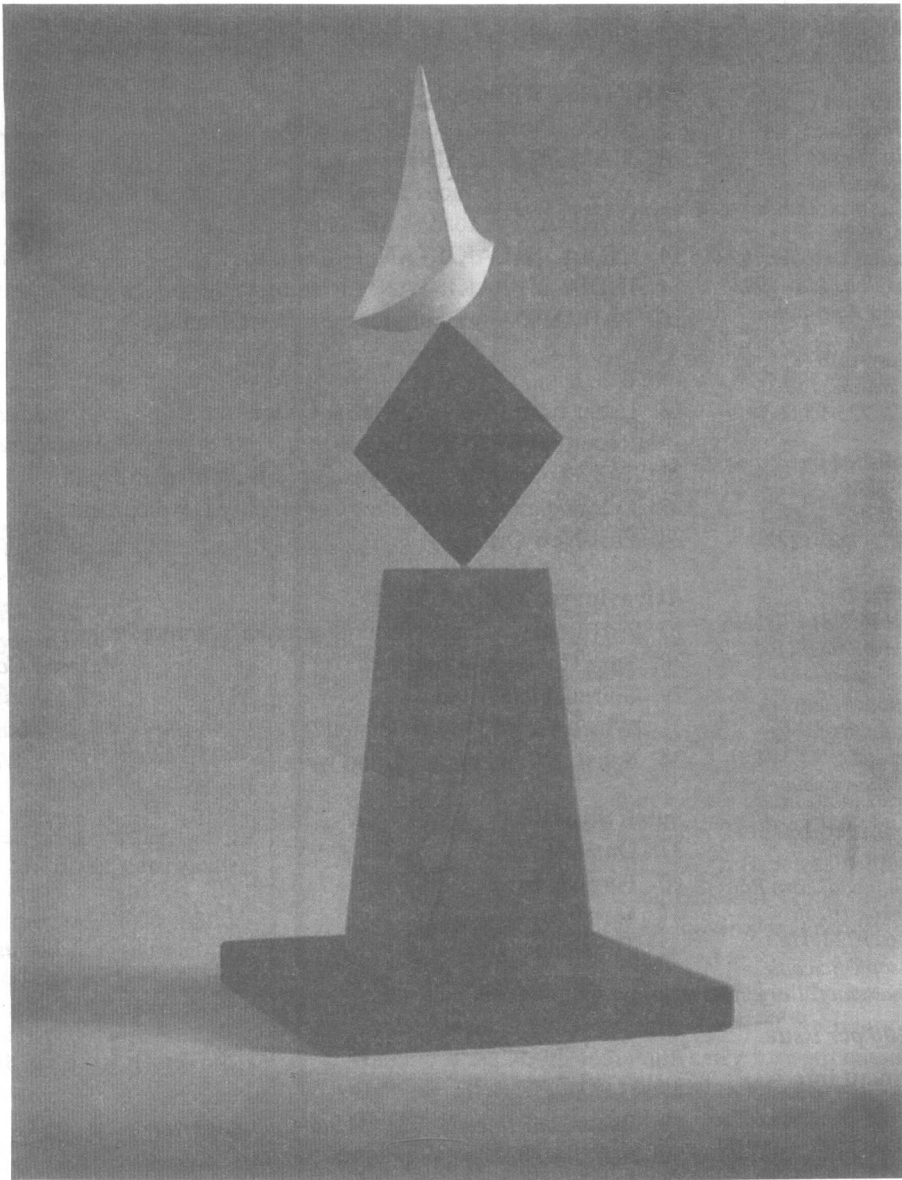


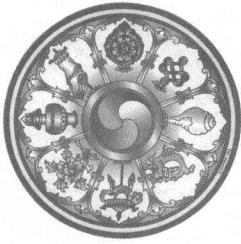
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* See page 48 for explanation

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PEACE

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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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JOINT COMMUNIQUE

Amsterdam 11 July 2002

The representatives of the Government of India and the National Council of Nagaland met at Amsterdam on July 9-10, 2002 and discussed the Government of India's response to items in the proposal given by the NSCN on September 21, 2001.

The Government of India recognizes the unique history and situation of Nagas. It is agreed that talks should proceed in an accommodative and forward-looking manner so that a lasting and honourable solution can be arrived at.

The Government of India renewed the invitation of the Prime Minister to the Chairman and General Secretary of the NSCN to come to India at the earliest to carry forward and expedite the peace dialogue. The NSCN leadership expresses willingness to come to India after the procedural aspects are taken care of. It has been mutually decided to extend the ceasefire for another year with effect from August 1, 2002.

(Th. Muivah)
General Secretary
of India
NSCN

(K. Padmanabhaiah)
Representative of the Government

Editorial Notes

Looking back, May 2002 marks the 10th anniversary of the bloody May tragedy in Siam, in which civilians protested and demonstrated against the military junta, the National Peacekeeping Council, which had illegally toppled the incumbent government—hence the cover of this issue. The violence that ensued and the subsequent intervention of the king compelled the military junta to step down. Many of the fallen protestors remained unaccounted for—listed as ‘disappeared’. The May tragedy serves as another political signpost as Thais travel down the unending road of meaningful democracy.

September 2002 is also the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the United States. It should be a solemn occasion to commemorate the fallen on both sides—the World Trade Center and Pentagon victims as well as those of the US-led intervention in Afghanistan. Peace and innocent civilians are the real victims of international terrorism and the war against terrorism.

The preparation for the Bandung II conference (see Wolfgang Schmidt’s article) is another major event for anyone interested in not only resisting but also challenging old and new forms of imperialism in the 21st century. Hopefully, it will not transmogrify into another elitist and pointless gathering so vividly exemplified by the recent Asia Cooperation Dialogue initiated by the Thai government (see Asda Jayanama’s article).

Internationally, the past few months leading to September have witnessed substantial tension in the subcontinent between India and Pakistan, threatening to spiral out of control. In the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has flared up and recaptured the (short) attention of the international media and community. Interestingly, and this has been quite a standard practice in the mainstream, only Palestinians are depicted as terrorist-while Israeli aggression (i.e., state-sponsored terrorism) against Palestinians is represented as self-defense or ‘war against terrorism.’ The massive violence Israel has unleashed on Palestinians is grossly disproportionate to the violence emanating from the terrorism it sought to curb. But a glimmer of hope is visible in Burma where the military junta has finally released Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest and seemed to have opened a limited political space for her party, the NLD. Her compassion and steadfastness in nonviolence have made this partial opening possible.

Finally, *Seeds of Peace* would like to express its deep gratitude to our former editor David Reid for his excellent work in taking care of the last three issues. We wish him the best of luck.

S.J.

[In the light of the spate of border clashes and war of words between Bangkok and Rangoon, Aung San’s letter should be read and re-read.]

December 26, 1941

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our thanks are due to the Siamese delegation for honouring us with a visit.

The delegation is led by no less a person than Phya Anuman Ratchathon, director of Fine Arts and professor of the University of Chulalongkorn. Anuman holds a high place in the world of literature and arts in Siam, besides being a historian of international fame.

An author of voluminous works, his “History of Faiths of Siam and Neighbouring Countries” has been regarded as an authority on the subject of comparative religion. It is a matter of gratification that a leading exponent of Siamese art and culture has come to this country and it is hoped that the contacts made would have important results in the national life of our two countries.

Our countries before the war had the privilege of welcoming a goodwill mission from our eastern neighbour. And although our own preoccupation with our affairs had prevented our paying her our return visit, the relationship between Burma and Siam has always been characterised by the greatest possible cordiality and good will.

A number of Burmans are residing in Siam; and during the last war, quite a number of Burmese families evacuated to that country. The result is that the ties of friendships are even stronger now than ever before, and there are now many in Burma who have come to regard Siam as a kind of second home. Those of us who have visited Siam have been impressed by the overwhelming hospitality extended to us at all times by the Siamese. We appreciate these unfailing proofs of sincerity and friendship on the part of those who we regard as our kinsmen, and with whom we have many things in common. Our beliefs and traditions are in many respects similar. We have learnt to respect *one another and to admire each other’s prowess*.

The national heroes that excite our utmost admiration are Alaungpaya and Phra Naret. Both Shwedagon and Wat Arun are the objects of our veneration, while the mighty Irrawaddy and lordly Menam Chao Phaya with their myriad streams of life—giving waters will always command a sense of eternal gratitude and affection both in the Burman and Siamese. These common institution traditions and aspirations are significant, for they have helped to overcome one difference that exists between us—the difference in language. But this difficulty is overcome for practical purposes in the course of a short stay in Siam. For the Siamese spoken word is partial to the foreigner.

The one overriding factor, however, that had in the past kept our two countries united is of course our spiritual affinity.

It is the religious bond that binds Burma and Siam so closely. As you know, Buddhism is the prevailing faith—the State Religion—in Siam. Siam takes pride, and quite rightly so, in her orthodoxy; and after Burma, Ceylon and Cambodia ceased one after another to be independent, Siam has had the honour of being regarded as the Defender of the Buddhist Faith. The Siamese government has set an example to Buddhist countries by the far-reaching legislation introduced in recent years calculated to enlist Buddhism in the cause of national unity.

As regards our future, our mutual interests and our past experience require that we should stand together.

There must be no occasion for any misunderstanding between us, and no effort should be spared to foster still better and closer relations between our two countries. We believe that such close friendship can be maintained only by constant and intimate contact.

With this end in view, and for the mutual benefit of our two countries, we propose to appoint a diplomatic representative of ours in Siam at an early date.

In conclusion, I wish to thank Phya Anuman Ratchathon and the distinguished members of the Siamese delegation again for giving us this opportunity of showing our high esteem for them and, on the auspicious occasion of our Burmese New Year, our fraternal greeting to the Siamese people.

SIAM

Pipeline protestors are not done yet

The recent intervention of the Prime Minister to find a compromise solution for the troubled Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline has yet to quell the fears of local residents who continue to resist a project which they say is both dangerous to the environment and economically unjustifiable.

When the Thaksin government announced that the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project must go on, but this time taking a different route, the public sentiment was "now the protests will surely end." The secretary to the Prime Minister said that people living along the pipeline route had reached a better understanding of the project.

But the protests continue, and the villagers are asking the city folks to open their eyes to reality.

"The general public may see us as selfish," said Sulaiman Mudsu-yuf, a leader of the anti-pipeline group in Chana district, Songkhla province. "But if they had the information we have, they would think otherwise."

For instance, the villagers contend, the pipeline route has not really changed, despite Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's announcement.

Residents along some stretches of the gas pipeline route in Nai Rai village pointed out that although the pipeline's head location is changed, the tail is still on the old route.

Convincing Catchphrases

The Petroleum Authority of Thailand (PTT), government officials, and the Prime Minister's military advisory team use the



Nobody knows what the future holds for these small-scale fishermen in Chana district, but they vow to fight against the gas pipeline project to their last breath.

catchphrase "national benefits" to explain to the public why the gas pipeline and gas separation plants are needed.

The advisers say Thailand will lose 10 million baht each day for not selling the gas to Malaysia. And if the project is delayed, it will stop economic development in the five southernmost provinces.

The official line sounds convincing to a lot of people, including Harlorn Manlor, a member of the Ban Na Tambon Administration Organisation (TAO) who supports the project, in the belief it will help increase his income. "I think that I can sell more coffee. I heard we can even sell a herd of cows every day for the consumption of workers (who will build the pipeline)," said Harlorn.

However, he doesn't yet realise that only 450 or at most 1,200 persons will get jobs on the pipeline construction and no more than 200 will be employed if gas separation plants are built.

Another point raised and taken up by supporters is that Thailand may have to pay a daily fine of 40 million baht if the project is delayed. Harlorn is very concerned about the purported fine, but he does not know how this figure came about. Neither does he know whether any such fine will be paid by PTT and Petronas, joint contractors for the project.

Little in It for Thailand

Studies by Chulalongkorn University's Asian Studies Institute, the Prince of Songkhla University and the Senate Committee on Environmental Affairs found the same thing: the Production Sharing Contracts (PSC) that govern the joint Thai-Malaysian gas industry don't primarily benefit the Thai national coffers.

Despite news reports of a 50:50 investment share between Thailand and Malaysia in the Trans Thailand-Malaysia (TTM) Company and a 50:50 profit

split from the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Authority (MTJA), most of the income goes to foreign investors and operating companies.

The contracts show that Thailand earns only five percent of royalties and only one-quarter of the profits to be shared between MTJA and the two operators Petronas and Amerada Hess in Block A-18, which has the largest gas deposit among the three blocks in the Thai-Malaysian Joint Development Area (JDA).

Block A-18 holds 72 percent of the estimated 9.53 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of gas reserves in the JDA. However, Thailand gains nothing from Cost Recovery in Block A-18, which will be shared between Amerada Hess and Petronas. This is because Thailand has already granted the exploration concession to Triton Oil.

The other two blocks B-17 and C-19 contain 28 percent of the total gas reserves. PTT-EPI, a subsidiary of PTT, will gain its 25 percent in Cost Recovery. The bigger slice of benefits will go to other companies involved.

While Bangkok residents do not seem to be aware of this, village communities along the gas pipeline route are very alarmed that the Thai people have been placed in a disadvantaged position.

A Thai manager at the Bangkok office of Amerada Hess told Perspective that she could not comment on local people's protests against the gas pipeline, or whether the protests would affect the company's investment plan.

The company was undergoing an organisational restructuring after merging with Triton Oil, she added.

Fears of Worse to Come

The locals are not only against the pipeline, they are also against building new industrial plants and plans of any such type. They believe that the gas separation plants and pipeline will only breed heavy industries, which will further degrade the environment.

Dr Anan Boonsopol of the Songkhla Civic Group Network says: "We are not only talking about petrochemical plants, we are talking about the entire industrial development plan. We need to discuss the whole Penang and Songkhla Economic Development Plan, not only the gas separation and pipeline projects."

However, PTT's Gas Business Group senior executive vice president Prasert Boonsampan insists there are no petrochemical plants. He says Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has confirmed this too.

"If the opposition chooses to disbelieve official statements, then I give up," Prasert told Perspective.

But the locals say that Prime Minister Thaksin's promise is nothing to them; he has already broken many promises.

"When he became prime minister in January, 2001 he promised that he would put the 'people' before 'money and investment.' Time has proven the value of his words," said Kittipob Suthisawang, a leader of the Chana Rak Tin Group.

To end the issue, a PTT executive said the company will ask the Ministry of Industry to issue a ministerial regulation to ban petrochemical plants. The villagers dismiss this, however.

"A ministerial regulation is nothing, it can be easily dismissed," Kittipob said.

"Even government rules and regulations on environmental precautions for industrial estates are not enforced. See how the factories in Chana district pollute our waterways and air today," added Kittipob.

But Prasert believes that factories and industrial plants will open up in the lower south with or without the gas pipeline.

The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), he adds, has a plan to connect the gas pipeline to the Chalung industrial zone in Songkhla's Rataphum district.

Nevertheless, the villagers believe that the frenzy of projects for constructing pipelines and gas processing plants are fuelled more by private profits than real energy requirements for Thailand.

Who Said We Need It?

According to Prasert, the total national gas reserves are about 30 trillion cubic feet (tcf). "If Thailand uses up 3,000 million standard cubic feet per day (mmscf/d), our reserves will last for 30 years," Prasert explains.

"On the other hand, if we consume 4,000 mmscf/d, then our gas reserves will only last for about 22 years." Prasert bases his estimates on the growth rates in the Medium Economic Recovery (MER) and in the Power Development Plan (PDP) 2001.

"We predict that the country's electricity consumption will increase. Therefore the demand for gas will also increase from today's 2,400 mmscf/d to a probable 4,000 mmscf/d in the future," says Prasert.

Based on the consumption rate of 2,400 mmscf/d, 62 million Thais now use up 38 cubic feet of gas a day (cf/d): 76 percent to generate electricity, 19

percent to run industries, and five percent as fuel.

Prasart Meetaem of the Prince of Songkhla University pointed out that Thailand has too much gas to consume since it only uses 38 cf/d today.

He referred to an agreement between PTT and Petronas, which says that gas purchases from Block A-18 are expected to amount to 390 mmscf/d.

"How can four million people in the lower south use 390mmscf/d of gas?" said Prasart. He says Thailand has more than enough gas in reserve. "We will have about 4.5 tcf of gas left in five years when Malaysia will stop taking its share of gas from the JDA," he says. "And we still have plenty of gas left from contracts with Burma as well as other Gulf of Thailand contracts."

According to PTT's Prasert, the five southernmost provinces consume only 100 to 200 mmscf/d of gas. "Much of the rest will be supplied to Rayong and the Central Region," he explains.

Although the official line is that Thailand will need more energy sources than it has now, villagers believe this is used only to justify the building of pipelines and gas processing plants. Villagers point out other reasons why the gas projects are redundant, and are actually hurting the economy.

The Fight Goes on

Since the gas industries are run mainly by PTT, some profits will go to the government. Conversely, losses will be borne by the government. This means that all Thai citizens will pay up if the gas business does not make a profit.

For this reason, the villagers along the gas pipeline route are

looking closely at the ways the government is managing the gas business.

Thailand's excess gas supply from Burma's Yadana and Yetagun gas fields continues with a take-or-pay contract of 30 years. Since Yadana started to deliver in August 1998, up to December 2001, Thailand paid more than US\$848 million plus some US\$100 million in interest for gas that only began to be fully utilised this April.

Prasert contends that we can make up for the consumption shortfall in 6-7 years. However, a report of a former secretary-general of the National Energy Policy Office to the prime minister's military advisory team says it will take Thailand about 10 years to make up for it.

Prasert assures that the state is negotiating with the Burmese consortium to lower the price of gas, low enough to compete with other fuels.

"Also, PTT is asking the Ratchaburi power plants to use more gas instead of fuel oil."

But the villagers question this move. While the Ratchaburi power plants are under contract to use gas from Burma, the generators are of the combined cycle type that can use both gas and fuel oil.

They question whether the PTT will succeed in its negotiation with the Burmese consortium.

And the public continues to ask: Will the Ratchaburi power plants be able to generate more electricity than they are doing now? Will there be a need to do so? The questions are relevant because the consumer will pay up in the event the electricity generation industry has to pay more for energy or fails to make a profit.

The cost of JDA gas has been set at US\$2.3 per million BTU, but the service and delivery charges are still unknown. Trans Thailand-Malaysia (TTM) company officials are quick to project that profits will be returned at a rate of 15 to 18 percent on investment. TTM officials said that it will not lower any cost of investment. To reach the profit estimates, it will increase delivery charges.

To the villagers watching the Thai-Malaysian gas project, this means end-users in both countries will be forced to pay more to increase TTM's profits.

Prasert admits that Burmese gas is more expensive than gas from the Gulf of Thailand. The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) confirms that, per million BTU, Yadana gas costs about US\$3.8 while Gulf of Thailand gas costs about 100 baht (about US\$2.3).

Some locals questioned why Thailand has to buy gas from Burma when it has its own gas sources, which are cheaper.

Many local villagers interviewed by Perspective in Chana district are upset by the government's decision to go ahead with the pipeline project, which they say will affect the environment and their traditional way of life.

Those who support the pipeline and related industries are not as vocal, and a large number of villagers prefer to sit on the fence.

Prasert Saheam, chairperson of the Sakom Tambon Administration Organisation in Chana district, said the pipeline and gas separation projects would create jobs for high-school and college graduates. "I wish to see the project as it will benefit the country. We should not be too worried by the opposition." He

said the protesters were overly alarmed by the environmental impact of the projects.

"We have new technology to solve all the problems," he added.

But protesters like Arisa Marnla, one of the protest lea-

ders in Chana's Nai Rai village, say the matter goes beyond the environmental impact. They question who really benefits from the gas pipeline project.

"Although we have constitutional rights, we can not stop the project," says Arisa. "But we

will fight to our last breath with our hands and our hearts."

*Supara Janchitfah
Bangkok Post,
May 26, 2002*

SIAM ACD or ADC?

The much-vaunted Asia Cooperation Dialogue ended with extensive publicity in Cha-am June 19. A series of TV interviews of Foreign Minister Surakiat and his staff followed a few days later, to convince the public that ACD is a major THAI RAK THAI's foreign policy success, and is modestly described as a "historic Asian event" as well as "a beginning of new chapter of world history", in the PM's inaugural speech. Yet the Thai informed media and principled academics were not impressed, while foreign media hardly referred to this "historic Asian event." Why is there so much gap between our government and our informed public on this subject? The following observations may help readers to appreciate why ACD was not so well perceived and almost did not take-off.

First, the concept of ACD is confusing, but the Thai view seems to focus on various forms of economic cooperation for those Asian countries which are ready to join. ACD has a theme (how to consolidate Asia's strength), but no agenda. Along this flexible line, I suppose ACD can be anything and everything. The Cha-am outcome certainly bears this out. No wonder that

two weeks before ACD started, the foreign minister, his officials, and some selected academics, were still brainstorming for more precise direction on this subject! Moreover, to give intellectual content to ACD, Jawaharlal Nehru's Spirit of Bandung, Mahathir's EAEC, Koizumi's "community that acts together and advances together," and Jiang Zemin's Boao Forum were suddenly invoked. But this last minute attempt to give ACD an Asian intellectual respectability was not convincing.

FM Surakiat also argued that Asia should have its own region wide organisation because other regions already have theirs. However this simplistic copycat approach is flawed as each continent has its rationale based on its own historical, cultural, and political traditions. Thus the Americas have their OAS, whose main objective is to discourage interference in one another's domestic affairs. Africa has its OAU to combat colonialism and apartheid, and now the African Union to promote democracy and development. Europe has its EU to promote economic and political union. Asia also has its own

diverse traditions and complications, which are far more challenging than those of other continents. For this reason, any pan-Asian organisation proposed must have something more compelling than the ACD's desire to increase Asian cooperation and solidarity.

From my own experience at the UN in New York City, Asian group (56 states and not 40 as claimed by MFA official) meetings rarely discussed substantive issues, because when we did we usually disagreed, sometimes violently. So for many years now we have agreed among ourselves to discuss only procedural, protocol, and election issues. Africa, Latin America, and the EU on the other hand were able to discuss substantive issues in their group meetings.

This does not mean that Asia is doomed from pan-Asian cooperation, but it does mean technical studies and right timing are necessary before any chance of success for any meeting can be expected. The Cha-am event certainly did not meet this standard.

Second, the fact that Thailand alone is the host to this "historic Asian event" surely is a delusion of grandeur and did not

encourage our guests to quickly accept our invitations. Such an important undertaking should have Asean's intellectual and political support, particularly from the original six, in the form of active consultations in the preparatory stage, and co-hosting of the event. We had been asked about joint efforts by Asean colleagues, but for some reason did not accept their offer of collaboration. Dr. Prapat Thepchatri of Thammasat was right when he suggested a month before the meeting that we should have Asean co-hosting the event.

In addition I also believe that there should have been systematic consultations at the official level on both technical and substantive aspects of ACD with all the 17 countries invited. Our inexperienced foreign minister should have delegated more responsibility to his senior officials. The so-called "top-down" policy is not "a one person" diplomacy, he still needs to work with all officials and advisors as a team. Better still, the efficiency of the foreign ministry will be greatly enhanced if a more experienced and mature foreign minister is appointed together with a deputy.

Third, the demand that this event should be attended only by foreign ministers was also another delusion of grandeur, and with bad timing and insufficient prior technical consultations, this demand almost turned into a diplomatic fiasco. Our foreign minister seemed to forget that our guests are not mileage plus ministers, they will only leave their capitals only when there are important matters to attend to. Even if they were free to accept our invitations many

questions must have crossed their minds on the substance and format of ACD. These doubts must have been very genuine as initially only a handful of foreign ministers accepted our invitations. So we lobbied and pleaded hard, and lowered our goal (and our pride) from only foreign ministers to any ministers will do. In the end a hotch potch of ministers came and saved THAI RAK THAI's day. They also prolonged ACD's life for another year by supporting us as host again for next year second "historical Asian event" in Chiangrai, where they will be able to enjoy the sunset at FM Surakiat's mansion—provided, unlike last year, the protocol officers bring them to his mansion on time. In 2004, ACD can take place in Phuket where the foreign minister has another mansion. This wild goose chase can go on and on, so long as we are willing to be the host.

Fourth, the confusion caused by unclear or lack of criteria as to which countries should be invited to this first meeting, was harmful to supposedly pan-Asian character of the ACD and also to our role as impartial host. In short, questions were asked why these 17 were invited and why not others, and why some subregions in Asia had so many representatives, while others had none. Take the case of the 2 representatives from the Middle East, both Gulf Cooperation Council members, are the much bigger players from the same region like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria, not to mention Iraq, happy with our selection? This question was rightly raised by Dr. Khien Theeravit of Chulalongkorn in *Matichon* in June. Iran, which promoted "Dialogue Among Civilizations" at the UN, was very

keen to participate, but was not invited. There were also no representatives from Central Asia and South Pacific. So contrary to our PM's speech, ACD was definitely not "a gathering of ministers from every region of Asia." How can you then have a balanced ACD core group meeting, as the Cha-am event was supposedly designated, when not all sub-regions (six) in Asia were represented?

Still on the subject of invitations, one may ask further why our foreign minister invited Australia to attend the ACD, then changed his mind, which of course annoyed the Aussies immensely, not to talk of diplomatic protest. This incredible faux pas would not have come about had Surakiat consulted his junior officials.

Fifth, ACD was supposed to be an informal meeting, a retreat, but it was probably one of the most formal "informal" meetings that our guests have experienced. There was a formal inaugural speech by our PM, a "Chairman Statement", mass media coverage, photo session, and press conference by the chairman, and at one time there was even a planned audience with His Majesty the King! This was quite a contrast to Asean retreats where foreign ministers did not say much to their officials, and hardly anything to the press.

Clearly the Thaksin-Surakiat tandem was less interested in discussions than public relations and the extreme informal format was used because the complex nature of ACD had not been adequately addressed.

After these five observations, which I hope our broad-minded government would accept them as constructive criticism, what is our evaluation

of the Cha-am meeting?

Not very positive I am afraid, because we should be more interested in a systematic, analytical, and substantive approach to pan-Asian cooperation, which would also entail good timing and in-depth preparation. The Cha-am meeting was more of a THAI RAK THAI's public relations stunt for domestic consumption. It was not really **ACD (Asia Cooperation**

Dialogue) but **ADC (Asia Diplomatic Confusion)**. Let's hope for Thailand's sake, that it is also not a case of, in Alexander Pope's words, "fools rushing in where angels fear to tread."

I am sure those of us who had been critical of ACD are nevertheless in favour of all levels and forms of cooperation, so long as they enhance Thailand's prestige, but we are against using Thailand's good

name for self-promotion through gimmick diplomacy and cheap propaganda.

Asda Jayanama
is former Permanent
Representative of Thailand
to the UN in NYC.
A slightly different version
of this article appeared
in the *Nation*,
July 3, 2002.

ISRAEL

Face facts:

Israel is losing a war and her ethics

After the creation of a Jewish State in 1947, following in the wake of Nazi atrocities against Jews, some Israelis believed that Jews and Palestinians could—indeed would have to—share the same small piece of land and thus live together in peace. Extremists, however, thought they could expel the Palestinians, or make life so miserable for them that they would have to leave. Millions of Palestinians did flee or were informally expelled but millions remained. Irresponsible heads of neighboring Arab states also played a bellicose role in the early conflict and refused to take in many of the Palestinian refugees.

Almost fifty five years after the birth of Israel, Premier Ariel Sharon retains his conviction that by increasing Palestinian suffering he can force them to either surrender any claims to independence and sovereignty in some not too distant future—and then live in Bantustan-like

territories; or make their lives so uncomfortable they will leave.

Unlike the framing of the issue by pro-Israel groups here, who claim to represent American Jews, the current Middle East blood bath has nothing to do with Israeli survival or with supposed plans by Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat to drive the Jews into the sea. Quite the opposite! Sharon has convinced his backers at home and abroad that Israel should deploy its military to accomplish the task that should have been completed in the 1940s: expel the Palestinians. In 1982, Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon tried the military ploy to attack the Palestinians in Lebanon. That maneuver cost Israel many lives and much prestige. This time, Prime Minister Sharon has insisted, the Israeli military will attain its historic goal and rid the historic territory of Palestine of Palestinians.

TV and newspaper reports, however, appear to contradict

Sharon's strategy. Instead of yielding to the power of Israeli tanks blasting away with cannons and machine guns and F-15s firing rockets at civilian targets in West Bank and Gaza cities and refugee camps, the Palestinians appear to have increased their will to resist.

The military barrage, the inability of people to work, or obtain food and water, attend schools or have access to hospitals and electricity has hardened the very people it was supposed to soften. Indeed, hundreds if not thousands of Palestinians have declared themselves ready to die, to commit suicide for their cause, and there is reason to believe that Sharon's display of naked military power has increased the number of potential suicide bombers and resistance fighters.

This fact, of course, raises the uncomfortable but logical question: what power does threatening people with death

hold if they have already volunteered to die? Few Israelis, I think, would undertake certain death missions. As Israeli writer and war veteran Uri Avnery writes: "Palestinians know fully well that they are fighting for their very existence; Israelis know that they are fighting for the settlements and bankrupt politicians." He refers to the settlements built in the midst of occupied Palestinian land.

The right wing Sharon's strategy not only hovers on the edge of bankruptcy, but threatens Israel's fragile sense of cohesion and its western way of life. Israelis don't go to the movies, cafes, theater; they stay home, fearing suicide bombers. Israeli parents with kids in the military worry daily that their kids will not come home alive or in one piece. "Will it be my son's tank that hits the land mine?" And for how long must this continue?

Journalists quote Israelis who feel queasy about the images they see on TV, about what their military is doing to a civilian population. And those Israelis who do not chant slogans like "Kill all Arabs"—or think that way—have begun to have serious qualms about a "war" in which their soldiers react to stone throwing teenagers by firing missiles from jets and helicopter gun ships.

Israeli TV shows photos of blindfolded prisoners. Sharon even invited TV photographers to capture images at a Palestinian Refugee Camp of how Israelis brutalize their captives. The news shows hundreds of young to middle aged Palestinian men with their wrists locked in handcuffs, blindfolds covering their eyes. Heavily armed Israeli troops then push them toward an

"interrogation center."

Children watch their fathers and older brothers bound, blindfolded and occasionally spat on by uniformed Israelis. Reporters simply refer to these places occupied by Israeli armed forces as "refugee camps." They don't report that many of the families in these sordid locations have lived there since 1948 when the Israelis drove them from their homes.

Not all Israelis see these images positively, however. Outside of his extreme right-wing constituency that has always backed his expel-the-Arabs stance, Sharon emerges as a dangerous man, a loose cannon.

Now, even the most uncritical supporters in Washington see Israeli behavior as a liability to US future plans, re-pursuing Al Qaeda, bombing Iraq and extending the "war against terrorism" to still other parts of the Muslim world. President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell demand that Sharon rein in his military or else.

Sharon has agreed, but before US envoy he's trying to kill as many Palestinians as possible, before US rep Anthony Zinni arrives and the cease fire takes effect. The Bush crowd obliged Sharon by waiting more than a week before ordering Zinni to return. Bush had initially given Sharon the go ahead for his military assault. Now, given US plans and hopes to widen the "war against terrorism" to include Iraq and other Muslim nations, the Bush planners must try to rein in the impulsive Sharon lest they lose all support in the Muslim world for their offensive against Muslim terrorists. (It should be noted that when Bush says terrorists he really means Muslims and perhaps members of Co-

lombia's FARC. He doesn't mean terrorist who target Cuba's Fidel Castro, for example).

But most important, Sharon's war effort against the Palestinians has neither succeeded nor heightened Sharon's popularity. According to Israeli polls, the bloody events of the last few months have caused the majority of Israelis to disapprove of Sharon's brute-force-uber-alles policies. Hundreds of veteran reserve officers have refused to serve in a campaign they see as immoral to the core. What a change from last year when Sharon won election by saying that he the tough guy could definitively win the war, and finally resolve the Palestinian issue in favor of Jewish residents.

Sharon has also miscalculated the impact of his policy to isolate Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat. By demonstrating that he could virtually imprison Arafat in his own home, over the last month, he showed how truly weak the Palestinian authority is; but in the world of public opinion he also rescued a failed leader who was heading toward the scrap heap of history. Palestinians, according to their own polls, had begun to tire of Arafat's bumbling over the decades, but now, thanks to Sharon's heavy handedness, Arafat has emerged as an old man who shares the suffering of all Palestinians at the hands of the Israeli occupiers.

Israelis have paid a heavy national price for occupying Palestinian land. As the Israeli death toll mounts and as Palestinian deaths and suffering reach new heights, the stain on Israel's image abroad spreads as well. Ads denouncing Sharon's tactics have appeared in prestigious US newspapers and each day I receive email appeals from differ-

ent Jewish groups to protest against the outrageous and immoral behavior of the Israeli government.

The Sharon government appears unable to maintain its support at home or abroad. If the Labor Party pulls out of the coalition it will force new elections and, as polls indicate, Sharon is unlikely to win again. More than 1500 have died in this short war between a powerful Israeli military and Palestinian civilians or suicide bombers and resistance fighters.

The United States, which has treated Israel as the most special of all its allies, lavishing it with aid and military equipment, now sees its own interests in stopping Sharon's aggressive behavior and supporting the peace plan proposed by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah. Under this plan, the Arab world would recognize Israel and establish normal relations

with it, in return for Israel's recognition of clear boundaries (pre 1967) and a Palestinian state. It sounds reasonable and just. But as Avnery points out: "Thirty five years of occupation and settlement have eroded Israel's ability to reason, leaving instead a mixture of arrogance and folly."

Jewish theologian Marc Ellis of Baylor University agrees. Israelis have become so warlike, he thinks, that they should "replace the Torah and Ark of the Covenant in the synagogue with a liturgical representation of a helicopter gunship." Until Israel began to demand that its soldiers act like occupiers, usurp other people's land, raze houses, assassinate individuals, there existed a unique Jewish ethic, a code of conduct that defined justice and equity for Jewish people. Thanks to Israeli policies, Ellis argues, that special conscience that has endured for millennia, has nearly vanished.

Perhaps, I think, Israelis can save their souls and get peace in their land if they stop the war, end the occupation and treat the Saudi peace plan seriously, not just as another blueprint they can circumvent as they have with all previous plans, but as a chance to save a great people's ethic, the essence of Judaism. Once Sharon and his nasty and hateful ideologues leave the seat of power, it should not take a Sherlock Holmes to figure out that Jews and Palestinians will eventually have to share this land and to do so they must establish a way of living together—in peace.

Saul Landau

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BURMA

The road to Mandalay

For Burma's pro-democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, the road to Mandalay has been long and difficult. She tried to go by train and was turned back. She tried to go by car and was placed for 19 months under house arrest.

In the past week, under a new arrangement with the country's military leaders, who released her from detention on May 6, she drove unimpeded to Mandalay, the country's second-largest city, where large crowds cheered her and officials welcomed her with respect.

Political change in Burma



comes painfully slowly, and it is not clear yet how much real difference Mrs Suu Kyi's new freedom may make.

But her recent travels—to Mandalay and several other cities—signify a tentative new relationship between the country's ruling generals and the opposition whose electoral victory they refused to honour 12 years ago.

Each side is walking very softly now, testing the other's good will.

"Cooperation and co-ordination," said U Lwin, the secre-

tary of the opposition party, the National League for Democracy, who helped work out the parameters of Mrs Suu Kyi's freedom. "There is no confrontation."

He added, "It is not the duty of a political party to oppose the government all the time."

Some diplomats have already become impatient with the government's actions since Mrs Suu Kyi's release from house arrest in May.

They note that the private discussions she had held for 18 months with top leaders have not resumed, and that promises to release large numbers of political prisoners have not yet been kept.

But at the same time, Mrs Suu Kyi has been moving fast to take advantage of the wider playing field, reconstituting her party and working to carve out an influential new public role for herself.

That new role, it appears, will be to co-ordinate and monitor humanitarian assistance from abroad.

In calling for an embargo over the past decade, she effectively closed the door to most foreign assistance.

What she switched off, one diplomat said, she can switch on again, a powerful position for a symbolic leader with no formal role.

"People used to say she was against any aid," Mr Lwin said.

"Not any more. Today she is looking forward to getting more beneficial assistance aid to the people of Burma."

As for the sanctions imposed by the United States, Europe and international donors, the diplomat said the time had not yet come to relent.

Asked when that time would come, the answer was: When Mrs Suu Kyi says it has.

In allowing her this public role, the junta has given her a degree of legitimacy as a public figure.

In accepting it and cooperating with the government, she has also conceded a degree of legitimacy to the junta.

Her travels also have been an assertion of a stronger political role.

For the most part, they have been part of a campaign, which began even before her release, to reopen the party's offices around the country and to reinvigorate its youth wing.

Two years ago, the junta had seemed bent on destroying the party altogether, closing virtually all its offices and arresting hundreds of members.

Already, about 50 party offices out of what once was a network of 500 have reopened, Mr Lwin said.

Although there has been no mention of Mrs Suu Kyi's release in the controlled press in Burma, word has spread, and thousands of people have jammed the roadsides to greet her in her travels.

She has agreed not to hold mass rallies, which could amount to the start of a real political campaign, Mr Lwin said.

He insisted that the crowds that have gathered to see her have not been organised by the party, and he said she has stopped to offer them only a few minutes of greeting.

Mrs Suu Kyi has also agreed to give the authorities 12 hours' notice of any travels to Rangoon's suburbs and as much as a week's notice for a major trip like the one to Mandalay, he said.

"They don't follow like before," he said. "Maybe they follow in their own way. They are around, we know."

The presence of the authorities is not entirely unwelcome, Mr Lwin said.

At the party's request, the government has agreed to take responsibility for Mrs Suu Kyi's security.

When Mrs Suu Kyi was released in May, she said the quiet "confidence-building" discussions she had been having with the government would now move to more substantive issues.

That does not yet appear to have taken place.

"This phase is, 'Okay, we've built some confidence, and let's see if we can work together'," the diplomat said.

For six years, from 1989 to 1995, Mrs Suu Kyi was kept under house arrest.

When her party won more than 80% of the seats in a parliamentary election in 1990, the military refused to honour the result.

After her first release from house arrest, the government worked hard to make her life difficult, barring her from travelling and arresting her supporters.

It is not clear yet which direction this new relationship might take, or even whether it will move forward at all.

Substantive steps still seem far away—a reconvening of the constitutional assembly that would include her party, or holding new elections.

The generals may have no intention of making these concessions.

But the opening they have made now suggests that they may be engaged in something more than gestures.

Diplomats suggested the generals' shift may have resulted from the pressures of political and economic legislation and demands of neighbours, particu-

larly Malaysia.

For its part, Mrs Suu Kyi's party has not relented in its push for democratic government.

Asked whether the junta would ultimately have to give up some power, Mr Lwin, secretary of the National League for De-

mocracy, said: "Yes, definitely."

Seth Mydans

Bangkok Post, July 6, 2002

INDIA and PAKISTAN

India today

The last few months have been a difficult period for India in many ways. The communal violence in Gujarat, the threat of nuclear conflict in the Indian sub-continent and the further consolidation of Hindu communal forces in power have made me think about the relevance of the nation-state system to our lives. Why are human beings, whether Muslims or Hindus, subjected to such degraded and beastly forms of violence? Faith cannot be an answer and if faith becomes an answer for such tragic events then we *must reexamine our beliefs and faiths*. *Patriotism cannot also be an answer to the question why nations prepare to fight a nuclear war*. Power seems to be a more crucial factor in both these conditions of violence against humanity. Power and political game-plans at home and abroad are better answers. Who are the winners and victims of these

developments? The Gujarat violence has left me numb and speechless at the fact that our state has considerably been communalized. The weakness of Western secularism that we have adopted has clearly been exposed in these circumstances. The nuclear threat has made me wonder why poor and common people should fall victims of political designs of our leadership in the subcontinent? It is an irony of sorts that we were told constantly during that period of intense conflict and tension in the region that we can survive as a nation even after an attack on our cities but it may not be possible for the opponent. Consider the number of people living in any major city in the subcontinent and the consequences of a counter attack that would wipe out the enemy. Is this all part of our actions to defend our faith or patriotism? There is little accountability of the system and

the leadership to the people. We are unable to address more serious human problems, needs and challenges. Our governments and leaders are not able to respond to this crisis of absence of governance. When our military analysts and political leaders count on the extent of damage that we both can inflict on each other they are neither considering the poor, uneducated, marginalized, oppressed millions already leading a life of the living dead without any relief or rehabilitation from the state. People at the grassroots are struggling for water, electricity, food, education, shelter and basic dignity to their lives. But consider how our leaders are assessing the political gains of communal violence and nuclear deterrence that seemed to have prevented the actual conflict. Are there choices before our people?

Ramu Manivannan

INDIA and PAKISTAN

Listening to the voices against war

At the outset, I pose more questions than possibilities. The questions have gained a sharper focus and sense of urgency since my recent visit to India, more specifically, the region of La-

dakh, the northernmost part of Kashmir. This visit was part of my ongoing involvement and the work with the Ladakh Nuns Association through the International Network of Engaged

Buddhists Women's program. Arriving in New Delhi en route to Leh in early June the situation was tense. At the time, most countries were strongly urging travel to India to be avoided, with

the threat of possible nuclear war. People I spoke to en route—Indians returning home, people interviewed by the BBC and people in the streets—were all saying, “yes, there should be a war. Things can’t be worse than this—a war might help!” Where was the voice for “no” I wondered? And why was the ‘yes for war’ so strongly expressed?

No doubt that this apparent one-sided focus was easier to see as an outsider. How do we mobilise awareness and develop strategies for non-violent change in the face of violence, mounting engineered fears, acceptance of the war on terrorism and the threat of nuclear war? In an article I received recently from London’s *Independent* by Edward Said, he advocates for more involvement of grass-roots leaders of civil society on both sides of, in this case, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. It seems to me that, in the case of the Indian/Pakistani conflict, many factors are contributing to a pro-war advocacy, possibly underscored by fear. But significantly, the root causes of the conflict in Kashmir, since well before the time of partition in 1947, have never been addressed.

Through the Ladakh Nuns Association, we asked the head of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, where was the voice for ‘no to war’? He quickly organised a meeting of all the leaders from the major organisations in Leh, where there was immediate receptivity to the idea of a peace vigil. A wide spectrum was represented from Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist leaders, political representatives from the Communist to the Congress parties, and representatives for example, from the taxi union and the shop owners. Two days later 5,000



people—about one third of the population of Leh—including many school children, joined a walk through the main streets of Leh up to a sports ground, where the brief speeches were televised and relayed nationally. Our banners gave voice against war. For example:

“Say no to war. Say yes to saving all beings”

“We are all brothers and sisters”

“Peace, Shanti, Gede, Amon” [English, Hindi, Ladakhi and Urdu words for peace]

“We have a responsibility to protect mother earth and each other”

But equally as powerful as the message was the strength and solidarity of a wide political, social and religious spectrum, speaking out—not passively accepting what seemed to be inevitable.

Isabel Hilton recently wrote about Kashmir in the *Guardian*.

“After years of conflict, Kashmiri opinion is divided and confused, ‘stunned,’ as one writer put it, ‘with confusion and sorrow.’ But that does not mean we should make no effort to hear their voice. The very fact that so many go to such strenuous ef-

forts to suppress it tells us it may have something important and unexpected to tell us. It is time we insisted on listening.”

And Arundhati Roy takes this further in a report in the *Christian Science Monitor* of 5th July, where she says we ‘must listen to the non-violent poor, and must allow for peaceful change before violent change becomes inevitable’. But she stresses that we also need to find ways to strengthen, support and get involved in our non-violent movements, in solidarity with the unheard voices.

As for the rest of us concerned citizens, peace activists, and the like it’s not enough to sing songs about giving peace a chance. Doing everything we can to support movements like the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save Non-violence Movement) is how we give peace a chance. This is the real war against terror.

The current widespread shift to the political right is associated with an increase of human rights abuses and the repression of freedoms of speech and association, especially for the dispossessed and those whose voice is not heard or



listened to. As Mike Morrow has recently commented,

"Yes, it is time we insisted on listening—and on making solidarity with those who would in the face of repression give breadth and depth to the dialogue on issues of war, peace and fundamental human rights of Kashmiris, rather than to those who would not only repress such voices but would repress our own, coercing and coopting us into seeing no evil, hearing no evil, and, most importantly, keeping our mouths shut. The old adage is correct: if we feign to ignore the jack boot of history planted on the faces of others we increase the likelihood that it will be planted on our own."

In my country, Australia, there is still the challenge of the massive popular support for inhumane, violent and unjust policies and practices for example,

against asylum seekers, and anyone questioning these policies and practices. Greed, hatred and ignorance are powerful forces, engulfing us all. This helps me see more clearly where I need to work, in building and nurturing community in support and solidarity with other communities. Some of the workshops and meetings coming up include meetings with our Zen teacher and social activist from Argentina on "the movement as a place of nurture" and "what is the struggle for?" Workshops will include, "beyond power games" and "taking heart in tough times—from despair to empowerment." Our Buddhist Peace Fellowship T-shirt message by the way is "a buddhist's place is in the struggle"!

A meeting on "Peacekeeping in an Age of International Insecurity in the Asia-Pacific

Region" convened by Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa in Thailand earlier this year, brought together peace activists, trainers in conflict transformation and leaders from local organisations to discuss preventative strategies and options for peace-keeping. The meeting reflected strong vision and commitment at grass roots levels, and a wide range of skills appropriate for working with conflict. Issues taken up included networking, informing ourselves about un-reported issues, and opportunities for giving a voice to the voiceless. Through this network and through INEB, we now need to consider how we can struggle against the inertia and listen to the un-reported sides in a conflict, and be in greater solidarity with the repressed. Listening to the voices or sounds of suffering as Avaloketeshvara, as a basis for action. How can we support the small social movements that Arundhati Roy talks about, in thus playing a small but vital role against the different war on terror?

Peace, Shanti, Gede, Amon, Shalom and Salaam.

Jill Jameson

6th July 2002—with thanks to Mike Morrow from Asia 2000 Limited and M.G.G. Pillai from Malaysia for circulating many relevant articles.

TAIWAN

A museum for the new millennium

In the Taipei suburb of Yonghe, hidden away above a department store is a museum. You may think nothing of this as Taiwan

is home to many museums including the world-renowned National Palace Museum. A visit to the Museum of World

Religions (MWR) in Yonghe, however, is a must for anyone interested in understanding the world's religions. It also offers

the opportunity to experience a museum that is in tune with the multimedia age.

Entering the MWR one meets a series of images that ask questions such as "Where do I come from?" and "What is the meaning of life?" This prepares you for the fact that the experience of the MWR is not like that traditionally associated with museums. Forget boring exhibits and static displays, because the MWR is far more modern and interactive. It is an all-encompassing experience that proves learning need not be the slightest bit boring. One of the MWR's goals is to combine education with leisure.

The MWR is the vision of Master Hsin Tao who was born in Burma and whose early life was disrupted by the civil war in China. He became an orphan at four, and joined a guerilla army in the Chinese Civil War at the age of ten. In 1961, at the age of thirteen, he escaped to Taiwan. In Taiwan he was drawn to the practice of Buddhism.

Master Hsin Tao began to plan for the MWR after he emerged from a long retreat at his monastery on the northeast coast of Taiwan about ten years ago. He saw the MWR's mission as one of fostering greater understanding, respect, and tolerance for all the world's religions. The Museum was officially opened in November 2001 at a ceremony attended by many religious leaders from around the world.

On the MWR's website Master Hsin Tao says he hopes the museum is a first step in propagating the ideals of love and peace to all corners of the world that will enable every person in this time of discord and disturbance to rediscover the tranquility of their inner spirit

The MWR has displays of artifacts and items related to ten major religions: Hinduism, Shinto, Judaism, Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and two rotating displays dedicated to ancient religions and indigenous religions. The latter two displays are initially represented by ancient Egypt and the Mayan religion. There is also a display dedicated to Taiwanese beliefs.

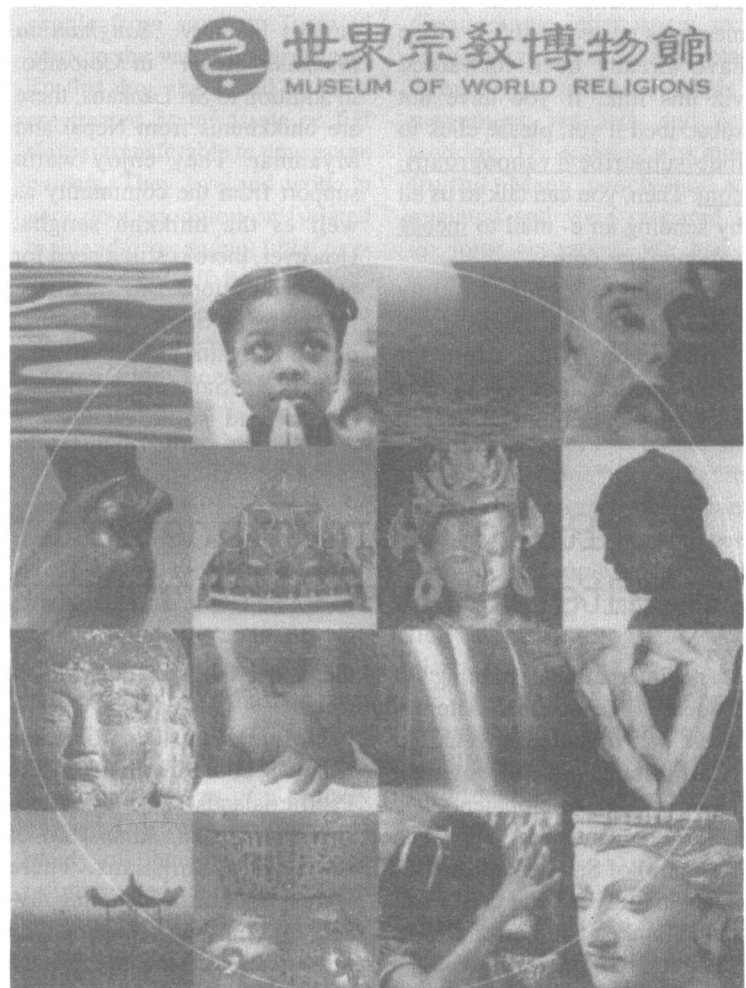
As well as displays of religious artifacts, the museum includes interactive displays that show the role religion plays in daily life from birth through to death. Master Hsin Tao believes society needs a diversity of me-

thods for popularizing religion.

The MWR aims to create a dialogue and interaction with the audience, providing real-life experiences from which to choose one's religion rather than presenting a comparative criticism of different religions. As such it makes not only an essential contribution to the field of museums but to promoting peace and understanding among people of all religious faiths.

David Reid

For more information about the Museum of World Religions please visit its website www.mwr.org.tw



Letter from INEB Secretariat Office

Dear INEB members and readers,

Greetings from INEB Secretariat Office. I hope you all remain in good health and spirit.

I have already revived the INEB e-group, which is a free e-mail link among INEB members. Many of you may have received my invitation to subscribe or to participate in it. My intention is to use this e-group as a quick mode of communication as well as a means to increase the dynamics within our network. You are most welcome to share any relevant news, announcements, and comments. Some of the messages posted to INEB office have already been forwarded via this link. If you have not subscribed it yet, please click to ineb-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Then, you can talk to us all by sending an e-mail to ineb@yahoogroups.com.

During 26 June - 7 July 2002, I attended an international training on "Education for Global Alternative" organized by Catholic Committee against

Hunger and Development (CCFD) and The Center for Society and Religion (CSR) in Sri Lanka. The report is also printed below. Then I visited our friend and INEB committee member Raja Dharmapala who runs the *Dharmavedi Institute*. He is very keen on the issue of reconciliation of conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamil people via interfaith dialogue. He told me that there are some signs of hope for peaceful negotiation among the people and the state on the issue. I hope he will update us on any progress soon.

I also had a chance to visit a famous nunnery "*Sanghamitta Bhikkhuni Aram*" in Colombo. In addition to Sri Lankans, there are bhikkhunis from Nepal and Myanmar. They enjoy warm support from the community as well as the bhikkhu sangha. However, there is still a need for better education.

Here in Siam, Wat Songdham Kalyani headed by the Venerable Samneri Dhammananda, and some NGOs are

about to provide "**Socially Engaged Buddha Savika Training**" from late July onward. It is a three-month intensive *vassa* training for Buddhist women who wish to be ordained as *sameneri* next year. The majority of the participants are Thais while some are from Laos and Cambodia. I hope that a similar training will be organized at an international level next year.

During 6 - 22 November 2002, INEB will co-organize an **Asia Super-T**, which is a super training for social action in Asia, led by George Lakey, Pracha Hutunuwat and Ouyporn Khuankaew. For more information, please contact me.

Finally, there are two more events coming up before the deadline of this issue of *Seeds of Peace*: the Interfaith peace mission in Indonesia and Buddhist-Muslim interfaith dialogue. Next issue I'll report about them.

Warm regards,
Anne Lapapan Supamanta
INEB Executive Secretary

Report on Education for Global Alternatives International Training

The international training on Education for Global Alternatives was organized by CCFD (Catholic Committee against Hunger and Development) and CSR (The Center for Society and Religion) of Sri Lanka from 26th June - 6th July 2002 at CSR Farm in Colombo, Sri Lanka. I was invited to participate as a representative from INEB and

the Spirit in Education Movement.

More than 40 participants from 15 countries in Asia, the Pacific islands and Latin America participated. Almost all of them were Christians. There were 3 Buddhists, including myself, and only one Muslim. The atmosphere promoted a sense of interfaiths solidarity. It was

very interesting that, among us, the majority were from countries accustomed to globalization like the Philippines, Indonesia, Korea, Brazil, Peru, etc. But we also had participants from "new to globalization" countries such as China, Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia. I myself felt that the new comers would have had a good chance to learn from the

globalization-torn nations.

The training was divided into four parts: the understanding and analysis of globalization; impacts of globalization on marginalized people; religious response to globalization; and workshops to discover alternatives to globalization—plus an exposure trip to witness the impact of globalization.

The first days started with greetings and an opening speech by Father Tissa Balasuriya of CSR followed by country reports. From the situation reported, it could be summarized that globalization is actually a new banner for liberal capitalism, an economic system becoming increasingly dominant across the globe. It has similar adverse effects on the different countries discussed: structural adjustment program causing reduction of social welfare, human rights violation, child and woman trafficking, displaced people, ecological problem, urbanization, consumerism and uprooted local culture, etc.

Then, we went on to analyze the regional situation amid globalization at both the global and the geopolitical levels. We found out that within the Asia Pacific region, among elements shaping today's situation, some are enduring and some are changing. The enduring ones include the US's presence and dominance, militarism, arms race, poverty, corruption, etc. Those that are changing for the worse are the degradation of natural resources, rising of religious fundamentalism, terrorism etc; and changing for the better include the rise of civil society, people's movements, human rights awareness, etc. We also discussed phenomena such as the increasing influence of

the IMF, World Bank and ADB; China entering the WTO; regional economic blocs, etc. as factors interplaying in the globalized arena.

In the next session, we learned about the impacts of globalization from the perspectives of marginalized people, i.e., indigenous people, women, dalits, farmers, manual labor, etc. To expose us first-hand experience, we were divided into three groups and visited areas affected by globalization: a slum area in Colombo, a tea plantation in Kandy and a fisherman village in Negombo. I opted for the tea plantation.

Tea was introduced to Sri Lanka since the colonial era. The British had brought Tamil people from southern India to work in the vast tea plantations. To this day, the Tamil workers are treated as an assets or fief slaves; transferable to new estate owners. They live and work in very poor condition on isolated highlands, receiving little payment and cut off from the outside world. Everyday they are exposed to chemical fertilizer and pesticide. Since tea is a commodity, its price is negotiated at faraway markets, thus tea workers keep alive with very scant income without any social security scheme.

Coming back to Colombo, the next session required inputs from religions to come up with alternatives to globalization. I had a chance to make a presentation on "*Buddhist Response to Globalization*." Looking from the eyes of a socially engaged Buddhist, there is plenty of dhamma that can be re-interpreted to match modern forms of suffering caused by globalization. In addition to this, there were inputs from Islam,

Christianity and Hinduism.

Toward the end of the training, we had more workshops. Starting from analyzing religious elements that are oppressive and supportive for liberation. It was agreed that, while the essence of every religion is beneficial, once religion is institutionalized, its vitality to cope with many problems and conflicts weakens. Sometimes, it is even a cause of problem as we have seen in some fundamentalist movements. As many people came from countries with serious religious conflicts, they tended to resort to sectarian humanism or naturalism or anything that does not involve religion.

We also had workshops to discuss some other issues such as paradigm shift, Asian platform, revitalization of people's movement, research and networking. The training was quite fruitful. Many people got acquainted and were prepared to do joint activities. We had a number of research topics, e.g., labor flexibility, garment workers' condition, impact of TV on local cultures, etc. We came up with a network of growers of rice, tea, coffee and spice. We came up with programs for joint training and workshops. NGOs working with indigenous people got together and some visit and information exchange programs were planned.

The training ended with ordination and planting of tree seedlings, which, they said, was inspired by an idea from the Buddhist way of protecting trees.

Anne Lapapan supamanta
INEB Executive Secretary

The blooming of socially engaged Buddhism in Japan?

Socially engaged Buddhism in Japan is somewhat of an enigma. It does not have a single hi-profile person who leads a major social change organization like A.T. Ariyaratne and Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka, Sulak Sivaraksa and his many small NGOs in Thailand, the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in exile, or even Aung San Suu Kyi and her democracy movement in Burma. Although some have painted Daisaku Ikeda and Soka Gakkai in a similar light to these figures, it is an erroneous comparison as Soka Gakkai inside of Japan largely devotes itself to its own organization expanding activities and very partisan political organization. Amidst highly secularized and highly western influenced Japanese society, many socially engaged Buddhists keep their Buddhist side to themselves. Further, there has been very poor networking among socially engaged Buddhists due to this discrete Buddhist identity and also due to the difficulties of cross organization cooperation in traditional Japanese social groups. Part of this difficulty in being overtly Buddhist in a modern Japan is perhaps the warranted distrust of the way Buddhism and authoritarian power have made bed fellows in the past. In this way, priests and lay Buddhists have certain hesitations in reaching out beyond the typical social activities of religious organizations which are largely confined to proselytization of new members and basic social welfare activities like running kindergartens. In this way, numerous individual priests and



lay organizations have journeyed overseas using Japanese Buddhism's economic largesse to engage in supporting social welfare activities abroad, mostly in South and South East Asia, but also commonly in Africa and the Middle East. However, without a public identity and a network to unite themselves, the individuals and organizations operate in relative ignorance of each other, often retracing each other's steps and making donations to the same organizations.

It is from this unfocused and disunited situation that the leaders of the most significant Buddhist NGOs have decided that socially engaged Buddhism in Japan needs to come out of the closet. It needs a clear and strong social identity that is known to others. It needs to not be afraid to apply Buddha Dhamma teachings and practice to social problems. It needs to learn from the secular world as well as to offer its potential to a Japanese society that is ideologically and existentially groping for a new identity.

This identity needs to be one that joins it significantly with its Asian neighbors and crawls out from under the paternalism of the United States which has so profoundly shaped everything in Japan over the last 55 years.

In this way, these Buddhist NGOs have launched an effort to make a non-sectarian Buddhist NGO network in Japan which will not seek to dictate the activities of assorted socially engaged Buddhist groups. Rather, it will seek to help them find a common identity and develop what we could call a sangha of socially engaged Buddhists who can draw on each other for information, resources and wisdom. The first modest attempt to get this network off the ground was a symposium held on July 6 in Tokyo entitled "Buddhism, NGOs, and Civil Society." The program was headed by two prominent guests: Phra Phaisan Visalo, a development monk from Northeast Thailand, and Jun Nishikawa, Professor of Economics at Waseda University. Phra Phaisan

was here in Japan finishing a four month stay to study religion and globalization and had been invited to offer his insights on Buddhist activism from his long time experience in Thailand. Prof. Nishikawa is one of the most prominent economists in Japan who in recent years has become more and more interested in various models of alternative development. He has translated both of David Korten's books (*When Corporations Rule the World* and *The Post-Corporate World*) into Japanese and has recently co-edited a comprehensive book on Buddhist-style alternative development in Thailand.

In his talk, Phra Phaisan traced the rise of development monks in Thailand, specifically showing how they have stepped in to meet the intangible cultural and spiritual needs of people in this age of economic development. At the same time, NGOs have helped Buddhism to see and more deeply understand the injustices of the present development paradigm. Phra Phaisan outlined areas where he felt Buddhist activists and NGOs can deepen their cooperation in the development of a more empowered civil society. These areas include: 1) humanitarian relief, which has long been a common form of social engagement for Buddhists and a focus of most Buddhist NGOs in Japan; 2) peace activities, which Phra Phaisan felt could be a key area of activism for Japanese Buddhists as peace workers, witnesses and activists in various parts of the world; 3) the structural violence of present social and political systems which globalization has exacerbated. This includes developing new values and new paradigms for society. NGOs

have a particular strength in this area from which Buddhist should learn; and 4) inner peace and spiritual well-being, which means the creation of a new consciousness that is beyond consumerism. This last area is obviously the particular strength of that Buddhist and other religious groups can offer the civil society movement.

Prof. Nishikawa followed Phra Phaisan with a general outline of the various trends of the development age and the rise of alternative development models, especially socially engaged spiritual ones. One of the more significant points in his talk and in his recent work on this issue has been his picking up of the Thai scholar monk Ven. Payutto's distinction between development as a solely material process (*patana*) and development as a deeper holistic spiritual process (*bavana*). The common term for economic development in Japan today is *kai-hatsu* (*kai*=to open, begin; *hatsu*=to emit, arise, awaken). Prof. Nishikawa and his colleagues have re-read the two Chinese characters for this word in the traditional Buddhist way as *kai-hotsu*. In Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, this character for *hatsu/hotsu* is used in terms which refer to the resolve to attain enlightenment and develop *bodhi-citta* (*hotsu-bodaishin*) or to the vow to follow the Buddha's way (*hotsu-gan*). This play on words is significant in that it presents a way to develop a new kind of language to express a new orientation towards development. At the same time, it does not present a new kind of jargon (which ancient Buddhist terms may seem like) which is opaque to economists, secular activists and other groups involved in social change.

Prof. Nishikawa's conclusion focused on how certain key Buddhist concepts like "the middle way" and "interdependence" can help Asia, with its significant Buddhist population, to develop its own unique understanding of civil society and the civil virtues on which it is based. Until now, the idea of civil society has been fashioned in a largely western way with its civil virtues rooted in the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. "Justice" is one of the key virtues that has developed out of these religions and into a common social concern for the modern world. While this concept of "justice" is important in many ways, it is not without its problems, as seen in the drive for ultimate "justice" by both the United States and Islamic fundamentalists in their new "holy war." Although Buddhists may gain from developing a deeper understanding of justice, especially social justice, Buddhists tend to have other orientations which focus on the inner transformation of ignorance rather than the external retribution of 'evil'. (for a more in-depth discussion of these issues see David Loy's articles *On the Nonduality of Good and Evil*, and *The Spiritual Roots of Civil Society* at <http://www.bpf.org/think.html>)

The second half of the program was a panel discussion by representatives of four of the major Buddhist NGOs in Japan. These are: the Buddhist Aid Center (BAC) formed in 1982 in response to the refugee tragedies in Indo-China and run by a number of Nichiren Sect priests (*not* of the new Nichiren based groups Soka Gakai, Rissho Koseikai or Nipponzan Myohoji); AYUS formed in 1993 by a group of mostly Jodo Shu priests

to give administrative and basic support to others small NGOs in Japan; the Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA) originally formed in 1980 as the Soto Shu (Soto Zen) Volunteer Association which has focused its efforts on relief and community support services in Laos, Thailand and Cambodia; and the Rissho Koseikai Fund for Peace (One Meal Fund) formed in 1974 which engages in various relief work in all parts of the world.

Through the personal reflections of each of the representatives of these organizations, the audience gained a very interesting perspective on how Japanese Buddhist groups' approach to development work and international cooperation has changed over the years. In the early 1980s with the Cambodian refugee crisis at its height, Japanese Buddhist activists were very focused on relief activities. This was the period of the first emergence of Japanese Buddhist NGOs which came in response to numerous factors. One was a response to criticism in the mainstream media that Buddhism had become irrelevant to modern society and that Buddhist priests had no concern for the general well-being of people. A second factor was the shock and embarrassment that many Japanese Buddhists experienced on their first visits to these crisis areas in South East Asia. First, they found that here in Asia almost all of the religious-based groups doing aid work were Christian groups coming from the West. Secondly, they found Theravadan monks working with the barest of resources running educational and others sorts of aid and development programs. As Rev. Yoshimichi Ito of BAC noted in his comments, "Here I was, a priest of



the Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) tradition which emphasizes the selfless path of the bodhisattva, coming from Japan with nothing much to offer except a suitcase of money, and there I found monks of the Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) tradition, who supposedly are only focused on personal enlightenment, working in the barest conditions using their heart to pass on whatever wisdom and abilities they could to the common people."

These sorts of encounters have had great impact on Japanese Buddhists over the years. Increasingly, they have seen that although they may be able to provide large sums of money to run various programs, the people in these "poorer" countries have vast amounts of emotional and spiritual resources. In the present age of economic and social decline in Japan, more and more NGOs, schools, and other institutions have begun to create "work camps" in which young Japanese don't merely go to these poorer countries to "help" these people, but go to these countries to engage in activities and gain from these emotional and spiritual resources that are so lacking in Japan and other parts of the developed world. This change in orientation of not only Buddhist groups, but other Japanese groups involved in international activities, marks an important sea-change in both the develop-

ment movement and the civil society movement. When *kaihatsu* begins to shift to *kaihatsu*, activities change from the one way movement of economic resources from North to South to a two way exchange of material and spiritual resources. This is the foundation for a rich civil society movement which creates a network of solidarity among different countries. In an age of multinational corporations and undemocratic quasi-governmental trade organizations, such a global grassroots civil society movement is clearly a vital development.

Compared with South and South East Asian NGOs, Japanese NGOs, especially Buddhist ones, are in their infancy. During the years of the great economic boom here, such groups could hardly concern themselves with anything but giving economic support to those in need in other countries. This remains a role that Japanese Buddhist groups can play. However, with the economic downturn in Japan, Japanese in general have been doing serious soul searching on the real value of life and material development. This soul searching has begun to create a change in thought and approach to relief, social change and international activities. The development of such a non-sectarian network of Buddhist NGOs and individual Buddhist activists is a sign of this trend which we hope will develop (*kaihatsu*) more strongly in the near future.

Jonathan Watts

Long term member of INEB and a participant in the Think Sangha, a socially engaged Buddhist think tank. He lives and works in Japan as a teacher at Bunkyo University and research fellow at the Jodo Shu Research Institute.

Cambodian Volunteers for Community Development

Known as CVCD, this Cambodian NGO was established in 1992 by Arn Chorn-Pond and its current director, Sothea Arun. Emerging out of brutal civil war especially during the Khmer Rouge regime, CVCD was organized to start raising a new voluntary spirit and social morality promotion among young people of Cambodia to serve communities. A massive street cleaning and tree planting campaign was conducted in Phnom Penh. A vocational training project began and today approx 500 young people come to learn English and computer skills at CVCD. Several monk volunteer to come and teach at CVCD both English classes and Dhamma teachings. Since 1992, over 50,000 people have been involved in community development activities.

CVCD runs education and literacy programs for children in squatter communities, training in sewing skills for women, of whom many are either widowed or former prostitutes. Domestic violence in Cambodia continues today on a large scale. Each year approx 100 victims killed by acts of violence are both victims and perpetrators between ages of 7-25. Sadly these young people continue to act in violent ways due to deep emotional suffering from the war generation, high rate of illiteracy and continued conditions of poverty.

While our global situation escalates in world leaders setting examples of more and more war and violence, how can we hope to breed a new generation of lea-



ders with compassion for peaceful solutions? As the world often speaks of preservation of culture and heritage, the teachings of dhamma must be included as part of cultural heritage preservation.

Progressive monks willing to take a greater role in socially engaged work in the dhamma deserve more support. Many of the poor having no access to formal education come to the pagodas for guidance, so with more monks that can be trained to offer better guidance in education and awareness along with peace of mind training, a difference can be made to create a new culture of peace.

CVCD has now established with the Buddhist Institute in Phnom Penh a curriculum for volunteer teachers to be brought into outlying communities. The project will encompass 250 young people in the Baray Commune of Takeo province, providing:

- Informal education in Khmer and English literacy and elementary math for 2 hours each day per class.

- Promotion of morality and

home economics via the Buddhist five precepts and teachings of dhamma.

—To encourage volunteerism to mobilize their information to the entire community along with environmental and hygiene issues, including cleaning-up and tree planting campaigns.

Teachers will be sent to train other teachers so that this project can be ready to reach out into more communities.

CVCD envisions a country where the hopelessness of the poorest citizens becomes a moral strength in uniting communities with Cambodian people embracing a spirit of trust, volunteerism, compassion, solidarity and respect while continuing to enter the modern civilization.

Any support for CVCD is welcome.

Home office: #416, Street 310, Mailbox CCC 228, Boeung Keng Kang III, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Contact: Sothea Arun, Executive Director
Tel: (855-23) 216-615; Mobile 012-855-661
Email: cvcd@forum.org.kh or arun@mobitel.com.kh

Post-New Order and the never-ending strife in Indonesia



The post new order era of archipelagic Indonesia has seen much suffering and instability caused by either seceding attempts or religious strife—from Aceh (Irianjaya) to the Mollucas and other areas of dispute. It seems the powers that be in Jakarta, including the footloose and divisive Indonesian army (TNI), have benefited from these tumultuous situations and have played significant roles in perpetuating them. The increasing militarisation in these disputed areas, including the supply of arms to the conflicting radicals, is a simple panacea advised by the Jakarta and has led to exacerbated violence.

During 20-24 July 2002, three Buddhists from Siam have been invited to participate in the interfaith dialogue and visit to religious conflicts in the Mollucas and Bali. Apart from the author, the other two representatives are Ms. Lapapan Suppantra, Executive Secretary of

the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), and Mr. Somboon Chungprempree, Director of Wongsanit Ashram. Only the latter went to Bali and observed what seemed to be a pseudo-conflict between Hindus and Muslims there. Lapapan and I consulted and met with participants from other faiths including Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity in a small hotel in overcrowded Jakarta, as the trips to Ambon and Poso have been cancelled due to precarious local situation.

This event was organized by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), which has memberships in 126 countries around the world. Led by Dr. Park Seong Won, several members from WARC's executive committee in Europe, Asia and the USA have participated in this event, too.

We attended to testimonies from both Christians and Muslims from Poso and Ambon of

Central Sulavasi and the Mollucas, respectively. We heard about their traditional peaceful existence and elements of hatred sowed since the colonial times. Christians constitute the majority of the population (60%) and largely belong to the higher stratum in society. They were distinctively favored by the Dutch in those days, too.

The mysterious brawl in January 1999 between a Christian bus driver and a Muslim passenger, which subsequently led to the killings of the driver and other highly respectable Muslim teachers, is believed to be the starting point of the conflicts. In Poso, a similar inexplicable incidence took place and instigated riots, too. The coming of the Laskar Jihad, a Muslim fundamental group based in Yogyakarta, in 2000 intensified violence in Ambon, after a year of violence predominantly instigated by the radical Christian group. The

muddling of local and national army men and the police, which have had conflict of interest with each other, has increased the number of deaths and casualties. To date, 5,000-10,000 died and close to 700,000 people, almost one-third of its population of 2.1 million became Internally Displaced Persons (IDP). Just to travel from the airport to the city of Ambon is torturing enough. According to Dr. Park, who traveled there before, he had to take a taxi for five kilometers and then took a speedboat in order to avoid crossing into the conflicting areas of Christians and Muslims. In the 2002 report by the International Crisis Group, a Chinese Christian man was reported to drive across the Muslim area as an attempt to make a shortcut to his destination. His car was fired upon and his wife was killed.

Just this year, a peace accord, the Malino Agreement, was signed by representatives from both the Muslims and Christians in Ambon. The process preceding the agreement was substantially pushed through by the Ministry of Politics and Security. Both Christian and Muslim representatives at the interfaith consultation upheld the agree-

ment as a way out of this turmoil. They simply complained about the lack of political will by the government to implement it. They kept on reiterating that both Christians and Muslims want peace and had been able to live peacefully together. This made participants including who know next to zero about the country and the religions, startled, as to how such a tiny brawl could lead to mayhem. Upon a visit to a Buddhist organization in Jakarta later, we heard from one of its members who works in the governmental anti-corruption bureau that attempts to instigate religious conflict did not happen just in the Moluccas and Poso. They took place in at least two other provinces, Medan in Sumatra and Gorontalo in Sulawesi, in which both Christian and Muslim populations are very close in number. But attempts to instigate religious conflicts in these two provinces failed. He did further say, and on which I totally agree, that there should be in-depth study to explore factors that make the conflict potentials different in two very similar contexts.

True enough, an urgent challenge to end religious extremism is to “develop a new

approach to understanding Islamic law” as asserted by former President of Indonesia, Abdurrahman Wahid (“How to counter Islam extremism”, Ambon Information Website). Placing much importance on education, he further stated, “...we need immediately to address these apparent contradictions between our understanding of Islamic law and the universal values (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) that we not only endorse but also proclaim to be the heart of our faith. If we fail to address this in our institutes of higher learning and in our theological discourse, we condemn ourselves to be trapped in an infantile stage of development, and as Muslims failing to achieve the maturity required of us by the core principles of our faith.”

Another essential understanding is based on perspectives beyond religious ones. In order to understand the complexity of these so-called “religious” conflicts and bring about their end, an understanding of political, social and cultural contexts must be embraced.

Pipob Udomittipong

The constitutionality of the Petroleum Act, which authorized the Petroleum Authority of Thailand to construct the controversial Yadana gas pipeline was challenged in the Thai Court. Due to his staunch opposition to the project, Sulak was charged with violating the Act. Both the verbal and written testimonies of Mr. Kanit Na Nakhon, former vice-chairperson of the Constitution Drafting Council, to the constitutional court, supported Sulak's claim that the Act needs to be amended in light of the 1997 Constitution and several criminal and civil laws.

Sulak was charged for leading the campaign against the notorious Thai-Burmese gas pipeline, the revenue of which has been reportedly used for purchasing jet fighters from Russia. Widespread reports on tortures, killings and rape as a result of forced labor imposed on indigenous people living near and in the areas of the pipeline route have prompted the ILO to send in special rapporteurs and led to condemnations by the ILO and by the UN's member countries.

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**Super-T will be held during 6-22 November 2002
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For more information, please contact:

International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB): ineboffice@yahoo.com

Or visit our website : www.sulak-sivaraksa.org

Join forces to build the "Mun Yuen" Community

(The first village of Earthen Dwelling in Thailand) November 1-30, 2002 at Ban Thap Na, Thap Sathit district, Chaiyaphum province. Price: \$300-\$600, includes delicious local Thai meals, simple lodging and tuition.

Build the first earthen village in Thailand. In all, 25 houses and one community center will be built.

Concerted effort under this program will yield a prototype for any community wishing to live in harmony with nature. Participants will learn about natural building and community culture. It will be a great time for all to share experience and generosity with other.

Natural Building Workshop

Learn how to make earth-bricks by ADOBE technique and foundation of earthen meeting hall (for about 50 persons) in Wongsanit Ashram.

September 13-15, 2002. Wongsanit Ashram, Nakhon Nayok province, Thailand

Price: \$100, includes delicious Thai meals, simple lodging and tuition.

Natural Building Workshop

Construct an earthen meeting hall (for about 50 persons) in Wongsanit Ashram, by ADOBE technique and earth plaster.

October 19-23, 2002. Wongsanit Ashram, Nakhon Nayok province, Thailand

Price: \$150, includes delicious Thai meals, simple lodging and tuition.

For more information or to register contact

Pyrin Pongsura.

Wongsanit Ashram. P.O. Box 1. Ongkharak, Nakhon Nayok 26120, Thailand.

Phone 037 333183, 037 333184

E-mail ashram@cscsoms.com

www.sulak-sivaraksa.org

Ariyavinaya: Engaged Buddhasavika Training Project at Wat Songdharmakalayani

Based on the belief that spirituality is the foundation of self and social development and that ordained lives can support spiritual growth more than other ways of life, a group of Thai Buddhist women seek ordination for their spiritual development. These women follow the Buddha's intention of having women take on half of the responsibility in continuing and supporting the religion as well as applying his teachings to all levels of lives, from the personal and the community to the society.

Despite this fact, ordained women—Maechee (white robe nuns), Samaneri (novices), and Bhikkhuni (female monks)—

have not yet gained much acceptance from the society. In particular, Samaneri and Bhikkhuni ordinations are still very new ideas for the society. Therefore, it is crucial that women who are interested in taking the Samaneri or Bhikkhuni ordination, and women who are interested in learning Dhamma (the Buddha's teachings) and engaged Buddhism should have adequate knowledge and information so that they will be able to cope with social forces, or become strong supporters of women ordination. Equally important is that these women will be able to use this knowledge and information for the benefit of them-

selves, society, and Buddhism.

During July 29- October 18, 2002, the Buddha Savika Foundation, the Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development (TICD), and the International Women Partnership for Peace, Justice, and Mindfulness will organize a 12-week long training project. Its targets are lay Buddhist women and Maechee who are candidates of Samaneri and Bhikkhuni ordination or who are interested in learning the Dhamma and engaged Buddhism. Lay Buddhist women and Maechee from Laos and Cambodia will also be among the participants.



(For further details contact Samaneri Dhammananda, Watara Songdharm Kalayani, 195 Petkasem Rd., Phrapathon, Nakorn Pathom 73000, Tel. 034- 258270; Poolchawee Ruangwichatorn, or Araya Phayung-phong, TICD, 29/35 Soi Ramkhamhaeng 21, Ramkhamhaeng Rd. Wangthongland, Bangkok 10310, Tel. 02-3147385-6)

Nobel Laurette calls on Irish Government to act to save the children of Iraq

The Continuing death and suffering of Iraqi children is preventable, let us therefore together prevent it”...

“War on our Iraqi brothers and Sisters would be a war on the spirit and dignity of the entire human family”.

Speaking at the 23rd War Resisters' International Conference in Dublin, on Monday 4th August, Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate, Northern Ireland said:

“I call on the Irish Government to use its voice in every European and World Forum of which they are a part, to oppose US war against Iraq and work for diplomatic options, including the lifting of economic trade sanctions, to be taken to stop the violence against the Iraqi people, who have been living and dying under these brutal sanctions and effects of war for too long.

“Wednesday 6th August (Hiroshima Day) will be the 12th year of the Economic Sanctions against Iraq. These Economic Sanctions were described to me during my visit to Iraq, by Joanne, an Iraqi teenager, as being their “Silent Nuclear Bomb” that drops into every home and is

slowly destroying not only the children but the whole Iraqi nation. Well over half-a-million Iraqi children have died of malnutrition and preventable diseases (resulting from the after effects of the Gulf War and continuing economic sanctions) and each day more children die unnecessarily.

“Now as the Bush Administration is making extremely clear, Iraq is in serious danger of an all-out US assault in the coming months. This week when the Iraqi government have offered weapons inspections, the American Administration have responded by saying it is not about weapons inspections. Rather than going into yet another war causing further untold suffering to Iraqi civilians, also affecting the Middle East and the entire human family, as we are now so interconnected, that every diplomatic option must be tried to divert war. The age of wars has gone, such barbaric activity is not acceptable at any time, but even for those who believe in War it should not be acceptable when diplomatic options are readily available as has been, and continues to be in the case of Iraq.

“The American Government has

a responsibility to uphold its Democratic Constitution and abide by International Law, and respect the democratic wish of many American people, and the vast majority of governments and peoples of the world, who are calling for a non-violent solution to this crisis. WAR ON OUR IRAQI BROTHERS AND SISTERS WOULD BE A WAR ON THE SPIRIT AND DIGNITY OF THE ENTIRE HUMAN FAMILY.

“We are currently in the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) and this challenges us all to focus on the children and do all in our power to see they have clean water, food, medicine, a safe environment, and world. Children in Iraq do not have these things because of UN/USA/UK sanctions. The continuing death and suffering of Iraqi children is preventable, let us therefore prevent it.”

Mairead Corrigan Maguire

Nobel Peace Laureate, Peace People,
224 Lisburn Road, Belfast. BT307NP.

Tel: 028.44.663465

Email: info@peacepeople.com

www.peacepeople.com

(4th August, 2002)

INTERFAITH SOLIDARITY FOREST WALK In Support of the Indigenous People of Northern Siam

Spirit in Education Movement (SEM), in collaboration with Khan Watershed Communities Network, Catholic Commission for Ethnic Groups, Justice and Peace Commission of Thailand, Inter Mountain Peoples Education and Culture in Thailand (IMPECT), Kwan Muang Institute, The Centre for Inter-ethnic Studies (Chiang Rai Province) and PgazK'Nyau Association for Social and Environmental Development, is organising Interfaith Solidarity Forest Walks VIII in support of the indigenous people of Northern Siam. The intention of the walks is to bring an international and interfaith moral witness to the struggle of indigenous peoples in their efforts to evolve their sustainable way of life and to protect their sacred lands in the face of modern development. This year, there will be three different walks.

Samoeng District, Chiang Mai Province, 3-11 December 2002 Chiang Mai province is famous for its natural beauty. We will walk along the forest and Lan Ngen stream, which runs down to the Khan river where we will have a solitary time for meditation. The walk will be led by 2 hilltribe village leaders, Padi Joni O-docho and Padi E-Hlai, and a well-known Thai deep-ecologist, Nuttarote Wangwinyoo. Padi Joni O-docho and Padi E-Hlai are respected intellectuals and are famous all over the world for their defense of the rich culture of hill tribes in Siam.

Pai District, Mae Hong Son Province, 3-11 December 2002 The leaders on this route are Padi Ta-Syae, a Buddhist who possesses a wide knowledge of plants and their special properties, and Ft. Vichai Poaktavee, a Catholic priest who has worked with hill tribe communities for a long time and is concerned about issues of justice and peace.

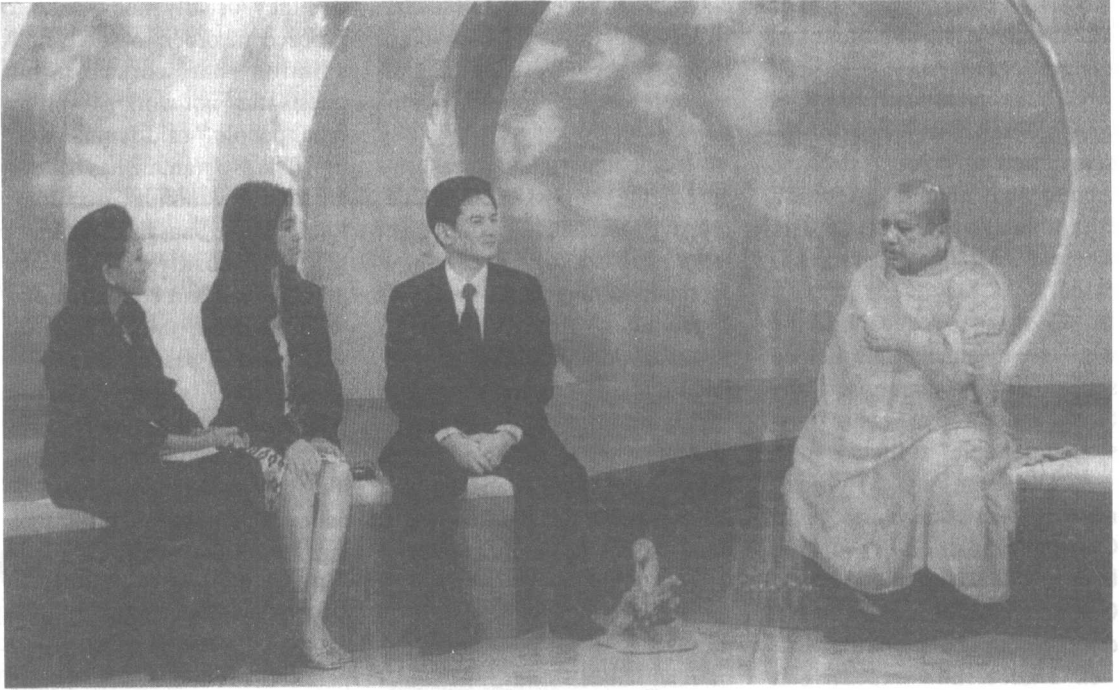
Mae Chaem District, Chiang Mai Province, 28 December 2002-5 January 2003

We will visit Lua (Lawa) and PgazK'Nyau villages. We will learn in a practical way what it means to pursue a close to nature, sustainable way of life. The leaders of the walks will be Padi Mo-Saow, a hill tribe village leader who excels in story telling, reciting poetry and singing; and Mr. Prachar Hutunuwat, the Director of SEM, who was a monk for 11 years and is now applying Dhamma to help society.

You can join us for any one of the routes and donate USD 500. This fee is for food, accommodation in the villages, round trip transportation from Chiang Mai to the villages, resource person salaries, co-ordination charges and forest-communities funding. If you can afford to pay the full cost, you will be supporting 2 persons. They will either be activists/conservationists, monks/priests from Thailand or other village leaders.

For more details, please contact: Mrs. Maria Deniz (English) or Ms Suwannee Hirunmaleelert (Thai), Spirit in Education Movement (SEM), P.O. Box 1, Ongkarak, Nakornnayok 26120 Siam (Thailand), Tel: 66-37-333183-4, 66-1-8036442, ashram@cscsoms.com, <http://www.sulak-sivaraksa.org>

Spiritual television: Stop suffering, get wise turn on your TV



Rape. Slapstick jokes. Greed-driven game shows. By all the evidence, TV is not something people usually turn to for peace of mind or spiritual inspiration. A small group of people, however, is determined to change that.

The Ni Lae Cheewit or “This is Life” programme, currently airing on Channel 5, is an attempt to introduce spiritual matters into a particularly worldly realm.

This is the first time that religious matters—not one of the most attractive subjects to the highly competitive and commercial TV business—have been given prime airtime, between 8:30 and 9pm on Sundays. The half-hour programme focuses on how to apply dhamma to solving problems in everyday life.

The prominent spot may be a mixed blessing. Since the programme appears at the same time as soap operas, the all-time favourite among Thai viewers, questions abound about whether it can survive.

“I believe that many people in society are living their life in suffering. They do not know how to get away from it. They need dhamma to help them analyse their lives—what causes their suffering and how to end it,” said Mae Chee Sansanee Sathirasuta, the much-respected, white-robed Buddhist nun who initiated the dhamma programme.

She emphasised that dhamma in this case need not be Buddhist only.

“Suffering and happiness are universal. In future, we will

try to present ways to look at ending suffering and encouraging happiness from the perspective of other religions, so that we’re catering for different communities,” she said.

For many people, a dhamma talk is little more than a sleep-inducing session that features a slow-paced lecture full of difficult-to-understand Pali words. But Ni Lae Cheewit is different. The programme’s format is that of a popular talk show. An emcee interviews guests such as celebrities or people who have survived serious problems in life.

The few episodes aired so far cover up-to-date issues such as sex among teenagers, drug abuse and domestic violence. Guests come from diverse backgrounds and have included Thanpuying Poonsuk Banom-

yong, wife of the late prime minister, Pridi Banomyong, veteran actress and theatre guru Pataravadi Meechudhon, as well as teenage icons such as Modern Dog lead singer Thanachai Utchin and actor/singer Monthol Jira.

The project started last year, when a dozen or so TV personalities turned up about the same time to study dhamma at Sathira Dhammastan retreat centre, where Mae Chee Sansanee is based.

Chorpaka Wiriyanon, the well-known emcee who helped set up the programme, said she thought the project was a "mission impossible" at first.

"I've been in the TV business for several years," said Chorpaka, a member of the board of directors of Neverland Creations Co Ltd, which produces a couple of game shows.

"I know how expensive it is. To a certain extent, producing a TV programme is like selling meat in the market. Everything must be fresh. If it can't be sold or aired on a certain date, it must be dumped and all the investment is lost."

It was also extremely challenging, she continued, to come up with a concept for a programme that isn't aimed at making a profit but is part of a medium that's all about profit.

The first thing Chorpaka told Mae Chee Sansanee was that she needed to find initial capital of at least 10 million baht if she really wanted to get the project off the ground.

Mae Chee Sansanee was quite taken aback at the large amount of money involved. Eventually, however, she managed to secure funding from the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (THPF) to produce dhamma

programmes for various media, including TV, radio, print and the Internet.

The THPF manages a fund, derived from taxes levied on cigarette and alcohol sales, that supports activities which help improve the physical, mental and spiritual health of the population.

Once the funding was secured, the impossible became more possible. A production team was set up, headed by Jamnanjar Chumcheun, formerly a producer with well-known news-and-documentary-maker Pacific Inter-Communication.

Jamnanjar says the programme aims to act as a bridge between the spiritual and temporal worlds. To survive, he says, it must exploit the nature of television for its own purposes.

"With TV, the content must be simple. Every sentence must be easily understood or it won't have any impact. The visual aspect is everything. What do we mainly have? In terms of visuals, we have a few people sitting and talking. That's not very exciting. We have to spice it up with other elements—hot topics or remarkable guests."

Whether the programme-makers like it or not, they have had to accept that many viewers are hooked on coverage of negative issues, she said.

"What we can do is to find someone who has had experience of some of these negative trends, like the drugs scourge, and explore how he or she managed to overcome their problem."

In many of the shows Mae Chee Sansanee helps find an answer to each problem based on dhamma. But the production team insists that there is no fixed format and, sometimes, no solu-

tions to the problems raised.

"We focus more on how to make people understand the cause of each problem. When people realise the chain of causality, they usually know how to proceed in order to solve it. A solution that works for our guests may not work as well for other people," said Jamnanjar.

The programme has been on air for a few months. According to Mae Chee Sansanee, feedback has been positive, with many letters of support coming in plus requests from universities for videotapes of past episodes.

"There is no way our programme will get more viewers than the soap operas. I have no illusions on that score. But I do believe that it is thought-provoking. It will encourage people to learn more and eventually to contribute to a happier life for others," said Mae Chee Sansanee.

Even with the initial investment from the THPF, the programme still needs to have five main sponsors in order to sustain itself. At the moment it has one.

"By its nature, this programme is not the kind that will attract a lot of sponsors. Besides, we are selective about whom we want to work with. We don't accept money from alcohol or cigarette firms," said Chorpaka.

To boost funding, she has launched a project with the slogan "one baht per one episode."

"We will ask viewers to support us by donating one baht per episode—52 baht a year. Once you pay this fee, you become a member and are entitled to participate in activities we're going to hold later on," she said.

Several thousand viewers have signed up so far. Chorpaka said the team will handle the money in a transparent manner

and at the end of the year the balance sheet for the project will be shown to the public.

Mae Chee Sansanee insisted that the programme has not been created to turn a profit and that if it does happen to make some money, this will be used to set up something she calls a "spiritual art house."

"It will serve as a forum for a dhamma community, a base to expand spiritual knowledge. It will be a refuge for women who want to pursue dhamma study. At the spiritual art house, children won't have to wait until col-

lege to learn about dhamma or public service. They can go there and learn through art."

She said that part of the reason why she pushed for a dhamma programme on TV was that she wanted to show that the mainstream media, which normally deals with more commercial matters, has the ability to promote positive values for the edification of society.

"I don't aspire to changing the media. But at least the programme is a clean drop of water in the torrent of consumerism. I hope people will see how nour-

ishing it is ... and that there will be more programmes like this on television in the future. I hope that with this small drop of water, more life will flourish."

(For further details contact The Sathira Dhammastan Nunnery, Soi Vajarapol, Ramindra Road, Bang Khen, Bangkok 10230. Telephone: 02-509-0085, 02-510-4756 or 02-510-6697.

Email: thisislife@savika.org.

Web site: www.savika.org.)

Atiya Achakulwisut

Bangkok Post, March 31, 2002

Why a World Future Council?

Our deepest crisis is not poverty, environmental collapse or terrorism. It is our failure to respond adequately to these challenges, despite having the means to do so.

It is claimed that this is because of irreconcilable differences in our value systems. But researchers have found widespread agreement on values and value priorities across continents, faiths, cultures and social classes.

What we lack are institutions to back up these common values. For the key problem is not "the way we think" but *which* of our thoughts are respected and acted on by the institutions of power in our societies. We face an implementation vacuum, not a values vacuum. The Australian Green Senator, Bob Brown, suggests that above the entrance to every parliament should be the words:

"Will people 100 years from now thank us for what we are doing here?"



Our responsibilities are historically unique. For the first time not just the next 100 years but even geological time periods are affected by what we decide—or do not decide—today.

Global concerns have also become morally relevant. There is no escape from the failures of the present order. This applies not only to environmental threats. There is also no escape from the anger and frustration of the millions of unemployed roaming the streets of the South

having learnt that this global game has many more losers than winners!

But our leaders have abdicated their responsibilities, preferring the easy way of only representing our narrow interests as consumers. They have become subservient to the short-term interests of global corporations, at the expense of everyone and everything else. At one meeting I attended recently, the representatives of the local federation of small and medium-sized businesses declared that "global capitalism is our biggest enemy."

We are increasingly rebelling against the dismissal of our deeply held values in the name of economic efficiency. We feel cheated and revolted. Cheated by the promises of a "micromillennium" and "silicon civilisation" of freedom and leisure against the reality of increasing working hours and stress or long-term unemployment and exclusion. Cheated by the promise of a

“global village” against the reality of a return of the brutal competitive world of the 19th century in which constant de-skilling and the infiltration of adversarial money bargaining in all areas of life breaks down trust and community. Cheated by the promises of the Rio Agenda 21 against the realities of the WTO and the “ecological aggression of the North against the South” (Klaus Toepfer). Cheated by the promise of 1989 against the continued reality of nuclear weapons—biological time bombs whose effects transcend time and space, poisoning the earth and its inhabitants for generations to come. Cheated by the promises of science and technology against the realities of toxic cocktails poisoning our water, soil, air and bodies. (In the UK half the population now believes science and technology do more harm than good—and 72% do not believe government safety assurances).

We are outraged by “Christian” leaders who insist that the poor pay compound interest to the rich even when it costs the lives of the children! We fear the judgement of our grandchildren when the richest nation on earth declares it cannot afford the (estimated 1% of GNP) costs of preventing global climate destabilisation

We feel revolted and hurt by the daily horrors of agri-business and animal experimentation. Of the 250 million cattle, pigs, horses and sheep transported through Europe every year, many for up to 20 hours without rest or water, 25 million are dead on arrival. We feel afraid deep in our souls when nature is dying and even the experts admit being “scared” because “no-one knows why”—

as when the fish deaths in the Baltic were reported recently. We feel damaged in the core of our being by the mechanical dogma foisted upon us, portraying nature as a mere machine to be manipulated.

We feel outraged by corporate control over the genetic blueprints of life and worry what it might mean for future generations to grow up thinking of life as a human invention, where the boundaries between the sacred and the profane have disappeared. (In the U.S.A wealthy couples can now order their designer child: eggs, sperm and surrogate mothers are all offered on the internet).

Our modern experiment of putting scientific and economic freedom first and then using ethics to deal with the consequences no longer works. It is a curious paradox that we celebrate our power and our (imagined) mastery over nature—yet, at the same time see ourselves as prisoners of some automatic, unsteerable process which we call progress.

I have said “we” because in my experience outrage is the common reaction from those offered the opportunity to respond. It is reflected in reports from all over the world, whether it is 87% in the UK demanding the protection of local production from enforced globalisation or the “citizen juries” in Latin America, overwhelmingly rejecting GM foods after hearing both sides of the argument.

Many react to the ecological-cultural crisis with confusion and anger, searching for scapegoats, becoming addicted or falling ill. The rising tide of intolerance as well as the epidemics of drugs, depression and mental illness in the

industrialised countries indicate that we are on a path destructive not just to our planet but to our societies and to ourselves.

We need to re-cast the debate on our future in moral terms. We have very little time left for the cheap fossil fuels on which we have built our modernity are ecologically unaffordable and physically running out. The energetic imperative of a transition to a global solar culture of sharing is today the foremost moral imperative—for unless we obey it, there will be no future for any human moral debate. We urgently need a global forum with the ethical and intellectual authority to guide this deep cultural transformation. This World (Future) Council would aim to reflect our common values and responsibilities for the present and the future. It would give weight to global citizen—and not just to consumer—values, providing impulses for research and political action.

No other institution is presently filling this gap. The most glaring failure is probably that of religious leaders who—with few exceptions—lack the courage and conviction to speak out, e.g. against consumerism and the destruction of biodiversity, and seem to have lost faith in their ability to engage in moral discourse. Making the market the principal instrument of human development has made shopping the principal cultural expression of “modern” societies. We now need to decide not just on a different destination—for our planet cannot afford global consumerism—but also develop the means to go with it. Both the means and the ends need to be equitable, sustainable, participatory and satisfying.

This is the task facing us. A

tall order, no doubt, but we do not start from zero! The building blocks of a workable global future already exist. Putting them together will require a convincing vision which captivates the imagination and inspires action, both of those now excluded and worried about their family's next meal—and of those in a position to penetrate and redirect the mechanisms of global power towards a just and sustainable order.

The World (Future) Council would also help reclaim our minds and sensitivities, eroded by consumerist brainwashing and the trivialisation of public debate. It would provide a permanent institution representing our higher values, thus giving the necessary impetus to implementing the agenda we know needs to happen—but which is gathering dust because it has no ongoing “promoter.”

The proposed Council would consist of respected individuals drawn from

- the wise elders of our planet
- the heroes and whistle-blowers
- the “best practice” pioneers
- youth leaders.

The first act of the Council could be a declaration that the time has come to bring democracy to the global level so that the people of the world can determine their common destiny. This could coincide with the launch of the proposed eParliament—linking electronically the earth's 25,000 democratically elected members of parliament.

The World (Future) Council could become the Advisory Council of the eParliament. It would hold the long-term vision, speak for shared values and

ensure that the parliamentarians have access to the best practical visionaries when tackling global problems.

I am often asked how Council members will be found and chosen. But this is not as difficult as it may appear. The list of proposed names I receive from very different audiences and countries whenever I describe this project overlap to a remarkable extent. We *do* live in a globalised world. It is not just Nelson Mandela who is on every list....

The Council itself could be supplemented by advisory councils from different sectors of society. Membership could rotate and be subject to ratification by the eParliament Executive. The Council could even evolve into, e.g., a Council of Regions or an Earth Senate. Several traditional societies had a “Council of Seers Into The Future” whose voice was respected when day-to-day decisions were taken.

Drastic steps are now needed for we face a global emergency. Ten years after the largest-ever global gathering in Rio, the signs for the crucial implementation follow-up meeting in South Africa this year could hardly be worse. Preparations are incoherent and incomplete, the likely outcome disappointing and weak. Many targets have been stripped. There has been a major effort to water-down “mutual accountability” for tackling global ills. The debate on shared responsibility is receding and the poor global majority is losing faith in democracy.

These are not my conclusions but those of one of the highest-placed insiders in this process, the head of the UNDP,

speaking after the crucial preparatory meeting in Bali last month.

After his report, a prominent British bishop rose and declared that a major disaster in the rich countries was now needed to wake people up before it is too late. When asked what he had in mind, he replied: “The flooding of London!”

Such reactions illustrate the challenges we now face. I am neither an optimist nor a pessimist; I am a possibilist. We know what to do. We can either fail—and go down in history as accomplices in monstrous crimes. Or we can act now.

In the words of Colombian Senator Ingrid Betancourt—currently missing after being kidnapped by FARC guerrillas last February:

“Let us not list our weaknesses but claim our strengths and change the course of history!”

Jakob von Uexkull

Chairman, The Right

Livelihood Awards

Former Member of the

European Parliament

Tenerife, June 2002

Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD) founded in 1973 having Sulak sivaraksa as the first coordinator with its headquarter in Bangkok, was very active for over one decade on alternative model of development, stressing on spiritual and cultural roots more than caring for economic and material aspects of modernization, which is part and parcel of neocolonialism or economic globalization. Recently, ACFOD has been declined rapidly and all employees have been laid off. The headquarter will be moved to Manila, in the hope of saving the organization.

Spirit of Bandung alive and well

When Dr. Abdurrahman Wahid ascended to the Presidency in 1999, he made the suggestion of commemorating the 50th anniversary of the historic Bandung conference held in 1955. His vision to revive the Spirit of Bandung in light of the political, religious, economic and cultural crisis facing the 21st century received an enthusiastic response among social groups and organisations in Asia and Africa.

Bandung was not the first but the most emotional and visionary conference in the nascent history of non-alignment nations. As early as 1947, India called a Conference on Asian Relationships which was followed by meetings in New Delhi in 1949, Colombo (Sri Lanka) and Bogor (Indonesia) in 1954. The result was an Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference held in Bandung, Central Java, Indonesia, in April 1955.

The newly achieved liberation from colonial occupation was at stake. The Spirit of Bandung managed to bring all the great Asian and African leaders of that time together and got them united in defending political freedom and national independence. It was a critical junction in the post World War II period. Within the changing geopolitical conjunctions caused by conflicting ideologies represented by the Western and the Eastern blocs, Bandung was a milestone on the road towards the non-aligned movement.

The delegates from 23 Asian and 6 African states called for an indigenous and self-reliant development based on improved cultural and economic co-operation. They agreed on 10



Wahid: His vision to revive the Spirit of Bandung

principles as an orientation for the formation of their mutual internal relationships. These included respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations, equality of all races and all nations, mutual agreement on nonintervention in internal affairs, and non-violent conflict solutions.

Visionary leaders like Sukarno, Nehru, Tschu En Lai and Nasser, to mention only a few united in the Spirit of Bandung, have dared to counter the giant military power blocs with the moral power of non-alignment and independence. With this very active resistance to any co-opting of one of the two power-systems, they have protected autonomy and integrity of the new nation states.

Under NAM, formally established in 1967 and better known as Group of 77, they could take a firm strategic position in a post second World War situation that was politically increasingly polarised. It was also in this third frame of moral power that in the process of de-colonisation they could defend their national freedom and identity.

POST COLD WAR CRISIS

Since the end of the Cold War between the USA and USSR in the last decade of the 20th century, the political scenario has changed decisively from East-West confrontation into a global North-South confrontation. This new geopolitical scenario has a few new dimensions which are important and are to be incorporated into any new political concept.

Military regimes linked to the USA in the name of nation building, development and modernisation have taken over political power in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Today, we must ask to what extent globalisation is a new name for the same life-destroying force which peoples have resisted for decades. Some of the political centres have been co-opted and weakened and even turned against their own people in order to maximise profits.

Since May 2002, the USA has co-opted the former second superpower, Russia. The European Union, although slightly critical in political terms, has become a useful satellite within the military framework of Nato. Movements like that of non-alignment are increasingly under suspicion of being at best ambivalent towards the call for war against globalisation.

Nevertheless, over half a century old global and intermediate institutions may have to be radically reorganised. Indeed, why should we continue with a United Nations which only accommodates the ruling political class? Why not have parliament representing the people, the sovereign of modern demo-

cracies?

THE ROAD TO BANDUNG 2005

After a meeting between Dr. Wahid and renowned social critic Dr. Sulak Sivaraksa of Thailand, the idea was born to use the three years left to 2005 to have a program focusing on alternative approaches to peace and security, independence and freedom of all people in the 21st century. On this road to Bandung 2005, three major successful events in 2002 have happened.

The first response to Dr. Wahid's vision was organised by the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation in cooperation with the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok. About 110 participants comprising mainly Asian Buddhists, Muslims, Christians and secular people, convened in February 2002. The Conference was supported by several national and international organisations. The main focus was on peace, peacemaking and international security, including emphasis on experiences with ethnic conflicts in Asia. The mass media covered this event widely and with encouraging sympathy.

Another impulse came from a global planning conference on Democratisation in the Context of the Global and Regional Conflicts, held in Oxford, England, in March 2002. The conference was sponsored by the Buddhist oriented TODA Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research Centre, located within the University of Hawaii. About 80 participants represented at least seven civilisations. Mainly researchers, some came from action groups, a few from media institutions.

The Director of the Institute,

Prof. Dr. Majid Tehranian, a prominent Muslim peace-scholar, invited a delegate of the AIT meeting in order to create a direct link with the Bandung Vision. The Conference established a scientific framework for re-shaping the economically one-sided practice of globalisation into a concept of holistic globalisation which aims for sustainable communities, a newly defined global citizenship and a newly defined globalised democratic participation in the common good.

The third event was the Conference on Asia-Africa Beyond Globalisation: The Spirit of Bandung and a New World Order, held in Bandung, Indonesia, in June, 2002. The event was mainly sponsored by the Christian Conference in Asia (CCA) and organised by the Maranatha-Christian University. About 120 Indonesians and 30 delegates from Africa and other Asian countries reaffirmed the significance of revitalising the Spirit of Bandung for all nations that advocate independence and freedom.

The Conference was convinced that an alternative, peaceful and just world is possible as long as people and governments cooperate in solidarity against the dramatic implications of economic globalisation. Reference was made to the destruction of national economies, breaching national sovereignty, violation of territorial integrity, wars and threats of wars. The Conference stressed the following:

□ Global economic justice and serious implementation of economic, social and cultural rights that would enable Asian and African countries to develop their

own people-centred economies.

- Conflicts between and within countries must be resolved through dialogue circumventing any interference by foreign powers.
- Peoples were urged to establish democratic institutions, to implement all UN resolutions, to adopt all human rights, to eliminate all forms of discrimination, to condemn the manipulation of issues of race and religion.
- The participants upheld the sanctity of life as a basic foundation of humanity. Any war against terrorism is counter-productive and is to be condemned.
- Any new world order is to be based on human dignity. The formation of the alternative of sustainable and democratic communities should include all those peoples, groups, organisations and movements which have respect for life and are willing to contribute to a peaceful solution in diverse societies.

Going beyond globalisation means revitalising the natural human Spirit of Bandung, the Spirit of freedom and independence, inspiring alternatives to any form of domination and exploitation. The coherent Spirit of Bandung will not let down humankind but lead those now victimised by the one-sided implications of globalisation into a new era of peace, human security and just and sustainable communities.

Wolfgang R. Schmidt

Former Executive Director of World Council of Churches and Asia Director of Bread for the World.

There is only one earth, and we are all family.



GLOBAL FAMILY
FOR LOVE & PEACE

Letter Of Invitation

With the same understanding that we are all one family.


With the same mission of respect for all religions,
tolerance for all cultures and love for all life.

With the same vision of a world with
just and compassion
love and peace.

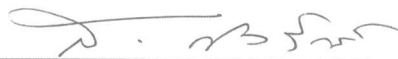
We Are Pleased to Announce That

PROFESSOR SULAK SIVARAKSA

Will Work Together With Us As An Advisor


Hsin Tao Shik

Dharma Master Hsin Tao
Founder and Chairman



Advisor

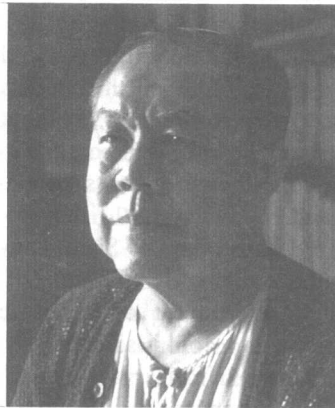
29 July 2002

On poverty

As you all know, the mission of the World Bank, as engraved on the walls of its headquarters in Washington, D.C., is to eradicate poverty. But since its establishment five decades ago, the policies of the World Bank have contributed to greater and widening income inequalities between and within states. This is especially apparent to World Bank watchers, and to those who are concerned about structural violence. Besides, the number of poor people based on the World Bank's definition of poverty has actually increased. And the natural environment has seriously deteriorated. It should be noted that the World Bank is lavished with immense human and financial resources: Probably the richest international organizations in the world, the World Bank employs the best and brightest in almost every field of specialization.

The president of the World Bank once queried me about the Buddhist conception of prosperity. I responded that from the Buddhist perspective a prosperous person is (1) self-reliant, (2) has self-dignity and is proud of his or her culture, (3) is humble and values simplicity (in short has contentment), (4) is generous, and (5) is ever mindful.

The president of the World Bank then noted that this Buddhist definition of prosperity does not mention about income and wealth at all. I responded that money and wealth are like a double-edged dagger. The Buddha even stated that in reality money is more a source of suffering than of happiness. As a result, the Buddha included in the *vinaya* (the code of monastic



discipline) a provision prohibiting bhikkhus from touching money and from appreciating it.

Prince Siddhiporn Kritdara, the father of new agrarian practices in Siam, once stated to Mr. Puey Ungphakorn, then Governor of Bank of Thailand, the following: "Money and gold are illusory. Rice and fish are real." Mr. Puey never doubted the correctness of this view.

If my definition of prosperity is correct, then poor people are those who are at the opposite end of the five principles listed above. Thus the leader of the Thai Rak Thai Party may be considered poor. The leader of the Democratic Party is apparently poor in terms of generosity. Put differently, the political and economic system under capitalism and consumerism is capable of using the mass media to indoctrinate the people to feel that they are poor due to the following reasons. (1) Capitalism opens no avenue for self-reliance. Everyone (the employer/investor as well as the employed) is at the mercy of the infamous market, is completely dependent on the market, which is free but ridden with injustices. (2) Capitalism, which destroys local and traditional cultures,

fosters an inferiority complex. In their places, capitalism promotes a culture of materialism and consumerism—often called McWorld Culture. In this context, religion and spirituality are expendable. (3) Capitalism views contentment as a sign of weakness and abnormality. Since the times of the Phibunsongkram and Sarit Thanarat military dictatorships, the Thai ruling elites have been indoctrinated by American modernization experts to abhor contentment. Back in those days, monks were even forbidden to preach contentment. A contented person does not aspire things beyond his or her needs. On the contrary, capitalism breeds competition for wealth, status, etc. This is a root cause of poverty. (4) Capitalism teaches the people the gospel of wanting and possessing, and not giving. Moreover, an act of giving in the capitalist context is often laden with ulterior motives—e.g., to obtain benefits in return. This is evident in many alms-giving ceremonies and high-profile 'philanthropic' activities in Thai society at present. (5) The practice of mindfulness in the capitalist context is almost impossible. Investment is all about taking risks and chances in order to obtain the greatest profit. Teachers, students, and even monks—many of whom—do not cultivate mindfulness. This gathering storm is an omen of impending destruction.

Many years ago, World Bank officials concluded that the inhabitants of Pak Moon communities in Ubon Ratchathani, Siam, met their criteria of poor and marginalized people.

The World Bank thus helped fund the Thai government's construction of the Pak Moon dam—to help the poor people in Siam in general, and the poor Pak Moon villagers in particular. The unfortunate result is that the World Bank and the Thai government ended up destroying the Pak Moon villagers' way of life, threatening their security and survivability. For centuries, the Pak Moon villagers led happy and prosperous lives, living harmoniously with their rice fields, fish, the Moon river, etc according to Buddhism and their local culture. In other words, they were self-reliant and dignified. And they were willing to give more than take.

The case of Pak Moon illustrates how knowledgeable and well-meaning experts trained in the Western tradition were blinded by ignorance and prejudice and ended up destroying a community and the natural environment.

At least, the World Bank is beginning to realize its shortcomings and failures: it now recognizes that the construction of large dams is more destructive than beneficial. World Bank officials even went out of their way to listen to the grievances of poor people at first hand. This is unprecedented. There is now a small office in the World Bank that deals with poor people. The employees of this office have traveled worldwide to interview some 60,000 poor people. The product of their endeavor is a two-volume book entitled *Voices of the Poor*. This is probably the first World Bank publication that forces government elites worldwide to listen to the poor. It is also noteworthy that the staff members of this small office are all motivated by spirituality and

morality and that they all value humility and simplicity. They even have a small room in the World Bank for meditation. These characteristics enabled them to truly open their minds and listen to the poor. Without an open heart, it is impossible to fathom the grievances of the poor.

Let us return to Siam. During the reign of King Rama VII, the government of absolute monarchy commissioned Dr. Zimmerman of Harvard University to examine the kingdom's economic situation. The Zimmerman report stated that the country had no poor citizens. On the contrary, Mr. Pridi Banomyong had experienced the grievances of poor farmers in Ayutthaya first-hand well before he went to France to pursue higher education. Because he had lived with the poor, Mr. Pridi understood the problems of poverty and indebtedness of Ayutthaya farmers. Therefore, when he led the 1932 revolution, he not only strove for political equality but economic justice as well. This reasoning is evident in his Draft on National Economic Policy, which is commonly known as the *Yellow Book*. Unfortunately, aristocrats of the *ancien regime* relied on the *White Book*, which was allegedly written by King Rama VII, to refute and overwhelm Mr. Pridi's proposal. They instead argued that not even dogs die of starvation in prosperous Siam. Poverty in Siam was mainly the result of laziness, gambling, and drug addiction, not unjust socioeconomic structures, they asserted.

Lamentably, Mr. Pridi's Draft on National Economic Policy was crushed in its cradle in 1932. It is still unable to see the light of the day. Great Bri-

tain successfully established a welfare state after the Second World War; that is, almost two decades after the vision of Mr. Pridi. That Britain succeeded in creating a welfare state is because the Labor Party was voted into office. Socialism was able to plant its roots on British soil because intellectuals, writers, academics, activists, etc. went down to the grassroots to truly experience the suffering of the poor and marginalized; and because they were able to channel these grievances into works of art that were able to convince the public. Working as a united front, they were able to tame capitalism in the context of socialism that was not totalitarianism.

The previous sentence is very important. China, Vietnam, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union though professing socialism actually practiced totalitarianism. Though these states had poor people, their suffering was mitigated by the welfare program organized by the state or communist party. Unfortunately, the welfare program was only concerned with the material domain. And the welfare program in the end robbed the people of the initiative to cultivate self-reliance. Moreover, their people, including party cadres, were forced to parrot socialist principles without believing in them. This is evident when the grip of totalitarianism weakened drastically or completely diminished, allowing capitalism to enter into these countries and oppress their citizens.

In the case of the former East Germany, despite the poverty of its citizens the government was highly concerned about the natural environment. Just one

day before the German reunification, the East German Parliament passed a bill prohibiting the felling of trees along roads throughout the country and the incursion into the country's forest areas. The communist government clearly understood that opening the country to the free market system meant that capitalists could easily use the pretext of development to destroy the country's natural environment.

Indeed many Burmese suffered under the dictatorial fist of Ne Win. But before the country opened itself up to global capitalism in 1988 Burma had a remarkable environmental condition. Compared to Siam, which had been opened to capitalism since 1855, the pristine-ness and equilibrium of the natural environment in pre-1988 Burma were in a different league. But just within one decade after Burma opened its door to international capitalism, the condition of its natural environment has been deteriorating at an alarming rate. The Burmese military junta not only destroyed the country's forest areas, but also exterminated ethnic minority inhabitants of those areas who had harmoniously coexisted with nature for centuries.

Since Burma gained its independence in 1947, successive Burmese governments have never had a western or modernized policy. The Burmese are not shy to wear *longyi*. Although Burma has been under dictatorial rule since 1962, the Burmese government has not been successful in extending its power into the rural areas because of the lack of an extensive network of roads. The Burmese military junta primary occupation seems to be sup-

pressing or pacifying small pockets of resistance or rebellion in the country. Even when there were communists in Siam, the "red" or "pink" area often had a satisfactory environmental condition, because it was not 'developed,' because state power failed to penetrate it.

When Burma was a colony in the British empire Maurice Collis observed that its inhabitants may be poor in terms of material possessions when compared to English people, they often traveled in carts, each of which was drawn by 2-3 oxen, reciting poetry and playing musical instruments, singing songs, taking their time and enjoying themselves. The natural environment in Burma was lush and pristine—in short, magical—Collis pointed out. In sum, the people whom Westerners perceived as inferior and poor were not embarrassed to lead simple lives, which were mightily enriched by the arts and culture.

My point is that there will be more poor and marginalized people in a capitalist society. If countries that experimented with socialism without a totalitarian face like Britain and the Scandinavia unequivocally embrace free market capitalism (at times called free market fundamentalism), the welfare system will inevitably be dismantled. Led by the iron-lady Margaret Thatcher, the Conservative Party had virtually demolished the welfare system in the UK. Even though Tony Blair and the Labor Party are in power, they have done nothing to arrest the trends triggered by Thatcher's neoliberal revolution. Some critics have even insisted that Blair is simply Margaret Thatcher in trousers. This year, Denmark

has slashed its foreign aid by 50 percent. And Sweden is increasingly flirting with neoliberalism. This is because these countries are following the footsteps of the United States, the greatest capitalist state with powerful transnational corporations whose influence is felt domestically and internationally. Neoliberalism is also unlikely to spare the European Union. Although many EU member states have Socialist or Social Democratic and Green parties, these two parties are not sufficiently principled and strong to challenge capitalism.

It is also illustrative that in New York, as Noam Chomsky has noted, almost 60 percent of black youth lack economic and educational opportunity and access to basic social security. Their plight is not significantly different from the inhabitants of Bangladesh even though the latter is considered the poorest country in Asia. Interestingly, the BBC has recently pointed out that the living condition of poor children in London is similar to that of Dickens' time—more than one century ago.

Let us direct our gaze closer to home and focus on Kerala state in India. Based on their GDP per capita, the inhabitants of Kerala would be categorized as poor. However, the unemployment rate in Kerala is very low; some economists may even consider Kerala to have full employment. The majority of peasants there cultivate food crops primarily for household consumption, selling the surplus. The state's social welfare program is extended to fully incorporate the poorest and most marginalized. Kerala has a higher literacy rate than the United States. Local politics is

also highly democratic in substance. The Communist and Socialist parties are often at the forefront of the local government. However, Kerala has received scant attention from the Western mass media. At the same time, the United States and transnational corporations have almost completely routed all of India economically. Only one decade ago, India was more socialistic than capitalistic.

The politics and economy of Kerala state are designed to provide opportunity to the poor and marginalized. Ladakh, on the other hand, is a small province in Jammu-Kashmir state. It can be said that the power of the local government has not penetrated Ladakh. This is because the inhabitants of Ladakh are mostly Buddhist. On the other hand, Muslims dominate the political and economic affairs of the state. Nevertheless, as practicing Buddhists, the inhabitants of Ladakh may be considered prosperous and happy based on the five criteria mentioned earlier. Anyone interested in Ladakh should consult Helena Norberg-Hodge's book, *Ancient Futures*.

Helena argues that the future must be built on traditional wisdom and culture. The future of the world cannot be

found in New York or London. Rather it is to be found in a small community like Ladakh. In the case of Siam, our future may well be found among the Assembly of the Poor. The Assembly of the Poor deserves credits for engaging the country's middle class, convincing the latter to overcome their prejudices and selfishness and struggle with the poor for justice. In many parts of the country, the middle class has become socially engaged and politically active—the situations in Kanchanaburi, Prachuab Kirikan, and Songkhla attest to this assertion. If the middle class collaborates with the poor in Pak Moon, Yasothorn, Surin, etc., then a new political movement may be set in motion, paving the way for local governance as in Kerala. Or at least they will have more bargaining power vis-à-vis the government; for example, pressuring the Thai Rak Thai Party to be more transparent and accountable, to be more considerate and sincere to the poor, to be more protective of the country's citizens against foreign investors and transnational corporations, to be more open to criticism, and so on.

The Thai government must also make its standpoint clear vis-à-vis the poor inhabitants of Burma and Vietnam. It must not

easily hedge on the issue of human rights and environmental destruction in both states. And not to forget is Tibet. China has long oppressed Tibetans. The nominally Buddhist government of Siam does not even have the nerve to allow His Holiness the Dalai Lama to enter the kingdom. Not to mention is the government's blind march according to the tom-toms beat of President Bush's 'war against terrorism.' The Thai ruling elites should have realized the leading terrorist state in the world is none other than the United States itself.

Do not think that what I have just mentioned has nothing to do with the poor and marginalized. In this globalizing world, we are all tied to the superpower and transnational corporations. I raise all these broad issues in this opening speech so as to provoke further discussions, hoping that you all will be able to reach your own conclusions. And if you find this speech beneficial, I will not regret having dragged this old body of mine all the way to meet with you today.

Speech delivered to Green Peace International, Cha-am, Siam, April 2002.

*An edited version of this article appeared in the **Bangkok Post**,*

August 4, 2002.

Forgiveness

In Buddhist culture the word *Abhaya*—no fear—is equivalent to forgiveness. At the time Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992, her first book, *Freedom from Fear*, was published. In the book, she explains how she fought against the military dictatorship in Burma with her compatriots

nonviolently. She meditated daily on loving kindness and extended her compassion to the oppressed as well as the oppressor. In fact, the military junta had organized a general election in 1990 in which her political party, the National League for Democracy, won a landslide victory. However, the military junta not

only refused to transfer power to the newly elected members of parliament but also put her under house arrest and brutally cracked down on her supporters.

A few years ago I participated in a march in Washington, D.C., traveling from the White House via the World Bank headquarters to the Embassy of

the People's Republic of China, demonstrating against the plan to build a gigantic dam in Tibet. The plan was proposed by the Chinese government, which was seeking financial support from the World Bank. The demonstration was a success as we were able to pressure the World Bank from supporting such monstrous project.

One of my fellow demonstrators in that march was a Tibetan monk in his seventies who looked as if he was 20 years younger. I learned that the Chinese had tortured him in Tibet for 18 years. When he was released, he escaped to India to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama. His Holiness asked him whether he was afraid at all while being tortured. He answered that he was not afraid of death or painful experiences. Instead he practiced loving kindness and extended compassion to his tormentors all the time. He knew that they were merely carrying out their duty and felt that his Chinese tormentors did not know what they were doing, mistakenly perceiving him as their enemy. Thus he did not

think that they were his enemy. Rather, they were fellow human beings trapped in the cycle of birth and death. As he conceded, his only fear at the time was losing compassion and forgiveness towards his tormentors.

Compared to the above two cases, my experience appears fairly insignificant. The military in my country, Siam (which I never refer to as Thailand), used to regard me as a traitor because I objected to the process of modernization and globalization which enriches the few, especially transnational corporations, at the expense of the poor and natural environment. I spoke out, wrote articles, and joined hands with the masses against mega-development projects that brought about deforestation, violated basic human rights, or sought to supplant local cultures and folk wisdom. I was arrested a few times on the charge of *lese majeste* (defaming the king, which is equivalent to treason). Yet I never hated my oppressors. Buddhism teaches me to forgive the so-called enemy. Indeed without an 'enemy' we can never improve our minds to be calm in

the face of difficult situations. However, we must cultivate the realization that the real enemies are within us: greed, hatred, and delusion. In other words, external enemies are really a projection of our inner fears. Once these internal enemies are overcome we will not perceive external enemies. All sentient beings will be our friends. There is no such thing as a nonrelational 'I'; we all are interrelated and depend on one another. We should be grateful to all sentient beings, not only human beings. Without trees we will not be able to survive either. Hence I have learned to be grateful to all, and it is beginning to pay off. Even the Thai military, which used to slander me or had me arrested, has now invited me to teach at the military college and has asked my Buddhist and Muslim friends to train young officers in the practice of nonviolence, nonviolent conflict resolution, and peacemaking.

Forgiveness project; the article will be published in a book compiled and edited by Dr Jampolsky and Dr Cirincione.

Monarchy

What would Siam be like without a monarchy?

I approach this question from the standpoint of a radical conservative. On one hand, I feel that constitutional monarchy is the best possible system for the country, especially for the maintenance of national cohesion and provision of moral guidance. Thais have a lot to be proud of their kings and royal families, of the 'golden age' enjoyed under the rule of righteous and enlightened kings (*dhammaraja*). By righteous and enlightened kings,

I mean monarchs who relied mostly, but not exclusively, on Buddhism to make the people accept their authority. They were kings because they ruled righteously. Broadly speaking, they had to uphold the dhamma, maintain cultural diversity and ecological sustainability, and promote traditional knowledge and spiritual development. The duty of the Siamese king is well captured by a Pali verse.

When kings are righteous,

the ministers of kings are righteous. When ministers are righteous, brahmins and householders are also righteous. The townsfolk and villagers are righteous. This being so, moon and sun go right in their course. This being so, constellations and stars do likewise; days and nights, months and fortnights, seasons and years go on their courses regularly; winds blow regularly and in

due season... When crops ripen in due season, men who live on these crops are long-lived, well-favored, strong and free from sickness.

On the other hand, these ideals were not always upheld. There were abuses of power, gross socioeconomic inequalities, and so on. Indeed the nation has a lot to be ashamed of. My radicalism derived from my conservatism: a nation cannot reform itself unless it first takes pride in itself, in its identity and ideals. It has to try to live up to those ideals. Without doing so, any reformist movement would have no impact on the country's politics, and it may easily become an object of loathing. Overcome by modernity, however, the influence of these ideals has been waning at both the ruling and grassroots levels. In the past,

the monarchy was an embodiment of these ideals. Possibly, it will continue to serve this function in the future. But it too must undergo reform. Otherwise, it will sow the seeds of its own destruction. At the very least, it must be accountable and open to criticism: the monarchy must be reminded by the people of what it means to rule righteously. And it must return to the essential teachings of the Buddha. If not, the monarchy will produce rulers who are kings only in name.

The bloodless 1932 Revolution paved the way for the country's democratization under constitutional monarchy. Thais were no longer subjects but citizens, at least nominally. An avenue was open for their participation in issues that mattered in their lives. The military dictatorships during and after World

War Two stunted democratization in the country and blew up the image of the monarchy in mythical proportions. The post-war dictators sanctioned by conservative royalists masqueraded as defenders of the monarchy. In the process they had committed more harm than benefit. The monarchy has become an institutional behemoth, beyond reproach and lacking transparency. The resurgence of civil and democratic movements in the 1990s is a good sign for the kingdom's future. Hopefully, these democratic movements and a reformed monarchy will contribute to greater freedom, justice, and prosperity in the country.

First published in the Times Higher Education Supplement in the Open Democracy Forum, U.K. on the eve of the British Queen's golden jubilee May 31, 2002.

The write stuff

More than a bookshop, Suksit Siam is both a place for intellectual exchange and absorption—and a channel for understanding the nature of life. If the bold ivory letters on the sign set up high could speak, they could certainly tell some stories. Greying now with age, the elegant letters reading “Suksit Siam” have seen all sorts of readers pass beneath them over the last thirty-five years.

Readers come here for many reasons. Some come to sit and quietly read their favourite tomes. Others are in search of a circle of like-minded friends. Modest in size, Suksit Siam has room for all.

Here, you will definitely not encounter Harry Potter or John Grisham. Gleaming on the

shelves is the crisp, cool prose of Krishnamurti, Potjana Jantharasanti, Rabindranath Tagore, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. There are artful satires of human foibles by Milan Kundera and Lao Khamhom, avant-garde poetry by Angkarn Kallayanaphongse and incisive essays by Sulak Sivaraksa (founder of the shop), Vandhana Shiva, David Korten and Helena Norberg-Hodge. Suksit Siam has a special liking for the non-mainstream. Even the few magazines on display are so-called alternative fare produced by grassroots groups.

Welcoming those who enter is a tall plywood case featuring books on Tibetan themes; above it sits a portrait of the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader, beaming a compassionate smile.

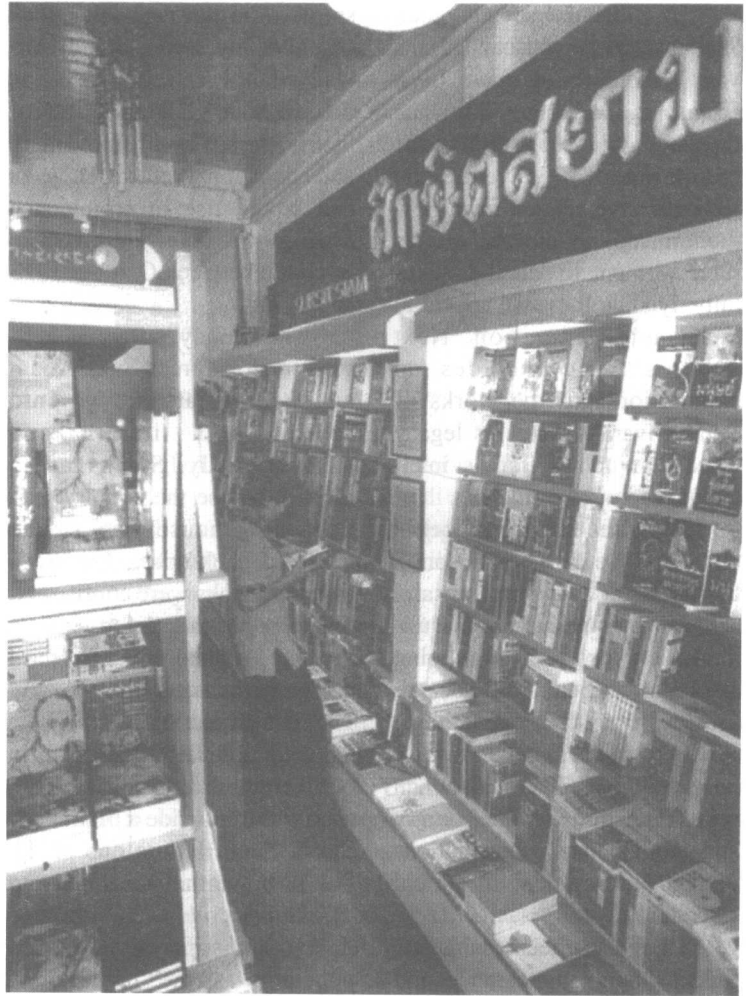
Suksit Siam is probably the only place in town, even in the whole Kingdom, that has compiled a wide range of publications and religious paraphernalia for those who want to support the cause of this usurped country and its population.

Some of the handicrafts and cloth made by villagers on sale at the bookshop. “We want to be a mediator between urban consumers and local communities,” said manager Wallapa Kuntiranont. As visitors browse through the voluminous collection, they will be entertained by the pastoral music of Tibetan flutist Nawang Khechog, or sometimes by the raw, plaintive Isan songs sung by Ubon Ratchathani protesters against the Pak Moon dam project. This literary sanc-

tuary is not blind to the plight of the suffering.

“We see our bookshop having a dual role,” said manager Wallapa Kuntiranont. “First, we would like to revive the role it had in the late sixties as a hub for intellectuals, by catering to their desire for quality works in both Thai and English. We put great stress on selecting titles that fit the character of Suksit Siam—books on spirituality, conscience and consciousness, culture, art, alternative development, poetry and politics—but not necessarily politicking in the mainstream sense.

“Second, we want Suksit Siam to also be a channel for understanding the holistic nature of life. Thus there are special corners for Tibetan religious artefacts and rural handicrafts by northeastern villagers, including the Pak Moon dam protesters. In the near future, we want to include organic products, pakayor weaving from the North, kadi (handwoven) cloth from Gandhian communities in India and so on. Basically we want to be a mediator between urban consumers and local communities, to enable the latter to achieve self-reliance and sustainability.”



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To fulfil the second goal, Wallapa and her husband, Hans van Willenswaard, have been organising monthly talks since the shop was reopened at the beginning of this year. The subjects have ranged from how modernised agriculture affects rural women, to whether naturally dyed clothes still appeal to the young generation. Next month's topic includes an exploration into the works of Sulak Sivaraksa and his legacy in relation to Thailand's intellectual life.

"Why the focus on Tibet in our shop? We have been inspired by the Dalai Lama's successful revival of [Mahayana] Buddhism and also by the on-going efforts of Tibetan refugees to preserve their cultural heritage. We try to do our small bit to raise public awareness about human rights violations in the country and the Tibetans' contributions to the development of global spirituality."

There have been changes in Suksit Siam's appearance and location, but the bookshop's mission—reflected in the title, which means education of the Siamese people—has altered little over the years.

Founded on April 20, 1967, the venue was modelled on a shop in the Philippines run by a friend of Sulak. It was to be a forum not just to sell books but where progressive minds could meet.

Originally situated on Rama IV, the first incarnation of Suksit Siam flourished—despite Sulak's lack of entrepreneurship. He often ended up giving lectures to visitors rather than encouraging them to buy books.

The shop's feng shui—it was located opposite a temple that was reputedly a haunt of

spirits—did not daunt the flock of university students and activists who organised clandestine meetings to discuss political liberty, the art-for-life movement and educational reform, subjects that would rise in prominence during the brief democratic interlude between October 1973 and 1976.

The bloody purge of activists in 1976 forced Suksit Siam and its affiliates to go into "exile"—both literally and metaphorically. Sulak had to physically flee the country. His publishing house was on the verge of bankruptcy. Hundreds of leftist books were confiscated by the authorities. A former staff member recalled how the entire company managed to make only 90,000 baht one year.

But ironically, the collapse of other publishing houses at the time was to provide a lifeline for Suksit Siam. It was one of the few to brave the storm, staying afloat by collecting overdue debts. The operation gained popularity as "the" publisher of books for the intellect.

More "tempests" followed, though. A severe flood in 1983 damaged the shop's sizeable collection of rare books. More turmoil came when the landlord, Chulalongkorn University, decided to turn some of its property, the Suksit Siam venue included, into a multi-billion-baht complex (it's still unfinished since work began in 1987). Thus the shop moved to its present location, again opposite a temple (Wat Ratchabopit), and entered a prolonged period in the doldrums until Wallapa and Hans took over the management with Sulak's blessing.

Wallapa is optimistic. "We don't aim high," she says. "We aim to have just enough to break

even and to have sufficient funds to publish about ten new titles a year."

In six months, however, Wallapa's new publishing house, called Suan Ngern Mee Ma (Garden of Fruition), has already put out eight titles, mostly translations of foreign books. Topics include ethical business (Mark Allen's *Visionary Business*), food security and biotechnology issues (Vandhana Shiva's *Stolen Harvest* and Helena Norberg-Hodge's *Bringing the Food Economy Home*), and naturally, Tibetan struggles (*Imagine All the People: A Conversation with the Dalai Lama*).

"We are also willing to let groups use our shop as a forum for occasional talks, or to display books that have been turned away by commercial operators. Actually, we just settled a deal with one NGO in the South that wants to get its book on small-scale fishermen distributed. Anything that can help to nurture the new generation, that can help us to be an oasis in the urban jungle."

Four centuries ago, the British thinker Francis Bacon said that some books are worthy only to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and a very few to be chewed and digested.

Bookstores are not much different—many are mere warehouses, a couple are worth hanging out in every now and then and a few—very few indeed—are real treasures, making it worth our while to return, again and again.

Vasana Chinvarakorn
Bangkok Post,
July 20, 2002

Peking, 28/06/02

Dear Sulak,

I am just returning from a week in North Korea, one of the most weird, complicated, difficult countries I have so far seen. Unicef is helping to fight undernourishment of children. Would like to discuss this with you soon.

Regards,
Reinhard Schlagintweit

March 2, 2002

Dear Sulak

What a pleasure it was to be with you in Bangkok after such a long interval. Many, many thanks for your hospitality and for including my granddaughter and her husband, Heidi and Aaron Morehouse.

I hope they have been able to reconnect with you and will have an opportunity to see some of the groups and facilities you mention both in and around Bangkok and the North.

I want, first of all, to subscribe to *Seeds of Peace* which I believe I was receiving for a while when it stopped coming, doubtless because of my delinquency in responding. Anyway I will dispatch a check for \$50 to you which I hope you can use without incurring onerous bank charges.

Because of your active concern with international peace and the attack on that condition by the United States, I thought you might find of interests a sermon on terrorism and globalization which I have given in recent weeks at a number of Unitarian Universalists congregations in different parts of the US. I would welcome any comments you might have. I will also dispatch a copy to David Reid, the Editor of *Seeds of Peace*, in case he thinks that some of the issue mentioned in my sermon might be of interest to the readers of *Seeds of Peace*.

We are trying to make at least a small contribution to the struggle for world peace in this difficult time by serving as the US publisher of a collection of statements opposing US attack on Afghanistan put together initially by Smitu Kothari at Lokayan and others in Delhi. The volume is entitled *Voices of Sanity*. I will send a copy under separate cover.

I will share a copy of my letter to you with David Reid with whom I believe I may have talked when I telephoned your office, trying to track you down. Whoever it was, was most helpful.

I am enormously interested in the plans that are being made for Bandung II and would like to keep in touch with those involved in the preparatory process. I gather that one such person is Jeffery Sng the Quaker International Affairs Representative for Southeast Asia who has previously been based in Singapore and is now in Bangkok. I do not, however, have a contact address for him in Bangkok and would appreciate it very much if you would send it to me.

Many thanks again for your warm hospitality and for the friendly interest you have taken in Heidi and Aaron and their quest for a better world.

Sincerely,
Ward Morehouse
President of Council on International and Public Affairs,
New York, USA

May 31, 2002

Dear Sulak

Thank you for your interest in my recent books. Here are the review copies you requested.

One copy of *The Wheel of Engaged Buddhism* is inscribed for you, with deep gratitude for your leadership and inspiration. You will see your own words quoted on pages 53 and 81. A note on page 81

gives contact information for INEB.

Trudy and I look forward to seeing you and your wife in September.

With best wishes
Kenneth Kraft
Lehigh University, USA

June 4th 2002

Dear friend,

What joyful memories return when I write this short note! That meeting, some years ago now, in Buddhamonthon and the other in the remarkable school on the river Kwai marked me and when my good friend Peter Carey spoke of your being in Oxford to speak on the coming Friday I was delighted. Until sadly, I remembered that I had various engagements in Cambridge on the very same day and on Saturday and Sunday, returning home to Oxford on the Sunday evening.

It would have been extraordinarily good to listen to your speaking on globalisation and the work of Engaged Buddhists in tackling it, and even better to meet you again after these years since our meeting in Buddhamonthon. How very sorry I am not to be able to be with you then in Trinity College.

If by some marvelous chance you should still be in Oxford on Monday do please tell Peter and I would be able to phone him on Sunday evening on returning from Cambridge; how gladly I would be anywhere in Oxford if I might have the joy of another meeting. At 86 I don't expect too many more possibilities will arise!

Warm greetings and grateful thanks for all the help and encouragement you give from afar in our struggle for justice and compassion.

C. Murray Rogers
Oxford, United Kingdom

June 5, 2002

Dear Sulak:

It has been so long since we have been in touch. I hope that you and your wife and daughters are well these warm days of early summer. I am quite well, considering my advanced age (85 this month), though I don't travel much these days.

I write to ask your permission to reprint "The Wisdom of Words" a piece you carried in *Socially Engaged Buddhism for the New Millennium*, 1999. I wish to use it in a forthcoming selected works to be titled *The Morning Star*.

I also seek permission to quote passages from *The Quest for a Just Society: The Legacy and Challenge of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu*, page 10, 7 lines, "Whatever system...as a whole;" and page 17, 9 lines, "The entire cosmos...shall all perish." These lines are part of the essay, "Three Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa," by Donald Swearer, and I am seeking Dr. Swearer's permission also. The original Thai publications in which these passages appeared will be cited.

I find that my copy of Buddhadasa's *Dhammic Socialism* has gone missing from my library. If it is still available, please have a copy sent to me.

Please renew my subscription to *Seeds of Peace*. I enclose a US\$60 money order to cover the subscription and *Dhammic Socialism*. If the book is no longer available, please pass the US\$10 on to the hungry ghosts.

I send you my warm regards, dear old friend.

Robert Aitken
RR2, Box 4873
Pahoa, HI 96778, USA

GUS DUR

By Greg Barton

Equinox Publishing Jakarta 2002
(414 pages)

Gus Dur by Greg Barton, with the laughing face of Indonesia's former President Abdurrahman Wahid on the front cover, is the long awaited biography of Indonesia's fourth President. The author is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Arts at Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria and a friend of Gus Dur. The book claims to be the authorized biography of Abdurrahman Wahid. Barton's new book appears to be a substantive piece of work and aims to be the most comprehensive on the subject.

Barton's *Gus Dur* provides a great deal of factual information about the former President's life, his family, his religious upbringing, his education, his romance with his wife Nuriyah, his children and his involvement in politics. The author has succeeded in organizing the information into a coherent biographical narrative, which takes the reader smoothly through the rocky passages of Indonesia's post-colonial history.

Although, Barton has assembled and ordered a wide range of factual information pertaining to Gus Dur's life the author stresses that he has deliberately focused on the subject's own account of his life. Perhaps for this reason the book appears to be strong on Gus Dur's impressions and somewhat weak on the author's own impressions of his subject.

The reader often gets the strange feeling that the focus is clearer when the camera is away from the subject than the other way round. Most biographies invite the reader to "look in" but Barton's biography invites the

reader to "look out." This is the main weakness of Barton's methodology. It obscures the subject instead of sharpening the focus on the subject. This is to be expected. Barton is metaphorically using Gus Dur's eyes to see his subject instead of using his own to see Gus Dur.

For example, Gus Dur's wild sense of humour can often be overwhelming to someone meeting him for the first time. But one does not get the sense of this exuberant and robust humour in Barton's treatment of his subject. Although, it is rare to find a top political leader with such an overdeveloped sense of humour like Gus Dur.

Gus Dur uses his often-infectious sense of humour to charm his friends and disarm his critics. Barton also makes passing reference to Gus Dur's proclivity to take refuge in comic relief when pressure becomes intolerable. However, when his resort to humour is not properly appreciated his behaviour can often be mistakenly read as flippant, insensitive or facetious. Never at a loss for jokes he seems to have one for every occasion including his own ascension to the Presidency of the Republic of Indonesia. One of his most memorable jokes was:

The first President of Indonesia was crazy about women (Sukarno)

The second President of Indonesia was crazy about wealth (Soeharto)

The third President of Indonesia was simply crazy (Habibie)

The fourth President of Indonesia made every one crazy (himself)

Though Barton's Prologue, including the sections "Goodness, it's Gus Dur," "An Unpretentious Leader" and "The Man

Behind the Persona" ably conveys Gus Dur's unconventional ways and the complexity of his personality, someone who met Gus Dur for the first time after reading Barton's biography would be quite pleasantly surprised by the former President's irrepressible humour.

The modern history of Indonesia was spanned by two long Presidencies followed by two short ones. Indonesia's first President, Sukarno ruled from 1945–1967. Soeharto, who succeeded him ruled from 1967–1998. By contrast Habibie ruled, as Interim President, from 1998–1999. The short, tumultuous and controversial Presidency of Gus Dur lasted only one and a half years (1999–2001).

Despite, his brief stay at the top of Indonesian politics, Gus Dur remained Indonesia's most colourful President after the charming, charismatic and flamboyant Sukarno. Like his predecessor Sukarno, the interface of Gus Dur's life with the hopes, travails and aspirations of the Indonesian people provides a more edifying perspective of Indonesian political and intellectual history than the colourless personalities of Soeharto and Habibie, whose lives were overshadowed by greed and corruption.

Gus Dur grew up during the tumultuous period in Indonesian history when the great issues affecting the social contract between the Indonesian State and Society were being hammered out. The great issues of the day that gripped the attention of the intelligentsia of Gus Dur's generation were, Revolution, Communism, anti-colonialism, the transformation of an archipelagic cultural framework into a modern nation state, the political problem of Overseas

Chinese in the new Indonesian State, the unique role of the army as a social formation in modern Indonesia and the accommodation of Islam into the new Indonesian polity—and within Islam itself the resolution of the tension between traditionalists and modernists.

Barton describes the dilemmas facing Indonesia's Moslem community, how they affect Indonesian Moslems and Gus Dur's role in negotiating political and ecumenical compromises between Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and the powers that be. In Gus Dur NU had found a leader with the intellectual capabilities and linguistic skills to negotiate on par with the sophisticated, urban, Jakarta elite. Gus Dur, the boy of the Pesantren, was well known among liberal intellectuals, writers and artists in Jakarta and as Chairman of The Jakarta Arts Council, was respected for his essays and his knowledge on film and literature.

Barton recounts the influence of Gus Dur, Nurcholish Madjid and Achmad Siddiq on the reform of Islam and the forging of a Moslem countervailing power to Golkar. The book describes the cautious negotiation dance between Gus Dur and Soeharto and Golkar's failed attempt to divide the Modernist and the Traditionalist camps within Indonesian Islam.

Barton dwells on Gus Dur's complex relationship with Soeharto. The book provides an interesting perspective on the background of the negotiation dance between Gus Dur and

Soeharto. Gus Dur's seemingly ambivalent response, to student pressures to bring Soeharto and his family to trial reflects the complicated adversarial relationship between the former corrupt dictator and Indonesia's fourth President.

This ambivalent and complicated negotiation dance appears to be a thread running through Gus Dur's political career even after his fall from the Merdeka Palace. Gus Dur is apparently cognizant of the fact that Indonesia lies in the shadow of the long arm of Soeharto's power. Gus Dur appears to believe that Soeharto holds the key to most of Indonesia's political problems.

This belief is evidenced time and time again. When he sought to challenge the dictator's authority under the New Order he negotiated with Soeharto. When the fate of Soeharto and his family lay in his hand as Indonesia's fourth President he negotiated with Soeharto.

Barton also touched on the anti-Chinese riots in Jakarta, which captured the imagination of the Western media and served as the prelude to Gus Dur's rise to power in Indonesia. The book traces the political gymnastics and last minute horse trading that resulted in the unlikely compromise that installed Gus Dur as Indonesia's fourth President, prompting the *Economist* to run the headlines "Goodness, its Gus Dur," in bold yellow font.

Barton covers the events, which dominated Gus Dur's brief Presidency. The book re-

counts the sacking of Laksamana Sukardi, the missing funds from BULOG, the rising wave of Islamic terrorism in the form of Laskar Jihad, the failure of IMF style economic recovery, the government's desperate cabinet reshuffle, the souring of relations with Megawati and the final confrontation with Parliament (MPR). The author also, dwells upon the breakdown of social order through escalation of ethnic conflict and the growing challenge to an already embattled Presidential authority posed by Parliament and the military.

The Epilogue comprises an almost hour by hour recounting of events during Gus Dur's last days at the Merdeka Palace. In the Conclusion, Barton attempts to weigh the achievements against the failures of Gus Dur's Administration. After acknowledging that Gus Dur exhibited some personal failings and made many specific mistakes, Barton's bottom line observation was that in the end the odds were stacked against him.

Given the difficult nature of the transition from military dictatorship to democracy, in Indonesia, it was highly unrealistic to expect Indonesia's first democratically elected President to deliver dramatic results before Gus Dur was even halfway through his first term as President. Barton's view is that in the long run history will judge Gus Dur more kindly than the Indonesian elite and the international media in 2001.

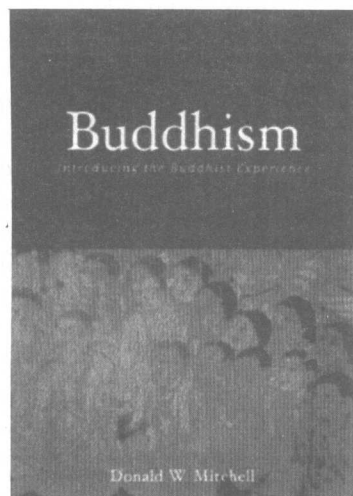
Jeffery Sng

Eight auspicious symbols (Skt., *ashtamangala*); eight symbols betokening the veneration of the universal monarch and by extension the veneration of the Buddha. In Chinese Tibetan monasteries they are often placed on lotus pedestals before statues of the Buddha. The eight symbols are parasol (symbol of royal dignity, which shields from harm); fish (Indian emblem of the universal monarch); conch shell (symbol of victory in battle); lotus blossom (symbol of purity); vase of sacred water (filled with the nectar of immortality); furled banner (emblem of the victory of spirituality); knot of eternity; wheel of the teaching (*dharma-chakra*).

Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience

Donald W. Mitchell

New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002



Donald W. Mitchell's introduction to Buddhism is the result of more than 30 years of teaching and research in Buddhist studies. Mitchell's experience shows in the clarity of his exposition, in the overall thoroughness of his work, and in the careful thought he has given to the structuring of the book. These features make this introductory textbook a very valuable resource for anyone who would like to develop a fuller and wholistic understanding of Buddhist traditions.

The initial difficulty in writing a text of this kind, Mitchell tells us, is how to do justice to both the diversity and the depth of Buddhist teachings and practices. Too much emphasis on the diversity can turn an introductory text into a simple catalogue of ideas, practices, places and cultural forms. Too much emphasis on depth can lead to a sense of Buddhism as a set of religious philosophies and techniques abstracted from any

historical and cultural context.

Mitchell's solution is to focus on the historical development of key teachings and practices—"spiritualities"—that lead to an experience of Awakening. Students of Buddhism are most intrigued, Mitchell says, by the life and experience of the Buddha himself, and by "the particular ways in which the paths to, and attainment and nature of, Awakening, are understood in the varieties of Buddhist experience."

Mitchell organizes his initial chapters around the life and teachings of the Buddha, followed by an exposition of fundamental texts and perspectives within Theravada and Mahayana. He then devotes individual chapters to the elaboration of Buddhist thought and practice in India, Tibet, China, Korea, and Japan. The last chapters focus on socially engaged forms of Buddhism in modern Asia and the recent spread of Buddhism in the West.

I found Mitchell's chapters on the life and teachings of the Buddha to be very helpful. He seems to have a sharp sense in these chapters about what to include to make events and concepts vivid and to avoid common misunderstandings. His section on the second noble truth, for example, counters simplistic understandings of craving by showing the many dimensions of this concept and how it articulates with ignorance in Buddhist thought.

In following the development of Buddhist thought and practice from the Buddha through south and east Asia, Mitchell does a remarkable job, I think, of being fair to the texts and writers of a given place and time. A good example would be

his discussion of forms of Pure Land Buddhism in China and Japan. Mitchell's shows how the advocates of Pure Land were particularly concerned about the egotism and futility of relying on personal effort in a time that they believed to be characterized by a degeneration of the Dharma. Their emphasis on the grace of bodhisattvas and "Other Power" begins to have its own persuasive logic when seen in the context of the state of the sangha at the time and of the specific ideas and practices they inherited from the Buddhist tradition.

In discussing the various "experiences" of Buddhism—in the Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese traditions, Mitchell is at his best when he locates the ideas and practices in their social, cultural, and historical milieu. He does this most vividly in the stories about individuals, such as the illiterate Chinese Zen master Hui-neng, Korean reformer Chinul, and Japanese innovator Saicho. Through these stories we get a strong sense of place, of personal journeying and discovery, and of the communities in which particular forms of Buddhism were practiced.

If there is one weakness in this book, I would say it is that this sense of milieu does not always receive the attention it deserves. The section on Indian Buddhist schools, for example, is a wonderful introduction to early Mahayana elaborations of foundational Buddhist teachings. But the reader might easily wonder how the Buddha's teachings became so heavily involved in philosophical and metaphysical questions, who these thinkers were, and in what contexts they debated and wrote down their ideas. The last sec-

tion on the growth of monastic universities helps a little. But a fuller discussion of developing monastic life and the engagement of Sanskrit speaking Buddhist monks with the whole range of Indian philosophical positions would have helped a great deal.

Similarly, a reader might well wonder why Theravada Pali-based forms of Buddhism did not undergo similar kinds of elaboration. (Steven Collins addresses this issue briefly in his introduction to *Selfless Persons*.) If, as it seems, there have been fewer Theravada texts that portray the path to Awakening in truly innovative ways, this fact needs to be explained more clearly. Presumably, the explanation would look to both text and milieu.

Going a bit further, I feel there is some danger in Mitchell's close association of the term "experience" (the Japanese experience of Buddhism) with in fact specific textual elaborations of new forms of doctrine and practice in Buddhism. Is this the reason, perhaps, that the Thai or

Burmese experiences of Buddhism, for example, seem almost absent from the book? Where they are present, as in the section on early Theravada, they play very minor roles. Thailand appears again in the later section on socially engaged forms, though Burma does not.

On the one hand, this may be because Mitchell is less familiar with Theravadin writers. In at least one case, that of Prayudh Payutto, the contributions of a really major Thai socially engaged thinker appear to have been overlooked entirely. On the other hand, I think it is, once again, because Mitchell relies rather heavily on texts that articulate innovative spiritualities, and less on milieu, in order to describe changes in the Buddhist experience. More attention to milieu would perhaps have allowed Mitchell, in the case of Southeast Asia, to take up the adoption and patronage of Buddhism by royal courts, the sometimes conflictive relationships between state and sangha, and the waxing and waning of meditation lineages (especially

in the ascetic forest monk tradition). These have all been important features of the nature and experience of Buddhism in Southeast Asia, and have had bearing on the way the path to Awakening is viewed and practiced by Southeast Asians.

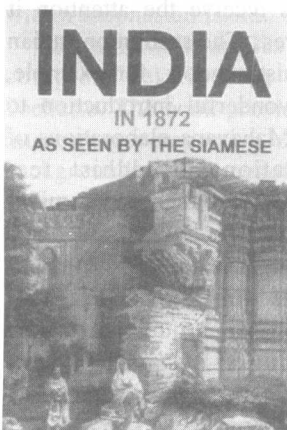
In spite of these weaknesses, Mitchell's introduction to Buddhism is a clear and thorough exposition of major concepts, practices, and developments within the diverse traditions of Buddhism. The breadth and clarity of the work make it an excellent reference. Reading Mitchell's text, I often felt inspired to learn more about a particular writer or school of thought. I was often moved to think about larger patterns as well. These include the recurring tensions between certain poles of spiritual practice—self-reliance or other-reliance, social engagement or withdrawal—and the dynamic by which people exchange, adapt, and create new forms of practice within a religious tradition.

Ted Mayer

India In 1872: As Seen by the Siamese

Sachchidanand Sahai

B.R Publishing Corporation



Professor Sachchidanand Sahai, who holds a PhD in ancient Cambodia from Sorbonne, is a former lecturer in Asian studies at Magadh University and the founder of the South East Asian Review and the International conference on Thai studies. Sahai in collaboration with India study Centre of Thammasat University carried out a five year research on King Chulalongkorn's visit to India the result of which is this book: *India in 1872: As Seen by the Siamese*.

In this book, this eminent scholar gives a unique insight on the visit of the Siamese King

Chulalongkorn or Rama V's visit to India in 1872. The book brings a fresh perspective on sources of inspiration for the modernization of Siam by the Piya Maharaja (or Beloved King), King Chulalongkorn.

Many historians have claimed that the king was highly influenced by his trip to Europe in 1897 and 1907 vis-à-vis the modernization process; however in his pioneering work Prof. Sahai claims otherwise. According to his research, he sees a direct link between the king's India visit and the course of modernization then followed.

The author gives a detailed account of the 42 days spent in India by the young king in vivid narrative, in order to bring out, how this visit was to mark the psyche of Rama V and be the basis of his future policies in Siam.

The book is divided into two parts, the first section is called "The Siamese Perception of Post Mutiny India." This section starts with an overview of the political situation existing in India after the mutiny of 1857 and at the time of the royal visit. Also the description of the Indian and British response to the same and a brief background of the tools applied by the British to colonize India. Thus the first two chapters deal with the global context of the king's visit followed by the micro-history of India till 1872. It then goes on to give a descriptive day by day account of the king's 42-day stay in India, the protocols followed the sights visited and the "British hospitality" extended to the royal visitor and the Siamese delegation. After which the author dwells into the diplomatic implication of this visit and the impact it was to have on the Siamese-British relationship in the years to come. The war game in Delhi and the Siamese research on the revolt of 1857, which was to help the king in his future restructuring and subordination of Siamese provinces, follows next.

There are two chapters which are especially interesting from the Siamese perspective dealing with the impression the king's takes back with him of the Buddhist India and the second which makes a link between the intelligentsia movements in the two countries that is the Young Bengal Movement with the



King Chulalongkorn (Rama V)

Young Siam Movement.

The second section of the book is called, "Original Documents from Media and the Archives Relating to King Chulalongkorn's Visit to India." This section is delightful, especially for history lovers, as going through this section brings history to life. One gets transported back to 1872 and can sense the curiosity and excitement the royal visitor had stirred amongst the British and Indian public alike. The section also has the report by E.D Sladen the British representative who escorted the King although his stay in India. This report is of particular interest to understand the British reaction to the visit.

Thus this book can be considered path breaking in several ways. Firstly, even though there is well research literature available of the foreign accounts of the Greek, Chinese, Arab and Europeans on India, this is perhaps the first from a Siamese perspective.

Secondly, King Chulalongkorn is probably the Thais' most revered monarch, the father of Thai society as we understand it

today. For long it has been believed that his plans for modernization were shaped by his visit to Europe alone, in that sense this book claims that the king's India visit left great impression on his thought process. Thus this is breath of fresh air in the study of Siamese history. His policies of centralization changed the very nature of the Siamese polity. This book helps us to gain a rare insight on the knowledge which the young king acquired during his stay in India by studying the British administrative system and then applying it in the Siamese context—thereby learning the art of controlling his subjects.

Thirdly as an independent non-colonized Asian nation, with the forces of colonization knocking on it door this visit of King Chulalongkorn becomes more important and gives a fresh perspective to the Indian polity in 1872.

Fourthly, King Chulalongkorn's visit was not merely a diplomatic move. His reception in India by the British was unlike any other official state guests, especially an Asian visitor. The visit was to have a great impact on the region and was to win for the British an ally for their designs on Burma.

Lastly, this book helps people with a keen interest in international relations by shedding a new light on the beginning of Indo-Thai diplomatic and cultural ties.

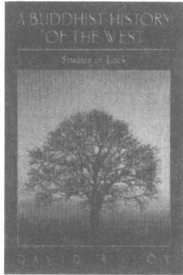
An eye for details. A thoroughly well researched book and a pioneering scholastic endeavor in Indo-Siam studies, Prof. Sahai's book makes an interesting read.

Shreya Jani

The two books that I have read recently are to be recommended to those who wish to understand different aspects of Buddhism.

1) ***A Buddhist History of the West: Studies in Lack***

David R. Loy
State University Press of
New York, 2002



David Loy's book is rather difficult to follow for those who are not familiar with either Buddhist concepts or Western philosophy. Yet it is one of the most useful volumes to understand the West from the Buddhist perspective. Most of us have been brainwashed to admire Western achievements, without realizing that they were all materialistic, and consequently lead to environmental degradation and exploitation of fellow human beings. This is the first time a Buddhist perspective has been used to understand Western history, bearing "Dukkha" in mind. Loy has made another great contribution following his masterpiece *Lack and Transcendence: Problem of Death and Life in Psychotherapy, Existentialism and Buddhism* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1996).

2) ***Zen Teaching, Zen Practice***

Edited by Kenneth Kraft
Weather Hill, New York, 2002

This book presents the subject in a very unusual manner. The editor asked eleven American practitioners to share their perspectives with us. Although all of them are not Philip Kaplau's students, it is a good idea to honour the wise Western monk who started the first Zen training centre and wrote the first American book on the subject from an American practitioner's point of view: it has become a classic. Kraft's previous book *The Wheel of Engaged Buddhism: A New Map of the Path* (Weather Hill, New York: 1999) is also a required reading for those interested in socially engaged Buddhism.

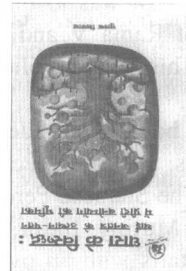
Sulak Sivaraksa

**THE FOLLOWING ARE
BOOKS BY S. SIVARAKSA
IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES.**

a) ***Seeds of Peace: A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society***
(Indonesian edition, 2001)



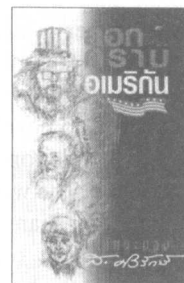
b) ***Powers That Be: Pridi Banomyong through the Rise and Fall of Thai Democracy***
(Hindi edition)



c) ***Powers That Be: Pridi Banomyong through the Rise and Fall of Thai Democracy***
(Chinese edition)



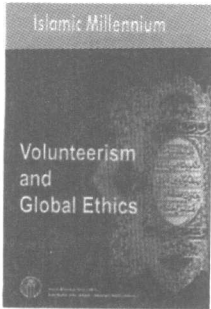
d) ***Unmasking the US***
(in Thai)



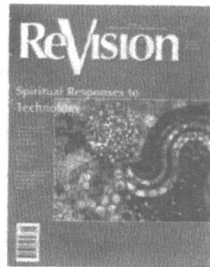
Map Co-Founder Awarded Prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize in 2002

Pisit Charnsoh of Yadfon (Raindrop) Association of Thailand, and co-founder of the Mangrove Action Project, has been named one of eight winners of the coveted Goldman Environmental Award in 2002. The Goldman Foundation recognizes the efforts of six grassroots environmentalist groups each year, and the prize has been compared to winning the Nobel prize in environmental efforts.

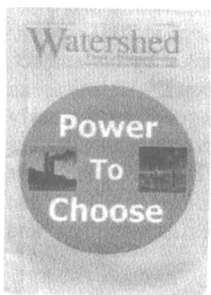
Pisit was recognized for his hard work with coastal fishing communities of Trang, Thailand, and his ongoing efforts to preserve the coastal biodiversity of the region, including coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangrove forests. In 1989, Yadfon, which means life-giving raindrops, succeeded in persuading the locals to replant a 587-rai (94 hectare) degraded mangrove forest. The villagers then petitioned the provincial authorities to set it aside as a community-managed forest, the first of its kind in Thailand.



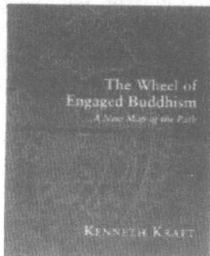
Islamic Millennium Journal:
Volunteerism and Global Ethics
Vol. II, No.2, Jan.-Mar. 2002



Revision
Spiritual Responses to Technology
Spring 2002, Vol. 24, No. 4



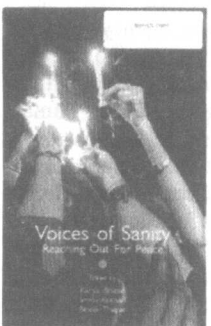
Watershed
People's Forum on Ecology: Power to Choose
Vol. 7, No. 3 March June 2002



The Wheel of Engaged Buddhism
A New Map of the Path

Kenneth Kraft, New York, Weatherhill, Inc., 1999

In this short but precious introduction to engaged Buddhism, Kenneth Kraft highlights the activities and challenges of socially conscious Buddhists. His format is of a handbook revolving around a mandala of engagement.

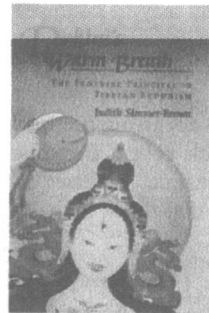


Voices of Sanity
Reaching Out For Peace
Edited by Kamla Bhasin, Smitu Kothari and Bindia Thapar
Lokayan and Rainbow Publisher, 2001

In a publishing coup, three resourceful India based activist-editors have assembled and published a rich collection of responses to the September 11 tragedy in New York and

Washington. Entitled *Voices of Sanity*, this penetrating critique of the U.S. Government's violent reaction to September 11 includes such international luminaries as Eduardo Galeano, Susan Sontag, Noam Chomsky, Edward Said, Fidel Castro, Wendell Berry, and Nobel Laureate Jose Ramos-Horta, as well as leading Indian and Pakistani activists and journalists such as Vandana Shiva, Praful Bidwai, and Tariq Ali.

Bodhi Citta Buddhist Centre Newsletter
July/August/September 2002

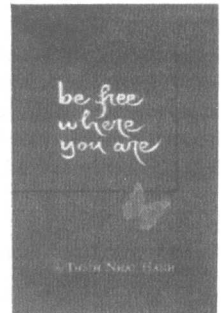


Dakini's Warm Breath
The Feminine Principle in Tibetan Buddhism
by Judith Simmer-Brown,
Shambala Publications, Inc.,
Boston 2001

Judith Simmer-Brown has produced a comprehensive, scholarly, and intriguing study of "dakini," the feminine principle in Tibetan Buddhism. It also includes an examination

of the hagiographic lore about dakini and ends with a description of dakini as the protector of tantric teachings and midwife of the transmission of teachings.

Be Free Where You Are
Thich Nhat Hanh,
Parallax Press,
Berkeley, 2002



The Humanism of the Middle Way:
Dawn of a Global Civilization
2002 Peace Proposal
Daisaku Ikeda,
The Soka Gakkai, 2002

Defying Corporations, Defining Democracy
A Book of History & Strategy
Edited by Dean Ritz
The Apex Press, New York, 2001

Tibet Under Communist China 50 Years

Gangchen Kyishong, Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration, Dharamsala, 2001

Globalization and the Asian Economic Crisis
Indigenous Responses, Coping Strategies, and Governance Reform in Asia

Edited by Geoffrey B. Hainsworth
Centre for Southeast Asia Research Institute of Asian Research, University of British Columbia, Vancouver

The Lilypad
Summer 2002 Vol.3, No.4

Minority Rights Group International
Report Burma (Myanmar): The Time for Change
by Martin Smith, May 2002

How to Practice
the Way to a Meaningful Life
by His Holiness The Dalai Lama,
and Jeffery Hopkins
Pocket Books, 2001

As a primer on living the good life, few books compete with *How to Practice*, another profound offering from the exiled Tibetan Buddhist leader His

Holiness the Dalai Lama. Westerners may be confused by the book's title, assuming that it focuses solely on Buddhist meditation and prayer techniques. Though it does address meditation and prayer, at its core this is a book that demonstrates how day-to-day living can be a spiritual practice. The six-part book covers Buddhist meditation techniques and visualization exercises as well as daily thoughts and actions that foster morality and wisdom.

Meditation on Gandhi

A Ravindra Varma

Festschrift

Edited by M.P Mathai, M.S. John , Siby K. Joseph
Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi 2002

No limits

Articulating William Lim

Introduction by Leon van Schaik,

Essays by Robert Powell, Andrew Lee siew Ming,
Leong Teng Wui, Lee Kah Wee, Lena Lim U Wen
Select Publishing Pte Ltd, Singapore 2002

Dharma World

For Living Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue

Vol. 29, July/August

Indestructable Truth

The Living Spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism

by Reginald A. Ray

Shambhala Publication, Boston & London 2000

Studying Tibetan Buddhism can be like entering a maelstrom of deities, rituals, and scriptures. In a new introduction to the history, the religion, and the philosophy of Tibetan Buddhism, Reginald Ray calms the storm and provides a compass for exploration. With spare precision and rich detail, he tells the story of Buddhism in Tibet, from its great progenitors in India to the larger than life transmitters to the series of schools that developed over the centuries.

Secret of the Vajra World

The Tantric Buddhism of Tibet

by Reginald A. Ray

Shambhala Publication, Boston & London 2001

Learned, articulate, and devoted to his subject, Reginald Ray writes about Tibetan Buddhism as an insider and as a teacher who gets his point across quickly and clearly, without dross or hyperbole. Ray provides important relevant context to what Tibetan Buddhism is trying to do and historical and religious explanations that makes intelligible these practices to outsiders and neophytes alike.

China's Panchen Lama is no Tibetan Panchen Lama

The high-profile meeting of the Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji on 31 July with the 13-year-old boy, foisted on the Tibetan people as the 11th Panchen Lama, was yet another exercise in the Chinese attempt at seeking international legitimacy for the boy they have imposed as the Panchen Lama.

Beijing believes that their control over Tibet's spiritual figures would ensure their control of the minds and loyalty of the Tibetan people. What the authorities choose not to see is that a spiritual person derives his authority only if he has been recognized as such by another spiritual figure that the people already revere. A reincarnation, who does not command the respect of people, is a useless tool in the hands of the authorities.

Beijing hopes to imprint the image of this boy in the memory of the world by constantly parading him as the Panchen Lama of Tibet. They seem to believe that a lie, if repeated frequently enough, becomes a truth. To the Tibetan people, this sort of

exercise only serves to refresh their national anguish over the fate of another 13-year-old, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who has languished in limbo for seven years now. The Chinese authorities spirited him away soon after His Holiness declared him as the 11th Panchen Lama in May 1995. A few months later, in December 1995, the authorities marshaled a group of Tibetan lamas into the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, and forced them to undergo the farcical ceremony of drawing lots from the Golden Urn to endorse Beijing's choice of the reincarnation.

The Chinese government's rejection and removal of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima prompted angry response from the Tibetan populace. They put up anonymous wall posters, expressing faith only in the Panchen Lama recognized by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The public mood in Tibet at that time was so tense that the authorities deployed a massive number of security personnel and unleashed a new wave of "political re-education" campaigns. Even at Tashilhunpo Monastery, the seat of the Panchen Lama, hundreds of monks disrupted the "re-education"

meeting and demanded the installation of the "real Panchen Lama" and "our Chatrel Rinpoche" at the monastery. This was a significant event insofar as the Chinese authorities till then had extolled Tashilhunpo as an exemplary monastery, whose loyalty to China had been taken for granted. By September of that year, Tibet Information Network, a London-based news monitoring agency, released the list of 48 Tibetans who had been jailed for expressing their faith in His Holiness the Dalai Lama's choice. Needless to say that many more remained unaccounted for.

That the Tibetan people deeply resent this interference in their age-old spiritual tradition is not lost on the Chinese authorities. This explains Beijing's decision to break the protocol of bringing its appointee to Tashilhunpo Monastery for spiritual training. They know that if they brought him to Tashilhunpo, the Tibetan people's disdain for him would become all too clear. And, this would spiritually neutralize what they had achieved through sheer force.

Thubten Samphel
3 August 2002

Puey Forum: A new haunt for Thai intellectuals

For over a year now a small temple in Bangkok's Chinatown has been playing host, every Saturday afternoon, to a congregation very atypical of a holy place. Sometimes the keynote speakers are young thespians experimenting with avant-garde theatre. Another week it was a former leader of the mass uprising of October 14, 1973 who came along to share his views on literary aesthetics. Once, a Marxist, one of Thailand's very last, turned up to talk about the Russian revolution, Stalinism, and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

The audience is, likewise, drawn from a wide range of backgrounds. Elderly Thais of Chinese origin who live near the temple. Full-time housewives sick of shopping malls. American exchange students curious about the Pak Moon Dam protests. Young, progressive-minded monks who want to do more than recite the Sutras.

Puey Sevanakarn, the Puey Forum, embraces them all. A modest operation, run by two full-time staff and a string of volunteers, the project aims to be a living monument to Dr Puey Ungphakorn, to uphold and propagate the concepts of *Santi pracha dhamma* (peace, people's participation, righteousness) which were so cherished by the late statesman.

"[I've] never thought about setting up a political party," Puey often insisted. "what I really want—the idea's always on my mind—is to see Thais, at least the literate ones, [learning how to] think [and] to work together [to realise *santi pracha dhamma*]. It doesn't have to be an organised movement. But [we need] courage, a consensus of views, to push ... for the constitution and democracy. If more of us share such views, then one day [*santi pracha dhamma*] will become a reality."

With the blessing of the abbot of Wat Pathumkongka, and funded by public donations following Dr Puey's demise in 1999, the Puey Forum has been in full gear since June last year. Its office, a venue for most of the Saturday forums, is located on the second floor of a renovated building in the temple

compound, sharing space with a Sunday school for young Buddhists.

The choice of venue was deliberate. Wat Pathumkongka is where the young Puey was ordained as a novice monk, and where his ashes are now buried, alongside those of his mother, underneath a Buddha statue. Moreover, it was the wish of Sulak Sivaraksa, the writer, social critic and moving force behind this innovative project, to see Buddhist temples reclaiming their role as the hub of the community, both spiritual and intellectual.

"We also plan to open the Buddhadasa Library [at Wat Pathumkongka] in the near future," said Sulak. "Buddhadasa Bhikkhu [the late spiritual leader] studied Buddhist scriptures here before he returned [home] to launch the Garden of Liberation [Wat Suan Mokkh] in his hometown in 1932. Acharn Buddhadasa and Acharn Puey both served as guiding stars, facilitating our navigation through the dhammic and secular worlds, respectively."

Remaining true to the spirit of Dr Puey's vision, the forum is not intended to be just another institution of higher learning—although many of the discussions generated there are no less challenging than debates engaged in by postgraduate students. There is no educational prerequisite, nor fee, for those who wish to participate in the activities held there weekly. The only requirement is that one comes with a curiosity to learn, with a critical, enquiring mind, and an open heart which can accept divergences in opinion.

"We try to keep the discussion as a two-way dialogue, where everyone can chip in and no one person dominates the conversation," noted Sirikul Kularb, one of the forum's two coordinators. "The important thing is to encourage learning outside the confines of regular classrooms. I believe the Puey Forum is hitting at the heart of the ongoing educational reform."

The democratic nature of the sessions can be gauged from the fact that topics of discussion rather than

being preplanned often come from the floor. Simply put, the participants do not believe that there is a monopoly on knowledge—on who can lay claim to it or decide how to share it.

Danai Paluekmonthol, a man from the neighbourhood and aficionado of all things Chinese, recently had an opportunity to present amateur research he did into what has contributed to the decline of Taechiew culture—how and why younger members of Thailand's largest Chinese-dialect group have opted to abandon their roots.

Phetlada Suengjitsiroj attended a talk at the forum last year on the spirit of rebellion in education. By the end of the day, she was so inspired that she volunteered herself to teach art at the Wat Pathumkongka school next door. The programme she runs every Monday afternoon comes courtesy of the forum since this state-run primary school has no budget to hire an art teacher.

Known fondly as Khru Phia by her students, many of whom are the children of day labourers in Chinatown, Phetlada has little background in art education besides a correspondence course she did in drawing. And yet she and another volunteer teacher have come up with several novel ideas to encourage the children's artistic pursuits—making natural dyes from clay and leaves, turning old socks into puppets, staging a play—as well as guiding them through the historical tapestry of Yaowarat, their own backyard.

From time to time, some of the children's parents are turned into teachers, regardless of whether or not they've had formal schooling. Phetlada cited the case of a manual labourer—she refers to him simply as "Olarn's dad"—who introduced the children to the beauty of the Isan banjo, bringing along one he'd made himself. Dressed in his best suit for the special day, deeply tanned face looking both proud and happy, the man drew pictures of the instrument, explaining the differences between northeastern and mainstream styles of banjo and the importance of keeping each string at moderate

tension.

"Remember the story about Lord Buddha's enlightenment?" he asked the class. "Legends say he suddenly realised the futility of tormenting his own body after listening to a song. The song told how an instrument can only play beautiful music if its strings are neither too tight nor too loose. The moral of the story is that we shouldn't dwell in extremes, in either luxury or deprivation."

Despite, or perhaps because of, their underprivileged background, a few of the children have revealed an impressive independence of thinking and some rare insights, says Phetlada. For example, one girl made a clay figure of a cluster of three mushrooms, each of which had a different "facial" expressions. She called it "Mushrooms of [different] emotions" and wrote a cute, rather philosophical, note to explain the piece: "The first mushroom is shocked because two other mushrooms suddenly sprang up right next to it. The second mushroom is sad for it wanted to grow out of the earth by itself, not as an attachment to the first. The third mushroom is delighted

since it is only a small appendix to the others and thus may be ignored when people come to pick the other mushrooms."

Young, imaginative minds like this girl's are a beacon of hope for the future of Thailand. Dr Puey, a respected economist and former rector of Thammasat University, placed great emphasis on developing human resources, considering this as being far more significant than economic prosperity: "If we cannot spare money for education," he said, "we shouldn't be spending money on any other matters. No set of problems—the spread of communism, the mafia, juvenile crime, economic recession even—can ever be prevented or improved as long as we do not invest in producing good-quality people."

And who knows what a truly educated, enlightened mind is capable of achieving. Back in the 1960s, Parithat Sevana, a predecessor of the Puey Forum, enabled a number of Thai intellectuals to come together, share their aspirations and frustrations, and brainstorm during a period when the Kingdom was ruled by a dictatorial military regime. The

venue used by that organisation was also a Buddhist temple (Wat Bovornives) and the open, dynamic discussions it facilitated contributed to the subsequent blossoming of democratic ideas which culminated in the uprising of October 1973.

Can history repeat itself? Or are market forces, and the claws of consumerism, far more effective at dampening debate than strong-armed political repression? Could the Puey Forum be adopted as a model in other parts of the country by people at the grassroots level seeking equal access to a real education? The forum may be dismissed as a mere talking shop with very limited impact, but it could very well lead to a questioning of the status quo, the formation of a network of like-minded individuals, and, perhaps, the emergence of a consensus for change to create a better society for all.

● The Puey Forum publishes a bi-monthly newsletter. The subscription fee is 200 baht a year.

Vasana Chinvarakorn
Bangkok Post,
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A Magsaysay Award for an INEB member

The Venerable Pomnyun Sunim won a Magsaysay Award this year for peace and international understanding. The Venerable Pomnyun Sunim is a South Korean Buddhist monk who, since 1999 led a campaign to end hunger suffering of people in North Korea despite the political cut-off between the two countries. In July next year, he will co-organize an INEB meeting in South Korea.

Pridi and Puey Fellowships

Prominent scholars Sulak Sivaraksa and Dr Seksan Prasertkul are recipients this year of prestigious fellowships from the Bank of Thailand's Fiftieth Anniversary Foundation.

Three fellowships are available: the Puey Fellowship, Pridi Fellowship and Prince Viwatanajai Fellowship. They were established to commemorate these three distinct people who contributed much to both the Bank of Thailand and the country

in general.

They are former Finance Minister Pridi Banomyong, who planned the bank's establishment; the first governor Prince Viwatanajai Chaiyan; and the well-respected, longest serving former governor Dr Puey Ungphakorn.

The Puey and Pridi Fellowships, worth two million baht each, are open to senior scholars to conduct advanced-level research in any field that will benefit the country, while the Prince Viwatanajai is aimed at a younger generation of researchers—not more than 45—wanting to conduct research in the field of socio-economics and politics.

Sulak Sivaraksa won the Puey Fellowship for his research project entitled "Thailand's Education System: Alternatives for the Future." The study will explore the viability of alternative methods of education in Thailand, particularly in the informal sector, such as age-old wisdom or knowledge based on local lifestyles.

Seksan Prasertkul, former student leader and dean of Thammasat University's Faculty of Political Science, received the Pridi Fellowship for his project entitled "The Role of Civil Society in the Development of Thai Politics."

The research will investigate the philosophy behind the Western support of a globalised economy, the Thai government's response to the outside pressure and conflicts between the state and civic groups. The study will analyse whether it is possible for civil society to be an active player in influencing public policy.

The committee decided that no applicant was worthy of the Prince Viwatanajai Fellowship this year.

Governor of the Bank of Thailand and Chairman of the Foundation's Committee, MR Pridiyathorn Devakula, will chair the fellowship presentation ceremony at 9am at Thammasat University.

11 May 2002