has been increasingly applying the Siamese Buddhist tradition to modern, national development – the changes that have occurred between the revisions of Siam in Crisis also reflect his Buddhist interests ("My job is to tell people of the ways to overcome their sufferings and unsatisfactoriness in life," p.181). The section on "Aspects of Thai Buddhism" has, therefore, grown over the last decade, and a new final appendix, "On the Author and his Views," which includes more snippets about Sulak than by him (similar to the appendix in Siamese Resurgence), also reflects Sulak's efforts along these lines. An important interview with Buddhadasa Bhikkhu appears in both editions (reprinted from an earlier publication, Visakha Puja 2510/1967). An essay on the waning of the study of the Buddhist Pali language written by Phra Devamedhi, perceived as another facet of the crisis in tradition and values, was removed in the revised edition. Perhaps an enhanced or updated version of the original article would have been better than dropping the point of the decline in Pali studies altogether. In the new appendix, credit is given to Sulak for stubbornly maintaining his stance despite resistance from others and the prevailing materialistic trends in development (the case of his being charged with lese majesty in 1984 comes up often, for example, see "Notes from the Author on the Second Edition," and pp.184, 322). Sulak's inclusion of the recent, candid thoughts (diary notes?) of a volunteer worker temporarily residing at his house in Bangkok, "Living at Sulak's," reveals his determination, honesty, and straightforward approach to leadership.

Even though it has been about a decade since the first version of Siam in Crisis was printed, in the introduction to this revised edition Sulak syas, "My view on my country and the region has not changed significantly. In fact the crisis in ethical and cultural values seems to be worsening." It is Sulak's optimism in the face of precious few triumphs in changing the course of development that comes through loud and clear.

As with Sulak's other volumes, there is much to inspire and much to take exception with – and Sulak knows the value of both of these. It is the difficulty of treading a middle path between inspired, meaningful development and dealing with self-doubt and the greed and doubts of others that is clearly communicated. In reading this book, the reader is introduced to a number of prominent Siamese and international figures who have assisted Siam, several important issues facing the evolution of Siam, and the provocative thought of a modern thinker struggling to make valuable traditions relevant to the present moment.

Grant A. Olson
Northern Illinois University
from Crossroad 1990

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SEEDS OF PEACE

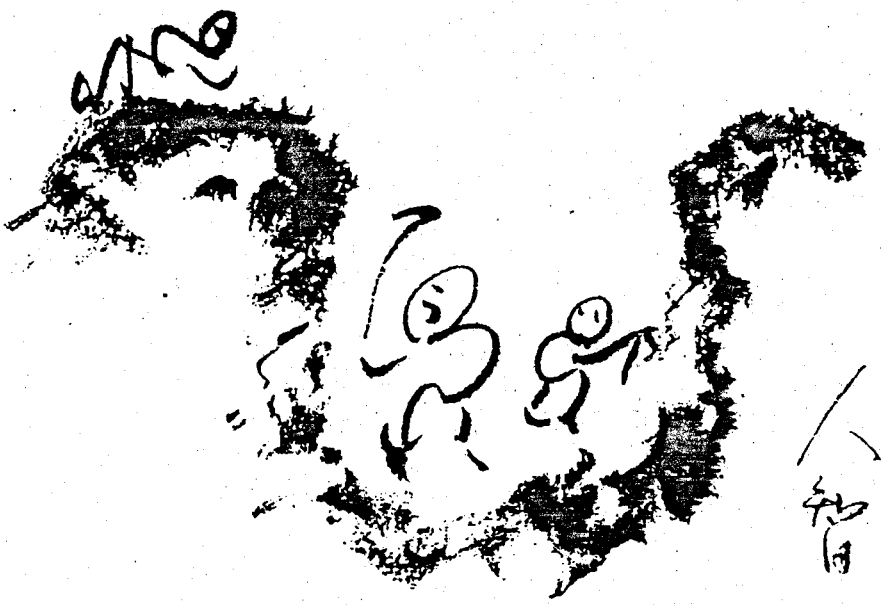
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Dédicated to
the memory of

CARL MAGNUS THORNES



(21 March 1968 - 26 February 1991)



Founding
Editor of

Karma :
The Scandinavian Journal of Buddhism



SEEDS OF

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Prince Wan's Centenary

On 25 August 1991 UNESCO will ask all its member states to celebrate the birthday centenary of H.R.H. Prince Wan Waithayakorn.



Prince Wan was a son of Prince Naradhip and grandson of King Mongkut, Rama IV. His grandmother and his mother were reknowned dancers of great beauty.

He was first educated in Bangkok and won the King's scholarship to England, where he first studied at Marlborough College and then Balliol College, Oxford, as well as at Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques in Paris.

After the First World War, he served in the Siamese mission at the League of Nations. At the age of 33, he became a permanent undersecretary in the Foreign Ministry, and at the age of 35, he was appointed Minister to the Court of St. James's.

After his return to Bangkok, he became the first Siamese professor at Chulalongkorn University. Later, he was appointed Rector of Thammasat University and elected President of the Siam Society, under royal patronage. He was also President of the Royal Institute, an equivalent of the Academie Français. His specialty was word coinage. Especially after the end of the absolute monarchy in 1932, he found it necessary to create many new Thai words for democracy, constitution, development, service, policy, etc. Some of these words have been adapted for usage in Laos, Cambodia and even India, because his words trace their roots back to Khmer, Pali and Sanskrit.

Prince Wan was the first Asian to be elected President of the UN General Assembly, which post he held from 1956-57. It was said that during his presidencey he conducted UN affairs in resolving international conflicts in a Buddhist manner, that is nonviolently, with loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity.

He was loved and respected by most who knew him. His scholarship, his sense of humour and his friendliness, as well as his humility, will be long remembered.

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Objectives of TICD

1. To coordinate work among individuals, groups of individuals and various agencies dealing with religions and development in the course of working together.

2. To share experience in and knowledge of religions and development as well as exploring ways and means of working together.

3. To offer training and secure resources in terms of man-power and materials to support and enhance the agencies that need help.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Since *Seeds of Peace* comes out only every four months, quite a lot of news and information comes through the editorial office between issues. In the time since the last issue came out, important events have taken place all over the world, and the change in the international scene since the "collapse" of the Eastern European and Soviet communist bloc seems to be accelerating all of the time.

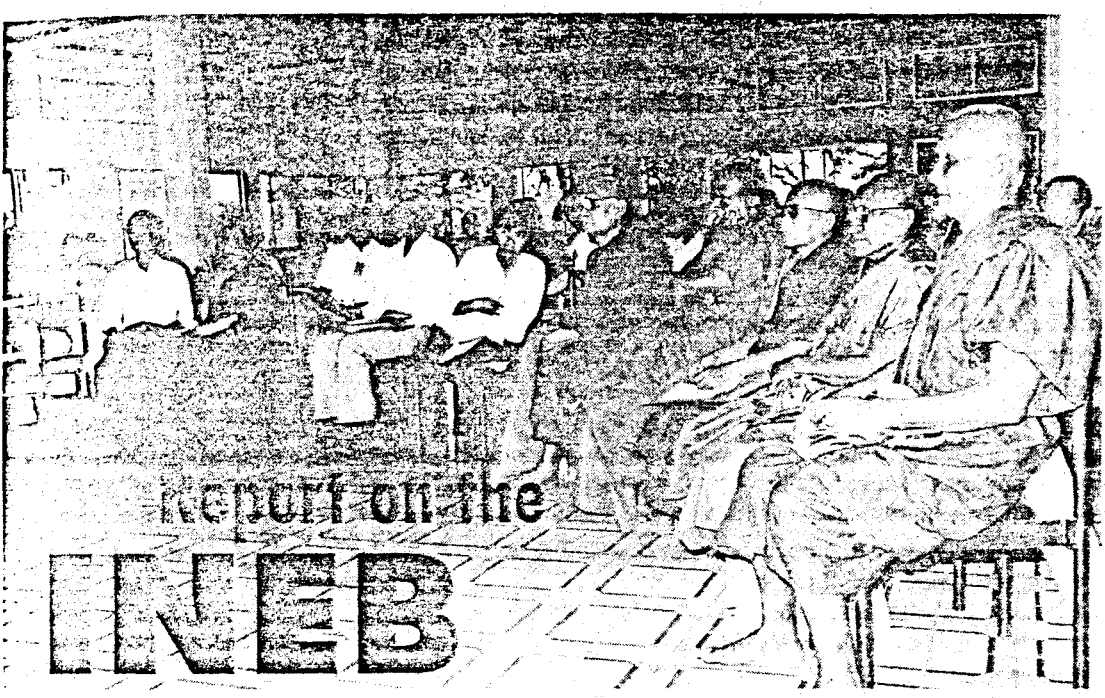
Locally, the Thai government, in what had been a seemingly democratic atmosphere, fell to a military coup; large-scale corruption was cited as a major justification. On the Burmese border near Thailand, a coalition government in opposition to the Rangoon military regime was formed. The National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma contains both members of ethnic separatist groups and representatives of the NLD (National League for Democracy) who were voted into office last year but have fled from the SLORC government in Rangoon. While this is an encouraging sign toward eventual peace in Burma, the NCGUB is plagued with problems. Two of its members either left or were kidnapped by Rangoon soon after the formation of the rival government. The situation of the Burmese in exile in Thailand, precarious because the rebels continue to harass Thai logging and fishing in Burma, is now even more in question as it is uncertain what the policy of the new Thai government will be.

On the other border (with Cambodia,) the news which reaches us is not so exciting, because it is more a depressing continuation of that which has been going on for years than anything new. All the 4 factions engaged in armed conflict continue to receive arms and aid from outside countries, and their desire for compromise and peace seems lacking. Again, the new Thai policy on this issue is also uncertain.

In international news, the war in the Persian Gulf, absurd in its launch after an arbitrarily set date, is now absurd in its "peace," which at present is a ceasefire in which both Iraq and Kuwait are in turmoil. The long-term prospects for peace dim, and the efficiency of the destructive power massed by the US led coalition is unlikely to be matched by an equally effective operation toward peace.

However, bad news such as this (and I name only a small part of the bad news which is brought to my attention over the months) is only the fruition of a long process. It must be remembered that the process, and not the fruit, is the important thing, and the area in which some hope can be found. The Gulf War (internationally) and the military coup (locally) are in many ways a distraction from other issues. The Gulf War, in part a test of American power in the wake of the cold war, is also a chance for the USSR and China (and all other countries) to test their own position in the world. The movement towards a sort of federalism, some way of avoiding civil war, which is now going on the the Soviet Union , is perhaps more important than what happened in the Gulf. And in Thailand, the fact that the military is now in control is not as important as how that control will be used. The corruption that the military claims to oppose, and the elimination of that corruption, is the important thing. This cannot be done in one fell swoop, but is a continuing process.

I mention in closing, both as a warning and a hope, the example of Komol Keemthong, a teacher who was killed in southern Thailand twenty years ago, in 1971. A reprint of a news story appearing in the Thai press appears in this issue. His story is one of hope, because it shows how one person, working with dedication, was able to do some work of great assistance in the small space afforded between the opposing sides of a conflict (in this case the Communist Party of Thailand on one hand and the Thai Military on the other, with the average villagers caught between.) It is in this small space, this crack between competing and unyielding forces, that the seeds of peace, which themselves will hopefully bear fruit, must be sown. Komol was killed for his efforts, but the spirit of his work continues. In a short span of time, he accomplished a great deal, because the process of tending to and raising these seeds of peace is as important as any fruit they will eventually bear – within each one of us as much as in the outside world.



Pre-Conference Seminar and Conference,

February 1991

International Network of Engaged Buddhists

Pre-Conference Seminar

- Wong sanit Ashram, Nakhon Nayok, Feb. 16-19.

International Conference

- Buddhamandala, Nakhon Pathom, Feb. 21-23.

Burma Peace Witness

- Burma Border, Feb. 24-28.

Summary of Events :

The International Network of Engaged Buddhists held its 3rd annual international meeting near Bangkok, in February, preceded by a four-day pre-conference seminar and followed by a investigative trip to the Thai-Burmese border to see first hand the situation of the ethnic minorities and the dissident students of Burma.

The Pre-Conference Seminar: A four-day seminar on the subject of "Buddhism and Social Activism" was held from Feb. 16-19 at Wongsanit Ashram outside of Bangkok. The first day was guided by Bert Cacayan of the Phillipines and the topic of community and community building was examined. The following three days were led by Paula Green and Stephanie Kaza, in conjunction with others. Over this period the Buddhist and spiritual roots of social activism were examined in some detail, with participants often meeting in small groups to

further discuss issues. Additionally, participants also examined the situations in their own countries, and explored issues and ways in which effective action could be taken. About 50 participants from at least 12 different countries took part in the pre-conference.

The Conference: The three-day 3rd International INEB conference took place from Feb. 21-23 at Buddhamandala, Nakhon Pathom. Participants from the pre-conference seminar were joined by new arrivals to review the actions of the previous year and to plan for the coming year, both in specific programs of actions and the general logistics of day-to-day communication. Six target countries were designated as of particular urgency: Bangladesh, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Plans of action were formulated for each of these countries and passed as resolutions. Additional resolutions on a wide variety of subjects were passed and wants and needs of member countries were discussed. A complete listing of the resolutions passed, including plans of action for each country and the wants and needs chart, is given seperately along with a list of INEB Boards for 1991-1992. Over 80 people from 15 countries attended.

Burma Peace Witness Program: A group of 15 peeople, in a program suggested by Paula Green and organized by Sam Kalyanee, visited the Thai-Burmese border to see first-hand the situation of the ethnic minorities and dissidents fighting the SLORC regime based in Rangoon. A number of camps were visited and the team also met with exile student groups and minority representatives in Chiang Mai and in Bangkok. On their return to Bangkok a press conference was held and the findings of the team were reported, as well as plans for action to alleviate the situation in the future.



INEB Resolutions, February 1991

Here are the resolutions passed at the 3rd INEB conference, Feb. 21-23 1991. Members are requested to read all of them to remind themselves of actions promised for the coming year. Names have been given where people have promised some sort of action. Please contact the concerned party if more information is wanted on a particular subject.

– That INEB add a further endorsement and blessing to the Willoughby's letter of Ministry, from the Society of Friends in Philadelphia should they so desire, that would read: INEB finds the Willoughbys to be Kaliayana Mitta (spiritual friends) of the Sangha, wishes them to find the happiness of the Buddha on their travels and appreciates their efforts towards the easing of suffering in this strife torn world.

– That INEB sanction, support, and distribute the findings of a working group that will develop a letter of blessing for engaged Buddhist pilgrims. This working group would be responsible only for issuing guidelines which local INEB sections could then adopt. The idea of community as integral to this blessing must be maintained.

– That INEB recognizes the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma. INEB finds the coalition represented by this NCG to be an historic step in the reconciliation of the Burma conflict. INEB encourages the meeting of a constitutional convention and the establishment of a permanent representative federal government to replace SLORC, the

Provisional government and the various revolutionary councils.

– That INEB sponsor the request by the Tamil based Nonviolent



Direct Action Group that a Buddhist contingent take some medical supplies to suffering Tamil inhabitants in the Jaffna War Zone. That ideally this contingent be a minimum of 3 people. That some, but not all, be internationals. That support of the Sinhala community be evident. That INEB will publish this proposal in ***Seeds of Peace*** and coordinate people with our contacts in Sri Lanka.

– That INEB sanction, support and distribute the findings of a working group on human rights and Buddhism. The focus of this group will be to look at the doctrine from the viewpoint of rights and entitlements, compare these findings to available international convenants and declarations and note similarities and discrepancies. The goal of this group will be the production of a document acceptable to the Sangha. If accepted, this will serve as a strong moral guideline to persuade the governments with pressure from below. Finished versions would have to be finalized by regional groups to reflect existing doctrinal differences.

Human Dhamma Resolution (draft)

From our experince as practicing and engaged Buddhists, we understand that:

a) there is a fundamental interrelationship among all beings (including animals and plants);
b) through understanding of this fact, we affirm that all human beings have a life-long duty (dhamma) to care for each other;
c) out of this responsibiltiy, we resolve to protect life, happiness, freedom, truth and growth with our bodies, speech and minds.

In this case we undertake to think, act, and speak with mindfulness (sati), leading to wisdom (paññā) and compassion (karunā). Thus we dedicate our lives to selflessness and the peace and joy of the Buddha.

To give substance to, and tangible proof of, our convictions, we will undertake the following actions:

- seeking the truth : disturbing our complacency and looking into situations of suffering; demanding media attention to situations of suffering; subscribing to journals from areas of concern; inviting and supporting speakers from the these areas.

- speaking the truth : participation in international pressure/letter writing campaigns; participation in urgent action networks; creating radio and other media educational programmes and forums.

- standing by the truth : encouraging projects of reconciliation; sending delegations, witnesses, 3rd party intervention teams and escorts for refugees, aid convoys, and other people at risk.

Resolution for Religious Independence

All people have the right to religious choice. We note that Buddhism is not a branch of Hinduism. We have our own understanding of Dharma which affirms equality and opposes discrimination regarding caste, class, sex and race.

Resolution on Concientious Objection

Recognizing that war is against the teachings of the Buddha and destructive of life, we express our concern for the suffering of all soldiers forced to fight. We express our support of those soldiers within all militaries who are refusing to fight in the Gulf. We especially give our support to the Buddhist soldiers and reservists who are showing their commitment to nonviolence by declaring themselves conscientious objectors. We urge the US military in particular to recognize these claims and rescind new policies that only allow soldiers to file a claim for conscientious objection after they are in the Gulf.

Resolution on Judicial Execution (Death Penalty)

We stress the absolute incompatibility between the death penalty and Buddhist ethics.

When the Buddha gave advice to rulers, he always exhorted them not to use violence. A ruler who kills, who orders someone to kill, or who refuses to stop someone from being killed is not a Buddhist ruler.

We stress that even if a prisoner sentenced to death is a murderer himself, two wrongs will never make one right. Besides, such a prisoner must suffer not only death, but also in waiting for death, which is an extreme kind of mental torture.

We oppose the death penalty out of compassion not only for the prisoner, but also for the executioner amd other staff involved in legal execution. They will certainly damage their own mental health by their evil actions, and we wish them to be healthy.

We find it hard to understand that some officially Buddhist countries use the death penalty, and that still more such countries have laws providing for that penalty, especially at a time when one country after another outside the Buddhist world is abolishing it.

In accordance with the Buddha's exhortation not to kill, nor to let kill, we demand that the death penalty be completely abolished in all countries. We demand that those political authorities who claim to be Buddhists prove this claim by taking the lead.

Resolution on women

Recognizing the special responsibilities, contributions and obstacles women face throughout Buddhist countries and the world, we make the following resolution:

Buddhism teaches us to respect all beings. Yet, the needs and rights of women are often not respected. We urge our members to work for the basic rights of women and children for shelter, food, clean water, sanitation, medical care, equal education, employment and opportunity.

We urge our members to promote women's concerns. As women have frequently been denied a voice and not listened to, we urge members to include women in equal numbers in delegations to religious gatherings and political conferences. We especially urge our members to work towards the participation of more Asian women in INEB conferences. We also urge our members to work to end the suffering of child laborers, the conditions causing street children and the forcing of children into military service.

We urge our members to give equal attention and resources to the education of Buddhist women, and In particular that we provide leadership training for women and work for the ordination of women and recognition of women Buddhist teachers.

Many countries face a shortage of Buddhist religious leaders and teachers. This shortage could be alleviated with more training and education for women. We support such initiatives as the International Conference of Buddhist Women (to be held in Thailand October 1991).

Women have a key role in preserving and passing on culture. We urge our members to raise the social, economic and political status of women who belong to ethnic minorities.

We urge our members to work against the exploitation of women as seen in prostitution, mail order brides and sex tourism. These degrade both women and men and create cycles of suffering. This exploitation perpetuates the idea of women as property, rather than human beings capable of enlightenment, whose labor and bodies should not be bought and sold.

Gulf War Resolution

Out of our compassion for all beings we make this resolution. May it be of benefit to all beings.

Whereas the Buddha teaches us absolute respect for all life, human, plant, and animal;

whereas Buddhism also teaches us our interdependence and connection with all beings, and how the suffering of one means the suffering of all;

whereas the violence of the Gulf War is causing irresponsible damage to the environment which sustains us all;

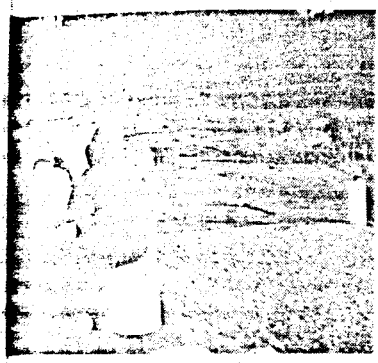
we express our great concern for the suffering experienced by all sides in the Gulf War We therefore urge:

1) an immediate cease fire in order to stop the killing;
2) the immediate cessation of all arms sales and military aid to the region;
3) immediate negotiations on the part of all parties to the conflict in order to resolve the immediate crisis.

Recognizing the right of all peoples to self-determination, we also urge negotiations for peaceful resolutions to the region's long-standing conflicts. We further request the allied nations to generously fund the reconstruction of war-damaged civilian areas in all countries affected by the war. We urge the United States, and all countries, to fulfill their financial obligations to the United Nations to strengthen the U.N. role and mission in peacekeeping.

We are especially concerned at the intense suffering and toll this war is taking on women and children throughout the world. We recognize the suffering and losses of all the young people who







are fighting on all sides. We support in particular the young men and women whose compassion drives them to reject violence and their participation in the military, and who are declaring themselves conscientious objectors. We also urge all possible help be extended to those delivering humanitarian aid to the region and that no restrictions be placed on such deliveries.

As Buddhists who struggle to extend loving kindness to all beings, we protest the deliberate construction of enemy images. Buddhism teaches us that the other is no other than ourselves. It is contrary to our teachings to believe that any human being is our enemy.

Realizing that the seeds to much future suffering are being planted, we urge all people to work for reconciliation. We commit ourselves to returning to our countries and working for both an immediate ceasefire and peaceful solutions to long-range issues. We support the movement toward total world disarmament, with conversion of military production to life-sustaining projects.

This war shows us the dangers of unrestrained greed, anger and ignorance. The Dalai Lama reminds us that Buddhism means to do no harm and to help others. In this spirit, we urge all people to work for an end to the hostilities and to stop the killing.

Spiritual Resolution

Resolved that Buddhism is a way of life for us to become free of ego in order to serve humanity and the world ever more fully. Our ways to realize this goal are many, including Dharma study, social service, environmental and human rights activism, peace work and meditation.

Resovled that we will work for the safe and peaceful conditions in which all beings may realize their spiritual potential (Buddhahood) so that all of us may work together for the welfare of all beings.

Maruyama-san
Santikaro Bhikkhu

– Resolved that INEB aid in the planning and execution of a community organization and leadership training program to be aimed at, but not limited to, participants from Bangladesh, Burma, Cambodia, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. INEB Bangkok will contact Bert Cacayan, of "Managing Alternatives Inc.", The Phillipines, among others, in regard to this training.

– Resolved that INEB condemn the environmental degradation in Tibet resulting from the massive deforestation and the exploitation of minerals. Further, INEB condemns the practice of improper and hasty restoration of holy sites in Tibet to promote tourism but which ignores necessary traditional rites and forms which need to be observed for proper restoration. Letters of concern regarding these issues will be sent in the name of INEB to the Chinese Authorities responsible for the administration of Tibet.

– Resolved that INEB Bangkok and INEB members support the resolution of INEB Japan regarding the opposition to Japanese involvement in the Gulf War and regarding economic aid and relations with the SLORC government of Myanmar.

– Resolved that INEB support the "Save Apo Sandawa Campaign," which opposes the geo-thermal power project on Mt. Apo, Mindanao, the Phillipines. INEB will issue letters in opposition to this project to President Aquino and the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and a letter of support to the "Save Apo Sandawa Campaign."

Working Group Resolutions

Finance

– A finance committe was set up which will periodically review the financial situations and coordinate new financing. The Finance Committe for 1991-1992 consists of Stephanie Kaza (USA), Rev. Maruyama Teruo (Japan), Jeffrey Sng (Singapore), Teddy Pasatiyo (Indonesia) and Ampiwal Chauyungyongkul (Thailand).

– specific projects are to seek funding from individual donors, funding agencies, etc.

– Finance Committee to pursue other funding ideas.
– reserve/emergency account to be established.
– monks to look into giving a portion of dana.

Communication

– INEB Bangkok to publish a newsletter alternately with *Seeds of Peace* (2 or 3 times/year) to contain wants and needs of members, addresses of related foundations, news, funding sources, activities, country updates, etc. Funding for this is to be drawn from the funds used to mail meeting minutes and the general INEB fund.
– INEB to establish an Urgent Information Network to respond to emergency needs.
– encourage country-country information and news exchange on a regular basis.

Training

– trainers to develop a training manual in communication skills, workshop organization, dhamma, etc. Ven. Santikaro and Ven. Dhammika to coordinate work on the Buddhist aspects of social engagement.
– training is primarily intended to liberate people to act for themselves.
– training teams are to be developed.
– trainees, after a training seminar, will write reports on what they learned to be published in *Seeds of Peace*.
– individual countries to submit to INEB Bangkok training proposals, including subjects, time period and facilities available. Contact then to be coordinated thru Pracha, Paula, and Liz.
– participants from neighboring countries to be invited to training programs.
– trainer information to be collected and published along with lists of necessary preparation.
– "training" is almost better considered a form of "development", as in sangha development, etc.

Alternative Forms of Engagement

– to encourage a stronger link between the academic/theoretical community and the activist community. To look into the formation of a working group and research network.
– to publish and update a bibliography of books and articles related to Buddhist activism. Send information to INEB Bangkok and Sue Darlington, USA.
– to make a list of resource people and instituions, both activist and academic.
– to encourage the study of Buddhist theory by monks.

Intra-Buddhist Dialogue

– to exchange greeting cards among members on special Buddhist holidays. Difficulties in setting this up were encountered and the present solution is to encourage INEB members to send cards on Buddhist holidays in their country to members in other countries in order to encourage the sharing of traditions.
– exchange visits between INEB members to be organized on an individual basis.

INEB resolutions for target countries, 1991-1992

The INEB conference of Feb. 1991 focused its concern on 6 target countries specifically. These countries were Bangladesh, Burma, Cambodia, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The following actions and resolutions were passed during the conference:

Bangladesh

– maintain a channel of information on the Chittachong Hill Tracts. To be done thru Prof. Sanjoy in Bangkok.
– help organize training for community leaders, both monks and laymen, male and female.
– help organize an investigative visit to the CHT and meetings with parliaament members in Bangladesh. This will be coordinated by Brother D'souza in Bangladesh and Prathad Chatterjee in California, USA.

INEB further resolves to:

1. Support the movement to preserve the ethnic and religious culture of the minority groups in Bangladesh, especially in the Chittachong Hill Tracts.
2. Encourage a return to the pre-1947 manual of governance for the CHT.
3. Aid in the establishment of a Vocational Training Center for poor Buddhists. Information on this to be provided by Prof. Sanjoy.

Burma

– collect information on human rights violations and environmental degradation and inform the international community through INEB , SPDI Bangkok.
– to send a letter requesting the Thai government to sever close ties with the SLORC military regime in Rangoon and encourage the transfer of power in Burma.
– to request the Thai government to treat with fairness and compassion the exiled students and ethnic minorities who have fled from Burma.
– to request that Thai monks not cooperate with SLORC.
– to request the Japanese government to stop Overseas Development Assistance to Burma while SLORC remains in power and to request Japanese companies and those of other Asian nations to stop trade with Burma.To be coordinated through INEB Japan.
– to raise funds for monks on the

border, especially for the construction of a wat.
- to raise funds for the students on the border. To be done thru NDF Federal University and INEB Bangkok.
- to form a field investigation team to examine the situation inside Burma, especially in the Kachin State in which human rights violations are reportedly excessive.

Cambodia

- to pressure governments to work for a ceasefire, reconciliation and peace in Cambodia. Send letters both to the local governments of INEB members and also to the 4 Cambodian factions.
- to spread information on the situation in Cambodia.
- The Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF) will publish articles and personal interviews.
- The Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation (CPR) will send information packets to the BPF.
- BPF will provide CPR with addresses of European and American Buddhist Journals.
- Prathap Chatterjee will write radio spots and stories for KPFA and NPR radio in the USA.
- Shirley in the USA and Doris in Germany will disseminate information to the wider press, such as the UNHCR refugee magazine and Gimini News Service.
- CPR will coordinate information to be sent to the Khmers in the camps.
- to aid in the training of nonviolent action and conflict resolution
- IFOR will help orgainize training in June, '91.
- INEB Bangkok will facilitate arrangements with CPR
- Funding support to come from BPF articles and possibly donations from participants in meditation at Suan Mokh, Singapore, etc.
- Corinne and Liz of CPR to propose training projects for INEB, including training in Dhamma.
- BPF to send children's books for translation.
- to aid in the planning and organizing of a Peace Walk through Cambodia
- clarify planning committee
- INEB Bangkok to give general support
- the role of foreigners for protection to be considered.
- INEB Bangkok to help on facilitating Thai-Khmer relations.
- Buddhist education and other projects
- to aid in research needs for hospital projec. Details to be sent to INEB Bangkok.
- find sister organizations in developed countries to aid in the funding for this project. Sue Darlington to look into this possibility in the U.S.

India

- to organize an Intra-Buddhist Dialogue and Study Tour in April, '91 for Ambedkar's centennary. Ven. Sukhemo and Robert Gwee to visit India for one month. A coordinating committee in India is needed.
- in Oct.-Nov. '91, 15 delegates from India to visit Sri Lanka, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Burma, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. Hosts in each country are needed.
- to organize Leadership Training for Young Buddhists which is to begin in 1992 and consist of 1-3 week courses in an on-going program in which local expenses are met by the hosts and trainers are provided from overseas. The subjects to include Buddhism, Community Organization, Development and Environment, etc. Trainers are needed for this project and those interested should contact INEB Bangkok.
- to support the formation of a Buddhist Library. Mr. Rathnam of Madras to collect and distribute addresses of active Buddhist groups in India so that they will recieve good Buddhist publications from all INEB friends (i.e. *Seeds of Peace*, *the BPF newsletter*, *Indra's Net*)
- to mark Dr. Ambedkar's centenary, INEB member countries will try and translate the short book *Dr. Ambedkar: The Liberator* into their national languages.

Nepal

- to campaign for an amendment to the Nepali constitution to make Nepal a secular state.
- INEB Bangkok will send letters to the Nepali government on behalf of the entire conference.
- INEB members are requested to individually send letters.
- to increase the awareness worldwide of the Human Rights situation in Nepal.
- articles written in Nepal are to be sent to INEB Bangkok, BPF, INEB Japan, Ven. Dhammika for publication.
- copies of news from Nepal appearing in the international press to be sent to the contact in Nepal.
- to support Buddhist education in Nepal
- Ven. Dhammika to raise funds for the publication of 2 books relating to Hinduism and Buddhism.
- Nepal and Malaysia, thru the Friends of Buddhism Malaysia, to arrange a Buddhist layworker exchange program.
- to coordinate other training
- INEB Bangkok to coordinate other training projects on nonviolent action, community organization, etc.
- BPF to look into the possibility of sending trainers.

Sri Lanka

- to support the orgainization of small schools for Tamils and Sinhalese which will encourage the

peaceful sharing of culture, language and religion. Raja Dharmapala to supply INEB with details. Contact: Dharmavedi Institute for Mass Communication and Social Development, Sri Mahabodhivihara, Narahenpita, colombo-05, Sri Lanka.

– to publicize the situation in Sri Lanka in the international media

– Raja Dharmapala and Robert Gwee to be in contact regarding the provision of aid for refugees.

– Peace Brigades International (PBI) to continue its presence and attempt to expand its operations into northern Sri Lanka.

– to aid in the publication of a Bilingual (Sinhala/Tamil) Newletter on reconciliation. Ven. Samitha in Sri Lanka and Ven. Dhammika in Singapore to organize.

– to aid in travel assistance for Ven. Samitha on publicity tours. Ven. Dhammika in Singapore to look for funds.

– to issue letters of support to a group of garment workers in Sri Lanka presently facing a factory lockout. The workers at the Cadillac Garment Factory are striking for better salaries, proper medical and toilet facilities, sufficient cafeteria facilities and proper administration of their employment provident fund. Letters of support to Nalini Rajasinha, N.J.S.P. Women's Section, 143/1 Que Rd., Colombo-10, Sri Lanka. Letters encouraging the lawful settlement of this dispute to be sent to the Chairman, Cadillac Garment Factory, 111/2 Railway Rd., Angulana, Moratuwa, Sri Lanka, and to President R. Premadasa, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Colomobo, Sri Lanka.

Save Mount Apo

Mt. Apo is the ancestral home of 460,000 people coming from 6 tribal minorities in Mindanao, Phillipines. Located in the provinces of Davao and Catalbato, it has an area of 72,814 hectares.

Mt. Apo is the Phillipines' highest peak with an altitude of 10,311 feet. A dormant volcano, it has many hot springs, waterfalls and mountain lakes. It is the most important watershed on the island of Mindanao in the southern Phillipines.

It was declared a national park by the Phillipine government in 1936. In 1984, ASEAN declared Mt. Apo as one of its heritage sites, emphasizing its outstanding wilderness and unique features as one of the highest botanical mountains in the region.

The Issue

The state-run Phillipine National Oil company, on whose board are very influential men like the Secretary of National Defense, Fidel Ramos, and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Raul Manglapus, began its exploratory activities in 1985 with the intention of setting up geo-thermal plants. Two years later, it has drilled two exploratory wells with a depth of more than 2,430 meters. Now, the Phillipine National Oil company intends to develop geothermal power plants in Mt. apo.

Opposition

The tribal groups living in the area oppose the project because it violates their religious and cultural rights as well as deprives them of their land and source of livelihood. Ecology groups and church communities oppose the project because it will destroy what little rainforest is left in the country. It will likewise endanger the watershed.

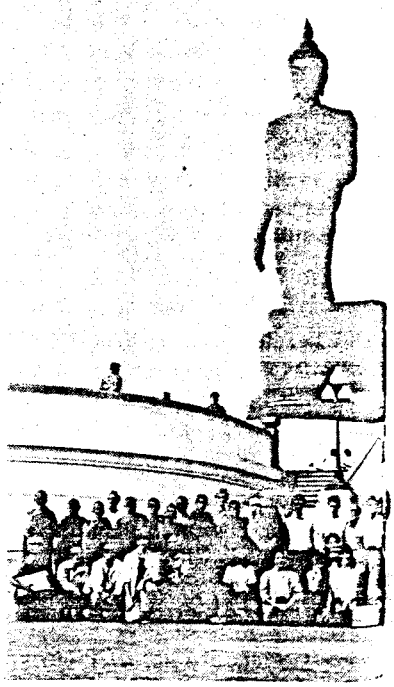
Furthermore, the project is illegal because Mt Apo is a National Park and one of the ten ASEAN heritage sites.

Appeal to INEB

– Pass a resolution supporting the action of the tribal minorities and ecology and church groups in the Phillipines who oppose the geothermal energy project of the Phillipine National Oil company on the sacred Mt. Apo.

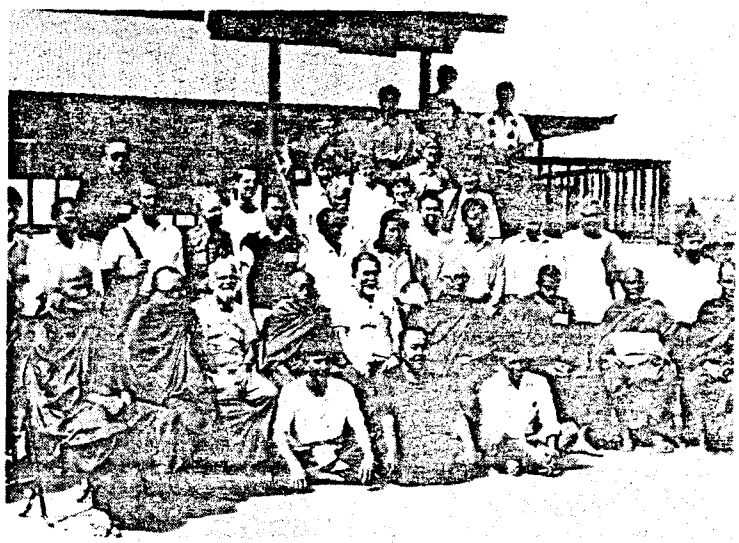
– Write letters to President Corazon C. Aquino, (Malacnang Palace, Manila, Phillipines) and to Secretary Fulgencio Factoran of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (Visayas Ave., Quezon City, Phillipines) urging them to stop the geothermal project on Mt. Apo.

– Write letters of suppot to: "Save Apo Sandawa Campaign"; c/o KFI; P.O. Box 175; 8000 Davao City, Phillipines, and furnish them with copies of your letters to President Aquino and Secetary Factoran using the above address.



NB

The next INEB annual meeting plus a pre-conference on Seminar as well as a post Conference peace witness will be held 16-29 February 1992.



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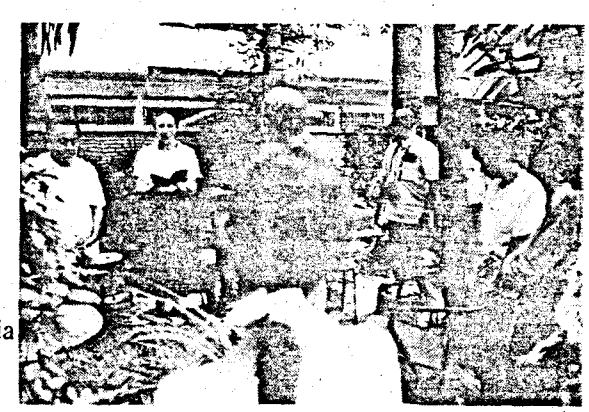
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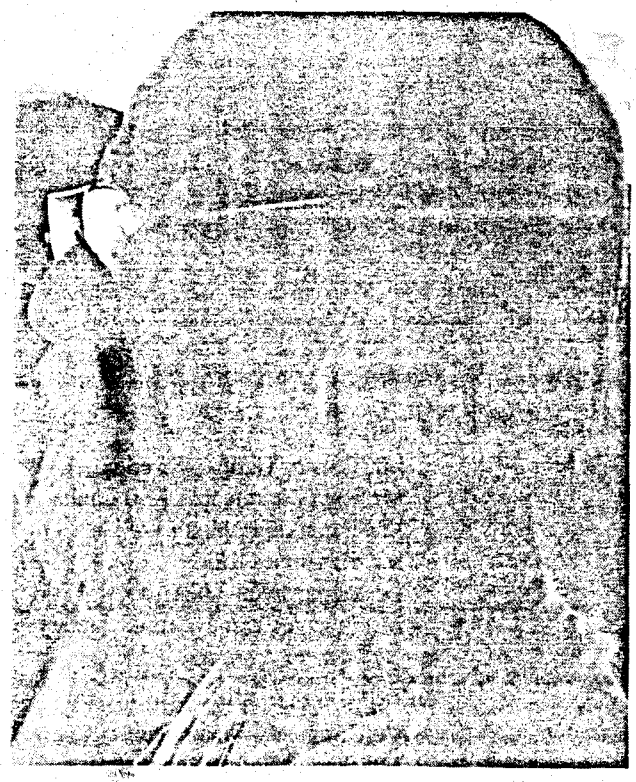
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Gandhi's Spirit is Alive in India



Five years ago on another of my frequent visits to India to renew contacts with the Gandhian movement and other groups working for nonvilent change, I was told by some younger workers that, "Gandhi is dead; what he taught us is no longer relevant." I continue to think about their statement. There is some truth in their position.

Gandhi can be found all over India. In every village and town there is at least one statue of the man. And he will be eulogized on appropriate anniversaries. But his vision of an India of village republics is lost in the growing centralization of the new imperial power centered in New Delhi.

I have visited many Gandhian Ashrams and institutions which are committed to serving the poor, the rural masses of India. Many of them are engaged in useful constructive projects, with great enthusiasm and hope. Gandhi's ideas are patiently and dutifully being applied, but with little spark. I see little evidence that these institutions have achieved much success in empowering the people to take charge of their lives.

Many Gandhians talk about the mission "to uplift" the masses and the importance of leading them in the right direction. I see little evidence that new leadership is encouraged, so essential if continued nonviolent change is to take place. The old men of the Gandhian movement who hang on to power year after year are not much different from the politicians of India; both find it difficult to make way for new leadership, for fresh ideas, for hope. But I recall some older Gandhians who still are filled with Gandhi's vision and making an impact.

On a recent trip to south India I visited again with Krishnamal, one of the harijans (the lowest of the low) of India, who is college educated and dedicated to helping the landless get possession of land to provide for their families. Krishnamal has raised two sons and now in her 60's

continues with unflagging energy to pursue the land.

Going beyond Vinobha Bhave's effort of earlier years to acquire land gifts from the landlords, Krishnamal is busy persuading landlords to sell their land to her organization for distribution among the landless. She noted that many landlords are moving to the big cities and sending their children for higher education in America. They no longer are interested in the village and have begun to sell their lands. Knowing of Krishnamal and her reputation, some landlords have come to her offering to sell at lower than market prices because she could solve the endless red tape involved in land transfers.

Krishnamal has already persuaded many banks in the area to finance these land purchases. Recently 10,000 acres of land was purchased through her group, and they are busy allotting the land to the villagers who have lived and worked on that same land--often for generations. Now Krishnamal and her workers, many from the villages, are faced with the difficult task of helping the villagers learn how to meet the responsibilities of land management and the art of cooperating with each other in the production and sale of what they produce.

I can relate equally exciting stories about Jaganathan, married to Krishnamal and a Gandhian who continues to walk from village to village teaching and helping the people to organize and depend on themselves in cooperation with each other.

Other hopeful signs of Gandhian rebirth are evidenced by many younger workers who have gone to work on the village level without elaborate plans of "uplift" devised by planning agencies with little knowledge of the village. I noted that many of the social change workers are applying some of the old Gandhian ideas, whether they are conscious of it or not.

There is the story of Sid and Skynta, a young husband and wife team, who gave up good jobs in America to come back to the village in India to see what they could do. In a few years they organized several development projects and trained villagers to continue the work. They founded a small training center which is training villagers and coolie (farm) workers in skills of organizing, managing, finance, and methods of nonviolent conflict resolution. They understand that real change can only come with the awakening and empowerment of the villagers. The typical training camp will focus on one issue—for example, pollution of the river from waste discharges of a nearby synthetic fibre plant affecting the health of villagers and their animals which are dependent on the river. The villagers analyse the problems, establish goals and work out strategies to attain them. They learn the use and power of nonviolence and how to engage in effective political action. Spreading skills of leadership and organization widely through the villages is the objective.

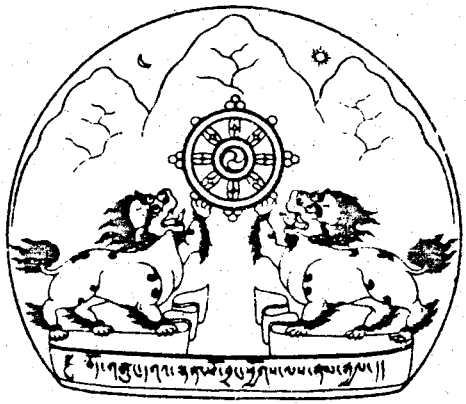
Sevati, a bright young woman from Gujerat state, is one of this young generation, courageous enough to apply Gandhian ideas in a fresh way. The daughter of two veteran Gandhians, with college training and some overseas travel, she elected to live in a village, learn their problems, earn their trust and help them in their struggle against the oppressive forces of landlessness, hunger and caste. Sevati and others I have known go into the villages in pairs to support each other and share the tasks together. Sadhana, a young graduate from Bombay, has committed herself to working in the village. She will live nearby in a tiny community center and integrate herself into the village. She has gone into the fields, working with the village women cultivating the crops and reserving her allotment of rice for others.

These examples are few; I do not asssume this is a trend. I see these brave efforts of courageous people as tiny seeds which may produce hardy trees in the future. If these seeds flower and multiply and continue to be nourished by the Gandhian vision, they may help the rural masses of India to break away from servitude to the political parties which use them as pawns to be sold on election day. They are the living embodiment of Gandhi.

George Willoughby

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KALACHAKRA IN SARNATH

Amid a time of growing tensions, just at the eve of the New Year, in Sarnath, India (near Varanasi,) the Dalai Lama of Tibet led a great Kalachakra Initiation for about 200,000 Buddhists who gathered on the spot where Buddha taught His first teaching, setting in motion the Wheel of Dhamma. They came from all the most remote valleys of the Himalayas, from Nepal and India, and some 3,000 Tibetans from Tibet managed to be present here despite the harsh restrictions imposed by Chinese authorities on their movement. Kalachakra Initiation, or the Wheel of Time, is one of the highest of the Tibetan Mahayana, belonging to the Anuttara-Yoga-Tantra. His Holiness the Dalai Lama explained to us that in Tibetan tradition, it was given whenever troubles arose and became dangerous for the people and the society, and that its aim was to diffuse the tensions. Sure enough, at the moment, it was very necessary – in the world with the Gulf crisis and in India with mounting intercommunal violence.



Before the Initiation, the Dalai Lama delivered a bright teaching on the Precious Garland by Nagarjuna. Like always, he stressed the importance today of universal responsibility, of good relationships to establish a dialogue between communities too often fighting one another and the necessity for humankind to understand the values of kindness and a good heart. "Real peace can come only by mutual understanding and respect," as he put it. And to do something very concrete on the spot, the Tibetan spiritual leader led a "Maitri Yatra", that is an Amity Walk, or even better said - "a compassionate walk" (in his own words,) from the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies to the Archeological Museum in Sarnath for the sake of world peace and together with representatives of various other religions. More than 100,000 people followed them, and another "Maitri Yatra" took place later in New Delhi.

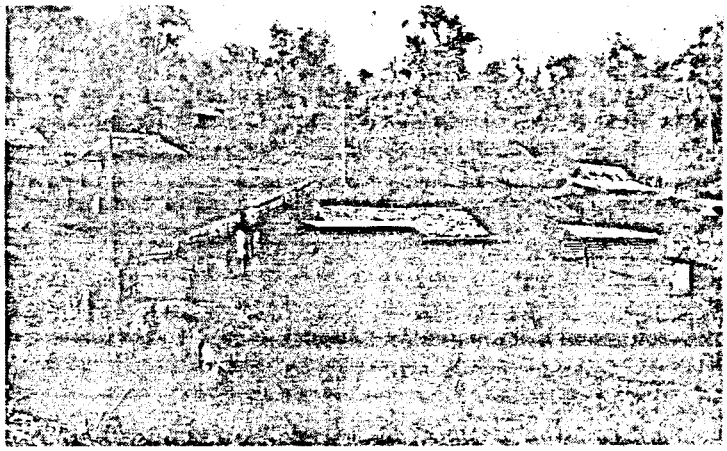
The celebrations in Sarnath also revealing the extent of the changes which the world is undergoing. The presence of envoys from the Soviet Buddhist Association, of some Kalmuk and Buriat lamas and of about 30,000 Nepali pilgrims, who invited His Holiness to come to give them a teaching in Kathmandu, was highly remarkable. So was the participation of a huge Mongolian delegation, with the most senior representative of Buddhism from Ulan Bator. Now, the Mongolians are waiting for His Holiness to give them a Kalachakra Initiation at the full moon in July.

For all the participants these were privileged moments to share with so many friends from all over the world, and yet, at the same time, as the Dalai Lama himself put it, "it is a time for all to assume their individual responsibility in the task of making a more equitable world for all of us who are living on this planet, taking care of the environment and of the needs, not only ours but also of the others". Maybe these kinds of "seeds of peace" are more needed today than ever...

Claude B. Levenson

The N.D.F. Federal University

Within thick jungle on the Burma/Thai border, the Federal University opened for its first semester of study in May of 1990. Its students come from the ethnic groups that populate the border areas of Burma. These ethnic minority people have been struggling for the right of self determination and cultural survival for the past 40 years. Now, for the first time, the young women and men from these areas have an opportunity for an advanced education.



The universities that were operating in the central part of the country were shut down by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) which claimed power following the military suppression of a student-led pro-democracy uprising in August of 1988. The Federal University is now the only institution for general and political studies open in the country today.

The Federal University is administered by the National Democratic Front (NDF,) which is a coalition of 11 different ethnic minorities in the Union of Burma. The Federal University has its campus near the NDF's administrative center in Manerplaw, which is in the Karen State of Burma. The NDF seeks the establishment of a federal union within Burma. A first step has been taken toward that goal in the opening of the Federal University. Here, students of many of Burma's ethnic nations attend classes in language, mathematics and economics and special seminars that focus on building the skills they will need as future leaders of their country. Living, working and studying together helps develop mutual understanding, the lack of which has been a primary cause of Burma's 40 years of civil war.

At present the University can only accmadate 52 students. The NDF has been working to expand the curiculum, as well as the number of students who have the opportunity to study. Support of friends abroad has been instrumental in helping the NDF and the students build this campus. More support will mean continued opportunities and a future for the youth of the ethnic nations of Burma.

PRACTICE

Practice is to free the body of destructive patterns, habits and acts of carelessness.

Practice is to free the mind from greed, hate and confusion.

Practice is to cultivate inner awareness, to discover depths of meditation and to realise psychological and spiritual insights into the nature of things.

Practice is the active work of the individual transforming herself or himself.

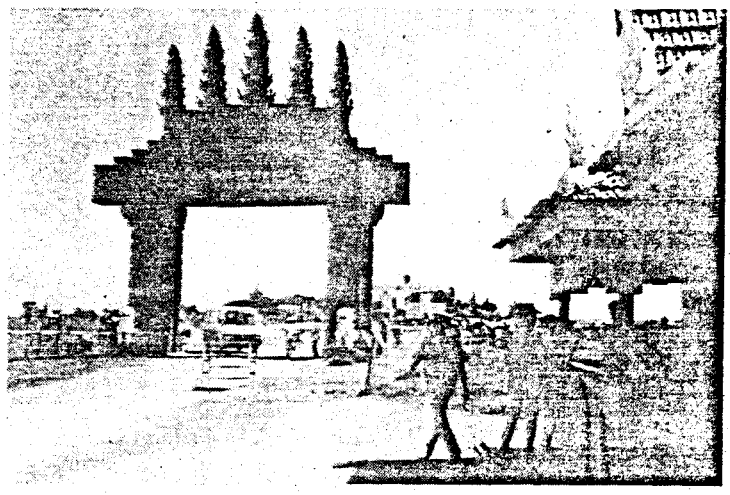
Practice includes equally the social, religious and political sides of life. We influence the world in the course of practice with the willingness to combat any form of oppressive power and exploitation. In the process of practice, various obstacles have to be faced and worked with in order that all events belong to practice. Struggle is at times an essential factor in practice.

Theory without practice is pointless. Practice without reason is blind. The route to practice is observation, experience and application.

Practice is the starting point for insight. In practice real knowledge manifests as purposeful activity.

Practice is the translation of a living perception into resolute awareness, compassionate action and transcendent seeing and liberation.

HISTORIC VISIT TO VIETNAM AND KAMPUCHEA



Since 1959 Buddhist monks from the two countries of Siam and Cambodia could not meet because their governments severed diplomatic relations due to differing views on political and economic systems. Therefore, the present visit by a team including six senior monks and two lay Buddhists from Siam, may be the first 13 days of official visit after a long 31 years.

Supported by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC :-Quaker American,) Phnom Penh and the Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute (Bangkok,) this team led by me on an invitation extended by the Most Ven'ble Phravinayadharma Tepvong, the head of Kampuchean monks, set out for Cambodia via Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam, on Nov. 5, 1990, and returned to Siam on Nov. 19, 1990.

The purpose of our visit was to reestablish the fraternal relationship between the Sangha and the Buddhists of Siam and Cambodia in order to search out possible ways to extend cooperation and assistance in the field of Buddhist education and social welfare.

IN VIETNAM

During the first leg of our journey, we paid a visit to the three important Buddhist monasteries in Ho Chi Minh city, namely Chua Vin Ngiem, Chua Giac Lam and the Institute of Higher Buddhist Studies, where we met Ven'ble Thich Minh Chau, the director of the Insti tute. He graduated from and completed a Ph.D. degree at Nalanda University, India, so he is very well versed in Pali and Buddhism. We have observed the Institute's activities and profitably exchanged ideas with the director. In addition to that, we have invited him to take part in the annual meeting of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists which will be held in Bangkok in Feb. 1991. On the last leg of our tour, we also spent some time in the War Museum, the National Museum and some other places of interest. Then, on the early morning of Nov. 7, 1990, we left Ho Chi Minh city for Phnom Penh, the war-torn capital of Cambodia.

In my opinion, Buddhist activities in Vietnam are very limited. We saw about 70 student monks attending classes in the Chua Vin Ngiem monastery and were told that there are about 120 monks who have enrolled as students of the Institute for Higher Buddhist Studies. In Vietnam all three of the main sects, i.e. Mahayana, Theravada and Mendicant, are administered under the same law. New publications that we saw in the libraries of the above two monasteries were very few. However, we have to appreciate and congratulate heartily Ven'ble Thich Minh Chau for his eminent work in translating five Nikayas of Pali Suttapitaka into the Vietnamese language and for other services to Buddhism.

IN CAMBODIA

On Nov. 7, 1990, we began our historic Cambodia tour after a long journey by car through Moc Bai, Svay Reang and Prey Veng. We finally ended up at Wat Svay Poper in Phnom Penh.

On Nov. 8, we visited the Museum of Crime (Tuol Slang s.21) in Phnom Penh city and the Genocidal Center at Cheong Ek where we were briefed about the horrid torture and killing committed by the Khmer Rouge regime. Innumerable skulls and bones are exhibited there, and the number of those who were killed during the years 1975-1979 is given as 3,314,678. It may have been for the sake of political propaganda.

In the afternoon of that day, Siamese Buddhist delegates called on Most Ven'ble Phravinayadharma Tepvong at Wat

Unnalom, where we joined in a mass prayer for peace and happiness for the people of Cambodia and the world as a whole. Ven. Tepvong informed us that about 60,000 Buddhist monks were disrobed by force during the Khmer Rouge regime. Many of them experienced severe torture and were jailed and/or brutally killed. About 2,000 monasteries in the country were badly damaged or ruined, along with Buddha statues and Buddhist books. As soon as the Khmer Rouge was driven from power, the revival of Buddhism started; seven former senior monks including Ven. Tepvong were re-ordained by the senior preceptor and his colleages from south Vietnam by the end of 1979. Now the number of Buddhist monks and novices is gradually increasing due to fewer restrictions upon them by the present government. Before, the minimum age for those who wanted to become monks was 50 years, but now young men are allowed to join the Sangha unless their servi ces are needed as soldiers to fight the Khmer Rouge. At the end of 1989 there were more than 16,000 monks and novices throughout the country. Many destroyed Buddhist monasteries are being reconstructed and renovated and some Pali study schools located in monasteries have been reopened recently, though they are facing a serious scarcity of teachers and text books.

On Nov. 9 we were taken to see a center for the care of orphans called Kulabteemuay (Rose No. 1). We then visited monks and novices studying Pali at Wat Tua Tampoon (or Wat Maniratanaram), where 70 monks and novices are enrolled. This is the biggest institute for the teaching of Pali which has re-opened in the country.

On Nov. 10 we were taken to see the projects of Redbarna (supported by Norway) at Wat Srob Saloa and Wat Chum on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, and later visited some important monasteries in Kiansvay District. Then, at Wat Vicitraram, we sadly found the skull and bones of the late abbot, Phravinayarakhit Suddhasilo, 83 years old, who was brutally killed by the Khmer Rouge along with 14 monks. The abbot's remains were well kept in a glass box.

On Nov. 11-12 our team was taken to visit the project of Padeck (Holland) in Pryveng province and monasteries in Kampongchnang provice, which is the birthplace of Ven'ble Kamron Rajasiri, one of our delegates who had left it 36 years ago. On a later part of our programme, we paid a visit to the former Royal Palace, Wat Phrakeaw, the Medical College and the National Museum in Phnom Penh.

On Nov. 14-17, accompanied by the most Honourable guide Ven'ble Tepvong, we travelled to Siam Reap by air to see Angkorwat, Angkorthom and so on. We all stayed at Wat Tamnak where about 200 Buddhist devotees came to observe Uposathasil and practice meditation. During the four days of our visit to Siam Reap, we were able to appreciate the greatness of Khom's Empire as well as Khmer art and culture. Khmer civilization reached its pinnacle of glory during this period. Thankfully, Angkor and other invaluable monuments have been well-kept.

After returning from Siam Reap, our team called on Mr. Chea Sim, the chairman of the United National Front, at the Samaggi Hotel. Mr. Chea Sim addressed a press conference and said that Siamese and Khmer people belong to the same race and culture and that they all profess one and the same religion, Buddhism. He regretted that sometimes the goverments of the two countries had different views on Kampuchea's problems, and he put emphasis on the Khmer Rouge's evil, saying that if they find an opportunity to return to power, certainly Buddhism will be eradicated again.

In response to the above official speech addressed to us, I (Ven'ble Somchai) said that this is our first visit, not our last. It will be followed by more exchanges of visits by Buddhist monks and people of the two countries. We agreed on the expansion of mutual relationships and a wide range of cooperation between the two countries to establish peace and harmony in this region. On behalf of the government and Buddhist people of Siam, we pray that all the leaders of the Khmer factions may regain the right view (Sammadithi) and come to solve all their conflicts through the power of loving kindness (Metta) and compassion (Karuna). May peace and happiness come back to Kampuchea soon.

CONCLUSION

In my point of view, Buddhism is still very much practiced in Cambodia. It remains as one source of relief and hope for the people. Unlike the Khmer Rouge, the present government in Phnom Penh, backed by Vietnam, realizes this fact and tries to utillize Buddhism to serve their politics. Now young men below the age of even 17-18 are permitted to be ordained as monks and novices, and the government has taken less income from temples. Even so, we still doubt their sincerity on the revival of Buddhism. Khmer Buddhists, according to my view, are in a dilemma: not only does the Khmer Rouge, whom they do not want to see again,

provoke fear and insecurity , but they have also gradually developed hatred and anger toward the Vietnamese and the government. This is because they think that the Vietnamese direct and dictate to the present goverment and have come to take away their property and that the government at Phnom Penh is a puppet of Vietnam. We were also told that the serious problem of corruption prevails everywhere, especially in the offices of high- ranking persons. Ministers and high-ranking officers earn only about 4,000 Reals per month (1 Baht = 25 Reals,) yet they live in very big houses with all kinds of facilities and drive air-conditioned Benz cars. So, the problem of corruption may have surpassed in scale and intensity that of the Lon Nol regime. Therefore, the people of Kampuchea, like the Jews, have been kept waiting for a Messiah who will come down to save them from misery. We have seen a statue as well as a picture of Phra Meteyya Bodhisattava in most shrines in Cambodia. Because of this, I think, Buddhism will continue to exist in the country for at least two or three generations more, or for a longer period of time if some changes take place. After a long discussion with Ven'ble Tepvong and others, we feel that the duty of Siamese Buddhists is to lend a firm hand to save Buddhism in that country, particularly in the field of educatio, by supplying religious books and teachers. These measures will help to revive and reorganize Buddhism and to re-establish friendly relations between the peoples of the two fraternal countries.

PHRAMAHA
SOMCHAI KUSALACITTO

Rebuilding a na



It took the Venerable Teb Wong only an hour and 40 minutes to fly from Phnom Penh to Bangkok. The distance was not so great, but the things that appeared in the two places were almost completely different.

At the grand and majestic sight of Buddhist monasteries here, glimmering chofas on top of the roofs, shining guilded images of the Lord Buddha housed in elaborately decorated structures, as well as the holy chimes of bells that echo sweetly in the peaceful air, Ven Tab Wong and his fellow Khmer monks could not help but think back to the old days when the religion still prospered in Cambodia.

"I felt like tears were going to flood my eyes. The monasteries in our country would be as beautiful had they not been destroyed," said the chief, who led a group of Khmer monks to Thailand to attend the annual meeting of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists.

According to Ven Teb Wong, Buddhism, as well as other religions and beliefs in Cambodia, came close to complete destruction during the Khmer Rouge regime. "Monasteries were raided and destroyed. Scriptures and books were burnt away or thrown into rivers," said the monk. His words were brief, and the tone of his voice was normal, but a chronic pain still showed itself in his eyes which seemed to be staring at something in the air. Perhaps, the vision of the cruel past was re-occurring in his mind.

"Monks were forced at gun poin to leave the sacred robe and to go out and work in the field," he said. "More than 25,000 monks were killed throughout the country, including the Supreme Patriarch, who was more than 8 years old.

"After a brutal period which lasted three years, eight months and twenty days, the tyrant was finally overthrown in 1979. But by that time, there was almost nothing left," said Ven Teb

religion

Wong, adding that the new government, in an effort to restore the religion, had called for Buddhist monks who were still alive.

"Only seven were found in the whole country," said the monk. Yes, he was one among those survivors. They were re-ordained, and Ven Teb Wong was chosen as leader of the first batch of Khmer monks -- with a mission to bring Buddhism back to life again.

"Under the new government, the Khmer people gradually gained their basic freedoms. At first, only those aged above 50 were allowed to enter monkhood, but now all are allowed, and children can become novices when they reach the age of 15," said the Head of the Khmer Sangha. He added that at present there are more than 20,000 monks and novices scattered throughout Cambodia in 3,000 monasteries.

"People come to temples to make merit and listen to sermons on every religious day," said the head monk. "We also have preaching programmes on radio four times a month."

"The new leaders help as best as they can in supporting the religion," said Ven Teb Wong, adding that the Kathin and other ceremonies were sponsored by the government. "Maybe it's because most of the new leaders were ordained before," the monk said. "As for Prime Minister Hun Sen, though he has never been a monk, he had led life as a 'temple boy' for several years.

"But due to the warring situation, the best the government can do for religion is really not much," he revealed, adding that most of the 3,000 monasteries are still in ruins. The government cannot afford to renovate them all. Some monasteries have only a couple of monks, and some are deserted.

"The monks still lack scriptures and books for dhamma study," he said, adding that 95 per cent of their religious documents were destroyed by the former regime.

Safety is another problem. In the past, Cambodia had a great many pilgrim monks or *phra thudong*. But these days, walking in the forest, one would run the high risk of being shot dead as suspected spies. "The monks staying near the border do not even dare to go far away from their monasteries," he said.

Asked if it was true, as many Thais believe, that Khmer monks, especially the *phra thudong*, possessed magic charms and were involved with the supernatural, the Khmer Head Monk laughed and said: "If that is true, they wouldn't be afraid of guerrillas' bullets. And not so many would have been killed." Yet, his laughter also carried a sense of bitterness.



The monk administration system is also weak. The title that Ven Teb Wong bore was the highest of all monks in the country. There has not been a Supreme Patriarch in Cambodia since the last one was executed by the Khmer Rouge.

Maybe all those facts can clearly explain why the Khmer monks were struck by emotional turmoil once they caught the sight of Buddhism in Thailand.

"Even the robes we are wearing were bought from Thailand," admitted the Ven Teb Wong. "And so were the bags." His words were confirmed by the Thai letters which appeared on the bag that each Khmer monk was holding. Only one of them had a bag that depicted a word written in the Khmer language. "I had it made in Phnom Penh," said the owner.

At the moment, Thailand and Cambodia do not have official diplomatic ties with each other, but the Head of the Khmer Sangha expressed his wish that there would be helping hands offered between Buddhists in the two neighbouring countries. He mentioned that, recently, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists organised a trip for Thai monks to visit temples in Cambodia to learn about the problems. And it was also this same organisation who paid the plane fees for the Khmer monks to attend the meeting.

"We may have been working for 12 years on the restoration of the religion in our country," said Ven Teb Wong, "but the state of Buddhism is still like a fragile young tree which may die at any moment."

By PONGPET MEKLOY

Voice Toward Nonviolent Action

One basic principle which differentiates human beings from animals is the human recognition of the value of one's own rights and the acknowledgement of the rights of others. When the value of human rights is not recognized, it leads to all kinds of violent actions, which can exist in our family, in our camp, in our country, and in every part of the world. All incidents of violence, not only in our camp, but in every part of the universe, are viewed with regretfulness and sorrow. We, all of us human beings, willingly or unwillingly, directly or indirectly, with awareness or without awareness, are a part of supporting the terribly violent actions that continually exist in the society of human beings.

Some people believe that the resolution of the problem should be "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". This means that when someone is insulted, he or she repays with more insults. If someone is hit on the head, he or she hits back in retaliation. If an opponent kills someone's friend or fellow soldier, he or she will kill the same (or more?) in return.

But, in truth, the resolution of the problem does not have to be dependent on violence or retribution. One can use the way of nonviolent action, which avoids harm, shuns killing and refrains from bloodshed. As the Buddha once said, "Hatred and enmity can be ended by those who are able to forgive." The nonviolent way respects the rights of others. Many people have used this way, and their actions are recorded in world history.

Mahatma Gandhi used the nonviolent way to achieve independence for India from England.

Archbishop Romero, a Jesuit priest in El Salvador, used the nonviolent way against the oppressors there.

Martin Luther King used the nonviolent way to obtain equal rights for African-American people in the U.S.

A Buddhist monk named Hem Chiv used the nonviolent way against French colonialists during their rule in Cambodia.

There are still many other people in the world who have believed in the non-violent way and used it to solve all kinds of problems. Some of those people have been honored and given a place in the history of our world.

Now, turn and take a

A SENSE OF PROPORTION

"80% of the world's wealth and resources are owned by 17% of the world's population – mainly the industrialised nations."

This is 4 to 5 times what they would have on a "Fair Shares" basis.

For the remaining 83% of the world's population to come up to the present standard of living of the fortunate 17%, five times the present world resources would be required – and there is the problem of pollution, of all forms, which would be some five times greater.

In other words, IT IS UNTENABLE.

The comment "Why don't they get on with it and build themselves up as we did?" has no relevance when the 83% who are to 'build themeselves up' are limited to owning just 20% of the word's resources. (Anyway, the first step in building themselves up 'as we did' - is to exploit other countries by colonising them, and this is not recommended by those very same critics.)

Further, the present world trade and economic system has the 83% as the satellites of the finance-centres in local cities and those in turn are satellites of the major finance centres in the major cities of any country – whence profits (and hence accumulation of capital) again go to the giant centres of London, New York, Paris and one or two more, so that capital cannot easily accumulate in those countries trying to 'build themselves up.'

"The Earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" says the quote from the Bible (Psalm 24) in gold lettering over the Main Entrance to the London Stock Exchange.

One can serve Mammon, but one cannot also serve God.

If it maximises Profits, it minimises Love.

H. HOLLO WAY
from The Bangkok Post
Saturday Feb. 23, 1991

deep look into our society again. We, as members of the human society, have to try very hard to tame our hearts and minds, to learn how to judge what is right and what is wrong and to understand and take tender care of this value of ourselves and all others as human beings.

The idea that violence is needed to solve problems must be abolished from our hearts and minds by participating in actions of goodness, by loving our-selves and others, by forgiving and by fully seeking compromise. It is your right to take action against injustices committed against you, but the way to use is not the way of force or of causing harm to others, but of seeking the truth and then solving the problem with justice, compromise, love, forgiveness and mutual understanding. Solving problems by the use of force or threats does not guarantee that the resolution or peace will last, for the arguments or issues which are not agreed upon wholeheartedly will be secretly held on to, and retaliation will occur whenever the situation allows. But if both sides have agreed and are willing to solve the problem with all their hearts, their strength and their souls, based on nonviolent action, the problem will be solved and peace will happen, and it will be durable.

On this special recognition of Human Rights Day of 1990, the Activist Team for Supporting Peace and Justice in Site II would like to ask everyone everywhere to please help contribute to the elimination of violent action by starting first with yourselves and your own family. Educate yourselves and your familes to gain knowledge of how to respect your own rights and know your own value as human beings. When you know your rights and understand your value, then you will easily know the other's rights and the other's value. When you understand these, you will know how to choose your way with good judgement, good consideration, righteousness and justice to find the truth in problems and avoid the use of the violent way to harm others, not only physically but also mentally. Then goodness and peace will come to all of us and the records of tragedy caused by human beings will close their pages in both the present time and the future.

We, the Activist Team Supporting Peace and Justice in Site II, wish and pray that everyone can live in peace and happiness.

Please allow nonviolent action to grow in your heart today and forever.

Thanks to all of you
Active Non-Violence Team
Site II Refugee Camp Thailand

REASONS FOR NONVIOLENCE

At first glance, violence may appear to be a superior technique for resolving conflicts or achieving desired ends, because it has obvious and tangible strategies and weapons. Nonviolent techniques are often more difficult to visualize and there is no shortage of moral and practical dilemmas that sceptics are able to raise as impediments to taking nonviolence seriously.

Yet, many reasons can be offered for the employment of nonviolence: it is a 'weapon' available to all; it is least likely to alienate opponents and third parties; it breaks the cycle of violence and counter-violence; it leaves open the possibility of conversion; it ensures that the media focus on the issue at hand rather than some tangential act of violence and it is the surest way of achieving public sympathy. Further: it is more likely to produce a constructive rather than a destructive outcome; it is a method of conflict resolution that may aim to arrive at the truth of a given situation (rather than mere victory for one side) and it is the only method of struggle that is consistent with the teachings of the major religions.

In addition, there are reasons for the employment of nonviolence that go beyond the conviction that it is a useful, or even the only 'correct,' method of conflict resolution. Nonviolence can also be the basis for a way of life; it is consistent with a belief in the underlying unity of humankind, and it is the only method of action, interpersonal or political, that does not block that path to what has often been called 'self-realization'.

People try nonviolence for a week, and when it 'doesn't work' they go back to violence. which hasn't worked for centuries.

Theodore Roszak

by
Thomas Weber and Robert J Burrawes.
Peace Dossier 27: Feb. 1991

TO EVERYTHING, THERE IS A SEASON

It was a case of the right person in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Komol Keemthong died of gunshot wounds 20 years ago. At the time, government troops fighting the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) were suspected of carrying out the assassination that robbed Thai society of a promising, idealistic young man.

The fact can now be firmly established that the killer, or killers, of Komol Keemthong and his two companions belonged to the CPT.

Why did a political party which professed to serve the common people and to protect their interests hurt someone whose activities would have served those same principles?

There are good reasons to believe that the killing was a case of mistaken identity, that the guerrillas mistook Komol for a government spy.

A long-time activist with contacts within the local CPT units revealed that the party high command had acknowledged its mistake. He said the guerrillas who carried out the assassination had just been transferred to the area. Not totally familiar with the local situation and people, they took matters into their own hands.

Why had this fact been kept under wraps for nearly two decades?

Publications from the Komol Keemthong Foundation still contain passages that leave the impression that the terrible deed was carried out by government forces.

A foundation official said it was not the foundation's intention to keep the fact from becoming public knowledge.

She said the foundation's main focus has been to carry on Komol's idealism by providing support to young people with worthwhile ideas but lacking resources. Foundation officials had discussed Komol's death internally, she said, but they felt it did not serve any purpose to publicise the fact after such a long period of time.

A one-time mentor to Komol and a foundation director, social critic Sulak Sivaraksa had, 19 years after the fact, written about it in *Matichon* newspaper last year.

He said he wrote the article simply to get the truth out. It was timed to coincide with the anniversary of Komol's death.

The reason it took a long time for the fact to be publicised is that the issue had never been raised, Sulak said, and it was thought to be adding nothing significant to the current social and political situation.

He insisted the delay was not meant to protect any individual or group.

Sulak said that Komol took the trip to the burnt village, despite several warnings, because he did not feel he was in any danger.

"Komol told me in his letter that he didn't think the CPT would harm him because he knew that before they carried out their threats, they would have given out three warnings" Sulak said.

"The villagers never made it clear to him that they were carrying the warnings from the CPT."

He acknowledged that the villagers' assessment of Komol was correct to a certain extent.

"When you engage in this type of activity, you have to have a high degree of self-confidence which people may interpret as stubbornness," Sulak said.

Another person who thinks Komol was stubborn is Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, the revered abbot of Suan Mokh forest monastery in Surat Thani.

In his sermon to the Bangkok visitors on "Thoughts from Khru Komol's Life", he said Komol used to visit him every time he was to enter a remote area.

The respected monk said he had expressed concern for Komol's safety to an aide; but, he said:

"I came to realise that if an elephant is going to take off, no one will be able to hold it back; so, I didn't express any opinion to him. I simply said to him to take care of himself."

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu went on to offer his observations.

"Conducting oneself to benefit others to the extent of sacrificing one's life is a high ideal of *Bodhisattva* in Mahayana Buddhism

"Khun Komol had a high degree of self-sacrifice, but he lacked a bodhisattva's ideal that has to do with saying things that ought to be said, that is knowing the time and place for each matter."

"Lacking an awareness of an appropriate time and place thus brought about misfortune and danger."

Perhaps it is pointless now to speculate on what could have been had Komol heeded the numerous cautions and warnings by villagers and friends.

It is time to look ahead. Many young people, one hopes, will step in to carry on Komol's idealistic torch, and the foundation, in his name's sake, will lend a helping hand to their endeavours.

But, if there is a lesson in Komol's death, it is this:

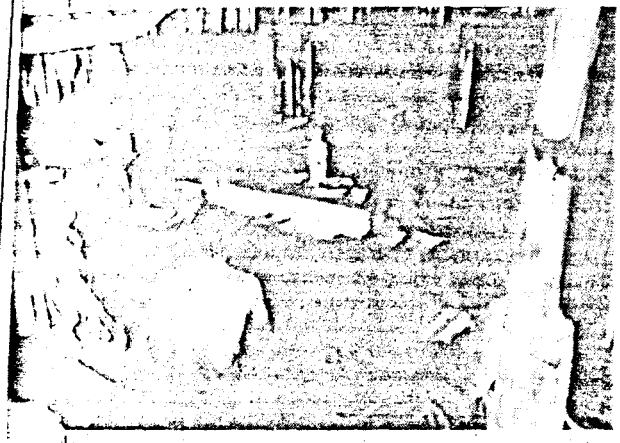
That in the heat of an idealistic moment, and in the enthusiasm of working for the good of a wider public, it pays to take a step back to view the whole picture and ask oneself: Is one the right person in the right place at the right time?

Wasant Techawongtham
Bangkok Post
Sunday March 10, 1991

Buddhists rap rights violations in Burma

The International Network of Engaged Buddhists has deplored human rights violations in Burma, particularly in Kachin State, a section of the country closed to outsiders.

A delegation of 15 INEB members recently met ethnic minorities, Burmese students and monks along the Thai-Burmese border.



The team of Buddhists – from Japan, Germany, the US, UK, the Netherlands and Nepal – heard bleak accounts of people forcefully drafted as porters for the Burmese Army.

Many died or were injured as a result of the arduous work.

Rape is also common-place, they heard.

Women are also being lured to Thailand to work as prostitutes.

According to the president of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship US, Stephany Kaza, the worst of human rights abuses were taking place in central Kachin State, to which outsiders are denied access.

While the Karennis have documented instances of human rights violations, the Kachin people have not, she said.

The INEB planned to help build a monastery along the border.

Social critic Sulak Sivaraksa, an INEB coordinator, said the objective of the tour, which followed the annual INEB conference in Thailand, was for Buddhists to have first hand experience of how their fellow followers are suffering.

It will enable them to help as now they have a clearer idea of the situation.

Last year's INEB exposure trip was to Sri Lanka where killings and human rights violations were rife.

With the military now taking over in Thailand, Mr. Sulak said he hoped the Thai junta would not encourage its Burmese counterpart to "get" the ethnic minorities.

The ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council should instead be persuaded by its Thai counterpart to adopt a moderate, conciliatory line towards ethnic minorities, he said.

Bangkok Post Fri. Mar. 1, 91

Nepal on the mend with new consumer culture

The banners advertising Tuborg and San Miguel beer are all over Kathmandu city. In the restaurants, Nescafe is available and the street vendors hawk Mars chocolate bars and Three Fives cigarettes.

Along New Road, department stores have mushroomed and are well stocked with Sony Walkmans together with the latest Hindi and English cassette tapes.

In a pub in the tourist district of Thamel, a private disco party goes on till the wee hours of the morning, with young girls donning Madonna-like dresses and the guys in denim jackets and ripped jeans.

Just nine months ago, these things were unimaginable in this tiny Himalayan kingdom, nestled between India and China. Prior to April of last year, a mere gathering of three people after six in the evening could warrant an arrest by the Army.

With the advent of multi-party democracy on April 9 last year after King Birendra Bkiram Shah lifted a 30-year ban on political parties after bowing to protests in which at least 20 people were killed, a new form of affluence has gripped the only Hindu state in the world.

Observers agree that this sudden consumer culture proliferation can be largely attributed to the resumption of the India-Nepal Trade and Transit Treaty which broke down in March 1989.

At that time, India's blockade of Nepal resulted in the closure of all but two transit points along its 885-kilometre border with Nepal. The move followed a breakdown in talks during 1988 to extend and modify two crucial treaties, one giving Nepali goods preferential access to India and another guaranteeing Nepal's transit rights to third countries.

The bilateral treaty expired on March 23, 1989, with New Delhi and Kathmandu coming to a deadlock over its renewal.

In June of last year, however, Nepali Prime Minister designate Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and former Indian Prime Minister V.P. Singh reached an agreement to resume the bilateral treaty.

One of the pre-conditions for the renewal of the bilateral treaty was that Nepal should defer taking delivery from China of a 1988 purchase of anti-aircraft guns, machine guns and a small number of armoured personnel carriers which was made under the previous regime of former Prime Minister March Man Shingh Shresta.

Analysts say the 1988 arms purchase from China was the heart of the trade dispute with India. India, till 1988, was Nepal's sole weapons supplier, and New Delhi saw the import of arms from China as going against the spirit of a 1950 treaty with Nepal which provides for special relations between the two countries.

With the "Chinese impediment" removed in Nepal- India relations and the resumption of the Trade and Transit Treaty, imports from third countries have been flooding Kathmandu city.

The new consumer culture that has overtaken Kathmandu, however, is viewed with scepticism by certain observers.

"The sudden influx of imported items has created an artificial want among the youth here," says Harvard-educated journalist Anup Raj Joshi.

"With the average salary of between 1,500 rupees to 2,000 rupees (Bt1,000 to Bt1,500) how can the young afford, for instance, a stereo cassette player?" he asked.

"This in turn serves to further reinforce the poverty syndrome. Youths feel they're poor not because they can't make ends meet. On the other hand, they think they're poor because they can't afford these luxuries."

Eleventh on a United Nations list of 15 impoverished landlocked countries, Nepal's per capita gross domestic product hovers at US$ 160 a year, on a par with Ethiopia or Bangladesh.

Political activist Padma Ratna Tulaga feels that India's motives in renewing the bilateral trade treaty are questionable.

"It's in India's interests that Nepal be made its satellite market and Indian businessmen are already having a monopoly of certain items like building materials here in Kathmandu," he says.

"One of the stipulations in the Trade and Transit Treaty is that if any Nepalese item were to be marketed in India, there has to be about 60 per cent local [Nepalese] content in it.

"But this is ridiculous because Nepal does not have raw materials of its own and most of the time we have to import them. Take, for instance, sweaters. We import the wool from Tibet and knit the garments in Kathmandu. But these sweaters cannot be marketed in India because there's no 60 per cent local content."

"Indian goods, on the other hand, are given reduced tariffs by the Nepali governmnet as compared to goods from China, which were previously accorded the same status as Indian goods," says Tulaga.

An economist from Tribhuvan University who did not want to be named says the bilateral trade treaty is actually to Nepal's disadvantage.

"Nepal has to mobilize resources internally and wean away from India if it wants to break free from the crutches of poverty," he says.

According to the economist, with the resumption of the bilateral trade treaty, Nepal's foreign debt had actually risen from 10.33 billion rupees in 1986 to 33.69 billion rupees (US$ 1.16 billion) last year.

"Nepal's imports from India and third countries have to be paid in hard currency but Nepali exports to India are paid for in Indian rupees which are now freely convertable in Kathmandu. This in turn results in a huge amount of US dollars leaving Nepal and finding its way into India."

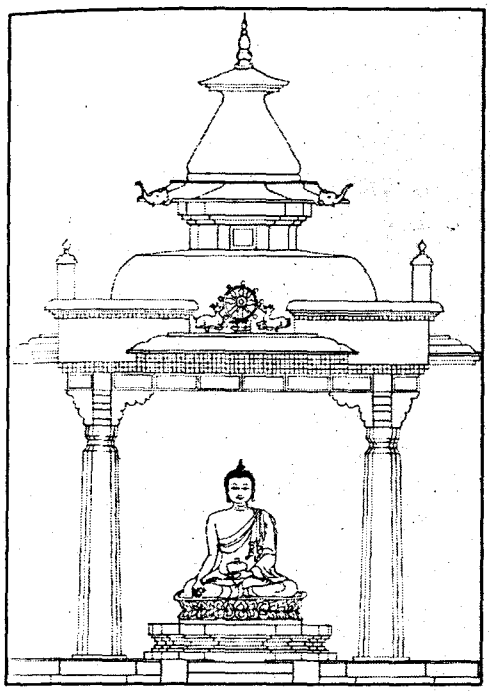
Nepal's foreign reserves of 8.45 billion rupees (US$291 million) come mostly from foreign loans, and its foreign debt has tripled in the last five yers.

Nation Sat. Jan 26

Buddha Pratima in New Delhi MESSAGE

Acharya Nagarjuna said, "I prostrate to the feet of Gautama, who showed the supreme Dharma, in order to eliminate all views, by holding firmly with his compassion."

Nowadays, in the world at large, people willingly indulge in the three poisons – desire, hatred and ignorance – and have become short-sighted. Due to this, it has become a common practice to be jealous towards those who are higher, to be competitive towards those who are equal and to exploit and abuse those who are lower. With the ever



increasing power of nuclear devices, the danger of total destruction has become grave and continues to be imminent.

At such a time, in order to remember the kindness of Lord Buddha, the Great Teacher, who showed the path of the essence of love and compassion for all equally, and of the peace and harmony which lead to everlasting bliss, and also in order to express my sincere respect and affection for the government and people of India, who cherish this good path of non-violence which was shown by him, a statue of the unequalled Buddha was commissioned for installation in the Buddha Jayanti Park in New Delhi.

On this auspicious occasion of its ground ritual, I send my dedicated prayers and words of auspiciousness.

Bhikku Tenzin Gyatso
XIVth Dalai Lama

Declaration of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma

Dated: 3rd. Day of Waxing Moon of Pyatho, 1352 (December 18, 1990)

The entire people of Burma and much of the world's population are well aware of the 1988 uprising of the monks, people and students who staged demostrations and general strikes against the more than 26 year reign of and intolerable enslavement under Ne Win regime's military and one-party dictatorship in Burma.

Ne Win's military regime staged a coup d'etat after crushing the 1988 people's uprising. Naming itself the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and giving the holding of multi-party democratic general elections as a reason, the military regime, led by Gen. Saw Maung, took control over all the affairs of the state.

Throughout the period prior to the elections, the political parties' election campaigns were either restricted or banned by the SLORC's orders and declarations. The organizations and election campaigns of the political parties were strictly controlled by Orders 2/88 and 8/88 and the Martial Law decrees of the SLORC. Democratic forces and organisations, including the National League for Democracy (NLD) Party, which enjoyed the popular support of the majority of the people, were restricted or suppressed by various means. Many leaders and members of various parties, including U Tin Oo, the Chairman, and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the General Secretary, of the NLD Party, were put under house arrest, detained in prisons, charged, sentenced or harrassed by frequent interrogations and night searches.

The pro-democracy people dared not express their will and attitudes because of threats, interrogations, investigations and many other harrassments by various means. People's rights to freedom of opinion and expression were also threatened and denied. People were forced to live in fear under the oppressive military rule. The elections were held under such harsh conditions -- full of restrictions and difficulties.

Nonetheless, with the overwhelming support of the people, the NLD won the elections, securing 85% of the total number of seats in the People's Assembly. In the light of all these events and developments in Burma, the establishment of a democratic government that can guarantee and safeguard democratic and human rights in Burma has become a historical necessity. The military junta held the general elections only to establish its own puppet government. However, the people expected a genuine democratic government after the general elections. With that great expectation, the people voted overwhelmingly for the NLD. This act of overwhelming support for the NLD means that in the hope of achieving democratic and human rights, the NLD had been entrusted with the historical duty to

establish an elected, democratic government as soon as possible.

Having no intention to transfer power to the NLD, the winner of the general elections with a landslide victory despite threats and restrictions, the SLORC, scheming to delay any transfer of power to the People's Assembly, threatened and forced the political parties to accept its programmes.

The SLORC prevented (with Order 1/90) the immediate convening of the People's Assembly, the transfer of power to the people's representatives and the formation of a government by them. The elected members of the People's Assembly rejected Order 1/90 and demanded the calling of the People's Assembly in September, according to the Gandhi Declaration. When the election winners of other political parties also unanimously stood behind that demand, the SLORC mounted its pressure on all the political parties which adhered to and were unified under the Gandhi Declaration. There were more arrests of the leaders of the NLD and the Democratic Party for a New Society. Moreover, the news letters, bulletins and publications of the political parties were also prohibited, even at the village and township level. The NLD's township offices were raided and searched by the army, police and intelligence. Elected members of the People's Assembly were arrested, and township political organizers were also called for interrogations. Referring to its own orders and declarations, and giving a number of unlawful reasons while putting up the unjustified signboard 'legally charged', the SLORC disolved many of the political parties or created conditions to make them weaken and fade away, so that only the puppet political parties and political opportunists who would obey their orders would remain. The SLORC thus forced the political parties' acceptance and signing of Order 1/90 by various, unlawful schemes.

The SLORC then arrested and persecuted the monks who protested the unlawful bannings, arrests and human rights violations of the regime and demanded the immediate transfer of power to the representatives elected by the people.

As for the NLD, it had proposed to the SLORC many times to discuss the smooth transfer of power. In accordance with the Gandhi Deuclaration, the NLD had sent a petition signed by the representatives elected to the People's Assembly calling for the principles of non-retaliation and co-relation and the smooth transfer of power to the elected Assembly. As for the SLORC, it responded only with the excuse that "it has no way to talk with the political parties for it is a non-political entity". Now Burma has become a country shrouded in darkness because of all the unlawful arrests, torture, persecution and human rights violations of the SLORC. In such a situation, it is absolutely impossible for the representatives elected by the vast majority of the people to convene a People's Assembly and establish a legitimate government. Therefore, we, the representatives of the NLD, the National Democracy Party, and other elected representatives, dedicate ourselves

(1) to eliminate the SLORC, the military regime, immediately,

(2) to call a National Convention with the People's Assembly representatives elected on May 27, 1990, members of the Democratic Alliance of Burma, other elected representatives and democratic forces and

(3) to establish a genuine democratic government -- "The National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma" -- for the establishment of an independent, prosperous and modernized Federal Union of Burma.

URGENT APPEAL ON BURMA SITUATION
Inter'l Network Of Engaged Buddhists - JAPAN

During the time we were paying attention to the problem of the Middle East, in Asia the Burmese situation has become much worse than before. We must feel great anxiety about the destinity of the students, monks and ethnic minorities who are raising the flag of democratization and struggling for it in the jungle.

We think that this situation will provide the military dictatorship the pretext for further use of its very strong military power in the violent repression of the students and the ethnic minorities who are struggling together with them.

Recent support to the military dictatorship has included large quantities of weapons and bombs from China.

In an unverified report attributed to the American CIA, it is claimed that the military dictatorship is planning a serious offensive aimed at the extermination of the ethnic minorities. We must admit that the scene is becoming all too clear from news that Buddhist temples and monks are also becoming a target for the merciless violence of the military dictatorship.

The problem is that a large part of the weap-

onry used is bought with resources which come from Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA). In 1986 the amount of ODA granted amounted to 30% of the Burmese national budget.

As the ODA comes from the taxes paid by us; we Japanese are indirectly exporting weapons and exterminating the students, monks and ethnic minorities who are searching for democracy .

On May 27, 1990, Saw Maung's Government held general elections in a situation in which the anti-goverment movements were suppressed and all kinds of freedoms witheld from the people. In this election more than 80% of the people expressed their support for the National League for Democracy and their hope for the end of the Saw Maung government.

No matter how clear the election's result, there has been no indication from the Saw Maung government of any intent to step down . Countries such as Germany, Canada and the United States have halted all economic assistance to this government.

In this international situation, why does Japan recognize this government and continue to



give it economic assistance? Or yet, why do companies belonging to the Japan-Burma Association not cut their relations with this government?

Concerned with the situation of a country in which almost all of the people are Buddhists, we members of the Japanese branch of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists make the following resolutions:

To call on Burma's Saw Maung government:

* To pass the government to the NLD.

To call on the Japanese government:

* To stop immediately all economical assistance to Burma.

To call on the firms associated with the Japan-Burma Association:

* To cut all relations with the present goverment of Burma.

To call on Japanese Buddhists:

* To understand the standpoint of Burmese Buddhist People and give them both material and spiritual support.

Inter'l Network of Engaged Buddhists JAPAN
Suzuki Ryowa
(Secretariat)

Reviving a Thai wedding tradition

A traditional Thai wedding ceremony is rarely seen nowadays. When one was held in an exotic atmosphere, Suthon Sukphisit took his camera to capture the event. Here is his report.

Lustral water was poured on the hands of the bridal couple as the words of blessing were murmured. The refreshing water passed through the hands to big brass bowls decorated with roses. It signalled that Ormkwan Sanasen and her British bridegroom, Lindsay Mc Ewan, had sealed their ties as life partners.

What made their wedding special was the fact that they had tried to revive a traditional wedding ceremony. It turned out to be an exotic event when all concerned dressed in traditional Thai dress.

Preservation of art is no strange idea to Ormkwan, who has been brought up with that thought all her life. Her artist parents, Acharn Ouab and Wisuta Sanasen, are recognised for their efforts in the preservation of folk art. Both are pioneers in preserving and promoting hand woven cloths, basketware, wooden crafts and other antiques. They collected them, introduced them to friends and sold them.

Ormkwan and Lindsay met and fell in love at Kingston Polytechnic in London, where both are studying art. They decided to get married, Thai style, at the home of Ormkwan's parents in Uthai Thani.

Acharn Ouab is a new resident in Uthai Thani. He said he had followed the hand woven cloth to Uthai Thani and was so charmed by the peaceful town that he decided to settle down there. He bought a piece of land overlooking the Sa Kae Grang River.

Within three years, he and his wife have built a residence quarter with two small Thai tradi-

tional houses amidst a lush green garden. They intend to use a house as an art centre. All the big trees were kept, and new bushes of different species grow against the grass which sways in the evening breeze. At night the path leading to the house is illuminated by lamps.

Thai people are famed for their hospitality. For the day of the wedding in Uthai Thani, it certainly proved true. When neighbours learned that their new neighbours were holding a wedding ceremony for their daughter and wanted it to be a traditional one, they volunteered to help. Many brought out their brassware to be used in the ritual ceremony and helped with arrangements.

Wedding ceremonies in Bangkok nowadays have been cut short, with much of the traditional procedure omitted. Instead, the procedure follows a ready-made formula. Invitation cards reach guests by mail. Guests drink to the couple at a party. It is neither an oriental nor a western rite, but unfortunately a rite designated by limited time and space.

The bridal couple chose New Year's Eve to seal their life bond and they began their new life together as the new year approached.

The traditional ceremony begins with religious rites early in the morning. The bridal couple give food to the monks and receive their blessing. Then the bridegroom is taken to join in *kabuan kan maak* (a dowry parade procession) to bring back food and gifts to his bride.

In the afternoon a lustral water pouring ceremony is held, followed by *bai si su kwan*, a blessing ceremony, a tradition practised by Uthai people. In this case, neighbours were invited to celebrate New Year's Eve at the house with *a likae* performance.

The morning mist was cleared away by the rising sun as the important day began, the bride dressed in a red pattern *pa sin* and white lace blouse, her bridegroom in *rajapatan*. Guests brought out their best designed *pa sin*, many dressed in a *jungabane* style, making for a bright colourful day. Nothing was done in a hurry. All proceeded at leisure.



Six monks, an even number is preferred, were invited to the religious ceremony. The names of the monks were specially chosen in order that they represented an auspicious meaning, like Phra Boonyeun (longlife) and Phra Maha Foo (prosperity).

The food presented to the monks was placed on big brass trays, an ornament every house-hold in the province has. After that the groom was taken to the centre of the town to bring the prepared dowry to the bride's house with a parade. The shop slected at the centre of the town as the site to prepare the parade bearing, again, a good name, Watanapaisal (prosperity).

According to tradition, the procession must be kept to an order. The leading couple will carry a banana tree and sugar cane tree, the former representing prosperity and the latter, sweetness. After that, a pair of dowries are placed in bowls to be carried by a boy and a girl. In the boy's bowl will be precious items like necklaces, bracelets, rings, earrings of either jewels or gold and money. The girl's bowl has a mixture of seeds – which has an auspicious meaning – like grains, *bai ngen, bai thong.* These will be wrapped up in a hand-woven piece of cloth.

A third line comprises coconuts, alcoholic drink and boiled pork and chicken, to be used in a rite upon reaching the bride's home to pay worship to the ancestors and deities believed to guard the house. There will be four pairs of *kan maak ek*, which are wrapped up on brass trays. The first pair contained betels, *bai ngen bai thong*, *bai tonrak*, the second had *hor mok* and *kanom cheen*, longer than usual, the third had *kanom tom* and the the fourth held *khao niao hua ngog*, *khao tok hua khon* (representing longevity).

Kan maak ek are carried by married women who had *kan maak ek* and still live with their husband. Divorcees and widows are not allowed to do the job. Once carried the trays cannot be put down halfway or change hands. If the carrier has to sit down, they can rest it on their laps. They will not give them to anyone when they reach the bride's house either. They will place them on the designated place – the mattress to be used for the wedding bed.

After *kan maak ek* will be pairs of sweet desserts, the number of them depending on how long the procession is. Nine is considered an auspicious number as nine or *kao* in Thai means progress. No

particular desserts are required here. All the items for this wedding were carried in pairs by neighbours who dressed gracefully in Thai traditional costume for the occasion.

The groom and his patron are at the rear of the procession. In Uthai Thani, the dowry parade walks north first, for a few yards, for prosperity again, before heading for the bride's house.

Ho hi ho hi ho hue, a man led a chorus of the famous tune to signal that the procession would start walking.

The gate of the bride's house was closed and representatives in the procession made noises in front of it to call attention. Representatives from the bride's house called out loud and asked who was making a scene at the gate and what they wanted. Their counterparts from the bridegroom's procession would then answer: "We're here for a good cause. We bring the groom here for a wedding ceremony. Now let's open the door."

It's not that easy. The people in the bride's house will pull the bridegroom's leg for fun by making excuses to not let him in easily. Acharn Sulak Sivaraksa, who acted as the groom's patron, had to bribe them with money. Sometimes, if they meet a tough negotiator, they have to pay more before being allowed to go in. The almighty baht proved its power here again.

There were three more gates starting with *nak*, silver and golden. They are called gates, but are not literally real ones. The bride's friends or relatives will join in the teasing game by bringing their necklaces or belts to be held up by two people to obstruct the groom and his procession. After some rewards were paid, the doors were opened.

After passing all the gates a representative from the bride's house will come out to invite them in. Usually it will be a child who carries a tray containing betels to welcome the groom and his parade to the house.

All the dowries are placed on the bridal couple's mattress, paved with three banana tree leaves. The bridal couple sat near it surrounded by the bride's parents, friends and relatives.

Valuable items in the bowl are then opened and the groom takes out some items to place on his bride, such as a necklace, ring and bracelet. The bride gave her groom a golden ring. A brief western tradition was inserted at this point, as the couple exchanged a kiss.

The other bowls and trays were opened and the bride's relatives found, with surprise, a bowl carrying the seeds. In it there was a bundle of pounds sterling, the true dowry from the groom.

Then the ritual performer led the bridal couple through a ritual ceremony to pay respect to the ancestors and deities and to ask for their blessings. The couple were told to light a candle. When the ritual ceremony was over, each was ordered to blow out their own candle. Unknown to them, the candles were used as cast lots. The longer one means its owner will dominate the other. The candles came out equal.

The afternoon ceremony began with a lustral water pouring ceremony. The groom, who found himself surprisingly comfortable in Thai traditional dress, sat prone beside his bride, their elbows and hands resting on cushions. He said he wished his parents could have come, but at this time of the year they were always kept busy by their business.

He did not feel too lonely though, as he was accompanied by friends from home and new neighbours who were more than willing to help. He had consulted books on the Thai traditional wedding and had practised a little bit of how to prostrate and sit with both legs tucked to one side.

Asked to compare this Thai wedding with its western counterpart, he said, "The western one is more straightforward, while the Thai wedding is more subtle in every detail. It's very intricate and respectful."

Parents, relatives and guests took turns to pour the lustral water on their palms, performing in a *Wai* position and blessing them with all the good things they could think of.

After that a *bai si su kwan* ceremony was held. This rite is held here as many people in Uthai Thani migrated from Laos.

When the young happy couple said it would be an unforgettable event for both of them, we knew they were surely right.

Bangkok Post
Tuesday January 15, 1991

Carl Magnus Thornes : An Appreciation

I first knew Carl Magnus Thornes through "KARMA," his excellent Scandinavian journal of Buddhism. Later we wrote to each other, after he found out that I was involved in the International Network of Engaged Buddhists. He very much liked the idea that Buddhists should not only concern themselves with personal spiritual growth, but should at the

same time care for social justice, human rights and ecological balance.

In November 1989, I was invited by the Life & Peace Institute in Sweden to take part in a seminar entitled "The Role of Religions in Situations of Armed Conflict." Carl Magnus then asked me to fly from Stockholm to Oslo, at his own expense, to talk on socially engaged Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia to Norwegian Buddhists and others in the University as well as in the mass media. He looked after me very well and introduced me to his family. I really felt that his friendship was warm and intimate.

In March 1990, in Siam, we had our second annual meeting of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists. Carl Magnus came and took an active part in our activities and was elected a member of the executive board. In Bangkok, he was presented to HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirinthorn, our King's daughter, and met a number of Siamese artists and poets. In the South, he met the Ven Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, perhaps the most well known Theravada scholar. He was impressed by the octogenarian monk in much the same way as he had been influenced by the friendliness and humility of another Buddhist spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

Later in 1990, I had the chance to visit Scandinavia once more, but Carl Magnus was too ill to see me. Indeed, he was not at all well when he came to our country, yet he managed everything bravely and calmly.

I was surprised when he wrote to me that he had had cancer for 3 years and did not expect to live much longer. He asked if it would be possible for me to attend his memorial service. He told me not to come if it would not be appropriate or convenient for me to do so, but that he would be very happy if I thought I could be at his Buddhist memorial service. His family would pay for all my expenses.

I replied immediately that wherever I would be in any part of the world, I would do anything to fulfil his wish. I wished that I could do more, especially to prolong his life, as his contribution to Buddhism and to humanity would have been much greater had he lived longer. I even advised him on Tibetan medicine, but he had already reconciled himself to face death meaningfully.

Carl Magnus was almost as old as my son. The loss of him must have been as great to his parents as if I were to lose my only son. Since I did not know him long, we must have been related in our past lives in order to have felt so close to each other. It is so sad that Carl Magnus died at so young an age. Yet, the Buddha reminds as that a good man who does not live long is much worthier than a wicked person, however long he lives.

When his father telephoned me from Norway to say that Carl Magnus had passed away, I was stunned and passed on the sad news to members of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, who were meeting for the last day in Bangkok. Many knew him personally, though some only through his work. They all sat in silence and spread their loving kindness to his spirit.

However sad and sorry I feel, I teach myself to bear his death mindfully. In our culture, death is only a transition : like a worm changing into a beautiful butterfly.

In the Dhammapada are the following two Pali verses:

Cirappavāsiṁ purisaṁ
durato setthiṁ āgataṁ
Nātimittā suhajjā ca
abhinandanti sāgataṁ
Tath'eva katapuññaṁ pi
asmā lokā paraṁ gataṁ
Puññani patiganhanti
Piyaṁ ñatiṁ va āgataṁ

Here is the translation:

"A man long absent and returned safe from afar, his kinsmen, friends, and well-wishers welcome on his arrival.

Likewise, his good deeds will receive the well-doer who has gone from this world to the next, as kinsmen will receive a dear one on his return."

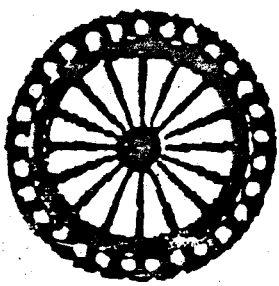
The commentary tells the story behind these two verses. A devout and wealthy person performed many good deeds, and a place in a celestial plane was ready to receive him even before his death. The Buddha uttered these verses, commenting on his good deeds and his future state.

I feel that this story fits Carl Magnus well, and do not think it is presumptuous to quote one more saying of the Buddha to end my short appreciation of Carl Magnus Thornes.

"When a good man is reborn into a family, it is for the good, the welfare and the happiness of many – his parents, his wife and children, his servants and workers, his friends and companions and also for the good, the welfare and the happiness of recluses and Brahmins."

Although we all miss him, we know that he is a good man. His life was a happy one, and full of worthy activities. He is certain to be well -born. May he ultimately reach the state of eternal bliss of Nirvana – Nibbānaṁ Paccayo Hoti.

S. SIVARAKSA
from a speech at
Vestrz krematorium Oslo 6 March 1991



Govt siding with SLORC

The attitude of Thai policy makers towards the students, the ordinary people, the political parties and the Buddhist monks of Burma who dare to speak out against the regime that holds their country in thrall is somewhat disappointing. It is also mystifying that Thailand continues to support the patently undemocratic and widely despised State Law and Order Restoration Council of the military junta.

It appears that Thailand's Government is prepared to back the SLORC even to the extent of deporting or imprisoning United Nations officials and those who care enough to support those struggling for human rights and democracy in Burma. It also looks as if the students will end up in something in the order of a huge immigration jail or concentration camp. In doing this the authorities are doing exactly what the SLORC wants them to do – shut up (in both senses of the term) any who criticise their inhuman policies and actions.

Thailand's policy has extended as far as breaking international law, as happened when the forced repatriations were carried out in Ranong, Mae Sot and elsewhere. The act of "deportation to slave labour or for any other purpose of a civilian population of or in occupied territory" constitutes a "war crime" and a "crime against humanity" according to the United Nations publication "UN Action in the Field of Human Rights." The taking of porters by the SLORC is, and was, the taking of slaves.

Why do both the Royal Thai Army and the Ministry of the Interior still support the SLORC, especially in the light of the regime's more recent actions? The Burmese military junta is not a suitable "true friend," or even trading partner for that matter, for any country that, like Thailand, likes to present itself as a democratic country. The result of such dealings is quite likely to be more heavy criticism and a loss of face before the international community.

The SLORC is one of the world's least democratic organisations, as borne out by its indefensible imprisonment of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, U Tin Oo, U Kyi Maung and other members of the party that won the elections that the SLORC itself staged. The SLORC holds many other political prisoners, including the former prime minister, students and members of any party or group they feel is a threat to their hold on power. So many people have been jailed, sentenced to hard labour, "disappeared," tortured or executed for what the SLORC chooses to term "crimes."

The Burmese military regime is widely condemned by the world's most credible human rights organisations and many governments, for various reasons : its appalling human rights record; its economic incompetence that has impoverished a once wealthy country; its record on drugs; its environmentally suicidal policies; its genocidal attempts to "eliminate" ethnic minority groups along all the country's borders; its storming of the monasteries and the subsequent arrests, imprisonment and forcible defrocking of Buddhist monks; its racial and religious intolerance; and its dishonest, brutal and repressive actions regarding the democratic movement within the country.

How can any government want to associate itself with a regime like that? Thailand has already acquired something of an aroma by rubbing up so close to the malodorous SLORC regime. Further contact could result in a ripe scent indeed. Breaking international laws; wreaking havoc on the neighbour's environment both on land and at sea; helping the slave-taking, torturing SLORC soldiers to annihilate erstwhile friends so as to capitalise on their suffering; and promoting what could be called "The SLORC Way to Democracy" which, it can clearly be seen, is no way at all – quite an embarrassing record all in all, one could be forgiven for thinking.

Could it be, perhaps, that it is time, late though it is, for a complete change of policy towards the SLORC regime? It appears that the present policy has not been quite as profitable as it was first thought (except for a privileged few,) what with the Burmans demanding more money and, in some cases, potentially very embarrassing cooperation for the timber, arresting and even killing Thai workers and strangling the lucrative border trade with excessive import duties, etc.

One would imagine that even some of the businessmen who initially supported the opening of trade links with the SLORC would be reconsidering the wisdom of that move by now. Even if there is lots of fast money to be made from dealing with dictatorial rulers, in the long term there is more profit in sustainable development in a peaceful, relatively stable country.

Aspects of Thailand's stance on Burma truly make one wonder. One of these was the distinct silence of Thailand's political, military, religious and other leaders (with one outspoken exception as far as this writer is aware), most of whom are supposed to be such devout Buddhists, when the Burmese soldiers shot down two monks and two others in Mandalay and when the SLORC soldiers

surrounded and entered the monasteries in Mandalay and Rangoon, seized an unknown number of monks and herded them before what passes today for a justice system in Burma, stripped them of their robes, cast them into jail and quite possibly executed some of them. That the Thai officials should aid the SLORC by silencing the protests of the few members of the Burmese Sangha in a position to tell the world what was happening from Thailand reveals something like a lack of the Buddhist quality of compassion for the sufferings of the monks and the majority of the Burmese people.

One of the reasons given for the severity of the reaction against the Burmese "dissident" monks and students is that the Thai Government has been "embarrassed" by their actions on Thai soil. It is curious that the Thai authorities should be embarrassed by the actions of the "dissidents," sometimes inappropriate though they might be, when the Government has such an apparently shameless attitude towards dealing with the appallingly repressive SLORC regime.

To give the Thai people credit where credit is due, they have shown, over a long period of time, a certain degree of leniency, compassion and the natural goodwill they are renowned for towards the Burmese who have fled the difficult conditions in their homeland, in spite of being inundated by hundreds of thousands of refugees from Laos, Cambodia and Burma. Unfortunately, this leniency and compassion does not seem to be reflected in any official policy.

Now both Thais and foreigners who are found guilty of extending their compassion to the young Burmese, who naturally feel bound to speak and act in whatever way they know to help their country gain the same democratic rights that Thais enjoy, are, it seems, liable to be severely punished by Thai law. Is compassion, then, and concern for the suffering of less fortunate people to become a criminal offence?

In no way are foolish actions such as hijacking Thai planes defensible. However, is incarcerating all the students and refugees (or "illegal immigrants as the Ministry of Interior likes to call them) along with a few aid workers an appropriate solution? The SLORC, no doubt, would think so.

In the perhaps vain hope of a more environmentally, politically and economically sound and humane policy...

Bangkok Post Dec. 3, 90

Nonviolent Action Conference in India

The "Second International Conference on Peace and Nonviolent Action" was held from the 17th to the 21st of February, 1991. Located in Udaipur, India and sponsored by the Anuvrat Vishva Bharati (Anuvibha), the conference aimed at promoting the spread of ahimsa–nonviolent action– as a method with which to meet the challenge of violence fearlessly and boldly. INEB sent a Thai Buddhist representative.

WORKSHOP ON SEASIAN INDIGENOUS TRIBAL MINORITIES

In a closed workshop in Chiangmai at the Mountain Peoples Culture and Development Educational Foundation (MPCDEF) compound, Nantharam 137, 30 participants in an IDRC-sponsored two-year research project on " Southeast Asian indigenous tribal minorties and regional development" discussed their provisional "half way" results. (IDRC stands for the International Development Research Center, which is based in Ottawa and sponsored by the Canadian government).

Participants in this research on the impact of regional development on tribal minority peoples include scientific institutions in the Philippines, Sabah, Brunei, Sarawak, W. Malaysia and Thailand. Representating Thailand are CUSRI (Chulalongkorn University), Bangkok and MPCDEF (Thailand), Chiang Mai, the latter being the host of the workshop. The two-year project is coordinated by the Center for Advanced Studies of Malaya University, Kuala Lumpur, Malayasia.

During the 4-day workshop, which was followed by a field-trip, the following provisonal conclusions were put forth:

1. Problems affecting many millions of tribal minorities in the whole Southeast Asian region seem to be strikingly similar. Major common concerns are the gradual loss of ancestral land, massive deforestation at the hands of logging companies, damaging commercial reforestation, plantation agriculture and the tourist industry.

2. This kind of national and regional economic development tends to be city-based, but leads to the underdevelopment or "marginalization" of

tribal peoples, who often live in the areas being tapped for their resources by centralized or national economic powers. Also common in all SE Asian countries seems to be the tendencey to make the "tribals," against all evidence to the contrary, into the scapegoats of ecological depletion.

3. In all Southeast Asia countries concerned governments and related power groups seem to be involved in an understandable, but probably short-sighted, economic planning based largely upon quick exploition of natural and human resources. This brings important revenues in the short term, but as this rapid exploitation is not sustainable, the countries concerned will have to pay a heavy economic, social and political price in the relatively near future.

4. In government or bilateral government projects, and also in projects more directly intended for tribal minorities, national economic interests may prevail at the expense of local village economies.

Research on a village-level proved that high capital input through extension projects has a local output of 0.6 versus an input of 1. This is in contrast to an output of 3. 60 when modern cash crops are planted without extension intervention. However, the highest output of 6.90 is obtained from a subsistance economy, maintenance of which thus seems to be in the national interest.

5. Self-reliance, self-development and indigenous self-management, especially through education and preservation of indigenous/cultural values and skills (particularly those relating to the ecology) were highly recommended by all the representatives from SE Asian countries as having the highest local and national output in the long run. Non-local support was seen as most beneficial in an NGO context. Together, these factors lead to more responsible ecological resource management with relatively low costs.

With this in mind, it was recommended that governments in the area give priority attention to granting citizenship and land rights to tribal peoples, along with equal access to national education systems.

6. Thailand, though facing the same problems as other SE Asian countries, was praised by the other SE Asian participants for its recent openness toward NGOs and greater involvement by the minority peoples themselves. In particular, the development projects initiated by H.M. the King, the most important "NGOs" in the highlands, were singled out for their far-sightedness regarding indigenous management and self-reliance. The MPCDEF (Thailand) research institute and team were also commended for its grass-roots research.

CHIANGMAI FEB. 3-9, 1991

The Supreme Patriarch has decided not to travel to Burma late next month to receive an honorary religious title from the Burmese government in Rangoon, an informed source said yesterday.

The source said the Supreme Patriarch made the decission recently when Deputy Education Minister Sakul Sriprom and religious affairs officials were granted an audience to inform him of the Burmese invitation to receive the title.

Somdej Phrayanasangvorn, the Supreme Patriarch, has made the decision because of poor health reasons, according to the source.

The decision followed criticism among social critics and academics who feared the Burmese offer to confer religious titles on the Thai religious figures could be a political ploy by the Burmese junta in Rangoon to try to gain legitimacy by the presence of the nine senior Thai monks.

The Burmese regime in Rangoon has offered the religious title of *Adhindhaja Maha Rattha Guru*, the highest of its kind in Burma, to Somdej Phrayanasangvorn, the Supreme Patriarch; while eight other senior monks are to receive the lower honorary title of *Aggara Maha Pandita*.

The ceremony to confer the religious titles is to be held at the Kaba Aye Pagoda, in Rangoon, and chaired by Burma's Minsiter for Home and Religious Affairs, Lt Gen Phone Myint.

Social critic Sulak Sivaraksa suggested that the Foreign Ministry, the National Security Council and the Prime Minister's advisers express their opinions on whether the Supreme Patriarch and eight senior members of the Sangha Supreme Council should accept the honorary religious titles from the Burmese government.

Sulak said in a letter to *The Nation* on Monday that the news that the Burmese junta in Rangoon is offering honorary titles to the Thai Supreme Patriarch and senior members of the Sangha Council has serious political implications.

He said if the Thai monks accept this offer and go to Burma, they become tools of the regime known to have abused human rights, an act that runs against basic Buddhist teachings.

Sulak said if the government wants to be wise and not allow our Buddhist hierarchy to become tools of the Burmese junta, the Foreign Ministry, the NSC and the advisory team to Gen Chatichai Choonhavan should meet informally and offer their opinion on whether the senior monks should accept the Burmese titles pending royal permission.

Sommatr Noimarerng
The Nation 9 January 1991

Junta's Choice For Premier Cheers Thais

The appointment of respected industrialist and former diplomat Anand Panyarachun as Thailand's new prime minister has been greeted with wide spread relief and enthusiasm.

However, under an interim constitution that in effect gives near-absolute power to Gen. Sundhara Kongsompong, leader of the military coup that on Feb. 23 toppled Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhayan, it remains to be seen how much power the new civilian premier will be allowed to exercise.

Mr. Anand's recognized integrity, intelligence and longstanding commitment to democracy will be his chief assets in restoring confidence in the Thai government at home and abroad. Those characteristics should also help him in the delicate tasks of balancing military and civilian interests and charting the country's course from martial law and military dominance to a more pluralistic system.

Indeed, the military has demonstrated a desire to win public acceptance. After the bloodless coup, it quickly reassured the public and the business community that fundamental economic conditions wouldn't change. It didn't retaliate when academic and civil-rights groups came forward with statements calling for an end to martical law, the release of detainees and the restoration of democracy. And late last week, the junta lowered income taxes and oil prices and instituted mild measures to ease Bangkok's notorious traffic problems.

However, the military's mild public profile hasn't won over everyone. "There's an overwhelming relief that tensions between the military and the politicians have come to an end, but that has tended to obscure the fact that the military wants a more authoritarian system," says a foreign diplomat.

Many Thais seem willing to welcome a more authoritarian system, at least for a while. Because of Thailand's long history of coups, "for the Thai public in general, a coup is just like (a Western) general election," says Sulak Sivaraksa, a social critic.

"We were all very proud" in 1988, when Mr. Chatichai became the country's first elected premier in 12 years, "and we feel that we've been betrayed by corruption. Once people were fed up with the government, they liked to see a new broom (the military), to sweep it away. This new broom will be popular for at least a month or two," he says. But unless the military does allow participation from all sectors of society, "people will not like it after six months."

Helen E. White
Asian Wall Street Journal
4 March 1991

Buddhism and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka

The Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development (TICD),in cooperation with the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), in Oslo, and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), have conducted a six-week course in Siam, for senior monks from the Sri Lankan Sangha, on "Buddhism, Conflicts and Social Transformation in Sri Lanka," from 15 March to 27 April 1991.

The course was intended to develop the links between the Sri Lankan Buddhists and the wider Buddhist community, to increase awareness of the issues involved in the conflict, and to contribute to Buddhist initiatives in reconciliation and peace making. The program included lectures and discussions on conflict theory and conflict resolution, as well as extensive contacts with Buddhist organizations engaged in social and humanitarian work. Monks from other countries in the region e.g. Burma and Cambodia,also participated in the full course.

CORRECTION
in Last issue
please read p.42 :
Gunnar Gälmo instead
of *Stefan Lindgren*

Association Bouddhique Linh-Son Sacred Mountain Monastery
9 Avenue Jean-Jaures 94340, Joinville-le-Point, France

First of all, on the occasion of the New Year 1991, we would like to send you our warm regards and wish you to be healthy and successful in the propagation of the Buddha's teaching.

We have been receiving your magazines regularly; thank you for your sending them.

Sincerely, we would like to thank you for your thinking about our Monastery and our Buddhist Association. After reading them, we keep them in our Library as Research Documents for our Buddhists to absorb your morality as well as Dharma path.

We hope that we will be able to receive more magazines in the future.

Wish you to be happy, properous and healthy in the Dharma.

Sincerely yours,

Ven. Dr. THICH HUYEN VI
The president

SRI SADDHATISSA
INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CENTRE
311 Kingsbury Road, London NW9 9PE, UK

I regret very much to inform you that I have been compelled to change all my plans and will not be able to come to Thailand after all. My plan was to go to my homeland, Sri Lanka, for a short visit prior to coming for the INEB conference. However, we have had to face some problems about our premises, which we had to vacate, and have moved to new premises (see the address above) rather sooner than we expected. You can imagine the amount of physical work that was engendered by the move and by further work to get the new premises ready for our activities. Some building work is still going on and I really have to be on the spot to urge the builders on!

Hard on the heels of this event has arisen the commemoration of the first anniversary of the passing away of our revered founder, Ven. Dr. Hammalawa Saddhatissa, involving a public meeting to be followed by the traditional religious services. I am enclosing for your imformation a card which sets out the programme that has been organised

All in all, I have been driven to distraction with all that these two events have entailed.

I had been so looking forward to visiting Thailand and participating in such a momentous conference as outlined in your programme, 'Strengthening the Network'. I feel there is much that I would have learned. It has been a great disappointment that I have had to miss this opportunity. I do hope, however, that I shall be able to visit your beautiful country on another occasion in the future.

In the meantime please accept my best wishes for a successful conference and please, do let me know in due course of all that takes place.

May you receive the blessings of the Triple Gem.

Yours in Dhamma,

Galayaye Piyadassi.

7, Cissbury Avenue
Findon Valley, Warthing
West Sussex, BN14 ODN, UK

Thank you for your letter and for the very interesting publication ***Seeds of Peace***. I am very glad to see that Buddhists are now taking a much more active interest in the state of their countries and that the outmoded idea that Buddhists are somehow living in a vacuum is being overcome. Even the most reclusive monk remains a part of this world and depends upon it for his life.

In the past, there has been an attitude amongst Buddhists here that they are somehow "above" political matters, but everything in life from drains up to food distribution is a political matter, and we cannot escape that. I feel it is very much up to Buddhists to use their influence to bring about a better and more peaceful world.

I remember very well that you came to see us when we were living in our first flat in Tolworth, and you signed our visitors book just after Christmas on the 30th December 1956. Since then we have moved several times and have lived in Banstead and Epsom in Surrey, in Chapmanslade near Bath, and in Balsham near Cambridge, before moving here where we hope to retire happily.

I see from our book that in the July before you visited us we saw Mr Ed Na Pombejra of Bangkok and I am wondering if you know him?

Unhappily, I managed to break my wrist recently, so my wife is typing this for me and my signature will appear very shaky. I hope you keep well, remembering the Buddha's words: "Health is the greatest blessing, contentment the best riches".

With best wishes for the New Year. It is nice to hear from you again.

Sincerely in Dharma,

Jack Austin

BUDDHIST BOARD OF THE USSR
49, Ostoshenka St., Moscow 119034
Cable: Moscow, G-34, Sovbuddhist

I am pleased to acknowledge receipt of your letters (information) and an invitation to participate in the 3rd international conference of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists. Sorry for delaying the answer. I should have replied much earlier, but the situation was unclear and it was difficult to give a definite reply.

Undoubtedly we appreciate highly your noble activities in bringing together various Buddhist organizations and individuals to discuss the most vital problems facing the majority of us. We were happy to participate in the 2nd INEB conference, and take this opportunity to express our sincere and deep gratitude for the invitation extended to us.

We think and are sure that such an organization as the International Network of Engaged Buddhists could contribute much in flourishing good deeds, making people more happy and more enlightened.

Unfortunately, now the situation is difficult in terms of finances. We have to cut down our participation in some international conferences, meetings, etc. Foreign visitors must pay for accomodations and domestic air tickets in hard currency.

More and more Buddhist communities have been appearing in this country. All of them need support at least in the beginning. So we are going through temporary difficulties and, to some extent, hard times. But we are convinced that we can manage to overcome all present difficulties and Buddhism will flourish everywhere in the Soviet Union.

With my best regards, I remain

Yours in the Dhamma,

Leonid Verkhovsky

9 Devon St.
West Preston
Victoria Australia 3072

I write to inform you of my activities, as you requested in a recent INEB communication. I spent 6 months in Thailand from June to December 91, living in Chiang Mai. Unfortanately there was a need for me to go home to Australia before the INEB '91 conference in February. I attended the '90 conference during a shorter visit to Thailand. In Chiang Mai I was doing Thai language studies & preliminary studies for a Masters degree which I have just begun on a part-time basis. The topic for my thesis is the significance of forest monks & forest temples in contemporary northen Thailand. I have previously studied the role of women in Thai Buddhism & my findings were published in *Radical Conservatism.*

Also, while in Chiang Mai, I researched topics related to women, especially AIDS, in conjunction with the women's study group at Chiang Mai Teachers College. I am hoping to have part-time employment this year if our education programme for teachers colleges in Thailand is funded. At present I am living in Melbourne, Australia & plan to return to Thailand and Chiang Mai in May of this year. While here I plan to do research on my Masters thesis while also doing some work on AIDS. I am also planning to send you literature on anti-nuclear strategies in Australia. We do not have any nuclear facilities as yet, but we do have uranium, which has been explored & mined in sensitive ecological areas as well as in sacred aboriginal sites. So campigns have focused on conservation and land rights areas. Many municipalities have nuclear free zones, thanks to the strength of the movement here, and mines and exploration have been severely restricted for some years. Soon I will be meeting with some people who hope to update and analyse strategies and know-how regarding nuclear power in industrializing countries. I will keep you informed.

In the state of Victoria we have reputedly, perhaps, the best anti-tobacco compaigns & legislation, as well as AIDS education and free syringe exchange programmes, in the world. And last year there was even a demonstration targeted at Shell Oil Co. for reforestation programmes in Thailand based on eucalyptus. Wood chipping is a big industry in Victoria, and despite major wins by conservationists, the industry still persists in important ecological areas. I can send you any information regarding the above. I have enclosed an article from a local publication 'Australian Society' on nuclear power in Japan and a monk's involvement in working against the industry. The non-violent movement here seems to be gathering momentum, and a friend of mine is going to send you a recently compiled Peace Dossier authored by Tom Weber & Robert Burrowes. Robert has returned from Iraq, where with several other Australians he participated in the Gulf peace camp. His diaries of his time there are going to be serialized for the major newspaper here & I could forward these to you also.

While in Chiang Mai I made the acquaintance of Pra Santithitto of Wat U Mong. He is a German monk who has been resident there for 15 years. For the past 5 months, he has been living in Melbourne as resident monk of the Buddhist Society of Victoria (BSV). He has aided in introducing Buddhadasa Bikkhu to Victorian Buddhists, and with his inspiration I will continue this work. I am writing an article for the BSV newsletter and will give a talk. I also have the recent video which I will show at the BSV as well as at the Council of Adult Education, where I will be running a short course on Thai Buddhism.

Kind regards,

Allan Beesey

52, Rue Pierre Semard
93150, Blanc Mesnil
France

First of all I wish you a Happy New Year. I am a Sri Lankan Buddhist monk. I think you will remember me. I came to listen to your talk in Paris with two other Buddhist monks who came from London. I think your talk was very useful to European Buddhist people. I have heard so much about you. I am very happy because fortunately at last I could meet you and I could listen to your Buddhist talk.

Here, in France I do Buddhist activities with Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodian and Sri Lankan Buddhist people. This temple belongs to the Vietnamese Theravada Buddhist Association. They help me to do these activities. I live alone in this temple. We will organize a Vietnamese and Chinese New Year festival on February 17, 1991.

I want to wish you good luck, good health and good cheer, not only now but throughout the coming year.

May the Triple Gem bless you.

Yours in Dhamma,

Ven. M. Gnanissara

TOOLS FOR TRANSFORMATION: A PERSONAL STUDY, *by Adam Curle.*

Hawthorn Press, Bankfield House, 13 Wallbridge, Stroud, GL5 3JA, United Kingdom, 1990. ISBN 1 869890 21 3. 204pp. £8.95 (North American distributor: Anthroposophic Press, Bells Pond, Star Route, Hudson, NY 12534, USA. $17.95).

As well as being President of the UK Network of Engaged Buddhists (former BPF,) Professor Adam Curle has also spent, on and off, some twenty-five years "moving back and forth between warring camps, looking with the eyes of love into the divine core of bloody-minded generals, and listening to the other in ways that open channels...from heart to heart" (Elise Boulding's *Foreword*). The author has lived out his Tibetan Buddhism and Quakerism in a lifetime of mediating violent conflicts, in Third World development projects and in education in the widest sense of the word. He has "come to see that the way we perceive human nature,*especially our own*, is of overarching importance." For example, we cannot hope "to help people change their lives for the better if our own existence is disordered and impoverished".

First the book sets out to demonstrate "how the great illusion of 'I', of separate self-existence, and the resultant three poisons [delusion, greed, and ill-will] has spawned terrible outbreaks of violence, turning our precious biosphere into a toxic desert". Secondly, it shows that "to the extent we are conscious of this reality, we might work against the poisons". In effect we are offered an inspiring testimony to the positive and healing power which begins to work when we relate non-judgementally to others with warmth, empathy, and trust and when we truly listen to them and open to them. And here the author finds "a wonderful paradox. The more we understand that human beings are not self-sufficient, self-existent and separate creatures, the more we appreciate and value their individuality".

All of the above is expresented in the first half of the book and drawn from the experience of mediating in several large scale military conflicts. We are reminded, however, that "mediators need the same psychological equipment of impartial good will, perseverance, impurtabability and objectivity; the same flexibility and preferably the same sense of humour whether they are dealing with a crisis in their home, or neighbourhood, or place of work, or are called in because someone's marriage is on the rocks".

There are many illuminating and fascinating anecdotes (especially about the Nigerian civil war,) together with twenty pages of illustrative dialogue. And always there is an underlying compassion even for "those who may be considered responsible for starting the hostilities; their burden of power, guilt and anxiety is usually onerous and painful".

Following the glowing chapters on mediation, I found the shorter section on transformative social change and development, together with the two chapters on education, something of an anti-climax. I felt a discontinuity between and within the chapters and a greater looseness and discursiveness in much of the writing.

Here again, however, the text comes alive in the several case studies and accounts of the author's experiences and is always Dharmically informed and unified. I found his vision of a "transformed society" too speculative and idiosyncratic for my taste, but I warmed to his many encouragements not to feel helpless in the face of the huge tasks which the world requires of us. Adam Curle is a great believer in the ripple effect of being positive in *all* our relationships, "even quite casually in shops and bus queues." However modest may be our "fragment of the network of relatedness...never mind; these things all in varying degree add to the reservoir of constructive compassion in the universe, or conversely to the flickering mirage of fear and loathing–much depends on our contribution, and our contribution depends upon our perception of reality". There is, however, a specific emphasis on community development and non-violent action.

The book concludes with three "appendices" which underpin the main text by explaining fundamental Buddhist teaching in terms of our experience of the modern world and its social structures and institutions.

There is a useful selective bibliography and a serviceable index, and the book is nicely designed. I shall be glad to have it on hand, both as a refreshing reminder of much that gets overlooked and, in particular, as a guide to mediation.

Ken Jones

THAILAND'S MONKS OF WISDOM

The "Genius" of Bikkhu Buddhadasa, says Grant A. Olson, "involves having broken through the constraints of tradition and rote learning to bring new interpretations of Dhamma on his own generation".

The noted American scholar is drawing a parallel between two of Thailand's best-known "monks of wisdom" as he puts it in his essay "From Buddhadasa Bikkhu to Phra Debdevi". This superb article is to be found in ***Radical Conservatism***, a major work jointly published by the Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development (TICD) and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB,) which is just hot off the printing press.

Radical conservatism? There's great beauty in the terminology, but surely it rings with contradictions. But clearing the air, Nicholas P.Kohler points out in his introduction to the book that the title is meant to "reflect the curious nature of Buddhadasa's approach to Buddhism".

The venerable Thai monk-philosopher's approach is plenty "curious". That's no over-exaggerated statement, as all those scholars, Thai and foreign alike, whose writings appear in this priceless volume, fully confirm. Thus far, this is the most ambitious and most impressive collection of articles on Buddhadasa Bikkhu and Thailand's rich Buddhist heritage ever produced in English in this country. Other writings ranging from philosophy, history and ethics to development help make this 560-page, textbook-size, austere publication a most compelling read.

Leading scholars whose articles are to be found in the collection include Ven Thich Nhat Hanh, Donald Swearer, Bikkhu Sumedho, Phra Debvedi, Louis Gabaude, Sulak Sivaraksa, Dr Prawase Wasi, Dr Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Dr Chaiwat Satha-anand, David Loy and numerous others.

Not all the essays are unbearably heavy. Whilst some may be highly scholastic in nature and hard for readers without the specific background to easily comprehend, there are a number of articles that offer immediate understanding on the part of the reader. Bikkhu Sumedho's essay on "The Buddhist Idea of a Perfect Society" and "Buddhism and Money" by David Loy are but two examples. Both these pieces are part of the volume's fascinating Section I.

The book contains five major sections which attempt to give focus to the material although there is a great variety of themes within each section.

Section I: "Buddhist Thought in the Contemporary World". Under this section eight brilliant essays give clear reflections on Buddhist philosophy and history. Bikkhu Sumedho's thoughts on a perfect society are profoundly elaborated. Society will never be perfect just as the rose can never maintain itself at its peak. The American monk from Hemel Hempstead's "Amaravati Buddhist Centre" sums up his thoughts on the point. However, says he, "We have to always realise that it will reach its peak. The more we focus ourselves from delusion, self-interest, ignorance, the more we can be part of and appreciate the flow and change of life, just as we appreciate the cycle of the rose instead of just grasping at the peak of its beauty."

The attainment of a "perfect society" is manifested through the release of various capacities, so the American monk suggests. Self-sacrifice, "not a kind of soppy matyrdom...that comes from self-involvement, but from no longer regarding oneself as more important than anyone else...the idea of sacrificing yourself without knowing yourself only makes you one of those sentimental martyrs...self-sacrifice comes from mental clarity, not from sentimentality".

Honesty, integrity, kindness, gentleness – "to be kind you have to be patient with life". Self-control, non-indulgence, austerity. And non-anger, non-impulsiveness. Non violence, non-oppression, patience and non-deviation from righteousness – "The more we are aware of these virtues, the more they can manifest in our lives. Trying to be virtuous from ideas alone can be a disaster. You just end up criticising yourself."

In "Buddhism and Money", David Loy talks on the "fundamental repression of human beings as partly being the "money complex", not "sex" as Freud thought. If this critique of the money complex is valid, what then is the solution? Following the Buddhist path which means "learning how to let go of ourselves and 'die'", writes the author. "Once we are good and dead, once we have become nothing and realise that we can be anything, then we see money for what it is; not a symbolic way to make ourselves real, to measure ourselves by, but a socially-constituted device that expands our freedom and power..."

Also coming under Section I is the Vietnamese monk, the Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh's article on "Seeding the Unconscious: New Views on Buddhism and Psychotherapy". Thich Nhat Hanh's elucidating essay compares Buddhism and psychotherapy and suggests that both "can come together and learn from and help one another".

Gently, the following is what the Vietnamese monk perceives as being some of the therapy:

I hold my face in my two hands.

No, I'm not crying.

I hold my face in my two hands in order to keep my loneliness warm.

Two hands to nourish, two hands to protect.

Two hands to keep my soul from leaving me in anger.

Section II: "Socially Engaged Buddhism". This second part addresses the present day problems of development in the Third World, "violence as the prevalent means of solving conflict and the deterioration of the earth's environment". The collection of essays in this section includes Thailand's former Magsaysay Award winner, Dr Prawase Wasi's mindful article on "Alternative Buddhist Agriculture".

And Sulak Sivaraksa's "Building Trust through Economic and Social Development and Ecological Balance: A Buddhist Perspective". What kind of world will it be in the year 2000? What kind of legacy will the 21st Century inherit from the previous one, "where might

has always been right, where the end has invariable justified the means and the weak have been persistently oppressed by the strong; and man's inhumanity to man, particularly on account of racial and religious differences, has reigned supreme?"

Section III: "Buddhism and Siamese Buddhism". It is this entire section from which the book's title has been taken. As the section suggests, the content examines the monk himself, the structural difficulties in Thai society as faced by him. Buddhadasa's teaching, says Louis Gabaude in his article, "Thai Society and Buddhadasa", needs some "deculturation".

"In other words", writes Gabaude, "the level of teaching must follow the evolution of society. This is, of course, easier said than done. So far, Buddhadasa himself appears to have learnt patience from experience. But experience is difficult to communicate to others, even to followers."

Grant A. Olson's penetrating essay on "From Buddhadasa Bikkhu to Phra Debvedi" comes under this section. Very interesting is the parallel the author makes of the two "monks of wisdom". Whilst Buddhadasa "reroutes streams of wisdom" from other Buddhist schools, "letting them flow into the Thai sphere and has enriched a tradition that had become somewhat stagnant and entrenched", and after having let those great teachings spread out into a "sea", Phra Debvedi "took us on a flight over the waves and currents to show us his 'bird's eyes view' of their underlying canonical patterns and importance for modern Thai society".

Section IV: "Perspectives on Buddhist Practice". This section expands outside the Thai perspectives to include Buddhism in the modern world with essays on Buddhism in India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Mongolia, Malaysia, Europe and the US.

Section V: "Interreligious Dialogues Toward Human Development" addresses a final and important point of how Buddhism relates to other world faiths. Dr. Seri Phongphit, Dr. Koson Srisang and Dr Chaiwat Satha-anand are amongst the contributors in this section.

Radical Conservatism – Buddhism in the Contemporary World is the most fitting tribute to honour Bikkhu Buddhadasa's 84th birthday anniversary which fell on May 27 of 1990. The Editorial Board under the Chairmanship of Sulak Sivaraksa, with unstinting help from many supporters, has produced a birthday celebration for a monk who rather than celebrating his birthday, mocks it.

Nevertheless, this is a book that anybody remotely interested in Buddhism should read; amazingly it is also a book for the devout student of Buddhism. "Suksit Siam" is the distributor. Tel: 222-5696-8. At 750 baht a copy (paperback) and 1,200 baht for hardcover.

Gap
Bangkok Post Sunday
December 9, 1990

DR.AMBEDKAR : THE LIBERATOR

By Ven. Bhandant Anand Kausalyayan and translated by Bhikkhu Chandra Bhodi., 86pp. $2, Bangkok.

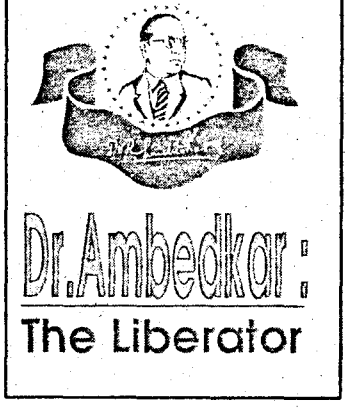
April 14, 1991, is the centennial anniversary of the birth of Dr. Ambedkar, who was born to an "Untouchable" family in India. From youth, however, one could see in him a man destined to become great and famous one day. He was a man of distinctive habits, soft-spoken and full of compassion, but, at the same time, he did things with determination. Though he came from a poor family and faced many indignities and hardships as an Untouchable, there were many who appreciated him and encouraged him. He was very intelligent and succeeded in his studies, obtaining many degrees: M.A., Ph. D., D. Sc. Barrister-at-law and, through the kindness of one of his teachers (who helped him to gain a scholarship from the Maja Raja of Baroda,). Yet, he accumulated knowledge mainly to serve the community and do away with caste division and the suffering it caused, especially to Untouchables.

He was invited to be a district judge, but refused to accept any government jobs. Instead, he earned his living as an advocate. He did not wish to take any knid of job which might get in the way of his work of social service.

There are several books that Dr. Ambedkar wrote concerning the plight of Untouchables, including ***The Annihilation of Caste*** and ***Who Were the Shudras***

This book, ***Dr. Ambedkar: The Liberator*** , will be found by all readers to be very interesting. There is much to learn about the unrelenting work of Dr. Ambedkar. A convert to Buddhism himself, he also led many Untouchables to Buddhism. People will surely appreciate knowing how much time and painstaking effort Dr. Ambedkar devoted to this purpose.

TTT.





PUAN

A book comprising a collection of essays on a "friend" is, with its title of *Puan* (Friends), interesting enough. But when its author is the likes of Sulak Sivaraksa, the book certainly commands one's attention more. To those who don't differentiate between a "friend" and an "acquaintance," or simply cannot see the vast differences that exist between the two, this slim publication is highly recommended.

The definition of a "friend" may be very brief by regular dictionary standards, but reading the outspoken social arbiter articulating his thoughts on what a "friend" is, it would seem unbelievably hard just to attain what's preached. Just to keep up with a few of the 10 commands *(dasa paramitā)* would simply be discouraging. Which explains Archarn Sulak's point why human beings today are so "pitiful" because real friendship is getting scarce.

"Looking at the quality of being a human being, it's pitiful that people are so lacking in friends. One moment we want to be alone and isolated; the next we want to have someone to share the conversation who dares to contradict us. But sometimes when frankly criticised, we're angry. The more wealth, the more power one has, the angrier one gets more quickly ...Without self-criticism how can one dig down to the deepest bottom of the pond known as 'ego'?...", writes Sulak.

From a historian's point of view, countless examples that took place in Thailand's past and during modern times illustrate the point how each case failed, or succeeded, in terms of friendship. From His Majesty King Rama VI, to politicians like Field Marshal P. Pibulsongkram and statesman Dr Pridi Banomyong. Britain's King Henry the Eighth is looked at particularly where it concerns his friendliness toward Sir Thomas More. All to attest to the author's convictions about true friendship.

Bertrand Russell once said: "If we were all given by magic the power to read each other's thought, I suppose the first effect would be to dissolve all friendships."

Is true friendship that shallow? What can friendship endure that love cannot? Friendship, trust, honour, integrity. In a century will they be words that time passed by? Read Sulak Sivaraksa's *Puan* and ponder on how important friendship is in your life.

Gap
Bangkok Post Sunday
February 3, 1991

Matthew Fox,
ORIGINAL BLESSING :
Bear & Co, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1983. 355 pp $12-95

Original Blessing in an inspiring primer of the creation-centred spirituality which Matthew Fox proposes as the new spiritual paradigm for our age. A Dominican scholar and imaginative populist, Fox argues that it is time to let go of the mainline Fall/Redemption model of western spirituality, and focus on "Original Blessing" instead of "Original Sin." Only in that way can we begin to reverse the ecological and 'egological' crises we all face in our inner and outer struggles.

In the process, Christianity too would be liberated from the dualistic patriarchal prison which has been erected around Jesus Christ's original message by theologians from Augustine to the present day. The key figures for a creation-centred tradition have always been there, along with Augustine & Co, and include Benedict, Francis, Aquinas, Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich and Mechtild of Magdeburg. They emphasise suffering not as the wages of sin but as the birthpangs of a new creation; holiness as cosmic hospitality rather than a search for perfection; and faith more in the imagination than in the intellect.

Key persons to draw inspiration from in our own day are liberation theologians such as Paolo Freire, New Age mystics like David Spangler and Marilyn Ferguson and spiritual feminists such as Charlene Spretnak, Mary Daly and Starhawk. The common strands that draw together past and present creation-centred people include personal creativity and human scale projects, female as well as male transformation, respect for the whole of creation – the land and all living creatures – and an ever-vigilant engagement with 'Blessing' rather than with 'Sin'. By such means we may start to undo the effects of the left-brained, patriarchal dominance of the 'Enlightenment' and the apparently unstoppable bandwagon of technological 'Progress'.

The Four Ways of creation-centred spirituality are the *via positiva*, which is befriending creation; the *via negativa*, which is letting go and letting be while remaining scrupulously attentive; the *via creativa*, which is befriending creativity; and the *via transformativa*, which is about making the breakthrough to authentic compassion, celebration and justice. The seeker is guided along each of these ways by linked themes, so as to understand, for example, humility as earth-centredness, imaginative art as a form of meditation or God as Mother. Fox takes each theme and illustrates it with quotes from key figures throughout history, who may be theologians, psychologists,

poets... So the 'God our Mother' theme draws on Meister Eckhart (What does God do all day? God lies on a maternity bed giving birth,) the medieval women mystics like Julian (Christ our Mother,) C.G.Jung ("The creative process arises from the realm of the Mothers") and modern feminists, whether Christian (Ruether,) post-Christian (Daly) or neo-pagan (Starhawk). The result is a moving plea to each one of us to do our bit to restore a proper balance of female and male in our own cultures by recognising and practising maternal wisdom, attentiveness and compassion as well as paternal thinking and practice.

Fox is aware of the risks of arriving at a new dualism by emphasising and comparing the two traditions of Fall/Redemption and Creation-Centred spiritualities, rather than trying to transcend them to reach a new synthesis. But, he argues, the west has been travelling the fall/redemption road for centuries, and the Catholic and Protestant Churches have given it 95% of their attention. 'And look where it has gotten us. Into sexism, militarism, racism, genocide against native peoples, biocide, consumerist capitalism, and violent communism. I believe it is time to choose another path'. Maybe, but this doesn't quite get to the heart of the matter of suffering individuals or societies. The final question must always be: How do we build bridges between Them and Us?

Noragh Jones

LOVE-LETTERS STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART

Design-wise all the elements on the cover make the book look rather strange. Strange, but striking. This publication entitled *Chodmai Rak Chaak Scandinavia* (Love-letters from Scandinavia), though not the least appealing from its title, has a commanding air of peculiarity when it boasts an introduction by the likes of Sulak Sivaraksa whilst the names of the two authors are totally unfamiliar to the Thai book scene.

What on earth prompted a scholar and social critic like Sulak to get himself entangled with what would normally be regarded by today's thinking generation as a mundane subject like "love"? Surely, Bangkok's commercial throbbings, working up toward next week's St. Valentine's Day crescendo, couldn't have been his ulterior motive, one would have thought. Love, perhaps. But St. Valentine's? Obviously not.

Chaiwat Therdtham, presumably a pen name, is a Thai now living in Sweden. For seven years from 1969 when he first set foot in Sweden as a student, Chaiwat wrote letters to a girl with whom he was completely infatuated by the name of Vallaya Saijit (also a pen name).

Vallaya, who was 14 at the time, responded to Chaiwat's imploring letters with the same frequency. The 88 letters published in this 431-page paperback are the result of their marathon correspondence.

Mahanta Adit Sanya, or the "great promises of the past", says Sulak, are so heavily engraved in human beings that it's difficult to erase them from our minds. One's first love, and/or one's first broken heart, are part of these "great promises of the past".

In Chaiwat's case, it's both his first love and in the end his broken heart which are his *Mahanta Adit Sanya*. All of us have our different ways to get rid of unhappy memories. Getting their letters published, Sulak reasons, is one way for Chaiwat to "liberate" himself from his past promises.



Whilst Sulak Sivaraksa may or may not have had to undertake the task of liberating himself from his past, the only common ground between the authors appears to be in the books both have had published.

Sulak's previous works on a similar topic, *Trisadee Haeng Kwaam Rak* (The Theories of Love) and *Chodmai Rak Chaak America* (Love-letters from America) are probably more than enough solid foundation for the 57-year-old outspoken critic to understand his young friend's plight. So, it could well be both coincidence and compassion that inspired him to accept to pen a brief introduction for *Chodmai Rak Chaak Scandinavia*.

If we were to translate Chaiwat Terdtham and Vallaya Saijit's experiences into a novel (for "life", is a big "stage" anyway), this is how the story would develop:

A man and a woman who used to be childhood friends, and who're separated by a great distance, have once again been united via letter writing. During their childhood days in Sakon Nakhon Province, he, who's two years older than she, lived in a *wat* in front of her house. Typically, all the kids in that neighbourhood played together. They "bathed together in the same *klong*". All the good fun stopped (for him) when he became Bangkok-bound to further his studies.

The boy was dying to get in touch with his friend but couldn't work up courage to do it. But he got a friend of his to write to her about him, to her dismay, as she had no idea who the writer was. These incidents were recounted in their first letters. On September 29, 1969 he managed to break through tradition with his first letter. It was written a year after he arrived in Stockholm. Eleven days later, on October 10, she answered his letter. She was 14 then.

Until the last letter, which was written by him on December 27, 1976, their story dwells on the present and of course, future. He wants to know all about her – her birthday, her studies, her goals in life – and keeps asking her to send him her picture. Obviously a book-

worm and extremely analytical for his age, he tells her of the books he's read.

From Hemingway, Flaubert, Seni Saovapongse and Suvannee Sukhontha to political scientists and economists like James Ingram, David A. Wilson, Dr Chaianan Samudavanija and Vittaya Chiengkul. The works of these authors are reviewed seriously and systematically in his letters. Suvannee's award-winning novel, *Khao Cheu Karn* (His Name is Kam), is discussed especially at great length.

She, whilst guarding herself against his earnest affection which he proposes in every letter, tells him about her daily life. School, friends and family dominate her world. The subject of "love" is brought up constantly and each has a totally different view of it. His is progressive, absolutely idealistic and utopian in nature; whereas hers (she later became a nurse) proves to be the opposite. During one discussion he even formulates an equation illustrating the basic logic of his idea of "love".

But Chaiwat is not at all an unsentimental guy. He sends her clothes and a necklace which he thought would look lovely on her (that's why he keeps asking for her photos). He sent her pictures of hairstyles he thought would become her. And cheques too, with the money he earned during university term-breaks.

Despite all his efforts to win both her heart and hand, he fails. There's no one who's in the wrong really. Just entirely different outlooks on life and, of course, love. He steps back from his world of idealism and illusion to rationally review the situation just in time in his last letter, which is, more than usual, philosophical and well-written. (He's a competent writer having had a short story published in *Chao Krung*, the best literary journal at the time, and having passed the approval of one of Thailand's great writers, the late Pramune Unahathupe, who personally edited his story.)

Their dream journey has come to a permanent halt. She hesitates to get on that "train" both of them were waiting to catch. Perhaps to her, there are other means of transportation yet to be explored. But there's no time left. The train is about to take off. He yanks her by the arm but she pulls back. The train isn't going to wait, and he has to make a decision.

"The journey, the time and the decision one has to make in life sometimes do not give one a lot of choices", writes Chaiwat Terdtham. "Yet there are many possibilities in life. Disappointment, fulfilment and happiness, therefore, are life's companions. This is a universal rule. No matter if it's the past, present or future, human beings have always been, are, and will always be treated unfairly either by time, surroundings or by the behaviour of fellow beings..."

Chaiwat Terdtham chose to remain in Sweden until today. His "great promises of the past" may or may not be liberated through the printing of his letters. But as a small documentary on this thing they call "love", *Chodmai Rak Chaak Scandinavia* leaves several fine points for both the young and old alike to ponder on. Especially those who never caught that "train"

by Gap
Bangkok Post Sunday
February 10, 1991

SEARCHING FOR ASIAN CULTURAL INTEGRITY,

papers from the Inter-Cultural Seminar 188 pp., 200 Bht, US$10.00, Bangkok 1991.

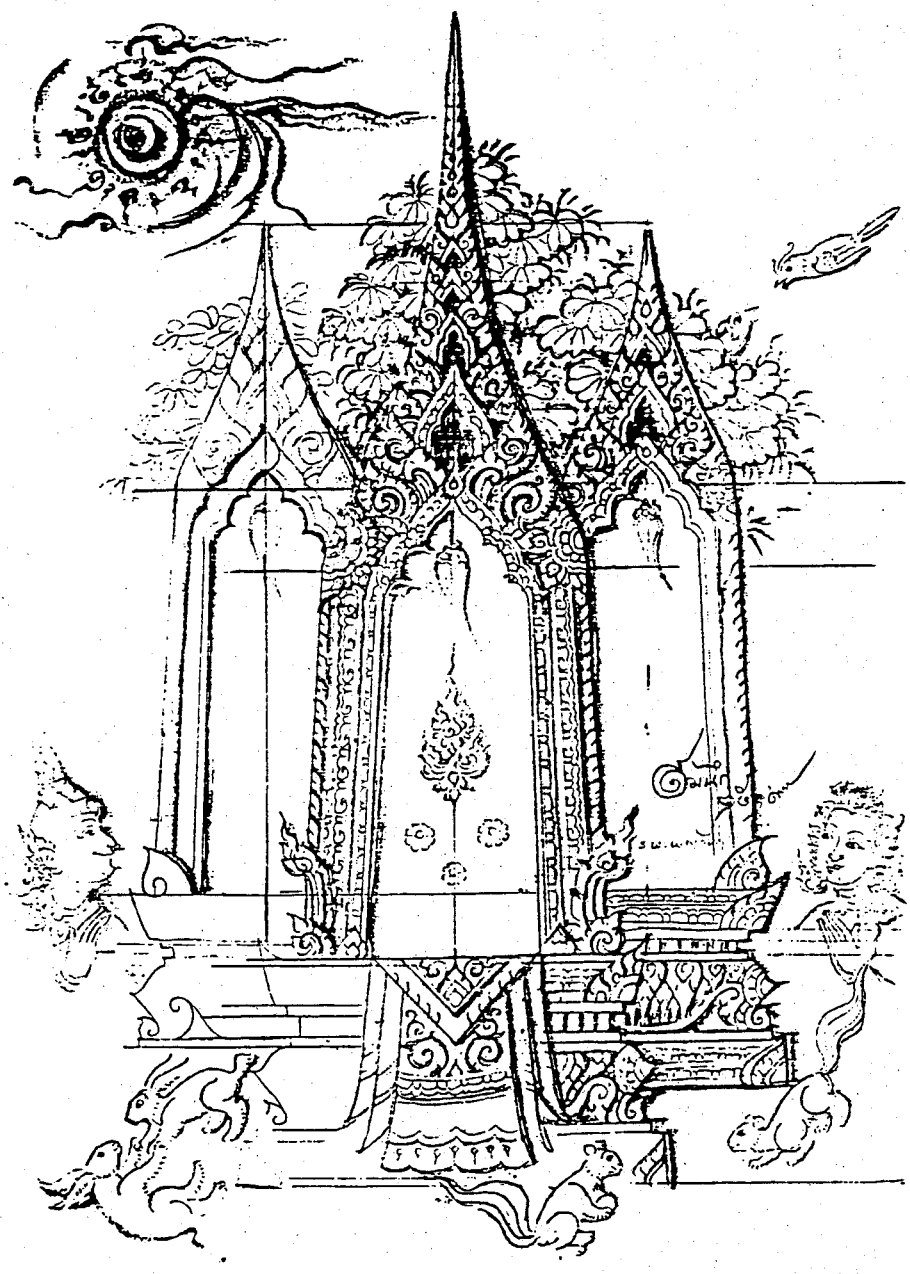
The title of this collection of papers, ***Searching for Asian Cultural Integrity,*** is most appropriate, for the overall effect on the reader is that he or she has awoken in the midst of an expedition, but can't quite remember how he or she came to be there. It is a moment of both confusion and excitement, and it is between these poles that this volume moves, first one way and then the other. This is both its strength and its weakness. The breadth that the articles span is impressive, both geographically (there are contributions from Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, S.Korea, Nepal and Sri Lanka) and thematically – history, politics, language, literature and psychology, as well as, culture per se, are dealt with. This allows culture to be as wide a "concept" as life experience can accomodate, though the negation of culture as a "concept" is arguably the most consistent and important contribution made in this search. The down side of this is a lack of focus and continuity – our ability to synthesize and correlate information is no match for such a variety of perceptions. Additionally, the readability and coherence of the individual papers varies quite a bit from one to another. This is, no doubt, due partly to the constraint of writing in English, the practical language of inter-cultural communication.

Given all this, ***Searching for Asian Cultural Integrity,*** is maybe best approached as a smorgasboard or art exhibition. One does not (perhaps cannot) try to take it all in, but selects between items of particular, general or only casual interest. It is clear that the search is only begun. Having sampled a variety of perspectives, further discovery belongs to the reader, as well as ongoing inter-cultural dialogue as represented by the seminar from which this volume evolved. What will the cultures of Asia keep as their own, individually or collectively? How will they adapt, or adapt to, the cultural influences of Western political thought and consumerism? What of the effects of inter-Asian political/ economic/ cultural interchange? The authors of these papers do not try very hard to answer these questions, and rightly so, for they must first be posed and reflected on. This they have done.

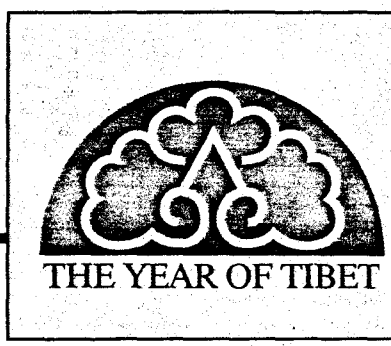
Vince Giorno

SEEDS OF PEACE

VOL. 7 No. 3 Sep. - Dec. 2534 (1991)



THE YEAR OF TIBET



SEEDS OF

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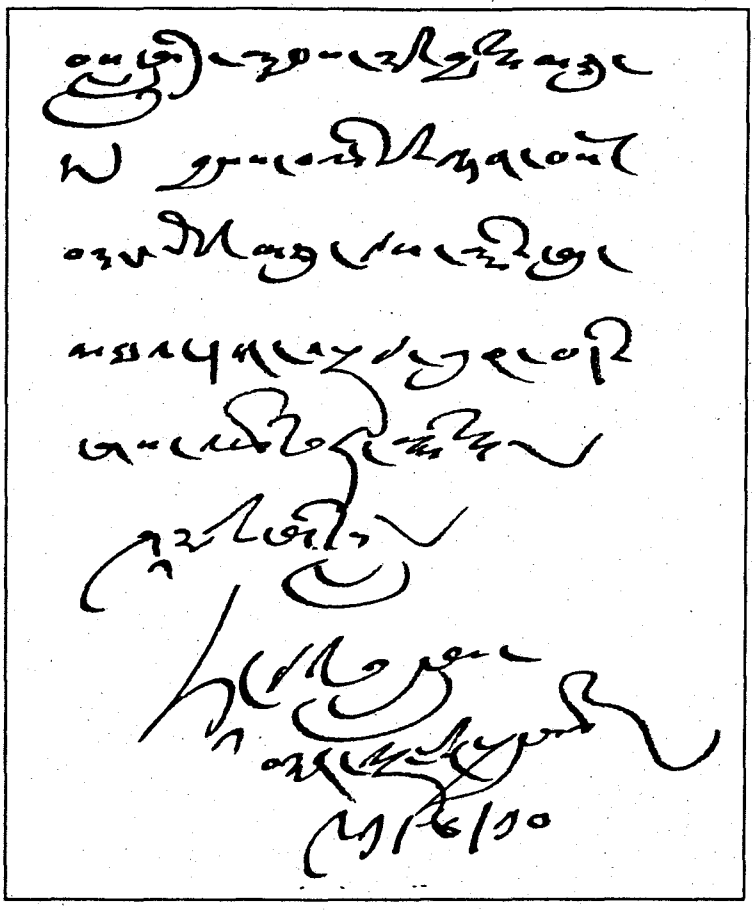
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2. To share perience in and nowledge of religions and evelopment as well as ploring ways and means f working together.
3. To offer training nd secure resources in erms of man-power and naterials to support and nhance the agencies that eed help. ■





When a delegation from the INEB secretariat had an audience with the Dalai Lama, our patron, at Dharmasala on June 10, His Holiness was informed that the upcoming issue of *Seeds of Peace* would have special features on the International Year of Tibet. He was then asked to bless the world with his message of goodwill for peace and happiness. His Holiness graciously wrote this for us in his own hand writing of very beautiful Tibetan calligraphy. Reproduced above and translated by the Ven. Duboon Rinpoche, Director of Tibet House, New Delhi, it reads as follows:

By the power of the blessing of the never failing refuge, and by the force of love, compassion, and noble motivation, may all sentient beings live forever happily.

TENZIN GYATSO
THE XIVTH DALAI LAMA

June 10, 1991

EDITOR'S NOTES

What to do? Although the Gulf War has mercifully ended, the madness continues to march on especially for the beleaguered South Asia region with Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, continued strife in Sri Lanka, and the natural disasters in Bangladesh. However, as this issue of ***Seeds of Peace*** comes to print, I am finding difficulty in finding room for all the great materials and articles of people contributing to global sanity and health. Unfortunately, some interesting stories will not find their way into this ***Seeds of Peace***, so let me take a moment to mention some of these parties.

During the Wesak celebrations of the Buddha's birthday, we received a kind visit from Dr. Daniel Susott of the World Family Hawaii Foundation who is doing excellent work in the Phnom Phen area for orphans and disabled people. His work in setting up hospitals and treatment centers in Phnom Phen and finding new homes for orphaned Cambodian children in America is truly inspiring and heartwarming.

In addition, I was distressed not to be able to include a large article chronicling George and Lillian Willoughby's work for peace and reconciliation over the decades. Here at Santi Pracha Dhamma and INEB, they have been an invaluable resource to our programs as well as just being great friends!

As for the parties who are represented in this edition, let me first of all mention His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Community. Ajahn Sulak had the pleasure of having an audience with His Holiness this past June in Dharmasala, excerpts of which we have reprinted for this issue. Additionally, I was privileged to hear His Holiness give a public lecture and take part in a Dharma talk and morning chanting in Washington D.C. this past April. From a personal note, his overbounding joyful mood and very strong presence certainly lived up to all that I had heard and read about him.

It was also very heartening to learn of his meeting with U.S. President Bush and members of Congress, the former meeting being a breakthrough for American presidents who have refused to meet the Dalai Lama in his official status out of concern of hurting U.S. relations with Communist China. One can only hope that a further step will be taken by the United States in recognizing Tibet's rights and refusing to placate the present Chinese regime as Congress attempts to attach restrictions onto the Chinese Most Favored Nation trading status against President Bush's wishes. Such an action seems only relevant in that it may pave the way for other countries to observe and to join in the struggle for Tibet's independence. Certainly, we here in Thailand are waiting for that day when the Dalai Lama will finally be allowed by the Thai government to come visit us.

Elsewhere, it appears that a real, meaningful Cambodian peace may be on the way. Meanwhile, rainy season has mercifully come to the Burma-Thai border region and with it a break in the military campaigns. Inside this issue are reports from various people in the TICD/SPDI/INEB network who have been working with refugees in that area. Fortunately, within the gloom of the two year anniversary of Aun San Suu Kyi's house arrest and cotinued foreign investment, a sprout of hope has begun to arise on the international scene as President Bush has finally cleared the way for the economic sanctions against SLORC that the U.S. Congress mandated over a year ago. Once again this will prove only significant an example for other governments to follow. In the meantime, it is our responsibility elsewhere to write our governments and any companies from our respective countries to discontinue their support for the SLORC regime and its continued violations of basic human rights. As Mahatma Gandhi wrote in his teachings on non-violence, to not oppose a violent force is to aid and join in that force. Silence=Death.

However, once again let me emphasize much of the heartening work and activities to be found in the following pages. It is quite simple to sit and criticize, and often do nothing but that. Instead, I am reminded of the Dalai Lama's impenetrable optimism in the face of all his and his people's difficulties. It is this optimism which can keep us alive and fresh to conquer the continual challenges of life on this shrinking planet. So we may follow in His Holiness' footsteps by renewing our vow to simply serve in altruistic compassion to others.

JSW

dress to His Holiness e Sangharaja

The Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development (TICD), in cooperation with the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), in Oslo, and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) have conducted a six-week course in Siam, for senior monks from the Sri Lankan Sangha, on "Buddhism, Conflicts and Social Transformation in Sri Lanka," from 15 March to 27 April 1991.

The course was intended to develop the links between the Sri Lankan Buddhists and the wider Buddhist community, to increase awareness of the issues involved in the conflict, and to contribute to Buddhist initiatives in reconciliation and peace making. The program included lectures and discussions on conflict theory and conflict resolution, as well as extensive contacts with Buddhist organizations engaged in social and humanitarian work. Monks from other countries in the region e.g. Burma and Cambodia, also participated in the full course.

The violent conflict in Sri Lanka has brought the country close to a political breakdown – a situation where even massive armed force is unable to protect the life and property of ordinary citizens.

Groups in armed conflict fight for strategic gains and for their daily survival. Weakening the enemy is an advantage to one's own side. A peace process requires a different perspective. The first step towards a transformation of the conflict must be – in literal terms – a throwing forth or a project of Sri Lanka. Groups need to explore their visions of the future state and society they seek or can accept.

In today's world, religion is deeply involved with internal conflicts. Religion can lead to polarization through righteous fervor or rigid dogmatism. It can serve to mobilize people for just and decent causes. And it can be a force for peace, compassion and reconciliation between enemies. Buddhism carries all three potentials.

For a country like Sri Lanka, if the great organizations of the Sri Lankan Sangha can develop their own approach to reconciliation and a vision of their own role in the national peace process, this would be a major force for transforming the conflict. Such a development must be rooted in their own tradition and expressed in their own language. It would be acceptable and legitimate only if it came from within Buddhism itself, as an internal response to the crisis.

The course we have proposed and carried out is an effort to bring this about.

The leading Sri Lankan monks and those from Burma and Cambodia have been with us for almost six weeks, starting at Buddhamandala, then to the Mahanikaya Wat Suan Keaw, the Dhammayutika Wat Komesratanarama, with Bhikkhu and lay facilitators and teachers from Norway, UK, USA, in order that participants understand the nonviolence power of love and compassion for reconciliation – not



nly in theory, but also in prac-ice.

After course work, they isited Siamese monks' develop-ent projects in the North and Northeast, to see how spiritual ell-being could go side by side r against material development. hey also visited Ayudhya and ukhothai, where once a close link as established between Siam nd Sri Lanka.

Now, they are at Ashram Vongsanit, established in honour f the late Phya Anuman and Phra araprasert, writing their own eport and evaluation before re-rning to Sri Lanka next week.

It is indeed a great auspi-ious occasion that your holiness rant them an audience. Your oliness, yourself visited Sri anka and has been fond of that ountry. Recently your holiness ven supported the Forest Robes eremony for Peace in Sri Lanka o that the Thai Buddhists would are for the sufferings of our Sri ankan brothers and sisters.

If your holiness would ive the venerable Bhikkhus some dvice, we would all be very reatful. They really want to arry out what they have learnt in is country to practice in Sri anka for reconciliation, peace nd prosperity within their own bility.

They also want a Thai uddha image to take with them o Sri Lanka. Nieces of the late Miss Karnika Bovornvuddhi has onated the image for the purpose lready. If your holiness would indly give the image to them, it ould indeed be a great honour nd the image would always emind them to practice the teach-ng of the Buddha in the best of onviolent tradition.

S. SIVARAKSA
WAT BOVORN NIVES
21 April 1991

Seeking the Way of Non-Violence



BUDDHISM teaches compassion, tolerance, moderation, and detachment. Buddhist monks are supposed to be experts at defusing conflict. So what is this all about, Buddhist monks studying skills of non-violence? Aren't they supposed to be teachers in these matters, not students?

These questions sprang to mind on hearing that Sri Lankan monks were attending a workshop in Thailand to learn non-violent skills in resolving conflict.

Other questions followed: Conflict and suffering are one and the same in Buddhist vocabulary. Buddha has outlined intricate steps toward the eradication of suffering. Are his directives insufficient to resolve modern-day conflicts?

What then has happened to this religious institution now that its members have to seek conciliatory skills outside its discipline?

"You should not confuse Buddhism as teaching with Buddhism as an institution," explained Pracha Hutanuwat, secretary of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists which co-organised the workshop.

"The teachings transcend all forms of discrimination, be it belief, race, gender, or status. Everyone is equal as a fellow sufferer who deserves equal compassion."

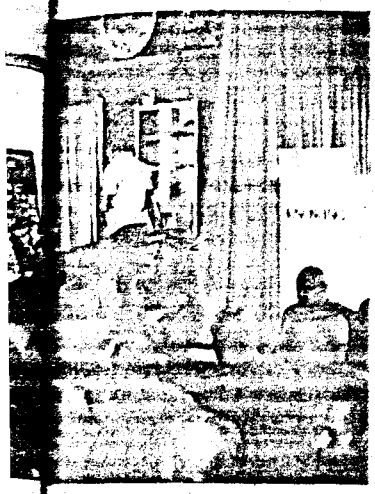
"But as an institution, the clergy are still bound to biases and prejudices. Many take sides. Others have interests."

"Monks have great potential for peace-making in this time of heightened conflict. But to do so, they must first and foremost stay above political interests and remain detached from power structures. They must be neutral," Pracha said.

"Learning systematic conciliatory skills advocated by western peace movements," said Pracha, "does not mean that old skills are no longer applicable. It is only an effort to adjust and modernise monks' peace-making tools based on Buddhist principles," he said.

Common sense and good intentions may not be sufficient when conflicts and exploitation have become more complicated and subtle and when the clergy have become an institution which is by nature inflexible.

"As peace-makers, they need more information to understand the real nature of the problems at hand. They need to look at



conflicts from the socio-economic point of view too, not on a spiritual level alone."

"They need to see the situation more clearly so that they can identify mutual interests so that both conflicting parties my find common ground for negotiation."

"They need to listen more. And to understand the problems, perceptions, and feelings of the other side."

"These skills are not innate. They can be taught. That's why monks as potential peacemakers can benefit from training in modern conciliation skills," said Pracha, who disrobed 5 years ago to work fulltime as a Buddhist activist.

Peace-making skills come most handy at the time when Buddhist countries are torn by various forms of violence, ranging from poverty to exploitation to war.

"In a time of rising ethnic and political conflict," Pracha said "Monks were often divided into different interest groups. Neutrality is the first casualty."

In Sri Lanka, the island country torn by ethnic violence between the Singhalese and the Tamils. Buddhist monks are Singhalese. Unlike in Thailand, they have voting rights, and many are involved in party politics. Singhalese monks have also long stopped receiving alms, a practice that forms close relationships between monks and lay people. They have achieved semi-official status and receive regular stipends from the state.

In Cambodia, where religion is often thought of as the sole remaining force for unity, monks are also divided into political factions.

In Burma, monks have been outspoken against political repression, and those joining the pro-democracy movements have reportedly been persecuted. Despite the unquestionable popularity of their causes, the pictures of monks taking to the streets in protest, shouting and waving, have left somewhat uncomfortable feelings. Monks must stand with the interests of the masses, not the elite. But where is the line of propriety for monks' roles, and how can they avoid slipping into the quagmire of anger and hatred during the course of fulfilling those roles?

Although the workshop was aimed primarily at Singhalese monks, a group of monks from Burma and Cambodia also attended, given their countries' similar need for monks' participation in the process of reconciliation.

Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Burma, Laos, and Thailand share the same Theravada sect, which prides itself on strict adherence to ancient teachings and monastic rules. This has given rise, however, to conservatism which – aggravated by lack of exposure to different practices and interpretations – leads to a belief that "our way is the only way."

"Exposure to the outside world and different practices even within the same sect is one first step toward dismantling conservatism and rigid views," said Pracha.

"Monks must get out of their own immediate contexts," he said. "To broaden one's view is in line with Buddha's teachings on eradication of conflict. One must start with the right understanding."

During the six-week course, the participating monks studied western theories and made comparisons with Buddhist views.

They also practised various counselling, negotiation, conciliation, and mediation skills under the guidance of experts from the Peace Research Institute of Oslo.

The Venerable Dr Pathegama Gnanarama, 52, principal of the Saddharmakara College, Buddhist and Pali University, head of the 30-strong Sri Lankan delegation, said he found concepts of conflict in the West and the East to be complementary.

"Westerners tend to discuss conflicts in a societal framework. In Buddhism, we tend to see it as arising from an individual's mind, and that suffering is the result of one's greed, anger, and delusions.

"But one cannot ignore one or the other. The western way may lack a spiritual dimension. But although we believe that changes must start from our minds, we must not forget that our minds are also affected by external factors. Both are intertwined."

Training includes role-

playing to practise conciliation, negotiation, and meditation skills. These skills include listening, identification of real issues, appeal to common interests, the handling of feelings which block communications, and the development of openness to create an atmosphere conducive to negotiation.

The participants were trained to identify whether the root of a problem concerned conflict of interest or misunderstanding, which need different handling. They practised role-switching so that they were accustomed to seeing problems from both sides of the fence.

As conciliators, the monks were shown how to pay more attention to unspoken feelings and to the nuances of body language so as to detect what lies underneath and try to create a more trusting atmosphere to allow the real issues to surface.

"We've come to see conflict as not as always bad. Conflict, like suffering, is natural. It becomes unwholesome when people resort to violent means to achieve their goals," said the Ven Gnanarama.

During their 10-day field trip, the delegation visited Thai monks in the countryside who are active in community development and conservation.

"We would like the Sri Lankan monks to see for themselves what they can do for the under-privileged outside politics, and what they can achieve if they stay non-partisan," said Pracha.

It seems that Thai Buddhism, although plagued with its own problems in the form of fierce materialism and deep-rooted superstition, has also provided some answers for the Sri Lankan monks.

They found that monks in the Thai countryside maintained close ties with the populace, and many took leading roles in serving the people's basic needs. They met an abbot from Surin who set up communal rice fields and rice banks and who successfully conducted campaigns against vice through group meditation. They met such conservationist monks as Phra Prajak Kutajitto who found hismelf evicted from the Buri Ram forest he is protecting and Phra Pongsak of Wat Pa Laad, Chiang Mai, whose water catchment conservation work has placed him in conflict with the authorities.



Both told the Singhalese monks that constant meditation gave them the strength they needed to stay above emotional responeses.

At Lamphun, they met Khru Ba Wong of Wat Prabaat Huatom whose work with the Karen minority shows how Buddhist monks can work with such people while retaining respect for their culture.

In Chiang Mai, they visited Wat Pah Darapirom which, apart from undertaking various rural development projects, is well-provided with documentation as in formation back-up for problem analysis and decision-making.

They also met the Venable Phra Bodhirangsi of Wat Pantong, who is one of the leaders of opposition against high-rise buildings and the Doi Suthep cable-car project in Chiang Mai.

"In Sri Lanka, it is not the monks' practice to engage in physical labour. So they were surprised to see such a prominent abbot as Phra Payom of Suan Gaew Temple, after returning from delivering a sermon, going straight into the moat to help others with the digging," Pracha said.

They have seen the unthinkable. The result is that some of the Sri Lankan monks have decided to undertake such tasks themselves. At the end of the workshop, five Sri Lankan monks said they would retire from their secure teaching posts to work for the people, to help restore well-being and ecological balance. Others gave support in the form of donations to start up funds.

They also agreed to revive – once a week to start with – the tradition of receiving alms, a practice that encourages a feeling of responsibility among monks for the well-being of the people.

A group of Sri Lankan

onks will be soon sent to train ith the Thamkrabok Temple's habilitation programmes for ug addicts, so as to help deal ith drug addictionfor young ople back in Sri Lanka.

On conflict resolution, it as agreed that monks can set up ormal friendship meetings be- en rival groups to pave the y for further talks. They vowed pass their peace-making skills the their peers and to seek to ng monks' education up to date keep them in touch with the dern world and its problems.

"We've also come to lise the significance of spiri- l equilibrium if we are to un- take a more active role in so- l movements," said the Ven na- narama.

It goes back to spiritual ength, he said, which can be ained through meditation.

"Neutrality is crucial. t that does not mean the lack of standpoint. Monks, as custodi- ns of morality, must stand for hat is right.

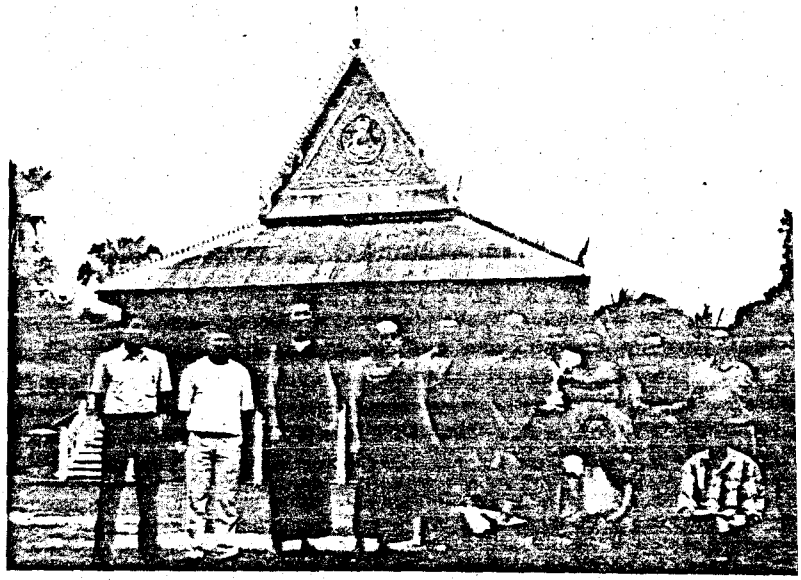
"Inner calm is necessary order not to waver. We must lupt our tactics, but we cannot bandon our Buddhist principles."

"Patience, compassion, d tolerance are necessary to the ne's ability to resolve conflict," e said. Many monks, however, verlook the significance of editation which fosters these ualities. Others do not have ystematic conciliatory skills.

"If we want to be effec- ive, we must strike a balance."

SANITSUDA EKACHAI
Bangkok Post
May 24, 1991.

BHUTANESE LAMAS AND LAYMEN VISIT SIAM ON HEALTH AN NUTRITION EXPEDITIOI



Since last year INEB and UNICEF Bhutan have been corresponding in order to arrange a study tour for a Bhutanese delegation of monks and government officials during June 2-16 in Thailand. On our side, we were excited and looked forward to seeing the delegation. It is not very often that we hear about Bhutan, a small country of only 1,500,000 people. Particularly, as there are few books about Bhutan in the Thai language available. Among those is *Bhutan: Paradise on Earth* which portrays a simple society strongly influenced by Buddist principles, which is very cautious to adopt new policies.

It is no wonder then that the government of Bhutan nominated 5 senior Buddhist monks from the district monk administration body to come to Thailand. This included a secretary from the Board of Monasteries and Examinations, a representative of the provincial monastic bodies of the Royal Advisory Council, 5 health officials from the district and national level, and the supervisor of the National Indigenous Hospital. The UNICEF Bhutan coordinator who was supposed to join the trip was unfortunately engaged in another activity in the last few days before the trip and could not attend.

The main objective of the tour was to expose the Bhutanese Buddhist officials to Buddhists in Thailand who are involved in community based activities in the field related to health

and nutrition. Monks in Thai socity are known to work in various fields such as herbal medicine, rehabilitation for drug addicts, agriculture, hospitals, conservation, community development, and, of course, meditation practice centers. Because of this, we wanted to include more community development activities for the tour group.

It was such a wondrous beginning on the orientation day since we started by giving a salutation in the Mahayana way. A lamp, a prayer wheel, incense sticks, a bowl of flowers, and rice grains were provided for the senior monks to use as they chanted in this sacred, peaceful ceremony.

The following session was an overview on public health in Thailand presented by Doctor Supatra, a representative of the government. One significant finding the group had was when they asked about the Thai monks' role in government; there seems to be no room for monks in Thailand in an official governmental capacity. Being a former president of a "Rural Doctors" association, Dr. Supatra pointed out the power of monks as a natural community who can use their leadership in health matters at the community level by cooperating with hospitals even though Thai monks receive no salarly as Bhutanese monks do.

To complete the picture of public health in Thailand, a representative from the coordinating committee of Primary Health Care for Thai NGOs talked about NGOs working to provide training and services to promote health care. NGOs are a new concept to the Bhutanese, so they asked many questions, e.g. "Where does the money come from? What are the long term goals of NGO's and can their work change government policy?".

In the afternoon, Acharn Sulak spoke on Buddhism in a rapidly changing Thai society. He said this generation prefers to visit the "new temple", the shopping center and chew gum instead of betal nut. As he spoke, the monks not realising what he had just said, passed around a bag of betal nut. When words were translated into Bhutanese, they smiled broadly proud that their betal nut is still valued in Bhutan. After giving the monks a good grounding in Thai Buddhism, Acharn Sulak came to the point why INEB needed to be established. It was a powerful lecture not only for the delegation but also for a group of foreign scholars who came to learn more about Buddhism.

On the third day, we visited Baan Than Tawan (Sunflower House), a home for malnourished children of the Foundation for Children. Baan Than Tawan can house a maximum of 20 children at a time, but on that day we saw about 6-7 children. Some of them have already recovered from being seriously malnourished while some are still getting over it. Baan Than Tawan has provided these children with supplementary food, time, and, most of all, love and care. The respones of these children when we held them in our arms obviously showed that they needed the warmth of being touched. Besides the activities of Baan Than Tawan, we also learned from Ms. Naiyana, head of the academic department about other activities of the Foundation and its organizational structure.

After lunch, we visited Ayuravedic Medicine College which is an effort to bring back traditional medicine. Students, 30 per year, will be taught basic science to competence in anatomy for the first 2 years, together with herbal, pharmacuetical and traditional massage. At the same time, the college also runs an O.P.D. as a service to community free of charge. The outstanding character of this O.P.D. is the diagnosis performed in a western way but the treatment given in a Thai traditional way.

Since the day was the cremation day of the Lord Buddha, Acharn Sulak brought the group to have an audience with the Supreme Patriarch in the evening. In addition, they were invited as guests of honour joining the chanting and candle light procession. It was truly a wondrous evening for the delegation.

On Thursday the 6th, we headed to Soong Nern Community Hospital which is also the name of the district located in Nakhon Ratchasima Province. It took us about a four and a half hour ride from the North of Bangkok to get there. The purpose of visiting this hospital was to see how health workers here can integrate traditional medication to modern techniques. At present, the hospital holds a strong reputation among interested groups of traditional medicine. At the hospital, Dr. Chatichai, the acting director, and Ms. Yupapon, the pharmacist, were waiting for us. After an introduction of both parties, Dr. Chatichai told us about the roles of a community hospital, one of which is to provide primary health care services for the community since government offices on the national level cannot solve the health problems of the people. Thus the PHC section was established. Dr. Chatichai and Ms. Yupapon then focused the presentation on a history of traditional medicine at the hospital.

It was in 1981 when a woman dentist started to introduce natural treatment to be used in this hospital and educational programs to the community's lead-

crs, such as village headmen, monks, and teachers. In addition, the self-caring concept was strengthened. Today, an Ayuravedic clinic is set up in this hospital with an Ayuravedic doctor in charge. After a patient is admitted to a modern doctor, and she/he does not recover, the modern doctor will suggest that she/he goes to see an Ayuravedic doctor. However, a patient who already has interest and faith in traditional medication can choose to see an Ayuravedic doctor directly provided that her/his illness is not too severe. In addition to the cooperation between doctors, it shows that the two approaches are not opposed to one another. In terms of production of herbal medicine, they use modern instruments and even modern scientific methods for laboratory instruments and modern scientific methods for laboratory testing, After all, the integration cannot exist unless the director of the hospital is a broad-minded person who likes to seek alternatives for the villagers' sake.

For activities in the community, Soong Nern Hospital has promoted herbal medicine groups run by villagers who are interested in traditional medicine. There also is a Thai traditional massage group in the community. After some discussion, we were guided to see an herbal plant garden, which is on the hospital compound, as well as an herbal medicine laboratory. In the evening, the delegation showed a video about Bhutan and children to some hospital officials before going to rest.

On Friday the 7th, we left for Kud Chum District of Yasothorn Province. Here, we planned to visit two villages which work closely with a highly respected, local monk. Phra Khru Supajarawat, the abbot of Baan



Tha Laad Temple, welcomed us to stay at the temple. Since it was a tiring day of traveling, we decided to stay and have a discusison with Phra Khru after dinner. We asked Phra Khru to tell us about his first engagement in community development work of which Phra Khru said that he gained the realization that the main stream of national development, materialistic development, did not bring happiness to the people. In fact, villagers have become less self-reliant and are faced with debt. Once he realized the villagers problem and his role and duty as a monk was not just to attain Buddhadood and enlightenment, he began to think of ways to take part in the problem solving of villagers. His main approaches are spiritual development, self-reliance, and organic farming. For self-reliance, Phra Khru has strengthened the use of herbal medicine instead of the pain relief drugs which usually carry addicitive substances and are easily found on the market.

There is also a group of villagers who are knowledgeable of traditional medicine in Tha Laad village. The next morning, we visited Sok Khum Poon Village which is only one kilometre from Tha Laad. There, we learned that some families have started to raise organic rice paddies according to Phra Khru's advice. The highlight of the activities in this village was the two village-run rice mills. By this way, villagers can avoid dealing with the capitalists in the market and can have their own rice mill to serve villagers who practice organic rice paddy farming since it is one of their rules to not promote the use of pesticides.

On Tuesday the 11th, we had an appointment with Ms. Suwannee Promchan, head of the Field Research Centre at the Institute of Nutrition of Mahidol University. Ms Suwannee shared her experiences with us about how you can get monks involved in nutrition programs. "As a Buddhist country where people have a high respect for monks, you should bear in mind that monks can be to your benefit in getting a message through to villagers," said Ms. Suwannee. On top of this, Ms. Suwannee added that one has to

better understand the function of each member of society before they can be educated. Timing and proper education were another key to success. After her presentation, Ms. Suwannee showed us her "teacher wagon" which was painted with cartoons by Suwannee's husband with short stories to educate people. It was even more interesting and attractive inside the wagon since she had installed a VCR to draw in many people, especially children, to view eductional videos.

We then paid a short visit to a monk's college which is a branch of Maha Chulalongkorn Rajvidhayalai, the first monk's college in Thailand located at Wat Mahathat in Bangkok. In the late afternoon, we went to Wat Nong Pah Pong to pay our respects to Luang Poh Cha, the great meditation master who has propagated Theravada Buddhism to various Western countries with a remarkable number of western disciples. Even though serious illness has prevented him from preaching for many years, his existence still teaches those who have eyes for the ultimate truth.

We left Ubon by overnight train for Bangkok and a rest in restless Bangkok until noon. In the afternoon of July 12th, we proceeded to Dhamma Sopit Temple, Uthai Dhani Province, where we met with Phra Maha Foo. The abbot welcomed us to stay at the temple before we continued with our tour the following day. The next morning was spent at Nong Yah Nang Temple where we observed how monks use their knowledge of traditional medicine for the benefit of the community. The abbot collected old formularies from his ancestors as well as villagers and spent his monkhood life helping people from suffering. The temple is famous for its efficient treatment of patients with bone diseases or semi-paralysis. Their treatment involves three major parts: (1) traditional massage, (2) herbal sauna bathing, and (3) herbal medicine of which each patient receives in their daily treatment. In addition, their services are free of charge and free from any expectation of payment. Before we left, the delegation made a contribution to the temple since we had learned that the abbot has been looking forward to soon having the new ward building completely finished.

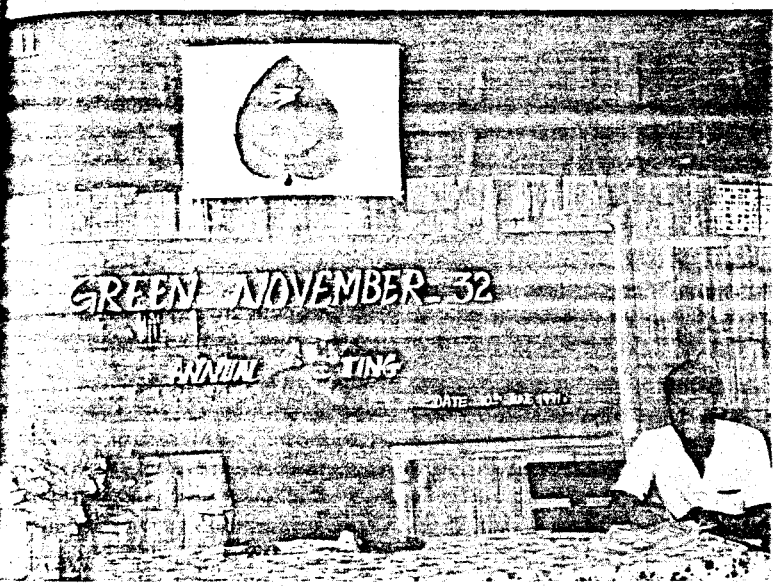
Before their departure back to Bhutan there was a reflection at AJahn Sulak's house in which Ajahn Uthai, Santi Pracha Dhamma's deputy director, participated as well. On the whole the delegation was satisfied with the program and had developed some ideas to bring back to Bhutan. One good point that the delegation had in common with the Singhalese monks from the Buddhism and Reconciliation Conference held this past March was the experience on going on alms round, a tradition which is no longer in practice in Bhutan. They found this to be a learning experience in what the Lord Buddha practiced and in community awareness. One problem the delegation did experience was the lack of free time. The busy schedule of the trip prevented them from enjoying some of the more popular attractions of Bangkok. Therefore, on the last day, the delgation was taken shopping in China Town. Finally, on Sunday the 16th, the delegation took their return flight to Bhutan. We hope that in the near future, we will be able to reciprocate this trip and bring a Thai delegation to visit Bhutan; a dream for us!

Supaporn Pongpruk and Anitra Phuang Suwan

Since the last issue o *Seeds of Peace*, the one-year anni versary of the May 27, 1990 elec tions in Burma has come and gone Unfortunately, there is little caus for celebration. Some small ligh in the darkness is, however, bein provided by educational program along the border, including th Federal University, which di manage to celebrate its successfu first year at Manerplaw (the Kare National Union stronghold). Fro its beginnings in seminars an workshops and the "jungle uni versities," the Federal Universit grew this past year to provide tw one-semester programs of full time studies in English, soci science and math to approximatel 100 students from the 9 ethni groups that comprise the Nation Democratic Front as well as th All Burma Students Democrat Front. Under very adverse cond tions (rampant malaria and th constant threat of attack from th Burmese army to name two) th Federal U had the distinction o being the only operating institu tion of post-secondary educati in the entire country of Burm The coming of these variou groups to live, study and wor together, to share in each other cultural traditions (and to pl some football and ping pong well), is as important as any fo tual learning, for these are th seeds of peace and hope for th free Burma of the future. Th university will continue to ex pand, this year's goal being a f year (two-semester) program. A soon as the necessary funding secured, the new academic ye will begin.

The trainings and sem nars that got things rolling co tinue as before, offering short term opportunities to the studen refugees and displaced perso along the Thai-Burmese bord who are unable to attend the Fe

ND THE WINNER IS... URMA ONE YEAR TER THE ELECTIONS



eral University. Programs in health care, appropriate agriculture and environmental awareness, teacher training, leadership training (especially for women), community development – these and more have been and are being offered. Volunteers and support from the international community have been essential, as has been coordination between all of the involved parties. Much of the latter work has been done through the Thai Interreligious Commission for Development (TICD). Sam Kalayanee of TICD, which is linked through Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute and its director/founder Sulak Siveraksa to INEB, has been an invaluable organizer in Thailand, from where communications and arrangements must nearly always be made. Further inquiries can be addressed to him at Burma Project, TICD. (Full address on p. 3 of this issue.)

It is great to hear of something positive about the Burmese situation, because the "news" only seems to get worse, both from Burma and Thailand. In Burma SLORC is conducting terror as usual. More political leaders have been arrested for daring to offer even the hope of an alternative to the surreal tragedy that is Myanmar. More have been tortured and more have died in prison. Despite its inability to crush the resistance, the Burmese army continues to demonstrate its prowess at such activities as bombing villages and attacking unarmed civilians deemed sympathetic to the rebels. As just one example of the latter, the case of the Mon village of Myin Wa Gone can be presented.

A couple of thousand people, including about 400 monks, had gathered for the creamation of the widely venerated abbot of Myin Wa Gong Temple. The Burmese army arrived the night before the cremation was to take place and camped just outside the village. Understandably nervous, the villagers sent one of their leaders and a monk to the soldiers with an offering of money and a plea that the ceremony not be disrupted. The monk was allowed to return, but the villager was detained until daybreak. Just after his release the army attacked the village where people were beginning to assemble. The attack began with mortar fire. Scores were wounded as people fled from the village, and a number of the younger men were taken as hostages. The empty houses and shops were looted and a ransom was demanded for the hostages. Families that could not afford the 2,000 kyat price could only watch helplessly as their sons or brothers were taken to serve as porters for the army. Such porters are employed by the army as munitions carriers and human minesweepers. Quite often they are released from service through death, either by starvation, lack of medical attention or execution. Thousands have died in this way. Village women were also raped, as were the women in the village of Sake Ga Le at which the soldiers spent two nights on their way back to their base in Mudon Township.

SLORC, though, is an equal opportunity oppressor, despite its racist rhetoric. Years of mistreatment under military rule, compounded by SLORC's increasingly desperate atrocities, has galvanized the numerically small

(about 1.5 million, an equal number having feld Burma over the last 40 years) but significant Muslim community in the western Arakan region. Leaders claim a total Muslim population of 6 million and hold the Burmese (Buddhists) responsible for the massacre of 200,000 Muslims over the last 50 years. If the Muslims enter the military struggle to oust the Rangoon regime, as they say they will, it will face insurrections on virtually every front. It can only be hoped that some people in the Burmese military hierarchy will realize the ultimate futility of their repressive rule and manage to chart a new course of peace and reconciliation.

tion has far exceeded their sentence for "illegal entry" (40 days); some have languished for over 6 months! UNHCR "protection" is apparently a euphemism, yet, incredibly, the Bangkok office decided to no longer even interview members of the ethnic minorities, let alone recognize their status as asylum seekers.

What can be done in response to these tragedies? Burma has very little foreign trade, but it is trying to expand foreign investment, especially in resource development. This gives the junta quick cash with which to buy more advanced weapons to use on the Burmese people – in particular the ethnic minorities. Many

mese delegation. The election of last year and its subsequent negation make a strong case for the illegitimacy of the SLORC regime. Vacating the Burmese seat at the UN would be an unmistakable sign that the world does not condone and will not tolerate the continuing atrocities of the Burmese military regime. Finally, please keep us informed here concerning any actions or canpaigns you undertake to help the Burmese people.

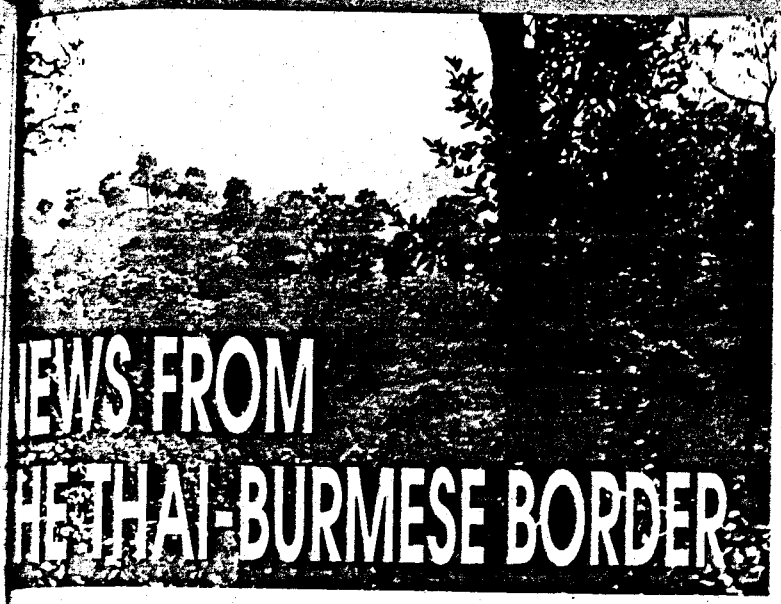
VINCENT GIORNO



In Thailand, Burmese refugees face increasing hardships. The arrest and deportation of "illegal aliens" is an everyday occurrence. Twice since March these deportations have included UNHCR-recognized students, who are called "persons of concern" officially, as the Thai government will not allow UNHCR to designate any Burmese as "refugees." Apparently this would cause displeasure to the "friendly" Burmese junta, who are allowing Thai businesses to exploit Burmese resources for attractive short-term profits (with disastrous long-term consequences). For many of the students the period of deten-

people feel that comprehensive sanctions enacted by the international community could be an effective measure. Concern could certainly be expressed to the government of Thailand in regard to its treatment of Burmese refugees. It must be kept in mind, however, that Thailand has been host to hundreds of thousands of refugees for the last decade and more. Still, UNHCR could be given authority to fulfill its mandate. (Thailand is not a signatory to the UNHCR charter.) It is probable that there will be a discussion when the UN General Assembly begins its fall session on whether or not to accept the credentials of the Bur-

The love that is firm, its high resolve unbreakable like a diamond;...the love that is never exhausted because it acknowledges voidness and selflessness; the love that is generosity because it bestows the gift of Truth without the tight fist of bad teachers; the love that is justice because it benefits immoral beings; the love that is tolerance because it protects both self and others; the love that is enterprise because it takes responsibility for all living things; the love that is meditation because it refrains from indulgence in tastes; the love that is wisdom because it causes attainment at the proper time; the love that is liberative technique because it shows the way everywhere; the love that is without formality because it is pure in motivation; the love that is without deviation because it acts decisively; the love that is high resolve because it is free of passions; the love that is without deceit because it is not artificial; the love that is happiness because it introduces living beings to the happiness of a Buddha. Such, Manjusri, is the great love of a bodhisattva.



NEWS FROM THE THAI-BURMESE BORDER

The monsoon season has arrived again on the Burmese border. The steep mountain forests have become green again with the lush growth covering the scars on the earth led by the logging and the dry season fires. The Salween river is again a muddy brown and the Moei river is becoming the same with the precious topsoil being carried down to the sea. The land here still has a remarkable fertility from the centuries of forest growth, and the border peoples, including the revolutionary groups, are busily planting food crops to make the most of it – and to make the most of the season of peace and relative stability.

Traditionally in Burma the fighting stops with the rainy season. This last week though has seen fierce fighting as the Karens have attacked and retaken Burmese positions and surrounded a Burmese tactical command headquarters. The sounds of battle could be heard at Manerplaw, the home of the national coalition government, and the site of the abymu monastery.

The monastry, built of hardwood and roofed with ain tree leaves has been largely completed in time for the rains, funds are still lacking to complete the monastery, for medicines and other necessities for the monks through the three month lenten period; for travelling, expenses for the 20-25 monks from other areas along the border to come and stay at the new monastry; for those staying in the other camps and for the Abymu's organising activities. The donations already received are deeply appreciated.

The political, enviornmental, narcotics and human rights situation within Burma remain exceedingly dismal. In the Shan state area two resistance groups, the Pa-o and Palaung, have bowed to the extreme pressure from the S.L.O.R.C. and signed ceasefire agreements, though small groups remain communities to the struggle. It is understood that eight of the candidates elected in last year's May 27th elections have died to date, several of malaria and three in the hands of the S.L.O.R.C. The junta has publicly confirmed that it will not relinquish power and continues with its systematic suppression of political activities and any who oppose it – daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners remain in custody; some have been executed.

On the environmental front, the SLORC is sustaining nothing except itself, the continued flow of the countries natural resources over the borders and one of the highest deforestation rates in the world. The recent billion dollar arms deal with China has led to an acceleration of the flow of timber across the northern border so that now, especially with the decision of two of the large Thai timber companies to pull out of Burma, more timber may be going into China than into Thailand. Democratic countries, particularly Japan, continue to recieve shipments of Burmese wood. Offshore oil exploration is underway in the species rich mangrove forests of the Arakan coast and the onshore exploration teams presumeably continue to blast and bulldoze roads through the dense virgin forest in search of the source of their wealth.

In the northeast the opium poppies are growing into another huge harvest, allegedly with the cooperation of some of the highest SLORC and military officials vast areas have been deforested to this end also.

The only bright light in Burma's scenario is the growing consciousness of people throughout the world about what is happening in Burma. Even the most powerful of vested interests cannot close the door on the truth forever; so governments such as the Australian, European and Scandinavian are generally still slow to act, but a little faster moving in reference towards pushing for the imposition of the long sought after U.N. sanctions. Perhaps we can help them to move.

Steve Thompson

ASHRAM WONGSANIT

With the beginning of regular seminars at the newly completed meditation hall and the continuation of building and work on the grounds, the ashram staff has been quite busy these past months.

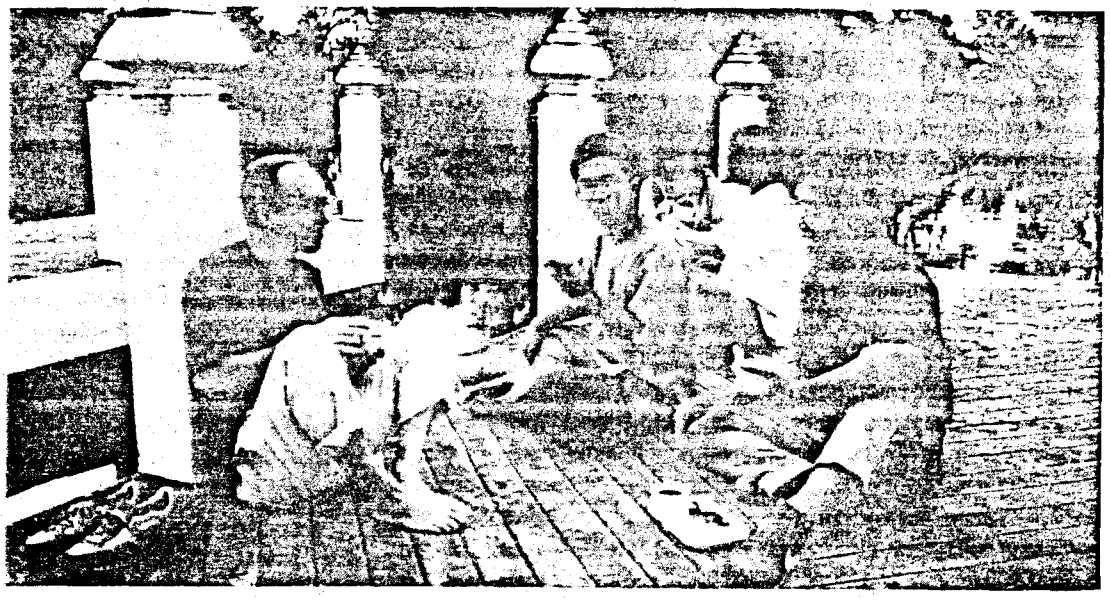
In April, the last week of the "Buddhism and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka" Conference was held at the ashram hosting over 30 monks and a number of facilitators and guests. In addition to this conference, there was a short program on "Social Change and the Ideal of Reality" for the 15 or so Sri Lankan laymen whom Santi Pracha Dhamma supports here in Bangkok. Finally, there was another short "Workshop for Training for Beginners" for 22 Thai members of local NGOs which focused on how to organize and run training seminars. This was led by Lillian and George Willoughby who so kindly fit this into their schedule on their way back from India to the United States after participating in the six week "Buddhism and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka" Conference. In the workshop, a variety of techniques were presented including agenda building, trust exercise, and role playing. In sum, all of the seminars received better than expected success, leaving encouraging hopes for the future.

Starting in July, there will be a Thai forum series of seminars once or twice a month. The first one will present a morning session featuring Santikaro Bhikkhu of Suan Mokkh speaking on consumerism's obstacles to teaching Dharma. An evening session will also be held featuring a Bhikkhu from Ladakh, India speaking on the condition of Buddhism in this small Himalayan community. Also in the planning is another conference similar to the April Sri Lankan one. This one will hopefully take place in November and be for a diverse group of Cambodians.

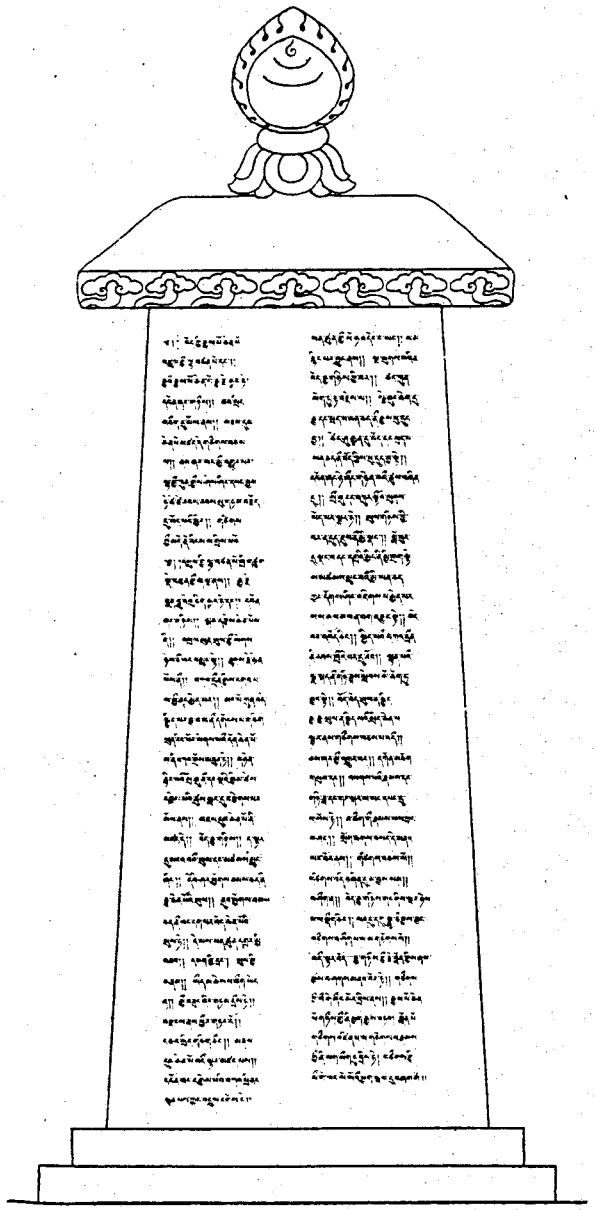
Finally, there has been considerable new construction done at the Wongsanit site. Each week, it seems, a new part of the final plan is accomplished. Mid-May saw the completion of housing for visiting monks, a group of simple but attractive one room huts on high stilts, as well as the completion of the brick patio surrounding the meditation hall. Since then, the canal which surrounds the ashram has been dredged creating a high bank so that the ashram's grounds can survive the rainy season. Last October, after one particularly bad monsoon, the ashram's grounds were flooded killing a large number of trees and plants. Right now a mass planting is taking place with 500 trees scheduled to be planted in the next 3 months! In addition, various vegetables and fruits are being planted for a self-reliant farm.

So if you're in Bangkok, don't forget to come out to Rangsit, Klong 15 to get out of the smog and noise of Bangkok. The air is fresh, the mornings crisp, and the community friendly with the children's village right next door!

Eddie Thongsook



TEXT OF THE WEST INSCRIPTION ON TSUKLAKHANG PILLAR



The Miraculous Divine King of Tibet Tri Tsung De Tsan and the Chinese Ruler B'un B'u He'u Tig Hvang Te, the Nephew and Uncle, with great regal dignity, comprehending the good and evil in the present and in the future, their great compassion covering all with benevolence having the same desire for the happiness and welfare of all and agreeing to the high purpose of securing lasting good, have conferred together to re-establish their old friendship and mutual respect and the conditions for rejoicing in a neighbourly relationship, have thus agreed upon this Treaty. Tibet and China shall guard the present border and the territory over which they each hold sway.

Between the two countries, no smoke or dust shall be seen. There will be no need for sudden alarms and the very term enemy shall not be uttered. Even the border security personnel shall, without any disquietude or terror, relax comfortably in their own territory. This peace and the moon.

Tibetans shall be happy in the land of Tibet, Chinese shall be happy in the land of China and that the solemn agreement now made shall never be changed, the Three Precious ones, all the Aryas/ Superiors, the Sun, the Moon and all the planets and stars are invoked as withnesses.

On the southern face of the pillar are the names of the Chinese ministers. On the north face, the names of the Tibetan ministers. That being from the setting up of this ston pillar in 823 A.D. until this year, 1991, one thousand one hundred and sixty eight years have elapsed.



DALAI LAMA ASKS WORLD'S DEMOCRACIES TO STAND BY PRINCIPLES

Mr. Speaker, Senator Mitchell, Representative Gephardt, Senator Dole and Representative Michel, Senators, Congressmen and other distiguished guests, and Brothers and Sisters:

When I was a small boy living in Tibet, President Roosevelt sent me a gift: an old watch showing phases of the moon and the days of the week. I marvelled at the distant land which could make such a practical object so beautiful. But what truly inspired me were your ideals of freedom and democracy. I felt that your principles were identical to my own, the Buddhist beliefs in fundamental human rights = freedom, equality, tolerance and compassion for all.

Today, I am honored to stand under this great dome and speak to you. I do so as a simple Buddhist monk: someone who tries to follow the Buddha's teaching of love and compassion, who believes, as you do, that all of us have the right to pursue happiness and avoid suffering. I always pray that the good core of our human character = which cherishes truth, peace and freedom = will prevail.

Our generation has arrived at the threshold of a new era in human history: the birth of a global community. Modern communications, trade and international relations as well as the security and environmental dilemmas we all face make us increasingly interdependent. No one can live in isolation. Thus, whether we like it or not, our vast and diverse human family must finally learn to live together. Individually and collectively we must assume a greater sense of universal responsibility.

I also stand here as a free spokesperson for the people of Tibet.

While your soldiers were fighting Communist Chinese troops in Korea, China invaded Tibet. Almost nine years later, in March, 1959 = during the suppression of a nation-wide revolt against Chinese occupation = I was forced to flee to India.

Eventually, many thousands of my compatriots followed me. Since then, Tibetan refugees have lived in exile. We were heartened in 1959, 1961 and 1965 by three United Nations Resolutions recognizing the Tibetan people's fundamental rights, including the right to self-determination. Your government supported and voted for these resolutions.

China, however, ignored the views of the world community. For almost three decades, Tibet was sealed from the outside world. In that time, as a result of China's efforts to remake our society, 1.2 million Tibetans = one fifth of the population perished. More than 6,000 of our monasteries and temples were destroyed. Our natural resources were devoured. And in a few short decades the artistic, literary and scientific legacy of our ancient civilization was virtually erased.

In the face of this tragedy, we have tried to save our national identity. We have fought

for our country's freedom peacefully. We have refused to adopt terrorism. We have adhered to our Buddhist faith in non-violence. And we have engaged in a vigorous democratic experiment in the exile community as a model for a future free Tibet.

Tibet today continues to suffer harsh oppression. The unending cycle of imprisonment, torture, and executions continues unabated. I am particularly concerned about China's long term policy of population transfer onto the Tibetan plateau.

Tibet is being colonized by waves of Chinese immigrants. We are becoming a minority in our own country. The new Chinese settlers have created an alternate society: a Chinese apartheid which, denying Tibetans equal social and economic status in our own land, threatens to finally overwhelm and absorb us. The immediate result has been a round of unrest and reprisal. In the face of this critical situation, I have made two proposals in recent years.

In September of 1987, here on Capitol Hill, I presented a Five Point Peace Plan. In it, I called for negotiations between Tibet and China, and spoke of my firm resolve that soon Tibet will once again become a Zone of Peace; a neutral, demilitarized sanctuary where humanity and nature live in harmony. In June of 1988, at the European Parliament in Strabourg, I elaborated on my call for negotiations, and made personal suggestions which would protect the territorial integrity of the whole of Tibet, as well as restore the Tibetan people's right to govern themselves. I also suggested that China could retain overall responsibility for the conduct of Tibet's foreign relations.

It has been almost three years since the Strabourg Proposal. In that time, many Tibetans have expressed profound misgivings over my stand for being too conciliatory. Beijing did respond: but the response was negative. The Chinese government, it is clear, is unwilling to engage in meaningful dialogue. As recent events in China itself indicate, the Communist leadership refuses even to acknowledge the wishes of its own people. I regret that my sincere efforts to find a mutually beneficial solution have not produced meaningful dialogue. Nevertheless, I continue to believe in a negotiated solution. Many governments and parliaments, as well as the U.S. Congress, support this effort.

For the sake of the people of China as well as Tibet, a stronger stand is needed towards the government of the People's Republic of China. The policy of 'constructive engagement,' as a means to encourage moderation, can have no concrete effect unless the democracies of the world clearly stand by their principles. Linking bilateral relations to human rights and democracy is not merely a matter of appeasing one's own conscience. It is a proven, peaceful and effective means to encourage genuine change. If the world truly hopes to see a reduction of tyranny in China, it must not appease China's leaders.

Linking bilateral relations to respect for basic rights will significantly decrease the present regime's readiness to resort to further violence, while increasing the strength of the moderate forces which still hope for a peaceful transition to a more open society. These efforts should be viewed not as an attempt to isolate China but as a helping hand to bring her into the mainstream of the world community.

In the future, I envision Tibet as an anchor of peace and stability at the heart of Asia: a Zone of non-violence where humanity and nature live in harmony. For hundreds of years the Tibetan plateau was a vital buffer between Asia's great powers: Russia, China and India. Until Tibet is once more demilitarized and restored to its historical neutrality, there can be no firm foundation for peace in Asia. The first step is to recognize the truth of my country's status; that of a nation under foreign occupation.

Recently, the United States has led the international community in freeing a small country from a cruel occupation. I am happy for the people of Kuwait. Sadly, all small nations can not expect similar support for their rights and freedoms. However, I believe that a "new world order" cannot truly emerge unless it is matched by a "new world freedom." Order without freedom is repression. Freedom without order is anarchy. We need both a new world order that prohibits aggression and a new world freedom that supports liberty, individuals and nations.

I would like to conclude by recalling a recent and moving experience. On my last trip to the United States, I was taken to Independence hall in Philadelphia. I was profoundly inspired to stand in the chamber from which your Declaration of Independence and Constitution came. I was then shown to the main floor before the Liberty Bell. My guide explained that two hundred years ago this bell pealed forth to proclaim liberty throughout your land. On examining it, however, I couldn't help noticing the crack in the bell. That crack, I feel, is a reminder to the American people who enjoy so much freedom, while people in other parts of the world, such as Tibet, have no freedom. The Liberty Bell is a reminder that you

cannot be truly free until people everywhere are free. I believe that this reminder is alive, and that your great strength continues to come from your deep principles.

Finally, my main task here today is to thank you – the Congress of the United States – on behalf of six million Tibetans for your invaluable support in a critical time of our struggle. The Congressional bills and resolutions you have passed over the last five years have given the Tibetan people renewed hope.

I offer you my prayers and thanks, and I appeal to you to continue working for the cause of liberty.

Dalia Lama speech at Capitol Rotunda
April 23, 1991

Protest in Lhasa

Despite arrests of opponents of China's occupation of Tibet during preceding days, a small demonstration took place in Lhasa on Sunday, May 26. Approximately 20 people gathered in front of the Jokhnag Temple in the city center and shouted slogans calling for Tibetan independence. Two people were arrested and the rest were quickly dispersed by police according to a report from the BBC in Beijing. A much larger protest in Tibet was canceled after a number of activists were arrested in Lhasa, according to travellers arriving in Beijing from the Tibetan capital.

A western tourist said that a Tibetan university student had told him of elaborate plans for a pro-independence demonstration, timed to coincide with official celebrations of the 40th anniversary of China's takeover of Tibet. The student claimed that several hundred people were ready to take part in the protest, adding that several groups had made Tibetan flags for the demonstration. The Chinese authorities regard possession of these flags, which show two snow-lions dancing in front of a mountain, as a serious offence. In December 1988 two flag carriers were shot dead on sight.

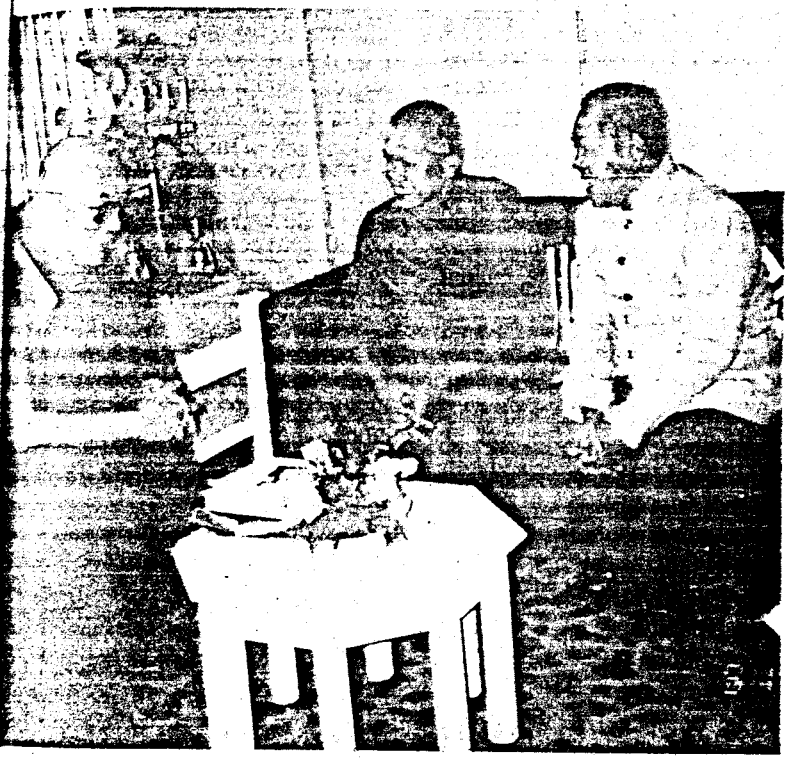
The student said that the plan collapsed only days before the date set for the Chinese celebrations when police arrested several of the organizers, including at least four of his close friends. The report of the arrests is unconfirmed, but several Tibetan underground groups had announced plans to stage protests on or around May 23. One group, the Tiger Dragon Youth Organization, had prepared leaflets for distribution.

Tourists in Lhasa reported seeing pro-independence posters on walls in the Tibetan quarter. All tourists except for two were confined to groups, and for the first time the Chinese enforced with apparently 100 percent effectiveness a rule forbidding tourists from going outside their hotels without a guide. Toursits attempting to leave without guides were stopped by plain-clothes police. One westerner was detained for two hours before being returned to his hotel, where police searched his belongings, apparently looking for names of Tibetans he might have been visiting.

No tour groups were allowed in the Tibetan quarter the day before, when many celebrations including a parade were held, apparently in a last minute change of plans by the authorities. The next day almost all groups are reported to have been taken by bus to visit Drepung, a large monastic complex six miles outside the city.

Tourists reported heavy but discrete police presence, with large numbers of plain clothes police on the streets and riot police kept out of sight in near-by buildings. One westerner who visited a government office near the city center on May 22 noticed approximately 70 riot police in uniform in an adjoining compound. "They were lounging around with their guns and were clearly not meant for anyone to see," siad the tourist. (Tibet Information Network, 7 Beck Rd London E8 UK; + 44.81 : 533.5458)

INTERVIEW WITH HIS HOLINESS THE XIVTH DALAI LAMA



This past June Sulak Sivaraksa led a delegation of Thais to Dharamsala, India to explore the Tibetan community in exile there and to have an audience with the Dalai Lama. The following is the interview that Ajahn Sulak and Dr. Sumkiat Onvimol of Thai TV had with His Holiness.

SS: This broadcast, Your Holiness, is not only for the Thai audience but for the whole of South East Asia and Australia because he (Dr. Sumkhiat) has now a satellite for broadcasting.

SO: The purrpose of us coming here is to inform the people in Asia. Since the television station we are doing is satellite broadcast to South East Asia and South Asia from Sri Lanka to the Philippines, people can watch it with a satellite dish. There are many great things Your Holiness has done and is still doing for the world in general and for the Tibetan people in particular. One is the preservation of Tibetan culture or heritage and the way of life in and outside of Tibet. The other one is the expansion of Buddhist ideas around the world. Thailand, in particular, owes this to you. But on the subject of the preservation of the cultural heritage of Tibet, do you face any difficulties so far, because you cannot go into Tibet to do the work you would like to do?

DL: Regarding the preservation of Tibetan culture, usually I make two categories. One part of Tibetan culture I consider just social product due to the social system or the particular situation, so you see this kind of culture or way of life will change over time. Tibetan social habits and our social system have changed in our new environment and circumstances. These things have to change. They are of no use to preserve.

The other part of Tibetan culture naturally is very influential and very much related to Buddhist ideas. Thie part of Tibetan culture, I think, is very useful in our day to day lives particularly when we face very negative experiences. It is a great tragedy in such circumstances when people lose hope or get depressed. A certain part of Tibetan culture or Tibetan way of thinking is very helpful in developing a certain wider perspective which sustains or maintains hope. So on the basis of that determination, a person, in spite of difficult circumstances, is mentally is quite OK, quite happy. This part of Tibetan culture I think is very worthwhile to preserve and can be preserved. Since we've become refugees, now more than 40 years but particularly since 1959, the destruction inside Tibet has been immense. Of course, nobody can deny that since then there has been some progress, but if you compare the destruction side and the construction side, the destruction sides are much greater. Even the late Panchen Lama publicly admitted this. Therefore, as refugees every time we

have gotten very negative, sad information, this certain way of thinking has been very helpful to maintain mental tranquility. So I think you see that the type of culture or way of thinking based on human compassion, compassion with a sense of responsibility or sense of community, can be very helpful for not only Tibetans but for humanity as a whole.

SO: Relating to that, what is your advice to the solution of certain political problems particularly now to the area of South East Asia.

DL: (Chuckles) That's very complicated. Sometimes we claim ourselves that the East is rich with philosophy, but sometimes it seems our rich philosophy is not adequate enough to solve our day to day problems. (Laughs)

SO: Some of the Western interviewers who have interviewed you have suggested violent means as a solution, but you still maintain a peaceful coexistence and peaceful solutions.

DL: Yes, that's the only way, nonviolence, the principles of nonviolence. I think harmony is the way, the only way, to live happily, to live together, and to solve human disagreements through human understanding. I think this part of the world due to overpopulation, economic problems, and many other reasons is experiencing a lot of killing and a lot of suffering which is very sad. I basically believe now that every crisis from any part of the world is essentially a global crisis. We cannot treat one crisis in one particular area. We cannot treat Eastern things as local things, because everything is related to one another. For example, Cambodia is a problem, and the Vietnamese refugees are a problem. Of course, these are related to many other factors. Under such circumstances, I think it is very essential to look at these problems from a wider perspective. If you look from only the local standpoint, then it appears very big. I think in some cases you may not get a feeling that things are so complicated and so interdependent. So sometimes you may feel, "Oh, I can solve this problem through violence." If you look from a wider perspective, from a distance, then you realize that things are not that easy. The solution depends on many factors. Accordingly, it becomes much clearer. Under such circumstances, I think both sides need patience and tolerance and understanding of the other side, mutual respect and harmony.

So in light of my own problem, the Tibetan crisis, I am always trying to find a solution from that angle. Respect the Chinese, their viewpoint, and their long term benefit, and, of course, our own interest and our own long term benefit cannot be sacrificed. See both views and interests and then try to find some solution. That solution may not be 100% satisfactory to one party, but that is the situation. I think world problems cannot be solved with one party's view or one party's interest. The whole world is becoming smaller, heavily interdependent, and under such circumstances it is very difficult to find solutions based on the view of just the local situation.

SO: If Your Holiness will permit me, my colleague is from the Thai-Tibet Center, and he is more of a religious academic.

SS: Just to follow what Dr. Sumkiat has said, Your Holiness's role in Buddhism has been very great. As you know Buddhism has been prospering very much so in the West, but at the same time my concern is that when you prosper, unless you are very careful, it could also lead very easily to decline. Now our monks whether Theravada monks or Tibetan monks, have been used to our own traditions, but when we are exposed to the West, how do we adapt our Vinaya? How do we adapt to the situation? I think these, I'm sure, must be Your Holiness's concerns, and any advice you would like to share with us would be of great benefit.

DL: Yes, that's a very deep question...again, I feel there are two aspects of any major world religion such as Buddhism. Now you know Buddhism originally comes from India and then spread into different countries. Eventually it took on local conditions and the local cultural heritage. Buddhism eventually developed certain outwardly new forms, because it combined with local conditions. Therefore in any religion I think there are two aspects, the cultural and the religious. Therefore, as Buddhism has begun to flourish in new places and areas such as the European Continent or America or South America, I think if people from these areas try to adopt the same way or same manner which is practiced by the Tibetan or Thai or Sri Lankan or any other Asian Buddhist individual, it is not so good. So taking the essence, such as the Four Noble Truths or the Eightfold Path, and at the same time taking into consideration the local conditions, then there will be some kind of synthesis. I think Buddhist ideas with the local conditions and the cultural aspect eventually can go together. Outwardly, there may develop a new form of Buddhism which can be more useful in society. This is generally.

Now regarding the monks' role: in the Vinaya and Sutra, the ultimate sort of decision or ultimate power to change originally depended entirely on the Buddha himself. Then according

to certain new circumstances, if you need some changes, there should be a gathering of the Sangha or monks who have full knowledge of the Vinaya rules and precepts. One single monk, no matter how great a scholar or master, should not have the power to make changes. It should be a group of monks. Then I think it is possible to adopt some minor changes according to new circumstances. Perhaps, I think in some cases in the future such things may happen. Generally, so far as my conduct is concerned, I say to those Westerners who want to become a Buddhist monk that there is no hurry. Before taking robes, the teachings should be examined and checked very thoroughly like Christian monks and nuns do. This I think is very important and useful. Then once you take the vow, you should be very strict. So usually, I make that kind of suggestion to new monks from different countries, but eventually I think the time may come when we will face some new problems due to new circumstances. Then I think we should have some kind of International Buddhist Sangha convention or meeting, discuss thoroughly all of these problems, and then make some kind of decision. This I wish to have. I think it's difficult for one or two Buddhist monks or even one or two Buddhist countries to decide for all of the Buddhist community. Mainly the Sangha should come together and discuss the present and specific problems of new circumstances and how to deal with them.

SS: That's a wonderful idea Your Holiness. You see not only monks, but, myself as a lay person, I am expected to keep the five precepts. Now traditionally the first of the five precepts is not to kill. That's fine. You don't kill even mosquitos. You don't kill animals. You don't kill human beings. But now in the present circumstances what about armaments? The First World produces 87% of their armaments for sale in the Third World. What do we Buddhists say? What about drafting? A lot of Christian conscientious objectors have the right in England and America (to avoid the draft). What about in Buddhist countries? Do we have the right as Buddhists? To me, this involves very much the first precept and how to reinterpret it in the modern day. Likewise the second precept, not to steal, what about international banking? (the Dalai Lama begins to laugh) The World Bank? The big companies of Japan coming to work with multinational companies in small countries? Where do we stand as Buddhists? This bothers me a great deal because all these big companies destroy the environmental balance in the world and have a lot of supporters like Buddhist governments. How is this your concern also, Your Holiness?

DL: Very good question. The bank system I don't know (laughter) that I don't know. There I think we have to follow the Muslim system. (Dalai Lama laughs)

SS: Exactly, I feel the Muslims are very good if they practice that.

DL: With this you see you mentioned the environment. I think the Buddhist concept regarding the environment is quite clear and quite firm. We should respect nature's existence, the existence of other forms of sentient beings, and their location. We should also have concern for the plants. I think this is very important. Now today in modern times, the environment, the issue of ecology, has become very serious, and Buddhist concepts, right from the beginning, are quite firm and quite clear.

Now your first question, this I completely agree with. I, myself, am trying to propagate, trying to change the public attitude towards armaments and the military establishment. I feel that besides thinking in religious concepts, just thinking about today's new world, that the military establishment is a really wasteful organization. Firstly, war with nuclear armaments is absolutely negative, isn't it? Already there are many national leaders and big nations trying to eliminate nuclear weapons. This is very good. Then conventional weapons of an offensive nature, I think sooner or later you have to eliminate. Then eventually defensive weapons, these things I think should stop being produced. I feel very strongly that if we develop the whole planet as a demilitarized one, all of humnity will get much benefit, not only less danger to one's own life but also more prosperity. I think there is so much in money, several thousands of billions of dollars, spent on these awful destructive weapons. Therefore as a human being, the time has come to try to eliminate these kinds of awful things. As a Buddhist naturally you have to oppose any king of warfare or any from of military establishment. I think now we have to try to completely eliminate all these things and to create a genuine zone of peace. This is I feel very important.

SS: It is very interesting to hear from Your Holiness, because I feel this sort of message should be heard often all over the world. Of course, Your Holiness' effort on environmental issues also is wonderful, and as you know there is the Thai-Tibetan study of the concept of nature under the patronage of Your Holiness. Recently the World Council of Churches has contacted me, and they say that Christians want to learn from Buddhists particularly

on environmental issues. I think we, Buddhists and Christians must work together. As Your Holiness said we must also learn from the Muslims on the banking system (the Dalai Lama laughs), but I feel what you said on armaments and militarism is that deep down it is *dosa* or anger or hatred.

DL: Yes, right.

SS: But more dangerous in my opinion right now is *lobha* or greed which you can see very clearly in consumerism. All the television programs, except Dr. Sumkiat's, all advertising, people are more and more greedy and the new temples are departments stores and so on and so forth. To me this is a great danger everywhere now, particularly in my country, and more and more in the big cities of South East Asia. Do we Buddhists have any say on that, and not only say, can we do anything against greed in any Buddhist way meaningfully for the young people?

DL: (Chuckles) I think it will be not sufficient to say just be content. I think now, again if you look at the planet as a whole, the resources of the planet are limited and human population is a problem. The luxurious way of life exists, yet at the same time on the same planet millions and millions of people are facing starvation. If you look from a distance, from space, it is the same planet and the same human beings. Each one has every right to be happy and to overcome all suffering. Even from a selfish or self-centered viewpoint, if there is an unbalanced economic situation or debt between developed and underdeveloped nations, if this situation remains continuously, it will cause serious problems. Therefore, those developed, industrialized nations which produce goods need the other countries which are rich in natural resources including oil. So in reality these industrialized nations very much depend on other underdeveloped countries. The development of the economy of those prosperous nations is essentially linked to those other economies. If you look from a wider perspective, you can realize that for even one's own future interest one should take a concern in others' development.

Now this is mainly for laymen: for the present generation if we do not behave well, or if we do not plan properly, then our children and our children's children will suffer. Very often I notice that ssome grandparents love their grandchildren more than their own children. If that is the case, then the present generation has a heavy responsibility for the next generation and their next generation. Therefore, if you look from all these different angles, then eventually you will realize some sense of responsibility.

Usually I have two kinds of desire: one desire is for necessary things. For example, when you are hungry, you say, "I want some food." That kind of desire is a right one. Another desire is when you already have all these basic facilities, and even then you want more and more. That kind of desire I consider a negative kind of desire. That kind of desire really leads to disaster. Sometimes, in my own case, when I visit some market place and see many beautiful articles, beautiful cameras, radios, watches and such things, then I get a desire like, "Oh, that I want; this I want." That is a lot of desire there, but then I check myself a second time, "Do I really need these things?" Then my answer is "No", so the desire which developed at the beginning was a desire for something unnecessary, unlimited desire. This kind of desire I think is truly greedy. A certain concept of desire about which some of my friends get the wrong impression is that Buddhists completely deny any form of desire. This is not the case. Desire with reason, with logic, with foundation, that desire is good desire. To achieve Nirvana, to achieve Moksha, that kind of desire is a very right one. From the medical viewpoint, we may find some evidence to show that too much attachment very often leads to frustration, anger, and hatred. You see anger and hatred are very bad for one's health. So from various factors I think we can find a certain convincing explanation that we would be better off with limited desire or contentment.

SO: Your Holiness, we have run out of time and overused you half an hour, but I have one brief final question which is more political. How do you foresee the future of Tibet?

DL: Quite optimistic. We have stood outside Tibet, as I mentioned earlier, more than 32 years now. I think within the next 5 to 10 years, we might see our own country with freedom. Of course the Gulf Crisis was very bad, but the international situation in the last two to three years has been very positive. I think the genuine desire for peace everywhere is very strong and very positive, particularly among the younger generation. I think the concept of world peace is very strong, and that people are realizing, even the politicians and national leaders, that military force is not the proper way to solve problems. Political solutions are better. Peoples' concern about democracy and freedom, clearly the democracy in the Eastern European countries, the Soviet Union, and China also shows that there is some kind of force based on basic human nature. This force is now getting the upper hand.

BANGLADESH :

LEARNING FROM DISASTER

There are few places on earth where the border between land and sea is so lightly defined as it is around the nothern shores of the Bay of Bengal. Here, elevation is measured in a few metres, the surface of the sea rises and falls with massive tides and the air above boils with clouds and thun derheads.

Along the coast to the north of Chittagong, a vast number of people have moved onto the mudbanks at the mouth of the Ganges-Brahmaputra river system. The farmer-settlers often stake their unofficial claims as soon as the new land emerges, and sometimes even while the mudbanks are below the high water mark.

Settlements on island like Kutubdia and Maheshkali were flattened when the cyclone, coupled with exceptionally high spring tides, hit the coast on the night of 30 April. Further, the low-pressure eye of such a storm raises the sea surface by 2 m or more, and when this mass of water – pushed by 230 kph winds – hits the shallows a tidal bore up to 10 m high can be created, as it was that night. This storm surge swept across the islands and coastal areas and inundated them, before falling back to the sea the next morning.

The loss of life – put by the Bangladesh government at nearly 139,000 – became known as relief teams arrived in the devastated region. By the 10th day after the cyclone, the bodies that had lain tangled on the beaches, suspended in trees and trapped in collapsed houses had been buried. However, in addition to those drowned and battered to death by the cyclone itself, the lives of hundreds of thousands more hung in the balance, with local food stocks gone and water supplies polluted.

By mid-May, two weeks after the storm, up to 100,000 cases of gastroenteric diseases were reported, with about 1,000 deaths. But by then a huge relief effort was in progress. Foreign donors had contributed nearly US$250 million in food, cash and materials. The dozen helicopters of the Bangladesh Air Force had been reinforced by some 15 more sent by India, Britain, Japan and China. A US Navy task force returning from the Gulf to East Asia anchored off Chittagong on 15 May to add its 24 helicopters and numerous hovercraft and landing barges to the relief programme.

Nevertheless, it will be many months before the population starts supporting itself again. The ponds that served a substantial prawn industry have been washed out and their associated freezing plants desstroyed. Salt pans, another significant local source of income, have also been lost. Fruit trees have been stripped of leaves, crops and grass seared by salt and village ponds filled with brackish saline water.

The monsoon rains – which start in June and run to September – should wash much of the salt out and help restore fertility. But in the weeks before the monsoon – and during the period just after the rains begin – the region remains wide open to further devastation by cyclones spawned in the Bay of Bengal. In the government offices at Cox's Bazar, virtually the whole coastal sea-wall system is marked in red and yellow on the wall maps to indicate breaches and damage. Engineers estimate that 285 km of embankments have been destroyed and another 235 km damaged.

To restore the embankments, Dhaka plans a "food for work" scheme which will provide short term employment and sustenance for the local population while they carry out these public works. The government is seeking 600,000 tons of grain for this project, of which over one third has already been committed by foreign donors.

The failure of the dykes to protect the population on 30 April, however, raises questions about the point of rebuilding them. While embankments do provide protection against lesser storms, sooner or later – on average every 20 years or so this century – the region will receive another direct hit from a powerful cyclone. The answer has to be the tents and makeshift shelters starting to appear in the wrecked villages of Kutubdia and other islands.

Bangladeshis are coming back to start again, fully – if fatalistically – conscious of the menace contained in the normally calm waters of the Bay of Bengal. With a population of 110 million

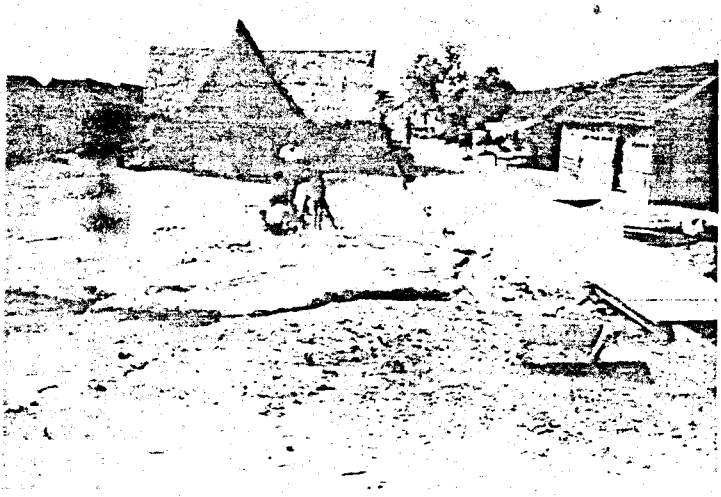
that on present trends will double by 2025, many more landless people will take the risk of occupying, tilling and perhaps one day getting title to the new land in this fertile but inherently dangerous part of the country. And with time and more silt, the land will become more secure as the delta moves further out into the sea.

Another part of the answer is that while it is impossible to protect the land against powerful cyclones, it is possible to save the people. As grim as the death toll was on 30 April, it was far below the hundreds of thousands thought to have died when the 1970 cyclone hit the same area – even though 40 million people have been added to Bangladesh's population in the intervening two decades. Although there were many obvious, and admitted shortcomings, the country showed itself far better organised to meet the storm's onslaught. Satellite monitoring gave ample warning, and for those that chose to heed it – or who could be warned in time – more shelters were available.

Throughout the disaster area, cyclone shelters generally appeared to have survived the storm intact. The shelters are concrete buildings, raised on pillars well above ground level, in which people can gather at the peak of the storm and flood. On Sonadia Island, about 20 km from Cox's Bazar, the entire population of 650 took refuge in a new shelter built by the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society. All survived, and the volunteers manning the shelter's radio were in contact with the society's Dhaka headquarters throughout the night. In the 1970 cyclone, Sonadia's then population was wiped out.

The Red Crescent model – a single-storey building on stilts – costs US$100,000. Not only does it require a lot of cement, it needs careful supervision during construction to ensure salt water is not used in mixing the concrete.

The government estimates that 3,500 shelters will be needed, which works out at a US$350 million bill. But the buildings can be used for other purposes in normal times – schools, clinics, village centres – and thus represent a wider investment in so-called "human resources."



Shelters built with World Bank funds in the 1970s were not given such roles in village development and are mostly gutted, neglected structures – though they withstood the cyclone and provided rudimentary shelter.

Aside from cyclones, the other great bane of Banglsdesh are the great floods that occur on average every five years or so. The 1988 flood, resulting from simultaneous peaking of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers, put half the country under water and caused US$1 billion in loss of capital stock. Following this, the Bangladesh Government and foreign-aid donors have been working on a scheme to control flooding. Not only will this protect lives, crops and property, the authorities see it as essential to the development of ever more intensive agriculture to feed the population.

Massive embankments will be constructed along the main rivers, and enormous drains built to prevent the land behind the levees filling up from local rainfall and tributory rivers. A huge area of the countryside will be divided into embanked "compartments," in which controlled flooding will be managed by intakes from rivers and offtake through the drains.

After detailed studies and design, work on the first compartments is expected to start in 1993, and construtction on the main river works will continue for 15 to 20 years. The overall cost in 1989 prices is put at US$3.5-4 billion, incurred at a "manageable" rate of about US$250 million a year.

Hamish McDonald
from FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW,
30 MAY 1991.

N.B. Buddhists have been discriminated in receiving aid to their tragedies. Those who wish to help Buddhist victims in Bangladesh, please contact INEB and TICD in Bangkok.

CAMBODIA :

WOMEN IN SITE 2

Most of the women of Site 2 are very poor. They are living in very difficult circumstances with very little emotional support. They obtain the necessities of life: water, rice, tinned fish and wood from United Nations Border Relief Operation but even their rations are not certain from one week to the next. I saw that these women are really powerless against abuse or injustice. They often say that Site 2 has no laws. I saw how much the women want someone to be interested in them and their families, to listen to what they have to say. I know that it is possible to help firstly by knowing them and listening to their problems. They have so many problems in their lives but they have no control over this in Site 2. I supervise the OB Ward and with the other midwives try to assist in all ways possible the women who are our patients.

On the ward I noticed that many of the mothers of low birth weight babies were poorer, these mothers usually had only 2 old sarongs, no clothes for their babies. The fires they had under their bed were wood not charcoal; charcoal is expensive to buy in the camp. Their food was different from that of people with money. Their families did not bring them extra meat or fruit after delivery, they shared together the hospital food.

I was encouraged to think about answers to these problems by Mary Dunbar, the Irish midwife who worked with me and prepared me for the responsibility of taking over supervision of the ward. Mary also encouraged me to adjust the procedures of the OB Ward to fit with the particular needs and traditions of the Khmer women. I was working with an Irish midwife, Mary Dunbar, who encouraged me to take more and more responsibility and finally showed me that she, Mary, was no longer needed. The Khmer midwives could run the ward by themselves. As you can see from the photographs, our ward is a bamboo structure with an earth floor. (The house in the camp are built in the same way as this.) Whether the child is delivered at home or in the hospital, a fire is lit under the bamboo bed of the newborn and the mother. It is considered very important to keep them hot. You will also notice that the family is there in the hospital with the mother.

Most of the patients who come to the OB Ward are from the poorer families. If they had money they would prefer to deliver at home. In their home it's the custom to give some presents to the midwife; not only to thank her but also to prevent bad luck in the future. Most families like to give bananas, chicken, rice, candles, incense and rice wine.

Wives of soldiers come to the hospital because they can receive 300B if their husband is a soldier, but only if they have a hospital card.

May women dislike the hospital. Some of the reasons they give are that the midwives are younger, that they cannot



remain modest in the hospital as the midwives lift the patients sarong during delivery. At home the traditional midwives deliver the baby still keeping the woman covered with the sarong. At home many families also call the Kru Khmer to the house if they think the delivery may be difficult. He walks around the mother's bed, saying prayers and chewing beetle nut, some families put a thorn branch under the bed to prevent the evil spirits from coming. Most families put salt on the placenta and bury it in a place where a lot of people walk. This is thought to help the baby have clear skin.

Mothers who choose the hospital say that it's the injections that keep the evil spirits away! (To make them feel better about this some are given an injection of sterile water.)

The chance to understand the traditional beliefs can make the time of delivery much less anxious for the mother. It was very important to me that Mary Dunbar encouraged me to share these beliefs with her, and to make a place for them in our hospital procedures.

Mothers in Site 2 have many social problems. Most of the husbands are soldiers and this makes everything more difficult for the family. Often a husband fighting inside Cambodia is not able to come back for the delivery. Some of the mothers have a relative to help them but a large percentage are by themselves. While they are in hospital they worry about who will take care of the house. Usually the other children come to stay in the hospital and share the mother's food. The mothers can have very little rest after delivery and have to organize who will carry water and wood. The mother may get a neighbor to help but then she must pay a few baht for the service. Usually within a week of delivery they try to manage everything by themselves. One of their big worries is that their husband will die in Cambodia and they will be left in Site 2 with no one to support them. In fact many fathers have died in Cambodia without ever seeing their children.

The families of soldiers are among the poorest in the camp. They often have more problems because of this. Some of the soldiers have problems when they come back from Cambodia. Because of the stress they have suffered they may drink a lot or gamble. They almost always go to the taxi girls (prostitutes). There is a great danger of sexually transmitted disease but the men do not take notice of this.

Taxi girls in Site 2 are mostly women and girls with little education. They give various reasons for becoming taxi girls. Some were raped during the dangerous journey to the border. Some were raped as young girls by the second or third husband of their mother. Sometimes it is poverty. Sometimes they have been abandoned by a husband who has taken a second or third wife.

It is very usual for men to take second or third wives. (After all the years of war there are more women than men.) I have seen great unhappiness from men who have taken a new wife before their child is one year old or even when their wife is pregnant.

Women who are poor try to make money in the market by making small rice cakes to sell. Or they may go outside the camp to gather fire wood for sale. I have seen these mothers often tired and angry with their children. In the evenings these families often go to sleep very early, not only to save kerosene, but because there is nothing to do. Social occasions are non-existent, even for Khmer New Year or the festival to remember ancestors. They stay at home. They have no money to buy special clothes or food to offer to the monks.



Thierry
Midwife in Site 2

A REFLECTION FROM THE INEB CONFERENCE

Last month on 16th February Aun and I and other 4 Khmer people from Site 2 went to a seminar of International Network Engaged Buddhists (INEB) at Nakhorn Nayok and Nakhorn Pathom. The seminar was sponsored by INEB. The goal was to strengthen the Buddhist network in seeking ways toward peace which is based on active non-violence and Buddhism.

Each country was asked to present the situation in its own country. Aun (a Khmer Health Training instructor) presented the general situation in camp. I presented the education problem in camp and the background of the Khmer Rouge. For instance, why people became Khmer Rouge and how the Khmer Rouge came to power. I was surprised because there were many people who did not know the problems and the killing fields of Cambodia, that's why I disclosed it.

There were five Buddhist monks from Cambodia including the head monk Venerable Tep Vong. In his speech he talked about the background of Buddhism and the destruction of monasteries, monk hospitals and the Buddhist monks of Cambodia under the rule of the Khmer Rouge. And how they appealed to INEB and the UN to help restore the monasteries, monk hospitals and to stop the war in Cambodia as soon as possible.

We had an unofficial talk with them about finding ways toward peace for Cambodia. At the beginning it seemed like they didn't trust us. To them it sounded like we were representing the resistance factions. But it was getting better after we tried to explain to them.

Venerable said Sihanouk and Son Sann should join the Hun Sen government to fight against the Khmer Rouge in order to eradicate them, then we will have peace. We said no, we won't have peace because that is not a peaceful way, which is against the Law of the Buddha. We may have another killing field if we do not choose the right means to resolve the problems. Then we emphasized that on behalf of the Buddhist Cambodian society we should stay neutral and try our best to stop the proxy war in our country through Buddhism and active non-violence. Anyway, they appreciated our ideas. Venerable Tep Vong added that he could not make any particular decision because he was not the only person to decide.

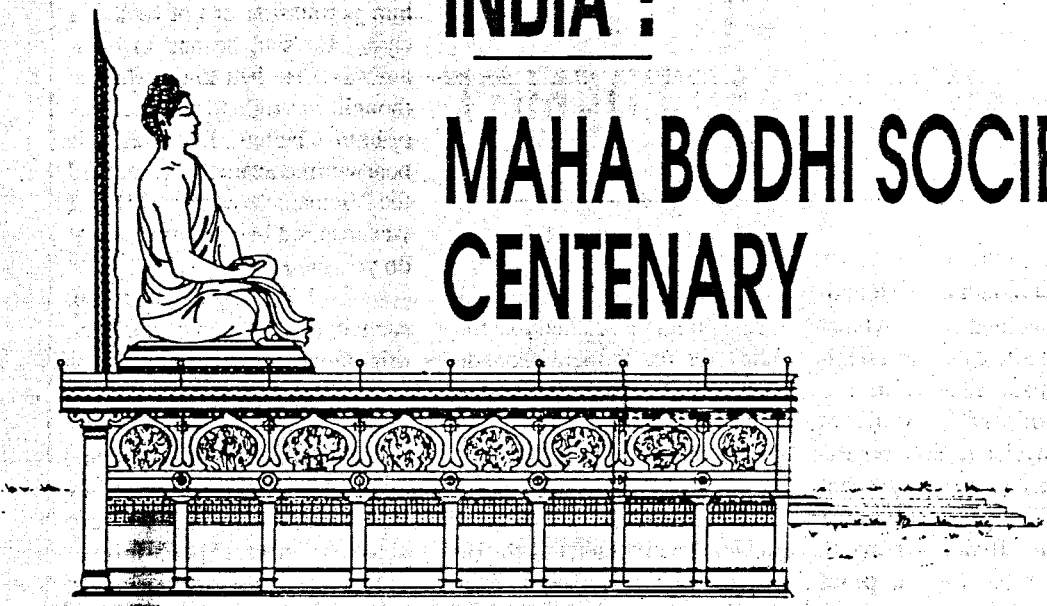
George Willoughby is a man from US who with his wife have worked for social peace for 50 years. He is a Quaker and he has done many non-violence activities to help the world. During the war between North Vietnam and US he told the US government that he would send medical supplies to North Vietnam. The government said no, they would't give him permission to do that. Then George said he hadn't asked their permission, he only just let them know, whether they gave him permission or not he didn't care. He said he had to do it anyway. He had to do what he thought was right to save the lives of human beings. Eventually his boat with medical supplies reached the Vietnamese shore safely. I was inspired by this story. What do you think?

I learnt something else, such as the law of co-dependence origination or that everything is interrelated. I would say that the running war in my country Cambodia, involves the USA, France, Soviet Union and China. They hinder the change. They refuse to change from war to peace in order to exploit it. They don't care that our poor Cambodian people keep dying because of them. They made the weapons in their own countries but they didn't use them to kill their own people, instead they export them to other countries and my country and indoctrinate my various Khmer factions to fight against each other. I am very angry when I'm writing up to this point. In ICRC Khao I Dang hospital, there was a boy about 10, his left arm was amputed and shrapnel has stabbed him all over his body and face. He got this injury while he was handling his cows and got caught in a clash between Phom Penh government troops and resistant troops. I was sad to see him in the hospital. This is only one example, there are still many. At Khao I Dang we have formed the Human Rights Committee. We have about 15 people and hold a regular meeting to discuss and share information from one another and plan for teaching.

Sum Sokry
Khao I Dang Camp
March 23, 1991

INDIA :

MAHA BODHI SOCIETY CENTENARY



Buddhism with its culture based on compassion and peace saw its golden era at the time of Emperor Ashoka. But by 12th Century A.D. it began to decline and inimical historical forces saw to its total elimination from India. Many centuries later it was given to the Venerable Anagarika Dharmapala the stupendous task of revival and renaissance of this ancient culture. Born in Colombo in 1864, Dharamapala undertook an intensive study of the Dhamma and developed deep insights into the teaching of Buddha. When he saw the Buddhist shrines which constituted the places of pilgrimage in India, in a state of neglect and disrepair, he resolved to restore them to their original glory. With indomitable faith and relentless energy he not only succeeded in this but initiated a movement for revival which has a world wide impact. The Maha Bodhi Society was founded by him in 1891. With branches set up in many parts of the world, the society continues its noble work for the good of many, for the benefit of many. The great Bhikkhu Dharmapala passed away in 1933.

MAHA BODHI SOCIETY, BANGALORE

The Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore, started by Venerable Acharya Buddharakkhita in 1956, is the premier Buddhist Institution in the whole of South India. It aims to make known the teachings of the Buddha to revive a noble culture and way of life and to facilitate translation of compassion into action. Besides the monastery and bhikkhu training centre, the Vihara conducts weekly Dhamma discourses and imparts training in meditation. The other activities of the Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore, include

A) A residential school for 100 boys,

B) A nursery school for children,

C) A publication division which has already brought out many valuable Dhamma books,

D) An artificial limbs manufacturing centre for the benefit of the physically handicapped,

E) Arogya Hospital for poor slum-dwellers,

F) An institute of Pali Studies and Buddhology,

G) A department for translating the Tripitaka into Kannada and

H) Printing press to support the publication work.

The Maha Bodhi Society, Banglore, has branches in Mysore and Ladakh.

Maha Bodhi International Meditation Centre was founded in the year 1986 by Venerable Bhikkhu Sanghasena and his spiritual associates, primarily to promote Buddhist meditation. Ven. Bhikkhu Sanghasena is the meditation teacher at the centre. He was ordained as a Buddhist monk and trained in deeper meditation specially by his teacher, the internationally well-known Buddhist Meditation Master, the Venerable Acharya Buddharakkhita of Bangalore, who guides thousands of disciples from East and West.

Living in Splendid Isolation

During the past 12 years Ven. Bhikkhu Sanghasena has undergone several intensive courses of Vipassana and other forms of meditational practices. He also spent some time in an ancient cave in remote mountains of Ladakh, which great yogis sought out in order to plunge themselves into deep meditation.

FACILITIES AT THE CENTRE

Regular meditation classes, Dhamma discussions and study groups are conducted at the centre. It is the only meditation centre of its kind in the whole of Ladakh for English-speaking people. A good number of interested local people as well as tourists are taking benefit of this opportunity. The meditation we teach here is simple, and strenghtens all aspects of life. It is easy to learn and you don't have to commit yourself to any faith or religion. Valuable and rare books and magazines on Buddhist philosophy and meditation adorn the small library at the centre. There is a small book stall too for those who want to purchase books on Buddhist meditation and philosophy.

MILAREPA MEDITATION CAMP

For the more earnest people who wish to capture and experience deeply the glory of the land, we conduct 5-7 days intensive retreat camps in some selected beautiful remote valleys. Interested persons can collect more information at the centre about the scheduled camps.



NAMGYLA, 14, left his family in Ladakh before he was 10. He travelled some 2,500 miles away from home to get education at the Bangalore Maha Bodhi Society Temple.

It was the first time he had come home for a summer vacation, along with other boys whose life and education are now under the care of Venerable Sanghasena, president of the Maha Bodi Society at Bangalore.

"I'm glad to be home," the boy beamed, and pointed to the surrounding snow-capped

mountain ranges, as we sat sipping the Tibetan tea (tasting a little strange with salt and soda) at the backyard of the Omasila guest house in Leh, capital of Ladakh.

"Look! How beautiful. I really miss it."

The view in front of us was majestic. The Great Himalayan and Zanskar ranges to the south, Karakoram to the north. Ladakh is a rare place on earth where its indigenous culture and people seem to have lived intact from the world outside for centuries.

The heavy snow, harsh and cold weather cuts Ladakh from the rest of the world from November to May. Even in summer, although the sun shines blazingly during the day, the night is freezing. But once word of the purity and beauty of Ladakh began to spread, visitors started coming.

The only land transport leading to Leh today is an old winding road from Srinakar in Kashmir, which opened to tourists in 1974. It takes two days of driving over hundreds of high passes. Due to weather conditions, the road is usable mainly in summer months, July and August. The other routes connecting Ladakh toTibet are now closed due to political turmoil.

I went there early this month, at the time when the foundation stone laying ceremony of the meditation centre and Buddhist school took place in Leh. The project – initiated by Ven. Sangkhasena, himself a Ladakhi who left his motherland to join the Indian army before entering monkhood more than 10 years ago – is to help poor Ladakhi children get a better education along with moral training.

"It doesn't make sense for children to leave their parents and travel so far away from home for education," said Jasbir Singh, a Singaporean Sikh who first came to Ladakh seven years ago and became interested in the project. Children taken away from their roots, he believed, will gradually lose their cultural identity.

Ven. Sangkhasena was able to draw some financial assistance from better-off Buddhist countries like Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore and Thailand. Though there's still a lot needed to complete the project, the present Ladakhis are hopeful that the project will equip the youngsters with modern education and spiritual training to prevent them from stumbling blindly into modernisation.

The timing of my going to Ladakh meant having to fly. Down below, over-an-hour-long flight from Delhi to Leh, was a panoramic view of stunning endless snow-covered peaks. Sud denly out of the blue, a barren valley dotted by trees appeared, just before we landed.

The first commercial flight landed in Leh in 1979. Prior to that, there was only military aircraft. Due to its strategic location, sandwiched between Pakistan on the west, Tibet and China on the east, Ladakh has a large Indian military base to guard its borders.

Politically, Ladakh is under the government of Jammu and Kashmir. Culturally and spiritually, however, Ladakh looks to Tibet as its inspiration. They speak with a different pronunciation but write in the same scripture. Ladakh comes from La-Tags, in Tibetan the land of the la, the land of high mountain passes.

The majority of Ladakhi people are Buddhists, decendents of Tibetan nomads who wandered west-ward with their large flocks of sheep, goats and yaks. But Buddhism first came to Ladakh through India not Tibet. King Asoka, the great Buddhist Emperor of India brought Hinayana Buddhism or the "Lesser Vehicle" into Ladakh in the third century B.C. Eight centuries later, Ladakhis adopted the Mahayana or the "Greater Vihicle', Trantric Buddhism from Tibet.

Power struggles and ethnic conflicts between Ladakhi Buddhists and Kashmiri Muslims have been a long-standing issue. The tensions broke out into a major riot in Leh last year, causing the place to be temporarily closed to visitors.

A senior Ladakhi citizen expresses his frustration, saying that the Ladakh culture and religion are under a constant threat by Kashmiri Muslims.

"Under the present administration of Jammu and Kashmir, we don't get sufficient funding to up-keep our monasteries, religious and educational institutes. I think it would be better for us to be directly under the Delhi administration."

As disputes between Kashmir and India are still a burning issue, he's fully aware that his wish has a very slim chance to come true under the present circumstances.

Perhaps due to the influence of Buddhist teaching, Ladakhis stay cool and calm in their struggle to preserve and protect their distinct culture. They live a simple life, yet work very hard to survive in such dry and stark land. Of the total 60,000 square miles of Ladakh, half of only one per cent of the land is arable. They grow green barley, apples and apricots. Despite its scarce resources, they are self-sufficient, able to strike an ecological balance with the basic human needs.

"You must take it easy, rest for a while, perhaps a few days before trying to move around too much," another Ladakhi

warned me about how our body needs time to adapt to the change of altitude, average about 19,000 feet. "Other-wise, you'll get a real headache and feel your muscles trembling."

But I had no time to spare as my stay was short. Namgyal accompanied me to the market where souvenir and miscellaneous shops lined up. Tibetan houses look sturdy and are strongly built with rocks which are abundantly available. I learned the first word in Ladakhi - "Jullay" meaning everything from hello, welcome to goodbye.

Unlike the rest of India, the art of bargaining was redundant here. "I'm a Buddhist, I don't tell a lie," said a shop owner as I first tried to bargain for a Tibetan silver necklace.

"Buddhism runs in their blood," a German woman who had already spent a month in Leh, studying Buddhism and meditation told me. "Ladakhi people are very hospitable, trustworthy and honest. They don't steal, don't tell lies. I never once saw any violence here either."

They are taught that every living thing has been their mother in one or another incarnation, so they always love and respect it, be it human, animal or insect. They strongly believe in the theory of rebirth. The present Dalai Lama of Tibet, who is now taking refuge in Dharamsala, northern India, is also believed to be the reincarnation of the previous Dalai Lamas.

The theory of rebirth is fascinating. In a book featuring an interview with the Dalai Lama, he explained that there are four types of rebirth. The first common one, wherein a being is helpless to determine his or her rebirth, but only incarnates in dependence on the nature of past actions. The opposite is the enlightened person who simply manifest a physical form to help others. The person is a Buddha.

A third one is he who due to past spiritual attainment, can choose, or at least influence, the place and situation of rebirth. The fourth is called a blessed manifestation who could perform helpful functions such as teaching religion. For this last type of birth, the person's wishes in previous lives to help others must have been very strong. Then they obtain such empowerment.

The belief in rebirth helps contribute to the understanding of the major difference between Mahayana and Hinayana sects. In the Hinayana, the end of the holy life is to enter Nirvana, a state in which one is freed from all sufferings, living in eternal peace. In the Mahayana, they may not attain Nirvana for themselves, they vow not to escape while the rest of the world still lives in pain.

The next day as we drove near the Indus River past a summer retreat which the Ladakhi people built for the Dalai Lama in 1987, a statement in the great Shantideva's *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* came to mind. It says "As long as space exists, and as long as there are migrators in cycle existence, may I remain – removing their suffering." The Dalai Lama once said he has that wish in this lifetime and he knows he had that wish in his past lifetimes.

The nearest attraction in Leh is the Shey Palace. Empty and crumbling, there's nothing to indicate the typical grandeur of a palace. It used to be a maternity home for the Queens of Ladakh, a place to come for giving birth. The present Queen now lives in a smaller palace at Stok, 10 miles away.

Stupas, where relics of kings and holy teachers are kept, are seen throughout Ladakh. It's a building of plaster and brick that has four stages, each symbolising a different state of consciousness. It begins with a large cubic foundation, rising diminishing cubes that support a wide, empty, bun-like middle portion, a long spire that comes to a point in the symbol of a crescent moon cradling a sun.

The religious devotion of Ladakhis is so evident, people whirling prayer wheels and prayer flags flapping in the wind. Tibetan Buddhists believe that they can accumulate merit through making offerings and reciting the sacred mantras. Mantra-stones which are stones with the letters OM MANI PADME HUM, carved on them, are just about every-where too.

OM MANI PADME HUM, Praise to the Jewel at the heart of the Lotus. I imprinted these words into my heart and mind as I recalled a lama monk once said to me that what's so stimulating about Buddhism is its belief in "man's capability to achieve spiritual perfection."

My trip to Ladakh ended shortly, but I knew then that my lifelong (many lives, perhaps) spiritual journey had just begun.

SAOWAROP PANYACHEEWIN
Bangkok Post
June 30, 1991.



INDIA CELEBRATES DR. AMBEDKAR'S BIRTH CENTENARY

Indian masses, more particularly the oppessed ones, and the government of India have been celebrating the birth centenary of India's gentleman of distinction, great scholar, brilliant author, and able statesman – a man of practical sense, the intellectual luminary was, above all, a far sighted religious leader. He was certainly the hero of the contem-porary Buddhist renaissance in India. His wisdom and vision have made a lasting contribution to the social consciousness of humanity.

The Indian people were jubilant when a sudden announcement was made by the government of India that the highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, had been given to Dr. Ambedkar posthumously. The award was given to his wife on the 14th of April, 1990 on Dr. Ambedkar's birthday and the first day of the centenary year.

Besides the government of India, many groups, particularly the followers of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, celebrated his birth centenary. One of such efforts was by the committee known as the "Bodhissatva Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee", New Delhi. This committee had a unique program of celebrating this occasion throughout the year, without a break. To make this program practically possible, a Shatabdi Rath (Centenary Chariot) was procured. The spotless white rath was decorated by attaching huge cut-outs of Dr. Ambedkar and a model of the Sanchi Stupa, a world famous Buddhist Shrine at Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh, India. The urn containing the ashes of Dr. Ambedkar was with the rath adding grace as well as sanctity to the Rath Yatra program.

In this year long program, the Shatabdi Rath covered 30,632 kilometers of distance, covering most parts of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, the entire states of Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, and some parts of the states of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Jammu, and Kashmir.

One of the important aspects of the program was to make available the literature of Dr. Ambedkar, the literature on him and on Buddhism at half the usual rates. On the international level, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Bangkok, was approached by the committee to celebrate his birth centenary. INEB, among other things, has published a small biography called *Dr. Ambedkar : The Liberator*. The INEB members belonging to different countries have also been requested to get the book translated and printed in their respective national languages. Visits of Indian Buddhists to various Buddhist countries have also been planned.

Initially, it was decided to conclude the program on the 14th of April, 1991 at 26 Alipur Road, Delhi, the place where Dr. Ambedkar attained his "Maha-Parinirvana" on the 6th of December, 1956. However, this program had to be suspended indefinitely since the present owner did not allow entrance onto the premises. The committee, under these circumstances, has decided to continue Rath Yatra until the government of India takes over possession of the property on 26 Alipur Road, Delhi and converts it into the Dr. Ambedkar National Memorial. The Committee can also raise the funds to pay the price of the premises, if the government of India or the owner so desires. To achieve this goal, it



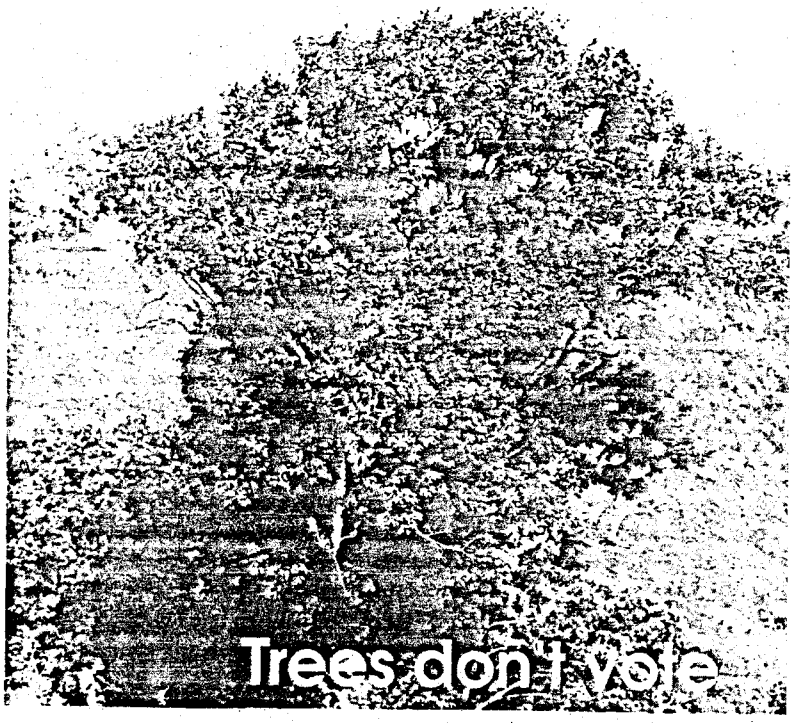
has been decided to organize Shatabdi Rath Maha-Yatra, a long journey of the Centenary Chariot.

In the first phase, to begin on the 15th August, 1991 from New Delhi, the Journey shall cover the whole of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa. In the second phase, it will cover Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra; and in the third phase, it will cover Orissa, West Bengal, and the North-East Provinces of Sikkim, Assam and Bihar. It is expected that more than a 3 year period will be required to complete the whole journey. It has also been decided that to carry out the entire program a society named the Dr. Ambedkar Centenary Foundation will be registered under the Societies Registration Act. This will facilitate those who want to support the program.

Now the primary aim is to secure 26 Alipur Road for the Dr. Ambedkar National Memorial. But we feel from last year's experience that Shatabdi Rath Yatra will do immense service to the people in understanding Dr. Ambedkar. We have noticed during our year-long journey that the people of India, by and large, do not want Dr. Ambedkar to be read and understood because of their age old prejudices. Unfortunately, even Indian intelligentsia is a victim of bias and prejudice and do not want to read and understand him. On the other hand, Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts and actions are very much relevant to Indian society and the politics of today. Shatabdi Rath Yatra has demolished these prejudices to some extent during the last year, and we hope to achieve much in this direction during our three year program.

Bapurao Pakhiddey

NEPAL :
DEFORESTATION



Whatever benefits it may have brought Nepal's 19.5 million human inhabitants, the country's fledgeling multi-party democracy seems to have been an unmitigated disaster for the trees of this land-locked Himalayan kingdom. If deforestation continues unchecked in Nepal's fragile mountain ecosystem, desertification is real threat by the end of the century, ecologists warn.

During the year-long interim government of Prime Minister K.P. Bhattariai, trees were felled at a faster rate than during the entire previous 32 years of party-less "panchayat" rule, according to D.R. Regmi, a septugenarian democracy activist and ex-minister who is no friend of the panchayat system. Bureaucrats confirm Regmi's alarm with hard figures.

A source in the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation estimates that 24,000 ha of forest have been destroyed during the past year (versus a total of 700,000 ha over the entire panchayat reign), and timber worth US$312.5 million has been smuggled into India or misappropriated by individual Nepali house-holds. The deforestation was organised by "criminal elements," the source said, who took advantage of the country's preoccupation with the general-election campaign just completed on 12 May.

The worst-hit zones were in the tropical southeast of the

country bordering the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, according to Indra Singh Thapa, director-general of the Forestry Department. With the protection of leftist parties, nearly 35,000 landless settlers have illegally squatted on forest land there.

One of the leftist enclaves borders on the West Bengal district of Naxalbari, home of India's "Naxalite" movement of self-styled Maoist revolutionaries. The encroachements have grown so serious that, in two of the border districts, a total of 120 forestry workers submitted their resignations en masse on grounds of "insecurity and mental tension."

Politicians from the dominant Nepali Congress Party lay the blame at the door of former minister Jhala Nath Khanal of the United Marxist-Leninist Party, who held the forestry portfolio in the interim coalition government. Khanal, in turn, blames panchay at revivalists bent on discrediting the multi-party system and disrupting the 12 May elections.

Indisputably, the political rape of Nepal's forests dates back to panchayat times, when aspiring office-holders used to barter off lumbering concessions and squatters' rights to fund their campaigns and swell their vote banks in the partyless elections. The 15-month trade impasse with India (through mid-1990) accelerated the despoilation. With petroleum supplies cut off, people turned to wood for fuel. At the height of the crisis, estimated forest losses ran as high as 200 ha a day.

Nepal's tourism boom has also aggravated the situation, with nearly 60,000 trekkers a year flocking to such spectacular – but remote – peaks as Annapurna and Mt Everest. Whole forests are felled to build accommodations for the tourists and cook their food, environmentalists complain. Pilot schemes to set up kerosene depots in the outback and introduce improved stoves and solar cookers have hardly made a dent in the problem.

In Nepal's delicate mid-mountainous and alpine regions, ecologists say, deforestation is so severe that millions of cubic feet of alluvium are washed into the Bay of Bengal each year. Director-General of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management Shushil Bhattarai warns that, if it goes on at this pace, Nepal could experience the sort of desertification that afflicts Afghanistan.

Foreign donors – a force to be reckoned with in an aid-dependent polity like Nepal's – are sensible to this danger. Finland has provided Fm 6 million (US$1.35 million) for implementation of the country's 21-year master plan for forestry development. The US, Japan, several Scandinavian countries and the Asian Development Bank have also chipped in for the master plan, while Britain has set up a forest research centre.

The master plan, however, was initially worked out between the government and the aid donors in panchayat times. Now that the interim government has given way to fully elected cabinet, Khanal's successor as forestry minister, Sailja Acharya, endorses the main tenets of the plan and promises vigorous action against deforestation. But the plan has yet to pass the full cabinet – a test of political will for ministers beholden as never before to voters.

Kedar Man Singh
FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW
4, July 1991.



The beauty of Poland is different – different from that of Western or Northern Europe, and most different if you happen to go there in early springtime, just a month after paying a visit to the almost aggressively tropical colours of Thailand.

The colours of Poland are softened, especially a day when rain lingers in the air. The contrasts of colours are less, and it takes some time to adjust your eyes to appreciate what you see.



Look at a Hospital

The problems of Poland, too, are different. Different not only from those of most other countries, but also different from what they used to be.

A few years ago, I was asked by some friends of mine to join a newly formed Swedish foundation in suport of a Polish hospital, specializing in the care of physically handicapped children and in research about their diseases. I found it impossible to say no when I was informed that this hospital had problems, and especially when I got to know the nature of some of its problems.

The Gorka hospital was founded about 70 years ago, not many years after the coming of the first Polish republic, in the old spa of Busko-Zdroj in the Polish province of Galicia (not to be confounded with the Spanish region similarly named). The name Gorka means "hill", since the hospital was built on a small hill just south of the town. The reason it was built there was that the founders got the ground for a cheap prize, because no farmer wanted to cultivate anything there – you see, at the end of the 18th century, when Busko-Zdroj was shortly in the hands of Austria, this hill was used by the occupants as the site of the gallows...

A macabre background for a hospital, but undoubtedly a change for the better to start serving life at a place where once death was served.

Whoever knows anything about Poland's history can imagine that any institution surviving for the latest 70 years in that country must have had its due share of trouble. So has Gorka, through the turbulence of the first republic, the time of the Nazi German occupation during World War II, the establishment of the second republic under Communist rule, and up to the present day changes that are turning Central and Eastern Europe upside down, converting it from Communism to Consumerism.

During its time as a more or less (in so far mostly less) sovereign republic, Poland has never been a rich country. When Gorka was founded, its initiator, the medical giant Szymon Starkiewicz, got help from a couple of local farmers, who literally built the house with their bare hands. To the economical problems have at periods been added political ones – not that Starkiewicz or his most important successor in so far, the equally gigantic (spiritually, not bodily) Tomasz Gorynski, ever wanted to deal with party politics, but there have been times when whoever trying to keep out of politics was in for political trouble.

Neither did Gorka get much support from ecclesiastical circles, at a time when power in Poland was in practice divided between Communist party and Catholic church. No doubt, most staff and patients at Gorka have always been Catholic, but the hospital as such has not; and besides, the religiosity of many staff members has been very practically oriented, with attendance of Holy Mass seen as much less important than helping the crippled children. Gorka is not a centre of proselytizing, either religious or political.

So, at the beginning of 1986, the Swedish Gorka Foundation was started in Stockholm, initiated by an immigrant woman from Busko-Zdroj and her Swedish husband. Our group started out with almost empty hands, which is a not quite an orthodox way of starting a foundation, but in addition to some equipment, we could at least give publicity, and that proved important – the grants from the Polish government of that time suddenly started rising again, after having been constantly cut down for some time...

With changing times, however, methods must change too. The present Non-Communist Polish government certainly doesn't mind that the leaders of Gorka never wanted to join the Communist party – but still, Polish government grants are again in danger, this time for purely economical reasons rather than ideological ones. There just isn't any money left.

Fortunately, the publicity we started to give has begun bearing some fruits. With the changing times in Europe, we have been able to channel some Swedish government aid meant for Poland to Gorka, although we know that we most probably won't be able to do that for more than a few years at the very most, according to the present regulations.

We got a great surprise about two years ago, when one of the main handicap organizations of Tunisia suddenly contacted us and showed interest in a mutual collaboration. Since we are by no means the biggest or oldest handicap organization of our country, we still aren't quite certain why we happened to be invited (the biggest and oldest ones were not), but it seems we have got a certain reputation at least for not letting money end up in the wrong pockets (our administration costs are negligible, and no one of us is salaried). This contact seems promising, and I have represented the Gorka Foundation at two seminars in Tunisia (the last one just three months after the INEB conference in Nakhon Pathom – I hope I will be able to take that up in a later article).

I wouldn't recommend you to call Poland a Third World country in the presence of a Pole, unless you are good at ducking – but seen from a strictly economical viewpoint, there are some countries conventionally included in the Third World who are actually better off than Poland. Anyhow, I think an exchange of experience between less affluent countries could be very fruitful, since there are obviously different ways of solving practical problems without necessarily pumping in a lot of dollars.

Of course, our foundation's help to Gorka must under no circumstances be regarded as alms thrown to a beggar. If Gorka is lacking money, on the other hand it has a surplus of such non-material factors that can't be bought for money, and about which economically affluent countries in general have a lot to learn.

Still, even if not everything can be bought for money, money is unfortunately necessary to buy some things, so we are thankful for all tips about where to find funds. Yens and dollars are equally welcome to our Swedish postal giro account, Stockholm 83 07 06 - 8 (Gorkastiftelsen), or to our Polish bank account, Bank Narodowe Warszawa 900 34 75 (Fundacja Górka). For further information, our postal adress is Górkastiftelsen, Sveavägen 80, S-113 59 Stockholm, Sweden, phone +46-8-21 25 08.

GUNNAR GÄLLMO

THAILAND :

JUNTA MAY STILL TURN ON ANAND, SOCIAL ACTIVIST WARNS

A leading social critic, Sulak Sivaraksa, has dismissed the Feb 23 coup as merely the echo of several others in Thailand since 1947 and warned care-taker Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun that he might one day be sacked by the military junta.

"I'm saying with respect to Mr. Anand. He may finally be sacked like many heads of civilian governments in the past," Sulak told a panel discussion Thursday.

Anand could remain in office as long as he complies with the military, Sulak said. But if the caretaker prime minister put himself on a collision course with the military, he could be removed by the National Peacekeeping Council as allowed in the interim constitution, according to Sulak.

Anand has said he has been given a considerably free hand in governing the country in the transitional period leading to a general election.

The social critic said the military appointed Anand just because it wanted to create a good image.

"Such a [superficially independent] government is often placed in office by the military after a coup solely because somebody wants to have a clean image," said Sulak.

"Another reason [for appointing Anand] is that Thailand has to trade with the West and therefore should imitate the governing systems of western countries," said Sulak.

He was speaking on the topic "Three Months after the Feb 23 Coup: by how many steps has Thai society been set back?" at Thammasat University.

Sulak, director of the Santi Prachadham Institute, said the military's reasons cited to justify the Feb 23 doup did not reflect the armed forces intention to help grass-root people.

The military cited the alleged rampant corruption in the government, harassment of civil servants by politicians and interference in military affairs. But the most highlighted reason is the military's claim that the previous government was trying to distort the 1982 alleged assassination conspiracy that targetted three leading public figures.

"The coup was not for the sake of the masses," Sulak said.

Referring to the military's campaign where officials are assigned to educate people upcountry on the values of a democracy, he said history might repeat itself and speculated that the military might be tempted to be involved in corruption.

The current campaign was initiated by Interior Minister Issarapong Noon-packdee with the aim to spread knowledge on democracy and to curb vote buying during elections. Its original Bt400 million budget was drastically cut to Bt200 million by the Cabinet.

He drew a parallel between the military and the student movement of the 1973 uprising. He said the once powerful movement later was weakened because it launched its democracy campaign despite insufficient knowledge about the lower strata of society.

Sulak said the ruling military's motive for the coup was only to preserve its power. "Despite the fact that many of the military leaders are from farming families, it's a pity they have forgotten their roots," he said.

"Several administrations previously aimed their development plans just for the upper and middle classes despite the fact that the lower classes are the majority in the country and thus the hope of Thai society."

SUPAMIT KEMALEELAKUL
The Nation
May 25, 1991.



Divisions undermine Buddhism's stabilising role : sacred and profane

The time-honoured ritual of people placing food into the alms bowls of saffron-robed monks as they trudge solemnly through the early-morning streets is a familiar sight in Thailand. National leaders are also often shown making merit and seeking good fortune by prostrating themselves with offerings before senior Buddhist monks, who chant in an ancient language and sprinkle holy water.

However, during the past two years the public has been offered other, less edifying, spectacles. These have ranged from errant monk and Santi Asoke sect leader Phra Bodhirak being arrested and stripped of his robes, to another monk, Phra Nikorn Dhammavadi, refusing to disrobe after being confronted in court with proof he had fathered the child of one of his followers.

Thais, particularly the more sophisticated younger generation, are increasingly confused by the growing contrasts in Buddhism's image. Side-by-side with venerate monks performing ancient rites they hear of politicians consulting members of the official clergy, or *sangha*, to have their fortunes told and exorcise political bad luck. Along with monks lecturing against greed and materialism on television, they see wealthy Thai businessmen shoring up their commerical good fortune by donating large amounts of money to equally wealthy temples run like businesses.

Buddhism in Thailand is under-going subtle and important changes, brought on largely by the fast-paced economic and Western-style social shifts which are eroding traditional spiritual and cultural mores. The changes are primarily an urban phenomenon, leaving the strong traditional role of mainstream religion in the rural areas largely unaffected. However, with rapid urbanisation and the spread of the mass media into the countryside, even the more remote areas are unlikely to remain isolated from these trends for much longer.

The significance of these changes is not merely an issue of theological interpretation, as the country's stability and resilience owes a great deal to the three pillars of its society: nation, monarchy and religion. While the average Thai's strong nationalism and fierce loyalty to the monarchy have proved a valuable mainstay in promoting social cohesion, the increasingly varied, confusing and often negative aspects of Buddhism have eroded the unity around the third pillar.

Rather than grasp the increasingly obscure and remote message of the traditional church canon, many young Thais are abandoning it altogether while others look to monks for their questionable supernatural abilities – often paying huge sums to have their fortunes told and buy allegedly powerful amulets. While the traditional sangha is still popular among older generations of wor-

shippers, it is having difficulty getting across to broad sections of the young, the growing middle class and the better educated, particularly in urban areas.

Many social and religious commentators feel it is time the whole structure and philosophy of a religion, propagated in Thailand by an estimated 200,000 monks and 100,000 novices in 30,000 temples came under fresh scrutiny.

Some new directions are already evident. Numerous sects, usually sharply at variance with traditional practices, are reaching out to those segments of society disenchanted with the Buddhist mainstream. They range from high-technology evangelical temples appealing to the comfort-seeking middle class to reformist monasteries offering simplicity, rigid self-denial and meditation to those disenchanted with the growth of commercialism. A number of movements have taken a sometimes politically controversial approach, such as helping the rural poor where the government has failed, while others appeal to the growing numbers of educated and assertive Buddhist women.

None of these sects has received, or sought, much guidance from the conservative religious centre. While they build up their following at the fringes of the mainstream, the sangha administration, led by a council of elders – all of whose 15 members are over 70 years old – has become more remote from the spiritual realities of modernising, capitalist Thailand.

In an interview with the REVIEW, leading social commentator and Buddhist scholar Sulak Sivaraksa criticised the council: "They live in the past. They devote all their time to form and are out of touch with reality." At a lower level, complained philosopher Praves Wasi, "monks are not interested in education, but in making charms, amulets, reading horoscopes – [which are] not in line with Buddhist teaching."

Thailand's Theravada Buddhism is the near-official religion for more than 90% of the country's 56 million people. Many follow an amalgam of Buddhist, Hindu, Brahminist and animist traditions, leading some obser vers to brand popular Thai Buddhism syncretic.

Buddhism traditionally flourished in rural areas, where monks enjoyed great status and temples served as centres of education as well as worship. Now, as the rural young stream into Bangkok and other towns, temples have less relevance to their lives. "On the one hand [Thais] think they are Buddhists, yet the Buddhism they adhere to is often just an outdated form of ritual," Sulak wrote recently.

The replacement of the local temple's social role, especially in education, by the state at the beginning of this century started the erosion of Buddhism's status. The trend was further enhanced by the strong centralisation of the church brought about by the Sangha Act of 1902. This first formalisation of the Thai church's administration removed the naturalist, village-up approach which had previously kept the religion more in touch with worshippers' needs.

The act formalised a requirement for unanimous consensus in administration. Yet this was almost impossible, given traditional animosity between the two competing sub-schools of Thai Buddhism – the small but royal-sponsored Thammayut and the more popular, less disciplined Mahanikay. Nevertheless, both had to be accommodated by the act. In addition, Buddhist scholars say, the act made the government's Education Ministry largely responsible for setting the council's agenda and implementing its decisions, thus delegating a greater role to the state.

This led to two developments. First, important issues of doctrine were neglected or frozen in inconclusive debate. Second, as Australian academic Peter Jackson wrote in his book *Buddhism, Conflict and Legitimacy*, it made the sangha more of a political tool. "In the 20th century each major shift in the Thai political system has been followed by a major state-initiated restructuring of the system of sangha administration."

This was clearly reflected in later rewrites of the 1902 act, each of which produced inconclusive shifts in the Thammayut-Mahanikay power balance. The 1941 rewrite followed the introduction of the constitutional monarchy and drive for Western-style democracy. The milestone 1962 Sangha Act was brought in by one of the strongest leaders in Thai history, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat. Attempted rewrites in 1973-76 and 1984-88 followed new advances in political democracy.

The use of the sangha by successive dictators Sarit and Thanom Kittikachorn to shore up their power and conduct anticommunist campaigns between 1959-73 was, in a sense, the seed of the current situation. By the time Thanom was overthrown in 1973, the line between establishment rightwing Buddhism – which sometimes emphasised wealth and elevated the so-called syncretic practices – and a liberal, reformist democratic school – which appealed to intellectual and anti-materialistic classes – had been drawn.

The most prominent legacy of 1960s rightwing dominance is Phra Kittivudho. Well known for his line that killing communists is not a sin, Kittivudho's wealthy temple and school have consciously tapped into the conservative, moneyed establishment. For them, Kittivudho's attractiveness, Jackson points out, is his relating socio-economic status with *karma*, or the law of moral retribution. This plays on the feeling of the elite that they got where they are by making merit – and generous merit-making donations will keep them there.



Kittivudho shrewdly combines this message with an interest in social justice, out of which have emerge programmes to strengthen village industries, advance land reform and resolve rural poverty.

Partly due to his past politics, Kittivudho fails to reach the growing materialist middle class. This audience is being tapped by the Thammakaya movement from its temple in the north Bangkok suburbs. The highly organised, high-technology sect provides its followers with a quick escape from everyday life into religion without sacrificing comfort, or that most valued commodity of the commercial class – time.

Thammakaya's immense organisation is heavily criticised by other sects – though it does have its defenders on the sangha council. It takes in millions of baht each day in fees and donations, and has come to control nearly all the Buddhist clubs on university campuses. Further, none of these sects take a criticial view toward supernatural practices so popular among highly superstitious Thais.

Reacting against this trend and against materialism, the country's liberal-educated elite have been drawn to more doctrinaire, reformist sects. In general, these sects preach simplicity, spiritual self-improvement and self-denial, without lucky amulets and creature comforts. The most extreme example has been the Santi Asoke movement, whose leader Phra Bodhirak created consternation in both the government and sangha leadership by refusing to work within the official sangha framework. His disrobing on these grounds and his present legal problems have given him something of a martyr image.

But the most important figure in doctrinal reformism is Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 85, and probably Thailand's most revered monk, whose opposition to supernatural practice has attracted Thai intellectuals and Buddhist scholars from around the world. The few Thai political leaders who support Buddhadasa, like Bangkok's Governor Chamlong Srimuang are those with the cleane images.

Despite this, Buddhadasa has not become an overt force in the sangha administration. Had he wanted, his seniority could have put him on the council as a potential supreme patriarch. Instead, he has shunned all involvement in politics and the sangha administration, but without challenging them as Bodhirak has done.

Nevertheless, Buddhadasa has inspired a large number of prominent disciples: the vocal pro-democracy Panyanantha Bhikkhu; modernist and progressive Phra Depvedi ; many of the monks involved in the potentially political "development monk" movement, and the country's most popular monk among the younger generation, Phra Payom Kallayano.

Payom, a student of Buddhadasa for seven years, takes his master's ground-breaking translation of Pali – Buddhism's ritual language – into modern Thai a step further. His popular lectures are spiced with street-level slang, irreverent political broadsides and risque jokes. "The old monks do not mix with young people," he told the REVIEW. "They need someone to listen to. If you speak softly to a big crowd, everyong would leave or fall asleep."

Payom's style allows him more than anyone else to reach the people with Buddhadasa's message, or at least his version of it. "The problem is Thai Buddhists do not study deeply any more – they just give donations. There should be more religion on television and less golf."

As these and other new schools strengthen, some movement has been seen at the centre of

the clergy. Although its image was severely damaged by the lengthy, some say inept, handling of the Bodhirak and Nikorn cases under Supreme Patriarch Somdej Yanasangvorn, the council is attempting to wrestle with the problems.

Since his elevation in 1989, Yanasangvorn has quickly dealt with the most scandalous cases, such as those of fake monks, sexually promiscuous monks and the misuse of funds. In addition, the most prominent practitioners of syncretic practices have also been warned.

However, critics say only minor problems and transgressions are being dealt with, while broader and more serious issues are ignored. The most crucial reform, says Phra Medhidharmaporn, rector of the graduate school at the Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, is to decentralise the sangha administration so as to make it more responsive to fundamental issues of dogma and practice and worshippers' needs.

Acknowledging that the Sangha Act has never been reformed from within the sangha itself, he says the council has steadfastly avoided addressing the issue. This, in turn, has frustrated a so-called democracy movement of younger mainstream monks centred around the university in their desire to reform from within.

"The problems do not threaten the overall stability of the faith," Medhidharmaporn says, while adding, "but the younger generation is a problem."

Rodney Tasker and Paul Handley
FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW, 4 JULY 1991.

Spiritual educatio gives new hope to young women



WHEN a poor country boy wants to study, he can become a novice and get free education provided by the temple.

Any financial needs that may arise are eased by public donations for the temple while his daily food requirements are met by alms giving.

If he is good at it, he can continue studying in monks' universities. He can, as most monks do, quit the robe to work as an educated layman with a certificate equivalent to a bachelor's degree.

But what can a poor girl do in the same situation?

Fourteen-year-old Kaejai Suwannajand from a village in Khon Kaen has a ready answer.

"My brother is studying as a novice. My sister left the village to work as a maid in Bangkok."

While her sister's drudgery helps support her farmer parents back home, many young girls end up in a sweatshop while others are lured into a life of vice.

"I don't want to quit school and work like my sister. I have faith and I want to live a religious life like my brother. To sudy and train my mind to be a

better person like him.

"But they said I could not be a novice because I am a girl. so I chose to be a nun," says the child nun, 14, head shaven and clad in a white robe.

"I told my parents that it is sinful to stop a person from entering a religious life. So they complied," she reveals, sporting her contagious sweet smile.

It is easy to understand her parents' reservations. While monkhood is a merit-accumulating practice, nunhood is still socially looked down upon as a refuge for dead-end women.

With the boys of the families gone, either to the temples or to schools, practical needs require the girls to help with the house-hold chores or to work and send remittances home.

Kaejai's nunhood, however, by no means guarantees the same educational opportunities her brother has.

To start with, there are no schools for nuns, let alone colleges. And if she wants to study, she must struggle on her own since most nunneries emphasise a spiritual life cut off from the outside world.

Even with the seminar's approval, Kaejai still has to spend her own money for the education. If she does not have the means, she has no choice but to learn to accept it – as most nuns do.

Nunnery

For the time being, the young nun does not have to worry about her education prospects. At least for another year. She is among 35 nuns, aged 12-20, who are attending the two-year course at Dhammajarinee Wittaya which is part of a nunnery in Ratchaburi Province. Their classmates include 22 girls, aged 12-16, who are from poor and broken families.

It is the country's first Buddhist convent school run by nuns.

"I want to make things easier for younger nuns. And to give some poor girls the chance to learn what they might find useful in easing their troubles ahead in their life," says Mother Superior Pratin Kwangaew, 48, in her soothing voice.



The two-year courses at Dhammajarinee Wittaya – meaning school for religious women– offer a combination of adult education and rigorous spiritual practices, aiming primarily to equip the students with the spiritual tools to steer their lives.

"They are the girls with few opportunities," says the serene Mother Superior Pratin. "Life won't be easy for them in the future. We just hope that these two years may help them somehow. To give them the ability to distinguish from good and bad, and the necessary strength to resist bad influences."

The pioneer project marks a big venture for Buddhist nuns who, unlike their Christian counterparts, do not receive social recognition as part of the clergy. Charity work is not part of the Thai nuns' traditions either.

The public image of nuns, or *mae chee*, is that of poor, old ladies who want to practice Dhamma in the temples during their last days and help with the

temples' chores in return for free abode and food. The younger nuns are viewed as the heart-broken who take temporary refuge in the white robes.

Lack of education and inferior social status make nuns feel unconfident and incapable of undertaking social work. And mainly because people do not donate to convents as they do temples, nuns lack necessary funds to start any causes.

They cannot expect leadership from the educated or wealthy women who later opt to live a religious life as nuns either.

"They are already weary from the hustle and bustle of the outside world. They leave their old lives to concentrate on mind training. They want peace. They don't want to be bothered with the kind of work which will bring headaches and problems," explains Mother Superior Pratin.

Until a year ago, this spacious nunnery hidden on a back road in Ratchaburi, was like any other. It provides a quiet retreat for the group of nuns who, shunning what society thinks of them, live a relatively isolated life to practice Dhamma.

Their only link with the neighbourhood is their morning alms round. At dawn, barefooted nuns leave the seminary, walking serenely in a long line for three kilometres to receive food from near by villagers.

The practice attests to the villagers' rare respect for this group of *mae chee*, apparently because of the nuns' strict discipline.

These days the line of the alms round is doubly long with a number of student nuns. Trailing serenely behind are "temple girls" in their white blouses and grey *pasin* uniforms.

Mother Superior Pratin knows well the difficulties nuns have to go through to get education. She has experienced it all herself.

Despite little encouragement, she persisted. Using family funds, she left for India and returned with a master's degree in History.

Her conclusion from those difficult years: a degree is not the answer if one's quest is to stem the causes of suffering.

An ideal education, she says, should help save oneself both in worldly and spiritual matters.

"I've long contemplated giving education to needy girls. To give them spiritual immunity and a sense of purpose in life. But we lacked opportunities, funding and personnel. When we had all the necessary factors, we just went ahead," she says.

The chance came when a senior monk promised to support the project financially and another group of active nuns from Wat Pak Nam volunteered to take charge of the teaching.

"Reverend Sakdiworaprasart of Somanat Temple said he once saw a girl crying, asking to go with her brother who had entered novicehood."

"Since then, he said he wants to do something to give similar chances for girls to have a religious life," says Panthita Yanyongyut who acts as Dhammajarinee School Project co-ordinator.

Mae chee Yupin Duangjand, 40, whose brisk movements contrast with the Mother Superior's calmness, is in charge of teaching and recruiting nuns from Wat Pak Nam as teachers.

She was among the first batch of Pak Nam Temple nuns who persisted to get an adult education and is among the few nuns active in volunteer work.

"Breath in slowly," she guides the Dhammajarinee during a meditation class in a vast praying hall which is brightly illuminated by shafts of afternoon sunlight. "Watch it move carefully...Then breath out."

She cannot conceal an indulgent smile when she sees one girl dozing off.

"They are tired. The girls have to get up so early in the morning. Three hours' walk during alms in the morning. Then classes. And sewing training. Then vegetable tending in the afternoon. No dinner in the evening, only milk or fruit juice. They have to observe the Eight Precepts and follow a life only a bit less stringent than nuns.

"But they are still girls after all. We cannot be too strict, can we?" she muses.

She proudly reports, however, the apparent changes in the girls in only one year.

"When they came here, they were small and not so clean. Look at them now. They've grown so much. Their manners. And their thinking. This goes to show the potential of these girls if only they have a chance."

The daily life of a Dhammajarinee, as the student is called, revolves around the religious life of the nunnery. Classes fit in between praying and meditation classes. Sewing is aimed to enhance the girls' job prospects. Vegetable plots are for their own meals due to limited funds.

Isn't it hard for teenagers to adapt to the strict religious lfie? to forego dinner, laughter, fun and games, and TV?

Empty stomach

For Ladda Sae Lim, a teenage girl with sad big eyes, those problems are trivial at best.

Comming from a broken home family of eight in a Bangkok slum, she says Dhammajarinee has given her for the first time the taste of life without quarrels,

beatings and sleeping on an empty stomach.

"My father is construction worker. He beats us when he's drunk. My mother could not stand the beating and she left. Father wouldn't let me live with her. I worked since I was 10, washing dishes. My stepmother often made me sew all night. I frequently missed school. I wanted to run away. But I was afraid. I had nowhere to go.

"This place is much better than home," Ladda says, eyes cast downward.

Her recent visit home has convinced her all the more. She told Mother Superior she wants to stay at the nunnery during the school's next recess, although all her friends will leave.

"I don't mind the quietness. I like the peace," she says. "The only thing I miss is my mother." She bites her trembling lips.

Like Ladda, 14-year-old Duangjai Duangchuen says if it were not for Dhammajarinee, they won't have any opportunity to continue studying beyond the six-year compulsory education period.

Duangjai's four brothers are all novices. Ladda's brother is in secondary school and, being a student, he is allowed to forego household chores which is Ladda's work.

"We were told that girls do not need to study. Girls must help with household work, taking care of the younger ones. Or work to help support the family," says Ladda. Duangjai nods in agreement.

Despite family bitterness, Ladda's voice is free of any resentment.

"Before, I used to be angry with my father and hate my stepmother. Now, I've come to realise that it is no use.

"I think of the nun's teaching about *Khanti*, the need for self-control and endurance. It helps. It makes me see that anger is a waste of time."

It is probably this very change Mother Superior notices in Ladda and other students that keeps her determined to continue the school despite being plagued with financial problems.

The senior monk of Somanat Temple has stopped the funding due to his other projects' needs and the nuns are left on their own to struggle with meeting expenses.

Initially, the nunnery was planning to extend the project and receive new batches of nuns and girls every two year. Now, the challenge is to complete just the first two years.

The nunnery plans a fund-raising *pa pah* ceremony in August. But the two *khun mae* are not very optimistic.

"People do not make merit with nuns. That's a fact," syas *mae chee* Yupin. "Besides, people generally like to make merit by building things – temples, religious monuments, artifacts.

"It is not a practice to make merit by 'building people' by giving the less fortunate a chance to develop themselves."

Like protective mothers, the senior nuns keep their problems to themselves. The girls' duties, as they see it, are to concentrate on school.

The Dhammajarinee and nun students seem unaware of the school's problems. That is probably why they talk about the future with optimism, full of "ifs".

"If we nuns have a better education, spiritually and academically we can serve our communities better," says *mae chee* Sutham Samano, 30, from Chiang Mai.

"A lot of women have problems and they do not have anyone to turn to. Some problems they cannot talk to monks about. If we have training, this is the gap nuns can help fill.

"If there are more schools to give girls a chance to enter religious life or to have religious training, fewer northern girls will be lured into prostitution.

"If there is a college for nuns, the doors will be open wider to nuns' work."

Ladda thinks of her friends from broken homes in the slum.

"Some of them slip into theft. Some into drugs. Some even take heroin injections. I don't want them to be like that.

"If only there were more schools like this, my friends would have the same chance."

For Mother Superior Pratin and *mae chee* Yupin, there is only one gib if: if they can find the necessary funds.

"We don't aim high," says Mother Superior in her gentle tone. "It doesn't matter if the students leave the nunhood later, or the girls will ever be serious enough to consider nunhood.

"If we are able to help foster some good people in society, it is enough.

"It's our way of giving something back to society."

Bangkok Post
June 9, 1991

N.B. This school is the result of a series of consultations and meetings among nuns from different parts of the country. The Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD), the YMCA of Chiangmai, and a few other NGOs have been supporting this sort of activity for about 5 years. TICD, especially, has been working closely to coordinate all resources to make this school possible. Any Contribution to the school, through TICD will be much appreciated.



Leaders must set example, says top abbot

THE Government should forego selfishness and reduce greed as an example to society, according to the Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu of Suan Mokh forest monastery in Surat Thani's Chaiya District.

"The governing elite should pay more attention to their conduct without selfishness and greed to set a model for the public. Only then will the public follow their example," Buddhadasa Bhikkhu said.

The revered abbot of Suan Mokh, or the Garden of Liberation, said his use of the term "governing elite" includes members of the Cabinet, the National Peace-keeping Council, the National Legislative Assembly, politicians, leaders of social institutions and the business sector, and Government officials.

In a rare comment on national affairs, the monk said elite rulers first have to set an example themselves by reducing their selfishness in order to persuade the rest of Thai society to adopt the same standards.

"Whenever people are selfish and immoral society will certainly be destroyed. Eradicating selfishness and reducing greed will persuade people to have faith in the Dharma. Then they will observe morality."

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu said that without an example being set national problems cannot be solved.

"The governing elite and members of the Constitution Drafting Committee will fail to tackle the problem of vote-buying in elections at national and local levels unless they themselves are selfless."

The constitution cannot eliminate vote-buying as long as elite rulers and the committee members maintain selfishness and fail to reduce their greed.

"This is because no morality can be found in selfish governing elite," Buddhadasa Bhikkhu said. "Good rulers must remove themselves from selfishness, evil and corrupt influence.

"Those who succeed in reducing selfishness will truly place themselves at the service of the nation. And vice-versa, those who fail to reduce selfishness will place the nation at their service."

When no such efforts are made, none will have faith in the Dharma. With society and the world in crisis, demoralised people will be subject to more corrupt influences.

"Only morality can help. But small groups of people pay attention to observing the Dharma – the virtues that protect society and the world."

When people become more and more self-centred, such corruptive things as vote-buying cannot be eradicated.

Only a small group of people turn to religion and have confidence in the Dharma but they have no influence. Those who can make things happen are not interested and do not care.

"People are now more superficial, without depth. It is deplorable and worrisome. They all look to amass wealth and fortune. They abandon themselves, are engaged in materialism, vice and lust," he said.

He called on people to have explicit faith in the Dharma and take it as the vehicle for making judgments to eradicate self-ishness and to do good based on moralith. The ruling elite will have to set a model for this.

Phayom Vannasiri

Jean Goss, Witness of Nonviolence

Jean Goss was born in 1912 in Lyon, France. At age fifteen he quickly became involved in the trade union movement. Following this he worked on the railroad where he became a trade union activist.

Serving as an artillery sergeant during the Second World War, he became a prisoner of war in 1940. His experience in POW camps in Germany changed the course of his life - and also those of many others, prisoners and guards.

After the war, Jean took up his work on the railroad again. He also began taking part in various international meetings and congresses.

In 1958 Jean married Hildegard Mayr. From this time onward, Jean and Hildegard went together around the world teaching nonviolence in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa. Their life and the fire of Jean's words touched all sorts of people: workers and lawyers, teachers and "campesinos", priests and bishops.

In 1984 and 1986 they offered numerous seminars on nonviolence in the Philippines, which helped the nonviolent overthrow of the Marcos regime. They also offered seminars in Thailand, Bangladesh, Hong Kong and South Korea.

The work of Jean and Hildegard Goss-Mayr has been recognized several times: in 1976 by the Luis Maria Xirinacs prize of the Spanish Pax Christi; in 1979 by the Bruno Kreisky Prize (Austria), awarded for Commitment in the Work for Human Rights; in 1986, by the Paul VI "Teacher of Peace" Award, given by the United States Pax Christi. Jean and Hildegard have been nominated twice for the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1979 by the Quakers of Great Britain and in 1987 by Mairead Maguire of Northern Ireland. Having been long-time Traveling Secretaries of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), Jean and Hildegard were IFOR vice-presidents from 1977 until 1988, when the IFOR Assisi Council nominated them Honorary Presidents in recognition of their life-long commitment to the Fellowship and the work of active nonviolence.

His suitcases packed for another trip, Jean Goss passed away suddenly on April 3rd, the same day he and Hildegard were to leave for three weeks of seminars in Madagascar. Hildegard stated that "He died with the same vigor as he lived." Jean goss is dead, but we are all very influenced by his life of giving and service. The message of his life and the power of Love that he radiated so strongly continue to live and are an inspiration for all of us.

David Atwood, IFOR

Rev. John Curnow : A personal memory

I first met John Curnow in the early 1970s, and we were in Ceylon together in 1973 with Professor Mushakoji of Japan, Bishop Labayan of the Phillippines and Bishop Wikramasingha as well as Ven.Ratanasara and Prof. Hewage of the host country.

As a result of that meeting near Kandy, we decided to found a new ecumenical organization for individuals and groups belonging to principal religions in Asia : Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Protestants and Catholics united in a common moral concern for human development, namely ACFOD or Asian Cultural Forum On Development.

We viewed development as a process in which traditional values were adapted or transformed to meet the needs of modernized societies. We saw development as a normative concept, whose norms and values were no more than the interest of people and objectivity no other than agreement in community through free and informed participation in the determination of their own advancement.

ACFOD recognized that the most fundamental problems of development were moral in nature, viz unjust international and intranational economic structures that systematically worsen the poverty of Asian peoples.

Consequently, ACFOD accepted as its foremost task and responsibility the promotion and strengthening of efforts to stimulate among the vast Asian population an awareness of their condition and the strength to strive towards meaningful participation in, and direction of , their own process of change.

In 1974, I was asked to be ACFOD's first honorary coordinator and in 1975 the organization was formally established with a full time coordinator. John served on the ACFOD's Coordinating Team (ACT) from the very beginning.

After the bloudy coup of October 1976, I had to be an exile outside Asia, hence was not eligible to be an ACT member and soon afterward John retired from the ACT.

In 1979 I was asked to be Coordinator of ACFOD, and I asked John to stand and be elected as and ACT member again. Eventually he became our chairman.

I worked closely with him and trusted him, despite our differences in religious and ethnic backgrounds. He was superb in handling difficult meetings. His friendship, dry humour and sound judgement are those that I valued most.

John was concerned with the issues of social justice, and usually sided with the underprivileged, especially among the indigineous of the region. His Marxist analysis of the social structure often put him into hot water with the reactionary elements in his church. Although he was critical of the establishment, he remained loyal to his Roman Catholic faith all through. I was privileged to attened Mass he celebrated quite a few times.

When I was in trouble in 1984, John did everything he could to help me and he kindly wrote a Foreword to my ***Siamese Resurgence*** published during that period.

John Curnow from New Zealand, Vikas Bhai from India and I were concerned that ACFOD must not be just another religional organization for development. Despite its retoric, it could easily have religious and moral values as the lip service only – as most governments also do.

In 1986, we therefore formed a program called 'Liberation, Religion and Culture' (LRC) within ACFOD in order to enrich its members and any other groups in the region that were concerned to counter the present crisis from a religio-cultural perspective.

In 1988, we organized a seminar on *Liberation, Religion And Culture : Asian Pacific Perspectives.* John took a very active role in this , as a result a book with that title was published a year later.

Unfortunately, by then Vikas Bhai had passed away and I left ACFOD for good. Now with the death of John Curnow, my link with the program and the regional organization the three of us founded together is no longer possible. The evaluation team on ACFOD told me privately that the Forum does not really care for the common moral concern of human development and ignors the rich religious backgrounds of the region. Indeed the majority of the new ACT have not even an historical perspective of the organization. Only with the stress on grassroots achievement, ACFOD may end up in the way, John, Vikas and I feared it would.

Before his death, John told me, he enjoyed reading ***Seeds of Peace*** with its concern for religious engagement to overcome suffering. He said he did not even read ***Asian Action*** which we founded as an organ of ACFOD.

May he rest in peace.

Sulak Sivaraksa

Ashin Nyar Na

Ashin Nyar Na passed away on 4th May, 1991.

Ashin Nyar Na was born in Mudon Township, in the Mon State, Burma about 30 years ago. Himself a monk, he actively organized both monks and the general populace in the weeks and months approaching the August 8, 1988 peaceful uprising in Burma. Following the massacre and arrest of thousands of people in August and September 1988, he left Mudon and after five days of walking arrived at Thay Baw camp in the liberated area in October of that year.

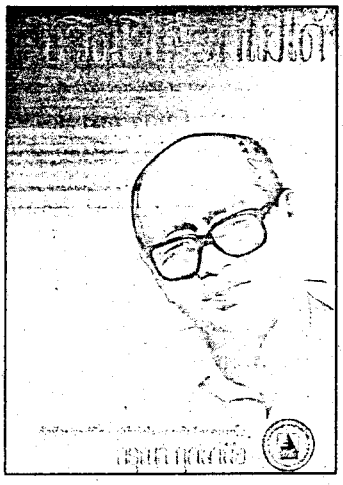
Ashin Nyar Na was later to become the leader of the All Burma Young Monks Union, (A.B.Y.M.U), at the Salween camp. He continued to serve the people as a monk and engaged activist, travelling to remote villages, ministering to people's spiritual needs and talking with them about the human rights situation and the democratic movement's advances in Burma.

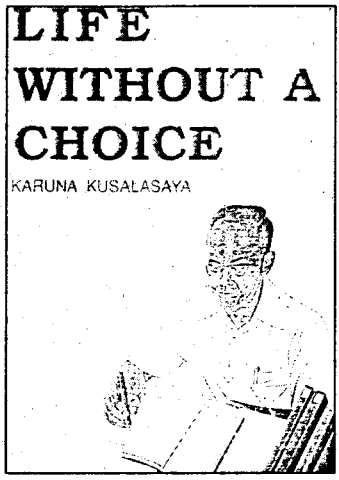
He became sick with Yellow Fever on the 2nd May this year. Despite the efforts of fellow monks and medical staff, he died two days later. His funeral was attended by many friends, including the chairman of both the A.B.Y.M.U., the Green November 32 environmental organization, and Ashin Khe Mar Sara who read the eulogy. The memory of his peaceful and active work in sharing the Buddha's teachings and in politicizing the Burmese people about the brutal dictatorship in Burma, will continue to inspire those who like Ashin Nyar Na are working towards a peaceful and just Burma.

Chris McMahon

An inspiring lifetime in letters







THE idea that one's life is predetermined, and there's not much one can really do to change it, has made us Thais incurable fatalists. To most Thais, fatalism is a kind of force that is not meant to be challenged. Life must be as it has previously been charted out, and therefore one ought to accept it.

He was an orphan whose parents died when he was barely eight years old. His first job was as houseboy toiling days and nights serving a married couple in Pak Nam Pho (Nakhon Sawan Province). His formal education is *Mor* 3 (secondary level), but he's a multi-lingual expert in Pali and Hindi and fluent in English.

For nearly 10 years, he was imprisoned, first as a prisoner of war and later on an alleged "communist" charge. And yet in 1981, he was awarded an outstanding honour by Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda for the book on Gandhi's life which he translated. He was one of the two "underground diplomats" who helped open China's door during Field Marshal P. Pibulsongkram's time, a job that many have claimed whilst he and his friend remained as the guys who "put the gold-leaf behind the Buddha's image", an expression used to connote an altruistic action that's not generally known to the public.

Now at 68, Karuna Kusalasai is a prolific writer and translator and respected *archarn* (teacher). In his autobiography, the third edition of which was released recently, Archarn Karuna is challenging life's philosophy as far as its preconditioned element is concerned. The autobiography, entitled *Cheevit Ti Luak Mai Dai* (Life Without A Choice), implies that no one can change life's destiny. Man is what he is neither because of his "superiority" nor "inferiority" complexes. "I want to point out that opportunity is a very important element in our life. And opportunity doesn't happen in everyone's life", the biographer indicated his point in the letter to his children.

Cheevit Ti Luak Mai Dai is in fact entirely composed of letters which Karuna Kusalasai wrote to his children. The first letter was dated May 10, 1984, his birthday, and was written when he and his wife, Ruang-ourai, whose name appears in his many volumes of books as his co-translator, were in Kathmandu. All 33 letters serve as the book's chapters that chronicle his life since he was born on the raft that was his first home until the present.

Autobigraphy is one form of writing that's not very popular in this country. After the grand success of King Rama VII's daughter-in-law, Khunying Manee Sirivarasarn's *Cheevit Muan Fahn* (Life Is A Dream) a couple of years ago, Karuna Kusalasai's book perhaps is the only biographical work that is of the same level of excellence as far as its historical merit is concerned although each is completely different.

Whilst *Cheevit Muan Fahn* recalls the life of the "uppercrust", *Cheevit Ti Luak Mai Dai* is the story of "someone who was born on the Thai soil". In this respect the two are worlds apart. Why a book about himelf? "It is a hard and nice subject for a man to write of himself: it grates his own heart to say anything of disparagement, and the reader's ears to hear anything of praise for him", the author quoting Abraham Cowley explains his objective clearly enough.

Proverbs abound in

Karuna Kusalasai's autobiography. From Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore, Lao-tse and Buddhadasa Bhikku, to H.G. Wells and Abraham Lincoln, he quotes. The encouraging words of these great men of the world prove to be the author's important inspiration. They, too, illustrate a learned mind and a well-read student of life.

The author's life doesn't belong to the privileged class. It is a life of struggle. Born of a Chinese merchant who was "cheated" in his business and who consequently was put in jail and died a few years later, and a woman who, after her husband's death was possessed by gambling and who died of T.B. a few years later, the young Karuna was left with his aunt. Life in a raft-house, where he was born, is an enjoyable moment of this book which is throughout handled without acrimony. Not even when he was slapped in the face so many times by the master of the house in which he was working as a houseboy because he accidentally broke the lids of the pots and plates. He was literally driven out of the house. The shattering incident changed his life.

Back to Nakhon Sawan Province, his hometown, he joined an Italian Buddhist monk, Phra Lokanart, who was in town to look for a group of monks and novices to go to India with him. King Rama VII who was "impressed" by Phra Lokanart's project had sponsored the expenses involving the initial preparations for the 100 monks and novices for the jouney. His Majesty's initiative was supported by several leading dignitaries including the late statesman Dr Pridi Bhanomyong.

But the one person who became the author's most important benefactor was H.H. Prince Paribatra Sukhumbhand, founder of the Military Academy, who the author had the opportunity to meet whilst Prince Paribatra was visiting India. Through Prince Paribatra's sponsorship, the author had a chance to "raise my face up and open my mouth" to further educate himself. The extension of his education was in the area of Indology or Indian Studies on which he later became an authority. His English was obtained from Bennett College via the post.

The 12 years he spent in India is a fascinating story. The acquaintances he made with celebrated individuals such as Noble laureate Rabindranath Tagore who was 80-years old at that time and Jawaharlal Nehru before he became India's first prime minister made another great impact on his life. Nehru's book, *The Discovery Of India* was later translated by him under the Thai title of *Pope Thin India*.

During the Second World War, when Thailand sided with Japan, the Thais in India were arrested as India was then still a British colony. Life in prison is another intriguing story the author recounts in this autobiography – be it his friendship with Thailand's "national artist" Fuah Haripitak or a fellow prisoner, a Japanese woman who was his first love. A pacifist by heart, the author assesses, "...War brings out the animal in human beings, so vividly that nothing can hide it."

Back to Thailand, his life was elevated far beyond the point from which he had started. His careers varied from being a teacher of *Pali* and *Hindi*, working in the Indian Embassy in Bangkok, translating news for several international wire services and translating books, to working for a newspaper *Sathiraparp* which was accused of being the "mouthpiece" of Field Marshal Pibulsongkram because its editor, Sang Pattanothai, was his "righthand man".

It was during this period that he was once again unjustly put in jail, this time for eight years. This aspect of the author's life, complicated as it was, is chronicled in detail, thus making up the book's climax in my opinion. Field Marshal P. Pibulsongkram's famous "change-of-heart, change-of-mind" foreign policy, i.e. Thailand's position toward the US and China, is sympathised with somewhat, because after all he was in the "not being able to swallow, not being able to spit it out" situation.

The author was arrested not because of anything he wrote but because of the trip he and another writer "clandestinely" made to China to try to establish ties between the two countries. It was during this time that the writer met with Chairman Mao Tse-tung. This happened after Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat had gained power having toppled Field Marshal P. Pibulsongkram in a *coup d' etat* and put Thailand under the regime of dictatorship for nearly six years, a tradition that was continued during the Thanom-Prapass era. Arrested during Sarit's time were thousands of intellectuals and ordinary villagers. Amongst the lawyers arrested at that time was Thongbai Thongpao, Thailand's leading human rights fighter.

The author's assessment of this period of Thai history is very neutral. But the two articles which accompany the story at this point in the text best describe the real story behind the establishment of Sino-Thai relations. One of the articles was written by the editor Sang Pattanothai himself.

In all, *Cheevit Ti Luak Mai Dai* is another priceless publication that needs to be read by

one and all. The flavour that the book generates is not only of historical but also of moral value. There're many tender thoughts and moments because the book is a personal assessment of the author who is at ease, if not sentimental, with his recollections:

"My candle burns at both ends.
It will not last the night.
But, ah my foes! and oh! my friends.
It gives me a lovely light!"

Thus, Karuna Kusalasai quotes St. Vincent Millay. And for a life that was supposedly without a choice, what could be more meaningful than that?

"GAP"
Bangkok Post, Aug. 27, 1989.



KARL MAGNUS THORNES WITH H.R.H. PRINCESS SIRINTHORN IN BANGKOK 1989

With the death of Magnus Thornes in Februar this year, *Karma*, the Sca navian Journal of Buddhism recently issued its last pub tion. Carl Magnus, who e and ran the journal, died a t death at the early age of 22 past winter. We would lik inform all of our readers o discontinuation of karma recommend the last copy for ing.

Social messages from a poet's journey to Phu Kradeung



MORE than a few poets attempt to imitate him. Popping up now and then in magazines' poetry corners are works that shadow his, at least stylistically. His "madness" which has earned him that sonorous reputation of being the *bete* noir of the establishment is not without duplication. Being a real poet, you almost always have got to appear to be insolent; and even insolence (ahangkar), his trademark, too, is being copied.

Angkarn Kalanapong is a man who's not that difficult to imitate outwardly, it seems. Most artists can look eccentric surely. Nature versus man, the subject in which he excels and for which he's criticised by some critics as limiting his creative output, is not that special a topic and any non-poet can talk about it anyway. The conservationist spirit, which, over the decades has been his burning passion, is hardly anything new either, it being today's number one war cry.

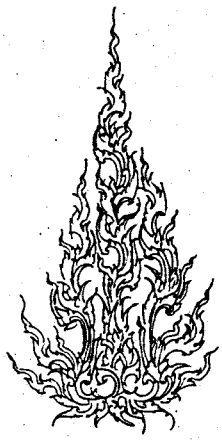
So, what then is so spe-

cial about Angkarn Kalayanapong? Why was this 65-year-old poet and artist selected as the "National Artist for Literature" in 1989 by the National culture Board of Thailand? And if he has in fact reached a "literary deadlock" as some critics say, how come he was honoured as an "outstanding poet", the first and only poet to receive the Sathirakoses-Nakapratheep Foundation award?

And what about another no less prestigious literary award, the SEA Write Award, which he won in 1986 (although he didn't show up to personally receive it at the gala, glittering award-presentation event)? Moreover, why would a world-class poet like Allan Ginsberg be so charmed by one of his poems that he translated it into English himself?

The reasons are boundless. All the honours Angkarn has received explain themselves through his prodigious volume of work. That's clear in that respect. But beyond the standard literary criticisms, Angkarn Kalayanapong is what and where he is until today because he is inimitable.

The person who literally "discovered" Angkarn literarily in the early Sixties is another *bete noir* of the establishment – the volatile social critic, prolific writer and erudite historian Sulak Sivaraksa. It was a kind of "It takes one to know one" instinct to begin with possibly. Sulak, then founder and first editor of the radical intellectual journal called *Sangkomsat Parithat* (The Social Science Review), ran Angkarn's poems in the publication. More exposure followed when Sulak published Angkarn's first anthology a year later, challenging critics' reactions as well as readers', not all of which were positive.



Most readers were of course flabbergasted by Angkarn's downright acerbity, demonstrated by the social messages he tried to portray. The *avant-garde* yet very traditional style he introduced completely obliterated not only the archaic poetic format but blew readers' minds. Naturally, most people found it hard to accept either the man or his works at the time.

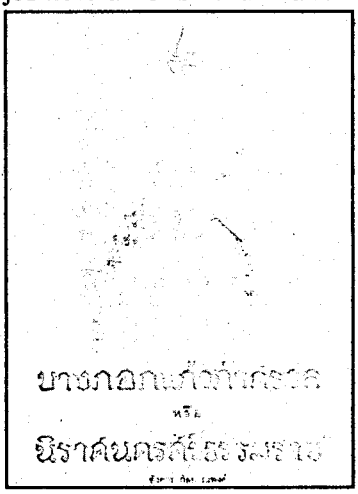
But, this formally-trained artist (Silapakorn University), who is one of the country's leading experts on mural paintings, is a man a Light Year ahead of his time. The exquisite beauty which he sees in nature and man, or their stark hideousness likewise, are versified in such a way his poetry simply transcends time. Time in fact seems to be his worst enemy. (He wears no watch: just looking at the sun's position tells him the time of the day.) He despises it so often in his many poems: *"Time is always the master /Killing and destroying things finally.../Humble me I am more free than the mighty Universe.../ No way time will hunt my life away"* (From a poem entitled "Pak Por Hai Nuay" – "A little rest to take the tiredness away".)

Over the last 28 years, since his work was first published, Angkarn has had six anthologies published. His writing he alternates with painting and renovating old murals in many *wats*. The former he did for survival's sake, to repay the loan he had taken out from a bank to have his house built; and the latter because this rare and dying skill was needed.

Recently, one of his anthologies has been republished. The publisher is no other than his old pal, Sulak, who is attempting to do a complete set of Angkarn's previous works. The book entitled ***Lam Nao Phu Kradeung*** (Sojourn in Phu Kradeung), thus marks the third volume of the set. The first two, Panitharn Kawee



(A Poet's Conviction) and *Kawee Niphon* (Poetry Writing), were released last year. According to the publisher, the fourth volume, *Nirat nakorn Srithammarat* (Sojourn in Nakhon Sri Thammarat –



incidentally, his hometown), is due for release soon.

This present volume of *Lam Nao Phu Kradeung* (349 pages) contains 101 poems written around 1969. Sulak believes that one of the qualities a poet must possess in order to inherit that recognition of being "The Great Poet of the Era" is to have one great work published which supports such an honour. *Lam Nao Phu Kradeung*, says Sulak in his Introduction written in 1973 which is included in the present volume, "merely reflects that Angkarn has gone one step further toward that accolade. Aggressive words and his acrimony, I can accept them. There are those that are also more refined, pleasant and moving, but there are some poems that are repetitive in words and theme," adds the social critic.

One aspect of Angkarn's poetry that escaped repetition, according to Sulak, is his unconventional and non-formatted style of writing. Citing Alexander Pope's way of writing his couplets as an example, Archarn Sulak indicates that "only those who understand both painting and poetry would appreciate such technique and beauty".

Those views aside, *Lam NaoPhu Kradeung* is a truly valuable work that will for certain stun, repel, move and charm a reader all at the same time. The poems are inspired by the poet's journey to Phu Kradueng, now a popular idyllic retreat for city people, situated in Loei Province. Many of the pieces are about the place itself.

The sojourn is not recorded chronologically and each poem has no relation to its neighbours. Whatever happened to move the poet is mirrored in the poems – sometimes sentimentally and forlornly; other times angrily and defiantly. Despite what seems to be repctiousness, there's always something fresh and new in the mood of the poem. In its surrealistic approach, a blatant reality. The reader is left bewildered and exhausted with this journey.

There's no way Angkarn's poetry can be fully translated into English, not even when he touches on merely simple subjects like the clouds or flowers. The part on different kinds of flowers in various poems is absolutely delightful. In "La Laew Pah Kaew Phu Kradeung" (Farewell, the Precious Forest of Phu Kradeung), a reader is introduced to the unusual names of wild flowers and plants.

A *nirat* (travel poem) typically sees the poet pining painfully for his beloved woman. The Great Poet, Sunthorn Phu, did that a lot. Angkarn uses this approach in several pieces. But when his mood shifts like in the poems where he condemns civilisation that has crept into provincial areas, or even in the big city like in the poem entitled "Krungthep-Thailand" (Bangkok-Thailand), you'd better watch out especially those who are easily offended by the truth.

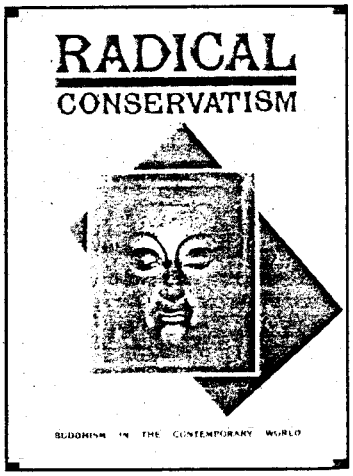
This is a book designed to be kept forever. It comes in both paperback (130 baht) and hard-cover (400 baht). It is attractively laid out with Angkarn's drawings in charcoal which are as mesmerising as most of his poetry. No other artist at the moment can combine modernity with tradition in his art quite as subtly as he can. And since poetry relies heavily on the sounds it makes the repetition in choice of words could hardly be considered a shortcoming.

Angkarn is well on the way to that accolade of "poet of our era".

"GAP"
Bangkok Post
June 16, 1991.

(Bangkok, The Thai Inter-Reli-

RADICAL CONSERVATISM: BUDDHISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD



gious Commission for Development and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, 1990) pp - 558.

The Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, the joint publishers of "Radical Conservatism," are to be commended for their efforts in drawing together such a varied, provocative and enlightening collection of articles analyzing Buddhism's role in contemporary society. This publication is of critical importance at this juncture in Thai history as Buddhism's relevance is increasingly questioned, and the status and prestige of the Sangha and its institutional hierarchy has been compromised and weakened. Well publicized infractions of both the vinaya and state law by renowned monks and perceived inaction and weakness on the part of responsible Sangha authorities to take remedial action have resulted in a crisis of faith on the part of the educated citizenry, particularly the younger generation. "Radical Conservatism" provides a much needed tonic; a faith restorative fostering a deeper understanding and awareness of basic truths as expressed through the Dharma in all its varied manifestations.

This volume of articles is dedicated to Buddhadasa and in honor of his seventh cycle. His prodigious labours in interpreting Buddhism to assure its continuing relevance in modern day society are now legendary.

It is not surprising that in a book of thirty-eight articles on such varied subjects as Buddhism and Psychotherapy; Buddhism and the Environment; Buddhist Monasticism in European Culture; Buddhist-Christian Approach to Social Liberalism, and Women and Buddhism in Thailand, the reader, depending on his or her background and proclivities, would meditate only on a selected few, peruse others and glance cursorily at the rest. However, each article, in its own unique way, provides new insights and perspectives which enrich our minds and contribute to our individual search for serenity, equilibrium and wisdom.

The first section, entitled "Buddhist Thought in the Contemporary World," contains two gem-like sermons, searing in their brilliance, as one comes to realize how it is possible to both be a good Buddhist and create a workable Buddhist society despite the violence, chaos and materialism so prevalent in comtemporary society. Interestingly enough, the two authors, Bhikkhu Sumedho and Bhikkhu Khantipalo, are western monks. This volume presents clear evidence that whether a monk or layman, one's nationality does not determine or limit one's ability to comprehend the intricacies of Buddhist thought and philosophy. Asian and western academics, teachers and philosophers are all equally contributing to the burgeoning worldwide Buddhist scholarship so evident in the volume under review.

I have always been an admirer of Thich Nhat Hanh's exceptional ability to communicate the vital importance of Buddhist awareness and how it can impact on every aspect of our daily life. I was, thus, quite predictably, enthralled with his expositions on anger, non-self and suchness and their meaning in our lives in his article on Buddhism and Psychotherapy. One of the favored way stations of the Middle Path must certainly be Plum Village where Thich Nhat Hanh resides. Other articles in this section deal with Buddhist approaches and means to cope with money and death. The article on Buddhist Education by the respected Buddhist scholar, Phra Debvedi, while erudite and informative as might be expected, somehow seemed a bit misplaced in this section.

One would have hoped for the inclusion of one of Phra Debvedi's trenchant treatises on the community service role of the Sangha, and specifically the work of the Phra Patana (Development Monks) in the north and northeast, which could have blended in perfectly with the cluster of articles in the next section on "Socially Engaged Buddhism." Herein, several interrelated articles focus on the role Buddhism can play in sensitizing the world community to a new approach to perceiving nature; to one on the interdependence of man and nature. Such a Buddhist inspired "world view" has very practical implications for solving the environmental crisis in which the world finds itself. At the same time, the various articles indicate how this Buddhist insight into the interdependence of all living things has implications for developing new systems of agriculture, e.g. integrated farming; new approaches to combating disease; and new paradigms of development replacing the increasingly discredited economic growth model. The authors in this section include such well known "engaged" Thai Buddhists as Dr. Prawase Wasi and Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa as well as their farang counterparts in the United States and Europe.

The third section of this volume deals with Buddhahasa's thought as interpreted by both Thai and western scholars who have pored and pondered over the entire corpus of Buddhadasa's writings and sermons. Each of the articles focuses on one or more aspects of Buddhist thought, his-

tory, or lore that has come under the critical eye of Buddhadasa and which consequently has been reinterpreted. Whether it is a question of the life of the Buddha or the core concepts of dharma, karma, merit, sin, nirvana, Buddhadasa's interpretations are inevitably cast in a modernized, demythologized, rationalist vein. The exposition of Buddhadasa' s thought by the authors in this section make the reader realize how easily Buddhadasa's thinking could be viewed by traditional Buddhists as radical and subversive. Despite the disclaimer of the two language thesis, **phasa khon** (every day language) and **phasa dharma** (dharma language), used for different audiences, the fact remains that Buddhadasa's predilection for the dramatic statement eradicating widely held literal and mythical beliefs, and for seeking identity of symbols and concepts with other religions has led to both misconception and mistrust. It is also clear from these authors' expositions that Buddhadasa's teachings are especially relevant for an educated urban clientele. They would appear to have less meaning for rural villagers and would more than likely cause confusion and be destabilizing. It is almost too facile to denigrate spirit worship and Brahmanic ritual, as well as popular forms of Buddhism, unless alternative forms of both social control and spiritual sustenance, meaningful within the villagers' mind-set and world view, are provided. Buddhadasa's thought is not geared to or focused on such a rural constituency. The authors in this section include such established scholars as Louis Gabaude, Donald Swearer and Grant Olson who have exhaustively translated and studied Buddhadasa's writings. It is somewhat surprising that one of the most provocative analysts of Buddhadasa's thought, Peter Jackson, was not given the opportunity to offer his critique herein.

The fourth section of this volume describes the national imprimatur that has been put on Buddhism given the different social, cultural, political and historical contexts in which it has flowered or declined. The vital role Buddhism has played in inculcating a sense of worth and dignity for India's untouchables is outlined. The Sri Lankan Sangha's concept of a "dharmacracy" is analyzed in terms of the negative effect it could have on the desirata of ethnic reconciliation. The flowering, destruction and partial recovery of Buddhism in Kampuchea is outlined in detail. Less attention is given to the unfortunate and counter-productive efforts of all Khmmer groups and factions to use Buddhism for their own political purposes. Other articles concern Buddhist ethics and the issue of ethnic minorities in Ladakh; survival of Siamese Buddhism in a Malay State; Buddhist music as a response to evangelist Christian practices; Buddhist monasticism in European culture; and the relevance and appeal of Buddhism to contemporary western society.

In line with Buddhadasa's interest in other religions and the influence of non-therevada doctrine and thought on his religious model, the last section deals with interreligious dialogues leading to human development and enrichment. The writers in this section caution Buddhists against self-satisfaction and a concommitant lack of interest in religious pluralism. They point up similarities and parallels among different religions as well as the critical entry points to best pursue reconciliation and mutual understanding. This section includes a rather provocative discussion of Christian liberation theology and a possible Buddhist variation on this theme.

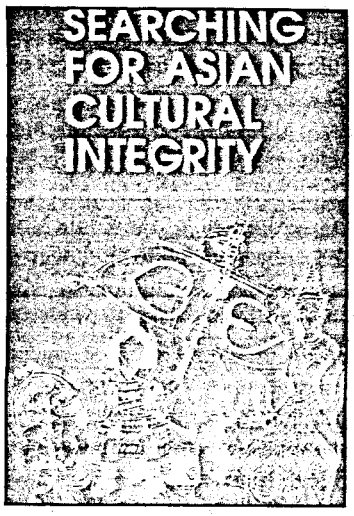
In addition to the intellectually stimulating provocative and informative articles in this book under review, the reader is further rewarded with a comprehensive bibliography of Buddhadasa's translated works in such diverse languages as Chinese, French and Tagalog. As if this was not a sufficient bonus, a bibliography of studies in English, French and German concerning Buddhadasa and Suan Mokh is provided. Both of these extensive bibliographies were prepared by Louis Gabaude of L'École Francaise d' Extreme Orient.

Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa and his fellow editors have done an immense service not only to academicians but to the general reading public in publishing "Radical Conservatism". This immensely readable volume has enough pearls of wisdom to both entice and enchant the most recondite of scholars, the most jaded of urban cognoscenti or iconoclasts. It is also a book of rare import for those of whatever religious persuasion searching for truth and meaning in an increasingly chaotic world. To the Kennedy Foundation for its financial support, to the editors for their arduous task of selection, cajoling and compiling and to the writers for their wisdom, a word of praise for a job well done

William J. Klausner

Searching for Asian Cultural

Searching for Asian Cultural Integrity



Integrity leaves this Western reader with a variety of reactions. This collection of essays has been amassed from the Inter-Cultural Seminar held at Thammasat University in Rangsit, Siam in March of 1990. In relation to the title, I was left still groping for coherence after reading these essays. The essays and a large appendix paint a very diverse and often unconnected portrait. Therefore, as I was taken through this Asian search for a cultural integrity, I often felt as if I was simply wandering as opposed to searching with a set of goals and ideals with which to focus my journey. Simply put, the essays as a collective group fail to hold a coherence to the theme of cultural integrity.

Disregarding how the text expresses itself as a whole, I found the individual essays imminently succesful and highly educating. Coming from a Western background has allowed me only a superificial understanding of the many great cultures of Asia, so these essays provided me with considerable insight and depth.

One of the advantages of the lack of linear coherence of the essays was the great variety of places to which the reader is taken. There are many great surprises as the reader comes in contact with lesser known areas of Asian culture.

B.S. Medina Jr.'s essay, "Literary Tradition and Social Change: The Balagtas Unconscious in Three Tagalog Women Poets," does a fascinating job of showing the connections between Filipino literature and political identity. Medina also addresses the personal well in showing the individual feeling and vision of these women poets. Ultimately, this essay not only informs but reaches deeper and touches the human spirit.

Another pleasant surprise in the collection is Houmphanh Rattanavong's essay, "Regarding What One Calls the 'Thai'". Just hours before coming upon this essay, I had coincindentally asked a Thai colleague of mine, "Who are the Thai' and ethnically where do they come from?". My question met with a polite but rather incomplete answer as this is a large question. I was, therefore, more than pleasantly surprised to encounter a detailed account of the ethnological history of the "Thai" by Mr. Houmphanh. In this century's era of Western colonial names and post-WWII abritrary national lines, I was very appreciative to find out the extent of the "Thai" ethnic groups which encompasses an area greater than Siam.

Another essay which delved into the deeper, lesser known aspects of Asian culture was Muhammad Haji Salleh's "Malay Ethnopoetics: Looking at Literature with Our Own Eyes." Salleh in his writing expresses the lack of a definitve literary tradition in Malaysia as we would understand it from a Western literary perspective. Instead, he weaves a basic understanding of the Malay culture through it's various story telling genres of oral, theatrical and written forms. What is most interesting to my Western mind is Salleh's expression that the individuality of most of the authors is found not in the creation of bold, new stories but in the subtle nuances of interpreting and reinterpreting the traditional stories of the Malay culture. To me, this notion epitomizes the difference between the Western emphasis on individuality and the Eastern one on community.

The discovery of some of the lesser known and understood aspects of Asian culture as represented in these three essays adds a great depth to the collection. It is in this way that the collection serves the title, "Searching for an Asian Cultural Iden-

tity." The reader is able to find some of the unique depth of Asian culture which forms the roots of its identity.

As the collection has been extracted from the Inter-Cultural Seminar held in Siam, It is not surprising to find much of the subject matter to be concerning Siam. In addition to Mr. Houmphaanh's contribution on the origin of the "Thai", the reader benefits from two encounters with the controversial but always stimulating Thai social critic, Sulak Sivaraksa.

His essay, "Crisis of Siamese Identity," is a fascinating account of the Thai crown and the subsequent non-monarchical governments of Siam's attempts to deal with modernization and the onslaught of Western culture. As always, Mr. Sulak is bold with his criticism yet gives credit where it is due. The criticisms of various former Thai kings in this essay are the same ones which had him jailed briefly in 1986 for *lese-majeste*. The important theme to draw from this essay, however, is not Mr. Sulak's bold tongue but his strength of commitment to criticize past mistakes in the attempt to find new solutions to the problems of rapid modernization in Siam.

The real jewel of the collection is not to be found in the main body itself but in the Appendix. Once again, the reader is to understand Siam through the eyes of Mr. Sulak, and once again the reader benefits from the unique depth of his lengthy "chat" with Filipino writer F. Sionil Jose. The two reflect on a number of topics running along a basic thread of modernization in their respective countries and social change. My attention was riveted as the two activists argue over violent and non-violent political change, the roots of consumersim and materialism in Asia, and, of course, Asian cultural identity. What is most enjoyable is experienceing the ebb and flow of a conversation between two knowledgeable people; the moments of heated debate and moments of comic aside. Whether one agrees with Mr. Sulak's or Mr. Jose's ideas is beyond the point. The ultimate value of the conversation to the collection is the window provided into the thinking of two Asian intellectuals. This view expands, enriches, and gives depth to the collection, and thus serves the title well.

Searching for Asian Cultural Integrity seems a very appropriate title for this collection for it implies a journey still incomplete. The collection in many ways leaves me feeling incomplete. Although it gave me a needed depth to my understanding of Asian culture, it still left me groping for what this search means to each country and the region as a whole. Though the collection contains essays which do address this question, it still seems to lack a comprehensive statement and agenda for this quest for cultural identity. In this weakness, however, the collection finds its strength by offering a diverse and deep exploration into some lesser known aspects of Asian culture. Once again, though, I am confronted with this question of identity. As a Westerner, I am certain that this volume offers great insight to the Western reader, yet I cannot make the same conclusion for the Asian reader. Do these essays provide insight for the citizens of Asia, or do they rehash familiar ideas and arguments? My only tentative answer to this question is that in light of many of the themes of this collection and with the knowledge of my own incomplete knowledge of my Western cultural tradition, I believe these essays will provide illumination to all. The search for identity, as always, continues but essays such as these should add greater understanding to many.

JSW

The Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian Buddhist Era seems to be one year later than that of Burma, Sir Lanka 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. 2534 according to the Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian calendar, but it is B.E. 2535 according to the Burmese, Sri Lankan and Indian calendar.

From University of Hawaii at Manoa

July 1, 1991

My dear friend Sulak,

Thank you for the copy of your letter to Abbot Ki about the November Seoul seminar #5 on Buddhism and Leadership for Peace.

I told Abbot Ki when he began to plan this semianr that this time I did not plan to take part, despite my eagerness to meet old and new friends.

Although I am alomost completely recovered from the quintuple bypass surgery, I am trying to restrict travel until 1992 when I plan to get back to "nomal." Thus I have declined travel to Japan, Spain, Korea, India, Florida, etc., in the next 6 months.

Furthermore, I have just begun work on a long overdue book, **Nonkilling Political Science,** that I hope to complete by December 31 of this year, started on my 62nd birthday, June 28. Thus I hope to avoid the up to 3 weeks interruption that going, coming, planning, recovering would entail.

The only exception I am contemplating is a possible trip to Pyongyang in the next couple of months – because scholars there have expressed interest in a suggestion to bring them (South Korean friends and some Gandhians) together in New Delhi next October to explore "Gandhian Principles for Nonviolent Community Unification."

With esteem and love.

Prof. Glenn Paige

From Nepal

Good to know that inspite of the heat in Bangkok you are working so hard. We are interested to know more about the seminar on conflict resolution. Will you please send us the report of the seminar if possible.

It is indeed impossible to run any work without constant financial contribution. It is good that you are thinking to bring out INEB in n brochure.

1. We feel that membership contribution as our regular source must be there. But we must be careful that this membership fee should not be very high so that it will be a constraint.

2. There should be provision or attraction for those people who could contribute (*dana*) in various fields or sector. These various fields could be decided based on the resolution at our INEB conference.

Maybe we can have an Emergency Relief Fund. In our brochure we can have a leaflet for the dana for an Emergency Relief Fund. The objective of this fund we utilize must be written clearly; Or may be we could have country-wide contribution page.

At present Kathmandu is just as hot as Bangkok. Though Kathmandu is hot because of the Election and National Census. While the census is going on, we are watching so that real picture will come out. Since the present Government is for Nepal – being a Hindhu country – many suspicious things are expected. On the very first day in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, Buddhist families were cheated. Though they said they are Buddhists the collector wrote Hindu. Of course we took action; we wrote a protest letter and handed it over to the Prime Minister and the Central Bureau of Statistics.

We are working sincerely for justice and peace. But whatever we are doing up to this day seems to be lacking something. We are moved by emotion and sentiment which sometimes may be wrong too. To begin any action, work or project one must have sound knowledge of one's area. Trainings are very much needed here. There is possibilty for the training except for the high financial constraint. We need community training so that socially engaged Buddhists in Nepal could work more correctly and successfully. We would be happy to get the training.

Now the General Election in Nepal is over. During the election we tried to draw the attention of the candidates, parties, as well as voters towards the causes of underpriviledged people and secularism by compaigning through pamphlets and posters. A copy of a pamphlet is enclosed herewith. We are sending post cards to INEB friends concerning Burma, Sri Lanka and Nepal as promised at the INEB conference. Hope you will help by sending these to the appropriate govts.

Dr. Leonardo Chapela was here with us one month ago. We had arranged a talk programme for him concerning his studies in Buddhist Economics.

As agreed at the INEB conference, we have proposed for a Training for Trainers Programme to the Friends of Buddhism, Malaysia. The proposal is attached herewith for your information and help. As agreed upon with Ven. Dhammika, we have completed translating his book' *Good Questions and Good Answers* .

Thanking you,

Parshu Ram Tamang & Stella

From Philippines

Warmest greeting of Peace from KFI!

This is to acknowledge with thanks your letter and copies of your letters to Pres. Aquino and Sec. Factoran. We informed the tribal groups opposing the geothermal project and they would like to convey their thanks for the solidarity your organization has expressed with them.

Recently, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has approved the Environmental Impact Assessment Study of the Philippine National Oil Co. (PNOC), practically clearing the way for the full-scale implementation of the project. Inspite of the people's opposition, the government is bent at pursuing the controversial project. The only option left for us together with the tribal groups is to mount a "people power" blockade once PNOC starts bringing in their huge equipment. When this happens, we will need all the support our brothers and sisters all over the world could give. This would mean blocking the access road to the geothermal sites by setting up camps at the center of the road. The government has been already training para-military groups from the ranks of the tribal community near the site against any opposition to the project. So, aside from the security situation, another important aspect of the blockade is to sustain the food supply of those who would be in the picket line. For this, we have set up a support fund which we hope your organization could support. Preliminary planning has been already drawn. We will provide you with updates if the situation here deteriorates.

Our warmest regards to both of you and thank you very much.

Very sincerely yours,
Wilfredo F. Rodriguez
(Executive Director)

From Bangladash

The 15 people who took part in the Burma Peace Witness programme formed a very homogenous group, in that the concerns were the same – to see and to learn and to express solidarity. The 4-day programme was well organized and well planned. Paula Green of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (USA) and INEB (Thailand) deserves congratulations for this success.

On 24 Feb., the participants were given a 3-hour briefing seession in Bangkok before boarding the overnight train to ChiangMai. Shortly after reaching ChiangMai, all flew to Mae Hong Song, a cute little hill station in northern Thailand. Mae Hong Song was the base camp, from where the participants were taken 26 Feb. by jeep up to the forest camps on the Thai-Burma border.

This day – 26 Feb. – spent with the Karenni refugees and freedom fighters will remain for this writer, at least, a very strong memory. Not just the hazardous drive through steep and winding dirt roads uphill (5,000 ft.), nor the breath-taking jungle scenery, but also the close contact with the tribal peoples, the visit to a makeshift Buddhist temple, the sharing of meals in a guerilla camp, the fraternising with refugee tribal children in a hill-side school, the meeting with a small remnant group of former Kuomingtang Chinese soldiers, etc., – and so many other stirring experiences. Can one day be long enough?

After this Karenni visit, one need not have to go to Burma, maybe. For, we have felt the pulse of the land, almost seen the heart throbs, and heard the muted cries. This lovely land, "Myanmar", must be free again! those of us in the Peace and Justice movement must help make that possible.

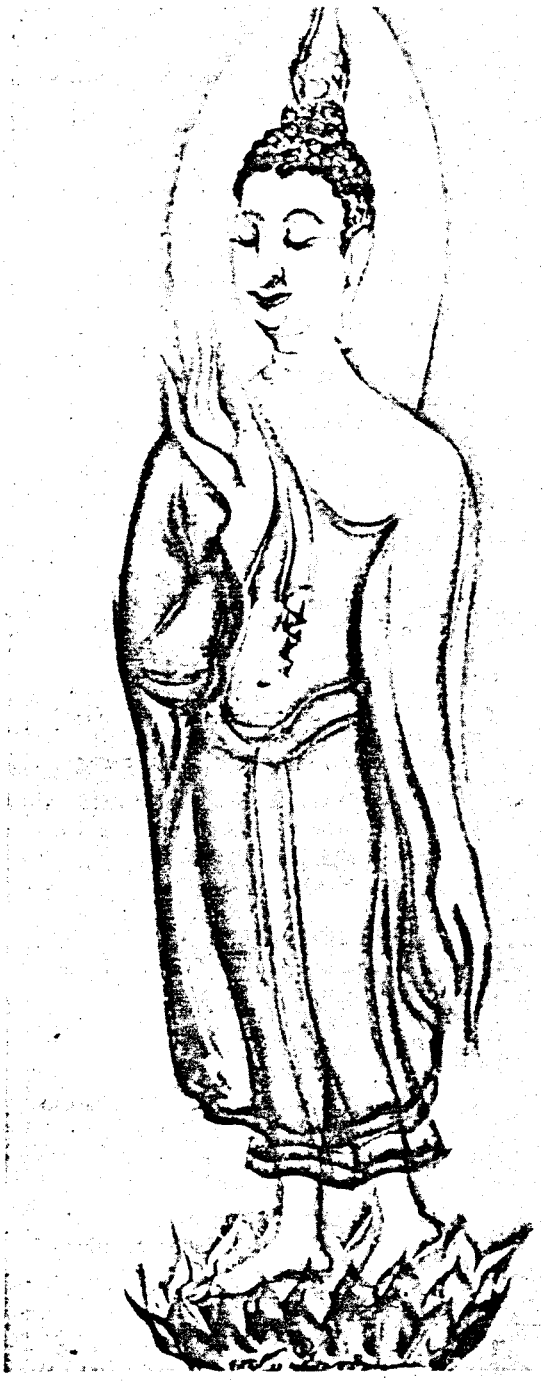
I have with me a copy of Pippa Curwen's poignantly beautiful video cassette on the Burmese people in the refugee camps in northern Thailand. The cassette opens with a refugee student singing; all through, the song rings in the ears – like the breezes sighing in the hilltop teak trees of the karenni refugee camps we visited – calling for a friendly response and the touch of a warm hand of sympathy. The peacock flying upwards on the Flag of the ABSDF (All-Burma Students Democratic Front) is so symbolic of the hopes of the people – the peacock, a bird of peace, yet so proud to be free!

Feb 27th was spent largely in searching for souvenirs in the bazaars of Mae Hong song and ChiangMai. Though the return train journey was not as pleasent as the upward one, the participants were sufficiently rested, and ready for the warm welcome and the even warmer meals at the residence of Sulak Sivaraksa. At this place were organized press interviews and an evaluation session by the participants. Once again, the feelings were unanimous: - the world must know the truth about Myanmar (Burma); a much more active publicity is needed, e.g. regarding the injustice of the continued Arms Aid to an oppressive regime, regarding the systematic deforestation by multi-national companies, regarding the non-violent efforts among the student refugees in Thailand, etc.

Bro. Jarlath De Souza

SEEDS OF PEACE

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■ HUMAN RIGHTS IN SIAM ■



SEEDS OF

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1. To coordinate work among individuals, groups of individuals and various agencies dealing with religions and development in the 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. ■



AUNG SAN SUU KYI

1991 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER



EDITOR'S NOTES

In the following pages, we hope the reader finds a variety of topics and ideas to give rise to contemplation and not only analysis of events but of one's self as well. The last months here among the Thai Inter Religious Commission on Development (TICD), the Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute (SPDI), and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) family have brought a lot of contemplation and analysis with the crisis that our leader Ajahn Sulak has faced. Sometimes, it seems that there has not been enough *self*-analysis. I do not mean this in a critical way, but more as a reminder to us all of the importance of self-contemplation. So many of us involved in the work of aiding others get caught up in the constant crisis of the moment and of those in continuing suffering. But once again, one comes across the question: Is it more expedient to help another out of the mud of life while oneself is also mired in the mud or to first extricate ourselves and then save the other person. The airlines would have us do the latter. So many of us in the NGO field seem to do the former, using service to others as a form of personal therapy. I believe the Buddha would once again have us travel the middle road: while serving others, which is inherently beneficial, we must also take time to serve ourselves so that the quality of our service can be the highest possible.

A week ago, I was reminded by a friend who had just returned to himself for a little self-mainanence that we must keep in touch with that fundamental practice of "spirituality", "Dhamma", "discipline", "faith", call it what you may. This root of practice can provide us with self-healing and renourishing. It is the quiet place within us all from which all compassionate and wise action comes. In this ***Seeds of Peace***, we try to re-establish an awareness of the importance of this place for all of us in realizing the idea of "engaged Buddhism", improving the quality of our work, or just being a good friend or even more simply, a good human being. Without this place, we are a tree with no roots, a culture with no history, a teacher with no knowledge destined to flounder in efforts which look good but bear no fruit for their lack of foundation. This issue's "Dhamma For Action" section hopes to stir some ideas and give some guidance for those desiring to expand their roots and enlarge their awareness of that vast storehouse of quiet inside.

Our "Special Feature" will be on human rights in Thailand. The events of the past months here have been fast and furious often leaving us, much less our concerned friends in other countries, wondering exactly what is happening. This section indicates some of the problems facing the Thai people as highlighted in the stories of Phra Prachak and Sulak Sivaraksa. Both of these stories point to fundamental problems in the Thai people's freedom to speak openly about problems in their society and to become part of the decision making process in their own communities. These problems point to the fundamental democratic crisis going on now in Thailand as the country grapples for a political future with a military junta guiding the way. In "Our Activities" section, more can be found on this growing conflict of interest among the tandem of government and big business and the Thai common people.

In our "Country Reports," we again have tried to update and inform on events going on in the South and South East Asia regions, paticularly in areas other than politics and economics. Such news on the culture and struggles of the common people in these countries is often few and far between. Thus, we like to provide some dynamic stories of people in these areas.

Finally, as we go to print, we are without our Editor-in-Chief, Ajahn Sulak, who is usually responsible for enforcing all deadlines with great efficiency and bringing together the variety of sources which go into making ***Seeds of Peace***. Thus, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to everyone associated with TICD, SPDI, and INEB from those who found an additional photo to those who rushed in a last minute article to those who helped to translate for some of us "Farang" who have yet to master the Thai language. This issue has truly been a team effort! Enjoy!

JSW

HOSPICE : ON COMMON GROUND

In his article "Religion and Aids" Dr. Prawase Wasi highlights the fact that, historically, "...religion had played important roles in human and social foundation through beliefs, education and practices which determined human and social behaviors, many of which positively affected health in a macro scale through the millennium." "However," he further states, "in modern societies religion has lost its past influence." This is an important point; for especially in our world as it turns today, with modernization and environmental concerns ever-mounting, and technological advances pushing the boundaries of our wildest imaginations, the resiliency of our religious values and beliefs are continuously being tested.

But no matter how far the boundaries of technology encroach upon the inner oasis of our dreams and imaginations; and no matter how far our electronic eyes reach the outer galaxies of space, we are still left to struggle, untouched by technology, with some basic and difficult existential and spiritual concerns; mainly, we all still must attempt to assimilate into our lives, consciously or otherwise, the intensified experiences and prolonged feelings brought forth by the concerns of dying, death, and bereavement. Perhaps it is in this "technological free zone" in which we most feel the absence of religion's intergral role in our lives and society that it once held.

Dying, death and bereavement, at some point in all of our lives, touches us at our most deepest and vulnerable levels. It is an inevitability that we often do not want to even breach in our thoughts, better yet have to experience in reality. It brings to the fore of our mind and being some of the most stressful - but essential and important - questions and feelings about our lives that we might ever have to face and endure. It is a time when the support, love, trust and understanding of others is of vital importance.

The increasing number of hospices in the world today highlights the positive movement towards addressing the issues of providing compassion and support to those who are dying of a terminal illness, and to those who are experiencing the repercussions of loss in their lives. Dying, death and bereavement awareness and consciousness is steadily expanding and on the rise - it is too important of an issue for this not to be happening.

During medieval times, "hospice" was the name given to places of rest provided en route to the Crusades - way stations that offered weary persons lodging and nourishment. Dr. Cecily Saunders, the London physician who founded the modern hospice did not invent the word but it has become synonymous with the revolutionary manner of caring for the terminally ill by easing their journey as they go from this life to the next.

In the early 1960's Dr. Saunders, during her daily rounds at St. Christopher's Hospital, became increasingly aware of the surroundings in which the terminally ill patients were eking out their final stage of life - often in dark back rooms in the hospital, without loved ones around and often in great pain. She observed that loneliness, isolation and fear of abandonment caused great distress and that chronic pain resulted in anxiety and in anticipatory dread of the recurrence of that pain. As a consequence of that recognition, in 1967 Dr. Saunders created within a section of the hospital an environment that became the original embodiment of "hospice care". This new modality in the treatment of the terminally ill included all the elements that would enhance the quality of life for the dying person and would provide support and concern for family members.

The dark back rooms of that hospital were transformed into a bright, cheerful, homelike atmosphere to which family and friends had 24-hour access to the patient. A staff of physicians and nurses was trained in "hospice" oriented care-giving techniques. because the staff understood that anxiety depression, sleeplessness and anticipatory dread of pain were components

of chronic pain, the management and control of that pain were given to the patient if feasible (Hospice of Cheshire County, Keene, NH USA).

Hospice is a comprehensive philosophy of care which takes into full consideration the dying individual's physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs. Hospice offers a type of care that is an alternative to the often sterile standard care provided in hospitals. An individual under hospice care has a confirmed diagnosis of a terminal illness; and, importantly, they are aware of the diagnosis and prognosis. Hospice care includes physicians, nurses, social workers, volunteers, clergy, and others as are needed. In hospice care there is a focus on maintaining the dying individuals comfort, allowing them to be as free from pain as is possible, without being drugged into incoherence. There is an emphasis placed on improving the quality of remaining life, not necessarily on extending it. Thus, as mentioned earlier, pain management and symptom control is an important aspect of hospice care; this enables the dying individual to remain lucid enough to exert some measure of control in their own affairs. The individual maintains the right to participate in decision-making concerning their own care. Hospice philosophy embraces the dying individual and their family as one unit of care. Hospice care is free of charge and there is no discrimination based on race, religion, sex, or national origin. Services at a hospice facility are available on a 24 hour, 7 day-a-week basis; thus family members and friends will be able to visit whenever they want too.

Hospice care is not the "monopolized" property of any one religious denomination or body, but is affiliated with and has access to as many different religious faiths as is possible; thus providing the terminally ill individual and their family with the broadest type of spiritual care that is available. Hospice philosophy of care, certainly, touches the heart of all religions desire, intention, and propensity to serve others in a compassionate and selfless fashion.

Thailand is over 90% Buddhist, with some 250,000 monks, 10,000 nuns, and 30,000 temples (Wats); thus, there is an ancient and rich wellspring from which to draw valuable resources from in reference to caring for the terminally ill, and for establishing the hospice philosophy of care. And, as Frank Ostaseski, director of the San Francisco (USA) Zen Center's Hospice Program, so succinctly and aptly stated: "For over 2,500 years Buddhists have used contemplation on sickness, old age, and death as a means of being fully alive. Caring for the dying is simply an unfolding of this practice, a fusion of spiritual insight and practical social action". Again, given the large number of Buddhists in Thailand, this is a very valuable resource to connect with.

Historically, the Buddhist Wat was a natural choice of where people could go when they were dying or bereaved. However, as mentioned earlier, this isn't so much the case anymore as the Wat is losing much of its role as being the "center" of the family and village, as it struggles to maintain an open eye and ear to the expansion of a changing society and world, while at the same time keeping dear the sacred and ancient practices and traditions.

It is our proposal to introduce the hospice philosophy of care in Thailand. More specifically though, we are exploring the options for beginning this "introduction" within the compassionate folds of a Wat or a Nunnery. Our intentions are to start off small, perhaps about 5 or so terminally ill individuals being cared for there. This would have tremendously positive implications for the particular Wat or Nunnery itself, and the Buddhist community in general, both here and abroad. Its effects would especially be pronounced in Thailand, where it would serve as an influential precedent. In addition, and importantly, this would serve to 1) help re-establish the Wat as an integral and central focus for the community; and 2) bring together Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike in Thailand with the main focus being each other's common means of expressing compassion and cooperation by serving others. Hospice's focus is on compassionate and humane care for those who are in the final stage of their life, and, in addition, offers the same support and care for their families too. The combination of Buddhist philosophy and Hospice philosophy can bring a very powerful healing influence to Thailand, not only for the terminally ill and their families - but, again, for the whole of society.

There are no philosophical or religious prerequisites for receiving such care; and although it is our hope that the Buddhist community - monks, nuns, and laypersons alike - will be the mainstay and pillars of support for such a hospice (indeed if it is at a Wat or Nunnery), naturally this does not exclude anyone else who would like to be involved. And, as such, all that's left then is the acknowledgment

that everyone one of us tread on Common Ground when it comes to dying, death, and bereavement: the immediacy and urgency of these experiences are certain to arise in our lives - and hospice care offers all of us an alternative, compassionate approach that brings with it a very gentle and healing influence. And hospice care is certainly and arena with which religion might establish new ground as a healthy, loving, and life-affirming energy in the world.

As the project unfolds...and develops its own character; and as I talk with more and more people - learning, listening, reflecting - talking about death and dying, and about what "hospice" care really is, I find that my mind often drifts in wonderment to another time; perhaps in a far-off and distant future when, collectively, our world will treat dying and death as the natural part of life's continuum that it truly is...

Just as now there is a whole process that goes along with a woman's pregnancy, perhaps then there will be an equally known, thought-through, and established process we are helped with when we are on the verge of death - a process that's initiated, however, well before that time, when we are young. Maybe then there will be an openness and consciousness towards death which will serve as guideposts for living. For we are all, most certainly, "pregnant with death" from the moment we are conceived in-utero... And just as There are natural childbirths at home, there can be natural deaths at home, with the help, compassion and company of friends, family and loved ones, which includes children. And if certain individuals are unable to die at home in this type of compassionate atmosphere and loving environment, or perhaps if they have no one they call family, then there will be numerous choices of places available (i.e., hospices) where they can stay that will offer them the same emotional, physical and spiritual comfort that they would get if they were in their own home, with loved ones surrounding them.

And, as for what happens after the labor of life/death and the contractions of birth have given-way and subsided - well, right now that is beyond our absolute knowledge and control, beyond what we can absolutely see or experience until we undertake the actual journey and birthing process ourselves. Thus, we are naturally left to concentrate our efforts on the *care* we offer to the dying. For whether or not you believe in a living, changing, perpetually existing soul, energy, or an afterlife of any kind, is not the point. The point is that a particular type of care is offered while you are alive on this planet. There are no religious or philosophical prerequisites for receiving compassionate care. Surely, even those who believe that nothing survives bodily death would welcome physical and emotional comfort when seriously ill and dying.

Dying, death, and bereavement - like joy, love, sadness, and sorrow - are just a fraction of the multitude of experiences and feelings that can be acknowledged as being "universal" in nature. Certainly, each of our pains and joys are to an extent perceived and experienced uniquely, but we all have these same "types" of feelings as we go through the course of our lives. Let's face the unadulterated fact: these common experiences and feelings are a "lifeline" that surely connects each one of us. Whether you realize it or not - whether you even care to realize it or not - they still remain commonalities that we all share, period.

Collectively, if this simple and profoundly ignored truth were to be taken seriously in daily worldly affairs, and in the seemingly routine happenings of our everyday existence, it's probably safe to say that most of

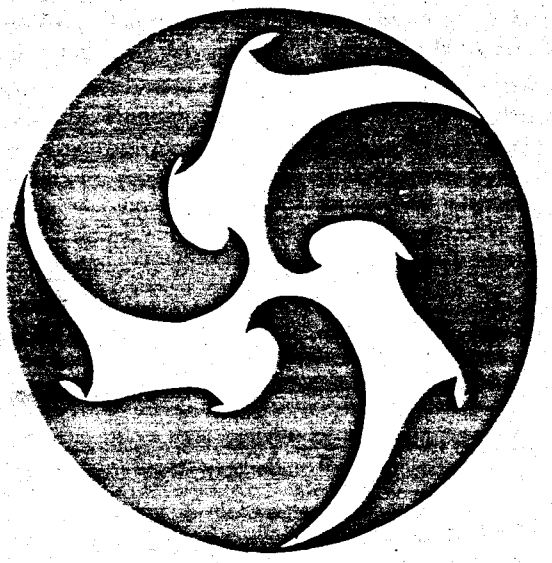


the current ills of the human condition that we have blindly reaped and sowed via our thoughts and actions would not exist. A quick glance through your daily newspaper substantiates all too clearly that collectively we just seem to overlook the simple fact that this life-line even exists. Or, maybe we just don't care that it exists. Hmmmmmm...but then, again, there's this issue of death that keeps surfacing - the universal equalizer and ultimate life-line of mankind; a very real common denominator that just won't stand for being ignored.

And it is quite a travesty that many times it is only through our experience of a loved one's death or impending death from illness that we gain the most insight to the value, frailty, preciousness and the potential simplicity of life itself. Often we don't fully realize or grasp the importance of what we have shared with another or what we have learned from them until their life has ended and we feel the ensuing ache of grief and loss in our life. For our daily interactions are not based on the premise that our friends and loved ones will not be there for us tomorrow - as they were there for us today. Perhaps we would act differently towards each other if, each day, we were to gently, in a healthy way, remind ourselves of this possibility....

Perhaps then there will come that day when hospice-like services and care will be so commonplace as not to be give a second thought; a day when healthy attitudes towards death and the dying process will be assimilated into the collective conscious rhythm of our everyday lives; a day when as a global community our actions stem from the acknowledgement of our life-line of commonalities, not from the dysfunction of our perceived differences. Maybe then a lasting, true peace will be realized, one that has thus far drastically eluded the world. So...it is bathed in such a light that we push ahead optimistically in our efforts to establish hospice care in Thailand. To be continued....

Jeffrey Adam Sager



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* The following is an excerpt from a taped interview between Venerable Suhitananda Dharma, an Afro-American Buddhist monk who lives in the United States, and Pracha Hutanuwatr, Executive Secretary of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists in Bangkok. Ven. Dharma runs a hospice house in Richmond California USA

P: First, I would like to ask you to give us the background of the work you do here. How did you start it? Why did you start it? And what kind of work is it exactly?

V: The Metta-Vihara A.B.C. Inc. is the name that we chose for our temple when we moved here to Richmond. About four years ago we were in this area and we discovered there were a couple of people who had the HIV virus. They were homeless and didn't have a place to go; one was terminal. And I had taken the training with the AIDS task force here in Contra Casa county, so I decided to help these two particular people. They came to our place and we took care of them. One has thus far passed away and one is still surviving. This was in the later part of 1987. And we continued to do that kind of work because we

...MPASSION: ...W WITH ...HITA NANDA

began to find that a lot of people in our area who were homeless and at the same time trying to deal with the HIV virus.

P: When they come here, what kind of treatment do they receive from this center, Metta-Vihara?

V: What we do here is try to use what we call "expedient means"; and to use what is called kala-yamithra, which means just being a good friend. And we try not to place any judgments on anyone that comes here; we try to accept them on the conditions they are when they first meet us. And slowly we try and help them connect with different service providers. We help them to get some type of medical treatment and to try to experience living day by day. We do not try to force them to understand Buddhist practice directly, so we use what we call "expedient means". We try to set some type of example or offer some type of advice and let them slowly build up their own self-worth and self-esteem. Sometimes this may sound contrary to Buddhist practice, because we try and lose the self in Buddhism. We found, however, that if a person has never found the self, it helps to try to build one up first, then understand it on a day to day, moment to moment basis.

P: Do you also provide medical care?

V: The local medical professionals work closely with us. I, myself, know something about nursing, so I do on-hands nursing, especially in the hospice. And when the person is sick I like to work directly with them in doing some type of nursing. But we network with all the service providers in the Bay Area, so if we can't find something here then we'll look for it in San Francisco, for example, and try to find the necessary services that they need so that they can improve and expand their life expectancy.

P: How do people know about your center?

V: Usually the hospitals, social workers, various homeless shelters, and even now the prisons will refer someone to us. Once or twice when we have met a couple of people through the homeless shelters, we then introduce them to a case manager so that we can get all the information we need to help them with the services.

P: Are most or all of the people who come to your center poor?

V: It's a variety. We have a mixture of people. We have black people, causasians, Asians; so it's a variety of people. But the majority of the people in our area who are affected by the virus are substance abusers, and most of them are Afro-American, black Americans. But our doors are open to anyone who is homeless, for anyone who is poor and who doesn't have a place to stay. Most of the people we work with now are HIV positive and have a diagnosis of AIDS or ARC (AIDS related complex). But here at the hospice we are open to anyone who has a terminal illness, with six months or less to live.

P: How many people do you have working with you here?

V: Not many. (laughing) We're looking for more. We have 3 house managers, myself, and one man who is starting to help us with some attendant work, as well. So I'd say about 4 or 5. I do most of the work at this house, working directly with the clients. But then I have to check on the other house for any other things. But we have 3 people at the other house who help assist us in taking care of the people.

P: What sort of training do the volunteers need before coming to work with you?

V: I think the best type of training a person can have is to have an open mind and an open heart. I like to see people come with some type of skills or ideas of something that they would like to do. Because if a person comes to us with something that they would really like to do, then they will do it well and they will stay to do it. So we don't set any type of criteria, just to have an open mind and an open heart, to be friendly, a good listener, and without judgement. That's the



type of a person who can do real well with this kind of work. Because most of the people really need a good friend, a brother or a sister. So we like to use the word "extended family" program. We call our places extended family programs. We try to create a family, because some of the people may have not had a really strong family. So we try to act towards them as if they were a member of our own family. We look at it as being part of the "human family". And with that attitude, slowly we are able to become closer and closer to the people we work with.

P: Which of the Buddha's teachings do you find most useful to use in this kind of work? Which are the most helpful to the patients?

V: The strongest one I like to use is trying to live moment to moment, day by day; this is the strongest one that we use. People who are infected with the virus have become so closely in-tune with their own bodies. It's the kind of "in-tune" that we try to achieve through our meditation practice, becoming in-tune to body and mind. And through their illness they become in-tune to both body and mind for all the different things that are happening to it. So we try and support them in going through this process and try to live day by day, moment by moment; and to always have the attitude that hope does not end until the last breath leaves the body. So we don't place emphasis on death; we place an emphasis on living. It's often thought that people come to the hospice to die, but they've come here to live moment by moment, until that transition is made. So we try to place an emphasis on daily living. And it is through Buddhist practices that we try to do this.

P: How do these people find meaning moment to moment when they know that they are so ill and dying?

V: I look at this way: from the moment we are born, we are all heading toward the same destination, except that these individuals are aware that they have an illness where their life can be cut short - maybe sooner then mine, but that's not necessarily so because I can just walk out this door and get hit by a car. Anything can happen to me at any given moment. So we emphasize that all of us are heading towards the same destination, some sooner than others. But to just to dwell on the illness and that they're going to die, then they don't gain any profit; so we help them to gain profit up until that point.

P: Can you give an example of how the Buddha's teachings have helped people at this point.

V: I can give you an example of the case of a man here who was sort of left on the outside of his family. He was very down and hadn't told his family about the problem he was going through. We worked with him to gain his confidence, and gained his confidence. And through this he was able to open up and trust. He was then able to come completely to terms with his illness and therefore able to let go and pass away in peace, in real peace. And knowing that people really cared about him. This was our first client and he left quite a mark on a lot of us because he was able to come totally to terms with everything and to let go in total peace. Another case was a young lady who had a child. She was estranged from the family. So by working with her, then gaining her trust and building her confidence, we were able to get her to contact her family and let them know what was happening. So the mother came out here. She had been looking for her daughter for a number of years. She brought her back to Pennsylvania where the young lady was able to pass away in peace, at home, and united with her family; there was no more breakdown. These are the types of things that happen from time to time that are really rewarding. It is what happens when a person is going through the last transition, and how they are able come to terms with a number of things. This has been a good learning experience for us because this is part of our practice too, in almost trying to become one with that person, to identify with that person; thus we treat that person the way we would want to be treated, so we can identify with that transition of life. We cannot cause that person to change, but that person can change themselves freely. And this can be used as part of our own growth, development and practice.

P: Can you give a little more detail on how you go about trying to gain their trust and confidence.

V: We try to be a real good friend, try to listen, because people who come to us are angry and want to let out a lot. They feel that maybe the whole world is against them, that no one wants to touch them. So we just sit back and open up ourselves to them, in a nonjudgmental way. It's a slow process, step by step by step, we gain their trust and understanding. And once we gain their trust, then they open up more to us. and that's how they're able to slowly change everything around from something that is really bad and disastrous, to a certain point in time into something that is really good and a learning experience for

them. It gives them the strength to deal with this illness on a daily basis.

P: After they gain some understanding, do they then also begin to practice meditation?

V: They don't exactly begin to practice meditation formally, as in actually sitting down with us, but they do learn how to deal with the subtle things that are happening within themselves. So actually, once they learn how to deal with fevers and deal with certain pains and discomforts in the body, then that is really like meditation too, because we have to experience that when we sit, but they have to experience this almost day and night on a 24-hour basis. So we help to guide them in those feelings and experiences that they are going through; so they are taking their illness and using it as their meditation. Because they are really in-tune to every little feeling or movement in their body. And sometimes in the beginning they become very paranoid: they hear a rumbling sound somewhere in the body and all of a sudden they're very shaken-up. A very tiny spot is magnified and we help them with that. Because this is what that virus can cause through the lack of an immune system; they are open to anything.

P: Is this like Vedanapassana

V: Yes, almost like it - very close, very close. If a person learns how to pay attention, and deal with that in their practice of understanding what is going on for them, they become very strong.

P: Do people on the staff have familiarity with meditation or Buddhist practice.

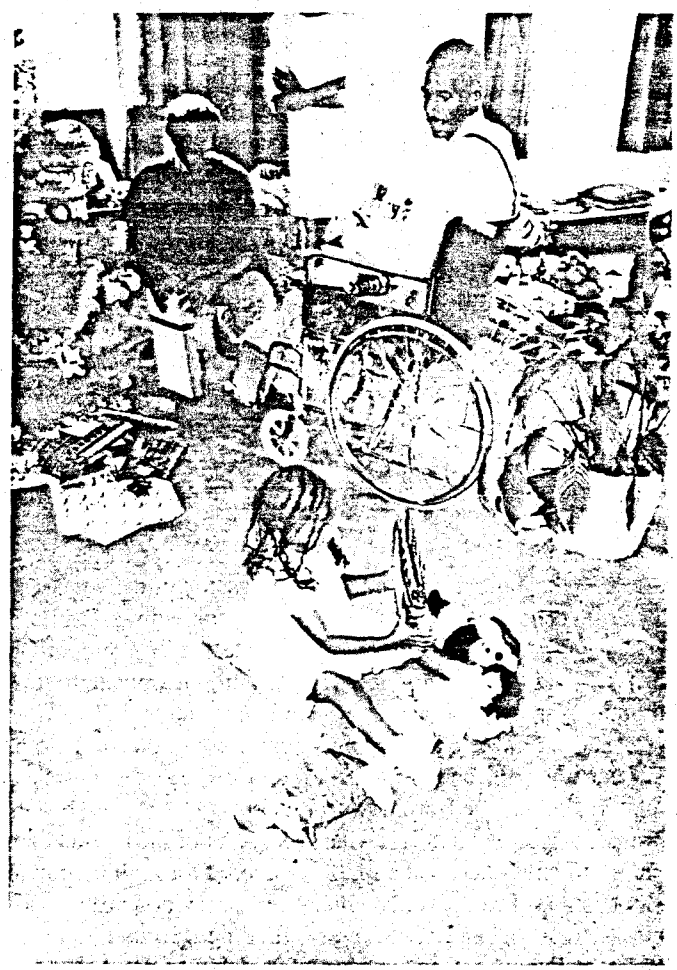
V: It's interesting, because most of the people we deal with are not Buddhist, most of them come from Christian backgrounds. The people that come work with us also come from a Christian background; but the understanding of the practice of Christianity to them has a similarity to what we try to do in our practices in Buddhism. So we have a very keen understanding on working together; we have a shared understanding. The emphasis is more on the meta, which is similar to agape in Christianity. So that gives us a type of balance point to work with.

P: Do the people that come to your hospice still continue to work or do they just stay here?

V: Most of the people that come here to the hospice are usually pretty sick. But we can be versatile because we're small. We get different types of people coming in who need different types of help. Because of the way the virus usually works, they're unable to hold a job, but we do encourage them to do things. Because if you put your mind on other things, you're able to deal more with the virus, too, and gain self-worth.

P: Do you create some sort of activities in the house for them to do, or are they unable because of their illnesses?

V: Some have bad days, but they do join in with house chores. We try to make them feel that they are part of a family, and try to do the normal things in which a family would do. Sometimes outside service providers might have things to offer. We hope to get volunteers to come and offer some type of art classes and different types of activities, so



they can replace some of the negative activities that were done in the past, since quite a few of the people are substance abusers and come from that type of background. So we have to find something to replace the activities that they're used to doing within substance abuse to other activities like art.

P: Do most of the clients have families of their own that help to care for them?

V: Most of them have families but don't have a relationship with them, perhaps because of the drugs or other activities; so the are estranged from their families. What we then do is to try and find out what the problem is. and if we can correct it, we indirectly try to help bring the family back together again, if we can. And we have been pretty successful doing that with a number of people. We only have two people who really don't have any family members at all. But for those who do have families, we try to help rebuild that family unit back, if we can find out what the problem and situation is. We then usually try to make that a priority if we can so that the family can deal with and understand the virus. A lot of people label it as: you have to be an IV-drug user; you have to be gay or a homosexual to contract this disease, but it's not so because anyone can get this disease. We just have to be careful and be aware and be educated enough because it's based on a lot of behavior; and behavior is not limited to any one group of people. But we have to learn about our behavior, for one thing, and once we do that we learn how to protect ourselves. so this is what we try to stress because a lot of emphasis has been placed on the disease being a certain way, and we're trying to get away from that now. They started using the term HIV instead of AIDS now. You say "AIDS" and everyone backs off. Now, with HIV, a lot of people are still not aware of it yet, but they are curious; then you can explain it to them and take the stigma away from this virus.

P: What is the daily schedule of the patients?

V: They usually go out for their medicines and to see their doctors, and different things. They can go out and do others activities if they want, too. When they come to us, they come with the understanding that this is not a prison or institution; the door is always there if they want to leave and never come back. So with that understanding they have a broad base of freedom to do things. So we try to find out what activities are available, let them know, and then they can go and attend these activities. We spend a lot of time talking with those who can't go out, like com, panionship, to help them deal with whatever it is they have to deal with or go through if they're bedridden, for example. But there's a number of activities that they could participate in, either with a particular service provider or in the community, i.e., movies, shows, picnics, library, going to the country, etc. But now we're trying to think of ways to develop some things for ourselves so we can have something in-house, like art classes and support groups, that might appeal to the individual clients. There's a lot of counseling, one-on-one talking.

P: How are the costs covered here?

V: A lot of the medical costs are covered through medicare. We get some donations and some funding. So this is how we go on a day to day basis - through donations and any type of help. Now we're trying to find people that can help us write proposals to build up the program.

P: Do you have any support from the Buddhist community here or in Asia?

V: We have gotten some support from the Buddhist community as well, too. We have gotten some funds from various Buddhist organizations and other things to help. And also some donations of things in kind; for example, today, we did a service for the Laotian community and they gave us a lot of food and things to bring for the people at the house to share. We look on that as being very good because the local Buddhist community here is still struggling to identify and adapt to this culture, but they do make an effort to offer some things to help the people. And the people here are usually very happy about that.

P: Can you give some of your background and training in Buddhism?

V: I started off as a trappist monk and my first hints of meditation were along the Zen line. The Pope (Paul) asked some of the volunteers of monks to go to Southeast Asia and to the East to learn Buddhist 0hilosophy and meditation.

P: And this is the trappist program in general?

V: Yes. And this is because of the activities of Thomas Merton and some of the Jesuit priests who lived in Japan and studied Zen or lived in India and studied Hinduism. So about 20 people in all went through the program. And so my first contact with the Buddhist practice was through Zen practice. I learned how to do Zen meditation with Suzuki. But as I went on and on and on...I discovered that I was a ritual type of person and became more

emersed in the Tibetan practices, combining the ritual and the meditations and the visualizations. I found that agreed with my nature, so it doesn't seem like a laborious job for me. Out of all the Buddhist schools, I know all the rituals. I made an effort to learn all of that type of practice. So I know how to do hundreds and hundreds of different types of rituals. I learned all this in the United State and in Asia. I spent time in Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim; and Dharamsala I go to quite a bit. I have 3 ordinations: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. I was also ordained a Catholic priest, as a trappist. So I'm incorporating a number of things because of the people that I deal with. I'm the first Afro-American to become a Buddhist monk.

V: Are you still a trappist monk?

P: Let's just say I'm a monk. Because Thomas Merton had the idea and the belief that monks are monks regardless of the religion. At one point many years ago, at the time of Alexandria, for example, monks used to come from all over the world to come together to study, to exchange ideas and spiritual views. And so I see myself as a monk; so I feel very comfortable in a trappist monastery; I feel very comfortable in a Buddhist monastery; and I feel very comfortable in a Hindu monastery. Because when I go to those places I'm going to learn something from somebody, spend time in retreat and share in their lifestyle. So I just see it more as a monk being a monk.

P: So you had a long period of study before you started any action?

V: No, you combine both action and study. Because once you become a Buddhist monk you just don't study for a certain amount of time and then you're finished. Because you have 108 books that you have to study, plus you have to study all the commentaries. So you spend a lifetime of study. So study and practice have to be a combination in Buddhist practice. I would like to say to the Thai community, especially concerning people and this illness, that there's a lot of fear and lack of understanding about this virus. And I hope many people will find some kind of a way to come together to help people who are going through this kind of trouble.

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CONSTRUCTIVE LIVING FOR THE MODERN AGE

From October 9 to 12, a group of Cambodian refugees and Thai NGO workers took part in a very special workshop at the Wongsanit Ashram about 60 kilometers northeast of Bangkok. The participants were exposed to a relatively recent form of "psychotherapy" called Constructive Living. In many ways, the term "psychotherapy" does not apply to this practice which has its roots in Japanese Buddhism and is wholly other from Western psychiatric practices. For four days, the 25 participants, who were mostly mental health professionals, were instructed in this two part method by American Gregg Krech who runs the Todo Institute in Washington D.C. and is coordinator of a local Buddhist Peace Fellowship chapter in that area. At the end of the workshop, it appeared that all the participants had learned a valuable tool for not only aiding their professional work but improving their own personal lives.

To first give a background on the training: Constructive Living consists of a two distinct methods of self-improvement which American Dr. David Reynolds has fused into one complete therapy. The first part of Constructive Living is a therapy developed in Japan after World War II by a doctor of the well known Jikei Medical School in Tokyo. The Morita therapy or philosophy or way of life is based on the Japanese concept of Jiriki or self-power and has its roots in the practice of Zen Buddhism. It teaches that there are many aspects of one's life which are uncontrollable such as the actions of others and

most importantly our own thoughts and feelings. Since we cannot control these things, we are inherently not responsible for them and must learn to accept them in our life. Such an outlook helps one to concentrate on the controllable present moment and to release anxiety about the uncontrollable past and future. Morita goes on to teach that one's behaviour is controllable. Though we may face problems from outside forces and have thoughts and feelings which disturb us, it is our actions which are the litmuss test of our lives. They are controllable through the development of discipline and maturity. It is the development of this Morita philosophy within the individual which can lead to a more responsible and rewarding way of life.

In Morita, we can use a series of principles to confront our disturbing feelings and thoughts which we so often use as excuses for our behaviour. These principles state that we cannot "fix" or "solve" our negative feelings buy that they will fade over time, except when restimulated. This latter point, therefore, diverges with traditional Western/Freudian psychotherapy which seeks to solve a patient's problems by having him/her call up and sort out past ill feelings and thoughts. Morita states that even unpleasant feelings come from beautiful places, e.g. depression over a divorce and a lost job show that an individual wants a good relationship and career. Thus, unpleasant feelings and thoughts need to be accepted and not labouriously delved into only causing further pain to the individual

Ultimately, Morita therapy is about figuring life out in action and experience and not in thought. What we do influences how we feel. Thus, if we can shift our focus away from our selves and our thoughts and feelings towards reality and our purpose in life or more sim ply our purpose for any given moment, we can experience a simpler and more rewarding life. We are free from suffering the moment we concentrate on reality and not on our suffering. This rationale shows Morita's Buddhist roots in a meditation on the present moment: Accept one's feelings, know one's purpose, do what needs to be done.

On the surface Morita can seem like a rather simplistic and overly rational way of going about life. This is where the second part of Constructive Living creates an effective foil for rounding out the practice. This second part is a method called Naikan which translated from the Japanese means "inside looking". It is a practice developed about 50 years ago by a Japanese business man named Yoshimoto. Naikan's roots also lie in Buddhism, but in contrast to Morita come from the Pure Land school of Japan known as Jodo Shinshu. In contrast to the self-power of meditation in Zen, Pure Land stresses Tariki or other power and the recitation of the Buddha of compassion and wisdom Amidha's name. This concentration on Tariki works to generate compassion and gratitude in the individual while striving to create a more balanced self-image.

As with the practice of Morita, Naikan seems quite simple in its method. However, one should not dismiss the practice as overly so, because it certainly can lead to very deep personal insight through intense self reflection. The practice consists very simply of answering three questions in relation to any close family member, friend, aquaintance, or even phenomena. They are: What have I received; What have I given?; What troubles and difficulties hjave I caused others? A particular emphasis is placed on the last question, and students are encouraged to spend more time on it. The student contemplates these questions usually with a close relative or an important relation over a fixed period of time.

Traditional Naikan is practiced in 7 to 10 day retreats in which a student contemplates these questions from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. exclusively with breaks only for eating and bathing. After segments of two hours,



the student will report his/her recollections to a facilitator who guides the student in his/her efforts but does not counsel the student in how to deal with the strong thoughts and feeling which may arise in such a practice. Ultimately, the practice can lead to a profound sense of humility and gratitude for what others provide and put up with in relating to ourselves. Such insight can also create a deeper humility and a more realistic self-image in the individual.

With all this to learn and practice in four days, most of the participants arrived at the Wongsanit Ashram on October 8 to be ready for the full day of instruction by Gregg beginning the following morning. The group of Cambodians consisted of various counselors and mental health advisors from the Site II refugee camp on the Thai-Cambodian border. As the camp is the largest (roughly 200,000 inhabitants) and one of the most violent and broken of the Khmer refugee camps, these representatives were highly keen to learn new methods to face the continuing emotional and psychological problems in the camps. The Thai representatives consisted of a cross section of psychiatrists, health professionals, and interested individuals from groups such as the Foundation for Children, Friends of Women, and the Isuzu Corporation.

Gregg spent the first two days concentrating on Morita which led to much discussion on the actual counselling of patients. Most of Gregg's explanations were very straight forward, and he often stressed the work of Constructive Living as a training or education with emphasis on a teacher-student relationship as opposed to a doctor-patient one. The student should verify all Morita teachings with what he/she actually experiences in practice and should never take the teachings simply on faith. Again in contrast to traditional Western psychotherapy, Gregg emphasized that once a student has learned the principles of Morita, he/she should discontinue regular Morita counseling. Gregg personally noted that he only counsels students for a maximum of 12 sessions.

By the end of the second day, we had broken up into smaller groups to experiment in a Morita Constructive Living Group Meeting such as the ones Gregg runs in Washington D.C. Such a meeting begins with each individual introducing his/herself and relating any ac complishments since the last meeting. The group then moves on to discuss Morita Constructive Living as it relates to a monthly and often predetermined topic such as health, relationships, doing our work with quality, etc. Finally, the meeting is concluded with the setting of specific and controllable goals for next meeting. Thus, by the end of the two day Morita workshop, we all had many ideas for individual and group counselling as well as a few guidelines for our own welfare. In addition, we all had begun to meet at 6:30 a.m for group meditation which helped to further the bond being created among the group during the regular sessions.

The third and fourth days were spent exploring Naikan therapy. In contrast to all the questioning and discussing of ideas during the Morita workshop, we spent much of the Naikan workshop in individual practice. In the spirit of Morita, Gregg told us that, "Taking action is always preferable to talking." And so we did. After a brief explanation of Naikan, we spent the next two days in mini-retreat contemplating our relationships in relation to those three key questions. At the end of each specific question, we were instructed to then write a letter of thanks and apology to the person which we had reflected upon. For many, this was the most individually rewarding part of the 4 day workshop. Many experienced very stong emotions in recollecting their pasts with their mothers, spouses, or close friends.

In addition, our daily routine became a little more intense. During mealtime we were instructed not to serve ourselves, only be served and not refuse anything that was offered. This practice was intended to foster acceptance and gratitude in what we received from others. It was a very good test for many of us since we had a variety of tastes in the group from vegetarians who could not pass up meat to Khmers and foreigners who could not pass up the extra chilli and sugar condiments which the Thais love on their food! In addition, we were also instructed to keep silent for the last day which was devoted totally to Naikan introspection. Sometimes we were not the best students ourselves as we would speak and sometimes make our coffee our own way, but many of us also took the opportunity to plunge into Naikan deeply and gain benefit from it.

On the last day, we discussed how to bring Naikan and Morita into one pratice as Constructive Living does. We also worked on plans for further action and developing Constructive Living Groups in Thailand and Cambodia. As Gregg told us that only about 100 people have done Naikan in the United States

and only 5,000 in Japan do Naikan every year, he emphasized that we were the first individuals to learn how to teach and practice Constructive Living in Thailand and Cambodia. This left us with the anxiety of the responsibility to continue on with these valuable ideas, but in the spirit of Morita we knew we were free to accept this anxiety and then practice Constructive Living in our own way and to try to develop it in our community if we sought that as a purpose.

As the time came to leave, many continuing coversations among Cambodians and Thais and Westerners had to conclude. Adresses were exchanged, thanks given, and we all packed into our respective buses for the jouney home. Upon reflection, we all want to give our greatest thanks to Gregg for taking time away from his busy schedule and his girlfriend back home to come to Thailand to teach us these very practical and useful principles which should enhance our lives and our work.

Personally, after exposure to various methods of Western group psychotherapy and eastern spirituality, I was very impressed by the clarity and simplicity of Morita and Naikan and Gregg's presentation. it seems so often that in searching for a new matrix with to sort out our lives and make them "easier", we end up adopting wildly complex and ritualistic philosophies which just give us another load of baggage to go along with the payload we already have. Instead of becoming lighter, we become heavier. We seem to get sucked into a kind of "spiritual materialism", attaining level 12 in New Age Transcendence or mastering the 4,332 marks of the enlightened sage. To me, one of the advantages of Constructive Living is its very down to earth, simple method which left me lighter at the end of the workshop and not burdened with a complex matrix I suddenly had to superimpose on my life. As a great blues guitarist said once to his overeager student, "Keep it simple". I truly believe that this applies to our lives. When we make a situation complex, it becomes as such. When we strive for simplicity in form and thought, it is simpler to see and solve problems. I think for some, Constructive Living can offer such a simpler and more effective way of living life.

JSW

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THE INTE
PEOPLE'
The Other Sit

After being held in the capitals of the industrialized world for more than a decade, the General Annual Meeting of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is coming to Bangkok.

Part of the reason for this choice is to show the example of Thailand's double-digit economic growth, which has been heralded as a success worldwide, organizers said in a press conference this week.

Gunning for the spot of "Asia's fifth tiger" - after the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong - Thailad's path to development has been viewed by the international funding community as a model for the region, and indeed, the rest of the Third World.

However, despite the praise and fanfare that has surrounded the build-up to this historic event, there is another picture of Thailand that contrasts with the image of a NIC. This other picture is composed of a plethora of ecological problems and growing social unrest in rural areas, where small communities are fighting with both state agencies and private companies for control over natural resources.

It is this "other picture" that will be the focus of a series of events organized by Thai and international non-governmental and people's groups that will take place

TIONAL ORUM : the Money

during the week preceding the official bankers' meeting next month.

The gatherings, dubbed the "People's Forum" to be held at Chulalongkorn University from October 8-18, will provide an arena for up to 1,000 rural people cand activists hoom Thailand and more than 50 other countries across the globe.

"The People's Forum will allow the world to hear people at grassroots level speak from their hearts about their success stories, their painful experiences, and how they have lived by using their own wisdom and knowledge," said Dr Prawase Wasi, a respected acad emic who is an adviser to the organizing committee.

"They will tell how they have survived despite the domination of modern industrial development promoted by governments and policy makers with the support of international aid," he said.

The Thai forum will take place from October 8-10 at the main auditorium of Chulalongkorn University. The programme of nine case studies includes.

- Small fisherfolk from the South of Thailand who have suffered from the ecological consequences of mangrove forests being cleared to make way for industrial shrimp farms, supported by the government. Rice farmers from the same area will also describe the impact of "saltwater irrigation", caused by the expansion of shrimp farms inland, on their agricultural land.

- Bangkok slum-dwellers will describe the reasons for migration away from rural areas and their problems with eviction and the quality of life in crowded and often unsanitary urban conditions. The Phai Singto community, which the government has tried to evict from their homes near the site of the newly-constructed National Conference Centre where the World Bank/IMF meeting is being held, will also relate their experience.

- Villagers from several regions of the country who have been resettled to make way for large hydro-electric and irrigation dams (some funded by the World Bank) and people who are currently resisting plans to build new dams like Pak Mool, will present their struggles. Northern farmers who continue to practise the muang fai traditional irrigation system will also describe their alternatives to large-scale, centrally-controlled water management.

Other topics to be covered include land conflicts, forests, water, agriculture, hand cloth-weaving, and hilltribes.

"Thailand is a very good example of both positive and negative aspects of mainstream development in a Third World country," said Prof Dr Saneh Chamarik, president of the Non-governmental Organization Coordinating Committee on Rural Development (NGO-Cord) and chairman of the event.

He said despite 10 per cent national economic growth, Thailand is confronting huge problems, mostly caused by mismanagement of natural resources and dispossession of local people, which have created social problems such as labour migration, expanding slums, prostitution and environmental degradation.

"The World Bank will only be a symbolic target, as the largest single funder of development activities in the Third World. We want to educate the public about the failures of this kind of development and show that there are alternatives to the destructive, unsustainable approach," he said.

Meanwhile the International Forum will take place on the seventh floor of the Graduate Institute for Business Administration (Giba) in the Chulalongkorn University campus between October 13 and 16.

Speakers will be from Malaysia, India, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Zimbabwe, Brazil, Taiwan, South Korea, and Mexico. They will present case studies under four main themes - forests, water, agriculture and industrialization. Organizers said participants have also been invited from Europe, North America, Japan and Australia.

The programme includes talks on the following topics:

- Social forestry in Karnataka State of India, promoted vigorously by the World Bank since the 1970s, which involved large-scale plantations of eucalyptus trees that have been seriously criticized by ecologists and local people.

- The rapid and uncontrolled urbanization in the Central American city, and impacts on the quality of life of people, especially in the slums.

- The links between flooding in Bangladesh and deforestation in Nepal, and efforts of local people's organizations to protect the watersheds.

- A critique of agro-industry for export in Brazil, promoted by the government and international funders, and an expose of alternative ecological agriculture that does not destroy rainforests or



pollute waterways with chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

- The social and ecological impacts of rapid industrialization in the East Asian NICs and their experiences of "alternative development" strategies.

The impact of large-scale development projects on the environment and people has been the subject of much discussion in the last five years. Since the mid 1980s, the World Bank/IMF meetings in Washington and Berlin (in 1988) have been accompanied by "parallel" events organized by non-governmental organizations critical of the policies and practices of the world's largest development funding agency.

Growing pressure on the Bank over disastrous projects like the Balbina Dam in the Brazilian Amazon and the Narmada Dam, which is currently under construction in India, have led to a number of changes in the Bank - including expansion of its environment department, tightening of environmental conditions for new loans, and a new tropical forest policy.

"But we have realized that the problem is not just the World Bank or any other single funding agency or even our own government... It is a concept of development that sees only material growth for a few, while overlooking the needs of the poor majority," said Prof Saneh.

Sustainble development depends on sustainability of rural communities, added Prawase. "The world's development should be based on harmonious co-existence between human beings and nature," he siad.

While a new generation of Westerners are trying to overcome consumerism and materialism brought on by industrialization, and starting to ask themselves what the "post-industrial society" will look like, Thailand is still being dragged into the industrial model, he said.

"Although science and technology are developing, the mind of the people is not. And this brings confusion and unrest to the world," he said.

The People's Forum is being held with the hope that villagers' experiences will arouse public awareness of the negative impacts of the country's development, some of which were funded by the World Bank and IMF, he said.

Not expecting to change the development strategies of either the Thai government or the World Bank, organizers said they hoped criticism and proposals from the grassroots level will raise public awareness and increase pressure for change in the long term.

PEOPLE'S FORUM

1991 BANGKOK THAILAND

Recommendations from the Thai forum will be compiled and presented at next year's United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, or the "Earth Summit", in Brazil, organizers said.

Suda Kanjanawanawa
The Nation

Arguments that Hold Water

Once a year, farmers in the northern provinces organize a spiritual rite, seub chata lamnam, to thank rice spirits for protecting their water resources in the past year and to ask them to continue to do so in the coming year.

Believing that streams and rivers are protected by these spirits, villagers have always been careful in the way they use the water. Farmers all over the north have traditionally irrigated their fields using muang faay. This is a tried and tested system of syphoning water from a stream to irrigate a field without blocking up the stream and preventing other farmers downstream from also using it.

A muang faay consists of a small weir made out of mud or a few logs thrown across the stream and a simple drainage system that channels water from the weir to the rice field. But not all the water is syphoned off and water that is not used flows downstream past the weir.

Under the government's development plans, however, these traditional muang faay systems have been undermined by huge, concrete hydro-electgric-cum-irrigation dams that have been built on rivers all over the country.

After the completion of Bhumibhol Dam, the country's first hydro-electric dam on the Ping River in 1964, the network of muang faay that had long been in place along this water route became redundant.

Farms were being supplied with water from canals that led from the dam. Villagers no longer controlled their own irrigation systems. They were now totally dependent on this giant, concrete dam.

The north of Thailand consists mainly of mountain ranges that used to be covered by thick forest. These mountain forests were watersheds that kept the entire region supplied with water. There were numerous streams that farmers could use to irrigate their farms.

These farmers would build any number of muang faay along a single stream and that would keep all their fields irrigated. This was a self-sustaining system that did not alter or damage the ecosystem and it worked for generations. The farmers were able to grow rice and vegetables and raise poultry and pigs this way, without any problems. The farmers also gathered herbal medicines, bamboo shoots and mushrooms from the rich forests. They got most of their protein from fish which they caught from the streams.

Then government agencies started to look on these traditional methods of farming as "out-of-date". With the first National Economic Development Plan 35 years ago, the government encouraged farmers to expand their farms to grow cash crops for export. Part of the package was the promise that the government would provide farmers with "modern" irrgation systems.

So the country's first huge irrigation dam, the Chao Phrya, was constructed in Chai NAT province in 1957. This was followed by the Bhumibhol Dam in Tak, the Sirikit Dam in Uttraradit and another 23 large dams all over the country. Most of the dams were funded by the World Bank.

It wasn't long before this "development policy" came under attack by conservationists who claimed that not only was it threatening the environment and its natural resources, it was also disrupting the way-of-life of the farmers and undermining their "local wisdom".

The watersheds, the critics said, were being depleted through deforestation caused mainly by logging but also by the building of dams and roads in forest areas. Consequently even the reservoirs created by the large dams could accumulate enough water to supply the farms.

A study on Local Water Management Systems conducted by the Project for Ecology Recovery (PER) this year, showed that out of 26 large dam reservoirs, 16 contained less than 75 per cent of their capacity. The Bhumibhol and Sirikit dam reservoirs, for example, contained just 39 and 45 per cent of their respective capacities of water.

The Irrigation Department had to ask farmers in some areas to delay their planting until they could be supplied with water.

The water level in the reservoir of the government's latest dam, Chiew Larn, in Surat Thani, is currently 20 metres lower than its high-level mark. environmentalists say this is due to deforestation in the reservoir's watershed. But biologists working in the area also suspect that it could be because the dam is leaking due to bad construction methods.



Once watersheds are deforested, soil erosion on the slopes accelerates. The eroded soil ends up as sediment in a reservoir and this can also reduce its holding capacity.

The Water Management study recommended that the government stop building large dams and encourage farmers to revert to traditional irrigation methods.

"In the North, 19 per cent of agricultural land is irrigated by modern irrigation systems. The other 81 per cent still depend on muang faay," said the study.

One of the researchers, Porntip Boonkrob, said that provincial governments remained stubborn about choosing large concrete dams over traditional weirs for their water-supply system.

"There are many differences between weirs made from mud, logs or bamboo and those made of concrete. One difference is the sediment problem. Weirs made from mud or logs allow sediment, which is organic, to pass through the barriers. The sediment keeps the areas downstream fertile.

"But concrete dams totally block sediment from passing through them. this means that the sediment collects in the reservoir in front of the dam and so the reservoirs have to be dredged periodically. Otherwise, their holding capacity can be seriously reduced," explained Porntip.

The study will be presented on October 10 at a session of the People's Forum, a parallel meeting to the World Bank/IMF Conference to be held in Bangkok the middle of this month. The meeting is organized by local and international non-government organizations to illustrate alternative concepts of development.

Nantiya Tangwisuttijit
The Nation
October 5, 1991

BURMA :

Diversionary Tactics

I was born in Burma and so was my father and my grandfather," says Shah Alam, a 30-year-old farmer from the Muslim-dominated Buthidaung area in the northernmos Tcorner of Burma's Arakan state. "I had two acres of land which I had inherited from my forefathers."

Despite his antecedents, the Burmese authorities considered Shah Alam an illegal immigrant from Bangladesh and drove him out. Since May, Shah Alam has lived with his wife, their five children and over 200 other destitute and starving refugees in the small settlement of Maricha Palong south of Cox's Bazar, near Bangladesh's border with Burma.

There is no camp as such - the refugees are squatting in abandoned buildings and in makeshift shelters in open fields. Every day they are joined by more families crossing the Naaf border river into Bangladesh. According to private relief workers along the frontier, the number of Muslim refugees from Burma stands at 16,000. More are expected to come as soon as the rainy season ends and the jungle routes from Arakan again become passable.

Shah Alam and his group decided to stay in Maricha Palong because it was close to an Islamic centre and a hospital built by Saudi Arabia's Rabita missionary organisation in 1978, the last time Muslims fled in large numbers from Burma. In that year, the Burmese Government unleashed a campaign code-named Naga Min, or Dragon King, driving more than 200,000 Muslims from Arakan across the border into Bangladesh. The Rangoon authorities then claimed they were carrying out a "routine check on illegal immigrants" and that "a few Bengalis who had no citizenship papers left the country."

The refugees who arrived in the 13 camps established across southeastern Bangladesh in 1978 told stories of killings, rape, pillage and arson committed by the

Burmese army. Many produced citizenship papers to visiting journalists to prove they were not illegal immigrants, as Rangoon claimed, but bona fide Burmese citizens. That refugee crisis was eventually settled after rising concern in Muslim countries led to intervention by the UN.

Judging from numerous interviews conducted by the REVIEW in Maricha Palong and other refugee settlements along the Burma-Bangladesh border, there seems to be little doubt that Rangoon is now carrying out a similar campaign against Arakan's Muslims - a minority known as Rohingya who insist they are different from both the Buddhist Arakanese and Bangladesh's majority Bengali population.

The latest campaign seems to have begun two years ago, when the Burmese Government started moving people into new satellite towns. Diplomats then described this policy as an attempt to impose more effective military control over the population in the aftermath of the 1988 mass uprising for democracy (REVIEW, 25 Jan.'90). In late 1989, the campaign reached Akyab, Arakan's state capital. The old Muslim neighbourhood of Sakkipara was razed and thousands of people were resettled at a site which lacked sanitation, drinking water and other basic facilities, a source from Akyab said.

By October 1990, the campaign had reached Mawdaung and Buthidaung, closer to the Bangladesh border. Shah Alam's village, along with six other neigh bouring Rohingya settlements, were demolished and their land confiscated by the army. A new military camp was built on the site, and at least three additional battalions of government troops were deployed in the border area.

Thousands of Rohingyas and other civilians were mustered as unpaid labour for the construction and maintenace of the new camp and other "border development projects" in the area, including a stretch of the Asian Highway now being built through Arakan.

Refugees interviewed by the REVIEW who said they had been forced to perform such duties were of both sexes and ranged between 10 and 60 years old. "At last, it became unbearable. I decided to flee to Bangladesh," Shah Alam said. Another source from Buthid aung said many mosques and other Muslim institutions in the area had been boarded up; some were even wrecked by the army. Buddhist Arakanese settlers were then brought in to populate deserted Rohingya villages. Many refugees claimed that Rohingya women had been systematically raped by government troops.

Most of these refugee claims are supported by independent observers, including Dhaka-based diplomats. They report that the entire area along the Bangladesh border is becoming increasingly militarised, and that the local Muslim population is suffering as a result.

The number of government troops in Mawdaung and Buthidaung has more than doubled over the past year and is now believed to be close to 10,000, including several contingents from the Lon Htein, a paramilitary security force that earned notoriety in Rangoon for its brutal handling of the pro-democracy movement in 1988. Helicopter landing pads have been built along the border, armoured vehicles now routinely patrol the road between Mawdaung and Buthidaung and new naval vessels have been seen in Akyab harbour.

The question remains: why is Burma's military junta doing this, and why now? In 1978, diplomatic observers believed Operation Naga Min was devised by the authorities to distract the population from the country's political and economic difficulties.

By targeting the vulnerable Muslim Rohingya minority, Who many Burmese still insist are Bengalis, the government could expect support even from its domestic critics. Anti-Indian sentfiments have always been strong in Burma, and many Burmese fear - with some justification - that their country could turn into another Assam if strict controls are not imposed on the movement of people from over crowded Bangladesh to the sparsely populated ricelands of Arakan.

Observers generally agree that the current campaign may have been launched for similar reasons. But the systematic way in which it is being conducted indicates that Burma's military may also have other motives.

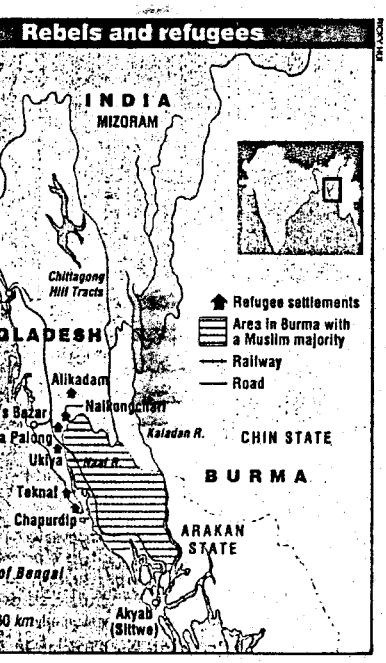
Since the 1950s the Burmese army has been unique in having its own ideology. To some extent it resembles the dwifungsi (dual function) doctrine of the Indonesian army, which holds that the military has both a defence and a socio-political role. The Burmese army carried the issue of an ideology somewhat further and formulated "the Burmese Way to Socialism" when the military first seized power in 1962. It was only discarded in 1988 following demonstrations against military rule.

The military regime's new ideology is summed up in slogans such as "multi-party system," "free enterprise" and "an open door economy," which represent - at least on the surface - a total reversal of the previous orthodoxy. A recent cartoon in the state-run Working People's Daily newspaper indicated another element in the military's efforts to rally the

Burman majority: while unruly civilian politicians squabbled over "this-ism" and "that-ism," a soldier said: "I have only one 'ism,' and that's Buddhism."

Other cartoons in the state-run media have ridiculed people of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi who is married to a Briton - and commentaries have urged people to eat, dress and behave like "pure Burmese."

"The Burmese Way to Socialism has been substituted with extreme, Burman-Buddhist chauvinism, and non-conformist fringe groups such as the Rohingyas suffer as a result," was how one long-time Burma watcher described the present mood in the country.



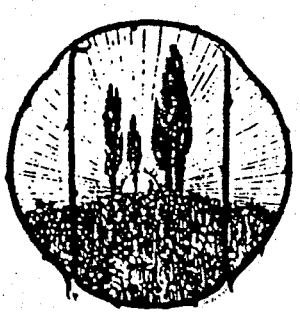
Observers also see the recent drives to bring the sangha, or Buddhist order of monks, more firmly under state control as part of the same process. The monks were the last force to pose any serious challenge to army rule when they decided a year ago to refuse to perform religious rites for military personnel. That boycott ended when troops raided more than 100 monasteries in the northern city of Mandalay, where the monks' movement had been strong.

The sangha now appears to have been cowed into submission, and the state media carries almost daily reports of senior army officers offermg colour television sets to monasteries and paying respect to senior monks. "They're doing everything to show the people they are devout Buddhists," a Rangoon-based observer said.

But while the crackdown on the sangha, and the campaign against outside cultural influences, may be seen as an internal affair, the drive abainst the Muslims is not. Over-populated Bangladesh is hardly in a position to accommodate thousands more refugees from Burma, in addition to the hundreds of thousands of people of Burmese origin already living in the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar area. The recent influx is causing severe frictions between the newcomers and the local population, especially in the sensitive Chittagong Hill Tracts area where many Burmese Muslims have sought refuge.

Exactly what the Burmese army is doing along the Bangladesh border may become clearer with the advent of the dry season in October-November. According to one analyst: "That's when refugees will start moving again in larger numbers - and more extensive military manoeuvers may begin."

Bertil Lintner
Far Eastern Economic Review
29 August 1991



INTERNATIONAL BUR CONFERENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Karuna Center, located in the US, is engaged with the people of Burma in the movement for democratic reforms and human rights. The director of Karuna Center, Dr. Paula Green, is on the Steering Committee of INEB. In conjunction with INEB and with INEB's Burma Project, Paula has made two trips to the Burma border to investigate conditions, meet with the leadership, teach students and document her observations and reactions for the Western press and public. On the second journey Paula and INEB brought 15 delegate-activists with them, so that others could witness and work for democracy in Burma.



Karuna Center saw the need to bring together the Burmese community in exile in the US and Canada, Western activists concerned about Burma and the leading NGO's working in such areas as human rights or environmental policy in Burma. Such a gathering was seen as necessary because

the task of restoring democracy to Burma is very complex and challenging and more cooperation is needed between the different organizations if such a task can be accomplished. Alone, each organization works in isolation without learning of the efforts and directions of other organizations holding the same aims.

Karuna Center sent a letter of inquiry to leading NGO's and Burma activists and scholars regarding their interest in a Burma coalition meeting. Because the response was so positive, a coordinating committee meeting was held in Washington DC in October, facilitated by Karuna Center and overseas Burmese members of CRDB, the Committee for Restoration of Democracy in Burma. At that time, final plans were made for the Burma Coalition Meeting, which will take place in Washington DC in November.

Dr. Sein Win, head of the NCGUB, (National Coalition Govt of Union of Burma) will be in the US at that time and will be the keynote speaker. Other speakers will be scholars and activists concerned with Burma. Representatives from all the leading NGO's, such as Amnesty International Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network, Asia Watch, Asia Resource Center and so forth have promised to attend. Delegates are expected from the US, Canada and Europe.

The focus of the meeting is action. This is not an information meeting to learn about Burma. It is focused on creating an all-Burma organization in the US and instituting those actions that can directly affect change for the people of Burma. Conference results will be reported in the next Seeds of Peace.

Paula Green

THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE SLORC

The three years since 1988 have seen conditions affecting the environment in Burma change dramatically with the coming into existence of the SLORC military regime. The changes have undisputably been for the worse. While the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), the previous military regime, had presided over severe attrition of the forests, other resources such as the fisheries, and oil, gas and mineral deposits remained largely undisturbed. The seas were exploited by the local fishermen without depletion of the resources. Wildlife populations were in decline, but with a few exceptions, not under severe threat. In comparison with other countries in the region environmental damage was moderate.

The changes wrought by the SLORC and it's policies have devastated the forests and the seas, and continue to do so. They have been a causal factor in natural disasters such as the recent flooding and fires and have seriously worsened the already poor conditions for tens of millions of people.

The main cause of this is the way the SLORC's so-called "open door" policy has been implemented. The "open door" policy is essentially the offering up of the country's wealth of natural resources to foreign enterprises at what are extremely low prices in order to maintain its tenuous grasp on power. The granting of fisheries,, timber, mining and oil concessions has been done with very little regard to the effects on the environment and the people and wildlife that inhabit it.

If one is to understand the present situation in Burma, it is necessary to perceive the nature of the SLORC. This is helped by knowing a little of the history of the last few decades.

Burma has been under the rule of military dictators for twenty-nine years. The BSPP regime of General Ne Win, from the 1962 coup d'etat to his resignation in 1988, demonstrated a lack of ability in managing the country's economy. This resulted in the country's status being reduced to that of a "Least Developed Country" from it's former status of being one of the most prosperous countries in Southern Asia and the world's leading exporter of rice. In 1988, General Ne Win, faced with a national uprising led by the students, virtual state bankruptcy, and external pressure for reforms, called an extraordinary



congress. In the congress, he acknowledged the failure of BSPP policies, made recommendations for economic reforms including encouraging private enterprise and foreign investment, and resigned - but left behind an appointed successor.

The SLORC took power in an exceptionally bloody pseudo-coup several months later after massive street domonstrations toppled Ne Win's appointees, and proceeded to implement policies roughly based on the suggestions made by Ne Win.

Reasons given by the regime for the BSPP's failure were;

"That there was little coordination among different sectors of the state economic enterprises.

That production had declined and that the productive sector was not operating along commercial lines.

That working skills had deteriorated, and losses and waste were not controlled"

These were the results of decades of nepotism, graft and institutionalized corruption and the lackof qualifications of many of the persons appointed to powerful positions without suitable skills. These are also some of the characteristics of the SLORC that, along with other traits, are now leading to some of the worst environmental destruction in the world.

The concessions granted to foreign and local businessmen, military officers and politically connected persons are subject to minimal control. Such controls as those applied are mainly as a means of extracting bribes by local Law and Order Restoration Council members, military and police. Also a large proportion of the concessions, for example all the Thai logging concessions in the Karen, Mon, Karenni and Shan states, the fishing concessions along the Tenasserim and Arakan coasts and some of the oil joint ventures that have been granted are in areas the SLORC does not control or has only partial control over.

The primary reason these concessions were granted was not only to generate as much foreign exchange as possible but to undermine the relationships and economic bases of the ethnic revolutionaries. Because the areas are a war zone, the SLORC's ability to police environmental abuses is almost non-existent-even if it was their intention to so do. The fact that the concessions were granted under such circumstances shows that there is no such genuine intention.

Such regulation of excesses that there is, is done mostly by the ethnic revolutionaries themselves who have taken strong measures against, for example, fishing boats that are known to have used dynamite to kill fish. Several have been sunk after the effect this has on the local people's and fishermen's livelihoods became apparent. The same logic applies to a limited extent in the forests, where destructive logging operations have been disrupted by the guerrillas. These actions, which set the guerrillas against the Thai military backed logging and fishing companies, have in some cases served the interests of the SLORC.

Environmental issues are generally little understood in Burma. Indeed, most people are completely unaware of the global concern about the environment, and are aware of the problems only through the SLORC's propaganda or as only when they are affected by them directly. This is to a large extent a result of the isolationist policies of the regime, its extremely tight control of the media, and backwardness of the state controlled education system. It is notable that in the period of



the worst devastation of nature that the country has ever seen, that the country is under martial laws that strictly control the press, that people are strongly discouraged from talking to foreigners, and the universities and most other centers of learning have been closed for nearly three years.

The military elites, while many of them are poorly educated, do understand very well the effects of their actions on the environment, and have taken pains to downplay the effects of their actions. In March 1990 they formed the National Commission for Environmental Affairs. This was done shortly after the announcement of the first logging and fishing concessions, and coincided with a seminar in Rangoon and Yezin, the forest department headquarters. Members of the United Nations agencies and regional specialists were represented at the seminar, and they were apparently impressed by the SLORC's presentations of the Forest Departments "Burma Teak

Selection System" and it's stated intentions to improve the enforcement of forestry practices, to increase the extent of reserved forests and etc. This kind of action by the SLORC is actually a part of its "policies of deception".

Their deceptions have been so successful to date it seems that recently the United Nations gave the SLORC's environmental white-washing institution, the National Commission for Environmental Affairs, over US $ 600,000 for unspecified purposes. It is evident however, that the SLORC does not have the slightest inclination to stop the destruction of the country's once pristine environment as the processes of it's destruction generates the foreign exchange it needs to maintain it's hold on power. The money given by the United Nations Agencies to the SLORC, presumably for environmental abuse control, is therefore more likely to go towards the financing of the SLORC officials' attempts to deceive.

September 1991

A VISIT TO SRI LANKA

It was planned that we, the INEB secretariat, would visit Sri Lanka by the second week of August to follow up on the "Buddhism and Reconcilitaion in Sri Lanka" seminar as well as to encourage monks to carry on their work as a result of their non-violence training in Thailand. During the final evaluation week of last April's conference, it was agreed that the Dhammavedi Institute in Colombo would play a role in supporting the 28 monks who participated in the conference by having 5 monks working full-time at the Institute to coordinate the whole group. Half of the funds for this were raised among the 28 monks and the other half by INEB.

Four months later, I, as a representative for Ajahn Sulak who was busily engaged in Bangkok and could not come, visited Colombo and some neighboring temples. The trip was divided into three main parts: visiting social work projects run by monks such as orphanages, nursing homes, and forest meditation monasteries; visiting our monks initiative projects and projects improved since the conference in Thailand such as Kalayana Mithra Samajaya in Ruwanwella and a community development project at the Nugawela temple; taking part in religious ceremonies such as the Buddhist Puja in the evenings and opening a library.

It had been announced that Ajahn Sulak would come to give a speech at each temple, therefore, each temple performed very elegant processions to welcome the delegation from Thailand. As a representative of Ajahn Sulak, I was highly appreciative at receiving such a warm welcome from respectful monks and devotees. The first thing I felt was that Sri lankan Buddhists are very de voted to the temple. Laypersons from all walks of life and all ages get together at the Puja ceremony at 7:00 p.m. everyday. Once at the Raja Maha Vihara, a 600 year old temple, I met an agriculture minister in white dress, the national costume, just simply coming to join the devotees at the Puja ceremony. I was impressed by the ceremony at which devotees stand in a circle and pass a basket of flowers and other offerings. It

seems that Dhamma school is the basic activity of each temple. Afterwards, some may move up to vocational skill activities such as sewing and working at orphanages or nursing homes.

I was looking forward to visiting Kalayana Mithra Samajaya in Ruwanella north of Colombo. it was founded by Ven. Y. Ananda, an active 35 year old monk. He told us that his idea of setting up a group of young men to do something beneficial for their own community came to him since his visit to Thailand. After visiting several of his projects, it was clear that he had acted on the ideas discussed among the participants during the last week in Thailand. The whole group also responded quite well and came to agreement in selecting a young man from each community.

Kalayana Mithra Samajaya is a training project for young men ages 15 to 16 from different towns. There 38 young men in total including 1 Tamil, 1 Christian, and 1 Muslim, to the majority Sinhalese. The purpose of the non-violence training is to: create kalayanamithra (good friendship) as the basis of friendships, increase awareness of ecological problems, and learn more about non-violence itself. It is a 7- day training at which a Quaker was also invited to give a single day session on non-violence. In all, it was very new and attractive to the young men to make friends and deal with new teachers. It was new to the villagers as well. During the sessions, a group of almost 100 observed.

As to the future of this group, Ven. Ananda said he is very content with the group, seeing the young men take turns speaking in public and learning to be good friends. He also has an idea for Samanera ordination but wants to consult with the other monks from the conference group. These boys will go back to their respective villages to set up a group of at least 10 friends in their village according to Ven. Ananda's plan. In the future, he will take some of them to visit Thailand. During the conference in Thailand, Ven. Ananda distinguished himself with his enthusiasm to express ideas.

The 16 monks from the conference group that I was able to meet were very impressed by the Thai Buddhist monks' development initiatives. Some of the group have made initiatives to improve conditions in their communities. While others are not in positions to initiate projects at least they better understand a monk's role in other Theravada countries like Thailand, Burma, and Cambodia. Certainly, it seems that lessons of the conference have taken root at Kalaya Mithra Samajaya.

My report would not be complete if I did not mention the rest of the Thai delegation composed of Phra Maha Somsiam, a representative of the Thai Sangha who lives in Sri Lanka. He is a very popular speaker who's sermons are also very practical. Our friend Raja Dharmapala who coordinates the Dharmavedi Institute was also very helpful and enthusiastic in arranging the whole program for our trip.

Supaporn Pongpruk





HUMAN RIGHTS IN SIAM :

The cases of Phra Prachak and Prof. Sulak Sivaraksa

The month of September has brought events in Thailand into critical perspective. At the six month mark of the National Peace Keeping Council's (NPKC) expulsion of the Chatichai government and usurpation of power through a bloodless coup, the progress towards democracy has been nil and the human rights has grown worse. September witnessed increased posturing by the leaders of the NPKC to secure power in the face of calls for the passing of a constitution and the holding of elections. In the meantime, various leaders of Thai society have come under attack for their protests of the NPKC's policies. Thailand's community leaders from political parties to student organizations to non-governmental groups are now waiting to see what will take place in the wake of the World Bank-IMF international conference which has the NPKC calling loudly for peace and harmony.

The first example of human rights abuses in September concerns the ongoing story of Dong Yai forest, the village of Hua Nam Phut, and its leading monk who lives in the forest, Phra Prachak. Phra Prachak is a traditional wandering monk, the type that travels from forest to forest village to village, on foot practicing meditation and living the life of an ideal homeless Bhikkhu according to the teaching of the Buddha.

In 1989, after 12 years in robes, he arrived at Dong Yai forest in Prakum district in Buri Ram province, Northeastern Thailand. Not knowing in advance the existing conflicts between the villagers and the authorities in the area, he decided to settle down there with the full agreement and encouragement of the villagers to help him establish

a monastery. He did this because the forest is so rich, and he saw villagers starting to cut down trees for timber. One condition he made with the villagers was that they would help him protect this 12,000 acres of forest for practicing Dhamma and ecological conservation.

The monk soon learned that the 12 villages in this area are in dispute with the authorities, especially the military who has been trying to relocate them elsewhere on poor pieces of land as the present land they are living on is a "Nationally Preserved Forest". However, these villagers moved into it many decades ago with the permission of the military who used them as a front to fighting against a resurgent movement in the area. Now that the military's mission has been successful and the villagers are no longer needed, they have been asked to leave in the name of forest conservation. But the hidden motive of the military is clear to the villagers. The military allowed a private company which runs paper factories to plant eucalyptus and bamboo on the land of the villagers forcefully. According to environmentalists, eucalyptus trees offer a quick growing source of paper pulp while destroying the soil and depleting water resources. In addition, this plan robs villagers of any local economic autonomy by making the area dependent on the eucalyptus plantations. Why does, this company, not the villagers, have the right to this land? In reaction, the villagers have twice burned the eucalyptus plantations, and their leaders have been twice arrested in the past few years.

To calm down the resistance, the local authorities have allowed local business men to hire the villagers to cut down the big trees in the forest. Once the big trees are cut that piece of forest can be called "degraded forest" and deserve "reforestation" which means the company can come in and use the land. Once Phra Prachak understood these complications, he contemplated upon what skillful means could be used to protect this forest and "tree ordination" came to his mind. Traditionally, Thai people tie yellow robes around sacred trees, believing that there is a spirit who can do harm or good to the people around it. Hence, the tree will be respected and protected.

With this idea as a background, Phra Prachak organized a big ceremony to ordain Dong Yai forest at which 2,000 people attended. Yellow robes were tied around big trees and white sacred ropes were circled around the whole forest. This skillful mean worked perfectly as from then on villagers in that area didn't cut down any more trees in the forest. But it turned Phra Prachak into the enemy of those who wanted to exploit the forest. A series of harassments were plotted against him including shooting a machine gun into his monastery when he was performing ceremonies, trying to divide the villagers who support him by discriminating measures, and putting pressure on the villagers to leave the area. Immediately after the February coup d'etat, harassment was increased as the military destroyed parts of villages with tractors and subsequently arrested Phra Prachak for protesting this action.

On September 5, Phra Prachak led a group of villagers on a journey to visit nearby Ban Sratakhien village which a few days earlier had been attacked by soldiers who had destroyed the villagers tapioca crops in an effort to force them off their land. The Ban Sratakhien village was under the same plan as HuaNam Phut for relocation, and the villagers had shown a similar resistance. On the way, the Hua Nam Phut villagers were stopped by soldiers on the road and asked for identification. When some of them continued on foot, a melee broke out with soldiers accusing Phra Prachak of initiating the violence, and villagers arguing that it was the soldiers with batons and rifles who had attacked the relatively helpless villagers. In the aftermath, Phra Prachak was again arrested, and villagers from the Buri Ram province who had resisted relocation were not granted new land or homes whilst in the heart of rainy season.

On September 25th, upon receiving bail and spending some time in Bangkok to let tempers cool, Phra Prachak returned to his village with an entourage of community and student leaders and press to be witnesses to his safekeeping. Harassment continues to this day to those who support Phra Prachak, such as popular Thai singer Yuenyong Opakul who has had attempts made on his life.

The second human rights abuse has been the harassment of social critic and democracy movement activist Professor Sulak Sivaraksa. In the wake of his speech on "Regression of Democracy After the February Coup" made at Thammassat University on Au-



gust 22nd, Army Commander-in-Chief, head of the NPKC, and newly appointed Supreme Commander General Suchinda Kraprayoon charged Sulak with "lese majeste" and personal defamation. The charges stemmed from various comments about the misuse of the monarchy for political advantages and suppression of criticism and accusations that the leaders of the NPKC had secretly visited Burma to acquire logging concessions and learn of coup d'etat.



In the speech itself, Sulak initially challenged the NPKC's reasons for overthrowing the Chatichai government. The NPKC's criticisms of the Chatichai government were that it was corrupt, had abused civil servants, was a parliamentary dictatorship, did not investigate a plot against the monarchy and the queen, and was not democratic enough. On the first point, Sulak challenged the NPKC's own corrupt administration and, here, made his comment about military leaders visiting Burma for logging concessions and lessons in coup d'etat. His challenge on the second point was that the NPKC has proposed the abolition of local elections and subdistrict headmen while General Issarapong Noonpakdee serves the dual role of NPKC Secretary and Minister of the Interior in the government. On the third point, Sulak rhetorically asked, "And is the NPKC not a dictatorship?". On the fourth point, he claimed that the NPKC had done nothing on this matter either, and on the fifth point, he claimed further negligence by the NPKC in order to secure its own candidate for the elections.

In the next body of the speech, Sulak focused on the actions of a desirable government in connection with four important concepts in Thai culture: the nation, the religion, the king, and the constitution. Concerning the constitution, Sulak remarked that there are no provisions in the constitution invalidating the declarations made by leaders of coup d'etats and that the traditional Thai system requiring all laws to be ratified by the king and enforced by the government have been ignored by past and current coup leaders. "Therefore, leaders of every coup, especially of the last coup, should be accused of lese majeste." He went on the criticize the corruption of the legal system, the monolithic party line of the educational system, and the ignoring of villagers demands and needs as problems needed to be addressed in the next constitution.

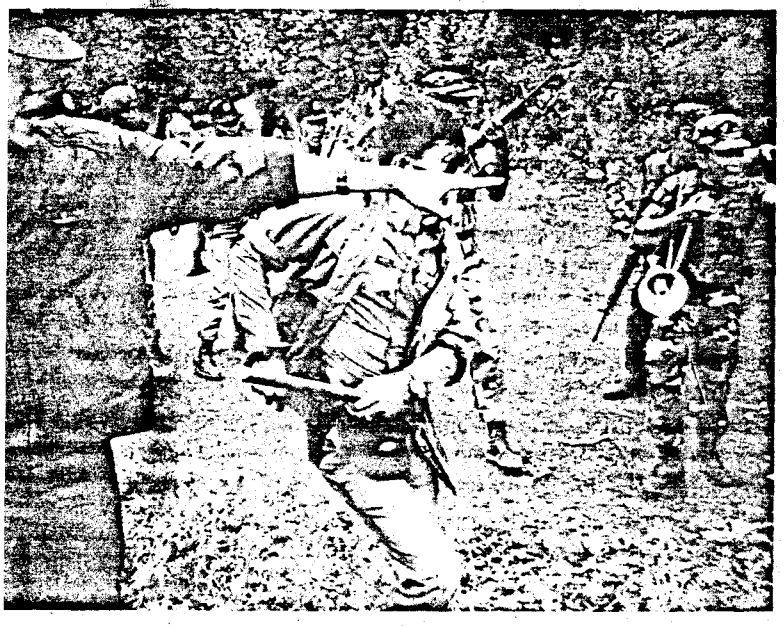
Concerning the monarchy and the king, Sulak expressed great concern in the military's control of the monarchy since the first coup d'etat in 1947. He especially pointed out the fallacy of the charge of lese majeste which prevents any constructive criticism of the monarchy and is only used as a tool by the government and military to control and manipulate the people. "Members of the royal family need not always be considered the top scientists or writers by university lecturers. I believe the king does not want that kind of false respect and that he is open to honest criticism."

Concerning the national religion of Buddhism, Sulak criticized the NPKC for allowing the Burmese SLORC junta to bequeath national honors on the head monks of Thailand and further criticized the NPKC for its continued support of the SLORC in the face of international criticism of that regime. In addition, Sulak brought up the case of Phra Prachak and the NPKC's disdain for their own religion in favor of logging concessions and golf courses.

Concerning the nation, Sulak criticized the military's equating itself to the nation and compared them to termites who eat away at the house of a nation. "The 80 to 90 percent of the majority of the population is the nation, not the 10 percent who are exploitative and rich."

Sulak summed up his speech by calling for the need for dignity in the Thai people, dignity that he feels is lost by the government's and military's ignoring of the Dalai Lama, support of the SLORC, and most of all neglect of its own cultural roots and blind following of western culture. "We allow the strong to exploit the weak; we allow mothers and fathers to sell

their own daughters; we allow the poor people to sell their labor in Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and California, but our elite ignore these people and their struggle." Finally, Sulak challenged his listeners not to necessarily agree with him, but to ponder his statements and then to conscientize themselves and stand up for their rights. "If we unite and learn how to fight; if we challenge them (the NPKC); if we speak out and think and write; if we cooperate, the NPKC will not survive. It will collapse. Only then will democracy flourish. Long live democracy!"



On September 13th, a warrant was issued for Sulak's arrest, and Sulak subsequently sought sanctuary at the German embassy. In the process of negotiations with Sulak's representatives, General Suchinda made it known that Sulak would be placed in a normal prison for convicts, not be allowed bail, and in addition the General said he could not be responsible for his cadres handling of Sulak. In the wake of civic labor leader Thanong Bho-aan's "disappearance" four months ago, most likely at the hands of a few careless and ruthless inferiors of General Suchinda's, Sulak thought it best not to surrender for the obvious fear of his personal well-being. Instead Sulak managed to sneak out of the German embassy and escape the country to Europe.

In the meantime, the organizations which he administers to the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD), the Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute (SPDI), and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), have come under investigation and harassment. Most specifically, the Burma Project under TICD has been investigated and its coordinator Sam Kalayanee is being searched for, since they believe he holds the information which can prove Sulak's claims about the NPKC.

Thus in the last month, the NPKC has stepped up its campaign against all dissident opinion by using violence and intimidation to silence community and national leaders of the people. In addition, in the last week, Air Force Chief and NPKC Deputy Chief Kaset Rojananin has come out twice calling for the resignation of Prime Minster Anand's interim government if the NPKC appointed National Legislative Assembly (NLA) does not pass the latest draft of the constitution. Such remarks have been assailed as without any legal grounds. Thus, The NPKC in the last month has taken a number of definitive steps towards securing its absolute power by silencing popular opinion and check- mating the interim government. Such are the deeds of a group who took power in February to increase democracy in Thailand.

Now, the country awaits the aftermath of the World Bank conference to see which way the NPKC will turn: democracy or dictatorship. New Aspiration Party (NAP) leader and former Army Chief General Chavalit Yongchaiyut has increased his attacks on the NPKC and General Suchinda who are trying to block his political assent to Prime Minister. This development is significant in that General Chavalit has a number of supporters in the military as well who have become disenchanted with a clique of Class 5 generals who have monopolized power at the top in the form of the NPKC. All these developments leave many with the view that the NPKC has two alternatives: 1. submit to mounting opinion against it and hold elections or 2. strike all sectors hard with another coup which will secure its absolute power. Thus, the people of Thailand are waiting for one of these two probable outcomes to manifest.



INTERVIEW WITH PHRA PRACHAK



PL: What is the truth about Somchai Chayasuk, the man from Suksamran who was caught cutting trees and tied up by you and other villagers?

PP: On August 28 we came upon nine people secretly logging, but eight of them escaped. The one we caught [Somchai] we tied up and covered his eyes so that he would not recognize members of our conservation group and come to hunt us down afterwards. He has accused us of beating him up and knocking out two of his teeth.

But on that day we had three provincial militia men with us - they are government people. You can ask them whether I ordered any beating. They are civil servants so they will speak the truth on this matter, and they can serve as witnesses in court.

Once we brought the suspect to authorities they didn't do a thing, even though they knew the names of all the other eight people who escaped from us. There are about 600 or 700 in Dong Yai Forest, but they didn't make any effort to go and arrest the illegal loggers. Instead they took sides with the culprits and started building up the case against us.

They have only one aim, that is to get me out of the forest. They have organized mobs to destroy my temple, fully supported by a certain highranking police officer. When they finally chase me away from Dong Yai, who will profit from the forest?

PL: Are you not doing all of this for your own personal benefit?

PP: I am doing this for the others. I don't want to create any conflicts. I don't want to cause fire and storm. I only ask that the forest remains. For myself it doesn't matter where I stay. Anywhere is the same as long as I can be of some use to others, as long as my breath has the greatest value. That is my aim.

PL: How do you feel about the rumours that you might be defrocked?

PP: Even if they force me to defrock, I will not denounce my monkhood. If they throw me in jail, I'll just stay there. If I no longer have my saffron robes I will wear white cloth instead. Monkhood is in the heart. Good behaviour and clean spirit. Once the storm passes it will be possible to continue to work. In any case, it's better than dying. As a spirit that loves the forest, I might have killed myself if I were a common man like Seub Nakhasathien. But I am not.

PL: Representatives of the Congress of Teachers for Society have gone to petition HM the King concerning the land and school in Ban Huay Toey, Soeng Sang district, Nakhon Ratchasima province. How do you feel about this?

PP: I agree with this. The poor, uneducated people look to the wise, well-educated ones for patience, help and guidance. Don't leave them with your feet and leave them squirming till they die.

These people [referring to soldiers] show no mercy, as if they were not Thai. Thai people don't treat each other like this. I have lived happily among soldiers since I was a child. But since I came here, why have things turned out this way?

If I had the opportunity to have an audience with Their Majesties the King and Queen, I would tell them the truth of what has happened and I would listen to their words directly. If they told me to do such and such, I would follow to the letter because they have compassion. But how can I ever have an audience? Who will help me just one time?

PL: How are you planning to help the villagers who are still in jail at Nakhon Ratchasima, and how will you handle the new case against you?

PP: We are now looking for the money for bail. Ten villagers, Bt150,000 per person. That's Bt1.5 million in total. The lawyer is trying to negotiate to reduce the amount. I travelled to see pak Thong Chai District Monastic Chief Phra Thawatphotikhun, and he has promised to help as he is also a conservationist at heart.

But I'm sure this won't be enough so I'd like non-governmental organizations to help out as well because two of the 10 villagers were injured. One man's head is till swollen from the confrontation [with soldiers last

Wednesday] and the other has pain in his chest.

After seeing them I feel they are in need of medical attention. their wives and children, friends and relatives are all poor people who could never afford the bail. The can barely find the money to pay for transport to the jail or for food for the detainees. These people are in urgent need of help.

PL: In this tense situation, soldiers have torn down the temple and removed the school. What are you going to do next?

PP: I went in to take a look this evening, but I retreated to the edge of the forest as I sensed danger. I think I will search for a safe place to stay somewhere inside Dong Yai Forest.

And the villagers who may be worrying about me, please tell them and the many monks who remain to help each other, keep each other safe. When I am not around they must be especially caring. If they are going to come in and tear down the temple or tear down their homes, just let them. Mere objects are not important. Don't worry about me, for now I must hide deep inside Dong Yai.

PL: If they destroy everything, where will the monks stay? Have you made any plans?

PP: I want them to stay put, stay with the earth. Sleep with the mice, the birds, and the insects. Be strong until the tension passes, until the end of the phansaa period [in late October]. I saw the destruction and I was so terribly disheartened. This whole thing happened because no-one studied the situation thoroughly enough. I came here so the forest would remain. After I leave, who knows what will happen to it.

PL: Does this mean you will stop your conservation activities?

PP: Our group is still strong. It's just that for the time we can't work. We must stop for now and start up again later on. It won't be too late.

Prathuang Loturit
The Nation's

Phra Prachak, 51, became a monk 15 years ago. Born to a poor family in Saraburi, he barely finished primary school. He worked at odd jobs, roadbuilding and day labour, and early on took to heavy drinking and gambling. Even after he was married and became a father, he continued his rough and rowdy lifestyle.

Until one day, he recounts, at the age of 36, he got caught in a drunken brawl and lay on his deathbed. At that moment, the man promised himself that if he recovered, he would enter monkhood for at least one phansaa (three months) period. Phra Prachak has remained as a forest monk ever since, walking mostly barefoot from place to place.

When he arrived at Dong Yai Forest in 1989, he was shocked by the massive forest destruction and moved by the villagers who, he says, were "hungry for a monk, for someone to lean on".

"For years I had travelled from Loei to Udon to Chanthaburi, living in the forest, sleeping in caves. I learned about what this body is, that it is a part of the forest. But I don't believe there is any coincidence in my coming here. My footprints must be here in Dong Yai somewhere, from some other time."



AND

Dr Chatrasumarn Kabilsingh is well known internationally both as an outspoken feminist and as a Buddhist scholar. These are two vocations that are at once in harmony with each other and in conflict.

As a feminist, she should be supporting the issue of abortion, which would give a woman the right to terminate her own pregnancy. But as a devout Buddhist, this should go against her principles of respecting and preserving all life, even that of an unborn baby.

Chatrasumarn, however, is more concerned about another issue - that of sex discrimination in the practice of Buddhism in Thailand. She has brought up two examples of discrimination. One is the fact that women cannot be ordained as monks in the Buddhist hierarchy in Thailand. The other is that women are not given the opportunity to study Buddhism at the college level.

Women, she says, have long played only secondary roles in Buddhism in Thailand. She argues that there is nothing in the religion that actually forbids women from being ordained.

As for religious education, she says, it is clear that women lack the same opportunities as men. "There is Vitthayalai Song [College for (male) monks], which, of course, does not enrol women.

BUDDHIST FEMINIST



That is made clear even in the name of the college," she points out.

In Taiwan, she says, women monks have been officially accepted. There is even a Buddhist college exclusively for women.

Chatrasumarn herself had to get her education in Buddhism abroad although she was born in a Buddhist country. She went to India to attend a religious college. After earning a bachelors degree in Buddhism from Santiniketan in West Bengal, she won a scholarship to do a doctorate in Buddhism in Canada.

For her thesis, she did research on bhikkhunee or female monks. Bhikkhunee observe 348 precepts - the same number as male monks. They are not to be mistaken for maechee of Buddhist nuns who observe just eight precepts. From that research, she has discovered that women do have a lot of potential to develop themselves spiritually, and they can also contribute a lot.

"It is very clear to me that women can make as good dhamma instructors as men," she says.

She insists that female monks, if they are allowed to teach dhamma, can fill in gaps that male monks cannot. "Men and women have different prespectives. Dhamma teachings have normally been androcentric. The teachings of the Lord Buddha have usually been interpreted by men. It is still one-sided.

"Women have a different perspective on Buddhism and that will termendously enhance dhamma and internal development among women," she explains.

Sex discrimination does not exist in Buddhism alone. In other religions too, men have usually imposed their views and they have a dominating role in propagating the faith. In religious records, women were always forgotten - this is so in the Bible as well as the Tripitaka.

"It is obvious that those who compiled the historical records were men. They simply overlooked the existence of women," Chatrasumarn says.

She has certainly not been the only one to fight against sex discrimination in religion. Women from other religions have also spoken out on the issue and they have given Chatrasum arn encour-agement even though her efforts to bring attention to the issue in Thailand have largely been ignored.

With her degree in Buddhism, Chatrasumarn worked as a lecturer at the Maha Chulalongkorn Monk college. "One monk approached me and said that he did not realize that women had so much difficulty in gaining access to Buddhism."

In her book, ***Thai Women and Buddhism***, Chatrasumarn, who is a professor at Thammasat University, devotes one chapter to the interpretation of the Tripitaka from a feminist point of view.

She insists, however, that her defforts to try to eliminate discrimination and enhance the status of women in Buddhism is significant simply because "there is a bias".

Through her research, she shows that the Lord Buddha understood the problem of sex discrimination. Female monks were sometimes put in a supportive role, to clean and cook for the male monks. "You have to remember that Buddhism was created in Indian society. Those Indian men who were ordained kept their social attitudes and treated women the way they treated them at home.

"The Lord Buddha, therefore, had to come up with regulations to prevent male monks from exploiting female monks. From reading the Tripitaka, I have got a very clear picture of the discrimi-

nation," says Chatrasumarn.

She has long been considered a radical by some Thai Buddhists for being so outspoken. The have never known whether to call her a feminist or a Buddhist.

"I have to balance myself too," she says. "As an activist, I've to keep my priorities and know what should come first - Buddhism or feminism. For me, I am more a Buddhist."

She cites the issue of abortion. "As a feminist, I should support it, for women should have the right to have control over their own bodies. But as a Buddhist, I disagree. If we choose to have an abortion, we must realize that it is not the Buddhist way."

Chatrasumarn admits she has confronted a lot of opposition, which causes her unhappiness. "But I am not someone who just pays lip-service to my religion. I practice it," she says. But she says it is because she is a practiscing Buddhist that she is able to maintain a spiritual balance.

When she attended international feminist conferences, she felt the fervent bitterness caused by the frustration of these feminists who have witnessed unfairness and suffering. Some feminists, says Chatrasumarn, were drained while others were suffering from nervous breakdowns.

"I observed the whole thing as a third person. And I realized how much they suffered. I told myself that I would not let myself become so obsessed that I too would suffer like that. I balance myself, my inner spirit by using Buddhist dhamma. If I did not practise it, I would be brought down by all my frustration.

"I have to check myself, to see how much I can take. I have to have patience and do the best I can from where I am," she adds.

"If I accomplish what I set out to do. It is to me Buddhism that has achieved it."

Chatrasumarn recalls how she was scoffed when she first discussed the possibility of reviving the bhikkhunee in Thailand.

"In Thai society, they laugh at you when you talk about ordaining women," she laments. That was when she was angered most.

"I don't think I am fighting for women. I am fighting to obliterate ignorance in humanity," she sighs. It was not only men but also women who turned deaf ears on her when she brought up the issue.

"Some women don't realize their own suffering. They don't realize they have more potential than they thought and they can develop their potential."

Chatrasumarn realizes well that she faces a mammoth task in trying to change the attitudes of society. But whether she can accomplish it or not is not the main point.

"It takes time but I'm not going to disappoint the next generation by having them ask why people of my generation didn't try to do anything. We are. But it may take a hundred years before we are successful.

"People during the Ayutthaya period fought for us," she says, "Now, I will do my part to contribute what I can to the society through Buddhism. I'll do it as an academic, as a practitioner. Whether people can take it or not depends on them. I've done my best," she says. Her face is calm with a sense of peace.

A mother of three teenage sons, Chatrasumarn has followed her mother in her devotion to Buddhism. Her mother, Voramai, was an energetic woman who was a schoolteacher. She became the first woman to be ordained as a bhikkhunee.

Chatrasumarn is dismayed that the door to expose the virtues of Buddhism is closed to women whereas that which leads to prostitution is more accessible to women.

To achieve her goal, Chatrasumarn says she won't use confrontation methods like some feminists. "In Thai culture, you simply can't confront. They cannot take it even if they are wrong. What I am going to do is to try to walk around them and gently remind them of the issue."

Chatrasumarn has considered being ordained herself as a bhikkhunee. "I am thinking about it," she says. "I would like to show the public how much a bhikkhunee can contribute to society."

She is not worried about not being able to observe the 348 precepts that a bhikkhunee must. "But if I am ordained, it will be difficult to travel to attend the conferences that I am invited to every year. And I will not be able to reprimand male monks. As a lay-person, I can do that," she says.

Her firm poise and her voice suggest her strong determination, just like any feminist, to accomplish their aims. But her calm non-aggressive manner, and her friendly eyes also show how Buddhism is so much a part of her life, guiding her past all obstacles.

Suwanna Asavaroengchai
The Nation
September 8,1991



BUDDHISM AND THE MYTH OF COSMIC JUSTICE



Some years ago I was confronted with the opinion that there is no such thing as a miscarriage of justice. More recently I listened to a taped talk which contained the claim that 'we live in an ethical universe'. Both views were offered by members of the Sangha and were, of course, made within the context of a belief in kamma. I think the time has come to challenge interpretations like this head on both because they adversely affect the credibility of Buddhism in the modern world and because they implicitly run counter to any form of social action.

The word 'kamma' or 'karma' refers to mental, verbal and physical activity associated with attachment and should not therefore be equated with 'deeds' because good or bad intentions are reasonably enough held to have psychological effects irrespective of whether they give rise to actions on the physical plane. Enlightened beings supposedly don't create kamma because they are free from attachment. The first two verses of the Dhammapada admirably sum up the belief in its simplest form i.e.

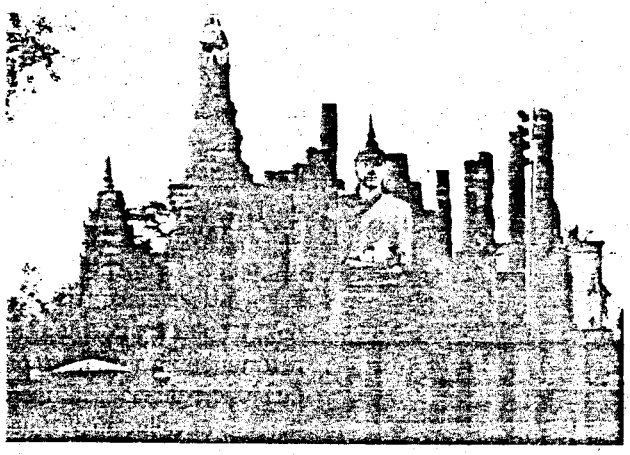
If one speaks or acts with thought corrupted
Because of that an anguish stalks on but
If one speaks or acts with reconciled thought
Because of that a happiness haunts one

This really amounts to a 'virtue is its own reward' line of argument which can be extended in a variety of commonsense ways. Good deeds are seen as not only inherently satisfying but as quite likely to be repaid in kind. Conversely a vicious act may give rise to fear of retaliation even where there is no remorse or guilt associated with it - and so on.

Such interpretations fall far short of any belief in cosmic justice of the kind referred to at the outset because they don't assume that one's circumstances and mental states are fully accounted for by one's own actions and attitudes. What can be termed the dogmatic interpretation of kamma does make this assumption. It holds that people's good or ill fortune is always an outcome of their own behaviour and therefere that it is an appropriate outcome.

The most obvious difference between the empirical and dogmatic approaches lies in their relationship to the rebirth doctrine. If one bases one's evaluation of kamma on the kind of assertion quoted from the Dhammapada it is clearly possible to make up one's mind about it entirely within the context of the present life, rebirth being viewed as a separate question to be treated on its merits. On the other hand the dogmatist's attempt to rationalize such matters as sexually-abused children puts him in the position of having to insist on rebirth in order to retain his belief in kamma.

It's natural to ask whether the texts themselves can be used to adjudicate the matter. As regarde the Suttas the first thing to be noted is that Gotama's ministry must be seen against a background in which various teachers held that - 'There is no reason, no condition, for the corruption of beings...(They) are confined by fate, accident, and their natures.' (1) Statements like this occur periodically throughout and indicate that there were plenty of people around who believed that human effort is of no avail or significance and cannot change the course of anything. Initially therefore the Buddhist view was simply the denial of this. It held that choice was not illusory and that human beings really could influence their



own destinies for better or worse. The question is whether it replaced the amoral determinism of the non-Buddhist teachers with a moral determinism which went to the other extreme via the dogmatic interpretation of kamma.

Whilst the direct scriptural evidence on this point is slight in quantity, it seems to me to be quite unambiguous. In the Majjhima Nikaya there is a discourse entitled 'At Devadaha' which begins with this highly relevant statement: 'There are, monks, some ascetics and brahmans who say and think (that) whatever the individual experiences, whether pleasant, painful, or indifferent - all that is due to what was previously done (by him)'. (2) The rest of the piece appears to identify such a view with the Jains, and contains an attack on their practices. 'At Devadaha' is neatly supplemented by another passage (3) where the same remark is put into the mouth of a questioner, who then asks Gotama whether he agrees with it. The answer (suitably abridged) is as follows: '...both in what is known by experience and in what is generally acknowledged by the world as true - in both they go too far. Wherefore I declare those ascetics and brahmins to be wrong.' There follows a list of factors contributing to human misery of which the 'ripeness of one's (bad) kamma' is only one. The net import of the others is clearly to concede a random aspect to the way in which misfortune strikes. On the basis of these passages it would appear that the real moral determinists were the Jains and that Gotama distanced himself from them as much as from the others.

Apart from the direct evidence there is at least one other type of episode which affects the matter. This has to do with those not infrequent occasions when he was confronted by brahmins determined to affirm the superiority of their own caste. His response was always to state categorically that merit was to be judged by behaviour and not by birth. Moral determinism cannot sustain such a distinction because, on its view, an advantage conferred by birth is itself necessarily an outcome of previous kamma and therefore acquired on merit. So either the Master was being inconsistent or he did not hold to such a view.

This last point has modern relevance in the context of the Ambedkar movement. As is well-known B.R. Ambedkar was an Untouchable, a state which caste Hindus could easily attempt to justify along the same lines. It's not really surprising therefore to find Trevor Ling writing of this famous convert to Buddhism: 'In Ambedkar's view the belief that good or bad actions (karma) in one life affect the condition of the doer of those actions in some future human existence was not an element in the Buddha's teaching...' (4) As against this it's difficult to see how rebirth could be rebirth at all without something being carried forward. However one might realistically argue that such influence would be confined to the level of character traits in a way which merely adds a third dimension to debates about nature vs. nurture. The determinist on the other hand seeks to raise kamma to the level of a controlling principle which somehow legitimises inequalities, accidents, and aberrations arising on the physical and social planes.

It is not difficult to find contemporary examples of determinist or semi-determinst positions. Thus an anti-abortion pamphlet by another member of the Sangha comments: 'Babies who come into this world deformed or sick or unwanted are experiencing the fruits of their past kamma...'. (5) And an apologist for Tibetan Buddhism suggests that a man killed by a falling branch might 'carry a karmic imprint tending to attract such a death'. (6)

Such statements are arbitrary and quite untestable. They are also reactionary in that, like Ambedkar's Hindu opponents, they imply moral sanction for whatever comes about in a way which sanctifies acceptance of every physical and external circumstance. Yet they are ultimately vacuous- an aborted foetus is as much the product of its kamma as an unaborted one by the very nature of the doctrine. And if the caste system were destroyed the new social order could use the same rationalizations as the old.

The strangest anomaly of all is the disjunction these attitudes

produce between doing wrong and being wronged. Avoiding the first becomes the focus for a morality of restraint but the second is, for all practical purposes, explained away. For those who are clear that the one involves the other however this can make no sense. For them a remedial aspect to morality is imperative and notions of cosmic justice give way to the uncomfortable thought that justice exists only in so far as Right Action can create and sustain it.

There is plenty of social morality in the Suttas to support this more balance view - the first recorded acknowledgment of the link between crime and deprivation for instance. Of course no Buddhist looks for a worldly utopia, given the endless supply of greed, hatred, and delusion. But samsara doesn't have to be hell on earth either and, if there's one thing calculated to make it that, it's for the wise and humane to retreat into inactivity whilst the Saddam Husseins, the Pol Pots, the arms traders and the oil slicks take it over. So let me finish by pointing out that, in the legend of the wheel-turning king, the monarch who wishes to abdicate and become an ascetic always instructs his successor on how to rule by dhamma prior to doing so. Surely there are no Buddhists so divorced from reality that they need transporting to Iraq or Chernobyl before they get the point.

(1) MN I 407 (2) MN II 214 (3) S.N. iv, 230

(4) Trevor Ling. Buddhist revival in India, p.112

(5) Bhikkhu Nyanasobhano. A Buddhist view of abortion (Bodhi Leaves No 117), p.25

(6) Martin Willson. Rebirth and the Western Buddhist, p.54

David Evans
INDRA'S NET

SAY "NO!" WITH ATAMMAYATA

For our health and sanity, for peace and ecological survival, for liberation, we must say "No!" to the myriad forms of egoism and selfishness, of greed, anger, and delusion, which generate and proliferate consumerism, environmental degradation, poverty, racism, sexism, immorality, and social injustice. But we don't know how to say it. We say "no" with schemes, with anger, with regrets, with guilt. Or we are afraid to say it. We haven't found a way to say "No!" and be free. So the world -- along with our minds -- re-mains a mess.

All religious teachings empower us to say "No!" to what is dangerous and stupid.1 Buddha-Dhamma especially shows us how to say "No!" to dukkha and its causes. Not passive acceptance, not denial, not apathy, not intellectual obfuscation, but wise and aware refusal to harm others, oneself, and the world is the Middle Way.

There is one term in Buddha-Dhamma which says "No!" best of all: atammayata. Most simply, atammayata means "I ain't gonna mess with you no more." In the Thai language these can be fighting words. If necessary, we can find more polite renditions, but the vigor of "I ain't gonna mess with you no more" must be retained. "This is it! I've had enough of your games and I ain't gonna take any more !"

Literally, atammayata may be translated as "the state of not being made up by, or made up from, that (thing or condition)."2 The central element maya means "fabrication, making into, concocting," which implies dependence, which means slavery. A mind that relies upon things -- outer authorities, consumer goods, power, sex, drugs, beliefs, theories, ignorance -- is fabricated by or concocted by those things. Essentially, one is turned into a slave by them. This slavery can be "positive-good" or it may be "negative-bad." The difference is subjective, that is, our own choice. Either way, by relying on things with attachment, we become their slaves. That condition is called "tammayata" (messing around, being messed with).

When we are freed from such slavery, when we feel no compulsion to rely upon and attach to things, when we don't judge them, don't even think of them, as "positive" and "negative", we have atammayata. We can translate this as "invulnerability, imperturbability, unconcoctability, unmanipulability," all of which are rather clumsy. The more down-to-earth "I aint gonna mess with no more" is more practical. It is just what most of us need. Fur-

ther, it contains the most profound message in Buddha-Dhamma, in all religion for that matter.

The story of the historical Buddha's life contains many examples of atammayata in practice. For example, the young Samana Gotama, stayed with the meditation masters Alara Kalamagotara and Uddaka Ramaputta until mastering their teachings. When each, in turn, invited him to be a co-teacher, the young Samana Gotama asked if there wasn't anything more to his teaching. When each said there was not, Gotama politely replied that this was not the end of dukkha he was searching for and walked away. To walk away from the fore most meditative bliss of his time, of all time, as well as the fame and spoils of bigtime gurudom, required atammayata.

Later, after practicing all the austerities and ascetic practices popular in those days, after taking such self-mortification further than anyone ever had, he realized it was all useless and dropped it all at once. Only atammayata can do that. Finally, sitting under the Bodhi tree during the night of the great awakening, Gotama refused to be tempted by Mara and his sexy daughters. Once again, atammayata said "No!" And then, observing the dependent arising of dukkha and the quenching of that chain reaction, Gotama said the ultimate "No!" He shook off all egoism, all illusion of self, all ignorance, and with it all dukkha. That remains the ultimate atammayata. Which opens the heart wide to nibbana.

In the great teachers of other traditions we can find atammayata, also.3 The Jewish patriarch Abraham was ready to sacrifice his son Isaac at God's command. Christ displayed one level of atammayata when he threw the moneychangers out of the temple and another level on the cross which represents the supreme crucifixion, the killing of the "I." In Islam, "jihad" represents atammayata towards injustice and social immorality, while the Mulla Nasruding stories are the atammayata of humor. In the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna accepts his duty to go to war even though kinsmen and many familiar faces were on the other side. With atammayata toward emotional attachments, he pursues his yoga.

Although atammayata is required at the spiritual heights, it is also found in children. For example, many of us once sucked our thumbs. Then one day we looked at the red, swollen, shrivelled thing we had been sticking in our mouths and lost all desire to suck on it again. The feeling which took the thumb out of our mouths for good is atammayata. (However, if the feeling didn't go deep enough, we eventually replaced the thumb with other things, like cigarettes.) All of us can remember times when we have seen something clearly for once and for all, thus ending a stupid involvement with that thing. Perhaps involvement continued - who cut off their thumbs? - but without the old stupidity and attachment. All bad habits can be dropped with atammayata.

Now, I would like to share a few ways in which we can use atammayata to make a better world and better lives for ourselves and our friends. There are many things to which we must learn to say "No!" Everything stupid, degrading, destructive, and obsessive must be chased away with atammayata. In the end, we should be left with only the healthy, the worthy, the just, the necessary, the peaceful, and the truly human (as well as divine).

First, let's look at a few external situations, like sexism. This is an all pervasive difficulty. Take a powerful instinct (sex), confuse it with political, economic, religious, cultural, and power issues, then you will have something which biases everthing we do. With all the instances of sexism which touch our lives - whether perpetrated by or against us - we must look hard at that sexism and see the assumptions and habits on which it is based. See the desires and fears which support it. Note the murky feelings involved. Most of all, see how it belittles each of us, reducing everyone to a beastly least common denominator. Look hard at all of that until seeing the ugliness, the crudity, the stupidity of it. Refuse to take part in it. Remove it from one's sexuality. Refuse to be trapped and used by not only your own prejudices but those of others. See the lust, fear, loneliness, and guilt that sexism pulls onto our heads and say "No!"

The world economic structure is kept going by consumerism. Few of us examine this morass, so few us are truly free of it. All of us have a few favorite consumer goods; we still like to make ourselves happy by buying a new toy. We all get excitement from buying, owning, and using things. Thus, we are suckers for TV hard sell. Thus, we buy into the entire net of consumer economics and politics. (It has become a global way of life, although eighty percent of humanity can't afford to buy in.) Next time your eyes fallon an ad in your favorite magazine, are caught by a billborad or store front display, or are drawn in by a TV commercial, say "No!" Look at it until you realize how stupid the whole mess is making us. Say "No!" to stupidity. Say "No!" to entrapment. "I ain't gonnamess with you no more." Just buy the things you need and only because you genuinely need them. Use them responisibly. Demand appropri-

ate products with appropriate quality. Don't mess with consumer junk no more! Give them the "Atammayata Seal of Disapproval."

Most of us live within minutes of some environmental tragedy, merely a blink of the eye if we live in a city or suburb. The forests around the monastery I am writing from are disappearing fast. A nearby dam ruins one river and a planned dam threatens another. The local market town is full of noise and the streets are full of plastic. The children eat junk food and toss the foil wrappers into the gutter. Men toss their whiskey bottles. Pesticides are used indiscriminately. You know what is going on around you. Say "No!" to dirty air, dirty water, dirty food, dirty money, dirty minds.

These three examples should be enough for you to get the principle. If you understand how to use atammayata in dealing with such situations, you will apply it to the issues on which you are working. Say "No!" to child abuse, malnutrition, deforestation, schooling, prostitution, political corruption medical dishonesty, torture, media disinformation, war, crime, technological overindulgence, violence...

Now, some internal situations. To apply atammayata to social situation is just a start, merely a holding action. The roots of the problems are deeper, that is, within the hearts of people. As "engaged buddhists" we must also work on the spiritual level. Our engagement is that we turn outer activism into spiritual non-activism. We use the work for others as an opportunity to say "No!" to our own egos, attachments, and ignorance.

For example, we are often motivated - to some degree - by outrage and anger. We see things going on in this world which we strongly feel are "wrong." We condemn these things as "wrong" and they don't make us feel very happy. But our minds are still sloppy and we can't distinguish the "wrongness" of certain actions from the "person" who does them. We easily slip into judging other people, the so-called perpetrators, as being "wrong." We attach to that "wrongness" more strongly, which becomes anger, outrage, hatred, wrath. We have become violent. Perhaps our demeanor is calm but our heart is violent.

The spiritual activist must find the means to say "No!" to the inner violence. We examine the process through which they are spawned, saying "No!" to each level of the concocting. We look bravely into our own anger and hatred, as well as the fear and exhilaration that can accompany them, seeing the burning pain as they singe our minds. We see the ugliness of debasing human life - our own and the other's - to such a pathetic state. We see the hopelessness of building a peaceful world through such violent thoughts. So we say "No!" to them. Going deeper, we see that the "person" is not what our judging makes him out to be. She is a breathing being who also seeks happiness and a good life, just as we do. He is influenced by corrupt forces in society. We say "no!" to the limited vision of the human being which judges him as "wrong" and "evil." We say "no!" to our lack of compassion. We say "no!" to our blindness.

Then we can face up to the "wrong" itself. Where, really, is the "wrong-ness." Can we put a finger on it? Does it stay still long enough for us to bring it to court? When we look with Dhamma eyes, which we call vipassana, we see that the "wrong" is impermanent, unsatisfying, and not-self. It is void of any self which can be wrong. The wrongness itself is



void. it is a word, a thought, a belief of our culture and experience which the mind projects onto reality. May we have the insight to say "no!" even to "wrongness." If we can take atammayata this far, our vision of the world becomes peaceful, no longer marred by our judgments and negative thoughts. Then we can peacefully respond to suffering and its causes, seeing them clearly as they are.

There isn't enough space to examine the other harmful emotions: fear, worry, greed for power, competition, lust, boredom, guilt, envy, excitement, etc.. Each must be investigated from its most crude level to its deepest roots until we can say "no!" to every level and manifestation of defilement. Then our engagement will be fully Buddhist, that is, Dhammic.

To be truly Buddhist or Dhammic, our engagement and activism must go one last step. At

the same time that atammayata is clearing up social and emotional problems, it can free us from the deepest dilemma of all - our selves. This "I" which is an "engaged buddhist," where is it? Can you show it to me? Can you keep is from making mistakes, from being hurt, careless, afraid, wrong, stupid, sick, sorry, burned out, dead? Where is this "Me" that we assume lurks beneath all our activism and living? Look closely, look deeply: please. Can you find it? Can you provide any genuine proof that such a thing really exists? You can't? Then why not follow the Buddha's example and say "no" to ego, to self, to "I", to "mine."

Now there is some fresh air in the room, some peace. Enjoy the life of atammayo ("one who is unconcocted"): the human life which is most peaceful and useful. Now we can understand others, even our "enemies," and have compassion for their fears, worries, and problems. Now we can smile at everyone and really work for peace. Atammayata gives the "non-engaged buddhist" this freedom to do whatever must be done and not-done. Discover atammayata through saying "No!"

Santikaro Bhikkhu
Suan Atamamayarama
20 October 91



THE TIEP HIEN PRECEPTS

1. Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. All systems of thought are guiding means; they are not absolute truth.

2. Do not think the knowledge you presently possess is changeless, absolute truth. Avoid being narrow minded and bound to present views. Learn and practice non-attachment from views in order to be open to receive others' viewpoints. Truth is found in life and not merely in conceptual knowledge. Be ready to learn throughout your entire life and to observe reality in yourself and in the world at all times.

3. Do not force others, including children, by any means whatsoever, to adopt your views, whether by authority, threat, money, propoganda or even education. However, through compassionate dialogue, help others renounce fanaticism and narrowness.

4. Do not avoid contact with suffering or close your eyes before suffering. Do not lose awareness of the existence of suffering in the life of the world. Find ways to be with those who are suffering by all means, including personal contact and visits, images, sound. By such means, awaken yourself and others to the reality of suffering in the world.

5. Do not accumulate wealth while millions are hungry. Do not take as the aim of your life fame, profit, wealth or sensual pleasure. Live simply and share time, energy and material resources with those who are in need.

6. Do not maintain anger or hatred. As soon as anger and hatred arise, practice the meditation on compassion in order to deeply understand the persons who have caused anger and hatred. Learn to look at other beings with the eyes of compassion.

7. Do not lose yourself in dispersion and in your surroundings. Learn to practice breathing in order to regain composure of body and mind, to pratice mindfulness and to develop concentration and understanding.

8. Do not utter words that can create discord and cause the community to break. Make every effort to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small.



9. Do not say untruthful things for the sake of personal interest or to impress people. Do not utter words that cause division and hatred. Do not spread news that you do not know to be certain. Do not criticize or condemn things that you are not sure of. Always speak truthfully and constructively. Have the courage to speak out about situations of injustice, even when doing so may threaten your own safety.

10. Do not use the Buddhist community for personal gain or profit, or transform your community into a political party. A religious community, however, should take a clear stand against oppression and injustice and should strive to change the situation without engaging in partisan conflicts.

11. Do not live with a vócation that is harmful to humans and nature. Do not invest in companies that deprive others of their chance to live. Select a vocation which helps realize your ideal of compassion.

12. Do not kill. Do not let others kill. Find whatever means possible to protect life and to prevent war.

13. Possess nothing that should belong to others. Respect the property of others, but prevent others from enriching themselves from human suffering or the suffering of other beings.

14. Do not mistreat your body. Learn to handle it with respect. Do not look on your body as only an instrument. Preserve vital energies (sexual, breath, spirit) for the realization fo the Way. Sexual expression should not happen without love and commitment. In sexual relationships, be aware of future suffering that may be caused. To preserve the happiness of others, respect the rights and commitment of others. Be fully aware of the responsibility of bringing new lives into the world. Meditate on the world into which you are bringing new beings.

THE TIEP HIEN ORDER was founded in Vietnam in 1964 during the middle of the conflict with the United States. A group of monks, nuns, and laypersons created the order in response to the great sufferings of the Vietnamese people at this time. The precepts are anattempt to update the traditional Buddhist precepts to meet the problems of the modern world. Developed by a group which was deeply spiritual and religious yet committed to serving suffering Vietnamese society, the precepts are a formulation of how to serve others from the basis of compassion and wisdom. They can serve as useful guidelines to the modern individual who seeks to maintain a deep spirituality while being enagaged in the problems of the world and more importantly who seeks to use this spirituality to transform society into a healthy, just, and peaceful place.

BANGLADESH :

Village Committees Learn to Guard Endangered Forest

Apingabaho, Bangladesh Grass-roots environmental movement is growing in this overcrowded, climatologically vulnerable South Asian country, bringing awareness and strength to villagers struggling to subsist on the fringes of vanishing forests.

Radhakantha Burman is one of its local heroes. For two years Mr. Burman, a tribal village leader, had been guarding a 200-acre patch of sal trees, or shorea robusta, a tropical hardwood. The trees stand on land that is in theory a common woods protected by forestry officials. But corruption, thuggery and unchecked erosion had combined to deplete the land. Wood for farm implements and leaves for mulch and cooking fires were getting harder to find.

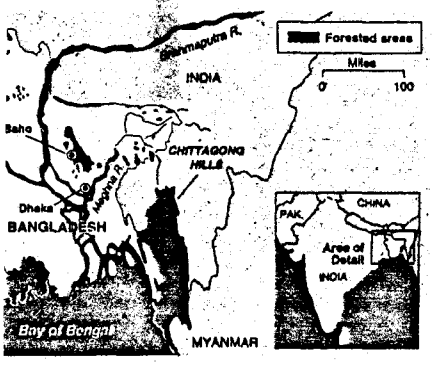
Aided by surveillance squads from five hamlets, Mr. Burman has in two years been able to deter illegal loggers and encroaching landowners looking for more space to plant rice.

"We used to guard it around the clock," he said. "We only have to keep an eye on it now."

For battered Bangladesh, this is a success story. But it is also part of a trend in South Asia, where individuals and public action groups, backed by international foundations and aid programs, are taking national development into their own hands, despairing of

costly government programs that never seem to reach the poor.

In Bangladesh, a Dhaka-based non-governmental organization called Proshika has taken the lead in forestry protection. With help from the Ford Foundation, Proshika (its name is an acronym for, roughly, "training, education and work") is assisting village committees not only in setting up forestry patrols but also in developing and diversifying their small farms to improve general living standards.



"Local problems should be solved by local people, but the nongovernmental organizations are necessary because governments are not giving us what we need," said Subodh Chandra Sarkar, the chairman of Proshika's Kaliakor regional committee, in an interview in nearby Fulbaria, the area's largest town.

"These programs teach us to analyze and look at problems in a wider way," Mr. Sarkar said through an interpreter. "We all knew about the firewood crisis, but we weren't aware how this problem of ours related to erosion, the depletion of soil, the loss of plants and animals and so on."

Mafruza Khan, an economist who is a project coordinator for Proshika in Dhaka, says that a number of factors had contributed to the depletion of the sal forests of central Bangladesh, one of three remaining forest areas in the country. The other two are in the mangrove areas of the Sunderbans and the Chittagong Hills.

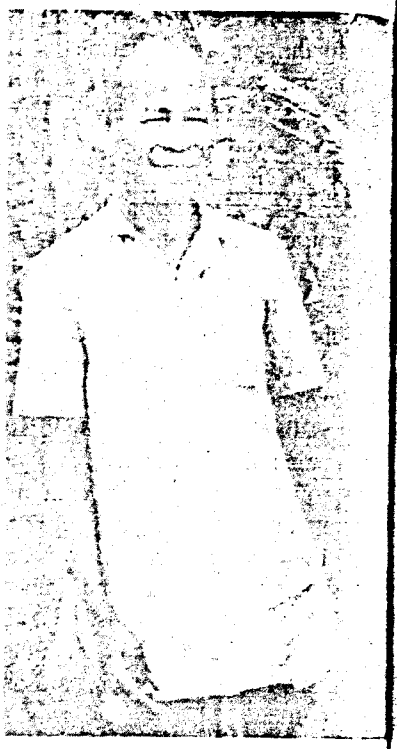
The use of wood for fires, tools and village construction is only a small part of the problem because sal trees grow back quickly from stumps, at the rate of several feet a year. More dangerous in the long run, Ms. Khan said, are illegal logging operations, in which stumps and roots are also burned to make charcoal; the clearing of land for farm crops, and the substitution of quick-growing plantation trees like eucalyptus or monocrop bushes for the hardy saltree.

Logging operaters also cut roads into the soft soil, speeding erosion and ultimately desertification. Wildlife has no place to hide and breed.

In Pingabaho, a tribal hamlet of mud houses populated by a mixture of aboriginal people and a few Bengalis, the villagers welcomed Proshika organizers, whose work they had heard about. Village leaders had gone to look at other Proshika projects in 1987 and 1988.

Two years ago, people from Pingabaho and nearby hamlets joined a training program. They identified the forest they wanted to protect, and divided it into zones for patrolling, Mr. Burman said. Local forestry officials, of ten as powerless as villagers when politically powerful vested interests are involved, have been generally sympathetic.

The vigil has been nonviolent in Pingabaho, more than 10 miles from the nearest motorable road. In other areas, grass-roots forest protectors have been assualted by rich landholders staking claims to common land, much of it in



litigation since the partition of British India in 1947 and the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.

Pingabaho's sal forest is now recovering, and there are plenty of sticks to be collected from the earth for trellises and frames to support new vegetable and spice crops. Spare underbrush is sold for firewood, always in great demand in Bangladesh, producing cash income for the occasional luxury.

"This year, we sold enough branches and twigs to pay for our children's football matches," Mr. Burman said.

Barbara Crossette
The New York Times
August 6, 1991

Cambodia : Peace of Paper?



"As we all know, Cambodia is more than just a country to most of the world. It is a powerful symbol of the terrible extent to which international politics can devastate a small nation. No country can really compete with Cambodia in terms of the tragedy of its recent history. And no country is now so weak, so demoralized or so battered as Thailand's eastern neighbor," editorialized **the Nation,** a Thai English-language newspaper two days after the signing of the historic accords on October 23, 1991. After 21 years of conflict, UN-brokered peace agreements were signed by the Supreme National Council of Cambodia, composed of representatives of the four Khmer factions, and 19 participating countries of the Paris International Conference on Cambodia. According to the plan, the UN Transitional Authority for Cambodia (UNTAC) will soon assume an unprecedented role in UN history to assist in the administration of the country, supervise the disarmament and demobilization of troops and organise free elections.

Yet at a press conference on the opening day of the Paris peace conference, representatives of non-governmental agencies working in Cambodia reminded the delegates that "never has a peace accord been greeted by so much anxiety." As champagne flowed in Paris, reactions in Cambodia and the refugee camps in Thailand were muted. "There is great hope, here in Phnom Penh, but no great wave of optimism yet," wrote Jacques Bekaert, a veteran Cambodia watcher. There were no fireworks or wild signs of jubilation. "I'm happy, of course, but I think we all have to wait and see," said a woman shopkeeper quoted in the ***Bangkok Post,*** echoing the thoughts and concern of many Cambodians. Many prefered to hold their excitement until Prince Sihanouk returns to Phnom Penh November 14. "When Papa comes home...then I'll believe it," repeated farmers, sellers and teachers alike. In the diaspora, reactions were equally subdued. Dith Pran, whose story was told in the film "The Killing Fields", and who continues to work tirelessly for peace in his country, remarked "This is a peace we must accept...But it is a peace with pain."

Meanwhile in Site 2, the largest refugee camp in Thailand, there were a few spontaneous celebrations and banners lining the main roads proclaiming "Thank you UN and all friendly countries for bringing peace to Cambodia". Some, such as a bicycle taxi driver who exclaimed "I'm so happy I could die! I've been here since 1979 and I'd stopped believing we'd ever see this day! When are they going to bring us home?" and a yiey (grandmother) who said, "I heard the monks chanting at 1 am, and I was surprised. I thought 'Oh, it must be for jen vassa (end of Buddhist lent'), but then I heard them chant thanksgiving for peace! What a beautiful sound! I was so happy, then I really believed it. I wanted to go to the wat (temple) right then, but I was afraid, there have been so many bandits at night." Yet other reactions were filled with skepticism. "We have a peice of paper!" said a student. A secretary lamented "Happy about signing a way back to power for the Khmer Rouge? How can I be happy about that? I was going to be happy because at least the shelling stopped, but the day they signed we heard more shelling than in a long time; they even took that happiness from me. Now I just worry about going home. Will

peace last? Will I get a house, a job, how will I feed my family, will I be accepted? Will I be robbed on the way home? Can I go see my brothers back in Cambodia without causing them trouble in their jobs? So many worries, how can I be excited?"

Indeed, as the peace accord was signed in Paris, the sounds of shelling could still be heard in Site 2 and the border towns in Thailand. One of the resistance factions, the Khmer People's National Liberation Front, which controls Site 2, and government troops were apparently engaged in last-minute battles over territory or market routes.

Yet at the same time alarming events were taking place in Site 8 - a Khmer Rouge-administered camp under the auspices of the UN. Three weeks before the signing of the agreement, 16 civilian ('democratically-elected') administrators and section leaders were called to a meeting at a Khmer Rouge satellite camp inside Cambodia, where they were detained. Instead a committee of five Khmer Rouge military men returned to say that the leaders had been reassigned other duties and illegally installed themselves as the new administration. The atmosphere in the camp was, and remains, very tense, as residents are terrified of being forced back across the border to an unsafe area. The intended area, Phnom Sam Pov Loon, is a dangerous area due to landmines, malaria, and lack of rice and medicine. Many camp residents have expressed fears to expatriate staff about being forced to return to this location. There were reports of armed elements in the camp at night intimidating residents to return to Cambodia now. A few days later the population was informed that all residents would be moved across the border to Phnom Sam Pov Loon over a three-day period, October 2-23. Over 400 people registered with the Red Cross for protection, requesting either protection in the camp or transfer to another camp. The Thai authorities have granted permission for transfer of three of these protection cases only. Disturbingly, a senior Thai official told Reuters that Thailand will not intervene in Khmer Rouge plans to resettle its people.

Due to international attention before the signing of the agreement, the threatened movement of the entire camp population over the border on October 20-23 did not occour. There is no doubt that international pressure helped to at least postpone this from occurring. These events would have seriously jeopardized the peace accords themselves.

Despite assurances (in a statement issued on October 17) 1991 by Khien Samphan and Son Sen, the Khmer Rouge representatives on the Cambodian Supreme National Council which that "the Democratic Kampuchea Party fully respects the principles of free choice...and voluntary repatriation," relief workers still report a climate of fear existing in the camps. Camp residents say the planned push back has only been postponed for the time being. There continue to be reports of Khmer Rouge soldiers moving in and out of the camp. Camp residents still get visits at night to 'discuss' repatriation plans. In oral and written announcements in camp, people are encouraged to spy on their neighbors and "cooperate with the police to report...all of the yuon (Vietnamese) agents and puppets conducting propaganda" in a chilling replica of tactics of the past.

Yet the people of Site 8 are becoming aware of the world wide concern for them and their right to a freedom of choice as per the Paris Peace Accords. UNHCR began its pre-registration campaign, in which heads of households are interviewed so as to ascertain where they would like to return to in Cambodia once the official repatriation process begins. Initial results show the great majority of people interviewed so far are choosing their villages of origin, and return with the UN, as opposed to the Khmer Rouge recommended areas. By daring to speak the truth, the people of Site 8 have proven that any movement across the border into Khmer Rouge-controlled area will be an involuntary one. During a festival organized in camp to celebrate the signing of the peace accord, many used the occasion to call for free choice and voluntary repatriation. Yet deep fear remains that the plans of the Khmer Rouge have not changed and nothing the people, nor the international community, do can stop them. "If the military comes in the night to get us we cannot say no. We must go. We are not brave enough to say no. We are afraid and don't even trust each other," wrote one Cambodian resident of Site 8 in a letter sent to an NGO official.

Indeed all of the political factions along the border are refining their efforts at encouraging and enticing 'their' people to return to their zones in order to build up a support base for the upcoming elections. While not as dramatic as those of the Khmer Rouge, their alternative repatriation plans are not to be ignored. They have registered medics and other workers, lured people to work in their areas by offering jobs in US Agency for International Development-supported hospitals, and played on residents fear of bandit attacks by claiming that only the factions themselves can protect the people. As one clerk in Site 2 said, "Maybe they force the peo-

ple back in Site8, but here they do similar things. Only they use psychological ways: they tell us it's better to live in a big group, with whom we know already, to protect ourselves from enemies and bandits."

The Paris Peace Agreement gives the UNHCR the mandate to carry out the repatriation plan, but for UNHCR to offer any viable option, adequate funding (and cooperation from local Thai authorities) are essential. Thus far UNHCR has received only $9 million out of an estimated $109 million necessary for its repatriation plan, which does not include costs of return for 170,000 internally displaced people, and even more displaced by recent flooding.

Does peace mean simply the absence of fighting? Perhaps after nearly a generation of war it will take some time for the Khmer factions and their respective donor countries to walk down the path which leads to peace. They are all still toiling on war footing. Peace is a new experience for them. Anne Cameron taught us in **Daughters of Copper Woman**, "When I was young they told me if a generation of people got pushed to killin' other people, it took four generations of peace to get peoples' heads fixed afterward. And we hadn't had them four generations."

Chaiwat Satha-Anand, professor of political science and nonviolence at Thammasat University in Bangkok, recently said that in the past, many peace accords have simply served to freeze the conflict for a time, as they have not addressed the root causes, necessary to create a foundation for true peace. While Cambodians in the country, in the diaspora and in the refugee camps hope desperately that the peace agreements signed October 23 lay the foundations for a true peace, they dare not believe it. Hope, not optimism, yet. The international community is all too ready to wash its hands of Cambodia, to relegate it once again to sideshow status, yet attention and aid are indispensable for the accord to be a foundation for true peace rather than 'a peace of paper' for further war.

Liz Bernstein

MONGOLIA : Buddha and Genghis Khan Back in Mongolia

Ulan Bator, Mongolia - In a makeshift temple at the foot of a rocky cliff in the Gobi Desert, four aged lamas in saffron robes sat cross-legged on carpets before a shrine to Buddha. They were fasting, meditating in silence and perusing sacred texts of Tibetan Buddhism.



Outside under a harsh sun lay the crumbling mud-brick ruins of the Ulgii Khiid Monastery, which once held more than a thousand monks. It had been sacked by the repressive Communist Government that ruled Mongolia for 70 years, a Government that destroyed more than 700 monasteries in the 1930's burning books and executing thousands of lamas.

Now some surviving lamas are returning to occupy Ulgii Khiid and several dozen other monasteries. They live and worship in yurts, the customary dome-shaped dwellings of Mongolian nomads. They are teaching younger men to be monks and making plans to rebuild the temples.

The scene of religious revival amid revolution's ruins illustrates the extraodinary changes under way in Mongolia. In yet another reverberation from the collapsing Soviet empire, the dictatorship tied to Moscow was ousted in March 1990 and replaced with a more reform-mined Communist Gov-

ernment and a Parliament that includes increasingly assertive democratic opposition parities.

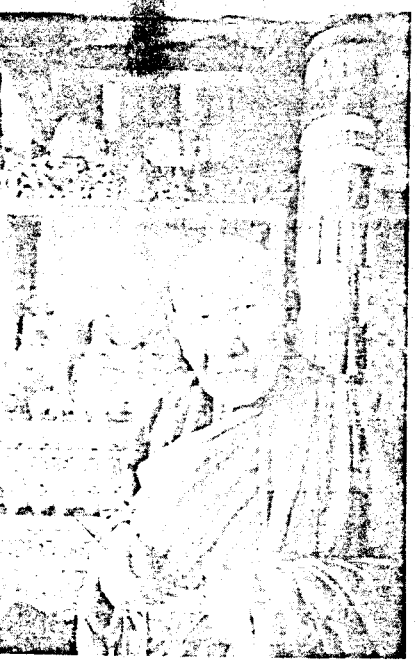
With that new political freedom has come a resurgence of Mongolian nationalism.

One of its most fundamental expressions is the official and popular support for Buddhism, the traditional religion of Mongolians for centuries.

In an interview in his private reception room at the Gandan Monastery here, the Khama Lama, the country's ranking Buddhist cleric, said, "This movement is very strong, not only among Buddhists but all people."

Other religious leaders, officials, intellectuals and diplomats agreed. Although few Mongolians may have a deep knowledge or belief in Buddhism, they said, any thing from the pre-Soviet days is encouraged and celebrated.

It was when the members of the American-Mongolian expedition were crossing the broad, desolate landscape between the towns of Saynshand and Dalan Dzadagad that they found the monastery ruins.



Fred R. Conrad/The New York Times

Cresting a dusty ridge they caught singht of what appeared to be some "lost city" of archeological legend. It was the ruins of a small monastery known as Khonchiyn Khural. On the ground the Americans found spent cartridges and an flattened Buddhist statue with bullet holes, legacies of the sack. The place was utterly abandoned.

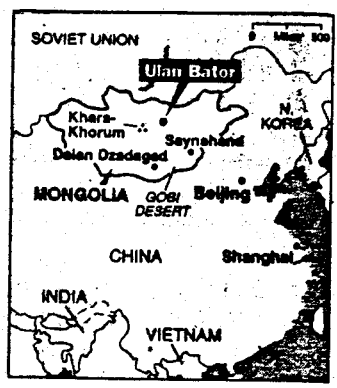
Most of those monasteries were destroyed in 1936 in what Renchingiy Otgon, director of the State Central Library, likened to China's Cultural Revolution in the 1960's. He said more than half of the country's books, many of them priceless hand-printed religious works in Sanskrit and Tibetan, vanished.

In a few more hours of cross-country travel, the expedition came upon Ulgi Khiid, where the white cloth of yurts glistened among the earthen ruins.

The American scientists were given a taste of Mongolian hospitality, tea with camel's milk, and a few were allowed a brief visit inside the temple yurt. The lay leader of the settlement, a young man named Sandag told them that 12 lamas and several young monks had taken up residence at the ruins late last year. With help from local herdsmen, they hoped to begin rebuilding the temple next year.

The Khama Lama said that some 100 monasteries have been reoccupied in at least a symbolic form, but that there restoration would be slow because of a lack of money and a shortage of monks Many of them are old - the Khama Lama is in his 80's - and only recently have younger men started joining the monasteries.

Michael Sautman, an American businessman here and a practicing Buddhist, expressed concern that "the whole tradition of Tibetan Buddhism with its



The New York Times

scholasticism and deeper meditative arts, have been lost in Mongolia." Many of the lamas, he pointed out, had to spend years outside the temple, living as laborers and herdsmen. Only the Gandan Monastery in Ulan Bator was permitted to reopen earlier in 1944, but more as a showpiece than as a vibrant religious center.

Mongolians are adherents of the Gelug sect of Tibet, commonly called the Yellow Hat Buddhists for the yellow caps worn by monks to symbolize their rigid rules on learning, discipline and celibacy, and followers of the Dalai Lama. Indeed, Dalai is a Mongolian word meaning "ocean of wisdom."

Kushok Bakula, considered a living Buddha and Inia's Ambassador to Ulan Bator, agreed that it would take years to train a new generation of monks. He and other Buddhist leaders are hoping that a visit from the Dalai Lama would set off a wave of religious fervor, bringing back more people to worship and inspiring the young to take up the monastic life.

But the issue of the Dalai Lama's visit has exposed the limits of religous freedom in Mongolia and served as a reminder that this country of two million people is landlocked between two giants, China and the Soviet Union.

With its withdrawal of most trade, military forces and eco-

nomic aid, the Soviet Union has left the once-depenedent Mon - golians to fend for themselves. Food and gasoline shortages are spreading, and Mongolians fear that conditions will worsen. They have made vertures for new trade ties with Japan, South Korea and the West, but they are restricted because their only transportation links are through Soviet and Chinese territory.

Under the circumstances, the Mongolian Government has sought to cultivate relations with China. And since Beijing looks with disfavor on any show of respect for the Dalai Lama, who disputes China's sovereignty over Tibet, cautious Mongolian officials withheld permission for the religious leader's planned visit here this month.

Not that the monks at Gandan are sitting still, waiting for a visit from the Dalai Lama. At noon one day in early July, they were out inspecting the construction of a new temple, young monks lending a hand to the old ones as they leaned over the foundation trenches. One of the few other construction projects in the city is the imposing glass edifice for a luxury hotel to open next year - the Genghis Khan.

John Noble Wilford
New York Times
July 22, 1991



TIBET: Human Rights Violations Continue

Lobsang Tsondrue, a Tibetan monk who is over 70 years old and a prisoner at Drapchi, was beaten unconscious by troops in the days that followed the US Ambassador's visit to the institution.

He was placed "in total isolation" at Drapchi Prison on 27 April, after his involvement in the protests there, and in July was still being held in solitary confinement.

Despite his age, he was beaten particularly badly for continuing to criticise the soldiers, according to a source from Drapchi.

"He was bleeding from his nose, mouth and ears. He gathered some of the blood in his right hand and threw it over the soldiers and prison guards. This resulted in several beatings, but each time he regained consciousness he shouted back at the soldiers and at the prison staff," the source said.

A prisoner who saw him in late June said that he was "in a bad condition" and that he had blood on his face and clothes, suggesting he had been recently beaten.

In the latest report from Tibet on 19 July, Lobsang Tsondrue was described as defiant; still demanding the release of the five missing prisoners and calling for the independence of Tibet.

Lobsang Tsondrue was arrested at Drepung Monastery in April 1990 and accused of "being a reactionary with the hope of splitting the great motherland." In 1988 he spent six months in prison without charge as a result of unspecified political activity.

Lobsand Tsondrue's case has been taken up by Amnesty International and is the subject of an Action Alert.

Tibetan Bulletin

MARTIN ENNALS - AN APPRECIATION

On October 28, 1991, I went to the office of International Alert in London to attend a meeting on Burma. Hoping to meet Martin Ennals there, I found out that sadly he had passed away on October 5 of lung cancer in Saskatchewan, Canada where he was the first professor of human rights at that University.

A few years ago Martin came to my house in Bangkok unannounced and luckily I was home. He solicited my help for the reconciliation of the Sri Lankans. That was the first time I met him, but I had known his name long before as the one who made Amnesty International famous as a major international monitor for human rights during his tenure as Secretary-General from 1968-80. Indeed, Martin has also been very generous to me personally when I was arrested in 1984 and now as I am in England as Amnesty's guest. It is indeed an irony to be here and to miss Martin, one of their founding fathers.

In 1977, Martin accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on Amnesty's behalf and when he left the organization, he founded I.A.- International Alert, which tries to offer solutions to countries and peoples torn apart by international conflicts and to alert international awareness of dangerous zones.

I have found Martin warm and friendly yet very unconventional. He was essentially a rather modest person. He was a man of principle which made it virtually impossible for him to compromise on issues where, in all truth, there was only one right way forward.

His whole career was full of the results of his innovative competence and his remarkable instinctiveness as to what human rights essentially are and what should be done to promote them.

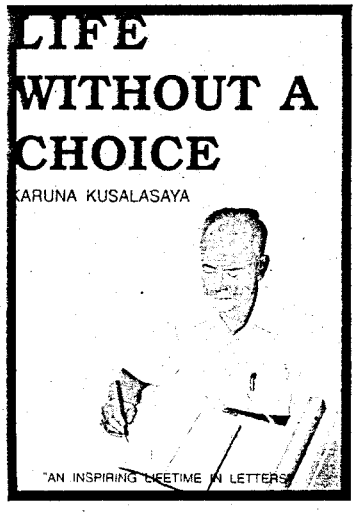
Luckily, he was born in England where he himself was not persecuted. Thus he did everything he could for those who have been denied fundamental human rights in every part of the world.

I will speak about Buddhism and Human Rights at an international symposium on the subject in Frankfurt, Germany in November, and no doubt we shall all dedicate our efforts to cherish Martin's pioneering work in this field.

A memorial service will be held for him in London on December 1- the Thai Constitutional Day. Let us hope that our constitution will be resurrected for freedom, democracy, social justice, and human rights as all other civilized nations on earth. If it could be so, Martin Ennals would really be proud of us as well.

Sulak Sivaraksa

LIFE WITHOUT A CHOICE KARUNA KUSALASAYA



Life Without A Choice,
Karuna Kusalasaya
Sathirakoses - Nagapradipa Foundation and Thai Inter-Religious Commission For Development, Bangkok 1991, 303 pp., 320 Baht.

Karuna Kusalasaya's Autobiography, ***Life Without A Choice***, offers a very relevant window into the close relationship between the personal and political in human life. Through life in an internment camp in India during the Second World War to making secret diplomatic visits on behalf of

the Thai government to China in the 1950's to once again being interned in a political prison in Thailand during the 1960's Khun Kusalasaya's life has certainly been much more political than the ordinary individual's. His accounts of such experiences are certainly fascinating. However, it is his most personal style in relating his life that makes his autobiography compelling.

Obviously, an autobiography will tend to be personal, yet for such a man as Khun Kusalasaya, who lived such an intensely political life - one devetoted to relating to and working with people, his writing strikes the reader from a very simple and intimate perspective. Through all his trials and triumphs, the reader can feel the simple innocence of the young man who left Thailand as an orphan to find identity in India.

Perhaps, it is the actual method of the autobiography which creates Khun Kusalasaya's accesible tone. Written as a series of letters to his children, the reader can feel the simplicity and intimacy of a story already known in facts by his children but yet to be understood in feeling and emotion. In addition, since this series of letters requires a year and a half to complete, a sense that life continues amid reflection is evoked. To myself, this is a subtle, yet very important aspect of the book, and the area which makes it shine as an autobiography. To often, a biography or an autobiography leaves a reader with a dull sense of finality, the lesson learned-the book written-the dust collects. However, in ***Life Without A Choice,*** the lag of sometimes up to a month between the three to five page letter/chapters reaffirms to the reader that Khun Kusalasaya's life is continuing dynamically as he writes and as we read.

Historically and politically, ***Life Without A Choice*** is quite succesful almost more in the sense of historical fiction than biography. Certainly it is not fiction, yet Khun Kusalasaya's style offers more as a time capsule of life in Asia during the tumultuous times of World War Two and the Cold War than as a history of politics during this epoch. As the Thai expert on Indian culture and servant and victim of the Thai government, Khun Kusalasaya could have written his story more from the perspective of his knowledge of India and of Thai politics in the 1950's and 60's. However, before ever plunging into such a detailed account, he kindly refers his children (and the reader) to other volumes already written on the subject either by himself or by others. This decison is succesful because of what Khun Kusalasaya does with the extra room created. What emerges is a fluid, personal style with striking images of life during these times.



Such an image is that of Thailand and Burma before World War II. Khun Kusalasaya makes time to relate the world and life of the average Thai merchant in the days before industrialization. His images of life on the Chao Phya river and of young Bangkok contrast so strongly life today in these places, it makes one feel that Khun Kusalasaya must be much older than what he tells us! Khun Kusalasaya's images of his trek to Rangoon through the Thai and Burmese jungles as a young Buddhist novice on his way to India can further fill the reader with wonder and longing for a time before machines and war came to these parts.

Another striking series of images are Khun Kusalasaya's four years in an internment camp in India during World War II in the wake of Thailand's appeasement with Japan. His description of the high discipline and morale which the Japanese solidiers showed each morning in their ritual towards the rising sun strikes boldly in coming to grips with the mentality of war. His account of his journey from Singapore back to Thailand through the wartorn peninsula is a powerful one as well.

Among all his stories, it is Khun Kusalasaya's attention to the human side that can catch the reader. In his account of the secret missions to open realtions with Communist China, it is his descriptions of Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai's little idiosynchronies which struck me the most. Those of us who care to all know about these two men's ideas and may debate them for hours. It is Khun Kusalasaya's observations of Mao's laughter, chain smoking, and clentched fists and Chou's ability to drink but not to smoke which can leave us with a fresh feel of what these men were like behind the histories they made.

This is where the personal and political meet in ***Life Without A Choice,*** and where the book is at its best. Journeys of history all with an attention to the way individuals present and hold themselves. The qualities which make people certain ways. The traits which lead to failure, suc-

cess, and the large grey area in between. The fine detail of life and of Khun Kusalasaya's life which has been more extraordinary than most. Perhaps, it is this sharp perception which has led him to this path and this life. The circumstances of Khun Kusalasaya's life led him to name his story ***Life Without A Choice,*** yet he clearly took definite choices in dealing with these circumstances. These choices have led him to a rich and inspiring life which can also be the experience of one who reads his story.

JSW

OUR APPOINTMENT WITH LIFE



The Buddha's Teaching on Living in the Present
Thich Nhat Hanh,
Parallax Press,
Berkeley, CA 1991
$6.00

Have you ever found yourself drifting in the stagnant pools of the past, or forging ten steps (or years) ahead of yourself into the unknown possibilities of the future - to then suddenly shake yourself, realizing that you're not paying attention to your world as it is now? How does one live comfortably and peacefully as part of a society that often bludgeons one's senses and sensibilities? Have you ever actually run away somewhere in hopes of "finding" yourself, only to "find" that you've taken the same fears and feelings along with you to this "new" place? What does it really mean to live and be "alone?" And how does one sustain a fruitful spiritual practice without giving up all worldly possessions, slipping into a robe, and moving to a distant and remote cave?

Ahhhh...the questions of a lifetime - or more.... If you've ever found yourself pondering such questions or the multitude of derivative questions that stem from them - and, even if you haven't - I still highly recommend the addition of this small treasure to your own personal library. For Thich Nhat Hanh, highly acclaimed Vietnamese Buddhist monk, poet, and peace activist, has the special gift of being able to convey heartfelt and penetrating truths in a profoundly personal and simple manner, in terms that are both readable and sensible.

Our Appointment with Life focuses and expounds upon the Buddha's "Sutra On Knowing the Better Way to Live Alone (Bhaddekarattasutta)":

Do not pursue the past/Do not lose yourself in the future.

The past no longer is/The future has not yet come.

Looking deeply at life as it is in the very here and now, the practitioner dwells in stability and freedom.

We must be diligent today/To wait until tomorrow is too late.

Death comes unexpectedly/ How can we bargain with it?

The sage calls a person who knows how to dwell in mindfulness night and day "one who knows the better way to live alone"

And the foundation stone of this sutra is the practice of mindfulness - the state of being awake and aware in each and every moment. And mindfulness, to be certain, is indeed a "practice" - a life-long practice of becoming unattached and attuned to the present.

Thich Nhat Hanh states that the subject of knowing the better way to live alone is quite important in Buddhism: "It shines light on the essence of living in an awakened way as taught by the Buddha: to let go of the past and the future in order to look deeply and discover the true nature of all that is taking place in the present moment." In our often hurried and busy lives, we don't usually pencil-in in our appointment books: "4:30 pm - 5:00 pm, being mindful to each moment". Although, it does sound like it might be beneficial to do so.

An important feature of the

book is Thich Nhat Hanh's gentle insistence that we can practice this without being isolated from society. One can, in fact, successfully be "alone" in society - "alone" meaning: grounded, centered, clear, unattached to the past or future and not distracted by the present, but mindful of it. And, in this way, "we can be in real touch with people and society, and we will know what to do and what not to do to be of help." This too is an important and vital point because it means that knowing "the better way to live alone" actually enhances and contributes in positive ways to the workings of society.

And, as with other books by Thich Nhat Hanh, **Our Appointment with Life** is also a wonderful resource for psychotherapists, or, for those interested in gaining a more in-depth understanding into what it means to be "attached" to our past/future, and, gaining some insight into the age-old psychological question: "Just what does 'letting go' really mean anyway?" He also explores other familiar psychological territories, such as: "What dynamics in our consciousness compel us to go back and live with the images of the past?" "What are our 'internal formations'?" "How do they effect our consciousness and behavior?" And, "How do we transform them?"

Our Appointment with Life highlights an issue that is quite relevant for each and every one of us - **the present moment,** the potential that each and every moment holds for us in our lives. Thich Naht Hanh lucidly and effectively brings this point to the foreground when he states that "The best way to prepare for the future is to take care of the present....And we can only build the future from the raw materials of the present....[for] if we are standing firmly in the present we are not overwhelmed by it."

This book comes highly recommended not because it's going to offer the reader other-worldly, mystical truths to absorb and digest, or, because it begets age-old, universal, spiritual and psychological questions for you to ponder; it comes highly recommended because it offers the reader profoundly simple and practical words of ancient and rich Buddhist wisdom on the ever-crucial issue of how to be fully alive in each and every moment of our existence. However, don't take these "simple/practical/everyday" words of Buddhist advice too lightly-for you may be quite surprised at what they offer and the subsequent positive effects that they can have on your life. You may be quite surprised, indeed.

Jeffrey Adam Sager

LETTERS :

FROM WAT BUDDHA DHAMMA, AUSTRALIA

The Wat is in transition, not quite one thing or the other, a fact which many people find disturbing. It cannot be fitted into familiar and well-defined categories. Actually from the start we tried to make it different, not a Thai Wat but a place where Australians could find out about Dhamma without too much Asian cultural overburden. For some years though it did have some resemblance to a forest Wat, but there were important differences: a lay community lived at the Wat and raised families here, while up in the 'sangha house' a large and varied librare reposed, certainly unusual in Thai forest Wats! A good deal of the library was taken up with books on Mahayan and in latter years there were tentative introductions or Mahayana practice here.

Still, nothing much changed until I went to a Dzogchon course and became very impressed with this type of practice As the local Dzogchen Community was looking for land thought it might be possible for the two to combine in some way. Theravadan and Dzogchen do not seem likely partners though no doubt stranger things have happened in California.

The gradual growth together of the Wat and the Dzogchen Community, called felicitously by one practitioner "a long courtship," has been mostly harmonious Now that this exploratory period is drawing to a close some who have chosen to keep to Theravada feel rather threatened by the proposed merger. It is interesting to see how people suddenly become active when property is involved, upon which of course they have spent much time. Maybe questions have to be addressed on the subject of giving without expectations, not an easy matter for many people. Anyway, we have got a process of talks between different parties, an interesting exercise in communication. When you can get people to talk to each other, then it is hard for them to fight!

My view is that the Wat is for all groups to share but this may not be everyone's perception. It is a beautiful and peaceful place which will be good for all Buddhist groups or individ uals who would like to hold retreats here.

This does of course mean that it is not any longer a forest monastery. For some years there has only been myself as a monk here while the lay community has been slowly winding down. Now it has come to the point where I expect to leave the Wat's (temporarily at this stage) nice she ltered environment that it is in a similar move to my (leaving home) about 30 years ago in Britain. Whether I shall stay as a monk is at least doubtful. Dzogchen practice will be easier if I am not one though it is not so easy to leave such an established way of life.

All this change, inside and out, is truly interesting. Where it will lead I do not know...

Phra Khantipalo

FROM: FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION NYACK, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

Dear Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun,

We have just become aware of the arrest and trial of Sulak Sivaraksa and the Ven. Phra Pachak, two internationally known and respected Buddhist leaders from Thailand. As an internationally involved organization with branches in forty countries, we have come to know and respect the integrity, compassion, courage and wisdom of both of these men.

We have witnessed in the last few years the rapid spread of democracy throughout the world and the growing determination of the world's peoples for governments which rule with fairness, justice and integrity. Although we have known and appreciated Thailand's great history and traditions, we are stunned that in this modern world eminent religious leaders such as you have chosen to arrest and bring such serious charges against these men.

If these charges are not dropped against Sulak Sivaraksa and the Ven. Phra Pachak, then we have no alternative but to publicize this throughout the world. Specifically, we intend to mount a campaign calling on the World Bank to postpone or cancel its meeting scheduled for next month in Bangkok.

May the spirit of wisdom and compassion inform you in this serious moment.

Sincerely,

Richard L. Deats

(Rev.) Richard L.Deats
Director, Interfaith Activities

C. Doug Hostetter

C. Doug Hostetter
Executive Secretary

POETRY

RELIGION

Putting gold leaf
on the Buddha's back
is child's play
Eating halal is easy too
Umar and Angkuliman are
the same, don't you see?
First they oppressed religion
then the self

Don't fight over who was better.
Ask ; which Umar or Angkuliman
are you, the old or the new?

HOLY WAR

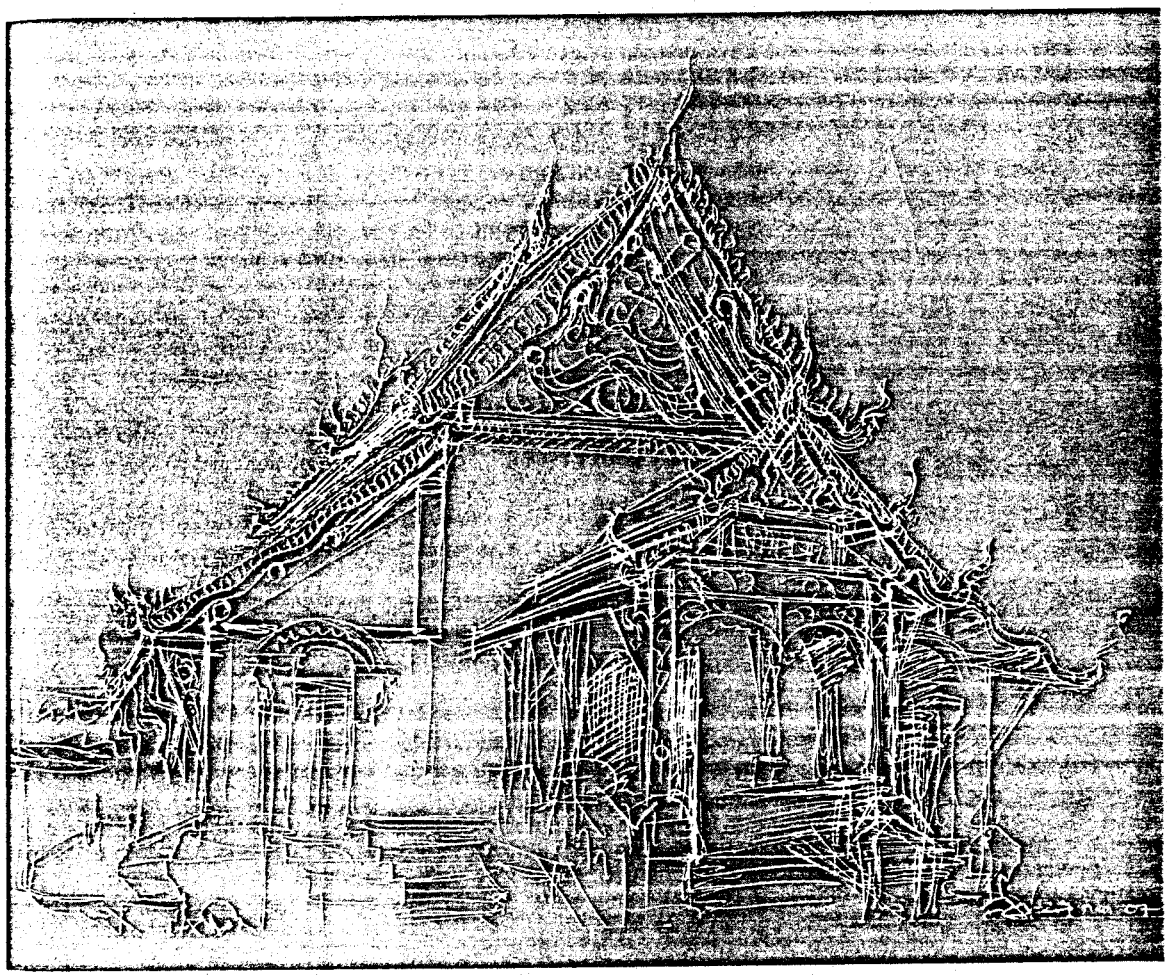
The peace of Hudaybiyah is over
And it's time for holy war
Don't say you've no stomach for fighting

Oh brothers, I mean this :
Your spirit is strong now, so
Assail the self
When an evil thought arises
Let it go, immediately !

Ilyas Baker.

SEEDS OF PEACE

Vol.8 No.2 May.-Aug. 2535 (1992)



THE *4th* **INEB** CONFERENCE



SEEDS O

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EACE

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bjectives of TICD

1. To coordinate work ong individuals, groups of indi- duals and various agencies deal- with religions and development the course of working together.

2. To share experience in d knowledge of religions and velopment as well as exploring ays and means of working to- ther.

3. To offer training and se- re resources in terms of man- wer and materials to support and hance the agencies that need help.

The goals of INEB are to :

1. Promote understanding nd co-operation among Buddhist untries, different Buddhist sects, nd socially conscious Buddhist roups.

2. Facilitate and carry out lutions to the many problems cing our communities, societies, nd world.

3. Articulate the perspec- ve of Engaged Buddhism re- rding these problems and train Buddhist activists accordingly.

4. Serve as a clearing house f information on existing Engaged Buddhist groups.

5. Cooperate with activists from other spiritual traditions. ■

SOMDEJ PHRA MAHA GHOSANANDA THE 4TH SANGHARAJA OF CAMBODIA

Leader of the Dhamma Yatra (Dhamma Walk) for Peace and Reconciliation commencing on the Cambodian New Year on April 13 in Aranyaprathet, Thailand (site of the Cambodian refugee camps) and concluding on Vesak Puja, the Buddha's birthday, on May 16 in Phnom Penh.

Slowly, slowly, step by step.
A journey of 10,000 miles begins with a single step.
Each step is a prayer.
Each step is a meditation.
Each step will build a bridge.



Because of Sensation,
Craving comes into being;
Because of Craving, Pursuit comes into being;
Because of Pursuit, Gain comes into being;
Because of Gain, Decision comes into being;
Because of Decision, Desire and Passion come into being;
Because of Desire and Passion, Tenacity comes into being;
Because of Tenacity, Possession comes into being;
Because of Possession, Avarice comes into being;
Because of Avarice, Watch and Ward come into being;
and many bad and wicked states of things arising from keeping watch and ward over possession come into being;
They are : Blows, Wounds, Strife, Contradiction, Retort, Quarrelling, Slander, Lies...

Wat Umong,
Chiang Mai
March 23, 1992

EDITOR'S NOTE

In this issue, we have spent a considerable amount of room on the past INEB Conference. As a voice for INEB, it is natural that we have used *Seeds of Peace* to highlight the activities of the conference. I hope, however, that the reader finds more than simple self-promotion and idle talk of INEB the organization.

I think for many of us the conference was a very important occasion to contact, share ideas, and plan action with others who hold common concerns. While a few of us must concern ourselves with the actual maintenance of the network, it is my hope that the reader will discover issues, concerns, new ideas, and possible solutions as opposed to idle chatter on the wonderfulness of this little network. The former is the focus of the work.

Recently, I have been thinking about the difference between one's efforts being legitimized by one's position or one's position being legitimized by one's efforts. For example, when one becomes a monk, does this mean one can relax in knowing that the discipline one has to observe as a monk will secure growth and wisdom? Or when one becomes a monk, does this mean one has an increased duty to practice and study earnestly in order to fulfill the ideal of monkhood? I truly believe in the latter case, and I think we can understand this idea in all of our daily efforts, either in recognizing marriage as a commitment to greater effort in sharing one's life with another or in recognizing the greater responsibility to serve others seflessly in becoming an elected public servant. On this day of elections in Siam, I hope that all the newly elected individuals will ponder this point. Finally, I would hope that all of us in INEB would view the increasing strength and interest in the network as a call to increased efforts to reach out to others in compassion and not as a sign to relax upon the laurels of as still a very small accomplishment. The articles and resolutions in the following pages are to spur thought, dialogue, and action.

Additionally, we have tried to continue to inform friends on the activites and problems of some lesser known areas of the world and to update them on continuing concerns from previous issues. We continue with our regular updates on Burma, Cambodia, and Tibet. We have follow ups on the conditions of Phra Prachak and Sulak Sivaraksa, who remains in exile. Finally, we call attention to the problems of indigenious tribal peoples in Bangladesh, Nepal, Siam, India and the world over. Although we are not including a "Dhamma for Action" section like last time, we maintain our commitment to this area in a speech by the Ven.Piyasilo of Malaysia.

JSW

To be Buddhist–and equal

In Thailand, a woman who chooses religion as a vocation normally becomes a mai ji (mother ascetic). She wears the white robes of a "layperson" and occupies an ambiguous position in society. She enjoys no status at all.

Men, on the other hand, can become Sangha (a Buddhist monk), which is a position that carries much prestige in society.

In a Cambodian refugee camp, a few nuns who have survived war and violence have to counsel refugees who have been traumatized by the conditions in the refugee camps who, all too often, are suffering from psychological disorders. The nuns, who have little formal education, can offer little consolation.

In Japan, women generally have been relegated to a subservient position in society, especially in the field of religion. Japanese nuns who are celibate and lead reclusive lives get less support from society than Japanese monks who may get married and raise families.

Although Buddhist women in Burma are said to enjoy more priviliges than women in other Buddhist countries, they are still treated as men's inferiors. Many Burmese still oppose the idea of women being ordained.

In Korea, although the young of both sexes embrace Buddhism, the positions of power and responsibility in the Buddhist hierarchy are toally controlled by men. Korean nuns have taken the lead in opting for independent organizational structures.

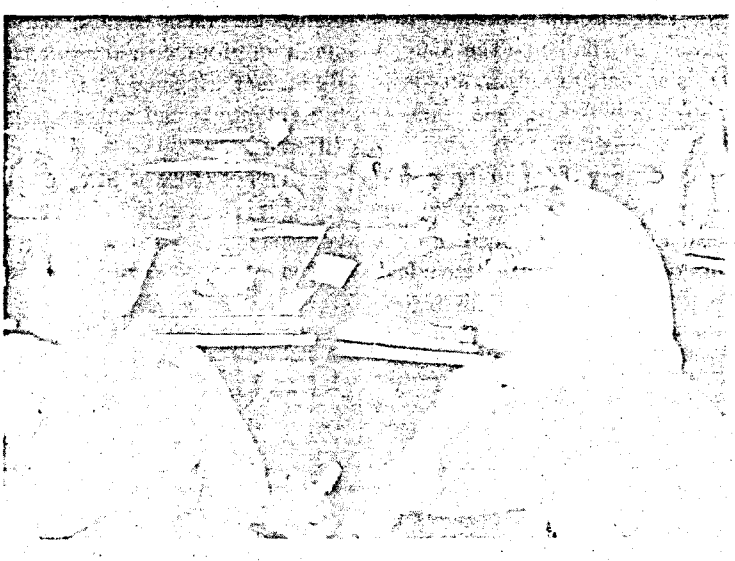
Taiwan is a success story as far as women and Buddhism are concerned. Nuns have become the backbone of a Buddhist renaissance, gaining fame in education, the arts and, most recently, in social welfare programmes as well as temple activites.

Although still under-represented in the thoroughly male-dominated bastions of ecclesiasti-

cal power,Buddhist women in Taiwan exert their influence through material generosity and sheer numbers.

Women entering monastic life outnumber men more than three to one.

In Asia, where Buddhism has been established and prospered, apart from some isolated examples, women act primarily as supportive adjuncts to the men in their lives, taking primary responsibility for the welfare of their families. But generally they hold no power or positions that enable them to make major contributions to society.



A similar situation which occurrs in several countries is that while men meditate and stuty dhamma, women do the chores both in the social environment and within the monastery.

"Women must change their status in society." said Bhiksuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo, an American who has become a Tibetan Buddhist priestess: She was addressing a group of 240 priestesses,nuns and laypersons from 27 countries attending the First International Conference of Buddhist Women at Thammasat University's Rangsit campus last week.

Bhiksuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo is among 20 Western Buddhist priestesses at the conference which ends tomorrow. These Western Buddhist women have brought with them their Western values and concept of Feminism and equality. They have been lobbying for a change in the status of Buddhist women in Asia.

"With wars and ecological disaster threatening humanity's very existence, the potential of all the word's citizens, female and male, must be maximized," she said.

"My thesis is ; In order to mobilize for the good of society, women must create for themselves avenues of spiritual evolution as well as gain a hold of the tools for substantially benefitting society.

Women, she said, need to overcome a traditional reticence to put themselves forward. "They must consciously develop inner strength to withstand the ripples created by going against the current of outdated social conventions."

According to Dr. Chatrasumarn Kabilisingh, a Thai Buddhist scholar and organizer of the conference,

"Thai women have little opportunity to study Buddhism. And that has deprived them of a chance to mobilize Buddhist philosophy in helping to solve their problems or those of their families. Buddhism is a spiritual resource for every human being."

The main aim of the conference is to have a brainstrorming session to find ways to enchance women's status and rights within a Buddhist context.

"In mainstream society in Thailand, there is almost no true understanding of Buddhism", alleged Chatrasumarn. "The practice of Buddhism doesn't actually follow what is taught in Buddhism. We have to launch a big campaign to promote Buddhist learning here ," she said.

Chatrasumarn said the conference was "history in the making". The force of Buddhist women will eventually change things for the better where women may learn about Buddhism. It is hoped that these units will serve as catalysts to boost the study of Buddhism at all levels of society and especially for women with fewer opportunities.

The conference has attracted participants from several countries,including Cambodia and Bangladesh.

During the conference, there was some discussion to try to help restore Buddhism in Cambodia after peace has been established.

Even if there are those who support the idea of the priesthood for women in Thailand, Thippthevi Thongpubeth, who is a sikamata (they abserve 10 precepts while nuns observe eight) in the Santi Asoke sect, led by controversial abbot, Phra Bhotirak, pointed out that it would be difficult for women to build up the discipline to observe 311 precepts. "We can be spiritual without having to stick to the form," she said.

Thiuppthevi said she knows of only 21 women who , like her, have ordained as a sikamata.

"There are no bhiksuni [pries tesses] in Thailand. The Sangha does not dare to support the ordination of bhiksuni," she said.

An Australian who has ordained as a Tibetan bhiksuni, Wendy Finster, is convinced that Asian women have been brought up to believe that they have less potential than men. This belief, she said, has followed them into the monastery.

"We, Western women, were brought up to believe in our equality. We feel we have the same potential as men. What is important, I think, is how you feel about yourself," she said. Asian Buddhist women, she said, have to change their attitude and realize their attitude and realize their own potential.

Bhiksuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo, however, maintained that her efforts to support women's rights and to give them equal opportunities is not a radical feminist's ideology. "It's not that we want to compete with the Sangha. But we want to improve the status of women and give them more opportunities to study Buddhism." Her main duty, she insisted, is spiritual attainment in Buddhism.

In fact, once Buddhist women have joined forces to try to improve Buddhist education, "most monks are very happy, since it will make their job easier."

But if monks are not ready to afford women equal status in religion in certain countries "then, yes, no problem. We can wait until the conditions and attitudes have changed," she said.

Nonetheless, the issue of women in Buddhism, she emphasized, "is an issue of social justice. There exists a situation of grave inequality between the rights and opportunities of male and female Buddhists. Where as the teachings of Buddha are universal and equally applicable to all human beings, the practical reality is that conditions for men and women in Buddhism, especially the conditions of monks and nuns are very different.

"It is not a case of different but equal, it is a case of different and very unequal. Until women are accorded equal opportunities that reflect their capabilities and commitment, Buddhism will not progress and the world will be poorer," she concluded.

Suwanna Asavaroengchai
THE NATION
October 28, 1991

Buddhism and Conflict Resolution Seminar

"I hope that we will be able to know one another's hearts and minds" answered one Cambodian man from Phnom Penh, when asked what his expectations were of the seminar he had just come to attened in Thailand. He was one of the 22 participants at a three week seminar on Buddhism and Conflict Resolution for Cambodians from Cambodia as well as from refugee camps in Thailand. The seminar was sponsored by the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD), the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) and the Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation(CPR), and held at the Ashram for Life and Society in Nakhon Nayok. Ten of the participants, of whom four were monks, including Somdej Sumedhadipati, Ven. Tep Vong, the Supreme Patriarch of the Cambodian Sangha, came from Phnom Penh. They were joined by twelve Cambodians from Site 2, Site B and Khao I Dang camps on the Thai Cambodian border.

The aim of the conference was to introduce participants to conflict resolution within a Buddhist framework. But as the participant quoted above said, another more important goal was to enable Cambodians from within the country and without, to get to know one another, to "break down the walls between us, as another participant said. Though the participants came from areas governed by different political factions who have been at war with one another for 13 years, they were eager to begin "breaking down the walls", particulaly as the Cambodian factions just signed a peace agreement last October, rendering the workshop even more timely. Though it is a fragile peace, it is the first sign of hope for reconciliation and unity. "We all have the same idea, we all want peace. We've come together to exchange ideas and see how we can make this peace a lasting one," explained another participant.

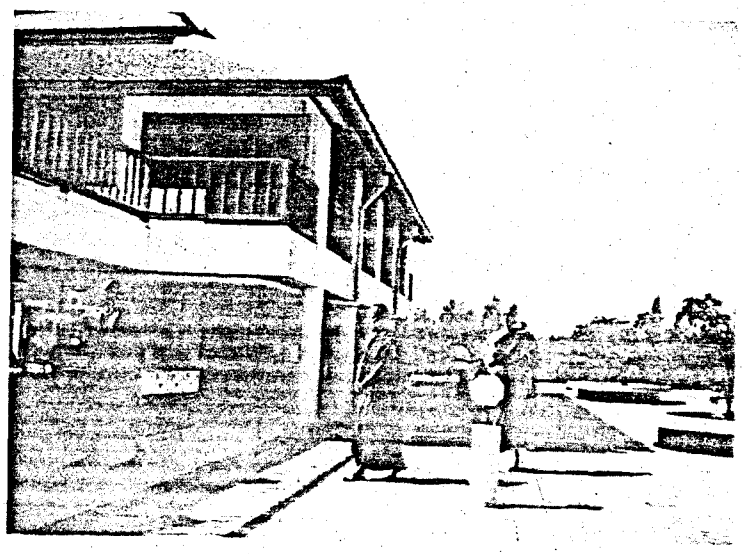
When introducing the workshop, Pracha Hutanuwatr, executive secretary of INEB and one of the trainers for the workshop, said that as there are deep cultural and religious ties between Siam and Cambodia, they have much to learn from and share with one another. He emphasized that the aim of the workshop was resolving conflicts at the personal, family and community levels, not national politics, as it is the people who suffer most as their communities have been destroyed at these local levels. The other principal trainer, Ven Santikaro from Suan Mokkh, stressed that an important

theme of the workshop was that "there can only be peace in our country when there is peace in our hearts." The trainers departed from the notion that amidst all of the suffering and the dehumanization of war, wholesome qualities such as forgiveness and compassion exist among the Khmer people, and this seminar was but one way to encourage and nourish these qualities.

Therefore the activities of the first few days focused on the participants, to allow the trainers to get to know them and learn from their experiences, as well as to enable them to feel comfortable with one another. The initial exercises included having the participants express their expectations, their hopes for the future of their country, and the most important things in their lives through drawings and poems. The evenings were spent playing traditional games and singing songs, to further help "break the ice". As Ven Tep Vong said, "the games and songs are very imoportant; it's one thing they all have in common." Indeed,talented singers and musicians, from both Cambodia and the camps, sang beautifuliy, and encouraged all to join in and have fun.

Then various meditation teachniques were discussed and practiced, introducing meditation as an integral component of the seminar for "to work for peace, we need peace in our hearts." The next few days were spent on applying the Four Noble Truths as a principle for problem analysis and problem solving. In Buddhism, the Four Noble Truths teach us to look first at what the problem is, its cause, its purpose and the way to realize its purpose.

In small group discussions, this tool was used for analyzing personal, family and then community problems. Several examples



were raised by the participants, and discussed in small groups, such as domestic violence and disputes over property. Regarding traditional methods of resolving the conflicts, many mentioned the role of monks and respected village elders who are often called in on such problems. Then the principles of attachment and conflict, detachment and resolution were introduced, based on the theory that by reducing attachment , one reduces the cause of conflicts. This discussion was accompanied by meditation exercises to help reduce attachment.

The last part of the seminar focused on listening skills and right speech as a basis for mediation and reconciliaton. As an exercise during this session, participants were asked to "put yourself in the others' shoes". Those from Phnom Penh formed groups and those from the camps imagined they had live in Cambodia, and each discussed what hopes and fears they thought the other would have regarding repatriation. At first people said "it's too difficult! I can't pity them! We've been suffering the most!" but soon they were talking away nonstop, and asked for more time to continue discussing. At the end, when each group hung up a poster, it was startling obvious that all feared landmines, that all feared that the cease-fire would not hold, that they would either lose their house or not have a house or not have a house to return to; yet all hoped that the peace would be a lasting one, that they would be reunited with their relatives,that democratic elections would be held and respected. One group from Phnom Penh said that the group from the camp had correctly identified their fears, but added "you left out one: we're also afraid you'll bring AIDS to Cambodia from the camps!"

Several guest speakers addressed the group at different times, including Laung Po Nan, a monk from Surin, and Phra Kru Chote,from Taphrya district, who are both active in community development, and who spoke about Dhamma and community life. One evening Chayan Pholpoke gave a slide presentation on the effects of tourism in Thailand. The participants were very interested, as Cambodia is just opening to tourism, and they asked many questions as they had not previously considered the negative as well as the postive aspects that Mr. Chayan discussed. Another day



Ajan Chaiwat Satha-anand, professor of politicial science and nonviolence at Thammasat University, presented modern theories of power, conflict and conflict resolution.

The last day of the seminar, the group was fortunate enough to be joined by three Cambodian monks from the Inter-Religious Mission for Peace in Cambodia, Ven Somdej Ghosananda, founder of the group, who was named Supreme Patriarch of Cambodia in 1987, Ven Yos Hut, who is presently working with the UN Human Rights Education Program in the border camps,and Ven. Touch Sarith from France. After visiting Cambodia, Van. Maha Ghosa-nanda and Ven. Touch Sarith had just joined Ven. Yos Hut for a tour of all of the border camps. The monks, with Ven. Tep Vong, held an open discussion during which they all agreed that the time has come when Khmer of all factions must drop their lables and join hands to reconstruct their country together. "We must stop having Cambodians from inside the country and Cambodians from outside the country... We're all Cambodians and we must love one another, have compassion for one another." They stressed that the Buddhist concept of non-self and inter-connectedness has to be applied to get rid of all forms of attachment to one's own faction. Afterwards, Ven. Maha Ghosa - nanda led a walking meditation around the meeting hall. Everyone joined this symbolic "peace walk", which the Venerable prefers to call a "dhammayaytra"' a traditional term for a walk to spread Dhamma to the people.

The next day the group departed on a 10-day exposure trip. The aim was to provide the participants with an opportunity to visit rural community development projects, Thai cultural and historical sites, and refugee camps of another group in conflict, specifically, the Burmese. The first leg of the trip took the group to Surin, where they visited Laung Po Nan's temple and community development projects including village-organized rice and buffalo banks. They also visited Uncle Maha Yoo's integrated farm, noting "it's an example of interconnectedness, like we studied. And in Cambodia, the land is even more fertile... it would be even more successful!" One participant who has spent the past 12 years in refugee camps, most recently working as a nursing teacher, commented "If I can't find work when I go back, maybe I could do something like this. And you know what? I like to farm!" The visits provided an opportunity to see people who are putting the teachings into practice, rendering the theory studied much more meaningful. The participants were impressed with the projects, commenting "they are poor, but they are helping themselves." But some had reservations about the role of monks in the development projects as they said "Cambodian monks aren't allowed to do things like

this" and "Thai monks must have different customs than Cambodian monks. Cambodian monks are not supposed to work, they are supposed to keep all of the precepts strictly, and stay in the temple." Yet other, younger Cambodians were impressed with the monks, "it is good that they are helping the poor people to organize themselves in cooperatives to improve their lives.

The shared language, culture, and roots of Surin area with Cambodia made the trip a special one. The paricipants could speak directly with their hosts, and the villagers welcomed them wholeheartedly, asking when they could visit Cambodia. In the evening they sang songs together, exchanging the Cambodian and Surin versions of the lyrics to the same melodies. One of the participants was even re-united with his older brother, for the first time in 9 years!

The group then went to Phitsuanaloke and Sukothai, where they truly enjoyed the visit to the historical sites. "It's good to see the Thais preserving and appreciating their culture and heritage. We can learn from them. It is like our Angkor Wat; we must preserve it. Many people have already stolen stolen the heads of statues to sell. It's a tragedy," said one man from Phnom Penh.

Another from the camps added "it's good for us to learn our history. We have a lot of common history, the Thais and Khmers."

During the trip over the mountains to Phitsuanaloke, the Cambodians were equally impressed with the beautiful scenery as well as with the extensive road system. One man from Khao I Dang camp said "I can't believe there are roads way up here! How did they make them? This kind of development is good. Out in the countryside, everyone has roads and electricity and schools.

This kind of development is better than Bangkok, where all they do is build on top of each other. I hope Cambodia follows this kind of development and not Bangkok. If they built such roads, electricity and water out to all the villages, the people have no reason to fight the government." A participant from Cambodia noted "Thailand is so developed. They have roads and electricity everywhere. They've never had a war. We need 50 years to catch up." Another added "But if we take all that money that was used for weapons and the war, and use it to build structures and develop our country, we could develop fast."

On the way back to Bangkok the group stopped in Utaithani to visit a hospital run by monks at Wat Ya Nang, using traditional medicines. Many of the participants, particularly some of the monks, were very impressed , claiming that it was one of the most interesting projects visited. Ven. Tep Vong said that he was very moved at seeing the monks healing others and valuing traditional mediciine.

The group also spent a day in Bangkok, visiting both the Grand Palace as well as the Foundation for Children 's projects in some slum areas and Patpong. Many of the Cambodians were profoundly affected by this visit, and one women said, "I was so surprised! Even with so much development, with so much of the country running, there are so many poor people who can't even walk yet... There are huge differences between the people, the rich and the poor, and they just don't seem to see one another." "I can't believe they sell things in the pagodas. That is different from Cambodia," commented one monk. Another man from a camp said, "I used to wish I could live in Bangkok... but no longer! Why do so many people come to live here? It's so polluted, you can't breathe. And the noise! And the canals are so dirty too. Why do they come?"

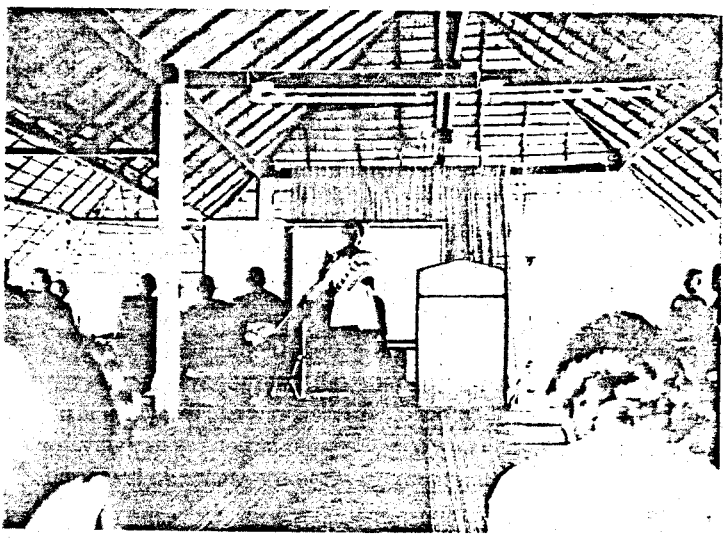
At the end, most of the participants agreed that the best part of the seminar was just enabling them to get know each other , to "break down those walls." The informal exchanges were what it was all about. Some people from the camps asked people from Phnom Penh about work possibilites upon their repatriation.

Another asked if it were possible for them to help make a visa for her to go visit her mother in Phnom Phenh. Addresses were exchanged and camp people promised they would visit the Phnom Penh people after their imminent return home. "And don't pretend you don't know me! I'll bring a picture of us together so you can't deny it!" joked one. Indeed many of the people from Phnom Penh returned carrying letters and gifts for families of those from the camps, and vice versa, with promises to look up one another's relatives. "We began to build a bridge - To touch hands."

Liz Bernstein

THE INEB 4TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP
Wongsanit Ashram,
Nakhon Nayok
February 16-20
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
Wat Umong,
Chiang Mai
February 21-23
EXPOSURE TRIPS
Burma-Thai Border
Cambodia-Thai Border
Thai Hill Tribe Villages
Thai Land Redistribution and Reforestation Project
February 24-March 1



SUMMARY OF EVENTS: The International Network of Engaged Buddhists held their 4th annual conference in February of this year, preceded by a four day pre-conference workshop and followed by four separate exposure trips. The following is a report on the events of the pre-conference and conference. Subsequent articles are included by representatives of the four groups who went on the exposure trips. It should be noted that Prof.Sulak Sivaraksa, an original founder of the network,did not attend although the conference took place in his native country. For his own safety,he has been living outside of Siam since September of 1991 due to his outspoken beliefs concerning the Thai government and the military regime who has administered to it since a coup d'etat in February of 1991.

THE PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP: For four days a fluid group of about 80 participants from 15 different countries met at the Wongsanit Ashram just outside of Bangkok. The workshop was originally designed to be a smaller, more decentralized meeting of participants teaching each other methods of social activism. However, it also presented time for people to learn about specific issues through a number of presentations. The balance of interactive sessions, speeches and small group presentations, and informal time for meeting one another and discussion made the pre-conference in general a very valuable opportunity for many. For the work, itself, a great amount of listening, discussion, debate, and consensus took place on the workshop sessions of Meditation and Social Action, Engaged Bud-

dhism: East and West, Women in Buddhism, the Environment, Community Development, Group Facilitating for Social Activists, Human Rights, and on the keynote speech of Colin Ash of England on "Allowing Buddhism to Transform the World". The group as a whole was also able to create a very pleasant, close community for these four days through the sharing of folk customs as nightly entertainment, including a candle light procession to the local temple to mark Magha Puja, the Theravada Day of the Sangha. Finally, the Ashram's improvements in the last year and the work of the staff there made the atmosphere for sharing ideas very conducive.

THE CONFERENCE: For three days over 100 hundred of us from 20 different countries met at Wat Umong on the edge of Chiang Mai in northern Siam. Sitting at the foot of Doi Suthep mountain, Wat Umong was an ideal spot having an open air meeting hall and large, peaceful grounds to breathe in peace when not intensively concentrating on the events at hand. For the first day and a half the group focused on short reports from the variety of organizations being represented at the conference and then on more lengthy presentations from the INEB countries of concern: Burma, Cambodia, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Nepal, Siam, Sri Lanka, and Tibet. After ingesting such a massive amount of information and often disturbing information of human rights and environmental abuses, the participants broke into interest groups on a variety of subjects and made out plans of action for the next year. These plans of action can be seen in the following resolutions. Finally, on the last day the Rev. Maruyama of Japan gave a compelling speech on INEB past, present and future(see following article). As one of the original founders of INEB with Prof. Sulak Sivaraksa, Rev. Maruyama provided the group with many ideas to contemplate and to then move on to create further resolutions on the network itself which also appear below. Finally, the conference came to a close with the resignation of Pracha Hutanuwatr as Executive Secretary of INEB. Much gratefulness was expressed for his work in the past four years and much hope renewed as he stated his continuing commitment to INEB. Ms. Supaporn Pongpruk, who has been active in the INEB Secretariat office over the last year and a half will replace him. It was recognized that the appointment of such an energetic and qualified woman is a progressive step for INEB and an appropriate way to end the 4th annual conference which was marked with much gender controversy.

INEB RESOLUTIONS 1992-93

BURMA

Resolved that INEB will continue to support the forces of democracy and non-violent struggle against the SLORC military regime in Burma. INEB seeks to build with other concerned groups worldwide a comprehensive campaign against the SLORC which integrates all areas of injustice from human rights abuses to environmental destruction, etc.

GENERAL

1. SUPPORT materially and emotionally various groups being oppressed by the Burmese Military Junta through Burma Project, the INEB Secretariat and other INEB organs.
2. COOPERATE closely with international groups lide Amnesty International, Asia Watch, Greenpeace, and the International Burma Campaign in proliferating information on abuses in Burma and campaigning worldwide for an end to these abuses
3. CREATE a faster, more efficient, and reliable network for distributing and collecting information about Burmese issues (see Information Center)

EDUCATION

1. HOLD trainings for Burmese monks in Dhamma, English and engaged Buddhism
   -Burmese monks need legal status and also help from Thai Sangha
2. SPONSOR through Burma Project trainings for lay people in the following areas:
   -Self-help
   -Appropriate agriculture
   -Health
   -Sanitation
   -English
   -Federalism
   -Grassroots development
   -Teacher training
   -Ethnic relationships

ENVIRONMENT

1. CREATE a more efficient information network
   -see general resolution # 3
2. HOLD training programs in the following areas:
   -End of 1992 training in basic computer, photography documentation and development, and slide show of environmental destruction and problems elsewhere in the world
   -Constructive agriculture profects
   -Environmental research
3. CAMPAIGN in the following areas:
   -Environmental destruction by the SLORC
   -Policies of Japanese Overseas Development Aid (ODA), United Nations Development Projects (UNDP), the

International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the Asia Development Bank which all support the Burmese military junta and aid their destructive environmental policies

CAMBODIA

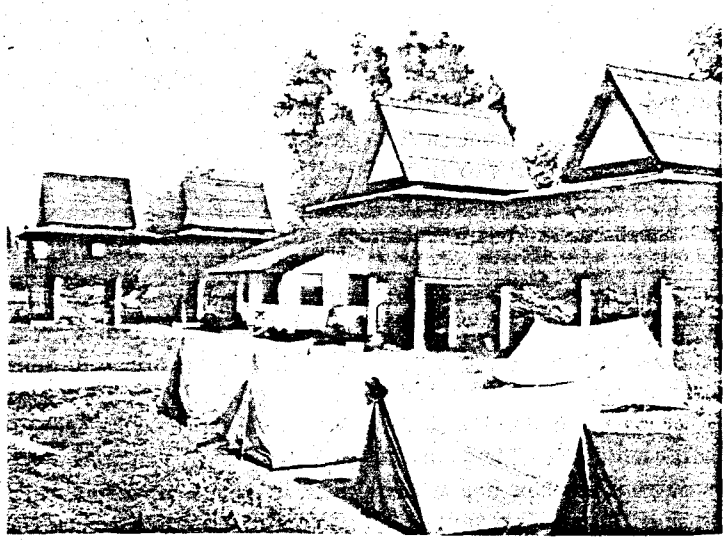
Resolved that INEB will continue to aid the reconciliation and reconstruction of Cambodia and to build cooperation and exchange with other countries in the region, especially Siam.

1. ORGANIZE a Dhammayatra (Dhamma Walk) in April-May 1992
   - -There are continuing needs for sponsorship and publicity
   - -CPR and INEB will coordinate
   - -Yeshua Moser will be the central coordinator
2. MONITOR Repatriation throught CPR
   - -INEB will spread information on
     1. Human Rights issues
     2. UN Peace Plan Implementation
     3. Forced repatriation
     4. De-mining
     5. Funding UNTAC
     - -Vulnerable women
3. HOLD Trainings
   - -Active Non-Violence Seminar in Khao I Dang Camp
   - -Meditation Course in Phnom Penh
   - -Buddhist Education in Taphraya
4. CREATE a network with human rights groups in the camps and in Cambodia
   - -This network will collect information and articles to make a magazine which will need resource assistance.

CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS

Resolved that INEB will further aid and develop the international campaign to increase awareness of oppression and discrimination by the Bangladeshi government and other internal groups against the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, who are predominantly Buddhist, thereby seeking to guarantee the observation of their religious, cultural and political rights.

1. DEVELOP international campaign
   - -Encourage friends to write to the Bangladeshi government to solve the CHT problem
   - -Local groups of INEB friends will help arrange meetings with the media, local groups and friends
   - -Bimal Bhikkhu will visit the U.S.A., Japan and Europe (and another person with Bimal Bhikkhu or independently)
   - -Develop a slide presentation and other forms of media to increase awareness
2. REQUEST foreign donors to the Bangladeshi government to attach conditions and supervision to their aid
   - -Ask them to send fact finding teams to CHT
   - -INEB friends to inform governments of CHT situation (coordinate with Burma campaign, etc.)
3. INCREASE information exchange and coordination worldwide with concerned groups, especially NGO's through:
   - -Letter correspondence from INEB friends, especially to Bangladeshi NGO's
   - -Direct personal contact from INEB friends
4. ENCOURAGE NGO's to work in CHT and send fact finding teams through:
   - -Personal letters to NGO's from CHT people, especially children
5. ALERT world to ecological situation
   - -Invite environmentalists to study situation (INEB friends to help locate and facilitate - coordinate with trips to other countries)
   - -Send information to environmental groups
6. CREATE an office in Bangkok under the INEB Secretariat
   - -Needs are:
     - A) One part-time staff person from Bangladesh to develop a newsletter and coordinate organization
     - B) Support (food, lodging) for staff person
     - C) Access to office equipment



and supplies
7. HOLD leadership trainings for CHT people with aid of INEB Secretariat

INDIA

Resolved that INEB will increase its focus on the renewal and regeneration of one of the largest Buddhist populations in the world by supporting and educating the ancient Buddhist communities and the newer Buddhist movements who come from the most oppressed sections of Indian society.

1. CREATE a Bhikkhu Training Center in Bangalore
2. BUILD and ESTABLISH an Institute for Higher Degrees in Pali Studies and Buddhology for clergy and lay people located in Bangalore
   -Need funds to build
3. BUILD and ESTABLISH nunnery and laywomen study center in Ladakh
   -Need funds to build
4. ESTABLISH Buddhist library and research center in Ladakh
   -Building begins in July
5. IMPROVE residential school for Buddhist studies and general education (high school level) in South India and Ladkah
6. International Meditation Center OPENS in Ladakh in July 1992
   -Open to foreigners May to September
7. HOLD leadership trainings for the new Buddhist groups and also the old Buddhist communities in North East India

NEPAL

Resolved that INEB will further promote the spread of democracy and human rights, and the observation of diverse religious and cultural customs in the multi-ethnic state of Nepal which is officially a Hindu state.

1. BUILD 5 Buddhist centers
   -3 in La Liduber, 1 in Nuwakot, 1 in Bhojpur
   -Land has already been acquired
   -Need funds to build
   -Centers will have stupa, study room and meeting/meditation hall for 100 people
2. BUILD regional level district monastery in Moran district
   -Land already acquired
   -Building started
   -Need funds to finish
3. HOLD training workshop in meditation, Dhamma, and cultural preservation for ethnic tribal leaders in conjunction with the INEB Secretariat in June 1992
4. HOLD 5th annual INEB conference in March 1993 (see Next Conference)

SIAM

Resolved that INEB will further promote the increase and expansion of human rights, environmental protection and alternative forms of development.

1. APPEAL to international environmental and human rights groups to pressure the Thai government to end their resettlement through eviction policy as expressed through the Khor Chor Khor land redistribution plan and to allow the people's participation on every level of this plan
   -Increase information and education on the international level about the Khor Chor Khor plan
2. By INEB Japan
   -EDUCATE and INFORM the Japanese public about the Thai villagers facing mass eviction under the Khor Chor Khor land redistribution campaign
   -LAUNCH campaign against Japanese companies which invest in the pulp industry and eucalyptus plantations which directly benefit from the Khor Chor Khor plan
3. ECONOMIZE and CONSERVE paper, especially in Siam, so as to help reduce the demand for paper products which create such governmental plans as Khor Chor Khor

SRI LANKA

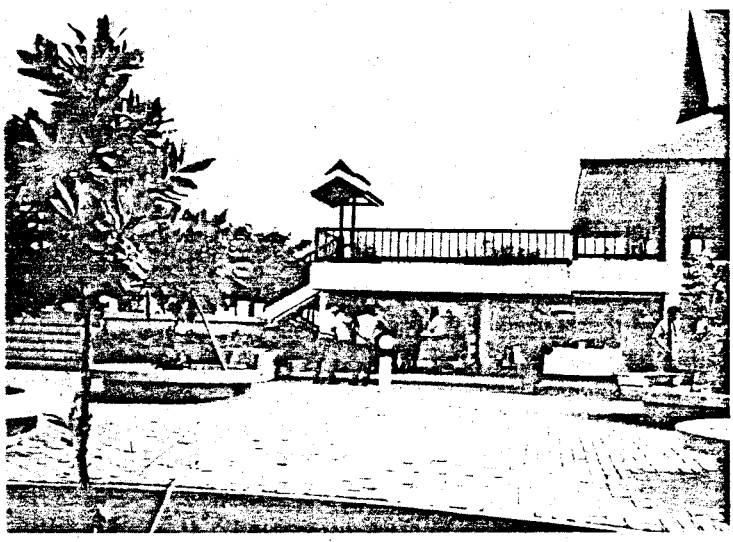
Resolved that INEB will further aid the peaceful resolution of the ethnic and political conflicts in Sri Lanka which have killed and exiled thousands through concerned Buddhist groups.

1. PROMOTE the reconciliation and resolution of the conflict



-Join the peace walk to Madras organized by the Nipponzan Myohonji Peace Pagoda
-Conduct a peace mission to North East
-Hold training workshops for reconciliation
-Promote engaged Buddhism
A) Apply sermons and meditation
B) Train young monks
-Send an observer to the Dhamma walk in Cambodia

2. EXPAND the scope of work at the Dhammavedi Institute
-Needs are:
A) 2 volunteer coordinators for training program
B) 2 volunteer English teachers
C) financial support for 2 administrative staff workers
-US$200/month



TIBET

Resolved that INEB will expand its efforts to aid the Tibetan community in its struggle for self-determination and cultural and religious preservation.

1. INEB to create a greater information network on Tibet (see Information Center), especially in the areas of:
-Culture
-Politics
-Women's Issues
-Dhamma
*Connect with information center in Dharamsala

2. ENCOURAGE cultural exchange
-Invite the Tibetan community to conferences and workshops
-Contact with European Tibetan Friends (Forum of several Tibetan support groups)
-Support the translation of Tibetan dharmic works (i.e. *1,000 Songs of Milarepa*)
-Invite teachers to give lectures and Dhamma talks (many teachers on their way to the East like Dagpo Rinpoche).
-Coordinate with the Thai-Tibetan Center in Bangkok

INEB STRUCTURE

Resolved that INEB will continue to operate as a decentralized network among friends seeking to form the vision and structure of a new kind of community.

1. DEVELOP the proposal for INEB to gain consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC)
-This status can enable INEB to:
A) lobby and provide information of INEB groups of concern
B) develop relationships with other UN groups like the Commission on Human Rights
C) develop relationship with a wide range of groups in ECOSOC
D) articulate the engaged Buddhist perspective
-apply for status either in 1993 or 1995

2. DEVELOP a draft of organizational structures for decision making and responsibilities within the network to be discussed and ratified at the next conference.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Resolved that INEB will promote the root re-examination of sexual attitudes so that women may gain the equal rights they inherently deserve, especially in the critical area of education.

1. CREATE an INEB staff position to work on women's issues
2. COMPILE for SE Asia a comparative survey of women's issues
3. INITIATE leadership training to encourage a greater awareness of attitudes and to facilitate a positive approach to changing them
-Invite the participation of the Sangha
4. ENCOURAGE re-examination of attitudes, especially within the Sangha
-Training and education program for both sexes
-Reconciliation
5. DISTRIBUTE relevant books and publications in INEB affiliated countries to women's groups in need of education
6. SUPPORT the restoration of full ordination for nuns in countries which forbid it
7. PROMOTE vocational training combined with Buddhist

teaching

INEB SANGHA CHAPTER

Resolved that INEB will support the Sangha in expanding their role in engaged Buddhism.

1. CREATE informal support group among Bhikkhus associated with INEB
   -Open to all interested individuals, non-sectarian, Nuns chapter
2. AID fellow members of the Sangha being harassed or imprisoned with the help of INEB friends
3. CREATE training centers
   -Subjects:
      A) Dhamma, Vinaya, meditation
      B) Teaching/training Skills (INEB trainers)
      C) Engaged Buddhism (INEB trainers)
   -Requirements:
      A) International, non-ethnic
   -Needs:
      A) Financial help for travel
      B) Advice from friends
      C) Broad support
   -Possible Location:
      A) Suan Mokkh
4. CREATE training camps and teams to support INEB trainings
   -Subjects: Dhamma, Meditation and Engagement

BUDDHISM AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Resolved that INEB will work to develop tools and concepts of Dhamma with which to understand, analyze, and develop society towards a healthier, more just, and more peaceful condition through a network of concerned activists, scholars and clergy.

1. NETWORK information and create a continuing dialogue on issues
2. HOLD international and local meetings to further promote dialogue
3. WRITE articles for publication in *Seeds of Peace.*

INFORMATION CENTER

Resolved that INEB will expand and improve its important role as and information analyzer and clearing house through the creation of an Information Center.

1. CREATE an INEB Information Center Focusing on :
      A) Information gathering
      B) Information storing and evaluation
      C) Information dissemination
2. NETWORK with the following groups:
   -Non-governmental organizations.(NGO's)
   -Religious Organizations
   -Public and private institutions
   -Publishers of newspapers, magazines, books, etc.
   -INEB members
   -Existing resources
3. Information Storing
   -INEB to set up a data base and library as foundation
   -Buy computer and photocopier
   -Hire skilled staff persons and use Sangha and volunteer resources as well
4. Information dissemination and sharing
   -Members of contact group to be sent out irregular information sheets
   -Needy person to be sent specific items of interest
   -Summary of work in *Seeds of Peace*
   -Develop newsletter for regular updates
   -Disseminate additional information through INEB members
5. A tentative budget was proposed and given to the INEB Secretariat

SULAK SIVARAKSA

Resolved that INEB will campain for the dropping of charges by General Suchinda Kraprayoon of defamation and lese majeste on the part of Prof. Sulak Sivaraksa thereby allowing his safe return to Siam and the continuation of his work.

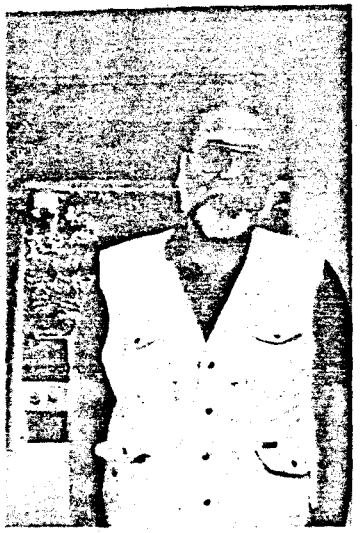
NEXT CONFERENCE

Resolved that INEB will hold its 5th annual conference in Kathmandu, Nepal from March 1st to 7th, 1993.

1. EXPOSURE TRIPS(-proposed)
   -Sri Lanka Peace Walk (may be attended before or after conference)
   -Lumpini (the Buddha's Birthplace) and other historical sites of the Buddha in India
   -Ethnic hill tribe communities
   -New Buddhist communities in India
   -Other sites in India or Bangladesh
2. INEB Secretariat to coordinate participants and INEB Nepal to coordinate logistics
   -One or two staff persons from Secretariat will go to Nepal one or two months earlier to help coordinate
3. FORMAT open to discussion and suggestions from all concerned

********FOR A COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT OF PRESENTATIONS MADE AT THE PRE-CONFERENCE AS WELL AS RESOURCE CONTACTS FOR EACH ISSUE OF CONCERN PLEASE CONTACT THE INEB SECRETARIAT********

A VISION FOR INEB



I was asked to consider INEB from the perspective of the past, present and future. I would like to begin by looking at the present issues to be considered now. As I mentioned in my speech at the opening ceremony of the pre-conference, the person who was central in founding INEB, Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa, is not here. He is honorably away. I believe that the present situation of INEB can be symbolized by Sulak's present condition. In light ofthis, I think it is very important work for all ofus to continue INEB's existence and work.

In this sense it is very important for us to continue to maintain and strengthen the INEB office in Bangkok in light of Sulak's absence which will help to create the conditions which will allow him to return as soon as possible. As everyone knows the Bangkok office is responsible for collecting and disseminating information from minority groups and social action groups all over the world, and so in this sense it is a very important information source. Based on these two functions of collecting and distributing information, INEB has an important central responsibility throughout the world for activists who need to use this information. As an information center it needs to analzse the information that comes through. It is important to be able to evaluate the information before sending it out. In this, the Bangkok office has a very important role in analysing information.

My main concern right now is that the staff members of the office in Bangkok don't have to suffer too much financially in terms of their own lifestyle. In other words, we need to support them so that they do not burnout and lose interest in the work. We also need to ensure that the people who work at INEB in Bangkok have the time to explore and work on their own particular interests in addition to working on INEB matters. Unless they have this time and this financial support, the INEB office will not be able to continue permanently. It is impossible to carry on INEB without the Bangkok head office. In order to support the lifestyle of each of the staff members and allow them to work in the best way possible, we need to make sure we fund them sufficinetly.

As a Japanese my dream was for Buddhists to be able to be independent and to have an independent network not supported by any outside religion. Until the formation of INEB, much of the international information on Buddhists and Buddhist countries which I received was provided by Christian sources through Christian organizations. Actually, the way I first met both Sulak (Sivaraksa) and Pracha (Hutanuwatr) was through a Catholic organization. Given these conditions, my very strong hope was that Buddhists could get together internationally and be independent of any Christian support. Unless Buddhists could stand on their own independently of any kind of Christian support, we would just be following them only and unable to initiate things on our own. I think it's a miraculous thing that this kind of network was able to develop given the present conditions today.

As you can see Buddhists are still working within a small, limited group and still need to broaden ourselves and become a larger functioning group. Through Sulak being a strong, internationally working social activist, we were able to start this INEB network.That Sulak was able to realize this kind of network deserves alot of respect and appreciation. This is evidence of the Buddha's will working throughout this organization to help it form. We have to accept that INEB is only four years old and that it is a baby in a sense, so I will not harp on its weaknesses in these early stages. We have to carefully try to nourish and raise this four year old baby Right now we're at the stage of having to prepare and think towards the future.

I would like to consider now what basic issues are involved in raising this four year old. When we look at Buddhism, women's rights is a very important issue. The reason for this is that it is a

question related to basic human rights. In the long history of Buddhism, women have never been able and still do not have fully equal status with men. Human beings are made up of both men and women; the human race is not made up exclusively of men. In its long history, however, Buddhism has only respected half of the human being. In terms of this issue then, it is neccessary to change Buddhism at its roots. It's a basic question of what kind of concept or principle Buddhism has about human beings. Through this issue we need to change Buddhism in a fundamental way.

There are many other issues that are also fundamentally important to change within Buddhism. The following are some areas of concern at present:

1. Human Rights Issues (especially the protection of the right to live)
2. Environmental Issues
3. Search of the true meaning of peace and it realization
4. Ethnic Issues (i.e.self-determination and mutual respect)
5. Liberation of Women
6. Efforts to gain a deeper insight into the reality of modern societies and find a way to attain true human dignity in the real world.

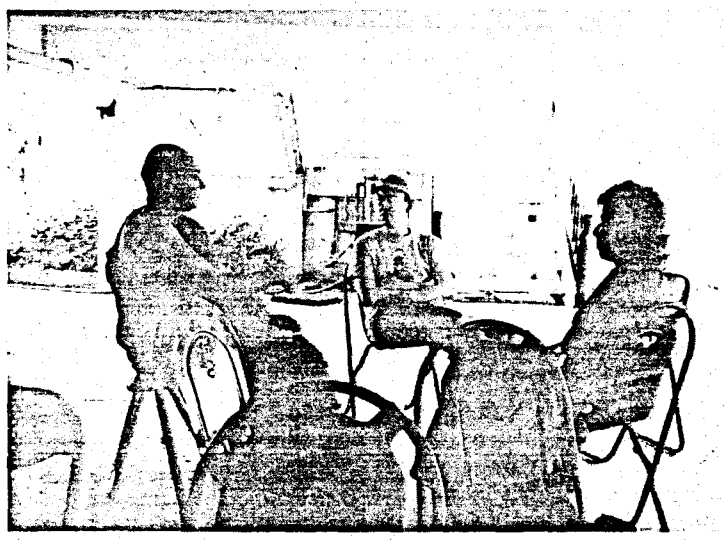
All of these are central to the issue of how to effect social change.

Now I would like to turn to the question of INEB as an organization. As I noted above, there are many issues that INEB has to tackle, but one thing to think about is creating a model community for our society. It is my idea that INEB itself should be a model so that the human race can continue to survive. Traditional society has collapsed. Modern society as well is also tending towards collapse. Within the first world, the community which we call family is tending towards collapse. An important question right now is how can human beings live together and what form will this living together take; what kind of community is needed? Unfortunately, I feel the form of such an ideal community has yet to be defined. Right now I am 60 and I have been doing social action work since I was a teenager. As I reflect on my social work from that time until now, I feel a rational, controlled, functional "organization" wastes the potential of human beings.

The question that I have been trying to solve is what will help change this kind of organization. I think INEB has been trying to answer this question through the idea of "network" itself. In terms of our principal here, this network is not based on organization to organization. It is fundamentally in terms of individual to individual. I am familiar with interchange between organizations and it usually causes great confusion and difficulty. This is because over and above the egoism of the individual, there is the egoism of the organization to deal with. In these terms I would like to continue the experiment of creating a new community through INEB's work.

Now I would like to personally consider the underlying Buddhist concepts upon which INEB is built. As Buddhists and mostly Theravada ones, when we use the word "Dharma" I think most people understand what we are talking about. However, the concept of the word "Dharma" can be understood in a very broad way. It encompasses a large variety of ideas. Probably each of us is individually thinking about different things when we use the word of "Dharma" Religious ideas are very difficult to speak about since everyone has a different definition of them depending on which sect they are in. When I speak with people of different sects, if I use three or four key words, they seem to understand what I am talking about. These key words which express our basic religious concepts are important, but sometimes we must leave them up on the shelf and get down to common words in order to communicate with eachother well. When we share our feelings or our ideas, this is a necessary condition in order to unite and be agreed on our understanding of Buddhism.

The reason I say this is because the INEB office collects its information from various, different



sources and then must send this inforamtion out to other different sources. It is not just a matter of getting information from the right and sending it out in the same line to the left. It needs to be evaluated, criticized and selected as to which is important enough to send out. We need to have abstract principles which will serve as a standard for evaluateing and selecting the concrete information which comes in. In terms of the process, we receive information and then act upon it, so it's very important that the information is correct, reliable and evaluated. Last night there was a group of us who got together to discuss Buddhist social analysis, and it was a kind of beginning to search for a common standard with which we can evaluate the information as I was suggesting. Possibly in the future we will have some sort of committee or further group discussion on this. In Asia, Christian organizations regardless of sect are also doing this kind of work. In a sense, this common understanding determines the direction of their social action.

I would like to talk about two more points. One very important issue is how we cooperate with other religious groups in our social work. Within the question of ethnic groups, there are many people who are not Buddhist. Some of these ethnic groups have different religions, and it's very important for us to know how to be able to cooperate with them in order to help solve their problems. The three religions we consider most universal, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity, have in their long history destroyed the gods of other religions. We need to stop this period of history where we have killed the gods of other religions. No matter how small the religion of an ethnic group is or what religion or gods they believe in, we need to respect and value them. This is very important for being able to reconcile different ethnic groups.

The last topic is a very large one pertaining to the fact that we cannot know what kind of world we will create or find tommorow. We need to find the possibilities and potential within religion for creating the world of the future. We need to use Buddhism to help nurture the culture which human beings have already created in order to help form the next society. We need to protect traditional culture and make it progress and develop. If we look at this situation objectively, there seems to be no hope for the human race. It seems like we are a terminal case. So it's actually time to give up hope if we look at it scientifically.

As Buddhists, we need to continue believing without giving up hope as a religion. INEB's role is that we need to continue to look for the potential within the human race.

Rev. Teruo Maruyama

THE EXPOSURE TRIPS :

LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE

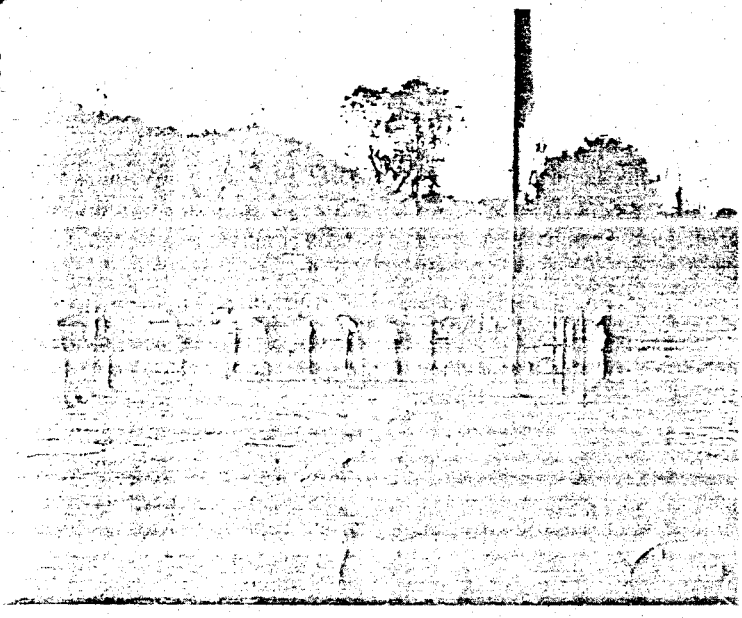
In February of this year, I was fortunate enough to attend the INEB conference in the northern town of Chang Mai. The main focus for me was to meet and learn about the environmental problems in Burma.

I have been a peace activist for 10 years now, and working for an international environmental organisation for 7, and through those years have learnt to respect the path of non-violence. Meeting other activists that have worked in Burma for a number of years and hearing their stories gave me a slight insight into the huge problems facing the country. I realised that this would be a big challenge for me in terms of visiting a place that is in its 43rd year of civil war.

There were 15 of us that left early one morning to travel to the border of Thailand and Burma. Our lifestyles were diverse to say the least, and all told we represented 7 different countries.

Travelling in the back of two trucks along a road that was being built to accomodate the hundreds of logging trucks that transport hardwood from the jungles of Burma, we came across what was once a thriving Karen village. The road was designed to go straight through the middle of the village which has resulted in terrible environmental damage to the area as well as a change in the lifestyles of the people living in the village. As we continued through this area I wondered how many of the men who agree to the funding of this road actually see the end product of their decisions? I bet they are not living with landslides, dust and the loss of their home.

We eventually reached the border of Thailand and Burma which is essentially the Salween river. A beautiful river that is the



lifeblood of everyone that lives on the banks and in the hills on both sides. It was quite late in the afternoon, and we had been travelling since 6 am that morning, but the sight of the longboats and the Salween soon rejuvinated our spirits. I was excited to be able to travel on this river and wondered what I would see as we travelled towards our destination, Manerplaw.

The trip took about an hour, and on the way I could see what the logging industry has done to the place. There were sawmills, teak plantations that had started growth about 4 years ago and looked like skinny little trees that were all planted in straight lines. We passed a few refugee camps which consisted of people that had fled from the Burmese Army who were conducting an offensive during this time. The boats eventually arrived at a place beside the banks of the Salween and we were told that we were now in Manerplaw.

Manerplaw is the headquaters of the many different groups that have united and created a National Democratic Front (NDF). It is also the home of the National Coalition Government for the Union of Burma (NCGUB) which has a mandate from the people to work for democracy in Burma. The NCGUB is essentially a government in exile. After the 1988 uprisings, the elections, the coup by General Saw Maung and the arrest of the leaders of the National League for Democracy (NLD), including Aung San Suu Kyi winner of the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize, there was a mass exodus from "inside Burma" to the border areas. When we finally arrived that evening the first thing I heard was an excited conversation about an air-raid and jets. I concentrated on taking our numerous bags up a hill towards what was to become our home for the next few days and decided to find out about the jets later.

Our home was the monastery of the All Burma Young Monks Union, which had been donated by Buddhists from the US, and it was wonderful. Situated on a hill which was to become a point of contention for those of us trying to gracefully walk down without falling over, it was definitely a place of peace, and I felt safe there. As I looked out of the monastery, I could see mountains surrounding the area, and on asking about them found out why Manerplaw is such a strategic position for the NDF and all that live here.

In order for the Tatmadaw (Burmese Army) to take Manerplaw the soldiers must first take Sleeping Dog Hill, a mountain situated behind the mountain ridge I was looking at. In order to take the mountain, the Tatmadaw needed to get to the Salween river, overcome the alliance force, then walk 12 miles through jungle, and over mountains to Manerplaw. I was begining to understand a little of what was the reality of life here in this village, survival.

Over the next few days we were able to meet with the various groups that are based here and learn about the struggle that has essentially been taking place since independence in 1947. Our discussions with the monks were an inspiration to me. The courage and dedication to the precious path of non-violence whilst the military regime brutally conducts its opression all over Burma is worth a million Nobel Peace Prizes. However, the most we can do in the international community is to get our governments to acknowledge that there is a civil war going on in Burma. The isolation of the people in the country, the censorship of news to the media, and the rule of terror has enabled the world to let Burma sink deeper into crisis.

Of the 15 people that travelled with me, 3 of us decided to stay in Manerplaw and spend the rest of our time with the students and other groups in the area. Apart from myself, there was Pam, an American and also an environmentalist dedicated to exposing the roles of oil companies and their destruction of peoples, lives,

and David, another Australian and a doctor who was hoping to be able to volunteer his services for a month or two. After three days with a huge delegation, the friendships and comraderie that existed between us ensured a sad goodbye.

It was late afternoon and the rain had been thundering down most of the day. A student came to take us to their boat in order for us to travel to the student camp and have an opportunity to talk and learn a little of their lives. The greatest challenge of our whole visit lay in front of us. How to get down the hill with the rain ensuring that the ground was like an ice rink and not make fools of ourselves. The student; of course, just nimbly jogged down, the three white healthy and very wet adventurers slid on our backsides. Very elegant, and not the best way to introduce yourself to a group of dedicated students. With our dignity intact we marched onto the longboat awaiting us.

The journey to the camp was stunning. The sun was going down, the rain had stopped and the sound of the V8 engine screaming at us became but an irritating noise. The jungle was so green. The light seemed to give the river a silver complexion, and the birds were in full song all the way. By the time we arrived at the camp, I was feeling centered and calm thanks to the beauty of this land.

We were given a meal and shown to our home, which was delightful. It was a home of a family that had fled from the Tatmadaw which also included three children. We had so much fun with the kids. It was a relief to be able to just play and forget about the war and the horror stories that had been told to us over the last three days. I slept well that night, even though it was freezing!

The ABSDF has established a Health and Welfare Committee to look after the health care needs of its members and the refugee population in the liberated area. Apart from the practical side of this, the students have achieved a great deal. They have completed three refresher courses for medical students, published a manual for backpack medics, a book on preventative medicine, and a first aid hand book for medical students as well as taking responsibility for the care of porters that have escaped from the Tatmadaw.

The biggest problem facing these people, apart from a civil war, is Malaria. It has been stated that 100 percent of the students that fled from the urban areas in Burma to the endemic border areas have contracted this disease. Medical supplies, a basic health clinic, funds to continue with their publication ***Dawn,*** and international solidarity were some of the requests made to the all familiar question Pam, David and I were to ask, "what do you need?"

We spent about 4 days at the student camp before returning to Manerplaw. We were shown everything whilst there. There is a carpentry department, which makes furniture out of the off cuts from the saw mills. There is also a clinic which desperately needs medical supplies, a main lecture hall at the Salween Student Camp, the monastery, and the area where students take courses on basic medicine, English and other issues.

We returned to Manerplaw a day after a vicious bombing raid had ocurred. The jets had attempted to bomb the headquarters of the NCGUB and the ABSDF. For the next three days Pam, David and I were to learn about bunkers, jets, trenches and the difference between the noise of a jet and the noise of a prop plane. But more importantly, I learnt about courage and comittment. Since returning from Burma, my colleagues have asked me how I could support the movement in Burma given my strong beliefs in non-violence. It's a good question, and one that I have finally answered to myself. The people fighting for their survival and land in Burma are involved in an armed struggle. Yes, this is true. But after my time there and listening and seeing and being bombed, myself, this is not an issue of armed struggle, but self defense.

Given the enormous problems facing the people of Burma, there is one solid thing you can do. You can question your government on why it is they do not acknowledge the civil war in Burma, and why they do not recognise the democratically elected government whose leaders are currently in prison. Find out what your government is doing about the house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi, and if you have the time, join a Burma support group in your country.

Faith Doherty



SURVIVAL ON THE MOUNTAIN

The Foundation for Mountain People's Culture, Development, and Education (MPCDE) recently organized an exposure trip as a follow up to the INEB Conference. Five of us spent a week living in two villages, experiencing their way of life. The trip was a tremendous experience, for which I am grateful. Yet not all is well in Eden.

Beneath the rhetoric of social change and development lies the issue of self-determination. How decisions are made and by whom is of critical importance for groups struggling for their cultural survival. The various Mountain people's of Thailand offer a particularly poignant example. Most are semi-nomadic, having migrated from Tibet, Burma, China, and Laos over the last 200 years. As a result of their migrations, language and culture continue to define the boundaries of their world, not national boundaries. However, opium production, population pressures, and concern over the countries dwindling forests have consistently brought these people into open conflict with the Thai government.

Self-determination is increasingly problematic for Thailand's minorities. Xenophobia, ignorance, competition over scarce resources, and national security concerns have effectively kept them powerless. More than a half a million live in the North, many groups for several centuries, but approximately 60% are still without citizenship. They are considered illegal immigrants and are not guaranteed any social or political rights.

In order to address some of these problems, the government has initiated a series of development projects, but the Thai government tends to equate the interests of the minorities with its own. In fact, the two are rarely commensurate, since each has a different goal in mind. Further, projects tend to be highly centralized and large scale. Planning usually occurs without local participation. The result is often a situation no one foresaw.



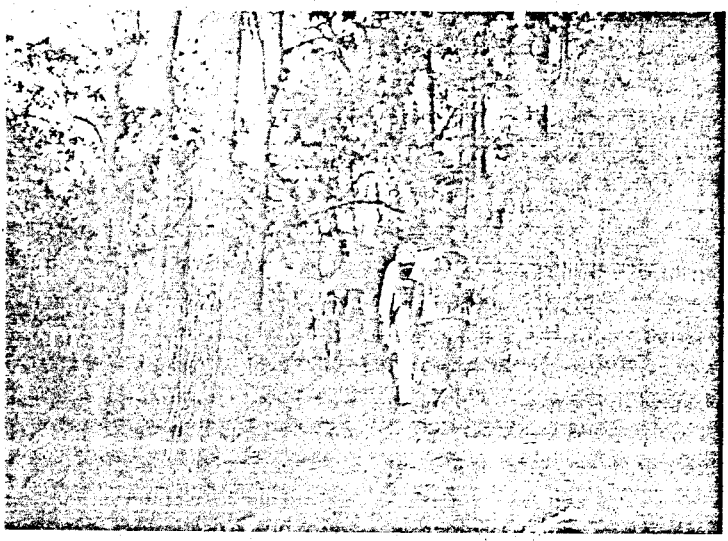
The Hmong, for example, have been one of the major opium producers in Northern Thailand. The reasons for this are complicated and reflect a distortion of their traditional economy; mountain rice and corn were grown for subsistence, opium for cash. As the demand for opium increased so did its supply. International pressure gradually led the Royal Thai Government into a cooperative agreement with the United Nations two decades ago. They initiated crop substitutions projects in order to eliminate poppy cultivation in several Hmong villages. Khung Wang was one of the targeted villages. Unfortunately, it is perhaps indicative of the future.

When the Royal Project began in 1972, the vast majority of the villagers practiced subsistence agriculture and raised opium as a cash crop. In the effort to change this, electricity and sanitation units were installed. New fields were cleared and prepared. Seeds and sale prices were also heavily subsidized. In spite of these incentives and the tens of millions of baht invested, the crop substitution did not proceed smoothly. Sesame was followed by castor beans, next came potatoes and then kidney beans. Different kinds of livestock were introduced and then discontinued. Currently, the Hmong are cultivating fruit trees, cabbages, and carnations. Finally, after 20 years, opium is nowhere to be seen.

Yet in many ways, the crop substitution remains a failure. The eradication of opium substituted one problem for another. Opium is a labor intensive crop which

also severely leaches the soil. According to the Hmong themselves, the increasingly poor quality of both their soil and opium made it clear that they would eventually have to stop cultivating it. Why did they resist for such a long time?

While the profits they received from opium were quite small, it remained consistent. Whereas, cash crop after cash crop failed on the volatile market. One year it was possible to make alot of money; the next to be in debt. Opium clearly provided a margin of economic insurance for the Hmong.



The initial decision to accept the projects was a pragmatic one. The village was forbidden from moving to a new site or clearing more of the nearby forest. Yields were declining. The promise of a road, electricity, and sanitation units was certainly attractive. What the Hmong failed to realize was how their decision would enmesh them more firmly in the international market and undermine their traditional culture.

Crop substitution encouraged each family to pursue its own economic self-interest at the expense of the already fragile sense of community. As the price of the cash crop plummeted, the villagers had to scramble for an alternative. In Khun Wang today, the Hmong can no longer afford to grow their staple crops. Cash crops, many geared for the export market, now consume all the available arable land. Without spare food, they cannot raise pigs, chickens, and ducks. Rice and animals needed for ritual sacrifice must be purchased in Chiang Mai and then transported back at a much higher cost.

The heavy subsidies which made the projects economically viable have now locked many of the villagers in a cycle of dependency. The added attraction of cash and the commodities it can purchase makes a return to self-reliant subsistence agriculture unlikely.

The Sgaw Karen village of Mauwakee is on the verge of a choice of its own. While it is only 70 km from Chiang Mai, its inaccessibility has helped villagers maintain their traditional lifestyle. At the moment, there is no road leading to the village, nor is there electricity or running water. There is, however, a newly constructed school. Several of the men built it in hopes that the government would be impressed by initiative and provide them with a teacher. Then, everyone could learn Thai and perhaps, other improvements would follow.

Change is inevitable and quite often good, yet the Karen are justifiably concerned about their future. Traditionally, the Karen farm a limited number of irrigated fields, while practicing a controlled and ecologically safe method of swidden (intervalled slash and burn) on the lower slopes. In their eyes, the forest is a part of their family, and they care for it accordingly. But over the last several years, population pressures have forced an increasing number of Thais upland. Frequently, they gain legal title to traditional Karen lands. Uncontrolled slash and burn agriculture and small scale logging are rapidly degrading the surrounding forest, placing the Karen's way of life at risk.

At the moment, Mauwakee is isolated and the problems facing other Karen communities do not yet afflict them. However, what else will come with development? Forest preservation and reforestation are urgent issues as is cultural survival. Depressingly, the current policies refuse to acknowledge these concerns are intimately connected. The Thai government's past solutions, exemplified by its Khor Chor Khor program, suggests that a future conflict is inevitable.

Life in a Hill Tribe village is hardly idyllic. Despite the way it has been packaged by tour companies, it is not exotic. Traditional subsistence-oriented communities struggle with disease, hunger, and ignorance everyday. For these reasons, tourist dollars and large-scale development projects are all the more tempting to the villagers. The concern is that they enter into a wholly unequal partnership, since they are kept largely powerless. An in-

formed choice is often all but impossible

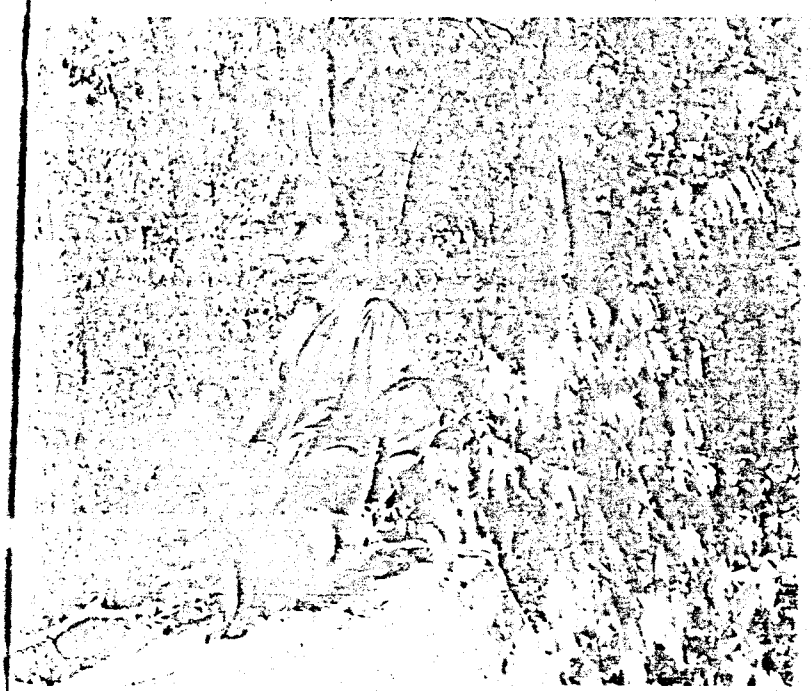
Foundations such as MPCDE are working hard to better prepare the Mountain People's so that they can take more control over their future. Another obvious step is to help them gain citizenship and the rights that come with it. Ultimately, the success of the government's projects concerning opium production, the preservation of its forests, etc., depends on its ability to work together with its minorities. With reconciliation and mutual respect, a future becomes possible.

Ken MacLean

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THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF KHOR CHOR KHOR

As many already know, KHOR CHOR KHOR is the abbreviation of the Thai government's scheme called the Land Redistribution Programme for the Poor Living in Degraded Forest Reserves. Since last year this scheme has been enforced by the Second Army of the Thai National Military which controls Northeast Thailand, Isaan, acting on behalf of the Royal Forestry Department (RFD). The army is evicting a large number of farmers and villagers who are living in "reserved forests" to use the land for commercial reforestation. According to the Seventh National Plan of Economic and Societal Development (1992-1996), the Thai government aims to extend national reserved forest to 40% of all national land as compared to the present 27%. The figure of 40% is divided into two parts: 25% is preserved forest which means a natural forest and park. 15% is an economic forest which the government leases on concession to logging companies with the condition to reforest. Since around 1985, mostly pulp tip companies have covered a wide area of this governmental, commercial forest with Eucalytpus camaldulensis, one of a type of fast growing species of trees.



Recently, INEB Japan members and other concerned persons made a trip to Ubon province, Buri Ram Province, and Korat Province to see the circumstances of eucalyptus reforestation. This reforestation is mainly caused by the Thai-Japanese paper pulp tip business. When we visited Phra Prachak at Wat Thamnamphut in Dong Yai Forest, it seemed that harassments had calmed down briefly during the recent election period. But on the way to the temple we saw some soldiers who were bathing in a canal like children, a few small barracks dotting the landscape, many big tractors beside the dirt road, and a crossing gate at the entrance of the Dong Yai reserved forest. Located in the reserved forest, the temple is being protected by monks and villagers living there. The big tractors have been used for the past five years for cutting cassava when farmers have planted only cassava in violation of the Royal Forestry Depart-

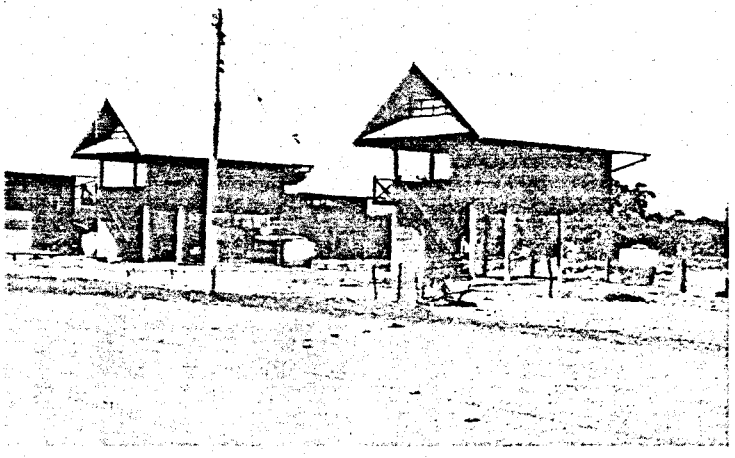
ment's policy that villagers must also plant eucalyptus when they plant cassava. Although I felt a little tense when we passed that canal, no one stopped us from entering this area, even though we were taking a lot of pictures with Phra Prachak in a car.

The remains of burnt, big trees continuing beside the road for about 20km up to the Dong Yai reserve made us loose our words. The contrast of this interim wilderness and the Dong Yai natural forest is quite extreme: dry soil vs. humidity, dry dirty air vs. cool fresh air, eucalyptus and cassava vs. a variety of aged, indigenous trees, etc. We could feel that nature was in this forest without asking anyone. Every villager was evicted to at least six kilometers away from this area. No one can live in this area any more except monks, nuns, and the laypeople who are taking a training course at Wat Thamnamphut, which has been damaged by the army already once. But villagers rebuilt it and some of them are staying and camping in this forest to watch and protect this primeval forest from the army. While we stayed there for 3 days, many villagers visited the temple to ask Phra Prachak's advice and to participate in two big ceremonies. We could see that their emotional ties are really strong. No one can break this relationship.

They allowed us join these ceremonies. One of them was a ceremony of tree ordination. Phra Prachak lead a group of monks, nuns, and laypeople to a specific huge tree during a walking meditation. They surrounded the tree and chanted. I think everyone could feel an increased holiness in the forest throughout this ceremony. An Australian broadcasting team was staying at the temple and making a TV program. After another ceremony, Phra Prachak took us to a small peak with a scenic view. He showed us the immense natural forest continuing into Cambodia. He is planning to have an 8 day walk soon. "Everyone is welcome," he said. He pointed out that commercial and leisure development will be coming to the area soon. INEB Japan members and Phra Prachak exchanged insights on the problems of commercialism in Japan and in the world today. He taught us a lot, no only with his words but with his ways.

During our trip, one of the awful things we saw was a "Thai Refugee Center" as named by the evicted villagers who inhabit it. At the moment, 105 families are taking shelter at Wat Sattakien in Sattakien village. Over 300 families were evicted to "Santi Suk village" (peaceful and happy village) a half a year ago. Inspite of the RFD's budget of 100 million baht, the government doesn't guarantee the expenses of building a house, the living conditions, or the happiness of the villagers. In addition to this, villagers have only been given half of the promised 15 rai of farm land. How can Khor Chor Khor create this land? Khor Chor Khor is just taking the land of the people who have for years already been living on the land designated for evicted villagers. On the one hand, villagers who once lived in the forest have lost their land, and on the other hand a new group of villagers will lose at least half of their land to make room for the newly evicted villagers who lived in the forest. Khor Chor Khor is creating new conflicts between old tenants and newly settled ones in such villages as Santi Suk village. For this reason, 105 families have rejected to move to Santi Suk village. As soldiers are watching Santi Suk village, it is difficult to visit friends for people who live at Wat Sattakien. Usually people come to the wat from Santi Suk village.

Villagers' shelters at Wat Sattakien are not so large and quite simple, no walls, windows or doors. There are only children, women who have children, and old people. The others have been working in Bangkok in order to send money to their families and to help other people who have left. These people in shelters will finish their food soon despite Phra Prachak's efforts to help them. We have to find a way to supprt them



to be able to continue their protest.

Why can Khor Chor Khor take land from the people so easily like this? The present land system is a big problem. The fact which surprised me is according to the current land ledger only 17% of farmland in Thailand is under personal, legal title. Some of the people who are evicted or have had some land taken by Khor Chor Khor have a kind of certificate of land title (Nor Sor 3 or Sor Kor). Certificates of Nor Sor 3 and Sor Kor were issued by the government to allow farmers to get titles for the land which they are using and living on now and in the future. Once every four years, the government must check the land by finding out who is living on it, who can live on it, whose owns it, and whether people have rene wed their certificates. The government, however, has never done this in the Northeast. In addition, when the government needs to use these lands, they just tell people that their certificates have are already expired. In the Seventh National Plan of Economic and Societal Development, the Thai government claimed to have readjusted the land system concerning the rights and titles of land . Unfortunately, this terrible eviction policy will be continued by the government. We should, therefore, begin a campaign concerning the problems of the land laws in order to stop the Thai government from evicting people anymore.

What do we need to do for Dong Yai Forest? We should keep our attention focused to the Dong Yai Forest if the new government orders the army to again harass monks and villagers after the upcoming election. Because the temple is in a reserved forest, it is possible that monks and villagers could be evicted in the near future any time the authorities want. Pulp tip companies have already started to export to Japan and other countries from enormous tip factories around the Siam gulf. INEB Japan will start campaigning against Japanese paper companies soon.

The more I learn about this issue, the more complicated it becomes. I feel the most important thing is not to lose sight of the fundamental problems which are the present land system of Thailand and the present government's use of all available land for commercial export purposes. It seems the press is focusing only on the problems of eucalptus as a destructive crop, but we should understand eucalyptus as only one kind of a quick growing crop which is simply being misused by the RFD and the paper companies. It is especially vital here to see the interconnectedness of these issues with a host of other global economic, environmental and social problems.

Naomi Takasawa

BURMA:

Monks on the frontline

WHEN Gautama the Buddha preached over 2,500 years ago that life was nothing but a continuous cycle of suffering, he probably didn't expect Burma's generals to have taken him quite so literally.

When the only two social structures in Burmese society are the military class and the Buddhist Sangha, or clergy, it is not surprising that the two should come into conflict. In its attempts to cling onto power and destroy all opposition, the regime has not spared the 600,000-strong Sangha, comprising monks (called pongyis), novices and lay people.

Despite Buddhism being the very core of Burmese society (even the generals claim to be devout Buddhists), opposition elements within the Buddhist community have been dealt with ruthlessly. Hundreds of monks were among the casualties of the 1988 massacres, when the army killed thousands of peaceful, pro-democracy demonstrators in cities all over the country, who called for an end to a 40 year-old civil war and an end to Ne Win's one-party rule. Since then, thousands more monks have been harassed, imprisoned and even tortured. In frontline zones, monasteries have been shelled, looted and burnt to the ground.

For many monks opposed to the regime, the only option has been to flee to the 'liberated' area, where a dozen ethnic guerrilla armies have waged a bitter civil war since Burma's independence from Britain in 1948.

Arriving recently by longtail boat to Manerplaw, the besieged headquarters to most of the armed opposition in Burma, it seemed a shell of its usual self. Huts had been vacated, tea shops closed and many of the bamboo political 'offices' cleared of their endless clutter of paperwork. Bunkers



were being refortified.

During the previous week, the regime had unveiled its new toys for the first time: jet fighters bought from China and Czechoslovakia. They attacked a frontline supply route, just north of Manerplaw. The fighting was audible in Manerplaw, but as the NCGUB - Burma's elected Government-in-exile, were taking evacuation procedures, another group was just settling in.

Hammers and nails and teakwood go to work on a modest-sized monastery that is now headquarters of the All Burma Young Monks' Union (ABYMU). The ABYMU is the product of Buddhist rage and frustration, some thing felt by 80% of the monks in Burma, according to its Chairman Ashin Khemesara. He was among the first monks who fled the towns with university students, trekking for days through hostile jungles to reach the revolution area.

Ashin Khemesara claims there are over 400 committed monks now in the revolution area, binding Arakan state (his birthplace) near Bangladesh, to Shan and Kachin states bordering China and Laos, and down to his headquarters along the Thai border. It is from here that he and his advisers plan a strategy of network co-ordination, from 'UG' (underground) monasteries inside the major towns to rural areas, and finally the international community.

Beneath the construction work Ashin Khemesara is pacing quietly back and forth, studying the ground beneath his elegant black slippers. A couple of monks are sitting around smoking green leafed cheroots and adjusting their saffron robes to the heat. The robes are blood red, but of different shades; some more earthy, some burgundy, others almost orange. But despite such brilliant colours, their robes blend in after a time, perhaps because they are surrounded by equally vivid splashes the deep green jungle, blue sky and harsh brown earth.

"We follow the Ghandian way of non-violence", says Ashin Khemesara leafing through some papers, "and as Buddhists we can only come to terms with our goal by using non-violent methods; compassion and education". He produces a letter of encouragement from the Dalai Lhama of Tibet, himself a spiritual and political exile since the Chinese invaded his Himalayan kingdom during the '50s.

"Our aims are clear. We want a public government in place that will protect Buddhism and bring civil and human rights for everyone in Burma. We want an international trade embargo on Burma and we want the United Nations to stop recognising the SLORC as the government of Burma. Finally we want people in the West to put pressure on those companies and governments who continue to do business with the SLORC".

It is a theme which threads through many of Ashin Khemesara's talks as we journey from monastery to monastery, frontline camp to frontline camp, as he lectures to local villagers, soldiers and monks on the internal situation and the crisis in trying to inform the international community. Newsletters are distributed, salutes given (to the monks), prayers offered (by the monks) and inevitably before noon, a feast of local cuisine is provided by the host village. Rice, fish paste and beans, washed down with lukewarm Chinese tea. The afternoons are spent not unlike a siesta, to avoid the hottest hours of the day; sleeping, reading, meditating and even fortune-telling. Others tune into the BBC on crackling old shortwave radios.

It is often these scenes which seem most incongruous at first. Monasteries are not just places of worship, they are a gathering point for each village. Eating, smoking, playing music; the chatter of voices echoes easily inside the teak caverns. Soldiers cradling weapons laugh and joke with the monks. Monasteries are still centres for learning, and each boy will spend a time there as he enters adolescence.

Some have had to become make-shift hospitals. One monastery visited last year had become a refuge after Burmese troops had burnt down an entire Karen village nearby. The mon-

astery had been shelled and looted, according to a resident monk, but left standing. About a dozen villagers were huddled inside, some suffering gunshot wounds, but most from malaria and malnutrition. The familiarly sweet smell of rosewood and incense had been replaced by stale bandages and antiseptic.

"This is a detestable regime" remarks Ashin Khemesara bitterly. "SLORC doesn't respect the people and they don't respect Buddhism. Sometimes the soldiers spit in our alms bowls, others tramp through monasteries with their boots on" One monk spoke of whisky being poured into alms bowls, rendering them useless as monks don't drink.

U Thanwara, a monk now on the border, spent six years in prison for participating in a strike and needs no reminding of the regime's cruelty. He claims to have been beaten every day, hung upside down and had genital electric shocks, as well as suffering other Orwellian techniques.

Another monk who was in hiding at a 'UG' monastery in Rangoon, was tipped off by his father, who is quite senior in the military. It highlighted a common tragedy of families divided by loyalty. The military class in Burmese society is so strong and so prevalent that almost all the dissidents, students and monks who fled to the resistance have at least one family member serving in the military.

Historically, monks have often been the catalysts for change in Burma. In fact the very first political organisation in Burma, formed in 1906, was the Young Mens' Buddhist Association (YMBA) modelled on the British YMCA. As nationalist sentiments spread throughout the country, calling for independence from the self-serving British, Buddhism became the power base for intellectuals, monks, militants and eventually the general populace. Half a century later, monks are still at the front of what Daw Aung San Suu Kyi calls "Our second struggle for Independence."

In October last year, tension between the SLORC and Sangha flared up again after two monks were shot dead in the street by soldiers in Mandalay, traditionally the spiritual centre of Burma. The Sangha responded by refusing all religious rites to military officers and their families. On approaching soldiers, some monks would mock falling to their knees and bowing, indicating the soldiers were more 'enlightened' than the monks; an act of subtle disgust.

Amid such public ridicule, the military reacted by encircling dozens of monasteries, cutting water and electricity and effectively barricading the monks inside. Two days later, troops stormed the monasteries, making dozens of arrests and seizing what the military usually calls 'communist propaganda'. Under further threats, the Sangha was forced to resume religious rites to the military.

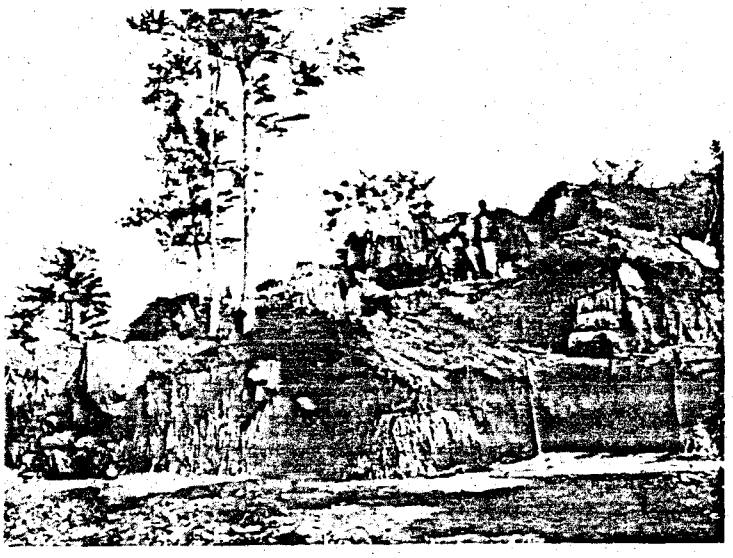
Other monasteries are being raided from time to time on reports that monks are stockpiling weapons inside key 'UG' monasteries. Although the ABYMU is hesitant to discuss the topic, it appears certain that some monks are couriers for weapons bought on the blackmarket, mainly Thailand, and smuggled into monasteries. Whether this is being done by a radical element or is actual ABYMU policy is unclear. But as one monk pointed out cryptically; "You cannot suppress the sentiment of the people forever. In '88 we were openly massacred. But next time there is a major confrontation, the people will not be completely defenceless. Next time they'll fight". It is also an indication to the military of the monks' determination to support the people – whatever the means.

And there's the paradox – of a militant Buddhist group like the ABYMU, and the question of monks advocating killing. Ashin Khemesara replies, "Each group has its own responsibility to help get rid of this regime. For some this means military means, for others it is political and spiritual and nonviolent means. We all have a role to play."

U Nu, Burma's first Prime Minister, and a devout Buddhist himself, said when he came to the resistance area: "It is a sin to kill, to be violent. But it is a greater sin to look on with folded arms when I see my countrymen suffering under tyranny. So in my case, I chose the lesser evil". It is a reasoning that could well be applied to the ABYMU and others who are attempting to bring peace and political change to a country characterised by poverty and terror: something the Buddha certainly didn't preach.

BANGKOK POST
March 22, 1992

EXODUS OF ROHINGYA MUSLIMS CONTINUES



Cox's Bazaar and Teknaf are the towns that dot the finger of Bangladesh lying between Burma and the Bay of Bengal. More than 120,000 Burmese Muslims crossed into Bangladesh after fleeing their homes in Burma's western Arakan State alleging discrimination and atrocities against them by the Burmese Army. The influx continued and the UN High Commisioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that about 5,000 refugees arrived in Bangladesh. However, the exodus of Rohingya Muslims into Bangladesh was not new. It was preceded by similar campaigns in 1955, 1959, 1975 and 1978 and among the worse, Operation Nagamin (Dragon King), which was launched 14 years ago in 1978 with "extermination" aims. So far 150,000 Rohingyas in Bn Thi township and 50,000 more in Maung Daw have been forced to flee for their lives; and also scores of innocent Rohingyas Muslims were brutally killed and a number of their age-old were destroyed.

The problem of the ethnic Rohingyas is beginning to put a severe strain on Bangladesh-Burma relations. There is absolutely no doubt that these Burmese Muslims-legal inhabitants of that country under every international law and by every norm that entitles one to the citizenship of a country- are being severely oppressed. They are being discriminated against, subjected to special tax , and reduced to being aliens under the law of the land. The SLORC's hardline attitude against the Rohingya Muslims appears to have increased following the crushing of the democracy movement there a few years ago. These Arakanese Muslims supported the movement, as did the majority of the Burmese people. The most condemnable move of the Burmese military junta has been the Citizenship Law which has effectively disenfranshised the ethnic Rohingyas. They have been reduced to being "stateless within a state."

In addition, the Burmese Ambassador to Thailand, U Nyunt, recently issued a statement saying that the Rohingya was not one of 135 national races, and that there existed only Burmese Muslims in Burma which represented less than two per cent out of the population of 40 million. [Nation, March 13,1992]

On the other hand, Bangladesh also responded by issuing a statement and giving Burma a history lesson. [Nation March 14,1992] It said that Burma's Arakan State, home to 1.4 million Muslims, was part of unified Burma when it was conquered and annexed by Burmese King Bodapaya in 1784. It added that the name Rohingya came from Rosang, the ancient name of Arakan. Local people pronounced the word "Rohang and Rohingya". Arakan was later changed by contemporary Burmese rulers into Rakhine. Those who lived in Burma when the nation gained independence from Britain on Jan 4, 1948 "were in fact citizens of Burma", the same way as those who got Indian and Pakistani nationalities when the two countries gained independence from Britain, it said. Also the former Burmese PMs U Ner and U Ba Save, in separate public statements in the 1950's, addressed the Rohingya as one of the nation's peoples "The Rakhine State is situated towards the southwest of the Union. The Buthidawang and Maung daw townships are included in the Sittwee Division of Rakhiue State [Arakan]. The majority of the people residing in these two townships are 'Rohingya' who profess the Islamic faith", according to U Nu on Sept 25,1954. U Ba Save said on Nov 3 and 4,1959 that "Rohingya are equal in every way with other minority races like the Shan, Chin

Kachin, Kayin [Karen], Kayan [Karenni], Mon and Rakhine. They have lived in Myanmar Naing Ngan (Burma) for ages according to historic facts."

The Burmese goverment must face up to the fact that Rohingyas and other ethnic minorities are as much Burmese as the members of the junta themselves. That they cannot oppress and discriminate against their own citizens just because they are ethnically different and follow a religion other than their own; so the present refugee problem should be reported to the international community and human rights organizations, as they need immediate Attention. Some of the local anthorities in Cox's Bazaar even said, "if a peaceful solution isn't found quickly, the only possible solution will be war. If the Busmese won't take these people back, the best way for us to cope with the problem will be to arm the refugees and help them form a liberation front. Let them go back to their country and fight for their homes and their language and their dignity."

Sam Kalayance
Burma Project
Reports from Cox's Bazaar and Teknaf, Bangladesh-Burma border



Fields of Dreams

Less than four years ago the Burmese Government considered Liu Go Shi an insurgent, outlaw and a drug trafficker. Today, he is making more heroin than ever before-but he has somehow managed to become a respectable citizen.

Although his refineries are located inside the former insurgent-held area in the northeastern corner of Burma's Shan state, Liu himself lives under the protection of the Burmese army in the garrison town of Panghsai near the Yunnan frontier.

He has invested some of this drug fortune across the border in China in the local tourist industry: his Daung Pyu, or White Peacock, Hotel ranks among the most luxurious in this booming border town. Even more startling, on 28 January 1991, Liu and his colleagues welcomed the US Drug Enforcement Administration and several UN agencies to their base at the Burmese border village of Mong Ko to witness a "drug-burning ceremony "

The extraordinary situation that has emerged in the drug-producing areas along the Sino-Burmese frontier can also be observed at the official border post at Se-Gao across the Shweli river from Ruili, another boom town in northwest Yunnan. On Gawng Maktop, a small hill overlooking the vast timber depots at Se-Gao, heroin can be bought less than 200 m from the nearest Burmese army outpost and a Chinese border police station.

At the drug-burning ceremony at Mong Ko a year ago, Pheung Kya-shin, the overall commander of the former insurgent forces in the Mong Ko region and the adjacent Kokang area, pledged: "Heroin processing will stop in 1991 and we'll completely eradicate poppy cultivation within six years."

In reality, Mong Ko has since developed into perhaps the most important center for heroin refining in Southeast Asia. Production

is expanding to the extent that heroin is now being manufactured in virtually every kitchen in the village. "If you walk down the main road, you can even feel the acidic smell of chemicals wafting out of the houses. The whole place literally stinks," a Mong Ko resident told the REVIEW.

In the surrounding mountains, poppy cultivation shows no signs of diminishing, despite official claims to the contrary. This year's harvest, now being collected in Mong Ko, Kokang and other areas in the Burmese sector of the Golden Triangle, is believed to be in the order of 2,200 tonnes-more than double the figure three years ago-narcotics officials say.

Official Burmese complicity in the drug trade could be initally explained by political expediency. Northeastern Burma's borderlands were for years under the control of the communist Party of Burma (CPB), the country's most potent insurgent force. However, in March-April 1989, CPB army commanders and rank-and-file mutinied against the party's elderly Maoist leader ship

Drugs had been the main source of contention between the orthodox political leadership and the free-booting CPB army commanders. For Rangoon, however, the mutiny could not have been more timely, analysts say. Within weeks of the putsch, the chief of Burma's military intelligence, Maj'Gen. Khin Nyunt, travelled to the border to meet some of the new leaders, including Pheung's younger brother, Pheung Kya-fu (REVIEW 1 June'89)

In exchange for promises not to attack government forces and sever ties with other rebel groups, the CPB mutineers were granted unoffcial permission to engage in any kind of business. The vast majority subsequently turned their respective units into government-recognised militia forces, and threw themselves enthusiastically into the lucrative drug trade.

It is also evident that the authorities in Rangoon are economically benefiting from the trade, intelligence sources say. According to official figures reported to the IMF, Burma has no more than US$300-350 million in foreign-exchange reserves. How ever, unofficial estimates compiled by embassies in Rangoon indicate that Burma's actual foreign-exchange holdings may be as high as US$850-900 million, most of which is reported to be deposited in overseas banks.

Intelligence sources, diplomats and other observers add that they suspect laundered drug money has paid for a substantial part of Burma's recent purchase of more that US$1 billion worth of military hardware, mainly from China.

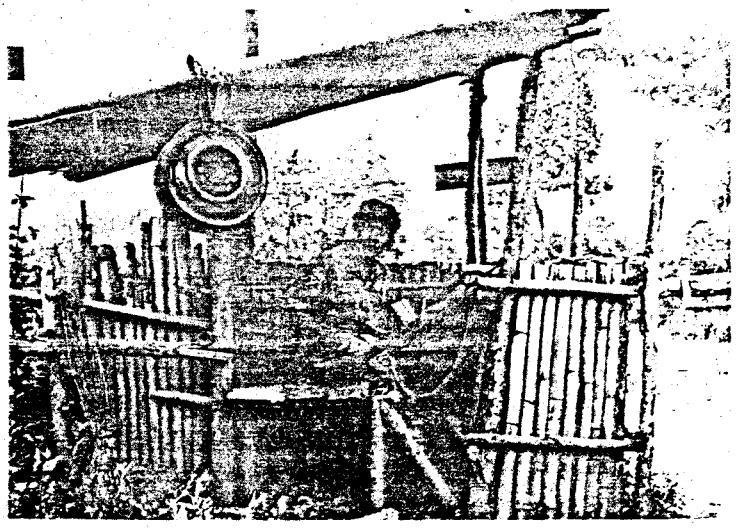
China's complicity in the trade, however, appears more complex. While Western narcotics officials are impressed with the obvious sincerity of many Chinese officials in Peking who seem genuinely concerned about the spread of drug addiction, especially in Yunnan and other southern provinces, at the local level the reality appears markedly different.

Although pictures of captured drug traffickers awaiting execution are displayed in virtually every town and village along the Burmese border, local authorities scem to have no qualms about letting Mu and others invest their drug money in hotels and other "joint ventures" in Yunnan. The chemicals needed to produce drugs flow freely across the border from China to Burma, even at the official border checkpoint at Wanting-Panghsai.

Former CPB commanders are also regular visitors to border towns in China. For example, a major trafficker in the former CPB area north of Kengtung in eastern Shan state, Lin Mingxian-who is also known as U Sai Lin-has just built a fortified mansion in Jinghong, Xishuang banna.

Lin's group in eastern Shan state is said to be the best-organised of the ex-CPB militia forces. "In Mong Ko and Kokang, there are lots of private drug traffickers and pedlars. The market is free," a source close to Lin told the REVIEW in Yunnan. "But in the Kengtung area, the trade is monopolised by Lin and his deputy, Zhang Zhiming."

As a result, local trafficking is almost non-existent in Kengtung: the bulk of the heroin produced by Lin and Zhang is convoyed down



to the Thai border in the south, while smaller quantities are sent via Jinghong to Kunming, Yunnan's capital.

Chinese complicity in the Golden Triangle drug trade is also more evident in this area than elsewhere along the border. Both Lin and Zhang are Chinese nationals, ex-Red Guards who came across the border during the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s to fight as volunteers alongside the CPB. When most such volunteers were recalled to China in the late 1970s, Lin, Zhang and a few others were left behind for intelligence purposes. Zhang, at least, is reportedly still closely connected with Chinese security services.

"In spite of a significant warming in relations between-Rangoon and Peking over the past few years, the Chinese still seem to think that it's important to maintain a direct foothold inside Burma, and they're using the former CPB forces for this purpose," a well-placed source said. "Zhang is their main liaison officer, in charge of maintaining some kind of control over the former CPB forces. He s useful for them. That's why they don't interfere with his business."

While the ease with which ex-CPB commanders have established relations with authorities on both sides of the frontier may be unique in present day international drug trafficking, the way in which the UN has become involved is even more extra ordinary.

Shortly after the CPB mutiny and the new alliances of convenience in the northeast were forged, the Burmese Government launched a "border-development programme" in these previously neglected frontier regions. UN officials were invited to tour the former CPB areas and Rangoon requested assistance from the world body. This resulted in a number of highly unlikely meetings in the border areas.



On 19 March 1991, for example, the state-run Working People's Daily reported that a team of UN experts had visited the hills north of Kengtung where they held talks with "leaders of the local nationals U Sai Lin and U Kyi Myint." The UN offcials were probably unaware that these two names are aliases for Lin and Zhang.

Other UN teams ventured up to Kokang to hold talks with Pheung and his new personal assistant, To Kwong Sum, a former Hongkong Policeman who retired in 1977 in connection with a corruption scandal.

According to the Working People's Daily of 12 July 1991, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) had committed US$1.3 million to support various projects in the former CPB areas. The UN Drug Control Programme, whose Burma project ended last December, is investigating the possibility of supporting crop substitution projects in Kokang and Kengtung.

A UNDP report from Rangoon dated 15 October 1991 outlined planned assistance to "border development." It refrained from mentioning the booming production of heroin in the area and the fact that the local militia commanders with whom the UN agencies are supposed to cooperate are all major drug traffickers.

Bertil Lintner
FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW
20 February 1992

CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS :

Human Rights Violations and Their Impact in The Region

Gross human rights violations are still continuing in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Extra-judicial executions and tortures perpetrated on the non-combatant Tribal People in the CHT by the Security Forces of Bangladesh are common in the daily routine.

Large scale incidents are still taking place in the CHT. Tribals are being killed, tortured, raped, injured and arrested. Burning the villages and looting their belongings are reported frequently. Thousands of Tribal People have been driven from their house and lands. Bangladesh Security Forces and Bengali Muslims settlers in clubs have killed perhaps more than 200,000 people in the CHT since the formation of Bangladesh. In short successive Governments of Bangladesh have been carrying out the genocidal policy for total extermination of the Tribal People from their homeland to occupy the land of CHT. As a result the influx of refugees to India is still continuing because there is no security for them in the CHT.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts is the homeland of 12 Tribes comprising about 700,000 people. It is situated at the southeastern part of Bangladesh, covering 5,093 square miles (10% of the country). The largest group of population is Chakma. The Chakma, the Marma and the Tongchangya are Buddhists, the Tripura are Hindu and other small groups are Christian.

In 1860, the CHT was annexed by the British Empire and administration was separated from the plain by the 1900 Regulation Acts for limiting migration of the people from the plain land.

Though CHT was a 98% Tribal non-Muslim populated area, unfortunately in 1947 it became the part of the then East Pakistan. So, to drive out the non-Muslim Tribals from CHT, the Government built a massive Hydro electric Dam at Kaptai in 1957-1963 which flooded 54,000 acres of cultivable land of the CHT; 100,000 people were displaced. Though a few received nominal compensation, thousands of them fled to India. Still 60-70,000 Chakmas remain in Arunachal Pradesh without any nationality.

After liberation the successive Governments of Bangladesh have not changed the Tribals driven out policy, rather it has become worse. Since 1979 the Bangladesh Government has encouraged a large number of Bengali Muslims to settle in to CHT and about more than 400,000 Bengali Muslims have settled in the CHT since 1979.

To occupy the Tribal land the Government has deployed at least 120,000 military and para-military security forces. Now, CHT is nothing but a big military camp. The Government of Bangladesh has sponsored the inhuman torture and killing of Tribal villagers, raping the women and teenagers by the security forces in a club with illegal Bengali muslims settlers. The tribal people are forced to move from their ancestral homes and land to cluster villages (Tribal people call these Concentration Camps) based near military camps.

The army controls all major aspects of civilian life. They Even



control the supply of daily essential commodities like rice, salt, kerosene and life saving drugs. As a result an artificial famine has been created in the region. At least 25 people from Baghai Chari and Barkal village have died without food since August of 1991. To save their lives from such inhuman torturing and atrocities a large number of people have been compelled to leave their villages and take shelter in the jungle. Some 50-60,000 Tribal people have fled to India and they are still living at the 6 Relief Camps in the Indian state of Tripura.

On 26 February 1989, the so-called Parliament of Bangladesh passed a new District Council Bill. The claim was that it would bring autonomy to the CHT; however, the paltry power of the District Council with regard to import issues such as land rights and their establishment by force have greatly discredited their claims as autonomous bodies.

In December 1990, the removal of the military leader General H. M. Ershed from power raised hope in the minds of the people of CHT that the new Democratic Government would solve the problem of CHT by political means.

Democracy has been restored in Bangladesh through Parliamentary election held on 27th February 1991. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party won the election and Begum Khalida Zia came into power.

Since the fall of the Ershad regime all District Councils in Bangladesh have been suspended except for the three District Councils of CHT. These District Councils were created in 1989 under procedures implemented by force and were widely criticised by the people in home and abroad.

The Government led by Khalida Zia claimed to be democratic and took steps to restore democracy all over the country, except in CHT. All "Black Acts" promulgated by the Government of Ershad were repealed but these are still existing in CHT. The Khalida Zia Government did not withdraw the military and para military forces from the CHT and the illegal Bengali Muslim immigrants were not taken back from the Hill Tracts Region.

Behind the Development policy of Bangladesh there is the slogan "We have to destroy the tribals in order to develop them". Once upon a time the Chittagong Hill Tracts were not only rich in timber and bamboo but also produced surplus paddy, cotton and vegetables. Hard working farmers were comparatively well off, and needy people were few in number. Now-a-days after millions of dollars of development aid have been spent, needy people abound with rice, yet vegetable and cotton have to be imported and timber and bamboo have become so scarce that the formerly magnificent houses of the Chakmas and other Tribes have given way to poor huts.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Board (CHTDB) was created in 1976 for the upliftment of the socio-economic condition of the Tribal people of CHT. In fact, it has been destroying the socio-economic condition and supporting the illegal settlement of Bengali Muslims on Tribal land in the CHT. The Chairman of CHTDB is the highest military Commander, the G.O.C., of Chittagong. Without his approval no development scheme can be implemented in the CHT, even a tribal student cannot be admitted to higher studies. So he, (GOC), can easily misguide development in CHT. No wonder then that most of the money for development programs is spent for the purpose of military oppression in the Hill Tracts.

In spite of being one of the poorest countries in the world, Bangladesh appears to make intense militarisation of CHT a priority, adding further to its already overwhelming problem.

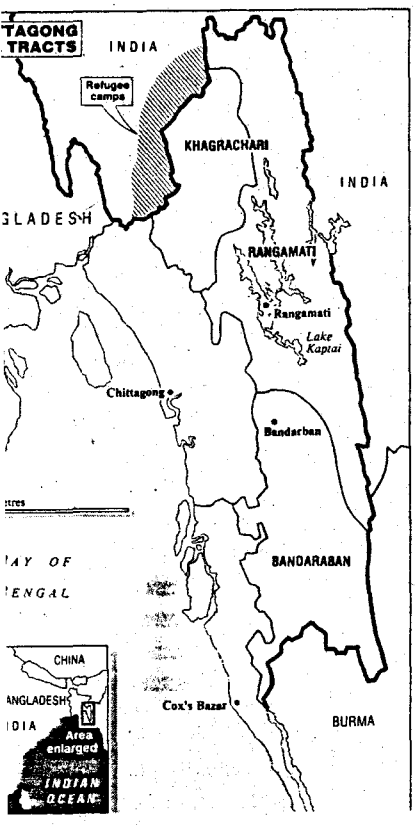
For Tribal people, development means ever bigger buildings in the administrative centres, while their houses remain even smaller due to the destruction of the local natural resources.

In the name of development the law enforcement personnel of Bangladesh have sought to force tribal villagers to move from dispersed villages into protected villages close to security forces camps. Villages of this type have been known by different names at different times, protected villages, collective villages, and more recently cluster villages. The relocation of the population in these villages, often presented by the authorities as being in the interest of the area.

There are 60 cluster villages only in Khagrachari District for the Tribal People. The cluster villages are nothing but concentration camps. The movement of the villagers is restricted by the Army personnel. The villagers live predominantly from Government hand-outs of food and provisions such as rice every few weeks.

The Government provides them rations only for a few months. Afterwards the tribal people are encouraged to work as daily labourers. So it is not difficult to understand how this development program is turning the Tribal People from village farmer into dependent bonded laborer for plantations of rubber and teak, sponsored by investors such as the Asian Development Bank.

The military personnel deployed in CHT have been using



the forest for their personal interest. They indulge in the destruction of forests, make business with the timber and use the property for their future generation. Even the stones from the area of CHT are being robbed to the other parts of Bangladesh. The Food For Work Program aided by US AID under supervision is being used in clearing the jungles and groves of nearby villages and roads. With the help of the US AID, green is being banished from the CHT, although the US Administration, I am confirmed, has no sanction in this destructive program

These unwise and destructive measures by the Bangladesh Military personnel are paving the way for the following:

1. Soil Erosion

2. Ecological imbalance which leads to insufficient rainfalls and thereby resulting in the creation of a dessert in the CHT

This ecological imbalance, being widened continuously, is not only harmful to the environment in Chittagong Hill Tracts but to the whole region of Bangladesh and the world as a whole.

Before concluding, I would like to appeal to peace-loving people, NGOs who are active for human rights and humanitarian work and democratic Governments:

1. To save the lives of the Tribals from serious starvation, an artificial famine created in the CHT Region due to increased control over food rationing in the cluster villages by the armed forces. Demand that aid agencies and NGOs be able to extend their development programs into CHT directly instead of handing over development funds to the Government of Bangladesh.

2. To return the Bengali settlers back to their places with the possible support of development aid funds.

3. To immediately demilitarize the Chittagong Hill Tracts and to restore democracy.

4. To ensure rights of self-determination of the Tribal People in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

5. To help to create a healthy environment so that the refugees can be repatriated and rehabilitated honourably to their respective land.

6. To enable scholars, scientists and observers to extend their help in studying ecological conditions in CHT, thereby protecting the region from imminent doom.

Bimal Bhikkhu
February 21, 1992

IFOR was among the first non-governmental organizations to raise the issue of the tribal people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh before the international community.

The IFOR recommendations presented to the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discimination and Protection of Minorities in 1984 and 1985 remain valid in light of the Commission's findings. IFOR proposed some immediate short term measures (to decrease tensions) and longer term measures after social and ecological research had been carried out. The IFOR recommendations to the government of Bangladesh were:

1. No further settlement in the Chittagong Hill Tracts by outside settlers should be permitted for a five-year period until a democratic and ecologically-sound policy for the area can be drawn up.

2. The "cluster village" policy should be stopped. They have no economic or social justification. Existing "cluster villages" should be dismantled immediately.

3. The authority of the civil government over the Hill Tracts must be restored, and the massive military and paramilitary forces withdrawn. The regular police should be trained to deal with inter-ethnic tensions and violence.

4. Discussions should be undertaken for governmental reform in the Hill Tracts leading to autonomous political institutions stronger than the recently established District Councils, which have not corresponded to the peoples' aspirations.

5. Social and environmental reserch in the Hill Tracts must be carried out by independent researchers so that the conclusions will be credible. Research needs to be carried out on current land-holding patterns, titles to land and communal ownership practices.

Land holding patterns are the key social issues over which conflict most often arises. There is also a need to have a study on the carrying capacity of land in the Hill Tracts. The fact that the Hill Tracts has a lower population density than the plains is no indication that the Hill Tracts can hold a larger population than at present without lasting ecological damage.

6. The tensions in the Hill Tracts are signs of the land problem within the whole of Bangladesh. While there are no easy solutions to the lack of land, there are land reform measures which can be undertaken in the plains-reforms which have been postponed in the past for political reasons.

7. There should be cooperation between India, Bangladesh and Burma to deal constructively with the hill areas and their tribal populations.

As there is now a new, popularly-elected government in Bangladesh which is less bound by the previous government's policy in the CHT, it is useful to write to the Prime Minister indicating your concern for the people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and asking for support of the IFOR recommendations.

Letters should be sent to:

The Prime Minister
Begum Khaleda Zia
PM's Secretariat
Sugandha House
Dhaka
Bangladesh

RECONCILIATION INTERNATIONAL
Winter 1991/1992

200 Tribals Slaughtered

Agartala, April 13: Bengali resettlers backed by jawans of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Bangladesh Reserve Police (BRP) attacked Logung, a "cluster village" in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, killing 200 tribals, including women and children, and injuring at least 200 others on Friday.

Over 3,000 panic-stricken tribals, rendered homeless by the attack, are reportedly trying to sneak into Tripura's South District.

According to reports, some young Muslim resettlers on Friday attacked three young girls from the cluster village who were tending cattle and tried to rape one of them. In a desperate attempt to rescue her, the two other girls attacked the would-be rapist with a hatchet, killing him instantly.

The youths fled to their village, but claimed that Shanti Bahini guerrillas hiding in Logung had attacked them and killed their friend. Enraged villagers immediately set out for Logung after collecting whatever arms they could find to avenge the killing.

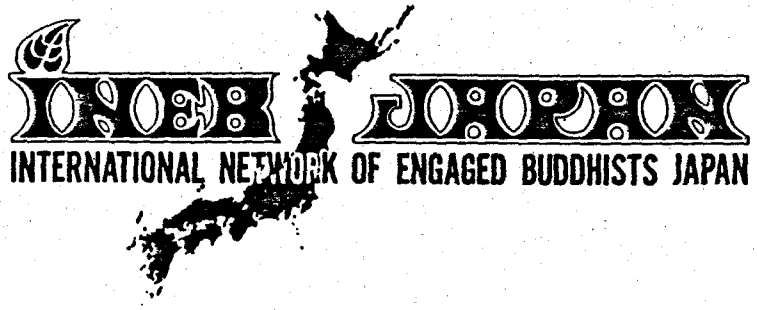
However, the tribals successfully pushed back the first group of attackers, forcing them to seek help from the paramilitary forces posted at Logung.

A large group of armed BDR and BRP jawans led by one Major Habib led the second assault on the tribals, shooting them down indiscriminately while their houses were razed to the ground. At least 200 tribals died in the attack and a similar number suffered injuries.

Reports quoting eyewitnesses said a large number of corpses were dumped in the premises of the Paharia Sarvodya Club in the Logung market before they were taken to nearby jungles for mass burial.

As news of the massacre spread, a high-level delegation of government and Autonomous District Council (ADC) officials visited the village and distributed food and clothing.

Sekhar Dhatta
The Telegraph
April 14,1992



JAPAN :
Politicians join call for Suu Kyi's release

Diet members were among some 300 people who called for the release of Myammar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi at a meeting Tuesday, the day she was to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo.

Participants in the Burmese Festival in Tokyo's Ilibiya Park called on the Myanmar military junta to immediately release all prisoners of conscience, to stop arresting and trying people for their political beliefs, and to immedialely cease all forms of torture and summary punishment.

The meeting was organized by five groups, including Amnesty International and the International Women's Group for the Freedom of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Satsuki Eda, the Shaminren party chief and Secretary General of the Amnesty International Diet Group, said, "What we can never forget is the result of Myanmar's 1990 elections," when Suu Kyi's party, the National League for Democracy, won by a landslide.

Those present included Norwegian charge d'affaires, Willum Steen, members of the International Network for Democracy in Burma and the Burmese Association in Japan.

Yasuko Takemura, a Social Democratic Party of Japan, member of the House of the Councilors, cited the junta's "disregard" for its people in explaining the group's appeal for Tokyo to halt its official development assistance to Myanmar.

During the meeting, song writer Yoko Aki read from a Japanese translation of Suu Kyi's unfinished work "Freedom from Fear."

This year's Nobel Peace prize winner was to be represented at the Oslo ceremony by her husband, Michael Aris, and their two sons.

Over 70 people demonstrated in front of Osaka Station Tuesday for the release of Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners in Myanmar.

Represcntatives from Amnesty International Japan, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists and the Burma Relief Center joined others in observing International Human Rights Day and the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Suu Kyi in Oslo.

Demonstrators collected petition signatures, held signs calling for the release of political prisoners and an end to Japan's aid to Myanmar.

They also observed a moment of silence for Suu Kyi.

About 12 demonstrators acted out major events in the Burmese pro-democracy movement, including the 1988 crackdown on peaceful demonstrations and the 1990 election, which was decively won by Suu Kyi and her party.

THE JAPAN TIMES
December 12,1991

LADAKH :

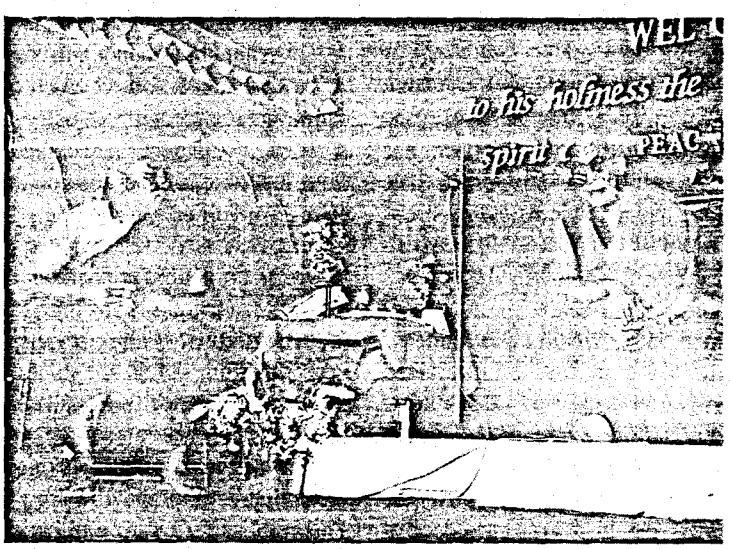
PRINCE MAHIDOL CENTENIAL LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTRE



Prince Mahidol Centeniasl Library and Research Centre is being established at Leh, initiated by a generous donation made by Princess, Her Royal Highness, Kalayani Vadhana

When the course of history witnessed the decline of the way of life taught by the Enlightened One, in its land of origin, Buddhism took root and flourished in countries outside India. Thailand is one such country. The teaching of the Buddha has been preserved so meticulously in its pristine purity that during the Sixth Buddhist Convention held for codifying the teaching, the Thai canonical texts were taken as authentic. Thailand is one of the oldest Buddhist monarchies in the world and considerable credit for the preservation of the Buddhist culture and tradition must be assigned to the Thai Royalty, whose patronage of culture and arts had remained consistently outstanding. Her Royal Highness the Princess Kalayani Vadhana is a scion of this illustrious family. A scholar in Buddhist philosophy, the Princess has adopted that knowledge to guide all her activities. Besides being personally involved in schemes for the upliftment of women, she had extended substantial support to various social service institutional-like schools and hospitals. She is committed to implement, selflessly, the Buddhist concept that one born mortal must perform many acts of merit.

When the Maha Bodhi Society undertook a set of projects for the welfare of the Ladakhi people by establishing a school, meditation centre, library and research centre, monastery for nuns, etc. an appeal was made to the princess. The humane motivations for these projects to be fulfilled at Leh found strong sympathetic vibrations in the noble heart of the Princess, and she made a donation of 1,000,000 Baht for establishing at our Leh campus a Library and Centre for Research in Buddho- logy. The Institution is named the "Prince Mahidol Centenial Library and Research Centre" in memory of the illustrious father of Princess Kalayani Vadhana. Prince Mahidol of Songkla, the father of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, was an eminent educator, scientist and humanist. We are greatly beholden to Her Royal Highness for her generosity and invoke the blessings of Lord for her happiness and well-being.



NEPAL : Environment And Human Rights In Himalaya

Environment is the fashion of our times, but for common people, survival is their primary concern. They have been fighting for their survival for a long time. We have historical evidences of such struggles being launched by village communities in Tehri Garwhal region since the beginning of this century. When this princely state adopted the policy of state control over forests, which like other common resources were owned by the village communists, people revolted. The last revolt was in 1930, when people of Yamuna valley turned out the officials from that area and set up their own independent Panchavat Raj. This was suppressed with brutal force. Gun fire was opened at the assembly of the people at Tilari on the banks of Yamuna; 17 persons died and 80 were imprisoned.

The government policy was to manage the forest for commercial purposes, whereas the villagers needed it for fodder, fruit and fibre, to meet their basic requirements. Though we have now a democracy set up - and it is supposed that in a democracy that "will not force, is the basis of the state" - still our situation has worsened. The hill people have lost their freedem-loving spirit. The inroad of materialistic civilization into remote Himalayan villages has created a new mass of exploiters, who in the name of development have established state control over all resources water, forest and land.

I could see its impact on the lives of the people, especially the women, who are the back bone of Himalayan soiety. In the state of Jammu and Kashmir, a massive programme of social forestry, funded by the World Bank, was launched obviously to improve the environment and to provide firewood and fodder to the villagers. But under this programme, poplars were planted to supply raw materiais to the match and pulp industries. The villages were sweeping dried, fallen leaves for firewood. A slogan evolved which said, "Plant Trees, Grow Money" showing currency notes falling down from the trees.

Statutory provisions in the Constitution become meaningless when people's means of subsistence are taken by the government under land acquisition acts. In the Himalayas, in the coming years, a massive programme of damming the rivers will be launched. It will displace millions of people, the rehabilitation of whom is impossible. There is no land in the hills, and in the plains they have to face an alien and hostile environment. Out of 20,000 families ousted by Pong Dam in the Himalayan State of Himachal Pradesh in India, only 2,500 could be settled. Those, too, in the desert area of Rajasthan. About 6,000 of these were evicted from the allotted land and forced back to the hills.

Another threat to the Himalayan people's survival is the expansion of luxury tourism in this region. The growing number of big hotels for tourists will, besides other things, usurp already scanty water resources. A tourist uses at least 20 times more water than an average hill family. This represents a slow and invisible attack on water resources.

The task of human rights activists in the Himalayan region is difficult. He or she must face the development lobby, which believes in the religion of economics. For economic growth, which of course is the God of the Elite, everything can be sacrificed. Besides local politicians, who are under the intoxication of the theory of economic growth, activists will have to face the opposition of multinationals, the ruling elite which protects politicians and business interests. They control the media. A press conference by them in a Five Star Hotel and a few advertisements to the leading dailies are enough to suppress the voice of the silent majority, striving to protect their right to life. Even the law courts – where justice is sold and the highest bidder is always the money man or scientist who can sell his expertise and conscience – will not come to the people's rescue.

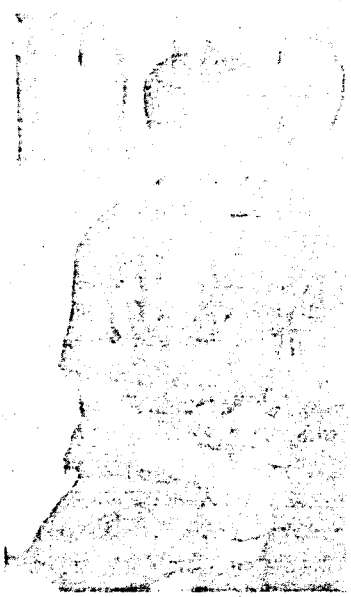
Yet we should not loose hope in people's power, and should therefore organise non-violent movements for our survival.

Folk media, especially folksongs and foot marches, are two most effective means to awaken the masses. Small groups of humanitarian scientists, social activists and compassionate literary men, artists and journalists should be formed to chalk out the strategy of the people's movement. Women, who are sufferers, should be brought to the forefront. This has been our experience in the Chipko movement. Telling of stories from scriptures like Bhagwat Kotha, stories from

Jatak, has also proved very effective. Interpretation of the holy books like Bangwat and the life and teachings of Buddha in the context of present day stitutions should be done, as has been done in Thailand, where Buddhist monasteries became the centre of the Chipko movement.

– From a speech given by Sunderlal Bhahuguna at the Workshop on Human Rights in the Himalayas, Dec.,7, 1991, in Kathmandu. Among the resolutions acheived at the international workshop was the contention that human rights include the right to a healthy environment. A resulting Kathmandu based Himalayan Network, to monitor and promote the human rights situation in the region, was also established.

Sunderlal Bhahuguna
THE INDEPENDENT
December 18, 1991



SIAM :

OFFERING THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

It has been 15 days now since Chalard Vorachat began his hunger strike in protest of the appointment of a prime minister who has not been elected by the people. No one knows how many more days his silent struggle will last, or how it will end.

On the roadside opposite Parliament House, the fasting protester sits leaning against the wall of Dusit Zoo, facing the honourabe place where he used to represent the Thai people as one of their elected Members of Parliament.

A thin mat has been laid on the footpath to keep him from the heat of the ground, and a plastic sheet hung above his head to ease the blast of the scorching sun. At his side, a small Buddha image is placed for moral support. The image is flanked with bouquets of flowers brought to him by people who admire his courage. The wall against which he leans is decorated with a large banner that cries out for true democracy in the country. A few inches below it is a piece of white cloth with black letters that show the birthday of Chalard. Another similar sign hung next to it has a blank space for the date of his death.

"My soul is still strong. I can fight for a lot longer," Chalard said, his words reinforced by the determined gleam in his eyes, shining through the weariness on his face. His strength is also evident in the confident smiles he gives to supporters who stream in to visit him, one after another.

"I use *ahimsa* (non-violent protest) because I want to create an understanding among the public that I have no hidden intention other than to sacrifice my life for the resurrection of democracy in our country," Chalard said, explaining why he chose to fight this way. "There was not much time. And I think that unless I do it this way it will be very hard to arouse the democratic spirit of the people within a short period of time."

Chalard has long been one of Thailand's outstanding political fighters.

"During all these years, I have tried to fight in many ways, even by becoming a Member of Parliament," he said. Disappointed by the ineffectiveness of the parliamentary system, however, he resigned as an MP in 1987.

This is not the first time he has staged a hunger strike. He did it in 1979 to protest against the increase in the oil price, and again in 1983 against the constitutional amendment to allow government officials to concurrently assume Cabinet posts. Events turned out satisfactorily, and he considered that he was victorious.

His longest fast was nine days. That has already been far surpassed by his present protest effort.

Asked about how he felt after having eaten nothing for several days in a row, he said: "The first four or five days was the most tormenting period; the changes occurred very fast and severely.

At that stage, I felt a lot of pain. My mind was a blur, and I was unable to control myself to communicate clearly. But after a week had passed, things began to be under control. Now I feel no pain, and my mind is even calmer than usual." He said that the weariness was an ordinary matter, since the body has nothing else to feed it but water.

"I know, however, that the longest I can stand this condition is no more than three months," he said, referring to the longest hunger strike he had heard of, staged by a prisoner in Britain.

The boiling weather does not bother him much, he said, since he can cool himself with hand fan and or with a damp towel which he uses to wipe himself when he feels too hot.

"The only worry I have about my health concerns the complications that may happen because I'm losing more and more of my resistance to disease," Chalard said. He has to take care not to get bitten by mosquitoes since even the bites will be slow to heal. He is still able to walk, so when he needs to urinate he goes across to the lavatory of the parliamentary guards.

"A healthy mind is important if you want to stage a non-violent protest," said Chalard, who receives considerable moral support from his constant stream of visitors. His supporters range from the young to the elderly, from farm workers to well-known politicians. Many have come all the way up from the countryside just for a glimpse of him, to touch the hands of their hero and to urge him to continue with his fight.

"But there are also those who try to discourage me," he said. "They come in various ways. Some write letters. Some just come and yell at my face, saying that I'll surely lose in the end and how shameless I am to persist in my protest against the new prime minister. Some say they are fortune-tellers and tell me that my life will become prosperous if I just give up my strike." But none of these efforts, he said, has shaken his determination, not even when an MP of the pro-military bloc sent him a champa coffin.

"I believe that with *ahimsa* we'll succeed in the end. Either this time or in the future," said Chalard, confident that the fight for democracy will go on, even without him.

Ahima, the non-violent form of protest that Chalard is using, is the same technique as the used by Gandhi in the fight for Indian independence. According to Pracha Hutanuwat of the Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute, an organisation working to spread of the idea of peaceful social struggle, the basis of *ahimsa* is to sacrifice onself to alleviate the suffering of others in society.

"It is used usually when the situation turns out to be extremely bad or hopeless," he said.

According to Pracha, there are many factors to take into consideration if one wants to fight this way.

"But two of the most important things are that you should know your opponent as well as yourself and that you should have the will to fight for your principles," he explained. "I think that in this age, our country has few people who will hold fast to their principles in the way that Khun Chalard does. In fact, Thai people in the past did not care much for such people. Acharn Pridi Banomyong did a lot of good deeds for the country, but few of us still remember much about him. Dr. Puay Ungpakorn, as another example, is forgotten even though he is still alive.

"Thailand is now in great need of people like Khun Chalard to be the backbone for our social morality," Pracha said.

Chalard's hunger strike is now in its 16th day. He began it alone, but he is no longer fighting a solitary struggle as he was on that first day. Besides members of the public who arrive in a steady stream to offer him moral support, there are now also some 30 others fasting alongside him.

No one can foretell how much longer he will be able to sustain himself, nor what will happen if the worst comes to the worst: if neither side gives in, and Chalard presses his struggle to its bitter conclusion.

His surviving fellow strikers may disperse, and the heroic deed may soon be forgotten, as has happened in the cases of others who fought for their principles. Or his death may give birth to a great many more "Chalards" to continue the democratic spirit.

We can only wait, and hope.

Ponpet Mekloy
The Bangkok Post
April 22, 1992



TIBET :

US SABOTAGES UN RESOLUTION ON TIBET

Geneva, March 4,1992: Pakistan's procedural motion to refuse action condemning Chinese human rights violations in Tibet and against its own citizens passed today by a 27-15 vote with 10 abstentions and 1 absent. The vote took place near the conclusion of the six-week long annual session of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

Diplomats and human rights activists say the resolution was defeated largely by U.S. opposition to an earlier version of the resolution. The earlier version. entitled the "Situation in Tibet", was sponsored by the European Community and three Latin American countries. Unconfirmed reports suggest the the U.S. worked against the earlier resolution as part of a deal between Secretary of State James Baker and Beijing's rulers. The deal obliged the U.S. to help China avoid condemnation of its human rights policies in order to persuade China to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

A long-time lobbyist at the UN, speaking of the earlier EC sponsored resolution on Tibet, said; "Once it became clear that a resolution on Tibet was likely to succeed, the US openly intervened to defeat it. Everyone was shocked. It was unexpected, especially since the sponsoring countries had gone to great pains to ensure that it only dealt with human rights abuses. The resolution did not address the political question of Tibet's occupation or its right to self-determination. When the US joined China, Iraq, Cuba, Iran and Libya in opposing such a legitimate issue we were perplexed and disgusted."

The U.S. did finally decide to co-sponsor the EC resolution at midnight the day before the vote was scheduled, but only after making small but significant changes to the text (including the change of title from "The Situation in Tibet" to the "Situation in China/Tibet"). The timing of the US action was such that most delegates to the Commission did not have time to receive new voting instructions from their foreign ministries. Even after the changes, the U.S. delegation was reported not to have instructions to lobby for its own revised version of the resolution. The eleventh-hour action by the U.S. seemed primarily designed to thwart Congressional criticism.

One US official, speaking off the record, hinted that the decision to block formal criticism came directly from the President. "If you ask in the US team who our China Desk officer is, they'll tell you it's a certain Mr. Bush", he said.

In a related announcement today Richard Shifter, the top US Government official concerned with human rights, has resigned. Shifther had been a strong supporter of censuring China, and was at odds with the administration over the resolution.

China has never been formally criticized by the UN Commission, even after the Tiananmen massacres of 1989. However, the UN has never expressly recognized China's claim to Tibet. The question of Tibet was on this year's agenda as a result of a resolution passed in August by experts comprising the Commission's Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

John Maier
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF LAWYERS FOR TIBET
Merch 4, 1992

Interview with Sulak Sivaraksa

In January of this year, Sulak Sivaraksa visited Seatle, Washington in the United States and the University of Washington under the sponsorship of Prof. C.F. Keyes. The following are excerpts of an interview with Prof. Keyes' son, Nick Keyes, who lives and works in Bangkok.

NK: Did the events of the past six months come as a surprise to you?

SS: Yes, they did.

NK: How did you eventually leave Thailand?

SS: I went first to Sweden because I did not need a visa to go there. From Sweden I was invited by Amnesty International to England, and then I was invited by the French Comite Catholique contre la Faim et pour la Developpement (CCFD) to Paris. From there I went to the Irish School of Ecumenics in Dublin, Ireland, and then was invited by quite a number of Christian organizations in Germany, in particular the Wolfgang University, where I took part in a seminar on human rights in Frankfurt. Lastly I was also invited to Norway to attend the giving of the Nobel Prize in honor of Aung San Suu Kyi. So I was in Europe for almost two months visiting various countries before going to Honolulu and then, of couse, coming here to Seattle.

NK: When you actually left Thailand, what physical danger did you believe you were in, and why?

SS: As I said earlier on, I was advised it was not wise to submit myself to the authorities because it had been learned through a very reliable source that I would be tortured. I don't think the Commander-in-Chief of the army would want to do that, but perhaps people at the lower levels would have done so. I could not but be mindful of the way in which the leader of the labor movement simply disappeared after submitting himself to the authorities. Many people believe that he died, either of torture or of maltreatment. I did not want to become a martyr or a hero. I did not want to die yet, or to be tortured!

NK: You have been lecturing extensively in Europe since leaving Thailand. Could you tell us what you have been speaking about?

SS: The topics have varied a great deal, depending on who invited me. For instance, in England, I gave one lecture each at three different universities, namely Cambridge, Hull and London. Almost all of them dealt with Buddhism; sometimes they would be on Buddhism and politics, sometimes on Buddhism and the environment, and so on. I spoke on similar topics when I was in France, Sweden, Denmark and Germany; these were the issues that most universities were interested in. Then, of course, I happen to be involved with a lot of Burmese communities, so the Burmese also wanted me to talk on the subject of human rights in Burma, although sometimes, I would also comment on human rights in Siam(or the lack of them).

NK: Concerning your return; when



do you expect to be able to come back to Thailand?

SS: Well,I think when the time is proper I will go back.

NK: Do you believe that pressue on the military to drop their campaign against you will eventually work?

SS: I don't know what will happen. It depends how unyielding people at the top are and on what their role is in the future. If they feel that they are omnipotent, then of course it is difficult for people like me, who are only ordinary mortals, to deal with them. But if they are tolerant, and conclude that they need people like me who are,perhaps, not polite but who speak the truth, and that we can all be friends as members of the same nation, then under such circumstances I could cooperate with them without compromising my principles.

NK: What are your thoughts now, almost one year after the coup? Do you hold out any hope for sustainable democracy in Thailand?

SS: I am fairly optimistic about the future of the country and the continuation of democracy in the country because of personal reasons. When I gave a lecture at Thammasat University [some months ago] there were only about 300 people listening to my talk, and I think half of them were asleep. But less than two months afterwards, when the World Bank met in Bangkok, my talk was quoted in many quarters, and people had become very interested in democrcy. Before the Constitution was passed in December, over 100,000 people agitated against granting power to the NPKC and called for greater democratic rights.

On top of that, at the same time that I was about to be arrested, Phra Prachak was arrested. This was the first time in Siamese history that a monk wearing yellow robes was put in jail. Normally, a monk would be disrobed first. His only crime was that he sought to protect. It is very well known that the powers-that-be are involved in destroying the forests. Now the whole monkhood is awakened to the need to protect the forests and to work with the people.

As you know, when the World Bank met in Bangkok, a lot of NGOs were also meeting there– not only Thai NGOs but NGOs from all over the world–to look at ways to protect the forests and to safeguard democracy. The World Bank even agreed not to support big dam projects in our country. Now, however, it has taken back its promise, thereby angering many people and making it difficult for them to trust big institutions nationally or internationally. However, if we follow the Buddhist way of non-violence, self-reliance,and organizing things and develop awareness of environmental issues, democracy and human rights, these trends all hold out good-hope for the future of democracy in our country.

Even though elections, if they are held in March, may not mean very much, I hope that elected M.P.s will refrain from corruption. Some elected M.P.s in the past have unfortunately sold their souls for power and money. If M.P.s see instead that the young people,students,NGOs and young monks are now united and aware of the grassroots and of the wisdom of the people, then I think there will be a good change for the future of democracy,human rights and the preservation of our environment. Furthermore, if people, particularly those Thai who read English newspapers and who form the middle class, become aware of the need to listen to the suffering poor and not try to imitate the upper class; if they become less interested in money and power and instead try to listen to the grassroots and unite with the grassroots, I think democracy stands a very good chance, and we can anticipate a bright future. It won't be easy, but I think it is possible. Certainly I see no future for some of those at the top who have,unfortunately, in keeping with Lord Acton's dictum that "power tends to corrupt, and abolute power corrupts absolutely", grown increasingly corrupt.

NK: What sort of changes will real democracy require?

SS: You have to respect people at the grassroots level and you have to look into your own history and culture. I think we have made a mistake here. This year is in fact the 60 th anniversary of our own democracy – in other words; it has now gone through five cycles. During these five cycles, first we tried the Whitehall model of democracy–British Parliament style. Then, after the year 2500, we tried the American method. Both have failed us because we have never tried our own method. Our own method involves looking to the Sangha. The Sangha is a model of democracy. You have egalitarianism in the Sangha. Everyone, from rich to poor, or from wherever you come is equal in the Sangha. It is a real fraternity; you become true brothers and sisters in the Sangha. And of course you work for liberation and for liberty. But liberty here, of course, is not Western individualism, but rather liberty from suffering. You work not for yourself but for the poor,

you work to preserve the environment, you respect other people including people with different ideas. Here the Thai have a chance. Moreover when you look at the Sangha, it is not only a Thai model; it is also the Burmese model, the Singhalese model, the Khmer model, the Lao model–the model for the whole of the region. Nor does it mean that you have to be narrowly Buddhist. If you look at the Sangha as a model, you must also at the same time be broadminded and respect our Muslim brothers, our Christian brothers and sisters, even those who do not believe in any religion, including our hilltribes. This is where our indigeneous culture can become a very important element in our democracy. Western democracy has its stengths and weaknesses, but when you import it wholesale, it just doesn't work.

Even an imitation of democracy, however, is better than nothing at all. You start by having a kind of democracy; it may not be excellent, it may not work very well, but at least it safeguards peoples' right to speak, their right to express themselves, and the principle of one man or one woman/one vote. This provides a basis from which to develop our own form of democratic system based on our own culture and history. We have a chance, because people are now/serious about these issues, particularly at the local levels. People in almost every province now have organized to protest the building of dams and to push for the preservation of forests. The monkhood is now awakened, and it is wonderful that young people now respect the monks in a way they never did before, and the right reasons. Ten years ago NGOs, particularly in the North, Northeast and South considered themselves superior to the local villagers, to the local headmen to the local abbots. Today they want to learn from the abbots. I think this is tremendous. NGOs in the Northeast respect the *puta*, respect the trees–I think this is wonderful. A lot of young doctors have formed *chumnum phet chonnababbot* (rural doctors) groups and allow traditional medicine into their hospitals. All these new ways of thinking will grow and produce real diversity, and lead towards true unity and democracy.

Unfortunateluy these things of which I speak would not be understood by the junta or by the elite, some of whom have become so wrapped up in their Ph. D's that they have come to believe the common people are stupid and cannot do anything properly. As long as you have that mentality, you will never have sufficient humility to look at your own shortcomings, but rather will takeyourself too seriously. If instead you take the people seriously, then you will learn from them, and things will change in a very meaningful way along the humorous Siamese lines of "sanug".

NK: You call yourself a social critic. Yet your own critics charge that while you are effective in pointing out Thai society's ills, you are short on realistic solutions or constructive plans of action. How do you respond to this?

SS: Well, I never call myself a social critic. I have been called a social critic–this is one of the labels I have been given–and as such of course I criticize society. But I have other labels–ones which do not come to the attenion of the press. I am also a bookseller; I am also a publisher; I am also a teacher. And in fact I may claim that I have not only criticized my country's social ills but have also been responsible for reconstructing my society in my own small way. I have been involved with youth groups for over 25 years. Even when some of the students have died, wehave formed foundations to keep their names alive, like the Kamol Keemthong Foundation. This Foundation is over 20 years old now. Its aim has been to encourage idealism among youth. Although we may not have achieved great results in two decades, we have achieved something. If people were to study the Kamol Keemthong Foundation seriously, they would find that has been one of my small contributions. I have also been involed with the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation for 24 years. This foundation has certainly done something in the realm of the arts. If I may say so, it has done much more than the government has achieved. Whan the Phya Anuman centenary was celebrated, his work on Thai culture was exhibited throughout Europe, Asia, Australia and the USA without a single penny of Thai government money being spent on this. On the other hand, for Prince Wan's centenary last year, the government held exhibitions and sponsored lectures in only three places in North America and Europe, yet this cost the government 5 million baht. This is a small thing, but my role, although very modest, very small, and although I have not achieved any thing of great distinction or success, has been always to try to work with the monkhood, with the underdogs, with youth, and with NGOs.

NK: The last question is, looking back at your career over the past 20 years, do you think that the focus of social activism in Thailand should be different now than it was in the 1970's? and do you think what is needed of a social

activist is different?

SS: Oh, obviously.. Time changes, and a lot of factors change. Let me speak as a Buddhist... In Buddhism the law of dependent origination shows that things depend on the causes and depend on conditions. In the 1970s,the students felt they had won, that they were victorious against the dictators. I think they were wrong; they got rid of three dictators, but the dictatorship system remains. In the 1970s they burned the books and felt that Buddhism had lasted 2500 years already and had had its chance. Now they take Buddhism seriously, they take Thai culture seriously, and so I think the NGOs and students, if they respect one another and don't try to be leader and followers, and if they unite together and learn from the monkhood, will be very good. The monkhood is very weak, but it is the only institution which represents the poorest of the poor. If the monkhood is aware, and if it wants to preserve the wonderful unique culture which we have accumulated over the last eight to nine hundred years and transform it for the modern world–get the essence of it beyond the unique formality and transform this into something which is non-violent, this will be very beneficial. Here, too, Buddhists in the West could help, because people in the West have also taken Buddhism very seriously. So the future to me is bright, if only people become humble, take their culture seriously, struggle non-violently by building peace within by empowering themselves and the people, and if the middle class would learn from the poorer class and unite against greed,hate and delusion. Greed, of course, comes very clearly in the form of consumerism, and hatred in the form of militarism. Delusion can even appear in the form of education if it renders you a slave by making you want to serve the system rather than freeing yourself.

I think if you grasp that you will have a wonderful opportunity to develop an alternative way of liberation. That way you can find your own form of democracy, which entails respecting other people, the small people, the grassroots people, taking them into your confidence so that they will have a chance to decide the future together with you and not to exploit our neighbors nor exploit the natural environment. I think the Thai have a wonderful chance, and if people at the top would learn to be humble and listen people at the bottom they, too, will survive meaningfully. Otherwise, I am afraid they will have to be in exile much longer than I am.

Thank you very much.

January 28, 1992

A Socially Engaged Holy Life



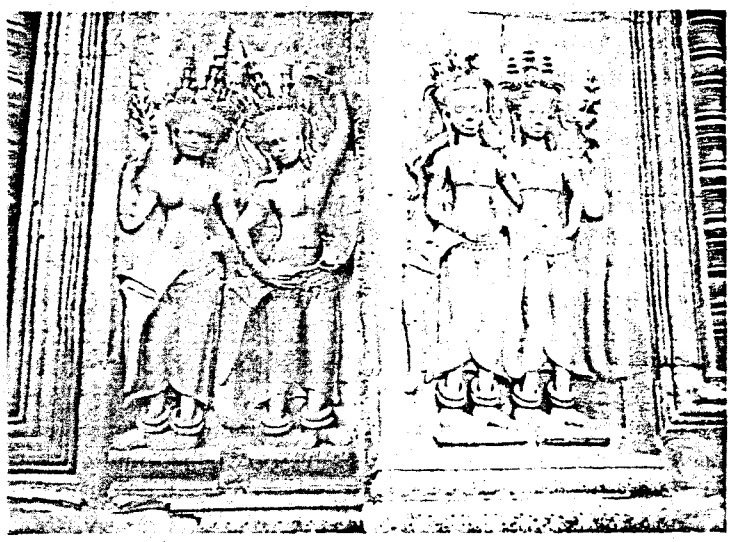
The annual Pacarayasara Keynote Address was given in February of 1991 by the Venerable Piyasalo of the Community of DharmaFarers in Malaysia. In the past, this address has been given by such renowned individuals as Ven.Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa, and Professor Donald Swearer of the United States. Ven.Piyasilo gave the address at Wat Poman in Bangkok to a delegation of members from the International Network of Engaged Buddhists who had collected in Siam for their annual conference. Fittingly, Ven. Piyasilo's talk was titled "Socially Engaged Holy Life" and elucidated the philosophical and practical teachings of the Buddha which are necessary for a life of social service and action.

Ven.Piyasilo presented an initial and very important theme in the need to create a strong internal environment as a foundation for all outer, social endeavors. The person who is socially engaged should be mentally engaged as well. The foundation for a socially engaged Buddhism, therefore, is moral conduct, an ethic which maintains the internal household. In light of this point, Ven. Piyasilo emphasized the danger of those who look for satisfaction in external, material thing

and become products of their socio economic system reduced to the sub-human level of being totally shaped and controlled by external forces.

Ven.Piyasilo's answer to this common condition of modern, urban capitalistic life was the creation of an individual moral foundation beginning with the five precepts. For the lay follower who participates in the daily mundane world, these five precepts are the Buddha's minimum requirement for conduct. Traditionally, they are known in the negative vernacular as not killing, not stealing, not abusing objects of the sensual pleasure, not lying, and not taking intoxicating substances. However, Ven.Piyasilo re-examined these five precepts in a more positive sense which gave a sense of personal empowerment to these moral requisites. Not killing is understood as the motivation towards compassion. Not stealing gives way to a sense of generosity. Not abusing objects of sensual pleasure allows a personal freedom conducive to personal development. Not lying concerns truth which paves the way for communication. Finally, not taking intoxicating substances opens the door for the previous four through health and mindfulness. Ven.Piyasilo emphasized that these five basic precepts of a moral life help form the vital internal environment with which to properly reshape the outer, social environment to be in harmony with the larger, natural environment of Truth known as Dhamma.

Ven.Piyasilo then pointed to early Buddhism as an example of a time when this wholesome mental ecology created a wholesome social ecology. "In simple terms, the early Buddhist monastic community, as presented in the Pali Canon, was democratic in government and socialist in distribution." Ven.Piyasilo,however, also examined how this wholesome internal and external environment deteriorated as the oral tradition of relating the Buddha's teachings died out. The alienation of the student from the teacher in the development of written texts, the commercialism of religion as mass communication has continued to grow, and the "professionalism" of institutionalized Buddhism have all contributed to the deterioration of not only the external ecology of Buddhism but most importantly its internal ecology. In Ven. Piyasilo's view, this deterioration of Buddhism's internal environment has led to a "professional" clergy more concerned with ritual and a kind of pervasive secularism in which many religious groups and individuals are more concerned with their own particular individualism than a wholesome identity which serves the general good.



As Ven.Piyasilo painted an empowering internal ecology for the socially engaged Buddhist through the observation of the five precepts, so he pointed to the five Pillars of Right Livelihood in extending this moral internal foundation to a moral outer manifestation. The ethical aspect of Right Livelihood, to not harm oneself and others, manifests through proper planning and priorities which allows for a minimal wastage of time, energy, and resources. The second principle of generousity, taking only what one needs, is borne out through a vocation which in some way serves a higher purpose, one that helps others develop. The third principle of responsibility, participation and not politics means a self-reliance or respondability in order to serve others. The fourth principle of communication, work as a means of communication, translates into the creation of opportunities to help others in need. Finally, the fifth principle of personal development, work that leads to self-discovery, indicates that a correct choice of vocation with the proper attitude will lead to an enlargement of positive qualities within ourselves. Thus, with this final point Ven.Piyasilo showed how dynamic the Buddhist concept of "socially engaged" can be. A wholesome inner ecology creates the foundation for a progressive outer one which in turn re-nourishes our inner being.

Finally, Ven.Piyasilo com-

pleted his protrait with an elucidation of the social emotions of a "Supreme Life". Lovingkindness, especially towards those who do not deserve it, compassion as empathy, altruistic joy in the success of others, and equanimity are the social emotions which round out the "internal dimensions" of the Holy Life, thus creating the Supreme Life. As the inner and outer life are nourished on the micro level, so the inner and outer life of society will be nourished on the macro level.

As Ven.Piyasilo brought his talk to a close, he left the delegation with a few words of mindfulness with which to help realize these inner and outer ecologies in the pursuit of a socially engaged Holy Life. He reminded the group of the difference in today's world and that of the Buddha, thus emphasizing the need to understand the Buddha's meaning and not merely his words. Through this, he felt, we can be "professional" but be guided by a spiritual commitment and wisdom. Finally, he left us with the admonishment that the true "socially engaged Holy Life" was found in the renouncing of material security for spiritual security. This true spiritual security, like love, is to be realized in the giving of it to others.

JSW

Ajahn Chah 1918-1992

The Venerable Ajahn Chah passed away in Thailand at 5.30 a.m. on Thursday January 16.

He holds a special place in the hearts of western Buddhists.

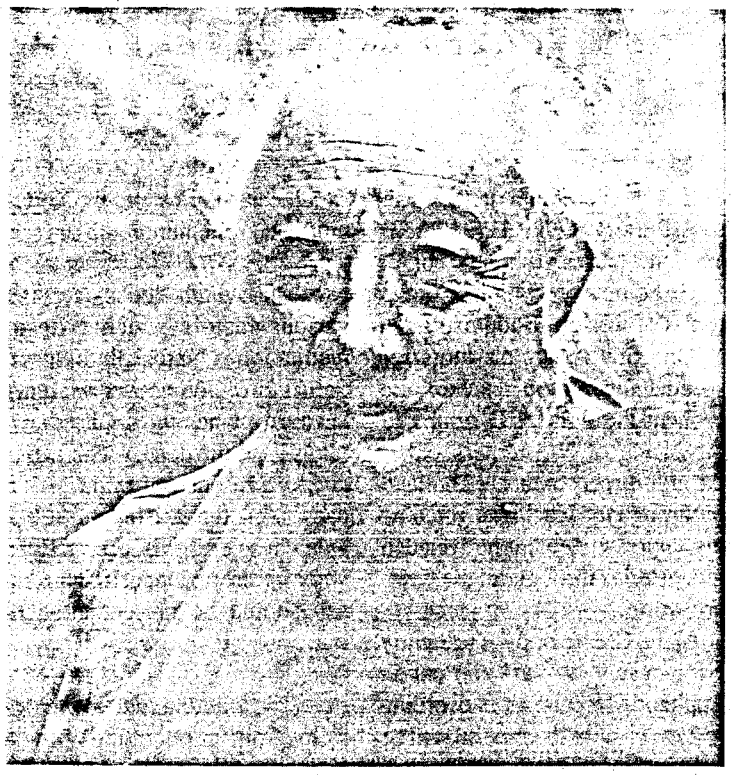
One of the world's most respected meditation teachers, he brought the light of Dhamma to thousands of Westerners either through direct contact in Thailand or through the teachings given by his senior students who founded monasteries throughout the western world.

Ajahn Chah's body is presently lying in state at Wat Pah Pong in Thailand's North-East. According to Thai custom the funeral will be held in 12 months time following ritual ceremonies on the forty-ninth and one hundredth days.

...That which "looks over" the various factors which arise in meditation is "sati", mindfulness. Sati is life. Whenever we don't have sati, when we are heedless, it's as if we are dead... This sati is simply presence of mind. It's a cause for the arising of self - awareness and wisdom ...Even when we are no longer in samadhi, sati should be present throughout...

...The Buddha laid down Morality, Concentration and Wisdom as the Path to peace, the way to





enlightenment. But in truth these things are not the essence of Buddhism. They are merely the Path... The essence of Buddhism is peace, and that peace arises from truly knowing the nature of all things.

...The Buddha was enlightened in the world, he contemplated the world. If he hadn't contemplated the world, if he hadn't seen the world, he couldn't have risen above it. The Buddha's enlightenment was simply enlightenment of this very world. The world was still there: gain and loss, praise and criticism, fame and disrepute, happiness and unhappiness were all still there. If there weren't these things there would be nothing to become enlightened to...

...Regardless of time and place, the whole practice of Dhamma comes to completion at the place where there is nothing. It's the place of surrender, of emptiness, of laying down the burden...

...The worldly way is to do things for a reason, to get some return, but in Buddhism we do things without any gaining idea... If we don't want anything at all, what will we get? We don't get anything! Whatever you get is just a cause for suffering, so we practise not getting anything... Just make the mind peaceful and have done with it!...

...Our discontent is due to wrong view. Because we don't exercise sense restraint we blame our suffering on externals... The right abiding place for monks, the place of coolness, is just Right View itself. We shouldn't look for anything else...

A TASTE OF FREEDOM
The Sangha-Bung Wai Forest Monestery

Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (1910-1991)

His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche passed away in Thimbu, Bhutan, on September 23, 1991, at the age of eighty-one. The reincarnation of Jamyang Khyentse the Great, one of the founders of the Rime, or non-sectarian, movement that arose in nineteenth-century Tibet, Dilgo Khyentse was considered by many to be the last great exemplar of that movement. The lineage holder of the Nyingmapa Shechen Monastery, he was a teacher of many of the leading Sakyapa and Kagyu teachers, including Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, and he held the rank of tutor to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche was also the SURU, or preceptor, of the royal family of Bhutan. In addition, he expounded the Dharma extensively in North America and Europe.

Tricycle: The Buddhist Review,
Winter 1991

The Nature of Mind

Like waves, all the activities of this life have rolled endless on, yet they have left us empty handed. Myriads of thoughts have run through our minds, but all they have done is increase our confusion and dissatisfaction.

Normally we operate under the deluded assumption that everything has some sort of true, substantial reality. But when we look more carefully, we find that the phenomenal world is like a rainbow-vivid and colorful, but without any tangible existence.

When a rainbow appears we see many beautiful colors-yet a rainbow is not something we can clothe ourselves with, or wear as

an ornament; it simply appears through the conjunction of various conditons. Thoughts arise in the mind in just the same way. They have no tangible reality or intrinsic existence at all. There is therefore no logical reason why thoughts should have so much power over us, nor any reason why we should be enslaved by them.

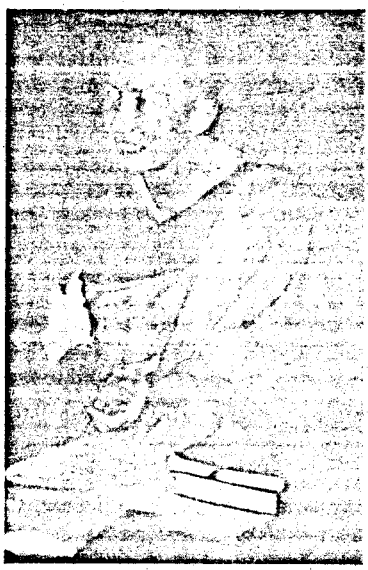
Mind creates both samsara and nirvana. Yet there is nothing much to it-it is just thoughts. Once we recognize that thoughts are empty, the mind will no longer have the power to deceive us. But as long as we take our deluded thoughts as real, they will continue to torment us mercilessly, as they have been doing throughout countless past lives. To gain control over the mind, we need to be vigilant, constantly examining all our thoughts, words, and actions.

To cut through the mind's clinging, it is important to understand that all appearances are void, like the appearance of water in a mirage. Beautiful forms are of no benefit to the mind, nor can ugly forms harm it in any way, sever the ties of hope and fear, attraction and repulsion, and remain in equanimity in the understanding that all phenomena are nothing more than projections of your own mind.

To realize that appearance and voidness are one is what is called simplicity, or freedom from conceptual limitations.

Adapted from "Mind" and "Practice" by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Editions Padmakara: St. Léon sur Vézere, France, 1990.

SAKYADHITA : DAUGHTERS OF THE BUDDHA



Edited by Karma Lekshe Tsomo, Snow Lion Publications, New York, 1988

The International Conference on Buddhist Nuns, held in Bodhgaya, India, in 1987, was the first worldwide gathering of Buddhist woman in the history of the world. This book, a collection of the talks presented at the conference, tells of the lives and aspirations of Buddhist nuns and laywomen from around the world. Edited by an America nun of the Tibetan tradition, it deals with the potentialities of women in Buddhism, the difficulties they face, and their hopes for establishing the Bhikkhuni order in countries where it does not exist.

Although the Buddha originally taught the path to liberation for all beings without discrimination and emphasized the importance of the four classes within Buddhist society–almsmen, almswomen, laymen, laywomen –patriarchal traditions have prevented women from fulfilling their allotted role. Today in Thailand, for example, more than ten thousand women renunciates are accepted neither as nuns (for discounts on transportation) nor as laywomen (for voting privileges). They are left without recognition from society and with out sufficient facilities for livelihood and practice.

Fortunately, in other parts of the world, such as Korea and Taiwan, the situation for women in Buddhism is substantially better. In these countries, women are given full support and have access to equal facilities and to full ordination. Consequently, inthese countries nuns are fulfilling an important role in the propagation of the Buddist teachings and in social development. The benefits for society are obvious.

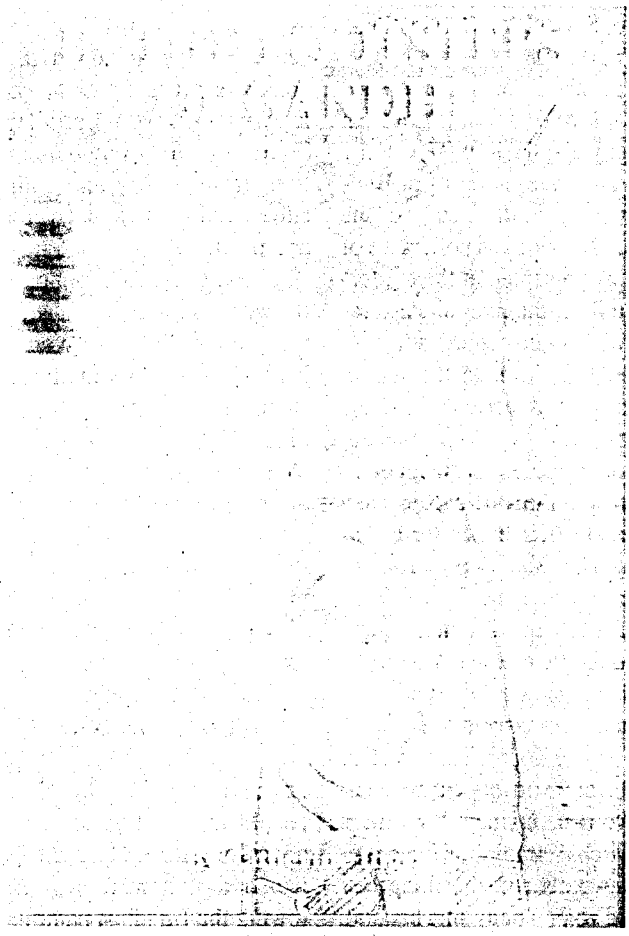
For Buddhism to be an important force for the betterment of humanity, it must extend equal concern for all the world's people,male and female alike. This book fully documents the problems and potential for women following the Buddhist path.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF GANDHI

Catherine Ingram, Parallax Press Berkeley, CA, 1990,pp. 284, US$15.00

Catherine Ingram, journalist and co-founder of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre in the USA, spent the greater parts of 1988 and 1989 travelling the world interviewing an impressive group of social activists: the Dalai Lama, Mubarak Awad, Joan Baez, Thich Nhat Hanh, Cesar Chavez, A.T. Ariyaratne, Joanna Macy, Ram Dass, Desmond Tutu, Gary Snyder, David Steindl-Rast, and Diane Nash. These activists share in common a deep spirituality which has distinguished their contributions to society. The fruits of Ms. Ingram's efforts can be seen in *In the Footsteps of Gandhi*, a compelling series of insights shared with these activists.

The collection offers an excellent balance of content for readers from any field. For fellow social activists, the interviews very much give guidelines and insights in to social action steeped in non-violence and loving kindness. For the average reader curious to understand more about these various personalities, the interviews render a view into each individual with simple and beautiful bits on living one's daily life. In the end, I felt I had gained a refreshing perspective on our world's present social ills while at the same time feeling lightened and empowered by the simplicity and optimism of the casts' insights.



In terms of social activism, I fould one of the most salient points to be a stress on the individual and making initial steps on the simple level. Amidst his extolling of how the world is becoming more and more a single global until, the Dalai Lama always comes back to the development of individual compassion and responsibility towards others as the crux for bringing the world together in a common humanity. "Without inner peace, it is not possible to have world peace." Mubarak Awad of the Palestinian Center for the Study of Non-Violence reiterates such an emphassis on working from the individual to the group to the world. "I think the most important thing in my early life had been not so much to look toward the world, but to look toward the individual, to look at the family-my brothers and sisters and my mother."

Through Mubarak Awad, we can not only see another tool for compassionate activism but also another common link among spiritual communities. Receiving a large influence from the Christain Quakers and Mennonites, Mubarak Awad speaks of the importance of forgiveness in continuing his work for reconciliation. "What affects me most as a Christian is the idea of forgiveness and the idea to help others. The thing that I learned about spirituality is that there is a part of God in everyone. There is no bad individual; there is no bad boy or bad girl, it is their actions that may be bad." From this Christian background, we can see how Awad has distilled an essential point of constructive engagement which Gandhi himself emphasized strongly. It is, therefore, not so surprising to see this con-

cept of forgiveness and its ramifications employed elsewhere. As an America born naturalist and Zen Buddhist practitioner, Gary Snyder also highlights this quality of forgiveness. "Practice to me has been liberating in the direction of understanding complexity and tolerance.. As you grew older, you understand how dificult it is for everybody to be pure, or for anybody to be pure. And you also realize the truth of things lies in the appreciation of complexity and of paradox... and in a whole lot of forgiveness." Through what he has been able to develop in his daily practice and through the direct influence of Gandhi which he acknowledges, Snyder has come to see the importance of forgiveness in encountering his fellow human beings.

This interweaving of common, fundamental understandings from diverse sources constitutes a great strength of these interviews, especially for the activist. Such convergence from these individuals with a variety of personalities, histories, and backgrounds makes the insights that much more powerful. In the search for a world which can live with itself and peoples who can live with each other, many have begun the effort to distill such common, fundamental understandings from the world's spiritual traditions, to try to unite people in peace by distilling a common ground from the moral and religious codes which people have used for thousands of the years to kill one another in the name of the Truth. Although *In the Footsteps of Gandhi* is by no means an attempt at such a grand task, the reader may still see how the world's faiths, including atheism, can point to such a common understanding and may make the first step of developing tolerance and respect for those from opposing faiths.

I believe this is the greatest social contribution of *In the Footsteps of Gandhi* for those trying to make a peaceful difference in the world. In keeping with the original thought of concentrating on making better our own small world first, however, *In the Footsteps of Gandhi* offers an equally important and enjoyable viewpoint on living daily life, a wealth of small maxims to live by:" My true religion is kindness" - The Dalai Lama; "Don't just do something, sit there"-Thich Nhat Hanh; "Reactivity is short sighted; quietness the master of the deed"-Ram Dass; "Freedom is people realizing that they are their own leaders"- Diane Nash; "When life was full there was no history"-Chuang-Tzu via Gary Snyder, and finally;" There is enough for every body's need but not enough for everybody's greed'-Gandhi via Ram Dass.

On this final level, *In the Footsteps of Gandhi* presents a beautiful balance between the simple and the complex and between the individual and the global, thus making Truth accessible and appropriate for all of us.

JSW

TURNING DREAMS INTO REALITY

FREEDOM FROM FEAR *AND* OTHER WRITINGS

Aung San Suu Kyi, Penguin Books, New York NY, 1991, PP. 338, US$ 12.00

Shortly before Aung San Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest by the Burmese junta, she told a western reporter,"Martin Luther King said to the people 'I have a dream'. Well, it's the same with us. We just want to bring our dreams to reality."

For just under a year , from her first public address to a crowd of several hundred thousand people outside Shwedagon Pagoda on August 26th,1988, until her house arrest on July 20th, 1989 Aung San Suu Kyi breathed life into the hopes and dreams of the Burmese people.

Travelling the length and breadth of Burma and giving hundreds of speeches emphasising unity, democracy, human rights and non-violence, she and millions of Burmese people defied the military ban on public meetings. In doing so, and by focussing on the need to do that which is right regardless of the consequences, the Burmese people were able to liberate themselves from the crushing psychological effects of life under the totalitarian rule of General Ne Win.

Although the State Law and Order Restoration Committee (SLORC), the latest version of the military oligarchy that has ruled over Burma for the past thirty years has actually increased the level of state repession, people all over the country are now aware that the future ultimately lies in their hands and in their ability to overcome fear. Indeed, the SLORC's purpose in completely denying the basic freedoms taken for granted by most people in the world is an admission that despite three decades of military propoganda, state controlled press



and a policy of isolationism all designed to pacify the population, the SLORC cannot control the Burmese people except through brute force.

Freedom From Fear and Other Writings, a collection of writings by Aung San Suu Kyi edited by her husband Michael Aris, provide a range of insights into the many influences that have led this extraodinary person to sacrifice her liberty for her country. The book is divided into three sections: 'The Inheritance", "The Struggle" and "Appreciations". 'The Inheritance" comprises chapters about Aung San, Burma, intellectual life in Burma and India under British colonialism and literature and nationalism in Burma.

The first chapter details the life of Aung San, Aung San Suu Kyi's father and the father of independent Burma. He is perhaps the only other person in modern Burmese history who was able to unite the vast majority of the Burmese people against a common enemy, the British colonial administration. The account of Aung San's life helps to explain his influence on Aung San Suu Kyi and also the way in which the Burmese people embraced her on her return to Burma in 1988.

The second chapter gives some insight into the love that Aung San Suu Kyi has for the culture and country of her birth. The following two chapters analyse the indigenous literature and intellectual life of Burma during the colonial period and the role they played in the struggle for independence. Despite having lived abroad since 1961 and having married an Englishman, one of the reasons she was universally accepted by the people was because of this great knowledge and love for Burma.

"The Struggle" comprises 17 chapters including essays, speeches, campaign letters and interviews with journalists. Aung San Suu Kyi's three essays on democracy and human rights are the heart of the book and give the reader an insight into her commitent to struggle for democracy following the Buddhist and Ghandian philosophies of non-violence.

"In Quest of Democracy" uses three Pali titles to describe the Buddhist view of an ideal leader; Mahasammata, "because s/he is named ruler by the unanimous consent of the people", Khattiya, "because s/he has dominion over agricultural land" , and Raja, "because s/he wins the people to affection through observance of the Dhamma'. She then describes the ten duties of kings : liberality, morality, generosity and self sacrifice, integrity, kindness, austerity, non-anger, non-violence, forbearence and non-opposition to the will of the people. Such a view of leadership must be threatening to the SLORC whose official term for law and order, nyein-wut-pi-pyer, literally means "quiet-crouched-crushed-flattened".

Freedom from Fear gives the reader some understanding of the basis behind Aung San Suu Kyi's extraordinary courage. She describes the four types of corruption : corruption due to desire, corruption due to hatred, corruption due to ignorance and corruption due to fear. She develops the argument that fear is the greatest

cause of corruption and the main reason that the oppressive regime has been able to remain in power in Burma for solong. She calls for a revolution of the spirit that reminds us of her famous statement, "Fear is a habit I am not afraid".

"The Struggle's" remaining chapters lead the reader to a greater understanding of the frenetic activity of Aung San Suu Kyi's year of public life and of her deep feeling for the need for unity. A speech given in Kachin State titled "The Need for Solidarity among Ethnic Groups" emphasises national unity and encourages the listeners to raise their children to see the similarities between people not the differences.

"Appreciations" comprises four chapters written by guest contributors, two of which describe Aung San Suu Kyi's life before her return to Burma in 1988, and two detailing that momentous year and the prospects for peace under her leadership.

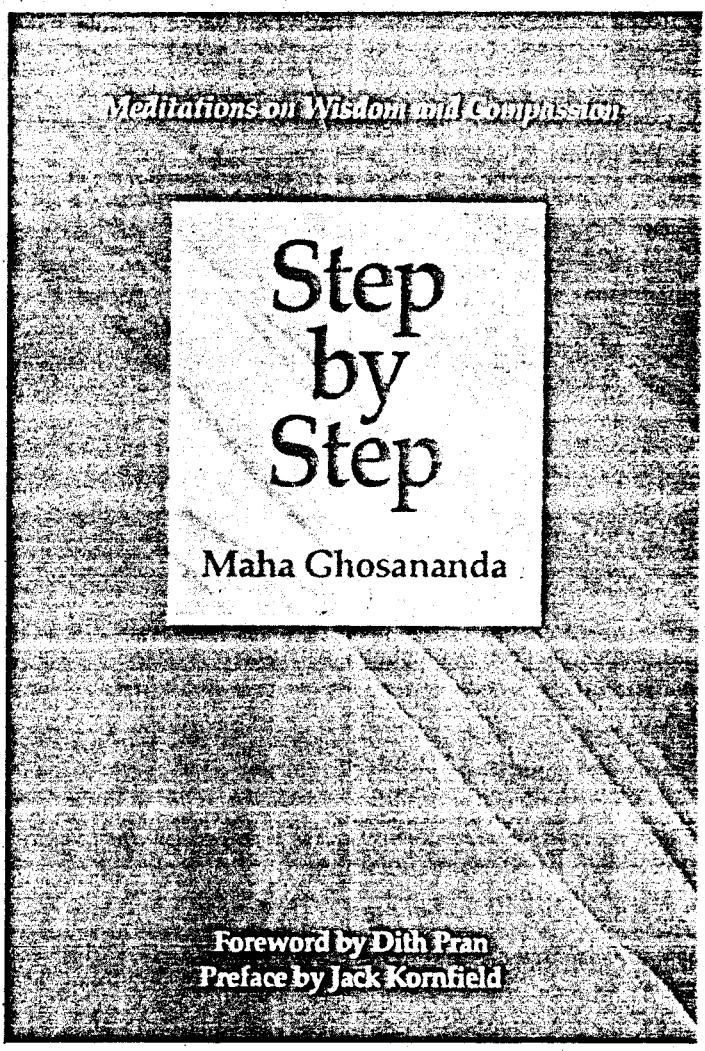
Without the guns, the torture, the executions and dissappearences, and without the civil war the SLORC has no means of control. Aung San Suu Kyi, in just 11 months of public life, transplanted in the hearts of Burmese people something of her philosophy of non-violence, self discipline and respect for the rights of others. Ne Win's pre-occupation with Burman nationalism and control through state violence and division no longer have any support outside the military elite. When the SLORC finally surrenders power to the legimitate representatives of the people, and Aung San Suu Kyi is once again free, it is possible that the Burmese people's dream of a nation where basic human rights are guaranted and the rule of law is followed may come true.

Chris McMahon

STEP BY STEP

Maha Ghosananda
Parallax Press, Berkeley, CA, 1991, pp. 120, US$ 10.00.

The journey towards peace and reconciliation in the aftermath of 20 years of war in Cambodia will be walked slowly, step by step. One of Cambodia's most respected monks and peacemakers, Venerable Maha Ghosananda, has written a book entitled ***Step by Step,*** a collection of meditations, stories and short discourses on peace-making, nonviolence, building reconciliation and the Cambodian people. Maha Ghosananda trained in Gandhian nonviolence and conflict resolution as well as his advanced Buddhist and language studies (he speaks 15 languages) and trained with several of Buddhism's greatest teachers and meditation masters throughout Asia. He has worked ceaselessly to keep Cambodian Buddhism alive, training monks and nuns, preserving cultural traditions, and building temples. He works to heal his country and to reconcile all Cambodians. He is a bridge builder. In spite of the intense and prolonged suffering that he works to heal, Maha Ghosananda exudes compassion, serenity and joy. His face and bubbling laughter shine with light



and love.

Maha Ghosananda says that, "Buddhists must find the courage to leave the temples and enter the temples of human experience, temples that are filled with suffering . If we listen to the Buddha, Christ or Gandhi, we can do nothing else. The refugee camps, the prisons, the ghettos, the battlefields will then become our temples. We have so much work to do."

Now with the signing of the UN Peace Plan for Cambodia, there is hope for peace. But the peace on paper is fragile. Maha Ghosananda plans to lead a dhamma walk or "Dhammayatra" for peace and reconciliation in Cambodia in April 1992. The goal is to foster reconciliation and unity among all Cambodians and to awaken the nonviolent nature of the Cambodian people. The process must begin with reconciliation. "Reconciliation does not mean that we surrender rights and conditions, but rather that we use lovein all of our negootiations. It means that we see ourselves in the opponent-for what is the opponent but abeing in ignorance, and we are also ignorant of many things. Therefore only loving kindness and rightmindfulness can free us."

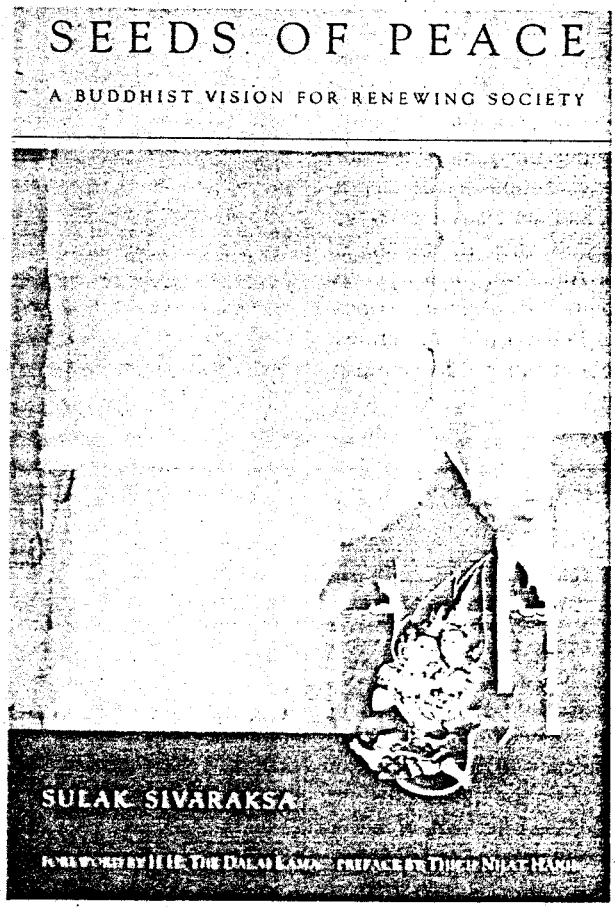
As someone who has worked in the Cambodian refugee camps for 8 years and witnessed great suffering, Maha Ghosananda'swork and words are an inspiration. His book is filled withwisdom and deep compassion. "Slowly, slowly, step by step, each step is a prayer. Each step is a meditation. Each step will build a bridge."

Corinne Bowmaker

SEEDS OF PEACE : A BUDDHIST VISION FOR RENEWING SOCIETY, Sulak Sivaraksa, Parallax Press, Berkeley, CA 1992pp.129

Once again that irrepressible gadfly, Sulak Sivaraksa, zeroes in on the body politic with his renowned biting critiques and stinging admonitions. In Sulak's latest English language book, *Seeds of Peace*,the censorious author does not disappoint readers familiar with his rapier like thrusts against the establishment. However, those looking for the author's familiar caustic and acerbic diatribe against his bête noire, the Thai military, will have to be content with the appendices: "Repression of Democracy in Siam" and "Why I Chose to Resist the NPKC." This timeSulak's field of battle is on a large scale as he sows his seeds of peace in the barren soil of worldwide consumerism, materialism, greed, hatred and delusion.

In the first section of the book, "The Politics of Greed", the author castigates the world's fascination with the dominant development paradigm of economic growth and the attendant emphasis on the individual accumulation of wealth. He deplores the loss of the traditional time honored Asian values of communal sharing and social harmony, of gratitude and respect towards nature, of self-sufficiency and frugality. He forcefully argues for recogni-



tion of the need for spiritual as well as material sustenance. He rails against the materialistic, economic growth of a "Think Big Strategy" of development which has increased the distribution of wealth gap, polarized society into the elite haves and non-elite have-nots, benefited multi-national corporations and left the disadvantaged Third World at the mercy of international financial institutions, resulted in the exploitation of natural resources and coursed environmental degradation, and led to the social ills of indebtedness, prostitutuion and drugs. Sulak offers alternatives steeped on the Buddhist values of compassion, tolerance, social justice, harmony with nature, self-control, and tranquility of spirit. Sulak cries out for a change of values; of direction; of focus. He finds hope in appropriate technology, alternative tourism, integrated farming, and community focused development, all of which place heavy reliance on local knowledge, customs and traditions. Sulak describes some examples of Buddhist inspired development programs emphasizing spiritual as well as material development in Thailand and Sri Lanka. In another chapter in the first section of his book, Sulak takes Japan to task as too wedded to a model of development dependent on Western economic theory and too consumed with Japan's own narrow economic self-interest. A theme running through the entire first section of ***Seeds of Peace*** is the replacement of former colonial forms of domination with new patterns of domination including that of internal colonialism as unjust ruling elites subjugate and take advantage of their rural masses.

In part two of this book, "Religion and Social Change", the author focuses on how religion can contribute to social change. Sulak calls upon religions to take up their prophetic, as well as priestly role, and seek to reform society so as to assure peace and justice. However, the author warns against both the bigotry of religious ideologies and the bandishments of secular intellectuals. The radical transformation of society requires personal and spiritual transformation. There must be growing mindfulness and awareness in the true Buddhist sense with cultivation of the inner-self. This can best be done through meditation. Only then can one turn towards creating a more serene, peaceful and just society. Sulak persuasively argues in this section for interpreting Buddhism as not only a religion of personal salvation but of socially engaged involvement with an abiding concern for the social, economic and political dimensions of life. Sulak clearly shares the view of the Buddhist scholar, Trevor Ling, who has noted that Buddhism can be regarded as a prescription for both restructuring human consciousnes and restructuring society. Sulak would not be the social reformer and critic we know if he did not rebuke the established Buddhist Church hierarchy for its legitimization of dictatorial regimes and the status quo with its existing patterns of social and economic injustice and inequality. For Sulak, one must return to the roots of Buddhist thought and doctrine. In a most enlightening chapter, the author analyzes the five moral precepts of Buddhism and indicates how these injunctions can be most meaningfully applied to the structuring of our dialy behavior and attitudes in this chaotic world of ours. Another interesting chapter deals with the Buddhist value of non-violence and Buddhist patterns of conflict resolution. In his discussion on women and Buddhism, the author opts for an interpretation of Buddhism which gives equality to women in reaching enlightenment, and he writes favorably of the yet to be reconized bhikkhuni movement in Thailand and the social involvement of Thai 'ordained' upasikas.

In the last chapter of the book, the author outlines a Buddhist model of society which requires a complete reformation of existing unjust structures: social, economic, political and religious. Those in positions of power must be guided by Dharma for if our rulers are just, society will prosper. Righteousness and ethics are essential elements of the Buddhist ideal society. Sulak urges citizens to recognize and reject unjust actions of their leaders and governments. At the world level, Sulak exhorts one and all to help create and sustain responsive and responsible international organizations. Sulak offers specific proposals which would lead to a peaceful transnational order. Among his recommendations are ones for institutes capable of taxing and regulation transnational corporations, international unions representing workers dealing with global capitalists, a new generation of institutions to consolidate the power of the South in its dialogue and negotiations with the North, arms control, security maintenance, and a global disarmament administration, institutions designed not to represent nation-states but human beings, e.g. United Nations as a world parliament elected directly by a world citizenry, a strengthened international judiciary, a strengthened international peacekeeping force, and a universal Bill of Rights. Taking a page from his "International Network of Engaged Buddhists," Sulak envis-

ages an ideal Buddhist world held together by a network of friends, peaceful and loving.

Sulak has been critized by some for his utopian solutions, for his polemics and exaggerations, for his somewhat native and simplistic views. But, as seers of old, he has a vision, as Martin Luther King did, he has a dream. He knows he is fighting against the odds as the swift currents of consumerism, materialism, competitiveness, self-interest and greed sweep onwards. Although his alternative visions have little chance of taking hold in the foreseeable future, he is convinced that sowing seeds of peace now will ultimately make a difference. Even now there are glimmers of an ideal society, however experimental, ad hoc, and village specific they may be : Thich Nhat Hanh's Plum Village, a series of northeast Thailand villages under the guidance of socially engaged "development monks" who have encouraged the establishment of rice and buffalo banks, integrated farming, child care centers, and gambling, alcohol anld drug free communities, Sri Lankan reconstructed villages following Buddhist guidelines developed by the Sarvodaya Movement.

Seeds of Peace, published in the United States by Parallax Press and in Thailand by the International Network of Engnged Buddhisd and the Sathirakoses-Nagrapradipa Founation, is beautifully produced. Tom Ginsburg has done an exemplary job as editor. Sulak's English prose style, while lacking the linguistic panache of his Thai writing, is both clear, concise and fluent. The book is graced by Thich Nhat Hanh's preface and a forward by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Their words of wisdom provide an appropriate context for Sulak's detailed reflections.

One can only regret that Sulak has felt it necessary and politically prudent to spend so much time abroad in the last decade and a half. He, like bibical prophets of old, seems to be more honored abroad than at home. He has found both solace and fame not so much under the tiled roofs of his Siamese homeland but within the ivy covered courtyards of academe in Germany, Great Britain, Canada and the United States. Inevitably, he has had to forego a continuing detailed knowledge of and contact and involvement with a variety of organizations working towards similar goals. During this period, new prophets, new gadflys on the body politic, new establishment critics have emerged , all with their own unique brands of charisma and their own disciples, followers, networks. Sometimes, one receives the impression, Sulak has to shout louder and in bolder rhetoric to be heard. His intellectual peers and the general public have seemingly turned their ears, and perhaps their hearts, elsewhere. However, the memory of his lonely struggle and heroic jousting with the windmills of establishment authority in the sixties and early seventies can not be easily dismissed or forgotten. However fickle or jaded the public may be,Sulak, himself, has remained true to his principles and consistent in his beliefs. His many friends and admirers would no doubt prefer him to be more moderate, more subdued, more circumspect; to engaged in strategic withdrawals so as to fight another day. Alas, such characteristics, tactics and strategy are not consistent with either Sulak's style or persona. Thus, for the moment, at least in Thailand, Sulak's message, so eloquently articulated in *Seeds of Peace,* will have to be enjoyed, savored and meditated upon without the author's electric presence.

William J. Klausner
Chulalongkorn University
March 11, 1992

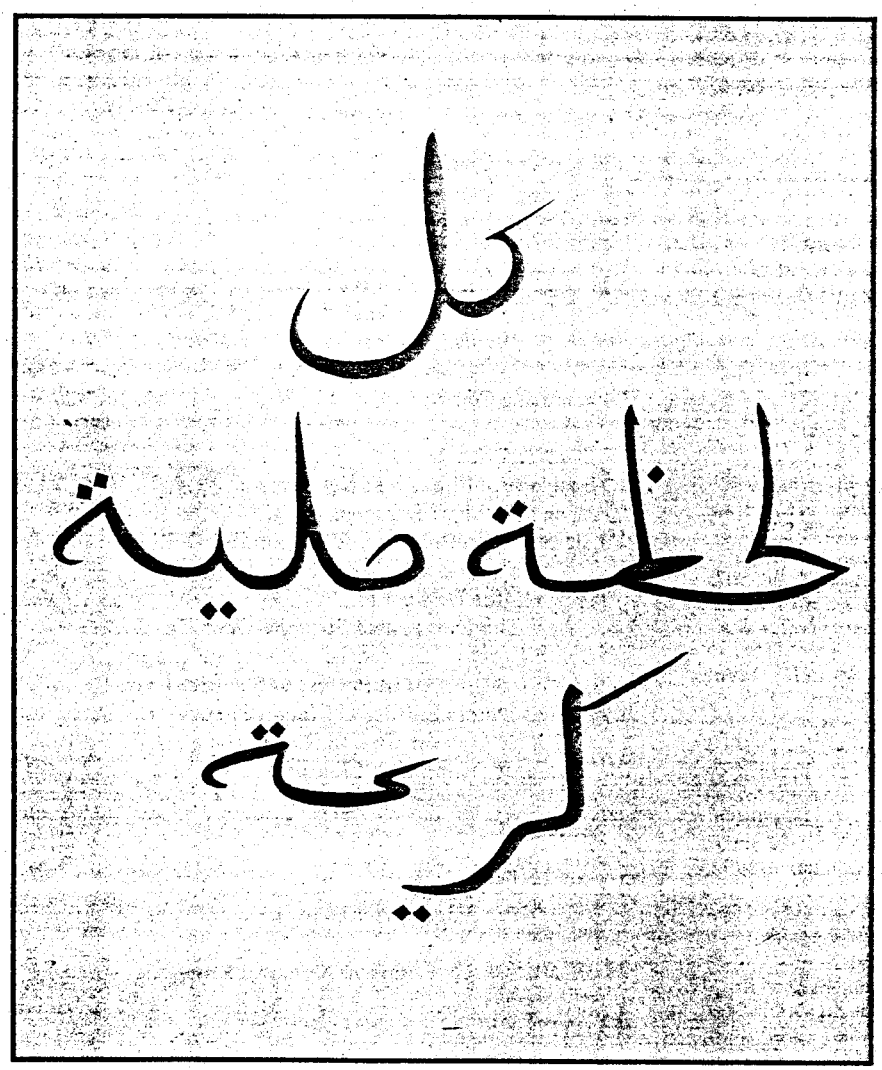
The Thai Resource Center
Thai Network
Council on Thai Studies(COTS)
Synapses
Institute of Asian Democracy
and
Wat Buddhadharma
Invite you to commemorate
"60 Years of Suan Mokh
(Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's 'Garden of Liberation')
and
the Quest for Thai Democracy"
May 30-31, 1992
to be held at
Wat Buddhadharma
8910 S.Kingery Highway
Hinsdale
for further information contact:
Anan Sirisombatwattana(312) 938-6127
Phra Sunthorn, Wat Buddhadharma(708) 789-8866
Grant Olson(815) 753-1981
or Lin Compton in Madison, WI (608) 262-0123

Please set aside these dates on your calendar to join us for a conference and workshop commemorating these two anniversaries. Venerable Pannananda Bhikkhu and noted social critic Sulak Sivaraksa will be joining us for this event and we will soon announe a list of other speakers. Thai food and Thai cultural presentations are also being planned. You will soon be receiving more information as to speakers, scheduling, registration fees, and accommodations motels near Buddhadharma Temple in the western suburbs of Chicago.

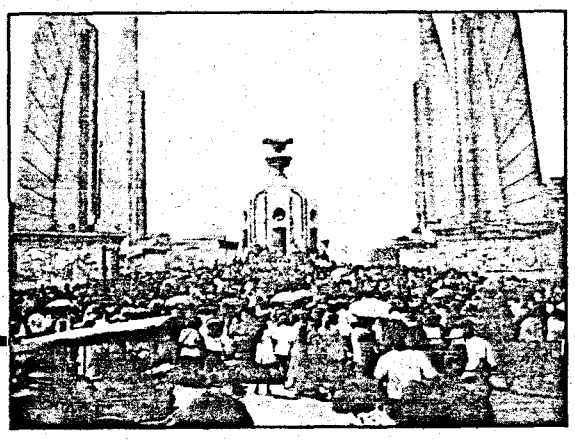
Please join us and contribute to a lively exchange of ideas!

SEEDS OF PEACE

Vol.8 No.3 Sep.-Dec. 2535 (1992)



"EVERY MOMENT IS A PRECIOUS JEWEL"



SEEDS O

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DEACE

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bjectives of TICD

1. To coordinate work
mong individuals, groups of indi-
iduals and various agencies deal-
ng with religions and development
n the course of working together.

2. To share experience in
nd knowledge of religions and
levelopment as well as exploring
ays and means of working to-
gether.

3. To offer training and se-
ure resources in terms of man-
power and materials to support and
nhance the agencies that need help.

The goals of INEB are to :

1. Promote understanding and co-operation among Buddhist countries, different Buddhist sects, and socially conscious Buddhist groups.

2. Facilitate and carry out solutions to the many problems facing our communities, societies, and world.

3. Articulate the perspective of Engaged Buddhism regarding these problems and train Buddhist activists accordingly.

4. Serve as a clearing house of information on existing Engaged Buddhist groups.

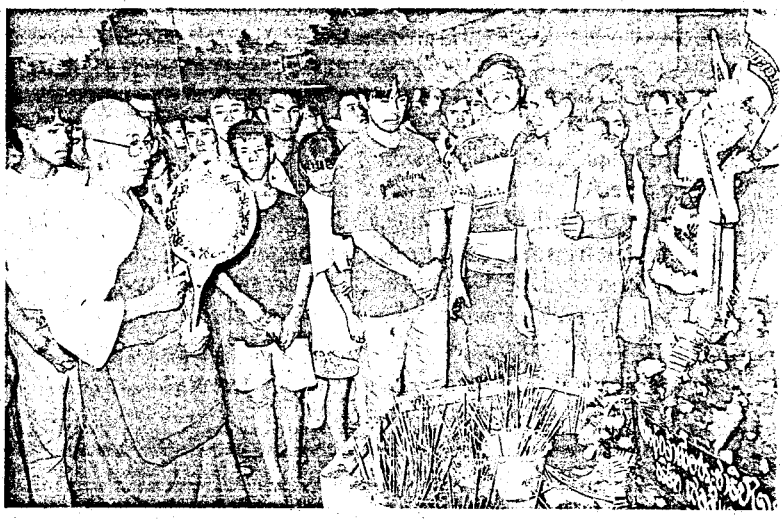
5. Cooperate with activists from other spiritual traditions. ■

MAY 17-20, 1992 : BANGKOK, THAILAND

Visakha, the 16th of May...
The Dhamma which filled the hearts of Thais the world over
Was gone by the 18th.

Why did such a terrible plague rise up and kill?
Is this not Thai soil, a Buddhist Land?

The blood of the pure has flooded the streets.
But history persistently proves that
Those who love the Dhamma
Will never lower their heads in submission.
-- An anonymous poem on a wall



We beg the media
To shed light on the truth!!
Don't bother to ask the government
How many are dead and injured.
They love to lie.

EDITOR'S NOTE

When we last left you, elections were just finishing up here in Siam and a long hot season lay ahead. At that time we snuck in an article at the last second on Khun Chalard Vorachat, a former MP who had begun a solitary hunger fast in protest of the newly appointed Prime Minister, former Gen. Suchinda Kraprayoon. Who could know at that point what was to come? The surrealism of the past months only really hit me upon my return to Thailand after a vacation visit to Japan and the United States. As an American, the concurrence of hot season and political violence was not something new to me. But the level of heat and violence here in Siam was new. At Suan Mokkh, I came across the expression of the unfetterred, calm mind as "cool" and that being in states of greed, anger and delusion is considered "hot". So it was for the months of April, May and June. And so as one tries to make sense of one's mood and actions after eruptions in a fit of anger, the nation of Siam is trying to make sense of the hot emotions and destruction of this past hot season.

In our section on Siam in "Country Reports", we have included an analysis of the situation which does not focus on the events of May 17-20 with which most of us are familiar. Instead, "When Politics and Economics Collide" focuses on the lesser undertood larger picture of events which created these fateful days and what the ultimate lessons may be. Additionally, we offer a follow up on the battle begun by Khun Chalard, one of the true heroes and galvanizers of the change which has occured here over the last months.

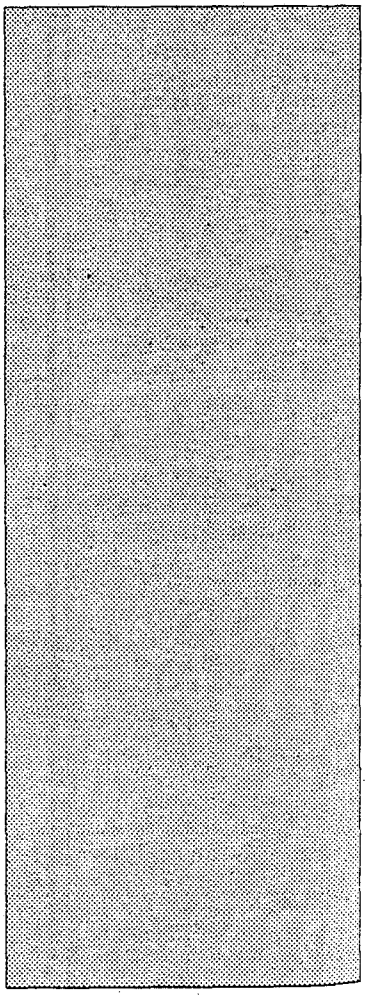
Quite ironically, the "Our Activities" section features the healing of wounds in Cambodia and the cleansing of spirits during last April and May's Dhamma Yatra across Cambodia, no small feat in the literal and figurative scorched earth of Cambodia in this past hot season.

Besides the remainder of the articles we invite our readers to peruse, I would like to call attention to two. In our "Articles" Section, Venetia Walkey a sculptress/activist from England and Lamphun, Siam offers a very compelling essay on the liberation of our beings through the liberation of our genders. Her essay is featured from a collection of essays that a group of INEB members have begun to write on the very large topic of "Buddhism and Social Analysis". This group was formed at the last INEB conference in February of this year as an attempt by Buddhist activists to develop an enlightened dialogue on the issues of social change and how Buddhism as a philosophy and way of life can contribute to the systemic liberation of all beings. I invite all interested parties of any sect or religion to join our dialogue by submitting an initial essay to the INEB Secretariat in Bangkok.

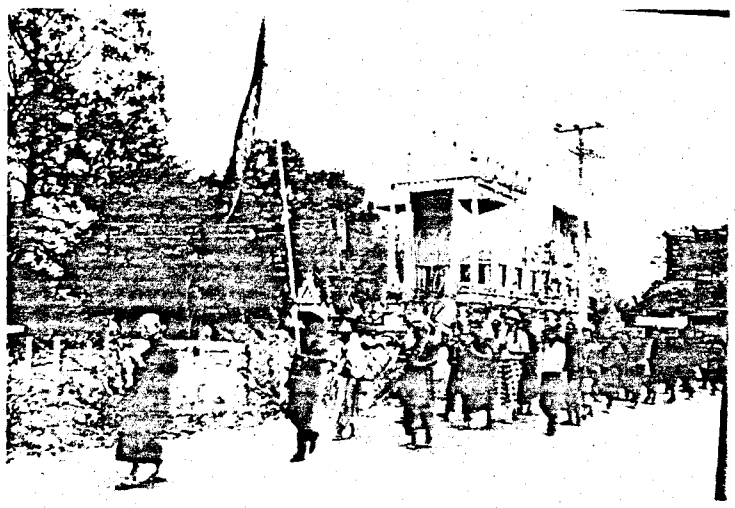
Secondly, I would like to call the reader's attention to the INEB Information Center under our "Announcements" section. Once again, at our last conference there were many calls for INEB to begin to fulfill one of its basic goals as an information collector and disseminator. Consequently, we have been able to find an able body to tackle this large project. Ken MacLean, who also joins our editorial staff, will begin the work of building this center. However, in order for this center to be built, INEB truly needs the support of its members who have called for its institution and of other interested and concerned individuals and groups. I encourage everyone, then, to look over the short summary of the center contained herewith, contemplate the relevance of such a center and what support can be offered to realize its full formation.

As I type away here amidst the downpour of the long awaited monsoon, I offer a prayer to all those who have sacrificed their lives for the greater good over the past months and I offer a moment of silence to gather energy for the ongoing struggle. For now, the rain and the healing have begun here. May all beings be "cool".

JSW



Washing Away the Blood



An old woman cries in relief and gratitude, and a child squeals in delight as we throw a pan of murky water over a family crouched on the side of the road. "Songkriem jop howie" we say as we cast the water: "The war is over".

This family is one of thousands who have lined the road to see the largest group of people to traverse Cambodia on foot since the forced exodus of people from Cambodia's cities during the Khmer Rouge time. Yet this group is travelling by its own choice. The walkers were refugees from camps just over the border in Thailand and people from villages inside Cambodia, who united to walk together through the country for peace and reconciliation.

Dhamma Yietra, as this walk was known, took 30 days to travel from the Thai border town of Aranyaprathet to the Cambodian capital city Phnom Penh, and numbered hundreds of Cambodians and a handful of international supporters.

A key figure in the walk was Maha Ghosananda, a Cambodian Buddhist monk well-known for his teachings on meditation practice and peace. He has made great efforts to reconcile people in Cambodia and abroad. In his recent book *Step by Step* (1992, Parallax Press) his words capture the tone of the walk.

He says: "I do not question that loving one's oppressors -- Cambodians loving the Khmer Rouge -- may be the most difficult attitude to achieve. But it is a law of the universe that retaliation, hatred, and revenge only continue the cycle and never stop it. Reconciliation does not mean that we surrender rights and conditions, but rather that we use love... Wisdom and compassion must walk together. Having one without the other is like walking with one foot. You may hop a few times, but eventually you will fall. Balancing wisdom with compassion, you will walk very well -- slowly and elegantly, step by step."

Walking as an act of reconciliation is desperately needed in this small, wartorn country. For the past dozen years Cambodia has served as a battleground where the United States, China and the former USSR played ugly diplomacy. During the war, the populations held hostage in refugee camps along the Thai border were indoctrinated with racist ideas of being the only true Khmer left (after the Vietnamese had invaded Cambodia to statedly force out the Khmer Rouge), and inside the country the propaganda maintained that the border camps were only Khmer Rouge.

Deep reconciliation and re-connection of the walkers on the personal level became such a regular occurrence that many walkers began calling the walk Dhamma Teak Tong, or Dhamma Contact.

Almost every walker from the border refugee camps was reunited with family members, from whom they had been separated for 13, 15, 20 years. Walkers would disappear into a house off the side of the road, or set out once we arrived in a town, only to reappear hours later, beaming. An older woman grabbed my arm one morning and exclaimed amid tears: "I found my daughter! After 20 years! Now she has a daughter! And she told me my other daughter is alive! She lives near Phnom Penh, and I can see her too, when we get there."

The following day, another walker ran up and excitedly said: "I just went to visit my uncle who lives in this village and there in his house was my father! I haven't seen him in 12 years! What luck!" On another evening while we were sitting under a bodhi tree chatting with some locals, a man brought two young boys over. "Please meet my sons. They are twins. 13-years old! I last saw them when they were only 20-days-old. Babies. They're grown up now, and study in boarding school. They don't know me."

Another man, who has paid dearly for the war with his leg, and who rode a cycle along with the Dhamma Yietra related: "In Battambang I met my sister! She

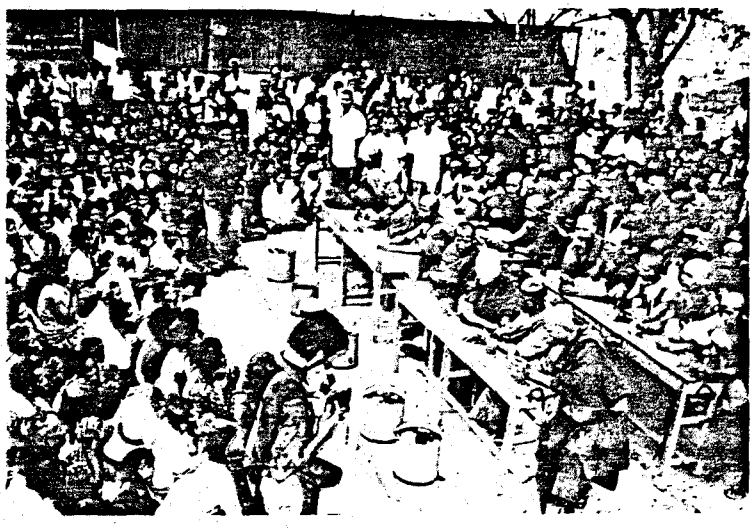
didn't recognize me at first, she didn't know I was still alive. She didn't know I'd survived the Khmer Rouge. She didn't know I'd lost my leg. She didn't know I'd married and had children. She just cried and cried."

Cambodia is another state where the interest of Cold War patrons to provide arms and pay for a war has declined. So the conflict has moved to a different arena. In October of 1991, the four factions involved in the conflict agreed to a United Nations overseen transitional government, reunification of the population, and disarmament for political struggle in elections set for 1993.

Although disarmament of combatants and transporting of refugees back into Cambodia are important, none of the UN programmes directly addresses the emotional needs of the population that has been traumatized by so many years of war and violence. Without reconciliation efforts aimed at addressing the fear, anxiety, pain and suspicion between the Cambodian people living under the control of the different factions, war could easily begin again. This parched emotional ground Dhamma Yietra hoped to water.

The spirit of the walk was spread by the Tuk Mon water blessing. In describing the symbolic significance of Tuk Mon, Maha Ghosananda says: "Mine are a simple people. To them, water means cleansing." So we washed away the pain of war of the people in many ways. After receiving water over her, one elderly woman who couldn't join the walk, offered me a stick of incense. "I can't make it. But take this, it will be my spirit walking with you."

Walking was not easy during the height of the hot season, and we usually began walking at 2 or 3 am to take advantage of cooler morning temperatures. One pre-dawn morning, we noticed a woman holding tightly onto her husband's wrist. As we approached a bridge, and someone shined a flash-light on a gaping hole in it, we heard her say: "Careful, stay to the right, take small steps."



Her husband was blind. They were both in their sixties. We asked her where they lived. "Far away," she said (which turned out to be deep in the countryside, 20 kilometres from this road). "We heard about the Dhamma Yietra yesterday morning and walked here in the evening. I've never seen anything like this in my life. We had to come. It's our one chance."

Before the walk had begun, many people said that this event could never happen, that there were too many land mines, literally and figuratively. We were told that we could never get the agreement or cooperation of the factions. Then there was the UN. Permission from the Thais was also necessary (who were involved in their own political turmoil and governmental change).

It was also known that many former soldiers had turned to banditry and were prowling the countryside. By the time we felt we could proceed politically, it was the height of the hot season when temperatures average 45 C and water shortages plague the country.

The walk was, however, an idea whose time had come. Many ways that seemed crooked were made straight, or at least passable, over temporary bridges. Aid, unsought, came at the most needed times. Permissions always came at the 11th hour, but the walk moved steadily forward. Even two days before, more than 100 refugees crossed the border from Thailand into Cambodia to set the walk in motion. Neither Thailand nor Cambodia had issued border crossing permission. Walkers learned to live in the moment through such situations.

But the miracle of the walk was not that it happened, but what happened on it and between people along the walk route.

As we walked out of Battambang in the early hours of the morning, one woman confided a dream to me. "Last night, I dreamt of my mother. I haven't seen her in a dream since she died during the Khmer Rouge period. She was making offerings to many monks. She looked happy. Then this morning, I came upon the Dhamma Yietra, and saw all of

the monks walking. What an incredibly good sign. I knew I must join you, all the way to Phnom Penh. Immediately I ran home to get some clothes to take. I feel so relieved that my mother's spirit is now in peace."

Others also spontaneously joined the walk. Some joined for a day, accompanying us from their village onto the next, often carrying offerings of rice or mangoes. Indeed, it was the offerings of these local, poor communities which sustained the walk, feeding and housing us in temples

The effect the walk had on people in the communities we passed was often profound. One old man told me: "All of my children have died. I'm all alone. Now there's only religion which can help. Now seeing all these people walking for peace and the re-birth of Buddhism in our country overwhelms me with happiness. We forgot our religion, and wandered so far, killing one another, waging war, spilling blood... we just have to go back to our religion."

Another woman added "We Khmer haven't seen peace for so long. We've never known it. Now seeing the monks, and all these people walking, makes me think they've come to teach us to love one another, to unite. When I see them, I feel speechless. Maybe we will have true peace after all."

On May 13th, Dhamma Yietra arrived in Phnom Penh for the celebration of Buddhism's highest holy day with over 1,000 people walking.

It was an awe-inspiring sight to see a hundred monks followed by hundreds of lay people in white, walking in quiet dignity down the main boulevard of the capital in a line that stretched for $1^1/_2$ kilometres. After the walk ended in the capital, the feelings of many of us were expressed by one old grandmother sitting, rubbing her feet when she said, "My feet are sore, but my spirit is at rest."

Elizabeth Bernstein is co-founder of the Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation. CPR served as the logistical centre for the walk. Yeshua Moser is Southeast Asia staff for Nonviolence International and served as pre-walk coordinator.

Liz Bernstein and
Yeshua Moser



LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR THE PRESERVATION OF RELIGION AND CULTURE IN NEPAL



From June 20 to 30, this training workshop was held at Wat Dhyan Kuti Bihar in Banepa, a beautiful town near Kathmandu. The 28 participants represented various Nepali ethnic groups such as the Tamang, Newari, Tharu, Chepang, Sherpa, Hyolonu, Magar, Rai, Kirat and Thagali. It was impressive to learn of the great efforts made by some participants to join the training. For instance, a young man from Chepang, a nomadic tribe, crossed mountains on foot for four days and then travelled by local bus for another day to arrive in Kathmandu. Another young woman arrived for only the last two days since her parents didn't approve of her leaving home for any kind of training. She did contribute bravely to the group both in discussions and role plays. For quite a few of the participants, it was their first time to come to Kathmandu. There were also 6 women representing different regions thus filling out a complete picture of the Nepali Buddhist community.

The trainers were surprised to find that most of the participants were young students from ages 16 to mid 20's. A third of the participants were older and active in the community such as a lama, a doctor, a female architect, a Thanka artist, a hotel owner, the president of a women's association, and a few teachers.

The training itself was organized by INEB Nepal and planned by the INEB training team since last February's INEB Conference. We feel grateful to various support groups such as the Young Buddhist group, the Tagari scholars, and the local devotees who funded the food for each day and contributed to specific topics. The abbot was also very kind in accommodating the 40 participants and trainers and encouraging a group of locals to cook excellent food for the training.

Venerable Santikaro of Suan Mokkh in Siam and Dr. Paula Green of the Karuna Center in the U.S.A. were the key trainers who brought about a variety of learning methods which captured the attention of all. Jim Perkin, a peace worker from America, also contributed as an active observer sharing clear cut examples of non-violence and other helpful feedback. From time to time, guest speakers were invited to lecture on specific topics for at least 40 minutes.

The daily schedule began with a 5:30 am wake up bell. At 6:00 there was yoga and Sun Namaste followed by a 45 minute session of sitting and walking meditation which was completed with chanting. After the morning and afternooon session work, there was meditation from 5:45 to 7:00 with open discussion about the meditation afterwards. It was hard to believe that most of the participants participated fully in this rigorous schedule. On some days, Ven. Santikaro lead us on a walk through the rice fields. At one point, a young man leaned to me and asked, "What are we doing?" I said, "Feel your breath." Everyone was delighted to engage in this walking meditation through the rice fields.

The core training course was designed in four parts. First,

an introduction explored cultural and Buddhist practices in each community. Secondly, the training focused on basic Buddha Dhamma teaching covering the Five Precepts, the Four Noble Truths as a map to life, the Noble Eightfold Path and its personal and social applications, interdependence, and the Triple Gem as a refuge.. Thirdly, the topic of engaged Buddhism was discussed with such concrete examples as the development work of Luang Poh Nan of Siam as models. Finally, additional topics and skills were discussed such as leadership skills, reconciliation, and women's rights.

Over the ten days, we could feel a gradual "change" in each participant and this included the trainers. Participants were rather nervous and quiet at the beginning. Little by little, though, they were stimulated by what they learned. Each day they became more attentive and fully interactive. They especially enjoyed the small group work, and the final day ended with a very good role play.

It took the first two days for participants and facilitators to work out of traditional learning methods, i.e. lecturing, note taking, and tests, into a more participatory process, i.e. sharing in large and small groups, role plays, cultural exchange, meditation, yoga, etc. At the same time, we found that the majority of participants were confused about their own Buddhist practices. On the fourth day the group worked on the various conditions of the mind. This session led by Paula Green presented one cultural wall which had to be worked through. Nepalis/ Asians are hesitant to speak out about their personal problems in terms of their own feelings of anger, fear, sadness, anxiety, and greed. The trainers wanted to move them to understand and overcome their own problems, so that they can become more effective community leaders. The participants at first could not understand why these ideas of personal problems and leadership were being linked together. The trainers had to explain that if a leader does not clarify and work to solve his/her own problems, he/she may confuse them with the community's. Paula emphasized that we cannot be community workers if our minds are not peaceful and calm.

Our translation team of Stella Tamang, Dr. Keshab Shakya, Dr. Chandresh, and Dev Ranjit became very helpful in not only enabling communication but also pointing out cultural points such as the traditional methods of Nepali leaders who need to be good at making long and powerful speeches and making decision by themselves. Participants, however, showed more and more interest in learning how to end *dukkha* (suffering). After sessions in which Ven. Santikaro showed examples of the Four Noble Truths as ways to solve problems both on the personal and community levels, participants would have Dhamma language in their conversation.

After four days of this kind of work, everyone felt rather tired. Therefore, on Day 5 we switched to a half day of trekking to the Tamang community at 6,000 ft. while practicing the skill of Ayanatana - what did you see, hear, smell, taste, and feel?

Paula took a significant role in introducing new learning methods which emphasized process such as the story of the group of blindmen each touching a part of an elephant and trying to define the elephant from their own small perspective. Such processes served well and energized the participants.

Ven. Santikaro also became a respected meditation guru bringing the Buddha's teaching back to daily life applications and away from petty sectarian differences. In Nepal, there are a variety of Mahayana and Theravada practices which vary according to the influences of Hinduism, animism, and materialism. Ven. Santikaro firmly stood above the different traditions and used the single word Buddha Yana (the Buddha's teaching) to end arguments. This practice really woke up the participants to being together as one.

When the session moved onto the Noble Eightfold Path, it was beautiful to see the participants practicing and sharing in mindfulness. During lunchtime, it was exciting to hear them talk about their practice. By passing on these small points. about eating that the Lord Buddha taught to his followers, Ven. Santikaro indirectly made the Buddha's teaching alive and close for all of us.

Furthermore, it was challenging when Ven. Santikaro spoke of the Noble Eightfold Path on the societal level illustrating child labor as a violation of *Samma Acheva* (Right Livelihood). At this time, a young man stood up and asked whether the Lord Buddha specifically spoke against child labor in the Tripitaka. His question really struck a nerve because in Nepal there are many child laborers in carpet factories. Ven Santikaro explained that the Buddha spoke out against slavery and that in the modern context, child labor is a form of slavery. In the end, the group appreciated Ven. Santikaro's adapting of Dhamma to a modern social context.

During the session on community development, Rik, a native community development trainer, demonstrated the interdependent causes of poverty through a role play activity. One group was asked to volunteer as Mr. Poverty. They were tied up with ropes which were symbolic of the root causes of poverty such as poor education, government policies, etc. Given the many causes of poverty in the



visible ropes, each individual was asked to untie themselves from them. Some chose to go under the ropes, others over; one person sat down meditating in a hunger strike. The final resolution, as symbolized in the cutting of the ropes with scissors, was to get together as an organization and solve the problems at the same time.

Rik was very skillful and aware as a trainer in getting the group to be active and participatory. His facilitation was actually interdependence in action, a Dhamma training of Ven. Santikaro's. He illustrated to the group how our lunch was very interdependent from the cooks to the farmers who grew the food to the sun and water which nourished the food, etc.

One thing that seemed to bother the trainers from the West was the disregard for women's rights. For the most part, Asian societies haven't given equal opportunities to women, and women themselves are not trained to stand up and speak out on their own. In order to address this problem, Paula led a group of women sitting in a circle in the middle of the whole group to talk about their problems while the others paid attention. The exercise turned out to be a perfect example of the attitude problems towards women as many of the men began to ignore the group. Some began reading magazines while others started their own conversations. Some actually did pay attention. Paula then switched the groups and had the men report on what they had heard and respond to this issue of the status of women. The scene ended up showing that the men could not hold a conversation on this issue.

In the end, Paula highlighted certain key points as lessons for the group: men often ignore women's points of view, have no sensitivity to their concerns, and often receive better education and training. Ven. Santikaro then further integrated the work by using the technique from the previous session on poverty to show the interdependent causes of women's problems.

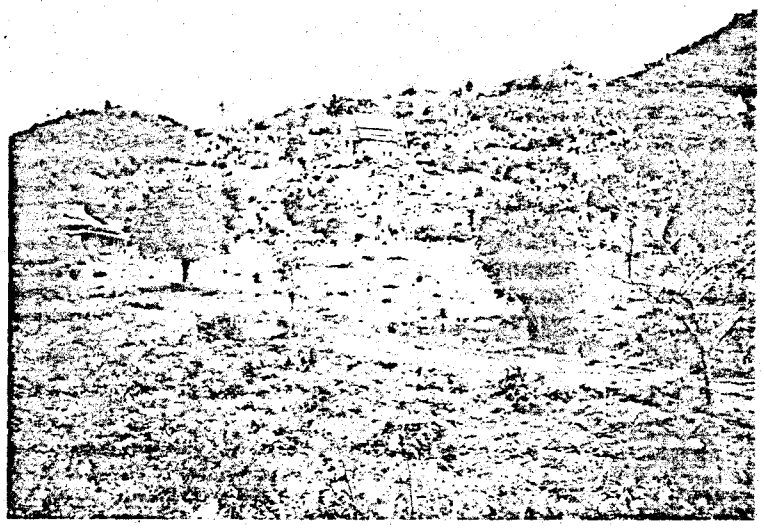
In the final evaluation session of the training, participants were asked to put down what they had learned and what they hoped to bring back to their communities. Some of the answers showed that it was a powerful experience for many: "I am a Buddhist"; "I will adopt more Buddhism for my study"; "I want to be a community worker".

This training, however, was only a starting for these people. They need more support when they go back to their own communities. Some may experience more frustration in now understanding many new things but still only being able to do very little. Ultimately, the participants, at least, began to understand the processes necessary for dealing with their own problems and how they may in turn help others.

Supaporn Pongpruk

HOSPICE :
DHAMMARAKNIWES
HOSPICE-DHAMMA CARING HOME

"Engaged Buddhism." "Engaged religion." "Engaged spirituality." The key word in these three easily misunderstood phrases is, of course, "engaged". Not an academic, abstract, or mere conceptual thought; not high-minded amorphous ideas - but, instead, an actual, grounded, practical, and manifested form of compassion and spirituality. This is what comes to mind when I think of "Dhammarakniwes," or, Dhamma Caring Home, which is the name for INEB Siam's first hospice site.



And even though Dhamma Caring Home is situated within a Buddhist temple, it is not a contradiction to state that it is also here where a ceasefire will be declared in the age-old "doctrinal wars" that religions have unceasingly waged. For the common focus becomes the universally shared efforts to understand the nature and language of death and dying. It's a loving, receptive, and compassionate environment, allowing us to experience and express honestly the repercussions that death and dying has on all of our lives. Most importantly, though, it is a place to care for the dying, to listen to the dying, to just be with the dying. These are not "new" concerns or issues, by any means; however, they do feel "renewed" in many ways in light of our efforts over the course of the past year to develop hospice care in the Buddhist temples.

Events continued to unfold favorably as we finalized our formal project proposal in early December 1991. During the two seminars we have organized on "Caring for the Terminally Ill: Buddhism, the AIDS Crisis, and Hospice Care", we garnered much support for the establishment of such care, as well as creating the beginnings of a strong network. Then, through a mutual colleague and friend, we met Phra Acharn Alongott. Acharn Alongott is the abbot of Wat Prabat Nampu, located 3 to 4 hours north of Bangkok in the beautifully serene foothills of Lopburi province. Acharn Alongott is a meditation master whose thoughts and ideas were very much aligned with what we were planning at INEB in relation to the hospice program. So, after meeting and talking with him and getting to know each other, we decided to work together and utilize Wat Prabat Nampu as the first hospice site.

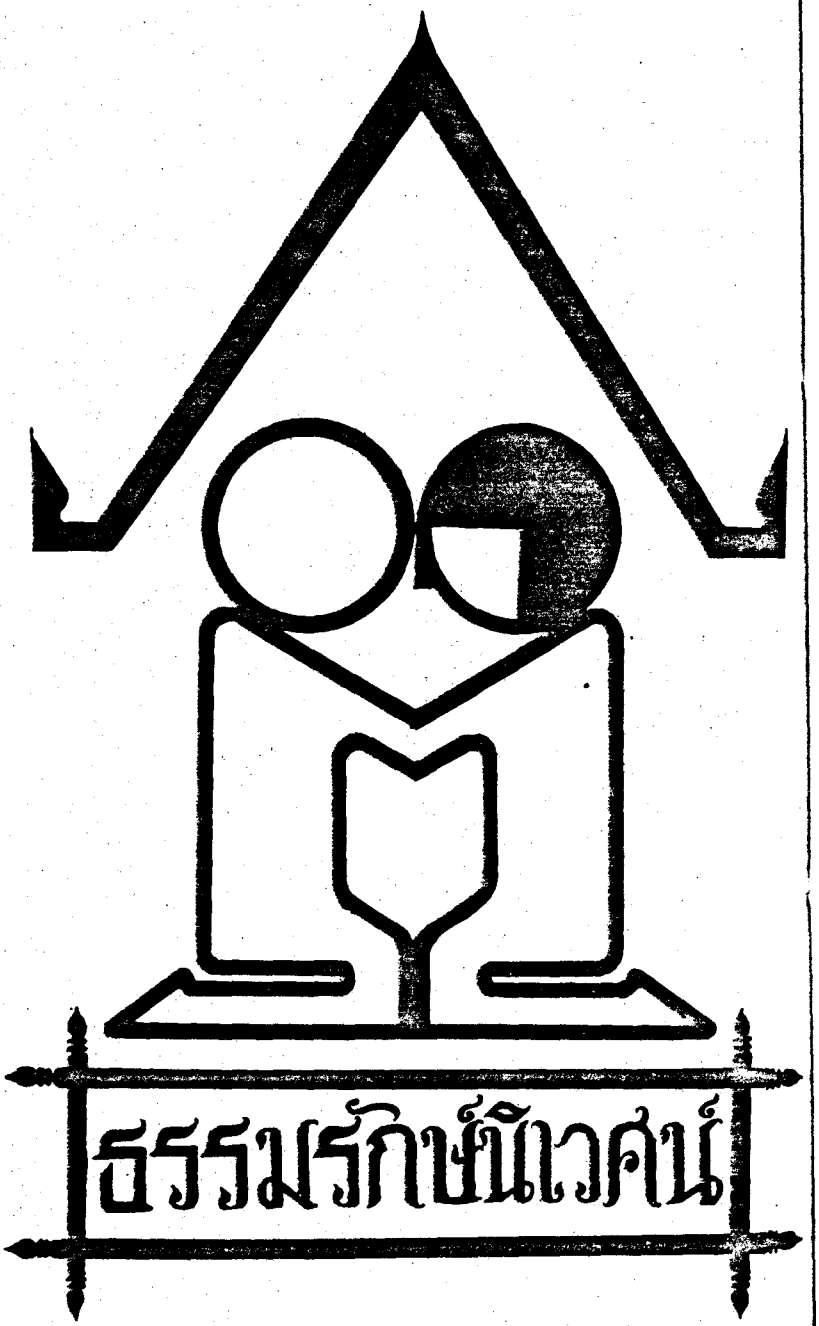
Acharn Alongott is very well-respected in Lopburi and we are making a concerted effort to include the local people in every stage of what we are developing there. Most of the nurses, volunteers, monks, nuns, assistants, etc., will be from the local region. At our last seminar, which was held at Tebstari Teacher's College in Lopburi, the local townspeople showed a genuine interest and concern in what was beinng presented. We remain very sensitive to the importance of a community-based type of care in developing the hospice.

With the advent of financial assistance from the Thai Ministry of Public Health, Dept. of AIDS, and the Australian International Development Assistance Program (AIDAB), we will soon be able to start caring for people at

the wat (between 10-15 people at first). In August we will be holding our first hospice training program, mainly for nurses, volunteers, and lay assistants. And tentatively, we will have another training class scheduled for monks and nuns for some time around November.

Amidst the grief, fearfulness, and misunderstanding of the burgeoning AIDS crisis in Thailand, the issues of death and dying are steadily pushing their way into the vulnerable world of the everyday consciousness. And, during this time, Dhammarakniwes at Wat Prabat Nampu will surely serve as a compassionately stabilizing factor for Thaii people in that region. In addition, as it will also serve as a model for other temples, its effects will eventually be felt throughout the whole country. It's simple: those who are dying in Thailand deserve to have this type of care available; it's humane, loving - it only makes sense...

Jeffrey Adam Sager

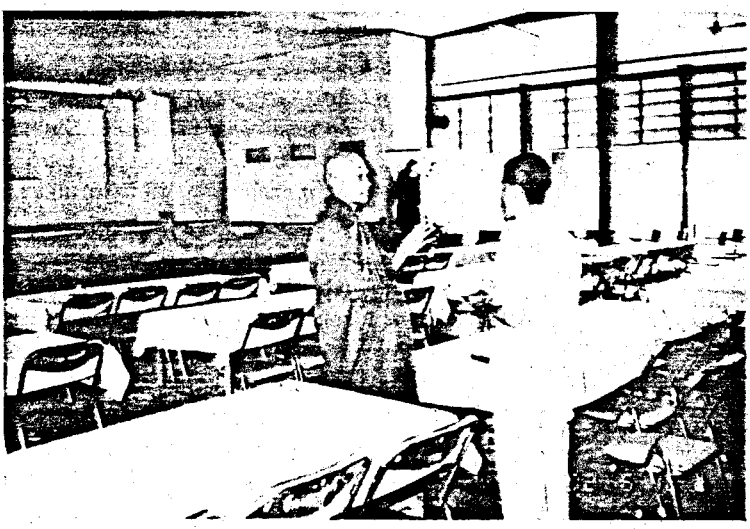


BUDDHISM: THAI SOCIETY, THE AIDS CRISIS, AND HOSPICE CARE

At present, it's difficult to prevent or solve the behavior problems in Thai society, which are immoral, even though Buddhism is a religion to create discipline and order for the right way of life in society. In fact, the tradition of living styles for the majority of Thai society is developed from economiic conditions which have changed rapidly in a short time. The competitive way of life is a condition that pushes people in Thai society to change their behavior, which then go over the limitation of the Buddhist teachings. Prostitutes, drugs, corruption, and crime are behaviors which violate the Buddhist teaching's discipline. It's hard to bring back religion's role to prevent these problems, but it is essential to have religions take action in the most effective areas possible. The AIDS problem in Thai society will certainly become a critical problem in the future. There are currently several hundred thousand people who are reported infected with the AIDS virus.

In Buddhism, monks can help to build up the level of consciousness of the people in relation to their behaviors. In addition, the monks need to have correct knowledge and understanding of AIDS themselves. But there are presently only a few monks who clearly have this knowledge and understanding about AIDS; and it's complicated to apply it to the Buddhist teachings harmoniously. Furthermore, the direct target group is not the elderly people who mostly have the chance to listen to the teachings, but the youth. Another aspect that religion should focus on is the problem of HIV-infected people's behavior, because the number of people infected is quickly incresing.

Presently, the government sector has not set any policy to serve AIDS patients in the future. There are not enough beds, which indicates that those patients will need to try to help themselves. More non-government rehabilitation centers will be established, but only to serve those patients who can afford them. If needed, for the middle class and the poor, their only options are to stay in beds in government hospitals or find some other places to be cared for. The real picture in Thai society in the present is that people still are afraid of AIDS patients, even members of their own families. And the patients themselves feel that when they get to the last stages of their illness, they won't want to stay at home for fear of being a burden on the family. Even though someone in the family or society might sympathize with them, it's hard to have the same kind of care at home that they would receive in the hospital.



By not having beds available for them in the hospitals or their homes, and at the same time, being detested by society, the AIDS patients are suffering terribly. They will become the burdens of society. If no one cares for them, they will take offense at the society, which will effect the mental health of the entire society. The people in society will become scared and terribly selfish because everybody will be afraid of AIDS, detest AIDS patients, and even mistrust members of the families of AIDS patients.

One way of resolving this problem is to cooperate to serve them by providing peaceful and comfortable places in all communities to take care of them – physically, mentally, and spiritually. Religion, in this regard, has a lot of potential. Temples will be the places for them to stay, where monkks can take care of them. The monks will serve as leaders to encourage the caretakers to have

compassion and dedication. The monks can also clarify things and help them to understand, and to motivate people to cooperate and serve the patients effectively.

Therefore, the role of religions to initiate AIDS resolutions should start from this point. For when there are places for the AIDS patients to stay, it will also be a chance for relatives and friends to meet with them conveniently and join in activities together. This can be just one way with which to solve and change the behaviors of people in society. And the cooperation of the community to help establish these places will reflect the consciousness of the people to change their own behavior as well. This is a resolution for prevention that will be created by religions only.

The International Network of Engaged Buddhists, in cooperation with Wat Prabat Nampu, realize that it is important to have religious organizations help to solve this crisis. So, a Buddhist hospice in Thailand has been established under the name of Dhammarakniwes at Prabat Nampu Temple, Khao Sarm Yod, Muang Lopburi, surrounded by the natural environment on the plains of the foothills.

The beginning process of the project is to set up seminars to educate monks, doctors, nurses, the heads of government offices and volunteers, in order to build up their understanding towards the objectives of the project. The next step is to prepare the staff by providing them with homecare training. The volunteers who have intention and compassion and are able to devote themselves will be selected.

The hospice will provide accomodation, food, medical care, mental and spiritual care - for free.

Phra Acharn Alongott
Wat Prabat Nampu

PRACTICING COMMUNITY

The Sangha Jewel brightly reflects our social selves, particularly in the West, where sangha is synonymous with the large community of Buddhist practitioners. For a week in July, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship sponsored a second Meditation in Action Institute, a rare opportunity for practicing community.

The engaged Buddhist sangha in the United States has been steadily growing in recent years, inspired by the work of Thich Nhat Hanh, the Dalai Lama, BPF, and INEB. It includes Vipassana, Zen, and Vajrayana students, as well as many non-affiliated people who feel a deep affinity for Buddhist principles of non-duality, peace, and self-examination. From July 5 to 11, nearly one hundred of us met at Oakland, California's Holy Redeemer Center to share our aspirations and our practice, to build a temporary new community together, and to put down roots for the future. Several elders were invited to talk with us – Robert Aitken Roshi, Joanna Macy, Sulak Sivaraksa, Pracha Hutanuwatr – but much of the deepest teaching came from grassroots people with a rich and varied experience of community, social action and Buddhism.

For several years a loose group in BPF has tried to find ways to develop Buddhist social theory and to test it in action, creating a western model that parallels what INEB is doing in Asia. Last summer we jumped in with both feet, organizing our first Institute. It was kind of a star-studded event – Aitken, Christopher Titmuss, A.T. Ariyaratne, Macy, Deena Metzger, Hutanuwatr – with an impossible number of workshops and choices. We had to accept criticism for a structure that could not respond easily to the group, one that included little free time or improvisation, and yet this event was clearly a successful first effort.

This summer the idea was to have meditation, silence and structured teaching in the mornings with self-designed, self-structured small groups in the afternoon. That meant the organizers would offer some group processes and decision-making training the first day, but people would have to form their own priorities collectively and see them through for the rest of the week. It looked pretty risky, but the format worked surprisingly well.

Our mornings began in silence and meditation leading into wonderful Dharma talks by Aitken Roshi discussing central Bodhisattva practices, the six Paramitas or Perfections. Each of his polished talks included time for deep exchanges between students and Roshi. After breakfast, we assembled for more experiential work with Joanna Macy, directly relating to the various kinds of community we already inhabit and the ones we might construct in the future. Several days into the Institute, Joanna became ill, and her work was picked up by BPF board members Donald Rothberg and

Stephanie Kaza.

Out of our long and sometimes difficult refining process, groups emerged in areas of engaged Buddhist community, gay men's practice, ecology, engaged Buddhist theory, and Buddhism & Psychology. These met each afternoon reporting briefly back to the whole community in the evening. Additional small groups came together at meals and break times to network and explore countless areas of urgent interest: Thailand, Burma, process training, racism, Yugoslavia, anti-nuclear work, Buddhist worker houses, gay and lesbian Buddhists, and many other issues. There were also visits to the Oakland Catholic Worker house, the Concord Naval Weapons Station vigil site, and Jubilee West, a neighborhood self-development project in Oakland's Black community.

The evenings usually included a brief council (so we could stay informed about each other) followed by a cultural or informational program. We had theater from Nina Wise, puppets enacting the Vimalakirti Sutra, a presentation about Thailand and INEB from Sulak and Pracha, and offerings of song, dance, and poetry by members at large.

My own role as coordinator sometimes drew me away from participation. I found it hard to let go. But I also found great satisfaction and gratitude working with teachers and friends so bent on creating harmony within vast differences and directions. Many of us came away with new ideas and renewed energy to take home. It was also very powerful to see Sulak and Pracha work together after this year of Sulak's exile. Their respective talents mesh so well, each building on his own strengths and leaning on the other's abilities. People were particularly responsive to Sulak's situation, in exile for being too accurate about the future while killers are pardoned at home. More than 75 letters were written at the Institute in support of his full exoneration.

A month has passed since our Institute and still the calls are coming and projects are unfolding. Several groups continue to meet regularly; the idea of engaged Buddhist houses is gathering momentum. In another month or two, it will be time to look more closely at our work and begin to think about next year's Institute. Maybe some of you will be able to join us this third time around.

ALAN SENAUKE is National Coordinator of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, working very closely with INEB. He is an ordained priest at the Berkeley Zen center, where he lives with his wife, Laurie, and their inquisitive little daughter, Silvie.

BANGLADESH: LIFE IS STILL NOT OURS

Since the Logang massacre in April, little concrete action has been taken by the Bangladesh government to shed light on the incident in which nearly a thousand people are estimated to have been killed and thousands more left homeless. While a special one-man investigating committee has been established by the government to document human rights abuses in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), witnesses who have volunteered to give accounts of the massacre have received death threats and are under surveillance by special security forces. Many are now in hiding, unwilling to give testimony for fear of their lives. Due to such intimidation, it seems increasingly unlikely that we will ever fully learn what occurred.

Despite the press coverage of the event and the country's appalling human rights record, Bangladesh has once again received generous support from the international donor community. Less than two weeks after the massacre, a consortium led by the World Bank pledged to give Bangladesh US$ 2.2 billion in new aid. While Bangladesh is overwhelmingly dependent on substantial and concerted foreign aid and investment, the unwillingness of the international community to link aid with human rights has clearly given them tacit encouragement to continue their socially and environmentally destructive policies in the CHT.

Approximately 400,000 of the indigenous Jumma peoples, who are largely Buddhist, now languish in cluster villages where every aspect of daily life is strictly controlled by the military. Denied access to their traditional lands, the cluster villages have effectively transformed self-sufficient farmers into landless laborers forced to work on plantations and other economic development projects funded by the Asian Development Bank, UNICEF, and the UN Development Program. Fifty-six thousand more have escaped these conditions to live in squalid refugee camps in the Indian state of Tripura.

Massive human rights violations, like the orchestrated massacre in Logang, clearly dem-

onstrate that the government's development and pacification programs in the CHT are failures. However, it is unlikely that the situation will improve any time soon. The Bangladesh government has persistently refused to negotiate with the United Peoples Party (JSS) or any other group working for peace and the right to self-determination in the CHT because it, as well as the military, has a vested interest in the 20 year-old conflict.

While the military's role in politics has been drastically curtailed following General Ershad's removal, it remains a powerful force in national affairs. Any further steps towards a more democratic system of government are to a large extent dependent upon their cooperation. Ironically, the very policies which directly contribute to the cycle of violence in the CHT strengthen the position of the current administration rather than destabilizing it. Content with its counter-insurgency role, the military is assured that its huge budget requests will continue to be granted and its firm control over all development programs in the CHT unquestioned.

At the moment, Bangladesh is playing a dangerous game. The government has recently agreed to form a special Joint Task Force to handle the growing refugee problem in the Indian state of Tripura. India, burdened with its own insurgent conflicts in the northeastern states of Assam, Mizoram, and Nagaland, is eager to repatriate these refugees to Bangladesh. Unconfirmed reports from Bangladesh indicate that the government has tentatively agreed to "rehabilitate" these refugees, which includes permission to return to their old villages and fields.

More alarmingly, the newly formed Rohingya Refugee Repatriation Committee threatens



to blockade the makeshift camps housing nearly 300,000 refugees from Burma, denying them food and medical supplies. While Burma and Bangladesh have both agreed to repatriate the refugees, the process has been indefinitely delayed. The refugees are themselves insisting that the UNHCR and International Red Cross monitor their return. However. neither government has allowed them any involvement.

Given the severe shortage of arable land and the guerilla wars raging on its borders with India and Burma, such agreements could easily prove to be disastrous for democracy in Bangladesh if mishandled. Regardless of the outcome, the biggest losers will be the indigenous peoples who inhabit the region.

Kenneth MacLean

JAPAN: A UNIQUE ENGAGEMENT



This past May I had the opportunity to journey to Japan for ten short days and visit many of the activist priests who make up INEB Japan. This visit presented a great opportunity to clear up some previous misconceptions about socially engaged Buddhists in Japan. In sharing my experiences and insights, I hope that others who have never been to Japan and have heard stories of cigarrete smoking, beer drinking, non-meditating priests will gain a wider perspective on this unique and small group of activist priests and nuns in Japan. I also hope that we outsiders can begin to make a more concerted effort to understand the aspects of Japanese society which have created this fascinating species of spiritual activist who puts down three packs of butts a day but is as or more dedicated a campaigner than the purest macrobiotic activist.

In beginning to come to understand the life of an everday Japanese preist, it is vital to get a grip on the multitudinal sects and divisions of Buddhism in Japan. One reason why some of us probably become distraught when we encounter our aforementioned "anti-biotic" priests is that we are carrying around visions of the austere lineage bearers of such great meditation monks from Japan as Dogen and Eisai. After all, Japan is where Zen Buddhism blossomed. Especially for us fantasy -laden westerners, these "anti-biotic" priests strike us as imposters unable to hold a candle to all the great masters we have read about in our bookshelf stocked of books on Zen. This attitude obviously becomes problematic when one experiences all that is not in books. Additionally, if we would actually read a book on the *totality* of Japanese Buddhism, we would see a tradition rich in variety.

There is much more to Japanese Buddhism than the Zen sects. Just as numerous and popular among the average Japanese layperson are the devotional sects such as the Jodo, Jodoshin, and Nichiren sects founded by the medieval Japanese masters Honen, Shinran and Nichiren. These sects have developed differently and have based themselves on a strong faith principle with recitation or chanting of the Buddha's name or certain scriptures such as the Lotus Sutra. In these sects, there is no emphasis placed on the sitting form of meditation practice as found in Zen or Theravada Buddhism. Therefore, for those of us who think that Buddhism begins and ends with such meditation practice, there are many in Japan and elsewhere who have a whole different notion of what it is to be Buddhist. This difference in notions is one very important place for open mindedness as Buddhists from varying backgrounds come to work together for a better society. As the Buddha taught, our personal views and beliefs can be great stumbling blocks along the path.

The above is an extremely crude synopsis of Japanese Buddhism, and I encourage others to further explore this subject matter through sources of more scholarly foundation. For now, it serves as a basis for understanding our INEB activist friends in Japan who all come from the group of devotional sects.

Of my 10 days in Japan, I spent in 8 in 3 different temples (two of which were INEB temples). The three presented fairly good cross sections of Japanese life. One was a Nicheren temple located in downtown Tokyo. another a Jodoshin temple in suburban Nagoya and finally another Nichiren one in the small town of Gotemba at the foot of Mt. Fuji

In these days, I was able

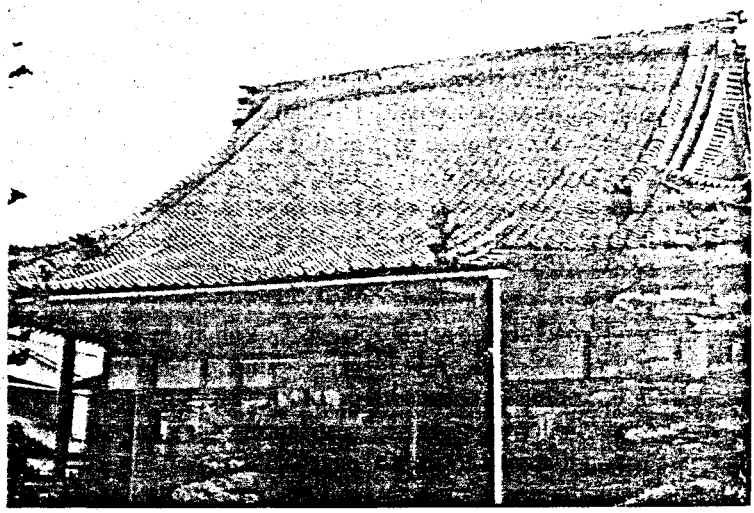
to see the typical day and living situation of a Japanese priest. The first most notable difference of these priests as compared to Theravada ones are their daily responsibilities. Whereas Theravada monks for the most part are left to their studies, meditation, and daily rituals while novices, nuns, and lay volunteers clean and care for the monastery, a Japanese priest will usually have a whole temple to care for by him/herself. Typically, a single priest will be assigned to a single temple which has a group of layfollowers consisting of anywhere from 150 to 500 families. In many cases, this leaves a devoted spouse or other family member with many of the cleaning chores. However, the priest himself must spend considerable time during the day maintaining the central practice room and the cemetaries which are an extension of most temples.

These priests spend most of their time serving the needs of their lay followers. Although this does not differ so much from Theravada monks, who do not follow the forest tradition, the fact that one Japanese priest by himself will maintain a whole temple as opposed to a number of monks in a Theravada temple makes this work more time consuming. Sometimes I wonder if Theravada monks wouldn't have so much time to meditate if they weren't so well taken care of. In the end, I developed a sense of respect for how hard Japanese priests who run their own temples by themselves have to work to maintain the needs of their lay community.

In order to be socially enagaged, therefore, our INEB Japan friends find themselves in the situation of having to devote their free time outside of their temple duties to activism. Unlike the professional activist who can perform his or her duties in a 9 to 5 manner, INEB Japan priests must perform their activism outside the 9 to 5 or the often 24 hour duties of being the head of a temple. In this way, they are similar to the lay activist who works a regular job and then spends their extra time doing activist work. Their jobs, however, are not regular. In serving as the caretakers of their respective traditions and of their respective communities spiritual needs, they encompass one of the noble eightfold paths, right livelihood. As an activist, they may appear as any ordinary citizen, and they even wear ordinary clothes except during certain ceremonial occasions. As a priest, however, they are certainly held to a higher moral standard than the ordinary citizen. One peculiarity of the Japanese tradition is that the distinction between the clergy and lay people is much more internal than the external distinctions of robes and the shaven head of Theravada Buddhism and many other Mahayana traditions.

The INEB Japan working group focuses on a variety of different areas of concern with each individual taking up a specific area. Suzuki Ryowa, who runs a Jodoshin temple in suburban Nagoya, is the main coordinator of the group and the central contact person for those outside Japan. Teruo Maruyama, who no longer heads a temple but now is a religious journalist for various publications, is the elder, ideological leader for the group. Five years ago, Rev. Maruyama had developed the same idea for an international Buddhist network as Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa and together they formed the original core working grooup of INEB. Bunji Amada, who runs a Nichiren temple in the small town of Gotemba at the foot of Mt. Fuji, is the editor of one of the magazines for which Rev. Maruyama writes. Other central INEB Japan members include Hideki Kodama of the Nichiren sect who has been focusing on Cambodian affairs, Jokei Majima also a Nichiren sect member who focuses on Burma issues, Ryuko Yamada of the Jodo sect who focuses on Indian and Bangladesh matters, Akimichi Sugiura of the Jodoshin sect who focuses on immigrant labor problems in Japan, and Nitta Shoen of the Jodoshin sect who helps with coordination for visiting activists.

At the end of my stay, I saw a much fuller picture of what it is to be a Japanese priest and a Japanese activist priest. This wider perspective put the cigarette smoking, beer drinking, and non-meditating into its proper place. These habits are just one small aspect of *some* of these activist priests. One must look at the



totality of their action performed. I have a hard time condemning such personal habits in the face of the hard work and dedication which the INEB Japan priests showed towards their activism and their daily priestly duties. In fact, I feel a measure of shame for making judements in ignorance: not realizing that a session of chanting can be just as centering as a session of meditation, not bothering to understand the different relationship Japanese preists of the devotional sects have to society, and so on.

One should also not be too quick to make judegments about others when oneself is also guilty. As Jesus said, "He who is without fault, let them cast the first stone." I have also heard stories of American Buddhist priests who have been guilty of sexual improprieties with their lay followers, and I have been frequent witness to Theravada monks also helping themselves to a smoke. This is a greater hypocrisy than what some may see in the Japanese priests given the Theravada monks pride in a stricter code of discipline. This point does not mean that we should excuse those who fully violate the rules of their discipline. It does mean that we shoould try to understand the differences in disciplines and see the intentions behind the totality of any person's practice. In the end what stands out to me are the lessons of passing judgement on others without fully understanding them. Let us go to Japan to truly understand their tradition and discipline and to see the intention and spirit of these activist priests. I believe the totality of these particular priests actions will answer all skeptics.

JSW

SIAM : WHEN POLITICS AND ECONOMICS COLLIDE

During May 17-20, a horrified world witnessed the Thai military's brutal suppression of pro-democracy demonstrators. Many observers, both here and abroad, were genuinely surprised by the violence. The country's development, based on the twin pillars of foreign investment and tourism, were thought to make such a heavy-handed response unlikely if not impossible. Yet it occurred and Thailand, enthusiastically promoted as the "Land of Smiles", found its international image in tatters. Unfortunately, Thailand will soon be forgiven for the bloodshed. Its strategic importance and booming economy guarantees that foreign investment and aid will quickly resume normal levels.

In Thailand, however, the long-term effects of the pro-democracy movement and the massacres are much less clear. Despite the relative abundance of televisions, mobile phones, and faxes, little of the demonstrations and the bloodshed broadcast around the world was shown here. People living outside Bangkok had to depend on the state-controlled media for most of their information. As a result, a huge gap in understanding the events in May remains between the capital and the provinces even though photographs and video tapes documenting the massacres are now freely circulating the country.

Although the military has prepared its own version of the events, the counter - propaganda is not the cause of the confusion. While pro-military and pro-democracy groups are busy struggling to win the hearts and minds of the people in the countryside, relatively little is being done to reduce the huge gulf separating Bangkok from the rest of Thailand. The tremendous speed of Thailand's development has effectively divided the country economically and sociallly. Increasingly, the two halves are finding each other unintelliigible. Their continuing failure to adequately understand the needs and



desires of the other represents a far greater threat to democracy in Thailand than the military.

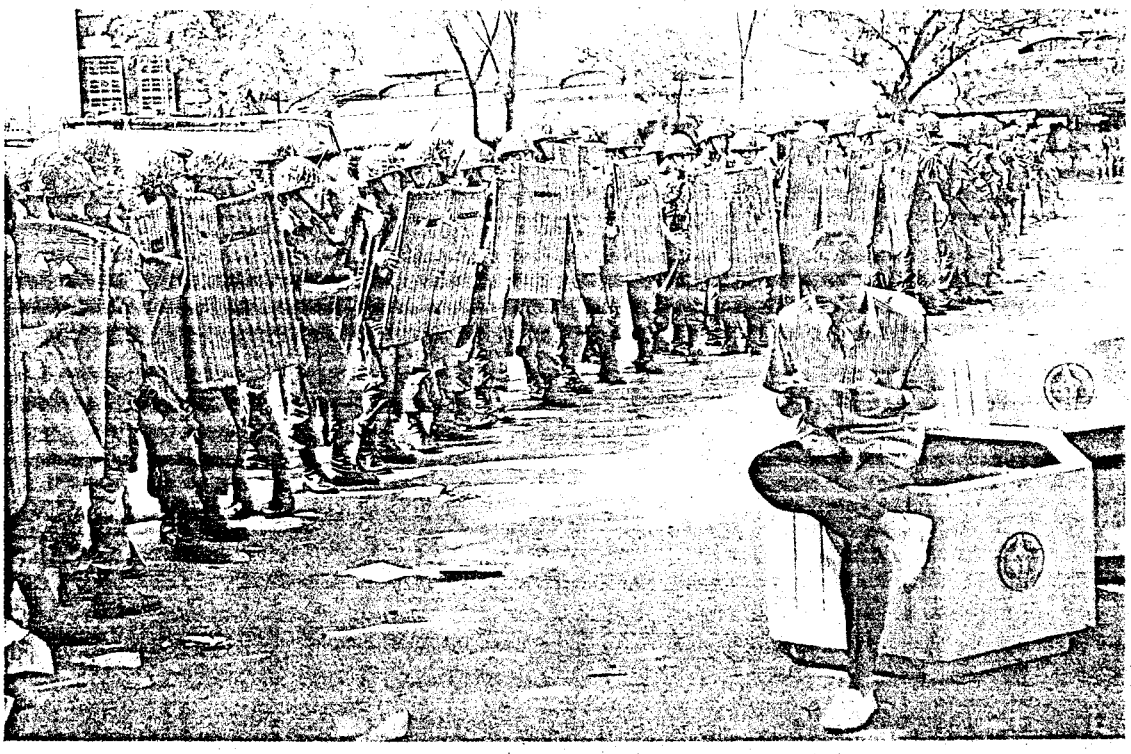
For those people struggling to survive in the rural areas, the events in Bangkok remain distant and not of immediate concern. Many others, however, are busy trying to reconcile their understanding of their own country and culture with the stark reality of last month's massacres. They are currently in the process of subjecting themselves and the ir institutions to an unprecedented period of criticism and openness. But the painful process of questioning one's traditions and values has only just begun. It remains to be seen how willing the care-taker government is to push for structural reforms and the military to accept them.

In many ways, the international news coverage of the crisis was misleading. The vivid portraits of violence completely overshadowed the two months of non-violent demonstrations and rallies held by pro-democracy parties and public interest groups. The crisis itself was in the end reduced by the media to little more than a personality conflict between Maj. Gen. Chamlong Sri Muang, the charismatic leader of the Phalang Dharma party, and Gen. Suchinda Krapayoon. Perhaps most importantly, the pro-democracy movement was damaged by its apparent "success". Gen. Suchinda, the focus of much of the protests, was forced to resign after only 48 days as prime minister. Attaining his resignation, however, has since proven to be a far easier task than transforming an authoritarian society into a more democratic one.

Behind Thailand's image as an easy-going, fun-loving country is a much uglier reality. Thailand, has long enjoyed a vicious cycle of military dictatorships, corrupt civilian rule, and popular revolt. In 1932, a revolution transformed Thailand's system of government into a constitutional monarchy. Since then, the nation has endured seventeen military coups and many other somewhat less direct forms of abuse. Powerful and wealthy individuals have routinely exploited the government, whose expanding bureaucracies and projects proved to be fertile grounds for corruption and mismanagement. Not surprisingly, the development of democratic ideas and institutions within Thailand has been crippled.

Ironically, the situation has gotten worse, not better. The popular uprisings in 1973, 1976, and 1992 have involved a progressively wider cross-section of people. The bloodshed whic h accompanied them has been more severe each time as well. Now, it is quite clear to everyone that the country's rapidlly growing economy and middle class have significantly altered the traditional balance of power in Thai society. Access to wealth and the power it brings are no longer easily controlled by a few individuals. As more and more groups begin to compete over the country's di-

minishing resources, the inefficient and corrupt political system will find it increasingly difficult to meet its people's needs. The current situation demands that major changes be made quickly if violent conflicts are to be avoided in the future. Unfortunately, the military's vested interests in both politics and big business could take years to unwind.



Last year's coup toppled yet another democratically elected government and clearly signaled that the military had no intentions of surrendering its position of influence in Thai society. The National Peace Keeping Council (NPKC), headed by prominent military leaders, appointed Mr. Anand Panyarachun to lead the interim government. His cabinet of politically neutral technocrats gave Thailand its cleanest and most able administration in the country's history. Mr. Anand, however, was meant to be little more than an acceptable face for the NPKC.

The council's behind-the-scenes maneuvering demonstrated that the military and its supporters were tailoring the new constitution to suit their own needs and interests for the next decade. The March 22 general elections only served to deepen the public's growing pessimism. Rampant vote-buying and other illegal tactics helped the Samakkitham Party, founded and financed by the air force, and four other pro-military parties to form the new government. With unprecedented support in the House and Senate, Gen. Suchinda accepted the premiership in tears and the "extra-judicial killing of democracy" in Thailand seemed complete.

By this time, though, the general public was unwilling to accept what such a future promised. The country's economy had been poised to recover from the Gulf War, which had severely depressed its biggest legal source of foreign exchange- the tourism industry. Last year's coup and the continuing threat of strongarm politics endangered all of that. A spectrum of public interest groups, including students, academics, and members of the press quickly began organizing protests. Chalard Vorachat, a respected MP from the Democrat Party, began a death-fast in front of Parliament protesting Suchinda's appointment. The pro-democracy movement then gained another huge boost when Maj. Gen. Chamlong decided to join Chalard. For the first time, the middle class made their presence felt in Thai politics. Yet, the huge demonstrations triggered by the fasts made little impression on the already entrenched coalition under Suchinda.

On May 17, Maj. Gen. Chamlong led approximately 300,000 people in a non-violent protest down Rachadamnoern Ave. towards Parliament. Within minutes, they encountered a heavily armed contingent of police and soldiers blocking a small bridge. The tense stand-off continued for several hours until the military turned off the water cannons used to control the crowds

and opened fire on the unarmed demonstrators. For the next three days, large sections of Bangkok resembled a war zone.

On May 21, His Majesty the King intervened, ending the bloodshed. Although the thousands of people arrested during the violence had already been released, a controversial amnesty was announced. Upon closer examination, it became clear that the amnesty was designed to protect those responsible for the massacres. However, international pressure and the threat of further violence eventually made it impossible for Suchinda to remain prime minister. On May 24, he announced his resignation.

Since then, a number of fact-finding committees have been formed to investigate the abuses which occurred during the conflict and the possibility of restructuring the military establishment. More than 100 people are believed to have been killed during the violence and hundreds more wounded. Nearly a thousand people are still missing. While the military's gross violation of human rights has been well documented, we may never know the true figures. According to eye-witnesses, many of the corpses were burned by soldiers and others transported to remote border areas. With the exception of Gen. Suchinda, the military officials believed to be responsible for the crackdown are still in power. Their presence represents a serious barrier to any attempt to fully-investigate the incident or effect positive change.

What was particularly noticeable throughout this non-violent campaign was the total absence of monks. The Sangha announced that it would maintain a policy of neutrality throughout the crisis. Monks were ordered to perform their daily tasks and practices as if nothing had happened. Extended chanting sessions were also held to send *metta* (compassion) forth in an effort to bring peace to Siam. Yet, life in Thailand during May 17-20 was not normal.

Although the Thai Sangha declared that it wished to remain neutral, it willingly sacrificed its moral leadership and responsibility. The Sangha, precisely through its apolitical stance, had the potential to end the bloodshed once it had begun. Yet, the Sangha remained silent even when soldiers shot and killed unarmed protestors inside temple grounds. Instead of initiating any meaningful efforts towards peace and reconciliation, several prominent monks performed rituals absolving the military leaders of their "bad luck". By refusing to condemn the violence and those responsible for it, the Sangha has clearly revealed who it supports. At some point, criticism may be turned towards them and their long-standing relationship with the military.

The mixed success of the demonstrations has certainly raised some difficult questions for those advocating the power of



nonviolence. While the protests brought about Gen. Suchinda's resignation, they came at a terrible price. For the first time, many Thai activists are realizing that non-violent protest entails a great deal more than merely gathering hundreds of thousands of people together in order to voice their grievances. Civil disobedience can take many forms and requires a tremendous amount of organization, experienced leadership, flexibility, and practice. Unfortunately, none of these were in evidence during the demonstrations and it cost them dearly.

Though life in Bangkok has largely returned to normal, pro-democracy activists and other interest groups are still very busy. Discussions and small-scale trainings following the crackdown have focused on alternative means of protest, e.g. strikes and boycotts, which would avoid putting people on the streets. Other groups are collecting information on human rights abuses and their work may eventually make it possible to bring those responsible for the massacres to trial. Educational efforts in the countryside have been stepped up in preparation for the next election and an independent body to monitor the polls has also been resurrected. Moves are also being made to allow national radio and television stations to be independently owned. Perhaps the biggest success has been the temporary suspension of the controversial reforestation plan *(Khor Jor Kor)*, which threatened to evict almost 5 million people in the Northeast.

While many people would like to see Anand stay in power as long as possible, he has refused to extend his stay beyond the constitutional limit. In his statement to the press, Anand remarked that Thais must stop putting their faith in a white knight in shining armor to come to their rescue. If Thais truly desire democracy then they must struggle for it themselves; it will not be handed to them. Perhaps, in the course of such a struggle, Thais will open their hearts to the injustice around them and their role in perpetuating it. Only then, will peace and democracy be possible for its neighboring countries.



Thais in US Commemorate Quest for Democracy

Thai citizens living in the United States, along with sympathetic American friends, are rallying in support of their troubled brothers and sisters in Thailand. In major cities throughout the US, expatriate Thais have responded to last month's turmoil by picketing Thai consulates and other relevant agencies, by holding conferences to disseminate information, and by sponsoring fundraisers to help console their injured and bereaved fellow countrymen back home.

A conference held at the end of May at a Thai temple outside Chicago was originally expected to draw fewer than 100 participants, but attendance swelled to more than twice that number as Thais and non-Thais alike converged from around the country for three days of prayer, lectures, and workshops.

"The turnout exceeded our best expectations," said Anan Sirisomphatwattana of Chicago's Thai Resource Centre.

Originally planned to commemorate the coinciding 60th anniversaries of Bhuddhadasa Bhikkhu's Suan Mokkh retreat in southern Thailand and the founding of Thailand's constitutional monarchy, a key component of the gathering was an examination of six decades of the "Quest for Thai Democracy."

Conferees from throughout the American Midwest, as well as from both east and west coasts and Canada, arrived on the evening of May 29 to hear a speech by Dr. Sulak Sivaraksa, who has lived outside of Thailand since his verbal clash with Thai military figures last August.

In keeping with the religious tone of the conference, Dr. Sulak offered as his remedy for Thailand's current political crisis a closer adherence by all Thais to the teachings of the Lord Buddha and those of Phra Buddhadasa Bhikkhu.

The solution to Thailand's ills does not lie in which leader is chosen to become prime minister, Dr Sulak suggested, and he urged his fellow Thais not to enslave themselves to temporal powers, be they persons or money. Instead, he said, "Those of us who are Thais ought to regard ourselves as slaves of the Buddha."

Despite a cloud of gloom that reflected Sulak's bleak prospects of soon returning home, he ended on an optimistic note, pointing out the irresistible force of Dharma and its logical conclusion: "If we look to the future of Siam," he said, "it's bound to be democratic."

Buddhist themes permeated the weekend, and each day began with religious rites. Talks presented during the weekend were filled with references to Dharma, the Sangha, and the relationship between Buddhism and democracy.

American anthropologist Dr. Grant Olson, who had helped to organise the meeting, also addressed the assemblage. He pointed out that Phra Buddhadasa always believed his founding of Suan Mokkh in May 1932 (just one month before the historic transformation of Thailand's government from absolute rule to a constitutional monarchy) was no mere coincidence but rather an auspicious concurrence and a sign that democracy and Dharma were intricately related concepts.

Dr. Olson went on to stress the importance of remembering original intentions, noting that Thailand seems to lose its way from time to time en route to the Buddhist and democratic ideals it once aspired to.

Also present on May 30 was retired Colonel Somkid Srisangkhom a contemporary of the visionaries who brought about the change to constitutional monarchy 60 years ago and a long time champion of democracy in Thailand. Col. Somkid described the "vicious circle of elections, politics, and coups" that has plagued his country during his lifetime.

Col. Somkid complained that Thais have accepted the military as a fourth branch of government – an addition to the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches accepted in most other democracies. This would have to end, he insisted, if Thailand were ever to stop the vicious circle turning.

He blamed the legitimation of this "fourth branch" on Thai academics and elected members of parliament, who he suggested have rushed to curry favour with military leaders after every coup. By offering to help the generals reorder the government each time, he said, they encourage the acceptance of military intervention in politics.

Col. Somkid warned that the current situation could drag on for months and that more bloodshed might yet occur. He urged a re-organisation of the Thai military and the removal of key officers he says are responsible for

continuing tensions. "We are not yet at the end," the retired soldier said. "The military learned nothing from history."

Other speakers included Dr. Thongchai Winichakul, assistant professor of history at the University of Wisconsin and a veteran of the popular demonstrations in Thailand during the 1970s. He pointed out that this was not just the 60th anniversary of Thai democracy, but the centenary of King Chulalongkorn's dramatic 1892 reforms which centralised the administration of the country.

Though Dr. Thongchai credited those great changes with having laid the groundwork for modern democratic government, he also pointed out that an unfortunate and unforeseen by-product had been the quick ascendancy of the military and its influence over the Thai bureaucracy. While he believes that today's Thai military speak honestly when they claim to want democracy, Dr. Thongchai also believes that the generals misunderstand the word's meaning and see democracy only as a set of institutions to guarantee law and order and the right of a certain class to govern.

"Democracy," he said, "is not just institutions. It is people power." Such power, Dr. Thongchai observed, has grown in the past 20 years, a period of great change in Thai society. He dismissed the army leaders' characterisation of the pro-democracy demonstrators as a "resistance group." On the contrary, he said, the 1991 coup should be seen as an act of resistance against the forces of change.

Dr. Thongchai, a survivor of the October 1976 incident at Thammasat University and a prisoner for two years afterwards, said the violence of May 1992 shocked even him, but he did not expect it to deter continued opposition to military rule.

A panel of six conferees conducted a forum at the end of the day to offer commentary on what had been said.

The conference concluded on May 31 with a series of workshops, one of which was intended to explore what Thais abroad and their non-Thai friends could do to help better the situation at home. Conference organisers compiled a statement on behalf of the participants which was to be sent to key individuals and organisations in Thailand and across the US.

"We have resolved that both Thai authorities and the US should understand the spiritual foundations of a large part of the social change taking part in Thailand" the statement concluded. "The interpreters of these religious traditions acknowledge that many of their most valuable teachings are in line with democratic principles, participation, and social harmony."

Though news in the US of events inside Thailand has slowed to a trickle since the violence ended, Thai communities across North America continue to seek ways of staying in touch and lending support for the people back home.

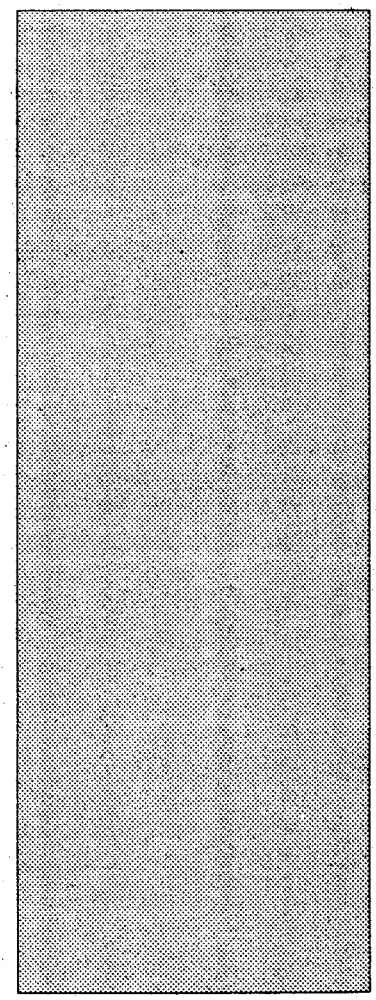
For example, a fair planned for June 28 at the Thai temple in North Hollywood, California, intends to raise money for the families of those who were injured or killed during last month's demonstrations in Bangkok. By offering live Thai music and selling food and T. shirts to those who attend, the members of Thai Taksin, a social group of southern Thais living in the Los Angeles area, hope to raise some money to send directly to Thai citizens who were effected by the violence.

One of the fundraiser's organisers, a Pasadena lawyer from Trang named Sukum Sai-ngam, says the idea started out small but is growing.

In a telephone interview, he referred to the tragic events of May as a "blood downpayment" and observed that Thailand has taken a significant turn in the road to democracy. His comments illustrate how very aware Thais in America are of the problems back home.

"In the past, this sort of thing would have been characterised as just another Third World upheaval" Mr. Sukhum said. "But now its's being called part of a maturation process. Chamlong's fast added a whole new dimension, and the army's reaction has caused the age-old consensus to break down at last."

Joseph J. Wright Jr.
BANGKOK POST
19 June 1992





The Democrat's Struggle Goes On

Seven weeks ago, when former Trat MP Chalard Vorachat decided to leave behind his family and his business to stage a solo hunger strike in protest against the appointment of a non-elected prime minister, many people thought he was just someone who wanted to make news of himself. Some thought he was insane. Many believed he would give up after a few days.

Yet, he held fast to his principles, his determination glaring ever brighter as time passed. People started taking him more seriously. And his message gradually began to get across to the public.

Several people asked him if it was worth it using *ahimsa* –non-violent means – as a tool to fight against a ruler who had no compassion in his heart. He said: "The intention of punishing myself is not to win mercy from such a person but to draw those who feel compassion to join forces and fight against the heartless ruler."

In this way, he managed to rekindle a burning desire for democracy in Thai society. And with support from several sectors including student groups and popular politicians like Gen Chamlong Srimuang, the fire spread quickly and widely among the general public. The enormous heat generated by the people's wishes proved to be so great that the prime minister who obtained his position through undemocratic means was unable to resist and had to yield up his authority.

Although the flames that Chalard helped to ignite later burnt wildly in an unexpected direction, bringing a rapid resolution of the premiership question but also causing great harm, the hunger striker stuck strictly to his original idea of peaceful protest until the end.

The former Trat MP had staged two hunger strikes before this: in 1979 to protest against the increase in the oil price, and again in 1983 against the constitutional amendment allowing government officials to assume Cabinet posts. Each event ended satisfactorily. And whether it was as a direct result of his protest or not, he considered himself successful.

"But this is the greatest time because it was a face-to-face fight between democracy and dictatorship, while the previous ones were just efforts to prevent dictatorship from growing too big," he said brightly. After the 46 days of his fast, this seemed to be the first time that cheerfulness had shone fully out from his usually unyielding eyes and determined smile.

"The success belongs to the people who came from all walks of life, together with all the organisations who combined forces to demand one thing: democracy. Everyone realised it was time to let the tree of democracy grow again." Chalard said. "To begin from the starting line again and finally reach the aim of true democracy in the next two decades is more hopeful than to live under the suppression of dictators.

"All these years my family was quite happy and my business ran quite well, yet I always felt we were under the control of dictatorship," he said, "It's only now that I am truly happy. We're free now.

"I must say, however, that the struggle against dictatorship is still far from finished," he warned. "If we just stop and bask complacently in our victory, dictatorial power will soon come back like it did before after the 'October 14' event.

"Gen Suchinda has resigned, but what we are really afraid of is not the individual, but the system," he said. "One thing we should all do to maintain democracy is to support elected prime ministers, because, unlike dictators, their power has no back-up from the authorities. They have no support from the bureaucratic system, whether from governors or other government officials. So the people must form a firm foundation for them.

"Moreover, in order to

maintain democracy we should also support the parliamentary system. If there's anything we want or anything we think is not fair, let the matter go through due process in Parliament. And keep a close watch," he warned, adding that if the people are serious about this, MPs will not dare to disappoint them for fear of not being chosen in the next election.

"Take the present situation as an example. Now people conquer, but I am afraid many of us will mistakenly think that we must immediately destroy the opposite side. That'll just make things worse," said Chalard. "We have our representatives in Parliament, so we should let the matter be settled through the parliamentary process. Let the MPs form an investigative committee which has the right to ask military leaders as well as concerned ministers to explain what happened. And the trial will follow later.

"Of course, if the prime minister and ministers were unelected people from the military, there would be no use in doing this. They wouldn't bother to listen to the people's appeals," he said. "This is why I said we should support elected prime ministers.

"People should be responsible about following the political situation. If the military unlawfully intervenes in government, we should express our opposition in peaceful ways. If there's a coup, the whole country should all agree not to pay taxes," he said. The recent measure of withdrawing money from banks related to the military in response to its bloody crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations was a good example of peaceful measures to show the public's feeling of opposition.

"If people develop their spirit like this, dictatorial power will gradually weaken," he said. "Even in England and America, democracy took centuries before it really blossomed.

"I believe the military now realise the greatness of the people's power. Yet as I already said, if we fall into complacency, dictators will soon return and demolish democracy with a coup."

According to Chalard, the democratic system in Thailand is not yet mature. He believes that to achieve a true government of the people, four more changes not yet included in the present constitutional amendment process should take place.

"Besides an elected prime minister, we should also have all leaders at other levels elected, too: provincial governors, *nai amphoe, Ramnan, or phuyaiban*," he said. "If we can elect a governor for Bangkok, why can't we do the same thing in other provinces? Why do people have to accept any person the Interior Ministry sends?

"The idea is based on the old fact that elected leaders must take sides with the people because their positions depend on the people's support, while appointed leaders tend to serve dictators rather than serve the people.

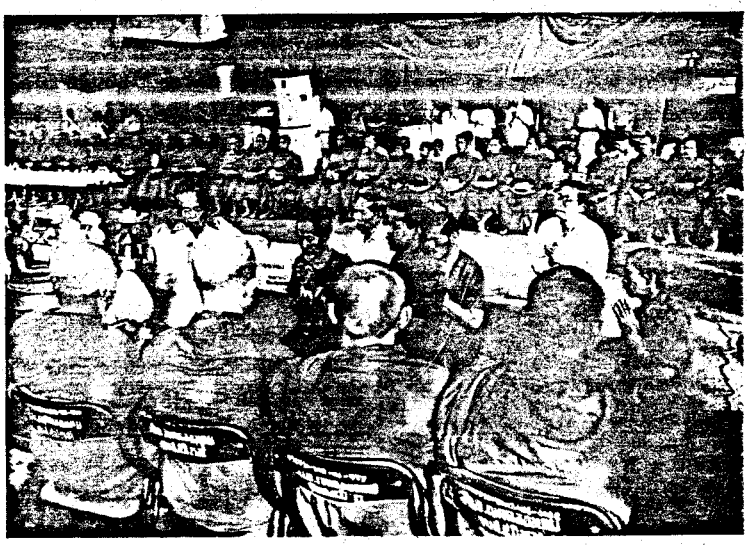
"Even Gen Chatichai Choonhavan, despite his family background, had to adapt himself and seek support from the people when he joined the stream of democracy," Chalard said. "If Gen. Suchinda had stood for election like others, he would naturally have had to adapt himself to the democratic system. And he would not have faced the problem of not being accepted.

"If the prime minister, ministers, governors, *nai amphoe, kamnan, and phuyaiban* were all elected, dictatorial power would have nothing to support it, and coups would be impossible," he explained. "They don't have to fear dictatorial power beause there is no power greater than that of the people who elected them."

Another change he longed for was the abolition of the Political Party Act which prevents the number of political parties from increasing.

"Why must politicians who come from the people be forced to register themselves at the Interior Ministry? Without the act, anybody would be able to set up a political party, no matter how many members they had," he commented.

"There's no need to worry that there will be too many political parties popping up. It will all de-



pend on how much people trust you, so a number of parties will naturally be eliminated," Chalard pointed out. He indicated the recent election of the Bangkok governor as an example. "There were so many candidates, but in the end it was just a few of them that people really chose from."

The other two changes he wished to see, he said, were that all dictatorial la ws and constitutions should be revoked and the responsibility of drafting laws should be given wholly to MPs who are representatives of the people.

"I believe one thing that can guarantee that developments toward democracy will not be interrupted is the existence of military leaders who have a democratic spirit," he said. "From now on democratic organisations should build cooperation with the military. We should no longer speak to each other from different sides, because the country cannot exist without the military anyway."

Chalard revealed that if he had a chance he would work on this in the future. At the moment, before he could involve himself in any political movement, he said he had two things to do first.

"I have to regain my health and then revive my business," he said. During the six and a half weeks of his hunger strike, he was not able to take care of his business at all. "Speaking of my business, sometimes I think it would be better if I died now," laughed the marathon hunger striker.

Apparently the loss of money was just a petty thing for him when compared with the great victory he shared with the people.

Ponpet Mekloy
BANGKOK POST
May 27,1992

SOUTH KOREA:

Prisoners of Conscience Begin Fast in Protest of National Security Laws



"People think things are better here now, because we have disappeared from the news." says Yoom Hae Kyong of Min Ka Hyup, the Association of Families of Political Prisoners. Having walked a gauntlet of riot police who had lined all approaches to the Myongdong Cathedral compound where I met Kyong, I could see things were not "better". Min Ka Hyup is one of 24 groups who now form the Coalition Against the National Security Laws. Each of these groups has been working in support of human rights in Korea and gathered at the Cathedral in support of a fast started by long term political prisoners held under Korea's National Security laws. The fast started July 22nd. "Out of hundreds of prisoners held for crimes of conscience" Kyong says, "we consider 90 to be Long Term Prisoners, with sentences of 15-42 years. My husband," Kyong continues," has served 7 years of an 8 year sentence." As she speaks about her husband, tears well up in her eyes and her voice trembles slightly. Nearby several women gather to address people in the compound and tell the stories of family members imprisoned by the government. "It is so unjust" says Kyong," some of these people have been in jail longer than I have been alive." Another women stops by to thank me for coming to hear their story. "Just tell the truth" she says to me, "and thank you for caring about the Korean people."

The National Security Legislation that allows for the arrest, conviction, and jailing of social activists is one of the key issues in Korean reunification.

This legislation has been used to stifle grass roots reconciliation initiatives by citizens in the South. Use of torture to obtain confessions to crimes against the state is routine according to Amnesty International. Repeal of these laws, which prohibit contact between citizens of the North and South of Korea, has been one of the non-negotiable items on the North's proposals for reunification. The Coalition is now creating pressure for repeal of these laws, and release of political prisoners.

As I left the Cathedral where Min Ka Hyup and the other groups will be maintaining their presence for the coming week I noticed there was a 20 foot high banner hanging on the side of the building facing the police squads. In large flowing Korean characters the determination of the families of political prisoners to achieve freedom for their loved ones and change in Korean society is unambiguously expressed: "We can die, but we can't give up".

Support Actions:

Petition your Member of Parliament or other governmental representative to include the following in your countries foreign policy suggestions: 1) press the Republic of Korea to repeal its repressive National Security Law and release political prisoners held under this law; 2) ask the United States to speed up the current US long range plans to withdraw all it's occupation troops (currently about 40,000) from the Republic of Korea; and 3) encourage high level talks between the U.S. and North and South Korea aimed at comprehensive military reductions on the Korean peninsula and negotiation of a peace treaty to finally and formally bring the Korean War to a close.

* Send copies of your locally circulated petitions to the Korean consulates within your country.

Further Information Contacts:
the Korean Support Network on APC computer networks <reg.korea>,
and Seoul Coalition for Democracy Unification Movement in Korea : 252-224 Soo Yoo 2 Dong, Do Bong Ku, Seoul, Korea
Amnesty International Reports: South Korea "Unconverted" political prisoners, July 1992, 3pp. South Korea Amnesty International's Concerns, June, 1992, 23pp.

Yeshua Moser is staff person for the Nonviolence International S.E. Asia office in Bangkok.

UNITED STATES : Ending US Inconsistency on Human Rights

Many United States citizens have no idea that for over two decades our country refused to ratify what surely is one of the most important international human rights documents of our time. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which establishes universal standards for the protection of basic civil and political liberties, is one of three documents that comprise the "International Bill of Rights".

In 1966, the ICCPR was adopted by the United Nations, but no action was taken by this country to ratify it until October 1977, at which time I signed the Covenant and submitted it to the Senate for advice and consent as required by our Constitution. The Senate gave this consent in April 1992, and in early June, George Bush signed the instrument of ratification. On June 8, 1992, the US, one of the keyplayers in drafting the Covenant, finally ratified this important human rights treaty.

Because of this historic action, the US removes its name from the list of pariah countries, such as China, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa, that have refused to accede to international human rights instruments. Along with the 102 other countries world wide that have ratified or acceded to the ICCPR, our country will submit a report to the UN Human Rights committee every five years, outlining measures taken by the US to implement the Covenant's provisions. In addition, US citizens will be able to serve on this commitee, which has been meeting since 1976 to discuss the progress of countries that have ratified the Covenant. Before ratification we were the only Western industrialized democracy absent from the committee.

Now that the US has taken this important step, however, it must not create doubts about its dedication and adherence to the Covenant by sanctimoniously picking and choosing among the provisions. to which it will adhere. President Bush

officially took exception to some Covenant provisions that conflict with domestic laws, including one on juvenile executions. The Bush administration wants to reserve the right to allow states to continue to execute juveniles. The only other nations that execute their young are Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria. New legislation is now required to make US law conform with the Covenant and with international law on this and other points.

Ratification of the ICCPR provides an excellent opportunity for the US to strengthen civil liberty provisions in domestic legal codes and affirm that international standards, such as treaties, prevail as the law of the land. Ratification also induce s our government to examine more closely the reasons for the upheaval that has shaken the US in the wake of the Rodney King verdict. Racial discrimination, police brutality and the inadequate response from the federal government to this problem, and the economic and social marginali- zation of African-Americans and other minorities are issues that demand immediate attention.

The government should also give higher priority to human rights in formulating foreign policy. Why were human rights abuses by Iraq of no apparent interest to the US government before the invasion of Kuwait? It is of equal concern that the Bush administration recently proposed a very generous trade package for China, a country that has failed to improve its appalling human rights record.

The US has yet to ratify several other widely accepted human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. This Covenant, along with the ICCPR and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, completes the International Bill of Rights. Those who oppose the ratfication of the second Covenant believe governments have no obligation to safeguard the rights of their citizens to jobs, education, housing, and an adequate standard of living. Recent events illustrate the tragic flaws of such thinking. Also awaiting action by the Bush administration and the Senate are the American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Even the Convention on the Rights of the Child has not yet been signed by the US.

By ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the US has taken one step forward, albeit at too slow a pace. It now is incumbent upon future administrations to accelerate these programmes and take action to end our country's inconsistency and double standards in dealing with human rights at home and abroad. We can hardly clamour for justice in other parts of the world if we will not pledge to provide justice for our own citizens.

Jimmy Carter, president from 1977 through 1980, is chairman of the Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation based at the Carter Centre in Atlanta. (c) 1992, The Christian Science Monitor Publishing Society

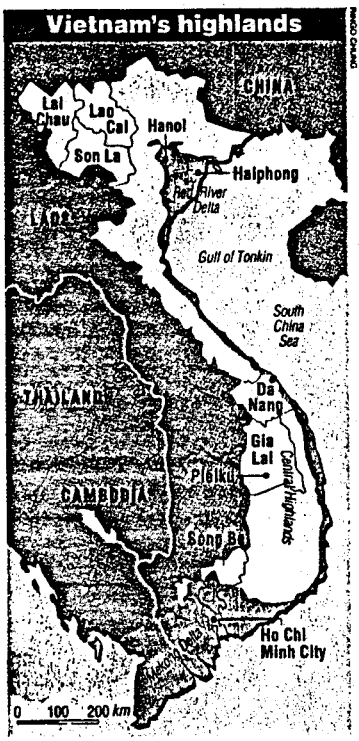
VIETNAM : Dynamics of Despair

Hanoi's six-year free-market reform programme has so far brought few benefits to Tan Sanmay, a Dao minority woman who farms on the steep mountain slopes of Lao Cai province near Vietnam's border with China. The 53-yearold grandmother says the biggest change brought by the reforms is that the village cooperative, set up in the heady day of the communist party's march towards socialism, has been abandoned.

What little cultivatable land there is in Ta Phi village has been divided among individual families but, with the demise of the cooperative, farmers no longer have access to government-subsidised fertiliser to boost their output. Sanmay, who is illiterate, is not sure how much land her family farms, but she estimates her plot produced enough rice last year to feed her family of nine for eight or nine months.

Sanmay, who like most minority women works 14 to 15 hours a day in the fields and caring for her family, moved to Ta Phi when she got married at 15. "After that I gave birth to a child every year, or at least two in every three years," she says. Sanmay had a total of 12 children, five of whom died of various illnesses when they were young.

The village administrative office has a small clinic but no medicines. The nearest hospital offering treatment for malaria and the severe stomach disorders which afflict the people of Ta Phi is 12 km away on foot in the



district town of Sapa.

Sanmay tries to send her two youngest children to school for a few hours early in the morning before they have to help in the fields, but the village has had trouble keeping its teachers. "They come for one or two months and then they leave," she says. "Often we have no teacher for several months."

Life in Sanmay's village, as in other minority communities in the northern mountains and central highlands, is harsh. A government economist estimates that the living standard of minority villages in Vietnam is only one fortieth of the level in Hanoi.

Vietnam's 53 ethnic minority groups total roughly 8 million people, or about 13% of the country's 69 million population. The 10 largest groups – the Tay, Thai, Hoa (or ethnic Chinese), Khmer, Muong, Nung, Hmong, Dao, Jarai and Ede– each number from 100,000 to 1 million people. The six smallest groups have less than 1,000 people each.

Apart from the Hoa – who mainly live in Ho Chi Minh City and lowland towns– and the Khmer– who live in the southern Mekong River delta – most of the other minorities dwell in the northern mountain and central highland regions which comprise about 75% of Vietnam's land area. These regions are of key strategic importance for Hanoi as they contain most of the country's forest and mineral resources.

The minorities' centuries of relative isolation ended abruptly in the 1940s, when the Vietnamese communists launched their war of independence against the French colonialists. Vietnamese revolutionaries established their resistance bases in highland areas where they recruited minority soldiers, while the French co-opted some groups to fight for the colonial army by promising them autonomous zones.

During Vietnam's war with the US, the highland areas were heavily bombed and sprayed with c hemical defoliants – particularly on the central plateau – further disrupting the lives of the minorities living there. China's 1979 invasion of northern Vietnam was also launched in areas inhabited mostly by minorities.

After the communists defeated the US backed regime in the south in 1975, they ploughed most of their meagere resources and limited foreign aid into developing industry in the cities and agriculture in the fertile Red and Mekong river deltas.

The minorities, many of whom practise shifting cultivation in or at the edge of the country's forests, were encouraged to resettle in fixed communities and become self-sufficient in food production, a goal that proved unattainable. Most villages continue to face rice shortages of three to nine months each year.

Rapid natural population growth among minorities, coupled with the migration of several million ethnic Vietnamese from the overcrowded deltas to the highlands in the late 1970s and early 1980s, resulted in a severe land shortage in the region. The unrelenting search for food has led to the rapid destruction of the country's forests and a sharp loss in soil fertility, further reducing the ability of minority farmers to eke out a living.

As the communist party began its drive to establish a free-market economy in the mid-1980s, however, it abandoned its emphasis on local food self-sufficiency. "We now realise that if you plant industrial or cash crops, they can be exchanged for food," says Hoang Duc Nghi, the minister in charge of mountainous areas and minority affairs. "But first you need to solve the transportation problem. How do you shift to a market economy without roads?"

Hmong farmers in Bac Ha district near the Chinese border have begun planting plums, apricots and other fruit on their terraced billside fields, but because of the lack of roads they get poor prices for their produce in the Red Rived delta.

The highlands also face other infrastructure problems. Because most highland provinces have no electricity, annual per-capita consumption totals only 18 kW hours. For example, Pleiku, one of the biggest cities in the central highlands, has no telephone links with the outside world.

Despite the poverty of the highlands, they have many of the country's most promising natural resources. Most of Vietnam's rapidly dwinding forest reserves are located in the central plateau, while the northern highlands have vast untapped mineral resources, including coal, iron ore, phosphate, bauxite, tin, gold, silver and precious stones.

The former Soviet Union

recognised the central plateau has ideal soil conditions for raising rubber, coffee, tea and other cash crops, but political and economic chaos forced the Soviets to abandon their projects in the late 1980s. The best sites for building hydroelectric dams to alleviate the growing energy shortages in the southern provinces are also located in the central highlands.

A resolution by the ruling politburo in 1989 put new emphasis on developing the country's minority regions and integrating them into the national economy. In recent months, the government has organised a series of conferences around the country to discuss strategies to develop the country's highland areas, but Hanoi -- which lost most of its Soviet aid last year and continues to face a US embargo -- is desperately short of funds.

Gia Lai province in the central highlands expects to receive only Dong 15-16 billion (US$1.3-1.4 million) from the central government this year, most of which will be spent on education and health, according to deputy provincial governor Hoang Le. Last year, Hanoi invested only about Dong 100 billion in the highlands, roughly 15% of its capital investment budget, says Tran Tho Nghi, deputy director of the State Planning Commission's Department for Localities.

The lack of government help for highland areas has created some resentment among the minorities. "We only received a certificate saying that we had made a great contribution," complained the party chief of a minority village west of Danang, which had supported the communists during the war with the US. "We haven't received any aid from the government since 1975."

One of the biggest changes under communist rule has been an attempt to legislate racial equality and elevate more minorities to government and party posts. Last year, Nong Duc Manh, a member of the Tay tribal group and the head of the central committee's Ethnic Minorities Commission, became the politburo's first minority member.

The party's 146-member central committee includes 13 minorities, while 163,000 party members, 7.5% of the total, come from minority groups. The National Assembly has 70 minorities among its 496 representatives, but most civil servants in highland areas are still ethnic Vietnamese because the pool of literate minorities is so small.

Some minorities feel their equality exists mainly on paper and that many local officials and ethnic Vietnamese continue to look down on them. "The state's policy against discrimination is correct, but people who carry out the policies in the provinces, districts and villages don't follow this policy," complains a minority village party chief near Danang. "They say we lack education, live in caves and eat salt. I think discrimination has increased since 1975."

Some minorities are also worried about the government's post-1975 policy to encourage lowland farmers to set up new economic zones in the highlands in an attempt to reduce population pressures in the deltas. Out of Gia Lai province's current population of 720,000 people, for example, roughly 200,000 are lowland Vietnamese who have arrived since the end of the war.

Land disputes have periodically erupted between the minorities and the newcomers, and these tensions appear to have increased since the party abandoned farm cooperatives in the late 1980s and began moves to divide land among individual families.

Last year Dai Doan Ket magazine reported that many minorities in Lai Chauprovince in the northwest were demanding the return of their former ancestral lands. In an effort to resolve the disputes, the article said that several thousand ethnic Vietnamese had been forced to leave the province and return to their former homes in the Red River delta.

The shortage of arable land in the northern mountains has also prompted some minorities to migrate south. Since the late 1980s, tens of thousands of Hmong and Dao farmers have moved from areas bordering China to provinces south of Hanoi and to the central highlands, where they have often become embroiled in land disputes with the local population. *Nhan Dan*, the party daily,





reported last year that in 1990 and the first half of 1991 some 85,000 minority people had moved from the far north to Song Be province, northwest of Ho Chi Minh City, where they were accused of destroying 5,000 ha of forest.

The party's recent moves towards a free-market economy also appear to have spawned an increase in opium production, particularly in the northern mountain regions. Recent visitors to Son La province on the Laotian border report seeing opium growing openly along the main roads, even though Hanoi banned commercial production in 1954 and introduced a total ban in 1986.

"In the past people only grew opium for family use, but now they can sell it on the market so they produce more," says Hoang Ngoc Lam, the Hmong police chief in Lao Cai province's Sapa district.

Nghi believes that Vietnam's northern provinces produced roughly 15 tonnes of opium last year. Lam says apart from some opium used for local consumption, much of the crop is smuggled out through China and the Vietnamese port city of Haiphong. Foreign narcotics experts say some is also moved through the international airports of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Nghi says the government is interested in foreign aid to introduce alternative crops, but he believes it will be difficult to stamp out opium cultivation unless roads are built to move bulkier produce to market.

Government and party officials admit they can do little to improve life in the highlands and capitalise on the area's vast economic potential without outside help. "We recognise that we have to lean on the mountain areas, which have forests and a potential for industrial crops and mining, to develop our economy," a government economist says. "But our biggest problem is the lack of capital. Without foreign investment it will be difficult for us to develop the economy in the highlands."

The mountain areas have so far attracted little foreign investment and aid, though a few firms from South Korea, Singapore and Japan have begun investing in wood processing and silk production in the central highlands. One reason for limited investment is clearly the region's poor infrastructure. But another key obstacle has been the government's refusal to allow all but a handful of foreign businessmen and aid workers to visit the central plateau due to fears of possible unrest caused by minority insurgents.

Hanoi has so far largely escaped the separatist unrest among its minorities that continues to plague the former Soviet Union and even China, though an insurgent group known as the United Front for the Struggle of Oppressed Races (Fulro) mounted occasional attacks in the central highlands after 1975. The group, which had earlier received funding from France and the US to fight the communists, said its goal was to establish an independent nation for minorities.

Officials in Gia Lai say most of Fulro's members had surrendered or fled the country by 1985, but an article in the army newspaper *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* last year suggested that at least some rebels continued to operate for much longer.

Murray Hiebert
FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW
23 April 1992

THE FEMININE PREDICAMENT



All over the world, social structures and political systems are breaking up. Nations are enmeshed in the arms race and the largely unrestricted sale of arms perpetuates the countless ethnic, religious and political conflagrations which continue to rage around the globe.

Rising populations, unsustainable development and the misuse of modern technology, threaten our fragile environment to the point at which an international summit conference was held in what many view as a last ditch attempt to forestall global ecological disaster.

Where did it all go wrong? How as Buddhists actively engaged in social analysis, can we help to turn the tidal wave of events, which largely self induced, seems to be engulfing humanity and all living forms on our planet?

Riane Eisler, internationally known scholar in peace and feminist issues, attorney and co-director of The Centre for Partnership studies, may have some of the answers.

In her book *The Chalice and the Blade*. she has synthesized a new theory of our cultural evolution from a *"gender holistic perspective"*. From the conclusions drawn, it would seem that to begin the healing process, we should first endeavour with all speed and by all intelligent means available to actively address the imbalance which exists throughout the world, in male/ female relations.

Her cultural transformation theory proposes that underlying the great and diverse surface of human culture are two basic models of society. The first is the Dominator model, popularly termed either Patriarchal or Matriarchal, the ranking of one half of society over the other, having the absolute power to establish and enforce domination. The second is the Partnership model in which social relations are primarily based on linking between the sexes, where diversity is not equated with superiority or inferiority. The partnership is egalitarian Although many will be familiar with her work, her research may be less well known in S.E Asia. However, its relevance to our present predicament is of great importance.

The central thesis of her cultural transformation theory is that the direction of cultural evolution in Dominator and Partnership societies is very different. It proposes that the mainstream of our cultural evolution during the Paleolithic, Neolithic and later Minoan, Cretan civilisations was towards a partnership society where the feminine principle was deified. The Goddess, whose body, the divine chalice, contained the miracle of birth and the power to transform death into life. Through the mysterious regeneration of nature, the Goddess personified the life giving principle and the unity of all things in nature.

The art of these prehistoric civilisations reflects a social order in which women played a central part, working in equal partnership for the common good. There is a noticeable absence of male domination, hierarchy, warfare or slavery. Minoan art expressed a spontaneous love of life, in which the primary function of the mysterious powers governing the universe is not to exact obedience, punish and destroy but to give life. There was no division between the sacred and the secular. In prehistoric and well into historic times, religion was life and life was religion.

Cultural transformation theory further proposes, that following a period of almost total cultural disruption in old Europe, between 4000-2500 BCE barbarian invaders, the Kurgans in three separate

waves, destroyed the peaceful order of the old European culture. These were people who worshiped the power of the blade, the power to take rather than give life, the ultimate power to establish and enforce domination aided by the new technology of metallurgy. It was at this cataclysmic period that a fundamental shift occured in the cultural evolution of Western society from partnership to Dominator organization. Egalitarian societies were replaced with patriarchal ones and women, once revered as peaceful creators, lost to the new warlike vision of man. Although the data is large based on Western cultural evolution, there are indications that this turning point was paralelled in other parts of the world. In Thailand, there is evidence that the female principle was predominant in earliest times and there are still traces of matrilinear organisation in society.

Ms. Eisler's observations were made possible because missing data not found in conventional sources has come to light over the past two decades as a result of female scholarship. Historically, the social scientists were men working on the study of man from a data base in which the other half of the human race in most studies of human society was almost completely ignored. Feminist scholarshp which has led to a holistic theory of cultural transfor mation, focuses on how we organise the relations between the two halves of humanity for the totality of a social system.

It shows that the way we structure the most fundamental of all human relations has a profound effect on all our institutions, values and on the direction of our cultural evolution, whether peaceful or warlike.

It is difficult for many people to believe that the structure of society could ever be other than patriarchal, much less that our very survival might depend apon anything connected with the female principle.

New discoveries from a holistic study of social history show clearly that, although men have fought wars for millennia, this does not mean that men are fundamentally violent and warlike. The root of the problem lies in social systems where the power of the blade is idealised, where men and women are conditioned to equate true masculinity with power, violence and dominance and the men who do not conform to these ideals are condemned as soft and effeminate.

In prehistory and in later periods, the feminine priciple re-surfaced: during the Troubador period in the courts of Eleanor of Aquitaine and amongst the flower children of the sixties protesting the war in Vietnam. There were many men who united to promote the power to give and nurture, whose values were in opposition to those of a dominator society.

Ms. Eisler suggests that if we define our present and future potential through the analysis of dominator and partnership models



of social organisation, we can also begin to transcend the polarities of the political right and left and of masculinism and feminism. The larger picture which emerges, indicates that all the modern post-enlightenment movements for social justice are part of the underlying thrust from a dominator to a partnership system. From this perspective, the more recent peace, ecology and feminist movements may be seen as part of our evolutionary struggle for survival.

Holistic research shows that our mounting global problems are mainly due to the logical consequences of a dominator model of social organisation allied with our unprecedented level of technological developement. It also argues that, since this combination of conditions has created the problems, it is unlikely that we will be able to find solutions within these existing structures.

A more optimistic view is open to us as co- creators of our own evolution, the alternative choice of breakthrough rather than breakdown. A breakthrough to new ways of structuring science and spirituality, politics and economics in a definitive shift towards the new era of partnership in the world.

It is interesting to note that Futurists see human values and social arrangement as the main determinants of our future, rather than technology and economics. Many intimate that we must leave behind the agressive conquest oriented values which have become masculinized to embrace and reassert a more feminine ethos.

In Politics and the Solar Age, Henderson describes a positive economic future in which the roles of men and women are fundamentally re-balanced. This entails the realisation that our masculine militarism is the most energy intensive, entropic activity of the human race. It converts stored energy directly into waste and destruction without any positive fulfillment of human needs. He predicts a marked decline in patriarchal systems and masculinized values which govern our present economic reality.

Willis Harman (*Futurist Studies*-Stanford University) writes that "what is needed and evolving, is a metamorphosis in basic cultural premises and all aspects of social roles and institutions– a de-conditioning of society. He describes a new consciousness in which competition will be balanced with cooperation and individualism will be balanced with love, a cosmic consciousness or higher awareness which relates self interest to the interests of fellow man and future generations.

Futurist writings also stress the lack of social guidance systems and governing values that would redirect the allocation of resources, including advanced technology. The Club of Rome proposes that what is needed is a new global ethic if catastrophe is to be avoided.

David Suzuki's recent "Declaration of Inter-Dependence" embodies much of the holistic theory and practise which is gaining strength today. Buddhism, whose essence is the teaching of the dependant orgination of suffering (the Paticcasamuppada), offers a social guidance system and an advanced spiritual technology which fulfills the new criteria.

In Dominator structured societies lurks the duel economy in which women's low or unpaid products are exploited. The U.N.'s "State of the World's Women" report, published in 1985, points out that globally, half the world's population (women) perform two thirds of the work in terms of hours and earn only one tenth of men's earnings. They own only one hundredth of the property in comparison to men. Since the unpaid labour of women is routinely excluded from calculations of national productivity, global economic projections would seem to be based on statistical illusions.

When the life sustaining labour of nurturing, loving and helping others and the nurture of nature are integrated into the economic mainstream, we will gradually develop an economically healthy and balanced social system. As we move into a world of partnership, the suspicion and recrimination in male- female relations will change to more openess and trust. Families and communities, national and international policies will benefit from these repurcussions.

There will in consequence be a decline in the problems of mental illness, suicide, divorce, wife and child abuse, vandalism, theft and murder which so often result from inequalities in society. These types of problems are largely derived from the high degree of interpersonal tension inherent in social organisations dominated by men and by child rearing styles based on force.

With more equal and balanced education, where men need no longer suppress their innate gentler qualities and more caring behaviour in children's education is reinforced, we may realistically expect fundamental psychic changes which will accelerate the process of transformation.

The social structures of the future will be based on linking rather than ranking in hierarchical insti-

tutions, allowing for diversity and greater flexibility in decision making and action. Roles of men and women will be far less rigidly conditioned, allowing the entire human race a maximum opportunity in which to develop the full positive potential of its evolution.

Ms. Risler asks us to observe the fluctuations throughout history from warlike to more peaceful times, from authoritarian rule to freer more creative periods, from times of brutal female repression to periods when there has been a broadening of educational and life opportunities for some women. In spite of the almost universal establishment of patriarchal systems, the resurgence of the feminine has taken place no matter how often it has been crushed, particularly during periods of political instability.

She points to the beginning of the Christian era when the Gnostic Christian communities were egalitarian. They threatened the existing patriarchal organisation of society and were destroyed as heresies by the so called "orthodox" Christian Church. Something went terribly wrong with the gospel of love and resulted in torture, conquest and persecution. Christianity became a patriarchal religion, the type of violent and hierarchical system Jesus had rebelled against.

Studies have revealed the grim fact that when threatened by change the dominator sytem's first line of defence has been the reassertion of male control. A regression towards the suppression of women is an early predictor of a generally repressive and bloody period of history. The conclusion is that unless the systems relationship between the suppression of women and of affiliative and caring values, is finally addressed, we



are inevitably moving towards another period of blood letting through war.

There are many indications of this today. Crimes against women are escalating. Fundamental Islam is relegating women to a position of subserviance, many of whom had emerged in less repressive times into a realisation of their full potential. Child abuse, the continued persecution of homosexuals and the continuing stream of hard pornography and advertisements for commercial gain continue to exploit and degrade the female sex. Recently the voice of a prominent American psychiatrist was heard proclaiming "that equal pay for women was counter to the free market economy and that anyway, women were genetically programmed to domestic choices."

The Buddha's Four Noble Truths are incontrovertibly a governing principle for the future organisation of society together with the development of a value system

based on the development of the ten virtues in order to master our negative tendencies.

Buddhists however also need to put their own house in order by re-evaluating male female relations within the Sangha and the lay community. It should be acknowleged that Buddhism, when first established in India, was rooted in the existing patriarchal structure of society. The Buddha did much to try and change existing attitudes towards women as mere goods and chattels, deploring their low status and lack of human rights. He set a great example, but aroused great antagonism amongst the Brahmins together with his criticism of the cast system.

Today, the lot of a few women in SE Asia has improved, but a great deal needs to be done to educate and give women a sense of their own worth and ability to help themselves. We must also help the majority of men to de-masculinize their conditioning and open up to their finer sensibilities, to release them from the iron bonds which have so long been inherited in the stereotyping of male roles in patriarchal societies.

It is interesting to learn that as a result of the feminist movement, some of the men have taken a leaf out of their book and formed groups to help each other break the shackles and to get in touch with their deep inner feelings and lost archetypes. This process often helped to release much sorrow and hurt suffered in their early years which could not be normally expressed as it would not have been considered manly. Some of their experiences were recorded by the BBC and were most touching. In allowing themselves normal human emotions, they were growing in understanding and maturity opening up to being human rather than sub or superhuman.

As engaged Buddhists, we can perhaps start on an individual basis, seriously analysing and working positively with the negative aspects of our male-female relations.

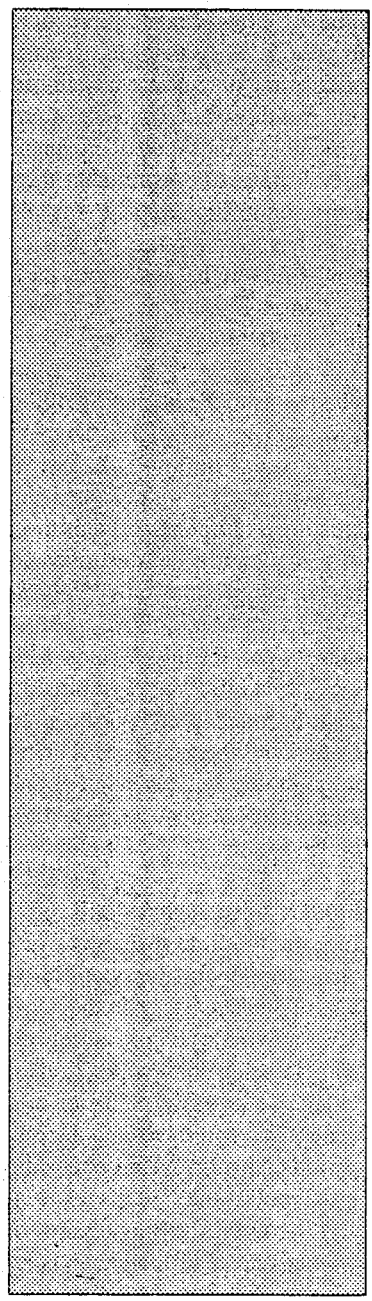
We should do all we can to foster good relations and to improve education and vocational training for women while helping them to escape degrading occupations and become economically self sufficient.

Buddhist education should be fully integrated into the educational system together with education on the interdependance of our ecological systems and a respect for nature and nurture. It should also include practical oppo-rtunitities to implement projects which will create social partnerships and partnership with the environment to ensure our future survival.

Buddhism, if rightly practised, is a truly democratic system. It respects the right of all beings to happinness and the avoidance of suffering. Yet in Buddhist countries, women continue to remain poor and disadvantaged. It is just not good enough to just "take refuge" in the triple gem. As Professor Robert Thurman observed, Buddhist monks are freedom fighters, seeking (in the Bodhisattva tradition) to liberate themselves and all sentient beings from the causes of suffering.

If we can all become freedom fighters in the true sense of liberation from our negative impulses which lead to suffering, then we may be able to stop history repeating itself in the endless round of rebirths and negative consequences.

Venetia Walkey (with overwhelming acknowlegements to Ms. Riane Eisler.) June 1992



NATIONAL INTERESTS WEAKEN RIO SUMMIT AGREEMENTS BUT PROGRESS ACHIEVED ON OTHER FRONTS

The Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in the first half of June, was probably the biggest conference ever held. Strictly speaking it was two conferences. While heads of state and national delegates deliberated at the huge Rio Centro complex built especially for the occasion, non-governmental organisations displayed their wares in a city park forty kilommetres away.

A hundred and fourteen heads of state and government approved the massive Agenda 21 document intended as a blueprint for a sustainable future, plus a statement of forest principles and the Rio Declaration. More than 150 nations signed conventions about biodiversity and climate change, but it remains to be seen whether or not enough funds will be forthcoming to make the decisions workable.

Nobody expected the USA to take major steps to resolve global environmental problems, and George Bush was clearly more concerned about the imminent presidential election. He told the press that he was "President of the United States, not president of the world and I'll do what is best to defend US interests". To which Maurice Strong, the conference's ebullient secretary-general, retorted: "We must change our attitudes. That message hasn't got through to everybody. Current life styles in North America are not sustainable".

Efforts by Western governments and environmentalists to persuade countries in the tropics to accept international supervision of their forests ended in failure. For the last two years members of the group of seven (G7) industrial countries have tried to create a legally binding forest convention. In Rio the so-called group of seventy-seven (G77) developing countries, led by India, China and Malaysia, refused to countenance any infringement of their national sovereignty. All references to a future forest convention had to be removed from the various texts, and all that finally remained was vague references to international reporting procedures on the state of tropical forests.



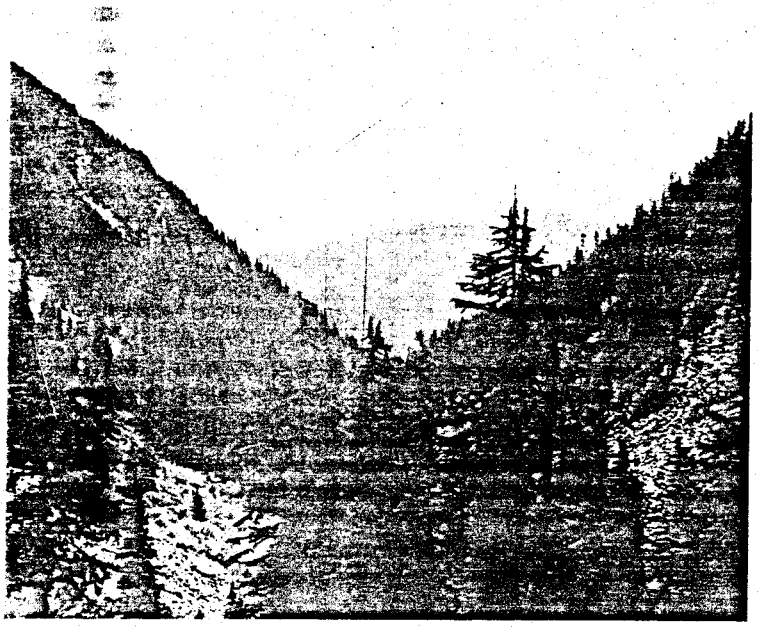
"We understand the global importance of forests", declared India's environment minister, Kamal Nath. But he insisted that they remain national resources. "We do not talk about the globalisation of oil. Yet oil has a greater impact than the forests on the global environment", he added.

Malaysia was the strongest opponent in Rio of a strong statement of forest principles that would have included a commitment to a future legally binding forest convention. "We don't at this time think there should be a convention", said Prime Minister Mahathiir Mohamad. When might be a good time? "The day the North replants its forests". For the moment, "a convention would only be fair if we could also tell the North that they could not have this or that factory".

Shortly before the summit, George

Bush announced plans to spend 150 million on forest aid projects, the first installment in a phased doubling of forest aid, and there were hints of further announcements to come. But in the event these never appeared, and Bush's closing summit speech left everybody in a mood of despondency. According to "green" senator, Al Gore, the failure of the forest negotiations "was an inevitable result of the North's failure to agree limits on carbon dioxide emissions" in the Climate Convention negotiations.

Third World governments were annoyed by Bush's statements that



stressed the role of forests as a sink for carbon dioxide. According to a US conservationist, "The message seemed to be that it was far wiser to invest in forests than to cut emissions of carbon dioxide".

There was less confrontation forty kilometres away where more than seven hundred non-governmental organisations (NGO's) displayed their wares in Flamenco Park, a long tree-lined expanse running parallel with one of Rio's beautiful but polluted beaches.

Most of the organisations represented had some sort of environmental concern - Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth etc. Jonathon Porritt's Tree of Life, a beautiful golden globe inviting people, especially children, to affix promises to take concrete steps for the environment, occupied a place between the main entrance and the beach. There was music, drama, dance, and an all-night vigil of prayer arranged by several religious organisations.

As far as the exhibition booths in the park were concerned there were few signs of involvement by religious bodies. Ananda Marg and the World Conference of Religion for Peace were present. Some Sri Lankan and Thai Buddhist monks were among the visitors, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama paid a visit.

The Vatican was represented at the international gathering and the World Council of Churches held a conference more than four hours drive from Rio de Janeiro. Some Brazilian church agencies occupied exhibition booths, as did the International Consortium on Religion and Ecology, the Development Forum of the Swedish Churches and the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland. All in all religious bodies, and especially the Christian Churc hes, were conspicuous by their absence.

The Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (CCBI) booth was staffed for the duration of the two parallel events by myself and Rachel Stephens, secretary for international affairs of the Methodist Church in London. Each day one of us would travel to the Rio Centro to monitor and occasionally participate in the UNCED proceedings, while the other spent the day sitting in the booth ans wering questions. In the evening we usually met with the British NGO's and some members of the British delegation.

The CCBI's two page document had been approved by the CCBI Assembly in February and was available in English and Portugese. It called upon the churches to recognise the importance of all six major components of the UNCED process as originally set out, and endorsed sustainable development as "a goal which expresses the Christian imperative to love and serve God the Creator and to love our neighbours, many of whom are children predominantly in the southern continents". It went on to argue that before any major breakthrough is likely to be achieved on the environmental or developmental fronts a solution must be found to the problem of international debt:

> In responding, the churches in Britain and Ireland are especially concerned to see that the developmental issues of the South are addressed and that adequate resources are allocated to meet tham. Much of the

pollution and resources depletion experienced throughout the world is the result of activities by industrial countries which have increased their assets and improved their lifestyles while concealing or ignoring the true cost of environmental damage. Industrial countries must shoulder the economic cost of addressing the environmental and developmental problems to which they have so heavily contributed.

Similarly, the churches, prompted by their overseas aid and mission agencies and in keeping with the Biblical principle of Jubilee, urge that commercial and government debts accrued by the poorer nations during recent decades be cancelled or rescheduled possibly in return for environmental guarantees within the scope of international agreements. It is intolerable that there should continue to be a net transfer from the impoverished developing nations to the industrial nations.

In their commitment to these developmental and environmental concerns, the churches reaffirm the scriptural emphasis on justice which has been a guiding principle in the traditions of the churches. That emphasis was clearly expressed through the European Ecumenical Assembly in Basel in 1989 when the churches of Europe committed themselves to seek peace with justice for the whole creation.

Brazilian visitors were particularly interested in our statement, and several journalists took copies of the Portugese version for publication in their newspapers. Brazilians were also very interested to know that the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (which replaces the former British Council of Churches) included Roman Catholics as full members.

All in all, participaing in the two Rio events was an enormously worthwhile experience. Although the impasse between the North and South prevented agreement on many major environmental fronts, the polarisations may have been inevitable if any progress is ultimately to be made. The North may now be beginning to understand the depth of feeling which many developing countries experience in relation to the true cost of it's own affluence, and the NGO's from all over the world, many of which have long appreciated this, are beginning to make significant inroads into the thinking of leaders and decision makers. Progress in Rio at the international level may have been slight, but few people realistically anticipated much more, while at the more informal level of personal encounter a great deal was achieved, not least at the NGO forum.

David L.Gosling

Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche 1954-1992

Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye was one of the most brilliant stars in the galaxy of scholars and siddhas from Tibet, the land of snow. Predicted by the Buddha, he was the crown jewel in the rime (non-sectarian) movement of Buddhism in Tibet.

He was born on December 14, 1813, to Sonamphel and Tashitso in front of Mount Pema Lhatse, one of the eight sacred places in Kham (eastern Tibet). Lodro Thaye became learned in the ten ordinary and extraordinary branches of knowledge, and it became his responsibility to explain and compose texts, which



incorporated a great number of teachings from both the old and new traditions, including the lineages of oral teachings, hidden treasures (terma), and teachings of pure vision. These were all brought together in Lodro Thaye's great Five Treasuries of Knowledge. At the age of eighty-seven on January 9, 1899, he passed away.

In the garden of Sambdrub Choling at Dowolung Tshurphu, the unexcelled heart center of the dakinis, the second Jamgon Kongtrul, Khyentse Ozer, was born in 1902 as the son of the 15th Karmapa, Khakhyab Dorje, of whom he was the heart son as well. He studied, mastered, and practiced to perfection the treaties of the sutras and tantras in general, and in particular, the Five Treasuries, the path of liberation, which focuses on the Mahamudra as it is elucidated in the special teachings of the Kamtsang Kagyu. Khyentse Ozer attained realization of the ultimate lineage and became the lineage holder of the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa. Many times over, he gave teachings, empowerments, and reading transmissions from the old and new traditions, such as the Rinchen Ter Dzo, and he rebuilt the retreat center of Tsatra Rinchen Drak (his residence at Palpung Monastery), supplying it with everything 10th He passed away on the tenth of May, 1952, having accomplished great deeds for the benefit of the teachings and sentient beings.

The name of the third Kongtrul incarnations is Jamgon Kongtrul, Karma Lodro Chokyi Senge, perfect guide of unequaled kindness, whose aspirations, activity, and accomplishments for the precious Dharma and sentient beings in general, and the Kagyu lineage in particular, have been a wondrous light in these dark times. For this reason, his name is spoken with great reverence.

According to this vajra prophesy, Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche was born on the first of October 1954. the male horse year of the sixteenth cycle, in Lhasa, from whence the Dalai Lama guided the spiritual and temporal life of Tibet.

At the age of six, he was enthroned by His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa at the old monastery in Rumtek, Sikkim. From then onwards, Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche as a heart son was inseparable from His Holiness, who supervised his education right from the very beginning, starting with reading, writing, and memorizing texts.

Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche had great faith, respect, and devotion for his spiritual teachers, the source of all paths and practice, and received from them many teachings of the sutra and tantra traditions. Especially, his relationship to the Gyalwa Karmapa, embodiment of all refuges, was one of total devotion, respect, and pure vision, which was greater than even that for the Buddha himself.

Jamgon Rinpoche visited Tibet in 1984, and at Palpung Monastery, he gave empowerments and teachings to a vast gathering of monks and lay people, and ordained about 500 monks giving them getsul and gelong vows. He then visited Lhasa and Tshurphu Monastery (The Seat of His Holiness the Ghyalwa Karmapa) where he gave empowerments and teachings to monks and lay people, and the ordinations of getsul and gelong to about one hundred. Furthermore, he was able to obtain permission for the reconstruction of Tshurphu, towards which he donated all the offerings that were made to him during his journey.

In 1988, Rinpoche constructed a new monastery at Lava near Kalimpong, West Bengal, and presently about 108 monks reside there, ten of whom are involved in a three-year retreat following the tradition of the golden Dharma in the Shangpa Kagyu. Likewise, in 1988 he started the construction of Phullahari Retreat Center in Nepal, where there are now about fifteen monks practicing.

At the age of thirty-nine (by the Tibetan calendar), Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche suddenly passed away, due to the obstacles for Buddhism and people in general, and in particular for the Kagyu tradition. Considering his age, learning, qualities, aspirations, and activities, his passing has been an unbearably sorrowful event for his disciples and all who knew him. Yet, as ordinary people with limited understanding and realization of how things truly are, we are unable to know the profound methods for benefiting sentient beings in the right time and place. We should, therefore, always look at his life with pure vision, great faith, and devotion, and try to attain in our lifetime the supreme achievement of Mahamudra through receiving in our mindstream the blessing of his body, speech, and mind. We should always turn our minds towards praying that his perfect incarnation will swiftly return, and that his life and activities will be brought to perfection following the aspiration he has made of the Dharma and sentient beings.

Bokar Tulku
Karma Ngedon Chokyi Lodro
DENSAL Vol.11, no.4

12 July 1992

Dear Sir,

Thammasat University once refused to grant an honorary doctorate to its founder, Dr. Pridi Banomyong. But many years later, in 1992 – the 60th anniversary of Thai democracy– Thammasat redeemed itself by offering an honorary degree of political science to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the brave leader of free Burma. For the first time a Thai university has acknowledged openly that it is supports moral courage, human rights and democracy in Burma, issuing a direct insult to Burma's military junta, SLORC.

Indeed, the university decided this while the NPKC was still powerful in Thailand. Hence it should even be more praised for its moral courage, appropriate of the former name of Thammasat–the University of Moral and Political Sciences.

In Thailand, Big Su–the former Prime Minister and Army Commander-in-Chief is still at large, by courtesy of royal amnesty, while in Rangoon, Suu is still under house arrest after three years of isolation. The Thai government would do well to follow Thammasat's example, and support freedom and human rights in its own country, a country that claims a long history of independence and a sixty year democratic tradition.

To improve Thailand's image abroad, it is not sufficient just to have honest technocrats run the country until the next general election. The government must have a vision of social justice at home and moral commitment abroad–otherwise the gap between rich and poor will continue to widen, and Thai entrepreneurs will destroy their neighbor's environment as they have already done in their own country.

While mentioning Big Su of Thailand and the heroine Suu of Burma, let's remember another Su–Thai social critic Sulak Sivaraksa, who is an exile because he dared to speak out condemning Big Su and the course of military government in Thailand.

Prime Minister Anand keeps saying that Sulak is his friend, yet he does nothing to order the Supreme Public Prosecutor to drop the charge of lese majeste against Sulak, although the charge of defaming General Suchinda Kraprayoon–no longer Big Su–has already been quashed.

Mr.Anand should remember that after 6 October 1976 he himself was almost prosecuted as a communist sympathizer for revealing secret government documents to student leaders. With the help of skillful friends, he was cleared of these charges, but he had to leave the country to serve abroad before he could resign and return in safety.

Mr.Sulak's only sin was that he spoke the truth, just as he had in 1984 when he was similarly charged and acquitted of lese majeste. Last August most people were unwilling to accept that Big Su could be autocratic and vicious. Unfortunately prophets are often unappreciated in their own land. Yet Mr.Sulak's words in Thailand and abroad have struck a nerve with many listeners at western cities and universities, as well as in the U.S.Congress. Americans and Europeans find it hard to believe that a rational monarchist like Mr.Sulak is not permitted to speak or allowed to live in safety in his own country.

While Mr. Anand has declared a policy of democracy and freedom of expression, honoring the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it seems a mockery that Mr.Sulak, adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International, is still in exile, still branded a criminal at home.

I suggest that people read Mr.Sulak's August 1991 address at Thammasat University, and ask themselves where any words of disrespect are directed at the king.

Does Mr.Anand understand that Mr.Sulak wants a monarchy free of political manipulation by any clique? For the monarchy to survive meaningfully, it has to face the modern world and listen patiently to constructive criticism. The king must be a Dhammaraja (righteous ruler), a Sommati Deva (an ordinary human being regarded as a "god" by common consent) not a superman, genius, or a Devaraja (god-king). What the Thai people call for is a true constitutional monarchy. It is only a fearful group of reactionary courtiers and privileged few who pretend to speak for the king and allow no criticism whatsoever.

The longer Mr.Sulak is not allowed to return home, the more his position resembles that of Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma. The Thai government, with all its public relations touting foreign tourism and investment, will be more and more equated with the dictatorial regime of Burma.

Human rights and freedom of expression are the basis for a democratic regime. Well meaning technocrats and general elections are just not enough. If the king and the administration don't encourage open discussion and full participation in government, despite the best will in the world, such a regime will always fail.

We know that in Thailand no one is allowed to speak openly about royalty and the military. The bloody events of May directly resulted from abuses of power by a few top military leaders. Had these men been accountable to the people, today we would have Thai people living in dignity, not a wounded state within a state.

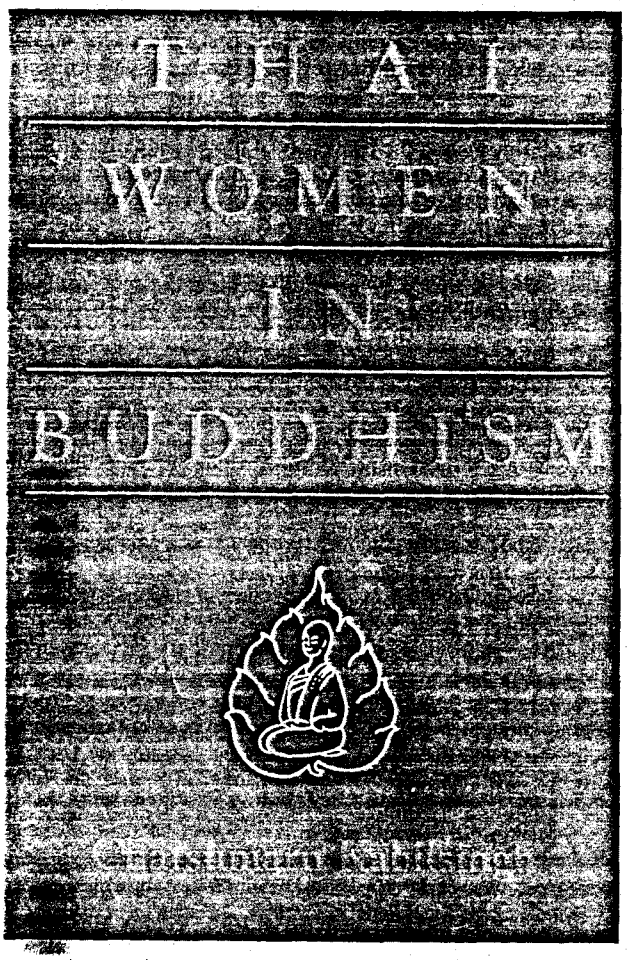
To preserve the monarchy, no one should be allowed to use the throne for their own political benefit. The monarchy must be accountable to the people, and open disagreement with His Majesty should be encouraged. We soon hope to hear Sulak Sivaraksa in his own land, one voice among many, speaking freely in a democratic Thailand.

Yours sincerely,



Alan Senauke
Berkeley, California

THAI WOMEN IN BUDDHISM



Chatsumarn Kabilisingh, Berkeley : Parallax Press, 1991, pp. 113, US$ 12.00

Perhaps a good place to begin a review of Ajahn Chatsumarn Kabilisingh's new book is to quote her own perception of the work put forth in the preface:

"This book, a collection of papers written between 1983 and 1990, is the first on the subject of Thai Women in Buddhism published in any language. As a pioneer work, it's far from perfect or complete, but I offer it in the hope that it will encourage further research. The work here needs to be continued by other scholars from various disciplines, so that the problems being faced by Thai and other women can be alleviated, and we can move in the direction of better society and a more balanced world."

It is fitting that this book has been written by one of Thailand's unique women. Ajahn Chatsumarn has integrated into a seamless weave the life of a contemporary scholar, a committed Buddhist and a feminist.

Although the book is not an extended work (numbering only slightly over 100 pages), it is densely filled with important historical and contemporary information concerning Thai women in relation to society and religion.

The book begins with a succinct history of Buddhism in Thailand. Prof. Chatsumarn delineates the Sukhothai period (1253-1350), the Ayudhya period (1350-1767), the Thonburi period (1767-1782), and the Rattanakosin period (1782-present). Here she also discusses some of the major influences that affected the development of Thai Buddhism during these periods, most notably the roles of animism and Indian Brahmanism.

Beginning with her chapter entitled "Perspectives on Thai Women", Prof. Chatsumarn examines how the major social institutions within Thai society have sought to subordinate women. For example, in the area of education, Thai women have been trained almost exclusively to become model housewives, being trained only in the so called "home sciences". Since 1927, with the founding of Chulalongkorn University, women have had greater opportunity to study both the arts and the sciences, yet still the old stereotypes persist.

The effect of the legal system upon women has been equally unjust and oppressive. Beginning with the Sukhothai period with its repressive Brahmanistic influence, women were seen primarily as the property of their husbands or the male members of their family. Even after King Rama IV made some reforms, husbands could still legally beat their wives short of seriously harming them.

Although it has been pointed out that Thai women seem to accept this lower legal status, Prof. Chatsumarn points out that in reality they seem to remain passive as a whole, because most Thai women have not been allowed the educational and social

tools to move against unjust legislation. Also within the political and economic institutions, women are still considered marginal participants with minimal rights.

In the third chapter, Prof. Chatsumarn takes a fresh look at the basic Buddhist texts from a feminist perspective. In interpreting these texts from the standpoint of what they say about women, she highlights two essential points. First, that it is highly questionable whether the original language of those texts, namely Pali, was ever a spoken language. Therefore, it is untenable to claim that what is recorded in the texts are a verbatim transcription of the actual words of Lord Buddha. The Buddha himself would have preached in his local dialect. Secondly, these texts were recorded by monks for the use of the Sangha. Thus, they would be subject to the male bias of the monks.

Prof. Chatsumarn courageously, yet respectfully, points out that even the Buddha himself was not entirely free of cultural conditioning. As she states, "He (the Buddha) retained some social values that appear to be strongly prejudiced from a modern standpoint. This should be kept in mind as we examine passages from the Buddhist texts."

I personally found this chapter the most engaging in that it addresses an important question which faces all religions which have a tradition of sacred scriptures. That is, how do we continue to interpret in a respectful, creative way the sacred writings which inform our various traditions. Will we cling to the "letter" of the writings or open ourselves to its spirit?

For the majority of the remaining text, Prof. Chatsumarn explores the history and present reality of the "Mae chii" (Thai nun) in Thai society. It is clear that this is an issue of particular importance to her.

During the entire history of Buddhism in Thailand, there has never been an official Bhikkhuni Sangha. It is also woefully apparent to any observer that the status of the Thai nun is far below that of the monk.

This manifests itself in a lack of educational and training opportunities they are provided. This section left me with a very strong emotional response. This is a basic issue of justice which needs to be radically addressed by the Sangha and the Thai government. My feeling is that these sections should be translated into Thai and disseminated widely among both groups.

But again, Prof. Chatsumarn sums up the situation in a direct and unthreatening manner when she writes, "The attitude of the monks towards Mae chiis must develop with their understanding of the crucial role Mae chiis can fill in Thai Buddhism. The position of the monks is not threatened, and by joining in the effort to make available the Buddha's teaching to all members of society, Buddhism and society as a whole will benefit."

Following this chapter there is a brief history of the two Bhikkhuni movements in Thailand. The second of these movements concerns the story of Prof. Chatsumarn's own mother (Voramai Kabilisingh), who today is the only ordained nun in all of Thailand. The story of her journey to ordination in the Dhammagupta sub-sect of the Theravada tradition is a fascinating account of a Thai woman's search for equality within the Dhamma and Sangha.

Of the remaining chapters, two are devoted to a survey of different nun communities both in Thailand and abroad. The section describing the various communities in Thailand will be particularly helpful to anyone who is interested in visiting any of these groups. There is information concerning the structure and communal life of each of them.

It is Prof. Chatsumarn's chapter on the relationship between Buddhism and prostitution, however, which is especially important. It is one of the clearest and most straightforward discussions of this ironic and tragic situation I have read. She begins by presenting information concerning some of the women mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures who were prostitutes. She notes that the Buddha did not take a negative stance towards prostitutes. There are accounts of several women who were once prostitutes who became ordained and obtained enlightenment.

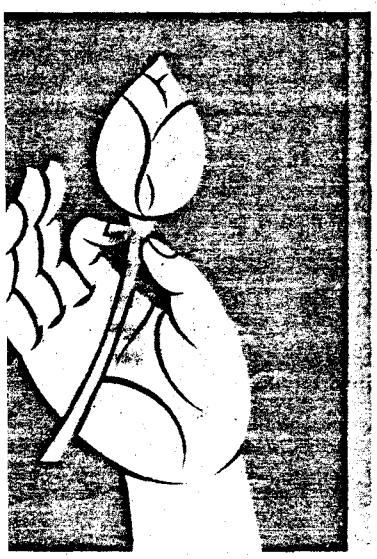
There are sections on the present day situation of the prostitutes with accompanying statistics concerning numbers of prostitutes, their incomes, places of origin and other demographic statistics.

Yet it is her critique of the Sangha's present attitude towards women generally, and prostitutes specifically, which is impossible to refute.

Overall this book is a powerful, groundbreaking work which hopefully will call forth continued study in this area as well as perhaps nudging the Sangha and the Thai government towards a more just and inclusive expression of Dhamma.

Craig Barcal

INNER PEACE, WORLD PEACE:



Essays on Buddhism and Non-Violence, Kenneth Kraft, Ed., Albany: State University of New York, 1992, 148 pp.

Buddhist art and iconography is filled with images of the Buddha meditating serenely. His posture and enigmatic smile are widely recognized as an expression of both inner and outer peace. This standardized symbol, in part, has given shape to the popular notion that Buddhism is an inwardly focused religion that gives precedence to meditation over social activity. For those who maintain such a view, a "socially-engaged" Buddhism remains a contradiction in terms. However, the world's increasingly desperate condition demands that we turn a critical eye towards such commonly held and often dangerous preconceptions. Simply, we must honestly re-examine the basis of our beliefs and values if we are to find solutions to our mounting problems.

INNER PEACE, WORLD PEACE is a provocative book designed to encourage this very process. Kenneth Kraft has brought together a number of well-known Buddhist scholars, activists, and authorities on non-violent struggle to produce the first work in any western language to examine the Buddhist approach to non-violence. The result is a book of astonishing variety and directness. The material ranges from a chapter on the great practitioners of non-violence in the Theravada tradition to an analysis of Tibet's monastic army of peace and the impact of Christianity on Buddhist non-violence in the West.

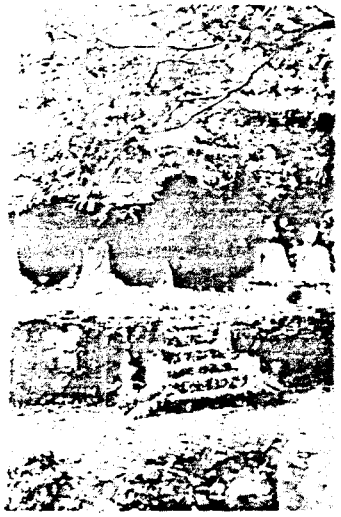
Due to the exploratory nature of the text, the articles are filled with questions designed to stimulate further discussion and reflection. For example, is a person who embraces non-violence entitled to resort to violence in extreme situations? Is Buddhist-inspired activism different from other religious and secular systems? Must one be fully or partially enlightened before one can act in the world with true wisdom and compassion? The reader will find no definitive answers or advice concerning non-violence for the simple reason that none are to be found. The ideal of non-violence will always remain "more of a direction than a fixed position."

The editor notes that the values of restraint and generosity are pre-eminent in the Theravada tradition, whereas wisdom and compassion dominate in the Mahayana tradition. It is not surprising then that the themes of engagement and disengagement appear throughout the book. Instead of perceiving these interpretations as being opposed to one another, the authors' suggest that the creative tension between involvement and withdrawal only points to the basic similarity between work on oneself and work for others. Through this realization, a socially engaged Buddhism becomes possible.

While such huge differences in approach and interpretation can often cripple a text by leaving it both unfocused and disconnected, INNER PEACE, WORLD PEACE is saved by the personal risks taken by its authors. Instead of hiding behind their scholarship, they have all taken personal positions on the difficult issues raised by non-violence and the question of Buddhism's continued relevance in the modern world. One author expresses real doubts the centrality of non-violence in Buddhism, while another explores different forms of non-violent behavior which do not presuppose any religious base. Several others convincingly argue that traditional Buddhist notions of non-violence must be expanded dramatically in light of current social conditions. Rather than canceling each other out, the different viewpoints encourage us to more fully explore non-violence and its potential for healing the world.

Ken Maclean

Buddhism and Ecology



Edited by Martine Batchelor and Kerry Brown. Cassell, 1992, £5. 99. 128 pages. ISBN 0-304-32375-6.

This is the first of a series of introductory volumes on World Religions and Ecology sponsored by the World Wide Fund for Nature.

In the two opening chapters on the Buddhist scriptures, (which would have been better combined), clear explanations are illuminated by impressively wide-ranging and apt quotations. The third chapter, by Stephen Batchelor, is a vivid and compelling introduction to Buddhist ecological philosophy and practice. It warns the social activist that 'the delusion of which Buddhism speaks holds sway over us in a much deeper way than mere ideas. We are in its grip almost physically, as though with our nerves, cells and chromosomnes, it compels us to grasp hold of the world in a way that intellectually we would most certainly reject.' Herein lies the tragic gap between ideals and behaviour that bedevils radical movements for social and environmental change. My main reservations about this essay is that it makes little reference to the intertwining of political and economic with ecological manifestations of delusion and oppression. More important, it fails to appreciate the enormous, supercharged karmic momentum of social structures and processes, as sensed by engaged Buddhists like Gary Snyder and David Brandon.

Section B, on 'The Practice', opens with a fascinating account of Ladakh by Helena Norberg-Hodge, exemplifying the extraordinary ecological, social, and spiritual merits of this most thoroughgoing surviving traditional Buddhist society. Following some 'Observations on the Japanese Way of Life' (which appear unrelated to the rest of the book) comes a discussion by Peter Timmerman of the potential of Buddhism for 'analysing, assessing, and perhaps dismantling the Romanticized individual self fed by a mass of technology designed to reshape the physical world.' Although the author believes that 'to be a Buddhist today is a geopolitical act', his interesting essay nonetheless fails to convey the richness and variety of Western Buddhist (and quasi-buddhist !) ecological thought and practice as conveyed, for example, in Allan Hunt Badiner's ambitious symposium Dharma Gaia (Parallax, 1990).

The final section, 'Meeting the Global Crisis' offers three well chosen examples of Buddhism in ecological and social action: the long established Sarvodaya grass roots self-help movement in Sri Lanka; a sparkling account of the resistance of a Thai monk, Ajahn Pongsak, to a whole catalogue of typical Third World 'development' horrors; and a selection of talks and writings by the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh, one of the most celebrated exponents of engaged Buddhism. The book concludes with excerpts from the Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize lecture: 'It is my dream that the entire Tibetan plateau should become a free refuge where humanity and nature can live in peace and harmonious balance.'

Many omissions are inevitable in such a selection, (the influentual [American] Buddhist Peace Fellowhip and the fast growing International Network of Engaged Buddhists are both conspicuous in their absence). It is therefore more the pity that the editors have not concluded with an annotated list of books, periodicals organisations and other resources. This is, nevertheless, a rich, readable and stimulating addition to the growing literature of engaged Buddhism, achieved in small compass and at a modest price. And it also turns out to be an excellent introduction to Buddhism.

Ken Jones

INEB SANGHA CHAPTER

At the Fourth INEB Conference attending monks met and proposed an INEB Sangha Chapter. One of our main issues was the development of "International Bhikkhu Training Centers." Santikaro Bhikkhu mentioned a center for foreign bhikkhus opening now at Suan Mokkh, the monastery of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu in Southern Thailand, and suggested it might fit the needs for such an international network of engaged bhikkhus. He was asked to write a brief description of the new center.

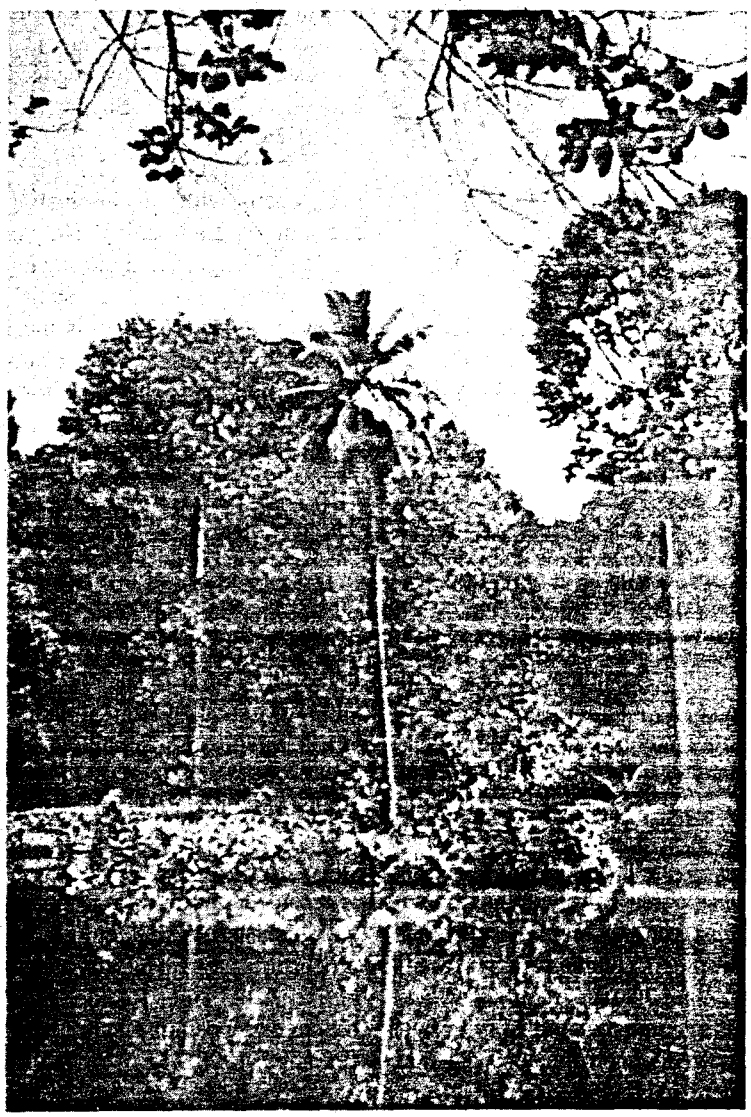
SUAN ATAMMAYATĀRĀMA

We have begun a new experiment at Suan Mokkh (The Garden of Liberation). On one hand it will try to recreate the conditions of the original Suan Mokkh, founded sixty years ago, as much as is possible. On the other hand, it will strive to respond to the problems of the modern world. Further, it will be primarily for foreign monks, both Asian and Western, from both south and north, who seek a training which will help them become Dhamma Missionaries. Our goal is World Peace, our vision is Dhammic socialism, our way is the Buddha's Dhamma-Vinaya practicing and working together as a "basic dhammic sangha.

Basically, it will be a forest Wat. There are still some large trees left on dawn kiam (the local name for the place) and we are planting as many young trees as we can care for. The more Dhamma friends that join us, the more trees we can nurture. The nearest village is a few kilometers away, so the alms rounds will build up our stamina. Around us are bogs, a hill, hot springs, caves, and grassy fields. Sadly, the remaining forest is disappearing under the onslaught of "development" (read "greed"). We will protect as much of nature as we can and provide a haven for the birds, fish, and animals fleeing the destruction resulting from selfish land speculation.

Accommodations and facilities are simple. There will be electricity only in the main building, the Buddhadasa School. Kutis are small and concrete, rather like "pill boxes," sufficient for meditation and sleep. They will allow practitioners to spend sufficient time in solitude and silence. In addition, each resident will have his own study cell in the Buddhadasa School. This building contains a large meeting hall (8x20 meters) flanked on both sides by the study cells mentioned above. It will also contain a library and office. The main floor is raised three meters off the ground, below will be a dining area and work space.

The training emphasis will be on meditation and



anapanasati (mindfulness with breathing according to the Buddha's teaching in Majjhima-nikaya # 118 will be the method taught). The first requirement of a Dhamma Missionary is experience in vipassana, not only technique, but real insight. Genuine meditation experience is the foundation for the rest of our training and work.

To support our own practice, help others, and wisely analyze social problems and systems, sufficient Dhamma study is necessary, not to become scholars, but to know what we need to know. We are developing a " curriculum" based on Ajahn Buddhadasa's Studying Dhamma the Right Way. The 2535 Vassa will work out the basic outline. Later vassas will fill in the details. Each "student" will fill in the outline by individual study of the Tipitaka and relevant Dhamma books, through group discussions and debates, and with occasional lectures. Older inmates will test their understanding by "teaching" the lessons of past (vassa) to newcomers.

As we develop in our study, practice, and experience of Dhamma, we need to learn how to share it with others. Fortunately, it is possible to practice "teaching" at Suan Mokkh's nearby meditation retreat center, where there are monthly courses. We can also help with the many retreats, workshops, and trainings which INEB is being asked to facilitate. Thus, we will have all the opportunities we need to learn how to teach, which is to develop language, speaking, and writing skills. At Suan Mokkh, nobody is the teacher, but we all practice teaching, just in case we some day have the experience and wisdom that makes real teachers.

We also hope to experiment with "A New Way of Doing Sangha." The Sanghas of monks, nuns, and lay people alike are finding it difficult to transform themselves into viable vehicles for dhamma in this struggling world. Young monks from different countries have the opportunity to develop new alternatives. This may include experimenting with processes like consensus decision making, sharing of responsibilities, and group dynamics. Further, we can expose ourselves to the perspectives and critiques of feminists, psychologists, social change catalysts, other religions, and whatever is possible and relevant. Mini-workshops can be arranged at Suan Atammayatarama itself and study trips can be organized, especially with INEB's help.

Suan Atammayatarama will explore so-called "engaged buddhism." For Dhamma to help people in this troubled world, we must understand the problems of society and find the best way to relate Dhamma to those problems. For this end, we will invite friends with experience in various fields – the environment, right live lihood, village co-operation and development, women's perspectives – to lead seminars and workshops for us. Also, it is hoped that we can contribute to an effective Buddhist analysis of social systems and structures.

At Suan Mokkh, "Dhammic Socialism" is the term we use to describe our vision of a just, healthy, and peaceful society. "Socialism" because we must put selfish interests asid in pursuit of the common or social good. "Dhammic" because our ideas, actions, systems, and organizations must be correct, that is, in harmony with Dhamma, the Law of Nature.

We can also work on the ways and means to make Dhammic Socialism a reality. "Basic Dhammic Sanghas" is one possible way to do so. We can explore the possibility with local poor villagers as well as support monks working in other parts of Siam, if not our home countries. In short, we will do what we can to develop a methodology for making Dhamma relevant to the problems at the grassroots level.

Details of daily life and practice will more or less follow the Siamese Forest tradition as it has been practiced at Suan Mokkh, especially in the early days. A wise and respectful approach to Vinaya will be fundamental. But we will try to make Suan Atammayatarama open to other cultures and traditions. In time, we may be able to incorporate customs and practices from other countries. Generally, there will be one meal a day and a group drink in the late afternoon. Most food will come from alms round. Residents should avoid the use of money and most property will be communal. Basic medical needs will be taken care of to the best of our ability.

The language of instruction will be English. Inmates will be encouraged to develop speaking and writing skills in English and their mother tongues. We are in the process of translating the work of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu from Thai into English and other languages.

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Good health and an open mind.
2. Dedication to living the bhikkhu lifestyle according to the Dhamma-Vinaya of the Tipitaka with wisdom and flexibility regarding local customs.
3. Commitment to training the mind through anapanasati, supplemental meditation practices, and constant mindfulness.
4. Aspiration to be well grounded in pariyatti, both to support one's own practice and to help others.
5. Desire to work for World Peace by exploring and experimenting with "engaged buddhism" and



"dhammic Socialism," especially to stand by and suffer with those who suffer most: the poor, the exploited, oppressed, and abused.

6. Ability to read English and hold conversations in English. Fluency is not expected, but you must have foundation skills. We can't teach English directly, but can help you develop your language skills.

7. Readiness for long term training. At first, come for a visit and look, then decide if this suits the needs of you and your people. It may be a few years before you can visit home.

INTRODUCTION PROCESS

1. Candidates carefully examine their needs and goals.

2. Visit for a period of three months or more.

3. After becoming thoroughly familiar with Suan Atammayatarama and its residents, discuss with the senior monk a long term commitment to the training offered here.

4. When everyone feels a candidate is ready for a commitment, a decision is made – on individual basis – regarding minimum length of stay and other considerations.

5. Our funds are very limited. We cannot afford to send you home on regular visits. Be prepared to wait, even if you have the money yourself.

6. No diplomas or certificates will be given. When you are finished with the training it will show in your face, words, actions, and dedication to working for the end of all dukkha.

Inquiries, suggestions, and support are welcome.

Santikaro Bhikkhu
Suan Mokkh
Ampoe Chaiya
Surat Thani 84110
Thailand

INFORMATION CENTER

Much of South and South-East Asia is currently trapped in a seemingly endless cycle of destruction and despair. 1.5 billion people live in conditions which can hardly be called healthy, just, or peaceful. The International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) recognizes that these endemic problems are all closely related to the cultural and spiritual wasteland in which these people now find themselves. As a result, a solution will require a holistic, as well as a culturally sensitive approach. In an effort to address this, INEB has been creating a world-wide network of spiritual activists. In the last year, INEB has successfully begun to run Buddhist-based training workshops on a variety of social concerns in Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. Requests have been made for assistance in organizing and running such workshops in India and Bangladesh. Currently, INEB plans to establish an information center which will greatly assist the growth and effectiveness of the organization.

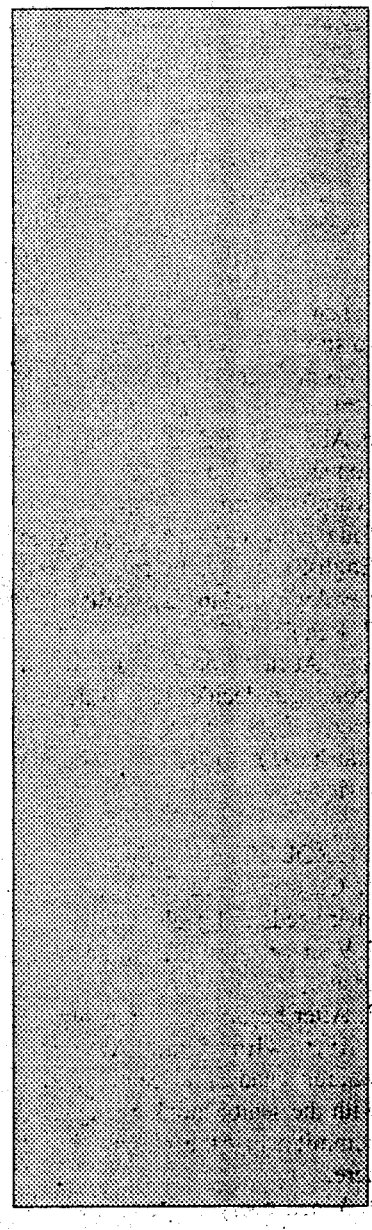
In South and South-East Asia, Buddhist communities represent either a majority or a very significant minority of the region's respective conuntries. However, years of neglect, internal warfare, and badly planned development programs have left many of these communities in desperate need of a complete renewal. As a result, INEB has designed a variety of projects which empower the disenfranchised. Training workshops focus on the continued relevance of meditation practice and Buddhist teachings in the modern world. This approach establishes a link between their cultural heritage and its inherent possibility for constructive change and innovation. Workshops for alternative agricultural projects, environmental conservation, and conflict resolution proceed from this fundamental understanding. The ultimate goal is to develop networks of self-sufficient communities, coordinating their resources and knowledge to create a better world.

Central to INEB's continued success is an effective means for sharing information, ideas, and opinions with others. Without such a system, the network will not be able to respond to the increasing requests for accurate and reliable information on national and regional issues. Accordingly, INEB plans to establish an information center at its head office in Bangkok. The center will create a faster, more efficient, and reliable system for collecting and distributing information to the network's affiliates and other concerned groups. Initially, the center will focus itself on designing a system to better manage the current flow of information. Additionally, the center will research and develop information "packages", which will form an important part of future training programs. As the center grows, it will then begin to research and publish special project and country reports, providing the foundation for effective action on the network's wide variety of social concerns. In particular, the center will focus on the relationship between human rights, the environment, and development. Eventually, the center will form the basis of a specialized research library and publishing facility at the Wong Sanit Ashram, located in Nakhorn Nayok.

Please send all donations, inquiries, and suggestions to:

INEB
Attn: Information Center
127 soi Santipap
Nares rd. Bangkok
10500 Thailand

* checks payable to the International Network of Engaged Buddhists



Sri Lanka-South India Interfaith Pilgrimage for Peace & Life

Sri Lanka, the Blessed Island, the Pearl of the Indian Ocean, the Paradise of Everlasting Summer has been torn by conflict and violence for over a decade. Many lives have been sacrificed; people of all religious and ethnic backgrounds have suffered deeply. Although this is a conflict among different peoples in one Asian region, the influence of complex international economic and political forces make it difficult for a resolution to be achieved solely by area residents.

The Sri Lanka-South India Interfaith Pilgrimage for Peace and Life will be undertaken by people in Sri Lanka in cooperation with people from India, with the support of and participation by people from around the world. The region to be traversed – Sri Lanka and South India – is a repository of shared cultures and wisdom which can contribute positively to the survival of humanity in these times of widespread violence. The purpose of the Pilgrimage is to seek a way for neighboring groups divided by fear and strife to live together in trust and amity.

Not only in Sri Lanka, but in many places around the globe, conflicts are continually arising due to ethnic, racial or national differences. It is as if the psyche of the whole human family is ready to erupt wherever there is a trace of grudge or misunderstanding. To quench the fire of hatred, the common people in regions devastated by fighting must rise up for peace. The force of division, poisoning people's minds and rending the invisible fabric of life, must be overcome by the force of unity. But, it can only arise when human beings hold trust and respect for others. A walk can be a vehicle for divided peoples to express their desire for peace and determination, to live in respect and harmony. If this can be achieved by the Sri Lanka - South India Interfaith Pilgrimage for Peace and Life, then a direction can be set not only for the South Asian region, but also for all humanity, as we look to establish a more peace-loving civilization in the 21st century.

The Pilgrimage will commence on February 25, 1993 from the peak of Sri Pada, the mountain sacred to all major religious faiths in the region: Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Christian. It will conclude in Madras, India on April 14, 1993, the New Year's day for both Sinhalese and Tamil people.

All those who will commit to the discipline of non-violence, which builds a spirit of generosity and patience and who will perservere through whatever difficulties may arise are welcome.

For more information, please contact:
Nipponzan Myohoji, Peace Pagoda, Ampara, Sri Lanka
Tel: 94 (country code) - 063-2123

Nipponzan Myohoji, Peace Pagoda, Leverett, Mass., 01054 U.S.A.
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