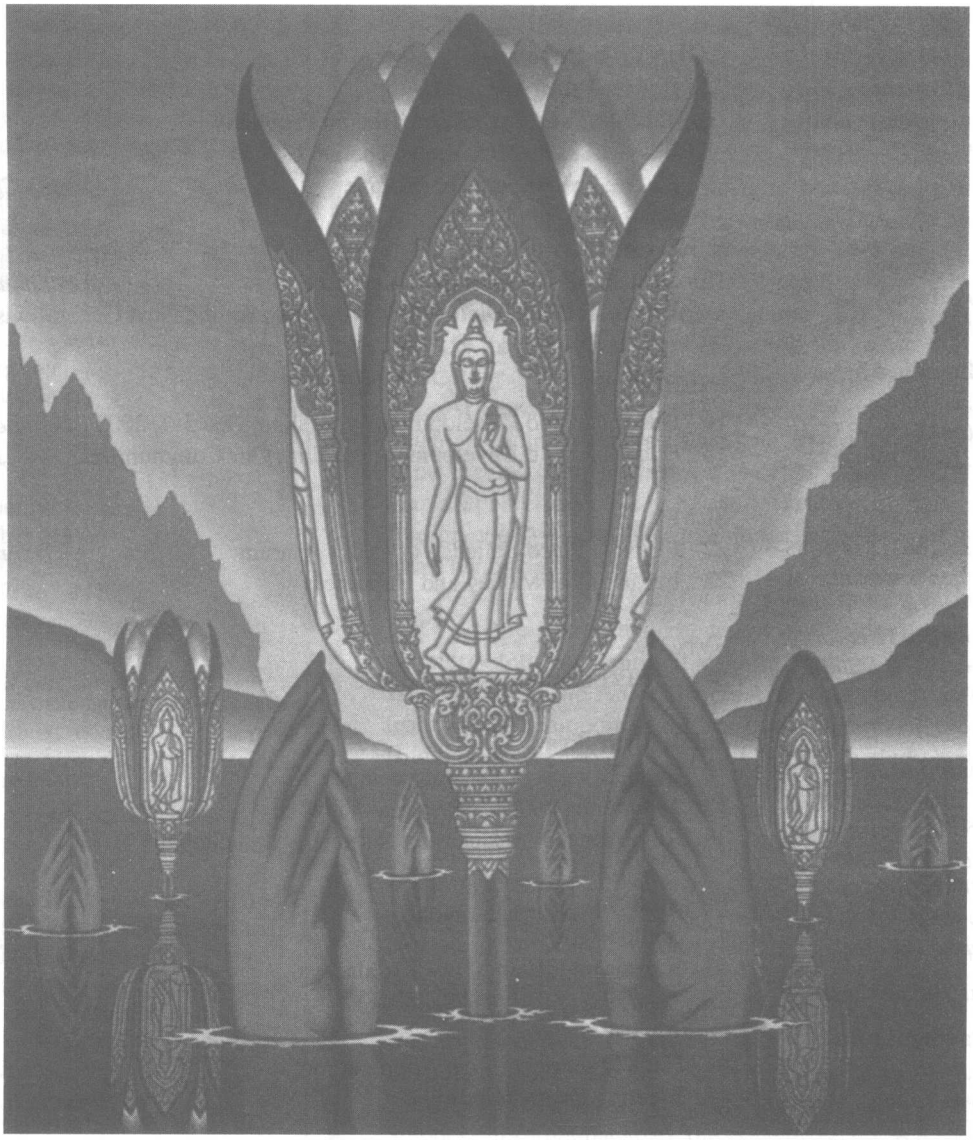
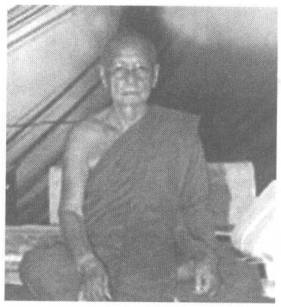
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Buddhist Challenges to Economic Development



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PEACE

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The goals of INEB are to:

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

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The Centennial Anniversary of Asabha Thera

8 November 2546

Asabha Thera was an abbot of Wat Mahathat—with the title "Phra Vimaladhamma"—a leader among Mahanikaya Order temples. During his lifetime, temples strictly adhered to the regulations and traditions laid down by Prince Patriarch Vajiranana from the reigns of King Rama V and King Rama VI.

His leadership posed a challenge to his peers in the Mahanikaya Order and some leaders of the Dhammayuttika Order exploited the situation. The dictator S. Thanarat then exercised his absolute power against the monk with much jealousy. First, his monkhood term was shorter than many senior monks. Second, his previous position was only as a provincial administrator. Third, because he was from Khon Kaen province in the northeast of the country and was of Laos ethnicity, it was unacceptable for him to hold any position higher than Thai monks from the central part of the country. Fourth, he was a progressive monk, well recognized nationally and internationally. Fifth, he was knowledgeable and fully utilized his abilities; in the past many capable monks kept a low profile so as not to outshine their superiors. Sixth, he dared to ignore certain Vinaya rules openly whenever necessary, e.g., putting a layman's apparel over his robe while visiting a coal mine in a foreign country—an unacceptable act in the eyes of conservative Theravada monks.

He was known for the efficient administration of the sangha and his temple, the encouragement of two-track education of scripture-study and spiritual training, inviting Burmese monks specializing in the Abhidhamma and vipassana meditation to teach in Siam, supporting the activities of Maha Chulalongkorn Buddhist University, and sending monks to study abroad in a time when studying foreign languages other than Pali was seen as dangerous.

Like Pridi Banomyong, Asabha Thera was accused of being a communist. His celibacy was questioned. Kukrit Pramoj, for instance, claimed that Asabha Thera would never be promoted to become a Somdej—an equivalent of a cardinal, because his horoscope conflicted with the king's. He was accused of committing major religious offences, was forced to disrobe, and was imprisoned for five years.

Later Asabha Thera's innocence was proved. He regained his ecclesiastical title and finally got promoted to the title of Somdej Phra Vuddhacariya, the same title held by Somdej To in the reign of King Rama V. After his release from jail he started a movement to promote *vipassana* and *dhutanga*. On the whole, his contributions to Thai society were no less than Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's—the difference being that Asabha Thera worked within the Sangha establishment, hence his rise and downfall within the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Editorial Notes

Post-Apec Bangkok has awakened from self-imposed sedation to reality and normality: traffic congestion, street hawkers, air and noise pollution, the reappearance of fake CDs, the city's disappearance from the international political map, and so on. It is likely to remain so until it is venue to another major international or transnational conference.

To a certain extent—however miniscule—the Thai premier, Thaksin Shinawatra, has also been shaken from his narcissistic slumber—or so he has led us to believe. This is primarily due to the birthday speech of HM the King. In the speech the Thai monarch warns the premier on arrogance. The king insisted that HRH the Princess Mother has acted as his conscience or *kalyanamitta* when she was alive: "When I was 40-50 years old, my mother told me sometimes that I was great but she always added that I must not forget myself. She said I must not float and that my name 'Bhumibol' means that I had to keep my feet on the ground. She said when I did something good, it's alright to know what I did but I should not be too proud." The king added that the premier is in a more favorable position than he is. This is because the Thai constitution prohibits the public from criticizing the king, and therefore he could not know whether he did right or wrong. He lamented, "The only person I could listen to was my mother, who has gone already." Therefore, the king suggested that the premier listen to the public and the media: "You have to read newspapers...and let them write."

Is the king implying the need to abolish the charge of *lese majeste* because he wants to listen to a varied lot of voices from critics and cheerleaders? Curiously, this is what Sulak Sivaraksa has been urging all along—that even the king should not be beyond criticism or reproach. The premier said he has accepted all of the king's recommendations. But what the king said is what many others have been saying all along. Did Thaksin listen to the king because he considers the monarch larger-than-life, an image the king himself seems to have denied? Or is Thaksin's arrogance not really at stake—the main issue being his vision to substitute management for politics? On the one side is the question of efficiency and profitability. On the other side is the traditional question of equality, freedom, and justice.

Thank You

We would like to thank the following donors for their generous contributions to our effort in educating the poor in our Spirit in Education Movement.

- Mr Kongpop Suthidhammavasi — 7,500 baht
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- Friends of Thailand Society, — the amount and the names of donors will be announced in *Pacarayasara*

We would like to express our gratitude to Ken and Peggy Macintosh for their generous donation of $1000 to *Seeds of Peace*. Without such gifts from friends it would be impossible to carry on our work. We thank them deeply for their selfless and compassionate efforts to assist others.

We urge our readers to continue your generous support so that our publication will continue to exist to sow seeds of peace in the violent world.

IRAQ
Terror War

It's the price of joining George Bush's "war on terror." They couldn't hit Britain while Bush was on his triumphalist state visit to London, so they went for the jugular in Turkey. The British consulate, the British-headquartered HSBC bank. London—abroad. And of course, no one—least of all the Turks-imagined they would strike twice in the same place. Turkey had already had its dose of attacks, hadn't it?

"They" must mean "al-Qa' ida". And of course, merely to point out that we—the British—are now paying the price for George Bush's infantile attempt to reshape the Middle East in Israel's favour will attract the usual venom.

To tell the brutal truth about the human cost of Tony Blair's alliance with the Bush administration is to "do the terrorists' work for them," to be their "pro--pagandist." Thus, as usual, will all discussion of yesterday's atrocities be closed down?

But the American and British administrations know very well what this means. The Australians paid the price for John Howard's alliance with Bush in Bali. The Italians paid the price for Silvio Berlusconi's alliance with Bush in Nasiriyah. Now it is our turn.

Al-Qa'ida was quite specific. The Saudis would pay. The Australians would pay. The Italians would pay. The British would pay. They have. Canada is still on the list. Until, I suppose, it is our turn again. Even in 1997, Osama bin Laden would repeat to me that Britain would only escape Islamic "anger" if it pulled out of the Gulf. Nor do these mass murders have just one purpose. Turkey is allied to Israel. Ariel Sharon has visited Ankara. Turkey is hated in Iraq and much of the Arab world, partly for its Ottoman antecedents. And if the Saudis are attacked because their Islamic regime is led by a corrupt monarchy, Turkey is attacked because it isn't Islamic enough. Break up Turkey. Break up the relations between Muslims and Jews in Istanbul—the purpose of last Saturday's suicide bombings—and break up the compromise "Islamist" government that now rules Turkey. All must have formed a part of al-Qaida's thinking.

Nor should we fool ourselves about what I always call "the brain." We have a habit of thinking that the bombers don't understand the outside world. If they are "against democracy," they wouldn't understand us, would they? But they do. They knew exactly what they were doing when they attacked the Australians in Bali—they knew the Iraqi invasion was unpopular in Australia, that Howard might ultimately be blamed. They knew the invasion was unpopular in Italy. So Italy would be punished for Berlusconi's hubris.

They knew, too, of the demonstrations that awaited George Bush in London. So why not distract attention from the whole panjandrum by assaulting Britain in Turkey. Who would care about Bush's visit to Sedgefield when Britons are lying dead in the grounds of their consulate in Istanbul? Just so in Iraq.

The Iraqi insurgents are well aware of George Bush's falling opinion polls in the United States. They know how desperate he is to extract himself from Iraq before next year's presidential elections. Thus they are increasing their assaults on American forces and their Iraqi supporters, provoking the US army to ever more ferocious retaliation.

We have a kind of fatal incomprehension about those against whom we have gone to war; that they are living in caves, cut off from reality, striking blindly—"desperately" as Mr. Bush would have us believe—as they realise that the free world is resolved to destroy them. Just now, I suspect they are resolved to destroy Mr. Bush—politically if not physically. Mr. Blair too. In a war in which we go all out to crush the leadership of our antagonists, we can only expect them to adopt the same policy.

But we go on misunderstanding. Take those tiresome speeches by Osama bin Laden. When his audio-tapes are aired, we journalists always take the same line. Is it really him? Is he alive? That becomes our only story. But the Arab response is quite different. They know it's him. And they listen to what he says. So should we. But alas, we still pedal the old myths, as George Bush did in London on Wednesday. His speech contained the usual untruths. Note, for example, the list of attacks he gave us: "Bali, Jakarta, Casablanca, Bombay, Mombasa, Najaf, Jerusalem, Riyadh, Baghdad, and Istanbul." Najaf

may well have nothing to do with al-Qa'ida but the suicide bombings in Jerusalem, vicious though they are, have absolutely nothing to do with our "war on terror." They are part of a brutal anti-colonial struggle between Palestinians and Israelis. Yet the inclusion of Jerusalem allows Ariel Sharon to join his war against the Palestinians to Bush's war against al-Qa'ida. This mendacity continued.

Israel, said Bush, had to "freeze" settlements on Palestinian land—not close them down—and only dismantle what he artfully called "unauthorised outposts." "Outposts" is Israel's word for the most recent land seizures in the West Bank and the word "unauthorised" suggests that there is some legality to the massive settlements already built on Palestinian land.

According to Bush, the "heart of the matter" in the Middle East is "a viable Palestinian democracy." Not once did Bush mention "occupation." Why not? Is he so frightened of Israel's lobby before next year's US presidential election that even this most salient fact of the Middle East experience has to be censored from his narrative of events?

There was, too, the familiar distortion of the historical narrative. He said that America and Britain would do "all in their power to prevent the United Nations from solemnly choosing its own irrelevance." Come again? Who was it who wouldn't let the UN inspectors finish their search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq last year? Who was it who wouldn't accept a UN stewardship of the Iraq crisis?

Bush claimed yet again that we "tolerated" the dictatorships of the Middle East. Rubbish. We created them, Saddam's regime being the most obvious example. Who doubts, Mr Bush asked us, "that Afghanistan is a more just society and less dangerous without Mullah Omar playing host to terrorists from around the world?" Could this be the same Afghanistan which once more cringes under the warlords of the old Northern Alliance, the Afghanistan where the opium poppy is once again the country's prime export, where aid workers are being cut down by the Taliban? And in Iraq, where the occupying powers now face an Iraqi insurgency of fearful proportions, Mr. Bush still thinks he is fighting "Ba'athist holdouts and jihadists." Even his military officers are repeating that it is a growing Iraqi guerrilla army they are fighting—not "foreign fighters" or "jihadis." At the end, of course, we came back to the Second World War and Churchill—the "leader who did not waver," with whom Bush last year compared himself and with whom he on Wednesday compared Tony Blair—a "leader of good judgement and blunt counsel and backbone."

Where, oh where are we going? How much longer must we suffer this false account of history? How much longer must we willfully misread what we are doing and what is being done to us?

Robert Fisk
www.zmag.org

TIBET
The Crux of the Tibetan Problem

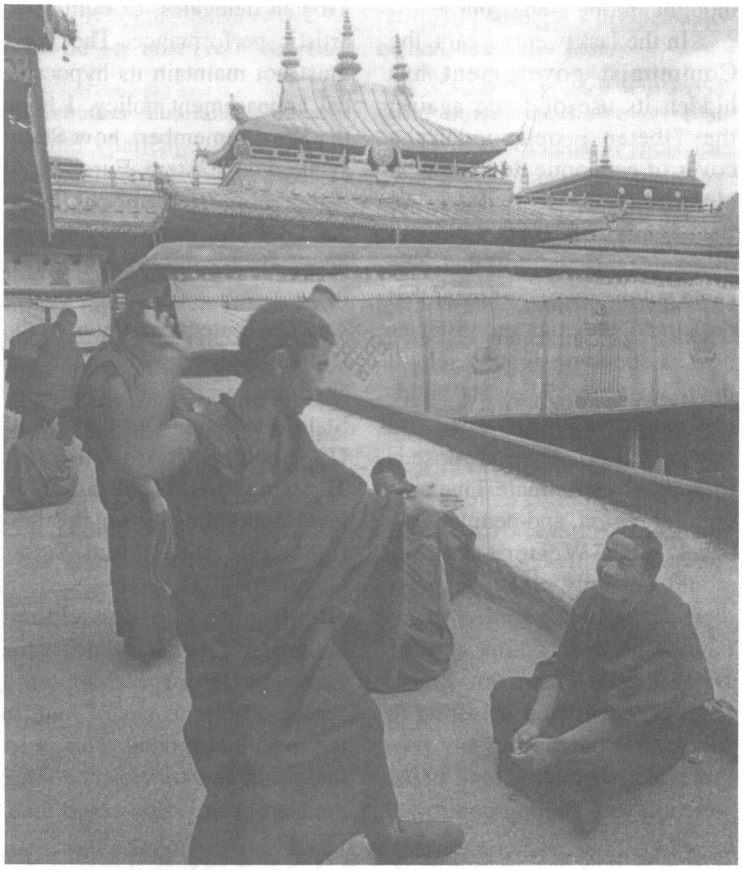
It is an honor to speak before this distinguished audience.

It's been almost fifty years since China "liberated" Tibet, crushing its people, government and its religion, and forcing the Dalai Lama into exile. Since then, tens of thousands of Tibetans have fled to all parts of the world. However, they have not given up hope. They have not been wiped-out or deemed irrelevant, and I suspect they will never be. To most Han Chinese, Tibetans are an "uncivilized, ignorant, filthy and superstitious" people, who needed to be liberated by the Chinese Communist Party. Yet, all throughout the world, Tibetan stand with pride.

All over the world, exiled Tibetans live together in peace with the locals of their adopted nations, receiving much more respect and welcome and trust than Chinese immigrants. Tibetan maintains their religion, culture, dress and customs, as well as his own government in-exile, with an unmistakable dignity. Among the younger generation, many obtain high-level academic degrees, and become well-known scholars. They may have lost their land, but they are reaching toward the heavens.

Beijing received a high-level delegation to restart negotiations

with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Regardless of Beijing's motives for holding these talks, or if the negotiations have any real success, at the very least, the negotiations make one thing clear: despite being exiled for over 40 years, Beijing cannot ignore the Dalai Lama and his people. Beijing refused to talk with Tibetan delegates for many years; they referred to them as a "Gang of Bandits." Now, Beijing is beginning to accept the reality. One of the reasons that brought Beijing back to negotiating table is the fact that the Communist regime is facing a historic crisis. It must change its policies. The exiled Tibetan government does not enjoy any military or any economic power; it does not even have any diplomatic relations. Yet they still matter. As everyone knows, the CCP's political power is always based on physical strength. Yet, the facts prove, although often drowned out by wickedness and greed, justice and truth eventually prevail.



Beijing knows the Dalai Lama and Tibetans are highly respected by peoples and government of nearly all nations, they know truth is not on their side. Nevertheless, there are two key factors supporting Beijing's Tibet policy: First, most Han Chinese are prejudiced against Tibetans, and believe Tibetans need economic, cultural and other assistance. Second, most Han Chinese believe Tibet was never an independent country, and was always a part of China. As a result, most Han Chinese agree with Beijing's policies.

Even many Chinese exiled or domestic dissidents which claim they are fighting for democracy, freedom and human rights, unfortunately, the sentiment of traditional nationalism leading them support and agree with Beijing's Tibet policy.

Many Han Chinese ask: Isn't Han Chinese culture superior to Tibet's? Don't Tibetans have an unhealthy, harmful lifestyle? Don't they want a theocracy? Doesn't the Tibetan religion block economic and cultural development, etc.? These questions are important to evaluate and discuss. However, the first thing we should address is this: who has the right to judge right from wrong? Moreover, who has the right to use physical force to implement such a judgment?

If a culture fails to respect another people's right to self-determination, then itself has no right to self-determination. Yet, this is what is happening in China. If Han Chinese is in the process of seeking democracy, freedom and prosperity, then it should respect another culture's right to do the same. Tibetans have the right to seek their own political future, social structure, religious beliefs and culture.

Actually, Han Chinese must appreciate Tibetan's tireless, courageous and consistent fight for its fundamental rights. Their struggle is breaking the power of the Communist autocratic regime in China. Tibet's efforts will eventually benefit all Chinese people.

If most Han Chinese begin believing that they should respect Tibet, and agree that Tibet has freedom of choice, I believe Beijing's current policy would become untenable. When a majority of Han Chinese expresses this type of sentiment, it will represent a significant shift in

thought among Han Chinese.

In the last twenty years, the Communist government has hidden its use of force against the Tibetan people under the cover of economic development along with the feet of tens of thousands of Han Chinese migrants pouring into Tibet. The same autocratic government that destroyed Tibetan monasteries now is spending money rebuilt the monasteries. They are building railways, highways, and power stations. Their purpose is to gradually eliminate Tibetan's culture, region, and people.

I wish Western nations would not only clearly express their desire to see fruitful negotiations between China and the Dalai Lama. However, I also hope they will stop investing in Tibet, stop purchasing any products made in Tibet, and never welcome any Beijing-controlled Tibetan delegates, or culture or artistic performance. The West must not maintain its hypocritical appeasement policy. I hope the West remembers how Stalin swallowed Eastern Europe and Asian countries and built up Soviet Empire, and what was necessary for the West to defeat it.

The State Department of the United States government has appointed an Under Secretary of State, Ms. Paula Dobriansky, as US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues. This is a high level appointment, which highlights that the United States Government is paying serious attention to the non-violent struggle of Tibet. It is time for the European Union to also appoint a senior official to push China to the negotiation table. This is an important and concrete step that the European Union could take. It would show the European Union does in fact actively defend the rights of the downtrodden and repressed.

The world is changing. In the face of a rising tide of globalization, liberalization, democratization and human rights, the old and tired petty excuses for injustice, such as colonialism, racism, communism and even nationalism, are becoming weak and indefensible. Sooner or later, they will all be thrown into the dustbin of history.

Harry Wu,
Laogai Research Foundation
European Parliament Forum
on Tibet: EU Response to
Sino-Tibetan Dialogue,
12 November, 2003
From ***World Tibet Network News***,
15 November 2003

BURMA
The Message to Thailand

Leading up to the recently concluded Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in Bangkok, supporters of a democratic Burma were led to believe by the administration of President Bush that the American President would take advantage of that forum to press for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and an early restoration of democracy in Burma. Contrary to these expectations, President Bush did not even mention the name of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi during the two day meeting of APEC. Instead, a personal message was quietly delivered to Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra by the US President who reportedly asked for assistance in obtaining her release and to push Burma's generals toward democracy. But rather than complain about the absence of strong words publicly expressed by the US President at the APEC meeting, we should keep in mind that the United States has consistently demonstrated its interest in bringing democratic change to Burma. But that interest is one of many, including security interests of very high priority.

The war in Iraq, in which the United States has assumed the primary burdens in money, troops, and administration, has understandably diverted resources from its global war on terrorism. The active support of Asian governments in this endeavor, therefore, is critical. Accordingly, the APEC venue was an appropriate forum to highlight the urgent need for that support. Forcing the Burma issue into the APEC agenda would have likely been perceived as an unwelcome intrusion resulting in a diversion from the focus of the US very important interest.

Reminding the Asian governments of their failures with the "engagement" policy toward Burma would not have been

helpful. Nor would it be helpful to criticize the corruption that has accompanied and reinforced the policy of engagement. Nor would it have been helpful to point out that the source of the scourge of drugs in Thailand and the region is Burma. All these are facts well known to every government, especially Burma's strongest supporter and apologist, Thailand. Perhaps President Bush decided to convey his message to the Thai Prime Minister because he recognized that of all the countries in the region, Thailand could, by pursuing its own security interests, change its policy of being the defender of dictatorship in Rangoon and become a strong advocate of democratic change in Burma. In short, Thailand is perhaps recognized for what it could be—a positive force for change.

Whether Thailand will accept the challenge of regional moral leadership is unknown. It is a decision not to be taken lightly due to personal ties, economic interests, and military considerations. In governments, especially democracies, doing the "right thing" in foreign policy is often determined by powerful special interests rather than national interests or morality. Yet, a democratic government in Burma could bring rich rewards to Thailand and its people in terms of economic growth, trade and regional leadership. That decision will likely be reflected in the conference, called by Thailand, concerning the restoration of democracy in Burma, to be held later this year.

We need to constantly remind ourselves, however, that the level of outside support for democratic change in Burma is ultimately determined by a nation's interests. Moreover, whatever support may be forthcoming (or withdrawn) can never be more important than the determination of the Burmese people to liberate themselves. Because Burma has not been known as a regime that exports its terror to other countries, but only inflicts terrorism upon it own citizens, Burma will not become a target of the global war on terrorism. This is our war to fight and win.

SIAM
From Sacred to Profane

Gamblers. Drug addicts. Regular visitors to night-time entertainment areas. Rowdy gangsters. Thieves in saffron robes.

The descriptions above appear to fit many circles within the Thai Sangha (monastic order) these days. But according to Phra Paisal Visalo, who recently completed eight years of research on the state of Theravada Buddhism in Thailand, these phenomena took root well over a century ago.

"The problems of monks deviating from the Dhamma-Vinaya are not new," wrote the scholar monk in his new book titled *Thai Buddhism in the Future: Trends and Alternatives to the Present Crisis.*

"The rampant indecorum in the Sangha signals the demise of Buddhism in Thailand — but there have been attempts at reforms every now and then too. Development in Thai Buddhism is not unlike patterns of fluctuating waves, with the continual ups and downs."

What distinguishes the past from the present crisis — and what may account for the survival, or extinction, of the religion in the future — is the crucial differences in world views. At least, argued Phra Paisal, the old Thai Buddhists still subscribed to beliefs in spiritual enlightenment (Nibbana) as the ultimate goal of religious practice; in the existence of other worlds that transcend the present life; in the simple faith that there is indeed a heaven awaiting the good and a hellish realm for the bad.

But, continued the monk, people nowadays attach very little credence to such tenets. The supreme awakening has become a task too difficult, or even impossible, for the majority of practitioners. Tangible, often material, successes in the present world have emerged as the sole measure of one's worth — and deeds. The notions of any other planes of existence beyond death would be simply laughed at.

In effect, the sacred of bygone eras has been trampled on, and in its place the profane has arisen.

Such a landmark transition has not been achieved overnight.

According to Phra Paisal, the changes have resulted from deliberate efforts by the ruling elite dating back to the early Rattanakosin era. At any rate, the "reforms" were deemed necessary in light of the expansion of colonial force, with its powerful tools in the name of science and modernisation. Other kingdoms in the same region had already witnessed a decline of the official set of dogmas, especially since the members of the upper classes themselves, through exposure to Western culture, chose to convert to the new religion (Christianity) and ways of life.

Everything comes with a price, though. The successes of the revival of Thai Buddhism from above have left a host of malaise that current generations must untangle — if they want to carry on the religion.

For Phra Paisal, "the fundamental, radical, transformation took place when the beliefs in the traditional cosmology that revolved around *Trai Phum Phra Ruang* [an old set of beliefs in the laws of karma] were invalidated — by none other than the leaders who expressed themselves as devout Buddhists."

One surprising discovery made by Phra Paisal in his extensive research was how the pioneers of this secular, more scientific, version of Buddhism were King Mongkut (Rama IV), who spent nearly three decades in robes, and one of his sons, Prince Vajiranana, who rose in rank to become the Supreme Patriarch during the reign of King Rama VI.

King Rama IV was the founder of the Dhammayuti Nikaya, a new sect that criticised and challenged the Maha Nikaya, then predominant in the mainstream Sangha. Prince Vajiranana was behind the unification of Theravada Thai Buddhism and its incorporation into the larger nationalistic discourse.

Judging from the various comments made by the royals, the status of Thai monks — as well as of traditional modes of practice — was perceptibly low. Rama IV openly commented how the men in yellow robes were "out of date" and unduly enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle. Prince Vajiranana himself expressed embarrassment when he made the decision to enter the monkhood — a life others branded full of futility and idleness. His half-brother, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), went further: He regarded monks who spent their time meditating as the "laziest" compared to those who studied Buddhist texts or prayed. (The monarch later made an apology for his "misunderstanding".)

Such negative attitudes were translated into a series of actions. Phra Paisal considers Rama IV to be the first Thai ruler who adopted science and its rational way of thinking into the teachings in Theravada Thai Buddhism. He approached Lord Buddha no longer as a mythical or spiritual figure but as a historical person whose dates, months and years of birth and death could be calculated scientifically. Likewise, he did not believe in the accumulation of merit (from previous lives) that had been traditionally factored into whether or not one was destined for kingship. Rather, bloodline was one of the decisive factors, he stated. Also out were beliefs in the supernatural power of the otherworld (although curiously, it was King Rama IV who came up with a construction of Phra Sayamthewathiraj, revered since as the protector of the Chakri Dynasty and the Thai kingdom).

Importantly, the ultimate goal of Dhamma practice — attainment of spiritual enlightenment — has since been conveniently dropped. Unlike previous monarchs, King Rama IV no longer held such an idea as attainable nor practical for a country's leader to pursue. He thus abandoned the daily almsgiving tradition in preference for spending the allotted time on hearing complaints from his subjects or visiting them (they were permitted for the first time to look up and have a glimpse of the royal portrait).

The dilution of Dhamma also expanded into the ecclesiastic realm. Prince Vajiranana later commanded a momentous change in the ordination ceremony of the Dhammayuti sect: They no longer had to utter a vow to practise in order to achieve enlightenment. The royal head monk perceived that such a statement would rather reflect insincerity on the part of the ordained.

Those transformations were not carried out as ends in themselves. Phra Paisal observes a peculiar trait in Theravada Buddhism: a close affinity between the Sangha and the national institution (be it the monarchy or the central government). The Buddhist Sangha was, and has been, exploited to serve the interests of the ruling class — a fact that would weaken both the religious institution itself as well as the lay public in the long run. How?

As the ruling elite embarked on a project to consolidate its power, Theravada Thai Buddhism became an indispensable

means toward that goal. Integration, in both governance and schooling of monks, was thus of the utmost significance.

Here, Prince Vajiranana played a pivotal role in the centralisation process in the religious realm, which closely paralleled the secular transformation. There was a revamp in religious curriculum that stressed textual learning and a standardised annual test. (Teaching of meditation was thus discarded, "for it would be difficult to test the knowledge".) Prince Vajiranana wrote hundreds of textbooks and commentaries that continue to be used in temple schools and universities.

The Sangha governance was likewise divided and categorised into layers, from the village temple all the way to regional headquarters. The sole authority was entrusted to the king and later to the Supreme Patriarch (who, however, retained only a nominal role in later years). An elaborate set of decorations and financial rewards were devised as incentives — Prince Vajiranana was, again, responsible for coming up with 21 different titles (*Samanasakdi*) to reward monks who played by the new rules and had good connections with the powers-that-be.

The historic shift was not altogether smooth, however. In his research, Phra Paisal cited several stories that denote conflicts between monks sent from the central regime and their local counterparts. King Rama IV himself disdained the then popular folk-style preaching of Lord Buddha's past incarnations that incorporated entertaining characteristics, considering it to be rowdy, irrational and untruthful. Donations to such religious functions, said the monarch, could have been better spent on making a funeral pyre for dead stray dogs.

Accordingly, a sense of alienation and discord between the old and the new Sangha ensued.

"For there were two different, incompatible, cultures in place," wrote Phra Paisal. "One professed rationalism, clear-cut content, tangible results in this lifetime and study of texts as a vehicle to realize Dhamma and the Truth. The other culture, meanwhile, espoused things that are beyond the boundaries of reason, the other world above the present one, an experience-based mode of learning, an oral form of teaching of allegories and parables, and importantly, a perception that Dhamma and enjoyment do not have to be mutually exclusive.

"As a result, those monks who were posted to provincial temples tended to hold the local versions of Buddhism in a negative light. Such conflicts could be presented as the divergences in world views. But underlying this was another type of significant differences — between city and rural cultures, or more specifically between royal court and folk cultures — that escalated the levels of disputes between the two groups. And then there was a subconscious ethnic bias, especially against the Lao locals."

Soon enough, it was the modern, rational Buddhism that won the contest — with consequences. The religion was to be initially cited in nationalistic discourses, to justify the existence of the state. Gradually, however, Buddhist tenets and personnel were to be taken as subservient to the interests of the nation. Here arose a new religion — that of nationalism.

"It is worth noting that wherever Buddhism has been a predominant religion, when the spread of nationalism extends its grips, the very first precept — that thou shat not kill — will always be manipulated in a way that serves the nation-state," argued the scholar monk.

Indeed, all the five precepts were to be amended so that they fit within the new scheme of modernisation and national security. The infamous statement by a senior monk named Kittivuddho Bhikkhu at the height of the Cold War — that killing communists was not a demeritous act — was the epitome of such warped pragmatism. But there were many other instances compiled by Phra Paisal. When a military dictatorship implemented rapid industrialisation programmes, monks were dictated not to teach the value of *Santosa* (contentment with whatever is one's own, as opposed to unbridled lust or desire).

Rather, they were advised to preach to the public to sacrifice for the sake of the nation and monarchy as another form of "Dhamma practice". Curiously, King Rama IV also introduced a "crude" version of the five precepts, for the laypeople, which tolerated an act of killing animals, lying, drinking and so on "as long as it enables one to survive and does not pose great harm to others".

After all, the very notion that all Buddhists need to do is to follow the five precepts signifies the prevalence of this pragmatic form of Buddhism. Worse, the religious tenets have been reduced to catering only to the benefits of individuals or their immediate acquaintances.

Closely parallel to the dilution of Buddhist teaching is the

growing distance between the temple and the lay public. Now monks are expected to conduct only the traditional routines within the ecclesiastical walls, aloof and indifferent to the affairs of the world.

"In the past, Theravada Buddhism prospered thanks to the close relationships between monks and villagers," Phra Paisal pointed out. "But when the two parties grow apart from each other, they will both weaken as a result.

"The [lay] community has become weaker because the temple lacks the ability to advise how they could interact with the outside world, with the flows of modernisation, in a constructive, enlightened manner. Meanwhile, the Sangha has also weakened since there is no support, no infusion of `new blood' from the lay people, most of whom have long forsaken the temple (as well as their own communities)."

Such lax conditions are conducive to an emergence of a new religion — and the most fearsome: consumerism. Subservience to the interests of the nation-state is only a step away from kowtowing to the dictates of the market and alluring cash rewards.

Phra Paisal notes how the rise in material prosperity of temples has been in parallel to the expansion of the cash-based capitalist economy, especially since the reign of King Rama V. Now the realm of faith has become a dynamic market where everything is turned into a commodity. The levels of sophistication are simply daunting. There are different, tailor-made merits to pay for. Superstition has also seeped back inside the temple walls — this time to offer instant, ready-made solutions to the seekers and cash for the performers.

Armies of "spiritual guides" hit the streets with advanced marketing skills. Ordination has been touted as an "experience" to be consumed at least once in a lifetime. One can even taste the sensations of ultimate enlightenment — as something "soft, cool and translucent".

Again, the scholar monk points out how the ruling elite contributed to the merge of Buddhism and capitalism. Prince Vajiranana's lectures and writings contained several advertising passages for banking institutions and for-profit enterprises.

While the cult of nationalism promotes uniformity and homogeneity — that all Buddhists are Thai citizens — the proliferation of consumerism espouses diversity. It has to be so. There is a wide, eclectic array of modern-day Buddhists. Farmers who wish for a good harvest of their bumper crops. Officers who seek promotion. Salesmen, politicians, actors, students — they each have different sets of desires and levels of understandings of what Buddhism entails.

Phra Paisal sees a similarity of this motley religiosity to a collage of art.

"We thus witness a number of people who approach many religious beliefs at the same time — on a 'trial' basis, not unlike consumption of goods. It is also easy for these people to discard any set of practices that no longer appeals to them, a little like shedding out-of-fashion clothes."

The secularisation of Buddhism — from a community-based religion catering to nationalism and individualism respectively — has been subtle, but with immense ramifications. With the entrance of a plethora of foreign faiths, Thailand has become a supermarket of "new religions" for the consumer to shop for and choose from.

Number of followers are no indication of quality, however. To the contrary, the present era witnesses the national religion in utmost disarray — there is impropriety of individual monks; inability of the Sangha to reform itself; and unresolved disputes over what constitutes genuine teachings of Lord Buddha, to name a few problems. At no other time has Theravada Thai Buddhism been in greater need of a new lease on life. Time is running out, but there is hope at the end of the tunnel.

Vasana Chinvarakorn
24 November 2003
Bangkok Post

Announcment

2004 Parliament of the World's Religions

Join 10,000 people of faith, spirit, and goodwill at the 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions in Barcelona, Spain July 7-13, 2004.

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Dear INEB members and readers,

1 Jan 2004

How are you?

I hope that the feeling of beginning anew at the start of the year would be with you and support you to remain in good health and spirit throughout the coming year.

For the year 2003, INEB organized, or co-organized, several events. In May, INEB co-organized a retreat and dhamma talk in Siam by Bhikkhu and Bhikkhuni from Plum Village, France, with kind support from The Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh. We had the 2003 INEB Conference in Seoul, South Korea. In September, INEB organized an Interfaith Peace Dialogue and Workshop for the Next Generation. In December INEB helped organize International Seminar on Buddhism and Development. Report of the last two events appear in this issue.

By the end of 2003, a workshop "International Training on Socially Engaged Buddhist Leadership for Youth" went on from 15-26 December. I promise to keep you informed of this activity in the next issue.

Also, INEB has become more involved in inter-religious cooperation within the Asian region. Several discussions have affirmed our commitment as members of Buddhist communities in a quest for justice and peace.

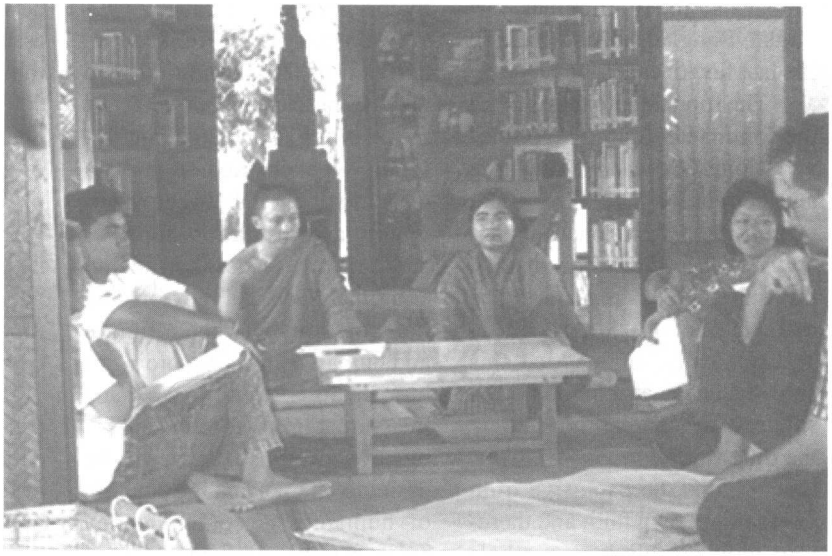
As for the plan for this year, INEB will go on with trainings and activities to support capacity building and connection for young Buddhist activists, grass-root leaders and Buddhist women, giving priority to our members, either individuals or organizations. The tentative INEB Program for this year is as follows, but the details will be announced later:

March: Regional interfaith consultation on gender justice and peace (co-organized)
July: Socially Engaged Buddhist leadership for youth - South & S/E Asia
August: Regional interfaith consultation on youth for peace (co-organized)
August: Training for social action trainers in Asia : Buddhist approach
November: International leadership training for Buddhist women

Therefore, it would be unfortunate if your membership has expired because you might miss a chance to participate in the INEB program. The INEB Secretariat Office depends a great deal on your support in the forms of membership renewal, donation, and also comments and ideas.

Happy New Year.

Lapapan Supamanta
Executive Secretary



P.S. Don't forget the next INEB general assembly in India "From Suffering to Nirvana" October 15-21, 2005.

Interfaith Peace Dialogue & Workshop for the Next Generation

Wongsanit Ashram was the venue of the interfaith dialogue of young people during 1-10 September 2003. It was attended by 15 young activists representing different beliefs such as Islam, Hinduism, Protestantism, Catholicism and Buddhism from Indonesia, Burma, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Laos, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and India. The dialogue's theme was "Religion's Role in Creating Peace."

Opening Question

The meeting opened with a question thrown by Father Bert Layson, a Catholic priest and an activist from the Philippines: "Whether or not religions have failed?" One of the reasons behind the question is the fact that religions are often times used as a means for legitimizing or justifying conflicts and massacres—religions as a source of problem rather than a means to solve conflicts and disputes. This is highly visible in the various inter- and intra-state conflicts in Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and India in the last few decades.

The fundamental basis of all the dominant religions is "peace" and " love." Peace and love have a close relation, and they cannot be separated from one another. Without the attendance of one, the other would necessarily be extinguished.

Ironically, in practice this spirit of peace and love is often subdued by competition among the different religious followers. Each claims the exclusive truth of his or her own faith and therefore idolizes religious symbols and rites, which may become a source of domination. The competition is also often times manipulated by official religious leaders who seem more interested in entrenching their status and privileges. Furthermore, there is a tendency among some religious leaders to use religion as means to gain political influence or to establish a theocracy, a point mentioned by Piet Khaidir, the former chairman of The Union of Muhamadiyah Students.

In his session Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa pointed out that nowadays all religious institutions are defunct and hollow because they are no longer capable of acting as the agent of change. Worse, Ajahn Sulak argued that religious institutions have also been used to legitimize state policies that often benefit only the upper social strata. The ambiguous position of religious institutions and the need to rediscover the essence of religious teachings are two themes that must be thoughtfully worked on by the younger generation.

According to Kenken, an activist of Hikmahbudhi, we need to be clear about what we mean when we talk about religion. Kenken tried to make a clear distinction between community and institution, follower and spiritual leader, spirituality and ritual, God and religion, and the position between religion and human beings. According to him, in this era there are so many misconceptions to the above-mentioned terms. Peace will be easier to attain when the position of humanity is comprehended more clearly. Kenken affirmed the importance of a "peoples theology", that is a theology coming and aiming solely to respond to the concrete problems experienced by the wider society. "Academic theology" has to be reconsidered and translated to "people theology." This matter was reemphasized by Aung Tung, a former Catholic priest from Burma, who called for an end to religious segregation and the need to look for the values of humanity in religious teachings. Fr. Bert Layson closed the ceremony citing one of Anthony De Mello's articles entitled "God in a Basketball Match."

Structural Violence and Mass Poverty

The problem has become more acute in this era of rapid globalization. The extreme social changes caused confusion for Sek Sarom, a young Buddhist activist from Cambodia. She ex-pressed her concern about the dreadful behavior of the new generation, which tends to assume that spirituality is something irrelevant and odd.

Prof. Chaiwat Satha-Anand opened his talk with many tables of conflicts that had taken place in Asia and African during the last 30 years, representing different types of conflict with varying number of casualties. In tune with Ajahn Sulak, Prof Chaiwat also emphasized the problem of poverty and inappropriate pattern of conventional education methodologies as one of the sources of conflict, which is often simplistically portrayed as ethnic, racial or religious.

Prof. Chaiwat pointed out that the world's 200 richest individuals have the income capacity of $ 500 per second, which is far above the earnings of peoples in the third world countries who only make $ 2 per day. The assets of the world's 200 richest people exceed the GNP of many developing countries.

The problem of poverty has caused many social problems such as a sense of inferiority, jealousy, hatred, dissatisfaction, political apathy—and not to forget "terrorism." Yet, this is not a justification for the violent acts of pure terrorism that had taken a lot of innocent lives.

Religion, Culture, Violence and Identity

Human beings in their particular perspectives need distinct identities in order to actualize and inform their very existence in the world. Human beings can select certain labels to depict themselves. Religious identity is frequently becoming the primary identity.

According to Ajahn Chaiwat, religion is an identity which is very closely related to culture in the scope of human activities. Identity makes each human being unique. A rigid identity which is taken fanatically and narrow-mindedly hinders human beings from seeing the pluralism of life argued Ajahn Chaiwat, who also confessed that ultimately any religion may be used to justify violence when needed. So non-violence is an agenda that must be promoted. Even though he refused to discuss whether or not religion is still relevant as a source to create peace, he was more inclined to talk about how religions create clear-cut identities that generate confrontations between people.

A more detailed discussion on the principles of non-violence was raised in the session led by Yeshua Moser, an international activist. Moser divided violent actions into two types: those that are easy to perceive and those that are difficult to see. Obvious violence is, for example, crimes; not so obvious ones are closely related to structural and cultural violence. The non-violence movement is presenting an alternative strategy in responding to both kinds of violence. The failures in mobilizing and convincing the mass to stage an active movement is the reason for the Tibetan non-violence movement abortive attempt emphasized by Yeshua. For that reason, Piet Khaidir strongly stressed the importance of developing mass strength and awareness to struggle against violence perpetrated by majority or the state. The growing awareness of pluralism, justice and affection are the spirit of non-violence, which must be high on the agenda today.

A Balance Between the Heart and the Mind

Modern culture, which sometimes implies Westernization, seems to worship the mind at the expense of the heart. Ajahn Sulak proposed that the world needs the existence of a balance between conscience and rationality. Hence to nullify the spiritual aspect would only give rise to mechanistic progress, which would ultimately dry up world civilizations. In other words, spirituality and aesthetics have to serve as a balancing factor. The interfaith dialogue represents one of the efforts of INEB to develop conscience and rationality equally. Instructed by sisters Anne and Ouyporn and assisted by brother Nuttarote of INEB, the dialogue created an atmosphere of friendliness thus allowing the participants to share information and also experience interconnectedness in a plausible manner; that is, bringing spirituality to the surface without the loss of intellectuality.

Kenken
Hikmahbudhi, Indonesia

Announcment

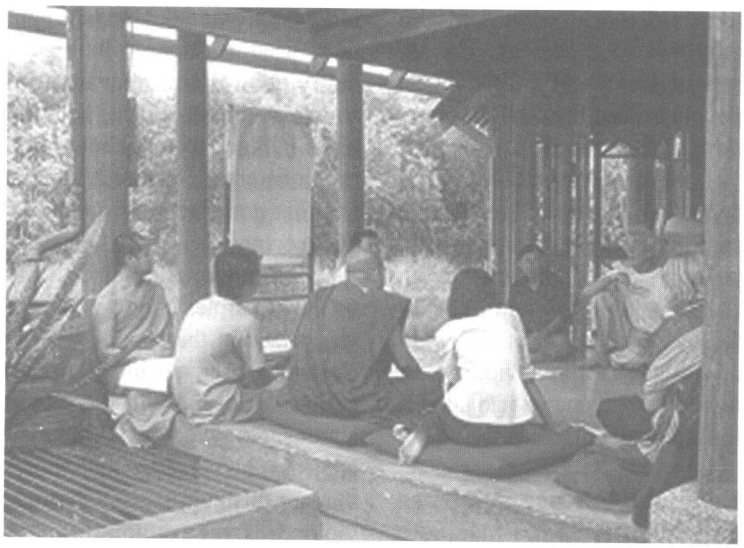
Engaged Meditation: Inner Practice and World of Change
A Weekend Program at Naropa University with Ajaan Sulak Sivaraksa

How can we draw on mindfulness practices to engage with the political, economic and social issues that face our world today? How can the insights of our inner work become means to our work in the often confused and chaotic outer world? Join Ajaan Sulak Sivaraksa, one of the world's leaders of engaged Buddhism, for an exploration into the power of compassion, loving kindness and mindfulness in creating concrete change in the structures of our global society. The weekend will include lecture, discussion, and periods of meditation practice.

Dates: April 16-18, 2004
Location: Naropa University, Boulder, Colorado, USA
For more information or to register: www.naropa.edu/extend or extend@naropa.edu;
(800) 603-3117.

Buddhism and Development Workshop, Dec 5-7, 2003: Summary

The Buddhist Perspective on Development Workshop was held at Wongsanit Ashram, near Bangkok December 5 through 7th, 2003. The World Faith Development Dialogue (WFDD) and the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM) coordinated forces to organize the weekend's events. Participants came from all corners of the world to engage in dialogue about the many issues surrounding a quickly changing globe. In the introductory session on Friday morning, each participant introduced him/herself. There were approximately 60 people in attendance. Monks from Cambodia, Burma, Laos, Taiwan and England; nuns from Taiwan; and lay people from Thailand, Burma, India, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Japan, Indonesia, Philippines, Bangladesh, Australia and America joined in to explore the similarities and differences in their unique passion for progressive change through action.



The following session was an open discussion to elicit and prioritize the topics that became the major themes for the weekend workshop. These included: dynamics in mindfulness, the fact of suffering (dukkha), the constitution of happiness, the requirement for contentedness, need for meaning, fostering dialogue to perpetuate understanding, compassion in education, and clarity in language use. In addition, social issues were also targeted, such as comparing Sangha organization and activities, awareness of like-mindedness, modes of enhancing cultural representation, gender considerations, application of Buddhist principles in contemporary society, the monks and nuns role in preservation of the Dharma, root causes of modernization, media influence, detachment between power and the 'overpowered', organization in community, and development within Buddhism generally. These key issues which represented the natural convictions of the participants gave rise to the sessions which followed over the next two days.

The third session involved presentations on grassroots experiences in Laos, Cambodia and India and the need for anti-consumer attitudes. Presenters emphasized the need to examine tradition through history and return to the teachings of the Buddha. Motivation should emphasize community merit rather than individual gain. A deep understanding of the deteriorating impact of globalization on the Sangha is desperately necessary.

Laos. A primary focus for change is found in leadership training. Addressing the problems through the acceptability of youth looking at a need for transformation from the inside. The young are encouraged by elders to carefully choose their path, but with such a large border shared with Thailand, the youth are often penetrated with the desire for expensive commodities. If they return home, many no longer appreciate the culture of their own people. Further, they often don't succeed away from their country and contract diseases and addictions.

Cambodia For many years engulfed by war and social upheaval, the people have been uprooted from their tradition. It has become increasingly important to educate the new era with an appreciation for environment, rights and health. Karuna in the heart and prajna in the mind, including a balance between. Through participation in community, individuals renew in understanding. As a treatment

requires many forces helping the same cause, so must the path be cultivated in fullness simultaneously.

India The pursuit of right livelihood is helping the people to develop skillful states. People are developing social work programs as well as systems for education. Hostels and community centres facilitate an interest in the Dharma. Lessons taught by the local people whose lives have been changed through Buddhism. The difficulties are primarily found in resisting the pull of modernization, considerations of hierarchy, and security issues of employment. Success is measured by an ongoing dharmic spirit in the face of contemporary powers of diminishment.

The fourth session held on Friday afternoon generated the topics which became the basis for small group discussion the following day. Participants focused on the subject of development, and over the three sessions held on Saturday, furthered their understanding of selected issues through free-flowing discussion, drawing on the insight of group members. The principle discussion topics and some of the points which arose were: Energy—organic alternatives are desirable but not economical, critical judgement is difficult; Privatization - in the national context, family can be a traditional alternative to corporation; Economics—goods exported rarely equals funds in; Media—potentiality as a tool as well as its negative affects; Gross National Happiness (GNH)—applied ethics beginning with holistic realization, steps following; Dialogue—consensus between groups, working towards problem solving; Education—monastic influence on local issues, need for methodological change; Modernity—challenges and repercussions of consumerism, corruption is widening the gap between rich and poor, loss of individuality; Youth—strengthening through education, investigation of teaching effectiveness; Community—principles preserved in tradition, interfaith unity.

The foregoing briefly captures the main ideas discussed, though it barely touches on the extent to which each issue was addressed and embraced in the groups. After reporting back, the entire room engaged in an open forum deepening the general awareness of the compassion felt for each.

For the final sessions on Sunday morning, individuals gathered in groups based on interest, focusing their vision on actualizing awareness into action. The areas covered and some of the key points raised were: Rejuvenation—change must come from inside of people who organize the Sangha. Encouraging critical thought and an active use of energy in the direction of making a difference. The importance of expanding understanding through dialogue with other traditions. Preservation of the Dharma is crucial, further workshops on particular issues would be helpful as well as a commitment for further communication between causes represented at this workshop; Media—Utilization of this powerful tool of contemporary society for the extension of Buddhism is crucial for maintaining a voice for it's principles. Technology allows individuals to stay in communication, creating inter-Sangha support. Networking between grassroots and alternative communities facilitates an ongoing need for a protected context for growth; Community—Various types of groups further positive change through generosity and shared vision. Friendship and inclusiveness encourage a renewed vigor in people. Sharing resources is important for effective communication, enabling the development of good forces on a wider scale; Education—Continually refreshing methods of transmitting the Dharma to youth allows it to maintain relevance in a changing society. Monks facilitate individual identification with the actualization of practice and provide guidance. Information on meditation needs to be made available and encouraged through an awareness of the changing context for learning; Macro Economics—Beginning with an analysis of existing information, research must be furthered on available alternatives. A collective path allows individuals to network, sharing perspective on the surrounding topics. Through coordination of interested persons, further discussion can help offer solutions for particular needs.

The workshop connected people through cultivating awareness and interest through interaction and dialogue. Participants were able to share areas of concern from their own contexts, and meet like-minded people to talk about change. A common vision for compassion in a world of penetrating forces of globalization, modernization, and consumerism arose out of the discussions and natural realizations of personal capacity followed. Individuals grew in an awareness of existing organizations that are fighting these forces and collaborated on ideas for further empowering these

groups. The sessions offered hope for the possibility that exists to put principles into practice through committed social action. The workshop demonstrated that mindfulness, unified effort and a desire for progressive change can make a difference.

Leanne Kadyschuk

Buddhism and Development: Healing Our Communities

Helena Norberg-Hodge's paper, "The Pressure to Modernise and Globalise", summarises the transition from holistic sustainable communities to their breakdown, step by step and as a vicious cycle with loss of self-esteem and culture, with an increase in violence and disconnectedness. Helena's case study of Ladakh over the last 30 years since road access opened the way to 'development', demonstrates a familiar story in so many places, further exemplified in Sulak Sivaraksa's[1] critique of capitalism. The consequences of the 'global development model' as outlined in both papers, from loss of livelihood, weakening of community ties, and loss of self esteem, form an interconnecting web of increasing poverty and violence. It is around these issues that aid and development bodies are responding, mostly with band-aiding attempts for quick fixes, addressing 'sustainability' in name only. Rarely are the root causes addressed. Many so-called 'poverty alleviation' programs are indeed poverty creating. David Loy suggests that the 'poverty problem' cannot be understood apart from the 'wealth problem', and that we need to explore the 'wealth/poverty dualism',[2] and the personal, social and environmental costs of our commitment to growth and wealth. Buddhist



teachings, such as the Four Noble Truths and David Loy's work in developing a Buddhist social theory help us to ask questions about development and to see the consequences, explore ways of healing, to see possible alternative models and even to acknowledge a not knowing of the answers.

In the practice of development, there are many agendas - often hidden - and a range development perspectives and organisations, ranging from local non-government organisations (NGOs), to the bi-laterals, multi-laterals and trans nationals. Much development aid can be said to be more damaging for communities than if not attempted at all. Of course there are those who benefit, but not usually the constituents it is claimed will benefit. For example, the CDRI (Cambodian Development Research Institute) did an audit of aid to Cambodia several years ago and concluded that most aid had exacerbated the situation. This brief generalisation overlooks some meaningful outcomes but I am focusing here on some of the following well known 'three poisons'.

Ignorance:
- programs designed out of country not responsive to actual needs;
- inappropriate in terms of language, models and vision;
- inadequate training for local staff,
- neglect of personal and cultural aspects;

Greed:
- distortion of local economies;

- expectations of rapid change too quickly;
- international self-interest in improving their own trade and job opportunities

Hatred:

- competitiveness introduced leading to conflict and violence.

Whist not advocating a return to traditional communities as they once were, the qualities of human existence as summarised in the 'paramitas' provide a bench mark and basis of moving towards healing. At the same time, what have we learnt from past and present experience that might be relevant to an exploration of alternatives to the capitalist model? Applying a community development model within a framework of Buddhist values and practice, such as in the Grassroots Leadership Training (GLT), as being implemented by Spirit in Education Movement (SEM), is one such approach. Development: has a wide definition, but I will use a concept which guided the work of a small Australian NGO, Community Aid Abroad/ Oxfam with whom I have worked, as a starting point;

'development is that process through which a society evolves the values, political leadership and other forms of organisation necessary to mobilise and utilise resources in such a way as to maximise the opportunities available to all of its members, for realisation to the fullest possible extent, of their potential as human beings.'[3]

The main elements are the sharing of power, grassroots participation and empowerment of people. The rationale for involvement in communities is:

'to alter the way things are done, to change structures of society which render people powerless along class, ethnicity, sexual preference, age and disability divisions.'[4]

The basis of development from a Buddhist perspective might include some of the following:

- experiencing the 'not-knowing' deep in our hearts before we can creatively respond, or decide not to respond at all;
- fully exploring our own motives for involvement;
- our effort (and no effort) towards self transformation - which includes a collective transformation,
- analysis of greed, hatred and ignorance at our own individual level as well as the social;
- in this time of wide scale de-humanisation, working with the totality of what we are, healing the sufferings as our own;
- being open to freedom and joy, which can arise out of the struggle, as life itself, as expressed by Arundati Roy:

"The only dream worth having...is to dream that you will live while you're alive and die only when you're dead. That is. To love. To be loved. To never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To watch. To try to understand. To never look away. And never, never to forget."[5]

Small is beautiful: Following Sivaraksa's critique of the scale and neglect of the full potential of human beings and all of life in the capitalist model of development, we need to advocate for small scale, diversified and holistic approaches to community development based on local organisations, sanghas or self-help groups. GLT has initiated comprehensive holistic training for sanghas (ordained and lay) with support and follow-up to enable them to become more actively involved as community development workers, supporting their communities and facilitating appropriate change.

Mutual Aid: Maybe it is time to be reminded of this principle, which has been a basis for ethical behaviour and which has appealed to the oppressed and exploited over thousands of years. Kropotkin says, 'that in the ethical progress of man, mutual support - not mutual struggle - has had the leading part'.[6]

Changes in the sangha and community in terms of monastic and lay relationships, gender, East and West or North and South, etc need to be considered. Although Buddhist teachings are relevant and have the potential to deepen our understanding and practice of an alternative model of development, we need to acknowledge the constantly changing situation of the world in which we find ourselves. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, a few years back in terms of working on a plan for a future Tibet with the Government-in-exile, said that in future monks and nuns should be more active in their

communities. This issue has also been taken up by INEB (International Network of Engaged Buddhists) in many ways, for example, training on gender, leadership training skills for nuns and laywomen, and offering training so that nuns in Ladakh could respond to both community issues and study of the dharma. This is also relevant in the West where there is a tendency for buddhists to be engaged in the community in limited ways, with an avoidance of structural analysis or strategic actions.

The bodhisattva ideal: a model of engaging buddhism, a dedication to saving all beings from suffering and to the liberation of others. The paramitas or 'perfections' are the virtues perfected by the bodhisattva in the course of her or his development, and useful guides in the practice of 'development' — inner and outer. How can we embody this in our development work? Maha Ghosananda invites us all:

"We Buddhists must find the courage to leave our temples and enter the temples of human experience, temples that are filled with suffering. If we listen to the Buddha, Christ, or Gandhi, we can do nothing else. The refugee camps, the ghettos, and the battlefields will then become our temples. We have so much work to do" [7]

We need to remember we are in process of humanising: brings humility.

Working with our emotions: looking into our internalised drives, especially our fears, which although they can be life saving, may also make us vulnerable to being controlled. For example, the governing party in Australia has politicised migration and refugee issues by playing on peoples' fears, and thus manipulating election outcomes, introducing repressive legislation, furthering the polarisation of rich and poor and relinquishing global humanitarian responsibilities.

Dependent arising, co-dependent arising or mutual causation: the function and dynamics of interbeing. Seeing the other as no other than myself. Informs workshops on conflict transformation, community building, (as opposed to pursuing individualism), acknowledging our multiple perceptions and celebration of difference and letting go of 'being right'. Basis for awareness of sharing the planet with all beings, seeing my true face.

Meditation: brings clarity and awareness to life.

Deep listening....listening to the cries of the world, as Avalokiteshvara herself. Reaching out and embodying the pain and suffering of the other, and touching compassion. Things shift.

Values: seeing how spiritual/religious values are declining and are being replaced by consumerist values, whether in Cambodia or Australia. In an age of increasing speed, time poverty, opinion polls and rapid sound bites, values have been de-valued. Values drive our thoughts and behaviour but often not brought into public gaze so we need to explore and then see if there is a possible choice. It is clear when we meet someone embodying strong values and even rarer, living them. Teachings come from many sources, if we can sometimes let go of our own particular tradition - which by nature will decay - and be open to others. A group of us have been receiving teachings from Uncle Max, a Yuin elder from the coast of New South Wales in Australia. He embodies and puts into practice the quality of respect for all living beings - not just human beings - despite the deep and widespread oppression since European invasion over 200 years ago.

Stories of resistance, of possibility, of strength through community and joy in the dance. This reflects what we have been learning about the Zapatista Way in our Buddhist Peace Fellowship meetings over the last few years, in our relationship of friendship and solidarity with the Zapatismo. We learnt something about the history of the movement in Mexico since 1994, of Old Man Antonios's discussion of Aboriginal needs and their myths, and how things began to work when they realised that listening at that stage was more important than saving lives. We heard how, despite the imminent loss of their lands, that the indigenous peoples demonstrated their support for the Zapatismo but didn't want war. We were inspired by their process of 'leadership'- to command by obeying the rule - which they also see as 'by asking questions we walk', so that both the asking and the question is then the 'leader'. They have created forums where everyone could share ideas, recognise the rights of indigenous people, respond to injustice, and work for respect and dignity for all, and for a 'world in which all can abide'. Another model of autonomous communities.

Here are a few more examples in the practice of development, responding to some of the more harmful consequences of development, where I have learnt much from my colleagues in Africa and Asia

- Responding to local communities perception of need, whilst acknowledging their own skill base, using training in participatory action research methods as a means of empowering communities, for example, training for community health workers in a refugee camp in Sudan;
- Training of trainers, as a means of sharing skills with others and strengthening capacity of local organisations. The Ladakh Nuns Association are now doing the surveys of training needs of nunneries themselves.
- Working with Disability Action Council (DAC) in Cambodia and providing training for Women with Disability committee members, who in turn offered training to their organisations; working with the DAC, government and NGO leaders on the consequences of a narrowly defined definition of karma, which has intensified the suffering for people with disabilities;
- Training as a means to re-building self esteem and confidence. For example,training some of the poorest women in managing small savings and credit schemes in Vietnam; providing leadership training skills for refugee women on Thai-Burma border;
- Engaging Buddhism in Western affluent, oppressive countries has never been more important, through awareness raising and social activism.

Joanna Macy talks of a growing movement away from the dominant 'Industrial Growth Society' towards a 'Life Sustaining Society' as the 'Great Turning'.[8] This involves "holding actions" in defence of life on Earth, analysis of structural causes and creation of alternative institutions and a shift in perceptions of reality, both cognitively and spiritually.

The many small acts of individuals and groups, often community based, tend to be ignored by the media and mainstream, but are indeed a powerful and growing force for change.

Some of our workshops in Melbourne around conflict have drawn on underlying Buddhist principles as a means of transforming fear and despair into empowerment and action. Central to this process is the 'truth mandala' introduced by Joanna Macy, which enables us to own and honour our intense feelings of pain and suffering. This can be a deeply connecting and transformative experience: transforming fear into trust, sorrow's other face is love, and out of anger comes a passion for justice. One of the goals of this work Macy says, is to help people experience their interconnectedness and self-healing powers after "reframing our pain for the world", as a basis for future action and healing.[9]

In our 'conflict transformation' workshops, we have found that looking fear in the face dissolves fear - fear of the other - which is often the basis of conflict. This comes out of the practice of looking at one's own needs and fears, and the needs and fears of others. Things shift as we look into our fears ...and find that the face of 'the other' is no other than oneself.

Fearlessness is not the absence of fear but the willingness to face it. And admitting fear is transformative, a total act of courage, and becomes a point of strength.

Jill Jameson
November 2003

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4 Hurriyet Babacan, "Cultural diversity and community development in Australia", in *New Community Quarterly*, vol.1, no.1, March 2003, p18

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7 Samdech Preah Maha Ghosananda, from *Peace is Every Step,* in *Entering the Realm of Reality: Towards Dhammic Societies*, ed. Jon Watts, Alan Senauke and Santikaro Bhikkhu, INEB, 1997, p.5

8 Joanna Macy, *Coming Back to Life, Practices to Reconnect our Lives, Our World*, New Society, 1998, p17-24

9 Joanna Macy, op.cit.p.58

I Love a Place Called Wongsanit Ashram



Whether the course of a person's life is entirely fortuitous, or by grand design, it is impossible to say. As for myself, I believe that my reality can be found in a bit of both, having good luck and the sense to know what to do with it, and stay the course, come what may. Why do I love a place called Wongsanit Ashram? Where can one find it? I love it because it is the place that I truly come to know myself, my motives, my well and truly screwed up state of heart and mind, and was able to achieve a sense of peace that has never left me. One can find Wongsanit Ashram at Rangsit, Klong 15, coming from Don Muang Airport, Siam and heading towards Ongkarak and Nakorn Nayok.

I arrived at the Ashram with my partner Caroline and daughter Jessica, in December of 1997, and wasn't to leave until a full year later. It was a time of great upheaval in Southeast Asia, with the tiger economies reeling from currency crises. It was also a time when the ethos of the Ashram was needed by the Thai people, and incidentally my family. We had been struggling as a young family living in London, although there is no doubt that we loved each other, Caroline and I were having trouble shaking off the demons from our past. It is true that they were ruining us, and so Caroline put aside her studies, and I my job, and we set off to find ourselves. First in Sumatra, Indonesia where we were accidental tourists in the middle of Aceh. With riots in the streets of Medan, and Suharto just about to fall, we headed to Siam.

Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa had founded the Ashram some fifteen years previously, it was an Ashram (which really means community) based on Gandhian principles, those of non violence, shared chores etc. Sulak, having been inspired by the life of Ghandhi, was determined to bring those ideals to rural Siam. It has since been host to every Thai dissident, student activist, misunderstood artist from across the land, and indeed from across the world. It is a place of sanctuary. Caroline knew Sulak since she was a child, we were invited to stay, and took up residence in the Baan Dek (literally 'children's home') where we started our new rural existence.

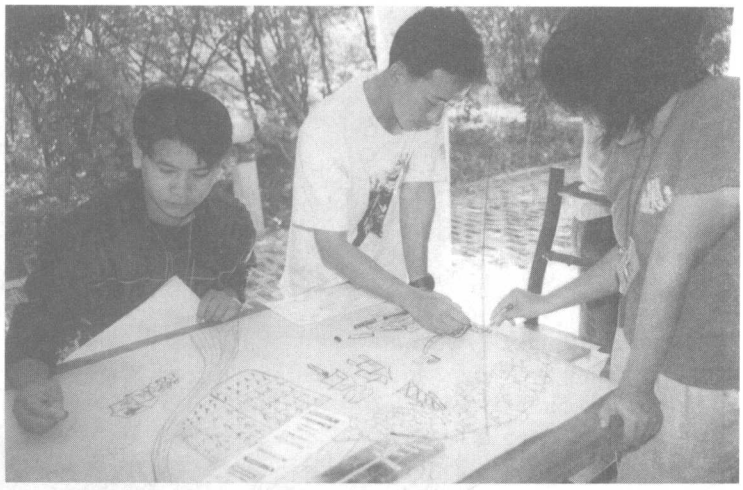
How to describe those days turning to weeks and then months? I can remember when a friend of mine from Jamaica in London told me of his youth spent there with a banana tree in his back garden. I always thought this the epitome of exoticism, imagine, a banana tree in your garden! One hot afternoon I dozed in the Baan Dek and dreamed of living with a banana tree in my garden, and awoke sleepily to see a banana tree through the window of my room. It was like arriving at a place that you have always wanted to be. Later in the week I help Luang, the Ashram's chief gardener plant a row of banana trees in a field behind the Baan Dek, a splendid banana tree grove.

The Ashram is not only a place of personal transformation, where Buddhist monks live in kutis (traditional stilled Thai huts) and Yoga guru's fresh from Delhi give early morning lessons. It is also a place where those with a dissident voice can be among their own, champions of the poor, of the oppressed, of the abused. Maybe that's why I felt so at home. It has been many years since I have been back, and just the other day Caroline said "I feel ready to go back to the Ashram." I looked at her, and felt my senses come to life, and knew in my heart, that I love a place called Wongsanit Ashram.

Danny Campbell

In Pursuit of Money and Happiness : A Community Business Class at SEM

Community business becomes one of the community development strategies nowadays. It is expected to be instrumental to strengthening the capacity and self-reliance of community as well as making a development holistic. A lot of government agencies and NGOs therefore turn to promote how to do community business many villages. However, community organizations' businesses that can survive are not many. Many of them are still unclear about the direction and goal of their businesses. Many are without management skills. Even if some businesses are lucky enough to survive and make profit, they do not contribute to solidarity and care among community members. Emphasis is placed more on profit making or monetary interest. Other values that unite people, strengthen the community and lead to holistic development are overlooked.



Spirit in Education Movement (SEM), Sai Yai Pan Din Foundation and Social Venture Network (SVN) jointly offered a training program on "Principle and Practice of Community Business Management toward Quality of Life and Strength of Community" from 2-5 October 2003 at Wongsanit Ashram, Nakon Nayok province, Siam. Participants are community leaders from rice mill projects, organic agriculture projects and cotton fabric weaving project from the north and the northeast of Siam. The major objective of the training, apart from making people understand how to gain monetary return from their business, is to avail people with how to earn a profit in terms of quality of individual and public lives of the villagers. Peaceful co-existence among mankind and between mankind and nature are taken into account. As Prince Siddhiporn Kritdakara put it, money is illusionary, food is reality, community business and pursuit of monetary profit must not be done alone, but well-roundedly in the manner that creates self-reliance for community holistic ally.

Learning and living together for four days enabled participants to understand the idea of community business. They became clearer about the direction and goal of their businesses. Topics covered in the class include business administration, designing a transparent and accountable organization, member participation in management, team building etc.

The program also provided participants with information on how mainstream businesses are run in reality. Participants said they are more aware of the downside inherent in mainstream business. They became clear about the need to adjust themselves if they are to develop their ventures in competition with mainstream business. It seems to them that, the mainstream business characterized by fierce competition is hopeless particularly for those whose fund is limited. They might end up as a victim to the mainstream business.

At the end of the training, some suggestions were made by resource persons. Revitalizing indigenous wisdom, producing basic necessities (food, clothing, etc.) and creating a network of consumers and a network of community businesses to learn and help from one another are among many ideas taken back home for further consideration.

Are Economies in Asia Alive?



SVN Asia (Thailand) awardees SPC Group and Chiangmai Forest Lovers Community with Khun Anaud, Ajarn Sulak and Khun Prida
(see page 29 about the awards)

A change in awareness of what *business* should be is happening in Asia and in the world. Pioneering corporate leaders—through inner growth—take values in life more seriously. Others realize that globalization not only opens unlimited markets but it implies inter-connectedness and responsibilities increasingly difficult to escape from. And the growing importance for business to build on 'brands' and consumer loyalty makes the good or bad reputation of a company the decisive factor for long term success. Consumers tend to screen corporate identity and business ethics of producers as much as the quality of their products.

These and many other emerging trends were signaled during the first Social Venture Network Asia conference held in Bangkok, 9 - 11 November 2003. The main focus was "rethinking Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)". Participants came from 15 countries of the Asia-Pacific region and speakers included Deepa Narayan, *Voices of the Poor* project of the World Bank, India; Banthoon Lamsam, President and CEO of the Kasikorn Bank, one of the biggest banks in Thailand; Dr. Jingjai Hanchanlash of Loxley Plc., a communication giant in Thailand; Tessa Tenant, founder of the Association for Socially Responsible Investment in Asia (ASrIA), HongKong; Richard Barrett, author of *Liberating the Corporate Soul* and consultant in corporate transformation; Viraf Mehta of Partners in Change, India; Stephen Loke of the Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility in Singapore; Sulak Sivaraksa who introduced the case of Human Rights and investment policies related to Burma with a video message of Aung San Suu Kyi; Gerard Kramer, Dutch Ambassador in Bangkok presenting the CSR policy of his government; Surin Pitsuwan, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and member of the UN Human Security Commission; and Prince Alfred of Liechtenstein who made the challenging effort to dig into the complexity of trends towards *New Paradigms in Economics.*

The SVN Awards have been presented at all previous SVN Asia (Thailand) Annual Conferences by H.E. Anand Panyarachun, former Prime Minister of Thailand.

Social Venture Network

(SVN) Asia started in Thailand after the groundbreaking *Alternatives to Consumerism* gathering organized by Sulak Sivaraksa in 1997. Activists and professionals working in a variety of sectors met to exchange visions on badly needed alternatives in their respective fields, be it medicine, education, religion, arts & architecture, community development or agriculture. The idea for networking around 'alternative business' was born when Ajarn Sulak linked up with local business people and colleagues abroad to work out the idea.

With the help of Social Venture Network Europe and USA, SVN Asia was founded in Thailand and since its start an impressive range of activities have been realized including: a business delegation paying a visit to the protesting village near the Pak Moon dam in the North East; exchanges with community enterprises in the South; public debates and field visits regarding community forestry and the position of indigenous peoples; and SVN talks on debt restructuring, corruption, developments in the media, as well as company visits to a great variety of colleagues who all in their own way make efforts to do business from the perspective of social and environmental responsibility. Central in these efforts is Prida Tiasuwan, President of SVN Asia (Thailand) and founder of Pranda Group Plc.

The vision expressed in the introduction to this article, however, is not (yet) how mainstream business people perceive their position in society. This was clearly exemplified by Banthoon Lamsam, President & CEO of the Kasikorn Bank, formerly the Thai Farmers Bank, one of the biggest financial institutions in Thailand. As a large-scale banker and CEO Mr. Banthoon told the audience he has to satisfy his shareholders first. Only when he could delegate the daily work to his top managers would he lean back and contemplate social schemes that address problems in society. He has to persuade the shareholders that these schemes will not affect the bottom line. The main reason why he engages with projects he initiates or adopts ~ and these are many as both Kasikorn Bank and Mr. Banthoon are known for their social profile ~ is to "feel good" in the margin of daily pressure.

Mr. Banthoon's honest, occasionally sarcastic, and humorous demonstration of the classical separation between core mainstream business and philanthropy matched the intention of the organizers that the conference be held in a creative context of realism and openness. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by and large is seen as separate from the managerial duty to run a company and deliver the highest possible return on investment. This is where *re-thinking* CSR starts.

Unfortunately another expected partner in dialogue happened to escape from the SVN Asia conference. The conference was offered as a platform for sincere exchanges and mutual challenges. UNOCAL, a major oil company from USA with growing operations and influence in Asia, at the last minute declined their initial intention to take part in the dialogue.

At other occasions, like at the Asian Forum on Corporate Social Responsibility organized by the Asian Institute of Management, Philippines, multinational corporations like Coca Cola (the major Asian Forum sponsor), Nestle, Shell and UNOCAL were happy to be placed in the flood lights and show their 'CSR'-achievements. However, the Asian Forum meeting, also organized in Bangkok earlier in the year, was a typical one-way communication show with a lot of contests for the best place but no real debate. Was UNOCAL afraid to discuss the Yadana Pipeline affair with Sulak Sivaraksa? Not unlikely.

Ajarn Sulak's presentation on Human Rights and the Corporate World — while recognizing from the Buddhist perspective that economic activity and business in terms of Right Livelihood are primarily beneficial — revealed the double face of UNOCAL and other 'CSR champions'. Sulak presented the Yadana Pipeline as an example of business acting in violation of Human Rights. UNOCAL cooperates with the military junta of Burma to transport natural gas by pipeline through protected forests from Burma to Thailand. UNOCAL and their subsidiaries did not eliminate the use of forced labour for the construction of the pipeline, a practice of the military junta to suppress ethnic minorities and minimize labour costs. The Burmese military also invests in illegal drug production and trade to make even more profit out of the lucrative sale of natural resources. UNOCAL recently confirmed that it will ignore the USA policy not to invest in Burma. It claims the Burmese population approves its presence in the country. A dialogue would have been interesting as Ajarn Sulak illustrated his arguments with a video compilation — of an interview given some years ago — of Aung San Suu Kyi who holds the rights to

represent the Burmese people based on her election as political leader.

It was one of the most moving moments of the first SVN Asia conference when six wide-screens were lowered in the Chumbhot-Pantip auditorium in Chulalongkorn University to allow Aung San Suu Kyi — who is held in detention by the military junta for more than six months now after a violent attack on her life — to be symbolically present and to directly address the conference.

In her clear voice and with beautiful flowers in her hair she argued that a sharp divide between the average citizens of Burma and the very rich elite is maintained by the present junta. In Aung San Suu Kyi's vision, investment is welcome if it serves the average citizens. That cannot be the case without respecting democracy, even if a well-off middle class is created with the help of foreign capital.

In her closing statement that seemed to be made especially for the many students that participated in the SVN Asia conference in Chulalongkorn University, the first university in Thailand, she encouraged the refugees and students not to despair but to remain determined to struggle for democracy and justice.

It was a pity that UNOCAL was not able — in an atmosphere of open dialogue — to clarify its policy and explain how it is related to corporate social responsibility. The contrast between admirable 'CSR' efforts of UNOCAL to engage in community development on one hand and support for an anti-democratic regime on the other hand seems to be more than a simple separation between core business and philanthropy: it becomes pure schizophrenia.

Although the positions of the Kasikorn Bank and UNOCAL towards CSR are totally different, these positions are likely to be both based on the same paradigm. This paradigm is that business has its own rule: 'maximizing profit,' and corrections on this rule are exercised only by external influences like governmental regulations, laws, (religious) ethics or 'feel-good' impulses of individual managers. Whether a straight-forward enterprise perceives philanthropy to be separate from its core mission, or whether business coalitions with illegal powers have to be whitewashed with *public relations*-driven social activities, the common paradigm seems to be that corporate social responsibility is not and should not be an integral part of the core policy of the enterprise.

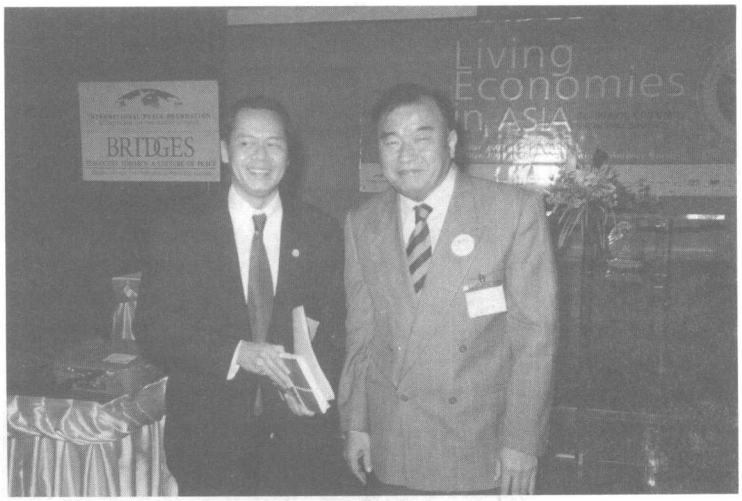
The message of the first SVN Asia conference at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, November 2003, is that this paradigm is now in question.

An impressive range of thought-provoking arguments to underpin this call for paradigm shift was presented based on experiences from different business sectors. Viraf Mehta from Partners in Change, India, presented the example of the TATA conglomerate, which started from a family business more than 100 years ago, and has grown into one of the biggest venture in Asia, adopted community development as its primary objective from the beginning onwards. Stephen Loke, founder of the CSR Center in Singapore, refering to his long experience as a former consumer activist, argued that CSR will become an important element of business excellence and that consumers will consequently push for the integration of CSR in business policies. Tessa Tenant from Hong Kong signaled a strong trend of financial institutions to apply CSR and related criteria to their investment strategies, especially for long term investments. And Masaru Kataoka from Japan illustrated how he could make ethics the core of the small-scale Citizen's Bank and be successful, in contrast with many mainstream banks in Japan who have to cope with a high level of non-performing loans. Kataoka's example made clear what *"Living Economies in Asia"* are and can be. Staying small and independent was also the factor to which Sutthichai Eamcharoenying of Wonderworld toy manufacturers, Thailand, referred to as a success factor illustrating this with a dialogue he had with well-known Therevada monk and wisdom teacher Phra Payuttho. The venerable Payuttho compared mainstream business with a big boat that will float with the current in the river in times of crisis, while the fish will be able to swim upstream. This view was supported by Dr. Jingjai Hanchanlash of Loxley Plc., Thailand, who referred to the economic crisis that urged business ambitions in the Greater Mekong area to be well-grounded in cultural specificity. And Peter Emblin, Australian representative in Thailand for Weber Shandwick, one of the giant Public Relations companies, expected CSR to become an inevitable element in business practice, to a great extent because investors will screen companies from that perspective as irresponsible behaviour becomes more and more a risk factor.

From the point of view of an independent business consultant with an enormous diversity of corporate clients all over the world, including Thai Airways (one of the sponsors of the SVN Asia conference) Richard Barrett presented a well-grounded, systematic approach to value-driven business. Richard, author of *Liberating the Corporate Soul*, made crystal clear that 'corporate transformation' is not something vague and in the air but a tangible process with measurable results. Once the seven levels of values in an organization are understood and motivations of managers are mapped, concrete steps can be made towards a 'full spectrum' value-driven organism. This includes survival and meeting the requirements of the financial bottom line, but does not stop there. Economic performance is only the first level and it will imply insecurity the more other levels of realization are not fully recognized and integrated.

The understanding of total *inter-connectedness* and, consequently, universal service as a step in the evolution of human consciousness can be compared with the process of recognition of the challenge of climate change. Environmental problems can no longer be dealt with as limited phenomena to be solved in isolation. All problems are interconnected and result in global climate change. This realisation is also true for the economic, social and cultural dimensions of Earth civilization: if the awareness of inescapable social interconnectedness is not made the starting point of each and every business, the world will suffer increasingly from the results of self-multiplying, illusionary practice.

However, Prince Alfred of Liechtenstein, Chairman of the Board of Advisors of the International Peace Foundation, co-organizer of the SVN Asia conference in alliance with Chulalongkorn University, explained step-by-step that a paradigm shift is relatively easy to anticipate in general terms, but much more difficult to grasp once operationalized in the full complexity of business reality. People tend to restore the status quo after crisis, but the point of crisis is that a new reality at another plane wants to be brought to life. Transformation follows organic patterns. Democracy is not enough, as much as the organic complexity of the body does not function according to democratic decision making among the head, heart or other organs.



Bantoon Lamsam, President & CEO of Kasikorn Bank with Prida Tiasuwan

Trends towards 'global healing' will imply: growth of businesses of scale, small enough to be able to fully shoulder responsibility, or *Living Economies* and global governance to coordinate interconnectedness between multiple networks of Living Economies. In this light Richard Barrett put the pertinent question to Robert England, UNDP Resident Representative in Bangkok, and representative of the Global Compact initiative, when the UN would fully start aiming for a democratic system of global governance.

Earlier Deepa Narayan, Senior Advisor of the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network at the World Bank, provided an overview of her findings based on research on poverty in 23 countries, published as *Voices of the Poor*. The World Bank, UNDP and other intergovernmental agencies, at the request of Kofi Annan, together launched the Global Compact initiative in order to create new public-private partnerships through which the corporate sector can take responsibility for poverty reduction, environmental devastation and oppression. The initiative is only in its beginning stages and is met with a critical approach of concerned NGO's. Simultaneously, at the national level some governments have formulated CSR policies including criteria for corporate behaviour and tax incentives for investment in



A group at Suan Pakkad Palace with Helen, Joyce (l.) and Carla (far right) in Thai dress.

sustainable development. Ambassador Gerard Kramer of the Netherlands explained how these national policies can be building blocks for inter-governmental actions.

Parallel with new initiatives in global governance, full attention should be given in the first place, according to Deepa Narayan, to the organizations of the poor themselves. External attempts to intervene are seldom successful. A new promising phenomenon is the emergence of a diversity of *social entrepreneurs*. They combine business intuition with social objectives in a creative and economically feasible way.

It was extremely encouraging that so many young people, students and young entrepreneurs participated in the conference. They brought contemplations on long-term development within reach of direct action.

The participants' quests about paradigm shift and global governance were brought very close to the skin when H.E. Anand Panyarachun former Prime Minister of Thailand announced, during the dinner cruise on the Chaophraya river as part of his traditional introduction to the SVN Awards ceremony, that he just had been appointed to chair the UN Commission advising Secretary General Kofi Annan on necessary reforms of the UN system, primarily related to security issues. Earlier Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, had compared the report of the UN Commission on Human Security, of which he was a member, with the paper *The Path Towards Living Economies,* produced by leading SVN members, concluding that the SVN paper represented genuine "out of the box" thinking. Is reform possible without questioning paradigms?

The first SVN Asia conference thus became a unique platform, where business persons young and old; politicians and administrators; NGO representatives; and the academic community (lecturers and students) discussed the challenge to rethink corporate social responsibility in the light of changing paradigms. The need to further explore the concept of "Living Economies in Asia" has been shown to be extremely urgent.

The conference was concluded with a dinner reception at the fairy-tale-like Suan Pakkad palace and gallery for modern art at the invitation of M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, co-hosted by Dutch Ambassador Gerard Kramer.

A first opportunity for follow-up will be the meeting on *Gross International Happiness* in Bhutan, February 2004. This meeting was introduced to the SVN Asia conference in the 'Spirit in Business' workshop. The next SVN Asia meeting will be organized in Singapore.

We hope *Seeds of Peace* readers will be part of it.

Hans van Willenswaard

Awards 2003

SVN Awards 2003

The SVN Asia (Thailand) Awards were presented by H.E. Anand Panyarachun. The committee selected awardees from the Business Category and the NGO Category. In the Business Category the winner was the Sor Por Chor (SPC) Group Co., Ltd. a manufacturerer of rice flour, and in the NGO Category the Chiangmai Forest Lovers Community. The SPC Group emerged from a network of 800 young teachers who supported self-sufficiency at the community level in 20 provinces in Siam after the 14 October 1973 uprising against the military dictatorship. The first rice flour factory started with a capital of 100,000 Baht (US $ 2,500). It expanded into 3 main companies with 19 subsidiaries, 100 distribution centers selling the flour to more than 3,000 noodle manufacturers in Siam. Employees have a chance to get involved in the management work of the company and they get shares in return. The company encourages employees to set up independent subsidiaries and to support the SPC Security Fund providing small loans for staff, customers and co-entrepreneurs. The SPC Group founded the Fund for Children's Education and Community Development. It tries to recycle the production residues together with farmers by turning them into biological fertilizer.

The Chiangmai Forest Lovers Community promotes a healthy interaction between forests and human beings. It emphasizes the role of indigenous peoples in forest conservation and put a lot of efforts to push forward — to no avail until now — an appropriate Community Forest Act to empower communities in their responsibility for forest conservation and cultivation. They often organize exhibitions, poets and writers trips to the forests, women and children's festivals, tree ordination ceremonies and the promotion of sustainable farming and agroforestry systems.

Both organizations are excellent examples of the importance of civil society engagement and the opportunity for enterprises and NGO's to work hand in hand towards self-sufficiency, environmental rehabilitation and social justice.

SNF Awards 2003 (The 2003 Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation Awards)

On 13th-14th December 2003, Wongsanit Ashram celebrated its anniversary with many activities. On this occasion, distinguished people were awarded by the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation for their lifelong struggle for peace and justice.

The late Ms. Supaporn Pongpruk, a forner INEB executive secretary, spent her last decade of life to teach people how to make peace with body to achieve peace of mind. With good friends around her, she was able to seriously practice dhamma. Despite her fragile physical state, she still cared for others and shared with them her talents such as yoga and alternative healing.

Ms. Rosana Tositrakul is one of the leading figures in the NGO movement against corruption in Siam. She invested a lot of effort in investigating the case of corruption of medicine and medical procurement in the Ministry of Public Health. Her effort contributed to the arrest of the cabinet minister who was later tried in court and condemned for the first time in Siam by the force of civil society.

Mr. Sahachai Supamitkrisana is a man of Chinese descent. He used to do business in a five-rowhouse shop before he was ordered to move out without fair compensation and respect of his rights. None of his neighbors dared to fight for justice because the rowhouses are owned by The Crown Property Bureau. He struggled to submit petitions to HM the King many times but nothing has been done despite the King promised him justice. His fight for justice is not over yet although he is now homeless, jobless and without surviving family members.

A Group of 5 young lawyers are committed to help the former monk, Ven. Prachak, who was accused of destroying forest by the government agencies. Although the case is long and without support, they are willing to help demand justice for the former monk who devoted himself to protect the environment.

Sulak Sivaraksa: An Appreciation



The first thing that comes to my mind when I think of Sulak is to compare him with other Thai intellectuals in the past 100 years or so. I discovered that there are very few Thai intellectuals like him. An important trait that distinguishes Sulak from the other Thai intellectuals is his unwillingness to take part in or belong to any system. By 'system' I am referring to the bureaucratic, business, or political centers. Among Thai intellectuals since the times of King Rama V, has there been anyone who refused to enter the system? Of course there have been such intellectuals, but they are very small in number. Most Thai intellectuals who have exerted influence on our worldviews, thought processes, political affiliations, economic convictions, attitudes in life, etc. belong to the system. But as early as 1962 — when he just got back from completing his studies in England and started to work on the *Social Science Review* — Sulak proclaimed that he did not want to take part in any system. What led him to make this decision? From his written works, we can make two approximations. One, he did not want to serve the military dictatorship at the time. Two, the Thai bureaucracy was still highly inefficient. Since the reign of King Rama V, we find that the bureaucracy had been very important in bringing about changes to Thai society. Of course the role of the leadership was also important. But the bureaucracy was not simply a tool of the executive. But in 1962, it was evident that the bureaucracy had already lost its power circa 1932. In particular, after the coup d'etat in 1947 up to the Sarit Thanarat dictatorship, the Thai bureaucracy no longer played an important role in transforming society. Asked whether or not the bureaucracy simply became a tool of the dictatorship, the answer is not really. But this is debatable. Sulak tends to praise the bureaucracy when it is under good leadership such as under King Rama V or Prince Damrong. But in 1962, this kind of bureaucracy had long disappeared. The young Sulak who felt he had a role to play in bringing about social changes could thus no longer work for the bureaucracy.

And the weakness of the bureaucracy was a subject Sulak often wrote about during his years at the *Social Science Review*. In his view, the bureaucracy had failed to come up with the right man for the right job — hence its inefficiency. So why didn't Sulak get into business instead? In 1962 most of the businesses in Siam were still small scale except for the banks. But he did not fully enter into business. There is an explanation for this, but I am not sure if it is the correct one. It goes as follows. Sulak was heavily influenced by Greek thinkers for whom working merely for personal gains was demeaning. Doing business is undoubtedly a search for profits. But Sulak has long been in business to sustain his livelihood like others. However, to be a bank manager in order to accumulate great wealth and then bring about social changes was antithetical to Sulak's attitude, which was influenced by Greek thinkers. On the contrary, I feel that Sulak felt that he had sufficient capability to foster social changes without having to enter into the business world, a world which requires making a lot of compromises. In terms of politics, at that time there was little opportunity for ordinary citizens to engage in politics. Subsequently, when there was an opening in the political system enabling ordinary citizens to play politics, it was too weak to bring about any social change. Small wonder that Sulak did not care much about playing politics. And when he concentrated on working from the grassroots, it became clear that the political system was not the agent to bring about social transformations. Among the few Thai intellectuals who chose not to be part of the system was Tien Wan. However, if we read his biography we would realize that he wanted to be included in the system, but it rejected him. Most intellectuals who were outside the system had been 'exiled' via various means. They were imprisoned, forced to flee to the jungles, collaborate with the CPT, etc. Therefore, Sulak has been successful as an outsider who has not been systemically removed like the other oppositional intellectuals.

What are the essential traits of Sulak as a public intellectual? One, is his attempt to talk about what it means to be Thai. At first — around 1962 — Sulak defined Thai-ness as the culture of the ruling stratum. Subsequently, Sulak redefined Thai-ness to mean the simple way of life of villagers and Buddhism. Initially, similar to many Thai intellectuals, Sulak felt that to change Thai society required some centralized systems, and thus his emphasis on systemic reform. This is a common addiction of Thai intellectuals. An important turning point was when Sulak met Prince Siddhiporn Kridakara and when he took a trip with a number of students to the rural areas. Both enabled him to confront and witness poverty firsthand. However he did not agree with either Marxism or capitalism. Instead he turned to Thai democracy, which is firmly rooted in the Sangha tradition of Buddhism. Moreover, from the mid-1970s to mid-1980s, he introduced the translated works of many alternative thinkers from abroad to Thai society, and his attitude toward Pridi Banomyong also shifted dramatically in that decade. Turning to witness the poor he also saw Pridi. I also feel that Sulak's attitude toward the royal families also altered during this period. In a book published in 1982 Sulak still praises King Rama IV and V, but also criticized them for failing to decentralize power. In other words, they were not the leaders who would pave the way to democracy. And he looked back to Buddhism seeing it as the solution to democracy. This book made me feel that Sulak gradually gave more importance to Buddhism than to the monarchy. This proved to be the breaking point in the intellectual development of Thai society and of Sulak; that is, it no longer entailed standing outside of the system but rather breaking up with the system. Even though this might not be as flashy as 14 October or 6 October, in terms of the intellectual evolution, this was a significant turning point. This is because most Thai intellectuals have been part of the system all along and wanted to grow within the system. As an outsider, it was acceptable for Sulak to return his gaze to the system. But once he broke up with the system, many Thai intellectuals found it unacceptable that he still criticize it.

Another important thing about Sulak is the web-like character of his version of Thai-ness: the simplicity of the villagers and the Dhamma. Sulak has pointed out that they are pertinent to resolving or transcending the crises in the present world. In other words, he feels that the problems that Siam is facing are not merely national problems. A common enemy that Thai and global citizens share is transnational capitalism, requiring transnational oppositional movements that are rooted not in Western theories but in

the Dhamma — in the simplicity of the villagers. Sulak has often pointed out that modern capitalism destroys ethics, morality, democracy, and the environment. This political standpoint is the byproduct of drawing connections between 'Thai-ness' and global events, a thing which no other Thai intellectuals in the past have done. This is because Thai intellectuals have only been concerned about the survival of the state, and therefore they were unable to connect Thai-ness with events worldwide. Sulak tries to find solutions to global problems from the context and perspective of Thai culture.

Sulak is a fiery and radical speaker, often providing interesting facts or touching on embarrassing subjects. In this sense, he has shunned an important tradition of Thai intellectuals, heralding a cultural revolution via his apparels, words, and lifestyle. It is not only his words that make him a gadfly. It is also his standpoint in which we are unaccustomed. Most cannot accept his views or recommendations because they can only be implemented or pursued once outside the system. How can we achieve a better society? Sulak has asked us to start from the personal level — finding virtuous friends, start forming groups, and eventually creating extensive networks leading to social movements and people power; in short, becoming agents for social change. But in one distinct way, Sulak has not completely broken away from the tradition of Thai intellectuals. It is his 'elitism.' I think most Thai intellectuals are still attached to the idea that social changes could only be brought about by enlightened leaders (e.g., *Dhamma raja*). This has been a persistent intellectual attachment since the times of absolutism. Thai intellectuals are obsessed with how their leaders will enlighten society. The leaders may be from a particular economic stratum, may possess a particular education background, or may be espousing a particular worldview. I think Sulak places great importance on personal virtues. Whenever he writes on Prince Damrong, Pridi Banomyong, or Prince Siddhiporn, he often stresses their personal qualities. He learns a lot more from individual beings than from books. Thus whenever he writes a book review, only the author of the book will surface, and the text will virtually disappear.

I think Thai society has many ways to eradicate oppositional voices; e.g., portraying them as abnormal or ill or sexually depraved; or pointing that they have vested interests in making such and such a stand. The idea is to render impotent or meaningless the recommendations of oppositional voices. In the case of Sulak however these methods could not be employed against him. An important shield that he possesses is the recognition that many international luminaries have bestowed him. And the Thai people often look up to the same luminaries who look up to Sulak. At the same time, Sulak is an intellectual with a very extensive and transnational network. Thus he is an anomaly that is dangerous to the system.

I understand that Sulak has no disciples because most do not stay with him for long. They branch out to do other things that may seem unrelated to what Sulak is doing. But they still remain within his network. Many may also have quarreled with Sulak and left the network. So I am focusing only on those within the network. I think this is an important and special power that is difficult to find elsewhere because most Thai intellectuals love to main-tain dominance— once a student, always a student, for instance. But Sulak is full of an ever-widening network of associates, perhaps too many for him to even remember correctly. Therefore, I believe that the main impact Sulak has had on Thai society is in the form of a vast network. Groups in this network represent themselves as alternatives to the Thai system, making Sulak an inevitable icon. This is a point that differentiates Sulak from most Thai intellectuals who rarely offer alternative choices. Pridi Banomyong for one offered alternative political arrangements that the Thai bureaucracy and state never came up with. Sulak and Pridi thus share many intellectual affiliations. If you ask me whether or not alternative choices will be more important for Thai society in the future, I will answer in the positive because there is no sign that systemic reforms will be successful. People therefore will look for alternatives outside the system, and they will always find Sulak standing prominently there.

Nidhi Aewsriwongse



14 October 1973: A Personal View

Most accounts of the 14 October 1973 event often start with the actions of 11 individuals who passed out leaflets demanding a constitution. In all 100 people signed the demand. Most of us probably have forgotten the names of those 11 individuals — plus the names of two more individuals, making them* 13 forgotten individuals in all. And most people have also forgotten — or did not know — that the demand for the constitution made back then came with an announcement, stating that anyone interested to learn more about democracy and the constitution should contact Suksit Siam bookstore. A forum on democracy and the constitution was to be held at the bookstore. At first the plan was to hold the meeting at the Association of Thai Reporters, but the latter refused to provide the venue. Most people are unable draw the connection between the Suksit discussion forum and the Prithat Sewana group, which was linked to the *Social Science Review*, on the one hand, with the 14 October movement, on the other. This is unfortunate because many leading scholars such as Benedict Anderson, Chai-anand Samudvanij and David Morrel have noticed and pointed out this connection. Subsequently, the *Social Science Review* was betrayed by local academics and intellectuals, and it eventually closed down due to the 6 October 1976 mayhem. And Suksit Siam, along with a number of other stores, was forcefully relocated by Chulalongkorn University in the name of land development. The giant columns — unfinished more than one decade after construction — still stand in the Samyan area, making a mockery of land development.

In truth, the 13 individuals who were rounded up by the police that October were the last straw that contributed to the mass students and citizens' uprising. Seksan Prasertkul and other youth leaders effectively awakened the consciousness of the masses. But the primary force that was responsible for cultivating the moral consciousness of intellectuals was the open letter by Puey Ungphakorn. He too was betrayed by the event of 6 October 1976 but his plight was miniscule compared to the torment the citizens had to endure during and after October 6.

Puey Ungphakorn is a leading symbol of Santi Pracha Dhamma. His moral courage and sense of righteousness remained unchanged throughout his life. The betrayal he had to suffer is similar to the one Pridi Banomyong underwent. As long as the elite and the masses are not — or refuse to recognize — the importance of both individuals, along with that of the other members of the People's Party and the Free Thai movement, it is highly opportunistic to call 14 October 1973 'our democracy day.' We must cure our historical amnesia and ingratitude.

There is a Buddhist saying that being grateful to those who have helped us, and repaying them back is a sign of a good person. Unfortunately, now we only have morally half-baked individuals, especially in the ruling strata, even though many of them are from the 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976 generation. Pridi Banomyong and Puey Ungphakorn are representatives of Santi Pracha Dhamma, a point which morally half-baked individuals cannot fathom. Our ruling strata lack guts and moral courage. Pridi and Puey, on the other hand, were willing to sacrifice their lives for the people, for the emancipation of all citizens, regardless of their sexes, classes, and ethnicity; and they worked for the reduction or eradication of oppression and exploitation emanating from the social structures as well as from foreign dominators. Both were symbols of truthfulness and nonviolence. They harbored no ill will towards 'the other side.' They were loyal to the dominant institutions: the People and the State. They were nationalistic but steered clear from the fascistic nationalism of Field Marshal Phibun and Luang Vichit Watthakan. Both Pridi and Puey supported constitutional monarchy, seeing it as relevant to the Thai social and cultural contexts. Both sought to secularize the monarchy, making it more accountable and transparent. Conversely, Field Marshal Sarit sought to immunize the monarchy from the people in a shroud of divinity since 1957. He was supported by Luang Vichit and Kukrit Pramoj. Pridi also understood how Sarit and Vichit coalesced to undermine or destroy the religious institutions of the nation. He was the only politician to give importance to religion. He believed that knowledgeable monks could provide moral guidance and use the Dhamma to brake to the wheels of State. We therefore

need to repay the debts we owe to Pridi and Puey. We need to honor them, which is quite impossible against the backdrop of the moral cowardice of the ruling strata.

Above I outlined the context of the events that culminated in the 14 October movement. In other words, 14 October did not emerge in a vacuum. Many of the participants in the movement felt that the people had won by overthrowing three tyrants and by restoring democracy. This is however an illusion, a fact which I pointed out at the time and have repeatedly emphasized over the decades. But it fell on deaf ears. The illusory victory the people won was evident three years later with the destruction of every indication of democracy in the kingdom — epitomized by the shootings of the students and citizens who congregated in Thammasat University. After that there were movements dissuading the youth from getting involved in political matters. Self-aggrandizement, money, and power within the context of capitalism and consumerism were promoted as virtues. Many individuals who have striven to destroy progressive political ideals are now in positions of power, continuing their anti-democratic project. I am talking about, for instance, Thanin Kraivichien, Ukrit Mongkolnawin, Prasong Soonsiri, Samak Sunthornrawet, and Dusit Siriwan; and about politicians in the guise of academics such as Likhit Theeravekin. Some are too old now to participate in the anti-democratic movement, but they are enjoying comfortable and luxurious lives — such as Praman Adireksan, Thanom Kittikachorn, Arthit Kamlang-ek, and Suchinda Kraprayoon.

Before we examine the changes that 14 October triggered we must remember that democracy in Siam reached its crest during the time of King Rama VI. In essence, it rose on the ruins of absolutism, which centered on Nation, Religion, and King, a concept borrowed from the God-King-and-Country royal tradition of England. And the new tri-color flag (representing the three institutions) replaced the so-called elephant flag. The King was the pivot of the three institutions. However, King Rama VI severely lacked good public administration skills. And his successor, King Rama VII — though well-intentioned and determined to rule effectively — simply had bad leadership skills. These are the sources of the downfall of absolutism in the Thai kingdom. Had there been no Pridi Banomyong, we might have had a people's republic since 1932. Pridi preserved the three dominant institutions of the kingdom after the 1932 revolution. And he added a fourth pillar, the constitution, to counter-balance the three institutions in accordance with the law for the freedom of all citizens, politically, economically, socially and intellectually. The establishment of the University of Moral and Political Sciences was intended to cultivate intellectual development, open-ness, and tolerance. In other words, Pridi tried to counter-balance the dictatorial tendencies in the kingdom with democratic elements during his time of political involvement.

Field Marshal Phibun, on the other hand, saw the kingdom as a house and the soldiers as its fences. Or he equated the soldiers and the ruling elite with the Nation. He did not see the importance of either religion or the monarchy, although both institutions had freedom within the boundaries that he demarcated for them. Phibun used the monarchy to get rid of Pridi, to push Pridi away from his political trajectory, especially be using Pridi as a scapegoat in the mysterious death of King Rama VIII. He was assisted by Kukrit Pramoj and Khuang Aphaiwongse in this nefarious project. Pridi did not have a chance to defend his innocence, and the nation slumped into a web of deceits and delusions under military dictatorship.

From then on, the Nation was equated with the military dictatorship. And the military dictatorship elevated the monarchy to divine status — beyond reproach and accountability. Historical facts were distorted or doctored to construct the divinity of the monarchy and to legitimize the rule of the military dictatorship. In 1962, Sarit issued a law to contain or preempt the influence of religious institutions. Here he was simply borrowing a leaf from King Rama V's textbook.

Moreover, the downfall of Pridi in 1947 coincided with the growing influence of the United States in Siam, economically, politically, and educationally. Both Phibun and Sarit sought refuge under the American imperial umbrella — akin to the absolutist monarchs who tilted towards Pax Britannica. But the capitalism and militarism of the United States were even more dangerous than the colonial threat posed by British imperialism. In particular, the indoctrination by American education was debilitating. Thai academics and professionals

trained in the US — who subsequently assumed positions of power in the country — became cheerleaders for capitalism and militarism while professing utmost objectivity and interest in freedom and democracy. They saw Buddhism as outdated and dangerous, especially to the workings of capitalism. Hence, they forced the Thai Sangha to stop preaching about simplicity, humility, contentedness and self-reliance. Small wonder that the saying 'Work is money. Money is work. Both bring happiness' became popularized at the time.

The Thai ruling strata drifted away from Buddhism since the reigns of King Rama V and VI. Most accepted that Buddhism must be subordinated to Western sciences. They discarded anything that could not be explained scientifically. During the military dictatorship, religion's role as a Dhammic brake to the wheels of State was destroyed. Moreover, in the present reign, Buddhism detached itself from science and devolved into occultism or even commercialism. It complements capitalism and consumerism. Many monks want to disrobe. Once living models of simplicity and humility, monks now compete for status and fame through commercialism, occultism, and climbing the ecclesiastical ladder. There are even shameless monks among the occupants of high ecclesiastical titles. Many worship capitalism, consumerism, and militarism even more than lay people do. Those who are morally courageous and who refuse to prostrate before injustice face immense obstacles to reach the upper echelons of the ecclesiastical order.

This then is our background prior to 14 October 1973. The men (invariably men) who succeeded Sarit continued to represent themselves as the Nation, and they completely controlled the kingdom's economy, politics, and education. For instance, General Prapas Charusathira served as the Chairman of Bangkok Bank, the Rector of Chulalongkorn University, the Commander-in-Chief of the army, and the Minister of Interior. General Thanom Kittikachorn was the Chairman of Thai Military Bank, Rector of Thammasat University, Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

However, the economic influence of the monarchy also expanded during the military dictatorship. Sarit returned the Bureau of the Crown Property back to royal hands. The action of this office is unac-countable to the state; seen as sacred it possesses special privileges. October 14 was then an important factor that enabled the monarchy to restore its political influence — despite a series of failed attempts earlier.

Up until 14 October 1973 (and we can also say up to now) the consciousness of the mainstream was dominated by militarism, absolutism, and materialism. Success by all means was raised to the avatar — even through the neglect of Right Livelihood. Self-protection, moral cowardice, and sycophancy were the name of the game. Most lacked the courage to dissent, to show that the emperor has no clothes on.

The monarchy accumulated many special privileges even more than the Nation did because of its sacred image. Criticizing the monarchy was akin to committing sedition. The monarchy also resumed its influence on religion. The more the monarchy got involved in religious affairs the more things turned for the worse, a point that is often neglected.

Now I come to my main point. 14 October 1973 was a clash between the Nation and the monarchy, a battle in which the former lost to the latter. At best, the student and mass movements merely constituted a sideshow. At worst, they acted as important variables that enabled the victory of the monarchy over the Nation. It was the monarchy's first victory over the Nation since 1932.

Prior to 14 October 1973, General Prapas Charusathira once remarked, "The Palace once relied on us, but now we have to rely on it." "We" here was not monolithic. There was the Krit Siwara faction and the Thanom-Prapas-Narong clique, the former siding with the Palace. Even Champhen Charusathira tilted towards the Palace and away from his younger brother.

Prior to 14 October 1973, there was widespread news that General Prapas sent Vichit Lulinond to see Pridi in Paris. The general intended to invite Pridi back to the kingdom, so the reasoning went. This move was similar to the one Phibun initiated in 1957. This may well be a major factor that ignited the conflict between the Palace and the Nation.

As a byproduct of the Palace's victory over the Nation, we had our first Palace-appointed premier Sanya Dharmasakti — a precedent to be followed in subsequent tragedies. — Thanin Kraivichien, Anand Panyarachun and Suchinda Kraprayoon. The Palace also

selected the members of the General Assembhy

The victory of the Palace however was short-lived. Three years later the Nation struck back when Kriangsak Chomanand removed Thanin Kraivichien from power. The premiership of Prem Tinsulanonda, who succeeded Kriangsak, signified the compromise between the Nation and the Palace — with TNCs and the superpowers (especially China) acting as important external variables. Ultimately, the Young Turks failed to reduce the power of the monarchy because Prem switched horses in the end.

Between 1973 and 1976 the Nation did not merely retrench to lick its wounds, but it also collaborated with the absolutist forces to manipulate the mass media in order to spread vicious rumors about the students and the progressives, including Puey Ungphakorn. They were portrayed as public enemy number one. Included in the rank and files of this collaborationist effort were those who did not want a change in the status quo — this despite the rapprochement between the US and China.

We must pay tribute to the civil servants in the ministry of foreign affairs who nudged the government to open relations with China and Vietnam and to restore the kingdom's dignity by re-adjusting its relationship with the United States (for the first time since the Sarit era).

On the flip side, the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), under the influence of the Communist Party of China, began to infiltrate and destabilize the students' movements and the Thai intellectual scene. The CPT used the new democratic opening resulting from 14 October as its window of opportunity to perform this feat.

Even worse, capitalists and entrepreneurs who lacked clear political standing and whose primary interest was accumulating short-term profit began to play a role in politics. For instance, the President of the Parliament was also the Key figure of the Bangkok Bank. He was reputed to speak Siamese with a heavy Chinese accent. 14 October 1973 also enabled Chatichai Choonhavan to return to the political scene and to ultimately become premier—Sarit had long banished Chatichai from the center of power. Chatichai worked hard to facilitate the penetration of capital into the politics of the kingdom. This is a legacy that Thaksin joyfully inherited.

Had there been no 14 October, it would have been impossible for someone like Thaksin to dominate the politics and economy of the country. Even more unfortunate is that our education system weakens our intellect and immunity to power. It does not equip us with the ability to tear the masks of the ruling strata — and see the elite in their nakedness. I agree that Chatichai was a nice person at the personal level. He was humorous and lively, and was amiable to everyone. He even surrounded himself with progressive intellectuals. However, we must not forget that he was also a criminal due to his role in the 6 October 1976 carnage, as was his brother in law, the leader of the Chart Thai Party, and the extreme right in the Democrat Party. During his premiership he opened up the country to TNCs and transnational capitalism, enabling them to trammel us. Furthermore, Chatichai gave the green light to the construction of the Pak Moon Dam.

More dangerous than Chatichai is of course Thaksin Shinawatra. Unlike Chatichai, he is not a nice man. His pursuit of self-aggrandizement is virtually limitless. He wants to destroy intellectual independence and to substitute management for politics. He uses his immense power and wealth to tame the mass media. He has striven to destroy the Assembly of the Poor. Thaksin mixes the interest of his telecommunications empire with that of the country. Lastly, he uses the government budget to help pave the way for his long term political tenure. The Thaksin episode shows that the Nation and the Palace are no longer in the driver seat—rather it's capital.

If Thaksin is a — if not the — unfortunate byproduct of 14 October 1973, what have we done to prevent him and his clones from assuming positions of power? Thaksin is a much more powerful man than Prapas Charusathira or Thanom Kittikachorn.

We have done a lot, especially in the Santi Pracha Dhamma movements composed of activists, NGOs, intellectuals, students, etc. We have long struggled for democracy nonviolently along the lines espoused by Pridi Banomyong and Puey Ungphakorn. An indicator of our success is the new constitution, which is far more democratic than the old ones. We have pushed for the promulgation of the new constitution despite the opposition from many mainstream bureaucrats and politicians. We have also paved the way for the emergence of new institutions and agencies that will uphold transparency and

accountability in society. Why then have these institutions and agencies failed to live up to their designated roles — failed to counter-balance the wily moves and power of the prime minister? We have to admit that conservative forces are still in power. They grew up and were indoctrinated with the nationalism and political values of Luang Wichit Watthakan and Kukrit Pramoj. Enamoured by militarism and absolutism, they do not — or cannot — understand the substance of justice, of Santi Pracha Dhamma.

Simply put, we did not make something out of 14 October 1973. We failed to foster a new consciousness for our contemporaries and ourselves. We were not awakened to truthfulness and lacked the moral courage to confront the stream of lies and propaganda flowing from the powers-that-be since 1947.

Winning over Thaksin does not mean overthrowing dictatorship in the form of neoliberal capitalism, which is dominated by TNCs and the major powers. Rather it means preserving local wisdom and cultivating moral courage. It entails the nurturing of seeds of peace within. It means having Right Concentration. It requires the development of intellectual self-defense against structural violence. These will help pave the way for a long term victory.

Mainstream educational institutions cannot play this role in part because of their rectors or directors, people still mired in militarism, absolutism, and consumerism. They need to nurture compassion, loving Kindness, altruistic joy, and equanimity within.

In short we must build on the original virtues propagated by Thammasat University (a.k.a. the University of Moral and Political Sciencs), and give them a more dhammic or spiritual grounding in order to merge our heads with our hearts and de-colonize our imagination as well as intellect.

S. Sivaraksa

Winners of 'Alternative' Nobels Named

STOCKHOLM (AP) - Winners of the "alternative Nobel Prizes" on Thursday called for civic groups worldwide to help reshape their societies and fight globalization led by large corporations.

Anti-globalization activists from the Philippines, and representatives from South Korean and Egyptian civic groups gathered in Stockholm to receive the Right Livelihood Awards, founded by a Swedish-German philanthropist to honour accomplishments overlooked by the Nobel award committees.

Filipino activist Walden Bello, the most outspoken among the winners at a news conference, called for a new world order to "break up the situation whereby the market and the economy serves society rather than the other way around."

"What we're after is true internationalization," he said, "in which participation in the international economy doesn't devastate societies but instead builds their capacity."

The award was founded in 1980 by Jakob von Uexkull, a former member of the European Parliament and stamp dealer who felt the Nobel prizes were too narrow in scope and tend to recognize work from industrial nations.

Also sharing the two million kronor (about $350,000 Cdn) prize were Nicanor Perlas, an antiglobalization activist from the Philippines, the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice from South Korea and SEKEM, an Egyptian network of businesses and social civil groups.

Former New Zealand prime minister David Lange received an honorary award, but no money.

The awards are formally presented on Dec. 8, two days before the Nobel Prize award ceremony.

Karl Ritter

Reforming Our Education Nationally and Globally

You all may agree with me that education is not simply about learning and teaching. It is also about leading an appropriate way of life in society, about supporting oneself and others, about overcoming oppression and exploitation, and about nurturing wisdom. Unfortunately, this meaning of education had more or less disappeared. It started in the West with the waning of Christianity's influence and the advent of the Age of Enlightenment. The brain and individualism have been overemphasized at the expense of sensitivity, sensibility, spirituality, and the mind. The West upheld Rene Descartes as the father of modern philosophy. His famous dictum *"cogito ergo sum"* places emphasis on egoism to say the least. If there is an "I" then there must always be a "you", a "we" and a "them," a "self" and an "other." Western philosophy is rooted in these dualisms or binary oppositions. There is a dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity: the former is associated with neutrality while the latter is seen as personal views. But if one is unable to see the limits of one's knowledge and the pervasiveness of one's prejudices, especially those rooted in love, hatred, ignorance, and vengeance, how can one assume objectivity.

This brings to my mind the words of Howard Zinn, the author of the widely acclaimed *A People's History of the United States*. Commenting on the notion of objectivity Zinn states:

> *I've said two things about it. One, is that it's not possible. Two, it's not desirable. It's not possible because all history is a selection out of an infinite number of facts. As soon as you begin to select, you select according to what you think is important. Therefore it is already not objective. It's already biased in the direction of whatever you, as the selector of this information think people should know. So it's really not possible.*

If we analyze Zinn's words, it seems that the objectivity the academic circles in the West uphold as foundational is really based on delusion or the sense of lack, which David Loy has convincingly contended in *A Buddhist History of the West: Studies in Lack* (2002) and *The Great Awakening: A Buddhist Social Theory* (2003). These two great books may serve as our guides in our quest for alternative education in the 21st century.

In my view the most important contribution to the alternative education movement in the past 30 years is the publishing of E. F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful*, which is primarily about Buddhist economics and secondarily about economics as if human beings matter. The importance of this point cannot be overemphasized. The knowledge systems of the West since the Age of Enlightenment have narrowly focused on academic progress and on power, wealth, possession, and success more than on human beings. Or if importance is placed on human beings, it is on his or her role as an oppressor—of nature or of fellow human beings, in terms of race, class, gender, sex, etc. Or human beings are seen as resources for the great capitalist machine that is increasingly transnational and out of control.

For Thais, we must remember that the first education reform in the kingdom occurred during the reign of King Rama V. It marked the beginning of the decline of the traditional forms of knowledge and education that were centered on the temple and the home—a knowledge system that meshed local traditions with the three-fold training, that interiorized ethics and Right Livelihood, that fostered simplicity and humility, that cultivated the symbiosis of the mind and the heart, and that engaged local communities or areas. In this knowledge system, monks and temples were models of simple living. Local knowledge was used to improve or change things. Problems were solved based on the principle of self-reliance and local traditions. Generosity served as a foundation. Students learned not to abuse themselves and others; that is, they engaged in moral training. They learned about ways to pacify or calm their minds in order to overcome or reduce stress, hatred, and fear. Meditation helps those who are eager for higher education to appreciate the magic of life that is transcendental or supramundane.

In other words, Thai education in the past, which had Buddhism as its core component, helped educate the people on ways to achieve primary happiness in their lives. Education

then is an art of happiness, a happiness that is realized through various achievements: achievement of persistent effort, achievement of protection, good friendship, balanced livelihood, achievement of faith, achievement of virtue, achievement of charity, and achievement of wisdom. For those who have achieved the higher education they will experience the cessation of defilements and sufferings, a condition that may be described as nirvana. This marks the completion of education, which often takes a lifetime.

Our traditional education system, which was autonomously organized by the citizens, gradually fell prey to the monopolistic power of the state from the time of King Rama V onwards. We must remember that to "reform" means to change or destroy the old form. The leitmotif of the reform was to destroy the right of citizens to organize and control their knowledge systems autonomously. Conversely, the state must be seen as the fountain of all forms of knowledge. Put differently, without state sanction a knowledge system is simply not worthy. Since then our education system has tamely followed that of the West. Education systems in the West have failed to merge ethics and scholarship, philosophy and the sciences, goodness and truth. Once our education system had achieved this, but we abandoned it in the name of progress, civilization, modernity, development, prosperity, globalization, etc. We must decolonize our intellectual processes and subjectivities.

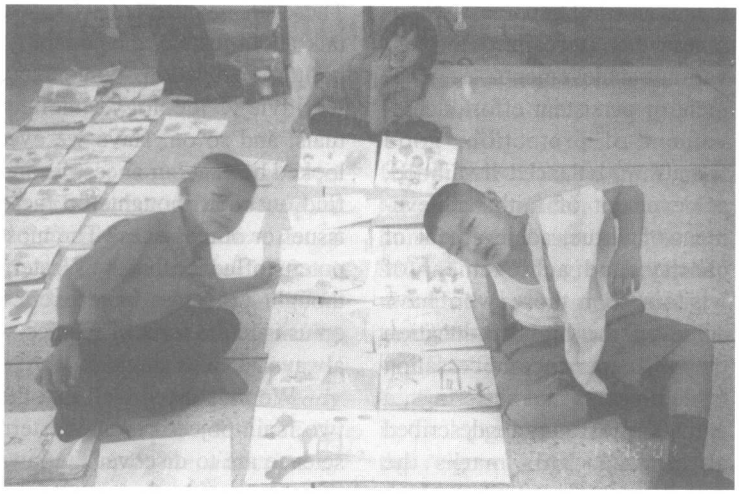
It must also be stated that the thought processes of our ruling elites paralleled those of their counterparts in the West. These are manifested when we talk about justice, the economy, politics, education, democracy, worldview, ideology, intellectuals, and so on. Have we ever looked back at our ancestors and find out their thoughts on these issues or other issues? The most potent influence that the Western thought processes have exerted on us is in the form of science—always taken as singular.

We must heed well that the two main objectives of Western science are to discover the laws of nature or pure facts and to use these discoveries to improve the wellbeing of human lives and the material world—e.g., medicine and technology. Religions, including Buddhism, used to play this latter role. But religious leaders in the West had long fought with scientists ever since Western science had transformed from natural philosophy into science at around the 19th century. And the break between religion and science also erupted in that century with the publishing of Charles Darwin's *The Origins of the Species* and *The Descent of Man*. Science signifies progress, while religion and theology are seen as signs of backwardness or stagnation.

Interestingly, Buddhist leaders in the 19th century did not engage in any debate with Western scientists. In the Thai case, our political leaders willfully subordinated Buddhism to science. In the West, the appeal of science grew rapidly and expanded into other disciplines or knowledge systems such as economics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and history. Venerable Payutto has made an interesting comment on this issue thus:

> Many disciplines and knowledge systems want to be scientific or try to show that they are scientific. But a view that is highly specialized, compartmentalized, and one-dimensional is self-defeating, making it impossible to be scientific, including science itself. Science can never be perfectly scientific because it lacks [many] components, making truth incomplete and imperfect. When a truth is imperfect then it is not really true. And when all the components are not considered and conclusions are hastily reached then reality is not clearly perceived. The system of logic and rationality is thus imperfect and thus could not approach the truth.

I admit that even if mainstream science in the West has limitations, it has benefited our world a lot, especially in the past century. For instance, our knowledge about the universe has expanded exponentially, and we have gained some power over nature and many diseases. It is possible to travel around the world (in particular if one belongs to the rich propertied class) and to communicate with others who live 2000 kilometers away from us. But we often marvel at these accomplishments without considering the prices we had to pay: deforestation, the destruction of natural landscapes, the dwindling of nonrenewable resources, the lessening of biodiversity, the concentration camps, weapons of mass destruction, etc. Only the few have access to these magical knowledge systems, medical advances, and technological developments. Moreover, the possessors of these highly specialized knowledge systems



are akin to theologians in the past: they have the power over life and death by structuring our worldviews, advancing policies that impact millions of lives, legitimizing war and violence, and so on. These highly compartmentalized knowledge systems are often lacking in ethical considerations. The novelty of Schumacher's work is that he tried to infuse the human dimension back into economics from a Buddhist perspective. Schumacher was not a Buddhist. But on the whole Buddhists have been quite influential in developing alternative education in the West. Many Western thinkers such as Ivan Illich, Paolo Freire, and A.S. Neal, along with many Catholic theologians or priests in Latin America have challenged the Western worldview. But they still do so from the Western standpoint that is based on logic and science. In other words, they could not go beyond science, that is, find an alternative to Western science.

It is heartening to learn that many Tibetan Buddhist monks have not succumbed to the Western/scientific worldview. Forced into exile due to the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet, these Buddhist monks have not been compelled to modify or revolutionize Buddhist teachings, which could not be proven scientifically, in order to be accepted by their contemporaries in the West and worldwide. Moreover, they also have not tried to launch their tradition to hegemonic position. Over the past 30 years, Tibetan Buddhist monks have done a great deal to tame the arrogance of Western science. One of the most noteworthy among them is Soghiem Troungpa, who has contributed enormously to a spiritual awakening in the West. He has shown that discovering nature's laws is insufficient: wisdom is also needed. He has shown that moral training and meditation can be relied on in our search for the truth, transcending the scientific and rationalistic paradigm. He has written many influential books and articles, and founded the Naropa University in the US, which has offered a Buddhist education for the past 25 years. The heart and the mind can also "perceive" things reliably and perceptibly. Many books by Naropa University's professors have shown that a science deprived of ethics is akin to superstition, and technological development without ethical considerations is like promoting black magic. *Perceiving an Ordinary Magic* and *The Sacred Life* by Jeremy Hayward are two good examples of using Buddhist practices to challenge mainstream science in the West. His latest book, *Letters to Vanessa*, warns against how technology, consumerism, and materialism are destroying the simple magic in the world and colonizing our imagination.

Moreover, The Mind and Life Institute was born in the past decade. Guided by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Institute has promoted dialogues between Buddhist practitioners and Western scientists. These dialogues have made many Western scientists more humble and have made them recognize the limitations of objects and forms and the ignorance of their knowledge system. For instance, many scientists have accepted that there is nothing in the mind that can be called "the self."

Most mainstream scientists do not see the importance of religious experiences or of spirituality. Thus they are not interested in the complexities of life and the mind, which cannot be proven scientifically. To approach or fathom these abstract understandings should be the substance of an alternative education system. An alternative educational practice that has been introduced to the West is mental training. It is essential training for all Dhamma practitioners. Meditation is used to tread or construct the mind's paths, to pursue the normal states of the mind. We are often attached to ourselves (to our convictions, theories, prejudices, etc.). As such the mind is ob-

structed by the five hindrances: sensual desire, hatred, indolence, anxiety, and uncertainty. These thoughts and feelings inhibit and whither the mind. Meditation is used to enliven and nourish the mind. When we have learned to calm our minds there will be inner peace. We will no longer dwell in our monologues. We will be aware of the superficiality of sensual pleasures and prestige. Instead, we will be able to give birth to true love that is not centered on lust and possessiveness, which are inextricable from greed, hatred and delusion. In other words, only through the reduction of self-attachment will we be able to overcome the dualisms that inhibit our minds and lives.

Once the dualisms are overcome we will appreciate the 'real' states of the mind: compassion, generosity, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. We will be able to perceive non-judgmentally and be awakened from the various forms of mental domination rooted in greed, hatred, and delusion which are best manifested by capitalism, militarism, and compartmentalized knowledge systems such as mainstream science. Meditation leads to wisdom; that is, the ability to know various states in their reality, without self-attachment. This will instill loving-kindness, sympathetic joy, and forgivingness in us. We will live in freedom. This will help alleviate or resolve the crises in the present world resulting from myopia and selfishness: obtaining short term gains at all costs.

We must overcome our "selves" to overcome these crises. This is the substance of a good alternative education. The objective of education must shift from mastery and promoting success, power, and social status to cultivating moral training and inner peace. Education must free us from the chains that are enslaving our minds.

We must treat science abstractly or Dhammically. In other words, we must develop technology of the self that will help realize inner peace and freedom and use them to engage with society for the benefit of all. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has confronted immense sufferings, especially having seen his people tormented under Chinese occupation. Yet he could continue living happily and simply, and remind fellow human beings of the virtue of simple living and happiness. He is surely one of our role models. For realizing alternative education at the international level, we must chart not only the roots but also the routes of our cultures, and their interconnection. We cannot return to the past: the past is already dead. But we can reconstruct it with a critical mind. For Thais this entails shedding certain practices and traditions that are not Dhammic so we can enter into emptiness without defilements and transcend capitalism, consumerism, militarism, and other forms of ignorance.

Buddhism and mainstream science see the world differently. Science tends to deal with the concrete while Buddhism deals with the abstract. We should try to mesh these two views and engender a science that is religiously or morally inclined. The Mind and Life Institute is trying to achieve just this.

What does it mean to be a Buddhist these days? We must find the appropriate light to interpret the teachings of the Buddha in order to awaken us from various forms of domination. We must understand the complexity of modern society, especially structural injustice and violence. We must ask ourselves what is the meaning of our lives: to have, to buy, to indulge, to possess, or simply to be? If we realized that the meaning of life is to be rather than to have, we will know our role and identity in society. We will know how to appropriately behave with others and to the environment. Buddhist teachings in the past do not have power in themselves and cannot deal with the malaise of industrialized or globalized societies, of transnational corporations and planeterized capitalism. We must not treat mental training as a form of escapism or personal salvation. Rather mental training must awaken our wisdom so we will be able to wisely engage with society and deal with the multiple crises of greed, hatred, and delusion in the present.

Thirty years ago Schumacher made us understand that human beings are incalculably more important than economics, profit, or scholarship. He encouraged us to return to Right Livelihood based on Buddhist teachings and on appropriate technology. Now we have David Loy who has clarified on what it means to be awakened based on Buddhist sociology. Loy writes thus: "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."

S. Sivaraksa

Somdej To

Today most people largely know Somdej To because of two reasons. One, he was behind the production of the famed and much-in-demand Phra Somdej amulets of Wat Rakang and Wat Bangkhunprom. I myself owned a Phra Somdej amulet of Wat Bangkhunprom, which Bhikkhu Badramuni of Wat Thong Nopakun gave me one-half century ago — at the time when I was about to pursue my studies abroad. Whenever and wherever I travel abroad I wear this amulet. Once, I visited a Chinese restaurant in Singapore. The manager of the restaurant owned a Luang Por Wat Paknam amulet, and was very interested in my amulet. He even called all the waiters to see it, insisting that its market price is more expensive than a Mercedes Benz. The interest in amulets is a rising trend in Singapore and many other countries. Two, it is often stated that Somdej To, along with many other renowned monks, may be contacted via mediums or mystics. Occultism and Buddhism are intertwined, and there are both pros and cons to this phenomenon. I will not delve into this matter here however.

Both of these factors show that Somdej To still has a lot of relevance for our contemporaries, psychologically, mentally, astrologically, etc. If we know how to deftly manipulate these issues — that is, develop a proper stance towards both amulets and occultism — they can be of good use. But it will be highly unfortunate if we are led astray by occultism and its secular parallels such as capitalism and consumerism.



Nevertheless, I do not believe that these two facts reflect the real virtue of Somdej To. In my view, Somdej To was a 'real' monk who had all the characteristics of a virtuous and responsible monk. As such I feel that he is unmatched by any subsequent monks even though some of them might be more knowledgeable or might have more powerful ecclesiastical titles. This is particularly true in the eyes of the public. The public relies heavily on him for 'relief': magic, miracles, wisdom, sermons, and so on. Somdej To was a progressive monk who used many unorthodox practices. But he could use them wisely and appropriately in every situation. He was, so to speak, the talk of the town in his times.

I have asked myself, wherein lies the ingenuity or uniqueness of Somdej To? My conclusion is that it's his 'monk-ness'. He clearly knew how to be and behave like a good monk. He knew the proper role to play and how to act rightly in different situations. All his actions led towards the diminishing of his self-attachments and conversely augmented his compassion for others, the rich and the poor alike, representatives of the state as well as the citizens.

Somdej To lived during the time when the Thai kingdom reached an important political crossroads. He was born during the reign of King Rama I, and he quickly earned the respect of the state officials and the Thai Sangha for his virtues and wide-ranging special knowledge. He refused to hold any ecclesiastical position during the times of Kings Rama I-III, but eventually accepted one during the reign of King Rama IV. In my view, that he belatedly accepted an ecclesiastical title was because up until then the kingdom still upheld old practices. The ancient wisdom of Ayutthaya was still alive, and Bhikkhu To could grasp its essence—its simple magic. As such he was 'nomadic', unattached to wealth and status, wandering to help or support others to the fullest of his capability.

During the times of King Rama IV there were major transformations, politically and educationally. A new dimension was opened up: westernization. It began to challenge the traditional forms of goodness. For instance, scientism began to challenge the Sukhothai worldviews and Ayutthaya traditions. In other words, Somdej To might have accepted an ecclesiastic position because he wanted to have some influence on royal and administrative affairs at this important historical junction; that is, to serve as a moral conscience to King Rama IV and to King Rama V's Regent. This is a political role that monks can choose to play—a role that is often forgotten. As a representative of the moral world, a good monk has

the knowledge, compassion, and wisdom to guide or instruct representatives of the secular state: he can serve as a brake to secular power, can help assure that the Dhamma will lead the secular world. This will inevitably lead to friction, but dialogue and negotiation may greatly mitigate its intensity.

In the past, monks had played this role though not that often. However, monks had traditionally acted as mentors or teachers to kings. This was the time when the Western worldviews were still held at bay. Monks were seen as higher in status than the people in the kingdom, including the king. They were perceived as more morally upright and more knowledgeable. But during the reign of King Rama IV, all the monks serving as mentors to the king had died (or were forced by Mom Kraisorn to disrobe). Besides the king himself was knowledgeable about the Scriptures as well as Western forms of knowledge. He needed a genius like Somdej To to brake his secular power. Somdej To played this role well: his moral training, concentration, and wisdom were unparalleled.

From the times of King Rama IV onward, monks must be knowledgeable about both the old and the new forms of knowledge, including Western forms of knowledge. Somdej To did not know the English language. Nevertheless, his worldview was international and his demeanor was transcendental — akin to the Zen masters in China and Japan. Unfortunately, since the times of King Rama V monks have been insufficiently aware of worldly matters and have tended to uncritically adopt Western paradigms of thought. Moreover, the elites and civil servants gradually perceived the secular knowledge they possessed as superior to monks'.

After 1902, when the state decreed legislation to control the Sangha, the Thai Sangha lost its autonomy socially and politically, and increasingly came under the spell of the secular state. Monks who opposed the state have been unvaryingly punished. The only exception was Bhikkhu Buddhadasa who was not only highly intelligent but was also endowed with morality, concentration, and wisdom. In many ways, Bhikkhu Buddhadasa is similar to Somdej To. Both were morally courageous and willing to challenge the secular state and its intellectuals. But Buddhadasa denied all forms of occultism whether in the form of magical objects or mystical practices. Interestingly, there are no Suan Mokh amulets. No monks from Suan Mokh have also served as mediums. If any worshipper goes to Suan Mokh to kneel before Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's image, he must also prostrate before a portrait of his dog. This reflects well Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's attitude toward the magical. For him, serving as a servant of the Buddha is in itself already a very simple magic.

S. Sivaraksa

Karuna and Ruang-Urai Kusalasaya

On 8 November 2003, there was a celebration to mark the 7th cycle anniversary of Karuna and Ruang-Urai Kusalasaya at Sulak Sivaraksa's office. The celebration aimed to express gratitude to a couple who contributed a great deal to Indian studies in Siam. As a source of civilization that influenced the development of languages and cultures in Siam, understanding India is important to understanding Thai roots.

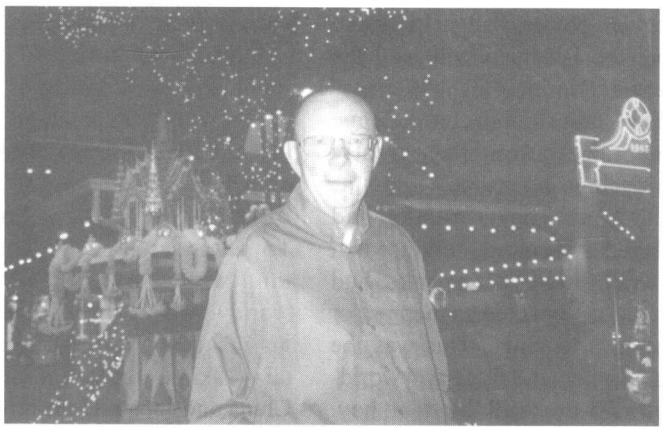
Karuna is a scholar of the indigenous languages of India. He introduced Indian studies to Siam in the areas of languages, literature and philosophy. No one after him has attained this level of knowledge. His proficiency in the Hindi language has enabled him to translate the great books of India, i.e. *Mahabharata*, *Buddhacarita*, and *Meghaduta*. All along he has been assisted by his wife, a scholar of the Thai language.

It is necessary to express appreciation to him and his wife not merely because they are sources of knowledge, but also because they have been living up to their accumulated knowledge. Their minds are clear and their behavior is humble. Their knowledge is therefore not sedentary. Rather it is living, lively, and full of inspiration. Karuna's dedication to learning since his youth as a novice earned him the friendship of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa.

Later in November, the Thai Ministry of Culture proclaimed Karuna a National Artist in Literature, along with other artists in many areas. This recognition was previously bestowed to another old friend of SEM, Angkarn Kalyanapong.

Hans Fräedrich — An Appreciation

(4 July 1973 - 13 September 2003)



After the great fire of London in the 17th century, Sir Christopher Wren recreated the city with St.Paul's Cathedral as the central landmark. However, there was no monument for the famous architect despite the fact that London was full of many monuments. Yet the Latin inscription in the Cathedral is so significant, as it states *Si Monumentum Reguiris Circumspice*

Likewise, one does not need a monument for Dr. Hans Fräedrich in the Berlin Zoo, because the Zoo itself is his monument. He served it with his heart and soul for 36 years with great achievement. Yet he would always deny his uniqueness, since he was so modest and so humble that he would share his success with his colleagues and others, especially the citizens of Berlin.

Some, would argue that a zoo is a symbol of the abuse of animals rights. Hans would never reply to such an accusation. Instead of words, his deeds show very clearly that the Berlin Zoo is really a worthy place for animals and men, and women, especially the old ones and the young ones.

While much of the jungle and the forest, even the sea, have been destroyed, perhaps animals may find their haven in the Berlin Zoo. And for those of us who could not afford to visit reserved forests for wild animals in remote places like Africa, Asia and the Americas, the zoo in the capital of Germany is just the place for us, human beings, to learn to love animals and to understand that we too are animals. We are interrelated, or to use a Buddhist phrase, the animals and us, humans, inter - are.

Without animals, without trees, without a proper natural environment, we simply cannot exist. Animals teach us to be natural, to be normal, and to be simple so that we humans could learn to be *Homo Sapiens*, the wise one, not *Homo Hipocriticus*.

Hans Fräedrich was never a hypocrite. He must have learned from animals, which he loved. He was so simple, so honest and was full of compassion. He had a good heart. Hence he had a good wife, good friends and good colleagues everywhere.

He was knowledgeable, not only in his profession, but in literature, philosopy and the arts, yet he never showed off his profundity in all these subjects. One had to search from him, in order to know the depth and width of his wisdom. He was in fact a spiritual being. He had both compassion and wisdom. He was also a good friend to many of us. The Buddha said that of all external achievements, one should not be trapped by fame, by wealth, by power and the like. The Buddha reminds us that the best in our life externally is to have friendship with the wise, the lovely and the compassionate ones. Indeed a good friend could be an exemplar for us to observe and to imitate his lifestyle. Hans Fräedrich was certainly a good friend, a *kalayanamitta.*

He was with us on this earth for over six decades, without an enemy. He has now left us to the world beyond. The Buddha said:

> A man long absent
> comes home safe from afar,
> his kins, his friends, his companions
> delight in his return.
> In just the same way,
> when a man has done good
> and gone from this world
> to the world beyond,
> His good deeds receive him —
> as kin, someone dear,
> comes home.

I am sure Hans Fräedrich is now in company of good friends in the heavenly realm. All of us should not be sad, but be joyful and if we too behave like him, we shall sooner or later join him in the world beyond.

S. Sivaraksa's speech
at the Memorial Service in Berlin
on 23 September 2003.

Meeting death mindfully

Supaporn Pongpruek is not a celebrity, and I do not belong to her circle of close friends. The only thing that I know about her is that she is dying. I first came across her name several years ago as the writer of one of my favourite books. Titled *When I Learned That I Had Cancer*, it is Supaporn's memoirs of the time she under took alternative healing, instead of modern surgery, to deal with a cancerous lump on her left breast.

But is was not the technical details of hers various experiments—from herbal medicine, to yoga, massage and macrobiotics—that gripped me. Rather, it was Supaporn's straight forward narrative of her initial fear, confusion, frustration, and eventually, self-discovery and acceptance of "the way the world is"—that plain, simple courage tinged with a sense of compassion. After I turned the last page of her book, I told myself that I had to interview this woman some day.

Time passed.

Then, a couple of days ago, after a Tai Chi exercise at Lumphini Park, an older friend of mine mentioned that she had just come back from Hat Yai. She'd been on a business trip, but had made a detour to visit Supaporn, a long-time friend, probably for the very last time.

The mention of her name stirred up memories. What had become of Supaporn? The final chapter of *When I Learned That I Had Cancer* ended on an upbeat note: a lab test announcing that he cancer was is remission.

Now, it seems, it had struck again, and was getting the upper hand. According to my friend,



Supaporn was virtually paralysed. Breathing had become a torture, yet she declined the use of a respirator as much as possible. Some of her close friends were taking turns handling all the basic life functions. Her ageing mother, though much agitated, was too frail to help as much as she wanted to. Yet, through it all, Supaporn manages to smile.

This was not a complete surprise to me. I recalled thinking, as I read *When I Learned*, that the writer must be a lively character. Some of her friends—and she has many—have compared her to a colourful bird. Her book was like a gurgling brook—cool, clear and refreshing.

It's a life-and-death battle Supaporn is going through at this very moment, and the amazing lady seems to be proving her valour. Another friend of mine, who is also one of Supaporn's acquaintances, passed on a note from John McConnell, a peace activist who has suspended all his work to take care of this dear friend in her final stages.

"Porn's [Supaporn's nickname] energy is very limited, and talking takes a lot out of her. Nevertheless, she manages both to be fully involved in her treatment, and to relate very meaningfully to the people around her. Each day she has at times smiled and laughed.

"A fragment of discussion from last night suggests her attitude: 'John, I never thought I would get like this.' 'Do you regret any of the decisions you made?' 'No, not one. It is just *anicca* [impermanence]. It is okay.' "

In another email, also forwarded to me by the same friend, Phra Paisal Visalo (one of the few good monks we still have), who had just returned from a visit to Supaporn's place, mentioned how doctors at the Palliative Care Unit of a local university hospital, incidentally where Supaporn helped run a course on Dhamma and Healing, were impressed with the patient's level of mental clarity. Again, this bit of information was not surprising. In her memoirs, Supaporn narrated how several of her friends, upon learning the name of her disease, invariably told her to start "practising dhamma", a phrase that Thai people usually associate with meditation.

Supaporn must have long abided by that advice.

I have been intrigued by the parallel between her past encounter of a decade ago and this new struggle. In the beginning, cancer opened up a new world for Supaporn—she rediscovered a community of friendships, those who were willing to spare time and thought, to nurture this small but brave lady. Supaporn wrote how she felt thankful to cancer for having given her an opportunity to explore her inner life, to learn that this earth of ours has never been lacking in kindness and unconditional love, — in peo-

ple's souls, in Mother Nature.

Now it will be death—the gate of life—that will provide Supaporn and her friends another big lesson. At the end of the day, it will be Supaporn who will have to go through the door, alone, Before the end comes, there will likely be a lot of struggles, at test of wills, doubts—what will be the discovery? Supaporn confided in her book that prior to this face-to-face experience with cancer, she used to believe she had enough experience to confront death, that she could easily overcome this universal fear.

"I expressed this arrogance of mine to Somdet Phra Maha Ghosananda [the much revered monk from Cambodia] and he simply smiled," Supaporn recounted in *When I Learned.*

"When he smiled, [Phra Maha Ghosananda's] eyes usually knitted together until they looked like a single line of blackish thread. Then he said, 'Those who say they don't fear death don't really know what it is. If they do, they will not say so. Indeed, most human sufferings arise from this—from this fear of death.'

" 'To make merit seven times is not equal to building a temple. Building seven temples does not amount to one *bhavana* [meditation], and seven *bhavanas* are still less than one contemplation on death.' "

It has been a lifelong journey for Supaporn as she has sought an answer to Phra Maha Ghosananda's riddle—how to contemplate death and dying. Has she at last found it?

On the final page of *When I Learned*, Supaporn noted how this fear had continued to "come and go depending on [the law of] cause and conditionality". But, she said, she no longer felt repulsed by the sensation. Indeed, the very arising of that breath? — has served as a useful indicator of her level of mindfulness, she wrote.

"It warns me whether or not I'm living a mindful life. Or am I being reckless again? I have, in effect, learned to become familiar with my own fear."

Supaporn is not famous, and it's likely that a few years after her departure, memories of her, except for those who hold her dear, will have dissolved into a pool of forgetfulness. But her past life, a struggle to accept, not fight, the cycle of *samsara*, will continue to be like a flickering candle to people who pick up her book and read.

Her current—and last—"meeting" with Death could be educational, as it could for any one of us. Are we content with our existence? What are the things we most cherish? Can we take any of those with us? What then can we leave behind for the earth, for our loved ones, for our fellow human beings?

This is the very last passage of her memoirs: "If it's the time that I have to go, for this leaf to fall off—by cancer or other causes, sooner or later—I hope that I will be a leaf that will not resist its final fall, that I will be a leaf that is happily drifting away."

Vasana Chinvarakorn
***Bangkok post*,**
Sunday, September 28, 2003

Supaporn was born on 17 May 2501 and passed away on 18 October 2546.

Dear Mr. Sivaraksa:

At its recent Annual Meeting, the Board of Trustees of the Asia Society approved your reappointment to an additional three-year term on the International Council, effective January 1, 2004. The Trustees and I are grateful for your participation in this significant network of Asian leaders connected to the Society. We hope you will accept reappointment to another term.

I look forward to seeing you when I next visit the region. Please also let me know whenever you travel this way. Our regional centers in Melbourne, Hong Kong, Manila, and Shanghai in addition to those in the USA, in California, Texas, and Washington, D.C. will be as welcoming as we are here in New York.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards.
Sincerely,
Nicholas Platt
President

My Dear Sulak,

The *Seeds of Peace* is always a joy to read. It gives me the tranquility needed in this period of *dukkha*; and may it help me be rid of *avijja* and attain true *panna*. Your Harvard lectures elucidate the dilemma of *lobha*, *raga* and *moha* and expound understanding "with compassion." I remain a true admirer of "socially engaged spirituality" and retain my desire "to work for social justice and change."

That, my dear brother, is my sincere tribute to you on your 70th birthday. Owing to my present circumstances and therefore my being in "meditation", I am probably the last to offer you my felicitations and wish you good health and wellbeing on this auspicious occasion.

Leung Fu Tse's insightful view regarding age is relevant.

"At 15, I set my heart upon learning,
At 30, I took my stand,
At 40, I have no doubts.
At 50, I know the will of Heaven,
At 60, my ear was open.
At 70, I follow the desires of my heart without breaking any rules."

I gather from our mutual friends that you have remained concerned about my situation here. I sincerely thank you for that. Among the things I have learnt here, in my incarceration, is that true friends are sometimes hard to come by. Fortunately I still have a good number. But then, there are a few, who, after years of friendship, have finally capitulated to the pressures and threats of the authorities. I have no malice but hope that they will return to the fold and resume the fight for freedom and justice.

I for one hold fast the belief, as I am sure you do yourself, that the will of truth will always prevail. It does not matter how many turns it may have to make.

With personal regards and from Asizah and the children. And, thank you for Danny Campbell's *A Tale About People and A Pipeline.*

Anwar Ibrahim

Dear Sulak and all friends in the office,

Widows cry - Kids are laughing
Bells are ringing - Bombs explode -
Songs are sounding - landmines blow -
"PEACE ON EARTH"
Presents under Christmas trees -
Behind locked doors celebrating families.
Alienated women -
old getting men -
Outside and lonely they remain. -
"TO THOSE WITH WHOM HE IS PLEASED"
who trusts a friend on common ground,
    whose being is safe and sound?
Who gives away a smile,
    and goes with uprooted quite a while?
Who unprotected will find his enemy?
Who dresses wounds although deadly?
Who is struck dumb with secret of life,
When hollow waffle dulls the enunciating voice?
Who listens and hears a friend's stammering
    about how and why she gets annoyed by one's behaving?
Who stretches out hands
    together with words giving an answer making sense?
Who's eyes are watering in wordless praying?
Who's heart silently amazes the miracle celebrating?
Does blossom in their hearts Advent?
Can "Christ-Child" cope with us then,
who as the likes of us became the human?
"GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO"

We greet you on the occasion of Christmas, celebrating Life and Love, with our best wishes for a good and healthy Year 2004, to be a year of peace in justice and solidarity, Yours

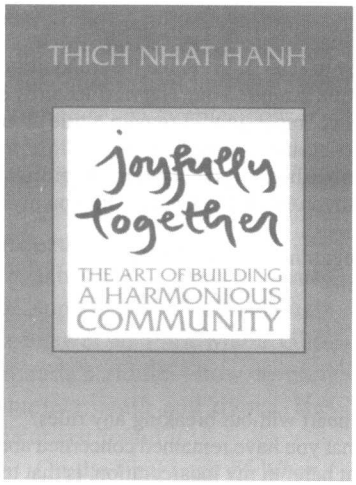
Inge and Wolfgang (Schmidt)

Thich Nhat Hanh:
Joyfully Together:
The Art of Building a Harmonious Community
Parallax Press: Berkeley:
2003. 109 pages US$10

This recent volume from Thay Thich Nhat Hanh focuses on building and nurturing Sangha through compassionate and enlightened interpersonal and group relations. Of particular relevance to Buddhist monastics, the contents also include much that is useful to Buddhist lay followers, and for anyone interested in methods of developing a community's strength and maintaining its harmony.

The volume features explanations of both traditional and innovative practices for community building, ranging from strategies for conflict resolution at the interpersonal level, to full-fledged monastic legal proceedings (*sanghakarman*), and community administrative structures that serve to develop and maintain balance and integrity in the Sangha.

Joyfully Together is arranged in six chapters with a short introduction and endnotes. The volume is grounded in an initial discussion of the importance of the Sangha to Buddhist tradition and the need for skillful means in building and maintaining its internal strength (chapter 1) This is followed by an extensive exegesis of the Anumana Sutta which details the ways individual Sangha members can deal with difficulties - and with difficult members - on an informal interpersonal basis (chapter 2). Discussion then moves to a thorough explanation of the traditional *sanghakarman* procedures used in the management of Sangha affairs and the formal



disciplining of its members (chapter 3). This is then followed by an exposition on the Seven Methods to Resolving Conflicts, also from the Vinaya, which explains ways of group conflict resolution that are less legalistic than the more formal procedures (chapter 4). Attention thereafter turns to Thay Thich Nhat Hahn's own Sangha community, Plum Village, describing its organization and administrative structure, paying particular attention to the innovative practices used for community strengthening in France and the USA (chapter 5). The concluding chapter is addressed to lay followers, particularly those with children, outlining innovative practices that can be used for conflict resolution and harmony-building in the family environment (chapter 6).

The primary theme of *Joyfully*Together is that a healthy Sangha community is essential to Buddhism and no individual can practice and develop on her/his own without Sangha support. The formation and maintenance of a successful community is nonetheless founded directly on individuals, so the second major theme is that harmony and group strength is based on resolving conflicts and creating harmony beginning at the personal level, moving from one-on-one interaction to a gradually widening pool of relations that eventually encompasses everyone.

The Sangha is a body and individuals are its parts. In making a Sangha community whole and healthy, recognition of one's personal shortcomings and errors is important, but equally important is the recognition that everyone is suffering and struggling with their own problems. Initial emphasis is placed on developing communication skills that help individuals overcome feelings of isolation. Through engaging in supportive processes that provide both constructive criticism and encouragement in an appropriate and loving way, the necessary foundation for self-improvement and group strength can be achieved. Nonetheless, Thay is careful to point out that not every person who wishes to be part of an ordained Sangha actually succeeds in maintaining the level of behavior required. Expulsion from the Sangha does occur, though the possibilities of this clearly diminish when the support practices in the community are active and effective in helping individuals rise to the challenge of a life of discipline.

There is much to recommend this volume. Informative, interesting and well written, it offers readers in-depth knowledge of Buddhist social philosophy and community life based on Thay Thich Nhat Hahn's many decades of experience as a Sangha-builder. Students of Buddhism will find the exposition of texts and description of relational processes indispensable to understanding the essential role that the Sangha plays in

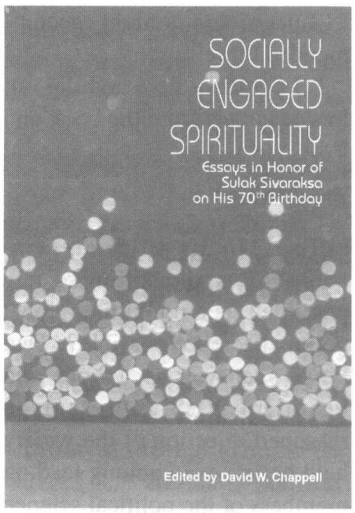
Buddhist tradition. For those with a more general interest in strategies for community development and practices of conflict resolution, this book includes a wealth of practical material that can be applied in a variety of social contexts and adapted to suit a wide range of purposes.

Those familiar with Thay Thich Nhat Hanh know that in addition to teaching the Dharma, guiding meditation, and upholding Vinaya observances according to time-honored standards, Thay is also a master of innovation. He has risen to the challenge of keeping Buddhism fresh, vital and relevant to current times and approaches this with courage, imagination and artistry. Buddhists outside his own community are gradually becoming acquainted with his practices of 'watering the flowers' and 'beginning anew' for personal growth, the 'mentor' and 'second body' systems for community solidarity, and 'the breathing room' and 'cake in the refrigerator' for harmony in the family. Whether we are conservative in our thinking, or feel inspired to apply the new practices described in this volume, or think we might want to develop strategies of our own, Thay's approach to community building is worth close study and *Joyfully Together* is a welcome addition to the work that he and others are doing in this important area.

James G. Mullens,
University of Saskatchewan

A VOICE OF SANITY

Christopher Titmuss
celebrates the life of a
Buddhist activist.
Socially Engaged Spirituality
Ed. David Chappell
Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa
Foundation, Thailand, 2003
Distributed in the UK
by Wisdom Books, £20.00



I FIRST HEARD of Sulak Sivaraksa, one of Thailand's foremost dissidents, lawyers and leading Buddhist activists, about thirty years ago. After meeting him in the 1980s and reading his early books such as *Siam through a Looking Glass* and *Siamese Resurgence: A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society*, I came to realise that Sulak's is a strong voice of sanity, challenging the actions of governments and corporations.

He uses his deep spiritual consciousness, his Buddhist practices and his training as a lawyer to press home the need for change: for legislation to protect rural people and their environment and to hold accountable those powerful forces which exploit people and planet.

Sulak is deeply Buddhist in heart and mind. Yet he knows well that there is much to be concerned about in Buddhism. It is after all a 'Buddhist' regime that is running Burma in its merciless suppression of democracy. Successive Buddhist governments in Thailand, too, have done little to safeguard the people from the materialistic exploitation of the country through consumerism and commercial interests. In Sri Lanka, a fanatical civil war went on for years unabated between Tamils and Sinhalese, who also happen to be Hindus and Buddhists. Again and again, the Buddha's teaching on the practice of meditation, right livelihood, interconnection with the Earth and the application of wisdom and compassion are ignored.

In such situations Sulak stands up for true Buddhist principles, and exposes the hypocrisy of so-called 'Buddhists'. His campaigns, public talks and writings have got him into serious trouble with the authorities. In the past, many of his friends around the world have spent a lot of time writing letters appealing for his release and calling on human rights organisations to support him, to get him out of trouble. He has taken his concerns to places where angels fear to tread.

For example, in August 1984, Sulak was arrested by the Thai government on charges of *lese-majeste* (offending the monarch), for critical comments he made about the Thai King in an interview. He faced between three and thirty years' imprisonment, but the government dropped its case, no doubt in part due to the international

campaign in his support.

Sulak and I have the same Buddhist teacher, Ajahn Buddhadasa (1917-1992), the legendary Buddhist monk who lived for more than sixty years in a 250-acre forest monastery that he founded in Chai Ya, southern Thailand, and called 'The Monastery of the Garden of Liberation'. Ajahn Buddhadasa once said that "flowers, candles, incense and worship of Buddha is Buddhism for thumb-sucking kids." Sulak and I are also long-standing members of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship that reminds meditating Buddhists that there is far more to Buddhist practice than sitting on the meditation cushion. Sulak insists that core practice of Buddhism must lead us to be concerned with the plight of the people and that of the planet. Buddhism which is disengaged from everyday social, political and environmental issues is not Buddhism at all. Such radicalism sets Sulak apart from conventional Buddhists. In June this year, I received a copy of *Socially Engaged Spirituality: Essays in Honour of Sulak Sivaraksa on his 70th Birthday*. The table of contents reads like a global Who's Who of international thinkers and activists. There are around ninety essays with sections on 'Proposals for Action', 'Light for Understanding', 'Values' and 'Friendship'. The book runs to a breathtaking 712 pages and is highly recommended.

I could sit here and dig out lots of quotes from the book and from Sulak's own writings that express his passion, his critiques of the global situation and his unabated concern for inner and outer renewal. Instead, though, I would encourage you to buy the book, and then come and spend time with Sulak at Schumacher College in South Devon from 9th to 28th November, 2003, along with Vicki Robin and John de Graaf, to explore major issues around simplicity and social change. It might be one of the best decisions you ever made.

Christopher Titmuss is co-founder of Gaia House, an international Buddhist retreat centre in South Devon. He is author of ***Mindfulness for Everyday Living.*** Reprinted from *Resurgence* No.221 November/ December 2003

Nonkilling Global Political Science

By Glenn D. Paige,
Xlibris Corporation, 2003

Challenging and overturning shallow but widely-held beliefs is anathema to the insouciant but a pleasure to the progressive. It is for those who believe knowledge is not static and resist the temptation to find solace in watertight compartments of concepts and ideals, thus enlarging the coast of knowledge. Professor emeritus Glenn D. Paige's book, *Nonkilling Global Political Science*, speaks of nothing less, more so with its glaring conceptual clarity and the cascade of buttressing historical, scientific and spiritual evidence of non-violence and nonkilling.

Running through the 239 — page simple-to-understand book, said to be the first book in English language with "nonkilling" in its title, are two questions: Is a nonkilling society possible? Is a nonkilling global political science possible? That Paige's answer is a bold and beautiful YES represents a reasoned rejection of the widely held belief, even among leading members of the political science discipline, that killing is inescapable in a human society.

If a society free from killing and threat of killing is unthinkable, as many political scientists and politicians hold, that in itself is a problem which political scientists should not readily repudiate but squarely address. It is nothing but a concrete challenge to the creative capabilities of political scientists, and Paige's work is a quintessential pathfinder atlas.

He painstakingly paints a picture of a human race that is not in want of nonviolent ideas, strategies and icons but desperately in want of the will to embrace those ideas and strategies and apply them with relevant modifications to bring about peace and sustainable development. It is a human society that yearns to be free from killing and threat of killing, a society that is not a mental abstraction but a complete possibility.

In Paige's mindset, if the medical profession could be set free from the 17-centuries-long dominance of Galen's laudable pus theory, that pus formed around a wound was nature's way of restoring health, and embrace the Lister-inspired invention of antiseptic, then violence and killing-accepting politics and political science is bound to give way to violence and killing rejecting politics and political science.

It was Erma Bombeck, the late American humorist, who said: "Never go to a doctor whose

office plants have died", and I agree. In relation to authors, I would say never read authors whose lives do not mirror their thesis. Professor Paige's nonviolence and nonkilling campaigns are fruits of heartfelt repentance worthy of strong support because he had killed in the Korea War.

At the University of Hawaii where he taught from 1967 to 1992, Paige introduced undergraduate courses and graduate seminars on political leadership and non-violent political alternatives. Before then, he had taught at Princeton University (1961 to 1967) and Seoul National University (1959 to 1961), leaving behind good legacies.

He also founded the Honolulu-based Centre for Global Nonviolence, hoping that his soft voice of experience would speak louder than the thundering voice of arrogance. He therefore reminds me of Augustine of Hippo who had strongly promoted Manichaeanism and scepticism but later turned out to be one of the strongest advocates of Christianity in his day.

Paige accuses the media, especially television, of promoting violence, a charge the media would quickly renounce as totally oblivious of its role in a human society. Many see the world through the eyes of the media and many children, especially in the North, spend long hours each week on television and video games replete with violent images that not only stick with them but also seem to make them accept spiral violence and killing as pleasant human functions.

The culture of violence and lethality, according to Paige, is also evident in colloquial expressions and trade jargons. It is not uncommon for people on Wall Street to say "You buy when there's blood in the streets" or for Americans to talk about making a killing on the stock market or for the media to talk of "bombshell" when some people are sacked in a government department.

Acknowledging the platitude that history is the root of political science and political science the fruit of history, Paige establishes historically the futility of war, illuminating it as serving the pride of men at the expense of the sanctity of lives. He goes on to present nonviolence and nonkilling in an evolutionary perspective, contending that past and present global experiences already mirror some prototypical components of a nonkilling society.

In Egypt, the Nubia-born pharaoh, Shabaka (c.760BCE-c.695BCE) abolished the death penalty. Following that precedent, 73 of the world's 195 countries and territories had abolished the death penalty by 2000 and 27 countries were without standing armies by 2001. There are many political institutions like the Friendship Party of Britain and the Green Party of Germany, and spiritual institutions like Jains and Quakers that support non-violence and nonkilling.

The same is true of educational institutions like Deemed University in Tamil Nadu, India; and economic institutions like United Farm Workers of America and Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya led by A.T. Ariyarante. There are research institutions like the Albert Einstein Institution, Cambridge, and the Gandhian Institute, Varanasi, India; problem solving institutions like Amnesty International, Greenpeace International and War Resisters International.

There are also non-violent political struggles in many parts of the world like the Gandhian independence movement in India and the Kingian movement for racial civil rights in the US; and security institutions like the prison without armed guards in Finland, and Japanese citizens who are virtually unarmed.

Only a minority of human beings dead and alive have killed and despite incidents of violence and killing in human society, the world population has been on the increase, rising from 2.5 billion in 1950 to 6.1 billion in 2000, with the projection for 2050 put at 8.9 billion.

As many as 22,500 American conscripts reportedly refused to kill in the Korean War and some 4,000 conscripted American men refused to kill in World War I. Besides, not all war implements have yielded to their users' wish. The story of *Vasa*, King Gustavus II of Sweden's warship, comes in handy. Commissioned in 1628 to be the mightiest and most splendid warship in the world, the ship sank as soon as it fired its first shot. What a great disappointment it must have been for the king who must have sunk huge sums of taxpayers' money into it! What an unwilling ally in the desecration of human sanctity the warship was!

But have world leaders learnt anything from it? Obviously, they haven't. Huge sums of money are still being expended on massive war machine while many people live in hunger and disease and the environment suffers more and more degradation partly because of the activities of the defence industry. Instructively, the num-

ber of modern day Vasas is increasing.

Author of *To Nonviolent Political Science: From Seasons of Violence* (1993), Paige is therefore leading a nonviolent revolution in political science in the areas of rejecting the rigidly held belief that killing is inescapable (normative), identifying factors favourable for nonkilling social transformation (factual), and understanding causes and processes of nonkilling change (theoretical).

He provides knowledge and skills for nonkilling transformation (educational and training), engaging nonkilling knowledge in practice (applied), transforming and creating organisations to facilitate nonkilling change (institutional), and creating and adapting methods of inquiry, analysis and action most suitable for nonkilling transformational tasks (methodological).

He holds that nonkilling is clearly and completely within the realm of possibility and is rooted in human experience and creative capabilities, thus making it a potent challenge to the dynamic discipline of political science, which is about human dignity, welfare and freedom. As he puts it, "Violence-assuming political science tends to discourage non-violent creativity. By dismissing it in professional training as deviantly 'utopian', 'idealistic' and 'unrealistic', political science intellect is condemned to confinement in perpetual lethality. Nonkilling creativity offers promise of liberation."

Interestingly, one of the few scholars that have readily accepted that promise is a top Korean philosophy professor and political leader whose country, North Korea, currently in a nuclear stand-off with the US, belongs to George W. Bush's infamous "axis of evil." To him, a nonkilling society is simply and squarely possible and by so concurring, the unnamed professor places scales under the feet of the many, notably American political scientists, who trumpet it as unthinkable.

In their thinking, nonkilling as a political principle is immoral, a nonkilling society would be totalitarian and would be attacked by foreign aggressors, killing to save victims of aggression is just, killing criminals for punishment and deterrence is beneficial to society, lethal technologies will always exist and there is no example of a nonkilling society in human history.

This is not surprising for, according to Paige, "killing contributed to the origins, territorial expansion, national integration, and global power projection of the United States of America... the reality of American State lethality is undeniable."

No doubt, no nation gives as much aid as America, but the bellicosity that runs consistently through its veins and arteries, reduces the impact of such aid, and *Nonkilling Global Political Science* believes mutual understanding and cooperation are better and more effective than gunboat diplomacy, and advises readers to always prefer persuasion to coercion in any form.

It stands to reason that the book would have gained a wider appeal if it was titled *Nonkilling Global Politics* instead of *Nonkilling Global Political Science*. This is because while many are interested in politics, few see political science as a field that is struggling to survive in the face of the litany of "unthinkables" in human sociopolitical and economic organisation. But Paige was writing mainly for political scientists and other social scientists, a number of whom are in dire need of liberation from the bondage of those "untinkables."

Nonkilling Global Political Science hopes to help them attain that liberation, for it is far from being the final word on the subject of global nonkilling. It is a stimulant to wider and deeper exploration into nonkilling alternatives that take a high sense of appreciation of the sanctity of human lives to embrace.

It will help the discerning reader to look through the hopeful lens of a pregnant future that may give birth to transmogrified despots, armed robbers, soldiers and intoxicated macho men as well as wife-beaters and child-torturing parents who will look at the past and its stench of wasted lives with stupendous regrets.

Thus, it is not one of those "fast food" books written to fill a space on the bookshop shelf or to give the author a sense of belonging in the "publish or perish" academic world. Rather, *Nonkilling Global Political Science* is a book meticulously crafted to challenge humanity, not just political scientists in ivory towers, to turn the captivity of human lethality. Every paragraph is loaded with wisdom that earns and stimulates reflection, debate and action. Little wonder it has received favourable comments from Nobel laureates, leading peace activists and notable academics. The cover is beautiful, with a "Take up and read" appeal.

Paschal Eze

Azmi Khalid:
Human Rights Advocate — A Tribute
Edited by Chandra Muzzafar
Published by Bakti Ehsanmurni Sdn Bhd
Kuala Lumpur 2002

Earlier this week a 40 strong delegation from Malaysia's Economic Action Council(EAC) visited Bangkok for high level talks with Siamese technocrats and leaders from the commanding heights of Thailand's private and public sectors.

Malaysia's curiosity about her Siamese neighbour appears to be at its height. Not only Malaysian tourists, but politicians, civil servants, technocrats, economists, bankers, researchers and think tanks have come to pick the brains of their Siamese counterparts and visit factories, SMEs and showcase projects. The curiosity appears to be somewhat one-sided.

But it's a welcome development following the decades of political and cultural compartmentalisation imposed by Southeast Asia's divisive colonial legacy. Because of colonial history those educated in English and French tend to know more about English and French civilisations than about neighbouring countries.

Books, which celebrate local heroes, or view history from an Asian perspective provide a refreshing correction to the systemic bias of an imposed Western education. *Azmi Khalid: Human Rights Advocate: A Tribute* is worth reading for this reason. The late Azmi Khalid was a Malaysian who was deeply committed to the human rights struggle and served as an Executive Committee member of ALIRAN from 1979-1988.

This is also a special kind of book. It is not a history or philosophy, or biography or a compilation of essays upon a theme. The nature of the book is suggested by its subtitle: "A Tribute". The book is a tribute to Azmi Khalid.

Why to Azmi Khalid? Because he was "a fine academic and a human rights activist" said Chandra Muzzafar who wrote the book's Introduction. But it appears difficult to justify the book solely on these two merits.

First, there is no distinct theory or body of knowledge that could be attributed to Azmi Khalid as an academic. Although, there are some excellent articles and papers among the compilation of writings of Azmi Khalid included. His substantial paper on " The Executive Perception of Law," is very coherent, well argued and a pleasure to read.

Also, included is a draft of the constitution of Persatuan Kebangsaan Hak Asasi Manusia(HAKAM), the National Human Rights Society prepared by Azmi Khalid which is not known to most people. Chandra Muzzafar regards this document as a very important milestone in Malaysia's human rights struggle.

Specialists, and especially those concerned with the development of Thailand's new Human Rights Commission, will find Azmi's other articles published in various journals and magazines and the human rights reports that Azmi had prepared for *Aliran Quarterly* of interest.

Azmi Khalid remains to be discovered as a theorist or theoretical advocate. Hopefully, the sample of his writings included would stimulate future research students to analyse and investigate his contribution to Malaysian political thought.

Second, probably not enough is known about Azmi Khalid as a human rights activist. A serious, balanced biography of Azmi Khalid as a human rights activist has yet to be written.

Although, there is ample testimony among friends, colleagues, family members and the faithful that Azmi Khalid deserves a hero's welcome in the annals of Malaysia's human rights struggle. Those who have passed him by in different ways will appreciate the touching reminiscences offered in the "Tributes" of the book.

Perhaps, this wave of applause and commendation for Azmi Khalid's contribution to the human rights struggle in Malaysia celebrated in the book should encourage scholars to write his definitive biography.

In some ways, this is not a book on Azmi Khalid. This book is more like a proposal towards a book on Azmi Khalid. If this book manages to stimulate serious research on Azmi Khalid, the former would have served its purpose well. The importance of this "pre-book" on Azmi Khalid should not be dismissed.

Chandra Muzzafar is right. " There is a tendency within the leading institutions of a nation to only focus upon the deeds of those who were in power or were associated with power." What about the good work done by ordinary men and women in our midst?

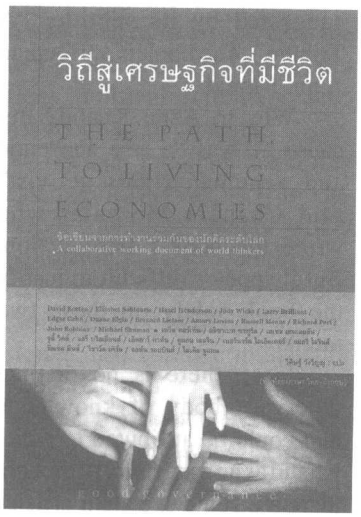
Chandra thinks its important "one should also remember the accomplishments of the hundreds of others who did not walk the corridors of power. People like Azmi Khalid." Unsung heroes

like Azmi Khalid are in danger of being consigned to oblivion by history. That would be a sad loss. Often such people demonstrate more integrity than many high visibility politicians.

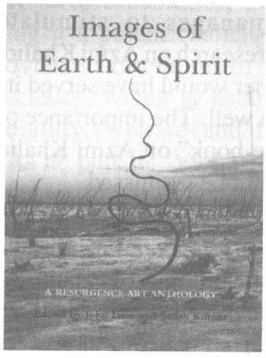
Jeffery Sng
Bangkok 11/13/03

The Path To Living Economies

with David Korten, Elisabeth Satouris, Hazel Henderson, Judy Wicks, Larry Brilliant, Edgar Chan, Duane Elgin, Bernard Lietaer, Amory Lovins, Russell Means, Richard Perl, John Robbins, Michael Shuman published in Thai and English by Suan Nguen Mee Ma Co., Ltd. in Bangkok.



Do you need a date-up on new ways of thinking and acting in the business world in the USA? You should read this book. Leading members and speakers of Social Venture Network (SVN) USA pool their ideas and come up with a groundbreaking overview of new approaches to corporate action. For business people in Asia who have created the "Asian Miracle" and have been influenced by the "American Dream" it is good to know that there is growing opposition and constructive counteraction against mainstream business in USA. Social activists may have to sharpen their critique on American imperialism by including sound knowledge of the alternative movement among entrepreneurs and pioneering business leaders. This book provides a handy introduction to 'Living Economies' with many website references. It is published in Thai and English in one volume. Available at Suksit Siam shop, Fuang Nakorn (opposite Wat Rajabopit) and through the publisher at suanco @ksc.th.com (Wallapa and Hans).



Images of Earth and Spirit: A Resurgence Art Anthology

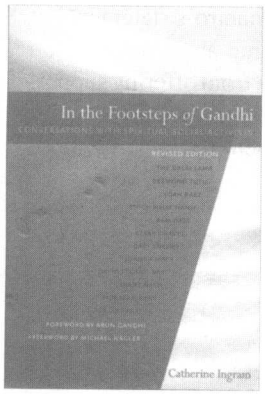
Edited by John Lane and Satish Kumar
Green Books Ltd., 2003

Images of Earth and Spirit features artists who are dedicated to the celebration of the earth and the renewal of life, and whose work has an enduring spiritual resonance.

All the artists in this book have been featured in the pages of *Resurgence* magazine, an international forum for ecological and spiritual thinking which challenges much of the conventional wisdom of our times, including the dream of unending material progress.

Their images reflect a new sense of the universe, holism, and interconnectedness, openness and nondeterminism, and are inspired by the spirituality and traditions of many cultures.

147 glorious colour illustrations from over fifty artists are accompanied by interviews and commentaries which give further insight into the artists and their work.

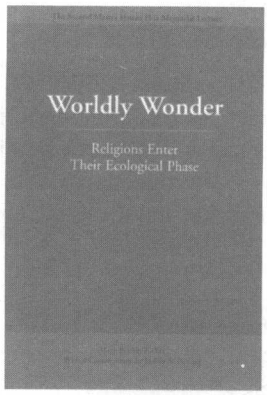


In the Footsteps of Gandhi:
Conservations with Spiritual Social Activists
Catherine Ingram
Parallax Press, 2003

This spring has witnessed worldwide demonstrations for peace that are the largest in history. At a time when growing numbers of people are studying the works of Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and other non-violent leaders, these eloquent and inspiring voices for peace are more relevant than ever. *In the Footsteps of Gandhi* provides original and soul-searching interviews with contemporary spiritual social activists. Whether discussing AIDS, apartheid, or the Israel/Palestine conflict — they embody the understanding that violence is not stopped by violence. Violence is only ended by love.

This revised edition features a new foreword by Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and author of *Legacy of Love*. It also contains interviews with Mubarak Awad, Ram Dass, Thich Nhat Hanh, Cesar Chavez, H.H. The Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, Joan Baez, and others. All this is followed with an afterword by American Book Award winner Michael Nagler.

Worldly Wonder: Religious Enter Their Ecological Phase
Mary Evelyn Tucker
Open Court, 2003



What is humankind in relation to 113 billion years of universe history? What is our place in the framework of 4.6 billion years of Earth history? How can we foster the stability and integrity of life processes?

Just as humankind is beginning to comprehend the vastness and complexity of the evolutionary story of the universe, we are also becoming conscious of the growing environmental crisis and of the rapid destruction of species and habitat taking place around the globe.

The challenge for the world's religions, argues Mary Evelyn Tucker, is both to reenvision our role as citizens of the universe and to reinvent our niche as members of the Earth community.

Peace and Policy: Dialogue of Civilizations for World Citizenship
Vol. 8, 2003. Violence in a Nonviolent World
Journal of the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research

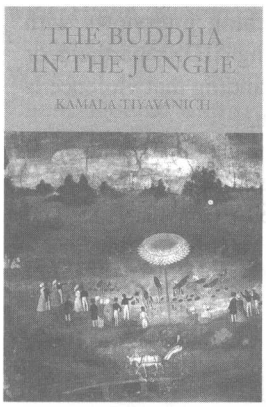
This issue of *Peace and Policy* is devoted to the theme of "Violence in a Nonviolent World." Included in this issue are papers by Immanuel Wallerstien, Anthony Marsella, Linda Groff, Beverley Keever, Wazir Jahan Karim, George McGovern, William Polk, Farideh Farhi, Glenn Paige, and Arun Gandhi. Many other relevant documents and images are included, each speaking for itself. But their combination demonstrates the central point of the issue. There are millions of peace-loving people and leaders in this world who keep silent when not provoked. But if provoked, they speak out with the power of an avalanche. *Peace and Policy* is privileged to give them a chance to speak.

Uncounted: Political Prisoners in Burma's Ethnic Areas
ALTSEAN-Burma, 2003

In Mr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro's report to the 59th Commission on Human Rights he states:

"Political arrests since July 2002 have followed the pattern of un-rule of law, including arbitrary arrest, prolonged incommunicado detention and interrrogation by military intelligence personnel, extraction of confessions of guilt or of information, very often under duress or lorture, followed by summary trials, sentencing, and imprisonment."

This report presents a sample of 46 cases that comply with the description in Pinheiro's statement but remain unrecognized as political arrests. They are people mostly in Burma's ethnic areas detained on accusations of supporting ethnic nationality opposition groups. The accusations range from offering support through food and accommodation, to knowledge of opposition group movements, to actually being a member of an ethnic nationality opposition group. This report explores the treatment received by those detained in prisons and military bases throughout Burma.

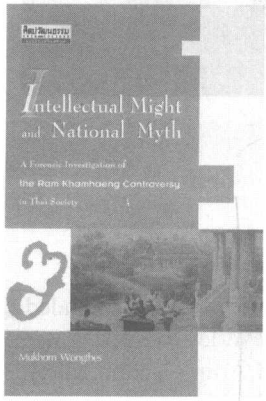


The Buddha in the Jungle
Kamala Tiyavanich
Published in Thailand by Silkworm Books, 2003
Published in USA by The University of Washington Press

The book is a collection of loosely related stories focusing on aspects of the lives and contexts of a number of Buddhist masters. These monks lived between the mid 19th -mid 20th century in Siam or Thailand. The stories in this book illustrate the Buddhist monks' involvement with the lives of common people and their respect for all forms of life. These Buddhist masters combined spiritual pursuits with social responsibilities. All of them were involved in their local communities as teachers, healers, astrologers, etc. The monks honored the kind of teaching that best suited the character and aptitude of the individual and taught in ways that made Dhamma relevant to everyday life.

The Sangha Centralization Act in 1902 established uniform rules and practices for all monasteries in Siam. From then on, the diverse teachings and practices of monks were replaced by a new "scientific" education system.

The collection tries to reveal about life and relationship in the old Siam in various aspects, i.e. between monastic and local laypeople, monks and novices, monks and bandits, etc.



Intellectual Might and National Myth :
A Forensic Investigation of The Ram Khamhaeng Controversy in Thai Society
Mukhom Wongthes
Matichon Plc., 2003

The Ram Khamhaen Inscription of Sukhothai has been considered one of the most important pieces of evidence of Thai history and is traditionally believed to be the oldest Thai writing, dated to the 13th century. It has been a major source of reference for Thai history in general and Sukhothai in particular. Since its "discovery" in 1833 by King Mongkut and glorified in the time of civilian-military regime, it has acquired an institutional, for some, sacred status and then became a national symbol that signified "Thai-ness".

The underground doubts surrounding the traditionally ascribed authorship and dating surfaced among some Thais around 1960s, but formal controversy only recently in 1980s. The hypothesis was that this inscription might have been a significantly later composition or "forgery" and was most probably done by or under direction of King Mongkut in 19th century.

The Ram Khamhaen controversy reaffirms the places of "myth" and "official-nationalistic discourse" in Thai society and reflects the levels of scholarship and scholarly attitudes and the mannerisms in the Thai Studies community. It also provides an excellent demonstration of the power relations of "knowledge", "truth", and "social institutions" in Siam. Finally it reminds us that the purely "academic" or "intellectual" debate and ideology-free enterprises and individuals do not exist.