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Reclaiming the Legacy of Pridi Banomyong



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PEACE

Seeds of 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, the Alternatives To Consumerism network and the Spirit in Education Movement as well as International Network of Engaged Buddhists. In order to subscribe a suggested $25/ year donation is suggested. Personal checks from the UK and US are accepted.

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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.

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THE DALAI LAMA

MESSAGE

Among the many forms in which human spirit has tried to express its innermost yearnings and perceptions, music is perhaps the most universal. It symbolizes the yearnings for harmony, with oneself and with others; with nature and with the spiritual and the sacred within us and around us. There is something in music that transcends and unites. This is evident in the sacred music of every community - music that expresses the universal yearning that is shared by people all over the globe.

It is in this spirit that the World Festival of Sacred Music is being initiated as a coming together of people of diverse backgrounds and traditions to share and nurture the profoundest expression of the human spirit that is part of each one of us. I am very happy that there will be a celebration of the World Festival of Sacred Music in Chiang Mai from December 8 – 10, 2000. I send you my greetings and prayers.

December 1, 2000

The League of Southeast Asian Nations
hereby guarantees that
this golden note is worth one lakh Bia

Issued to the public for commemorating the centennial anniversary of Mr. Pridi Banomyong, a monumental occasion that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has also earmarked for recognition and celebration in 2000-01.

The value of this golden leaf will increase by one-hundred-fold, which is equivalent to one krote Bia, in 2005, the year of the Second Bandung Conference of non-aligned states that do not wish to live under the yoke of capitalism and imperialism. As such, the owner of this golden leaf note may duly exchange it. Alternatively, the owner of this golden note may collect it as a souvenir, comparing it with the Pridi Banomyong treasury notes that the government seems so reluctant and afraid to print out. If the government refuses to print out Pridi Banomyong treasury notes, then Pridi Banomyong local currencies, not dissimilar to the currency experimented by the Kudchum community, will be proudly issued.

Chairperson of the Steering Committee on the Project for the National Celebration on the Occasion of the Natal Centennial Anniversary of Pridi Banomyong, Senior Statesman (private sector)

Editorial Notes

The postponement of His Holiness' visit was a lesson in non-attachment and in recognizing and celebrating smaller steps of progress. This issue does not have the high profile coverage of the Ariya-Vinaya conference that we expected in August; the conference will happen at the end of January. On the other hand, the World Festival of Sacred Music was a great success. The series of concerts in Chiang Mai and at the Pridi Banomyong Institute in Bangkok were well-received. Many people who attended have told us that the atmosphere and spirit of unity at the festival were unique.

In terms of smaller victories, this issue reports on several conferences on alternative education and human rights. Propaganda aside, these conferences speak to the fact that there are many local efforts for political and educational change, often in creative and inspiring ways. The sustainability of these efforts largely depends on external resources and a strong network of supporters; one of the aims of *Seeds of Peace* is to help in their sustainability by increasing awareness.

Another long-standing aim has been to offer an alternative, bottom-up view of Thai society and the relationship between the Thai government and social movements. *Pacaryasara* is considered the foremost off-center Thai political journal and *Seeds of Peace* is the international channel for its key findings and articles. The article on the anniversary of *Pacaryasara*, Sulak's article on the mass media and the monarchy, along with the US State Department document article, are included to illuminate the changes, continuities, and controversies in Thai society. We are concluding our yearlong celebration of the centenary of Pridi Banomyong and our decision to place him again on the cover is meant to be a tribute to his lasting impact on democracy and nonviolent social change.

January 6 is the date of the general election. The party of current Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai is not expected to retain control of office but an actual change in policy is unlikely. The popular candidate, a telecommunications mogul, will continue to promote the interests of businesses above the people and pander to the needs of transnational investors. In the final analysis, it is really up to the citizens to make Thai democracy meaningful—not simply by casting their ballots but more importantly by nonviolently struggling to promote justice in society.

Sonali Chakravarti & S.J.

About the Cover

On 29 July 1999 the first meeting of the Committee on the Project for the National Celebration on the Occasion of the Centennial Anniversary of Pridi Banomyong, Senior Statesman, took place at the Government House. Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai presided over the meeting. As the chairperson of the Steering Committee (private sector), I proposed that the Communications Authority of Thailand (CAT) should have stamps commemorating Mr. Pridi ready at the latest by his centennial anniversary on 11 May 2000. Furthermore, I mentioned that the government should issue Pridi Banomyong currency notes. I argued that every civilized constitutional monarchy also has images of individuals other than the royalties on its currency notes. If we want to be as civilized as the others are, I contended, we should not shy away from printing Pridi currency notes. After all, he was the father of Thai democracy and the most recent protector of the country's sovereignty.

My currency note proposal struck a raw nerve. Ultimately, I tried to strike for a compromise. In a subsequent letter to the premier, I stated that at the very least the image of the pedestal tray supporting the constitution on Thai currency notes should be restored. I explained to the premier that between 1932 and 1957 every Thai currency note had this image on it. During the dictatorship of Sarit Thanarat democratic development in the country was not only stunted violently, but it was also crushed symbolically: the image of pedestal tray was removed from banknotes. The Sarit dictatorship could not even tolerate a symbol of democracy.

Since 1998 the new constitution has governed the land. In many respects, it is more democratic—in both form and substance. And there are good reasons to believe that the Thai society is gradually moving away from nominal democracy towards meaningful democracy. There is the Freedom of Public Information Act, which was promulgated even before the new constitution. There are also many strong people's organizations: the Thai civil society is becoming livelier, demanding greater respect and attention from the ruling circles. It is in this context that the image of the pedestal tray on banknotes should be brought back. I also sent similar letters to the Governor of the Bank of Thailand and the Minister of Finance—but to no avail.

A national committee headed by the premier seconded my proposal for the printing of Pridi stamps. But CAT insisted that it was not possible to do so because a gap of at least 25 years (between the person's death and the present) is needed to commemorate any person on stamps. (Mr. Pridi died in 1983.) I then wrote to the Minister of Communications asking why there are stamps of the Princess Mother (Princess Sri Nagarindra) out: the 25-year rule should also apply to her case. I received the reply that members of the royal family are the exceptions to the rule. This shows that we are moving a step backward towards absolute monarchy. I later heard that CAT is planning to issue stamps of a Thai Olympic gold medalist even though the fellow is still alive. If this is true, then it is CAT's intention to find lame excuses for not printing Pridi stamps. The government and its agencies are still very reluctant to fully recognize the contributions of Mr. Pridi. Even Thai Airways has refused to publish articles on Mr. Pridi in its inflight magazine.

As such, the private sector has to take the initiative. We decided to publish Pridi Banomyong golden currency notes and gold stamps to counter the government's severe lack of moral courage. Needless to say, they are meant to remind the public of the importance and contributions of Mr. Pridi.

Sulak Sivaraksa

BURMA:
ASEAN leaders close ranks to support Burma

SINGAPORE - The 10 ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) leaders yesterday closed ranks in support of Burma's membership, agreeing on a policy that tells outside countries seeking meetings with the group to "take all 10 of us or none at all". The new policy meant that if one ASEAN member was not invited to a meeting, then no meeting would occur, said Foreign Ministry spokesman Don Pramudwinai.

The new approach was decided at the first gathering of the 10 ASEAN heads of state for an informal summit being held here, Don said, declining to name the leader who suggested it. "The leaders endorsed a new approach that says, 'We come in as a group and should be accepted as a group'," he told reporters after the meeting.

The move toward such a policy, Don said, was motivated by the ASEAN leaders' desire to demonstrate unity in their joint efforts and increase the group's bargaining power in its negotiations with non-ASEAN countries.

ASEAN comprises Burma, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

In the past, Western communities have usually banned Burma from any assistance or participation in meetings, due to the dictatorship of the country's military junta, its acceptance of forced labour and its dismal humanrights record. ASEAN, meanwhile, has strongly supported Burma.

One sign of the shifting attitude can be seen in the recent developments surrounding the ASEAN-Europe Ministerial meeting, which had been postponed for more than two years with Burma at the centre of controversy. The meeting, which is finally to be held in Vientiane, is now caught in dilemma caused by the EU's displeasure with Burma.

The ASEAN leaders who gathered yesterday also agreed to push for some ASEAN members that have not yet been admitted to international groupings such as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), to join those groups as soon as possible. Cambodia, Laos and Burma, for example, have not yet joined APEC.

The leaders also agreed that each ASEAN member would have to strengthen itself before the group could present a strong, collective front. This, they agreed, is no small challenge, given the continuing impact of the economic crisis through much of the region.

Identifying the challenges facing ASEAN, the summit said the group should take measures to bridge the gap between new ASEAN members (Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam) and old ones, narrowing the differences in areas such as human-resource development. From now on, the ASEAN grouping must take a wider view of regional problems, so that such gaps could be filled sooner, Don said.

To strengthen the grouping, transportation linkages should be made combining roads, railways and sea routes, so that all ASEAN countries and their people have the means to communicate with one another. The transportation linkages would also open access to trade, markets, business and investment for new ASEAN members.

Cultural ties should also be strengthened, the leaders agreed. To this end, they decided to join forces in conducting such events as ASEAN Cultural Week,an idea proposed by Vietnamese leader Pham Van Khai, who also offered to host it for the first year.

Besides these, ASEAN is considering joint events such as a road show and trade fair to showcase the members' trade and cultures to other countries.

The spokesman added that Burma expressed a need for more investment, and that if other countries weren't willing to help, then ASEAN members should step forward. The leaders began the summit with a "retreat meeting" at which no translators or foreign ministers were present.

Marisa Chimprabha
The Nation,
November 25, 2000



CAMBODIA:
Violence Rocks Phnom Penh

When armed men stormed government buildings and an army base in Phnom Penh last Friday (November 24) they shattered a nascent confidence that Cambodia had finally awakened from its dark night of decades of civil strife and violence. Authorities have blamed the violence on a little-known anti-government group, the Cambodian Freedom Fighters.

Sole opposition leader and fierce government critic Sam Rainsy has described the violence—which claimed eight lives and injured 14—as "orchestrated" and aimed at diverting attention away from the real problems of poverty and corruption. This was the worst fighting in the capital since the 1997 struggle for control of the government in which Prince Norodom Ranariddh was ousted by Prime Minister Hun Sen. Some 70-80 gunmen arrived in the city on a train early Friday and battled security forces outside the Ministry of Defence and cabinet offices for more than an hour with assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades. They then downed their weapons and fled into the city's maze of narrow streets and shophouses, where dozens of people have since been rounded up for questioning in police holding cells.

Two recurrent themes in the political analysis of the violence are concern over the possible impact on plans agreed with the United Nations for a Khmer Rouge tribunal, and the vast number of arrests that have taken place in the wake of the violence.

Hun Sen—whose government and party is littered with former communist Khmer Rouge cadre—has repeatedly warned that Cambodia's priority is peace and a trial could re-ignite civil conflict. According to Lao Mong Hay, who heads the Khmer Institute for Democracy, the number of arrests—more than 80 so far, with many more rumored—may be an indicator that the government is using the opportunity to round up a broad spectrum of opponents.

Dan Eaton, AFP
December 1, 2000

INDONESIA:
AIT Honours Wahid with Honorary Doctorate

Bangkok had awaited Gus Dur's (Abdulrahman Wahid) visit with some tense excitement. Elaborate and painstaking preparations had been made at the Asia Institute of Technology (AIT), the Thailand counterpart of Indonesia's Bandung Institute of Technology, to honour Gus Dur with an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Some faint hearts, among Gus Dur's fans, had expressed doubts at the last minute that perhaps Indonesia's embattled President might cancel his trip to Thailand to deal with the deteriorating political situation in Acheh where secessionist pressures are gaining momentum. Steadfastly confident that Gus Dur would make it to receive his honorary doctorate, at the AIT, was Thailand's man of all seasons, Sulak Sivaraksa who proclaimed with characteristic finality, "Gus Dur is a man of honour. If he has said that he would come then he will come!"

However, even Sulak's "My friend right or wrong, my mother drunk or sobre," public bravado needed reassurance when he privately interrupted Gus Dur's dinner in Jakarta with a telephone call for confirmation, "Are you coming, Gus Dur?" A slight hesitation and then Gus Dur replied, "Of course I am coming. It's just that I am not sure if I can come for three days."

Mr. Rachmat Ranuwidjaya, the Head of Protocol of Indonesia's Foreign Ministry had said

earlier that the President of The Republic of Indonesia would come to Bangkok on December 14th, attend the 90th graduation ceremony of the AIT to receive his Honorary Doctorate on December 15th and return to Jakarta on December 16th. Gus Dur's friends in Thailand had jubilantly cooked up an intensive program to spoil him rotten.

The elaborate menu had included savouring a Siamese traditional massage to de-stress him physically upon arrival. Afterwards dinner at Bangkok's famed Ma Maison French restaurant following the breaking of the Muslim fast, hosted by the Board of Trustees of the AIT. Following supper a special caucus with Thai Muslim intellectuals in the spirit of Pan Islam. Bedtime. Then begin again with Ramadan prayers at dawn and the meal before sunrise to withstand the long purifying fast ahead. Followed by a press interview; a business meeting with a coal importing company before proceeding, in motorcade, to receive the Honorary Doctorate at AIT. Then a Muslim prayer session led by the President followed by a luncheon press conference before returning to the hotel. A break...Then in the evening an address by Gus Dur, on human rights at a joint reception of ACFOD and Forum Asia at Chulalornkorn University's Thai House.

However, Gus Dur's shortened visit had made short shrift of the elaborate program that had been informally rehearsed with the AIT, the Indonesian Embassy and the NGOs. Gus Dur would only be in Bangkok for two days instead of three. Some things had to give.

Gus Dur's arrival in Thailand was without fanfare. He came in virtually unnoticed by the press. The Thai national imagination was focused on the general elections campaign, which had already begun. By a last minute feat the Indonesian Embassy had managed to wangle a short meeting with outgoing Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai who pledged co-operation in combating secessionist pressures.



Discreet meetings with senior correspondents of *The Bangkok Post* and *Le Monde* were set up. Gus Dur had scored points with the media following his verbal battle with Singapore's pugnacious Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew over the issue of East Timor's admission to ASEAN and Singapore banks' speculation on the Indonesian Rupiah. Gus Dur also called for the promotion of bilateral relations among Asian countries, using more regional languages in IT, deepening relations with India and opening the door to Australia's West Pacific Forum initiative. Gus Dur also shared his views on reforming Indonesia's Presidential system to incorporate direct elections of the office of the President as opposed to the current system of indirect elections of the President.

The resulting press and interview reports were very favourable. There was almost no criticism of Gus Dur by the press for the duration of the visit. Press reports emanating from Thailand were very sympathetic. Gus Dur had charmed the press with his unaffected simplicity, affability and intellectual sagacity. Jean Claude Pomonti of *Le Monde* said after interviewing Gus Dur, "He is amazing. He started to answer my questions even before I have finished saying them. And he is right. He knew what I was thinking before I finished my sentence."

Gus Dur also appeared more serious and businesslike than usual. For one thing he made very few jokes even privately this time. But upon being conferred his Honorary Degree as Doctor of Philosophy he could not resist musing that once upon a time he was with Admiral Sudomo, head of the dreaded KOPKAMTIP—Indonesia's secret police, listening to the humorous presentation of Dr. Roeslan Abdulgani. Upon his turn to speak he had said that Dr. Roeslan was deserving of the degree not only of Doctor Honoris Causa but also Doctor Humoris Causa, "On the other hand if Admiral Sudomo were

to be conferred a Doctorate it should be Doctor Hororis Causa." Gus Dur disarms potential critics by making them laugh.

Gus Dur was in top form on this trip to Thailand. The address he delivered to the 90th graduation of the AIT upon receiving the Honorary Doctorate was remarkably coherent, lucid and demonstrated a good grasp of the new Internet economy. All the more incredible considering that he had to deliver it virtually impromptu, without any notes. He had merely made a virtue of necessity because, being near blind he could not have notes even if he had had them.

"It has been a great honour for us to confer the Honorary Doctorate upon Gus Dur," said Jean-Louise Armand, President of the AIT. Gus Dur had also dignified the occasion and delivered an address worthy of being heard in the halls of knowledge. AIT was doubly proud that the institution had pulled off something infinitely more serious than just a Tiger Woods degree conferment affair.

Gus Dur wanted to eliminate some of the bad aspects of globalisation by adapting Internet technology to the special needs of the region. He does not want powerful interests to hijack IT for the benefit of the big powers and their multi-national corporations. Used rightly, IT has the potential to alleviate human misery in the world. Gus Dur takes exception to the view that English be instituted as the language of IT. IT must be related to the needs of the masses. Therefore, he would like to promote the inclusion of many regional languages in IT.

Dr. Kanchana Kanchanasut, Director of AIT's Distributed Education Centre and Executive Director of Country Code Top-Level Domain Name Secretariat for ICANN remarked that Gus Dur was surprisingly conversant with new economy and Internet issues. "Gus Dur's suggestion of using IT to promote direct trade between countries by short circuiting intermediaries should be seriously studied by governments," said Dr. Kanchana. "IT can effect direct contact between customer and customer, business to business(B-to-B) and business to customer(B-to-C)," she added.

What is needed is good internet facilities, good transportation and logistic capabilities. "For e-commerce to grow there must exist many companies to provide delivery service to the home. The transportation industry will grow hand in hand with e-commerce," said Dr. Kanchana.

The government can do a lot to promote confidence in using IT as a medium of commerce. "The government must become more involved in regulating IT users without trying to monopolise or control it. Having a centralised Ministry of IT, like Australia, to regulate the use of IT would be good," she said. "Other good things include introducing registration of IT users, providing certification and accreditation to develop confidence in IT transactions," she added.

"The AIT's goal is to promote higher education in the region, so that people don't have to go outside the region to get a higher education," said Jean-Philip Thourd, Assistant to the President of the AIT. IT education figures high among AIT's priorities. AIT is right behind Gus Dur in calling for development of IT resources and capabilities in the region. Gus Dur's IT aspirations call for promotion of IT training at all levels of society, not just within the formal education system.

"You can't just leave IT education to the Ministry of Education; IT will be left far behind. There must be a separate and specialised body to take care of IT development. IT education must be implemented through the informal education system as well, by setting up IT Centres in Community Centres open to all ages," said Dr. Kanchana.

After addressing the academic and diplomatic community in the morning, Gus Dur went on to address a gathering of Thai NGOs, hosted by Asia Cultural Forum For Development(ACFOD) and Forum Asia. Dr. Gothom Arya, Chairman of ACFOD Foundation welcomed Gus Dur on behalf of ACFOD, "Gus Dur we regard you as one of us. We are very proud of you. You are the only one among us who has been successful." Gus Dur reminisced that he had come a long way in his trek to the Presidency since he co-founded ACFOD 25 years ago. He recapitulated the main ideas of ACFOD and said that he remained committed to them. As President of Indonesia he vowed to promote the dissemination of the ideas of ACFOD throughout Indonesia.

The Gus Dur that came to Thailand was not the embattled Gus Dur, pilloried daily by the media controlled by his political adversaries and haunted by the shadow of impeachment. Gus Dur cut a good image in Thailand. He was calm, reflective and quietly self-confident. "The people are behind me," he reminded. Gus Dur had recently, triumphed over his political adversaries' attempt to unseat him through an impeachment motion in The Peoples Consul-

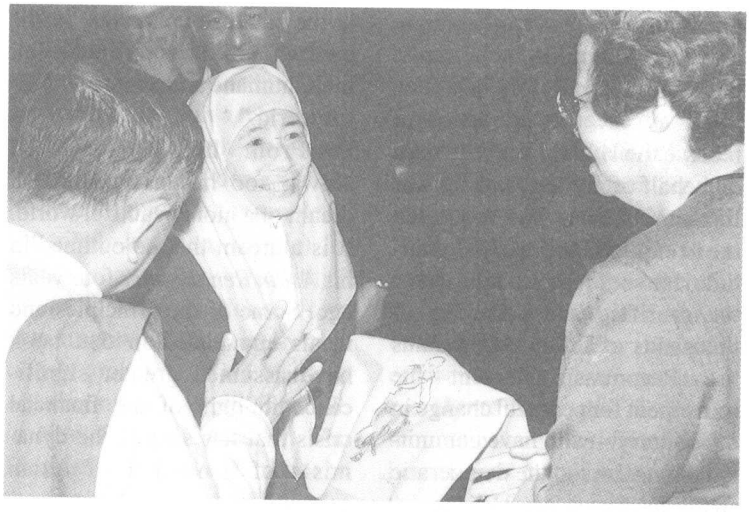
tative Assembly(MPR). The shadow of impeachment is now behind him. Having consolidated his political position he is ready to solve the backlog of economic problems dogging his administration and his country.

With the goodwill of his friends, of which he appears to have more in Thailand than elsewhere in Asia, he is riding the momentum of his recent political victory in the MPR over the move to impeach him. Apparently, energised by his political bounce back he returned to Jakarta on Friday December 15th only to fly again to Acheh to shore up the faltering humanitarian-military cease-fire the following day.

Jeffery Sng
12/20/00

MALAYSIA:
The citation for Anwar Ibrahim

Anwar Ibrahim started his public career as a student and youth activist in the early 1970's. When he graduated from university he declined several lucrative job offers, instead he established his own school to provide educational opportunities for poor school drop outs. He formed the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia which under his ten year leadership emerged as the biggest NGO in Malaysia. His campaign to advance the interests of poor peasants in the north of peninsular Malaysia in the early 1970's resulted in his detention for two years.



He decided to join the government in 1982 because he was convinced that the new prime minister Mahathir Mohamed was serious in his efforts to combat corruption and to establish social justice. He rose in the government from a modest position of deputy minister to Deputy Prime Minister as well as Minister of Finance. Although in the government Anwar never compromised his idealism. In fact, he dedicated his energy in the government to advance his idealism, to formulate policies that succeeded in massive reduction of poverty, improvement in the quality of life and stunning economic performance. But Anwar's interest goes beyond economic matters. He successfully fought for greater government tolerance towards dissent, cultivation of openness, civil society and democracy. Malaysia is a multiracial and multireligious society, and more than anyone else in Malaysia, Anwar has contributed towards civilizational dialogue to encourage the appreciation of religious diversity.

All these contributions have endeared him to the people of Malaysia. But Anwar is not only a man of action. He strongly believes in the power of ideas. Thus he wrote *The Asian Renaissance* where his ideals on man, society, and the future of Asia are powerfully articulated.

Anwar remained consistent with his ideals but midway Prime Minister Mahathir has deviated from his initial promises. Anwar is in prison today because of what he stood for, his uncompromising attitude against corruption, his demand for reform to eliminate corruption, cronyism, and nepotism in the economy. Despite brutal repression by Mahathir, the reform movement and the establishment of an alternative coalition for democracy initiated by Anwar is set to transform the Malaysian politcal landscape. Mahathir continues to detain Anwar because he wants to deny the demoncratic

movement in Malaysia of its effective organizational leadership.

Thus it is crucial for us to express our solidarity for the democratic movement in Malaysia and demand the unconditional release of Anwar.

Acceptance Speech by Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, M.P. President, National Justice Party, Malaysia, on the occasion of the conferment of the Human Rights Award of the World Festival of Sacred Music upon Mr. Anwar Ibrahim former Deputy Prime Minister, Malaysia.

I am deeply honoured to receive the Human Rights award on behalf of my husband, Anwar Ibrahim. Anwar has requested me to express his profound gratitude. He sees it as recognition of the sacrifice and suffering of thousands of fellow Malaysians in the Reformasi movement—the movement for peaceful change in my country—who have committed themselves to the democratic struggle for a just Malaysia. Anwar would have loved to be here in Chiang Mai at this World Festival of Sacred Music. He has always believed that music, art and culture are vital ingredients in creating a more humane and compassionate world.

Sacred music, in particular, can help sensitise the human spirit to both the virtue of character and the anguish of pain.

Today, Anwar endures the agony of incarceration. Serving a 15 year prison term, Anwar's tribulation is a tale that has been told over and over again in every clime and in every age. In the struggle for truth, justice and freedom, there will always be men and women who will be called upon to forfeit their personal well-being, to surrender their liberty, even to lay down their lives.

Ajarn Sulak, for instance, Anwar's dear friend from whom my husband imbibed 'the spiritual richness' of Buddhism, is one such person who has undergone tremendous personal hardship in the struggle for justice and freedom. The inspiration behind this Festival, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, is another remarkable example of 'a simple monk' who continues his arduous quest for the dignity of his people and, at the same time, strives, in his own words, "for a more peaceful, more humane and a more beautiful world."

From his prison cell, Anwar too has not ceased to dream of a more beautiful world. It is a dream that he outlined in his *Asian Renaissance* four years ago. Some of the principles and ideals enunciated in that book have assumed greater significance in light of the financial crisis that has sapped the dynamism of a number of Asian economies.

"The quest for growth," Anwar had warned, "must always be balanced by a profound concern for social justice and equity." It is partly because they failed to maintain that vital equilibrium between growth and social justice that some Asian countries are confronted with monumental economic challenges.

A single-minded obsession with growth that benefits a small minority much more than the vast majority of the populace is not the only challenge. Corruption has become rampant in many societies in our part of the world. Political oppression has robbed millions of people in Asia of their fundamental rights. Communalism is tearing apart the social fabric of a number of multi-ethnic states.

On the other hand, there is also hope on the horizon. In the last decade, authoritarian regimes in a number of countries in Asia have been replaced by democratically elected governments. Popular movements for freedom and justice are getting stronger in both authoritarian and democratic societies. There is greater awareness within civil society in the continent of the importance of honesty and integrity in public life. Inter- faith, inter-civilisational dialogue is becoming part of popular discourse in many parts of Asia.

This is why in spite of everything that has happened to him, Anwar remains optimistic about the future of his people and the future of Asia. He is convinced that Asians will draw out the 'core values' of justice, virtue and compassion from their religious and cultural traditions and transform their societies guided by "a new moral vision for the world."

The challenge before us is to actualize that new moral vision. Each of us in our own modest way should strive to achieve a fragment of that vision of a just, compassionate and peaceful world within our own lives and in our own settings.

This is what Anwar will try to do. For though his body is imprisoned his spirit is free. And it is that free spirit, inspired by the award you have conferred upon him today, that will pursue, with steadfast faith and unyielding courage, that vision of a beautiful tomorrow for all our children.

Chiang Mai
10 December 2000

INDIA:
Narmada: A Valley Cries

In spite of defeat, the struggle against big dams will continue .. . with resilience and determined efforts of people like Baba Amte, Medha Patkar of the Narmada Bachao Andolan, and thousands of those who fight for Right Livelihood. Among the 30 large dams planned for the Narmada River, the Sardar Sarovar dam is the largest. With a proposed height of 136.5 m (455 feet), it is the focal point of both the dam-builders plans and the Narmada Bachao Andolan's opposition. The Government claims that the multi-purpose Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) would irrigate more than 1.8 million hectares and quench the thirst of the drought prone areas of Kutch and Saurashtra in Gujarat. The opponents of the dam counter that these benefits are grossly exaggerated; the project would displace more than 320,000 people and affect the livelihood of thousands of others. Overall, due to related displacements by the canal system and other allied projects, at least 1 million people are expected to be affected. On October 18, 2000, the Supreme Court of India delivered its judgment on the legitimacy of the Sardar Sarovar Project. In a 2 to 1 majority judgment, it allowed immediate construction on the dam up to a height of 90m. The essentially unfettered clearance has come from the Court despite major unresolved issues on resettlement, the environment, and the project's costs and benefits. When the law of the land affirms such models of development, it only strengthens the false notions of ignorance and greed upon which they are founded. The world struggle against dams is not against development, but represents a reality that we cannot impose our ideas of suitable existence on people, who have determined their own in a manner of harmony and coexistence. Cultures and beliefs cannot after all be simply discarded by force, no matter how technologically strong the force may be.

The World Bank withdrew support for the Narmada project six years ago and in a recent visit to India, the Bank President Wolfensohn said "I don't want to be held responsible for problems (of tribals and poor people) for which I have every sympathy". People's organisations, from various parts of the country cautiously took note of his words at a gathering of over 2500 people in New Delhi (13th Nov.). The President who had to concede to the demand of the people that he should come before them said that the Bank is for alleviation of poverty. This rhetoric did not stop the people's determination to fight against development projects that exacerbate their suffering.

What are options for the NBA in light of recent developments? How can the people's movement be sustained?

One thing of note is the importance of the Narmada struggle as symbolic of global resistance movements. The movement catalyzed countless other protests against dams. The dedication of those involved is legitimized by the belief that their cause is just and that the people must have control over their future.

The Indian government realizes its tenuous position regarding the dam issue and a recent award given to the respected activist Baba Amte was an attempt to make amends. Upon presenting the Dr. Ambedkar International Award, President K.R. Narayanan said, "The struggle of Baba Amte now embraces the whole of suffering humanity and the tortured earth and its environment. It has been said that the struggle for environment is the biggest religious and spiritual movement in the world today. Baba Amte has said: "Now that the sun of life is about to set, I have set out to catch the rising sun of environmental consciousness". For him the environmental movement is not merely to save the trees, the mountains and the rivers, but the human lives that these nurture — the tribals and the poorest of the poor of the land. Baba Amte described the Narmada Bachao movement as a new battlefront for youth action and "as an outburst of Gandhian courage and concern for *antyodaya*."

Prashant Varma



TIBET:
The Changing Nature of Aggression: Activists Turn Up the Heat on BP

BEIJING, Dec. 8 - A broad coalition of Tibetans and human rights and environmental groups turned up the heat on British oil giant BP Amoco on Friday over its investment in a Chinese oil firm building a pipeline on traditional Tibetan land.

If no results are achieved by January 15 a public campaign urging BP Amoco to withdraw its investment in Chinese state oil major PetroChina will be launched.

The letter is the latest blow to BP Amoco as Tibetan activists turn their attention to multinational corporations and lending agencies. This follows a successful campaign obstructing a World Bank loan to resettle poor Chinese farmers on traditionally Tibetan land.

"As the top investor in PetroChina, BP is profiting from China's pillaging of Tibet's natural resources and the consolidation of Chinese control in the region," said John Ackerly, president of the International Campaign for Tibet. Half a century after Chinese troops invaded Tibet, Beijing is throwing open what it calls its "Western treasure house" of natural resources to try to absorb the remote Himalayan region into the mainstream Chinese economy (A Report from the Tibetan Government in Exile).

This should not alarm us, for it has always been expected from MNC's and TNC's—from institutions and structures that nourish greed in the name of profit. Lands like Tibet and Burma, which are rich in natural resources, are treasure chests for such corporations. The powers-that-be have found and depended on local partners to cultivate greed in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Today, in the Tibetan struggle, one has to contend with the changing nature of the oppressor. The regimes in such nations are externally supported by corporations, which are driven by greed. They are structures that are run and controlled by markets far away. Although their existence is founded on negative human qualities, we have to engage with them in order to change them.

We must realize that negative forces—greed, ignorance and hatred—are collectively at work. Traditional societies, which are not only rich in natural resources but in traditional human potential and wisdom, and understanding of life as well, will fall prey to these forces. The men and women who make up these organizations or corporations have to be confronted. Driven by ignorance, and mainstream notions of progress, development and need for rapid change, they are only shortening the lifespan of the planet. Yet the emphasis should be on an atmosphere of compassionate dialogue, which H.H the Dalai Lama is supporting both in principle and in practice. Only when a deep understanding of the suffering in the world is established can we begin to heal each other's misgiving.

Prashant Varma

SIAM:
Thai Environment Roundups

People affected by the Pak Moon Dam since ten years ago are still languishing for proper redress despite the strong finds by the World Commission on Dam against the electricity-generating dam. On 16 November, Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa, Tony Blair, UK prime minister and James Wolfensohn, World Bank's president, jointly launched the report, the result of environmental, social and economic impacts of ten major dams, which had been made possible by the Bank's money. The findings sent a big blow to the dam industry as their economic benefits were found much lower than the impacts on the environment and local liveli-

hood. Evidence found by neutral bodies of academic pointed to the well-rounded failure of the Pak Moon Dam. The loss of marine ecology, which had severely affected local fishery, was one among many counter-productive effects found. World Commission on Dam was set up by the cooperation between the bank itself and several other neutral developmental agencies.

However, many of the protesting villagers, who were occupying the dam site and had set up their village there, were greeted with their houses set afire by groups of men who were believed to have been hired by the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT). Several of them were injured when trying to stop these gang men from burning down their properties. It was widely reported that the incidence took place with indifference by local governmental officers despite their presence there. Fire brigadiers arrived just when everything was blazed. Immediately after the fire, a group of senators-elect traveled to the area to collect first hand information. Reportedly, in the EGAT's office nearby they met some of these men, who avoided telling their background and just walked away. EGAT at first attempted to altogether waive their responsibility. Later on, EGAT admitted that these men worked for them temporarily, but still denied that their barbaric actions had nothing to do with them. Fellow villagers, who have been protesting in front of the Governmental House since last May in the name of the Assembly of the Poor, pleaded the Bank's representative in Bangkok for help negotiating with the government to take responsibility over this incidence. Nothing has happened, though. However, two representatives of the protesters were invited to join the consultation session between the Bank and several NGOs in Washington DC. in mid - December.

In all, Pak Moon issue is still considered unresolvable by this present Democrat-led government, whose term is due pending the general election on 6 January. Some sources confirmed that the Prime Minister nodded to the plan to set the village afire. There is thus strong dissent among many affected villagers. Apart from the Assembly of the Poor folk, the residents of Ban Krau community in downtown Bangkok, which is under the threat eviction to pave way for an express way construction, put up a big banner declaring their constituency "Democrats Free Zone". The community, in which the majority Muslims lived since before Bangkok was founded, has been faced with an eviction order since ten years ago. Despite findings from the two previous public hearings organized by the government themselves against the construction, the Expressway Authority still insisted on conducting another "hearing". In the word of Sarote Pauksamlee, a Muslim leader of Ban Krau, "the government wants to conduct more and more hearings until we lose to them". The villagers vow to fight head on to protect their ancestral lands.

Another big Muslim community living under the threat of a governmental and transnational project is the fisher folk in Chana district, Songkhla, Southern Siam, who are faced with the attempt to construct the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline. The project is aimed at exploiting gases found in the Joint Development Area (JDA), between the Petroleum Authority of Thailand (PTT) and the Petronas, Malaysia. The last and second public hearing was brought to a halt by thousands of villagers who stormed the stadium, in which the session was supposed to be held.

On the positive side, villagers in Kudchoom District, Yasothorn, Northeastern Siam, re-launched their use of local currency, "Bia", mid of last October. The system devised to promote local trading and self-sufficiency was first launched 29 March. However, the attempt was thwarted by the presence of local authorities, which asked the villager to stop using the money. The final came at the order of the Bank of Thailand to ban the money accusing the villagers of violating the Monetary Act by mimicking conventional money. Meanwhile, in collaboration with the Thai Law Society, the villagers have submitted a letter to the Minister of Finance to repeal the ban, an exemption he can make under his capacity. These defiant villager finding invaluable benefits from the system, have started to trade with Bia again without having to wait for help from the Minister.



SIAM:
Community Currency and Local Self-sufficiency: The Case of Bia Kudchoom

It has been widely discussed elsewhere that one of the main causes for the Asian economic crash was the fluctuation of the world capital market. Many propose further that the containment of these capital flights must be put in place in order to avoid another crisis, but a few countries have dared impose such a measure. The leaderships fear that capital control will elicit divestment among foreign capitalists, many of whom have made their fortune through the chaotic stock prices. Of course, many governments are not allowed to set up the measure, as they have to abide by the conditions attached to the loan contracts they signed with multilateral banks. In a whole, it is not likely that such an attempt to curb foreign capital transactions shall be accepted as a norm, as long as most leaderships are still eager to pursue the integration with global economy at the expense of economic independence and domestic economy.

The attempt to expose local market to global economic forces is not new in Third World countries. The scheme has been pursued and pushed forward vehemently by the world development bodies and multilateral financial institutions, which have played crucially important roles in shaping the economic development plans and implementations in most transitional economies. In Thailand, it started from the export-led economic policy pushed through by the government and its lenders, which had converted a self-subsistent economy to a global market dependent economy. Monoculture has been promoted among poor and ignorant peasants and farmers to supply raw material for industrialized countries, which, through these unequal economic terms, have taken advantage and enjoyed their much higher value added by selling back machinery to food production countries consequently. Farmers have suffered losses either as a result of fluctuation and declining world produce's prices, and natural catastrophes. Consumer culture has eventually led to their ever growing dependency on outside market and rapidly increasing perpetual indebtedness. Of 5.6 millions farmer families in Thailand, 4.7 millions are indebted (about 83%) to the Bank of Agriculture and Cooperative (BAC). The reason the rest are not indebted is they are too poor to borrow. Whereas farmers' self-sustenance has declined, their desire to buy has been stirred up and it simply entraps them in this vicious debt and poverty cycle.

Koodchoom is a small district in Yasothorn, a province of Northeastern Thailand. Coupled with continuous support from NGOs (Non-governmental organizations), the local communities have looked for ways in which their self-dependency can be restored in the last two decades. They started first to ponder the mal-effects of Western medicine, which has also cost them much as well. They then revived their traditional medical knowledge — embarking on attempts to grow herbs and concoct their herbal medicine. Local hospitals became interested in their successes and started to use herbal remedies and traditional massage to service their clients. Their herbal products have been widely distributed and have become popular as an alternative to the unaffordable and ineffective Western medicine.

However, they began to realize that many diseases emanated from their consumption pattern and farming activities. With the introduction of monoculture, the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides has been on the rise, and soon farmers (and consumers) became affected. Yet, this promising modern agricultural methods even plunged them deep into the vicious cycles of indebtedness, migration and community disintegration. They therefore began to look for alternative farming and were impressed by non-chemical agriculture, which has then gained momentum elsewhere in the world. Starting from a few families and crops, a growing number of local peasants have adopted non-chemical farming as a norm. They soon found that local rice mills in nearby town refused to process their chemical -free paddy rice separate from conventionally and chemically grown rice out of their reluctance to readjust their machine too often. Ideas were abound over setting up a community rice mill to exclusively process non-chemical paddy rice. Eventually with locally donated land, locally raised shares and shares purchased by sympathetic consumers in Bangkok and other big cities, local farmers have formed themselves as a cooperative and established their own "Natural Appreciation Rice Mill" about ten years ago. By aid of NGOs, direct market channels have been created enabling local farmers to trade

without middlemen.

By that time, their other developmental and environmental initiatives including the declaration of local community forests, reforestation schemes, diversification of local food production, etc., have been implemented fruitfully and have rapidly gained popularity among the locals. Their key objective then was however not for economic prosperity, but self-sufficiency and economic independence. Along the course of these activities, they have regularly discussed among themselves and NGOs and some local concerned governmental officers various issues related to the well being of their community in the name of the "Self-sufficiency Group". Local weekly markets have been organized as a venue for local trading to cut the costs incurred from trading through middlemen. Nonetheless, they soon realized that though the production of non-chemical rice, traditional medicine and various kinds of food products have earned them stable revenues, their expenses were still rising and became unmatched by their incomes. The inflows of resources were outnumbered by the outflows. Besides, they began to be aware of the process of globalization and economic integration which have affected their attempts to gain their autonomy at the macro level. The fluctuating and declining or stagnant local price of rice, which is dependent on world price and international trade regulations and trade bodies, is one of the most obvious examples. The financial crash in Thailand in 1997 serves as a fresh memory of how fragile the global financial market is, but yet, the model is still pursued ignorantly by Thai elitist leaderships for the benefits of the few.

During that time, the villagers were approached by the Thai Community Currency Systems Project (TCCS), jointly developed by several local and foreign NGOs in Thailand. More activities have been introduced to give the villagers a chance to analyze their economic situation and ways in which their economic interdependence could be restored. One of the alternatives proposed was the use of a non-conventional medium for local exchange and trading. Thus, they started to explore the strengths of local community currency system. The process took place more than one year prior to the actual launch of the local currency in March 2000. *Bia Koodchoom*, the unit of currency, was printed to the equivalent of 500,000 baht (the number of local population (1,000) multiplied by 500). The notes are very beautifully and meaningfully produced. A drawing contest had been organized for entries by local students, which depict various aspects of local self-sufficiency and traditional culture. Local and traditional rhymes, which underlie concepts of self-dependence, were printed on each unit of the notes.

In the system, each villager can withdraw "*Bia Koodchum**", the unit of local currency, to the equivalent of 500 baht. The fundamental nature of *Bia Koodchum* is; it cannot be loaned, in other word, it does not incur interest; it is not convertible to conventional money, and it is intended to be circulated in the local community. It was then used along with conventional money. The main expectation is not for *Bia* to replace Baht, the national currency, but to raise local people's awareness of the importance of being dependent on their locally produced goods.

The launch was widely covered by local and national media, and this unfortunately elicited discontents from the local office of the Bank of Thailand (BOT). The presence of the officers in the village and the in-cooperation and persecution by other local top ranking administration officers have induced hesitancy among the community currency members, and the system was suspended after three weeks after its commencement. The final nail was hammered on the scheme when the national BOT sent an order to its local offices to ban the use of *Bia Koodchoom* accusing its nature of violating the present Monetary Act.

However, the governmental order has not dissuaded the villagers from the benefits of community currency. Lately, they plan to launch it again on 21st of October. This time, they will avoid using the terms, which make the system unlawful, such as "bank", "banknote", etc.

The launch of community currency is simply a culmination of their long time cooperation and mutual trust, without which such a local trading system is bound to collapse. The local leaderships adhere very much to the spiritual approaches of development, led particularly by a local senior monk, Phrakru Supacharawat. The revival of traditional ceremonies and the adaptation of religious rituals to serve the purpose of self-purification and social justice are their primary successes.

For more information about community currencies, or the TCCS Project, please visit <http://members.tripod.com/asiaccs> or http://ccdev.lets.net/>, Mr. Menno Salverda <tccs @ loxinfo.co.th>

*Presented at the Asia-Europe Summit gathering of civil society organizations in Seoul, Korea, October 2000

Pipob Udomittipong

* *Bia* conventionally means currency. But in this context, the villagers explained that *Bia* is a small sibling, which is bound to expand prosperously after being planted, based on the meaning of the term in their local dialect.

The following speech was given at the Millenium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders

28 - 31 August, 2000
Opening at the United Nations

Human beings have the tendency to become arrogant or hubristic, especially those that are highly educated. It is difficult for this kind of people to obtain blessings, which connote goodness and excellence. On the contrary, those that are truly humble also simultaneously value simplicity. They are always considerate and courteous to every sentient being and everything, even to the Other, the subaltern, the archenemies, etc. As such, they are more likely to attain the four blessings of Therevada Buddhism, which are as follows.

(1) Longevity: This does not simply mean living till old age. It means knowing how to live. Many people who are, for example, insincere, dishonest, selfish, greedy, and exploitative may well lead long lives. But they are far from experiencing the blessing of a worthy, prosperous, and noble life, one that emphasizes, among other important things, generosity, morality, compassion, and peacefulness. In other words, this kind of people is likely to relish the beauty of good living and of the power of life.

(2) Complexion: Those who know how to lead a good life will have healthy and beautiful complexion. The latter naturally reflects the radiant state of mind and patterns of behavior: the internal and external conditions of an individual are intertwined.



Moreover, it also suggests that the individual is living in harmony with others in society and with the natural environment.

(3) Happiness: Longevity and complexion contribute to happiness. Simply put, happiness or fulfillment is attained by promoting the happiness of others. With this in mind, the individual will clearly see that the majority of people in the world are in fact suffering from grinding poverty, famine, easily preventable diseases, oppression, and so on. Therefore, the individual will dedicate his or her life to eradicate or mitigate the roots of this suffering, to create a more just and humane society nonviolently.

(4) Strength: Needless to say, the blessed individual has spiritual and physical strength i.e., the moral courage and physical endurance to non-violently challenge the oppressive socioeconomic structures and concentrations of power. The individual will collaborate with others to realize this end, despite the great costs or risks involved in this feat.

Above, I have sought to redefine and clarify the meaning of the four blessings in contemporary context. No person can fantastically grant an individual with these blessings. Rather, they can only be engendered and nurtured from within. The cultivation of mindfulness and simplicity is the cradle of the four blessings.

To put everything in a nutshell, the highest form of blessing in Buddhism is *Appamadhamma*. I shall clarify on this matter by dividing it into two points.

1) *Yonisomanasikara*: Anyone who seeks to attain the special blessings must begin by practicing mindful breathing in order to develop critical reflection or wise consideration. The individual should be ever mindful, knowing when s/he is about to love, hate, become angry, vengeful, obsessed, and so on. And with mindfulness, the individual may be able to overcome these impurities of thought, even if only partially. The simple fact is to foster and nourish inner peace—to cultivate

seeds of peace within—and further culture the mind (*bhavana*) to develop selflessness. After all, one must live life for the wellbeing of other people and sentient beings, not to mention the natural environment. Selflessness along with an understanding of the unjust social structures will help engender solidarity and fraternity: individuals will come to care about, promote, and benefit from one another's wellbeing; they will also nourish diversity in human relations with the natural environment.

2) *Kalyanamittata*: Literally meaning an association with the virtuous, *kalyanamittata* is an external source of *dhamma* and acts as a moral conscience to the individual, among other things, raising embarrassing issues s/he may not want to hear and reminding what selflessness and goodness entail.

Religious leaders can easily fall prey to hubris or arrogance. Not infrequently, these figures cave in to the seductive lure of the state, money, or fame, and thus they conveniently turn a blind eye to the suffering of the poor and marginalized. They even lead an ostentatious and luxurious lifestyle. Put simply, they do not live what they preach. If we become good companions to such religious leaders, they may rediscover the virtue of humbleness and simplicity and may attempt to lessen the degree of their hypocrisy. They may even become empowered ethically and religiously, refusing to cringe in fear before the centers of politico-economic power.

If the world's religious leaders are already endowed with such blessing, they will have the courage to admonish or criticize the United Nations Organization. They will point out that as long as the United Nations continue to cower as the lone superpower and great powers act unilaterally or violently, the organization will become hollowed, will be transformed into a meaningless forum for small states to blow off steam. For instance, as the major powers are obstreperously engaging in the arms trade, the United Nations must exhort them to curb their activities.

Another pressing issue that needs immediate attention concerns China. Amnesty International has declared that no single person in China is immune from state-sponsored human rights abuses. Here, I am not even including the tragic case of Tibet. Nevertheless, the United Nations has allowed China to play a major role in running the organization. Beijing, for example, successfully pressured the United Nations to obstruct the participation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in this meeting. That H.H. the Dalai Lama is a devout and humble Buddhist leader who strongly advocates the quest for truth and justice compassionately and non-violently is beyond any doubt. If the United Nations consistently allows the members with vested interests to get the better of it, the organization will lose its credibility, and its espousal of global peace, justice, and prosperity will be mere rhetoric. If the present UN Secretary General sees us as his *kalyanamittata* and seriously considers our warnings and consequently works to re-direct some of the United Nations' activities, then the prospects for realizing these noble causes may be a bit brighter.

In the upcoming week, the delegates of most UN member states will participate in a major conference. We must likewise act as their *kalyanamittata*, sincerely pointing out that almost every government in the world is a primary cause of their citizens' destitution and of disturbing environmental degradation. In part, this is because most governments, willfully or otherwise, surrender to the dictates of transnational corporations, the World Bank, the IMF, etc., agents and institutions that are driven by insatiable greed, capitalism, technological determinism, and consumerism.

If these delegates care enough to observe the warning flags that we have raised, they may also hear better the cries and demands of the poor, weak, and marginalized, of those at the grassroots. They may even revise their prejudices and attitudes, understanding the virtues of simplicity and humbleness. As such, they may begin to realize that the poor have many valuable things to teach, if not to emulate. Organizing from the bottom up—that is empowering grassroots movements and communities—and forging networks of alliances with the middle-class and some political elites, we may help strengthen the development of a culture of peace. If you have understood what I just said, then you would realize that the greatest blessing is the one we cultivate within ourselves, without relying on the (allegedly) supernatural power of the sacred.

Sulak Sivaraksa



World Festival of Sacred Music



Evening is usually a meditative, sometimes sad time of the day, the light of the day is not quite gone and darkness is yet to come. The atmosphere is even more solemn when twilight is falling on a temple's grounds. Last week, as fading sunlight left shades of soft colours on a row of white pagodas at the elegant Wat Suan Dok, Chiang Mai, the sanctified sobriety was broken by a raucous sound of brass cymbals. The deep, resonant howl reverberated throughout the area, followed by the chanting of Tibetan monks from Tashi Dhargye monastery in Southern India.

The performance, which seemed to carry the audience to another plane of perception, was an awe-inspiring beginning to the World festival of Sacred Music. The three-day event, which was staged from December 8 to 10, took place in three different locations, both indoors and outdoors, in Chiang Mai and Lamphun provinces. An eclectic mix of more than 20 artists, representing different traditions from all over the world, took part.

The feast was global in its embrace, all over the world map of musical traditions ranging from a Burmese puppet dance to a piano recital from Germany, Buddhist chanting and masked dance by Tibetan monks, performances by an Italian soprano and Jewish hymn singer, with Latin Jazz and Arabian dance. More importantly, the festival gave center-stage to people usually pushed aside. Members of the Forum of the Poor, were able to relate their plight through the medium of folk songs. Venerable Lama Doboom Tulku, global chairperson of the World Festival of Sacred Music, said the idea to organize a unique musical event of this kind began four years ago.

'At that time, the millennium was approaching. Some of us at Tibet House discussed how the 20th century was meaningful to humankind' Ven Doboom Tulku who is also the director of Tibet House and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Foundation for Universal Responsibility, explained.

'Our world is characterized by conflicts,' the Lama wrote in a message for the festival. 'Conflicts between peoples, between development and conservation, between materialism and spirituality. To deal with the situation in which we find ourselves, we need wisdom and compassion as well as understanding and humility. What is needed, above all, is an acceptance of the ancient concept of the interdependence of life,' the senior monk stated.

Inspired by the vision of the Dalai Lama, Ven Doboom Tulku felt that a festival of sacred music would serve as a coming together of people from all over the world to share their deepest insight through music.

Once the idea was made known, it received an overwhelming response from all over the world. In 1999, the first World Festival of Sacred Music was held in Los Angeles. Afterward the local versions of the event were held in Vancouver, Cape Town, Luxembourg and Waterloo. The latest was held this past April in Bangalore, India.

The organizing committee chose to locate prospective people in different places who would serve as a patron for the festival. The patron then raises funds and organizes the programme in their area.

'Of course, the festival must be in line with the original idea and plan. The festival should be more than a meeting of two cultures.

'The programme should be representative of all the world.'

'Fortunately,' he added, 'we attracted the right kind of people all along.'

The Dalai Lama emphasized that the festival should not be perceived as a religious event.

Neither is it a political or sectarian event.

'Some people might think that the event is for Tibet or for the promotion of Buddhism. In fact, the Dalai Lama is concerned about the well being of the whole universe. The festival is held in that spirit,' Ven Doboom Tulku said.

Some of the patrons of the World Festival of Sacred Music include Nobel laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Czech president Vaclav Havel, Pandit Ravi Shankar, Madame Danielle Mitterand and the late Lord Yehudi Menuhin.

Sulak Sivaraksa, patron of the festival in Thailand, noted that the event was an appropriate tribute to the centennial anniversary of Pridi Banomyong, the late statesman and well-respected educator.

The last day of the festival, December 10, also coincided with Thai Constitution Day and the anniversary of the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights.

To mark the spirit of human rights, the organizing committee of the World Festival of Sacred Music gave an award to Anwar Ibrahim, former deputy prime minister of Malaysia who is now serving a prison term after enduring what Sulak, prominent social activist and Buddhist scholar, termed 'unjust and sham trials'.

Apparently the music fest did accommodate a political note.

Indeed, Sulak declared that music loses part of its beauty when it is devoid of social justice. According to him, sacred music need not have a religious tone. 'Sacred music is the kind of music that serves no vice, greed or anger. It is not military tunes



that invite people to use violence, nor commercial jingles that lure people to keep buying things,' he said.

'Sacred music follows the natural beat of Nature. It could be throbbing or fervent, painful or placid. Even courtship music,' Sulak noted, 'can be considered sacred music as long as it is not manipulative in nature.'

Jigme Drukpa, a folk singer and musician from Bhutan, noted that in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition, music wasn't just playing an instrument but rather inspiring harmony on earth. 'Nothing is not sacred: people, trees, animals. Virtue exists in both living and non-living things and we have to respect them,' the talented instrumentalist said.

With a flute, Drukpa rendered the beautiful *Melody of the Black-neck Crane*, depicting flocks of cranes escaping the dry winter of Bhutan. He dedicated the song, *Longing for Home*, which he composed during the more melancholic hours of his six years of study in Norway to the people of Tibet who, he said, are prisoners in their own country.

Nawang Khechog, the versatile flutist from Tibet, considers music a universal language, which allows him to share, on a heart to heart level, the suffering of the people in Tibet with people from other countries.

Still, the successful Tibetan native, who has graced almost every prestigious concert hall in the world, believes that, in essence, music must be natural — 'like wild flowers on the mountain. They just grow there. Music in itself is neutral. It is like a piece of iron. We can use it to make bullets to destroy one another, or to build a bridge that will link us together,' he said.

'There is quite a lot of music that inspires the deeper qualities in humanity,' he added. 'That is why festivals like this one are held. But there is also music that is profit oriented. To make money, people can make music that evokes violence and lust. We see it on television all the time. I am not saying that music must be spiritual or profound. It can be purely entertainment, something for people to enjoy, but it must not be harmful to the mind,' Nawang said.

The popularity of violent music is becoming a powerful force destroying the minds of the younger generations, he said.



For some participating artists, a political struggle is an inseparable part of their cultural life. The troupe of dancers and singers from Nagaland, a small Indian state near Burma were evidently pleased that viewers paid attention to their colorful outfits and powerful warrior dance. However, they were a little disappointed that not so many people made inquiries into their real life struggles. 'Our songs are usually touched by a sense of grief because there has been a lot of fighting in our history. There are 81 tribes in Nagaland, a lot of infighting. We have also fought for independence from India for more than 50 years,' said Kaka D.Iralu, the author of *Nagaland and India: The Blood and Tears*, who accompanied the troupe.

For Anant Narkkong, of Thailand's own Kor Phai band, the festival provided a lively forum for learning and exchange.

'I saw a rich cultural diversity behind music. I learned a lot about musical presentation—the use of music to communicate faith and rituals, in this case. This event demonstrated that the means to present and to appreciate music are almost limitless,' Anant remarked.

Kor Phai, a Thai classical music band with a touch of modernity, played two completely different sets of compositions on two days. On the opening day, the band brought back the ambience of Thailand's past by performing ancient songs of worship and ritual.

'These songs, like *Hom Rong Yen* and *Nang Nak*, represent our old roots. They belong only in the old world as their place in rituals have been long replaced by electric bands and karaoke,' Anant said.

'On the second day, the band presented experimental music-what ritualistic numbers from the old world would sound like in a modern atmosphere.' They also challenged the usual perception of a Thai classical band by presenting a selection on *samudhai*, or the cause of suffering from a musical interpretation of the Buddha's Four Noble Truths.

Against the jumbled chorus of *Hae Nang Mae* (a parade featuring a cat in a cage designed to plead with the gods for rain), two performers took turns reading brief news articles on fasting, an impostor monk, murder, cosmetic surgery and the Manchester United craze.

'These stories might not be pleasant but they are definitely something we can deliberate on — a resource for meditation. All things are transient.

There is no reason why they should lose their head or heart over a football match,' Anant said.

For Dinpa, an alternative musican from the Jeevan group, the festival proved that music could transcend race and religion.

'This event opened a whole new world for me. Although I have listened to this type of music for a while, I have never been to a live performance like this.



The raw power was just overwhelming.

It is quite amazing to see that, for once, language is no barrier to understanding. The musicians may come from different places, but we have the same heart. We may sing different songs but we follow the same tune,' Dinpa said.

For him, the best thing about this gathering was the hope it inspired.

'Alternative music has never been considered seriously in Thailand. There may be a few festivals, but not one that explored the spiritual depths like this one. After this event, I hope there will be a change of tune. I am sure there is hope for the future.'

Atiya Achakulwisut
Bangkok Post,
December 16, 2000





INEB Update

Greetings for year 2001, from the INEB Secretariat! We hope that this coming year will bring peace and happiness, and success in your journey towards a peaceful and just world.

First I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Khin Ohmar and I joined INEB as the new Executive Secretary beginning October 2000. Second I am pleased to inform all INEB members and friends that the INEB Secretariat office has moved from Bangkok to Chiang Mai in northern Thailand and now is back to functioning.

As of this update, we are still in the stage of reorganizing the office. However, please stop by and visit us if you ever come to Chiang Mai. You are most welcome. Please also note that the new mailing address for INEB is PO Box 16, Chiang Mai University PO, Chiang Mai 50202, Thailand, and telephone/fax number is 66-53-808-785. The email address remains the same, which is <ineb@loxinfo.co.th>. Thirdly, I would like to present an update on the activities of the INEB Secretariat and INEB programs.

July

The INEB Women and Gender Program organized a seminar for nuns from South and Southeast Asia from July 28-30. Twenty nuns from Tibet, India, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand attended the seminar. This seminar looked into Buddhists' perspectives on illness and healing. The three-day program included workshops on Yoga, Reiki (healing techniques) and Thai massage as well as a study tour in which the participants paid site visits to the herbal medicine plantation and production at a temple in northeastern part of Thailand. This project has been carried out by nuns and monks and offers traditional healing to patients based upon Buddhist philosophy.

October

The Secretariat office was moved to Chiang Mai. It was

made possible with all efforts by Ouyporn. Thank you Pi Porn! I joined the INEB Secretariat as the new Executive Secretary and Khun Kan Chit joined as a volunteer.

November

The Secretariat found an office space and moved in to the new place. Khun Kan Chit helped organize the *"World Sacred Music Festival"* which took place in Chiang Mai from December 8-10.

December

The Secretariat organized a seminar on holistic approaches to health care for people with HIV/AIDS (PWAs), their family members and caregivers, which took place at Wongsanit Ashram in Nakon Nayok province in Thailand from December 13-17, 2000. Seventeen participants from Burma, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, who are medical doctors, counselors and trainers who work for people with HIV/AIDS attended the seminar.

This seminar was the follow-up of the seminar that INEB organized in May 1999 and offered a program on working effectively with people with HIV/AIDS (PWA) who were in the dying process as well as their friends and family members. The seminar objectives were:

To provide participants with an opportunity to share their own knowledge, skills and experiences in the field of death and dying, particularly related to persons living with HIV/AIDS;

To increase participants' understanding of the major issues and challenges faced by the person in the dying process and how to provide sensitive and skillful support and counseling to the dying person in light of their challenges;

To help participants develop and expand skills in pain management, meditation, guided imagery and visualization that can be used by the PWA for a variety of purposes; to increase participants' understanding of effective means of supporting and counseling friends, family and other loved ones of the dying person with AIDS;

To provide a safe and supportive environment and structure in which participants can reflect on their own beliefs and attitudes about death and dying so that they will have increased capacity to be helpful to others facing death; and

To help participants understand the importance of, and develop their own self-care plans for the purpose of increasing their effectiveness with their patients/clients and to prevent burnout and vicarious trauma.

During the five-day working process of learning and sharing, the participants shared their experiences working with people with HIV/AIDS, discussed the delicate issues which involved around patients and their family members and caregivers, and the caring process. They also shared their knowledge on different ritual practices based on their ethnic, nationality, cultural, and spiritual backgrounds and discussed on the necessary skills that counselors and caregivers should have and counseling models that they should practice in their work with the HIV/AIDS patients. Then the participants explored ways and means to better help and facilitate the HIV/AIDS clients/patients and family members in death and dying process based upon different cultural, spiritual and traditional backgrounds and experiences.

This seminar was co-facilitated by Khun Ouyporn Khuankaew and Ms. Kathryn Norsworthy. As we all know, Ouyporn is a member of the INEB Executive Committee and the INEB Women and Gender Program Coordinator. She has been working as trainer on the issues of nonviolence, gender and women rights, conflict resolution, community and team building, leadership, and social action trainers.

Kathryn is a licensed psychologist and Associate Professor, Graduate Studies in Counseling at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida in U.S.A. Her clinical expertise includes post traumatic stress disorder, chronic and life-threatening illnesses, especially HIV counseling, and multi-cultural feminist issues in counseling and psychotherapy. For the past several years, she has co-facilitated workshops with Ouyporn for groups from Thailand, Cambodia and Burma on issues related to violence against women and HIV counseling. She has also worked extensively in the U.S. since 1990 with PWAs, friends, families, and care providers. She has also conducted regional and national trainings with psychologists and counselors working with this population from a multicultural perspective and has published on this topic.

The seminar ended on December 17 with a ritual closing. Notes of the seminar minutes and discussions will be produced into a publication, which will be distributed to the participants and NGOs that are interested in receiving to strengthen their organizations' work for PWAs.

Khin Ohmar

Soul in Education Conference, Findhorn Foundation, Scotland 21-28 October 2000

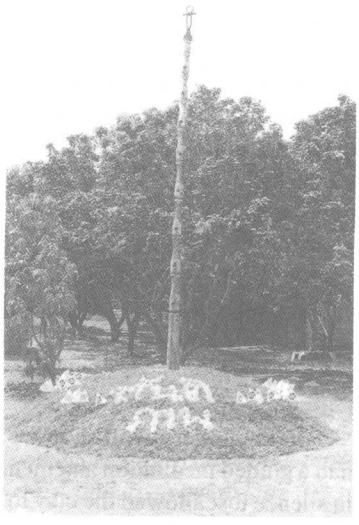
The Findhorn Foundation, an ecological and spiritual community on the Moray Firth in Northern Scotland was an appropriate and beautiful location for a conference with the challenging agenda of how, in the face of so much change, educators, parents, teachers and trainers can respond creatively to the demands for effective education today.

I had come to the conference representing the Spirit in Education Movement and my main work has been with the Grassroots Leadership Training (GLT) a programme to empower people who are living in extremely difficult and oppressive situations. For five years we have run regular three month courses for ethnic minorities from South-East Asia largely from the Christian faith.

The conference was one of the most powerful and moving I have attended.

Satish Kumar's workshops and keynote speech were particularly inspiring.

Whilst he told us about many amazing projects he had been involved in he also warned us to take things one step at a time. We don't have to have a mandate to change the world and small actions are as meaningful as large ones. He emphasised the importance of friendship and co-operation with like-minded people. If each of us could stay in contact or share a meal in the future with two or three people we met at the conference then that in his opinion was more than enough. Satish is a key person



behind Schumacher College in Devon, an international centre for ecological studies that runs short courses, many touching upon North -South issues. Satish explained how they have recently embarked on a one year Masters programme in conjunction with a local university based on the courses that they have been running for many years. A future vision for SEM is to draw upon the GLT programme and create a Regional Centre for Sustainable Communities in Thailand that will have a mandate to empower the many oppressed peoples and minority ethnic groups that are suffering in the region due to large scale infrastructure projects e.g. dams; decimation of the traditional way of life by the forces of modernisation and civil unrest. It is envisaged that the centre will challenge the mainstream development thinking that is causing problems in the region and run a full one year programme to facilitate the skills and awareness for small-scale ecologically sound, participatory community initiatives that embrace local wisdom and appropriate technology.

Another very uplifting presentation was by Paul Robertson. A classical musician who works and researches how music is a science, a pattern, a form, a cosmic and healing force. He believes that people have a need for music and that it is essential to our well-being. He showed footage of music as patterns, how the design of old violins related to where the stars are and how he had used music as a form of communication with people unable to communicate in other ways. For example there was a very disturbed and brain damaged child who just screamed all the time. During nine sessions the child learned how to communicate and respond through music. Paul warned us that music feeds our souls and is the birthright of us all and if we lose contact with music it is at our own peril. We always make time for singing and traditional music in our GLT courses and I reflected how the Christian participants seem to gain so much strength from their daily prayer and singing.

Ravi Ravindra, an Indian philosopher and academic gave a stirring talk with an Eastern perspective to holistic education. He spoke of how we should move from 'in-action to non-action' staying in the present moment. He also mentioned that we can choose whether to be,

'slaves or servants' to our work and our causes. This message hit me deeply, the workaholic activist culture of our organisations have often made me feel like a 'slave' to it!

The GLT courses for oppressed people in S.E. Asia that SEM co-ordinates emphasise participation, empowerment and spirituality in all activities. However this can be very challenging to put into practice. As a westerner I sometimes find SEM and Asian partner organisations rather hierarchical although I realise this reflects the local culture. Our staff and alumni speak several languages and come from very different backgrounds so it is not surprising there are communication problems. As a senior staff member where the cultural norm is not to openly criticise or question elders, I find delegation can be challenging. I believe that we should find culturally appropriate ways to facilitate deeper and more open communication systems. The idea of a formal peer support group appealed to me — colleagues and some outsiders could regularly make time to meet to see how we can help each other in all aspects of our work and lives. I would also like to introduce some mentoring systems and techniques to encourage deeper communication between staff members. This could help us to be more efficient as well as considering the spiritual and emotional well-being of our staff. However these kind of changes require time and sensitivity, a review of staff policies and formal processes to be put in place. I hope to find out more about some of the techniques mentioned at the conference to move towards this aspiration.

I attended one workshop called Bio-Danza with another friend who is familiar with our work in Thailand. It was led by an extraordinary Argentinian woman called Yoni Vogelius who was a refugee as a young girl although now happily settled with a family in the UK.

Bio-danza is a system of human integration and growth, stimulated by music and movement, the exercises wake up the feeling of aliveness allowing us to feel the intensity of each moment and works on the levels of connection to life, with oneself and with the group. Yoni has a deep empathy with displaced and oppressed people and she works with both children and adults.

In the pottery workshop we had a guided meditation and then in silence just allowed the clay to take a form. It was an invigorating change of pace from listening and talking and I felt it really helped me to absorb many other things that were going on at the conference at a much deeper level. I think we could use this kind of thing in our GLT courses. For example after the Philippines Study Tour the group comes back quite tired with so many impressions. In addition to the usual evaluation, we could lead the participants through a short meditation reflecting on the trip then in silence, ask them to create a painting or a clay model image of their experience. I think spending an afternoon on this kind of process could help with absorbing the content of the GLT courses on deeper level, is fun to do and we could have a exhibition of the work. I am quite excited about the possibilities of incorporating some of these kinds of exercises into our programmes. I also wondered about the use of Art, Drama, Dance and Music as a therapy for trauma victims and incorporating some small activities into our GLT programmes. Several years ago at a visit to a Women's Centre run by one of our GLT alumni, the young women gave us a lively performance of what they called 'Action Songs' acting out the experience of being porters and suffering abuse. This kind of work was very helpful for their emotional healing. We are already in the process of fund-raising and organising for a resource person to do a drama therapy workshop with the some of the young women from this Centre and hopefully this could be a pilot for other such courses involving the arts for healing.

Findhorn is involved in many innovative programmes we can learn from. In particular they are at the forefront of the Eco-village movement that also has many members and links in the developing countries especially in Ladakh and Sri Lanka.

On an inspirational level the conference exceeded my expectations and I feel it has been a transformative time in my own personal direction with many creative seeds planted that could in the future add greatly to the holistic dimensions in our work.

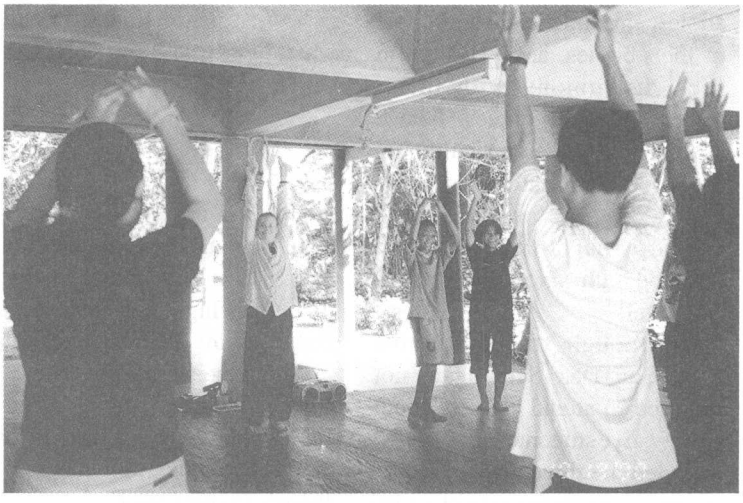
I would like to take this opportunity to thank CAFOD and the Findhorn in supporting me to attend the conference.

Jane Rasbash



Experiential Anatomy at Moo Ban Dek: Education for the Mind/Body/Spirit

In a statement about goals for the new millennium issued by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he stressed that we are entering a time in which there is an increased need to include the teaching of spiritual principles in the education of our children and young adults. Currently, education often omits attention to the spiritual. Further, traditional teaching (which requires that students sit still for long periods of time) perpetuates a view of mind and body as separate and learning is often believed to be solely a cognitive, intellectual function. It is my premise that it is the integration of body, mind, and spirit that is necessary for the healthy development of the individual. In October, I was fortunate to teach Experiential Anatomy in Thailand through workshops offered at the Moo Ban Dek School, sponsored by the Spirit in Education Movement. Below is a brief description of the Experiential Anatomy workshop and a bit about my experience of teaching.



Just as you are sitting, reading this, take a deep breath, in... and out...Notice your feet...are they both on the floor? If so, notice the weight of your feet on the floor. Notice your legs...how are they placed? Crossed one over the other? Bring your awareness to their position. Don't try to change your position, just notice.

Feel the weight of you body sitting...what parts of your body are touching the chair or the floor? Notice the position of your back, your shoulders, your neck, your head. Now, take another breath...in...and out...repeat this and as you exhale try to release your muscles and allow your weight to be supported by the chair, by the floor, by the earth.

This is the 30 seconds it takes to shift your awareness to your physical sensation, to 'remember' the body and mind, to integrate sensation and thought.

In addition to relaxing you may have noticed tensions or discomfort that you were previously unaware of. In fact, you may have noticed impulses to change your position, to re-adjust in a way that would alleviate the strain you experienced. By paying attention, our bodies speak to us.

From *A Body-Mind Approach to Movement Education for Adolescents*, by Susan Bauer. Our current educational systems help us learn how to clear our minds and focus our attention. Yet cultivating the capacity to be fully present-awake, attentive, and responsive to both inner and outer worlds, can positively influence all aspects of our lives. The essence of Experiential Anatomy is such mindfulness, while encouraging using the mind to discover and listen to the voice of our bodies.

Experiential Anatomy evolved from the field of Somatics, which encompasses several disciplines developed during the twentieth century in Europe and the United States. Under the names of bodywork, body therapies, and/or movement repatterning, these disciplines represent a variety of therapeutic and educational approaches to working with the body. The term "Experiential Anatomy" is used to describe a method of study that encourages experiential learning about body structure and function through active physical participation. My own study of Experiential Anatomy began in 1982 with Andrea Olsen and Caryn McHose (authors of *BodyStories: A Guide to Experiential Anatomy*) while an undergraduate at Middlebury College. Through further study of Ideokinesis, Body-Mind Centering TM, and Bartenieff Fundamentals, I

gained further training in Somatics. After teaching at a high school dance department I began to wonder how I could bring this wealth of information to my adolescent students, so conscious of their bodies, and yet often in such disharmony with themselves and their bodies. I have since developed a curriculum in Experiential Anatomy specifically designed for adolescents and have taught this material at both the high school and university levels.

Although students at the Moo Ban Dek School are not required to attend classes, about twenty-five students (ages 14-18) attended the three days of workshops. Each three-hour class involved active movement explorations as well as more inner-directed and meditative exercises. 'Explorations' is the term I use for such exercises that combine movement, visualization, drawing, and touch. In the first class, for instance, I led an Exploration that I call "the Mind's Eye and the Body Systems," in which students are asked to use their 'mind's eye' to look inside their own bodies to discover what is there. As they did this, I asked several questions to guide the exercise, such as:

What do you see?
How do you feel about what you see?
What is clear to you and what is a mystery?
What questions do you have?

After this exercise, students got into groups of 3 or 4 and, using a big sheet of paper, one student lies down on the paper while the other students trace an outline of his / her body. After the outline was complete, the students drew everything they knew about what is inside their



bodies and made a list of questions. Finally, students came back into a large group to share their drawings and their questions. Some of their questions included the following:

Why do we have tears when we cry?
What's in our blood?
Do men and women have the same skeletal systems?
How many organs are in the respiratory system?

Other Explorations included, for example, "Bone Tracing," (in which students feel the shape and location of each bone), "Curves of the Spine" (in which students work in partners to feel the curves of the spine, count the vertebrae, and discover the potential movements of the spine), and "The Dynamics of Breathing" (in which students locate the diaphragm and discover the relationship between the lungs and organs in the abdominal cavity). Students were fascinated learning such simple techniques to understand more about their own bodies.

During another Exploration of breathing, students were encouraged to reflect on the more metaphorical meaning of their breath. While lying in the Constructive Rest Position (knees bent, feet flat on the floor), with soft music playing in the background, we read to them (in Thai) from a passage from Thich Nhat Hanh's *Peace is Every Step*,: As you breathe in, say to yourself, "Breathing in, I know that I am breathing in." As you breathe out, say to yourself, "Breathing out, I know that I am breathing out." Just that...[or] you can just use two words, "in" and "out." This technique can help you keep your mind on your breath. As you practice, your breath will become peaceful and gentle, and your mind and body will become peaceful and gentle. This is not a difficult exercise. In just a few minutes you can realize the fruit of meditation. Breathing in and out is very important, and it is enjoyable. Our breathing is the link between our body and our mind (Thich Nhat Hanh).

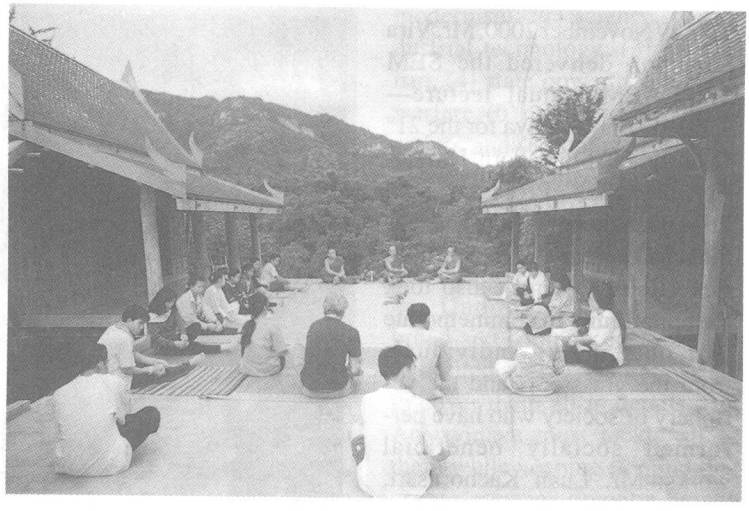
Observing two dozen teenagers mindfully engaged in this meditation, with peace on their faces and restfulness in their bodies, was deeply moving. Experiences such as this one, at the Moo Ban Dek School, keep me inspired about the power of Experiential Anatomy to help students to learn about their bodies, as well as to develop important tools—such as mindfulness —that will help them now and into the future.

Susan Bauer

The curriculum on experiential anatomy is available by contacting Susan Bauer at s1bauer@yahoo.com. She is currently studying dance and mask-making in Bali.

Report on the Alternative Education Movement in Thailand

In Thailand as in other Asian countries, Education Reform is currently being undertaken by governments as a response to the need to compete in the global economy. Human capital counts. Therefore Education Reform policies are often ambiguous and they largely put the burden of competitiveness on the shoulders of the children. Teachers are forced to become "student centered" while the conditions largely remain as "state centered" as before.



Long before mainstream officials discovered Education Reform, independent educators, teachers, parents, community leaders, environmentalists, farmers and youth groups have been practicing a great diversity of alternative approaches to education. In general these initiatives have been dismissed as marginal and unrealistic. After the groundbreaking "Alternatives to Consumerism" gathering in 1997, near Bangkok, Thailand, initiated by Sulak Sivaraksa, the first ever Alternative Education meeting in its kind was organised at 'Moo Ban Dek Childrens' Village School near Kanchanaburi, Kwai River area, near the Thai-Burmese border. In November 1999 the second international meeting on Alternative Education was held and more emphasis was given to action planning. This resulted in ~ at least ~ two decisions: to found a permanent 'Alternative Education Resource Centre' (AERC); and to have networking and inspirational meetings at Moo Ban Dek every year around November/December, alternately nationally and internationally. Other meetings are emerging in the same spirit.

Consequently the AERC organised its first national forum-meeting in December 2000! Also at the national scale, diversity led to joyful celebration: Montessori teachers demonstrated educational materials; Phurk Odochao told stories from the Karen indigenous communities in the North; Venerable Somboon conducted Buddhist morning meditation; and Chanok Pinsuwan taught us to dynamise meeting each other through 'Eurhythmy' movement as practiced in Waldorf education. Rachanee and Bibhop Dongchai, founders of Moo Ban Dek and activists hosted the meeting and discussed issues of social analysis essential for Education Reform from 'bottom-up'.

And subsequently: November/December 2001 will be the year of the Third International Meeting on Alternative Education in Moo Ban Dek, Thailand!!! Soon we will determine the exact date.

This meeting will be preceded by a creative international community gathering 21-25 February 2001 organised by Pipob Udomittipong, E-mail: mbd@ffc.or.th.

Please inquire and link-up: AERC, Spirit in Education Movement, 666 Charoen Nakorn Road, Klongsan, Bangkok 10600. Tel: (66-2) 438-9331~2; Fax: (66-2) 860-1277. E-mail: sem_edu@ksc.th.com. And we will send you a copy of our Alternative Education Newsletter 'HERE & NOW'. Ask for Hans and Wallapa.

Hans van Willenswaard

Report on the Sixth SEM Annual Lecture

On 29 November 2000, Mr. Vira Somboon delivered the SEM Sixth SEM annual lecture—entitled "Ariyavinaya for the 21st Century" at Silapakorn University, Bangkok. Professor Sem Pringpuangkaew, M.D., acted as the chairperson. The Spirit in Education Movement also took the opportunity to commemorate two outstanding individuals from the grassroots and the periphery of society who have performed socially beneficial works: Mr. Luan Kachornsart, an artist with noble principles, and Mrs. Sumali Limpa-owart, an ordinary citizen who successfully fought for greater access to official information. Since the fourth annual lecture, SEM has been giving such awards. Previously, SEM gave recognition to the late Mr. Kaisaeng Suksai, a politician who fought for democracy, and Mr. Surasi Kosolnawin, a government official who has struggled for the freedom of public information.



This annual lecture is not only intended to honor Dr. Sem, but also to elaborate on and explain the meaning of Ariyavinaya in the context of the modern world. Judging from the numerous social crises, it seems that the Thai society (especially Buddhist monks and lay people) does not really understand the meaning of Ariyavinaya and the threat of consumerism.

Mr. Vira Somboon is one of the leading persons who have fully grasped the meaning and subtleties of Ariyavinaya. He based his interpretation of Ariyavinaya on the teaching and explanation of Venerable Payutto. In his lecture, Mr. Vira logically introduced and discussed the concept of Ariyavinaya and threw out many provocative questions for the audience to reflect on. The gist of his lecture may be summarized as follows.

According to Mr. Vira, *Ariyavinaya* for the 21st century entails the quest for the right culture and paths, which will facilitate the progress of Dhamma. Put another way, it means the progress of Ariyavaḍḍhi (the Noble Truth) which comprises *Saddhā* (the good faith in human beings), *Sila* (the way of life one leads and the relationships one builds with others in society and with nature), *Sutta* (that which is heard or learned), *Cāga* (generosity, including the granting of opportunity to others), and *Paññā* (wisdom; understanding that happiness in life has many dimensions and being able to appreciate the benefits of cultural diversity).

In this age and time, when modernism has peaked in its extremism, progress is said to follow a linear trajectory. There is the belief that modernity is always better and more rational than the traditional forms. Certain ways of life or thinking, no matter how beautiful and Dhammic, are declared obsolete and forced to make way for modernity. Many people fully ascribed to the dictates of modernism—some quite consciously, others less so. When Margaret Thatcher was premier, she often cited one acronym to describe the overall policy of her government: TINA or there is no alternative. It is widely accepted that there is no alternative other than to follow the trends of modernity. This also means accepting the domination of transnational corporations, the logic of the free market system, the elimination of social welfare, and so on.

How can we create a culture of Ariyavinaya to confidently confront or countenance the onslaught of modernism as well as to come up with viable and noble alternatives?

Mr. Vira suggests changes or reforms in the following dimensions. On faith, he puts



emphasis on the latter half of the human being equation: we all must learn to truly be humans. On precepts, he encourages a way of life that will create the least harm to other human beings, to nature, and to all sentient beings. On listening, he insists that the mass media should disseminate truths and serve as a vital means for developing human potentials in various ways. On generosity, he calls for a fair means of producing, allocating, and distributing natural resources by breaking up monopolies or any concentrations of power. The people must have the opportunity to work and lead honest lives based on sustainability. And on wisdom, there must be full regard for the living condition in the short run and the long run. Spirituality should not be neglected as an important dimension in human existence. Our way of life should not only benefit ourselves but also our societies and other people.

If we want to realize these changes, we have to understand the present context and the kinds of problems that are associated with or that are derived from modernism. We have to be clear about the following 8 factors, which are the vital components of modernism: (1) science, (2) industrial technology, (3) capitalism, (4) state power, (5) nuclear warfare, (6) mass media, (7) education, and (8) status of women. These eight factors are in varying degrees related to *Ariyavaḍḍhi*. We may use *Ariyavaḍḍhi* to shed greater light on them.

Undoubtedly, these are broad and complex factors. Due to limited space, it is impossible to cover them all in details. But Ariyavinaya must tackle all of them while keeping in mind that progress means drawing human beings closer to Dhamma, to *Ariyavaḍḍhi* in varying degrees and in accordance to the context of different localities and eras.

Not infrequently, change comes gradually and is brought about by a small group of people. We must have hope and work to realize constructive changes.

SEM

ARIYA VINAYA PROJECT
Second meeting 21 - 27 January 2001

Due to circumstances beyond our control the visit of His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama to Siam planned for October/November 2000 had to be postponed. However, H.H. the Dalai Lama will participate in one of the upcoming Ariya Vinaya meetings. To improve relations, in November the Thai foreign minister, M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra met with the Tibetan Religious Minister, Tashi Wangdi in Bangkok.

The second Ariya Vinaya meeting will be held 21 - 27 January 2001 near Bangkok. The Most Venerable Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, Head of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Saranath, Varanasi, India will be the major resource person. In addition to leading socially engaged monks from Siam and prominent nuns associated with INEB, further participants will include Lama Bataa Mishingish (Mongolia/USA); David Chappell editor of *Buddhist Peacework: Creating Cultures of Peace* (published by Wisdom in association with the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century); Rajiv Mehrotra, Secretary/Trustee of the Foundation for Universal Responsibility (India); Wendy Tyndale pioneer of the World Faiths Development Dialogue; and Arnold

Kotler editor of the *Engaged Buddhist Reader* published by the Parallax Press.

Closely related with the Ariya Vinaya endeavour, members of the Union of Buddhist Students in Indonesia Hikmabudhi are preparing an appeal to all Buddhist students in the world to unite while celebrating diversity.

Hans van Willenswaard

BUSINESS & ART FOR TRANSFORMATION
Meeting of SVN Asia (Thailand) in Chiang Mai

When the business community meets with artists something magic happens: the 'real' person tends to come out! Business people often happen to be artists, though sometimes behind the scenes, and artists are often unconventional but clever business people. Together they can transform the world into disaster or paradise.

The Social Venture Network (SVN) was established eight years ago in the US to create a more just, humane and sustainable world. SVN Asia (Thailand) was formed in early 1998 to coordinate activities regionally, and widen the network in the Asia-Pacific region. The meeting "Business and Art: Transform Competition to Compassion" held 6-7 December 2000 in Chiang Mai was the second public meeting after an earlier conference in 1999 in Bangkok titled "Balancing Profit with Social Responsibility". Interaction with the Arts was chosen as the main theme because the meeting preceded the World Festival of Sacred Music, 8 - 10 December in Chiang Mai.

The artists' view can be very powerful, and artistic concepts are crucial elements in marketing strategies. Prominent Thai businessperson and poet Khunying Chamnongsri Hanchanlash illustrated her presentation with some cruel examples of worshipping violence in advertisement. Her question "Where do the Market and Aesthetics Meet?" resulted in a vivid discussion guided by Jeffrey Sng and Wisith Wangwinyu. This dialogue led to the conclusion that the two meet in a positive mode when Market and Aesthetics share Integrity as central common value. It was Mrs Khunying Chamnongsri's experience that a direct grant to a counter-violence project supporting victims of women's and children's abuse, even without advertisement for the product, was a very effective and probably sustainable means of promoting a new venture as it exemplified its dedication to the value of Integrity.

How important is it that the business sector complies with standards of social responsibility, sustainability and cultural integrity? Do "corporations rule the world"? In a panel discussion with Prida Tiasuwan, Mr Lee from Korea, Bert Barten from the Netherlands and moderated by Hans van Willenswaard (SEM) the role of multi-national corporations was critically assessed. The multi-nationals who aggressively conquer important sections of the markets in Asian countries should not primarily be tamed through legislation. The main challenge is to re-activate indigenous values and cultural patterns, like the extended family, which are true assets. Mr Lee gave the example of the Join Together Society in Korea where Buddhism and business work together. Bert Barten, a Director of Ground-Control audio-visual productions, maker of both documentaries and commercials, reported a recent dialogue between SVN Europe (the Netherlands) and the Shell Group on business ethics at the request of Shell, considered a landmark in European business history. The necessity of watchdog mechanisms for compliance with labour standards was also emphasized.

During a colourful dinner party with local music and dance two SVN Asia Awards were presented: in the business category it was attributed to Imboon Co. Ltd. (health food and herbal medicine); while Mr Chaiyapan was awarded as a social activist for his sustained support to the Assembly of the Poor.

The next morning Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa delivered a lecture on "Competition or Compassion": the title of a business forum held in Amsterdam with

H.H. the Dalai Lama. Ajarn Sulak launched the translated version of the book at this forum (please contact the Spirit in Education Movement for your copy) and he emphasised that compassion leads to the benefit and happiness of all while competition divides in winners and losers. However, fair competition ~ which requires effective watchdog mechanisms ~ can support the emergence of a compassionate world community. Sander Tideman, the editor of the book and a lawyer who was active in China as a banker and now a free-lance consultant on micro-credit, will meet with SVN Asia in January 2001.

The discussion which followed Ajarn Sulak's fiery speech was enriched with a presentation by Joni Odochao, a prominent Karen community leader. He made clear that as the Karen communities have lived in harmony with the forest for centuries, it is extremely unfair and unjust to accuse the Karen of destruction of the forest and urge them to migrate to other parts of the country. Chiang Mai Senator Dr Akom Tuladilok expressed his appreciation for the sincere and open discussion. Also Somkiat Apinyachon, Director of Apina Industry Co. Ltd. in Rayong (furniture) stated that a forum like SVN responds to a great need to exchange experiences on humane and creative approaches to business, respecting local and traditional social and cultural patterns, in an open community with likeminded colleagues. He is committed to expand SVN in Thailand while Prida Tiasuwan is willing to continue being pioneering Chairman of SVN Asia. The two day meeting concluded with a group workshop in pastel drawing held at the gallery of well-known artist Thepsiri Suksopa who designed most of the merchandising of the World Festival of Sacred Music and its publicity.

Hans van Willenswaard

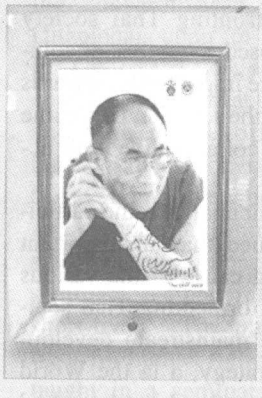
How you can help us

Though the World Festival of Sacred Music and Ariya-vinaya Project are pregnant with colorful initiatives and uplifting ideals, the financial resources to keep the project rolling are prohibitively limited. No money was collected from the participants. Thus, you are a vital lifeline. Your donation is more than welcome and appreciated. With your help, we believe that our sincere commitment and massive endeavor can be respectably accomplished. We have permission from HH the Dalai Lama's office to offer His photograph printed on gold leaf with His signature in limited numbers for those who contribute financially to help our projects.

Donation	Size	Remarks
(US$)		
2,500	Largest	Golden frame with His Holiness's Signature
1,000	5" x 7"	Glass frame with His Holiness's signature
500	5" x 7"	Glass frame with His Holiness's signature
250	Stamp size	Leather frame



Largest
Golden frame with His Holiness's signature



5" x 7" Glass frame
with His Holiness's signature

Thai Social Crisis and Religious Solutions

Religions believe that if their teachings are used as guidelines for conducting life and social activities, the prospects for social peace and tranquility will improve. Judging from the innumerable problems hounding Thai society at present, the kingdom is indeed suffering from a crisis. The Thai society is groping for ways and means to overcome these troubles. In this quest, Thai society must confront two vital questions. One, how much space or weight is Thai society willing to grant religions in its daily conducts? Two, and this is especially the domain of religious peoples, how can religions assume a larger voice in society so that religious teachings may truly act as social guidelines?

Against this backdrop, the seminar "Thai Social Crisis and Religious Solutions" was organized in Chiang Mai during 9-10 November 2000. Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, and Buddhists participated in the seminar. The participants are all experienced workers involved in grassroots community development, caring for AIDS patients, and promoting human rights and education. Together they analyzed the problems confronting Thai society and proposed a number of solutions. More importantly, towards the end of the seminar, they came up with a collaborative draft action plan.

In their analyses, the participants argued that an important underlying cause of the various problems tormenting Thai society is the mainstream developmental strategy, a la the World Bank, that the kingdom had uncritically adopted. They insisted that the mainstream developmental strategy feeds on the potent illusion of material grandeur and happiness and deliberately conceals the negative and far-reaching consequences of following such strategy. The social problems emanating from pursuing the mainstream strategy are coming home to the Thai people but the illusion of progress is terribly hard to dispel.

The participants even contended that the World Bank strategy is the antithesis of religious teachings. On this issue, Professor Nithi Eaosiwongse of Midnight University made numerous insightful observations. First, the World Bank strategy denies or denigrates the equality of human beings, dividing them into capable (e.g., efficient) and incapable beings based on the criteria of development; it even makes a virtue out of inequality. On the other hand, every religion posits that all human beings are equal, that all human beings must have equal rights and opportunity to fulfill themselves. Indifferent to the issue of equality, the mainstream developmental strategy therefore overlooks several vital dimensions such as education. Second, religions emphasize the importance of social justice. In contrast, the developmental strategy that the Thai kingdom is presently undertaking treats, for example, the widespread poverty and suffering due to lack of access to good and affordable medical treatment as regrettable but inevitable. Third, religions highlight the centrality of *metta karuna* in social relations whereas the World Bank strategy relies on the concepts of "them" versus "us". The latter mode of thinking can never lead one down the road of *metta karuna*. At best, it can only culminate in aid or assistance (as opposed to *metta*), sugar-coating the injustices and exploitation in society. Fourth, development does not mention about the other world. Since the end of the reign of King Rama V, books on Buddhism excluded the concept of nirvana and focused on the code of morality for the laity: the concept of nirvana does not facilitate the faith in development, the argument went. Without the concept of nirvana, everything has become compartmentalized and could not relate to one another. Lastly, the faith in western science and technology has supplanted the faith in the supreme goal of life: the temporal and impermanence are to be cherished.

Upholding a set of premises diametrically opposite to the World Bank's, the participants agreed that any development along religious lines must be people-centered and must rely on grassroots communities as agents of social changes and justice. Every individual has the right to fulfill himself or herself and to lead a rewarding life. As such, a new space for religions must be quickly established in order to bring substance and value to Thai society. Concomitantly, the myths and lies of the World Bank strategy must be exposed for the sake of the social good.

As mentioned earlier, the participants also came up with a collaborative draft action plan. The essence of the plan is to expand the network of alliances based on different religious affinities throughout the country. This means seriously applying

religious thoughts to grassroots activities; learning the teachings of other religions to facilitate mutual understanding; developing media to heighten the awareness of religious thoughts; establishing an alliance system that emphasizes cultural diversity; reflecting and learning from one another's experience; and creating a front that will organize and coordinate religious public relations campaigns. The participants divided responsibility for filling the details of each objective, which will be discussed at the next meeting. TICD plans to organize the next meeting in Bangkok.

Prida Ruangvijjathorn

Conference on Human Rights in Thailand

On 15 November the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation held a conference entitled "The 3rd Year Anniversary of the People's Constitution: Reviewing the Agenda for Human Rights". The first part of the conference focused on the meaning of the term "human rights" and the significance of Article 4 of the 1997 Constitution that refers to the inherent dignity of all human beings. The panelists, including labor leaders, senators, academics, and members of the recently formed Human Rights Commission agreed that the provision in the constitution had led to few tangible improvements in human rights; nonetheless, the Constitution is still a starting point for understanding the interconnected relationship between natural rights, legal rights, economic rights, and community rights. Also, in this period of an increasing number of NGO's human rights activism is way to bring together environmental, labor, and gender based organizing in order to place pressure on policymakers. Professor Saneh Chamarik, former vice rector at Thammasat University and a member of the Commission blamed the relentless pursuit of export oriented economic development for the creation of a technocratic and bureaucratic elite. This elite group is accountable only to multinational financing corporations, international financial institutions and foreign governments. The resistance of the government and corporations against a proposed international conference on prostitution was largely because those institutions wanted to protect Thailand's reputation and investment climate.

Legal protection of labor rights, including severance pay (see letter regarding NIKE), the right to organize, and improved working conditions were consistently mentioned as much-needed applications of the constitution. Another suggested legislative action was an improvement in the minimum wage, which currently at Baht 160 per day is not enough to support a child.

The relationship between law and culture was raised in reference to attitudes regarding gender but permeated through all topics at the conference. Anecdotes about the stratification of Thai society and gender norms demonstrated that neither rhetoric nor legal precedence can counter the embeddedness of cultural norms without a change in childhood and adult education.

Teaching about human rights and universal dignity while maintaining a student-teacher relationship marked by deference seemed to be a dilemma for several speakers. Savitri Suwansathit, the Inspector General at the Ministry of Education, spoke of the hesitation on the part of schools to fund human rights programs. She emphasized that there must be increased importance granted to human and civil rights education and an improvement in teacher training programs. Human rights education is part of a broader change requiring teachers to focus on teaching method and its impact on content; the phrase, "How you teach is what you teach" was used to describe this new perspective. University level education is also regarded as a priority for changing consciousness. Dr. Jaran Ditapichai, chair of the Union for Civil Liberties, said that he conducts seminars at universities and with police officers. In these seminars he raises questions about domestic violence and corporal punishment but he said that the impact of these seminars seemed minimal and short-lived. The philosophical basis for human rights cannot be taught in a seminar format, it must be integrated into other social science disciplines.

Two issues brought up by members of the audience did not receive much attention from the panelists: 1) the issue of psychological abuse and harassment and 2) the discrimination faced by people whose sexuality and gender are not clearly defined. The concept of psychological abuse did not have legal precedent and was grouped together with physical assault or abuse, effectively dismissing the issue of harassment. The need for space to voice complaints and receive help was not developed. Secondly, discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation was also outside the scope of the conference. The point that adolescents who experience this type of discrimination are especially at risk for suicide or depression was raised but there was no movement towards including this in a discussion about school curriculum.

Several participants directly responded to claims made by politicians such as Lee Kuan Yew that human rights are a so-called western concept. This debate has become hackneyed and it was evident that most speakers agreed that this "Asian values" argument is flawed and not consistent with the spirit of Buddhism. Dr. Jaran noted that the Buddhist concept that judges people for their actions lays a complex foundation for human rights. On one hand, it affirms the potential of all people to do good and thus be treated with dignity and respect. On the other hand, there can be a justification to use social class or status as an indicator of good and bad actions and the privileges entitled therewith. Although this karmic determinism is specifically refuted in many Buddhist scriptures, the concept persists and is reinforced by government policies that ignore the lives of the poor. Many speakers emphasized that the highest values of Buddhism, that of compassion and nonviolence fit closely with the concept of dignity. The dhamma must be practiced in all relationships and Buddhism takes human rights to the level of kalyanamittata, the act of being a good friend and spiritual companion. Buddhism can be a powerful intellectual and cultural foundation for human rights in Siam but there continues to be a lack of Buddhist-based and monastic involvement in the campaign.

Sonali Chakravarti

François Houtart and Prague 2000: After the Protests

During 25-30 September staff members from TICD, Wongsanit Ashram, Health for the Poor, and the Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute gathered at Kaeng Krachan national park to discuss the relationship between local organizing and globalization. For the first two days, Father François Houtart led a discussion about the development of capitalism and levels of alternatives. He is the director of the Tricontinental Institute in Belgium, an organization that studies development in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. His talk included an overview of the development of capitalism, levels of alternatives to globalization, and case studies from former socialist economies. Houtart framed his lecture by articulating that his utopia would be an economy based on insuring basic needs and a society committed to the democratization of culture. One of the defining features of his vision is a reorientation of market relationships. Houtart said that one of the major failures of applied socialism was the emphasis on equality of distribution rather than an emphasis on new relationships of production and consumption.

He divided suggestions for practical change into two categories: short-term and mid-level. In the short term, the Tobin tax is a means to translate a small amount of speculative capital into productive capital that can be used by states to strengthen labor rights and maintain social welfare programs. We are currently living in a virtual economy where the three largest sources of capital are private pension funds, the reserves of transnational corporations, and money financed to meet state debt. Profits from speculation in this virtual economy do not translate into the dissemination of technology or improvements in living conditions. Even George Soros sees the potential for capitalism to undo itself without greater regulation. It is necessary and effective to use the contradictions in



capitalism to slow its destruction. An economic argument, rather than an ethical one, against the current deregulation of capital is the most powerful critique; the economic argument rests on the idea that the current stage of capitalism includes waste and inefficiency and is not meeting the most basic needs of society. Regarding party politics, Houtart sees the strategic value in supporting parties such as Blair's Social Democrats in Great Britain that aim to "humanize capitalism" while acknowledging that these parties are not seeking a reorientation of market relations. They are still an important step to making change in this direction and are crucial to local resistance to larger forces of unregulated capitalism.

Mid-level reforms include regionalization efforts that break the trend of globalization. Houtart stressed the difference between free trade regionalization and protective regionalization such as the Latin American Mercur Sur and the Common Market in southern Europe. The aim of these protective regional groups is to maintain local production and distribution and use the internal contradiction of capitalist aspirations between local entrepreneurs and multinational corporations to change the trend of globalization. The Malaysian decision to prevent the liberalization of the automobile industry was followed by a similar decision in Indonesia indicating that some nations are open to protective measures and would be interested in strengthening regional organizations in order to resist neo-liberal mandates. Regionalization is also a way to incorporate the diverse factions and concerns of protesters into a cohesive force at the local level.

Cooperation and compliance with World Bank initiatives are seldom useful for the strengthening of local forces. Instead, the most common results are a co-optation of NGO projects and new rifts in the community. Each program must be considered separately and a handful of programs, such as the Special Invest Fund in Vietnam, have been successful in microcredit and education. However, the foundation for systemic change will not come with incremental or rhetorical changes in international financial institutions. There must be new organizations that are philosophically distinct from neoliberalism and which are democratically organized.

The case of Cuba is a unique case study for understanding the opportunities and limitations of development outside of the policies of international financial

institutions. Despite the destruction of the economy triggered by the collapse of the USSR, Cuba has managed to maintain universal and high quality health and education systems. There continues to be a strong commitment to sharing knowledge and Cuban doctors routinely help victims of natural disasters and work with the poor in neighboring countries. Several years ago, the need for foreign capital led to the promotion of tourism and a dollarization of the economy. This courting of foreign capital along with small scale market liberalization has created a new social divide based upon access to US dollars. The US embargo on trade with Cuba has been recently strengthened with the Torricelli act and Helms-Burton legislation therefore Cuba continues to be in the margins of neoliberal globalization and is a powerful ally in the globalization of resistance.

Houtart's views are very close to the views presented in Focus on the Global South's recent publication, *Prague 2000*, a collection of articles on the need to disband the World Bank and IMF. Walden Bello systematically lays out the series of events that have challenged the legitimacy of the Bank and the Fund: the handling of the Asian Financial Crisis, the co-optation of the United Nations through the Global Compact, the findings of a bipartisan Congressional commission, and the popular sentiments expressed through the protests (The Meltzer Commission found that the World Bank had a 65% failure rate in the poorest countries). Bello employs a Kuhnian model of paradigms to explain that the current paradigm of the World Bank and the IMF cannot regain legitimacy given the amount of dissonant data it is forced to reconcile. This dissonant data challenges every aspect of the institutions and their concepts of development, there must be a new paradigm. The other authors elaborate on the limits to dissent in the current institutions (e.g. Stieglitz's critique and ousting), the lack of disclosure, and the homogeneity of philosophy and education among policymakers. The essays do not get stuck in the deconstruction of the Bank and Fund and offer beginning guidelines for the path of "deglobalization" and a "strategy that consciously subordinates the logic of the market, the pursuit of cost efficiency [in exchange for] the values of security, equity, and social solidarity". This strategy includes a new emphasis on local production, income redistribution, a monitoring of the government and the market by civil society, and new community systems of exchange. Focus on the Global South is based in Bangkok and the call for the end of the Bank and Fund are especially germane given the recent Thai experience with financial instability. In 1998, in order to stimulate the economy, the Thai government, under the auspices of the IMF, implemented tax reductions and amended foreign investment laws. The emphasis was largely on increasing the local and international demand for goods while ignoring the needs of the poor and working class. Jacques-chai Chomthongdi states that much of the recovery in Thai exports is a result of a healthy, expansive US economy and does not reflect an improvement for the majority of Siamese people. The GINI index (a measure of income inequality) has risen , along with unemployment and cuts in public health and education. Houtart and the authors at Focus on the Global South offer potent critiques of the current system and useful answers to the question, "what next?" But to draw again on Kuhn, data and evidence are not enough to cause a paradigm shift- there must be an intersection between this knowledge and those holding power in the current model in order for change to be implemented.

Sonali Chakravarti







Granddaughter of Rama V

Her Royal Highness Princess Churairatna Sirimalaya, the last granddaughter of King Rama V, passed away on Friday at the age of 91.

Princess Churairatna's parents were Prince and Princess Baripatra, former owners of Bangkhunphrom Palace, which is now the Bank of Thailand.

She was the mother of MR Chatumongkol Sonakul, the current BOT governor. Her husband was His Serene Highness Prince Chatramongkol Sonakul, younger brother of His Royal Highness Prince Dhanivivat, late president of the Privy Council.

Princess Churairatna started a Siamese restaurant in London. It was perhaps the first anywhere outside the Kingdom, according to social critic and scholar, Sulak Sivaraksa.

"She was a wonderful lady, full of generosity and great humour," Sulak said, recalling his time as student in Britain, where he knew the princess.

"Her first son was the famous *Bangkok Post* columnist, the late MR Ayumongkol Sonakul, after whom a foundation was named. Her daughter, MR Sumalyamongkol, is the director of the famous kindergarten named after her mother," he added.

The royal remains are being kept in a golden urn at Banrospark Pavilion, at Benjamabhopit Temple.

Pravit Rojanaphruk
The Nation
November 26, 2000

Commentary

127 Soi Santipap, Nares Rd.
Bangkok 10500

November 26, 2000

Dear Editor,

I congratulate you on the report on the demise of Princess Churairatna Sirimalaya, but it had two mistakes, which need to be corrected.

1) The title of Her Royal Highness in English covers a daughter of any Siamese King with royal mother or non royal mother—the difference in Thai would be a celestial princess or an ordinary princess. HRH also refers to any King's granddaughter born of a celestial prince and a royal mother. Princess Churairatna was the last of this category. Princess Galayanivaddhana, His Majesty's elder sister is also a Royal Highness and grand daughter of King Chulalongkorn but she is a celestial princess. Another granddaughter of His late August Majesty who is still alive is Her Highness Princess Vimalachatra. Although born of a royal mother, her father was not a celestial prince. Hence she was not entitled to the royal prefix.
2) The late Prince Dhaninivat was also a highness without royal prefix.

His or Her Highness is slightly above His or Her Serence Highness, the lowest member of the royal family. They may be quite a number of these grand daughters of King Chulalongkorn who are still alive.

In the Sixties, there was an enthusiastic Indian diplomat, the late Mr. Nirmal Singh, who knew many members of the royal family. He wrote to HSH Prince Ajavadis Diskul as His Supreme Highness and to H.H. Prince Dhani as His Royal Highness. The Prince told him that "Ajavadis may be a supreme highness but I am certainly not a royal highness."

Yours sincerely,

Sulak Sivaraksa

10 October 2000

International Buddhist Progress Society
Fo Guang Shan
Kaohsiung, Taiwan

Dear Mr. Sulak,

It was a year ago when we met. I believe you are still as busy as you have always been. Life at Fo Guang Shan is also busy with our objectives to advocate Humanistic Buddhism and build a Pure Land on earth, be of service to society, and at the same time cultivate our body and mind.

I write to request your assistance. Yesterday I received the Sept-Dec issue of *Seeds of Peace*. There is an article by Ven. Santikaro about the Dhammakaya situation that states that, "Wat Phra Dhammakaya is the premier example of capitalist Buddhism in Thailand (and thus can be compared with the Soka Gakkai in Japan and Fu Kwang Shan in Taiwan). I am curious to know how much Ven. Santikaro knows about Fo Guang Shan? I feel sorry that Ven. Santikaro has done what secular people do—saying things publicly without giving us a fair quotation.

During the September 21 massive earthquake in Taiwan our monks and nuns risked their lives to go into the remote mountains and experienced falling rocks while traveling on mountain roads day and night to help whoever they could find. I wonder whether Ven. Santikaro would want to risk his life to help the nuns in Thailand with their unequal status? I deeply regret reading the venerable's article, although he said it was not his personal feeling. If he has no motive whatsoever, how could he have summarized what others have said and then put it in writing? As a monastic, I think he should not have followed the ways of secular people. He should have followed what the Buddha taught.

Mr. Sulak, I know you are always fair and like to help people and I invite you to bring a team of people, including Ven. Santikaro, to Fo Guang Shan to stay for a few days or even a few months to collect facts and investigate what Fo Guang Shan has done for the people of Taiwan. Fo Guang Shan is promoting Buddhism and we follow the bodhisattva vows to liberate all sentient beings. I look forward to your assistance.

Yours in the Dharma,
Bhiksuni Chueh Men
Executive General

Needham, MA

16 October 2000

Dear Sulak,

I so appreciate all your work, and especially the Buddhist Muslim dialogue on *Alternative Politics for Asia* and your very interesting book on Pridi. Kept wishing you were here with us at the Interfaith Peace Council meeting last month. So good to have Chandra Muzaffa with us.

I have been very ill ever since that meeting. Just now beginning to recover.

You and your work are in my thoughts and prayers.

With loving thoughts,
Elise Boulding

Sharpham House
Ashprington, Totnes, Devon
27 October 2000

Dear Sulak,

I noticed that you threatened to cut me off if I do not pay for my subscription to *Seeds of Peace* and I would hate for that to happen; so please find herewith a check for £ 100 to help you carry on.

My dream of visiting Siam has faded into the now impossible distance, so you remain my only living contact.

Best wishes,
Maurice Ash

12 July 2000

International Campaign for Tibet

Dear Sulak,

I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation on behalf of all of us at ICT for your participation in the July 1st March for Tibet and the other ICT events surrounding the vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Washington D.C.

The entire series of events was a profound success. The D.C. police crowd estimate for the March on Saturday was 8,000 people—the largest March for Tibet ever in the U.S. The following day, His Holiness the Dalai Lama spoke to more than 45,000 people in the National Mall capping-off the Folklife Festival, which exposed more than a million people to the Tibetan Diaspora and their culture. Finally, the week's crowning moment was the announcement by the World Bank on July 7th that they will not fund the Tibet population resettlement project in Amdo. The Veritable Samdhong Rinpoche delivered a moving speech at the celebration party that evening. His works captured the true meaning of what we as a movement accomplished in our 15-month endeavor: "You may call it a victory, but it is not a victory for a person, or for a group of people, or for a country. But this victory is a victory for justice: a victory for truth; a victory for non-violence; a victory for the preservation of the environment; a victory for the good of humanity."

We hope that you enjoyed the programs while you were here in Washington. Thank you again. We couldn't have done it without you. I look forward to speaking to you in the near future.

Best regards,
John Ackerly
President

16 Dec 2000

Dear Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa,

I am writing to you some words and thoughts about the Sacred Music Festival in Chiang Mai. It was a unique experience for each and every person who tasted of the varieties of the program. The sphere of music is so vast and there the limitations of language, caste, class, and creed, religion and various paths are galloping to the sovereign unity of ecstasy. My heart was full of energy and my breath was taken away by each and every program. The last day, under a huge tree with enchanted greeneries, we sat and the same ecstasy was experienced. The vibration of the atmosphere was so enchanted that it cannot be described. While there I remembered my foot march on Boodan Movement with Vinoba Bhave. My elder brother's wife used to take part in the foot march and she was a very good musician. With each day in villages, she used to sing first and then deliver lectures. With the exertion of the work she became ill with throat cancer. So the vocal music stopped but she created a music friends circle in the Sangli district. The famous artists from that area used to come each Thursday with their own instruments and the ultimate result was the same atmosphere as the Sacred Music Festival. She died in 1992 but the music circle still goes on.

Yours sincerely,
N.V. Kulkarni

Nike and Tiger Woods

In November, Tiger Woods was awarded an honorary degree in Sports Science from a local university. At the ceremony, over 40 workers demonstrated to raise awareness about conditions at Nike factories. It was the first time Thai laborers protested against a retailer, marking a new strategy for connecting with the international movement against sweatshops and using the power of negative advertising to pressure local factories. The letter below was distributed to Nike representatives, supporters, and the press.

14 November 2000
Tiger Woods
Shangri-La Hotel
Bangkok

Dear Tiger Woods,

We are grateful for the chance to present you with information about the situation of Nike workers in Thailand. First, we would like to be clear that we have the utmost respect for your skill and perseverance as an athlete. Second, we wish to express that Thai workers need the jobs that Nike provides and are willing to work hard. However, no one should have to experience the deplorable working conditions and wages that Nike employees face.

It is estimated that there are 70,000 workers producing Nike products in Thailand. Additionally, thousands of Thais are employed as migrant laborers at factories producing for Nike in Taiwan. It is on behalf of these tens of thousands of workers that we appeal to you to use your influence as a respected athlete and benefactor of Nike's success to push for better working conditions.

Mr. Woods, your current contract with Nike nets you $100 million(US) over a five year period. In contrast, an average Nike worker in Bangkok earns the Thai minimum wage of 162 Baht per day ($4) and workers in the provinces earn 130 Baht per day. Even though Nike workers are earning the daily minimum wage, most of them end up working far more than an eight hour day. Many of them routinely work until 10pm and sometimes until 2am to earn overtime pay that they need to make ends meet. Many workers are not paid hourly, but by piece, causing them to stay long hours to finish quotas.

Aside from not earning enough, Nike workers in Thailand face abysmal working conditions. Workers often are not issued proper safety equipment and suffer job injuries. Thai migrant workers at Nike factories in Taiwan are only permitted to use the bathroom only twice a day, leading workers to suffer kidney infections and other health problems. When workers organize and try to improve these conditions they are harassed or fired. Or worse, the factory closes and shifts to non-union production where wages and benefits are even worse. For instance, in September the Thai Iryo Garment factory, which produced for Nike, shut down. Nike shifted production to VT Garment in Sathupradit and Garment Tech factory in Bangkok, neither of which has a union.

Mr. Woods, we ask that you use your influence with Nike to push for the following requests:

* Nike has to set the same standard for their workers' living and provide labour protection to every worker throughout the world.
* Nike has to pay a living wage that enables a worker and two dependents to be able to live like human beings.
* Nike has to respect workers union rights and provide protection to labour leaders and respect collective bargaining rights.
* Nike has to stop using sub-contracting and sweatshops that are not protected by law.
* Nike has to comply with Occupational Health and Safety working environment standards.

Endorsed by:
Thai Iryo Garment Workers Union
Par Garment Workers Union
The Textile Garment and Leather Federation of Thailand
The Paper and Printing Federation of Thailand
All State Enterprises Workers Federation
State Railway Workers Union
Labour Coordinating Center
Thai Labour Campaign
Center for Labour Information Service and Training
Student Federation of Thailand

My dear Sulak,

I started writing this letter some time in May, but I put it aside when I got to reminiscing about the late 70's, thinking that I should sleep on it and then review it to see if I had allowed myself to get too sentimental. But then I got busy (even in prison?) with preparations for my defense and it became the letter's fate to lie in a corner of my cell for a few months. I am sorry if I have kept you anxious and wondering if I had received the readings materials you sent (most of it through Dr.Chandra Muzaffar). One of the first things I did after my conviction on August 8 was to return to this letter.

I remember now how amazed I was at the coincidence of receiving the May - August issue of *Seeds of Peace* at a time when Pridi Banomyong's centennary was being celebrated. I have always been in awe of Pridi, for his dedication and sacrifices in the name of democracy and humanity. During much of that week I had been trying to recall all that I have read and heard about his ardous political pilgrimage. So you can imagine how my normally dreary cell seemed to brighten up when I received the Pridi materials. And it was surprising that the guards allowed more materials to be brought in for me than they normally would. I am certain that it was providential; Pridi himself must have willed it from the Great Beyond. Reading his speeches again and contemplating afresh on his egalitarian vision, I can't help but marvel at his intellectual prowess and tireless work for freedom and democracy. Now, more than ever, I empathise with him in his loathing for authoritarianism. No doubt, your book *Powers That Be* should be essential reading for the uninitiated or for anyone who needs a deeper understanding of Pridi and what he stood for. Indeed, I think it redressers the paucity of materials (in English!) on this very important Asian Renaissance figure. For me, it makes wonderful reading not only for the light it sheds on Pridi's life, but also for its candor and humility in exposing the "old" Sulak and explaining the "new" Sulak. What a brilliant scheme for a book! Has anyone told you it's a veritable tour de force?

I have asked Dr Chandra for a copy of your collaborative effort *Alternative Politics for Asia.* Having read a review of it, I think it will make for intriguing reading. I admire your consistency and tenacity in pursuing cross-cultural dialogue, your belief in extracting the best from different traditions.

I must confess that before my acquaintance with you, I knew precious little about Buddhism, although I thought I was rather familiar with its teachings. It was due to you that I learned to appreciate its spiritual richness. You would recall our initial acquaintance in the late 70s, when I visited your bookshop and climbed upto your house (yes, literally on a tree, how astounding!) — and listened to your eloquent discourses on "Siam" and her cultures, traditions, history and future. I remember joining you in meditation in a monastery on top of a small hill. And I shall never forget the serenity and tranquility that coursed through my whole being as I immersed myself in prayers and *zikralluh.*

You've gone through the pyre yourself, enduring so many trials and tribulations, the most famous of which must be the *les majeste* persecution. But you've come out a winner and will forever be remembered for the sacrifices you have made in your indefatiqable struggle for democracy and justice. And then, of course, there is also your personal charm. But I believe the only reward you seek is spiritual enrichment. At the height of the *les majeste* affair, our dear friend, Dr Muhammad Hj. Salleh exhorted me to do what I could in your interest. Have I ever told you that when I conveyed my concerns to the then Thai Ambassador in K.L. and the Minister of Finance, they were both apologetic and embarassed? They nonetheless assured that they would intimate to the authorities my sentiments regarding the matter. At least they did not have the temerity to mouth the usual garbage about non-interference and what not.

I am sure you keep in close touch with other members of the 'Southeast Asian Intellectual Group', which you initiated in the late 70s. For myself, I must say that I have benefited immensely from that fraternity. The late Soedjatmoko appounded extempore with such brillance — his views on *The Limits to Growth*; William Lim of Singapore with his enchanting humane architecture and Muhammad Hij. Salleh's advocacy of cultural empowerment without compromising artistic integrity. But it was your meticulous planning, personal attention and charm that made such gatherings unique and memorable. In fact, it encouraged me in my own efforts towards civilizational dialogue. It paved the way for our Christian-Muslim and Islam-Confucianism dialogues. By the way, I understand that there was an Ariya-Vinaya Conference last month. Any advice please?

Incidentally, when my daughter Murul Izzah returned from Bangkok, she conveyed to me the concerns of some friends over my view vis-a-vis the International Monetary Fund. Apparently, the Mahathir propaganda has borne some results. Of course, he would make much of my personal friendship with Michel Camdessus and ignore the fact that I have consistently and vehemently opposed IMF conditionalities that take no account of social realities in debtor countries and that I have, on various occasions, publicly rebuked the Fund for being benign towards European and South American debtors and inordinately strict with African and Asian debtors. Minister Tarrin and his predecessors would attest to the fact that I have been more vocal than others in criticising the IMF for being too rigid in its prescriptions, showing no regard for the need for social safety nets. And the Indonesians will remember that I castigated the Fund for delaying its disbursement to Jakarta.

But then, corrupt and authoritarian leaders will always try to cover their malevolence. When something goes wrong that they cannot cover up, they will always try to pin the blame on others. The crisis of the late 1990s, although undoubtedly precipitated by foreign speculators, was also the fruit of corruption and imprudence. In Malaysia, for example, my warning against ostentatious mega projects were unheaded for years, precisely because the benefeciaries were Mahathir's children and cronies. I agree with Moncur Olban (*The Fall and Rise of Nations*) that invariably the objection to the IMF by such leaders is not whether the economy is people-oriented or environment-friendly but the IMF's insistence on good governance, accountability and transparency.

I am sorry to have brought up this unpleasantness in a letter that had its origin in more spiritual promptings. I should have reserved ths outburst for another letter. So dear friend, I should not like to end on a sour note. Let me once again thank you, from the depths of my soul, for such nourishing gifts—the books, the journals and, I am certain, the prayers. If you have the time, please write to your admirer and friend.

Anwar Ibrahim

A Note on the 29th Anniversary of *Pacarayasara*: A gadfly in Thai journalism

This paper was originally presented at the Inter-Asia Social and Cultural Study Conference, held at the U. of Kyushu, Fukuoka, Japan in December, 2000.

Depicted with fiery piles of books, the cover of the first issue of *Pacarayasara* in July 1971 read "burn the books down". It marked the awakening of Thai intellectuals, who besides taking part in struggling for political freedom, viewed the unchaining of education as a primary solution through which true liberation can be attained. Thus was born *Pacarayasara*, a fervent call for intellectual freedom amidst the iron curtain of two previous decades of military rule.

The golden era of democracy has lived a short life in Thai history. Turning democratic with constitutional monarchy in 1932, Siam faced an uphill task to educate the public of the new political system. Mr. Pridi Banomyong, who led the non-violent coup to take power from the Siamese monarchy, established Thammasart University of Moral and Political Science, intended to educate the masses about democratic principles. Despite his great contributions in education, economics and politics, the lack of public awareness coupled with the rifts among the democrats paved way for the return of military regime time and again and the re-empowerment of the monarchy. These two institutions have worked hand in hand to reinforce each other at the expense of freedom and quality of life throughout the course of modern Thai history.

During the 1950's and 1960's students were tamed with repressive measures. Thammasart university became the breeding ground for avant-garde political activists and there were attempts by the army to distort its original principles. Political gathering was made illegal and students were encouraged to attend social functions, to dance and sing in order to forget suffering of the majority poor. The constitution was torn down and a row of dictators succeeded to rule the country.

The *Social Science Review*, initially launched by Sulak Sivaraksa in 1963, was a tool to raise awareness among students about American hegemony over Thai politics, society and economy, and the unjust dictatorial rule of the army. At the risk of censorship, in-depth information and rare commentaries were published about the decisive roles of American advisors in Thai social and economic plans and the army. Group discussions were organized in various disguises to enable truth-thirsty students to meet, exchange ideas and to learn from scholars in various fields.

New educational pedagogies by leading educators such as Paolo Frieire, Ivan Illich, Paul Goodman, John Holt, etc., were translated into Thai and circulated among the closed groups. The first issue of *Pacarayasara* was born at the initiative of a group of students in the Faculty of Education at a state university. The front cover and the articles inside caused much controversy and carried on the message and spirit of the *Social Science Review*. The journal prompted students to join social and political mobilizations during the two bloody mass uprisings in October 1973 and 1976. At that time much of the interest of the editorial board was shifted toward propagating nonviolence as a means for social and political change. Another focus of the board was on alternative development policies such as the Gandhian village republic.

After the military coup in 1976, many students, who subscribed to socialism and communism, fled into jungles and joined the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). Despite draconian censorship from the army junta, publications on socialism and communism were produced and circulated discreetly. As to *Pacarayasara*, the contents were predominated by thoughts of relevant thinkers and theorists such as Karl Marx, Mao Zedong, Antonio Gramsci, Che Guvara, Fidel Castro.

Until around mid 1980's, *Pacarayasara* was steered by the next generation of student activists, many of whom had defected from the CPT and had pursued higher education here and abroad. Many joined, or formed non-governmental organizations to undertake activities in various fields, mainly rural development. *Pacarayasara*'s contents became diverse again and it became a forum of exchange among these activists on various subjects including environmental problems, farming problems, and social development. The journal began to challenge the present trend of development in which much emphasis was given to economic development at the expense of the poor, nature, society.

Now, apart from its sharp criticisms, the current editorial

staff attempts to present solutions; for example, in response to the effects of the green revolution, we brought attention to natural or non-chemical farming. We invited Mr. Masanobu Fukuoka, who despite his lack of reputation in his own country, Japan, was widely respected for his pioneering in natural farming. His book, *One Straw Revolution*, was translated into Thai and we organized a series of seminars and exposure trips. This marked an era when many farmers were converting back to their traditional subsistence agriculture in order to avoid being trapped in the cycles of indebtedness and extreme poverty. We also presented to readers our own model of self-subsistent farmers such as Prince Siddhiporn Kridakara, who turned back to his aristocratic background, and embarked on settling in his experimental farmland. His saying "Money is illusion, food is the substance" became the buzz words among intellectuals who discarded their middle class background and opted for voluntary simplicity.

Nowadays, in the age of globalization whereby big multinational companies have reaped huge profits out of scarcity, starvation and poverty of the majority, *Pacarayasara* stands as a source of information and inspiration to awaken people to fight against the corporate rule. We have published a series of articles by knowledgeable thinkers and activists including Walden Bello, and have reviewed numerous relevant books such those by Susan George, Hazel Henderson, etc.

At the same time, we are truthful to our roots and explore the Buddhist and Siamese teachings and tenets that contribute to the cessation of these sufferings. In the wake and shock of the economic collapse in mid 1997, many rightly blamed the unstable and corrupt world financial and capital market. Not satisfied with just critiquing the present economic structure, we were then the first to introduce to Thai public a system of community currency also known as "LETS" (Local Exchange and Trading System). Later on when a group of villagers in a small district in Northeast of Thailand began to practice this system themselves, we have kept reporting their progress and our previous articles in community currency were circulated widely to educate them about the details of the system.

Another unique aspect of *Pacarayasara* is, it is not simply a forum for veteran and prolific writers, but for young writers and critics as well. During my editorship I have invited many young graduates and grassroots activists to write for me on different subjects. Some help review English books on various issues pertaining to globalization and others write on special topics, such as an article on the relevance of classical music to the contemporary world written by a graduate from Germany.

One last aspect, which absolutely makes our journal stand out from the rest of Thai media, is our courage to publish articles, news and reviews critical of the monarchy. Three decades ago, political dissidents were punished as communists but in the last two decades, when the power of the monarchy was restored by a military dictator, *Lèse majesté* has been widely used to persecute democratic fighters. With its severe punishment, three years in jail minimum and fifteen years maximum, none of us has dared to criticize the institution.

Many dams and infrastructures that displace poor people have been constructed as part of the Royal Projects. The first dam ever built in Thailand was named after the king, and a series of dams afterward the other members of the royal family. The Pa Sak dam was recently completed with many people removed from their land with inadequate compensations. Corruption in the project regarding land compensation was widely recorded by NGOs and many villagers who were abused by the project's officers were interviewed, not a single newspaper or any other media carried their stories. Praise has been heaped on the success of the project.

With the monarchy as the major shareholder of the Siam Commercial Bank (no.4 biggest in Thailand), the Thai Cement Company, several big construction companies, and most importantly, the Crown Bureau Property (the owner of one-third of the land in Bangkok), its role should not be exempted from criticisms. Yet, with scary consequence, the Thai media have ruled out reporting on these issues. I think it is only *Pacarayasara* that publishes such material and we enjoy receiving contributions from anonymous writers. However, we are not anarchists. We respect the monarchy and see the utmost necessity of having it for people's unity. Yet, with its not being subject to transparency and accountability, its chance to survive is slim.

Pacarayasara is not simply entertainment for intellectuals, but is an instrumental stimulant in a changing society. We are committed to presenting news that might be shunned by most media due to its controversial content or hefty punitive fines. However, we are rooted in our culture and attempt to explore deeper into our own cultural and spiritual traditions. We are firm on critiquing, but at the same time, presenting solutions, though we are far from reaching our said goals.

Pipob Udomittipong

The Thai Mass Media and the Modern Thai Monarchy

To better understand why the Thai mass media lavish a fanfare of publicity on the royal family we need to know a bit of historical background. In 1957 Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat launched a military coup d'etat, which woefully lacked any basis of legitimacy. He ripped apart the Constitution and clamped down on the parliament. Remember that when Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram and his cohorts rode on the crest of a military putsch to power in 1947, they used the protection of the constitution and democracy as a pretext. Although the new constitution they promulgated was much less democratic, the Phibun clique still tolerated the existence of the Thai parliament. Put differently, they still—no matter how opportunistically and cynically—upheld the spirit of the 1932 Revolution. Thus between 1932 and 1957 Nation, Religion, Monarchy and Constitution remained potent, galvanizing symbols. On the other hand, for want of a legitimizing factor, Sarit focused solely on protecting the monarchy against the threat of Communism.

It is true that the Phibun clique also cited the protection of the monarchy as one of their pretexts for initiating the coup. But their bogeyman was Pridi Banomyong, not international Communism. They mendaciously accused Pridi of attempting to topple the monarchy in order to install himself as president. In reality, Pridi was a firm supporter of the monarchy. And if there was anyone who really aspired to become president it was Phibun. The Phibun clique used the monarchy as a political tool. The monarchy was preserved but kept firmly under the iron fist of the prime minister. In fact, protecting the monarchy to a certain extent meant isolation and confinement. Except for an annual three-week-long vacation at the palace in Hua Hin, the king was not allowed to travel anywhere in his kingdom. Furthermore, the Phibun dictatorship only permitted him to perform ceremonial duties. Needless to say, the king felt highly uncomfortable and restless. As a result, the military clique allowed the king to establish and operate his own radio station, to find his little personal corner to blow off steam. It was the only station that acted as the amplifier of views and activities of the royal family. For the other stations, the prime minister was virtually the only news.

Sarit revolutionized everything however. He indulged the monarchy with every possible privilege and comfort. For instance, Sarit returned the helm of the Crown Property Bureau to the king. Moreover, strongly supported by the mass media, he fanned a cult of the royal family. News not only on the king but also on the other members of the royal family uncontrollably proliferated, and so did their portraits and monuments. News on the royal family was transformed into daily news. Essentially, the Sarit clique deified the king and the royal family. In the public eyes, the king became something akin to the Almighty. *Lese majeste* was first invoked in 1957. Individuals accused of criticizing the royal family were invariably imprisoned. (See David Streckfuss, ed., *Modern Thai Monarchy and Cultural Politics* for further details on this issue.) Likewise, those harboring doubts about the benevolence of US foreign policy were all summarily dismissed as communists and incarcerated. This was so because Washington developed a patron-client relationship with Sarit. The US was the planet that the Thai satellite revolved around.

In brief, the Sarit regime cast a powerful and long lasting spell, making most Thais mindlessly fear and revere the king and the royal family. Many Thais used to cringe in fear before monks. Not to appear immodest, I was the first to break the taboo and start publicly criticizing monks. And I was the first and still am the only public critic of the royal family. I believe that without transparency and accountability, both the religious and monarchical institutions—two important pillars of Thai society—will ultimately atrophy. The absence of public criticism of the monarchy will for example breed shameless sycophancy. Thus we must all attempt to be like the child in Hans Anderson's work, pointing out that the emperor has no clothes on. Lamentably, most Thais, especially the mass media, still find this simple feat unconscionable and indigestible. For instance, we are too timid to declare that H. R. H. Princess Sirindhorn is acting as the public relations officer of China by frequenting that country. Remember that her visits become part of daily news,

single-mindedly lauding the grandeur and spectacles of China and thereby sidestepping the fact that Beijing is one of the worst human rights abusers in the world. We also fail to question whether the Thai taxpayers are subsidizing the regular trips abroad by members of the royal family. Never uttering a whisper of criticism, the mass media are always full of praise for the royal family—in part done automatically out of fear. On the other hand, the mass media often lack the knowledge to tackle religious issues. Take the case of Dhammakaya. Until recently, many in the mass media are caught unawares of the issue even though Venerable Payutto, to give a random example, has been highlighting the problem for almost two decades.

* * *

Sarit 'invited' in the Americans and welcomed their ideology of capitalism and consumerism. Backed by the US, Sarit proposed that money is the solution to every problem or issue. The mainstream mass media, which acted as Sarit's fawning lapdog, happily engaged in self-censorship and merged the dual themes of monarchy and capitalism together. Corporations and investors soon took their cue from the media. So when we see that corporations are exploiting the image of the king and the royal family in their advertisements today, we have to understand that this is one of Sarit's legacies. This shameless practice has become widely accepted—is considered completely unobjectionable. Deified, many members of the royal family such as King Rama V are also portrayed as sacred, requiring unequivocal worship and devotion. Such obsessive and foolish practice is not only ridiculous but also reflects cowardice: the Thais are taught to fear the 'supernatural' and the magical.

What is inhibiting the mass media from speaking or at least confronting the truth, from honestly and sincerely criticizing the monarchy? Fear is definitely one of the important factors. The penalty for lese majeste is really harsh these days. Worse, the Thai judicial system and attorneys are often highly conservative. Most of the time, the defendant is found guilty. So far, the sole exception seems to be my case. I was acquitted of the charge of lese majeste. The court even lauded my "courageous" attempt to preserve and protect the Thai monarchy.

The second factor is probably ignorance. For instance, I won the lese majeste case in part because the plaintiff, Suchinda Kraprayoon, was blind to many essential facts. I discovered that King Rama V had abolished the practice of prostrating in worship of the king or royal family members in 1873; he declared that it was barbaric and uncivilized. Many people do not know about these things and ignorance breeds fear. As a result, a mist of erroneous, mystical, and improper beliefs still shrouds the Thai monarchy. If left uncorrected, these misunderstandings may sap the vitality of the monarchy.

In general, the Thai intellectuals are too preoccupied with self-preservation and self-promotion. They are obsessed with rising to the top of the politico-economic pecking order. Hence they shun from raising embarrassing issues and from questioning the hegemonic values and attitudes: to rise to the top, one has to be like the 'masters.' Many are also profoundly indoctrinated. A central but fallacious tenet pounded into our heads via formal education is that the future of the country lies in preserving the sanctity of the monarchy, and hence it is beyond reproach. Banning the film *Anna and the King* is incomprehensibly reactionary, a move that will likely tightened the noose of illusions. Most school and university textbooks severely lack critical perspectives on the royal family. For instance, they do not even mention the fact that King Rama II ordered the execution of his very own younger sister. As a rule of thumb, those who attained power and privileges are all unequivocally glorified—the only exception being powerful individuals who ran into conflict with the royal family such as King Taksin.

* * *

The simple point I want to convey is that a human person who is unwilling to confront the truth will gradually lose his or her humanity. The Buddha achieved enlightenment because he discovered the Four Noble Truths. The truth is the noblest thing. And when the truth is linked with goodness and beauty, the absence of the truth spells unpleasantness and repulsiveness. When we are afraid of the truth we will not know what goodness and beauty are. At present, wealth and status are used as indicators of goodness. Needless to say, something is terribly wrong with this. Bootlicking is handsomely rewarded. The Thai people seem to be confused about the meaning of goodness, beauty, and truth. We must look at the truth in the eyes. Take the case of Gandhi. The truth galvanized him into courageously and non-

violently fighting British colonialism; goodness and beauty do not entail the use of violence.

The Thai monarchy should move towards cultivating the truth, goodness, and beauty—in a word towards nurturing simplicity. The monarch must first be awakened to the virtue of simplicity before he can embark on positive revolutionary changes. Pridi Banomyong, a founding father of Siamese democracy and advocator of constitutional monarchy, realized the virtue of simplicity. A year before he passed away, Pridi wanted to carpet his room to buffer against the sting of Parisian winter. He soon realized that he could not even afford to buy himself this modest comfort. During the premiership of Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram, the king had to ask permission from the government before buying a personal vehicle. Therefore, the Thais tended to sympathize with him. Nowadays, he has an excess of everything. The Crown Property Bureau owns 30 per cent of the land in Bangkok. The king is not even aware of all the Bureau's policies and activities—of how it forcefully evicted people from their lands in order to make way for the construction of high-rise buildings. Of course, the king is not to be blamed for the Bureau's policies. The point is that the Bureau is completely unaccountable. The Bureau also had a share of responsibility for the nation's financial collapse because of its excessive borrowing from international lenders.

This means that the monarchy has to be more transparent. This also calls for further devolution of monarchical power and the redistribution of royal wealth. It is true that the king has been abstaining from visiting foreign countries. But the members of his family are frequent fliers. Where do all the subsidies for these trips come from? How many times each year does each of them visit a foreign country? No doubt, part of the money comes from the Thai taxpayers. Another source of subsidy is CP; taking money from CP is even more dangerous than from taxpayers.

If one holds steadfastly to goodness, beauty, and truth there is no reason to fear criticism and questioning. One's innocence will shine through. The monarch is the *raja*, literally meaning the leader whom people are sincere towards. Hence there should be no sycophancy. On his coronation day, the king declared "I will reign the kingdom with justice." It is encouraging and heartening to know that the king is paying very close attention to the well-being of his peoples: for instance, he has toured every nook and cranny of the country, visiting his peoples. Some have even argued that the king's trail of sweat can be found in every square kilometer of the country. But the Thais do not only want to see the king's devotion and sweat. We also want him to redistribute monarchical power and wealth. We do not want to see a monarch that is above the nation-state. Real and meaningful changes are needed. Otherwise the monarchy will be reaping the seeds of its own destruction. The 1932 Revolution engendered the first wave of changes, enabling the monarchy to prolong its life by some six decades. Back then the monarchy—in reality, the advisors and entourage of Rama VII, not the king himself—was rather indifferent to politico-economic reforms and changes. I call for the preservation of the monarchy via meaningful reforms and changes. I want to see a reign of justice, not a theocracy. I want to see the monarchy taking the side of the people and of truth, goodness, and beauty. This requires confronting the truth. And it requires transparency and accountability, two elements that help contribute to goodness and beauty.

Sulak Sivaraksa

A Note from the Publisher

The US Office Memorandum that is reproduced here is simply intended to provide evidence to Sulak Sivaraksa's assertion in his article "The Thai Mass Media and the Modern Thai Monarchy" that King Rama IX was not widely looked up to in the immediate years after his coronation. This is in sharp contrast to his present status, which, as Sulak Sivaraksa argues, was largely invented during the dictatorship of Marshal Sarit Thanarat. The US Office Memorandum also reflects the political turbulence in Siam after World War Two.

Mr. Landon's observation in the Office Memorandum that "It may by true that Phumiphon killed his brother either intentionally or accidentally" does *not* reflect the view of either the publisher or the editors of *Seeds of Peace*. Again, Landon's observation highlights the state of profound political uncertainty or confusion after the Second World War in general and after the death of King Rama VIII in particular.

Office Memorandum
United States Government
To: FE — Mr Butterworth
From: SEA — Mr. Landon
Subject: Siam
Date: February 20, 1948
Confidential

It is presently agreed among the U.S., British, French, and Chinese governments that if Khuang Aphaiwong is designated Prime Minister and if his government receives a vote of confidence from Parliament that formal notification of such development will be acknowledged by the respective representatives of the foregoing governments at Bangkok and normal relations then resumed with the Siamese Government. It is further agreed that if someone other than Khuang is designated Prime Minister the interested governments will consult before taking steps to resume formal relations with Siam.

The most recent reports in connection with the assassination of King Ananda to the effect that Khuang is preparing to announce that King Phumiphon killed his brother accidentally, that Phumiphon will abdicate and that Prince Chumphot will become King, inject new elements into the situation which may profoundly disturb present political alignments.

In 1945 Khuang was raised to political power by Pridi Banomyong who is now in exile. Khuang's personal ambitions led to a break with Pridi within nine months. Khuang was again raised to political power by Phibun in November 1947 when Phibun seized control of the government from Pridi by a coup d'etat. Phibun, like Pridi, thought that Khuang would be a willing pawn and a pliable follower. Apparently Khuang is again engaging in ambitious maneuvering which may lead to a break with Phibun.

Phibun is antagonized by Khuang's proposal that Phumiphon be named the killer of his brother and that Chumphot become King. It may be true that Phumiphon killed his brother either intentionally or accidentally. Such a possibility was indicated in an earlier memorandum by me on this subject. Politically, it does not matter whether Phumiphon did kill his brother, if the purpose behind the accusation is to put Chumphot on the throne. This then becomes a deliberate attempt by Khuang to restore the monarchy to some of its former power and to establish Khuang and the Pramoj brothers firmly as leaders of a royalist party and of the nation. They apparently hope that they can sustain themselves with Chumphot on the throne because Chumphot is a mature person of considerable wealth who has had long experience with palace politics, who has a large personal following among the Siamese and Chinese residents in Siam, and who is driven by an ambitious wife who, as the intelligent daughter of one of Siam's cleverest Foreign Ministers is thoroughly familiar with internal and foreign political machinations.

The situation is further disturbed politically by the corrupt activities of Luang Kach Songgram who is supporting Khuang and who controls, under Phibun, an important segment of the military. The corrupt practices of Luang Kach have antagonized Phibun who regards lush corruption as one of his own privileges and who expects followers like Luang Kach to take less conspicuous shares. Furthermore, as Phibun has already enriched himself, he is able to take a moral attitude toward Luang Kach and deplore his corrupt practices in order to win favor at home and abroad.

Phibun and Pridi are political opponents within the same political party. They are equally opposed to any return of the monarchy to power. They do not object to the present King because he is immature and without a following. Khuang may be forcing them into each other's arms by the specter of Chumphot as King. Khuang and his following are working to establish a new political party distinct from the one which is split between Pridi and Phibun. Khuang cannot be successful if he is supported only by Luang Kach and his military following together with Chumphot and his royalist following. Phibun is essential to him for a stable government.

If the present indications of a Pridi-Phibun amalgamation continue, then we may expect a situation to develop similar to the one in December 1938 when Pridi and Phibun found that they needed each other and set up a coalition government.



Searching for Peace: The Road to Transcend

Johann Galtung and Carl G. Jacobsen (2000)

Pluto Press ISBN 0-7453-1613-1

Searching for Peace mmm, it sounds like a dhamma book—I can relate to that - I first thought when asked to review this tome from Galtung and Jacobsen. I was immediately thrown into the deep end of interstate and global conflicts, rather heavy going for someone who has spent the last few years with extremely limited access to newspapers let alone CNN.

It is very densely written and all the background about Milosevic and NATO/AMP expansion initially seemed somewhat unreal to me. I felt quite lost in the anagrams- TFF, CPSU, EMU (I know that one—its an Australian flightless bird isn't it?) but in persevering something clicked and it began to get interesting. I was being drawn to reflect on the complexities of human nature and it became apparent that the discussion was leading somewhere.

The book is divided into four parts. Part One looks at perspectives and assumptions within conflict resolution in two chapters: "Peace-making as Realpolitik, Conflict Resolution and Oxymoron", followed by "Our War Culture's Defining Parameters".

In the 1990s government level and UN initiatives for conflict resolution reverted to and/or are still stuck in old dogmas that have failed. The authors point to new approaches that are solidly based in the grassroots with individuals becoming involved in research and praxis at a 'real' level as opposed to the 'realpolitik'.

However, while the need for bottom up, grassroots approaches are alluded to the authors also suggest that "the NGO idealist route that attempts to nurture and expand nodules of peace culture is often pursued with dangerous, conflict encouraging naivete, due perhaps to the realpolitik at the local level."

All the while though the *Transcend* writers deal with top end, meta and meso level conflicts—there is very little grass to chew on here. The discussion suffers slightly at this point with the slight performative contradiction of implying that the *Transcend* approach is somehow more viable than these other NGO attempts. This may well be but at this point they have yet to convince the reader.

Having said that the aim of their book is spelt out and it is to "broaden the repertoire of skills and knowledge in approaching conflict and to establish conflict transformation as a viable and necessary alternative to traditional (violence enhancing) outside-state (top down) interventions." By and through critiquing various 20th century situations and responses, both theoretical and practical, the authors point to the need for a new approach, new thinking and creativity.

Once the discussion moves to detailing the role of media coverage in conflicts it does become obvious that the authors of *Searching for Peace* have done the research. They are certainly not being naïve when they look at the biases inherent in such players that add fuel to the flame, making peacekeeping — let alone peacemaking — at the highest levels virtually impossible since, as they maintain, anything played out in the public arena tends to revert to zero-sum.

The chapter on Our War Cultures Defining Parameters defines the parameters of an ostensibly European war culture and takes a look at capitalism versus Marxism, pointing out that the original postulates have been co-opted and skewed. It is argued that "in the thwarting of developmental prospects- an integral factor in systemic failures—is clearly today's primary violence generator". Therein lies the seed cause of violence.

Thus violence is structural so it also needs to be tackled at the top end. In this they have justified their approach while not precluding vital work at the grassroots. They mention a couple of transcending and sustaining options as possible parts of a solution. The Tobin Tax on speculative financial transactions, even at a miniscule percentage, would reap sufficient for all the necessary aid programmes in the world and the Miller Tax is a suggested tax on the use of 'the global commons'.

Part Two focuses on some of the major conflict formations of the last century using the *Transcend* formula of prognosis, diagnosis and therapy. They begin with the world economic crisis and charge the IMF with being a doctor offering only one therapy. Holistic therapies are needed as the ideology of the market has been proven to have

extreme limitations.

In the short term they suggest restrictions on the borderless financial economy through tax, accountability, transparency and the re-introduction of the traditional state border economy. In the medium term, which is less superficial, they suggest radical redistribution and the building of modern subsistence economies in all communities based on micro credit, alternative technologies and local money. For the long term there would need to be fundamental change in the basis of values, re-instating altruistic solidarity instead of the egoistic cost/benefit economism. Human projects would be more spiritual and necessarily less material.

For peace to exist basic needs through livelihood need to be guaranteed and the corporations that rule the world don't and won't do that. States can no longer do that because their tax bases are eroding as the welfare sector grows. Who can effect some change here? Consumers, these authors maintain, can impact on all markets except arms, drugs and pornography.

In much of the preceding discussion the authors' own position is quite apparently grounded in the covert, alternative realpolitik. What follows is more systematic and based in situations that any good student of international relations will be aware of but it also seems to put the authors' approach squarely in the realm of the big players.

They identify five types of conflict formations of the past century that continue to impact the 21st century and the needs that feed the formations, such as; geo-economic, geo-political, geo-military, geo-cultural, and euro-regional.

What Galtung and Jacobsen are attempting to do is to put conflicts in context. Rather sensibly, Sarajevo is given as an example, a geographical intersection and faultline where all these contexts come into play.

We are reminded that there are in fact some 2000 nations fitting into the borders of 200 states with only 20 of these being homogeneous nation-states. As such a nation is a cultural group with territorial claims but all up there may be some 10,000 different cultures on this unequally shared planet of ours. This brings into even more stark relief the demands and agendas of the few over the needs of the many. Therefore if patriarchy were added to the list of conflict formations then the whole world is involved in conflict with men running the conflict formations and women being victims or silent partners.

What can smaller countries do? They suggest that if the big boys have a trade union called the Security Council why not create a trade union of smaller like minded countries? Perhaps more likely at this point in history is a union of like-minded people, NGOs and Peoples' Organisations.

The *Transcend* approach to peace is finally brought to light in Part Three. This section provides an historical overview of 40 conflicts over 40 years: The Road to *Transcend* spoken of in the title.

The story of the road to *Transcend* brings the text back to a human level. This is perhaps the saving grace of the book for those who may feel separated from the conflicts affecting other people and other lands by the buffer of the TV screen and daily life.

The final section, "In Lieu of a Conclusion: Other Thoughts towards a Roadmap", begins by critiquing the role of mediation ("a top down, elitist approach") that relies on representative agreement. They question the concept of mediation itself and explore mediation from the perspective of it being the product of a specific psycho-social environment. The premises of a predominantly western approach are revealed as are the dangers of packaging mediation into a "universal toolkit of skills and exercises"—the marketing of mediation.

Other cultural approaches point more to healing, transforming or transcending conflict but despite recent literature the emphasis still seems to be on resolution through mediation which focuses on conflicts between actors rather that conflicts within them. Paradoxically the focus is also *upon* actors oriented towards individuals and leaders and *away* from the relations and underlying structures that are at the root of conflicts.

Other processes need to be engaged such as peace actor empowerment, strengthening resources and actors at community and grassroots levels. To create a praxis of peace, process is crucial but it requires action on all fronts as it were, and depth, and span. It is necessary to go to the roots of the structures, cosmologies and mindsets sustained by memories of glory and defeat, necessary also to span peacework across all levels of civil society and traditional cultures as well as the state. What is lacking are grassroots movements, people having been left out of the elitist win, lose or draw game of war and peace.

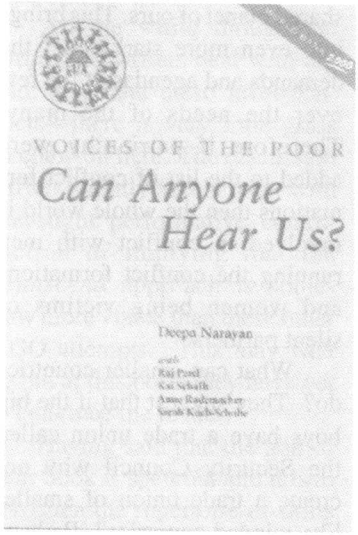
The *Transcend* approach then is an opening up to other possibilities, peace as a verb, something that people do and can do. It is the questioning and exploration of hegemonic premises on all levels in all players. Questioning the white or western or male view of things. Questioning the assumptions about security, security from whom and what, by whom and what and for whom and what. Questioning the validity of a UN Security Council whose five permanent members run 85% of the world's trade in arms. Questioning the false image of peace through the force of arms and recognising the structural and cultural violence that is the core of many of today's wars and humanitarian catastrophes.

Angela Ballard

Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?

Deepa Narayan with Patel, Schaft, Rademacher, and Koch-Schulte
Oxford University Press: 2000 ISBN:0-19-521601-6

In August, the World Bank Poverty Group, part of the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network held a workshop for leaders of people's federations and NGO networks meant to be a forum for leaders to respond to the recent publication of *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?* —a report based on a 60 country study of poor people using PPA methodology (Participatory Poverty Assessment). This methodology is grounded in open-ended questioning and a stated commitment to policy follow-up; the average country visit lasted four months. Deepa Narayan, the Lead Social Development Specialist and Voices of the Poor Team Leader, was recently highlighted in the *New York Times* as an example of a change in outlook at the World Bank. In many ways this is an accurate assessment; the *Voices of the Poor* study and concluding findings are a dramatic detour from traditional Bank reports. The most important change is the primacy given to indigenous knowledge of poor people—both knowledge about the complex conditions and causes of poverty and also knowledge about the biases evident in many Bank programs. The report frequently



uses quotations to allow for the least mediated form of communication possible and the following quote, listed under the heading of "Assets and Vulnerability", is representative of the data gathered in the study:

A lot of people were sending their children to school by using the cattle. Come plowing time, the oxen could be used. Come planning time they would sell the cattle to buy seed and fertilizer. Come drought, a few cattle would be sold to tide the family over till the next harvest. Now with so many kraals (corrals) empty [due to theft], the kids will drop out of school, people will have a problem with farm inputs, and we will be more vulnerable to hunger during the drought. (Swaziland 1997)

The direct quotations are a valuable yet small step in the direction of including the voices of the poor in the decision making process of the international development. The quotations also mark regional patterns and connect material poverty with psychological stress and depression. The privileging of sociological and psychological analyses along with economic logic is another point of engagement with a major critique of the Bank. The attention given to the role of social norms and the iterative relationship between poverty, violence, gender discrimination, and health issues is promising and indicates that a comprehensive proposal based on these findings would include non-economic prescriptions and attention to the destabilization of community that often follows development programs.

The report presents the strengths and assets of poor communities as more than anecdotal success stories. The emphasis on cooperative efforts and individual strategizing for survival is an asset of the report and lays the foundation for

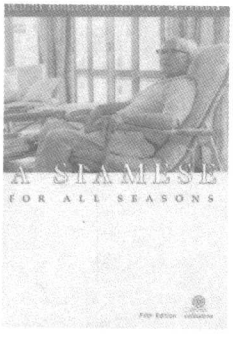
policy initiatives based on already existing strategies. The assessment of survival strategies comes to the conclusion: "given the pressures to survive and their dependency on the rich, the networks of poor people become atomized and serve a survival and social function rather than a transformational or political function . . . Developing organizational capacity of the poor is a long term process that may take 10-20 years and requires long-term financing, trust, and flexibility".

The values of "financing, trust, and flexibility", although important—particularly in the case of rebuilding trust in the value of World Bank projects—are not in the same spirit of policy change initiated by people's networks and based on survival strategies. Community specific and resource-oriented proposals appear to be mandates coming from the studies but the issue of local ownership of projects is not a central focus in the concluding analysis. The discussion of community-driven development is balanced by discussion about increased organizational capacity as a prerequisite. Transparency and accountability, long-standing values of the Bank that are often tied to structural adjustment programs, are again reinforced. These values are crucial to curtail the presence of what political scientist William Robinson calls "polyarchy", a system of procedural democracy controlled by elites, but transparency and accountability should not be used as tools to stall the devolution of authority and community ownership.

The authors of the report affirm that organizations and social networks should be strengthened but the report does not state whether this is for an end other than the conventional neoliberal model of economic development. The omission of a clear mandate to decentralize projects and create strong, self-reliant communities is indicative of the de facto ideology of globalization based on export-oriented development and globally integrated consumer markets. Furthermore, the report does not link better policy to a newly transformed framework for local innovation and international support. Instead, the solution is seen to be a strengthening of middle-level entrepreneurship along with an amelioration of abject poverty.

Throughout discussions of migration, social cohesion, and environmental assets there is no direct assessment about the influence of corporations. Perhaps this is consistent with the experiences of the participants or particular rural locations, nonetheless, the analysis of poverty seems incomplete. By failing to link the patterns of poverty with trends in globalization, the report hints at only marginal policy change. The other two books in the *Voices of the Poor* series: *Crying Out for Change* and *From Many Lands* are similar studies and may fill the gap between valuable research and the need for a related and meaningful change in policy.

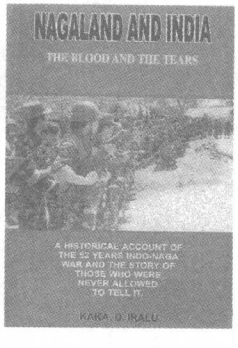
Sonali Chakravarti



A Siamese for All Seasons: Collected Articles by and about Puey Ungphakorn

(5th edition, Komol Keemthong Foundation Publishing House)

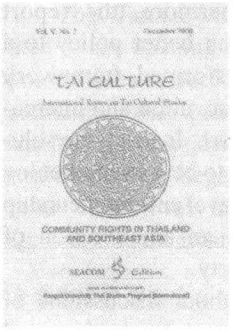
Dr. Puey Ungphakorn is credited as having been Bangkok's foremost city planner and a leading Siamese intellectual. As the governor of the Bank of Thailand he pushed forward the ideas of equitable growth and the need for ethics in economics. The collection includes both his own articles and others' reflections on his work.



Nagaland and India: The Blood and the Tears

Kaka D. Iralu (2000)

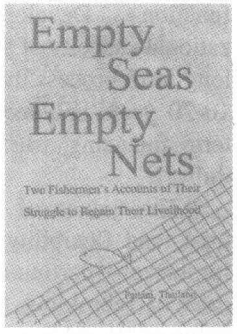
A clearly written and thorough account of the struggle for autonomy in the Indian state located next to Burma. In the 1950's, the people of Nagaland were the victims of torture by the Indian and Burmese governments in order to suppress dissent. Such violence continues today and Iralu provides convincing testimony about this often overlooked struggle.



Tai Culture: International Review on Tai Cultural Studies (Vol V. No. 2)

Second edition:2000

The regional periodical focuses on community rights with case studies in the Hmong, Akha, and Mon communities.



Empty Seas Empty Nets

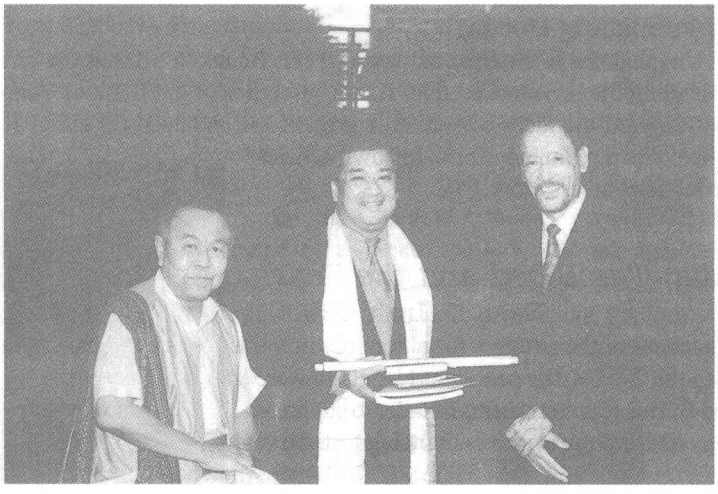
Two Fishermen's Accounts of Their Struggle to Regain Their Livelihood
Yuesoh Sama Ae and Muhamasukree Masaning
Interviewed 14 and 15 July 2000
Edited and Compiled by:
Snigdha Vallabhaneni and Kathryn Cook
Translated by: Dr. Srisompob Jitpiromsri



Rigpa Journal

Rigpa's International Review September 2000

The Rigpa Journal, September 2000 celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of His Holiness's enthronement. The tribute consists of a collection of personal accounts by people who have worked closely with him. "The Dalai Lama is not a god, remote and invisible. He is a human being, walking on the earth, laughing, pausing for thought, moving elegantly among us all—suddenly escaping his bodyguards to shake the hand of one more person..." The journal also includes an account of the leadership of Sogyal Rinpoche and Rigpa's own 25 year history of spreading messages of peace and spiritual exchange.



MR. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, Deputy Thai Foreign Minister assures Tashi Wangdi, Tibetan Minister of Religious Affairs, that the royal Thai government will welcome H.H. the Dalai Lama to visit this Buddhist kingdom soon.