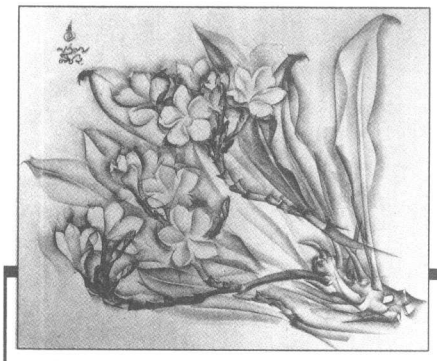
SEEDS OF PEACE

Vol.10 No.3 Sept.-Dec. 2537 (1994)



Peace & Alternative Development Work



SEEDS OF

CONTENTS

Editors:
Sherry Yano
Pipob Udomittipong

Cover:
K.Khemananda

Lay-out:
Song Sayam., Ltd.
Tel. 662-225-9533-5

Published by:
INEB
Ph & Fax 662-037-391494,
5461518
TICD
Tel.662-4379445
Fax 662-4379450

Distributed by:
Suksit Siam
113-115 Fuangnakhorn Rd.
Bangkok 10200
Fax 66-2-222-5188

Baht 80 per issue

3 Inscription from the Past
4 Notes from the Editors

Country Reports
5 Responding with Words, Not Whips: Nonviolence in Thailand — *Varaporn Chamsanit*
7 Cambodia: The Dhammayietra — *Porwisa Daochanteuk*
8 Two Worlds, One Fate: Phra Prachak and Phra Phaisan visit Japan — *Jonathan Watts*
11 Suu Kyi Languishes while Burma Suffers — *John Hail*
12 Sulak Sivaraksa's Trial in Thailand
12 Chronology of the Hunger Strike in Thailand
13 Sulak Saddened by Apathy toward Chalad Demands — *Kriss Chaiyarat*
15 Women, Violence, and Nonviolent Action: A Meeting in the Philippines
16 Thai Historical Research in the People's Republic of China — *Professor Tuan Li Seng*

Special Feature:
Peace & Alternative Development Work
17 Six Years of INEB — *Surapee Chootrakul*
20 TICD & the Empowerment of the Thai Sangha — *Pipob Udomittipong*
23 The Komol Keemthong Foundation — *Thitima Khuntiranon*
24 The Traditional Medicine for Self Reliance Project — *Rosanna Tositrakul*
26 The Coordinating Group for Religion in Society — *Sarawut Pratoomraj*
27 Wongsanit Ashram: Ten Years of Community Life — *Supaporn Pongpreuk*
29 The Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute — *Uthai Dulyakasem*
30 Friends of the People: A Siamese Green Agenda — *Pracha Hutanuwatra*
32 The Thai-Tibetan Center — *Thamrong Pattamapart*
33 Shante Sena in the Forest — *Dhammayietra Centre for Peace*

Viewpoints
34 Citizen Peacemakers: What Can They Do? — *Adam Curle*
36 Buddhadasa on Caring for Nature — *D.K. Swearer*
38 Buddhist Wisdom and Traditional Values for Ecological Balance — *S. Sivaraksa*

Obituaries
42 Mai Tin Maung
42 Brang Seng - An Appreciation

People
43 Sulak Sivaraksa : A Warrior in the Field of Cultural Politics *Dr.Kasean Techapeera*

46 **Reviews & New Books**
47 **Letters & Announcements**
Back Page
52 Mindfulness must be Engaged — *Thich Nhat Hanh*

PEACE

Is published thrice annually in January, May and September, in order to promote the aims and objectives of the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD) and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB). For subscriptions and further information, please contact INEB at P.O. Box 1, Ongkharak, Nakhorn Nayok 26120 Tel/Fax 66-37-391-494. Suggested minimum donation US$ 15 per annum, postage included. Personal cheques from UK and USA are accepted.

The objectives of TICD are to :

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

Thai Inter-Religious
Commission for Development
124 Soi Wat Thongnopakhun
Bangkok 10600
Tel/Fax: 66-2-437-9450

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.



INSCRIPTION FROM THE PAST

This world resembles a library.
Old scripts and new scripts are there to read.
Each leaf on a tree can tell a joyous story;
There are so many stories to tell under the sky.

The past is inscribed on the earth.
Heavenly scripts are to be read from the stones.
Mother Earth is always kind:
She teaches you everything.

Traces of old streams left on the cliffs
Tell an eternal story.
The ocean which has dried up
Leaves a legacy for philosophic thought.

Of great value are dust, soil and sand,
Surely of comparable worth to radiant diamonds.
Gems would be of no value
If there were no soil and sand to match them.

The values of all things are held in balance,
Such that the scale shall not tip.
Thus the earth and the sky proffer a challenge
To the soul to exercise its imaginative power.

Certain places on earth can enlighten you,
For they contain exquisite poetic messages
That express themselves in the songs of forest and water,
Magically wrought to counter any aging.

Let us sharpen our vision.
Let us draw on our spiritual power.
Let us learn the language of the earth, the water, the sky,
And search for enduring bliss.

We shall find the sense of life
Written on these portentous testimonies,
Which can serve to create a new life-path
That may lead to immortality.

Let us strive for that perfect peace
Which transcends all bonds of time,
A state of endless power that is creative
And worthy of every breath of life.

Angkarn Kalyanapong

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

This issue focuses on the peace & alternative development work of various Asian and international organizations.

One of the ongoing challenges that we have found common to many in this type of work is finding a balance between reflection and action. Often, we hear friends in the NGO community speaking of the abundance of deadlines and the lack of manpower & resources to meet these deadlines. Time for reflection, renewal and the synthesis of a cohesive vision for the future, is often a scarce commodity.

At the same time, it is true that modernization, in demanding a separation between the secular and the spiritual, has marginalized religions by attempting to keep them from being involved in the day-to-day workings of society.

On the way to a meeting in Northeastern Thailand in July, Phra Santikaro of Suan Mokkh mentioned that he believes that a worthwhile goal may be to have spirituality become more engaged and secular activities become more spiritual. Indeed, this is the aim of many of the individuals, groups and organizations highlighted in this issue — to bring together inner and outer peace and development by drawing on spiritual values and ideas to work in our communities and society.

At the same meeting, Phra Kru Supajarawat, Luang Por Nan and Phra Kru Mongkon; all well-known 'development monks' in the Thailand's Northeast, reminded us that true human development starts from within. They said that you cannot help other people or your community until you know yourself. If you know yourself, you will be able to know others. Human development is not only physical and mental (which can include mutual conscientization), but spiritual as well. Consumerism can only be tackled if people have a strong sense of themselves, their community and the reality of the modern world. People can only change themselves and their world, if they can find clarity. To see things clearly, they must find stillness and strength within themselves from which they can be mindful and aware.

All of these monks are deeply involved in their communities in many ways — from providing meditation retreats for villagers to promoting traditional medicine, non-chemical farming and assisting with cooperative rice mills. Yet they make no distinction between inner and outer development; between reflection and action. To them, these are all part of 'peace and development'.

The goal, then, articulated by Phra Santikaro, seems a worthwhile one — to have spirituality become more engaged, while secular activities become more spiritual. This is the theme of this issue of *Seeds of Peace* — to highlight the work of various groups who attempt to bring these spheres together.

Pipob Udomittipong & Sherry Yano

RESPONDING WITH WORDS, NOT WHIPS: NONVIOLENCE IN THAILAND

Amid the storm of controversy surrounding the Pak Mool Dam project at the end of 1993, a band of villagers took a stand by making a human barrier around the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand's dam construction site to call for fairer compensation for being forcibly removed from their homeland.

In February of 1994, an army of Isaan farmers unhappy with their impoverished living conditions took their plight to the streets, participating in a week-long march from their northeastern hometowns to Bangkok.

More recently, in a rally in support of political activist Chalad Vorachat last month, yellow cloth banners were hung on tree trunks around the demonstration venue marking the area as a peace zone. Thousands of yellow flags featuring the word 'nonviolence' together with bunches of roses were distributed among protesters.

In what ways are all these events similar? They were all carried out using nonviolent methods.

But what is the true meaning of nonviolence? How do people perceive the concept? And what is happening with the movement in Thailand?

Defining nonviolence

"Nonviolence is a means to solve disagreement or to react to particular situations without enforcing violence, especially physical and life-threatening harm, toward people of the opposite side." This broad definition of the concept appears in the book *Saang Santi Duay Mue Rao* (Creating Peace With Our Hands) published by the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS).

"Nonviolence," as it says in the book, "is a powerful strategy in that it can deprive unjust authoritative power, not through the use of weapons, but through disobedience or refusal to comply with the power."

According to senior non-governmental social worker Santisuk Sopanasiri, nonviolence discourages partisanship at all levels.

"To practice nonviolence, we must try to cut off dualistic ideas and develop the ability to see our opponents and ourselves as one. We are all humans alike and we all can make mistakes. Your mistakes and my mistakes are the mistakes of mankind which we must work together to solve," he said.

Santisuk, who is also a committee member of the Campaign for Popular Democracy, admitted it is difficult to put this non-dualistic idea into real practice.

"We are, all through our lives, taught to compete with one another in order to be the winner, to be the best. We are rarely taught to adore a situation in which there is neither a winner nor a loser."

Also, nonviolence proponents believe that the nature of human beings is ultimately good. Therefore, when nonviolent protesters are attacked with physical harm and their only response is resistant peace, it is thought to act as a powerful weapon, evoking the sympathies of the attacker.

Thammasat University Deputy Rector Associate Professor Chaiwat Sathanand, a nonviolence theorist, said, "Believing in nonviolence means we have respect for the humanity in other people. If people don't have such respect, they tend to regard others as objects and feel justified to beat, hurt or even kill them."

"But one thing must be remembered," the Deputy Rector emphasized," nonviolence does not teach you to surrender to injustice. That's why it is always more difficult to exercise nonviolent action."

"How can we fight against injustice, evil and inequity in this world without abusing the people behind the phenomena? This is not an easy question."

A strategy or a way of life?

Santisuk, after his long years working in non-governmental organization (NGO) circles, believes in nonviolence as a way of life, saying the practice is most meaningful when it starts from inside oneself.

"Working with NGOs is another aspect of nonviolence. The effort is meant to help eliminate social inequity which, in itself, is considered structural violence (it being the social structure which allows people to take advantage of others)."

Napaporn Rattanavong, a young female NGO worker with CGRS, is another person who believes that nonviolence should be taken up as a way of life. This, she explained, means nonviolence upholders should, to some extent,

try to live a disciplined life. For her, this means operating under Buddhist religious precepts.

"I think the most permanent and realistic nonviolence is in ourselves. The concept is best reflected in our relations with the people around us."

Meanwhile, Chaiwat said he would rather place emphasis on the strategic quality of nonviolent action. This means developing the efficient use of nonviolence as a strategy in order to create social changes.

"I don't talk much about nonviolence as a way of life because I want to communicate with larger numbers of people in general. To discuss nonviolence as a way of life you can address only a limited number of people from some religious backgrounds. Yes, I agree that it is morally superior for people to develop a peaceful, nonviolent lifestyle. But whether the process is effective in this global society is another question."

And to carry out nonviolent action, the academic insisted that at times it is inevitable that actions may cause trouble for those the protests are directed against.

"For example, workers striking for a pay raise certainly create problems for factory owners," he said. "Ask me whether I would consider this a nonviolent method and the answer would be 'yes'. The workers hold the strike merely to increase their bargaining power. They don't do any physical harm to their employers, nor do they set the factory on fire."

It is difficult, Chaiwat said, to create a definitive scope for nonviolence.

"Some people may say a rally on the street is violent because it blocks the traffic flow and causes inconvenience for the public. It depends on how each individual perceives violence. Therefore, it is important that you determine what you consider violent and nonviolent first, before you start an action.

"But one thing occurs," he elaborated. "People sometimes use nonviolent methods without being aware that they are doing so. In these cases, some elements of violence might unconsciously be included in their actions. They may say some provocative words such as "blood must be washed with blood." Such words are unlikely to be said if people are aware that they are using a nonviolent strategy."

"I'm not sure whether I could call what is happening in Thailand an actual nonviolence movement," remarked Chaiwat, adding that he would not consider something a movement unless there were common objectives among participants and substantial coordination.

The movement in Thailand

According to Santisuk, the concept of nonviolence in Thailand is closely tied with Buddhist principles which have an emphasis on mercy.

Chaiwat agreed with this, saying, "The nonviolence movement in Thailand, if it could be called a movement at all, was first started by members of Buddhist clubs in universities."

That was almost 20 years back when a group of university students who rejected the strong influence of Marxism at that time, and who believed in nonviolence as a means to solve social confusion, formed their own group called Kalayanamitr (Good Friends), which was later changed to Santi Sungkhom (Peaceful Society).

Activist monk Phra Phaisan Visalo, who is a prominent upholder of nonviolence and a founder of the Kalayanamitr group, conceded that the nonviolence movement in Thailand has not made much progress over the past two decades. Although there have been numerous training sessions on nonviolence for the staff of NGOs, university students and villagers, the scale of success is still limited.

Meanwhile, Chaiwat, although not very impressed with the government's level of understanding of nonviolence spoke optimistically on behalf of the people.

"Although the mass perception of nonviolence among Thai people is not up to a satisfactory level right now, the situation is improving. At least the word 'nonviolence' is more frequently mentioned now than before.

"Whether we are aware of it or not, Thai people have improvised several nonviolent strategic actions which I've never seen in other countries," he continued. "The ordination of large trees [by performing religious rites and putting orange robes, like the ones worn by Buddhist monks, around the trees in an attempt to rescue them from being cut down by illegal loggers] is one example."

The use of advanced communication technology such as mobile telephones and fax machines to spread information during the May 1992 pro-democracy uprising is another example of Thai people's innovation of nonviolent action, according to Chaiwat.

"Villagers are nonviolent by nature," said Napaporn from her experiences working with rural villagers.

"However, there are times when they integrate nonviolence and violence. Normally they start with petitioning, seeking negotiations and holding protests. But once these nonviolent measures fail, they will eventually shift to

the use of violence."

Santisuk cited what he considers the reasons for the slow progress of the nonviolence movement in Thailand.

"We, the Thai people, have long been under the influence of authoritarianism. It is only in really no-way-out situations that oppressed people will stand up and fight."



The public's lack of understanding of social structural problems was another factor which obstructed the growth of the nonviolence movement, he said.

Phra Phaisan said one of the weak points in the nonviolence movement in Thailand is the public's lack of understanding of the concept of nonviolence.

"The government has a low regard for people's demonstrations, saying that they are undemocratic. For them, democratic activities are confined to ones that take place within Parliament."

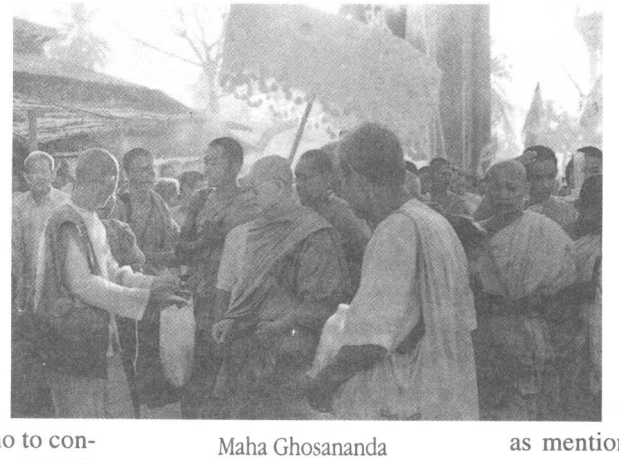
As for the people, the monk commented that many people are under the false impression that demonstrations are the only form of nonviolence. This results in people becoming discouraged when a demonstration, for whatever reason, does not bear fruit. They can easily lose faith in the methods of nonviolence.

"Eventually," the monk said, "I must say it is the lack of substantial strength among nonviolence upholders that is primarily responsible for the limited success of the nonviolence movement in our country."

Varaporn Chamsanit
Reprinted from *The Nation,*
July 29, 1994.

CAMBODIA: THE DHAMMAYIETRA

When I first heard about the third Dhammayietra (peace walk) in Cambodia, I was very interested and wanted to participate, but I was not really confident that I could join. I just hoped I could. At that time, I did not know many details about the Dhammayietra, such as how to prepare or who to contact. After the sixth annual INEB conference, I was told that I should talk to Pi Liz because Pi Liz was one of the organizers of the walk and she can speak Thai. However, I felt too shy to talk to her.



Maha Ghosananda
on the Dhammayietra

In April, my father asked me if I was interested in joining the walk in Cambodia. I was very glad and excited. I never thought it would come true and had almost forgotten that there would be a walk. I told my father that I would join the walk, and I asked Ah Surapee (Aunt Surapee) how I should prepare. After that, I thought about nothing but the Dhammayietra in Cambodia, and I visualized a long, beautiful, and peaceful caravan of monks, nuns and lay persons, including myself. I hardly thought about the danger that I might face during the walk as mentioned in the preparation process. I had a strong belief and confidence that walking with mindfulness and discipline would save us from danger.

This journey was my first experience flying in a plane, and being teased about flying made me nervous; I was afraid that I would get sick on the plane. I

knew that the only thing that could help me feel better was meditation. When we flew, I tried to meditate; at that moment I could hear my heartbeat and I could feel the movement of the plane.

When we arrived in Phnom Penh, I saw the small airport and easily found Pi Maew and her friends who were waiting for us. Even though it was an unfamiliar place, I felt happy and very comfortable because of the warm welcome from Pi Maew and her nieces. I didn't feel anxious or worried at all.

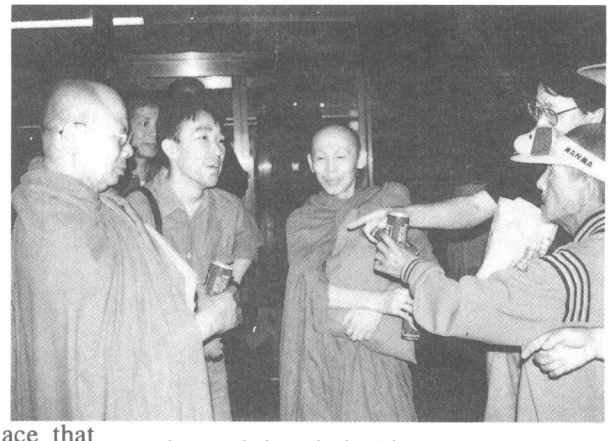
The first day of the walk, I was thinking about Ah Surapee and Ah Porn's advice before I left Thailand. I felt so happy when we started walking, and I could feel the great belief of the people who joined the walk and the people who welcomed us on both sides of the road. Still, I felt disappointed when I saw a group of new monks who were not disciplined. It spoiled the beautiful picture of the peaceful and disciplined caravan that I had imagined before I came. They were unlike most of the Maechi (nuns) in the walk who were old and walked with a peaceful and mindful manner, even though they had to run sometimes to stay in their line.

After only three days of the walk, I saw something I never thought I would see, and it moved my heart. There was a long caravan of carts of villagers passing by. They were fleeing the intensifying fighting in the area. There were small children leading pigs or carrying pots walking behind the fully-loaded carts. At that moment I was dejected, and my hope for the Dhammayietra was gone. I started to question myself and reviewed my life from the time I was very young until now. I realized that I had never faced real trouble, never drifted, never been a refugee, and now I thought, "What can I do to be more useful and helpful to others?"

The 30th of April was the day that we were confronted by the Khmer Rouge group. I was very frightened and the only thing

TWO WORLDS, ONE FATE :

It seems a long way from Dong Yai forest. With its urban sprawl of pachinko parlors, neatly paved roads, and high-rise business buildings, central Japan seems more like one big Bangkok; certainly not Phra Prachak's element, but once again Phra Prachak came to a place that seemingly had the least to do with the forest, to try to save the forest.



Phra Prachak and Phra Phaisan in Japan

Bringing his jungle-hardened bare feet to the cities of Japan, Phra Prachak sought to show people their connection with the forests of Siam, to show them how their gifts, beautifully packaged and wrapped four times, are not only ruining the forest of Siam but also the lives of thousands affected by deforestation and by the hunger of paper companies searching for more resources. Indeed, the densely packed cities and interspersed, lush green forests of Japan would seem to belie any connection with the suffering in Dong Yai and other parts of Siam. Yet upon closer examination, one can see a similar suffering that Japan endured just fifty years ago.

As one despairs at the predominance of cold concrete and glass which make up most Japanese cities, reflection is in order to know that almost all of the old traditional wooden houses, buildings and temples of Japan were burned to the ground during the American firebombings at the end of World War II. As one rejoices over the seemingly lush forests that one can find even within the Kyoto-Osaka-Nagoya megalopolis, a second look reveals a vast monoculture of pine trees planted only forty years ago as an attempt to re-green the country after most of its original forests, like in Siam, were logged to the ground. So as Phra Prachak came to appeal to the Japanese people for help against the activi-

I could do was take a deep breath to smell the soil and think of my parents, my family and all my friends — especially the ones who were captured by the Khmer Rouge. The picture of the injured people who cried for help because of their deep pain is still clear in my mind and my heart.

I felt hopeless and something inside me said that I might not see my friends come back safely. I knew that the best thing I could do was meditate and send them loving kindness, but it was the most difficult thing for me because I still wanted to hope. When one has hope and expectations, it is serious ; it is not a joke. I was thinking about the caravan of evacuating villagers — yes, they must have had hope; they must have hoped in the same way I did now.

When everybody came back safely without injury, I was very happy, but I was worried again the next day when the situation did not get better. I was afraid and worried that being young and frightened might cause me trouble. I might do something crazy and lose my mind which would be a burden to the others. I wanted to go home but I couldn't because I felt responsible for what I was doing. I had made the decision to join the Peace Walk, and I had to continue.

After those incidents, we walked without any trouble, but the image of the group of monks still disturbed me and made me feel dejected and hopeless. Changing the route, and Pi Liz and Pi Bob's leaving the walk made me really hesitate to continue. I almost lost my belief in the Peace Walk. Even having seen the great Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom, the golden cities of the past, didn't help because at present, the amputees and child beggars are a reality that we must face and acknowledge.

Porwisa Daochanteuk
16 years old

PHRA PRACHAK & PHRA PHAISAN VISIT JAPAN

ties of its government and companies in the logging and paper industry in Siam, there was a deeper connection of suffering at the hands of modernity, two peoples at different stages in the same historical continuum. Dong Yai suddenly seemed right there in all of us.

It also seemed a long way from Wat Paa Dhammachat. As the furthest frontier of Mahayana Buddhism in its original growth a thousand years following the Sakyamuni's 'parinibbhana', Japanese Buddhism seems the most dissimilar in form to the Buddha's original teachings. In contrast, Siamese Buddhism represents the Theravada attempt to maintain the exact original practice of Sakyamuni. In this way, Phra Prachak and his travelling companion, Phra Phaisan Visalo, could seem no more different to the priests of Japanese Buddhism. Indeed for the average Japanese, the two monks with their shaven heads and saffron robes could be more easily mistaken for a pair of cultists. In Japan, the vast majority of Buddhists take a very different approach to Buddhism, often one of prayer over meditation, of faith over 'paññā', of other-power over self-power. Furthermore, the division of Japanese Buddhism into a variety of different sects with different practices contrasts with the tradition of keeping all monks under one 'Vinaya' in Siamese Buddhism. So as Phra Prachak and Phra Phaisan grappled with priests with families, long hair, lay clothes and the occasional beer, the Japanese grappled with the two monks' afternoon fasts, keeping of early hours and singular wardrobe.

With these differences apparent, we all set to work trying to bring people together. Using the problems of the environment and foreign laborers (specifically Thai prostitutes) in Japan and our common tradition of Buddhism as themes, Phra Prachak, Phra Phaisan, INEB Japan and a number of other Japanese NGOs spent the last two weeks of this past May bringing to light the ever increasing connection between Japanese and Thai society. The plan was to conscientize. The hope was to stir people into action. Things went according to plan. Our hopes, for the time being, are still just that, lots of potential waiting to bear fruit.

The central focus of the two monks' trip was to give lectures and to meet citizen groups in the main population centers of Japan on the central island of Honshu.

The lectures and seminars in which they participated were held in Tokyo, Kyoto and Nagoya at a number of different sites ranging from universities to tem-

ples to community halls. In each place, their talks varied slightly but always contained a few central themes: the larger problem of land use in Siam for preserved forests, village lands and paper plantations; the specific faces of this dilemma through the activities and experiences of Phra Prachak and Phra Phaisan; and Phra Prachak's unique Dhamma as an inspiration to the deeper answers behind this problem of material resources.

While Phra Prachak offered his special experience of the effects of misguided development and corporate exploitation on the forests and villagers, Phra Phaisan offered larger perspectives on the roles of all the various groups involved in this problem. With his experience as a student activist, NGO worker and monk, Phra Phaisan gave valuable insights into the complex relationships in Thai society between the central government, local officials, the police & military, villagers, the monkhood, NGOs, and local & foreign business. At the end of each lecture, an extensive question and answer and commentary time was held. This provided especially rich exchanges for students to ask questions, NGOs to address issues and government groups to defend and to elaborate on development policies.

The second part of the two monks' trip found them travelling to smaller towns and cities in search of Japan's own social problems. The main focus of these trips was investigating the serious problem of Thai women laborers forced into prostitution in Japan. Recently, there has been a spate of serious incidents involving these women. The monks visited one small town north of Tokyo where three women received 10 year prison terms for murdering their retainer who had forcibly kept them in prostitution. They visited another woman outside of Nagoya who was also being held for killing her retainer for similar reasons. The plight of these women is the dearest of the difficulties facing Thai and other foreign laborers in Japan. As these women and the other Thais who they met during their visit seemed grateful to receive the two monks, Phra Prachak and Phra Phaisan felt a sense of crisis in the complete lack of Thai monks living in Japan. As these foreign laborers face the intense difficulties of their work and their lives as outsiders, the monks felt that some Thai monks should certainly come to Japan to live and to give moral support to these people. In the end, Phra Phaisan made a commitment to try to develop a small program of monks to come live and support these laborers in Japan.

Throughout this busy schedule, the monks also took time to experience Japanese life and especially Japanese Buddhist life. In Tokyo, the two stayed at Zojoji temple, a massive Pure Land temple originally built for the private use of the Tokugawa generals. Now it is a monastery for novices as well as a popular tourist and wedding site.

This temple presented the first challenge of divergent 'vinaya' between Japanese and Thai Buddhism. The monks had to put a special sign outside of their shower room asking people to wait since all the novices shower as one group and do not cover themselves. The next meeting of *vinaya* took place in the dining room. There would be no alms gathering for the two monks. Instead they were served a simple breakfast in a large communal dining room. In addition, as we entered to order our food, Phra Prachak noticed a rather large case of refrigerated beer. When informed that Japanese monks have a soft spot for alcohol, he responded like a teacher scolding his students. After staying in a number of other temples and private residences and visiting numerous sites including the famous temples of Kyoto, we were all pleasantly surprised at Phra Prachak and Phra Phaisan's eagerness and happiness to try new things and to adapt to all the strange new ways. As this was Phra Prachak's first time to travel abroad, we were even more impressed with his typical Thai *sanug* spirit and *mai pen rai* ease. When asked what he thought about Japan he gave it the thumbs up and responded that he would have come sooner if he had known how nice it was. As the true Dhamma followers that they are, Phra Prachak and Phra Phaisan were always perfectly blending a seriousness of their purpose to come to Japan and a lightness to enjoy the present moment of their experience. In the end they strongly impressed their Japanese ordained counterparts.

At this time, the ultimate outcome of their visit is uncertain. Much of the two monks' work was in conscientization, making people aware of problems. Such work takes time to ferment and blend with the activities of the recipients. At each stop, Phra Prachak and Phra Phaisan were warmly received by mostly full audiences. Therefore, we hope that such positive reception of the monks will have positive long term effects. Concretely, the process of organizing this tour brought INEB Japan and a number of Japanese NGOs closer. They now plan to better coordinate their activities on the Thai forestry issue through a special committee. Additionally, a number of plans were created to increase coordination between Thai and Japanese NGOs on the

problems of foreign laborers. Such work is an ongoing process and in this light, we hope that Phra Prachak and Phra Phaisan will return soon to continue the conscientization and networking that they have begun.

Jonathan Watts

Jonathan Watts is currently working with INEB Japan and living in Nagoya.

After returning from Japan, Phra Prachak could not return to his area and was forced to disrobe before the beginning of Buddhist lent (July 23, 1994).

SUU KYI LANGUISHES WHILE BURMA SUFFERS UNDER JUNTA

As the heroine of Burma's short-lived democracy movement begins a sixth year of lonely confinement in her lakeside Rangoon home, Burma's military rulers seem as determined as ever to keep Aung San Suu Kyi — and the nation — in their iron grip.

The Burmese junta has given some tantalizing hints of flexibility, most recently a comment by military intelligence chief General Khin Nyunt in an interview that he would be willing to meet with Suu Kyi at "an appropriate time."

U.S. Congressman Bill Richardson was allowed to meet with Suu Kyi in Rangoon in February — her first non-family visitor since she was put under house arrest on July 20, 1989.

During his meeting with Suu Kyi, Richardson, a New Mexico Democrat, offered to act as intermediary between the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner and Khin Nyunt, widely regarded as the most powerful figure in the junta.

Richardson said a meeting between the dissident and the general would be the "minimum gesture" needed to"improve Washington's chilly relations with the Burmese government."

The junta, meanwhile, has dropped some of the restrictions of the socialist economic system imposed by former dictator Gen. Ne Win.

The reforms, including legalization of some sectors of the country's thriving black market, have resulted in a boom for some.

"There have been a lot of cosmetic changes — increased tourism, more hustle-bustle on the streets," said a Western diplomat specializing in Burma. "But fundamentally nothing has changed. The fact remains that it's still a repressive military regime."

Suu Kyi, 49, the daughter of Burma's assassinated independence hero Aung San, was put under house arrest during a general crackdown on dissent in which hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators were shot and thousands were imprisoned.



Suu Kyi

The political party she led, the National League for Democracy, won Burma's first democratic election in 1990 despite the confinement of Suu Kyi.

But the junta, which calls itself the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), ignored the election results and began institutionalizing military rules in the former British colony.

Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her efforts to bring democracy to Burma, much to the embarrassment of the military regime that arrested her.

Although SLORC has been roundly condemned by the United States and other countries, as well as by human rights groups, for nipping Burma's democracy movement in the bud, the regime has found some important allies.

Junta representatives have been invited to attend the 27th annual ministerial meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Bangkok from July 23 - 27 as the guests of Thailand.

Along with Singapore — Burma's leading trading partner — Thailand has what it calls a policy of "constructive engagement" with Burma, aimed ostensibly at encouraging reform through expanded diplomatic and economic contacts.

The policy has resulted in increased trade, mainly the exploitation of Burmese timber, mineral and fishing resources in return for Thai and Chinese consumer goods.

China has been quick to take advantage of Burma's economic opening, selling the junta jet fighters and other military hardware in return for agriculture and forest products.

The American petroleum company, Unocal, has entered into a multi-million-dollar deal with the junta and a French firm, Total, to drill for natural gas in Burma's Gulf of Martaban and export it via a pipeline to energy-hungry Thailand.

Burma recorded a trade deficit of $52 million last year, the highest in 11 years, while the country's annual per capita income of $210 is among the lowest in the world.

According to Burmese dissidents, the junta's moves toward economic reform, like those in the political arena, are a sham.

"SLORC didn't just legalize the black market, they took over the black market," said an exiled Burmese. "The army and their friends can undersell everyone else because they don't have to pay bribes to the soldiers."

As a result, the dissident said, the junta has been successful in translating its political and military power into economic power, and has tightened its controls.

summarized from an article by John Hail (UPI), appearing in the *Bangkok Post* on July 20, 1994.

SULAK SIVARAKSA'S TRIAL IN THAILAND

The trial of Sulak Sivaraksa has been fraught with difficulties and delays. On the first of June, Sulak's lawyers were to begin cross examining two of the prosecutor's witnesses; however, the court clerks had forwarded all of the trial documents to Nakornnayoke provincial court despite orders by the judge to the contrary. The documents are expected to be returned by the end of August. Hence, the hearings have been re-scheduled for September 5th, 12th and 26th.

On July 20th, Sulak gave a speech at Thammasat University to mark the fifth anniversary of Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest. His speech caused an uproar in the Thai military. Army spokesman Col. Palangkoon Klaharn stated that Sulak's criticism could provoke certain military personnel to take "offensive action" to express their outrage. He also added, "But we do not wish for anything serious to happen [to Sulak]. Therefore, at this stage we ask Khun Sulak to change his behavior and stop such criticism."

CHRONOLOGY OF THE HUNGER STRIKE IN THAILAND

May 25: Political activist Chalad Vorachat begins his hunger strike in front of Parliment to demand genuine charter reform, 10 days after sending an open letter to Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, listing his four demands. The four points were asking the government to push for a House committee to draft a new charter, calling for the direct election of Cabinet members, provincial governors and tambon councillors.

May 27: Hundreds of right-wingers turn up to ridicule Chalad.

May 30: Palang Dharma Party hardliners and party founder Chamlong Srimuang gave their support to Chalad. Chaiwat Sinsuwong, a hardliner, attacked Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai for allegedly "dragging his feet" on charter reforms. He and Chamlong called on the government to give in to Chalad's demands by setting up a House committee to draft a new charter. Chuan said the government would not bow to Chalad's demands.

May 31: Chalad collapses and is given an intravenous saline-glucose solution as his condition deteriorates. He continued to receive the intravenous feed during most of his hunger strike. Signs of serious rifts in the PDP emerge as PDP leader Boonchu Rojanastien says the hardliners' call for the House committee reforms is illegal.

June 1: PDP MP Mana Mahasuwerachai announces that Chalad agrees to cancel his fast after having reached compromises with government representatives.

June 2: Mana distances himself

from Chalad, accusing him of having breached promises in return for certain compromises. Mana says Chalad and his supports agreed to end the fast in exchange for being allowed to go on televesion to explain their cause. The opposition promises to support a motion calling for a special House committee to draft a new charter.

June 3: The so-called Friends of Chalad from the Thai Political Reform Organization fight for the hunger striker's cause. Chalad shuts himself in a cage. Chuan rules out any compromise with Chalad, saying the government would not support any attempt to form such a House committee.

June 6: The government agrees to support the formation of the House committee, but will not initiate attempts to set up the panel. Chalad promises to end his fast once the panel is formed.

June 7: Following much criticism and satire in the newspapers, the Democrat Party and most of its coalition partners come out against drafting a new charter.

June 8: Turmoil engulfs the PDP and the party appears to be on the brink of break-up because of a bitter conflict among its Cabinet members and hardliners over whether to push for the House committee to draft a new charter. Boonchu orders PDP MPs to not file a motion to call for the draft. However, 21 dissident MPs defy his order and submit the motion.

June 9: Parliament President Marut Bunnag forms a committee to prepare for the drafting of a new charter. But Chalad refuses to end his fast, saying Marut's panel is irrelevant to his demands.

June 15: Hardlines in the PDP score a victory in a party meeting by gaining full backing for their controversail motion to draft a new charter.

June 16: The 21 PDP MPs unexpectedly fail to push for an early debate of their motion. Sources say Chamlong asked them not to do so after being certain that Chuan would dissolve the House and blame it on the PDP. Chalad asks his supporters to stop their demonstrations in front of Parliament. He gives himself up to police and continues his fast in the Police Hospital.

From June 1 thousands of people gathered everyday in front of Parliament House.

June 20: Chalad returns to his hunger strike in front of Parliament, this time keeping a much lower profile.

July 31: Chalad goes to see H.H. the Supreme Patriarch who asks him to end his hunger strike.

August 11: Mr.Chalad is ordained at Wat Bovornives.

SULAK SADDENED BY APATHY TOWARD CHALAD DEMANDS

In an interview with KrissChaiyarat, social critic Sulak Sivaraksa gives the reasons why he has come out to back hunger striker Chalad Vorachat, who is calling for the drafting of a new constitution. He says Chalad has kindled political awareness among the people to replace "the dictatorial constitution" with a new one.

Why do you support hunger striker Chalad Vorachat in calling for the drafting of a new constitution?

Chalad is an idealist who many Thais don't understand. Most Thais are pragmatists who don't understand idealists. They only want to become prime minister or to make money. Thais are very competent in these areas—to do business or to become MPs to secure cabinet posts. That's why they don't care about principles. Chalad is a rare person because he's an idealist who cherishes noble thoughts. When Chalad fasted two years ago; the Thais regarded him as crazy.

We Thais have forgotten those who have devoted themselves to the country, like [former prime minister] Pridi Banomyong who risked his life in calling for democracy in 1932 and led the Free Thai Movement which saved the country during World War II. We let Acharn Pridi suffer for 21 years in China and 16 years in France, where he died Even now, national leaders don't show any gratitude toward him. ... Thai society has never admired any idealist. But I admire Chalad as an idealist. As I've said, the people have forgetten the May crisis two years ago. What did we call for two years ago? We wanted democracy in its true sense and the result was: only [former prime minister] Suchinda [Kraprayoon] was ousted. Suchinda has never been punished and can still play golf. He's still arrogant when appearing in court [in a defamation lawsuit he filed against Sulak]. Chalad has told me that his hunger strike two years ago did not make the country more democratic because [Prime Minister] Chuan Leekpai is no different from Suchinda.

What is the similarity between Chuan and Suchinda?

First, Suchinda, like Chuan, rose to power to the prime minister's post in line with the law.

Secondly, Suchinda broke his promise that he would not accept an offer to become premier. He said he would have nothing to do with corrupt ministers, yet he later appointed them in his Cabinet.

Chuan also broke his

promise to amend the constitution to make it more democratic and to allow the election of provincial governors now, saying it has to go step-by-step. [Interior Minister] Chavalit [Yongchaiyudh] and [Palang Dharma Party founder] Chamlong also made these promises. However, Chavalit broke his promise.

Many people think that idealistic thoughts are not practical. Can pragmatists and idealists meet half way?

Many Thais cherish pragmatism, so much so that they forget the significance of idealism. In Buddhism, Lord Buddha taught that all men can gain enlightenment. Idealism is like a goal we have to try to achieve. If we cannot become an *arhat*, we should try to become an *anagami* or a *sota patiphala* [one who gains lower stages of enlightenment than an *arhat*].

In Chalad's case, it may not be possible to achieve all of his demands. He has lately called for the government to meet his main demand [to form a House committee to draw up a new constitution] and the government can do it.

Two years ago, Chalad was ready to die during his hunger strike. Many people staged rallies across the country. But they finally gained nothing. Chuan is a dictator like Suchinda. The important thing is that the present constitution is dictatorial.

I'd like to recall the October 14 uprising in 1973 when student leaders and several people were arrested and killed. The result was the three tyrants escaped from the country, which remained under a dictatorial regime as before.

What are the advantages of Chalad's hunger strike for a new constitution to the Thai society?

First, the people will see that idealism is more significant than pragmatism; Secondly, they will see that the government is dictatorial as well as the constitution and the people have to fight against it; Thirdly, the people would realize that they have the right to voice objections when they disagree with anything. We're ready to die for what is right and this is part of the Buddhist culture. But Khun Chuan doesn't understand it and said he is being pressured.

We want to awaken the people with our protest in calling for a people's constitution. Chalad has contributed tremendously to the country....Without him, Chuan and [Army chief] Wimol [Wongwanich] would not have been able to rise to power. The Class 5 military officers [from the Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy] would not have allowed him [Wimol] to gain the top army post, even though he is also a Class 5 graduate. Those who are in power are ungrateful and think that they rose to power on their own.

Why doesn't Chalad fight in Parliament as he is also the leader of the Democratic Force Party?

I think Chalad's way of protest is justified in the sense that this is non-violent fighting. Chalad has given the government a chance to amend the constitution. But the government has done nothing in the past year. Chuan has said that was an affair of Parliament, and not the government's. The government has also been defeated many times in Parliament [in its proposals to amend the charter]. In this case, the government should resign. Yes, the prime minister may not dissolve the House, but he should step down. If he is a competent politician, he would be re-elected in the next general election.

It's quite obvious that Chuan is incompetent. He has done nothing for the poor or to change the unjust social structure.

Chalad's protest would benefit all people in society as it would restore social justice. When Anand Panyarachun was prime minister, people loved him so much that they formed the "Friends of Anand" group. Only the rich, and not the poor, benefited from the Anand government.

Please note the difference between the two groups of "Friends of Anand" and "Friends of Chalad". The Friends of Anand group is comprised of the rich and senior academics and Friends of Chalad are people from all walks of life. This is why I have come out to support him.

It's terrible that [popular TV anchorman] Chermsak Pinthong invited Chalad to appear in his TV talk show [Looking from Different Perspectives] programme only to discredit him. He also invited Phra Panya Nanda Bhikkhu and [Campaign for Popular Democracy president] Xan Kaewxusai to attack Chalad. I wanted to appear in the programme, but my request was turned down.

Many people think that Chalad's hunger strike is dictatorial in the sense that he tries to impose his thoughts upon others. Some people call this the "bandits' method".

That was the remark of [deputy Finance Minister] Trairong Suwankhiri...I've known Tairong since he was a student who participated in the October 1973 student uprising. However, Trairong's remark [regarding Chalad] sounds like that of [former prime minister] Thanom Kittikachorn or [former military strongman] Prapas Charusatien.

It is believed that many of those who have come out to support Chalad's hunger strike do not really agree with what Chalad demands. They back Chalad simply because they don't like Chuan.

You must understand that there are a lot of people either in the Friends of Chalad or Chuan's group. The point is they have to

say who they support. We don't know what is really in their minds.

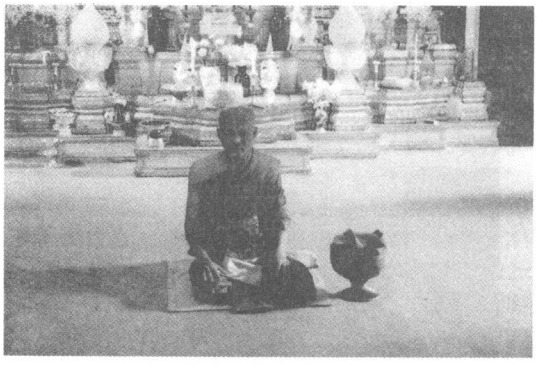
At least I think they don't want to see Chalad die. This is a good attitude. So we've got to help him. ...

More people have gradually seen that the constitution is dictatorial and want to change it. The Friends of Chalad has approached all political parties for help. [Confederation for Democracy secretary-general] Dr.Weng [Tojitrakarn] and [New Aspiration Party deputy leader] Veera Musigapong have been admirably patient in their work in seeking help from all political parties, and they have supported them.

Chat Pattana Party leader Chatichai Choonhavan has said that Chalad, unlike other Thais, is very idealistic and should not be allowed to die. He said the Chat Pattana Party would coordinate with other opposition parties to help Chalad and they did.

Can you comment on Chuan's remark that the country's principles are more significant than a man's life?

The current so-called principles are dictatorial. What he meant is that he has been the target of criticism. At present, he has regarded himself as the principle. ...Actually, the most important principle is justice.



Chalad at his ordination

The main principle must suggest that the current constitution is dictatorial and it should be amended for the country's well-being. And Chuan used to promise this before he became prime minister.

Chalad has kindled people's political awareness. More academics, parliamentarians and opposition politicians now agree with Chalad.

Chuan is a good-for-nothing man who tries to avoid problems for his political survival. He is so afraid of the military.

Do you think the pro-Chalad demonstration will escalate?

No, it will not be blown out of proportion so long as the authorities try to solve the problem. But Chuan is stubborn. The Palang Dharma Party has submitted a motion to form a House committee to draw up a new charter. Let them do it. Then, the other MPs should back the PDP's proposal to form the committee. This way, Chalad would not die and nobody would lose face.

If Chuan doesn't want to do this, there are no other loopholes and he should step down. It's shameless for him to stay on. I don't think the House will be dissolved before MPs vote for the national budget to get the Bt5 million [provincial development] fund for each MP for political campaigns.

What would happen if Chalad died?

If Chalad died, Chuan would have to take responsibility because he has failed to take any action to help Chalad. I'm afraid that, if Chalad dies, the military may stage a coup.

***Nation*, June 14, 1994**

WOMEN, VIOLENCE & NONVIOLENT ACTION
A MEETING IN THE PHILIPPINES

In November of last year, 45 women from 27 countries met in Manila to explore the theme "Women, Violence and Nonviolent Action." The meeting was co-sponsored by the Life & Peace Institute, World Council of Churches and Lutheran World Federation, in cooperation with Gabriela, an alliance of scores of women's groups in the Philippines. Most of the text of the statement from the gathering follows.

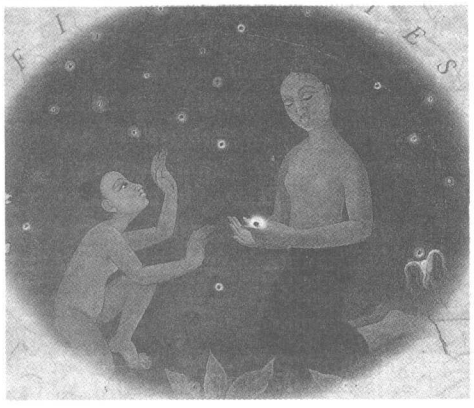
...Our reflections were shaped by the Filipino context. We witnessed tremendous poverty, militarism, and injustice, but were also witnesses to the courage and dignity of Filipina women in their daily struggles. We were moved by the efforts of Filipina women's organizations working through Gabriela to respond to the many varied needs of their sisters.

Violence against women takes many forms — from violence within the family to ethnic conflicts and wars to political violence to economic structures which oppress women. We recognize the need to expand the definition of violence further to include, for example, oppressive

cultures and racism, the negative consequences of high technology, dominant development ideologies, and the forced separation of the people from their land and natural resources.

We also recognized the need to challenge the dominant human rights discourse. Far too often the concepts of democracy and the nation state have been defined within the dominant Western paradigm and have ignored the diverse ways in which societies, particularly in the South, have organized themselves. These concepts need to be reformulated and women's perspectives and views within these debates need to be assured.

We worked intensively on issues around domestic violence, and we call for the silence around domestic violence to be broken. The stories of women's pain need to be told — and need to be heard in ways which influence national and international policies. In spite of the many obstacles, progress is being made in this area, including changes in national legislation regarding rape laws, pornography and violence on television.



"Fire Flies" by K. Khemananda

Many of the meeting participants spoke of their lives in the midst of wars and conflicts in Somalia, former Yugoslavia, Haiti and Palestine. While women are rarely part of the decisions to go to war, they always suffer its consequences. We affirm the way in which women sustain their families in times of conflict, and recognize that their struggles for survival often leave little energy for playing a more active peacemaking role.

We affirm the important initiatives which women are taking in many different contexts to work nonviolently to resolve conflicts and to foster reconciliation, as in South Africa and Palestine.

Women's efforts to find alternatives to violence come in many forms — from dialogue with women on the other side of a conflict to education about domestic violence. Women have often been the backbone of social movements, but their contributions are too frequently unappreciated. Recognizing the need for interlinkages of the marginalized, the women's movement needs to play an active role in bringing a feminist world view and in advocating nonviolent ways of resolving conflicts.

Although the tasks before us are many, we draw strength and hope from each other and from our vision of a world where all human beings live with hope and dignity and a world without violence.

Taken from the *Life & Peace Review*. 1993. No.4

THAI HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Since the re-establishment of ties between the People's Republic of China and Thailand, there has been increasing political, economic and cross-cultural dialogue between the two countries due mainly to the great effort of a few individuals involved in various sectors. Sulak Sivaraksa is one of those individuals. He has contributed a great deal to promote intellectual and cultural exchange between Chinese and Thai scholars.

In particular, Sulak has provided extensive support to researchers of Thai history in the People's Republic of China by providing books to a number of libraries, assisting scholars with the translation of Chinese work into Thai, arranging support from Japanese, Chinese & Thai organizations to publish the works of Phya Anuman Rajadhon in Chinese, and organizing trips to China for members of the Siam Society to promote academic exchange.

After diplomatic ties were re-established between our two countries, Sulak was among the first to visit. This was at a time when there was a great deal of misinformation about our country. Undoubtedly, he must have had to be persistent in order to undertake such a visit. And upon returning, he wrote about China which helped provide Thai people with a clearer

understanding of our country.

Sulak's relationship with the Thai Research Institute of the People's Republic of China began in 1981 when he attended a conference on Southeast Asia, held in Canada, where he met Professor He Zhao Fa, the Director of the Southeast Asian Institute of Zhong Shan University at Kwang Chow. After this conference, he was invited to the university as a resource person.

Zhong Shan University was founded by Sun Yat Sen, a great leader of the Chinese, in 1924, and is an important university in the South. The Southeast Asian Institute at the university is well known for its Thai historical research. Sulak has also forged ties with other academic institutes such as the Southeast Asian Institute of Yunan. We believe that Sulak is the first Thai professor to forge friendly connections with Thai historical research institutes in the People's Republic of China.

During his visit to the library of the Southeast Asian Institute at Zhong Shan University, Sulak saw that there weren't enough Thai books to undertake detailed research projects. Upon returning to his country, he applied for funds from a German foundation to supply hundreds of Thai textbooks to various libraries including those at Zhong Shan University, Peking University and the Southeast Asian Institute of Yunan. We will remember his great contribution long into the future. As the Chinese proverb goes: "The drinker never forgets the well-digger."

Sulak also introduced the works of Phya Anuman Rajadhon, a great Thai scholar, to our institute and others. I have translated an autobiography by Phya Anuman Rajadhon and other related works into Chinese while Professor Ma Ning has translated *Essays on Thai Folklore.* Sulak also contacted the Toyota Foundation to secure funding to publish the two books. These publications increase the Chinese people's understanding of Phya Anuman Rajadhon and Thai customs.

In addition, in 1983, Sulak arranged for thirty Thai scholars to visit Yunan. That trip is still etched in my memory. And in 1984-85, I was invited to teach at Chiang Mai University in Northern Thailand. During that time, I wrote articles on Thai history which were based upon Chinese texts and my work and experience in Thailand. Sulak helped get my work published here.

There is a Chinese proverb which says, "Distance proves the horse's power. Time proves a person's earnestness." After ten years of friendship, we are sure that no matter what the circumstances, Sulak will always be a respected professor and a close friend.

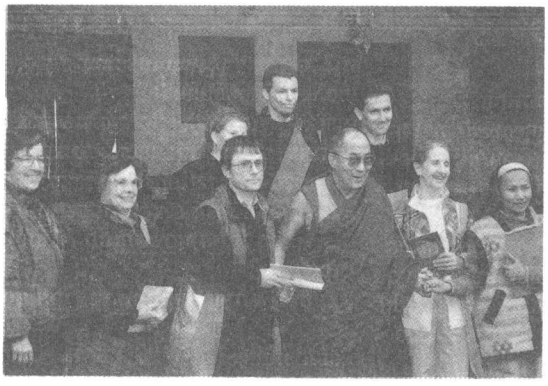
Professor Duan Li Sheng

SIX YEARS OF INEB

When INEB began in 1989, there were already active individuals and groups in Siam working on various issues. For example, Phra Phaisan Visalo was working on education and the environment; Chatsumarn Kabilsingh was working on the role of women in Buddhist society; Niramon Prudtathorn was working on the status of women in Thai society; Luang Por Nan was working on community development along Buddhist principles; and TICD (the Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development) was providing financial and ideological support to groups of monks working towards 'right livelihood' in their communities.

Each of these individuals and groups were trying to infuse their respective fields of work with some positive aspects of spirituality which seemed to be lacking. Therefore, the creation of INEB was an attempt to bring these people together to discuss mutual concerns around using Buddhist values to positively influence society. It was also apparent that it would be important to work with the established Buddhist Sangha and the academic community in order to encourage and assist them to become more socially concerned and active. TICD was one of the first groups to attempt to bring together these various sectors of Thai society to work towards solving social problems in a Buddhist way. INEB sought to expand this work within Siam and in other countries, particularly other Asian Buddhist countries.

One of the first concrete activities of INEB in Siam was the creation of training seminars on



INEB members meeting with
His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Dharmsala



Ven. Maha Ghosananda
at the sixth annual INEB conference

nonviolence, conflict resolution and mediation. In early 1991, as part of an ongoing project with Sri Lanka, INEB and the Dhammavedi Institute of Colombo developed a seminar on reconciliation and conflict resolution for Sri Lankan monks. The second half of this seminar focused on visiting various Thai NGOs, especially Buddhist groups involved in community development. Since the Thai and Sri Lankan Sanghas have a long history of close relations, INEB felt it important to build on this relationship by establishing a network of Buddhist groups active in community development.

At the end of 1991, INEB, together with the Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation, took a step further in this direction by putting together another seminar on reconciliation and conflict resolution for Cambodians. Seminar participants came from three of the four existing factions in Cambodia at the time, including members of the government in Phnom Penh. The largest Buddhist university in Siam, Mahachulalongkorn, was instrumental in helping to develop this training. They were also vital in encouraging the participation of the official Sangha of the Phnom Penh government. This training was the first step in re-establishing closer links between the Thai and Khmer Sanghas. As with the Sri Lankan seminar, this and subsequent Cambodian seminars all involved exposure trips to Thai organizations involved in community development. These trips served to introduce and foster the idea of community development based on Buddhist ideals to the Cambodians. Three years later, this has evolved into a growing network of Thai and Khmer NGOs.

Also in 1991, an American volunteer at INEB, Jeff Sager, created a new INEB program in Siam. From his experience with mentally handicapped patients, he developed an idea for temple-based hospices for the terminally ill — especially for those with AIDS. This project was a radical attempt to get the Buddhist Sangha involved with the severe problem of AIDS in Siam. Initially, this required extensive training for monks so they were able to properly communicate the idea of an AIDS hospice to their communities. INEB was able to find one monk, Phra Alongott Tirkhapanyo at Wat Prabatnamput in Lopburi province, greatly interested in this project. He joined INEB in a partnership to create a pilot program in AIDS hospice care at his temple. Two years later, this project has achieved some success and acceptance in Thai society. As the program has grown on its own, INEB has withdrawn its direct involvement. It now continues under Phra Alongott and other monks and lay persons who have taken up the idea.

Another activity which was started in 1991 and continues today, is the support for Phra Prachak Kuttachitto of Dong Yai Forest, and the villagers in the surrounding community. In conjunction with TICD and the Wongsanit Ashram, INEB has been helping to coordinate a national and international campaign on the vast array of issues and problems associated with the Dong Yai Forest crisis. The crisis encapsulates issues on appropriate development, the environment, Thai land rights, the use of the military in solving conflicts, the role of foreign business in Siam, and the role of Buddhist monks in these issues. At first, INEB played a key role in gathering international support for Phra Prachak and helping him fight for the survival of Dong Yai and the livelihood of the villagers. In this way, INEB has also played a role in

supporting TICD and the Wongsanit Ashram in their various community support projects in this area. More recently, INEB has been coordinating Phra Prachak's visits to Japan, the United States and Europe. This has involved not only the specific problem at Dong Yai, but the larger problem of appropriate development in Siam. Phra Prachak's recent visit to Japan provided additional opportunities for Japanese and Thai NGOs to further cooperate on the mutual problems of illegal laborers in Japan and deforestation in Siam.

In 1992, the tragic events of 'Bloody May' (May 17-20) catalyzed INEB's involvement in the Thai movement for democracy and human rights. In the days leading up to the crisis, INEB joined with other Thai NGOs in supporting Chalad Vorachat's hunger strike and promoting nonviolent protests. During the actual crisis, INEB staff workers relayed news from the streets to the INEB office and onward to our international friends and contacts in an effort to circumvent the military's censorship of the press. INEB's work in this area continues in its support for Chalad Vorchat's most recent fast for a more democratic constitution.

Another ongoing peace activity in Siam involves the case of Sulak Sivaraksa, one of the founders of INEB. In 1991, he was charged with lese majeste and defamation of the leader of the military junta, and as a result was forced to live in exile for over a year. The charge still stands, but thanks to the collective support from INEB's international members, Sulak's colleagues and students both inside and outside Siam, he has been able to return to Siam and is now defending himself against the charges.

In addition to the peace work in Siam, over the last six years INEB has established relationships with various groups in Asia, Europe and North America. INEB acts as a central network, channelling information for these groups and helping them to promote activities on various issues such as the environment; alternative education, women's issues, human rights, peace and nonviolence, and developing a Buddhist vision for society. In particular, INEB has been able to support groups in Bangladesh, Burma, Cambodia, India, Japan, Ladakh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Britain, France, Russia and the United States. INEB is also attempting to develop more contact with groups in China, Vietnam, Laos and Korea.

Some of INEB's other activities have included supporting peace walks in Cambodia and Sri Lanka; organizing workshops & training on indirect & direct nonviolent action, reconciliation & mediation for monks, nuns, lay people and NGOs in Siam, Cambodia, Burma, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh; campaigning to make Nepal a secular state and to stop discrimination and human rights abuses against Buddhists there; developing an international campaign to increase awareness of problems facing the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh; supporting the establishment of Buddhist monasteries, libraries, and training centers for monks, nuns & Buddhist youth in Ladakh, India & Nepal; supporting the Tibetan community in its struggle for cultural and religious preservation; and campaigning against international political & military linkages, and environmentally destructive business support for SLORC in Burma.

Unfortunately, INEB's attempts to improve the situation in Burma have not been as successful as we would have liked, despite our geographic closeness. In 1990, INEB was able to help the prodemocracy students camping on the Thai-Burmese border to communicate with the outside world and establish links with various Thai NGOs. INEB provided them with books and other necessary materials, and attempts were underway to start a "Jungle University" at Manerplaw to provide nonviolence training and intellectual stimulation. Due to the extremely difficult conditions, INEB was unable to continue these activities after one year, but some other groups have been able to maintain contact with the activists. INEB hopes to be able to organize more training in nonviolence, conflict resolution, and mediation for Burmese monks, nuns and lay people in the future.

At present, INEB is seeking funding for a course for Buddhist monks, nuns and NGO workers to be organized jointly by Wongsanit Ashram, the International Society for Ecology and Culture, and INEB. This course is intended to deepen the participants' understanding of the destructive elements of the current development process in Asia, to investigate alternative models, and to contribute to practical Buddhist initiatives for more ethical development that encourages self-reliant communities and preserves traditional cultural values. The course will be led by Helena Norberg-Hodge and Sulak Sivaraksa. It will consist of two parts; a nine-day seminar and an eleven-day exposure tour.

The underlying objective guiding all of INEB's activities throughout the last six years has been to find ways to facilitate dialogue and mutual understanding between various Buddhist and

non-Buddhist organizations and individuals, both in the East and in the West. In this way we are working continuously towards solving social problems by applying the perspectives of engaged Buddhists around the world. Often this approach puts us in direct opposition to world development trends, and so offers valuable alternatives for a more humane world based on the universal truths of wisdom and compassion.

Surapee Chootrakul

For more information, contact:
INEB
c/o Wongsanit Ashram
P. O. Box 1
Ongkarak
Nakonnayok 26120
tel/fax: (6637)-391-494

TICD & THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE THAI SANGHA

Through thirty years of modernization, Thailand has transformed herself in many ways. Unfortunately, deterioration in the environment and spirituality have resulted. The exploitation of natural resources solely for economic gain during this past half century has increased exponentially and resulted in deadly calamities. Drought spreads across rural areas while air & water pollution prevail in urban settings. These devastating conditions drive people to desperation and despair in the wake of increasing scarcity of resources and growing environmental degradation. As economic indicators rise, human development is actually hindered for many people in the country.

The founding of TICD

For the past thirty years, material growth has been glorified and promoted, and the two main traditional foundations of Thai society, namely the family and the community, have been fractured. In particular, temples which used to play major roles in maintaining the cohesion and flourishing of society, providing important services such as education, health care, and the transmission of cultural & spiritual values, have been forcibly replaced by the intrusion of modern institutions such as schools, hospitals, government development agencies, etc. At a personal and structural level, local people have indulged in consumerism to perpetuate the drive for the nation's (economic) prosperity. This has resulted in the increased power of the state and greater amounts of resources being allocated to affluent people.

"Development, then," said Sulak Sivaraksa, prominent Thai social critic, at a recent conference of the Sekhiya Dhamma Group of monks, "meant material growth. Once development takes place, the natural environment is destroyed and the rich become richer while the poor get poorer, until they have to sell their daughters as prostitutes."

Recalling the establishment of TICD, he continued, "We saw that religions were being used as instruments of the state to lure people to support consumerism. With some close colleagues from different faiths, it was agreed that we would set up an NGO to tackle the problem." Hence, the Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development (TICD).

Since then, TICD has been attempting to involve monks in the struggle for social justice.

Luang Por Nan is an example of such a monk. Living in rural Thailand, Luang Por Nan started to grow concerned about the plight of the poor villagers who provided him and the other monks with alms everyday. Lacking knowledge and experience, however, he was unsure of how he might begin to become more involved in addressing the problems of his community. Then, TICD approached him, and other monks like him who were concerned with the same issues.

Sulak stated, "With our help, he and other monks were able to see development work carried out by their fellow monks in countries like South Korea and Taiwan. When he returned, he began to reflect upon the root causes of the poverty which is rampant in his village and then began to implement various projects to help the villagers."

Among his many projects, the rice banks, communal farming and local revolving funds are the most widely known. In addition, he has expanded the work from his own village to cover most of the area in the province, using the network of local monks known as the 'Saha Dhamma Group'. At least one monk from each district belongs to the group. Rice banks

and other projects aimed at upgrading people's lives by strengthening their self-reliance, were set up in many areas and proved themselves successful.

Luang Por Nan is a senior monk who has successfully helped society. There are many other success stories, such as those of Luang Por Khamkien, Phra Kru Supajarawat, etc. As time passes, however, these senior monks have grown more concerned with finding younger monks to continue the movement.

Sekhiya Dhamma Group

"In late 1989, these senior monks, along with some younger monks, gathered together to discuss forming a group." said Phra Phaisan Visalo, an activist-turned-monk, during the conference. "They contemplated the idea of networking and later agreed to come together to form a group."

"The name 'Sekhiya Dhamma' was coined by Phra Depvedi (presently Phra Dhamma Pitaka), one of the most outstanding contemporary intellectual monks in Siam," said Sulak. "Sekhiya means the monks' discipline. However, as the traditional discipline which monks practice nowadays does not benefit people in our changing society, naming the group as such would remind monks of their duty to make their discipline more relevant."

Thus, according to Phra Phaisan, the main objectives of the group are to coordinate monks involved in development work as well as to promote more networking, and to try to find alternative ways of development which will contribute to society, religion and the Sangha, as a whole. The members realize these aims through their various projects which cover most of the regions in the country. Every year, they get together for an annual conference in which progress reports are presented on their work (which includes natural conservation, development, education, etc.) Time is made available for sharing experiences, discussing problems, and planning the following year's activities.

TICD has served as the group's secretariat and facilitating agent. We help to provide them with information, training courses, seminars, registration services and other resources.

This marks the group's six-year anniversary. Around 700 monks are on the member's list. However, frankly speaking, only sixty to seventy are genuinely active. "We have selected a member from each region to act as a representative to help fulfill the group's objectives. Unfortunately, this has not worked out very efficiently", admitted Phra Phaisan who has been serving as one of the core members of the group since it was established.

Monks & natural conservation

The group still plays a positive role. The socially-engaged monks have inspired and learned much from each other. One of their most outstanding successes of the past few years, has been their effort in helping to preserve the environment.

Over the past three years, TICD has organized a number of training courses and related seminars for the monks. At each event, they are provided with essential information, training in managerial skills (including proposal writing, fund raising, project evaluation, etc.) and other necessary materials. Small grants are available for those who propose pilot projects.

One of the most striking successes has been the work of Phra Somnuk Natho of Plak Mai Lai temple in a province near Bangkok. His 36 acres of temple land is covered with lush forest.

"When I first arrived (around ten years ago), the local villagers cut the trees to use as firewood." said the conservationist monk. "They did not see the value of the plants. They cut down trees everyday."

In a successful effort to dissuade people from logging, he studied and showed the locals the herbal value of the plants growing in the forest. Small metal signs describing the name and medicinal contents of each plant have been attached to plants in the woods. He also speaks regularly to educate people on the matter. Moreover, after he gained fame, through the help of various NGOs, including TICD, the local people have become proud of the forest and no longer show the slightest inclination to cut it down.

"They dare not cut even a weed," joked the monk. "Once they read the signs, they realize that even a weed is a valuable herb."

Another more controversial case of a conservationist monk is that of Phra Prachak Kuttachitto who, over the past few years, has raised a stern voice against logging in the vast areas of pristine forest in the Northeast of Thailand. Threatened with jail and court action, he has stood his ground.

"A monk living in the forest is like a fish in water," said Phra Prachak. "The Buddha spent most of his lifetime in the forest; being born, enlightened and dying there. Monks who sought to live in secluded forests were always praised by the Buddha. So how can the authorities threaten to move me out?" complained the monk.

After his arrival in 1989, he started asking local people to stop their logging, to which they agreed. Unfortunately, the log-

ging involved huge profits for corporations, local elites and certain forestry officials. Thus, he was threatened many times with legal measures and armed attacks. But his voice has never been quieted.

His reasons for his courageous actions: "I try to preserve the forest because I know how detrimental it would be if the whole forest were cleared. Besides having no place to keep the balance of nature which would affect our crops, we would have no refuge to take in order to attain peacefulness through contemplation. The Buddha praised the forest as the most suitable place for practice. Thus, I am simply performing my duty according to Buddhist teachings."

Since the case began, the Sekhiya Dhamma Group in cooperation with TICD and other NGOs, has been trying to campaign for help. The mobilization of monks and frequent private visits of the member monks have helped his struggle. Also, with help from international networks like INEB and her partners, Phra Prachak's case has attracted international attention and support.



Buddhist nuns and a mission to help poor girls

In addition to projects with monks, TICD is involved in a nuns' project. In previous years, there has been a growing number of nuns trying to work for social justice. However, compared with the monks' movement, the work is just beginning.

A notable case of engaged nuns is the attempt to help poor girls at a nunnery school in Ratchaburi, a province two hours from Bangkok. The school, called Dhamma Jarinee Wittaya, was established three years ago by some leading nuns in cooperation with TICD. The nunnery, which provides free education and accommodation for poor girls, is quite unique and is a milestone since it is the first of its kind. Traditionally, as a boy, one can be ordained as a novice and further one's studies. But this privilege is unavailable to girls and many of them have been sacrificed and sold as prostitutes by their poor parents in order to earn money to sustain their fragile families.

The director, Maechi Pratin Kwan-on, known as "mother" to the girls, has been outstanding in her efforts to maintain the work in the school. Last year, a foundation was set up to ensure their funding long term. The staff member at TICD who is involved with the project occasionally teaches at the school and has assisted in campaigning for funds.

Other initiatives

TICD also coordinates public discussions from time to time. In July of this year, TICD arranged a day-long public discussion to mark the anniversary of Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's passing away. Participants reflected upon Ven. Buddhadasa's ideas and considered ways in which his vision can continue to be realized in the future.

The future of empowerment

Most of the work at TICD has been concerned with strengthening the network of monks. Thus, it is hoped that our future role will be that of a facilitating agency which encourages smaller working groups which can be linked together through the larger network.

In July, a two-day meeting was held in the Northeast to allow three groups of monks working separately in grassroots community development in the adjacent provinces of Surin, Ubon Ratchathani and Yasothorn, to come together to share experiences and exchange ideas. These three groups have decided to form a Lower Isaan Network to enhance their work at the local level. This is the first regional cell which has been formed within the larger Sekiya Dhamma network.

With the rise of other serious social problems, particularly the AIDS epidemic, TICD has also implemented various projects to raise the awareness of monks concerning these issues. The aim is to enhance opportunities for them to become involved.

This growing movement of monks and nuns provides some hope in the struggle for justice in our society. However, hard it may be, TICD is committed to supporting this movement.

Pipob Udomittipong

For more information, contact:
TICD
124 Soi Wat Thong Noppakun
Somdej Chaophya Road
Bangkok 10600
tel/fax (662)-437-9450

THE KOMOL KEEMTHONG FOUNDATION

The Komol Keemthong Foundation was established after Komol Keemthong, a young graduate of Chulalongkorn University, and a teacher in Muang Huay Nai Khao school (Wiangsra District, Surat Thani Province) was shot dead. Komol was a hard-working person who sacrificed everything, including his life, for the ideology that he held so dear. He was killed over twenty years ago at a time when the rural areas were still largely ignored by his fellow Thais, especially by young intellectuals. Komol dared to jump into the mud with his gown, becoming a light in the dark for children and villagers in this rural area.

He began working in Wiangsra amidst all kinds of difficulties; having to learn to live with the harsh conditions and extreme poverty of the area. Many of his friends had chosen much more comfortable ways of life. In addition, he faced resistance and threats from some people who did not understand his good intentions.

He died at the age of only twenty-five, leaving the children and villagers mourning the departure of their beloved teacher and son. Komol's life was the inspiration for the Komol Keemthong Foundation which was created in 1973. The Foundation is not just a memorial to his life, but is aimed at maintaining and spreading his ideology—making his vision real and supporting those who have adopted his ideology. He believed that one should be conscious of sacrificing oneself for one's society, that one should search for knowledge and be brave and a leader on the 'right path'.

When the Foundation was first established, its office was located in the Suksit Siam book shop near Chulalongkorn University. Its work, at the beginning, focussed mainly on education. Books and periodicals were published to present new ideas to society while a group was set up to discuss new ideas on education. An intellectual journal, *Pacharayasarn,* was published with financial support from the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation. A monthly newspaper, *Chaobarn,* was published beginning in early 1973; the first newspaper for rural people in Thailand. It started initially as an insert in the journal, *Social Science Review,* and was later sold on its own.

In the area of religion, the Komol Keemthong Foundation has been encouraging Buddhist monks to become more involved in community development. Apart from organizating training for Buddhist monks, the Foundation also publishes books on religious issues and self health care.

The Komol Keemthong Foundation has also encouraged intellectual activities by supporting young people in playing leading roles in various circles, supplying funds and books to student groups in various institutions for exhibitions, academic seminars and social development activities, such as volunteer camps and dramas.

During the first fifteen years of its existence, the Komol Keemthong Foundation received financial support mainly from foreign organizations, such as Bread for the World (Germany) and ICCO (Netherlands).

The Foundation supports individuals who want to carry out development work in rural villages. It has also served as a seed, out of which several groups later grew to become separate organizations or foundations which have played active roles in Thai society, such as the Foundation for Children, Folk Doctor Foundation, Crescent Moon Group and Coordinating Group for Religion and Society.

In the three years of "blossoming democracy" which followed the October 1973 demonstrations, the Komol Keemthong Foundation tried to present alternative concepts to Thai society; in particular, the concept of 'Ahimsa' or nonviolence, by distributing printed materials to present alternatives to violent confrontation which was on the rise at that time.

After the October 1976 uprising, the Foundation was searched by authorities. Staff were threatened by armed authorities and many books were burnt or destroyed. The *Chaobarn* newspaper was closed down. Several committee members resigned and others went into political exile.

After the uprising in 1976, the Foundation supported the establishment of a research project on local herbs for self-reliance, and the Foundation for Children's lunch program for school children and their children's village project. It also began publishing a newspaper, *Pheun Chaobarn,* in late 1979 to replace *Chaobarn.*

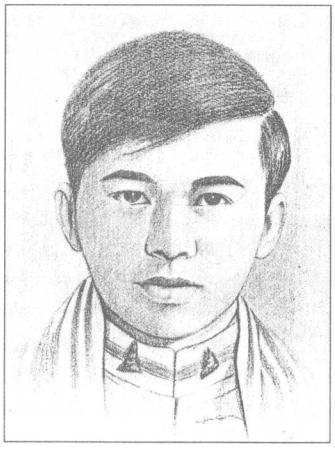
After the Komol Keemthong Foundation moved to its present office at Soi Ban Changlor in 1980, it provided support to many projects dealing with child welfare, rural develop-

ment, education, appropriate technology, volunteerism, student cooperatives, youth, libraries, street children, exposure trips and environmental protection.

At present, the Komol Keemthong Foundation is involved in the following activities: The Komol Keemthong Publishing House publishes books to disseminate various concepts to Thai society including nonviolence, religious matters and self-reliance. The publishing house is the foundation's longest running program. At present, approximately twenty to thirty books are published annually not only to disseminate information but also to help generate income for the Foundation.

A group within the Foundation was formed in 1983 to promote peace and social action ideals. Information is distributed through various media, such as the *Sarn Komol* leaflet, the Saengtawan Library (where both books & tapes are available) and seminars/discussions with other organizations on various issues.

The Ecology Study Project has received part of its financial support from a foreign organization and has raised the remainder within the country. The project focuses on education for children



Komol Keemthong

and youth to promote greater environmental awareness. Activities include youth and teacher training, camping, the creation of an environmental resource center and a mobile exhibition to raise consciousness on environmental conservation in high schools, and the arrangement and support of various lectures and seminars.

The Foundation also provides indirect support for two other projects — the Traditional Medicine for Self-Reliance program which includes the Friends of Nature Club which promotes the consumption of chemical-free food, and a project of the Mirror Cultural Group which uses drama and other forms of media to provide local people with information and opportunities to reflect upon social problems. The Mirror Cultural Group's project is aimed at empowering local people to participate in social action.

Throughout its twenty years of existence, the Komol Keemthong Foundation has been assisted and supported by a large number of individuals and organizations both directly and indirectly. The Foundation has created opportunities for young people who wish to explore new ideas and to participate in various creative activities which benefit both themselves and society as a whole. It seeks to propagate goodness, virtue and truth, and to support people who care for others. Although the Komol Keemthong Foundation is not famous or widely recognized at the national level, many young people have been inspired and supported by this organization. This is the legacy of Komol Keemthong whose ideals live on.

Thitima Khuntiranon

For more information, contact:
Komol Keemthong Foundation
8/23 Soi Ban Chang Lor
Prannok Road, Bangkok Noi
Bangkok 10700
tel/fax: (662)-411-3774

THE TRADITIONAL MEDICINE FOR SELF RELIANCE PROJECT

The Traditional Medicine for Self Reliance Project was established fifteen years ago. The organization has stayed small to allow it to remain flexible through funding ups and downs.

During our first five years, between 1980 and 1984, we struggled to get established. We have received support from the Komol Keemthong Foundation from the beginning which was especially crucial in those early years. Valuable assistance and support also came from well-known individuals such as Phra Dhamma Pitaka (P.A. Payutto), Phra Ajahn Somnuk Natho, Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa, Dr.Prawase Wasi, village leader Wiboon Kemchaleom and many others.

At first, the project focused on collecting extensive information from villagers regarding the use of herbal treatments. At that time, there were no academics or government health officials inter-

ested in traditional medicine. Governmental agencies did not begin their work in this area until 1983-84 when they received grants from the WHO and UNICEF for an herbal study project which was to be implemented under the nationwide Primary Health Care Project. Our project was able to supply a great deal of information to the government's herbal study program. Information on three of the first five herbs recorded by the government program were provided by our project. We also published and distributed pamphlets containing information gathered through our project.

From 1985 to 1988, our organization grew stronger, and our campaigns more popular. The Ministry of Public Health was campaigning intensely across the country to promote the local production and use of herbal medicines. This also coincided with a growing interest in this area worldwide. The Traditional Medicine for Self Reliance Project was invited to take part in governmental health activities at all levels — at the ministerial, provincial and community levels. This has enabled us to forge strong working relationships with governmental agencies.

In addition, a number of medical scientists and pharmacists have conducted research using data collected by the project. This has helped promote the use of herbal medicines and make them more accessible and acceptable. Since 1988, the activities of the organization have expanded to include working with local villagers to promote herbal plantations and forest conservation. The two main groups that the organization has been working with are the



Opening ceremony of the Friends of Nature Club

Local Folk Doctors' Club of Kudchum in Yasothorn Province and the Herbal Users Club of Bodhi Prathapchang in Pichit.

In 1990-91, we began to realize that the promotion of the curative aspects of herbal medicine was not enough. In order to truly promote 'good health', preventative measures and rehabilitation activities needed to be considered. As a result, we took a more holistic approach to health which considers the interrelatedness of body, mind and environment. We began to campaign for changes in the consumption patterns and behavior of the people, promoting preventative as well as curative health care.

With this broadening of our focus, we began to campaign for natural farming which enables both the producers (farmers) and consumers to achieve a healthier environment and lifestyle. Part of the inspiration for this campaign came from the visit in 1990 of Masanobu Fukuoka, a well-known practitioner of natural farming. This project was aimed mainly at farmers in Kudchum where villagers were encouraged to grow rice without chemical fertilizers and to experiment with natural farming through the use of trial plots on their land. Recently, with support from the project, villagers were able to install a communal mill which produces non-chemical rice for sale to urban consumers.

In the past, we produced a journal to disseminate information on the use of herbs; however, since the bulk of our information on various herbs has already been published, and due to budget constraints, we have stopped publishing the journal and have begun to use other less expensive media such as radio and television. We also have a regular column entitled "Herbs for Health" in a weekly magazine.

In order to raise awareness among urban dwellers and gain their support, we have formed the "Friends of Nature Club". Members of this club are provided with information regularly on herbal medicine and health & environmental issues. Occasionally, exposure trips are arranged for city people (the consumers) to meet with the farmers who produce non-chemical rice. Herbal seedlings are also provided to city dwellers. As well, we have a television program on health problems, and publish a quarterly newsletter called *Friends of Nature* which not only provides information on herbs, but contains articles on health, organic food, and environmental issues.

In 1994, we opened a 'green' shop called the "Friends of Nature Club Shop". Profits go to help support the organization, making us more self-reliant, and less dependent upon foreign and domestic funding agencies. More importantly, the shop provides a link between consumer and producer. Farmers in our project areas are no longer producing only

for their families' consumption. Cash cropping has become an important part of the economy. Securing market outlets for non-chemical rice will help promote non-chemical production.

Thus, at present, we are engaged in two main areas. We have activities aimed at promoting the idea of holistic health, and at the same time, we are facilitating economic development which will allow both the organization and the farmers to become more self-reliant. At the forefront of our activities is the "Friends of Nature Shop".

Rosana Tositrakul

For more information, contact:
Traditional Medicine for Self-Reliance
403 Soi 7
Suan Pa Pracha Niwet
Thetsaban Nimit Tai Road
Chatuchak, Bangkok, 10900,
tel/fax: (662)-589-4243.

THE COORDINATING GROUP FOR RELIGION IN SOCIETY

The Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS) was founded in 1976 during a time of violent political unrest in Thailand. CGRS is comprised of Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants and Muslims who believe in nonviolence and seek to promote nonviolence and spiritual principles to achieve peace and development.

The Group seeks to raise public awareness of social justice issues, to propose alternative courses of action which arise from religious and nonviolent ideals, and to provide services to disadvantaged groups of people.

The two main target groups of CGRS's programs are victims of injustice (including people whose human rights have been violated) and their families, and disadvantaged people who have been affected by government and private development projects.

At present, the objectives of CGRS are to protest the use of violence against prisoners, criminal suspects and rural people; to promote the use of nonviolence among those whose rights have been violated; and to encourage more people from various religious backgrounds to take a more active role in addressing social problems, and to coordinate their efforts.

Over the past year, in the area of human rights, CGRS has been involved in protesting the use of torture by police. It has also provided legal aid in cases of extra-judicial executions. In addition, legal training has been provided to villagers in rural areas. And finally, CGRS's ongoing program to visit prisoners who have no relatives, was continued.

In order to encourage nonviolent approaches to social engagement, approximately 200 village leaders whose communities have been negatively impacted by government and private development projects, received training in nonviolent conflict resolution and resistance techniques.

In the area of inter-religious dialogue, a seminar was held on democracy and the role of religions. CGRS also organized a study tour on victims of mainstream development.

Continuing its publishing activities, this past year CGRS put out two editions of *Santi Sangkom* (Peaceful Society).

CGRS also works with various human rights and religious organizations to campaign for certain issues. This past year, CGRS organized and supported campaigns to promote democracy in Burma, to press for reform of the Thai constitution, and to push for the application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights laws in Thailand.

Sarawut Pratoomraj

For more information, contact:
CGRS
495/44 Soi Yoo-omsin
Jaranwanitwong Road
Bangkok 10700
tel/fax: (662)-424-9173.

WONGSANIT ASHRAM: TEN YEARS OF COMMUNITY LIFE



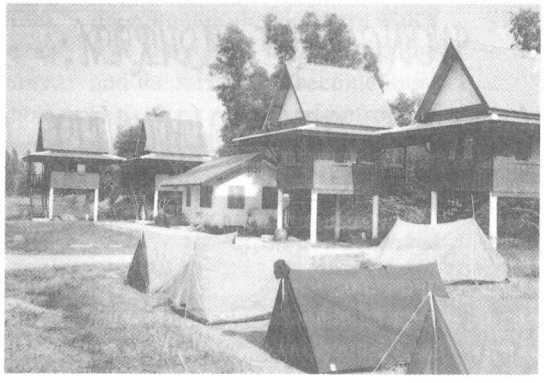
"We are a community still working towards our goal, and we don't view ourselves as already perfect or ideal. Who is the Ashram? All of us who are living here, and we need to help each other improve and transform it. We shouldn't expect, and others shouldn't expect, that we have already reached our goal as we originally set it." So says Niramon Prudtathorn, a well-known activist & feminist now living at the Ashram. About a year ago, she decided to stop working in order to have time for reflection. She wanted to find a place to live where she could practice dharma. She promised herself that she would have no projects other than living peacefully, resting and practicing dharma. In November 1993, she joined the Ashram. It's an honor for the Ashram to have an experienced activist like Niramon join us, contribute to community life, and advise us on public relations, writing and gender issues. It's a policy of the Ashram to invite activists to live here to inspire and influence us.

Over the last three years, the Ashram has changed little by little in ways that may not be so easily apparent to newcomers, but as one who has lived here for almost two years, I feel a little frightened by the changes.

I came to live at the Ashram originally quite by accident. About two years ago, I learned that I had breast cancer, and I panicked, feared dying and became quite confused. I wondered, "What can I do? Shall I have an operation or should I choose natural healing?" I found that I feared rejecting modern medicine. After consideration, I decided to move to the Ashram and heal myself by natural means. At that time, the Ashram consisted of only eight or nine staff and a group of eight Sri Lankans. It was very peaceful. We had plenty of time for discussions and taking care of each other. There was such a feeling of warmth and support in the community, and I felt that this was the main element in my healing. I had at least four hours a day for meditation. Everyday, at least three to five people would meditate with me from 6:00 to 7:00 a.m. and again in the evening before dinner. I had a small group of people swim with me every evening. At night, I volunteered to teach English to the Sri Lankans three days a week. We always had guests coming to the Ashram, and we'd set up a small group to talk with our guests. Our friends had time to play chess and listen to the BBC. Within six months, I felt that the energy of the Ashram and the people in the community had helped me to heal myself, and I went to see the doctors — both a natural healer as well as a surgeon. My surgeon was very surprised that although I chose not to have an operation as she had advised, I had gotten healthier.

During that period at the Ashram, we always had interesting people from the INEB network visiting us. Sometimes Japanese, Sri Lankan, or English monks would visit, and beyond peace issues, meditation and natural healing always seemed to be the topics of discussion. I still remember our friends from England who run a community like ours, Friends of No Frontiers, where they practice Hinduism. Our friends decided to travel for one year visiting 40 countries, and they ended their trip at the Ashram. It just so happened that Maha Ghosananda was visiting the Ashram at the same time, and it turned out to be a great meeting of Buddhism and Hinduism. At that time, I felt we had more time and were more focused on spiritual activities since we didn't have so many projects, and this was one of the most beautiful aspects of the Ashram. Since we were a small group, we didn't have so many complex problems of human dynamics even though our physical surroundings were not as beautiful as they are now. It was quite

dry; we didn't have many trees and the soil was poor and acidic. We planted banana trees, but they didn't survive. We didn't have many birds then, and we couldn't grow any vegetables. We struggled with a poor communications system and the electricity was unreliable. All of us worked hard to improve the land, and to build the walkways.



This is the tenth anniversary of the Ashram. I would like to review these past ten years in two segments; the first seven years and the last three years.

Originally, the woman who donated the land to the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation (SNF) wished to see the Ashram run like a modern temple — a spiritual place for the new generation to undertake activities to serve society. So for the first seven years, a group of families lived at the Ashram as an alternative community. I would like to especially mention the family of Khun Siriporn, the delicate, yet determined woman who shaped the Ashram in its early years. She lived her life in a non-materialistic way. She planted many of the plants that we enjoy today. She accommodated many young students and activists who wanted to renew themselves in a rural environment. Many activists currently involved in various organizations came to the Ashram in their student days. Perhaps the most important aspect of the Ashram during this period was that it provided inspiration as an alternative way of life for Thai society.

About three years ago, the SNF decided that we should expand our activities to serve more people. We had to transform ourselves from a small community with a few simple buildings to a larger community with a greater number of larger buildings. We brought in more technology to plan, build & landscape. We had to introduce new management systems, and of course secure funding to implement the projects. Along with these changes came a new element: PRESSURE TO GET THINGS DONE. This second period will come to an end this year. We have to revise our policies once more to be more in touch with the younger generation and to initiate projects which serve society.

In early 1989, the Ashram had only enough money to build the Santhagara (the meeting hall), and had no funds for administration. We had only three staff members. We have expanded rapidly. In 1993, we grew from a community of eight or nine members to become one of over 35 people. Understandably, conflicts arose proportionally. I think this is a very challenging time for the Ashram. We claim to be an alternative community which encourages people to rise to their own potential and to apply their potential in a way that serves society.

The process of growth was somehow unavoidable. The challenge is to develop and maintain relationships among members of the community who have come from very diverse backgrounds. We have not lived together as a community for a long time; however, we appreciate that most of the people who have come, have a vision of bettering society, even if our visions do not always coincide.

The Ashram serves as a forum for people who have just graduated from school and those who have turned their backs on formal education. All of these people have come to the Ashram to try to put their visions into practice. Thus, the Ashram is a place for people to exchange ideas, discuss and debate. Sometimes these discussions become very heated, and then we have the opportunity to learn to resolve and heal our differences. The Ashram acts as an informal university according to the teachings of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu as practiced in Suan Mokkh — we are all teachers to one another. Our learning process also includes foreign friends which broadens all of our perspectives and provides an opportunity for greater cross-cultural understanding.

Recently, we completed an evaluation of our activities, and we examined our role in society. We found that one of the main problems is that we are all overworked and haven't managed our workload very well which has resulted in the deterioration of our sense of community. We have been focusing mainly on projects and less upon people and community life.

One of our projects is concerned with Buddhist education. We support monks who apply dharma to education in the provinces. For example, in the Northeast, there is a monk who works with children aged 12 to 14, who has formed a Children's Bird Lovers Association. We are also

involved with the Peace and Reconciliation workshops based upon Buddhism, run by John McConnell. This workshop may be one of the first of its kind for Thais. It applies Buddhist principles to reconciliation work rather than discussing them only in dharma talks. Many groups have participated in the workshops — student monks, engaged Buddhist monks, female workers, alternative education teachers, and NGO activists. There are also many kinds of seminars on peace and social transformation, and the Ashram provides accommodation for all participants. This has been quite difficult as all of us were inexperienced in this area. We have tended to emphasize work, and this has eroded the community's harmony and sense of balance at times. Perhaps we've tried to organize our lives too much, rather than living naturally and cooperatively. We have found it difficult to harmonize our community life with our work serving society, which has resulted in these activities remaining distinct and separate. We seem to theorize rather than just doing. For instance, instead of just going ahead and planting new plants, we spend much more time talking about what plants we should grow. We spend long hours discussing the pros and cons of communal versus separate kitchens. It has become more difficult to balance our heads and our hands. So our policy has become more flexible. We try to focus less on results and more upon the suitability of the person for the work—to allow people to take time to get used to new work, and to change if it does not suit them. This, however, raises other problems in terms of follow-up. We are still struggling with this. Some of us are more determined and more results-oriented, while others feel that people should find their way gradually.

There have been many changes at the Ashram—there are more plants, more buildings, more birds, more guests, more activities. And there will always be more questions to ponder as we find our way as an alternative community.

George Willoughby visited the Ashram and gave a workshop on community life. He recommended that we be careful about building any more buildings, and advised us that new members should be approved by the community. He believes it important to have short-term volunteers to provide opportunities for mutual learning.

Little by little, we are becoming more ecologically aware in terms of garbage disposal, smoking, health food and non-chemical agriculture. We have tried to introduce communal meditation and greater gender awareness. The question for us now is how to weave more spiritual ideals into our daily lives. How can we make the Ashram a place where spirituality will be the foundation and inspiration for our work? And how can we do this in an environment which encompasses all religions and perspectives?

Supaporn Pongpreuk
For more information, contact:
Wongsanit Ashram
P. O. Box 1
Ongkarak
Nakonnayok 26120
tel/fax: (6637)-391-494

THE SANTI PRACHA DHAMMA INSTITUTE

The Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute, a Thai non-profit organization, was established in 1988 to promote peace (Santi), public participation (Pracha) and righteousness (Dhamma) in Thai society. The Institute is legally under the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation.

The Institute undertakes activities that help deepen people's knowledge and thinking on peace/nonviolence, democracy, truth and alternative development models.

Although the Institute is small, it has had a large impact on the thinking of Thai people. Recent political and social phenomena support such a claim. It is not an exaggeration to say that without the courage and initiative of the Director of SPDI, the military junta might well have gained political legitimacy and might now be ruling Thai society. The courageous speech of the Director of SPDI at Thammasat University, which took place six months after the coup, profoundly affected the thinking of a great many Thais. It served to remind the public that peaceful and nonviolent resistance to the military junta can lead to a more democratic political system. The demonstration against Gen-

eral Suchinda's government in late May 1992, clearly showed that the principles of nonviolence and truth can be effectively applied by the people. Many of those who took the lead in organizing peaceful and nonviolent demonstrations against the junta were connected with SPDI. Without strong convictions in peace through nonviolent means, democracy and righteousness, they would not have risked their lives in such a way. Furthermore, the activities of the Institute, such as the training program for new and perspective NGO workers (as well as the Community Organized Research for Alternative Development program) help raise awareness of the root causes of social injustice in Thai society. Demonstrations by rural people, supported by NGOs, against the construction of dams, the use of coal for power generation, the construction of highways passing through temples and Muslim cemeteries, etc... all attest to the fact that the principles of peace, democracy and truth have been widely internalized by the people.

The organization is also involved in arranging public forums on various issues and in publishing.

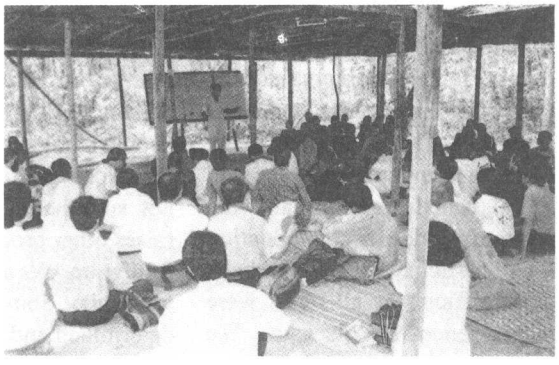
For the past few years, SPDI has been supported mainly by European organizations such as Misereor, Bread for the World and CEBEMO.

SPDI is determined to continue its work in the area of peace/nonviolence, public participation and righteousness until these values are fully realized in Thai society.

Uthai Dulyakasem

For more information, contact:
Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute
117 Fuangnokhon Road
Opposite Wat Rajabopit
Bangkok 10200,
Tel: (662)-223-4915
Fax: (662)-222-5188

FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE: A Siamese Green Agenda for the Twenty-first Century



The Advisory Board of Wongsanit Ashram, representing a number of NGOs within Thailand, has decided to form a committee called the "Friends of the People" to mobilize Thai NGOs and citizen groups to work together with a specific agenda of structural change. This agenda will focus on the issues of social justice and ecologically sustainable development.

The work of most NGOs has tended to be issue-oriented and reactive; without a holistic vision or strategy for achieving a better society. The more we struggle, the more our energy dissipates without having tackled the root causes of the problems, resulting in a loss of hope and morale. What is needed is a Green Agenda.

The long term goals of the committee are as follows:

1. Politically, to work towards the decentralization of the Thai government which is modeled on the centralized system of the colonial governments of the last century. The committee hopes to support the fragile representative democracy while encouraging greater public participation. Local people must have more say in managing local resources. National Social and Economic Development Plans should be approved in Parliament. Eventually, citizens groups and NGOs should create an alternative development plan which represents the aspirations of the common people. In order to realize these changes, people's organizations must be strengthened at all levels.

2. Economically, the work of the committee will be aimed at reforming the nation's economic structures so that all people will live above the poverty line. Measures such as land reform, a progressive income tax, inheritance taxes, social welfare, fair wage & price systems, and strong workers' & farmers' unions, should be implemented. Economic reform should not be growth-oriented, but rather ecologically sustainable, and should enhance the spiritual life of the people. A green dhammic socialism will be developed.

3. Political and economic goals cannot be achieved without cultural change. Indigenous cultural values such as simplicity, respect for nature, sharing, and

the supremacy of spiritual values over material values must be preserved and renewed. At the same time, new and relevant cultural values such as equality, social justice, non-submissiveness, a sense of excellence, and ecological awareness must be promoted to replace old feudal values, which support patriarchy and hierarchy, and modern consumerism, which supports greed, hatred and illusion.

4. The committee wishes to promote the renewal of Buddhism so that its tremendous cultural and spiritual influence can be utilized to bring changes for the betterment of society. Religion in Thailand must be separated from the state, and minority religions such as Islam, Christianity and Animism must be respected and accorded equal freedom.

5. The committee will promote educational reform aimed at instilling values of ecological & spiritual sensitivity in the young rather than values of consumerism. Thus, the state must allow alternative educational initiatives and encourage plurality in the education system. Local people must be allowed to participate in determining the kind of education that is appropriate for their particular needs, especially minorities and tribal peoples.

6. The mass media primarily serves the government and business sectors, and is in need of reform. The committee seeks to find ways for mass media to be used for public education on serious issues facing Thai society. NGOs and citizens' groups must network with progressive circles within the media so that issues and initiatives that they are working on can be heard by larger society. The progressive elements in the media must also be supported so that they can encourage reform from within. In addition, an independent Media Watch Center must be created to monitor trends & information presented. At the same time, alternative programs must be produced for TV & radio. Magazines presenting alternative opinions and ideas from local & international communities must be encouraged.

7. Conservation must be promoted which will demand a change in the mainstream middle-class lifestyle. NGOs & citizens' groups must be mobilized to protest and stop the construction of hydro-electric dams and nuclear power plants. Measures such as a green tax and the enforcement of pollution standards must be implemented as soon as possible. In order to achieve this, an effective Green Information Center will be needed. It could provide reliable information on specific issues and give an integrated and holistic picture of environmental problems and possible solutions.

The first temporary committee of Friends of the People was formed in January 1994 representing over fifteen NGOs. Funding is being sought to hire a working secretariat. This secretariat will be supervised by a four-person working committee. Within the larger committee, groups will be formed to deal with each issue (e.g. mass media, land reform, etc.) Together, they will create a Green Agenda.

After approval of the agenda by all groups, an educational campaign will be carried out to educate the public and gain input and feedback. The committee will also lobby to have the agenda submitted to the government.

In one to two years, a people's council will be formed, consisting of representatives from citizens' groups, academic circles, and NGOs. This council will serve as a citizens' action group that will approve, legitimize, and promote this agenda in the greater society. Fora to encourage public participation will be held.

Eventually the Friends of the People would like to encourage the formation of a new political party whose platform is based upon this Green Agenda. The NGOs will indirectly support this party but will not be directly involved in it.

The Friends of the People, then, seek to provide a vehicle to enable NGOs, citizens' groups, and progressive academics to network, dialogue and forge a common vision — a Green Agenda.

As well as having long term goals, there are urgent issues which demand the creation of shorter term objectives. Mainstream growth-oriented development has created a great many problems for people living and working at the local grassroots level. (e.g. rural people affected by dam construction, farmers by agri-business companies, etc.) These people are unable to solve their problems through negotiation with the state. In order to have their voices heard and to gain bargaining power, they must organize protests and demonstrations. At present, there are no NGOs who specialize in organizing demonstrations and direct action with the people. Information must be coordinated at the local, regional and national levels. Professional organizers are needed to work side-by-side with local people to support people when needed and to liaise with media and other influential groups. In addition, local organizers must be strengthened and supported, and their experiences must be recorded for future generations. An effective communication system to support local initiatives and enable better coordination on larger issues, is needed. A working group has been formed to fa-

cilitate these shorter term goals, and funding is being sought for coordination, the creation of a communication system and training for local leaders.

Pracha Hutanuwatra

For more information, contact:
Pipob Dhongchai
666 Charoen Nakorn Road
Klongsarn, Bangkok 10600
tel: (662)-437-4318

THE THAI-TIBETAN CENTER

The Thai-Tibetan Center was founded by a group of Thais interested in Tibetan studies and Vajarayana Buddhism. The group was composed of scholars, government officials, business people, NGO workers, students and others. The founding of the center arose from a campaign to promote changes in Thai foreign policy. In 1987, the Thai government denied entry to His Holiness the Dalai Lama preventing him from attending the Magsaisai Awards conference in Bangkok. Although the campaign was not successful in changing Thai policy, it became apparent that there were many Thais interested in the history, culture and religion of Tibet, as well as in the nation's current struggle for survival.

Therefore, a center for Tibetan studies was set up — the first of its kind in Thailand. It served mainly as a resource center; collecting & disseminating information and holding seminars on Tibet and the Vajarayana tradition. Many of the people who sat on the center's executive committee were themselves involved in Tibetan studies as translators, scholars, teachers and the like.

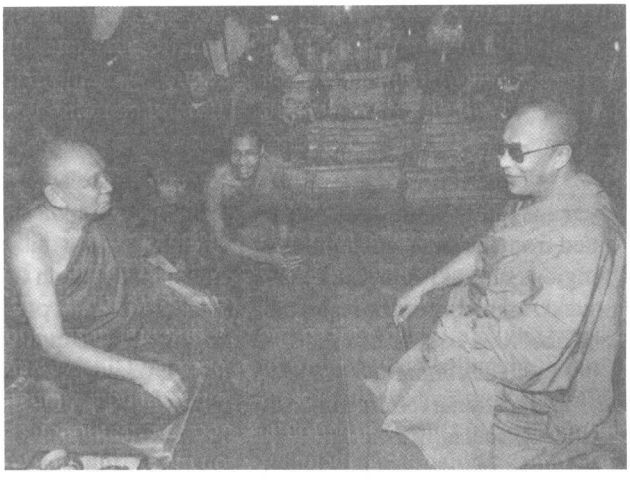
The objectives of the center are to study & disseminate information on Tibetan culture and society; to promote understanding and linkages between Thais and Tibetans; and to promote cooperation among Buddhists of different traditions.

Amchok Rinpoche, a learned Tibetan Lama, has visited Thailand twice (in 1990 and 1991) through the center. He has spoken at both Thammasat University and Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University.

Dagpo Rinpoche led Vajarayana meditation courses at Thammasat University and at the center in both 1991 and 1992.

The center has also assisted a film crew who produced a documentary on the Tibetan way of life. The film was produced in 1991 in Dharamsala, India, and contained an interview with the Dalai Lama. The film has been broadcast in Thailand.

In 1990, the center tried again, unsuccessfully, to lobby the Thai government to permit His Holiness the Dalai Lama to enter the country to attend a ceremony to mark Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's eighty-fourth birthday. This campaign continued, until 1993 when the center was able to bring the Dalai Lama to a meeting of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates in Thailand. After the reception, the center arranged a meeting between the Dalai Lama and the Supreme Patriarch of the Thai Sangha, Somdej Phra Yanasamvara.



A meeting between the Dalai Lama and the Supreme Patriarch of the Thai Sangha, Somdej Phra Yanasamvara

The center also publishes Tibetan stories and papers on Tibetan history, culture and religion.

Thamrong Pattamapass

For more information, contact:
The Thai-Tibetan Center
113-115 Fueng Nakorn Road
Opposite Wat Rajabopit
Bangkok 10200
tel: (662)-225-9533

SHANTE SENA IN THE FOREST

Presently the forests of Cambodia are being destroyed at an alarming rate, and thus we must act quickly to protect them. I believe that if this destruction is allowed to continue, it will present a grave danger for the future of Cambodia, Asia and indeed the entire world.

The Shante Sena, or Peace Army, has been formed to undertake environmental preservation, for if the environment continues to be destroyed at the current rate, we will not be able to enjoy lasting peace. Even if political parties cease fighting over politics, fighting over scarce natural resources will increase, particularly as rainfall diminishes and people become desperate. The protection of the environment is therefore an urgent matter for the Shante Sena.

In addition, Buddhist teachings of the inter-dependence of all beings and co-dependent origination provide an excellent source of material for ecology and environmental awareness. The movement to protect and replant forests is a large and long-term endeavor. It is not something we may do for just two or three years. Indeed, there is no end. It is like our work for peace. As Samdech Preah Maha Ghosananda teaches us, "There is no beginning and no end, we must constantly begin again and never become discouraged". Yet if we do not address this problem immediately, it might be too late for us to find a solution.

I would like to begin the search for solutions to this grave problem in Cambodia, by starting a community-based forestry project integrating Buddhist and traditional beliefs. I was an organizer of the Dhammayietra, the walk for peace and reconciliation from Siem Reap to Phnom Penh on the eve of last May's elections, led by Samdech Preah Maha Ghosananda. On the walk we became acutely aware of the environmental destruction caused by excessive logging in our country. We also planted trees in temples along the route.

Now we are forming a Shante Sena, or Peace Army, to protect & renew the forests through community forestry programs. We will attempt, as a first step, to carry out a pilot project in a small forest called Prey Chumka Koki 1. This forest is in the Chantrea District of Svay Rieng Province, near the Vietnamese border. We have chosen this area because it is familiar to us. We know the history and geography as well as the villagers in the area. We know that all of our initiatives must be in accordance with the local geography and environment. In addition, Svay Rieng is one of the poorest provinces in terms of forest resources, and we feel an urgency to discourage further losses.

First, we plan to form a group of about thirty people, and train them so that they are aware of the problem and skilled in protecting and replanting the forest. Many people have already come to sign up for the Shante Sena. They will form a solid base for the Shante Sena in the future, for the protection of this and other threatened areas.

In attempting this experiment, we wish to protect the remaining forest and to re-forest one specific plot in Svay Rieng Province, designating it as a meditation forest. We also wish to enhance the villagers' appreciation of the value of the forest and understanding of the importance of protecting the forest. After learning from the villagers about their relationship to the forest, we would like to begin educating the community about ecological inter-dependence and the value of the forest, based on Buddhist and traditional beliefs.

The training period for the Shante Sena volunteers is very important. We must develop people and their hearts before we develop anything else, so the foundation of our house is firm. We will begin training them in Buddhist meditation to help cultivate concentration, as a solid foundation upon which to build. Meditation enables us to be aware of the effects of our actions, including those destructive to our environment. Training in ecology, based on Buddhist principles such as interdependence and co-dependent origination, will follow. These Buddhist teachings provide a strong existing framework for environmental awareness and protection. Indeed, Buddhist teachings emphasize respecting not only the lives of human beings, but plants, animals and minerals, and stress the cultivation of awareness of our inter-dependence which helps us to protect the earth.

Many world-renowned monks, such as Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama, Ven. Buddhadasa and Ven. Prachak have further emphasized the natural relationship between deep ecology and Buddhism. I am



presently translating some of their works into Khmer. I recently led a group of monks and nuns to visit Ven. Prachak in Dong Yai forest, in Buriram, Thailand. There he and the villagers are struggling to protect the province's last rain-catchment forest from illegal loggers and the government's plan to initiate commercial eucalyptus plantations. They have held 'tree ordinations', tying yellow robes around sacred trees and white ones around the whole forest. Ven. Prachak led us on an early morning walk through the forest, and then, sitting on a rock outcrop, calmly explained why he, a traditional wandering monk who has spent over thirteen years practicing meditation in the forest, struggles for environmental conservation.

"We must learn that the forest is life itself. We must learn that we are the same as the leaves, no more important, no less important. We must allow the leaves, the branches, the bats to be our teachers.... Monks need the forest as fish need water."

Our own Ven. Maha Ghosananda often teaches us about environmentalism. During last year's Dhammayietra, he said, "When we respect the environment, then nature will be good to us. The trees are like our mother and father. They feed us and nourish us; provide us with everything — the fruit, the leaves, the branches, the trunk; they give us food and satisfy many of our needs. But if we just cut down all the trees it won't rain anymore. The trees make it rain. So on the Dhammayietra we are spreading the dhamma of protecting ourselves and protecting our environment, which is the dhamma of the Buddha."

The participants must have time to learn theory as well as to put lessons into practice. The training must develop the participants' hearts and minds simultaneously; to develop inner strength. They must develop compassion as well as wisdom in order for the movement to be successful. If the participants are only taught technical expertise but do not develop inner strength, they might not possess the courage required to deal with this serious problem. On the other hand, if they only develop compassion and inner strength without technical expertise regarding forest preservation, they will be of no use to the forest and may actually cause harm. As Maha Ghosananda teaches us, "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."

As Ven. Prachak said to us, "Dare to confront your fears. Dare to know the forests, then you will understand you are one with them, and there is nothing you can do but protect them."

For more information, contact:
Shante Sena
Dhammayietra Center for Peace & Nonviolence
Wat Sampeo Meas
P. O. Box 144
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Fax: (855)-232-6400

CITIZEN PEACEMAKERS: WHAT CAN THEY DO?

What can the local/indigenous would-be citizen peacemaker do? If my experience in ex-Yugoslavia can be generalized, there will be little— not necessarily none, but less than before — opportunity for conventional mediation. Perhaps, however, what is happening in ex-Yugoslavia, may suggest a new approach. Mediation or conflict resolution efforts to end the violence are currently out of the question for political and military reasons. But there is still plenty to be done.

Refugees and the homeless still need to be cared for, mines need to be cleared, the victims of violence need to be healed, human rights need protection, relief is needed for the poor and protection for the weak, injustices need correction. Above all, it is necessary to demonstrate both that violence does not solve the ultimate human problems, and that there are alternatives to it. To work on these issues is fundamental peace work; no society can enjoy peace if these needs are unmet and these tasks unfulfilled.

In parts of ex-Yugoslavia, for example, there are local and indigenous centers carrying out this work. It is difficult for two main reasons — material short-

ages & poverty, and popular hostility, especially from the ruling authorities. The general mood is one of rampant militarism and ethnic chauvinism. Fortunately, opposition and hostility have not checked the work of these groups, even if some of their members have been threatened with death.

I see these local and indigenous groups as extremely important for the future. If a peaceful society is ever to replace one which is violent and ethnically bigoted, the values of impartial compassion, nonviolence, human rights, and social justice must be the bedrocks on which it is built.

Tasks for outsiders

In this context, what part can be played by the would-be citizen peacemaker from outside the area? The first step that we should take is to reject the identity of "foreign experts." The experts in this case are the local peacemakers, the members of the peace groups. The outsiders should come as sharers, supporters and helpers rather than initiators.

The foreign expert can all too easily come to consider her- or himself a minor deity who lays down laws that others must obey. This may not only be quite inappropriate, but contrary to the democratic spirit that is the essence of peaceful situations.

Local peacemakers may in fact feel that their concerns have projected them into a part they cannot sustain and which demands skills and experience they do not possess. They may feel that the outsiders have abilities that they themselves lack, and so be ready to depend excessively on them.

However, when an outside agency such as the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Peace Brigades International, War Resisters International, the Quakers (via the



American Friends' Service Committee or Quaker Peace and Service), or Global Peace Service, is approached, it should be made clear that the outsiders will avoid any prescriptive role. Their job, as I envisage it, is to act as advisers or consultants. They will offer to give workshops or training in skills and practices that the local group feel they need rather than to peddle their own solutions to the problems of other people; problems which they know only second hand.

These workshops and training might cover such fields as group dynamics, social change, theories of peace and conflict, psychological factors in violence, mediation, negotiation, conflict resolution, the practice of nonviolence, responding to violence, human rights and their protection, organization and administration, computer use and electronic communication, building a database, peace education, community development, small-scale economic development, adult literacy, appropriate technology, problems of refugees and mine clearance.

There is, however, one issue of transcending importance, upon which the effective use of all other skills, and abilities depend — the development of the local peacemakers' inner resources of wisdom, courage, and compassionate nonviolence. These great and universal qualities must receive adequate nourishment. The peacemakers will otherwise be worn down by the hostile opposition from those who are interested less in peace than in violence, by danger, and by the stress and the difficulty of their work.

For this reason, the outsider will probably often be justified in suggesting a nonviolence training workshop concentrating on the nurturing of inner resources through psychological understanding, mediation, listening and relaxation exercises, and on fostering the solidarity and mutual respect of the group members; and applying the insights gained through this work to the actual problems they are facing.

It should, however, be noted that this type of psychological preparation is equally essential for all other types of peacemaking. This is especially true of mediation, in which the main task of peacemakers is to reduce the exaggerated fears, resentments, suspicion, and hatred that distort the perceptions of decision makers; in fact, to try to make their minds more peaceful. This, however, is only possible when the minds of the peacemakers are themselves peaceful, less beset by turbulently negative emotions.

Such as workshop should ideally last at least a week, but this will seldom be possible in the prevailing times of crisis. Such workshops should then, perhaps, be scheduled fairly often, a regular respite for the restoration of calm and determination. This maintenance of inner strength provides the foundation on which the actual practice of peacemaking skills — mediation, diplomatic negotiation, work for human rights, helping those traumatized by war, and all the other varied tasks — can be securely built.

A further significant role for the outside helper is to give

encouragement, and to provide links with groups and agencies involved elsewhere with comparable problems. This can be most helpful for local peacemaking groups, especially in the early stages when they are still small, inexperienced and not certain if what they are doing is right. Reassurance and support at this stage from an outside observer who is seen as knowledgeable and objective can be very valuable.

There are a number of agencies working internationally which, like the few mentioned earlier, could help to organize appropriate assistance for peacemaking groups in difficult and violent situations. They either have the resources or are reasonably placed to raise them. They could constitute a network for the exchange of information about the needs of different peace groups and the names of people who could be helpful in meeting them. Finally, they could provide a valuable back-up service for those individuals.

Adam Curle
Taken from the *Life & Peace Review*, 1993, Vol. 4

[Adam Curle is President of the Network of Engaged Buddhists in U.K.]

BUDDHADASA ON CARING FOR NATURE (DHAMMAJATI)

Like Thomas Merton, the late American Trappist monk and peace activist, Buddhadasa exemplifies the truth that thoughtful spiritual engagement with the world requires a degree of contemplative distance. Despite the fact that Buddhadasa, like Merton, spent most of his active career in a forest hermitage (Wat Suan Mokkhabalarama, Chaiya) he was extraordinarily responsive to the issues of his time. As a consequence, the classical Buddhist themes which dominate Buddhadasa's thought, e.g. non-attachment, dependent co-arising, and emptiness, tend to serve as the ground or base from which he addresses an exceptionally broad range of issues, problems and concerns ranging from meditation, monastic discipline and ritual observances to work, politics, women and the environment.

An issue which preoccupied Buddhadasa toward the end of his life was the destruction of the natural environment (Thai: *thamachat*; Pali: *dhammajāti*). One of his informal talks at Wat Suan Mokkha was titled, "Buddhists and the Care of Nature". I have based the title and much of the content of this short essay on two of Buddhadasa's talks given in March of 1990 (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. *Buddhasasanik Kap Kan Anurak Thamachat.* Bangkok: Komol Keemthong Foundation, B.E. 2533 / C.E. 1990). I shall begin our consideration of "caring for nature" in a manner consistent with Buddhadasa's abiding interest in language by examining the last two terms of the title of his talk, 'anurak' (Pali: *anu-rakkha*) and 'thamachat' (Pali: *dhammajāti*).

Within the context of the worldwide concern for environmental destruction, the Thai term 'anurak' is often translated into English as "conservation". In fact, the dozens of Thai monks involved in efforts to stop the exploitation of forests in their districts and provinces have been labeled, 'phra anurak pa', translated as "forest conservation monks". 'Anurak', as embodied in the life and work of Buddhadasa and several forest conservation monks, however, conveys a richer, more nuanced meaning closer to its Pali roots; namely, to be imbued with the quality of protecting, sheltering, or caring for. By the term, 'anurak', Buddhadasa intends this deeper, dhammic sense of 'anurakkha', an active "caring for" that issues forth from the very nature of our being. In this sense, 'anurakkha' is linked with a pervasive feeling of human empathy (Pali: *anu-kampa*) for all of our surroundings. If you will, caring is the active expression of empathy.

One cares for the forest because one empathizes with the forest just as one cares for people, including oneself, because one has become empathetic. But how does one become empathetic? 'Anurak', in this sense is fundamentally linked with non-attachment or liberation from preoccupation with self which is at the very core of Buddhadasa's thought. He articulates this theme by using various Thai and Pali terms including 'mai hen kae tua' (not being selfish), 'cit wang' (non-attachment or having a liberated heart-mind), 'anattā' (not-self), and 'suññatā' (emptiness). In a talk to the Dhamma Study Group at Siriraj Hospital in Bangkok in 1961 he stated unequivocally the centrality of non-attachment to Buddhist spirituality: "This is the heart of the Buddhist Teachings,

of all Dhamma: Nothing whatsoever should be clung to: '*sabbe dhammā naḷaṃ abhinivesāya*'."

We truly care for our total environment and for our fellow human beings only when we have overcome selfishness and those qualities which empower it, e.g. desire, greed and hatred. Many of Buddhadasa's essays reflect his profound commitment to this truth, for example: 'Khwam Mai Hen Kae Tua Champen Samrap Rabop Kanmuang Khong Lok' (1989) [Overcoming Selfishness is Essential to a World Political System], 'Kan Rapchai Phuoen Tham Hai Lok Santi' (1960) [Serving Others Makes the World Peaceful], and 'Kan Tham Ngan Duae Cit Wang Phua Sangkhom' (1975) [Working with Liberated Heart and Mind for the Good of Society]. Note the persistent linkage between non-attachment, selflessness, and the capacity to be truly other-regarding. Caring ('anurak') in Buddhadasa's dhammic sense, therefore, is the active expression of our empathetic identification with all life forms — sentient and non-sentient, human beings and nature.

Caring in this deeper sense of the meaning of 'anurak' goes beyond the well publicized strategies of the conservation monks to protect and conserve the forest such as ordaining trees, as important as these strategies are in Thailand today. This is where the second term, 'dhammajāti', comes into the picture. The Thai term, 'thamachat', is usually translated as "nature". In its more nuanced Pali sense, however, 'dhammajāti' denotes everything that is linked to dhamma or that is dhamma originated (*jāti*). That is to say, 'thamachat' includes all things in their true, natural states, a condition that Buddhadasa refers to as the "norm-al" or "norm-ative" (*pakati*). To conserve (*anurak*) nature (*thamachat*), therefore, translates as having at the core of one's very being the quality of caring for all things in the world in their natural conditions; that is to say, to care for them as they really are rather than as I might benefit from them or as I might like them to be.

From an ethical perspective this means that our care for nature derives from an ingrained, selfless, empathetic response. It is not motivated by our need to satisfy our own pleasures as, say, in the maintenance of a beautiful garden, or even the laudable goal of conserving nature for our own physical and spiritual well-being or for the benefit of future generations. To care for nature in these pragmatic, functional terms has immense value, to be sure. I think Buddhadasa would not dispute this fact. A carefully tended garden is both meaningful to the gardener and inspirational to the viewer; furthermore, human survival may depend on whether or not we are able to conserve our dwindling natural resources and solve the problems of our increasingly polluted natural environment. Laudable as these two senses of conserving nature are, however, they lack the profound transformation or spiritual sense of what Buddhadasa means by 'anurak thamachat'.

The concept of active caring for others needs little explanation. The word itself, evokes numerous examples from our own experience, e.g. the parent who cares for a child, the mutual caring among friends, the responsible caring of citizens for the well-being of the state. But what does Buddhadasa mean by caring for nature, 'thamachat'? By 'thamachat' Buddhadasa certainly does not mean to essentialize the concept of nature or to impose on nature some sort of abstract, metaphysical construction. Quite the contrary. For Buddhadasa, things in their natural, true state are characterized by their dynamic, interdependent nature (*idcapaccayatā, paticca samuppāda*). Everything is linked in a process of dependent co-arising, or as Buddhadasa says so often, "We are mutual friends inextricably bound together in the same process of birth, old age, suffering and death." In other words, the world is a conjoint, interdynamic, cooperative enterprise (Thai: *sahakorn*. Pali: *sahakarana*) in which we transcend all manner of artificial distinctions such as employer/employee, capitalist/laborer, and get about the business of saving the world.

While some linkages are obvious to us, e.g. our relationships with family and friends, others are more attenuated or hidden. For example, only in recent years has it been commonly recognized that the destruction of the Brazilian rain forest or the ocean dumping of toxic waste affects the entire world's ecosystem; or, in more immediate and personal terms, that whether I personally conserve water, electricity, gasoline and so on affects not only my neighbor but the health of the entire cosmos. To care for (*anurak*) nature (*thamachat*), therefore, stems from a realization that I do not and cannot exist independent of my total environment. I am not "an island unto myself"; or in Buddhadasa's terminology, I do not and cannot exist unto myself (*attā, tua ku khong ku*) because to do so contravenes the very laws of nature.

Buddhadasa extends the sense of a cooperative society (*sahakorn*) to the cosmos.

"The entire cosmos is a cooperative. The sun, the moon, and the stars live together as a cooperative. The same is true for

humans and animals, trees and the earth. Our bodily parts function as a cooperative. When we realize that the world is a mutual, interdependent, cooperative enterprise, that human beings are all mutual friends in the process of birth, old age, suffering, and death, then we can build a noble, even heavenly environment. If our lives are not based on this truth then we'll all perish."



Buddhadasa Bhikkhu
& Gene Sharp

My own personal well-being is inextricably dependent on the well-being of everything and everyone else, and vice versa. In Buddhadasa's view this is an incontrovertible, absolute truth (*saccadhamma*). To go against this truth is to suffer the consequences. Today, we are suffering the consequences. As Buddhadasa expressed it in terms approaching an apocalyptic vision: "The greedy and selfish are destroying nature... Our whole environment has been poisoned — poisons everywhere, hospitals filled with the physically ill, and we can't build enough facilities to take care of the mentally ill. This is the consequence of utter selfishness... And in the face of all of this, our greed and selfishness continue to increase. Is there no end to this madness?"

In Buddhadasa's view, caring for 'thamachat' means not only that we care for other human beings and for nature, but also that we care for ourselves. In a manner typical of Buddhadasa's interpretation of Buddhadhamma, he makes a distinction between inner truth and outer truth. Outwardly,'thamachat' means physical nature. But the inner truth of nature is 'dhammadhatu' (the essential or fundamental nature of dhamma), namely, the dependent co-arising nature of things (*paticca samuppāda, idappaccayatā*). "When we realize this truth, the truth of 'dhammadhatu', when this law of the very nature of things is firmly in our hearts and minds, then we will overcome selfishness and greed. By caring for this inner truth [anurak thamachatphainai = *dhammadhā tu*] we will then be truly able to care for nature (*anurakkha dhammajati*)."

Buddhadasa's dhamma is part of his legacy to us. His teachings about caring for nature represent a thoughtful Buddhist ecological perspective; the simplicity of his lifestyle amidst the natural surroundings of Suan Mokkha, moreover, provides a compelling testimony to the viability of putting these teachings into practice. Caring for nature (anurak thamachat) is not a theory. It is a way of life.

Donald K. Swearer
Department of Religion
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, PA, USA

Buddhist Wisdom and Traditional Values for Ecological Balance

Although the present dominant world order is quite desructive to the environment and creates widening gaps between the rich and the poor, there are social movements around the world now working for peace, justice and ecology. These include Thai Buddhist monks ordaining trees to preserve the forest,the struggles of native people against deforestation and the damming of rivers, the struggles of local farmers against biotechnology corporations etc.These struggles need to be better integrated and their common agenda must be firmly placed on a nonviolent and spiritual path. This is the only way they can overcome the violence and destructiveness of the dominant world order.

The teaching we need in order to walk this path already exists. The challenge facing humanity is not the development of more and more technology,markets and bureaucracies but the development of wisdom and compassion, that is, spiritual development.

In *Dharma Gaia : A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and*

Ecology , published on Earth Day 1990 in the U.S.A., the Dalai Lama wrote a very interesting foreword which should be quoted in full:

"The Earth, our Mother, is telling us to behave. All around,signs of nature's limitations abound. Moreover, the environmental crisis currently underway,involves all of humanity, making national boundaries of secondary importance.

"If we develop good and considerate qualities within our own minds, our activities will naturally cease to threaten the continued survival of life on Earth. By protecting the natural environment and working to forever halt the degradation of our planet, we will also show respect for Earth's human descendants—our future generation — as well as for the natural right to life of all Earth's living things. If we care for nature, it can be rich, bountiful, and inexhaustibly sustainable.

"It is important that we forgive the destruction of the past and recognize that it was produced by ignorance. At the same time, we should re-examine, from an ethical perspective, what kind of world we have inherited, what we are responsible for, and what we will pass on to coming generations.

"It is my deep felt hope, that we find solutions which will match the marvels of science and technology for the current tragedies of human starvation and the extinction of life forms.

"We have the responsibility, as well as the capability, to protect the Earth's habitats,—its animals, plants, insects, and even micro-organisms. If they are to be known by future generations, as we have known them, we must act now. Let us all work together to preserve and safeguard our world."



Sulak Sivaraksa

The world view that informs us in this inquiry includes the awareness of the interrelatedness of all beings as expressed in Buddhism. This is also a part of the spiritual tradition of many indigenous peoples of America, Australia or New Zealand. For instance—Native Americans teach that humans are not separate from nature. Instead, humans are products of nature, and that nature does not exist simply for human manipulation. Humans are products of natural or spiritual forces that created and continue to govern the world. The Native Americans believe that one cannot separate politics from personal life, spirituaity from politics, the animal world from the human, art from the crafts necessary for survival. The traditional Native American lives with an awareness of the sacredness of all life that guides each step he takes,each decision he makes. Many native prayers end with the words *Mitakoyasin*, meaning all my relations, to acknowledge that every being in the world is part of one's family.

Dhyani Ywahoo, a Cherokee medicine woman of Native America and teacher of Tibetan Buddhism has said, "There is a stream of compassionate wisdom of which we are all a part ..... From that flowing heart comes a great wisdom, to which each of us is attuned .... So peace is alive within us as a seed, as a song. To call it forth is a practice of clear vision and clear speech. See the beauty and praise the beauty, and wisdom's stream shall flow abundantly in our heart."

Buddhism,through its insistence on the interrelatedness of all life, its teachings of compassion for all beings, its nonviolence, and again, as with the native spiritual teachings anywhere,its caring for all of existence,has been leading some westerners to broader and deeper interpretations of the relationship between social, environmental, racial, and sexual justice and peace.

In this area, we are inspired by examples of such movements like Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka and the number of Thai monks involved in conservation of their local areas through Buddhist meditation and activism. The Bhikkhu Sangha of Chiengmai even stopped a cable car being built on the holy mountain of Doi Suthep. They have now led the laity on campaign against high rise buildings in the city.

The late leading figure among Thai Buddhists was, ofcourse, Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. His vision of a good and just society coincides with his view of an original state of nature or an original human condition, one of mutual interdependence, harmony and balance. By its very being, this state of nature is selfless — individuals are not attached to self for its own sake. But with the loss of this state of innocence, individuals are subject to the bondage of attachment (*upādāna*) and unquenchable thirst (*tanhā*). Consequently, sentient beings need to find ways to return to, or

restore this condition of mutual interdependence and harmony, love and respect. On a personal level, the attainment of wisdom through increasing awareness, continuous attention (*sampajañña*), and focused concentration (*samādhi*) serve to break through the conditions of greed, hatred and delusion—the three root causes of evils in Buddhism, while, on a social level, those in positions of power promote economic and political policies which after meeting basic physical needs promote a balanced development in which matters of the spirit assume their rightful dominance.

Buddhadasa's vision of a harmonious, dhammic world can be described in terms of three basic principles: the good of the whole, restraint and generosity, respect and loving-kindness. The principle of the good of the whole is based on the Theravada worldview of conditioned genesis or interdependent co-arising (*paticca samuppāda*). Nothing exists in isolation; everything co-exists interdependently as part of a large whole from whatever level it may be viewed — molecular, human, social or cosmic. The entire universe exists in a mutual fellowship. Countless numbers of stars in the sky co-exist because of this system. Because of it, the sun and planets, including the earth, survive and do not collide.

To act in terms of the good of the whole requires restraint of egoistic drives on the one hand, and active generosity on the other. Buddhadasa looks to the Buddha and the monastic order, but also to an idealized and simplified past as examples of these virtures. He said, "Our ancestors ....taught that we should do what we can to promote the co-existence of all beings .... All living beings are able to exist to the degree that they form a society, a mutually beneficial cooperative. This is the handiwork of nature. If nature lacked this character, we would all die. Those who know this principle hold fast to it. Even their rice paddies are planted for the benefit of wild animals who feed on it, as well as for their own consumption, they grow as much as they can to share with all forms of living beings."

The shared universe we inhabit calls for us to live in accordance with the principles of respect for others and the active pursuit of their well-beings, that is to say to demonstrate loving-kindness (*mettā*). It is in this regard that Buddhadasa becomes a peace advocate in the broadest sense of that term, condeming war and all forms of violence toward both human beings and the environment.

Now, let me describe another example of the interrelatedness of peace and justice as it is played out on American soil, and the implications of its emphasis on compassion and the interconnection of all beings, its inherent non-violence. Buddhism seems particularly suited to application to peace and justice issues. Buddhism and Native spiritual traditions in any land can lead us away from our anthropocentric position towards caring for the animal world and all of nature. There is a renewed emphasis on the interconnection of all life in modern Buddhism.

An organization that is attempting to move on this awareness in confronting issues of building trust through economic and social development with an awareness of ecological balance is the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Begun in 1978 by Robert Aitken of the Diamond Sangha in Hawaii and others, it offers Buddhists a way to take their practice into the world of political and social action.

Especially active in the U.K. are, for example, Christopher Titmuss and his best seller of interviews with various concerned citizens of the world entitled *Spirit for Change : Voices of Hope for a World in Crisis* and Ken Jones with his book on *The Social Face of Buddhism*. Jones is now active in the British Network of Engaged Buddhists.

In Siam too, we have a local organization called the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development which coordinates work among individuals, groups and various agencies dealing with full human development, and promotes ways and means of working together non-violently among Buddhists, Christians, Hindus and Muslims. Among those of the same faith, we have set up an International Network of Engaged Buddhists, concentrating especially on an alternative education and spiritual training, peace activism, human rights, ecology, family concerns, rural development, alternative economics and politics.

Thich Nhat Hanh should also be mentioned. He is a leading inspirational figure for members of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, and a patron of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists.

Nhat Hanh particularly stresses nondualism in his teaching, and speaks of *being peace* in the moments in one's own life as part of making peace in the world. He stresses the continuity of inner and outer, calling the world our "large self," and asks us to become it actively and to care for it.

His Tiep Hien Order, created in Vietnam during the war, is part of the lineage of the Zen School of Lin Chi. It is a form of Buddhism engaged in daily life, in society. The best translation of Tiep Hien, according to Thich Nhat Hanh, is the "Order of

Interbeing," which he explains in this way, "In one sheet of paper, we see everything else, the cloud, the forest, the logger. I am, therefore you are. You are, therefore I am, That is the meaning of the word interbeing. We inter-are."

He went on to say, "I know that in our previous life we were trees, and even in this life we continue to be trees. Without trees, we cannot have people; therefore, trees and people inter-are. We are trees, and air, bushes and clouds. If trees cannot survive,humankind is not going to survive either. We get sick because we have damaged our own environment, and we are in mental anguish because we are so far away from our true mother, Mother Nature."

Robert Aitken Roshi added a few more words of caution,"at the same time, of course, we are, all of us, eating each other. Destruction and renewal join in Shiva's dance. Trees died that this book might live. Beans die that I might eat. Even at the kalpa fire, when all the universes are burned to a crisp, the flames of that holocaust will crack the seeds of something; we don't yet know what. Meantime, with minds as broad as can be, my lifestyle and yours will be modest and hearts will be thankful. It will be clearly appropriate to do this and not to do that. Kuanyin has a boundless sense of proportion."

The order of Interbeing is based on Thich Nhat Hanh's reformulation of the Buddhist precepts into fourteen guiding statements,designed to explicitly address social justice and peace issues, sensitizing the participant to test his behavior in relation to the needs of the larger community, while freeing him from limiting patterns. These precepts address issues of mind, speech and body.

The first precept is: "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. " And in his discussion of this, Thich Nhat Hanh writes,"If you have a gun, you can shoot one,two, three,five people, but if you have an ideology and stick to it, thinking it is the absolute truth, you can kill millions." and "Peace can only be achieved when we are not attached to a view, when we are free from fanaticism. The more you decide to practice this precept, the deeper you will go into reality and understand the teachings of Buddhism."

Another precept urges us not to avoid contact with suffering, but to find ways to be with those who suffer. And another: not to accumulate wealth while millions are hungry.

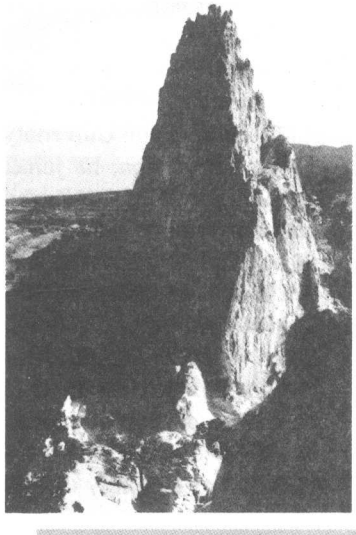
These precepts create a consciousness of, and a precedent for social justice and peace work grounded firmly in Buddhist principles, in our individual beings and in our practice of mindfulness. The seventh precept is perhaps the most important ; a pivot on which the others turn.

Do not lose yourself in dispersion and in your surroundings. Learn to practice breathing in order to regain composure of body and mind to practice mindfulness, and to develop concentration and understanding.

These guiding statements achieve an integration of the traditional five precepts with elements ofthe Noble Eightfold Path, and I believe Thich Nhat Hanh's decision to elaborate on the traditional precepts came from his observation that one can interpret these to encourage a withdrawal from the world, a passivity in the face of war and injustice, a separation of oneself from the common lot of humanity. In rewriting the precepts, he is countering that tendency. In directing us to focus on our interconnection with other beings, he is asking us to 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.

Some of us are trying to meet this challenge, and I hope what some of us are trying to do in connecting our being peace within, to the outside world engagingly and mindfully, would contribute to a better world with social justice, nonviolence and with ecological balance — the Middle Way for each and for society at large, to live in harmony with one another and with nature.

A draft presentation for The Thirteenth International Transpersonal Association Conference :Towards Earth, Community, Ecology,Native Wisdom and Spirituality. May 22-27, 1994 Killarney, Co.Kerry, Ireland.



IN MEMORY OF MAI TIN MAUNG

INEB members will remember Mai Tin Maung as the soft-spoken young man from Burma who embodied the Buddhist ideals of deep conviction and quiet humility. As one of our most reliable and committed members, he was present at the fourth, fifth and sixth annual INEB conferences.



Mai Tin Maung (standing)

After the fourth conference, he wrote to the INEB secretariat: "Thank you very much for your kindness for the INEB 4th annual conference. I [will] never forget [the] monks and gentlemen who are calm and speak kindly to us. Sometimes I [feel] ashamed because I'm a revolutionary and they are peaceful monks. When I was 20 years old, I was a monk, and my ambition is to [do] beneficial work to promote the standard of Hilltribe education. But according to [our political] situation, now I'm a revolutionary. After the INEB conference, I went to the front line to help my friends. In the front line area, I studied *Seeds of Peace.* So, I [wonder] why [there is] more violence in Buddhist countries? I'm holding arms in my hand. This is my situation."

Circumstances led Mai Tin Maung to be a revolutionary in life, yet his character was an exemplary model of Buddhist equanimity and integrity. We mourn him deeply now and respectfully honor the memory of his selfless dedication to the spirit of peace, justice and harmony in his own country and in the world.

BRANG SENG — AN APPRECIATION

I was very sad to hear the sudden death of Kachin leader Brang Seng, who passed away unexpectedly on 8th August 1994.

He was born on 16th June 1931 in Hpakant, Kachin State and finished his studies in 1954 with a bachelor's degree in education from Rangoon University. Upon his graduation, he joined the teaching staff of the Kachin Baptist High School in the State capital of Myiykyina and became its headmaster in 1957 and principal in 1958.

In 1963, he went underground and joined the fledging Kachin Independence Organization, which was founded two years earlier, and rose rapidly through the structural heirachy from township organizer to township administrator, and in 1966 to become the KIO's northern division secretary, and the head of the finance and foreign departments between 1967-70.



Brang Seng was chosen to lead the KIO delegation to Beijing three times in 1967, 68 and 69 where he met and held talks with several of China's top party government and military leaders, including Chou En-Lai.

He was unanimously elected to the dual posts of KIC president and KIO chairman in 1976 after the death of Kachin leader Gen Zau Seng.

In 1986 he was the first chairman of the northern military zone of the National Democratic Front, which comprised a dozen armed ethnic guerrilla groups active along the Sino-Burmese and Thai-Burmese borders.

I got to know him because

he expressed to me that there should be an option for nonviolence and diplomatic discussions. Hence I was responsible in getting INEB involved with various Burmese and ethnic groups to provide nonviolence training at Manawplau and elsewhere. My house even became a place for Brang Seng to meet with western diplomats.

He travelled extensively to meet with government and opposition leaders around the world to campaign for international support for his group and other anti-Rangoon ethnic and opposition movements until he was incapacitated by his first stroke in late October of last year. Even at the hospital in Kunming, he expressed his concern about my *lese majeste* case. He also sent two Kachin Baptists to attend our 6th INEB meeting last February.

When I attended a meeting in Kuala Lumpur a few years ago, I read his statement to the Burmese officials from Rangoon, who pretended to ignore it, but afterward asked me privately to have the statement passed on to SLORC.

I found chairman Brang Seng to be both diplomatic and trustworthy. He earned both respect and love from his fellow Kachin leaders and the general Kachin public as well as the admiration of leaders of other armed ethnic groups.

He was known, not only for his mastery in bargaining in negotiations but also for his outspokenness, pragmatism and farsightedness. He was a devout Christian. I found in him a good friend. He is survived by his wife and seven children.

S. Sivaraksa

SULAK SIVARAKSA
A WARRIOR IN THE FIELD OF CULTURAL POLITICS

I think we can look at the value of the Thai intellectual in two ways. One is as a systematic thinker or theorist, an aspect in which the Thai intellectual never flourished. Ms.Supaporn Ativanichayaporn wrote a thesis which studies the progress of Thai thought regarding political economy, and she concludes that from 1949-1982 this line of thought did not progress. What occurred during this time is that the old ideas were simply re-explained in an alternate form.

A different approach, and one which has been the strength of the Thai intellectual, is that of acting as a cultural politician. Thai intellectuals have been very good at selecting and synthesizing elements from local and foreign cultures to form what is called Thai culture. This ability has been used by intellectuals as a tool to legitimize their own authority or that of the groups they endorse.

When the leftist intellectuals renounced their armed struggle in the jungle and concluded that their social analysis was wrong, they underestimated the value of cultural politics and focused their study on systematic theoretical thinking. When they looked back at the older Thai intellectuals of both the left and right, they were disappointed, not realizing that while the older intellectuals were not competent at theorizing, they were excellent cultural politicians.

What, then, is cultural politics? It is a kind of striving to define the meaning of being Thai — to select, adapt, and screen local and foreign cultural elements in the process of redefining and reinterpreting the meaning of being Thai. In this arena, the Thai intellectual excelled.

The problem, however, is that Thai politics in the context of Thai cultural politics has defined the meaning of being Thai as being traditional. This definition was created and supported by monarchists since the period of King Rama 6. This definition has a rigidity which resists change, and it forced Thai intellectuals of later generations to respond by reinterpreting, selecting, and redefining the meaning of being Thai. In this sense, the role of the Thai intellectual became similar to that of an importer or a broker, importing cultural elements not only from abroad but also from the past and synthesizing these elements to produce new discourses on Thai culture.

Dr.Seksan Prasertkul has pointed out that the problem of cultural politics in Thai politics is that Thai nationalism, or being Thai has predominantly meant being against change. In the West, nationalism came from the rising power of the bourgeoisie together with the introduction of liberal politics and economics, although it must be pointed out that this is not necessarily democracy. Liberal politics refers to a multi-party system of election, while a liberal economy means an economic system with the least

possible intervention by the state.

Democracy, though, has nothing to do with liberalism necessarily, and in the West, democracy wasn't initiated by the bourgeoisie, but was the result of the struggle of people such as the grassroots laborer and farmer or the middle class person who had not yet become rich.

Nationalism is an imaginary community of nation created as a weapon by the bourgeoisie to fight against the absolute monarchy whose slogan is "L'etat, c'est moi."

The bourgeoisie use the concept of the nation state as a strategy to gather all the people into this imaginary unity. Hence, in the West the concept of nation was created as a tool to fight against centralized authoritarianism.

In Thailand, however, the state used cultural politics to "own" nationalism, which means that the state undermined the power of the bourgeoisie right from the beginning. Furthermore, the state used the idea of nation, the strength of Thai identity as a tool to threaten the Chinese bourgeoisie. On one hand the state needed to keep these people under control because they were moving under extraterritoriality. However, during that period the Thai state also depended on the Chinese bourgeoisie for economic benefit and so, to some extent, feared them. Another factor which further fueled this fear was the republican revolution of Dr.Sun Yat Sen in China which the Thai state felt might unduly influence the Chinese bourgeoisie. For these and other reasons, the Thai state created the concept of the nation and used it as a political tool to "control."

The bourgeoisie, the Chinese capitalists, however, felt no need to fight state because Westerners had already imposed a liberal economy on Thai society. The Western bourgeoisie, on the other hand, had to struggle with the state and mobilize nationalism in order to create a liberal economy.

In summary, Thai nationalism is a cross cultural product of royalist — Bangkokian cultural elements mixed together with Chinese and Western elements with one condition which served as a buffer against authoritarianism — the ability to use Thai language.

The Thai capitalists, therfore, did not have to fight the state; they simply wanted some measure of power sharing such as participating in parlimentary democracy, for example. It was the middle class, rather, who were fighting with the state, and the composition of this middle class changed from period to period. For example, around the time of the 1932 revolution, the middle class were those in the government machinery, and in the 1992 May uprising, they were the businessmen with private cars and mobile phones.

In this context the appearance of Thai leftist intellectuals after W.W. II is very important because they were the pioneers who challenged the above-mentioned concept of being Thai—the idea that being Thai meant being against change. They used Marxist cultural discourse from the West to fight against this concept.

This group tried to synthesize Marxism and Maoism into Thai culture by translating texts, writing poems, composing songs and rewriting history. Thus, the intelligensia used communist socialism discourses to fight for democracy, and in 1958 when General Sarit Thanarat came to power, these intelligentsia were arrested, assassinated, chased into the jungle and forced into exile.

In the intellectual vacuum thus created, when this first group of intelligentsia were forced out of society, Sulak Sivaraksa appeared.

I think Sulak's most important role has been to link Thai intelligentsia to their Thai cultural roots, empowering them culturally to fight against the power of the state and the capitalists. From 1958-1974 especially, Sulak's role was fighting against the state and capitalists. During these 16 years, what choice did the Thai intellectual have but to get involved in cultural politics?

Sulak's significant contribution has been to invert the authoritarian-dominated meaning of being Thai and being Buddhist from that of being against change to its true and original form. He legitimized people outside the circle of power who are fighting for liberty and who are accumulating wisdom to fight against authoritarianism as being truly Thai, truly Buddhist. He called into question the authoritarians' use of the meaning of being Thai and being Buddhist as being "against change."

In the famous Greek myth, Prometheus fought for fire with which to light the world. In Thailand, Sulak's role is similar in that he is fighting to bring back to Thai intellectuals the true meaning of being Thai so that they are rooted in Thai culture, a fact that will empower them to fight against the state and the capitalists.

At the cultural intersection where the road of left and right cross, where the super highway of the West crosses with the cart road of the East, right there, if there would be a monument, I think it must be Sulak Sivaraksa's. This will be the milestone of the Thai intellectual's pilgrimage.

I think Sulak is a cultural

hero, but he is not a hero of Thai culture in the generally accepted sense that being Thai means being against change. He is a hero of cultural innovation for Thai society. He is a linker, selector, interactor, supervisor, demonstrator, dialoguer, discusser and dialectician between different cultures, different discourses. His contribution as an innovator is to bring together people from different schools of thought and different systems to exchange ideas and search for mutual learning and understanding.

Sulak can assume this role because he uses himself as a model of discourse mixing. He demonstrates the way to synthesize the left and the right, the old and the new.

Thus, Sulak has a clearly negative identity. No party considers him their ally; everyone says he belongs to the opposite side.

The right says he is left, the left says he is right; the conservative says he is radical while the radical says he is conservative. It is an identity derived from negation. He is rejected by all systems so that he is outside any system, unaccepted by all systems. So where, then, is he? He is at the center of the intersection because he does not enter any road.

The right asks what kind of rightist is he who fights against dictatorship, denounces the military junta, and supports Pridi Banomyong, the father of Thai democracy? The left says what kind of leftist is he who loves the monarchy, loves religion, denounces the communist party, condemns Marxism and rejects violence? The conservative says what kind of conservative is he who drinks Kloster beer, criticizes monks, is critical of the monarchy and promotes nonviolent revolution? The radical says what kind of radical wears traditional clothing and searches for Thai roots? What has happened? What is Sulak's special destiny?

Sulak identifies himself with the alternative elements in every system. He takes the side of the minority opposition and resists all kinds of authoritarianism, whether that of the state, the capitalist, or the technocrat. This means that among the right there are the powerful right and the powerless right, while among the left there are the mainstream left and alternative left, and so also among the old and the new. How can the mainstream in each system accept Sulak when he always identifies himself with the alternative elements?

Why does he choose to do this? I think it is because of his criteria of selection, filtration and reinterpretation from the four main streams of Thai society — the left, the right, the old and the new. His criteria are rejection of authoritarianism, insistence on searching for liberty and the accumulation of wisdom. This is his frame of reference for identifying with the four main streams.

So, in a sense, Sulak is both left and right, old and new. As a rightist he is moral and righteous, denouncing the immoral; as a leftist-anarchist he denounces the authoritarian state and authoritarian party. As an old reformist he denounces the old which is deteriorating from the original old; as part of the new, he is a conservative condemning the new who are uprooted from their own cultural background.

All in all, Sulak is the historical antithesis of the four main streams of Thai culture. He argues, criticizes and rejects the four main streams — no matter if they are left or right, old or new. Where, then, is the synthesis, the answer? I don't think Sulak, himself, is that synthesis or has the answer, but he is the critical bridge to facilitate the process of synthesis and solution.

In a talk on the hero of Thai culture, Dr. Niti Aewsriwong said that nowadays Thai people are in a crucial period. Each group, each faction has its own hero, and there is no one national hero who is accepted by all. Nowadays, Thai people have no consensus. We have no common agreement which might serve to connect all groups, no agreement which might connect the military to the civilian, build a bridge from the political parties to the people, or link those on the opposing sides of the dam conflict. When I talk about synthesis, it is this kind of consensus that I mean which we lack.

Before the 1973 October uprising and after the collapse of the communist party in 1981, there was an intellectual vacuum. People were confused — some were imprisoned, others chased into the jungle. The intelligentsia, especially, were confused about how to find a solution.

During these periods, Sulak's role was crucial. He created a culture of inter-group dialogue to promote critical thinking among people of different views. It was a process of searching for liberty and learning how to accumulate wisdom. In the former period he founded the *Social Science Review* ; in the latter he created *Pacarayasara*. Both magazines were tools to bring about consensus among people of differing thoughts and differing cultural discourses. His initiatives steered Thai society away from danger during those critical periods, and it is why during the military dictatorship before 1973, we had a consensus that we wanted democracy. Furthermore, during the civil war after 1976, we had the consensus that we wanted non-

violent social change.

The problem is that we are now facing a danger that is more serious and deeper in its own way, and we have no consensus about the solution. It is a socio-economic problem unsolvable by any ready-made answer. We used to believe that dictatorship could be solved by democracy. This is no longer valid for solving the present political problem in Thailand, because it is a cold war between the urban sector and the countryside, the agricultural sector and the industrial sector, and between social classes. It is a war in which we are fighting over diminishing natural resources and cheap labor. The danger is that this cold war has real potential to become a violent war.

This would be worse than the former wars because neither side has a strategy for reconstruction after the conflict. In the former wars, at least each side believed they knew what to do after the war. Moreover, at present we don't have a solution which can persuade the opposing groups to put down their arms and voluntarily work together.

Hence, the violence of the Pakmool dam conflict. In the future this will be seen as wasted bloodshed, because ultimately we don't have the vision for a solution.

In this crucial period, our society is badly in need of a culture of dialogue so that people from different factions, camps, discourses and systems can come together and talk. We really need a discourse mixer service. We need a place outside the system to set up an intersection that will facilitate dialogue between the left, the right, the old, the new, the local and international. We're especially lacking in interaction among government technocrates, business consultants, NGO thinkers, and free intellectuals in the media and academic circles.

In this most critical of times, we have expelled our most gifted, experienced, and best discourse mixer. What would you call it if not an intellectual suicide by Thai society?

Dr. Kasean Techapeera

This is an article rewritten from a public discussion on the value of Thai intellectuals at Thammasat University on the 19th of March 1993 to celebrate Sulak Sivaraksa's 60th birthday.

BEYOND OPTIMISM : A BUDDHIST POLITICAL ECOLOGY

by Ken Jones
John Carpenter Publishing,
Oxford, 1993
15 pounds sterling, post free, from:
UK Network of Engaged Buddhists
Plas Plwca, Cwmrheidol, Aberystwyth, U.K., SY23 3NB

The significant momentum that the international green movement established throughout the 1980s to alert politicians, the multinationals and the public to the global crisis has entered decline. By the early 1990s the green movement ploughed into its own crisis. Having formed political parties, organizations to protect land, sea and air, lobbied governments and introduced a spiritual dimension to politics, the green movement became confused. Politicians, the corporate world, the media and the public continued the ideology of self-interest regardless of the cost. Frustration, disappointment, conflict and burn-out became all too common stories within the green movement.

Ken Jones' book comes at the right moment. In the genuine spirit of Buddhist practice he faces the truth of suffering and the causes and the means to the resolution of global suffering. What gives this book particular authority is his lifetime of spiritual and political experience. A prominent figure in the Welsh Green Party, Ken is a founder of the UK Network of Engaged Buddhists.

The power of the book reveals itself in Ken's recognition that green politics must be understood in historical and contemporary social and political contexts, which have shaped the present direction of human values. He draws upon the thoughts of Schumacher, Lovelock, Keynes, Fromm, Marx, Porritt, Wilbur, Merton, etc. among the 250 references.

He writes insightfully of the overdeveloped world and the underdeveloped world as well as proposing realistic ideas for forming a green society and to return to a community, which is "tough and mutualistic." One of the themes that threads its way through the book is the determination to challenge the power of the ego and its manifestation in personal and political life. Ken writes, "The argument of this book is that we shall need to start to nudge the evolution of human consciousness itself beyond its present high egoic level... We shall need to develop institutions and structures which provide for security, restraint and responsibility, as well as freedom and empowerment."

Readers will find again and again throughout the pages of the book the Buddhist tradition's values for nonviolence, tolerance, ethics, awareness, compassion and wisdom.

Ken also explores the relationship of Buddhist perceptions within the libertarian tradition which he clearly respects. It is these features which make this book of particular significance for those who believe that spiritual values and Buddhist wisdom have an invaluable role to play in political life. Thus Ken has drawn on contemporary commentators who are strongly influenced by the Buddhist tradition including Roger Walsh, John Seed, Joanna Macy, Gary Snyder, Williams Ophuls and Adam Curle. My small preference, however, would have been to see a few direct quotes from the Buddha, himself.

Beyond Optimism sets a vision and offers a realistic message as we approach the next millennium. It ought to be on the reading list of all thoughtful women and men.

Christopher Titmuss

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE TWO MILITARY JUNTAS: THAILAND & BURMA

by Kanbawza Win
CPDSK Publications
P.O. Box 260
Samsennai P.O.
Bangkok 10400

To purists, who see things as either black or white, the two juntas of Burma and Thailand should appear to them as entities of the same category. However, due to differences in historical developments, political, cultural, social values, ethnic composition and economic systems of the two countries, a comparative study of the two is not as amenable as it may seem. Any attempt at comparison of the two juntas is fraught with the pitfalls of over simplification, irrelevant analogies and intractable but elusive preconception. The danger is, none the more, alleviated by some similarities in forms and manners of the two that are most apparent for aggregation and analysis.

In This presentation, Kanbawza Win has attempted to render a comperative study of the two military juntas, in a scholarly and impartial manner, by an in-depth study and investigation of the backgrounds of the two military establishments, the political cultures, social values and economic conditions of the two countries. It cannot claim to be a comprehensive and exhaustive study of the two military juntas and the consequences brought about by their actions. However, the book is nevertheless interesting and informative for fresh observations and insights that can only be made by a person who has seen and experienced, at first hand, the workings of the two dictatorships.

Dr. Than Htay

NEW BOOKS

THINKING GREEN by Petra K. Kelly ($18)
THE AWAKENING OF THE WEST by Stephen Batchelor ($18)
MINDFULNESS AND MEANINGFUL WORK ed. by Claude Whitmyer ($16)
THE PRACTICE OF PERFECTION by Robert Aitken ($22)
BURMA DEBATE ed. by Mary Pack: bimonthly, first issue July-August, 1994

LETTERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
Center for Korean Studies
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024-1487

3 May 1994

Dear Khun Sulak:

I spoke Sunday with Ven. Jinwol Sunim, a Korean monk whom I believe you know well. He told me about your interest in publishing a Thai translation of my recent book, *The Zen Monastic Experience*, through your publishing company in Bangkok. I would of course be extremely honored to have you arrange a translation into Thai. Permission will have to be requested directly from Princeton University Press, which holds the copyright, but that is a formality.

Khun Sulak, we have an interesting karmic connection, which I am sure you have long forgotten. Jinwol Sunim may have told you that, before I went to Korea, I had first been a monk in Thailand, in the Thammayut Order. I arrived at Wat Bovoranives in 1972, as a young 19-year-old kid with keen interest in Buddhism. Phra Khantipalo, who was my contact at Wat Bovoranives, asked around among the lay supporters of the Wat, to find soneone to sponsor my ordination. You may be surprised to learn that you, Khun Sulak, were my sponsor, acting as my surrogate parent during my ordination! Because of health problems, I eventually only spent one year in Thailand, before leaving for Hong Kong and eventually Korea to continue my monastic career. After five years in Korea, I finally returned to the US (still as a monk) and returned to school to do Buddhist Studies at UC Berkeley. I later taught at Stanford for a year and have been at UCLA since 1986. I still remember with deep gratitude your help in getting me started in my study and practice of Buddhism. I have followed your career with interest since then, vicariously proud of your many successes. It is good, finally, to be back in touch with you.

May You Ever Grow in Dharma,
Robert Buswell (Rocano; Hyemyong)
Professor of Buddhist Studies

Mcleod Ganj, Dharamasala, India

May 16, 1994

Dear Samdech Preah Maha Ghosananda,

I am deeply saddened by the news accounts regarding the loss of lives during the Dhammayietra on Saturday. I have been informed that you will continue to walk for peace but have altered your route and will conclude your journey at Ankgor Wat, which is at the heart of Cambodian culture.

I wish to take this opportunity to offer my encouragement and prayers that despite the recent tragedy the objectives of the third Dhammayietra will be met without any further bloodshed. It is my heartfelt hope that this walk through the war torn provinces of Cambodia will help bring peace and reconciliation to the Cambodian people and by doing so further serve your goal to help re-establish Buddhist principles of nonviolence in your country.

It is my understanding that you are joined in this walk by the Sangha and lay people from Cambodia as well as other Asians and Westerners and that one of the purposes of the Dhammayietra is to encourage respect towards the environment. To all of the participants I extend my support for their exemplary work which adheres to the tenants of the Dharma in an appeal for countrywide reconciliation, compassion, peace and loving-kindness.

With prayers and good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
The Dalai Lama

Saigon,.Vietnam

May 28, 1994

Dear The Most Venerable, Brother and Sister,

May I translate SEEDS OF PEACE into our mother language (Vietnamese) and publish it in our Buddhist Newspaper? Please let me know.

As you know, I am living under a Communist regime. They've not allowed us to develop Buddhist activities and receive help from other Buddhist countries outside Vietnam. I have thought, however, it is time, we have to know what's happening with Buddhism in the world. I gain knowledge from your magazine. I thank deeply all my spiritual friends, especially INEB members for putting their hard work into keeping SEEDS OF PEACE alive.

By the way, please give me some pictures from INEB Sixth Annual Conference in Siam (February 13-19, 1994) and can you show me the address of the Buddhist Newspapers named TORCH OF WISDOM and SNOW LION or THE MIDDLE WAY. I would like to get further information about Buddhist activities in the world.

I want to keep in touch with your organization as a member, how can I? Now I must say very sorry, because I cannot support minimum donation US$ 15 per annum. However, I will support you in my mind.

I must close for now and I do hope to hear from you soon.

May the Lord Buddha bless you all.

Yours Very Respectfuly
Ven. TNT

COMMUNITY OF THE PEACE PEOPLE
"Fredheim", 224 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 6GE

21st June, 1994

Dear Mr. Chalad,

I have heard via my friend, Sulak Sivaraksa, of your campaign and that of thousands of Thai people for genuine reform in Siam – and not minor amendments as proposed in your Parliament.

I have written to the Speaker of the House of Rep., and the Prime Minister asking them to speed up constitutional reforms for genuine democracy.

I hope there will be real political reforms soon, and this will enable you to start eating soon in order to gain your strength and health so very necessary to enable you to continue your lifelong commitment to nonviolent social and political change in your country, and in our world.

Yours sincerely,
Miread Maguire
Nobel Peace Laureate (1976)

COMMITTEE OF 100 FOR TIBET: A STATEMENT

For over 1300 years the Tibetan people have maintained a unified and distinct cultural realm that has persisted into modern times. In 1950 the People's Republic of China invaded Tibet and embarked on a policy of occupation and oppression that seriously threatens the continued survival of the unique Tibetan culture. Tragically, a world which condemns colonialism has ignored China's occupation of Tibet.

Since 1951, hundreds of thousands of Tibetans have been killed outright or died as a result of aggression, torture or starvation. Over 6,000 monasteries and temples have been destroyed in an attempt to eradicate the Tibetan religion and culture. The continued population transfer of Chinese to Tibet threatens the existence of the unique national, cultural and religious identity of the Tibetan people. China's exploitation of Tibet's environmental resources seriously threatens the ecology of the fragile Tibetan plateau.

The Tibetan people have demonstrated repeatedly for independence from China. Their struggle is nonviolent and worthy of special attention. Indeed, in 1989 the international community honored the Tibetan freedom movement when the Dalai Lama, the leader of the Tibetan people, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

We are concerned about the continuing human rights abuses in Tibet. Over forty years of Chinese occupation have demonstrated that there can be no guarantee of human rights for Tibetans until Tibet is free. To assure human rights within Tibet, we believe it is necessary for Tibet to regain its independence.

We have joined together in a Committee of 100 for Tibet to support the Tibetan people's struggle for independence. We ask the peoples and nations of the world to recognize that Tibet is rightfully an independent country which is now illegally occupied by the People's Republic of China.

We ask for full support of Tibet as an independent nation, and for recognition of the democratically elected Tibetan government-in-exile. We ask for international support of a withdrawal of China from Tibet. And we ask for full privileges in the United Nations for the Tibetan government-in-exile.

The survival of the Tibetan people is at stake. We believe it is time to support Tibet.

Committee of 100 for Tibet
P.O. Box 60612
Palo Alto, CA, USA 94306

SULAK SIVARAKSA — WINNER OF THE 1994 SRIBURAPHA AWARD

The objective of the Sriburapha Fund is to provide pensions to Thai writers who have contributed to society, and to hold activities to remember the works of literary masters. The Fund also honors prominent literary figures with its annual Sriburapha Award.

The Sriburapha Award is given to Thai writers who have written articles, features, or short stories that serve society and humanity. The recipient must have been a writer for more than 30 years and still be living.

This year, the outspoken writer and social critic Sulak Sivaraksa was the recipient of the prestigious award.

The announcement was made by Suwat Woradilok, Chairman of the Committee for the Sriburapha Fund, as follows:

"Sulak Sivaraksa is an important social critic, thinker, and writer for Thailand, who has continued to contribute to the world of literature since 1957. During the periods that Thailand has been under the control of dictatorial regimes, and the free-flowing of intellectual ideas subsequently suppressed, Sulak Sivaraksa has managed to present works of literature, and articles which inspire the youth to search for new paradigms and ideas for dealing with society. Sulak was also the editor of the *Social Science Review* which was central to the type of thinking and searching occurring during that period. It was fundamental to the process of fighting for democracy and justice in society, which stimulated the formation of democracy movements such as the student demonstration of October 14th, 1973 and other significant events thereafter.

For several decades, Sulak has produced literature and articles on many subjects. He is able to link Western and Eastern philosophy. He also brings to the fore and joins the best aspects of both past and present Thai culture. Most importantly, he has been able to utilize Buddhist philosophy and wisdom in a way that is applicable to the modern era.

In addition, he is a social activist who stimulates NGOs to participate in social development. This has lead to the creation of various kinds of NGOs involved in a variety of alternative issues. Because his ideas and sincerity towards his work have made him into an astute and discerning critic with a tendency for outspokenness, he is sometimes disliked by the authorities and has often been threatened.

In his role as thinker, writer and pragmatist, and as one who is honest, serious, and sincere in his creative work, he is an outstanding contributor to the literary world. The Sriburapha Fund would therefore like to give the 1994 award to Sulak Sivaraksa."

5 May 1994

IFOR TO CELEBRATE 75th ANNIVERSARY

On October 1st and 2nd, 1994, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) will celebrate 75 years of active nonviolence and reconciliation. As the IFOR international secretariat has been housed since 1977 in Alkmaar, the Netherlands, the celebrations will take place in Amsterdam on October 1st (Saturday) and in Alkmaar on October 2nd (Sunday).

On Saturday, Nobel Peace Laureate Mairead Maguire of Northern Ireland, and Sulak Sivaraksa, renowned Thai Buddhist social activist, will speak on "Challenges for Reconciliation in Today's World". Sunday's events will include an interfaith service, followed by a ceremony to install a peace pole by Mairead Maguire and Sulak Sivaraksa.

The IFOR is a multifaith movement of 140,000 members committed to active nonviolence as a way of life and as a means of personal, social and political change. IFOR counts branches and groups in over fifty countries and on every continent. The 1993 Annual Report and IFOR's constitution are available on request.

For more information, contact:

Janny van Halen or Fancoise Pottier at IFOR
Tel: 31-72-123-014 Fax: 31-72-151-102
Email: ifor@gn.apc.org

The Naropa Institute announces the MASTER OF ARTS IN BUDDHIST STUDIES—ENGAGED BUDDHISM

Beginning the fall semester of 1995, the Naropa Institute will offer a graduate program in engaged Buddhism. This 61-credit degree program is designed to prepare students for social action work based upon Buddhist philosophy and meditation. The program consists of four semesters of full-time study, including a 400-hour hospital chaplaincy internship (to train students to work effectively with suffering), and a summer Retreat in the Streets. It culminates in a paper, reflecting on the internship experience from a Buddhist studies viewpoint.

The Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies program will offer three areas of concentration — Languages (Tibetan & Sanskrit), Contemplative Religions and Engaged Buddhism. Each of these programs will provide the student with the opportunity for broad, in-depth study of Buddhism as a literary, religious and cultural tradition. The Masters program's approach is critical and nonsectarian, with primary emphasis on Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, with reference to the Southeast Asian and Far Eastern Buddhist traditions.

For more information, contact:
The Buddhist Studies Department
The Naropa Institute
2130 Arapahoe Avenue, Boulder, CO 80302 USA
Ph.303-546-3502

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR GANDHI IN THE CHANGING WORLD

An international seminar on "Gandhiji in the Changing World" will be held at the Mahatma Gandhi campus of the Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad. The seminar is being organized under the joint auspices of the Gujarat Vidyapith and the Committee to celebrate the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, and will take place for three days, from November 6 - 8, 1994. Discussions will take place on Education for Nonviolence (Ahimsa), Nonviolence as a way of life (personal & social), the Gandhian perception of a new economic order, and other topics.

For more information, please contact:
Ramlal Parikh, Vice Chancellor,
International Seminar on Gandhi-125
Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad - 380014, India
Tel: (91)-272-429392
Fax: (91)-272-429547

MAHABODHI INTERNATIONAL MEDITATION CENTER

The Mahabodhi International Meditation Center in Ladakh (India) provides courses in meditation and dharma study; has a school for girls, a library and a monastery for nuns; and carries out activities in education, training, international exchange, rural social services, health care, water supply and holistic health education.

They are currently seeking donations for their school and their water project.

For more information, contact:
Bhikkhu Sanghasena
Mahabodhi International Meditation Center, P. O. Box 22
Devachan
Leh, Ladakh, 194101, India

PATIBODHAMA

A new Buddhist community, Patibodhama, has been established in St. Petersburg (Russia). Fifteen men & women of different professions and ages have come together to study and practice the teachings of the Buddha. Their practice leans towards the Theravada school. At present, they do not have a constant Dhamma teacher who is a member of the Theravada tradition.

Any visits from Theravada teachers or donations of books on Buddhism would be gratefully received. The community also warmly welcomes all visitors in the hopes of promoting mutual learning & cooperation.

For more information, contact:
Vadim Druzhinin
Grazhdansky pr. 77/3-232
St. Petersburg 195257
Russia
Tel: (812)-534-8118
Fax: (812)-533-7133

COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVES TO CONSUMERISM PROJECT

Through this project, we are seeking to find, describe, understand, and communicate examples of community initiatives to resist the economic forces and values of consumerism.Such efforts to resist consumerism may be rooted in cultural, religious or other core values and motives. Clear cultural, spiritual, or values motives can form a nucleus around which to build satisfaction and meaning that is richer and stronger than materialism.

The purpose of the project is to find, describe, understand and communicate examples of community initiatives to resist consumerism to give these efforts greater voice & recognition.

The organizing "nodes"of the project at present are:

1. In Thailand, the Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute
2. In Malaysia, the Just World Trust
3. In Hawaii, the Department of Religion at the University of Hawaii
4. In Colorado, the Naropa Institute

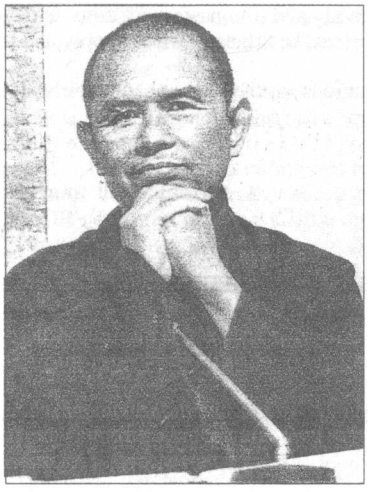
The project is scheduled to run from 1994 to 1996.

For more information, please contact:
Kersten Johnson
Department of Religion
University of Hawaii

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL INEB CONFERENCE

The seventh annual INEB conference will be held from February 26 to March 2, 1995. For information on the conference venue and the pre-conference tours, please contact the INEB office in Thailand.

MINDFULNESS MUST BE ENGAGED



When I was in Vietnam, so many of our villages were being bombed. Along with my monastic brothers and sisters, I had to decide what to do. Should we continue to practice in our monasteries, or should we leave the meditation halls in order to help the people who were suffering under the bombs? After careful reflection, we decided to do both— to go out and help people and to do so in mindfulness. We called it engaged Buddhism. Mindfulness must be engaged. Once there is seeing, there must be acting. Otherwise, what is the use of seeing?

We must be aware of the real problems of the world. Then, with mindfulness, we will know what to do and what not to do to be of help. If we maintain awareness of our breathing and continue to practice smiling, even in difficult situations, many people, animals, and plants will benefit from our way of doing things. Are you massaging our Mother Earth every time your foot touches her? Are you planting seeds of joy and peace? I try to do exactly that with every step, and I know that our Mother Earth is most appreciative. Peace is every step. Shall we continue our journey?

Thich Nhat Hanh

From *Peace is Every Step*, published by Bantam Books.

INTERFAITH PEACE PILGRIMAGE

In response to all the suffering, misery, and affliction caused on the earth through war, an Interfaith Pilgrimage for Peace and Life has formed to acknowledge and deeply reflect on the history of military expansion; to pledge never to again enter into a war; to enlighten the troubled world with the beautiful precept of Not-to-Kill; and to create a peaceful world through adopting direct nonviolent practices. In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, the pilgrimage will begin on December 8, 1994, in Auschwitz, and continue through Eastern Europe, the Middle East, India, and Southeast Asia, ending in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1995.

Each walker's presence and participation will be a living prayer of peace. For more information please contact: The Peace Pagoda, 100 Cavehill Road, Leverett, MA 01054, USA.