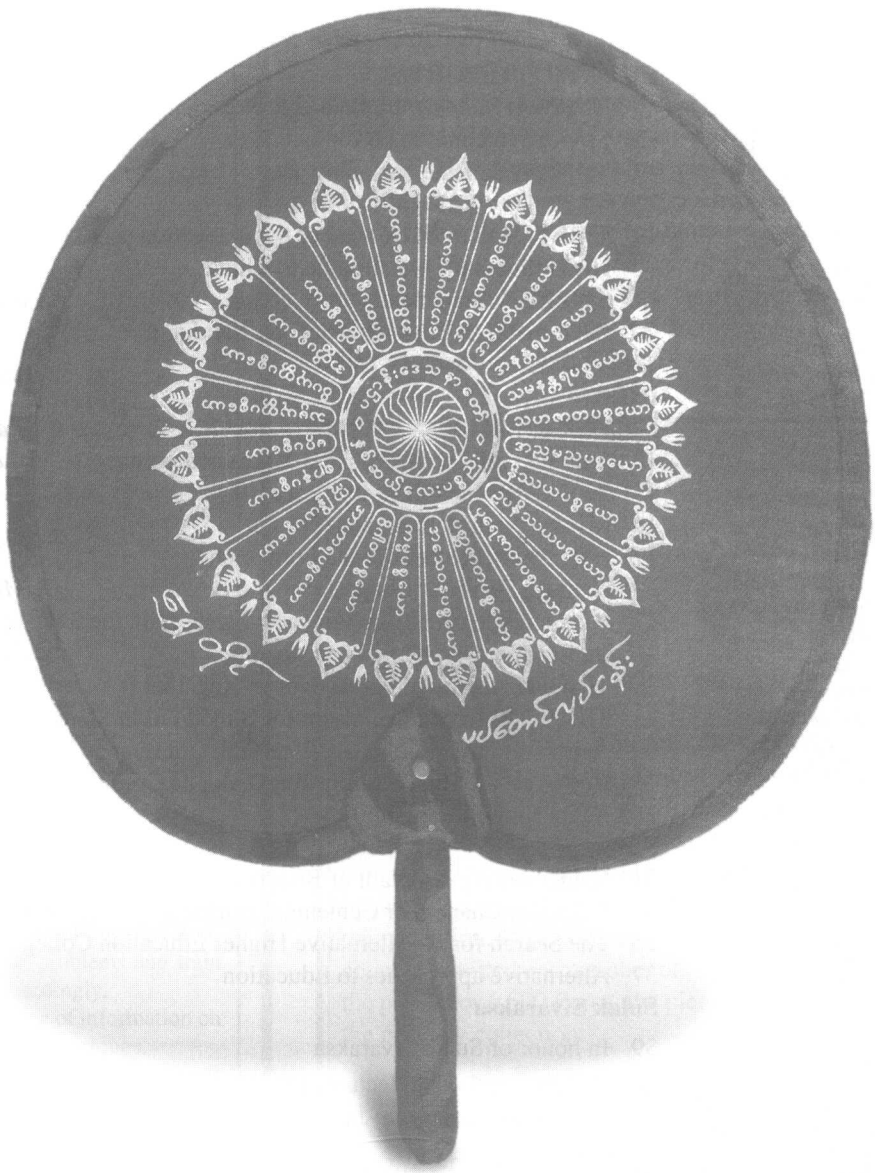
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Vol.19 No.3 Sept.-Dec. 2546 (2003)



Supporting People's Movement Against APEC



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PEACE

Seeds of Peace is published thrice annually in January, May and September, in order to promote the aims and objectives of the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development and the Spirit in Education Movement as well as the International Network of Engaged Buddhists. In order to subscribe a suggested $50/ year donation is suggested. Personal checks from the UK, US, and Germany are accepted.

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The goals of INEB are to:

1. Promote understanding and co-operation among Buddhist countries, different Buddhist sects, and socially conscious Buddhist groups.
2. Facilitate and carry out solutions to the many problems facing our communities, societies, and world.
3. Articulate the perspective of Engaged Buddhism regarding these problems and train Buddhist activists accordingly.
4. Serve as a clearing house of information on existing Engaged Buddhist groups.
5. Cooperate with activists from other spiritual traditions.

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Kularb Saipradit and Thai Society

Kularb Saipradit is one of the kingdom's most admired thinkers, writers, and journalists. He began writing since he was 17 or 18 years old, and by 1945 served as President of the Newspaper Association of Thailand. One of his most well known pen names is "Sriburapha" (The Glory of the East). Aside from being an influential figure in the Thai literary circles, Sriburapha was at the forefront of progressive social movements dealing with a wide range of issues, from democracy to religion, peace to human rights. During 1952-1957, he was imprisoned for "Peace Rebellion." Because of Mr. Kularb's acerbic wit and continuous political involvement, his newspaper was closed by authority in 1974. He was also a spiritual person. An example will suffice. Bhikkhu Buddhadasa had this to say of Kularb Saipradit: "Mr. Kularb knows how to select useful Dharma and make use of them in his life." Among his famous novels are *Behind the Painting, A Real Man,* and *The War of Life.* He also wrote many important articles, poems, and short stories. Sriburapha is recognized domestically as well as internationally. He died in China as an exile. UNESCO will celebrate his centennary in 2005.

Le Parisiene
Monday, 23 June 2003

Two blue umbrellas emblazoned with royal crests shield him from the sun. Bodyguards surround him and officers in the French civil police trace his every step. Yesterday's private visit of Wachiralongkorn, Crown Prince of Thailand, provoked the curiosity of the citizens of Saint-Ouen.

In total, 30 people formed the princely entourage that graced the walkways of the Biron Market for almost two and a half hours. The principal item of interest to the future monarch: fine furniture. In one alley, the Prince and his female companion stopped in front of a boutique specializing in furniture from the 30s and 40s; a particular commode caught their attention. The asking price: 10,000 Euros. The princely couple permitted one member of the delegation to negotiate the price. For 6,500 Euros, the piece was secured a place in the princely collection.

The small troupe arrived at the exit of the market. Suddenly, two Thai tourists caught a glimpse of the oldest son of their King. As he passed by, without uttering a word, the two prostrated. The Prince greeted them warmly.

"It's the first time that I have seen him so closely, he was confident, and very gentle, like one of the tourists really. For the Thai, He is an exceptional being. He is higher than God."

Editorial Notes

In mid-October the Thai kingdom will host the APEC 2003 meeting. Half-baked from the very start, it is surprising that APEC has lived to see the 21st century. The stated objective of APEC is to promote "open regionalism" in the Asia Pacific region through free trade and investment for "developed member economies" by 2010 and for "developing economies" by 2020. In the late 1990s, APEC slipped into a virtual coma with the financial crisis destroying the model economies of the Asian tigers and throwing millions of lives into dire straits. Journalists quickly labeled the forum "Ageing Politicians Exchanging Cocktails" or "A Perfect Excuse to Chat". And rightly so, because APEC's annual summit meetings are often conducted with much fanfare, transforming them into fantastic spectacles.

APEC is a vehicle for neoliberalism. It is a platform to explore and achieve consensus on the virtue of more far-reaching liberalization, acting as a sounding-board for WTO and IMF policies and an incubator for hatching future binding bilateral trade agreements. Its meetings are conducted secretly behind closed doors guarded by tight security; that is, free from parliamentary scrutiny or public debate. True, it is not a trading bloc or a trade agreement, and it seems voluntary and non-binding, but this is because it relies heavily on peer pressure.

APEC earned a new lease on life after 9-11 with the US increasingly dominating the meeting. Opposition to neoliberal globalization is increasingly associated with fundamentalism and "terrorism." The "war on terrorism" goes hand in hand with neoliberal expansion. Aziz Choudry has thus wittily re-dubbed APEC "Americans Plot To Expand Crusade."

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BURMA
Statement by the U.S. President

Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 and Executive Order

Today, I have signed into law the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 and an executive order sending a clear signal to Burma's ruling junta that it must release Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, along with all other political prisoners, and move down the path toward democracy. These measures reaffirm to the people of Burma that the United States stands with them in their struggle for democracy and freedom.

The Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act is the result of close cooperation between my Administration and Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, especially Senator Mitch McConnell and Representative Tom Lantos. Among other measures, the legislation bans the import of Burmese products. The executive order freezes the assets of senior Burmese officials and bans virtually all remittances to Burma. By denying these rulers the hard currency they use to fund their repression, we are providing strong incentives for democratic change and human rights in Burma.

In May of this year, the Burmese government tightened its grip on the people of Burma when it organized an attack on the motorcade of Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the National League of Democracy (NLD). Since then, Burmese officials have ignored requests form around the world to release Aung San Suu Kyi and other members of the NLD and to reopen NLD offices.

The repression of the Burmese regime contributes to problems that spill across Burma's borders, including refugee flows, narcotics trafficking, and the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases. These problems affect Burma's neighbors, and these nations must play an important role in resolving the current crisis. I urge the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to continue to make clear to the regime that its behavior is inconsistent with ASEAN's standards and goals. Burma should not be permitted to tarnish ASEAN's record as a positive force for progress. I also welcome the measures taken by the European Union and Japan to bring about democratic change in Burma.

The United States will not waver from its commitment to the cause of democracy and human rights in Burma. The United States has raised the situation in Burma at the United Nations Security Council, and will do so again as developments warrant. The world must make clear through word and deed that the people of Burma, like people everywhere, deserve to live in dignity and freedom, under leaders of their own choosing.

July 28, 2003

***

rant workers in Mae Sot are not Burmese, belonging to other ethnic groups such as the Mons and Karens, who have fled not only harsh poverty but also violence, atrocities and war under Burmese military rule.

"At least here we have a chance to find work so we can send money back to our families," said factory worker Lui Lui, 25, from Moulmein.

Many end up with shattered dreams. "We never knew that life on this side of the border is also very insecure and dangerous," she said.

Routine police extortion is only the mildest form of systematic abuse they must endure. Of the estimated 100,000 Burmese workers in Mae Sot, only about half are registered. Having official status does not mean you're free from harassment.

As a rule, the employers do not let the workers keep their registration cards, which is a gross violation of labour rights. The workers are given only photo copies of the cards, or receipts for the registration fees.

The police do not acknowledge these informal papers. But both the officers and the workers know the rule of this cat-and-mouse game. Pay up to be let go, or be kicked out of the country.

The "negotiations" can happen at police stations and detention centres, but by then the process is a lot more complicated, thus needing more money to untangle it. Most workers have heard of horror stories about severe beatings and sexual harassment in state prisons and detention centres.

To avoid all that, they just pay on the spot.

Regular police raids mean migrant workers from Burma live under fear of arrest and deportation, which increases their vulnerability to extortion and exploitation.

"I never feel safe here," said Lui Lui. "Walking down the street can be a risky business. We can be harassed anytime. People with wives and children can be deported and their families broken apart.

Every time I see a policeman, I tremble and sweat. It's a life full of fear. It is so stressful."

Fear of arrest and deportation forces the workers to endure the slave-like work conditions. "I'm afraid to leave the factory," said another immigrant worker. "I'm too scared."

Those who seek better-paying jobs elsewhere must pay a hefty sum to human trafficking gangs to transport them to other provinces.

Most who stay put in Mae Sot are afraid to demand better work conditions. It is common for protesting workers to be deported. The workers' leaders are often physically attacked by gangsters paid by the employers. Some mysteriously disappear.

The popular method to make Burmese workers disappear is to burn the bodies on piles of tyres. Such burning is rife in the outskirts of Mae Sot where immigrant Burmese workers are hired as farm hands. Many are unregistered, and thus vulnerable to abuse.

"When they asked for payments after many months of work, the employers often refused, which led to quarrels. Then the employers just have the workers killed by hired guns and have them burnt on tyres to get rid of the bodies," reported a rights activist, asking for anony mity because giving humanitarian assistance to illegal workers is deemed an illegal activity by state authorities.

"The police never took up these cases, so the climate of impunity breeds more and more violence," he pointed out.

There also have been several cases of "mysterious disappearances" of workers who were suspected of petty theft or who had quarrels with Thai villagers, added the rights activist.

In January 2002, 17 Burmese immigrants were killed and dumped into a river in Mae Sot. The authorities let the bodies flow into the stream inside the Burma borders so they could close the cases without having to investigate the murders.

Lying beneath this violence and systematic negligence of the abuses of the Burmese workers is deep hatred, say the rights activist.

"They equate Burmese workers with all things bad, be they criminals, job stealers, disease carriers—the enemies of the country.

"They feel the Burmese workers should be thankful enough they have a roof over their heads here so they should never, ever challenge the Thais in any way. And those who do, just have to be punished."

It's not only police and immigration authorities who can arrest the workers—local administration officials do too.

Since many village heads, kamnans, and their sub-ordinates such as village defence volunteers, are extortionists and human traffickers themselves, the abuses of power are widespread-not only in Mae Sot but every where in Thailand that Burmese migrants are working.

"We feel we can be terrorised by just anybody here," said one worker. "We dare not resist, or question anyone, because we don't know who are the real officials and who are the fakes."

For those who try, resistance can be fatal-as Aye Min, 22, and his friends found out. They tried to fight back against an extortion gang. They were beaten up and burned to death.

SANITSUDA EKACHAI
Bangkok Post

SIAM

A delicate balancing act

Every crisis opens an opportunity, and this is apparently the case with Prime Minister Thaksin's decision to lend his full weight to the US-led war on terrorism.

Tuesday's [June 10, 2003] arrest of three suspected members of a terrorist group in the southern Thai province of Narathiwat, which took place just hours before Thaksin paid a courtesy call on President Bush at the White House, took almost everyone by surprise. But Washington was ebullient, hailing it as "a positive step forward in the global war on terror."

Back home, however, confusion reigned over the charges laid against the three Thai Muslims accused of plotting terrorist attacks on several embassies in Bangkok and tourist attractions in the city and elsewhere.

For many residents of Narathiwat's Muang district, the suspects—Maisuri Haji Abdullah, 50, who ran the Islam Burana Tonor school, his son Muyahi Haji Doloh, 22, and Waemahadi Waedao, 40, a medical doctor—could hardly be believed to be members of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a militant Islamic group thought to be allied with Osama bin Laden's alQaeda terrorist network.

"Dr Waemahadi is a good man," a religious leader told Perspective. "I don't believe he could do that."

But police and security officials insisted that the government had enough evidence to bring charges against the three suspects. "We have been following their movements for quite some time," a high-ranking army officer told Perspective.

"We have clear-cut evidence and this will be shown during court proceedings."

Deputy Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh said on Wednesday that Maisuri and his son admitted to police interrogators that they had been plotting to attack several embassies in Bangkok and other targets in Thailand. Waemahadi denied the charges.

TERRORISTS EMERGE

Before Tuesday's arrests, the Thaksin government had insisted that there were no terrorist cells in Thailand. Suspec ted terrorists might have been here, but only for a short stay or for passage to other countries.

Government officials tended to retreat into a denial mode every time foreign governments warned of terrorist threats in Thailand. Most recently, when Australia issued new travel advice on May 29 warning its citizens travelling in Thailand to "exercise extreme caution," Prime Minister Thaksin responded by telling Thais not to be frightened "like foreigners."

The Australian advisory said "threats against Australians and Australian interests in Thailand are high, and we continue to receive reports that terrorist elements in the region are planning attacks."

Admitting that the terrorist threat was real, a police source in southern Thailand said Thai authorities had been keeping a close watch on JI members here for "several months."

Prime Minister Thaksin, he said, was concerned that any public talk about terrorism in Thailand would frighten investors and tourists away.

"The government did not want any adverse effects on the Thai economy," he explained.

In separate interviews with Perspective, police and security officials declined to reveal the exact number of JI members in Thailand, or say how long the organisation has been present here.

All agreed, however, that the JI's ultimate aim is to create an Islamic state in the region through the use of violence.

According to the White Paper prepared by Singapore's Home Affairs Ministry, this Islamic state (Daulah Islamiyah) would be centred in Indonesia but would include Malaysia, south Philippines and, inevitably, Singapore and Brunei. This vision was spelt out in a JI manual known as Pedoman Umum Perjuangan Jemaah Islamiyah.

"In addition, the JI shares the virulent anti-West ideology of global jihad purveyed by the al-Qaeda, and its close links to the al-Qaeda have made it a willing proxy to attack the US and other targets," says the White Paper.

The JI's link to violent incidents was confirmed by Dr Rohan Gunaratna, research fellow at the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at St Andrew's University, who said the JI's planned creation of an Islamic regime would also include Cambodia and southern Thailand.

His view is shared by a Thai Special Branch police officer and a Malaysian analyst, both of whom told Perspective that the planned Islamic state would include the three southernmost

Thai provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat, and the northern Malaysian states of Kelantan, Perlis and Kota Bahru.

"Kuala Lumpur began monitoring JI activities even before the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, DC in September 2001," said the analyst.

Historically, JI traces its roots to the Darul Islam (DI, or "House of Islam"), an organisation which emerged in the 1940s and which fought together with the Indonesian revolutionary army against Dutch colonial rule. After Indonesia gained independence in 1949, DI continued its armed and violent struggle for the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia, according to the White Paper.

"The Indonesian government tried to suppress the group after independence but never completely succeeded. In 1985, several radical DI elements fled to Malaysia to avoid arrest by the Suharto government. They settled there, and later regrouped and renamed themselves Jemaah Islamiyah," says the Paper.

So how much of a threat does the JI pose to Thailand and other countries in the region?

The alleged plots to attack western embassies in Bangkok and tourist attractions in Thailand clearly demonstrates the danger posed by this radical group, said a Thai security official.

That is why Thailand is cooperating closely with other Asian countries to contain the threat of terrorists," he noted.

"No country can be safe if it is surrounded by neighbours infested with terrorists."

WAIT FOR ALL THE EVIDENCE

Prime Minister Thaksin's tough stance against terrorism was spelt out in his keynote address to the US-Asean Business Council annual dinner last Tuesday, where he emphasised the need for countries to protect their economic security against "all kinds of terrorism."

"It is the duty of both the government and the private sector to ensure that economic confidence will not be impaired or destroyed by an act of terrorism, for letting it be impaired is tantamount to a victory by the terror," he told the audience, which included top US politicians and businessmen.

Terrorism is bad for business. That was the message that Thaksin conveyed to the world. But there were other considerations that Thaksin probably took into account, including the need to put Thai-US relations back on track after some misunder standing over Thailand's stance on the US-led war in Iraq, military assistance and cooperation in narcotics suppression, and bilateral trade.

"Above all, as a member of the United Nations, we must follow UN resolutions on terrorism," said a senior Thai diplomat.

"We might have been tip-toeing a delicate line to protect our tourism industry, etc, but now is the time to earn the trust of the global community, especially our neighbours."

Singapore has been very assertive, as has the Philippines, which arrested several suspected JI members and those with suspected links to al-Qaeda after the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the US.

Southernmost Thailand is a sensitive area, being home to a large number of Muslims. The presence of JI members in this part of the country, allegedly with the help of a local politician, has complicated the already volatile political climate there, an observer noted.

Thaksin may have hoped to kill two birds with one stone. He has already earned the admiration and support from the United States, and he may now set his sights on restoring law and order in the restive South.

But for ordinary people in Narathiwat and nearby provinces, Tuesday's arrests have shaken their psyche. Initial reaction was a mixture of shock and disbelief.

For many, it's hard to admit that there are, indeed, terrorists in their midst.

"There is a lot at stake here, and the government has put its credibility on the line," said a lawmaker in the South, echoing the concerns of prominent religious leaders and community leaders fearful of negative fallout of the incident.

Chaiwat Kamchoo, former dean of Chulalongkorn Univer sity's Faculty of Political Science, said public scepticism could be expected as full accounts of the suspects' alleged activities had not been made public.

"It's too early to form an opinion on this matter," he told Perspective. "All the evidence must be examined. And we must be fair to both sides."

But will the crackdown on JI make Thailand a safer place?

If the alleged plots to attack western embassies and tourist attractions here truly reflect the capability and strategy of JI members, the government can only win the war by adopting a sustained approach involving cooperation from all groups and members of society.

SONGPOL KAOPATUMTIP and SURATH JINAKUL
Bangkok Post

TIBET

Statement by Special Envoy Lodi Gyari, head of the delegation sent by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to China

As a result of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's efforts, we were able to re-establish direct contact with the Chinese leadership in September 2002. In continuation of the process my colleague Kelsang Gyaltsen and I, accompanied by two members of the Task Force, Sonam N. Dagpo and Bhuchung K. Tsering, visited China from May 25 to June 8, 2003. This visit follows the changes in leadership of the Chinese Communist Party as well as of the Chinese Government and has given us the opportunity to engage extensively with the new Chinese leaders and officials responsible for Tibet and our relationship.

In addition to the main objec tive of continuing the process begun in September 2002 to meet Chinese leaders responsible for Tibetan affairs, we had three specific aims for this visit; i) to broaden our overall under standing of the situation in China through visits to different areas and meeting with officials; ii) to meet Chinese Buddhist leaders and to visit Buddhist holy sites; and, iii) above all, to visit Tibetan areas and meet Tibetan officials.

In Beijing we met with Ms. Liu Yandong, head of the United Front Work Department of the Communist Party of China, Mr. Zhu Weiqun, deputy head, Mr. Chang Rongjung, the Deputy Secretary-General, and other senior officials. We were impressed by the attention and candor displayed by the Chinese leaders during our meeting. Both sides agreed that our past relationship had many twists and turns and that many areas of disagreement still exist. The need was felt for more efforts to overcome the existing problems and bring about mutual under standing and trust.

We feel greatly encouraged by our first encounter and exchange of views with our new Chinese counterparts. They have explicitly acknowledged the positive efforts made by the Tibetan leadership to create a conducive environment for the continuation of the present process and we suggested that both sides take further steps.

The second visit provided us with an opportunity to tour areas in the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Yunnan. We have been greatly impressed by the economic and social changes in the areas that we visited.

A high moment of our tour was the brief visit to Gyalthang, including to the Gaden Sumtsenling Monastery (founded by the Great Fifth Dalai Lama), in present-day Dechen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province. In Yunnan, we were able to have interaction with Tibetan officials working both at the provincial and prefecture level. We have been impressed by efforts to protect the beautiful environment of Gyalthang as well as the living conditions of some of the families that we visited. However, we emphasized to the officials the importance of maintaining Tibetan religious, cultural and linguistic identity along with the material development. Our visit was too short for us to assess in an adequate manner how effectively the Tibetan language, culture, religion and identity are being preserved, protected and promoted in this Tibetan area.

In Yunnan, we have been very pleased to visit some areas of ethnic minorities belonging to the Yi, Naxi (Jang), and Bai nationalities. These people have close historical, cultural and religious links with the Tibetan people. It was our great pleasure to meet various officials of these peoples and to befriend them.

On our tour we have been able to meet officials of various levels of the provinces we visited and exchange views in a warm atmosphere. During this visit we visited Mount Putuo (Riwo Potala) in Zhejiang Province and Mount Jizu (Riwo Jakang) in Yunnan Province. These two sites are sacred to both Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist traditions and it was our honour to be able to visit them. In Beijing we were particularly pleased to meet with Master Yicheng, President, and Master Sheng Hui, Executive Vice President, of the Buddhist Association of China. The meetings with various civil and religious leaders gave us the opportunity to share with them some of the thinking of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Today, we briefed His Holiness the Dalai Lama about our visit. His Holiness is particularly pleased that the Chinese leadership has a positive assessment of our recent direct contact. He is encouraged by the development and reiterated the importance for us to continue to make vigorous efforts to advance this process further. Our mission is to lead this process to an earnest negotiation to find a mutually acceptable solution for the Tibetan people.

Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, Chairman of the Kashag (Tibetan Cabinet), who has given continued, close guidance and firm support to our mission, has expressed his determination to continue the present course of creating a conducive atmosphere for the continuation of the process of rapprochement.

Our host for this visit was the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party. Many other authorities, including the governments of Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Yunnan and their autonomous prefectures, cities and counties, have been involved in organizing our visit. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the officials at various levels for their hospitality and assistance.

Dharamsala, June 11, 2003

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INDONESIA
Towards a Second Bandung Conference in 2005



The first Bandung Conference occurred a decade after the Second World War. At that time a new world order was emerging based upon a bi-polar international arrangement of states. As East-West rivalries intensified, the newly independent Afro-Asian countries were concerned about loosing their hard-won right to self-determination as they succumbed to pressures to join either the Eastern or Western Bloc. It was in this context that the Afro-Asian countries came together at Bandung in 1955. After sowing the seeds, following the Bandung Conference the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was born in 1962/64.

The call for "Bandung Two" again comes at a crossroad in history where a new world order is in the process of being formed after the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR and the Eastern Bloc. Many countries still hope that the Cold War bi-polar hegemonic power-system would be replaced by an authentic and genuinely multi-lateral geopolitical system. Instead, the world has been treated to demonstrations of super-power unilateralism and crude exercises of super power hegemonism.

Because of the legacy of the first Conference, that is, because of the hope of the people of this world for a new human order, it is not only symbolic and urgent but still in time for organising a second Bandung Conference and to address the new threats and the emerging global human contradictions and antagonisms in the post-Cold War period. The agenda of "Bandung Two" will be distinctively different from that of "Bandung One". But it will—similar to Bandung 1955—address important crossroads in history where the old order is being phased out and a new order is about to be formed. Like in the first Bandung Conference the smaller and weaker stakeholders, the majority of the civil society, in the emerging world order demands—besides or together with the dominant actor—to participate in shaping the one world in mutual agreement, peace and human dignity.

* Evaluation of the last 50 years of developments in Afro-Asia in the light of the Spirit of Bandung and from the people's perspective
* Nation states, Regions, Hegemony
* Religion, State, Party-politics
* Co-operation between Religions and Civilisations
* Basic Human Rights and Lifestyles

Excerpt from report prepared for Bandung Project by Wolfgang Schmidt and Jeffery Sng (11/08/2003)

Dear INEB readers,



Greetings,

July turned out to be a period of learning for many INEB members. The *Vassa* rains retreat, a Theravada Buddhist tradition, began on the 14th of July and will last for 3 months. Many INEB members consider this a time for intensive practice. Also the 2003 INEB-Korea Conference held in Seoul, South Korea from the 21st to the 25th of July was another occassion to grow in *panna* and *kalyanamitra* and enrich our committment to social engagement.

This was the first time to hold our annual conference in a Mahayana Buddhist country, and experience firsthand the marvelous hospitality of the Korean Buddhists. The Venerable Pomnyun Sunim and Prof. Park Gwangseo were among our hosts and they did a wonderful job of making all of us feel at home. Not only were we able to participate in the valuable Mahayana tradition in Korea, we also had the opportunity to learn about our friends' suffering caused by the division of North and South and the perpetual struggle for peace on the Korean Peninsula.

In addition to the compassionate leadership of our hosts, and the thought provoking lectures and discussions from friends, I was particularly impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of young Korean Buddhists who contribute their time working with Buddhist organizations. Those of us who from time to time complain that Buddhism fails to give and attract the attention of the youth would be pleased to see their young Korean brothers and sisters actively participating in Buddhist social service programs while practicing the Dhamma. Definitely, the conference workshop devoted to the youth and the young-at-heart turned out to be, in my opinion, the most active and lively discussion of the week. It made us all feel young. After talking to the youth, I learned that if they had more chances to strengthen their spiritual foundations, they would feel more confident in being Buddhist and would live more meaningful lives. I hope that in the future we would welcome more young members into our organizations and activities and perhaps revive our INTERBUDDY program or INEB chapter of "Young Bodhisattvas".

Another outstanding issue raised during the INEB conference was the situation of Buddhist Dalits in India. They are in need of support. Among the most urgent perceived needs is an increased sense of solidarity with other Buddhist communities as well as teachers who can provide them with Buddhist teachings and help them to cultivate a Buddhism that is more relevant to their unique circumstances.

This September, INEB will organize an international workshop partially to coincide with the second anniversary of the September 11th incident. The Interfaith Peace Workshop for the Next Generations will bring young people from South and Southeast Asian countries where interfaith conflict pose a threat. Aiming at the young people from grass-root communities, INEB sees the workshop as a complement to our Interfaith Dialogue and an affirmation of our commitment to increase cooperation in peace and interfaith activities.

This *Seeds of Peace* is the last issue of this year. To continue our effort next year, the editor and INEB encourage our readers to support our existence by renewing your membership. Also, in the spirit of a "participatory civil society" any contribution of ideas, comments and suggestions you might have are always welcome.

Yours in the Dhamma,
Lapapan Supamanta
Executive Secretary

Summary of The 2003 INEB-Korea Conference

The 11th INEB Annual conference for the year 2003 was held from the 21st to the 25th of July in Seoul, South Korea was a fantastic success. 46 Korean and 34 overseas participants were met with great hospitality throughout the conference. Present at the Samsung Life Center where the conference was held were Bhikkus, Bkikkunis, scholars, social activists and youth of Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana and Western Buddhist traditions from 13 nationalities.

Upon their arrival on July 20th all participants were greeted at the airport by the Venerable Pomnyun Sunim, a very humble but nevertheless energetic monk. Some of us had a chance to visit the office of the Jungto Society for a short rest before moving on to the conference venue in Yongill just south of Seoul.

The Jungto Society (Jungto means pure land) was established by the Venerable Pomnyun Sunim with the wish to make socially engaged Buddhism a reality. The Jungto Society is a combination of urban temples, community consultation centers, social service offices and other locations for spiritual practice. Despite a heavy workload our friends there are able to maintain their high spirits and energy due to their strong spiritual foundation and an intense enthusiasm to relieve the suffering of others.

The conference was composed of several parts: keynote addresses, small group discussions, peace action, a public conference and an exposure visit.

Buddhist Identity in the Modern World

The first day of the conference opened with remarks from important figures in Korean Buddhism. The theme of the day "Buddhist Identity in the Modern World" was first addressed with the keynote address by Sulak Sivaraksa, bearing the same title.

This theme was then enhanced through four thematic work shops: *The Role of Ordained and Lay Persons in Buddhism* with a presentation from Mr. Hasha Liyanage (Sarvodaya, Sri Lanka) and Dr. Kim Sungchul (Buddhist for Solidarity and Reform, Korea); *Inter-Buddhist Dialogue: Theravada and Maha yana* with a presentation from the Venerable Bodhipalla (Maha bodhi Maha Vihara, India) and Dr. Kim Youngpyo (Korean Association of Buddhist Professors, Korea); *Roles and Responsibility of Women in Buddhism* with presentation from Rajani De Silva (Sakyadhita, Sri Lanka) and the Venerable Hyeyeon Sunim (Buddhist Women Development Institute, Korea); and finally, *Participation of Youth in Buddhism* with a presentation from Shinta Dewi (HIKMAH BUDHI, Indonesia) and Park Sungchul (Together for Good, Korea)

Socially Engaged Buddhism

On the second day of the conference the main theme for discussion focused on Socially Engaged Buddhism with an exchange of practical experiences of applying Buddhist teachings to the needs and problems prevailed in the modern day. The day started with input on *Buddhist Response to Social Needs* from two speakers, Dr. Hasha Liyanage (Sarvodaya, Sri Lanka) and the Venerable Pomnyun Sunim (Jungto Society, Korea).

The content of the presen tations were carried over to be pondered further in thematic discussions with four topics: *Environment and Consumerism* with a presentation from Nuttarote Wangwinyoo (Khuan Muang Institute, Thailand) and Park Sokdong (Jungo Society Buddhist Academy for Ecological Awakening, Korea); *Peace and Conflict Transformation* with a presentation from Sunil Wije siriwardena (Sarvodaya, Sri Lanka) and Noh Okjae (Jungto Society Good Friend); *Poverty Eradication and Emergency Relief* with a presentation from Dhammachari Lokamitra (Jam budipa Trust, India) and Lee Hyesook (Life Sharing Associa tion, Korea); and *Human Rights and Marginalized Persons* with a presentation from Tenzin Rabgyal (a Tibetan member of INEB) and Khun Okker (INEB-Burma)

Action Plans

Despite the fact that they had to stop from time to time for translation into their native languages, the participants were actively involved in discussion within each thematic workshop. Some workshops such as *The Role of Ordained and Lay Persons in*



Buddhism, Inter-Buddhist Dialogue: Theravada and Mahayana, and *Poverty Eradication and Emergency Relief* became more of a consultation and dialogue with a rich discussion, and arrived at no action plan. While other workshops inspired parti cipants to present the following action plans:

Roles and Responsibility of Women in Buddhism

* Training for laywomen Dhamma masters

Participation of Youth in Buddhism

* International youth camp
* Holistic education to in crease participation of youth

Environment and Consumerism

* Youth Environmental Leader ship Training
* Petition against construction of road into a national park in South Korea

Peace and Conflict Transformation

* Appeal for Peace in Korean Peninsula
* Appeal to support peace negotiation in Sri Lanka

Human Rights and Marginalized Persons

* Appeal for temporary release of Anwar Ibrahim to receive proper medical treatment outside Malaysia
* Appeal for the democracy in Burma
* Appeal for the freedom of Tibet

Peace Action

To make known their commitment to peace and social concern, conference participants expressed hope for peace on the Korean peninsula in a peace meditation at Imjingkag, the border between South and North Korea on July 23. The meditation was led by Sunil Wijesiriwardena. David Chappell read appeal for peace! Participants placed roses on the barbed wire fence dividing the countries and waved bright green handkerchiefs with the hope that the North Koreans on the other side of the fence would recognize our goodwill.

In Seoul itself there was a public discussion on Socially Engaged Buddhism at the National Press Club which was very well attended.

Exposure visit

INEB conference participants also had the opportunity to visit several famous Buddhist places at the end of our conference. On July 24th, the group traveled to the southeastern coast of the Korean Peninsula to visit the famous Unmunsa Temple. This old but beautifully preserved temple is now the biggest college for bhikkhunis. The teachings and living practices followed there are based on ancient traditional patterns and the temple has a wonderful ambience of peace, sacredness and scholarliness. Those INEB members who are actively involved in bhikkhuni and women empowerment program were pleased to visit the college. Since restoration of the bhikkhuni order is a concern for a number of Theravada Buddhists, visiting Unmunsa Temple was a marvelous encouragement and inspiration.

The other two historic locations that INEB delegates visited included the UNESCO world heritage site of Bulgooksa Temple. Bulgooksa is an ancient exhibit of key Mahayana teachings and faith. Throughout the site one can see images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas embedded in buildings, decora tions, paintings, and artifacts. We also visited the Seokguram Temple, the home of the cave housing a famous stone Buddha image.

Note: The papers and presentations of each resource person can be seen in full at **www.inebseoul.org.**

Reported by:
Lapapan Supamanta
Executive Secretary



2003 Seoul INEB Statement for Peace

The Korean War lasted three years from 1950 to 1953 and more than 2.8 million people died.

Since then, for more than fifty years, South and North Korea have been at odds. Disputes, both small and large, have continued until today and Korea remains a divided country. Separated families cannot meet each other freely yet, and the status of numerous missing persons is presently unknown.

War clouds hang over the Korean peninsula. North Korea's development of nuclear weapons has provoked conflict with the US. There is a distinct possibility that the hard-line policy of a U.S. preemptive attack against nuclear facilities will prevail.

Today, we, the 11th Conference of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, consisting of 80 Buddhists from 15 countries, declare that the Korean peninsula is in eminent danger, and to prevent violence we must spread the Buddha's message of compassion and peace.

Since Im-jin-gak where we are standing now is a site that commemorates the sufferings of the Korean War, we, the participants in the 11th International Engaged Buddhist Conference resolve that:

- We shall work to prevent war on the Korean peninsula.

- We urge the US government not to carry out a preemptive attack that might cause a full-scale war on the Korean peninsula even if the existence of nuclear weapons in North Korean is confirmed.

- We urge the North Korean government to halt any plans of developing nuclear weapons.

- We urge the South Korean government not in any circumstance to support a war on the Korean peninsula. Further, we resolve to work to prevent the starvation of North Korean people.

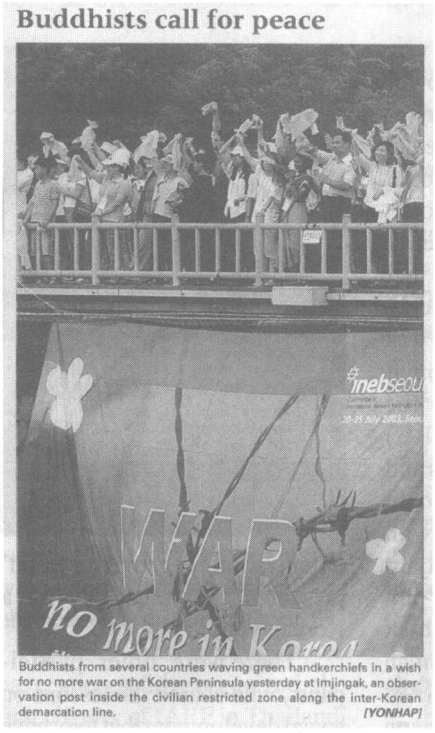
- We urge the South Korean government, its people and the international community to expand their humanitarian assistance to North Korea.

- We urge the North Korean government to cease any violations of the human rights of its citizens.

- We urge the North Korean government to allow the reunion of ten million separated families and People abducted from South Korea by North Korea should be allowed to return, and the kidnappings of Japanse citizens should be clarified.

- We urge the Chinese government to not punish North Korean refugees, and cease to forcibly repatriate them.

- We urge the North Korean government to not punish North Korean refugees who have repatriated voluntarily or forcibly.



Buddhists from several countries waving green handkerchiefs in a wish for no more war on the Korean Peninsula yesterday at Imjingak, an observation post inside the civilian restricted zone along the inter-Korean demarcation line. [YONHAP]

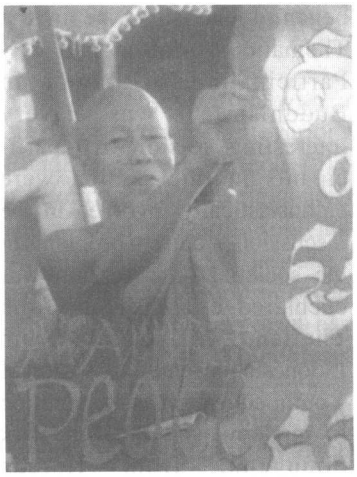
Standing right in the middle of disputes, we, the Engaged Buddhists will lead a peace movement to benefit both South and North Korea. No matter how hard it is, we, Engaged Buddhists, will continue our practice in the light of the Lord Buddha's teaching.

With the blessing of the Great Compassionate Buddha, we shall carry on with the work, with wisdom and compassion.

Here at Im-jin-gak where many people lost their lives, we, Engaged Buddhists, vow to sow the seeds of life, peace and hope. If there is a sign of war, we vow to sit in the middle of the road under the scorching sun. We vow to be the seeds of peace that will sprout in all the troubled areas in the world.

Namu Buddha, Namu Dhamma, Namu Sangha.

July 23, 2003
Participants of the 11th Conference of International Network of Engaged Buddhists



My days with INEB Seoul, 2003

It was a Thursday evening, I was feeling so depressed and down. The whole day I was so busy at work, but after reaching home the recurrent sense of inability to do something for Tibetan people started making me sad. I looked at the picture of His Holiness and prayed for his blessing and quickly the prayer was granted, I was invited to give a presentation at International Network for Engaged Buddhist (INEB) conference on Human Rights and Marginalized People, in South Korea. The invitation came with kind recommendation from Ajarn Sulak and I was referred by him as 'the right person to talk about the situation in Tibet and Human Rights of the Marginalized Tibetans'. We reached Incheon International Airport, South Korea on Sunday morning. Venerable Pomnyun Suning and other INEB Seoul staff were there to greet us. I offered a Tibetan scarf to him and greeted them in a traditional Tibetan way of greeting respected guests.

T first half day of the conference went well. After lunch, the thematic workshops which were divided into four sessions began. I choose to be in the Thematic Workshop part D - Participation of Youth in Buddhism. It was a very interesting session. All participants in this session were enthusiastically involved in the discussion of current problems in the societies. Our session was cochaired by Mr. Nutt, from Thailand. Ms. Shinta from Indonesia presented 'A Vision of Youth: education as the solution in modern age' and Mr. Park Soungchul from Korean



organization 'Together for Good' presented 'A typical day for a Korean youth'.

There were other participants, who shared the lessons on social development that they have learned from their activities in their countries. I recall three persons, namely U Shit Maung (Rakhing Development Foundation, Bangladesh), Lee Gyoungjae (Indranet Community for life, South Korea), Nun Chutipa Dhapasuth (Dhammastan Dhamanurag, Thailand) whose ideas resonated with mine. After finishing my MBA, I was thinking of new business approach based on Buddhist philosophy. During that time I felt my mind was clouded with materialism and presentations from these three, kindled new ideas in my mind. I felt my cloudiness started fade. I would call them Buddhist Entrepreneurs. Their experience taught me a new approach to doing business by keeping a balance between materialism, consumerism. Although there is a need for more research, at the end our team came up with three pro- posals.

This model shows how a Buddhist Entrepreneur implements business principles while eliminating greed and anger through love and compassion by being more engaged in social activities. For example, one might eliminate anger by understanding the innocence of society through commu- nity service.

On the second half of the second day I was supposed to give my presen tation. I felt both excited and nervous.

In my presentation I focused on five areas: Brief History of Tibet, 50 years of Chinese Government Rule in Tibet, Current Situation inside and outside Tibet, Relevance of Tibetan Culture and Civilization to the world, Support, Tibet needs from other countries. I'd requested to resolve the restoration of Tibet Economy, Culture, People and Human Rights, improving awareness on Tibetan People and its history; Exert direct and indirect influence on oppressing Chinese Government, induct leniency in the mind of Chinese Government towards Tibetan People, Culture and Civilization, conduct International Forum on Tibet Causes to increase awareness and create an environment for open dialogue between His Holiness and the Chinese government.

On the fifth day, I spoke of my dream. I wished to bring up Global Tibetan Association and work closely with all.

Tenzin Rabgyal

The next INEB conference is to be held in India in 2005. Coinciding with the 50th anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism.

First Announcement of the Formation of IARF Thailand Chapter

As a representative of an ad hoc group of religious people from Thailand who are concerned with the problems on religious freedom, at the end of July to the beginning of August 2002, I was invited to take part in the 31st World Congress of the International Association of Religious Freedom in Budapest, Hungary with 500 other participants from 25 countries around the world. IARF (International Association for Religious Freedom) is one of the oldest international and interfaith NGO of the world which has consultative status with the UN's Socio-economic Council, and works closely with the UN High Com mission For Human Rights.

It was an inspirational experience, sharing stories and discussing different issues concerning modern society and that of religious people. One common thing that I found was that every religion has its own problems. And as members of the human family, we have more experiences in common than we do experiences that are different, in spite of the fact that we may have differing religious beliefs. The pain of suffering and suppression which we all share has the same taste of bitterness and ugliness, especially when people of authority exploit others who are deemed on the lower rungs of society. So, there is much that we should learn from one another which will help us transcend the obstacles within and without.

After months of struggle, we have successfuly organized the first chapter of IARF in Thailand, led by Acharn Sulak Sivaraksa who is serving as the President of the National Chapter, Co-chaired by Dr. Parichart Suwannapupha, with Ms. Lapapan Supamanta, Treasurer, and myself Mettanando Bhikkhu as Secretary. We are very honoured to have Senator Thongbai Thongpao, as our Honorary Advisor and Ms. Maneerat Pakdurong as our legal advisor. We are committed to work for the rights and freedom of people of faith in Thailand and the world, in accord with the IARF's Constitution and the UN.

Seeds of Peace has generously agreed to give us a column in its periodical publication. In the name of the National Chapter of IARF, I would like to invite those who are interested to join the National Chapter of IARF Thailand to apply for membership at the office of INEB.

Mettanando Bhikkhu,
Secretary, IARF Thailand Chapter
(For more information about iarf, see www.iarf.net.)

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other. In this way, inductive approaches to confronting social issues from a Buddhist perspective are needed; that is to begin with our daily struggles as Buddhists to confront suffering and work inward towards developing principles and practices which have arisen from these struggles. In this third Think Sangha meeting, we were for the first time in large majority Asian, coming from grassroots experiences in the South. As such, it was natural that the group took a more inductive approach to confront the issue of violence.

In this way, the group began with their own personal experiences of Buddhist practice in relation to violence and worked outward over the next five days to include gender and family violence, religious and ethnic violence, and national and global violence. After exploring our basic Buddhist identities, we broke into small groups to share a violent event (experienced or witnessed) which had a direct impact on us. We were asked to share how our understanding and practice of Buddhism helped to respond or cope with the experience. Finally, we were instructed to record any principles that were revealed by these stories to report back to the main group. Not surprisingly, one set of principals that emerged was compassion *(karuna)*, love and forgiveness in confronting the perpetrators of violence. However, these principles immediately led to deeper contentious issues concerning the boundary between forgiving and forgetting, and questions about what a Buddhist concept of justice might be. Buddhism is often stereotyped as being socially passive towards social injustice. While this may be positive in that Buddhism has rarely if ever created holy wars, according to Gandhi's understanding of non-violence, such passivity can be equally as damaging when it allows, and thereby supports, the violent actions of others. Buddhists often think that it is better to do nothing than to act out of anger or be forced into violent action through engagement, which creates more bad *karma*. However, as Bhikkhuni Dhammananda from Thailand noted, if one is in a situation to help another and doesn't, then one transgresses one's own precepts. *Karma* is not only what one has done but also includes what one hasn't done and what one can do as intentional, moral action. This initial discussion exposed a deep, common theme for the following days concerning the difference between passivity and equanimity *(upekkha)* and the interpretation of the doctrine of *karma* as a kind of retributive justice.



Concerning gender and family issues, we learned from our host Ouyporn Khuankaew of the *International Women's Partnership (IWP)* about the popular teaching of *karma* which perpetuates an inferiority complex among women toward not only their spiritual capabilities but also their worth in daily society. In her conference paper, Ouyporn noted that if a woman seeks out a monk for advice concerning physical beatings by her husband, she will usually be told that this violence is caused by *karma* and that "she cannot do much except be patient and kind to her husband so that one day the *karmic* force will cease and everything will be fine". In this way, women are dissuaded from ever leaving abusive husbands. Ouyporn spoke of this situation as a kind of "structural *karma*" in that prevailing attitudes about women, their power and their worth build a structure (or more precisely a culture) into which both women and men are inculcated.

Concerning ethnic and religious violence, we learned from Khuensai Jaiyen of the *Shan Herald Agency for News* how the doctrine of *karma* is used to instill passivity towards violent oppression. In Shan State of

Northern Burma where the Shan people share a common Buddhist heritage with the majority Burmans who dominate the military government, Khuensai noted that most monks in the region are Burmese and have links to the military. They tend to emphasize patience or equanimity *(upekkha)* towards the trouble in this region, and also teach *karma* as the reason for present sufferings. There is a prevalent view among the Shan people inculcated by Buddhism that to recruit soldiers to resist the Burmese military is evil, because it means taking part in killing and the creation of more bad *karma* in the future. In turn, they have developed a sense of fatalism that their suffering is due to bad *karma* from a past life. Khuensai said the idea of past *karma* has been used to make the people submissive, so they are waiting for a savior, unable to liberate themselves. He also commented that non-violence has been interpreted here as passivity, so instead of fighting for their rights, the people choose to flee.

Concerning national and global issues, these issues of passivity and resignation were further encountered in stories from the North. Participants from the United States and Japan spoke of the deep fear and emotional paralysis that most citizens in these countries confront in their repressed awareness of complicity in environmental destruction and structural violence through economic development and militarism. Our responsibility for direct forms of violence is integrally related to our complicity with structural and cultural violence. This was something we learned on the first day of the meeting from Yeshua Moser, Director of the Southeast Asia Office for *Non-Violence International* in Bangkok. He provided us with our one theoretical model to reflect upon during our conversations - the triangle matrix of direct-structural-cultural violence developed by Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung.

With direct violence as the apex of the iceberg poking out of the water, structural and cultural violence form its bases, usually hidden from sight beneath the water. In this way, to confront the roots of direct violence in their structural and cultural forms means also to confront one's own unconscious patterns of belief, thought and action in our daily lives. In his conference paper, Yeshua spoke of the Buddhist precepts *(sila)* in terms of examining one's own personal connections with systems of killing and living in a way that removes complicity with them. As examples, he cited from his own personal experience having become vegetarian, not paying taxes which support government spending on military, and various kind of non-violent social activism.

Concerning the experience of fear and emotional paralysis in the face of violence, the group used some of Joanna Macy's practices in her workshops dealing with despair and empowerment. Using the Buddhist insight of non-duality and interconnectedness, participants were asked to draw webs of interconnection between their own activities and partners, and further out ward towards other like-minded groups to see the deep solidarity of peoples working for transformative awareness and social justice. At the same time, participants were instructed to fill in the other half of these webs with the groups who oppose the work of the participant's web of solidarity. Finally, we were asked to choose two or three of these "antagonists" and explore ways in which they could be transformed into allies. Drawing on the experiences of Arjuna Krishnaratne of *Sarvodaya* in Sri Lanka to overcome factionalization and distrust amidst Sri Lanka's ethnic war, we learned that we need to look at the resource potentials of every single actor in our sphere of action. If an antagonist cannot be transformed in some way into a resource, they at least need to be transformed into a neutral force in our work. In Sarvodaya's case, Krishna noted that if the government is opposed to you, provide a service that they don't or can't provide and then you can gain their respect and they have to deal with you.

In our short time together, it was certainly impossible to resolve all issues regarding violence. The discussion about how to confront the military regime in Burma represents an ongoing challenge for Buddhism as to how to respond to extreme violence while maintaining one of the deepest practices of non-harming. Phra Phaisan, who teaches non-violent methods to border police in Thailand, called on the group to perceive situations more widely, and not just as political struggles. Buddhism can work perhaps most effectively in these areas of structural and cultural violence. He said you may fight and kill, but you can't use Buddhism to legitimize it. It is essential to not make the Dhamma serve your own ends, but to use it to challenge yourself to grow.

Using the Dhamma to challenge ourselves to grow, I believe, is very much at the heart

of the inductive approach we used at this meeting. Ironically, our one Christian participant, Gerhard Koberlin of Hamburg University in Germany, best summed up this approach as "ecumenical learning". Ecumenical learning uses personal interaction and communication as the basis for transformation. This may sound simple, yet it has extremely significant ramifications. Such interaction and communication does not mean simply to "be present" with those people we meet. Rather, it is a more active engagement of reaching out to the suffering and the marginalized. This outreach to the marginalized means creating spaces for breaking the silence concerning the experiences of marginalization, because perhaps the greatest injustice that the marginalized experience is the fact that their histories go unrecorded and their voices go unheard. In our short meeting, we attempted to honor this spirit by giving each participant the stage for telling their story to the group. This act of speech is a first step in empowering various types of Buddhists to rearticulate the teachings in an historical and social context which meets their needs - rather than as decontextualized principles which engender resignation to karmic destinies.

In conclusion, the group has committed to various "ecumenical learning" activities through mutual visits in support of each other. Principally, this will involve visits by the Thai women and bhikkhuni in the group to Indonesia and an exposure trip for young Indonesia Buddhists to Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka. Most participants have also committed to recording their stories in written form. In addition, others have committed to more deductive, theoretical papers on Buddhist responses to violence. We are also developing a short declaration on the meaning of *karma* as intentional, moral action rather than retributive justice. Finally, many in the group have taken up the challenge to further reduce their complicity with forces of violence by engaging in *direct, non-violent protests against the war in Iraq.*

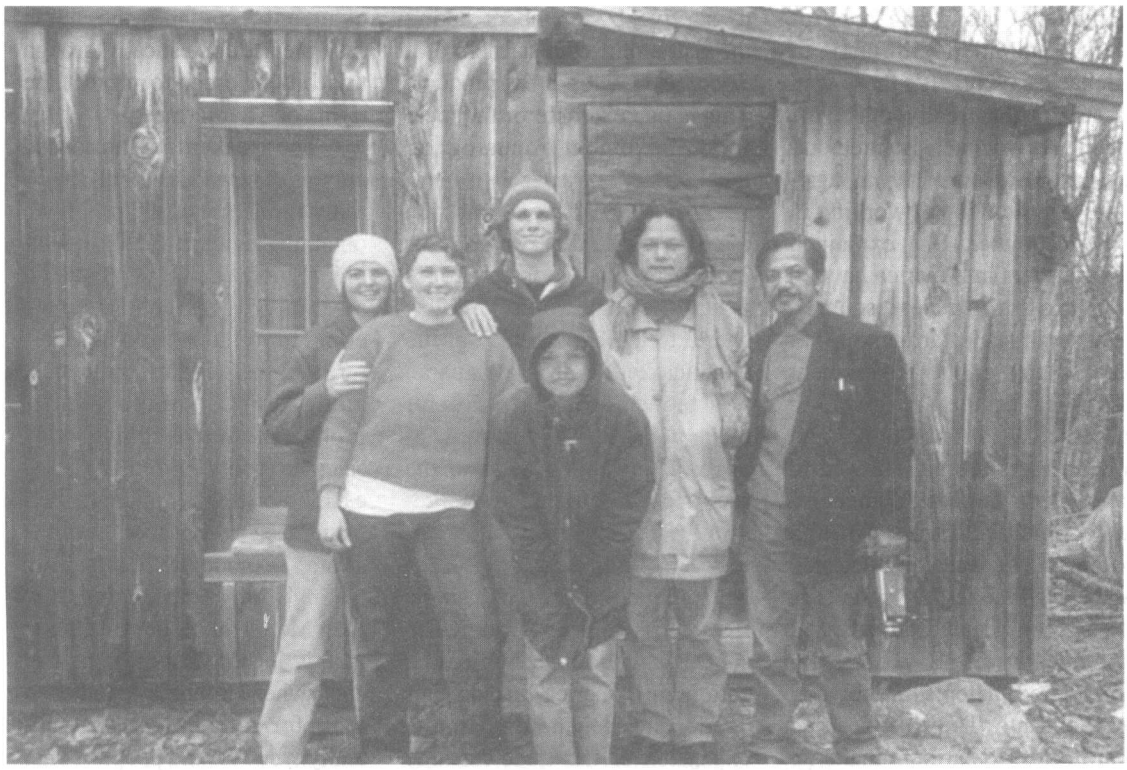
Think Sangha is a socially engaged Buddhist think tank affiliated with the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF) in the United States and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB). We use a Buddhist sangha model to explore pressing social issues and concerns. The group's methodology is based in friendship and Buddhist practice as much as theory and thought. For more information, visit our website.

Jonathan Watts

Thai and American farmers comin' together

The woman takes another day-old loaf of bread and throws it over the fence. The chickens come flocking from across the field, pecking at the stale grains with excitement until they realize it is the same as every other day. Bundled up in a puffy winter jacket that could never be worn in his home, Ubon Yoowah laughs and bewilderedly asks if chickens can really eat bread. Ubon, an NGO and farmer from Yasothorn province in Northeastern Thailand, was in America with two other Thai farmers talking with farmers about the effects of free-trade policy on small-scale producers. The woman, Michaele Blakely who runs a small organic farm outside of Seattle, smiles at the question and explains that her friend is a baker who gives her the old bread in exchange for eggs. Michaele then shows-off her specialty product: naturally-colored blue and green chicken eggs, explaining her crop-rotation system, and natural fertilizing methods. As they continue to talk, Michaele shares with the Thai group her opinions about the World Trade Organization's (WTO) agricultural policies and their impact on organic farmers in the US. The similarities between the effects faced by small-scale farmers in Thailand and throughout the world become clear.

The opportunity for Mr. Yoowah, Mr. Bamrung Kayotha (a farmer and representative of the Assembly of the Poor), and Chalida Maneepakorn (a student organizer and activist) to go to America arose out of discussions



between American exchange students and Thai farmers and NGOs. During the tour of the United States, Thai activists spoke about the mislabeling of Thai Jasmine rice in America and the threat of the strain's genetic modification. The tour was carried out by the Thai Alternative Agriculture Network, Biodiversity and Community Right Action Thailand (Biothai) and The Educational Network for Global and Grassroots Exchange (ENGAGE), which is an organization that stemmed out of an American study-abroad program based in Khon Kaen.

In 16 days, the Thai group managed to speak at 33 different venues in America. They went to 8 different states, and talked to over 1,000 people and 42 organizations. The venues ranged from large conferences, panels, university and secondary school classrooms, small NGO meetings, and farms. Some examples included a speaking event at a conference on globalization, biodiversity, and rights of indigenous people, speaking with law students and organizations focused on trade policy at Harvard University, exchanging with Native American groups working to protect a similar threat to their 'Wild Rice', exchanging with fair trade and food policy organizations, and evenings talking over homemade tea or wine at farmer home-stays. They used these opportunities to discuss with organizations how small-scale farmers in America and Thailand could work together in the future.

Ubon and Bamrung explained to Michaele and others in America about the situation of Thai farmers. They discussed about the majority of small-scale farmers in Thailand are poor. In the last forty years the promotion of the Green Revolution has changed the agricultural system from one of integrated production for local consumption to one of export production of a few crops, in which farmers buy the food they eat. From this change, they've seen the deepening dependence on the world market. They've seen the price of crops drop as Thai farmers try to compete with American agribusiness supported by heavy subsidies. They've seen the breakdown of communities and villages as people migrate to cities looking for work. They've seen the loss of indigenous species and biodiversity. They have seen all this and now worry the effects of globalization may be even greater. Transnational corporations now have the ability to ob tain patents giving them exclusive rights to natural resources, which in some cases they have taken from local communities. The current threat to Jasmine rice is a prime example of the effects Thailand's farmers can face from these kinds of systems, and was what the speakers traveled so far to convey.

Americans listened intently

to the Thai group and most of them responded similarly to Michaele saying, "It's these kind of stories that really make me mad." As Michaele pointed out, the large-scale industrial agriculture system is not working in America either. She explained how farmers in America have to buy the rights to water resources, how small-scale farmers do not receive any of the government subsidies as they're given to large-scale farmers only, and how farmers are not allowed to save seeds because companies have obtained rights through patents. The speakers learned that more than 25,000 patents in the US are granted already and 94 percent of all genetically engineered patents are owned by Monsanto. They also learned that in the US farmers make up less than 2 percent of the population and many have become contract farmers. In addition, 95 percent of the food in America is manufactured by corporations while 30 million Americans don't have enough to eat.

However, there are many things that farmer groups in the US and Thailand are trying to do to solve these problems. Many of the alternative models used by small-scale farmers in America could also be used in Thailand. Michaele is one of the many farmers involved in the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement. The idea of CSAs is that consumers become members of a farm by investing in that farm upfront. As members they receive a box of produce weekly from that farm. Certain farms offer barter systems of exchange of 4-8 hrs/wk work at the farm in exchange for produce. Many farmers believe CSAs are a way of building community, and a way to allow small-scale farmers to survive by members taking the risk along with farmers of a dry season with little produce. This is one example of the local food movement focusing on local farmer markets.

Another approach is the alternative trading system, Fair Trade. Fair Trade is an economic model that offers an alternative to the exploitation of the 'free market'. Fair Trade guaran tees farmers a decent price for their products, lifts them out of poverty, and puts them on the road to self-determination. Presently farmers groups in Yasothorn and Surin along with Green Net produce fair trade Jasmine rice that is sold in Europe. The speaking group met with organi zations in America that do Fair Trade and began to plan the expansion of fair trade Jasmine rice to America.

One way that small-scale farmers in America are protecting their rights over natural resources is through the Geographical Indicator Bill. In Washing ton State there is a kind of onion called the Walla-Walla Onion that is known for its unique flavor. Due to its well-known qualities, companies that sell onions have started to use the name to capitalize on its popularity. Local farmers went to court for the rights to the name Walla-Walla and won under the context of it being a geographical indicator. Presently there is a Geographical Indicator Bill being reviewed in Thailand. It almost passed through the Thai parliament without the inclusion of protection of certain plant and animal species such as Jasmine rice. American intellectual property rights experts emphasized to the speakers the importance of the inclusion of Jasmine rice in this bill. Right now Thailand has the chance to register the name Jasmine rice domestically through this bill in order to protect the rights of Thai farmers.

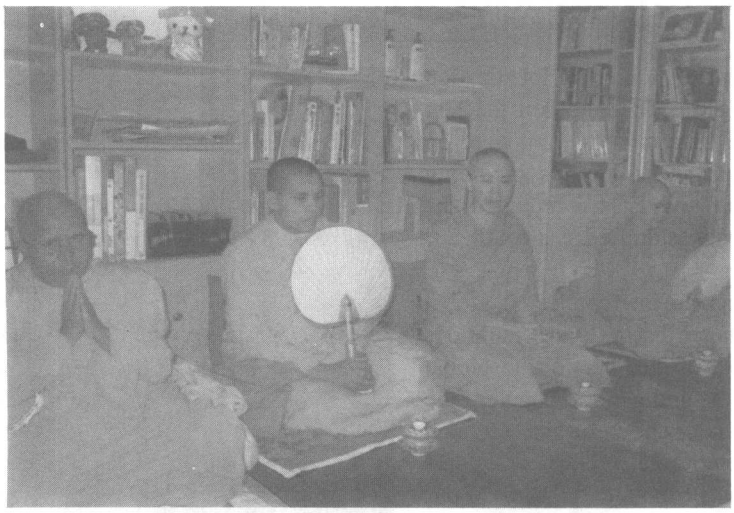
The speaker tour introduced a series of new ideas for all small-scale farmers in the world from obtaining rights through Geographical Indicator Bills to creating alternative systems such as community-supported agriculture. All of the farmers they met along the way faced similar problems. At one point Ubon said, "we only had to look into each others' eyes and we understood each other as we have the same experience." Through talking with American farmers like Michaele it became clear that it is necessary for people everywhere to come together to look for alternatives that actually work for the people. Thai farmer groups, NGOs, and ENGAGE plan to arrange the next trip, bringing American farmers to Thailand during harvesting season to exchange with Thai farmers on their experience and see how they can support each other. Maybe this time American farmers, wearing t-shirts and flip-flops during their winter, will be the ones taken aback asking if chickens can really eat rice.

For more information on the campaign, contact ENGAGE at pareents@yahoo.com.

Peggy Reents
ENGAGE Jasmine Rice
Campaign Coordinator
22 May 2003

Sulak Sivaraksa's next court appointment on the Yadana Gas Pipeline case is on 9th October 2003.

The First International Vassa for Bhikkhuni in Siam



A simple birthday luncheon for Sulak Sivaraksa's youngest daughter turned out to be quite a a historic event. The **Venerable Dhammananda** Bhikkhuni, who was invited to give blessing, brought with her the five bhikkhunis from three countries who are spending a vassa at Songdham Kalyani Temple in Nakhon Pathom province. The number of bhikkhunis present was enough to make the bhikkuni sangha eligible to preform rites such as chanting suttas. This is the first time such thing has been possible in Siam.

The gathering of bhikkhunis became possible following the full ordination of **Venerable Dhammananda** earlier this year in Sri Lanka. Ven. Dhamananda. who is required to stay with her teacher for at least two years following ordination, invited her 62-year old teacher, the Venerable Rahatungoda Saddha Sumana, from Sri Lanka to spend the rains retreat in Siam. This period is planned as an intensive training to compensate for the fact that the Venerable Dhammananda is not able to study in Sri Lanka. This opportunity was then made open to other bhikkhunis who expressed interest in participating in the intensive training. The group of bhikkhunis presently consists of two Sri Lankan bhikkhunis, the Venerable Supeshala, and the Venerable Sudinna. There is also one bhikkhuni from Indonesia, the Venerable Santini, and another from Vietnam, the Venerable Dhammanandi. All of the female monks have been ordained into the Theravada tradition.

The sangha of six bhikkhunis now exceeds the minimum of four that is required by the vinaya to perform ceremonies, the most important being the recitation of the **Bhikkhuni patimokkha** which contains all 311 precepts for bhikkhunis. The Venerable Dhammananda said that it takes more than an hour to fully recite. The recitation is very important as it is a chance for all in the bhikkhuni sangha to check their observance of the precepts as well as to invite fellow sangha members to inspect one another's behaviour. In other words, not only it is a chance to purify and affirm the precepts, it is a time to strengthen community life, which is indeed another objective of this retreat.

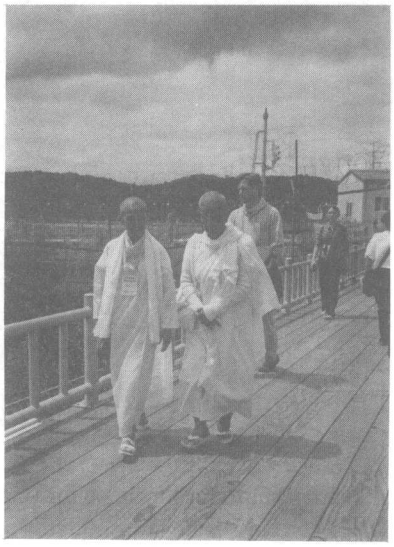
For the entire three months, the bhikkhunis will be busy learning the Dhamma. Besides vinaya study and English language study many persons are invited to the temple to give lectures on relevant topics. Study visits outside the temple are also provided from time to time. Every Sunday is a time for Dhamma talk, and twice a month are the reciting of Bhikkhuni patimokkha on the full moon and new moon days. And, whenever the chance arises, the bhikkhunis perform various rites relevant to their role as monks. Presently, the nightly sutra chanting to honor the Venerable Voramai, the founder of Songdham Kalyani Temple who recently passed away, is performed.

To commemerate the end of vassa the Songdham Kalyani Temple is planning the "Robe Offering Ceremony" on the 12th of October. This will mark the first "Robe Offering Ceremony" done for the bhikkhuni sangha in a bhikkhuni temple in Siam.

Lapapan Supamanta

Report on International and Interfaith academic conference on Religion and Globalization

The International Conference on Religion and Globalization was held at Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand from the 27th of July to the 2nd of August, 2003. Participants from over 31 nationalities and of numerous faiths and traditions including Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Baha'i attended the conference. The following declaration was drafted as a result:



(1) In à world that has become an interconnected global village, we voice our deep concern that the living conditions of an ever increasing number of members of our global family, notably the poor, the indigenous peoples, the workers, and countless women, children, workers, and others, have continued to deteriorate.

(2) We call attention to the unjust economic structures of our contemprary global society, which result in the deaths of 35,000 children daily, from starvation and hunger-related causes. These are veritable weapons of mass destruction that must be eliminated.

(3) The consumption habits of people in affluent societies and of elites in the so-called developing world have brought about blatant inequalities in the human community, and an ecological crisis of global proportions. As a result, countless living species are daily becoming extinct, and the matrix of life on earth in continuously threatened.

(4) Notwithstanding the heroic struggles and the victories of women's rights movements in different parts of the world, the male-dominant character of our socieies, as well as religious communities and institutions, continue to oppress women and deprive them of their basic rights as human beings.

(5) Millions in our global community live under terror and threat to their well-being and security. Millions have become refugees, uprooted from their homes and communities. We deplore the fact that religion is often used as a pretext for attitudes and acts of violence, whether they be individual, group, institutional, or state-sponsored.

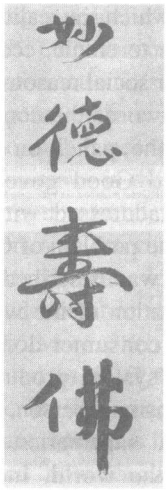
(6) We call attention to the fact that the five permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations are themselves the world's largest arms dealers. These arms have killed and continue to kill millions of people throughout the world, a situation of deplorable irony undermining the very security of the entire global community.

In the light of the above realities we face together as a global family, we in our respective religious communities can no longer afford to live in isolation, or with attitudes of exclusion or competition. We acknowledge the continuing need to reexamine our religious traditions and institutions, so that religion, rather than being part of the problem, can serve as a source of empowerment and enlightenment as we seek for solutions.

As we conclude our conference, energized, enlightened, and inspired by our encounters with one another, we rededicate ourselves to building a world of peace, justice, and security and well being for all, a world in which everyone's basic human needs are met, and where our human creativity and spiritual yearnings can be fulfilled.

Report on the Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue Conference on Global Ethic and Good Governance, May 5-7, 2003

The idea to hold the Paris UNESCO conference grew out of the previous three Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue Conferences which the Museum of World Religions and Global Family for Love and Peace (GFLP) had initiated as a response to the events starting with the destruction of the Buddha Statues in Bamiyan and the 9/11 catastrophy. The offer to start a new round of discussion on how Buddhism and Islam together can respond to the challenges created by the political, religious, economic and cultural crisis facing the 21st century had received an enthusiastic response among individuals and organizations in the USA and Asia. The first dialogue was held in March 2002 at Columbia University and focused on doctrinal and theological issues. It was followed by the "Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue and the New Asia" which was organized by JUST (International Movement for a Just World) in Jakarta in May of that year. It centered on Buddhist-Muslim relations in Asia and the problem of Globalization. These topics were again taken up in the context of Indonesia, where the "Millenium Interfaith Dialogue" was held in July under the auspices of IMFO (Islamic Millenium Forum), in cooperation with INEB (International Engaged Buddhism). The active participation of the KALAM Youth Network for Peace and Common Future was a very important component of this dialogue. The



planning committee for these dialogues, which included Dharma Master Hsin Tao, Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, Prof. David Chappell, Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa, Dr. Chirzin Habib, Dr. Wolfgang Schmidt and myself envisioned the Paris conference both as a platform to initiate Buddhist-Muslim cooperation in Europe and also as a venue to discuss plans for a Bandung 2 meeting. This is a project to recover the vision set out in the first Bandung conference in 1955 in the context of the 21st century.

The organisatory work for the Paris UNESCO conference started as early as September 2002. Dr. Wolfgang Schmidt enthusiastically engaged himself as our ambassador to UNESCO. Unforeseen hurdles had to be overcome, the major one of which had to do with UNESCO's "One-China policy". We were told that, since the Museum of World Religions is located in Taiwan, the PR China delegates to UNESCO might veto the whole program unless they had been contacted beforehand and given their recommendation. Another hurdle was the problem found with the affiliation of some of our invitees, namely Dr. David Chappell, Prof. Majid Tehranian. UNESCO officials advised to exclude them on the grounds that they work with institutions affiliated with Soka Gakkai, which is considered a religious sect by UNESCO and therefore banned from its programs. Bureaucratism was another hurdle. It prevented the timely finalizing of the program as well as the timely delivery of a needed statement for funding (which as a result thereof was lost) and of the invitation cards to the public (which were therefore caught in the mail strike). Also, since religious activities are not allowed on UNESCO grounds, we were strongly advised to keep any form of prayer, blessings or meditation altogether out of the Buddhist-Muslim dialogue conference.

Dr. Schmidt's relentless efforts which included a visit to the Chinese ambassador in Bern, the strong support of the UNESCO Chair and conference co-sponsor, Rabbi Dr. Alon Goshen-Gottstein and especially also the help of the former President of Indonesia, Dr. Abdurrahman Wahid finally secured the "green light" for the conference from the office of the UNESCO Director General, Dr. Koichiro Matsuura.

The conference featured thirty speakers from more than

ten countries. It was structured around three major topics: 1) Global Ethic and Good Governance, 2) Religions's Response to Violence: From Cause to Cure and 3) Interfaith and Peace Education. The question to be addressed in all of these panels was the specific contribution that Islam and Buddhism could make respectively with regard to these issues.

The conference was opened by Ms. Milagros del Corral, Director of UNESCO's Division of Arts and Cultural enterprise, Mr. Ahmed Jalali, President of UNESCO's general conference, Ven. Dhammaratana, Vice President of the World Fellowship of Buddhism, Ven. Dharma Master Hsin Tao, founder of the Museum of World Religions and GFLP, and Dr. Abdurrahman Wahid. All speakers stressed the importance of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue in promoting peace, understanding and respect. The role of inter-religious dialogue is threefold: breaking down stereotypes and understanding the other, helping each other grow and learn to face the world together; and to find common responses to world challenges. Dr. Wahid emphazised that, in order to know others, one has to know one's own faith first. One of the causes of terrorism can be traced to the misunderstanding of one's own religion. Through dialogue with Christians and Jews, Muslims have recently learned a lot about their common heritage, and are now enlarging the dialogue to include Buddhists and Hindus as well.

There was agreement among all that speakers that conflicts which are carried out in the name of religion by fanatics and extremists stem from the misinterpretation of sacred texts and are to be condemned. However, the role of the media in this context needs cautious examination, since it tends to attribute religious causes to conflicts which, in reality, have arisen due to ethnic, economic, political or social reasons.

Day two of the conference featured the panel on Global Ethics and Good governance. Speakers addressed with great concern the problem of Globalization. It was described as the Westernization of the world, in which a consumer-dominated capitalist system produces the one-dimensional person, drained of internal sanctuaries. People all over the world, including the West, are exploited by this system which is based on huge disparities of wealth and access to information. The driving force behind Globalization is contemporary capitalism in its three dimensions (3 C capitalism): the corporate dimension, the consumer dimension and the casino dimension. These in turn re-enforce structural violence, namely the massive income disparity between rich and poor, famine, the international debt problem, "free trade", deregulation and environmental destruction. The term Globalization itself is a cover-up for domination and exploitation which puts democracy at risk.

The speakers then addressed the specific contributions that religion can make in formulating a set of ethic guidelines for good governance. They all agreed that religions have a crucial role to play, which has yet to be developed. Buddhist texts contain a precise list of desired qualities for the ruler as well as the principles for good rule. These principles rest on the Five Precepts which are identical with the four guidelines of Global Ethics, namely not to kill, steal, engage in sexual misconduct and be untruthful, to which has to be added the fifth precept of not abusing alcohol or drugs. Ajarn Sulak in particular emphasized the concept of non-violence towards self as well as others and made a powerful case for the reinterpretation of the Five Precepts in order to suit the features and challenges of the modern world and its institutions. The role of spirituality as counterbalance to materialistic forces and agent of transformation was also discussed. On the Muslim side, the clear set of guidelines for good governance in the Qu'r-an and in Islamic jurisprudence was elaborated on. Dr. Abudrrahman Wahid pointed out that in Islam, the law is sovereign and demands equal treatment of all people. Also, the golden rule of life—do to others as you would have others do unto you—was highlighted by Dr. Chandra Muzaffar as a principle that could be the basis for a new global governance and could create a universal declaration of human responsibility. All speakers agreed that it is imperative for religions to attempt to reconcile the material and spiritual worlds, and to counter the narrow vision of the human being as an "homo economicus" by encouraging the emergence of a "homo spiritualitus".

Unfortunately, time constraints did not allow for more in depth discussion and conversation between the speakers on these important issues. But the hope is that the ideas and in sights presented in this panel

will serve as a resource for ongoing exchanges in the future.

Day three of the conference stared with the panel on Religion's Responses to Violence: Cause or Cure. There were two major differences in the approach taken to this topic on the Buddhist and on the Muslim side. From the Buddhist's perspective, no outer peace is possible without inner peace. That means that the path to peace in society depends on the process of inner transformation, in which ignorance, anger and greed are transformed into wisdom and compassion. From the Muslim perspective however, there has to be justice in society first before the individual can find inner peace. Religion has to go beyond personal salvation to promote justice in society. Muslim speakers stressed the fact that Muslims feel threatened by superpower domination, perceived in the effect of globalization, and also feel repressed by their own governments. Under these circumstances, reform of society is perceived as more urgent than individual transformation. Prof. David Chappell brought together these two approaches by speaking about the need of institutional ethics in light of Buddhism's emphasis on individual ethics. Much of the violence in today's world is caused by institutional violence, the greatest form of which is poverty. Institutional violence is maintained by misinformation about and misrepresentation of facts and events by the government and media. The example of Bosnia, shared by Mr. Ahmet Alibasic, showed how misinformation and propaganda were used to incite ethnic and religious hatred. All speakers agreed on the importance of objective information coupled with education to evolve a better social process and create just institutions that maintain peace, not war.

The two distinct approaches to creating a peaceful society as well as the emphasis on the right use of information resurfaced in the last panel on Inter-Religious Dialogue and Peace education. Since ignorance is the basis for conflict and misunderstanding, education and information are the principal means to promote peace and tolerance in the long term. Mr. Marc Cheb Sun who represented an NGO that works with the second generation of immigrant Muslims in France explained how knowledge of history together with the involvement in the civic process creates the conditions for peaceful cooperation between Muslim and Non-Muslims in France. On the Buddhist side, both Dharma Master Hsin-Tao and Prof. Michael v. Brueck emphasized the importance of spiritual education as an element of peace education. Prof. van Brueck gave the concrete example of some German schools that have introduced meditation and yoga as a means to counteract violence.

In conclusion, let me address the question of what, from my point of view, has been achieved in this conference. The constraints of time and place did not allow for some of the ideas that had been included in the conference planning to materialize. For one, we were not able to proceed with the Bandung 2 planning. Also, the much hoped for participation of both Buddhist and Muslim groups, including young people, in the UNESCO conference, did not happen, even though we were able to meet some of them in the visits to the Karma Ling Buddhist Center and the Paris Mosque on the last day. Also, the participation of Prof. Majid Tehranian was unfortunately not possible. But what has been achieved in this conference will be of no small significance in times to come. The conference speakers and audience came together from many different countries and religious affiliations, the major two of which were of course Buddhism and Islam, but even within those traditions, there are different schools. The climate of the dialogue was one of openness, respect and willingness to listen to and learn from one another. There was no attempt to convert anyone to anyone else's point of view. The themes of the panels and time restraints did not allow for in depth discussion of theological and doctrinal points of convergence or difference between Islam and Buddhism, but focused instead on the resources inherent in those traditions to address the problematic situation of our global community in its ongoing polarization, continuing violence, social and ecological disintegration. The speakers not only provided invaluable insights into those resources, but also set an example of how to dialogue and cooperate as equal partners in the common tasks that we all share. It is our responsibility to continue in this kind of endeavor together both on the level of dialogue as well as of transformative action in order to help the seeds of peace grow in our hearts, in our communities and in the world at large.

Maria Reis Habito,
International Program
Director, Museum of World
Religions

Strategies for action supporting principles for sustainability for healthy societies

This response addresses the question: What are the best avenues of approach for religious groups in addressing impacts of globalizaton? I offer a visionary sketch of strategies that could be undertaken by a) individual religious organizations such as churches and temples, and b) religious institutions such as denominational associations or international representative bodies such as the World Council of Churches. In these comments I affirm the role of churches and religious institutions as political forces in the public realm, going beyond serving the personal psycho/spiritual needs of parishioners to taking up a public ethics of sustainability as a moral call.

To recap Gary Gardner, churches, temples, and religious organizations have five key assets which can be used effectively for an agenda of sustainability.[1] These are : 1) the capacity to provide meaning to social activity; 2) the capacity to inspire and serve as a moral authority, 3) the number of followers who can be engaged, 4) substantial physical and financial resources, and 5) the capacity to generate social capital. This last asset may be the most important in catalyzing both local and global actions.

Principles for a sustainable future have been proposed by David Korten[2] which appears to be the foundation for a similar set of principles offered in a later work by Sarah Anderson and John Cavanaugh.[3] I will use the framework of these principles to describe a role for religious organizatons that is transformative rather than just critical. This assumes that every effort will carry some weight in the dynamic give and take of the multifaced phenomenon called "globalization." Efforts that are strategically linked through collaborative initiatives will likely be even more effective and can serve as a counterbalancing force to other less sustainable agendas. In many cases, there are already local or national initiatives under way which could be reinforced or strengthened with leadership of support (funding, publicity) from others.

As for Buddhist and Christian roles in this vision, this can only be speculative. I would imagine that for both groups, it will be the more educated, more well-established congregations and sanghas that will have the most impact in moving the world toward sustainability (though sheer numbers could count too). Christian groups are generally more organized and populous and so may be more active in a leadership role. However Buddhists may find few barrirs in aligning their religious philosophies to support a sustainable agenda.

Environmental Sustainability (Korten) Ecological Sustainability (A & C)

Korten places this principle as primary, reflecting his sense that any other human development and flourishing rests on healthy ecosystem functioning. Anderson and Cavanaugh place this principle third, perhaps reflecting a greater emphasis on new democracy movements as rallying points for citizens and the world. They imply that the force of these alternative principles of sustainability will rest more on the human capacity to embrace them than on ecological support systems.

Individual churches, temples, mosques, or religious organizations can promote or participate in environmental sustainability by greening their immediate physical institutions. Already the Green Sanctuary program has a number of institutions enrolled and is serving as a counterpart to the Campus Greening movement. This involves taking steps to reduce energy use and carbon emissions, enhance landscaping, conserve water, recycle paper, etc. For example, Episcopal Power and Light started the Regeneration Project as a way for faith-based groups to buy renewable or green energy supplies. To support a culture of environmental responsibility, such groups could also design green liturgies for Earth Day and throughout the year introduce sustainability themes into religious education curricula (many have already done this to varying extents). They could likewise join state, regional, or national religious greening networks to strengthen local efforts.

Religious institutions or global NGOs could support environmental sustainability by making public statements on behalf of their denomination or group and providing web and print publicity on their green stands. They could lobby political institutions within nation

states or the United Nations to bring moral pressure toward greater ecological sustai nability in the face of globalization pressures. For example, the World Council of Churches is sponsoring a Global Climate Change program to lobby governments to work for beneficial climate policies. Institutions could also support seminaries in providing sustainability courses as part of ministerial training, and in hiring faculty with commitments to doing theology or ethics in an ecological context.

Economic Justice (Korten)
Equity (A & C)

The principle of economic justice centers around meeting basic needs of all the world's peoples without impairing options for future generations. It means stabilizing the distribution of economic power to reduce the gap between the wealthiest and poorest around the globe. Accomplishing this will require actions at many levels and from many factions working together for a more fair world.

Already some churches and religious organizations have focused on ethical investing as one response to righting economic inequity. This could be further promoted through workshops, peer consulting, and easy access websites. The Inerfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, representing 275 Catholic, Protestant and Jewish investors, has been a leader for over thirty years in using shareholder resolutions to shape corporate social policies. Fair trade (vs free trade) issues could be raised in church study groups and parish coffee hours.[4] The Interfaith Coffee Program run by Equal Exchange already had over 3500 congregations participating at the end of 2001. Churches, temples, etc. often have mechanisms for supporting various charity causes; these could be expanded and evaluated in the light of globalization and thus made more effective.

Religious institutions at the macro-scale have taken up the cause of Jubilee Year debt relief—the cancellation of illegitimate debts of poor countries. This is remarkable vision and has gained tremendous support internationally. As an umbrella cause it can serve to shelter a range of initiatives to reduce poverty and debt in countries most devastaed by economic inequity. Some denominations such as the Presbyterians and Congregationalists have focused on environmental justice issues; poverty and debt could be included in this and expanded to encourage a global perspective on the wealth gap. Seminaries could take up the topic by hiring faculty or developing courses in Ethics and Economic Justice; if a visionary foundation offered award money for course development, this would speed the process along.

Biological and Cultural Diversity (Korten)
Human Rights (A&C)

For David Korten, "diversity is the foundation of evolutionary potential."[5] Without a flourishing biological base,cultures are limited in their own capacity to evolve. For Anderson and Cavanaugh, "cultural, biological, social, and economic diversity are central to a dignified, interesting, and healthy life."[6] For them, protecting cultural health means protecting local tradtions that work to protect cultural and biological resources. Ensuring human rights is one way to do this, serving as a strong moral avenue for religious response.

Compared with mainstream environmental groups, churches are minor players in protecting biological diversity. Still they can contribute to efforts or help restore locally-damaged watersheds or woodlands. Zen Mountain Monastery in the Catskill Mountains of New York, for example, has dedicated 80% of its 280 acres as "forever wild". Green Gulch Zen Center north of San Francisco has worked out land management arrangements with its government neighbor, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Working with environmental groups provides an opportunity for applying one's ethical practice and at the same time, lending spiritual strength to those on the front lines dealing with ecological damage. It seems more likely the religious NGOs and temples could take the lead in developing cultural exchanges and interfaith dialogues to promote intercultural understanding. This might build on the "sister city" concept which has gained great momentum in the last couple of decades. Such exchanges or mutual support could help focus on tolerance of difference, in hopes of mitigating global fears raised by western economic colonization.

Religious institutions have a role to play in articulating public apologies for historical and ongoing holocausts of various cultures around the world. Where a particular denomination is responsible for deeds that devastated indigenous tribes, for example, full repentance and acknowledgement of acts done, can help lay the ground for cooperative relations in the future. Where the responsibility is more diffuse, institutions can

take a leadership role in issuing broad apologies on behalf of all those who have suffered (as in losses of biological and cultural diversity due to colonization and resource exploitation). Examples such as the Bishop's Pastoral letter on the Columbia River Basin in the Pacific Northwest, can spur similar statements elsewhere to move the healing along. Religious institutions can also play a role in actively supporting the United Nations' Human Rights Charter as well as NGOs such as Cultural Survival and Amnesty International who work on behalf of cultures whose human rights have been reduced by agents of globalization.

People's Sovereignty (Korten) Human Democracy, Subsidiarity (A&C)

Self-determination and local control are key to human scale democracy, in Korten's principles. He feels that sovereignty should rest first in civil society, with the good of the people as the top priority of government. Around the globe today are many diverse resistance movements protesting the dismantling of local economies in favor of globalized corporate control. Subsidia- rity means that whatever decisions and activities that can be handled locally should be, and that whatever power exists at the local level should stay there.

Some denominations such as the Unitarian-Universalists and the Quakers have a long-standing tradition of providing open forum space for discussing community issues. Individual churches could take up program development in the form of guest speakers, book groups, and public forums that local democracy practices. They could also be proactive in providing sanctuary for activists committed to democracy who may be more and more threatened under U.S. Patriot Act limitations of freedom. Such acts of sanctuary have a long history back to abolition and anti-war protesting and could be called on again in the fight to protect the foundations of democratic freedom. Churches could also collaborate with other community groups to promote "zones of local accountability", a way to rebuild economic and political transparency, helping to turn the tide of corporate financial abuses.

Religious institutions could support human democracy by promoting peer group collaboration with global NGOs, in effect countering the corporate presence through non nation-state small "d" democracies. They could use their institutional standing to lobby political agencies within nation states or the United Nations to bring moral pressure to bear toward greater democratic freedoms where they are threatened by agents of globalization. In particular, international groups could take up the challenge to corporate personhood.[7] This legal challenge is gathering momentum rapidly and already several towns have taken steps towards revoking corporate charters.

Intrinsic Responsibility (Korten) Jobs/Livelihood, Food Security (A&C)

Taking responsibility, for Korten, means no externalizing of costs, but full accountability for all costs. He supports local systems based on self-reliance as a better model for full internalization of costs. "The goal is to structure economic relationships so as to encourage each locality to live within its sustainable evironmental means."[8] Anderson and Cavanaugh develop these concepts with their concerns for workers' rights and dignity in livelihood as well as for universal food security based in local systems.

Church groups and other religious organizations may be able to promote suc local economic arrangements through working directly with farmers. In some towns such as Portland, Oregon, there are Community Supported Agriculture systems in place between local churches and farms, where parishioners buy weekly shares of produce from participating farms. Churches and meeting houses might also be places where public forums could be held to bring community members together to consider the specifics of local accountability and self-reliance.

Religious institutions such as the Catholic Church or the WCC are in a good position to critique the currently existing international organizations which promote externalization of costs and global systems over local systems. These include the IMF, the WTO, and trade agreements such as NAFTA. Representing many people or many denominations, these macro-scale NGOs can take issue with lack of accountability or responsibility for the consequences of IMF and WTO actions. They can draw on their moral authority to witness wrongdoing that has resulted from economic globalization.

Common Heritage (Korten) Protecting the Global Commons (A&C)

Korten recognizes the resources of the planet as the common heritage of all people, now and those to come in the future, and calls for people to serve as trustees in the interest of future generations. Anderson

and Cavanaugh further call for particular safeguarding of the building blocks of life. They urge the adoption of four guidelines to protect the commons, delineating those resources that could not be traded because of their toxicity, those that should not be traded for profit because of their basic necessity (such as water), those that should not be patented, and those that should not be subject to current international trade institutions. This conversation about the global commons has a long and rich history, but unfortunately the commons have been plundered more than safeguarded over the centuries.

Churches and religious institutions may have little role to play in this philosophical and practical dialogue. But already at local, national, and international levels, religious groups are lobbying on behalf of the Earth Charter, a document that summarizes many of these sustainability principles. This is an example of how religious groups can rally around initiatives that represent the core values of religious teachings on behalf of the world's peoples. More of this is certainly possible, but it will require even more sophisticated collaboration between faith-based groups and sustainability organizations.

These are just some preliminary thoughts on how religious institutions might actively take up the challenges presented by globalization. Engaging the conversation is critical to influencing the direcion it will go. Globalization has hurtled forward for over a decade in this latest incarnation, and for inevitable economic reasons, is now hitting some roadlocks. It may be time for religious organizations to promote a reflecive dialogue through critique and collaboration, taking up what could be a very useful role in the unfolding global drama.

Stephanie Kaza
IBCTE meeting
Response to Globalization
May, 2003

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1 Gary Gardner, Involing the Spirit: Religion and Spirituality in the Quest for a Sustainable World, Worldwatch Paper 164 (Denvers, MA: Worldwatch Institute, 2002),pp11-20.

2 David Korten, When Corporations Rule the World (West Hartford, CN: Kumarian Press, 1995), pp272-273.

3 "Another World is Possibe: New Rules for the Global Economy", in Sustainable Planet: Solutions for the 21st Century, eds. Juliet Schor and Betsy Taylor (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), pp166-169.

4 See the most recent Coop America Quarterly (#59, Spring 2003) for excellent coverage of fair trade product alternatives.)

5 Korten, p 272.

6 Anderson and Cavanaugh, p 169.

7 See "Challenging Corporate Personhood", an interview with Jan Edwards in Multinational Monitor 23 (10, 11), October/ November 2002, pp 30-32.

8 Korten, p 273.

Remembering a servant of Buddha

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu called himself a lowly servant of the Lord Buddha. Yet the late reformist monk is one of the few Thais whose works have been extensively cited, translated, and studied both in his home and overseas.

This influence does not necessarily mean understanding, let alone actual implementation, of the revered monk's teachings. Most of Buddhadasa's compatriots—including those who reside at Suan Mokh, the forest monastery that he founded seven decades ago—still know very little about him, noted Sulak Sivaraksa, one of the monk's long-time disciples and a sharp-tongued social critic.

"More and more people may pay a visit to Suan Mokh," said Sulak in a recent keynote speech on the 10th anniversary of the venerable monk's departure, "but that doesn't mean they grasp the essence of the dhamma he tried to impart."

"Even those at Suan Mokh, I'm not sure if what they do is just to preserve his past reputation and work and nothing else. Are they seeking only to keep the place as a holy site, resisting any changes for fear that his name might be tarnished?"

For Sulak, constructive transformation itself is the spirit of Buddhadasa and his lifelong efforts to reform Thailand's Theravada Buddhism, which is now more than ever in need of a fundamental overhaul.

As a first step, Sulak advo-

cates a review of Buddhadasa's life and work. But he stressed that we must never regard the late monk as a superhuman beyond criticism.



The very first lesson we could learn, said Sulak, is how Buddhadasa cherished a monas-tic life—a path shunned by most. He set out to show exactly how a monk ought to live.

In Buddhadasa's time, the religious establishment was already rife with signs of decay. Quite a few men in the saffron robes were, as they are now, preoccupied with decorations and donations, and examples of impropriety abound. Curiously, the "last straw" that prompted Buddhadasa, then a young monk from a rural province of Surat Thani, to turn his back on the capital city and set up Suan Mokh in his hometown, was the discovery of his peers at a Bangkok temple enjoying bowls of peanut sweets at night.

The "crime" witnessed by Buddhadasa—Theravada monks vow not to eat after 12 noon—seems minuscule compared to the levels of transgression at present.

"Theravada Buddhism in our country is no longer in a coma; it is already dead," said Sulak.

"Some temples are no different from a robbers' den, with monks supping after dusk, drinking alcoholic beverages, gambling, watching pornographic videos and committing certain acts that lay people would dread to do themselves. You could say the more senior the monks, the more wicked they are."

As the centennial of Buddhadasa's birth approaches in 2006, Sulak proposed a scheme to make Buddhadasa's writings accessible to the public. One way is to rearrange the monk's books according to their levels of difficulty as well as to turn some into a cartoon format for the younger generation.

A more difficult task is to reinterpret how rituals could serve as a vehicle of dhamma teaching.

One of Buddhadasa's innovations was to introduce a daily prayer, usually delivered in the esoteric Pali language, with translations in vernacular Thai. Sulak went further: He suggested a reinterpretation of the seventh precept—that monks must refrain from all forms of entertainment. The monastic rule, he said, refers only to sexually-enticing performances, ones that lead monks to indecorum.

"Than Acharn [Buddhadasa] once told me that Pridi Banomyong proposed that he apply music to religious rituals-something that Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism have already been doing. He was partial to the idea, but admitted that he was not skilful in such a field at all."

What Theravada Buddhism is still lacking, Sulak continued, is a set of rituals or sermons that teach the wrongs of consumerism—how modern technology and indulgence in material comforts have resulted in destruction of nature and exploitation of other beings. Vietnamese Zen monk Thich Nhat Hanh, Sulak said, has set a progressive example: ecologically friendly messages have long been incorporated in his daily set of prayers.

An even more delicate matter, though, concerns how to approach the concept of mys-ticism. Sulak said one typical view is that reincarnation has no role in Buddhadasa's works. This, he said, can be attributed to a "simplified" version of one of his most popular books titled *Khumue manus (Manual for Mankind)*.

"True, Buddhadasa saw how his contemporaries had been talking a lot about heaven and hell and past and future lives, so he turned instead to emphasise dhamma for the present. But all in all, he never denied the [teachings of] cycles of births and deaths. At least, the first painting of the subject in Thailand, drawn in Tibetan style, was done right at Suan Mokh."

Mystic matters—be they about the succession of the Lord Buddha's lives, his demonstration of miraculous power, or existence of celestial beings may be intangible, but that does not mean they do not exist.

Moreover, Sulak proposed, those very concepts, which date back to bygone eras, may hold a key to spiritual awakening. Dialogues between Buddhists and scientists are thus necessary, both for better understanding among the adherents themselves and to counter the dominance of scientism, propelled by greed and ignorance.

"We need to go back to our

own roots, our old treasures of wisdom. Than Acharn [Buddhadasa] may not buy the idea completely, but it is his right. We do respect him, but we also have a right to think differently too.

"If we leave Suan Mokh to become out of date, if there are no monks who can get to the gist of dhamma and apply it to tame the force of materialism, capitalism and consumerism, it is like we leave Buddhadasa to die. Then all his worth would be limited to the words in his books.

"[What we can do now is] to awaken a new breed of monks, instead of making more amulets, more temple buildings. That is a rightful way to pay respect to the servant of Buddha, indeed, to Lord Buddha himself."

Vasana Chinvarakorn
Bangkok Post

"Ruen Roi Chanam" or "Centennial Building" : A step towards new business – community partnerships



It was a moving moment when Thanpuying Phoonsukh Banomyong, wife of the late "Father of Thai Democracy" Pridi Banomyong, together with H.E. Ambassador Atsushi Tokinoya of Japan opened the doors of the new building at Suan Nguen Mee Ma in Klongsarn, Bangkok; 24th June 2003. It not only marked a new phase in the work of the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM) and all the organizations united under the legal umbrella of the Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation (SNF), it also added a new dimension to the biography of Ajarn Sulak and his family.

Readers of *Seeds of Peace* who enjoyed Ajarn Sulak's autobiography *Loyalty Demands Dissent* know that in 2002 it is 100 years ago that his late father was born. The name of the new building in Thai language therefore is "100 years building". By donating the garden (in Thai 'suan') of his mother and great-aunts named Nguen, Mee and Ma to the SNF for the construction of the new building, and by dedicating it to his father, Ajarn Sulak exemplifies the deep importance that is adhered to family life in Asia, and to generosity.

Ajarn Sulak's commitment to the people's movement in Siam was matched at this occasion with similar generosity from the side of the Embassy of Japan in Bangkok. A substantive grant facilitating the construction of the "Centennial" building can be understood as an expression of sincere Japanese efforts to build intensive cooperative relations among Asian countries, not only in terms of mainstream economy, but by supporting people's movements in the diversity of Asian cultures.

Seen from this perspective it was more than appropriate that the opening ceremony was invoked by music made by a group of farmers and longstanding friends from Isan, the North-East region of Siam near the border with Laos. The music group included leading persons of the "Assembly of the Poor". The "Assembly of the Poor" is a widespread people's movement in Siam campaigning for farmer's rights and staging non-violent protest against reckless intrusion by modernization.

For the people's movement in Siam 24th of June is a day of great significance. It is the day that visionary statesman Pridi Banomyong with his allies proclaimed Democracy in the year 1932. This marked the start

of the era of constitutional monarchy in Siam. This era tragically includes the expulsion of Pridi and his death in exile in France without a chance to visit his beloved country. It includes the student's revolt of 14 October 1973 when democracy was reclaimed from dictatorship. And finally the emergence of a new Constitution in 1999.

However, the era of Democracy in Siam has not come to full completion yet. That is why Ajarn Sulak and his associates emphasize the need to strengthen the people's movement as before. Support from the urban middle class is essential. And more than in recent NGO tradition importance should be adhered to the "democratization of economy". This does not imply an egalitarian approach. Equality is the guiding principle for justice but not fully applicable to economic reality. A values-driven economy will center around the principle of fair cooperation and will recognize differences between people and their livelihoods as a basic asset. Differences create opportunities for exchange and mutual help. People's efforts should be awarded, but not lead to extreme competition and exploitation or 'structures of violence'.

In the year 1997 Ajarn Sulak and the growing group of social activists under his guidance (formalized in a diversity of autonomous groups under the legal umbrella of the Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation 1968) organized the groundbreaking "Alternatives to Consumerism" international gathering in Buddha monthon near Bangkok. This gathering can be seen, among many other impulses generated during this event, as the starting point for new initiatives in the field of 'alternative' or socio-economic development. One initiative that sprouted from this unique "Alterna tives to Cosumerism" gathering is the Social Venture Network in Asia, a creative business network. Another attempt to shape economic cooperation, be it at the small scale, is the Suan Nguen Mee Ma company or "Garden of Fruition'. The shareholders of this company are both NGO's and business friends.



"Ruen Roi Chanam" or "Centennial Building" adds a dimension to these initiatives. Its purpose is to grow towards a meeting point for activists in socio-economic development. For rural producers to interact with urban consumers. A meeting point for farmers with the urban middle class; for business and communities.

This is not a quick process as it is embedded in the holistic approach demonstrated the last decade by the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM). The SEM lecture of Nicholas Bennet "Education for Socio-economic Justice" delivered at this occasion gave food for thought. He stated that mainstream education reinforces economic inequality. Where are the alternatives? The aspirations of the "Centennial Building" demand growing involvement of all partners united under the Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation and their networks including partners in S.E. Asia and the Asian region. It also will include intercultural exchanges with the Japanese community in Siam, as was confirmed from both sides.

The first meeting in the "Centennial Building" in this line was the celebration of the birthday of H.H. the Dalai Lama, Sunday 6th July 2003, with a discussion on "Buddhist Economics". Follow up to this meeting will be given during a 3 days workshop in Bija Vidyapeeth, the College for Sustainable Living in Dehra Dun, India in September 2003. Bija Vidyapeeth is the Indian sister project of Schumacher College in U.K. The workshop will be conducted by Vandana Shiva, Sulak Sivaraksa and Helena Noberg-Hodge.

In the morning of the opening day of "Ruen Roi Chanam", 24th June 2003, a group of Therevada monks chanted and blessed the building and Ajarn Sulak's family. Dr. Sem Pingpuongkaew, the 90 years old patron of the Spirit in Education Movement spoke encouraging words and many guests came to convey congratulations.

The building is not yet ready! The third floor is meant to provide accommodation for rural groups on visit to meet urban consumers associations. But within the limitations of the budget there is nothing more than the roof yet. Many private donations have been added to the Japanese grant already including a generous gift of Kled Thai bookdistributors; furniture for the building was provided by Apina Company Ltd.; and pro visions to beautify the garden by Wangdex Company Ltd. Donations and initiatives are still welcome...

Hans van Willenswaard

The search for an alternative higher education college



The search for an alternative higher education is often propelled by a negative picture of the contemporary secular western university. That picture is characterized by restless staff ever busy and burdened undertaking research into fields increasingly more arcane and producing texts valued much for their contribution to a university's assessment for funds and, more reservedly, for their contribution to the sum total of human happiness. It is a picture even more crowded with students on larger and larger campuses pursuing studies ever more varied, ever more 'scientific' and morally anarchic. The students are no less busy than the staff whom they encounter but distantly, as if through a glass darkly. In the upper reaches of the university many minds are resolutely fixed on the quest for money and enlargement, albeit these are more comfortably seen as the guarantors of quality and survival. Inspiring a rising generation with the distilled insights of the past, inculcating superior moral values, sharing the blueprints of a New Jerusalem are tasks not to be attempted. Such institutions, in their most grotesque form, manufacture rarely read footnotes and train students for a secular world where in the soul has long departed and the object of the exercise is the creation of material wealth. Notwithstanding that such a picture is indeed grossly unfair, for, surely, within such universities there remain more altruistic searchers for the truth: both staff and student. It, nevertheless, prompts the riposte: what then of an alternative higher education? What should be its features? And there's the rub. Any attempt to cast a new vibrant alternative can so easily be challenged by an agnostic world seeking empirical warrant. The alternative offered below is but one version springing essentially from a faith that something different from the standard and increasingly homogenised western version must be attempted. It has its genesis in a small Church College—Trinity College, Carmarthen, Wales. Rather than absorption into the secular and standard higher education system, it has sought to go back to its roots, to seek answers to basic questions as to why it should exist and to move to a position where it genuinely seeks to complement secular provision, but not in a spirit of hostility. A start has been made and no doubt it will take much time (and there will be faltering along the way) to establish a truly distinctive "alternative".

At heart, the "alternative" College recognises its Chapel—not simply as an antidote to incessant rush and tumble, but because reflection, quiet, prayer, contemplation, meditation are essential loadstones. But the Chapel is more than a place to inspire and comfort, it is the base of a chaplaincy committed to caring for the spiritual journeys of student and staff alike. It is a professional actively second to none in the institution: it is to be attended to with energy and zeal. A premium would be placed upon the quality of campus life wherein, e.g. more time would be devoted to staff meeting students.

The "alternative" College is no selfish enterprise focussing especially on its own self interests. It will overtly seek to help the community in which it is physically placed—on the basis of the community's needs rather than its own. It will seek to give and not to count the cost. Issues of inclusivity and developing new flexible modes of study will be crucial to its future development. It will prioritise areas that will support community capacity building; examples might include drug addiction support, commu-



nity development and youth work.

Study of, and research into, religion and theology would be a central concern of its education programme. The "alternative" College would be truly ecumenical and strive in this field to be intellectually rigorous whilst shunning any religious bigotry. It would be open to all faiths and none, and encourage those seeking spiritual development. It would offer other subjects, largely in the liberal arts.

The "alternative" College would be international in its aspect. In its encouragement of the spirit in education it would reject an introspective and parochial approach, as though shielding a threatened creation, but look out into the wider world to give and to learn. Relationships, lending to joint endeavour, with Colleges professing a similar alternative policy would be sought.

Honouring its Foundation, it would specifically support the spiritual institution that brought it into being, namely, the Church in Wales. Such support would be given, not for what the institution might thereby gain, but in an attitude of cultural indebtedness and, no less importantly, because of the relevance of the overlapping missions of the Church and the College.

Institutions, notwithstanding their "alternative" credentials, take form (and, of course, are as susceptible of ossification as any other organisation). The form of this alternative College would be marked by corporate celebratory services and events, each term, appealing to the senses and highlighting its testimony to the spirit in education. Such events would fulfil a psychological need and offer public witness. They serve, too, to reinforce an understanding that spiritual growth is neither exclusively a solitary venture nor a matter merely of words and their meaning.

Hitting upon an alternative formula will hardly suffice: implementation is surely crucial. It is here that we may possibly be willing to learn from the practices of the best of secular materialistic institutions. The discipline, good management, performance checking and the ability to learn from experience are all to be brought to bear upon the exercise.

Annually, the institution (representing students, alumni, staff, trustees) would assemble for the corporate expression of its beliefs, to take stock on the year's progress (and disappointments), to draw fresh inspiration, to share a common meal and to promote a bonding of friendship and purpose.

And lastly, this alternative institution would strive to share news of its endeavours—its exemplification of the spirit in education—with the wider world, in an attitude of openness and giving.

So, in summary, this "alternative" college would have, at its heart, a spiritual life, supported by a chaplaincy, and a strong campus life. It would help altruistically its local community. It would have exemplary studies in religious fields (alongside other programmes). It would look out internationally to give and to learn, rejecting an inward-looking defensive approach. It would honour and support its institutional foundation, the Church in Wales, in appropriate tasks. Each term it would publicly celebrate its corporate life and values. Its management would be disciplined with due emphasis upon effective implementation. Annually, it would stocktake and recharge its batteries. It would broadcast news of its spiritual journey.

R.J. McCloy

Note: The views expressed in this article are the personal reflections of Mr Robert McCloy, a Foundation Governor of Trinity College, Carmarthen. They reflect his interpretation of the recent developoments at Trinity College, Carmarthen. Robert McCloy, whose friendship with Sulak Sivaraksa goes back to college days, held various public offices in the U.K. including that of a director of education in local government. The summary contains an apposite acronym?

Alternative approaches to education

It is a truism that everyone has the right to education and training. This is, for instance, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But the matter does not simply rest there. What kind of education are we talking about? Are capabilities such as literacy merely measured by the ability to read and write characters, or does such entail the ability to interpret other signs and symbols? For example, can our children see atrocity in the production of armaments and injustice in the neglect of the poor. Our ability to realize less violent futures may require something radically different from the education being offered in the mainstream.

In many respects, education in the mainstream is counter productive. Students are disem powered, indoctrinated with biased and distorted views, and, consequently, groomed as ruthless but efficient guardians of the unjust and violent international order. Helena Norberg-Hodge, a leading expert in alternative education, has pointed out that curricula throughout the world "[isolate] children from their culture and from nature, training them instead to become narrow specialists in a Westernized urban environment." Siam and other Southeast Asian countries have not been exempt from the ill effects stemming from the implementation of inflexible and irrelevant educational forms. The values and principles that have governed Thai society for centuries have been heavily diluted in just a few decades. Mainstream education has weakened Thai identity and blinded the Thai to the real sources of their misery.

In order to preserve options of cultural and spiritual identity we must make a conscious effort to integrate our cultural traditions and spiritual values into our curricula. If we are interested in introducing the substance of Buddhism and other spiritual traditions into education for the sake of liberation, we may begin by examining the suffering we find in society (e.g., poverty, despair, environmental degradation, pollution, etc.) and confront their causes, which are linked to faith in Scientism and other ideologies such as capitalism and consumerism without questioning their ethical values. These causes of suffering contribute to the formation of social structures and economic systems that cherish injustice. The cessation of suffering thus requires the application and modification of the Noble Eight fold Path to suit the contemporary context. This is one of the things education should accomplish for us.

We must also avoid seeing the following institutions as the answer to our problems: the State, the government and its agencies; transnational corporations and their affiliate business members; and mainstream science and technology. We must recognize that they are often motivated to support an educational system that will benefit them monetarily or politically. When education is manipulated as a means to an end numerous problems such as environmental degradation, consumerism, and social injustices proliferate. It is thus dangerous to rely on such bodies for solutions to our predicaments. Rather we should organize from the bottom up and create an ever-widening, inclusive, and partici patory circle of virtuous companions. We must serve as bulwarks against encroachments and threats posed by transnational corporations-at least, we must force them to become more concerned about environmental, social, and ethical issues than in the past. Any scientific research and development must also be transparent and accountable. Otherwise, R&D would be single-mindedly performed for the sake of profit and not for the people. Not infrequently, for example, lives will be destroyed and violence promoted through the development of inappropriate technologies.

Social engagement and experiential learning are also badly needed nowadays in a world torn between the two poles of universalisms and radical alterities. To this end, SEM is presently partnered with the Council on International Educational Exchange-Thailand which has been working for almost a decade to develop an alternative model of education. CIEE-Thai land provides foreign students with immersion experiences in Thai communities, and involves them as agents of positive change within those communities. Through this empowerment the student groups are encouraged to cooperate with local communities to find solutions to social problems. Such "alternative"

approaches to education are promising in that positive social change takes place along with personal transformation.

In closing we would like to suggest the following as guidelines for those interested in alternative approaches to education:

1) We all must find time alone to practice critical reflection so as to make us 'normal' human beings who abstain from abusing ourselves and others.

2) We must incorporate the lower and middle classes in our educational work-not to say of people's organizations, conservationist movements, ethnic minorities, etc.

3) We must work to develop alternative media sources that are unbiased.

4) We must maintain dialogue with political leaders and bureaucrats to find a common denominator on education.

5) We must maintain dialogue with corporate owners, leaders, and managers; bankers and investors; high-ranking employees of international monetary and financial institutions; and so on.

6) We must link together mainstream educators and spiritual leaders in the common goal of educating the people.

7) We must focus on virtue and righteousness, quality more than quantity, and direct our efforts towards goodness, beauty, and knowledge via the synchronization of our brains with our hearts. We must foster networks of self-reliant communities.

8) Our research works should be based on praxis. Villagers should take part in research without depending on experts and should address the causes of their suffering in society vis a vis their local wisdom and cultures.

JJ

2003 ICT Light of Truth Award Recipients

H.H. the Dalai Lama recently presented the Light of Truth Award to Michele Bohana, Benjamin Gilman, and Robert Thurman for their "outstanding contributions to the public understanding of Tibet and the plight of the Tibetan people." Past award recipients include Petra Kelly, Heinrich Harrer, the people of India, Richard Blum, Danielle Mitterrarand, Hugh Richardson, Melissa Mathison, Martin Scorsesee, Clairborne Pell, Charlie Rose, Richard Gere, Michael Currier, Lavinia Currier, and A.M. Rosenthal. This year's recipients were chosen by the Board of Directors of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT)

Simplicity and Social Change
Vicki Robin, Sulak Sivaraksa and John de Graaf

November 9-28, 2003

"Live simply that others may simply live" represents much more than the lifestyle choices of some relatively affluent individuals. As exemplified by groups such as the Simplicity Forum, it is developing into an international network for social change. This course looks at the significance of voluntary simplicity from the global and structural to the personal and financial. What does simple living mean? What are the impacts of overwork on health, families and the environment? What new models of community can support alternative lifestyles and consumption patterns? Participants will explore how to transform their own lives and build a movement for social transformation towards a simple and sustainable culture.

For more information

Email: admin@schumachercollege.org.uk Web: www.schumachercollege.org.ukt

Recommended Reading

New arrivals from India and Singapore (in English): William F Lim—Select Books, Singapore: *Alternatives in Transition; Alternative (Post) Modernity; Nolimits : articulating William Lim.* Vandana Shiva—Bija Vidyapeeth, Dehra Dun, India: *Stolen Harvest; Water Wars; Earth Democracy, Living Democracy; Rice Recipes;* and more. All may be ordered through: Suksit Siam Bookshop - 113 Fuangnakorn Road, Bangkok.

In honor of Sulak Sivaraksa

In dark times we need to look for the light, and the celebration of Sulak Sivaraksa's 70th birthday, indeed, casts a bright light over the shadows of war and ignorance. We in the countries of the West know so little about the wisdom and treasures of the East, and Sulak has long been a carrier of that wisdom, back and forth between East and West. After his student days in London, he returned to Siam to begin the very special kind of networking and journal and newsletter editing, to say nothing of the writing of many books, that have brought people together worldwide who share a concern for social transformation. His capacity to envision a transformed world has deep roots in his Buddhist faith and has enabled him to develop a contemplative activism that has made unique contributions to peace and justice in both the East and the West, including particularly the United States.



I well remember my early contacts with Sulak on his visits to teach at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, in the 1980s. Boulder was a hotbed of action for social change—not all of it well thought through. As a Quaker I instantly related to the spiritual depth of his social witness. Social witness, after all, requires careful analysis of the society one lives in, and a lot of social skills in working with others to bring about change. But those requirements pose a problem. Doesn't spiritual life need solitude, time for deep reflection, for its development? Yes, time for reflection is critical, but Sulak demonsrates in his own life a form of contemplative activism that has opened new doors for many social change movements. The concept of Engaged Buddhism and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists that he helped create have not only opened new doors for Buddhist communities in Asia but opened new understandings for all faith-based communities around the world, as well as for secular peace movements. That social action can also be contemplative has certainly been an important insight for many of us in the Quaker community. Our social agendas sometimes run away with us. But if we stay mindful, this need not happen.

How could one human being have done all that Sulak Sivaraksa has done? All those books written, newsletters and journals edited; all the projects for community action at the local level to undo the harm that western-style development has done to the soil, forests, and waters of earth, let alone to earth's peoples; all the villagers, city dwellers, monks and nuns he has activated to help undo that harm; all the skills of dialogue in difficult conflict situations he is able to impart to others; all the dhammayatras, citizens' peace pilgrimages through suffering lands he has helped to organized—how does he do it?

The inner light, the seed of the spirit that moves Sulak in that light, that spirit, is in each of us. If we let it teach us, love and peace can come alive in the world in a new way. Thank you, Sulak, for showing us this truth through your life.

Elise Boulding

Buddhist activist to lecture at OSU

Sulak Sivaraksa, a Nobel Prize nominee and prominent Buddhist social and environmental activist from Thailand, will give the annual Ava Helen and Linus Pauling Memorial Lecture for World Peace at Oregon State University on Tuesday, April 22.

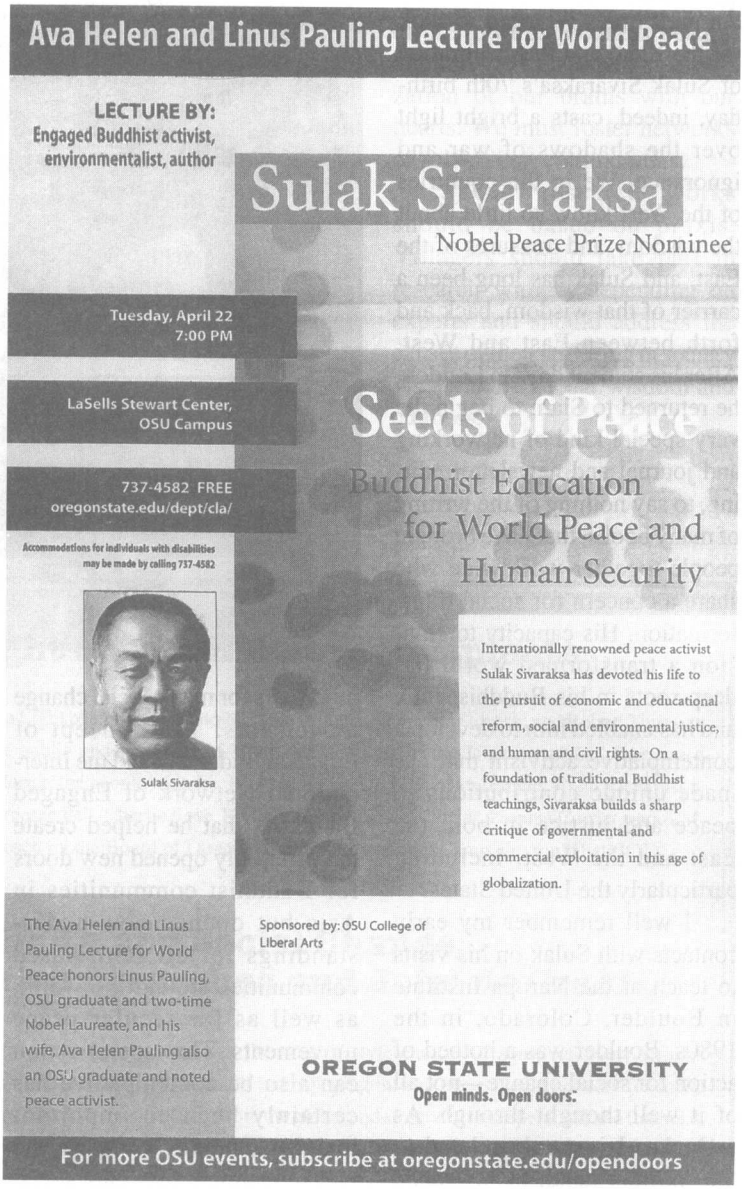
His talk, "Buddhist Education for World Peace and Human Security," begins at 7 p.m. in LaSells Stewart Center's Austin Auditorium. It is free and open to the public.

After receiving university and law degrees in England in 1961, Sivaraksa returned to Thailand in 1961, where he became a publisher, university lecturer and founding editor of the *Social Science Review*, Thailand's leading intellectual journal, until it was suppressed by the government.

Sivaraksa has founded numerous organizations that promote economic and educational reform, social and environmental justice, and human rights. He also has written hundreds of essays and books, including *Seeds of Peace: A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society and Loyalty Demands Dissent.*

In many of his writings, Sivaraksa takes on the issue of environmental destruction in Thailand and globally. Among the organizations he founded is Sekhiyadhamma, or Students of the Dhamma, which is a network of Buddhist monks working in their communities to preserve local environments that are essential to village economies.

He has been a sharp critic of governmental and commercial exploitation of nature at local, national and international levels, and the consumerism behind that exploitation.



Sivaraksa has actively supported the Assembly of the Poor, a group that emerged in the 1990s as a non-violent, grassroots democratic force in Southeast Asia, and now includes nearly a half-million members in Thailand alone. One of the goals of Sivaraksa and the assembly has been to eliminate, or at least slow down government and private projects that dislocate villages or undermine traditional ways of life and the communities that support it.

His ideal, supporters say, is tied toward the rural Thai environment of relatively small, self-sustaining communities living in harmony with the natural environment. Sivaraksa has said he does not advocate a return to a pre-modern era—an unrealistic goal—but instead promotes alliances and networks

among people from many walks of life including laborers, academics, farmers, activists and business leaders to build a more democratic, inclusive and compassionate society.

The OSU lectureship honors Linus Pauling, an OSU graduate and two-time Nobel Prize laureate, and his wife, Ava Helen Pauling, a noted peace activist. It is sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts.

Mark Floyd

Nobel Prize nominee offers vision for peace

Buddhist activist seeks new approach

Education that reaches beyond Western thinking to embrace wisdom and morality will someday lead to world peace. That is the belief of Buddhist activist and Nobel Prize nominee Sulak Sivaraksa, who spoke Tuesday night at Oregon State University.

Sivaraksa gave the annual Ava Helen and Linus Pauling Memorial Lecture for World Peace to a full house in LaSell's Stewart Center's Austin Auditorium.

Sivaraksa said the world is becoming increasingly interdependent both socially and politically, and that the intertwining of the world can now be felt in its farthest corners.

"In the most remote of Siamese villages," he said, "globalization has shown us the tiniest creature lives and dies by the decisions of people who may not be able to find (Thailand) on a map."

Sivaraksa said the Buddhist approach to education could put the world on a path to social enlightenment. In the West, he said, the objective of education is gaining knowledge and skills to help earn a living.

"This perspective will not get us very far," he said. An alternative perspective, he said, was an education aimed at pulling out the hidden potentials in each person.

Buddhist education is rooted in the teachings of the Buddha, who as a prince, discovered that beyond his life of luxury lay death and suffering.

He immersed himself in life outside the palace walls in order to learn about suffering and transcendence.

"We can see a Buddhist pedagogy does not separate life from education," he said.

Understanding is tied not with rejecting the world, he said, but interacting with it and exploring the sources of suffering, including greed, lust and self-absorption.

Contemplating the causes of suffering could lead to the eradication of suffering.

Suffering finds its source in ignorance, Sivaraksa said, and careful training and cultivation of morality can erase ignorance.

"To know or understand doesn't mean to dominate or possess others," he said.

It also means reassessing the world and the meaning individuals attach to everything in life.

"Buddhism does not abide by the spectator theory of knowledge," he said.

By focusing on morality, generosity and mindfulness, perceiving the world nonjudgmentally, students can attain the wisdom needed to recognize suffering and help eliminate it.

Sivaraksa said he was honored to speak at an event memorializing Ava Helen and Linus Pauling, known for their life-long peace activism.

"As indebted as we are to them," he said, "we must remember their work is not finished."

Theresa Hogue
Gazette-Times reporter

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America. How could I imagine at that time that he could get Ikeda involved into the operation of the INEB! Hence, it is obvious that you would like to develop further realtionships with the SGI.

When the Soka Gakkai started its radical propagation in 1951, which often accompanied the violence and attacked followers of the religious tradition, I determined to challenge it. This became my lifetime theme when I was a sophomore at a university. Not only do I criticize the Soka Gakkai, but also many people having various religious backgrounds oppose its conspirative and individualistic propagation.

In the past, we received a request from Buddhists in Indonesia and Malaysia not to support the Soka Gakkai. In Europe, the Soka Gakkai has been seen as a cult and supervised by society. In Japan, Komei-to, a political party sponsored by the Soka Gakkai has been active as one of the ruling parties. In the past, they tried to renovate the government and advocated peace and welfare, which gained popularity among the people. Nevertheless, once after becoming one of the ruling parties, they dropped all the past policies and supported the legislation of sending Japanese defense troops to Afghanistan and Iraq, even though the troops would not be engaged in actual combats. In other words, the Komei-to and Soka Gakkai are very contradicted to themselves; on the one hand, advocating peace and welfare and on the other hand, supporting policies of the Japanese government promoting the structural violence led by the U.S.

In the past, the INEB headquarters was often questioned, including the improper use of the fund, the withdrawal of American members, and etc. Although some of INEB-J member criticized the INEB headquarters, I tried my very best to persuade them for their further support. However, your action at this time is showing us that we are no longer able to cooperate. I do not intend to compromise with you by withdrawing my criticism towards the Soka Gakkai; hence will accept your challenge.

As far as the future of the INEB is concerned, the spirit of its establishment needs to be reconfirmed. INEB-J's position of building a network with other Buddhists in Asia, the U.S. Canada, Europe and South America would not change. We would like to start sharing information of the Soka Gakkai and a warning against it with our friends in the world.

It has been 14 years since you and I started the INEB. The INEB has developed because of the diversity of Buddhists all over the world. The Soka Gakkai has been hypocritical by eliminating other Buddhists. Your action cooperating with the Soka Gakkai is unacceptable to the spirit of the INEB.

Buddha Dharma promises us a world illuminated by truth. When a sense of self-approach rises in you under the guidance of Buddha, your words shall be heard by Buddha.

I hope that such a day comes sooner. Goodbye.

In gassho,
Teruo Maruyama



July 26, 2003

Dear Mr. Maruyama,

Thank you for your e-mail. I am sorry for offending you. But *Seeds of Peace* is owned by The Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation (SNF) of which I am the president. *Seeds of Peace* has been in operation for 19 years, long before INEB was born. And the SNF allows INEB to use its publication of *Seeds of Peace*. Kled Thai Publishing House of which my brother is the Managing Director, has been publishing Mr. Ikeda's dialogues with distinguished thinkers in Thai for the last two decades. I don't see anything wrong in that. I disagreed with many of Mr. Ikeda's ideas, but I feel SG International is doing many good things abroad and I believe he is no longer in control of SG in Japan. I also disagree with many things that you do, but that does not mean that I have to think negatively of you.

I've never asked Mr. Ikeda to join INEB, but personally if I want to have relations with him I feel that is my own right and freedom which nobody could interfere. I don't see anything wrong for David Chappell, one of my best friends, to work for Soka University. If you felt it was not wise to have him elected to INEB executives, you could have said so at that time, since you were there. You said earlier on that you were no longer active in INEB Japan. And the one Japanese on the executive board has not even said anything on this or other matters.

I wonder whether this issue which was so upsetting to you was discussed openly with members of INEB Japan prior to sending an e-mail to me. Indeed if you or INEB Japan cared for what we had created together, I should be informed frankly about Mr. Ikeda's activities within Japan of which I have no knowledge.

Yours sincerely,
Sulak Sivaraksa

CC. all members of INEB Executive and all members of INEB Japan

Venerable Voramai

In 1959, Voramai Kabilsingh braved the attacks of the clergy to become Thailand's first female monk. The clergy scoffed at her because she was ordained in the Mahayana tradition in Taiwan.

But 44 years later, the first female monk was ordained in the Theravada tradition, and on our own soil. Again, the clergy dismissed the ceremony as the ordination was conducted in the Sri Lankan Theravada tradition.

Who knows if the clergy will still scoff at female ordination 44 years from now.

Ven Voramai, 95, Thailand's pioneer in female ordination, passed away on Monday. But her conviction lives on.

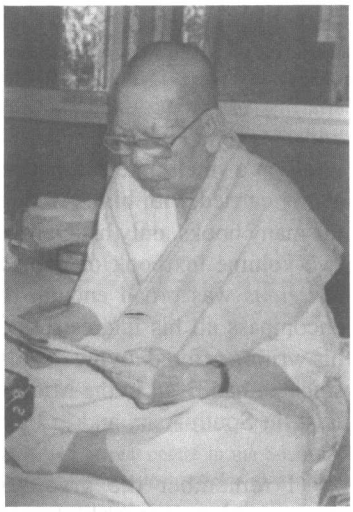
Through her moral courage, Ven Voramai paved the way for society to embrace female spirituality. The clergy may remain close-minded, but society now is open to the idea of female ordination. What was formerly believed impossible is now possible. When that happens, change is irresistible.

Ven Voramai's life should be a source of inspiration to all who work for change.

This should be borne in mind by the many civic groups working towards better human rights and social justice, for whom the situation now is distressing, so much so that many are beginning to lose hope.

For a start, the voices of ordinary Thais are being silenced everywhere. Many village leaders are reportedly under duress as part of the government war on drugs and dark influence, being punished for their outspokenness.

Grassroots groups are being dealt with one by one, starting with the Pak Moon dam resis-



tance movement. With the movement against the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline in Chana district of Songkhla now the country's strongest civic group, the govern ment looks set to crush it.

Apparently, the government wants to clear the way for other mega-projects to move ahead free of popular resistance. These projects include the potash mine in Udon Thani and the massive tree farms in forests, which will entail further evictions of forest dwellers.

Where are we to place our hopes? The children? Not when the latest figures show that one million children suffer from malnutrition. Our youth? Not when teen suicides and violence make daily headlines? Our clergy? Not when they are rocked with endless scandal, the latest of which involves the murder of a rich monk who appeared to have epitomised the widespread temple corruption. Our police? Give me a break!

If life in hard for ordinary Thais, it is hell for the millions of Burmese migrant workers who are treated like slaves. And when they ask for slightly better work conditions, they are kicked out of the country, just like that, because the employers and the authorities want to keep them as slaves forever.

Take the deportation on Tuesday of 420 Burmese who had been employed by King Body concept, a garment factory in Tak's Mea Sot district. Their crime: to ask to be paid on time and to be given a raise.

At the sweatshop where they toiled, they received just 55 baht a day and five baht an hour for overtime. They worked from 8am to 10pm, and often till 3am. Their rooms were crowded, their toilets were filthty, and too often they were not paid on time.

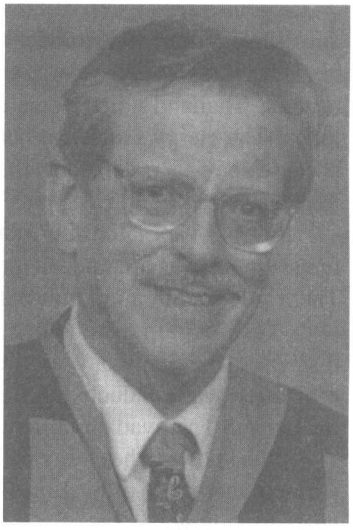
So they asked for 80 baht a day, no work ofter 10pm and general improvement in the work environment. Their employer responded by firing them on the spot and they were immedialtely deported, even though, as registered workers, the law allowed them one week to find new employment.

Such injustice makes many of us angry. But if we choose the path of change, we must accept the journey will be rough. It will test not only our determination but, more importantly, our integrity, our patience and our compassion

As Ven. Voramai's life has shown us, lighting just one candle can lead to others being lighted and the darkness being shattered. So whenever the gloom descends, keep on moving forward and keep your candle burning bright.

Sanitsuda Ekachai
Bangkok Post
Thursday June 26, 2003

Willard Gurdon Oxtoby (1933-2003)



Will was my teacher and friend for more than forty years, and was filled with more enthuasiasm, kindness, and curiousity than anyone I've ever known. I was a young theology student in 1961 at McGill University in Montreal when I first met him as a new professor. I still remember his eye-catching black-and-orange Princeton robes that he happily wore after he was awarded his doctorate in 1962 for deciphering some ancient Semetic stone writings along caravan trails that he likened to scratcing "Kilroy was here" on a blank wall.

Will was always eager to learn new things and to broaden his knowledge, especially about other religions. His father was a professor of Old Testament, but Will and I fell under the influence of Willfred Smith and McGill in exploring the faith of others. When Wilfred moved to Harvard to direct the Center for the Study of World Religions, Will followed him. In 1966 Will was invited to Yale University to begin a new comparative Religion program, and I again joined him as his student. Then ten years later when Will was establishing a new Center for Religious Studies at the University of Toronto, I joined his staff, so together we welcomed Sulak Sivaraksa to the snows of Toronto in 1978 to teach Buddhist studies.

Will had an enthusiastic curiosity about everything and kindness for all. The "Seeds of Peace" that he planted were not based on inner calm but the delightful discovery of connections everywhere. His eye and memory for detail was breathtaking, whether travel notes or books or restaurants. His exhuberant sharing of his any discoveries with everyone was aided by scribbling on a small notepad that he alway carried with him. Among his many books, only his Oxford two-volume textbook on *World Religions* was broad enough to encompass all his interests, and his writing offered loving details since he had lived in the Middle East, in South Asia, and in East Asia.

I remember the gracious dinners at his home with his lovely wife, Layla Jurji, and then after her death in 1980 from cancer, the lively meals with his second wife, Julia Ching–whom he once described as "blunt, but never dull"—who in 2001 also died from cancer. I've never known a kinder person than Will, and his loving support to Layla and Julia were models of care.

I received a phone call from Will shortly after he was told that he had invasive colon cancer. Not knowing if he would live, but suspecting the worst, he offered his last writing as a contribution to Sulak's seventieth brithday book, *Socially Engaged Spirituality*. With his broad love for interreligious encounter, and his attention to detail, he mapped out the variety of ways that Christians have engaged other religions around the world, from colonialism to competition to friendship. The journey of Christianity encompassed centuries and continents, but never in one person did it express the degree of exhuberance and delight, or breadth of knowledge and attention to detail, or lively sympathy for others and their faiths as did Will himself. We sorely miss him.

David W. Chappell
Orange County, California



July 09, 2003

Dear Sulak Sivaraksa,

His Holiness the Dalai Lama directs me to thank you for your e-mail of July 4 and for your warm greetings on the occasion of his birthday. He is very happy to learn that you had organized a Roundtable Discussion guided by yourself and Dr. Puntasen on Buddhist Economics on July 6. His Holiness is also pleased to learn about the International Workshop on Buddhist Economics you are planning in Dehra Dun, India, from September 17 to the 20, 2003 and the First Social Venture Network Asia Conference in Bangkok from November 9-11. His Holiness feels that these will certainly contribute towards educating people in the importance of having spiritual values in business.

With Best Wishes,
Tensin Geyche Tethong

August 11, 2003

Dear Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa,

As I arrived at Gaunt's House last weekend I was delighted to discover that you were giving the daily talk. Last summer I was living and working at Lerab Ling, Sogyal Rinpoche's retreat centre in the South of France. Whilst helping with the audio/video production team I spent some time downloading and reading your articles on a number of issues.

For some years now I have been trying to find ways of linking the antiglobalisation movement more closely to socially engaged Buddhism. I came across INEB a number of years ago when, an involvement with the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order led to myself and some friends attempting to set up a small group we called the Buddhist Social Activist Network. Our engagement at the time led to participation in a demonstration to oppose the sale of electro-shock torture equipment at the COPEX exhibition in the UK and on another occasion a brief meeting with Ken Jones who was running the INEB in the UK.

Since that time I have been a low key, relatively inactive advocate and supporter of the Indymedia intiative which I think may hold some interest for you if you're not already aware of it.

As I tried to convey at the last of your Gaunt's house appearances the principle behind Indymedia is one of open publishing to provide an alternative view to the corproate media and to give people a chance to express their views and engage in public dialogue about issues that concern them. More information can be found at: www.indymedia.org.uk

I hope this information is of some use and may be used to help raise awareness of how neoliberal globalisation and the concentration of wealth among an elite few leads to so many violations of social justice and the the environmental devastation that is left in its wake is unsustainable.Many thanks again for your inspiring talks last weekend. Please let me know if there's anything I can do to help.

Andy Brown

May 12, 2003

To UNESCO Director General
Dr. Koichiro Matsuura

Your Excellency,

We wish to bring an urgent matter to your attention. The issue has profound relevance to UNESCO's basic goals and methods of operation. If the position is upheld, we can predict that it will have extremely negative consequences for the reputation of UNESCO as an organization dedicated to the pursuit of peace through culture, communication, science, and education. UNESCO was founded on the principle that if wars begin in the minds of people, it is in the minds of people that the defenses of peace must be built. As we see it, the decision of your organization in the following instance directly contradicts that fundamental UNESCO premise.

Within the preparatory phase of the Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue Conference in the framework of UNESCO's Inter-religious Program, held in Paris, May 5-7, 2003, we have been informed, that we could not invite distinguished scholars. Thus Dr. Majid Tehranian, Professor of International Communication at the University of Hawaii and the Director of the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, has been black balled by your organization to attend the scholarly conferences. The ostensible reason given is the connection between their respective academic organization and Sokka Gakkai International. Both institutions are financially supported by SGI but enjoy an independent status under the United States laws for non-profit, non-sectarian, and

independent organizations.

Apart from the fact that the mentioned scholar enjoys an international reputation for integrity and expertise in the area of Buddhist-Islamic dialogue, his respected organizations are also Untied Nations NGO affiliated with a long and distinguished record and service to world culture, education, and research. We are shocked and urge you to look into this matter as soon as possible. We are confident that after careful consideration, you will reach the same conclusion as we that any barrier to freedom of speech within UNESCO's programs is tantamount to the break of its fundamental purposes.

On behalf of Professor David Chappell, Soka University of America, and Professor Sulak Sivaraksa, Director of the Buddhist Research Institute and winner of the alternative Noble Peace-Prize in 1995, and with thanks for UNESCO having facilitated an important and pioneering dialogue between Buddhists and Muslim,

Wolfgang Schmidt, Consultant for the preparation of the Dialogue Conference.

August 1, 2003



24 July 2003

Dear Sulak,

We here at the Paramita Group would like to congratulate SEM on the dedication of the New Century Building. Of course, this building will prove to be a valuable resource both for the people of Siam and those of us who so frequently "crash your party".

As an expression of our gratitude for all that you have done to promote the ideals espoused by groups and organizations like ours, and perhaps also as dues for use of the new facilities, we would like to donate a computer to the New Century library.

Please accept this donation as an expression of our willingness to help SEM in any way that we possibly can.

Best wishes,
B. Joseph Johnson
Director- Paramita Group



Dear Sulak!

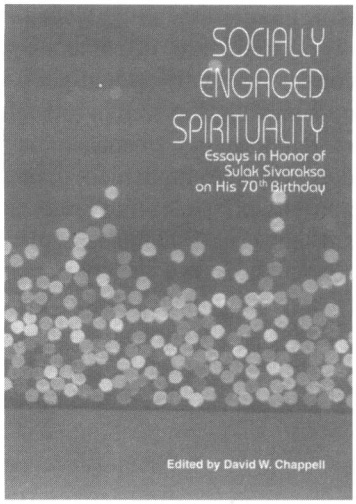
Finally we missed you during our visit in Thailand. I regret very much having missed this opportunity to see each other and exchange. But I know that in busy times it is difficult to meet, although I tried several times to get through by phone, I was not successful. But our travel in Thailand was very nice, and very interesting also. It was the first time, that I was in touch with a Buddhist country and culture, so I was very impressed, and realized how much Buddha's teaching, and the possibility to live for a certain time as monk has a beneficial influence on thinking and behaviour of people: not only the inner balance and gentleness, but also having time for quiet meditation. And the experience to live off what people offer, and live a simple lifestyle may be a strong experience!

Now we are back, and I'm engaged again in several nonviolent projects with our local branch of IFOR, mainly in training work with local parishes, groups and Somalian refugees. But then also with preparation trainings for nonviolent action against globalisation, as the European movements are not very clear about it.

All the best and with the hope to see you at another opportunity

Ueli Wildberger

Socially Engaged Spirituality: Essays in Honor of Sulak Sivaraksa on His 70th Brithday *edited by David W.Chappell (2003)*



Many men aspire to be citizens of the world, and Sulak Sivaraksa is just one, but here is hardly a place in the world where Sulak does not have a friend. His friends include peasant leaders, aristocrats, religious leaders, technocrats, politicians, statesmen and activists.

So it came as a fitting tribute when a new book was launched to mark his 70th birthday. A casual glance at the long list of contributors to *Socially Engaged Spiri tuality* shows that Sulak has friends everywhere. His well-wishers in the 712-page book range from the Dalai Lama, Aung San Suu Kyi, Professor Johan Galtung, former Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid and World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn.

There are altogether 90 essays in four sections of the book, which underscores the importance that Sulak places on friendship. Despite his progressive views on consumerism, women's rights and globalisation, Sulak remains a classicist at heart and believes in the cul tivation of human virtues. For Sulak, the virtuous man stands by his word and places the highest value on friendship

Sulak makes friends indefatigably. His notion of friendship is closer to the old-fashioned proverb "A friend in need is a friend indeed" than to the modern, American contact management school dictum of "Making friends and influencing people."

Sulak shows his friendship best when his friend is down or is in trouble. This is somewhat different from the contact management philosophy, which tends to commend making friends with the rich and powerful who can provide advantage and to shun old friends who are no longer useful. Sulak values friendship for its own sake.

Because he genuinely values friendship and does not only use friendship to seek power and advantage, many of Sulak's friends happen to be among the young and idealistic. Elias Amidon, a Sufi leader and Elizabeth Roberts, a Bud-dhist from Boulder, Colorado comment: "Sulak has had a for mative influence on 3 generations of social and environmental activists, first of all in Thailand, but also throughout southeast Asia and beyond, to Europe and the US."

For the English peace activist Nicholas Bennett, Sulak's "most significant contribution has been the help and support that he has constantly provided young Thais in starting their own struggle to improve the world around them in a non-violent and humane way."

This brings us to another aspect of Sulak's view of friendship. For Sulak, friendship is not just about cultivating and refining soulful sensibilities or celebrating the heart's inward music of love and devotion. Friendship is also solidarity in engagement. Sulak invites his friends to join him to engage the external world, to change it and improve it. But he rejects the use of all forms of violence, including war, to impose change upon the world. Sulak understands that to rectify injustice and bring about social change in a humane way we must muster our inner spiritual resources to inform the expression of social struggle with values of gentleness, human dignity, peace, love and non-violence.

SPIRITUALITY IS THE ANSWER

Sulak opposes the powerful current political ideologies, including liberal democracy, communism, fascism, capitalism and militarism, which subscribe to the tenet that the end justifies the means. Even when the end is good, which is usually the case, the devil lies in the means. The use of evil means to achieve a good end usually results in the corruption of the latter. So Sulak vocally opposed the US deployment of overwhelming military force to bring about regime change in Iraq and install liberal democracy over the bombed rubble of Saddam Hussein's brutal repressive dictatorship.

Sulak shares the view of former Indonesian President Abdurraman Wahid that secular political institutions have failed to effectively address the problem of social injustice and structural violence. Mired in the political quick sands of bureaucratic legalities, secular governments have been unable to respond to the people's cry for justice. The increasing politicisation of religious organisations and

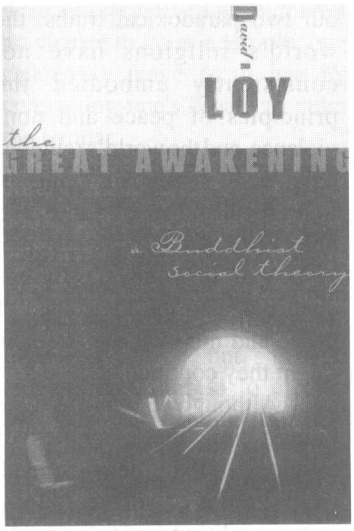
the recent electoral victories of religious political parties in many countries throughout the Muslim world reflect the disenchantment of the people with secularism.

The answer to communism, liberal democracy and capitalism is spirituality. Only when social struggles, class struggles and revolutions are informed by correct spirituality would goodness prevail, The current revival of religious movements, including Islamic fundamentalism, non-violent peace movements and engaged Buddhism, represent a reaction of society to the failure of the great social theories of the 19th century.

These ideas are evident in Socially Engaged Sprituality, which offers a cocktail view of the new spiritual social movements of which Sulak has become a global symbol.

Jeffrey Sng

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can reasonably wonder what, for example, do the doctrines of karma and rebirth mean today? How can a (post) modern person understand them? And what can Buddhism contribute today to our understanding of such pressing issues as corporate globalization, terrorist violence, criminal justice, biotechnology, and ecological crises? This book is a thorough exploration of these issues and a noble attemprt to answer these relevant and rather urgent questions.

In our pluralistic culture, it seems appropriate for Buddhism to share its insights with and learn from other schools and traditions. As Loy suggests in his book, "Buddhism needs the contributions of Western modernity—such as democracy, feminism, and the separation of church and state—to challenge its institutional complacency and liberate its own teachings from such traditional social constraints, and Buddhism can also help our postmodern world develop liberative possibilities otherwise obscured by the anti-religiousbias of so much contemporary social critique." In this book, Loy incorporates interdisciplinary insights with his Buddhist analysis in an attempt to form a workable Buddhist social theory.

Loy, in each chapter of the book, offers an analysis of how Buddhists can apply the four noble truths to arrive at a systemic understanding of how the three poisons (greed, hatred, delusion) have become institutionalized: greed has been institutionalized in global capitalism and unchecked economic development, hatred has been institutionalized in the new American "holy war" against terrorism, retributive justice systems, and the curious historical problem of Japanese samurai Zen, and delusion has been institutionalized in our collective fascination with biotechnology and our anthropocentric relationship with the earth.

To heal our wounds, Loy suggests that "the Buddhist solution to such problematic dualities involves realizing that this way of thinking/perceiving/acting is a construct that can be deconstructed."

It means we must transform our ways of experiencing and living in this world. If to liberate the mind from conceptual fixations is most needed, Buddhism can perhaps work along with other disciplines and social movements such as feminism, ecological economics and deep ecology to make positive contributions to this end.

All of what Shakyamuni Buddha has taught concerns suffering and ways to end suffering without much emphasis on the metaphysical. The synthesis offered in this book is a call for the awakening of the mind, both individual and collective, to explore the nature of the world's suffering, the conditions that cause suffering, the end of suffering and ways out of suffering. Loy breaks new ground in his exploration of "social dukkha", or social suffering, which obviously takes various forms in our modern society.

Loy's interpretation of dharma is what I would call a re-enchantment of Buddhism in the sense that he emphasizes the pragmatism and anti-metaphysical approach of early Buddhism in a way that is similar to post-modernism. That is, we should be suspicious of any grand theory that purports to offer some final synthesis, a master set of categories that supercedes all others. The goal is to end our dukkha rather than find a unified grounding theory that can operate perfectly only on a conceptual ground. As the title of this book is *The Great Awakening*, it seems appropriate to end with Loy's explanation of the phrase: "To wake up is to realize that I am not in the world, I am what the world is doing right here and now. When Shakyamuni became enlightened, the whole world awakened in him and as him. The world begins to heal when we realized that its sufferings are our own."

Nuttarote Wangwinyoo

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Subverting Hatred:
The Challenge of Nonviolence in Religious Traditions
Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, ed.
Fourth printing October 2002,
Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York

As a reaction to all the uncertainty amid the rapid changes in our social, political, and economic environments, particularly since the end of the

Cold War, people struggle to locate some ground from which they might find shelter. People seek stability and security in ethnicity, nationality and of course religion.

Religion, for better or worse, is one of the strongest identities that unite people. It reaches the deepest depths of human feeling. It portrays a state of being that is most perfect, most peaceful, pure and true, which lies beyond the existence of our individual selves. In order to achieve such an ideal state, religions provide a set of morals and values that shape the behavior and mind of followers. It strengthens esprit de corps and at the same time fosters a sense of otherness. We must however be careful not to be so naive as to overlook that religions are also often used to legitimize violence, including wars, in many parts of the world today.

The book Subverting Hatred: The Challenge of Nonviolence in Religious Traditions is one effort to understand the role of religion in nonviolent and violent responses. The challenge presented to the contributors to this book are two fold: (1) to find whether nonviolence can be, and has been, supported by religious traditions, and (2) reaffirm the claim that nonviolence embodies one of the noblest values and sacred obligations of religion put it.

This book explores the concept of nonviolence within nine religions; Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism and the spiritual traditions of the Native Americans. This comparative study, though it is a valuable reference book for comparative religious studies, is better understood as a quest for peace and nonviolence.

The essays in the collections do not provide ready-made answers. Rather, they are a platform from which we might explore our own traditions more deeply. They show that from all religious traditions, we can draw out two paradoxical truths: the world's religions have not consistently embodied the principles of peace and nonviolence, and the world's religions have made significant contributions to the ideal of peace and nonviolence. Then, the question is posed: how have religions contributed to the ideal state of peace and nonviolence and how might they continue to do so.

Although it is not always known how the teachings of religions will be demonstrated, many groups of adherents from some traditions are trying to bring forth a dimension of peace promotion through various forms of activism. In so doing, the findings of the book confirm that nonviolence is not an ideal imported from outside our traditions, but is rather a call to the central truths that do not drive us away from, but call us back to an encounter with the priceless treasures of our spiritual traditions.

L.S.

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work or piety. Even when there's no chance to go to a temple, one can easily make merit just by controlling one's breath to calm the temper.

Meant to give insight into proper ways of making merit, the 60-page book highlights what people should do on Buddhist Lent. For instance, it is a tradition to present temples with a candle on the occassion, but since all temples have access to electricity these days, light bulbs are more useful.

It also suggests smart ways of spending money and other kinds of dedication for good causes. An electrician, for example, needn't donate money to monks because his career skills can be a more valuable gift.

"Help poor children, prevent starvation and achieve peace of mind," remarks Chaleerat Saengsuwan, a campaigner of the project.

30 Ways of Merit Making is a rough yet comprehensive guideline for giving merit. Buddhists can learn how to donate more constructively and achieve peace of mind just by refraining from the kind of evil deeds that defile one's life.

The book also encourages self-participation in a process of helping, caring for and sharing with the underprivileged.

"The book aims to present a true way of Tham Boon, which harmonises with the post-modern way of life. "Buddhists often neglect how important society is. This book will encourage merit-makers to achieve happiness as individuals and at the same time in society," says the author.

Some 30,000 copies of the booklet are being published with the assistance of Bangchak Petroleum Plc, which is allowing the Buddhist network to sell each copy at Bt5. For more information, please contact the institution at (02)866-2721-2 or visit http://budnet.info.

Niwat Apichartbutra,
The Nation

Voices of dissent, voices of freedom

Forty years ago, as the country was reeling from yet another military coup, scholar Sulak Sivaraksa struck a courageous blow for freedom of speech by launching a new journal aimed at encouraging more academic and intellectual exchanges among the public.

His quarterly journal, *Social Science Review*, not only served that purpose—it also became a crucial source of inspiration for the younger generation at the centre of major political changes that culminated with the October 14, 1973 uprising.

Among its columnists were famous names ranging from elite figures to modern intellectuals such as Phya Anuman Rajadhon, Human Rights Commission chairman Saneh Chamarik and scholar Nidhi Aeusrivongse.

This year is the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the journal. Although it ceased publication after only 12 years in 1965, the 14 October 1973 Memorial organisation is organising an exhibition to commemorate the journal.

"The journal was an intellectual community in which the country's intellectuals shared their views," says Pimpaka Ngamsom, the memorial's coordinator. "Theirs reflected the social and political conditions of that time. So, we can see what drove these people's ways of thinking. It's valuable and should be recognised."

The event, "40 Years of *Social Science Review*" comprises a display of the journal in its early years, special editions that reflected the political atmosphere of the times such as the Farmer Edition, and the final issue in 1976.

Accompanying these rare publications will be a movie presentation of "The Quiet American" and a talk, "Social Learning at the Present Time".

The talk will be led by prominent figures of the young generation, including Surakarn Tosomboon of *Pajarayasarn* magazine. Surakarn's education-themed publication is aimed at giving the young generation a stage to share their views and lifestyles with the public.

Pimpaka says there will be no comparison with the past generations on the stage, as each generation has different beliefs and is driven by different forces in society.

The event will be held at the memorial, Kok Woa Conjunction, Rachadamnoen Klang Road. It opens today and runs until August 3. The movie and the talk will be held on the last day starting at 1 pm.

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CARL MAGNUS THORNES SCHOLARSHIP FUND

This year the Carl Magnus Thornes Scholarship Fund was extended with a generous sum to facilitate the participation of persons in the course work of the Spirit in Education Movement and TICD. Carl Magnus Thornes was a young pioneer in engaged Buddhism in Norway. After his tragic passing away his family constituted the Fund and the amount was matched by a private donation from Ajarn Sulak. Many monks, nuns and laypersons already enjoyed opportunities to attend courses through this scholarship, and the extension of the Fund may provide a good example of investment in people for a better future.

Maurice Ash Memorial Fund

In memory of the late Maurice Ash, his daugther, Claire Ash Wheeler kindly offered 10,000 USD in support of the alternative education programs of the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM). In 1995, the idea of launching SEM was first expounded at Sharpham House, founded by Mr.Ash who had also been the spirit behind Schumacher College, the main alternative education and ecological center in the West. This fund will be matched by friends of Sulak Sivaraksa, and will be used to support indigenious and marginalized people as well as monks and nuns to attend SEM's courses aimed at empowering them spiritually.

Mrs.Lee Story Cable Memorial Scholarship to SEM University

Allow us to express our deepest thanks to all donors for their generous donation of USD 1,500 for Thai monks, nuns and novices who want to study at SEM (Spirit in Education Movement) University. Mr.Prasong and Mrs.Chaba Jaturabun, Mr.Thomas Brown and his wife, Mr.Vira Jadijang, Ms.Sirin Jitjaturan and Mr.Yothin Jitjaturan and others who have made this scholarship fund possible are not only social and spiritual leaders within their communities, but they also play important roles in helping others learn and achieve a better way of living. The scholarships are awarded in the memory of Mrs.Lee Story Cable, our dear friend who passed away recently in Los Angeles. All donations to the fund can be considered as a continuation of Lee's 20 years of work to help underprivileged children, orphans and others lacking educational opportunity in Siam.

Seeds of Peace Extends Thanks to Paramita Group

Seeds of Peace and SEM would like to express their thanks to the Paramita Group for donating a computer for use in our new library. The Paramita Group is a new organization dedicated to supporting nonviolent movements as an alternative to the violent war on terrorism. At present, Paramita is working in cooperation with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's Department of Home to create microfinance, literacy, and health strategies based on Tibetan Buddhist values and aspirations. With time, Paramita hopes to train Tibetan monks and nuns and other lay volunteers to implement these strategies in Tibetan refugee settlements. Please visit their website to learn more: www.paramitagroup.org.

Our gratitude for Ms.Judith Collignon's support

We would like to thank Judith Collignon for her kind support. Dr. Collignon very graciously offered to mail the May issue of *Seeds of Peace* to numerous readers throughout Europe, bearing the cost herself. Without such generous acts it would indeed be very difficult to continue our work; appreciation runs deep for all our good friends who make tremendous efforts to keep *Seeds of Peace* alive. You too can help by renewing your subscription to our publication. Of course, donations of all kinds are welcome and much needed. Please help us in our efforts to sow seeds of peace throughout the world.