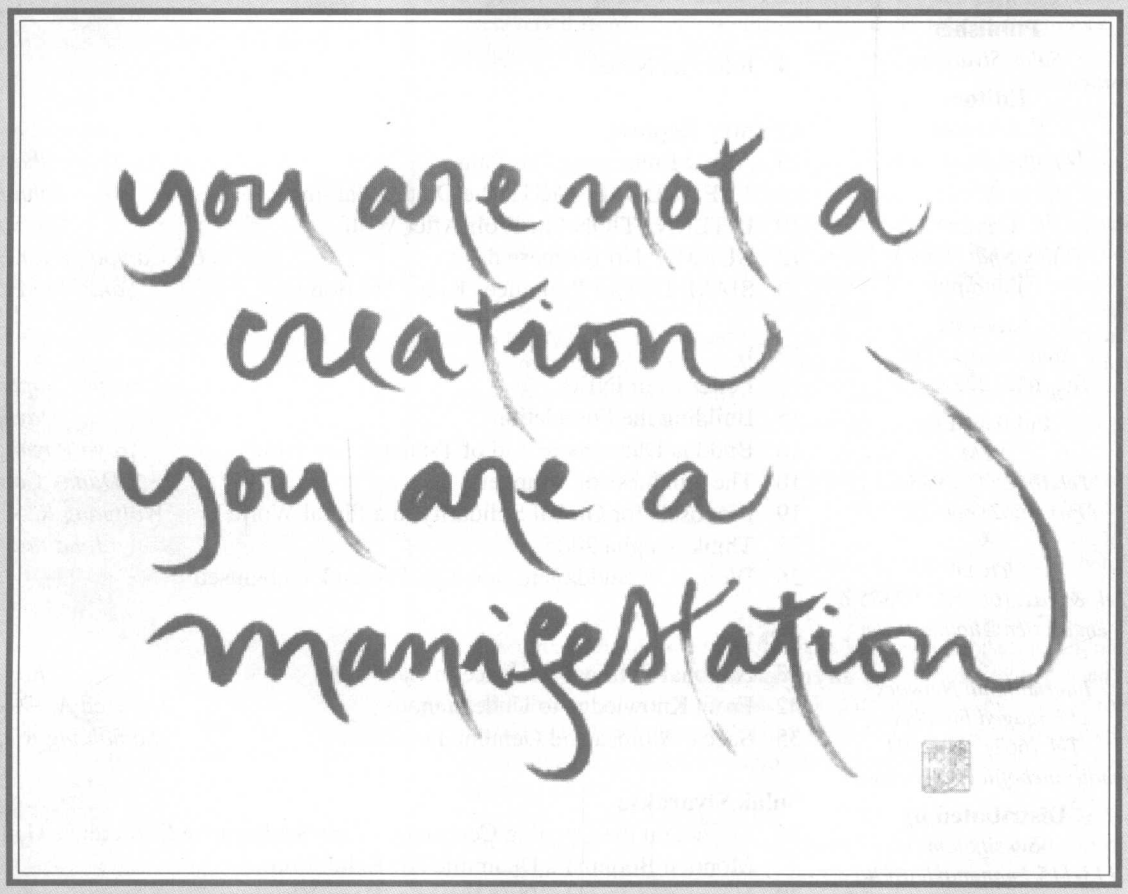
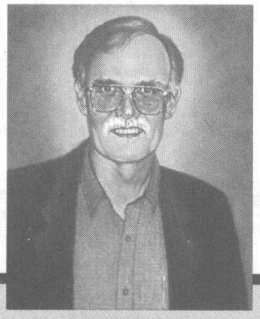
SEEDS OF PEACE

Vol.21 No.2 May-Aug. 2548 (2005)



19th June 2548
Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 60th birthday
6th July 2548
H.H. The Dalai Lama's 70th birthday
16th August 2548
60th anniversary of the Declaration of Peace by Mr Pridi Banomyong, the Regent of H.M. King Ananda Mahidol and leader of the Free Thai Movement, which ended the state of war between Siam and the Allies despite the fact that the Thai Government had declared war against Great Britain and the USA.



SEEDS OF

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PEACE

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

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The goals of INEB are to:

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

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Appreciation to David Chappell

I can't believe the fact that a gentleman, David Chappell, cannot be with us anymore.

He has definitely lived a dedicated life of compassion and networking among the Buddhist society. We all remember his smiling face...

May his soul rest in peace and his spirit be with us!

Gwangseo Park
Korea

I first met David back in '91 in Hawaii whilst doing a Zen training period with Aitken Roshi. I was delighted to meet up again with him more recently through INEB. The night I read your message about David I had a dream of him that night, an expansive dream. In this dream, he knew he was soon to die and he said something like, "I go in peace and you too must all go in peace". Of course it might have been very different but it seemed like a wonderful messageto us all. In love and peace and the dharma,

Jill Jameson
Australia

I am sad to hear that David Chappell has passed away. It must be a shock for many people since he is such a dear friend and last time I saw him he seemed to be in good health. I always remember his sincere laughter and lively conservation. He is one of a few Western scholars who is genuinely humble. His understanding of the world and his articulation of life have brought inspiration and vision into our work in engaged Buddhist community. I really want to appreciate his friendship and wisdom he has shared with us. His love and passion for a peaceful and just world will be with us in our work and spirit.

May his spirit be free from suffering.

Love and peace,

Nuttarote Wangwinyoo
Thailand

I was so very sorry to hear that David Chappell has left us, bereft of his friendship, wisdom and youthful exuberance.

Memories of the Ariya Vinaya Conference when we were invited to become wise elders in support of the Young Buddhist International Students Association and his support for my unorthodox approach to Buddhist Economics via Drama, cooked up late in the evening, before the final day. Brief glimpses of him at the INEB Conference in Korea. A charming note acknowledging my humble contribution to your Birthday book.

Only a handful of petals and I wish I had known him better. He was a sower of seeds of Peace and I look forward to your next edition.

With much sympathy and condolences to his family

Venetia Walkey
Thailand

We are very sorry to know that our Dharma friend passed away from us. I remember that Mr. David Chappell was very active in Peace and Reconciiiation. I met him last time in Seoul, S. Korea in 2003 during INEB conference.

I am very deep respective to him, we call him a Peace maker.

We are sharing the suffering with his family,

ANATA !!!!!!

Peou Vanna
ANLWC, Cambodia

Jon Watts is now helping INEB to develop a program on *Culture of Awakening* in memorial of David Chappell. The concept paper is available at INEB Secretariat Office upon request. We welcome comments and suggestion from David's friends so that the program would reflect his virtue as a socially engaged Buddhist as much as possible.

Editorial Notes

The tsunami disaster at the end of last year has had a deep spiritual, psychological and cultural effect until now–hence the many articles on this topic in this issue. Despite the terrible tragedy at the end of 2004, this year began with the good news that Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, one of our patrons, was allowed to return to his native land–at least temporarily. On his way to Vietnam, Thay stopped at the Bangkok airport and gave us one of his beautiful pieces of calligraphy, which we gratefully put on the front cover of this issue.

On the 19th of June, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will reach the age of 60. Although she is still under house arrest–the most severe one ever–her practice of *ahimsa dhamma* inspires us all. We believe that right will certainly overcome might, with wisdom and compassion.

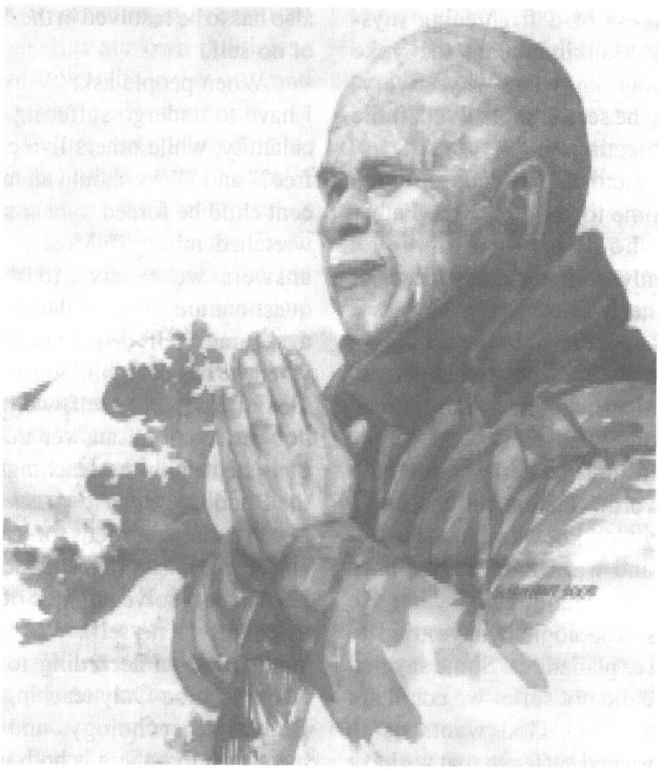
On the 6th of July, H.H. the Dalai Lama will also reach the age of 70. Although His Holiness is freer than the Burmese lady, his country and people are no better off than Suu Kyi's compatriots. We pray for His Holiness and for Suu Kyi for their good health, long life, happiness and strength–physically, morally and spiritually–so that their people will later be free from political oppression. May peace and social justice as well as environmental balance prevail in Burma, Tibet and elsewhere.

At the national level, apart from the tsunami disaster, violence in the Malay provinces has worsened. However, since the National Reconciliation Commission has been set up by the government, headed by former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, we hope and pray once again that peace will prevail in this country too. Let us hope that our Prime Minister will learn to be humble and act honestly for the benefit of his compatriots. If the government is serious about peace, it should honor the 60th anniversary of Peace Day on the 16th of August, 2005. But we still doubt the sincerity of the government as we have also doubted the sincerity of the Indonesian government vis-à-vis the 50th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, despite the fact that we were asked by Abdulrahman Wahid, when he was President of Indonesia, to prepare Bandung II to pave the way for social justice with compassion.

This year, we also join the Right Livelihood Foundation in Sweden in celebrating the 25th anniversary of the award recognizing alternatives to the main system of economism, materialism, and neoliberalism. Many recipients of the RLA were invited to share their vision of the future in Munich this past March, and will meet again in June in Salzburg to discuss the creation of the Future World Council. Let us hope that this important initiative will soon be realized.

As stated in the last issue, we want to dedicate this issue to the memory of David Chappell. So many people wrote to us appreciating his life and work. We could only publish a few of these notes of appreciation; the rest can be looked up on our website (www.sulak-sivaraksa.org). We also want to develop a special project dealing with the Culture of Awakening in memory of David and Suzuki Raowa. Besides, David had edited a special volume on our publisher's 70th birthday entitled *Socially Engaged Spirituality*. Kumarian Press in Connecticut liked it so much that they have decided to put together an abridged version for distribution in the US. David agreed to work on this edition but he passed away before the mission was accomplished. Now, Donald Swearer has agreed to do so in order to dedicate the new volume to David Chappell.

ASIA
Embracing Our Pain



The whole human race is in mourning ... Over the past days I have offered incense and recited Buddha's name every day to send energy to the victims and their families. The whole world is shaken by the disaster in Southeast Asia. Indonesia and Sri Lanka have suffered most of all. The tsunami even reached the shores of Africa and hundreds of people on the coast of Africa have lost their lives.

Although we are sitting here, a part of our heart and body has died also. Many people from northern European countries such as Sweden had gone on holiday to this area looking for a quiet, unpolluted and warm place to take a break, and in a few moments the tsunami took their lives. Scientists are saying that if Southeast Asia had had a system of alert, some people could have avoided the catastrophe. A warning system could have given people four hours time to leave the coastal areas. However, even if there had been a system of alert how could ordinary people have been alerted; those who do not have radio, TV, those who are working at sea, on the land or the children?

The westerners who lost their lives in the tsunami were mostly vacationers, who went there to escape cold winter weather, but some of those who died were here to do charitable work. They did not come here on holiday but to offer their services.

This calamitous event urges us to look deeply and consider the condition of the human species. In Christianity, the question of why there is this kind of suffering has been discussed through the ages. Why does God, who created the world with all its species, allow such suffering to take place? This has been a subject for theologians throughout time.

In Buddhism we speak of Cause and Result. We say that we have to bear the consequences of our actions. Still, people ask: "How can children of three or five years old have done such evil acts that they have to lose their parents or their own lives?" How can we explain the law of karma?

Whether we are Christian or Buddhist, this disaster poses questions for us. Christian believers ask: "How can God, who loves mankind, allow things like this to happen?" Buddhists ask: "How could people who have come with the best of intentions to help others and were doing charitable work, or innocent children, have committed such a crime that they should die in this way?"

Some people say that although during this lifetime they had not committed crimes they may have done so in a past life. We try to provide answers like this.

The French poet Victor Hugo at the age of 40 or so lost his daughter who was about 20 years old. Her name was Leopoldine. He suffered deeply and asked God why this should have happened to her. She too was drowned. A tender flower just opening suddenly snatched away by a wave.

When his daughter died, he

went back to his birthplace Villequier. In the poem entitled *At Villequier*, he says: "Mankind can only see one side of reality. The other side is plunged in the darkness of a frightening mystery. Mankind bears the yoke without knowing why. Everything he sees is short-lived, futile and fleeting."

Victor Hugo calls on God: "I come to you, God, the Father in whom we must believe. Calmly I bring you the pieces of my heart filled with your glory, which you have broken. I accept that only you know what you do, and that mankind is only a reed that trembles in the wind."

Man is powerless, man is of no worth. That is our condition. Only God knows what He is doing and we, His creatures, have no understanding of what He does. Theologians have tried to give explanations. Some say that if we did not suffer we could not grow. Thus God wants us to mourn and suffer so that we have a chance to grow. Some people can accept this kind of reasoning, but others cannot.

In Plum Village, we have often studied rebirth and the cycle of samsara. We know that in popular Buddhism, the teachings of rebirth are based on a belief in a self or soul. It is said that when someone dies, they are reborn as another person or an animal. There is faith that we continue. When we die, we do not cease entirely to exist. We continue in a different form, and that is what we call the cycle of birth and death.

We have learned, however, that in the deeper Buddhist teachings, we have to understand rebirth in the light of no-self. The basis of Buddhist teachings is the teaching on no-self. If we understand rebirth and the cause and result of action in terms of a self, we have not yet touched the deepest levels of the Buddhist teachings.

Similarly the matter of evil also has to be resolved in the light of no-self.

When people ask: "Why do I have to undergo suffering and calamity, while others live carefree?" and "Why should an innocent child be forced to bear such wretched misery?" Most of the answers we receive to these questions are based on the idea of a separate self. We know that when we base our thinking on the idea of a separate self, we have not yet found an answer that is consistent with the teachings of the Buddha.

All the questions of cause and result, retribution and rebirth have to be resolved in light of the teachings of no-self. We have studied karma according to the Manifestation-Only teachings of Buddhist psychology, and we have seen that there is both individual and collective karma.

We might expect that the people of Southeast Asia who are born, grow up, and make their living there would be killed in the tsunami that took place there; but why should tens of thousands of Westerners go there to meet their deaths? At this moment there are thousands of Westerners who still do not know whether their loved ones have survived, and as every hour passes their hope diminishes.

When an aircraft explodes and crashes and nearly all the passengers die but one or two survive, we ask: "Why? Why did they not all die? Why did one or two live?" This shows us that karma has both an individual and collective aspect. When we discover the principle of individual and collective, we have begun to resolve a significant part of the matter already. If we continue in the direction of the insight of no-self, we shall gradually discover answers closer to the truth.

In the war in Vietnam, both the country and its people were subject to enormous destruction. Why did those two million people die while other millions did not? Looking into this carefully, we shall see that even those who did not die, did die, though in a different way.

It is very clear that when someone we love dies, the person who dies suffers less than those who outlive him. Therefore suffering is a collective and not an individual matter.

Victor Hugo, in his life as a poet, was seeking and looking deeply and therefore many of his poems are meditative in nature. His contemplative poems are collected in a volume called *Les Contemplations*. Contemplation means looking deeply.

Victor Hugo also found that human destiny is a collective destiny, and he caught a glimpse of the no-self nature of all that is. If any accident happens to one member of our family, the whole family suffers. When an accident happens to a part of our nation, it happens to the whole nation. When an accident happens to a part of the planet Earth it happens to the whole planet, and together we bear it.

When we see that their suffering is our own suffering, and their death is our death, we have begun to see the no-self nature. When I light incense and pray for those who died in the tsunami disaster, I see clearly that I am not only praying for those who have died: I am also praying for myself because I, too, am a victim of that earthquake.

We ourselves have died, too.

There are not just the 155,000 dead. Whenever we love, we see that the person we love is ourselves; and if our loved one dies, we also die. Although we are sitting here, and we have the impression that we are alive, in fact we have also died. What happens to one part of the body happens to the whole body.

The human species and the planet Earth are one body. I have the feeling that our planet Earth is suffering, and this tsunami is the cry of the earth as it writhes in pain: a lament, a cry for help, a warning.

We have lived together so long without love and compassion for each other. We destroy each other; we abuse our mother Earth. So the Earth has turned back on us, has groaned, has suffered. The Earth is the mother of all species. We make each other suffer and we make our mother suffer. These earthquakes are bells of mindfulness. The pain of one man of humankind is the pain of the whole of humankind. We have to see that and wake up.

In the past, whenever there was a natural disaster, such as a flood, an earthquake, or an epidemic, the rulers in Asian countries believed that they as rulers had not lived up to their responsibilities and that was why the natural disaster had be fallen their country and their people. When a natural disaster occurred, rulers in Asia would commit themselves to practising vegetarianism, sleeping on a mat on the ground and praying. The ministers at the court also were vegetarian, slept on the ground and prayed for many weeks.

There is something very commendable in that. It means that the king has seen his responsibility. He has seen that he has lived and ruled in such a way that has allowed disasters to happen to his country. Eating vegetarian and sleeping on the ground was the way that the king and the ministers had of beginning anew. There is something very beautiful in that. But our own politicians do not look at life in that way, and this custom no longer exists.

We are not politicians or kings, but when we are aware of the suffering and misfortunes that are happening to the Earth and the human species, we too should eat vegetarian meals and lie on the ground. We also have to renew and better ourselves, because karma is collective.

All of us, to some extent, have contributed to the collective karma. A disaster that happens to any part of our planet earth or the human species is something for which we all have to bear responsibility to some extent. When others die, we die; when others suffer, we suffer. When others are in despair, we are in despair. That is the insight of no-self.

The insight of Victor Hugo is the beginning of the discovery and realisation that goes beyond the idea of a separate self. When people see the no-self nature of painful events, they can accept them and they do not protest to God or protest against the lot of humankind.

In the *Tao Te Ching* (a Taoist work) there are the words, "The heavens and Earth are unjust if they look on all species as straw dogs. The holy ones are inhuman if they also look on all species as straw dogs."

"Straw dogs" are those not worthy of consideration, without any significance. If the heavens and Earth give birth to countless species of beings just so they can suffer and die, then Earth and sky are truly inhuman.

The "holy ones" here are the rulers, the emperors. The commands of the emperor were known as holy directives. The opinions of the emperor were known as holy thoughts. Rulers can determine the destiny of the people. They decide whether to subjugate the people or whether to go to war, and so they can be inhuman just as the Earth and sky can. These words are protests about the lot of humankind.

We shall soon recite the name of our teacher, the Buddha, and the bodhisattvas Manjushri, Samantabhadra and Avalokiteshvara. As a sangha body we should produce the energy of compassion and mindfulness. We should embrace the planet Earth as we pray for all the victims and their families who are grieving them.

Some of them can hold each other as they weep. Others have no one to hold as they weep. We should pray for ourselves because we also are victims of the horrendous disaster which has just happened.

Please look deeply. This is a chance for us to grow in understanding. Whether you come from a Christian, Jewish or Buddhist tradition, you have to look deeply. The key to our contemplation is no-self.

Victor Hugo was Christian; he found a way to go beyond the separate self. We have to look deeply to see that we are the dead. We are that orphan, that child is us. Only by contemplating in this way can we accept and clear the tremendous pain that we have today.

The article is an excerpt from a dharma talk given by meditation Master *Thich Nhat Hanh* in Plum Village, France, on December 30, 2004.

THE MIDDLE EAST
The Other, Man-made Tsunami

The west's crusaders, the United States and Britain, are giving less to help the tsunami victims than the cost of a Stealth bomber or a week's bloody occupation of Iraq. The bill for George Bush's coming inauguration party would rebuild much of the coastline of Sri Lanka.

Bush and Blair increased their first driblets of "aid" only when it became clear that people all over the world were spontaneously giving millions and a public relations problem beckoned. The Blair government's current "generous" contribution is one sixteenth of the $800m it spent bombing Iraq before the invasion and barely one twentieth of a billion pound gift, known as a "soft loan", to the Indonesian military so that it could acquire Hawk fighter-bombers. On 24 November, one month before the tsunami struck, the Blair government gave its backing to an arms fair in Jakarta, "designed to meet an urgent need for the [Indonesian] armed forces to review its defense capabilities," reported the *Jakarta Post*. The Indonesian military, responsible for genocide in East Timor, has killed more than 20,000 civilians and "insurgents" in Aceh. Among the exhibitors at the arms fair was Rolls Royce, manufacturer of engines for the Hawks, which, along with British-supplied Scorpion armoured vehicles, machine guns and ammunition, were terrorizing and killing people in Aceh up to the day the tsunami devastated the province. The Australian government, currently covering itself in glory for its modest response to the historic disaster befallen its Asian neighbours, has secretly trained Indonesia's Kopassus special forces, whose atrocities in Aceh are well documented. This is in keeping with Australia's 40-year support for oppression in Indonesia, notably its devotion to the dictator Suharto while his troops slaughtered a third of the population of East Timor. The government of John Howard—notorious for its imprisonment of child asylum-seekers—is presently defying international maritime law by denying East Timor its due of oil and gas royalties worth some 8bn dollars. Without this revenue, East Timor, the world's poorest country, cannot build schools, hospitals and roads or provide work for its young people, 90 per cent of whom are unemployed.

The hypocrisy, narcissism and dissembling propaganda of the rulers of the world and their sidekicks are in full cry. Superlatives abound as to their humanitarian intent while the division of humanity into worthy and unworthy victims dominates the news. The victims of a great natural disaster are worthy (though for how long is uncertain) while the victims of man-made imperial disasters are unworthy and very often unmentionable. Somehow, reporters cannot bring themselves to report what has been going on in Aceh, supported by "our" government. This one-way moral mirror allows us to ignore a trail of destruction and carnage that is another tsunami. Consider the plight of Afghanistan, where clean water is unknown and death in childbirth common. At the Labour Party conference in 2001, Tony Blair announced his famous crusade to "re-order the world" with the pledge: "To the Afghan people, we make this commitment, we will not walk away... we will work with you to make sure [a way is found] out of the poverty that is your miserable existence."

The Blair government had just taken part in the conquest of Afghanistan, in which as many as 20,000 civilians died. Of all the great humanitarian crises in living memory, no country suffered more and none has been helped less. Just three per cent of all international aid spent in Afghanistan has been for reconstruction, 84 per cent is for the US-led military "coalition" and the rest are crumbs for emergency aid. What is often presented as reconstruction revenue is private investment, such as the 35m dollars that will finance a proposed five-star hotel, mostly for foreigners. An adviser to the minister of rural affairs in Kabul told me the government had received less than 20 per cent of the aid promised to Afghanistan. "We don't even have enough money to pay wages, let alone plan reconstruction," he said. The reason, unspoken of course, is that Afghans are the unworthiest of victims. When American helicopter gunships repeatedly machine gunned a remote farming village, killing as many as 93 civilians, a Pentagon official was moved to say, "The people there are dead because we wanted them dead". I became acutely aware of this other tsunami when I reported from Cambodia in 1979. Following a decade of American bombing and

Pol Pot's barbarities, Cambodia lay as stricken as Aceh is today.

Disease beckoned famine and people suffered a collective trauma few could explain. Yet, for nine months after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime, no effective aid arrived from western governments. Instead, a western and Chinese backed UN embargo was imposed on Cambodia, denying virtually the entire machinery of recovery and assistance. The problem for the Cambodians was that their liberators, the Vietnamese, had come from the wrong side of the cold war, having recently expelled the Americans from their homeland. That made them unworthy victims, and expendable. A similar, largely unreported siege was forced on Iraq during the 1990s and intensified during the Anglo-American "liberation". Last September, Unicef reported that malnutrition among Iraqi children had doubled under the occupation. Infant mortality is now at the level of Burundi, higher than in Haiti and Uganda. There is crippling poverty and a chronic shortage of medicines. Cancer cases are rising rapidly, especially breast cancer; radioactive pollution is widespread. More than 700 schools are bomb-damaged. Of the billions said to have been allocated for reconstruction in Iraq, just 29m dollars has been spent, most of it on mercenaries guarding foreigners. Little of this is news in the west.

This other tsunami is worldwide, causing 24,000 deaths every day from poverty and debt and division that are the products of a supercult called neo-liberalism. This was acknowledged by the United Nations in 1991 when it called a conference in Paris of the richest states with the aim of implementing a "programme of action" to rescue the world's poorest nations. A decade later, virtually every commitment made by western governments had been broken, making the waffle of the British Chancellor (Treasurer) Gordon Brown about the Group of Eight "sharing Britain's dream" in ending poverty as just that: waffle.

Not one government has honoured the United Nations "baseline" and allotted a miserable 0.7 of its national income to overseas aid. Britain gives just 0.34 per cent, making its "department of international development" a black joke. The US gives 0.15 per cent, the lowest of any industrial state.

Largely unseen and unimagined by westerners, millions of people know their lives have been declared expendable. When tariffs and food and fuel subsidies are eliminated under an IMF diktat, small farmers and the landless know they face disaster, which is why suicides among farmers are an epidemic. Only the rich, says the World Trade Organization, are allowed to protect their home industries and agriculture; only they have the right to subsidize exports of meat, grain and sugar and dump them in poor countries at artificially low prices, thereby destroying livelihoods and lives.

Indonesia, once described by the World Bank as "a model pupil of the global economy", is a case in point. Many of those washed to their deaths in Sumatra on Boxing Day were dispossessed by IMF policies. Indonesia owes an unrepayable debt of 110bn dollars. The World Resources Institute says the toll of this man-made tsunami reaches 13-18 million child deaths every year; or 12 million children under the age of five, according to a UN Development Report. "If 100 million have been killed in the formal wars of the 20th century," wrote the Australian social scientist Michael McKinley, "why are they to be privileged in comprehension over the annual [death] toll of children from structural adjustment programmes since 1982?"

That the system causing this has democracy as its war cry is a mockery which people all over the world increasingly understand. It is this rising awareness, consciousness even, that offers more than hope. Since the crusaders in Washington and London squandered world sympathy for the victims of 11 September 2001 in order to accelerate their campaign of domination, a critical public intelligence has stirred and regards the likes of Blair and Bush as liars and their culpable actions as crimes.

The current outpouring of help for the tsunami victims among ordinary people in the west is a spectacular reclaiming of the politics of community, morality and internationalism denied them by governments and corporate propaganda. Listening to tourists returning from stricken countries, consumed with gratitude for the gracious, expansive way some the poorest of the poor gave them shelter and cared for them, one hears the antithesis of "policies" that care only for the avaricious.

"The most spectacular display of public morality the world has ever seen," was how the writer Arundhati Roy described the anti-war anger that swept across the world almost two years ago. A French study now estimates that 35 million people demonstrated on that February day and says there has never been anything like it; and it was just a

beginning.

This is not rhetorical; human renewal is not a phenomenon, rather the continuation of a struggle that may appear at times to have frozen, but is a seed beneath the snow. Take Latin America, long declared invisible and expendable in the west. "Latin Americans have been trained in impotence," wrote Eduardo Galeano the other day. "A pedagogy passed down from colonial times, taught by violent soldiers, timorous teachers and frail fatalists, has rooted in our souls the belief that reality is untouchable and that all we can do is swallow in silence the woes each day brings." Galeano was celebrating the rebirth of real democracy in his homeland, Uruguay, where people have voted "against fear", against privatization and its attendant indecencies.

In Venezuela, municipal and state elections in October notched up the ninth democratic victory for the only government in the world sharing its oil wealth with its poorest people. In Chile, the last of the military fascists supported by western governments, notably Thatcher, are being pursued by revitalized democratic forces. These forces are part of a movement against inequality and poverty and war that has arisen in the past six years and is more diverse, more enterprising, more internationalist and more tolerant of difference than anything in my lifetime. It is a movement unburdened by a western liberalism that believes it represents a superior form of life; the wisest know this is colonialism by another name. The wisest also know that just as the conquest of Iraq is unraveling, so a whole system of domination and impoverishment can unravel, too.

John Pilger,
7 January 2005,
from www.zmag.org

INTERNATIONAL

Wolf After Wolf

President George W. Bush has designated Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz as a nominee for the president of the World Bank to succeed current World Bank president James Wolfensohn.

Wolfowitz, who is second in command to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, is widely regarded as a leading figure in the neo-conservative cult. He is an architect of the Iraq war. His arrogance, ignorance, and incompetence are unbounded. Wolfowitz & Co. predicted that the Anglo-American occupation armies would be greeted with flowers and sweets in the streets of Baghdad and Basra.

Wolfowitz's succession to the World Bank presidency is likely to move the institution from bad to worse. In his years as the organization's chief Jim Wolfensohn has paid a lot of lip service to comprehensive development Framework and civil society but the bank remains a huge international bureaucracy that follows, by and large, the neo-liberal program. In recent years it has embraced dialogue with non-government organizations, the hype about knowledge-sharing, and empowerment.

The respected liberal economist Joseph Stiglitz did bring a fresh air of dissidence to the Bank, but he was quickly shown the door out. That became a typical play during Jim Wolfensohn's regime at the bank. Other independent-minded people were kicked out or told to tone down their analysis. With Wolfowitz at the helm, the bank's climate is likely to get worse, not better. It would stifle the scope of independent research, analysis, dialogue and dissidence in the institution.

The Bush administration's decision to nominate Mr. Wolfowitz as the president of the World Bank is a clear display of its imperial arrogance as well as a show of contempt for international law, diplomacy and peaceful methods of resolving conflicts. This follows its earlier decision to appoint John R. Bolton as the new U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. The administration is dedicated to imposing its neoconservative program on foreign aid program and multilateral institutions with as much zeal as it is to dismantling Social Security domestically in the guise of reform. The U.S. and other advanced countries generally get what they want from international aid programs and multilateral agencies, but the appointment of Wolfowitz is an attempt to make the World Bank even more subservient instrument of

the U.S. Treasury and State Departments than it is already.

The nomination of Wolfowitz as president of the World Bank will prove to be controversial, particularly among developing countries as well as America's European allies. The staff of the bank, many of whom are competent professionals and functionaries and specialists, will be demoralized and insulted by this choice. It is no accident that the administration has picked Wolfowitz rather than an establishment figure or competent manager from the internationalist wing of the Republican Party. Even from the vantage point of narrow interests or conservative principles, it is a bad choice.

The United States is the World Bank's "largest shareholder." Unlike the UN General Assembly, where each country has one vote, voting power in the Bretton Woods institutions is allocated on the basis of economic power. The president of the World Bank has always been an American, whereas the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, has traditionally been an European.

The Bush administration's decision to nominate Mr. Wolfowitz will need to meet approval of the executive board of the bank. The executive board usually rubber stamps decisions emanating from U.S. Treasury. The developing countries have limited clout: borrowers can't have too much say. The Western Europeans tend to be more interested in sharing the pie. That said, on a few occasions disputes do arise, so it will be interesting to see if the Europeans and the developing countries dare to reject Bush's nominee.

President Bush described Wolfowitz at a press conference as a man of "good experience." He certainly has a record of service to interests of the powerful and the rich. Wolfowtiz was the U.S. ambassador to Indonesia. The U.S. backed the Suharto regime right until its fall. Wolfowitz served as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia. Note how the *New York Times* and other mainstream media mention how he served in that capacity during the Philippines transition to democracy without recalling that President Daddy Bush praised and supported dictator Marcos. Talks about "Wolfowitz's drive to spread democracy" should not go unchallenged. The U.S. has been a consistent supporter of tyrants and assorted dictators and monarchs, particularly in the Middle East and West Asia with greater zeal than any where in the planet, in countries like Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Pakistan. Wolfowitz berated Turkish military generals for the Turkish parliament's firm rejection of endorsing U.S. invasion of the Iraq war and thus denying U.S. military access to invading Iraq from Turkish soil.

If the principles of law and justice are applicable for the masters of the universe then Wolfowitz, his boss, and his boss's boss, are certainly international war criminals. They have used massive force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Iraq. They invaded the country and are responsible for killing thousands of civilians. They have endangered international peace and security and have conducted acts of aggressions. They have squashed peaceful Iraqi non-violent opposition to the occupation. They are indirectly responsible for torture and violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilians in Iraq and elsewhere. Such persons should be surely subject to indictment, not election to high offices in international agencies and praise.

Paul Wolfowitz would not, however, be the first war criminal to have served as the president of the World Bank. That distinction belongs to Robert McNamara, U.S. Defense Secretary who went to head the Bank, after directing the slaughter of Vietnamese peasants, napalming that country, and bringing the world to brink of nuclear war during the Cuban crisis. Years later, McNamara apologized but not to the Vietnamese, only to the Americans for causing them so much pain and suffering. With such distinguished pedigree, Wolfowitz cannot complain about the lack of outstanding role models.

Background Information about the World Bank and its Big Sister The World Bank's mandate is to reduce poverty in the developing countries through development assistance. But a large chunk of international aid is to promote rich country's exports and push the services of high-flying rich country consultants on poor countries. Moreover the level of rich country foreign assistance provided to developing countries remains shamefully and abysmally low. Aid is not necessarily allocated in favor of those who need assistance the most. The high-income members devote on average less than 0.35 percent of their GDP to foreign aid. While some foreign aid programs do have positive effects and have improved the lives of the poor, a lot of foreign aid still goes to propping up favored dictators and corrupt regimes.

The IMF, located across the

street from the World Bank headquarter on 18th Street in Washington D.C., is the Big Sister of the World Bank. The IMF is responsible for macroeconomic surveillance, instituting structural adjustment programs and loans. The World Bank supplements the IMF's goals. Unlike the IMF, the Bank provides sectoral loans, project financing, and technical assistance to developing countries for all kinds of programs, ranging from environment, health, infrastructure, energy, trade, information technology, private sector development, capacity building, and gender equality.

Though the critics of the World Bank are correct in many respects, the concept and the principle of genuine transfer resources and knowledge sharing among countries is not really disputed. The World Bank has to be fundamentally reformed to serve the interest of global communities and the poor. But the appointment of Wolfowitz, after Wolfensohn, is bound to do profound damage to the processes of unilateral transfer and the World Bank as a key institution. The Wolfowitz appointment needs to be widely resisted. The progressive community should voice its opposition not just to Wolfowitz but also the present international foreign aid regime.

Abu Spinoza
is a pseudonym for an economist.

BURMA
No Burmese days

If there is one thing that the US and Europe can agree on without any soul-searching, it is that the Burmese military junta is unfit to host an international meeting. Burma has made no progress in introducing democracy or improving human rights in the last decade. Nor is the country an important enough oil producer or economic partner to cause the West to hesitate for long about isolating the regime.

The significance of this is beginning to dawn on Burma's neighbours in the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean). Burma is due to take the rotating chair of Asean from the middle of next year, and thus to host meetings with western and Asian governments, but the more sensible Asean leaders realise that something has to give: if the junta does not withdraw from the chairmanship or suddenly produce tangible evidence of democratisation, there will be embarrassingly few participants from abroad.

This is no small matter. Under current conditions, including the continued house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese democracy campaigner, invitations to a meeting in Rangoon would prompt a western boycott and the collapse of the main diplomatic forum for south-east Asia. Not surprisingly, the advanced, internationally connected economies are putting the most pressure on Burma. Lee Hsien Loong, Singapore's prime minister, will discuss the issue with Burma's rulers in Rangoon today. In Malaysia, which championed Burma's entry into Asean in 1997, the government is backing a parliamentary motion calling for Burma to be passed over for the Asean chair. A meeting of Asean foreign ministers in the Philippines next month will put further pressure on Burma to withdraw. Even Thaksin Shinawatra, the Thai prime minister, whose family company has invested in Burma, spoke this week of the need for Burma to improve in the interests of Asean. Only minor players such as Hun Sen, the strongman in charge of Cambodia, and the Communist rulers of Laos are calling for Asean to maintain its policy of non-interference in domestic politics.

This policy has been used as an excuse for inaction since Burma joined Asean eight years ago, but the snag is that its accession in the 1990s was agreed under a completely different policy known as "constructive engagement":

Asean would take in Burma, reach its full complement of the region's 10 nation states and so present a united front to the outside world, while, while Burma's neighbours would work behind the scenes to encourage political and economic reform.

So far, constructive engagement has failed. The junta's intransigence threatens to expose Asean to the humiliating spectacle of its meetings being hosted by a regime better known for brutality than for internatinal understanding. Burma must withdraw from the chairmanship of Asean, and its fellow members must not shrink from the task of persuading it to do so.

US Campaign for Burma,
Financial Times,
March 30, 2005

SIAM
Do Our Prejudices Know No Bounds?

Whatever the colour of our skin, we all look the same when our bodies decompose. That is what the array of corpses at Wat Yanyao informs us, the living. So why the fuss about our racial or ethnic differences?

No matter how rich or poor we are, the loss of our loved ones is equally over-whelming in our hearts. Since we are all the same, don't all the victims and survivors of the Dec 26 tsunami deserve equal assistance?

Sadly, the Thai authorities do not think so, not when it comes to migrant workers from Burma.

As we Thais celebrate the massive outpouring of our own generosity for the tsunami victims—particularly for the foreign tourists, the country has totally ignored the plight of poor migrant workers who, like us, lost family members and their source of income when the killer waves hit the Andaman coast.

Like us, their lives have been shattered. But we do not recognise their deaths and their losses. We do not give them relief aid. Worse, we punish those who survived the disaster by deporting them to a precarious life back in Burma, which refuses to accept its own citizens.

What has become of us?

There are more than 120,000 registered manual labourers from Burma in the fisheries, construction, rubber and other industries in Ranong, Phangnga, Phuket, Krabi, Satun and Trang provinces. The real number of migrant workers could be at least twice that figure.

Thousands of these people are believed to have perished when the tidal waves hit those provinces. According to survivors' accounts, at least 1,000 are missing in Phangnga alone.

These survivors believe many of their loved ones are lying unattended at Wat Yanyao among the unidentified. But they are too scared to go and check and collect the bodies for fear of being arrested and deported.

The fear is well-grounded.

Thanks to the media and nationalist history, the general Thai public harbour a deep prejudice against the Burmese as a ruthless and untrustworthy people who destroyed our once glorious capital and now steal our jobs, rob their employers and bring us contagious diseases.

Right after the tsunami, an actor who served as a rescue volunteer told the media he suspected a group of looters he saw were migrant Burmese workers. The mere suspicion awakened the deep prejudice against the Burmese.

To confirm these suspicions, the police immediately arrested a group of migrant workers accused of looting. The media proclaimed the Burmese were out to hit us again in our time of tragedy.

Instead of sending the accused to court, as is their basic right, the migrants were immediately deported. And then the authorities began rounding up all migrant workers with the excuse that the crackdown was necessary to prevent further crimes during this time of emergency.

Who cares if these people are registered workers legally entitled to the same assistance as all Thai workers? Who cares if deporting them will aggravate their plight? Who cares if they will face danger in Burma, which was also ravaged by the tsunami?

According to local NGOs, more than 1,000 migrant workers have been deported. When Koh Song in Burma refused to accept them, the officials reportedly left them to their own devices on nearby islands,

To avoid deportation, many survivors have fled to the mountains where they are hungry, afraid and jobless. Is that why some have turned to theft?

Many Thais agree with the deportations, saying the scarce resources available during the emergency should be for Thais alone.

The foreign tourists may applaud Thai generosity, but the tales our neighbours tell their children and grandchildren about us Thais will be much less flattering.

These will be tales of racism, cruelty and heartlessness. They will be tales of a deep prejudice that could not be moved even by a natural disaster that highlighted the transience of life, the sameness of humanity and the futility of all prejudice.

When will we ever learn?

Sanitsuda Ekachai
Bangkok Post.

Letter from INEB

Dear INEB members and readers,

In the last few months, the INEB secretariat office in Bangkok was busy with activities in response to the tsunami devastation in Thailand. Among good hearted people working to serve the survivors, I am glad that some of our young Bodhisattva alumni and friends are actively involved particularly in India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Our friends in other parts of the world express their compassion by sharing both materials and money through donations, and also sharing the sorrow by visiting the effected areas. We got regular news updates from INEB members about their involvement in tsunami relief and the grievance of local people, especially the poor.

Although INEB had to cancel the Dharamsala Visit by Thai Theravada Buddhists and the Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue due partly to tsunami urgency, the spirit of the two activities expressed themselves in the tsunami action. Everywhere we see intra-Buddhist and inter-religious cooperation in efforts to help those who are in distress. That's the dialogue of action.

Even though the year 2005 opened with tragedy, there is some good news. First of all, we are glad that the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh was invited by the government of Vietnam to visit his motherland and give dhamma teachings from January-April.

Ajan Sulak Sivaraksa reached his 72nd year in March. In June 19th, Aung San Suu Kyi will turn 60 years old. July 6th is the 70th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In addition, August 16th is the 60th anniversary of the declaration of peace by Mr. Pridi Banomyong, Regent of the Kingdom and Head of the Free Thai Movement, which declared independence from the Japanese occupation during World War II. In the auspicious months, it's time for us to contemplate on the virtue of Buddhist leadership and non-violence advocacy for peace.

Coming up in the next several months is The 2005 "Young Bodhisattva" International Buddhist Leadership Training for Spiritual Resurgence and Social Innovation. It will start from the Vesak day in Siam (May 22nd) until the end of June. To me, it is always an exciting activity that enables INEB to meet many young promising Buddhist leaders in South and Southeast Asia.

The INEB conference this year will be in India in October. Please book ahead for your seat. More information can be found hereafter and on our website www.sulak-sivaraksa.org. Though the conference is an important chance to reflect on the direction and role of INEB in the future, I would welcome your comments and ideas to improve INEB at anytime.

Yours in the dhamma,
Lapapan Supamanta

Photo from the last INEB Conference in Seoul, South Korea

Building the Foundations

In November and December 2004 Buddha Smiles hosted courses in natural building and Permaculture design at the Garden of Peace Primary School near Vellore.

Almost a year earlier Buddha Smiles held the first natural building workshop at the same site. It was amazing to see how much had been accomplished in that time. A year ago the site was just a bare field. Now the whole area was planted with crops of millet, lentils, ground nut, bananas and papaya. The school was now open with 25 happy students attending everyday.

The natural building workshop planned to build an Interfaith Meditation Hall. Participants came from Australia, Canada, the USA, Holland, Belgium and India. Work began with designing the building and digging the foundations. The work went well but when the time came to pour the concrete there were some problems coordinating with the local workers and work was stalled. As a result participants undertook some other small building projects.

There was also the chance to participate in some interesting local activities including a haircutting ceremony and a visit to a weaving village. I had visited the weaving village a year earlier and the people of the village were excited to see us return. The village has an after-school programme run by Buddha Smiles and it looks to be a continuing success.

Although the natural building workshop did not achieve its goal of building the meditation hall it was still successful in other ways. It established some strong foundations for the building and also continued to develop good relations with the local community.

After the natural building course the Permaculture design course began. We were fortunate to have Max Lindegger from EcoLogical Solutions in Australia join us. He has a wealth of experience and India was the 25th country that he had taught a Permaculture course in. Much of his teaching involved telling stories about designs he has seen or helped implement around the world. There is a saying in Permaculture that "the problem is the solution" and Max seems to have been finding a lot of solutions that are sustainable in the truest sense of the word.

One day of the course was a field trip where we visited a nearby organic farm and also went to Tiruvannamalai to visit the Permaculture farm. There were many good examples of Permaculture design there. It was hard to believe that what is now a productive farm with lots of tree cover was bare rocky fields 12 years ago. Seeing such a good example of the application of Permaculture was inspiring to everyone.

There was a lot of talk among the participants during the course about ways we could help the local people. The biggest issues that came up were deforestation and diet.

There is a large brick making industry in the local area that uses a lot of wood to fire its kilns. This seems to be a principle cause of deforestation in the local area. The solutions are not simple, but Buddha Smiles is committed to doing some work in this area. By implementing Permaculture design at the school there will be many positive examples for local people about ways they can improve their lifestyle. One of these is growing a wider range of foods that will lead to improvement in their diet and nutrition.

After five weeks of building and permaculturing there were many new ideas about ways to continue the development of the school site. Already a lot has been achieved and it is now easy to see the many possibilities and benefits the project will bring as it comes to fruition. However, the best thing for me was seeing the smiling faces of the children as they came to school everyday.

If you can make a donation for Buddha Smiles, please contact Ramu Manivannan (ramu_manivannan@hotmail.com)

David Reid



Buddha Dhamma in Aid of Tsunami Survivors : Report from Siam

On 10-15 January 2005 a group of Buddhist Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis, nuns, laymen and laywomen, all together numbering 10 volunteers from various regions throughout Siam, through the coordination of INEB and its local network, went to join our brothers and sisters who were affected by the Tsunami tidal wave in the southern Phang-Nga province. We all kept an open mind and the willingness to accept all that may happen.



In these situations of calamities, the Teachings of the Buddha, *Buddha Dhamma*, is the most viable refuge, which is beyond religious rites and ceremonies. Our group visited numerous people affected by the Tsunami and provided emotional support through listening and lightening their emotional burden. In one instance of initiating dialogue with the affected people, we feel that all of us at a point in time, were brothers and sisters, and this is what motivated and drove us to quickly travel to southern Thailand, especially to Phang-Nga, to offer whatever support is possible. This is perhaps what our volunteers from other NGOs are feeling.

From Bangkok, we had loosely planned our itinerary so as to adapt to ever changing circumstances. When we really went down fieldwork, we had to change our plans hour by hour and day by day. At this time, most of the folks still lived in tents, feeling troublesome as having to wait for long queues for various amenities, and having to put their belongings in some order. They had to follow up on various documents of personal identification in order to receive government assistance and to get evidence to support their rights of ownership to their land. We divided our group and went into eight refugee camps, stayed for over 3 nights in one camp.

The provision of assistance to emotional hardship through the foundations of religious teachings which will facilitate each survivor to work within oneself and psychological heal one's emotional wounds by having mindfulness within the present moment; understanding rightly the current situation and the acceptance of an ever changing reality and possessing wholesome thoughts. This also includes the ability to recall one's mental capabilities and psychological strength to face up to the emerging and transient reality.

The emotional wounds are deep scars within the subconscious mind of each. This natural disaster is one of the world's tragic experience which adversely affected those who are directly involved, which is difficult to cure within a short period of time. We still also have those who are indirectly affected and feeling depressed as they are constantly exposed to news reports and stories of individual survivors as they go into the fieldwork of helping them. This includes volunteers of NGOs who have great feelings of empathy towards the survivors and unconsciously carry the emotional burdens of the people who are affected.

The tsunami tidal wave that destroyed the homes of people who are already troubled with poverty, debt, problems of nationality, the local fishermen, people who have no land title deeds such as the people of Moken ethnic minority. There are also problems of Thai minorities who have been staying in Thai soil for many decades and yet have not been legally recognized

as Thai citizen. Problems of prostitution, illegal migrant workers and transnational labour especially from Myanmar are right there. The Tsunami catastrophe has worsened the already existing problems of livelihood and well being of the people affected, and corresponding have given us the opportunity to go to the south to understand and face the sufferings with the survivors.

We have listened to numerous stories, including those of a child stories who related the tragedy with a voice of innocence which is contradiction to those of elders which we hear the underlying tone of voice and their worried faces which signify great stress and suffering. We reflected that it has been over 100 days now, but there are still some people who are unable to sleep because they are afraid and fearful. Some even wake up in the middle of the night and fear the tidal wave will come back again. Many have told us that, in the middle of the night, just having the wind blow, feelings of fear and images of the giant tidal wave comes into mind, and they would wake up like having a bad nightmare. Villagers that are survivors are still very afraid of sleeping in their own homes. They have to set up a group of rotating villagers to come in mid-day to oversee the homes and the domestic animals that live within the area. The sea which had been familiar before the Tsunami tidal wave, now needs time to provide assurance and confidence to the fishing villagers.

For women, especially mothers, although the Tsunami had passed, they still feel a sense of wrongfulness because they are unable to protect their child, they are constantly blaming themselves for the lost. Especially for mothers, who had carried their child in their arms, the tidal wave stole the child right beneath their eyes. Many mothers had told us with tears flowing down their cheeks that they still find the strength to live on is for the sake of their child. For some, they are still waiting to have the body of their child to return to them, so that a proper Buddhist cremation ceremony could be performed for the spirit to move on into the light.

Simply, the act of pouring lustral water by Buddhist monks and binding strings of blessed thread by Buddhist nuns onto the wrist of survivors, who have nothing—no possession, no home, no family—give them a sense of strength of will to face whatever may come. This is their only refuge, refuge in the Dhamma. In these tragic situations, the aspect of being exposed to the aura of tranquility within the Buddhist monks, Buddhist Bhikkhuni and nuns provide them with a feeling of hope that what they are suffering right now can be overcome through the exemplay behaviour of Bhikkhu, Bhikkhui and nun, where tranquility and internal peace comes from knowing oneself.

Temporary shelters at Baan Karaburi elementary school, Phang-Nga province have over 200 persons. Tsunami survivors here initially came from Baan Pak Chok, Phra Thong Island, where everything—homes, fishing boats—were washed away by the Tsunami; including a Buddhist Ashram where two Theravadin Buddhist Bhikkhus passed away. Villagers here invited us to stay with them. We stayed for 3 days to receive alms food. One elderly woman villager said, "We would like to offer alms food to Buddhist Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis and nuns in order to feel better. I would like to make the food that my child liked and offer the food as alms food to monks. For three days, all the Bhikkhu, Bhikkhuni, nuns will go on alms round, perform morning and evening chantings. During evening chantings, many people came and joined us, did meditation, listened to Dhamma talks and divided into various groups to talk to the ordained.

Araya Payungpong
and *Mahaviriyo*



The Kindness of Strangers

The day after Boxing Day 2004, I watched the horrific news reports emerging from the Indian Ocean. I felt a cold chill running down my spine, a sense of helplessness and dread, as I contemplated the magnitude of what had happened, and where. A savage act of nature had torn the heart out of the coastal communities of the Indian Ocean. After the inevitable devastation followed a huge attempt to rescue and help the survivors. I could not watch the media coverage. In an age where spectacular atrocities happen daily and are supplied continuously via news channels, the images of abstract suffering did not fit in with the memory of the people and the places that I had known.

Initially, the breaking story appeared small in scale, one imagined, bad enough as it would be, lives lost and property damaged on a local level. Subsequently it became increasingly apparent that so many had died, the toll was raising day by day, from ten thousand to hundreds of thousands. What had occurred was an unimaginable disaster. Of all the newspaper images I have seen, one in particular in poignant. It is a photograph of a classroom in Banda Aceh. The teacher, wearing a white headscarf, holds a piece of chalk between finger and thumb. Smiling at the children, she points at a blackboard, and encourages them to learn. The thing that stands out in this picture of normality is that there are just six or seven children, grouped together in the centre of the classroom, surrounded by rows of empty desks and chairs. Each unfilled place is a heartbreaking reminder of their vanished classmates.

I have never visited the islands off the west coast of Siam, namely, Phuket and Phi Phi. Those were the parts affected by the tsunami, and they are places which are evocative of a holiday in paradise. I have however, travelled extensively throughout Siam and through my good friend Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa, come to know and love her people. I have spent time in the province of Aceh, which is on the northern tip of Sumatra, Indonesia. My eldest daughter was four years old, and we were there ostensibly to do volunteer work. Looking after the huge leatherback turtles that nest on the group of coral atolls known as Pulau Banyak, seemed like a dreamy escape from city life. We travelled around the province and found it a wild and fascinating place. It is a land of myriad cultures which, at that time, was enduring the death throes of President Suharto's regime and uncontrollable forest fires. This accompanied by a dirty war of twenty five years old that exists to the present day. Despite this the people we met with were willing to share their homes, food and stories with a kindness to strangers that belied a very often harsh existence.

Bapak and Ebu, are the Bahasa names for father and mother, names that are both immediate and universal. Our hosts insisted that we called them mum and dad. Dad was a hard working man who attended the mosque for prayer, and mum a gentle eyed woman with a ready smile. Their easy going approach to life and friendship, and their readiness to take us in and make us welcome was as spontaneous as it was generous. We stayed with them at their home on the main island of Balai, and them on the deserted island, Palambak Kacil. Here, facing the vastness of the open sea, I thought then and can never really shake the feeling that such a place was perfect, and that the further one travelled from such an idyll, the more complicated life became. It took forty five minutes to walk around Plambak Kacil in its entirety. The brilliant white coral sands were easy under our bare feet, and a surrounding turquoise lagoon played host to shockingly vibrant life. Hermit crabs, stingrays, triggerfish and anemones, teemed in the water, which was a refreshing respite from the heavy tropical sun. As long as we had drinking water from the island's only well, could catch the abundant fish and keep the firewood dry, we were safe in our shelter from the rainstorms that would lash down at night. Our evening conversations consisted of slowly learning languages. I will never forget the phrase ' Saya tidak suka nyamuk' which means 'I do not like mosquitoes'. At dusk, the coconut palm fringed isle was framed by the most magnificent pink sunsets. Stretching far off into the horizon, they were the most beautiful that that I have ever witnessed.

It was here that my daughter played with Bapak's daughter, learning to polish shells to a brilliant sheen for necklaces, and to suck sugar cane instead of sweets. Here I learned the real meaning of what it is to hunt for food. With the knowledge of Bapak and his sons, I came to appreciate that fish know when you are hungry, and that all your

days are taken up with the business of catching them. I was made to feel foolish by Bapak's dog Campat, who woke me one morning barking, excitedly displaying his prize, a bigger fish than I had ever caught. These are the memories that live on in my heart, the laughter, the friendship, the struggle to live, watching my daughter with her sun bleached hair playing with her little friends.

After two months spent in Sumatra it was time to travel to Siam, and to make the acquaintance of Ajahn Sulak. There were the exchanges of goodbyes and promises to return someday, spoken in truth then, but, like so many promises, broken with the passage of time. I remember vividly the boat leaving Balai harbour. A group of children somersaulted into the sea from a pier, I noticed how the atolls sat easily on top of the ocean, or in reality, how they barely broke the surface of it. The smiling kids waved us on, showing off with all the bravado of youth. Many readers of *Seeds of Peace* will have lost friends in this great tragedy. The magazine exists to form and bring together friendships bonded through religious, political and social adversity. Stretching the boundaries of friendship is what they seek to do. I have tried to learn this lesson in life, to be a good and easy friend. Through Ajahn Sulak and others, I have been able to educate my heart, and I do think this began in the company of that fine family who generously offered their world and expected nothing in return.

Danny Campbell

Proposals for Global Solidarity in a Plural World

Bandung II Conference, Yogyajarta and Bandung, Indonesia, April 18-24, 2005

Unit of Global Analysis: Human Civilization

In 2005, we face a far more differentiated world than during the Cold War (1947-1989), in which the world was divided between the capitalist, communist, and non-aligned blocs. The world has gone through major economic, political, and cultural transformations. About 1000 Transnational Corporations (TNC) have brought about a global market. Some 200 national states are divided between a superpower (USA), regional powers (e.g. ASEAN, EU), and an increasing number of large, medium, and small powers at different levels of economic development, political integration or disintegration. In addition, an expanding global telecommunication system has empowered a nascent global society while promoting a consumerist world. Because of such shifts, nation-states seem to be an inadequate unit of analysis for understanding. In a globalizing and tribalizing world, the unit of analysis no longer can be the state, which is undermined both at the top and bottom of global social structures.

What can replace the traditional Westphalian conceptions of world order? We propose human civilization as a common journey in pursuit of peace with peaceful means. We understand human civilization not in terms of stages like Marx, Rostow, or Bell, nor as cycles of birth, development and death like Spengler, Toynbee, or Sarkar. We view civilization as a layering process from nomadic to agrarian, commercial, industrial and digital (Tehranian 2005). Human civilizations may be analyzed in terms of their prevailing modes of production, legitimation, communication, socialization, and selfhood.

The world community is today deeply divided among these five modes both within and among nations. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq cannot be fully understood until we view them as a conflict between different modes of civilization. More than two-third of the world lives today under the pre-industrial modes at $2 a day of income. The growing economic, political, and cultural disparities between the five modes suggest a possible global civil war of state and opposition terrorism without physical and moral boundaries and of unknown duration.

Organic Global Solidarity for Human Civilization

Co-existence of the five layers of human civilization, combined with identity, commodity and security fetishisms have created a world of antagonisms between differing layers of mechanic solidarities. However, global solidarity has to anticipate the life-interests of all and therefore to be a solidarity of inequals, including the "other", the "foreigner", the "they" and the "we", everyone who lives in any of the five layers of human civilization. We call this solidarity an organic human and global solidarity for life, because this kind of solidarity takes into account not only one aspect, one person's or group's view, one area of interest, one source of power. It takes into account everything organically and pertaining to life: diversity with respect to cultural, social, ethnical and national matters and gender differences. Solidarity by definition is (1) a spirit of community despite differences and inequalities—social differences are even a natural precondition—, and (2) a spirit of community because of difference, namely in spite of unfair impairments against the commonly felt interests.

But the concept of organic solidarity for life does not only reflect the diversity of human beings, it also confirms their universality. Any concrete acting in solidarity always has two preconditions: (1) It accepts and confirms the abstract generalizing equality of all human beings. This includes the universality of mankind, of different and alien persons. It is solidarity with "everybody who has a human image" (Habermas). Justice and welfare, freedom and equal chances are normative and universal preconditions for a maximum of implementation of organic solidarity. (2) It is more relevant to accept and confirm its concrete difference of each individual human being. In its concrete form, organic solidarity is constitutive for human community, because it takes serious the individuality of everyone.

For a global civil society beyond the nationalist fragmented and therefore also locally relevant concept of life in global citizenship, the everyday practise of solidarity is of decisive importance. The discovery of the diversity of human beings as a constitutive element of solidarity opens a new base for human life, democratically organized in community on local, regional, global level. Solidarity based activities of the international civil society have questioned the legitimacy of hegemonic global governance and crossing boundaries, religions, cultures and nationalities. Resistance includes labor-, women-, environment-, human rights-, peace-, justice- and other base-movements and should aiming for a global human civilization in global solidarity.

Three Elements for Promotion of Global Solidarity

Under such circumstances, the unit of analysis in international relations must be also viewed as layered from tribes to villages, cities, states, regions, and the entire Planet Earth. The mission of Bandung II must be the promotion of global solidarity in a plural world. It may consist of the three following elements:

(1) Bandung II can unite the emerging global civil society from all five civilizations into a coherent political voice to counter the hegemonic strategies of the global economic and political forces.
(2) Bandung II can establish a growing network of global economic, political, and cultural networks for human security and dignity, sustainable development, and the pursuit of world peace with peaceful means.
(3) Bandung II can mobilize the considerable cultural resources of an emerging global society to produce a new global civilization based on unity in diversity.

Need for a Global Civil Society Movement

Bandung I was an alliance of the non-aligned states during the Cold War. Historical circumstances have significantly changed since 1955. Instead of colonialism, the world today is faced with powerful globalization trends that cut across the boundaries of states, markets, and civil societies. The global communication networks also have made it possible for the globalization trends to penetrate almost all countries with disastrous as well as beneficial consequences.

Following September 11, 2001 and the rise of state and opposition terrorism, we can witness a need for the renewal of the global movement for peace and justice. Since states, markets, civil societies, and communication networks are playing a critical role in the current globalization trends, the movement must employ the existing material and cultural resources of all four major stakeholders. For the goals of peace and justice, the global civil society constitutes the most sympathetic of the four stakeholders. The movement must be therefore based on an alliance between

civil societies and other sympathetic elements among the other three stakeholders. This proposal focuses on the construction of such a movement.

Human Civilization as a Possible Framework

Any social movement would have to adopt a conceptual framework for the development of its strategies and tactics. In this instance, the need for a peace and justice movement is global in scope. However, most of the current stakeholders in globalization are currently tied to national boundaries (states), profit seeking opportunities (markets), fragmentary preoccupations (civil societies), and biased journalism connected with state, market or civil society interests (the news industry).

A global movement for peace and justice requires global citizens. Fortunately, there is an emergence of global consciousness and global citizenship among ecumenical religious movements, civil society movement such as Greenpeace or Amnesty International, and political movements that have recognized a growing global interdependence.

Human civilization seems to be the only possible common framework for such a task. Bandung II must adopt as its own the common human journey toward a global civilization that outlaws wars and provides means for conflict management and resolution. However, civilization has been often used as an ideology to mobilize "us" against "them". The ideological conception of civilization that makes a sharp distinction between the civilized and the barbarian are not tenable. The enemy is within. Human individuals and societies all have shown a propensity to violence when and if under attack. Moreover, weapons of mass destruction no longer make a distinction friend and foe, military and civilians, main targets and collaterals. In the case of the nuclear weapons, it all depends on which way the wind blows.

If we adopt "human civilization" as a common journey, we would have to totally discard its ideological uses. Depending on the circumstances, we are all civilized and barbarian. The demonic and angelic forces are present in all human beings waiting to express themselves under appropriate circumstances. Wars are often fought under the noblest of goals. But they create circumstances under which the the most "civilized" appear as "barbarians".

Proposed Goals for the Movement

Bandung II can make a critical difference in the current international discourse if and when it pursues the following goals:

- Maintenance of Human unity in diversity
- Human civilization as a common journey in pursuit of peace with peaceful means
- Human dignity and security as the first and foremost common goal of human civilization
- Respect for sovereignty at all layers of human society, from tribes to villages, cities, states, regions, and the Planet Earth
- Respect for the interdependence of human civilization and its natural environment
- Concrete measures to narrow the gaps among the five modes of human civilization by means of transfers of knowledge, science, technology, capital, and management.
- Mobilization of the global civil society to persuade the global market, state, and communication network to work toward the above common goals

Proposed Strategies and Tactics

The foregoing goals cannot be realistically achieved unless and until practical strategies and tactics have been devised at all levels of global governance. Bandung II must therefore develop policies to deal with the following strategic objectives:

- Democratizing global governance
- Democratizing national governance
- Promotion of women's participation in all aspects of society
- Respect for the rights and sovereignties of repressed minorities or majorities.
- Micro credit for all layers of human entrepreneurship
- Reforming and strengthening of the United Nations system
- Freedom for the mobility of labor and capital across national boundaries
- Establishment of a world currency pegged to all other national currencies
- United Nations citizenship for all those requesting it
- Outlawing of all forms of violence, from domestic to international
- Reform of the current global juridical systems to bring all violators to justice
- Establishment of several global funds to encourage innovations in science, technology, and arts.
- Taxation of global commons such as the electromagnetic spectrum, geostationary orbit, ocean resources, or currency exchanges to finance the global funds.

Conclusion

The foregoing proposals may seem idealistic. The goals set by our great spiritual and political leaders in the past also seemed far-fetched at their time. However, as H.G. Wells has reminded us, "civilization is a race between education and catastrophe." On that note, we rest our case.

Majid Tehranian
and *Wolfgang R. Schmidt*

Think Sangha 2005: Exploring the Method of Socially Engaged Buddhism

Here's a question to entertain: Are Buddhist teachings (like not-self or emptiness) ideas and concepts to be understood OR practices and methods in which to engage? After answering, then ask yourself: What's the difference if I answer one way or the other?

Issue vs. Method

Most of our projects, meetings and life activities focus on a single *issue*, in social work this might be globalization, violence, environment, etc. While it is important to provide a focus, we also have a tendency to become more rooted in the issue and ideological positions surrounding it, rather than rooting ourselves in the human relationships from which the issue evolves. In the overemphasis on ideology, we tend to become blind to the central importance of methods —that is *how* we go about actually confronting the issue. A typical situation may occur where an organization espouses a progressive agenda (environmentalism, gender equality, etc.), yet is unaware or unable to face the unprogressive means or methods it uses to confront the issue (their own authoritarian and/or patriarchal organizational sturcture).

Because the focus is on ideology, most of us cannot comprehend the essential importance of method much less the power of embracing and developing *multiple methodologies*. In the end, arguments and divisions tend to occur between groups, because individuals not only cling to their ideological positions but also to one preferred method. From a Buddhist standpoint, we might understand this point from the Buddha's core teaching of the four types of clinging (*upadana*) which not only include views or ideologies (*ditthi*) but also rules or methods (*sila*). Further, various Buddhist metaphors indicate the essential importance of remaining open to new ways of seeing and acting in the world, such as "dharma" as any manifestation of truth, the 84,000 dharma doors, and the thousand armed Avalokiteshvara.

A central theme of all Think Sangha work since its inception in 1997 has been to develop creative ways to apply Buddhist ideas to modern problems. Our project work over the last three years has made an important step forward in this work—for the first time we were able to discover a *method* in which the contemplative social theorists and the grassroots social activists in our sangha could understand each other more clearly and collaborate more directly. In short, this method is a three part process of story telling structural analysis—ethical praxis [for details, see: http://www.bpf.org/tsangha/tsm03report/longreport.html].

In this way, our 4th International Think Sangha Meeting held from February 20-25 focused on further developing this work by exploring and experiencing the different approaches and methods of the participants to their work. We came together as seventeen from Tibet, India, Sri Lanka, the United States, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Australia, and Korea; a mix of teachers, academics, community organizers, NGO workers, monks, nuns, and generally, socially engaged Buddhist activists. The focus of the program was on how we do our work rather than the issue we are working on. The ultimate goal was to learn from each other in an experiential way in order to *develop a wider and richer repertoire of skills and abilities for applying to our own non-violent Buddhist social change activities.*

In keeping with this focus on process and method, we also did our best to keep the meeting agenda and plan flexible and open to change. Though this may sound beautiful in words, practically it was a very difficult task specifically within the pre-imposed confines around the meet-

ing which were: 1) the meeting was organized by the author and five other core Sangha members, 2) there were new participants invited who had no direct experience in the Sangha or in this type of workshop, 3) these new participants were invited by different core members and tended to gravitate more closely to that core member. Our goal was to create a democratic group oriented process. However, there were already dynamics of power and intimacy from the beginning: between core and new, and between directly related and indirectly related particpants.



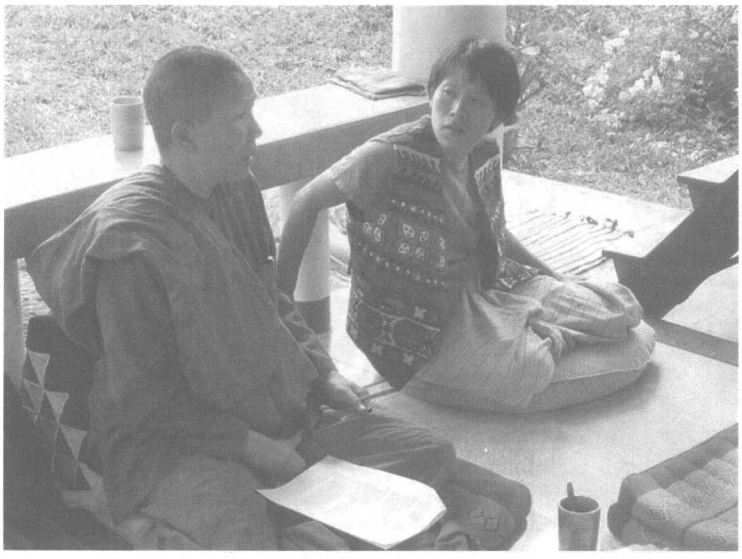
Right Speech & Deep Listening

From our previous meeting, we knew that in order to confront this natural imbalance that exists when any group comes together we needed an initial process building our trust, friendship and community through story telling. Story telling we have found to be a powerful tool for making sure that everyone is heard. This helps to empower the speaker and to encourage compassion through deep listening. It is also an essential group dynamic tool by helping to highlight the varieties of relationship and expose the nature of power in these relationships.

As we not only wanted to focus on our process but to experiment in developing a uniquely Buddhist process, we organized this story telling session into three parts based on the Triple Gem of Buddha-Dhamma-Sangha. So breaking into small groups of 3-4, we shared our personal experiences based on the following questions: 1. Buddha—Recall how you were "awakened" both to your spirituality and to your concern for society?; 2. Dhamma—How do you sustain yourself spiritually and what Dhamma is important to you in this regard?; 3. How are you sustained by others (people, organizations, etc.) and what Sangha is important to you in this regard?

Through mutliple rotations of these small groups, the result was a rapid and relatively deep group intimacy established by the end of the day. These small groups allowed for a much more intimate setting in which everyone could be heard more easily, especially for those without a high level of English, and everyone could listen more deeply. However, the success of these small groups highlighted the first problematic encounter in the shift back to the large group at the end of the day for a short report back. The very qualities which made the small groups successful (i.e. the intimacy which empowered a dynamic of expression and listening) became diluted in the large group—those with better English tended to speak more, those with more assertive personalities spoke more, and deep listening became more of a challenge. When empowered speaking and deep listening become lost, the fault lines of our social conditioning and of power (patriarchy, class, ethnicity, nationality, education, etc.) begin to manifest. After a day mostly dominated by an intimate process, however, these fault lines could not be seen yet, and the day ended on a very energetic and deeply connected feeling.

Again following the process we developed in the 2003 Think Sangha meeting, we introduced on the second day more analytical work (structural analysis) after the grounding of relationships had been established on the first day. In keeping with the focus on process and method, this day's agenda was about critically examining our approaches and methods to activism. So we broke into three groups of concern based on our present work or immediate interest: 1) Conscientization—education and awareness raising; 2) Training—giving conscientized persons tools and skills to more actively practice and engage and become leaders; 3) Organizational Building and Transformation—bringing together people into organi-



zations or transforming organizations along Buddhist guidelines. Once in these groups, we spent the morning discussing the following questions in our work allowing each individual to talk about their particular situation: 1) How have you tried to implement Buddhist ideas into your work?; 2) What is the impact your work has had on your students/community and yourself? How do you think you have succeeded and failed? In this session, we felt it important to examine as deeply as possible the reasons for failure or success in our work. How much are our present actions in harmony with Buddhist principles and practices? These groups on the whole went very well, especially the second group on training which was not only the largest of the three but asked for additional time in the afternoon for continuing their dicussions.

Practicing the 1st Noble Truth of Dukkha

Finally, in the second half of the afternoon, the group came together as a whole again—and the aforementioned fault lines began to appear. We had spent parts of the last three days together as a complete group, either at meals or in morning meditation or evening chanting. However, sitting together as a group to discuss issues, especially issues around our work and ones connected to social problems, presented a much more challenging process. By the end of the session, the group found itself out of balance. The intimacy we had developed was of course still very new and fragile.

As is often is the case with deepening levels of intimacy, faults lines appear as we struggle with out own conditioned selves. In short, issues cropped up in this last session about right speech (truthful speech vs. kind speech), about the full participation of all, and about decision making authority within the group. Especially concerning the last point, we were at a critical stage in the group process where the authority of the core organizing group had to be merged to the developing membership of the other participants to create a fully consensual process.

In this way, we attempted to practice the methodological ideals outlined at the beginning of this article (being open to change in harmony with the group's developing needs) and to actively practice Buddhist teachings (holding our conflict or dukkha mindfully and trying not to run from it or react to it). So on the morning of the the third day, we engaged in an exercise in Deep Listening & Right Speech. Deep Listening meant holding onto our feelings and being mindful, while Right Speech meant being true to ourselves by saying how we really felt and speaking in a way to benefit others and ourselves.

While it is not in the scope of this short report to go deeply into this session, we again struggled to find a whole group discussion process which honored deep listening and right speech in the way that the small groups had. Methdologically, we had run up against another constraint of our general meeting process: time was a significant limitation to bringing together a group of seventeen people from widely different backgrounds and creating a deep and consensual group process. Just the day before, this realization had been articulated from the group which worked on training. In their report back, they had commented that in their experience, meaningful training workshops need a lot of time, up to three months, and that many of them no longer had interest in doing shorter five-day workshops.

Expanding Our Resources and Methods

After this group reflection process, we set up another process over the next day and a half to share and expand our resources. In the afternoon of the third day, everyone took about an hour by themselves to draft a large chart on newsprint relating

these things about themselves: 1) the Dharma tool you use in your work and life; 2) your resources (material, friends/ network/community, and inner); 3) your areas for growth and learning; 4) your needs, and 5) your plans and projects for 2005. We spent the rest of the afternoon sharing our charts with each other in an open session called a "gallery walk" in which each participant briefly explained their poster.

Sharing these five areas with each other we felt would help everyone develop an awareness of some important aspects of their work. The first aspect is not only identifying needs but also resources that can be shared with others. By sharing in a gallery walk style instead of just prompting people to get together with each other, we all first spent time deeply listening about each person's work and hopefully gained some new awareness and ideas for their work. Secondly, the dharma tools section developed a rich pool of Buddhist resources in teachings and methods which everyone could draw on. Finally, the section on plans and projects for 2005 helped everyone to think in an integrative way. So instead of creating new projects from this meeting and piling on new agendas and work to our already busy schedules, we were encouraged to see how we could fit into each other's already planned agendas. In this way, there was the possibility of relieving work stress through direct mutal support and aid.

On the final day, participants were invited to briefly review each others' posters and then make a list of what they could offer others and also receive from them. Then in the morning, participants were encouraged to network on an individual basis and then slowly develop connections which included three or more people working as a group.

Although the connections and plans connected from this process are too long to list here, one notable agreement developed out of the very active session on training held on the second day. A group of participants who have been active in running training courses over the past five to ten years on socially engaged Buddhism decided to hold a small international meeting next year to develop a manual on training people as socially engaged Buddhists. This manual will not only include a basic approach to developing people as socially engaged Buddhists but also contain specific sections on Buddhist approaches to certain issues like gender, environment, media and consumerism, peacemaking, youth development, etc.

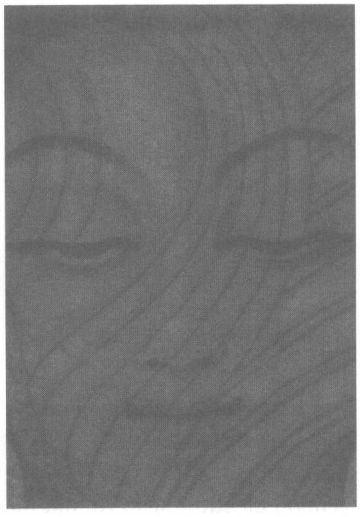
I think this initiative is especially significant because it represents much of the aim Think Sangha has held since its inception. While we were more issue driven in our first years (i.e. Think-like), in our last five years we have become more concerned with how to develop and sustain ourselves and others as socially engaged Buddhists activists (i.e. Sangha-like). This past meeting really did not develop much "intellectual" content, but it certainly marked another step in how we all understand our work and how we need to go about realizing its fullest potential.

I think we have learned much from exploring deeply the other pole of method. Now we know that while we still need to engage in issues, we must be very mindful of the method of our engagement. On the other hand, if we want to deeply develop a group process, we must commit greater time to the task. Thus, future Think Sangha meetings may depart from our usual five-day gatherings and explore new ways of meeting, according to the issue and method requirements.

At this point, I hope that Think Sangha will continue to engage with *issues* by creating writing projects on Buddhist approaches to various issues as it has done in the past. I also hope that it will now be more active to sponsor processes which develop Buddhist *methods* for confronting social issues, like the planned meeting for next year to create a socially engaged Buddhist training manual.

For more about Think Sangha, visit our new homepage at www.bpf.org/think.html and be sure to look at our new Think Sangha Journal *about Karma and the Dharma of Social Justice.*

Jonathan Watts
Think Sangha Coordinator



Women in Buddhism: Suu Kyi, Poonsuk recognised

Aung San Suu Kyi and Thanpuying Poonsuk Banomyong have received a UN "Outstanding Women in Buddhism" award for their peaceful courage in the face of grave personal hardship and political crises.

The two women were among 20 award-recipients named at a ceremony at the United Nations Building, Bangkok, yesterday, to mark the 2005 United Nations International Women's Day which takes place today [March 7, 2005].

Suu Kyi of Burma and Thanphuying Poonsuk of Thailand have similar experiences of political crises in their respective countries: they have campaigned for freedom and democracy and they have been imprisoned.

Poonsuk, 93, had to live in exile for decades, while Suu Kyi, 60, is now under house arrest for a third time.

Suu Kyi is recognised for the example she has given in peaceful conflict resolution and equanimity in the face of suffering and injustice. She has been held since May 2003 following clashes between her supporters and pro-government forces in Northern Burma. The first time the Burmese junta placed her under house arrest, she was detained for six years, between 1989 and 1995.

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD Party) won a landslide victory in the general election in 1990, but the junta refused to recognise the result. The second period of Suu Kyi's house arrest was for 20 months, between July 2000 and May 2002.



Aung San Suu Kyi

In her book *Letters from Burma*, Suu Kyi refers to the first time she was under house arrest as "Days of Rest" and pointed out that she started each day with an hour of meditation. On the subject of gender, Suu Kyi says it is not the prerogative of men alone to bring light to the world.

"Women with their capacity for compassion and self-sacrifice, their courage and perseverance, have done much to dissipate the darkness of intolerance and hate, suffering and despair," Suu Kyi was quoted as saying.

Poonsuk, widow of Thailand's first senior statesman and former prime minister Pridi Banomyong, is honoured for her work over the last sixty years to bring peace and hope to the younger generations.

Poonsuk always supported her husband, who led the 1932 peaceful revolution in Siam. During World War II, she joined the Free Thai Movement, resisting the invading Japanese side-by-side with Pridi and other Thais to bring peace to the Thai people and the rest of the world.

When a political storm was brewing around Pridi, Poonsuk calmly endured injustice several times. She was accused of offences against the internal and external security of the Kingdom and detained between November 1952 and February 1953. Poonsuk refused to give in, observing the teachings of the Buddha that "Dhamma always protects those who practice Dhamma". Now 93, she is president of the Pridi Banomyong Foundation, established to encourage young people to continue the goodwill and work of the older generation in preserving independence, freedom and democracy.

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga was honoured for her encouragement and support for the peaceful resolution of the conflict in her country. Nepalese activist Stella Tamang also received an award for her role as an international facilitator for peace and conflict resolution in the last seven years. Well-respected Dhamma writer Upasika Ranchuan Intrakamhaeng is recognized for her work in promoting peace. She has penned more than 20 Dhammá books to promote a life of true peace and happiness. She has instilled Thailand with a love of reading by helping to establish libraries, schools and literacy



Poonsuk Bamonyong

promotion programmes.

Among other women to receive awards were: Sister Jotika Hermes, the abbess of Amsterdam's Buddhavihara Temple; Bhikkuni Dr Gotami, who established a Buddhist temple in Massachusetts and counsels Southeast Asian immigrants from Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Thailand and Vietnam in need of help; Bhikkuni Sang Won Sunim who founded her own temple Bo Myung Sa in Seon Hwak Won in Korea and established an international sisterhood for world peace in Japan. Suchinta Bhikkuni who serves the Sri Lankan community in the USA and is committed to internationally supporting women's higher ordination.

Dr Thynn Thynn, a Dhamma Burmese teacher who established the Sae Taw Winn II Dhamma Centre in California and wrote a book entitled *Living Meditation: Living Insight*, which was translated into Dutch, German and Vietnamese.

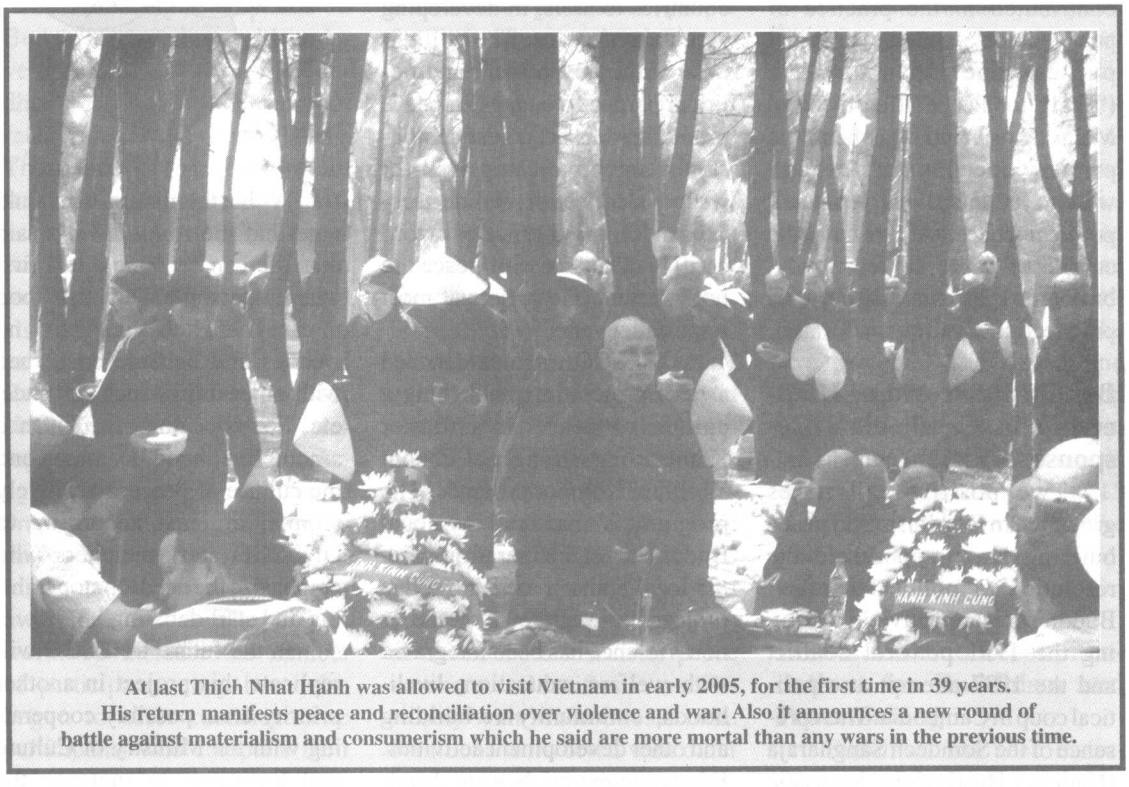
Bhikkuni Hong-Xiang Shih, the abbess of Jing-Ci Temple in Taipei, who established exchange visits by nuns from her temple and those in Korea; Maechee Arun Pet-Urai, has dedicated her life to promoting the



Stella Tamang

status of maechees in Thailand and served as the Secretary of the Thai Maechee Institute from 1981-1993; Nurse Vilas Porphraphai who has devoted her life to service at Maharaj Hospital in Nakhon Si Thammarat, setting up a medical equipment centre to reduce equipment shortages, and developing new equipment to meet the specific demands of patients.

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At last Thich Nhat Hanh was allowed to visit Vietnam in early 2005, for the first time in 39 years. His return manifests peace and reconciliation over violence and war. Also it announces a new round of battle against materialism and consumerism which he said are more mortal than any wars in the previous time.

National Political Violence and Buddhist Response In Cambodia

Introduction to Political Violence in Cambodia

Over the past thirty years, Cambodia has fallen into a deep political hole. Through a series of long, politically violent movements, violent solutions have been used to resolve issues in Cambodia, and this has created a violent culture for our Buddhist country. The bed of peace of Buddhist culture was destroyed to almost zero. It became a big question to all Cambodians how Buddhists could commit such massive crimes on humans and destroy their own religion? Today, there is still no clear answer to these questions. The 1991 Peace Accords allowed Cambodians to breathe in peace gradually, and Buddhism has re-established its role in the country and contributed to the practice of peace among diverse political parties. The Dhammayietra ("Walk for Peace") led by Ven. Maha Ghosananda has been the primary mechanism through which Buddhism has promoted political peace. At present, the culture of peace moves slowly, but it has grown and now is practiced in a variety of forms.

Buddhism: Providing Leadership in Cambodia's Response to Violence

Two positive initiatives grounded in Buddhism and peace building have emphasized the resolution of political conflict. Buddhists were active in resolving the 1991 political conflict and the 1997 attempt at a political coup in Cambodia. The presence of the Somdech Sangharaja (National Head of the Monastic Sangha) was critical to the peaceful closure of both conflict situations. His involvement was initiated by a Buddhist organization called Santi Sena.

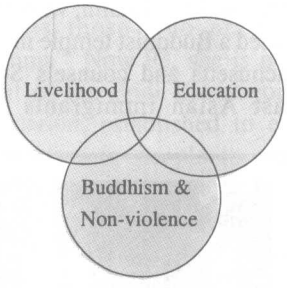
Ven. Maha Ghosananda has led Cambodians to a joint declaration of peace among religions coordinated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO has assumed an important role in encouraging the government, NGOs, and other international communities to develop a culture of peace. Supporting activities have occurred through formal and informational education, livelihood projects, sports, environment projects, etc.

In 2000, UNESCO chose Cambodia as one of the 5 priority countries to assist in developing a culture of peace. The willingness of the government and political parties to engage in peace promotion has been best demonstrated in active campaigns for weapons collection and destruction and in the absence of armed conflict. The words of peace are now present on banners at most important events.

UNESCO has since launched a pilot project in establishing a culture of peace at a former Khmer Rouge stronghold, Phnom Vorlli, in Kompot province. The program is managed by local Buddhists in cooperation with the local authorities. Within this project, the culture of peace or non-violence has been integrated with welfare, education, livelihoods, community re-building and other development activities. Education materials were developed by the organization, but implemented by the local authorities beginning first with the education of children and mothers and eventually involving the men in the community. Local UNESCO staff believe that basic needs are a leading goal in achieving a culture of peace. For example:

=> share their concerns or basic needs => build trust => integrating common goals

The integration should look like:



Within this matrix, we should note that the *Abhidhamma* said that life can be maintained first when a person has enough food to eat. Then, he/she can have no worries and become concerned with other things such as peace, etc. For educators, the balance among livelihood, Dhamma and the culture of peace is relatively simple, at least according to UNESCO staff members who emphasize the need to "stop fighting and start debating".

In the future UNESCO will replicate this project in another priority area, possibly cooperating with the Ministry of Culture and Religions to increase the

culture of peace through temples. As the traditional focal point of communities, temples provide an ideal locus for engaging Dhamma in social development.

The Ministry of Culture and Religions is committed to the rebuilding of Buddhism nationwide. It has encouraged every temple in Cambodia to support the strengthened presence of Buddhism and development by establishing temple development associations. In 2002, the Ministry announced that the monks of every temple should play more important roles in helping society to rebuild the Khmer spirit, or social morality, and to participate in environmental preservation and protection. Now, at many primary schools, children participate in a chanting program before taking class, and key governmental and NGO employees are trained in the Buddha's Four Noble Truths and development.

The National Vipassana Center is increasing its emphasis on Buddhist education and has developed formal structure of Buddhist education which incorporates national and district levels. Thousands of participants are studying and practicing *vipassana*, and though most of the participants are elderly, there is an increasing number of professionals and students. The center is encouraging highly developed Buddhists to follow the Four Noble Truths and Three Trainings (*tri-sikkha*) and has encouraged beginner Buddhists to practice the meditation methods that can help them to refresh their minds and to develop a greater awareness for their lives and work. To increase the number of participants, they have also begun to offer certificates to participants who complete their training.

Several Buddhist based or monk led organizations actively operate in Cambodia, such as Buddhism for Development (BFD), the Buddhist Fund, Santi Sena, Buddhism for Kompong Thom Development (BFDK), and Community Friends for Rural Development (RFCD). BFD, SantiSena, and the Buddhist Fund are notably active in peace making and in activities related to livelihood. More Buddhist organizations exist, but have yet to establish development programs in the country. Many NGOs also provide development activities in a variety of areas such as livelihood, environment, and literacy but have yet to integrate peacemaking as a focus.

BFD believes that Buddhist philosophy is to help humans based on the Buddha's well-known advice, "Venerables, please go to villages and communities and cities to express the Dhamma to a great deal of people for their advantage and for the peace of many lives, including humans and devas[1]". The key Dhamma used in its community development are physical development (*kaya bhavana*), moral development (*sila bhavana*), spiritual development (citta bhavana), and wisdom or intellectual development (*panna bhavana*). Some BFD staff members are monks, and go out from the temple with the intention of saving lives.

SantiSena is another example of a Buddhist organization that promotes peace and livelihood. *Santi* means peace and *sena* means servant, so the monks of SantiSena are seen as peace workers. SantiSena works closely with Maha Ghosananda. SantiSena is involved with other peace promoters and with the use of influential monk roles to help solve national political conflicts. BFDK, meanwhile, focuses its work on the environment and education using practices and beliefs similar to the BFD. The Buddhist Fund concentrates its activities on "The Middle Path" in making peace. It uses a book which was written by Maha Ghosananda, *Step-By-Step*, as an organizational guide.

Other NGOs promoting peace in Cambodia are Silaka and Star-Kampuchea. These two organizations participate in the peace walk (*Dhammayietra*) created by Maha Ghosananda. This peace walk has been cooperatively sponsored by several NGOs, including several Christian NGOs. The Weapons Reduction Group actively works with the government, NGOs and community development actors to integrate weapons reduction into community development and to date has collected and destroyed thousands of weapons. The Cambodian Development Research Institution (CDRI) published the Buddha's experiences on peaceful conflict resolution for peace makers and problem solvers in Cambodia. Human rights organizations educate and monitor human rights in Cambodia using Buddhist concepts, especially the five precepts. The Active and Non-Violence Working Group (ANVWG), supported by two international NGOs, encourages grassroot organizations in 15 provinces to experience and solve problems through non-violent methods.

Limitations and Recommendations for Buddhism and Peacemaking

Buddhism has been instrumental in promoting nonviolent

responses to violent unrest, and the Dhamma has proven to be powerful in its contribution to individual and community peace. However, the potential of Buddhism as a consistent and meaningful service to peace in Cambodia is limited in the following ways:

* There is a lack of influential and active monk leaders to encourage and direct Buddhist education. One of the Supreme Patriarchs is seen by the public to be working for a political party and has a low level of Buddhist education. Key monk leaders should relearn Buddhist philosophy and the Buddha's life, play a leading role in education, and develop a long term and measurable peace making plan to support their own spiritual development.

* Despite the positive efforts of many temples and monks in peace activities, the majority have been isolated from building peace in Cambodia. For example, domestic violence and spiritual education programs are often implemented by non-monks or people without knowledge of Buddhism. Financial and technical support is given to development projects that have not recognized the importance of spiritual education. It is recommended that NGOs, the government, and supporting agencies cooperate more actively with temples in implementing development activities, especially spiritual development. Monks have powerful techniques to produce peace, and they are located everywhere in Cambodia. When trained in the right Dhamma tools, they can be of significant service in the making of peace. It is also recommended that Buddhist funds be used to contribute to public needs and community support services in addition to temple construction.

* Some monks are interested in social activism and in conflict resolution, but are not allowed to do so because of political pressure. It should be an option to introduce Buddhist philosophy to influential politicians in both direct and indirect ways (publications or media), assisting them to recognize the potential of involving monks on behalf of Cambodia.

* Most monks traditionally remain in the temples, but could be useful to those Cambodians in need of mental or spiritual help. Buddhism was established to minimize suffering, and the Dhamma is intended to move lives from suffering to peace—the role of the *pabbaja* (practitioner) is to help him/herself, then others. Thus the Buddha taught us to be active, do what we can do and go to the communities to save lives with maha karuna and metta. Buddhism is the bed or nursery of peace and good actions, but now it has been terribly damaged. An internal and external network of sangha in Cambodia could establish a network to regularly share Dhamma tools or Buddhism and peace development experiences.

Dhamma Teachings with Relevance to Political Violence in Cambodia

As the Buddha said to Ananda, "People who are in hell are like the soil under my feet, and the people who are enlightened are like the dust on my feet[2]". Not many currently practice the five Buddhist precepts (*sila*), which are the foundation of peace and human rights. However, suffering and violence can be solved by the *tri-sikkha* (the three trainings of precepts - *sila*, meditation - *samadhi*, and wisdom - *panna*). The *tri-sikkha* is an effective tool to achieve the Noble Eightfold Path, and when we succeed in these, everyone will have great compassion (*maha karuna*) and great love (*maha metta*). Finally, we will live in peace, especially when, as stated by Maha Ghosananda, "We work for peace step-by-step." So we should build peace for others through a gradual, step-by-step activism and developing inner peace as seamlessly as breathing or eating meals.

To build peace, we need to educate people about *maha karuna* and metta. To build *maha metta* we should follow two ways: 1) encourage interested people to practice the *tri-sikkha*, and 2) provide opportunities to those who lack *metta* to learn about *dukkha* (suffering and the results of violence) and *samudaya* (the roots causes of suffering). People who are wise or respected leaders and follow the *tri-sikkha* can be influenced to educate and demonstrate these principles using clear goals and desired outcomes. The Buddha said, "A wise person leads to peace".

Once day, the naturally interested and naturally uninterested people may join together in the *tri-sikkha* when their right understandings have developed[3].

Conclusion:

There have been some successful efforts to build a culture of peace in Cambodia by Khmer peace activists, the government, NGOs, and the international community. Non-violence has been included in such development activities and sectors, such as peace walks, sports, literacy, formal education, advocacy, livelihoods, etc. We have seen weapon

The suffering of Cambodia has been deep.

From this suffering comes Great Compassion.

Great Compassion makes a Peaceful Heart.

A Peaceful Heart makes a Peaceful Person.

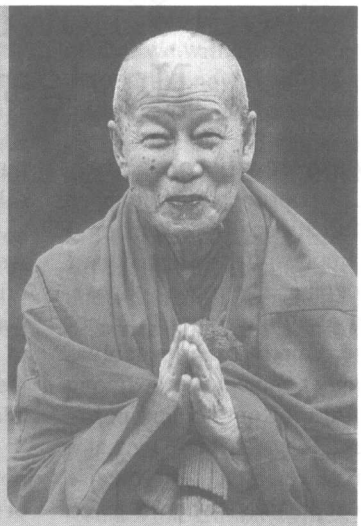
A Peaceful Person makes a Peaceful Family.

A Peaceful Family makes a Peaceful Community.

A Peaceful Community makes a Peaceful Nation.

A Peaceful Nation makes a Peaceful World.

May all beings live in Happiness and Peace.



Venerable Maha Ghosananda

DHAMMAYIETRA

reduction, weapon laws and peace agreements. National Buddhist structures have become more active in spiritual development in Cambodia. A few Buddhist organizations now work for the communities in their practice Buddhism as a means to save lives from suffering.

However, peace initiatives have been limited by the lack of strong education methods, the lack of collaboration among peace promotion activities, and the inability of peace promoters to fully use Dhamma tools in development. Not many Buddhist institutions are able to understand or translate a vision of Buddhism into practice as it applies to social and economic development, and most Buddhists are not active at the community level. Thus, *there is no clear movement to build spiritual peace in Cambodia*. A long-term spiritual education plan should be scientifically implemented with cooperation among all those committed to development and peace. It should assist monks to become seriously involved in violence eduction, and non-religious organizations to understand how to support traditional practices in development. With the assistance of respected and wise leaders to educate and demonstrate the *tri-sikkha*, *karuna* and *metta* through activism/right effort, we should be able to build peace in society. In order to have a strong spiritual peace building movement, we should bring together all peace building institutions and religious activists to work in sharing knowledge and experience as well as tools and the way to conduct regular education regularly and spiritual peace building activities. Buddhist organizations or networks should be led by well educated Buddhists who have a high level of compassion and are willing to work for sentient beings and social change like Maha Ghosananda - otherwise, it will be ineffective and less influential.

Ubasak Ros Sotha

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[1] Preah Vinakyak Tripidaka, page 66, no. (32). In a history of the Buddha written by Toyohara Daijo, he describes the Buddha's daily activities, saying that during the 3-month rainy season, the Buddha meditated. Besides this, he went from city to city and village to village without wearing shoes, nor riding anything at all, in order to explain the Dhamma to people.

[2] VivithakDarmaSangahak, page 131, edited by M. U Kao Sovann, 1970

[3] The Buddha also said that people who have just a bit of dust in their eyes (i.e *kilesa* - greed, anger and ignorance) have some capability to understand the Dhamma and become enlightened. Thus, it would be a great shame if their lives become spent without coming in contact with the Dhamma.

From Knowledge to Understanding: Navigations and Returns

Why are we where we are?

Life is an unending sequence of bifurcations. The decision I take, implies all the decisions I did not take. The route I choose, is part of all the routes I did not choose. Our life is inevitably a permanent choice of one among an infinity of ontological possibilities. The fact that I was at a given place, at a very precise moment in time, when a given situation occurred or a given person appeared, may have had a decisive effect on the rest of my life. A few minutes earlier or later, or a few metres away in any direction, might well have determined a different bifurcation and, hence, a completely different life. As the great Spanish philosopher José Ortega Y. Gasset pointed out: "I am myself and my circumstance".

What holds for individual lives, holds for communities and whole societies as well. Our so called Western Civilization is the result of its own bifurcations. We are what we are, but we could also have been something we are not. Let us then revise some of our decisive bifurcations.

Sometime during the XIIth Century, in Italy, a young man, named Giovanni Bernardone, while still very young and very rich, decided to radically change his life. As a result of his transformation, we remember him today under a different name: Francis of Assisi. Francis, when he referred to the world, spoke of brother Sun and sister Moon, of brother wolf, and of water, fire and trees, and people as brothers and sisters as well. The world he described and felf was a world where love was not only possible but made sense and had a universal meaning.

Sometime later, also in Italy, we hear the resounding voice of brilliant and astute Machiavelli, warning us that: "It is much safer to be feared than to be loved". He also describes a world, but in addition he creates a world.

The world we have today is not that of Francis. It is the world of Machiavelli. Francis was the route not navigated. The navigation we chose was that of Machiavelli, and inspired by it we have constructed our social, political and economic conceptions.

In 1487, another very young man, just 23 years of age, Francesco Pico della Mirandola, prepares himself for the public defense of his 900 theses about the concord between the different religions and philosophies. He refuses to enclose himself within the narrowness of just one doctrine. Convinced that Truths are multiple, and never just one, he longs for a spiritual renovation that can reconcile humanity.

Some years later, fervent believer in absolute truth and in the possibilities of certainty, Francis Bacon invites us to torture Nature so that through the delivery of her secrets, we can extract the Truth.

Again two worlds. One representing the route we navigated, and the other the route we navigated not. We did not follow the way suggested by Pico della Mirandola. We opted for accepting Bacon's invitation, and, thus, we continue applying his recipe with efficiency and enthusiasm. We continue torturing Nature in order to extract from her what we believe to be the truth.

In the year 1600, Giordano Bruno was burnt at the stake, victim of his pantheism, since he believed that Earth is life and has a soul. Everything, for him, are manifestations of life. Everything is life.

Three decades later, Descartes whispers in his *Metaphysical Reflexions:* "Through my window, what I see, are hats and coats covering automatic machines".

We did not navigate the route of Giordano Bruno. We chose that of Descartes, and, in that manner, we have witnessed the triumph of mechanism and redutionism.

For Galileo and Newton, the language of Nature is mathematics. Nothing is important in science that cannot be measured. We and Nature, the observer and the observed, are separate entities. Science is the supreme manifestation of reason, and reason is the supreme attribute of the human being.

Goethe, whose scientific contributions have been (unjustly) overshadowed because of his colossal achievements in literature and the arts, felt upset with what he believed to be the limitations of Newtonian physics. For Goethe, "science is as much an inner path of spiritual development as it is a discipline aimed at accumulating knowledge of the physical world. It involves not only a rigorous training of our faculties of observation and thinking, but also of other human faculties which can attune us to the spiritual dimension that underlies and interpenetrates the physical: faculties such as feeling, imagination and

intuition. Science, as Goethe conceived and practiced it, has as its highest goal the arousal of the feeling of wonder through *contemplative looking* (Anschauung), in which the scientist would come to see God in nature and nature in God"[1]

Two worlds once more. Another bifurcation. We are still under the spell of the overpowering luster of Galileo and Newton, and have chosen not to navigate the route of a Goethean science. Feeling, intuition, consciousness and spirituality are still banished from the realm of science, some new enlightenment arising from the field of quantum physics notwithstanding. The teaching of conventional economics, which, as incredible as it may sound, claims to be "value free", is a conspicuous case in point. A discipline where mathematics has become an end in itself instead of a tool, and where only that which can be measured is important, has generated models and interpretations that are theoretically attractive, but totally divorced from reality.

Johannes Brahms composed two concerts for piano and orchestra. Regardless of which of the two may be more to one's liking, the fascination is with the first. In fact, it is a splendid exposition of the route Brahms finally decided not to navigate. We have been left forever with the curiosity of knowing how the *other* Brahms might have been.

That's the way it is. A route not navigated remembered only by "library worms", and a navigated route to which we attribute spectacular successes and achievements. The University in particular has chosen the routes of Machiavelli, Bacon, Descartes, Galileo and Newton. As far as Francis, Pico, Giordano Bruno and Goethe (the scientist) are concerned, they have remained as historical footnotes.

As a result of the navigated route, we have managed to construct a world in which - as suggested by the Catalonian philosopher Jordi Pigem,[2] the Christian virtues such as: faith, hope and charity, manifest themselves today metamorphosed as schizophrenia, depression and narcissism. The navigation, no doubt, has been fascinating and spectacular. There is much in it to be admired. However, if schizophrenia, depression and narcissism are now the mirror of our existential reality, it is because all of a sudden we find ourselves in a world of confusion. In a world of disenchantment, where progress becomes paradoxical and absurd, and reality becomes so incomprehensible, that we desperately seek refuge in a technology that offers us an escape into *virtual realities*.

Where have we arived?

We have arrived at point in our human evolution, the characteristic of which is that we **know** a lot, but we **understand** very little. Our chosen navigation has been piloted by reason, and leading into the port of knowledge. As such it has been an overwhelmingly successful navigation. We have never in all of our existence, accumulated more knowledge than during the last one hundred years. We are celebrating the apotheosis of reason, but in the midst of such a splendid celebration we suddenly have the feeling that something is missing.

Yes, we can achieve knowledge about almost anything we want. We can, for instance, guided by our beloved scientific method, study everything there is, from theological, anthropological, sociological, psychological and even biochemical perspectives, about a human phenomenon called **love**. The result will be that we will **know** everything that can be known about love. But once we achieve that complete knowledge, we will sooner or later discover that that we will never **understand** love, unless we fall in love. We will realize that knowledge is not the road that leads to understanding, because the port of understanding in on another shore, and requires a different navigation. We will then be aware that we can only attempt to understand that of which we become a part. That understanding is the result of integration, while knowledge has been the result of detachment. That understanding is holistic, while knowledge is fragmented.

At least we have reached a point in which we are finally becoming aware that knowledge is not enough, and that we have to learn how to attain understanding in order to achieve the completeness of our being.

We are, perhaps, beginning to realize that knowledge without understanding is hollow, and understanding without knowledge is incomplete. We therefore need to undertake, at last, the navigation we have so far postponed. But in order to do so, we must face the great challenge of a language shift.

José Ortega Y Gasset, the Spanish philosopher already mentioned, used to say that "every generation has its theme". We might add that, in addition, every generation, or historical period, is dominated by, or falls under the spell, of some language. That is the way it is, and there is nothing wrong with it, as long as the dominant language of a given period is coherent with the challenges of that period. The important thing to keep in mind is that language influences our perceptions and, hence shapes our actions. Let us go through

some examples.

During the first three centuries of the Second Millennium of Western civilization, the dominant language was of a teleological nature, meaning that human actions had to be justified in terms of a calling that was superior and beyond the needs of every day life. That made possible the construction of the great cathedrals and monasteries, where time was no issue. That the construction would take six hundred years? And so what! Nobody was in a hurry. After all, they were constructing for eternity, and eternity is not infinite time, but timelessness. Thank God that the language of "efficiency" had not yet been invented. The importance lay in the deed and not inthe time it might take. It was a case of coherence between language and historical challenge.

The language dominating the Nineteenth Century was basically that of the consolidation of the nation-state. The great speeches of political leaders such as Disraeli, Gladstone, Bismarck, are relevant examples. Without going into details, we may also say that the dominant language of the Century was coherent with the historical challenge of the times.

It is only in the Twentieth Century that the dominant language is that of economics, especially during the second half. A quick overview shows some interesting perspectives. The late Twenties and early Thirties, the time of the so called great depression, coincides with the emergence of Keynesian economics. The Keynesian language is in many ways the result of a crisis, having the capacity of both interpreting the crisis as well as overcoming it. It is, again, a language (or rather sub-language) coherent with its historical period.

The next sub-language shift occurs during the Fifties and Sixties, with the emergence of the so called developmental language. This was an optimistic, utopian and happy language. Economists writing in those days were mainly dominated by the feeling that, at last, we had discovered how to promote true development and overcome world poverty. For the purpose of our argumentation, it is unnecessary to reproduce the prescriptions here. However, what should be pointed out is that although the hoped-for goals were not fully achieved, many things during those decades changed in a positive manner. A language, at least partially coherent with its historical challenges.

And then came the last three decades of the Twentieth Century, with the emergence of the neoliberal discourse. A language that is still dominating over a period in which global poverty has increased dramatically, debt burden has crippled many national economies and generated brutal overexploitation of both people and natural resources, destruction of ecosystems and biodiversity has reached levels unknown in human history, and accumulation of financial wealth in ever fewer hands has reached obscene proportions. The disastrous effects of this language, absolutely incoherent with its historical challenges, is clear to be seen by everyone, although decision-makers and holders of power prefer to look in the opposite direction, and hold on to a pseudo-religious concoction.

Where do we go from here?

We are, thus far, successful beings, yet incomplete. And, most probably, it is that incompleteness which is responsible for the uneasiness and anxieties that permeate our existence in the world today. Perhaps the moment has arrived in which to rest and reflect. We have the opportunity now, to analyze with true honesty, the map of our navigation, with all its hazards and successes, with all its tragedies and glories. And then, it may be wise to unearth the alternative map of the route we navigated not, and see whether we can find in it orientations that can rescue us from our existential confusion.

Perhaps it would make sense that we start seeing brothers and sisters surrounding us. Perhaps it would be good to believe in the possiblilities of harmony between many possible truths. Perhaps it may be to our advantage that we dare to imagine and believe that the earth has a soul and that everything is life. Perhaps it would be good to realize that there is no reason whatsoever to banish intuition, spirituality and consciousness from the realm of science. Or, to put it in Goethe's words: "It (we) would seek comfort in the whole, (we) must learn to discover the whole in the smallest part", because "nothing is more consonant with Nature than that she puts into operation in the smallest detail that which she intends as a whole".[3]

Our passionate pursuit of knowledge has postponed our navigation towards understanding. There should be nothing to impede the undertaking of such a navigation now, were it not for an economics which, as practiced under the spell of the neoliberal discourse, increasingly distorts reality, thus contributing to our confusion and to the falsification of knowledge itself.

No sustainability (which obviously requires understanding) will or can be achieved without a profound language shift. A new language that opens the door of understanding; that is, not a language of power and do-

mination, but a language that may emerge from the depth of our self-discovery as inseparable parts of a whole that is the cradle of the miracle of life. If we manage to provoke such a shift, we may still experience the satisfaction of having brought about a new Century worth living in.

Let us hope for a safe voyage and a fulfilling navigation towards the shores that may turn us into complete beings capable of understanding the completeness of life.

Manfred A. Max-Neef

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[1] Jeremy Naydler, Goethe on Science, pg. 23. Floris Books, England, 2000.

[2] Jordi Pigem, La Odisea de Occidente, Editorial Kairós, Barcelona, Spain, 1993

[3] Mentioned by Jeremy Naydler, in Goethe on Science pg. 92-93, Floris Books, Great Britain, 2000.

Sacca, Ahimsa and Genuine Democracy: Essence of Tibet in Exile Government

As the head of government since 2001, the Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche mentioned that sacca (truthfulness), ahimsa (harmlessness) and genuine democracy are three essential principles that Tibetan government abide by without compromising.

"Critics in the west criticize that we do not have good diplomatic nature, which is true. We need to express our clear position. We even need to criticize our ally states who take any action which is against our principles. We heavily comment on India's nuclear weapons test. In spite of USA continuous support to us Tibetan refugees, when American troops invaded Iraq, we also criticized them strongly. We regard the principle of truth and harmlessness as more important than diplomatic manner."

There are two significant and distinct characteristics of voting process of the Tibetan government in exile. There is no political party, and there is no running for election. Therefore, there is no campaign for election. The voting system comprises of two steps. Firstly, each voting rights holder nominates persons and votes are counted to find the nominees. Secondly, the election committee will investigate the nominees' personal history and the result will be publicly announced. At this stage, the nominees can withdraw if they like, followed by voting to find those with highest votes to go to the parliament.

In the normal democracy, the decision making process emphasizes on majority vote. For Samdhong Rinpoche, such process is not the governing by people, hence genuine equity is rarely resulted. He took The Buddha's detailed stipulation on Sangha as an example in decision making for any community activity. Even only a single person opposes, such activity is null.

"Such process might be difficult but significant. It shows that even a single vote is as equally important as majority vote. The underlying logic is, if it is truth, everyone must agree. And, the most important of all is a chance for the minority to explain in equal basis".

As another example the Rinpoche raised a movement in India led by Vinoba Bhave, Gandhi's prominent disciple. In the early stage of this movement, the decision was made on *unanimity*. Finding out later it is cumbersome, he then changed to approval basis. That is, although there is disagreement, if those who disagree approve, the decision can be made.

To the question that what the minority should do if the majority is against the principle of truth and harmlessness, the Rinpoche said, *"Truth is always truth, and harmlessness is always harmlessness. They exist and go on without majority voting support. However, the extreme fault is that the majority of people no longer believe in truth and harmlessness and we have to follow them. We must be aware that such decision is a result of propaganda of a particular interest group. For example, the saying that globalization is inevitable is not truth. If we decide to stand by truth, we can choose to do so".*

When asked about the opposite roles of monk and politician, the Rinpoche confirmed that he is not a politician, but a monk. *"Working for people does not necessarily mean being a politician. I am a monk who works for benefit of people. If we equate management for the benefit of people as being politician, a politician and a monk can be one.*

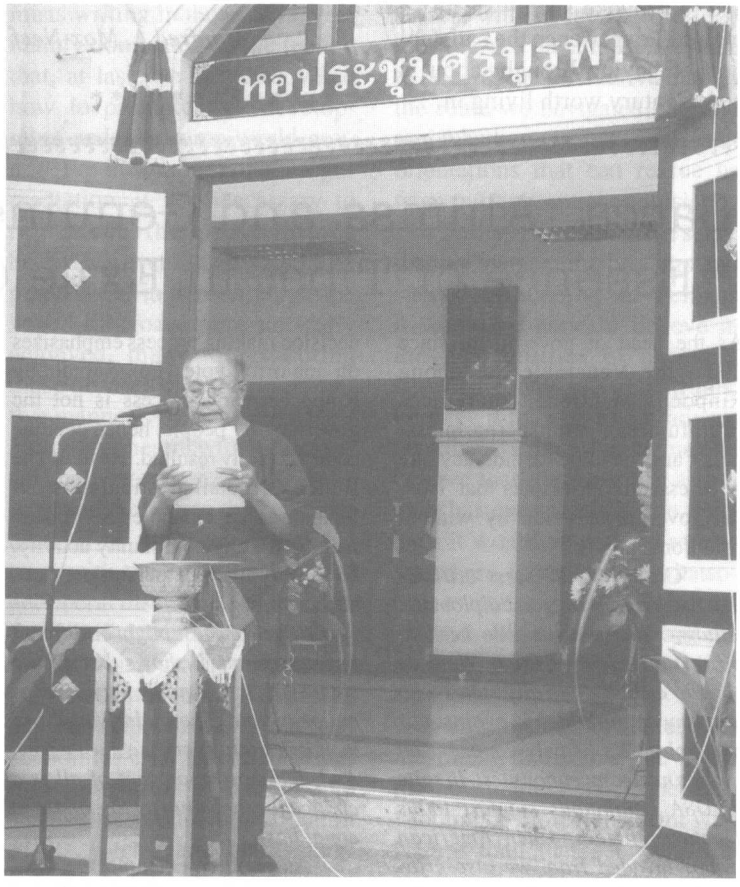
Similarly, practices of meditation and mindfulness are not monks' business only. Laypeople must do so, too. In my political practice, I try to be always aware of my own self. Sati and sampajañña (mindfulness and consciousness) are important mind-observing tool. Sometimes, I fail, but try again and again".

Finally Samdhong Rinpoche talked about genuine democracy in his sense as state administration which does not separate between the governor and the governed, and there is no ruling elite class and the ruled class. *"You may say this is an ideal which cannot become true. But in the everchanging world as today, nothing is impossible. It's all up to our determination. Non-separation or non-extremity between things is genuine in both Dharma and democratic principles".*

Summarized from The 11th Sem Pringpuangkaew Annual Lecture by the Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche, Head of Tibetan Government in exile at Dharamsala. Bangkok January 16, 2005.

Speech on the Opening Ceremony of the Sri Burapha Conference Hall

Past and present members of Thammasat University should be proud that an alumnus who had steadfastly stood for the cause of peace and democracy even if that entailed the periodic deprivation of personal freedom and lifelong exile is now being recognized by UNESCO as an important world personality. On the auspicious occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth on 31 March 2005 and at the university in which a new conference hall bearing his penname "Sri Burapha" is situated we are rightly venerating the venerable —a truly meritorious act.



Sri Burapha was not only the pseudonym of Kularb Saipradit but, for many years, has also been the name of an important award for Thai writers whose works and actions are devoted to righteous cause, especially liberty, solidarity, equality, and nonviolence.

Hopefully, the Sri Burapha Conference Hall will not be just a building but also a platform to display or inform about beauty, truthfulness, and goodness in an exceptional way. All members of Thammasat University—administrators, academic staff, students, etc.—must collaborate to launch this platform, to initiate activities that glorify (the meaning of *sri*) the direction of "burapha," which does not simply mean "the East" but also, and more substantially, "the dawn" or the beginning of a new day—when the golden rays of the sun pierce through the darkness of the night. And if we are mindful we can use this brightness to awaken ourselves to peacefulness and cleanliness, at the personal and the social levels. Therefore I hope that a number of individuals who support this goal will make the Sri Burapha Conference Hall a lively, dialogical forum open to public participation, to anyone who searches for or upholds the values embodied by Kularb Saipradit.

Also, we must not forget that this year also marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Direk Jayanama, who taught at and was the first dean of the Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University. Has the university planned to commemorate this special occasion? At least it should persuade the Thai foreign ministry to name its library or one of its conference rooms "Direk Jayanama" to remind the younger generation of the virtues of humanism and selflessness. Although from different walks of life, the goodness of Direk Jayanama was comparable to Kularb Saipradit's.

We are also approaching the 100th anniversary of the birth of Puey Ungphakorn who like Kularb Saipradit was a Thammsat alumnus and like Direk Jayanama had taught at that university. There is now a Puey Forum at Wat Pradum Kongka, the temple where he was ordained as a novice and where his ashes (along with his mother's and maternal

grandmother's) are kept. Built in 1999, the year Puey passed away, the Puey Forum is not only a commemorative building. More important, it seeks to rejuvenate the role of the temple in contemporary society and to rekindle the flame of peace and righteousness. It is heartening to learn that at the Bank of Thailand there is a Sethadhamma (righteous economics) Association, which was recently established on 12 January 2005. There had also been a Sethadhamma Association at Thammasat University. In fact, Puey Ungphakorn gave the association that name, when he was dean of the Faculty of Economics.

It is clear that the Bank of Thailand well recognizes the virtues of Puey Ungphakorn. The foreign ministry should emulate this gesture and recognize Direk Jayanama because one should be thankful for benefits received and should reciprocate them. Thammasat University is collaborating with the Bank of Thailand to revitalize the long dormant Sethadhamma Association. It should similarly persuade the foreign ministry to launch activities geared at promoting goodness in the name of Direk Jayanama. A university's responsibility is not only confined within the walls of its campus. It should also display moral quality and force to the wider community.

I must commend the Thammasat University Council for approving the establishment of the Sri Burapha Conference Hall. And on the opening ceremony of this conference hall may glory be in the direction of the dawn or the awakening of goodness. To embark on the path of real goodness requires the Right View. At present, society is laden with false views—greed, lust, prestige, and so on. Therefore, I hope that the conference hall will be a platform to cultivate the Right View.

On the 50th anniversary marking the end of the Second World War in the kingdom, Bangkok opened the Peace Park. The handwritten words of Kularb Saipradit praising peace were visibly engraved at the park to serve as a reminder to all visitors. 16 August 2005 will mark the 60th anniversary of the declaration of peace made by Pridi Banomyong qua Regent. It will therefore be highly appropriate for Thammasat University to organize an official ceremony on that day to awaken all Siamese to the worthiness of Sri Burapha and his contemporaries such as Direk Jayanama and Puey Ungphakorn. These three individuals, numerous others whose names could not be mentioned here, and virtually all the Thammasat students who devoted their lives to freedom and democracy were students of Pridi Banomyong, the founder of Thammasat University.

We must not forget that when Pridi announced the declaration of peace on 16 August 1945, it was simultaneously a declaration of independence and liberty. Earlier, Pridi had helped guided Siam in the transition from absolute to constitutional monarchy on 24 June 1932. In other words, we must not forget that peace, independence, and liberty were restored to Siam on 16 August 1945 as a result of the efforts of the Free Thai Movement, whose headquarters was situated in Thammasat University. And if Pridi did not have Direk Jayanama as his right hand, who then successfully brought along Luang Aduldejcharat as another close collaborator, the underground activities of the Free Thai Movement would have met with even greater obstacles.

On the 50th anniversary of the declaration of peace, H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn presided over the opening ceremony held at the Grand Conference Hall, Thammasat University. H.R.H. Princess Sirindhorn will once again graciously preside over the centennial ceremony of Sri Burapha on March 31.

Hopefully, Thammasat University will not only commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Kularb Saipradit but also the 60th anniversary of the declaration of peace.

21st March 2005

Montien Boonma's Dhammic Art Exhibition

I felt truly honored when Apinan Posayanond recommended the Asia Society to invite me to give a lecture at the opening ceremony of Montien Boonma's retrospective exhibition in New York City in 2003. My lecture was also published in the exhibition program, which was entitled *Montien Boonma: Temple of the Mind.*

The exhibition was held at the Asia Society Museum during

4 February-11 May 2003. A series of lectures, discussions, and programs relating to Buddhism, culture, society, and art were organized along with the exhibition. A lot of people went to see Montien Boonma's displays. Many also attended the related talks or activities.

Montien Boonma's exhibition then went on a tour spanning three continents. It was exhibited at San Francisco's Asian Art Museum during 25 February-23 May 2004. Later, it traveled to Canberra, Australia, and was displayed there during July-September of the same year. Finally, the exhibition has returned to Siam, and is currently on display at the National Gallery on Chao Fa Road until 20 April 2005.

I am proud that the artistic creations of Montien Boonma have been displayed in three continents over the past few years. I need not mention that his works had also been shown in Europe and in many Asian countries. At the National Gallery, we can witness the diverse creations of a multi-talented individual—paintings, sculptures, architectures, and so on. They constitute contemporary art, but ones that are rooted in or inspired by Thai-ness or Asian-ness. Yet, they are able to transcend parochial nationalism or Pan-Asianism. Put another way, they are not asphyxiated by the Oriental-Occidental dualism. Rather, Montien Boonma's creations are a mélange of global knowledge(s) and wisdom. The artist expressed his Buddhist nature through his heart, which had weathered a lot of sufferings (e.g., his beloved wife's chronic illness as well as his own) mindfully.

Montien Boonma had confronted the roots of suffering mindfully. Although he partially



overcame his personal suffering, he was able to prevail over his illness periodically. He had also made a resolution, which he steadfastly upheld: against his will, he vowed to leave his beloved wife for ten years on the belief that it would make her conditions better.

Montien Boonma had deeply understood the virtues of truthfulness, resolution, generosity and morality, which are all part of the ten perfections. He therefore possessed true love for his wife, family, fellow human beings, and all sentient beings. He transformed his personal suffering into marvelous works of art. Montien Boonma did not expect viewers to see his self in his works: he was de-centered, was not attached to the self. Rather, he wanted them to think again and think deeply about life, about truthfulness, peacefulness, cleanliness, purity, and so on. He encouraged them to see that the self is and is not their own, and therefore urged them to engage with themselves and others on this basis. He sought to awaken his audience, so to speak.

Montien Boonma was not a Buddhist artist in the traditional or classical sense. His works are also not a form of Buddhist commercial art. He had understood the Dhamma through practice. He regularly cultivated inner and outer peace through mindful breathing. And this enabled him to attain wisdom resulting from reflection, which can be amply witnessed in the beauty of his works. The beauty of his works is thus beyond words and the confines of traditional contexts. Let us be reminded that nurturing inner peace is at the heart of world peace. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama puts it, "There will not be peace in the world unless each of us has inner peace. This may be difficult, but it is the only way."

Montien Boonma had suffered from a chronic illness and the torment of having to abandon his beloved wife and ultimately his own life. But as a practitioner of Buddhism, he undoubtedly realized the Three Characteristics of Existence: All conditioned things are impermanent; all conditioned things are subject to stress and conflict; and all things are not-self or soulless. We all cannot escape from these three characteristics of existence; they are conditions not of our own making. The self and freedom can only be realized in this condition of thus-ness into the world. In Buddhism, understanding the Three Characteristics of Existence requires fusing the mind with the heart. Only then will we be able to de-center our attachments to the self. As mentioned above, Montien Boonma had shown us these facts in his creations. And even though Apinan Posayanond was one of the main organizers of this marvelous exhibition, his action was truly meritorious or wholesome as he was not concerned about putting himself in the limelight. His humility and sense of humor enabled him to work effectively at the international level. The same could be said about Montien Boonma.

Siam is a Buddhist land. Its

Buddhist nature however is not apparent in its political, economic, and education systems. Mainstream culture, which emphasizes formalism, has seized the hearts and minds of Thais. The mainstream lacks inner peace, and it sadly fills this absence with capitalism, consumerism, and militarism.

Also, Siam has been an important launching pad of Buddhism to other societies due to the efforts of a series of exemplary monks such as Ajarn Cha Subhaddo and Ajarn Buddhadasa. Venerating both monks, Montien Boonma had seriously practiced their teachings. He himself had served as another stream carrying the Dhamma abroad. To date, no other Thais have succeeded in using works of art to transmit Dhammic messages as he did.

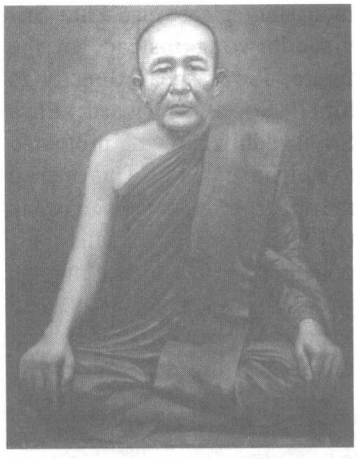
The artistic creations of Montien Boonma not only enabled us to see beauty but also the truths of life. They show us that although life is filled with sufferings, it is also beautiful and truthful. This paradox is the condition of our freedom and life.

From experiencing the creations of Montien Boonma and having learned about his life and work, I am obligated to bow my head to him humbly and feel proud of his life and works. And if I am proud to be Thai it is because a person like Montien Boonma had helped illuminate the path to inner peace, for myself as well as for others. Like Montien Boonma, I want to harness inner peace and build an expanding network of virtuous companions to serve Thai society and the world.

From the bottom of my heart I thank Montien Boonma, and invite you all to cherish the beauty and truths of life that are to be found in his marvelous works.

Venerating Somdej Phra Vanarat (Heng Khemacari)

We may be hard pressed to find another monk with qualities comparable to those of Somdej Phra Vanarat (Heng Khemacari) Unfortunately, his life was short-lived. He passed away at the age of 63 in 1943, after spending 42 years in the monkhood. Had he lived on, he would have further strengthened and stabilized Buddhism in the kingdom. In any case, he cultivated numerous renowned and highly capable disciples who effectively administered Wat Mahatat, the largest monastery in Bangkok,in particular Phra Vimaladhamma (Choi Thanadatto) who founded or revitalized the Mahachulalongkorn University, which emerged on the foundation of the Mahatat College (the first college in Siam) during the time of Somdej Phra Vanarat (Dhit Udayo). Also, we should mention Phra Vimaladhamma (Arj Asabho) who became Somdej



Phra Buddhacariya and once served as acting Supreme Patriarch. In all likelihood, he would have successfully continued the legacy of Somdej Khemacari had there not been turbulences in both the worldly and the religious realms. The legacy of Somdej Khemacari has yet to be fully analyzed and discussed in details, however.

Somdej Khemacari was born on 31st January 1881 in Tarae, Sakaekrung, Uthaithani province. His father was Tua Ko, bearing the family name of Chua. His mother was Tuptim. At the age of 12 he entered the monastic order, but disrobed twice due to the Chinese familial obligation to worship the ancestors. At the age of 13 he re-entered the monkhood. At 16, he went to study the Pali Scriptures and pursue a religious education at Wat Mahatat in Bangkok. In 1903, he passed the ninth grade of Pali examination. Subsequently, he was appointed and promoted in the ecclesiastical ranks. Starting with the title Phra Srivisuddhiwong, he proceeded to become Phra Rajasudhi, Phra Devamoli, Phra Dhammatilokacariya, and Phra Vimaladhamma, respectively. Then he became a Somdej in 1939, serving as the first Somdej Phra Vanarat under the constitutional monarchy. And he became

president of the Ecclesiastical Assembly as a result of the promulgation of a new Sangha bill in 1941.

Somdej Khemacari served as the abbot of Wat Mahatat since 1923. The following year he became the ecclesiastical governor general of Nakornsawan. In 1928 he served as the deputy chief superintendent of the north. Two years later, he was ecclesiastical governor general of Ayutthaya. In 1939, he acted as the patriarch of the south. He was most capable and effective in the various ecclesiastical positions he held. His disciples became ecclesiastical provincial governors or abbots in the provinces or regions under his responsibility. They all facilitated the orderly and effective administration of religious affairs in those areas. At Wat Mahatat, Somdej Khemacari promoted the strict observance of monastic duties. He convinced all monks there to uphold the monastic disciplines and study the Scriptures seriously. He provided educational opportunity to the youth and kept the temple's grounds in good conditions. Meditation practice, however, seemed to have suffered slightly: 'form' was emphasized at the expense of critical reflection.

Somdej Khemacari was a direct byproduct of the classical religious education, which emphasized the oral tradition. Although at first he wanted to return to his native province and revitalize Buddhism there, his ingenuity enabled him to pass the highest level of Pali examination and made it necessary for him to help administer religious affairs from Bangkok. As a "classical" monk, he prohibited his disciples from learning the English language. He saw it as an obstruction of the way to mindfulness or as a threat to celibacy. Pali scholars and students at Wat Mahatat thus had to secretly learn the English language themselves. If one overlooks this slight defect, Somdej Khemacari was on the whole a progressive monk in terms of both educational and administrative matters.

He was one of the leading and favorite disciples of H.R.H. Prince Vajirayanavaroros. When Somdej Khemacari first received the royal title in the monkhood as Phra Srivisuddhiwong, Prince Vajirayanavaroros even went to witness the ceremony at his living quarters. The young monk saw this as a gesture of blessing. The prince also wrote a letter to the abbot thus: "Now the Venerable is already old. If there is any affair requiring the involvement of the monastery please use Phra Srivisuddhiwong instead. In the future, I will speak directly to him." Soon afterward, Phra Srivisuddhiwong got promoted to a higher position. This opened the opportunity for a junior monk to fully work and realize his potentials. After inspecting the workings of the Bangkok Noi Sangha, he wrote a report, which greatly impressed the prince. As a result, the report was reproduced in the *Declarations of the Sangha* to serve as a model for other ecclesiastical officers to emulate. To my knowledge, no other monks had received this honor. Somdej Khemacari was also bestowed the honor of serving as master leading the study of the Scriptures despite his young age. This position is equivalent to that of an ecclesiastical governor general. Undoubtedly, Somdej Khemacari greatly respected the prince patriarch. He also venerated Somdej Phra Buddhagosacariya of Wat Debsirin. At the time, Pali scholars and member of the Royal Family widely acclaimed the works by both Somdej. Always mindful, Somdej Khemacari never allowed himself to breach the monastic rules however slight. Moreover, he was a respected Dhamma preacher. Prince Vajirayanavaros once praised Somdej Khemacari thus: "After listening to the sermon of Phra Srivisuddhiwong (Heng Khemacari) of Wat Mahatat, I found that he is knowledgeable in the Dhamma and present the subject well. He should rightly be a preacher. I write these words to show my satisfaction."

Although pithy, these are profound and revealing words. For someone who was praised by the Prince Patriarch, it was like receiving a certificate or university diploma. At the time, listening to sermons by monks was a serious public affair, participated by people from all walks of life —members of the royal family, aristocrats, ordinary civilians, etc. Prince Vajirayanavaroros was therefore careful not to praise monks indiscriminately.

H.R.H Prince Damrong Rajanubharb also admired Somdej Khemacari. After more than a decade of exile in Penang, the octogenarian Prince Damrong attended the cremation ceremony of Somdej Khemacari at Wat Debsirin. Prince Damrong struggled to walk up to the funeral pyre in order to pay his final homage to a respected monk.

Uthaithani province is proud of its native son, who had performed great religious services for the kingdom. The province built a small hospital to honor Somdej Khemacari not long after he had passed away in1943. In

1995, a bridge crossing the Chao Phya River and enjoining the provinces of Nakornsawan and Uthaithani was constructed. This was the first time in Thai history that a public facility was named after a monk. Previously, public facilities had only been named after members of the royal family and politicians.

Now, the abbot of Wat Dhammasopit in Uthaithani province has constructed a three-storey building on the temple's grounds to serve as a memorial Library to Somdej Khemacari, which will be formally open on 26 March 2005.

Venerating Maha Sila Viravong

On the grand opening of the library today, we must bear three things in mind.

1. The ceremony today is a gesture made to venerate the venerable. We must warmly express thanks to the children of Maha Sila Viravong. They have shown their gratitude to their father—their benefactor—and have kindly invited us to take part in this merit-making ceremony to reverence him. He devoted his life to fight for the independence of his country and to the advancement of knowledge and scholarship. His way of life was that of a true Buddhist gentleman in which goodness was enjoined with knowledge. It is important that this generation and generations to come realize the significance of venerating individuals of such high caliber. Nowadays, we have too many morally half-baked individuals, especially the rich and the powerful. Venerating a dignified human being is thus akin to making good merits.
2. This library is a gift of Dhamma. In other words, it provides knowledge on truthfulness pertaining to both worldly and dhammic matters. This is superior to other forms of material giving, and this giving is completely devoid of profit motives. For those interested, there are books by



Maha Sila himself; by Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, the famous Thai spiritual leader; and by Uthin Unyavong, one of the best novelists and short story writers of Laos; and numerous other past and contemporary authors. There are books written in Lao, Thai, Pali, and western languages. Hopefully, this library will steadily increase its stock and will soon become a center of excellence. If individuals elsewhere seek to honor the venerable in this way, we will help nurture the grounds for idealism and extend the gift of the Dhamma to many more people. In this way, we will be helping to make truthfulness triumph over fallacy—excellence over moral inadequacy-which is prevalent in capitalism and consumerism and often comes by the name of globalization.

3. Maha Sila Viravong's life and work transcended the confinements of the nation-state. He is honored and revered on both sides of the Thai-Lao border. Although he was born in Roi-Et province (Siam), his life ended on this side of the Mekong River. Even though Laos and Siam are two separate independent states politically, culturally we are in fact one. The Mekong River is unable to sever the close and long established ties between the Thai and the Lao peoples. His written works, translations, and magnum opus *Tao Hung Tao Jeuang* are invaluable—together they constitute a jewel in the literary and cultural achievements and history of the Tai-Lao people living in the Thai kingdom, Laos, Sipsong Panna of China, Shan States of Burma, the Black Tai etc. in Vietnam, and other Tais in Assam, India.

Now *Tao Hung Tao Jeuang* is available in the Thai and Lao languages. It is an extremely important historical document for the Tai-Lao cultural identity. In the future, one hopes, it will be translated into other Tai languages. It will also be available in the western languages, Chinese, and other languages used on the Asian continent. An invaluable knowledge system knows no boundaries, forming a Republic of Letters transcending geographical, political, and economic barriers, and standing the test of time.

It can be said that Maha Sila was an heir to the literary and religious tradition from the time of King Mongkut Rama IV of Siam. King Rama IV's bicentenary was on 18 October 2004. The present Thai ruling elites do not have the eye to see his ingenuity.

Before he became king, Prince Mongkut was in the monkhood for 27 years. As a monk, he was known as Bhikkhu Vajirayana. Also, he was the spiritual teacher of Devadhammi Mao, a leading monk in the northeastern wing of the Dhammayuti order which also spread into Champassak of Laos. Phra Upalikunupama cariya (Chan Siricando) of Ubonratchathani province was the main pillar maintaining this religious lineage for the third generation from Prince Mongkut until the time of Somdej Phra Mahaveeravong (Ouan Tisso), who was the spiritual teacher of the monk named Maha Sila. Indeed, it was the Somdej who allowed Maha Sila to use his religious title as his surname. This constituted an inheritance from the supramundane to the worldly, from royalty to the common people, from Siam to Laos, propelled by the Wheel of Dhamma, which is transcendental.

Moreover, that Siam was able to veer towards modernity while maintaining dhammic substance without succumbing to western colonialism was in large part due to the ingenuity of King Rama IV in both the spiritual and worldly realms. Thus when Siam constructed the first public library of the capital, it was named Vajirayana Library after King Mongkut's religious name in the monkhood. When Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, one of the King's sons, was given charge of the Library, he turned it into a major institutional pillar upholding and cultivating pride in the Thai language, culture, traditions, and history. This served as an important foundation for the Republic of Letters.

Although Phya Anuman Rajadhon was not related by blood to royalty, Prince Damrong greatly admired and held him as part of his kin in the Republic of Letters.

Maha Sila Viravong had worked closely with Phya Anuman, and not only inherited a great deal of literary skills and knowledge from the latter but also from Prince Damrong. His history of Laos, anthology of Laotian traditional stories and folklores, and revision of Laotian literature on spiritual as well as worldly matters can be traced back to the lines of Damrong Rajanubhab and Anuman Rajadon. Nevertheless, he also maintained a high degree of independence and originality. For instance, he sided with Prince Petcharat, the viceroy of Laos, in demanding for Laotian independence from France.

Here independence not only

means political independence. It also entails intellectual independence, which must go together with beauty and goodness. Truthfulness is the essence of peace. The Vajirayana Library became a foundation that promoted interest in the new knowledge system of Siam akin to what the Royal Society did in Britain and the Academie des Sciences did in France.

Let us all hope that the Maha Sila Viravong Library will fulfill a role comparable to the three aforementioned institutions. The Vajirayana Library is a symbol of excellence because of patrons like Prince Damrong and Phya Anuman. Likewise, the Maha Sila Viravong Library will need to find individuals to build on the work initiated by his two leading daughters: Mrs.Dara Kalaya and Mrs. Duangduen Bunyavong.

With this good will, I invite all guests to help unveil the Maha Sila Viravong Library. May it be a bright light in the Republic of Letters forever.

[Excerpted from Sulak Sivaraksa's speech on the grand opening day of Maha Sila Viravong Library at the Thousand Bamboo Grove, Vientiane, Laos. It was held on 25 December 2004. The centenary of Maha Sila Viravong will actually be on 1 August 2005.]

Sulak: Politicians Pander to PM

Politicians pander to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra like prostitutes selling themselves for money, leaving people with no power and no voice, said a prominent social critic and scholar yesterday.

"The people's constitution has been thoroughly corrupted by politicians who see their jobs not as serving the masses and the greater good, but instead serving the ones who can benefit them financially or politically, like Mr Thaksin," said Sulak Sivaraksa, acting adviser of the Assembly of the Poor which marked its last day of protest in front of parliament yesterday with a rally at Government House.

"We are supposed to be under the rule of people who have our best interests in mind, not rulers looking out for their own best interests."

Prostitutes sacrificed their honour for base reasons, engaging in sexual acts for money, Mr Sulak said. The was somewhat like MPs and senators who sold themselves to Mr Thaksin to further their own aspirations, and sought also to lower the people to their standards.

"Look how easily they can buy people's votes with a few empty promises. Their job has changed to not keeping promises and making excuses, and ours has changed to not holding them accountable for their words or actions," he said.

Mr Sulak said, "Unless you're a member of one of Mr Thaksin's so-called special interest groups that have the abliltiy to sway political opinion and get attention, your're out of luck."

The only solution, Mr Sulak said, was for people, especially the poor, to make their voices heard by not accepting Mr Thaksin's money and show him who was the boss.

"Mr Thaksin's socialist schemes are mere bribes to keep people's mouths shut about the damage and conflicts caused by government mega-projects that take away people's land and destroy the environment," he said.

No government officials or MPs came out to meet with the 1,000 or so protesters outside parliament's fortified gates.

The Assembly of the Poor is an antipoverty group made up of more than 200 civil rights organisations affected by government projects and land conflicts.

When the assembly moved to Government House yesterday, the protesters left behind an engraved stone tablet condemning those who corrupted the land and praising those who cherished it.

A police officer guarding parliament, however, ordered it removed as soon as the crowd left, as it was against regulations.

Mahachon party's senior adviser Maj-Gen Sanan Kachornprasart, meanwhile, visited the Assembly of the Poor's protest yesterday. He offered the assembly moral support and urged the crowd to continue fighting. He said he would support them, but did not say how.

On Tuesday, Democrat leader Abhisit Vejjajiva visited the protesters and talked with Grandma Hai Khanchanta, 76, who fought 27 years to get her land back. He promised to help the association if their concerns required legal amendments.

Bangkok Post,
March 18, 2005

Mochtar Lubis: An Appreciation

Mochtar's father was a Sumatran prince in the service of Dutch colonial administration of Indonesia. One day, when Mochtar was around 14 years old, his father ordered him taken away for the day to a relative's nearby. But Mochtar, surprised at this unusual step, made his way back home to the government compound where they lived and found a large assembly there, of all the employees and workers on the local plantation. Two men in shackles were brought in, trussed up and flogged. Later, his father, rather than admonishing Mochtar, said to him: now you see why you must never serve the Dutch. And this incident, he said, set him on the course of his life.

Mochtar participated in the struggle for liberation from the Dutch that followed the Japanese withdrawal from the Indies, both as a journalist and a fighter. At that time he met Hally, who was to be his wife for over 40 years. The dedication of his best-known novel, *Twilight in Jakarta* reads: "To Hally, to whom I owe a debt of love."

In the struggle for political leadership that followed independence, Mochtar, then a young jounalist, threw in his lot with the democratic socialists such as Sjahrir—Dutch-trained moderates—who wanted to steer the new country into a moderate course that would over time lead to general education and democracy. But this moderate party received hardly any votes at the elections, and the rabble-rousing and flamboyant Soekarno was elected, to lead the country for decades. Mochtar founded the country's foremost newspaper, *Indonesia Raya*, which fought corruption and the growing influence of the PKI, the Communist party. Soekarno decided to silence the opposition and sent its leaders into imprisonment at a camp in Madiun, in West Jaya. When Mochtar was delivered at the camp by the police, he found the prisoners dis-spirited and idle. Mochtar promptly called them to assembly and organized programs to keep them occupied. Prisoner Moh. Roem, former Minister of religious affairs was drafted to give Arabic lessons every morning, the former Ambassador to France was to offer a French course; Mochtar himself built a tennis court and became tennis instructor. Spirits in camp rapidly rose. It was always Mochtar's way, in a time of crisis or pessimism, to seize the helm and reestablished morale by personal example. His exuberance, tenacity and refusal of compromise made him early a model to the younger generation. The military coup of General Soeharto freed the camp prisoners, and Mochtar —by then Indonesia's foremost novelist—resumed his editorship for *Indonesia Raya*, and devoted his paper to a losing fight against corruption. Mochtar was jailed again, and his paper confiscated. He then focused on his other vehicles—the publishing house Yayasan Obor Indonesia and the literary political monthly *Horizon*, which was the mouthpiece of the "generation of '68" which had spearheaded the opposition to Soeharto. Mochtar grew somewhat isolated in his last years, but continued to be a moral model of integrity and daring, the personification also of a lifelong struggle for freedom of the press. He was a painter also, and a sculptor of talent.

Ivan Kats

Satomi Oba

The death of Japan's Satomi Oba, an anti-nuclear activist, leaves a large void in the struggle for world peace

The three ladies look jubilant; one could almost glimpse a jovial wink in their eyes. Collectively they are known as the Trident Three. The name was coined for then-historic victory in chilly disarming a research barge associated with a nuclear submarine called the Trident. The court later acquitted them. The sheriff said the three plaintiffs—Angie Zeiler, Uila Roder and Ellen Moxley—were "justified" for what they had done. They even received an alternative Nobel prize, the Right Livelihood Award, for this valiant, unprecedented act.

As she pushed a postcard showing the Trident Three across the table to me, I could somehow sense a similar streak of cheerful determination in this small-built

Japanese lady. Satomi Oba said she would like to share with me this little "memento". It was to show her cordiality and to explain, with minimum use of words, her source of inspiration —why she continued her small crusade despite the cost.

"It was so funny," she said, "it caused a lot of shame to the [British Navy]. They always boasted about their fool-proof security measures but the Trident Three act has shown how easy it was for ordinary citizens to climb on board and throw away the [nuclear-related research] equipment.".

What Satomi—that was what her international circle of friends called her—did may not have that dare-devil element like the Trident Three's. But as the founder and director of Plutonium Action Hiroshima (PAH), Satomi has taken a lot of risks in pursuance of her beliefs: that this earth of ours would be a much better place without nuclear power, in any guise or form.

For her, "nuclear power plants and nuclear weapons are the same thing originally". The PAH may have been inspired by the tragedy of Hiroshima but its main campaigns have been directed against nuclear-fuelled plants which ironically are the source of most electricity consumed daily by Japanese citizens.

In one interview, Satomi remarked about this paradox: "I began to question the fact that people of Hiroshima are active against nuclear weapons but not so active against nuclear powerplants.

Why did she become involved?

Accidents—and there have been enough to support the concern—are one factor. The 1986 Chernobyl accident was awake-



up call; another leakage of sodium in 1995 at MonJu, supposed to be Japan's first fast-breeder reactor, made the potential disaster real and closer to home. Worse, the escalation of terrorism since the September 11 tragedy has added further to the sense of insecurity, Satomi said.

But there are graver causes: a subtle but systematic link between generation of energy by radioactive materials and development of atomic bombs—what prompted Satomi to declare that the two activities are essentially one and the same.

How?

The state-of-the-art generation of power at nuclear plants, Satomi pointed out, inevitably produces "waste". But the term is misleading in a significant way-for the so-called spent fuels are valuable raw materials for the arms industry. In another previous interview, Satomi claimed that plutonium, in particular, "has been used by the military—only—and no country has succeeded in using it for civilian purposes."

Thus her vigorous struggle to educate her fellow Japanese on how it is crucial to "fight the nuclear issue inside Japan first", the lady's patriotism did not blind her to see many "crimes" committed by her government

and home-based conglomerates. In the same interview, Satomi discussed the dilemma concerning overseas shipment of radioactive waste generated by Japanese nuclear power plants.

"The Japanese government," she said, should accept the high-level waste. And we have to leave it in the place where it is created, and not move it. The problem is that nuclear hazards accumulate and are dangerous to indigenous people and discriminated people on the site.

"We should have thought about this 30 years ago. It is too late now. But we have to keep and watch it safely. However first we should recognise that there is no solution |to radioactive waste]. No solution in the world."

Indeed, things have been far from easy. During our conversation, however, Satomi said she believed people's attitudes have changed "little by little". More people, especially at the grassroots level, have become better aware of the need to cut down their energy consumption, she said. Some local politicians have also made pledges to the anti-nuclear bandwagon. On the other hand, she lamented how industries have always insisted on the necessity to have more reactors built—usually with acquiescence from the state authority.

The job was endless, with on compensation and very few expressions of thanks. But there's no giving up either. There were so many people, Satomi recalled of her first visit to Hiroshima in 1969, who have suffered from atomic radiation. There are many more who continue to make "hard efforts" that remind her that there is still a lot of work to be done.

Equipped with excellent English, Satomi put it to good use. She translated English materials into Japanese, and vice versa. Besides the PAH, she was active in several networks—No Nukes Asia Forum, the Abolition 200Q—and contributed regularly to a forum called WISE International. When we met, she breezily exclaimed how she had to return to part-time teaching as a way to support her social work. It was a bit hard, she admitted, to switch her brain between issues concerning peace, equality and justice in the day and English grammar at night.

An anti-nuclear activist's life seems a little precarious, on the financial front, but it must have been a fulfilling one inside. A few days before she fell unconscious from sudden cerebral haemorrhage, Satomi was co-chairing a session on Security and Peace Building at the Asia Pacific Greens Kyoto Meeting. She passed away on February 24.

During our meeting, I bought several photographs taken by Satomi during her trips to Europe (where she did her campaign every now and then). At least I could lend my little support, or so I hoped the scenic pictures revealed the dazzling beauty of old European towns. They also showed the appreciation mind of the photographer herself. A short reflective essay Satomi co-wrote with her two travel companions seems best to summarise the three ladies' minds, not unlike the Trident Three themselves;

"Emerging into the blazing sunlight, we pondered the spectacular view of the snow-capped mountains towering above Lake of Annecy and watched the leisurely picture below of sailing boats and strolling families. One of us observed, imagine that the whole world could be this peaceful and content. As we sat together on an ancient stone wall and posecd for a photograph, we looked at each other and realised who we were. One of us was from Germany, where nuclear fission was discovered and ballistic missiles originated. One of us was from the United States, the first country to develop and use unclear weapons. And one of us was from Japan, the first country to suffer the devastating effects of the atom bomb. All of us were born in the years following these events. And all of us were women. We felt that we were the axis of hope. We sat down together to write postcards to our friends at home. And this is the message we sent:

We have a dream...A nuclear weapons convention ratified, space weapons banned, missiles gone, and we have loads of time to enjoy beautiful Switzerland (and France)!

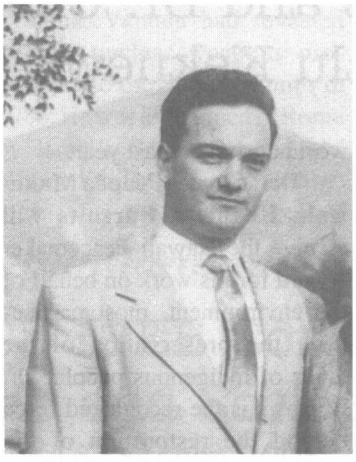
Love and peace from The Axis of Hope: Satomi Oba, Japan (born 1950), Jackie Cabasso, USA (born 1952) Regina Hagen, Germany (born 1957)."

Vasana Chinvarakorn

Do you renew your subscription?

May we remind our readers to renew your subscription or help others who cannot afford to pay for *Seeds of Peace* so the the publication will be available to all who seek something to read beyond those provided by the mainstream mass media.

Robert Bobilin



Wongsanit Ashram celebrated its 20th anniversary last December. Even long before that, I had tried to establish an ashram as an alternative community. Many friends of mine experimented with 3-week camps for young people with promising leadership. We expected them to have time for meditation, music, painting, writing, whatever they liked as well as a chance for dialogue. They came from different countries, different cultures and different religions. We called this camp "Pacific Ashram" with Soedjatmoko as a president of the camp and Mochtar Lubis as an advisor, both were from Indonesia and both had passed away. Soedjatmoko was Rector of the United Nations University and Lubis was a famous journalist and novelist.

I was chosen as a secretary and Brewster Grace was treasurer who looked for financial support for the camp. It was Brewster Grace who proposed me as the president for Southeast Asian Cultural Relations for the Future. It was actually the first time that we in Southeast Asia could get to know one another, outside official relations.

The camp was opened for South, Southeast Asian and American peoples, thus it was called Pacific Ashram. The first camp was in Kuala Dunkun, Kelantan, Malaysia, shortly after the October 1973 uprising in Siam.

The next camp was at Pha Laad Temple in Chiang Mai, Siam. Mr Karuna Kusalasai, a Thai scholar, was invited to be a Guru in residence. I took managerial responsibility. Professor Robert Bobilin, Chair of Religious Studies, University of Hawaii in Honolulu participated in the camp. Also present there were three religious leaders; P.A. Payutto Bhikkhu from Siam, Thich Nhat Hanh from Vietnam and Swami Agnivesh from India. Thich Nhat Hanh was allowed to visit Vietnam early this year. The latter is a Hindu monk whose activities against social injustice earned him the Right Livelihood Award last December.

After the camp at Pha Laad Temple, Bob wrote an article mentioning the three religious leaders. They all became my friends, for three decades now.

As for Bob, knowing that I had to exile during the Thanin Kraivichien administration after the October 1976 uprising, he arranged for the University of Hawaii to invite me to give three speeches at the 70th anniversary of the university. I met David Chappell there and we developed close companionship. David passed away early December last year, and Bob followed him later in that very same month.

Although Bob is a Christian, we are good friends. Whenever I travelled to Honolulu, he and his wife always welcome me warmly. So did my wife and I when they came to Siam. Yet, the most important is that he supported my work in almost every way, particularly the International Network of Engaged Buddhists and its publication *Seeds of Peace*.

Bob was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1924. His father was a Methodist minister. Bob married Dorothy long enough to celebrate the golden jubilee shortly before his death.

Bob started his teaching career at the University of Hawaii since 1967. His important book is *Buddhist and Christian Movement for Economic Justice*, which was derived from his concern in Southeast Asia.

During the Vietnam War, Bob helped the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). AFSC was initiated by the Quakers for peace work. I was involved in many of their activities. He left the words that, in merit making for his funeral he would prefer the contribution in forms of donation to AFSC because it is the organization that is doing peacemaking amid the violence overwhelming the USA and major parts of the world. He himself donated his body for academic research in heart disease in the University of Hawaii.

Bob was a good hearted man with gentle humour and simple lifestyle. He and his wife were a lovely couple. Even after retirement, he kept on doing social work till his final days. That's in addition to peacework; he was fighting against the government project for legalizing casinos.

I believe that he will rest in peace.

Sulak Sivaraksa

Hawaii Peacemaker Awards Go to Dr. Glenn Paige and Dr. Charles Péapéa Makawalu Kekuewa Burrows

The 20th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration at Church of the Crossroads to be held on Monday evening, January 17, will honor two Hawaii residents for their contributions to peace, nonviolence and stewardship of the earth.

Dr. Glenn Paige, U.H. Professor Emeritus will receive the Hawaii Lifetime Peacemaker Award. Dr. Paige's conversion from Korean War veteran to a quarter century of international leadership in the name of nonviolence has culminated in his most recent book *Nonkilling Global Political Science*. This book has been translated into 15 languages and has resulted in invitations to Dr. Paige to do presentations and speak with world leaders in 6 countries around the world during the last year.

Dr. Charles Péapéa Makawalu Kekuewa Burrows will receive the Hawaii Peacemaker Award for his work on behalf of the environment, most particularly the preservation of the lands of indigenous people. Dr. Burrows is the recognized force behind the restoration of the Kawai Nui Marsh. His work there has contributed to a greater sensitivity to the Native Hawaiian reverence for the land and he is frequently called on by community, school and faith groups to guide them through an understanding of the importance of this area to the Hawaiian people. His work in connecting the spiritual and faith traditions to a commitment to stewardship of the earth has resulted in his role as a local, national and Pacific-Island leader in preserving and restoring Indigenous lands.

According to Laura Crites, chair of the Church selection committee, "During this time of violence, war, global conflict and destruction of the earth, the work and words of Dr. King call us to commit to not only peace and nonviolence between peoples but also to a responsibility for stewardship of all creation. The work and presence of these two people give us reason for hope in a gentler, kinder and more caring world."

The service will be held at 7:00 pm at Church of the Crossroads and will be followed by refreshments. All are welcome.

Right Livelihood Award to be Presented to Vanunu

Tomorrow April 19, the Israeli nuclear whistle blower Mordechai Vanunu finally receives his Right Livelihood Award diploma from Jakob von Uexkull, founder of the award, at a press conference in Jerusalem. The award had been bestowed on Vanunu in 1987 "for his courage and self-sacrifice in revealing the extent of Israel's nuclear weapons programme." The award is presented annually in the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm, but Vanunu could not travel to Stockholm in 1987, as he was imprisoned until April 21, 2004.

Prior to the press conference, Uexkull will make a presentation in the Knesset Constitution, Law and Judiciary Committee (probably in a speech, otherwise in writing). The committee holds a hearing about the restrictions imposed on Vanunu: He is still not allowed to travel abroad or to contact foreign citizens and media, and his movements inside Israel are controlled. Uexkull, who is a former member of the European Parliament, will say in his presentation:

"Today the European Union is not just an economic, legal and political community but also increasingly a values community, united by a common ethics and culture. Kidnapping a person from European territory is a shocking affront against those values, which will not be forgiven until Vanunu is free to return from where he was forcibly and illegally removed. This issue will not go away. Numerous resolutions in the European Parliament and presentations from EU governments have so far been ignored by Israel, which has clearly underestimated the continuing enormous international support for Mordechai Vanunu."

"I see no contradiction between caring for the security of

Israel and honouring Vanunu. The security of every nation is inseparable from the security of the world and every nuclear bomb makes the world less secure. For these are not rational weapons and their use can never be rational. How can a country be protected by a 'weapon', which would make it uninhabitable for countless generations?"

A former worker at the secret Israeli nuclear facility at Dimona, Vanunu had revealed Israel's nuclear weapons programme to the Sunday Times in 1986. He was kidnapped in Rome by Israel's Secret Service and returned to Israel by clandestine means for trial on charges of espionage and treason. In December 1987, his brother represented him at the presentation of the Right Livelihood Award in the Swedish Parliament. In March 1988 Mordechai Vanunu was sentenced to 19 years' imprisonment.

The 2005 INEB Conference: Buddhists and Social Equity

9-16 October 2005
at Nagaloka, Bhilgaon, Nagpur, Maharashtra, INDIA

The spirit of equality and respect of human rights are already embedded in the teachings of the Buddha. He announced that people can be classified only by deeds and advancements of merit, not by birth. Moreover, he made clear that all people are born equal in terms of capacity to get enlightened. There is no such thing as class and caste in his teachings. An alternative, caste-free, women-included, other faith-friendly community that he established, known as sangha, was a mere challenge to his contemporaries.

INEB2005 in India serves as a platform for us, his disciples in the modern time, to understand the problems of inequality and ignorance of human rights and dignity, as well as master the principle and skillful application to match the current situation. Buddhists have a capacity to play a creative role in tackling prejudices and discriminations in terms of ethnicity, caste and class, sex, religion, political ideology, etc. Such discriminations bring only destruction and division among humankind regardless of religious affiliations.

Details on activities

9 October 2005	arrival at Nagpur, Maharashtra, India
10-11 October 2005	**Pre-conference workshop**
12 October 2005	**The Ceremony** to celebrate the 49th anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar's conversion
13-16 October 2005	**The 2005 INEB Conference**
17-18 October 2005	**Pilgrimage** to Ajanta and Ellora caves (optional)
19 October 2005	Departure or optional visit to Aurangabad

Participation

For the registration form and conference information: available at both INEB (ineboffice@yahoo.com) and Dhammacari Lokamitra (inebindia@jambudvipa.org)

Registration fee

* **Full Program** *(Pre-conference workshop, The Ceremony, INEB Conference)*
  USD 325.00 For participants from Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Australia, USA, Europe
* **Pre-conference only** *(Pre-conference workshop, The Ceremony)*
  USD 125.00 For participants from Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Australia, USA, Europe
* **Conference Only** *(The ceremony and The 2005 INEB Conference)*
  USD 200.00 For participants from Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Australia, USA, Europe
* **Optional Pilgrimage Fee**
  USD 200.00 including transportation, accommodation, food and entrance fee

Fee includes lodging, meals, local traveling expenses and meeting document. If you wish to make extra donation, that will go to support participants from poor countries.

Dear Planters of Seeds of Peace

I've been in receipt of XXI:1, the first issue I've ever seen, for a month now, too immersed in unexpected writing assignments to have replied earlier to thank you. I've had an opportunity to read the issue which I found most ennobling and engaging. Thank you (kop kun kaa).

I have mailed Sulak Sivaraksa my two books, as he invited me to; I hope they arrive ok. He also expressed interest in an exchange for his books, which I look forward to receiving and reading. (My books are: "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Buddhism" and the anthology "What Book!? ~ Buddha Poems from Beat to Hiphop").

Meanwhile I continue to follow the situation in Nepal, as well as an ordinary individual can from the outside. The black-out of cellphones and Internet sites did not bode well, seeming to announce a policy of "closing the door before beating the dog." How many innocent people will be scooped up in the nets? Good to hear there was at least one Internet blogger whose writing came through. Yesterday I heard via the BBC that the Maoists launched a large-scale attack on an outpost. Both sides, naturally, will have different versions, but it certainly seems, alas, to reflect a state of war. The throne will strike back, hard, which will only inspire more violence from the opposition, in a tragic, deadly cycle of hatred. I hear the king has asked the U.S. for 100 days, after which he assures there will be democratic elections, etc., but can he deliver or is he "buying time"? I wonder if the U.S. government might want to distance themselves from the war, and Britain as well—which leaves India. Might the Maoists win their support?

I am not an NGO, merely a citizen who wishes to keep informed, and who is necessarily concerned about any unnecessary suffering. Seeds of Peace provides a new source of information for me, most appreciated.

Meanwhile, I'm working on various writing projects. I still have a little overhang, financially, from the last book, to afford me these low-or no-paying assignments, which may plant a few seeds of peace of their own. I will try to keep my website updated.

One website I hope everyone can visit is The Buddhist Channel: http://buddhistchannel.tv—which I call "a daily newspaperless" that's the first worldwide Buddhist publication. (In the interests of full disclosure, I should say that I've been honored to be appointed to the International Advisory Panel.) That's where I've gotten my news about the tragic tsunami toll, which of course continues.

I hope I haven't copied anyone in this email who wouldn't want to read this, and that I did copy the ones who do.

Thank you.
With hands joined in reverence, I am
yours in the Dharma, ever,
Gary Gach

Dear Sulak

We thank you and your Sangha for the kind wishes for the New Year.

We were thinking of all our Thai friends during this terrible tsunami that touched your country.

It all reminded us about the fragility of human life, of life altogether, about our common vulnerability and brotherhood.

We hope you are all well.

We send you a newsletter about a meeting in Jordan, that took place just before Christmas, where Tho and I participated. Mae Chee Sansanee was there too. We hope that it can bring you Hope and Love for the New Year.

Wishing so much to see you again!

Love
Lisi and Tho

Dear Ajahn Sulak

Warm GREETINGS from the Bengal Buddhist Association—a century-old organization of India, on the occasion of your 72nd birthday.

Taking this opportunity, we would like to reiterate our deep appreciation for your most significant contribution to the cause of socially engaged Buddhism.

With our heartfelt prayers for good health and further success of all your endeavors.

Sincerely yours,
Hemendu Bikash Chowdhury
Trustee & Treasurer / Editor : JAGAJJYOTI

27 March 2005

Dear Sulak,

Today is your birthday—an important one if I remember your tradition well, So it is fitting that I first started to study "Conflict, Culture, Change" which you kindly sent me on my birthday. Second, to send you my warm wishes for your health, development and internal satisfaction. And last but not least to tell you how much I profited from my first encounter with your book and look forward to further reading. I found so many of the ideas and of personal experience that have made in the last 40 years, meeting and talking with you so valuable. You are a wonderful bridge between our civilization, culture and religions. This is a book I would like to be translated into German. In case there is an attempt in that direction that I could support. Please let me know. I will certainly hand on this book to Silvia's Buddhist friends.

I am sorry we could not meet when you were in Berlin. But there is another occasion in the near future.

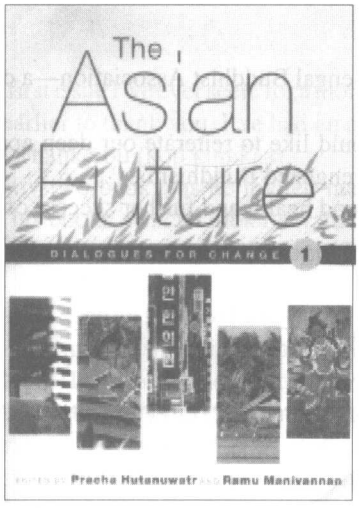
With best wishes and regards,
Yours,
Reinhardt Schlagintweit

Deep Gratitude to our Supporters

Ms. Susan O'Conner
We would like to express our gratitude to Ms. Susan O'Conner for her donation of USD 10,000 for Sulak Sivaraksa's and INEB' relief program for the survivors of tsunami devastation in the south of Thailand. With her generosity, we are able to provide trauma healing and community rebuilding program for the survivors in 3 villages of Phang Nga province.

Mr. Tom Brown
With the kindness of Tom who offers to mail our *Seeds of Peace* to the readers in USA, INEB and its publication *Seeds of Peace* and able to save considerable fund, which goes instead to support readers in poor countries and activities of INEB. We are very much grateful to his generosity.

The Asian Future: Dialogues for Change Volumes 1 & 2
Edited by Pracha Hutanuwatr and Manu Manivannan
Zed Books London/ New York 2005
ISBN 1 84277 345 3



"Our role is to empower diverse alternatives" says Ashis Nandy. The quest for alternatives to the present model of "development" is the theme of these deeply searching interviews in which 14 leading Asian intellectuals and activists express their views about the future of Asia.

They come from different countries, different cultures and different spiritual traditions: Abdurraman Wahid (Indonesia), Chandra Muzaffar (Malaysia) and Mahmoud Auyoub (Lebanon/US) are Muslims. Samdhong Rinpchoche (Tibet/India), Sulak Sivaraksa (Siam) and Helena Norberg-Hodge (Sweden/Ladakh) are Buddhists. Satish Kumar (India/UK), Vandana Shiva and Ashis Nandy (India) are Ghandian/alternative thinkers. Tu Weiming (China/US) is a Confucian scholar. Bishop Julio Labayen (Philippines) is a Christian. Arief Budiman (Indonesia/ Australia), Walden Bello (the Philippines) and Nakamura Hisashi (Japan) are left intellectuals strongly identified with Asian culture.

Nevertheless, for all their differences, their critical analyses of the present effects of the western development model and their projections for the future have much in common with each other. The themes they speak about include the alienation of many Asians from their own culture leading to their sense of inferiority regarding the West. They analyse globalisation and consumerism; power structures and the role of grassroots movements; modernisation and science; private property and human rights; democracy and concepts of government and leadership, and what constitutes a sustainable society. They discuss the role of religious institutions, the rise of fundamentalism, ethical and spiritual values; and the destruction of our natural environment emerges time and time again as a theme of prime concern.

The dialogues are often dense but if the reader is prepared to go through them slowly s/he will be enriched by the contributors' combination of intellectual clarity with a heartfelt commitment to bringing about social, economic and political change in Asia. The level of analysis is challenging at times but the conversations are not about abstractions. The book is not a religious one but it is pervaded by spirituality. It is about modernity and tradition, the old and the new, the private and the public, in short about life.

The message is one of hope. The dialogues give us a vision of truly possible alternatives, if Asia can only be Asia and build its future on values that are coherent with its own culture—an Asian Future. This is not isolationism. It is rather a question of ensuring that Asia has the freedom to reject the destructive elements of the western development model while accepting what is valuable within it. In this sense there are many signposts here that people from other continents of the world, too, would do very well to follow.

Wendy Tyndale

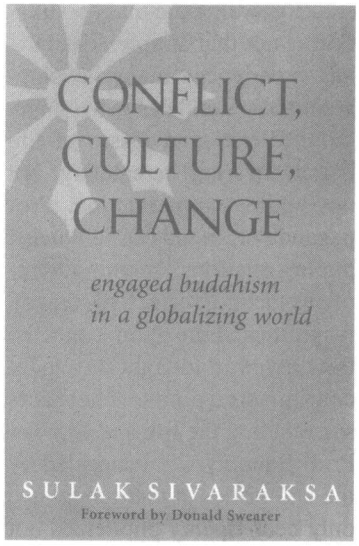
Conflict, Culture, Change
Engaged Buddhism in a Globalizing World
Sulak Sivaraksa
Foreword by Donald Swearer

Few people wear as many hats as Sulak Sivaraksa. Quite apart from the fact that he has been responsible for founding and/or holds high office in numerous non-governmental organizations, he has become widely known internationally as one of the most articulate voices explaining the practical applications of the Buddhist dhamma to everyday life in the economic and political circumstances of in the twenty-first century. In this capacity he is much in demand internationally as a teacher and speaker, as can be seen from this, his latest book, which contains pieces originally delivered in countries as varied as the United States, India, Australia, Sweden

and the United Kingdom, as well as his native country.

Another aspect of Sulak's work concerns the politics of his own country, which he believes should be called by its legitimate former name Siam, rather than the mongrelized westernization "Thailand." The second part of the book deals in detail with the political history and development of the country over the past one and a half centuries. This is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand Thai politics. The introduction by Donald K. Swearer provides interesting insights into the development of Sulak's own thinking.

For most readers, however, it is the first and larger part of the book which will be of most direct interest. In it Sulak covers a multitude of issues, always clearly presenting a Buddhist approach to each subject. To name a few of the issues he deals with, there are pieces that deal in an honest and uncompromising yet



constructive and optimistic way with Buddhist-Christian understanding; a Buddhist response to acts of violence including the September 11 outrage; the United States led wars against Iraq; Buddhist perspectives on globalization, capitalism and consumerism; and Buddhist education.

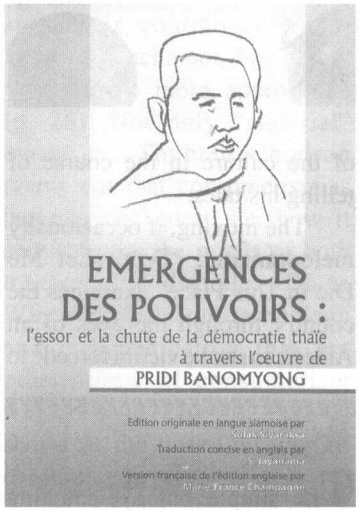
Many of the pieces that make up this part of the book will bring to mind the teachings of the great Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh. This is hardly surprising, as the two men have been friends for many years. They co-founded the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, and no doubt each has had a degree of influence on the other. In fact the two voices, one of the widely revered ordained monk and the other of the passionate and committed lay Buddhist scholar and activist, complement each other admirably.

This book which celebrates Sulak's 72nd birthday is full of matters of interest to members of all the traditions in Buddhism and as well as to non-Buddhists concerned with creating peace, protecting the environment and in contending with the many disturbing aspects of twenty-first century society.

Ian Mayo-Smith

Emergences des pouvoirs: l'essor et la chute de la démocratie thaïe à travers l'ouvre de Pridi Banomyong
S. Sivaraksa

Despite a gap of nearly 20 years since its original publication in Thai, this translation into French retains its novelty and attraction to readers. The book portrays two equally interesting aspects. First, it reviews the history of Thai politics since the pre-World War period, particularly highlighting the role of Pridi Banomyong in revolutionizing the governing system in the country. Second, it represents a personal confession of Sulak Sivaraksa, who has had a change of heart



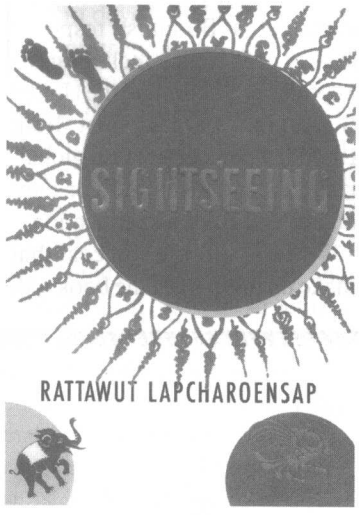
and had the courage to admit his mistake. Sulak, like many other Thais, was deceived by a propaganda campaign to discredit Pridi. The passing of King Rama VIII was a sentimental event that was masterfully exploited by Pridi's enemies and eventually forced him to live in exile. Sulak, together with many other journalists, openly condemned Pridi. It needed time, research effort and some of Pridi's acquaintances to convince Sulak of Pridi's innocence and his good intention for Thailand.

Perhaps my Thai nationality could slightly influence my strong appreciation of this book. Nevertheless, the development of democracy in Thailand should represent an interesting case study for readers of any nationality. In particular, this French version would interestingly convey a

message back to the land where Pridi received his higher education. Although this book was translated from the English version, readers can rest assured that its accuracy is guaranteed, by careful proof-reading of Thai scholars in France. The appendices also contain some useful information of the Thai political history. This book, with less than 100 pages, may also teach us many lessons, for example, on how democracy may develop. We cannot invade a country and rebuild it in a day,or even in a year. Simply transferring the absolute power to the mass population is not that simple. Thailand has experienced many development phases and has faced many 'coup d'etat' and losses of life before arriving here today, but not without imperfaction. Propaganda or, in today's language, public relations, seemingly remains the most effective weapon in politics. Education could be the only way to fight any indecent master-plans. The facts surrounding the life and work of Pridi Banomyong, concealed by the authorities at that time, have only been openly publicized not so long ago. Some of these facts in the book may still surprise many Thais. We can only hope that such evil would not happen again. My only criticism on the book is that Sulak, despite his effort, has only known Pridi through secondary sources and has met Pridi in person only twice. It would be wrong to learn about Pridi Banomyong from only this book. Perhaps we have to do more reading ourselves.

Sirapat Pratontep

Sightseeing
Rattawut Lapcharoensap



The short stories that make up Rattawut Lapcharoensap's *Sightseeing* are filled with indelible images grafted by a talented young writer.

While his plots are fairly conventional, Lapcharoensap serves up striking moments—a little girl with a mouth full of gold teeth; a pig named Clint Eastwood headed out to sea as mangoes rain down on his pursuers; a partially paralyzed grandfather joyously piloting a bumper car—that cause his stories to linger in the reader's mind.

Each story in *Sightseeing* is set in contemporary Thailand and the Thai-American author does a fine job revealing details of the culture in the course of telling his tales.

The moving, if occasionally melodramatic, "Don't Let Me Die in This Place" examines the country through the eyes of an American stroke victim forced to move to Thailand to be cared for by his son and his Thai wife. Lapcharoensap skillfully uses totems of American culture—baseball and action movies —to accentuate the "foreignness" of the narrator's surroundings.

"Priscilla the Cambodian" is perhaps the book's strongest story, though the collection is remarkably even throughout. A tale of an unlikely friendship torn apart by an ethnic conflict, "Priscilla" best blends the author's gift for arresting images with his storytelling ability. It is Priscilla who sports the aforementioned mouthful of gold teeth, and her parting gift to the two Thai boys whom she has befriended is truly unforgettable, The stories in *Sightseeing* are definitely worth a look.

Rob Cline

HOOKED!
Buddhist Writings on Greed, Desire, and the Urge to Consume
Edited by Stephanie Kaza
Shambhala Publication Inc.
Boston & London 2005

The simple but eye-catching design of this red book reinforces its essence. A sharp fishhook on the cover stuns me: in everyday life of consumption, am I just like a stupid greedy fish biting the tempting bait without knowing what is inside and who is going to catch me?

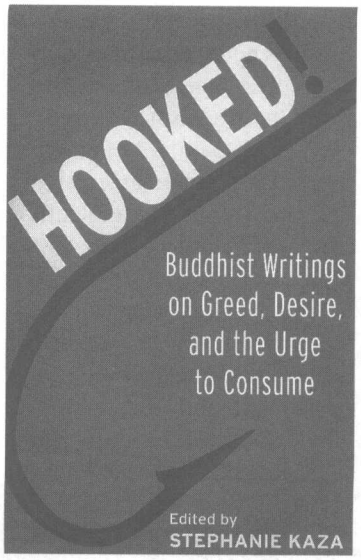
For Buddhists, we remember by heart that one of the roots of ignorance is greed. We often hear Buddhist monks say that

desire jeopardizes peace of mind. We seem to take both greed and desire for granted. But in the time of globalization what do they really mean to us? This unwholesome root seems to be normal. If we want to look cool, we know well what to wear, to drink, to drive. If we don't get the latest fashion, we are weird. No money? Credit card is not only fine, it also shows that we are creditable and special.

In this book, Stephanie Kaza points out that consuming is no longer natural action for human beings' plain survival. Consumption transforms into "consumerism", which is "a belief system that accepts consumption as the way to self-development, self-realization, and self-fulfillment". We learn that consumerism expresses itself in various aspects, e.g. as a moral doctrine for developed countries, as a social ideology for establishing class distinction, as economic ideology for global development, as political ideology and as a civil movement (p. 4). Kaza makes us understand her concern: "consumer identity is crowding out or displacing ecological identity" which includes respect, compassion and reverence for life and nature.

Another concern (or challenge?) is her question about actions of Buddhists in response to the issue. To her, Buddhist initiatives have been modest. In fact we rarely see major Buddhist involvements in anti-consumerism movement.

The prominent Buddhist thinkers and practitioners who accepted Kaza's invitation to share ideas on the issue are from diverse backgrounds, namely the Theravada, Mahayana (e.g. Zen and Pure Land) and Vajrayana traditions. They are monks,



nuns, lay thinkers and young people, mainly from the USA and Asia.

The book consists of three parts; "Getting hooked: Desire and Attachment", "Practicing with Desire: Using Buddhist Tools", and "Buddhist Ethics of Consumption."

In the first part, we get more understanding of what is going on in our mind that leads us to get "hooked" by consumerism. The word "hook" is introduced to us by Pema Chodron. Tibetan word *shenpa* is commonly translated as attachment, but to her "hooked" is more appropriate (p. 28). Not only "material" hooks us. Thubten Chodron points out that consumerism is the religious quest, i.e. how it contaminates the minds of both teachers and disciples. Diana Winston talks about technology and communication that are other forms of consumerism while David Loy (in Part 2) shows us the unskillful way of consuming time.

My special interest in Part 1 goes to Sumi Loundon's "Young Buddhists in Shopping Shangri-la". She sincerely shares with us the struggle of young Buddhists who learn about goodness and practice in Buddhism while living in the temptation of materialism and consumerism. The question here is central to the "middle path". Interestingly, she points out that young Buddhists in affluent societies seem to take consumerism more seriously than young Asian Buddhists whose concern is more on climbing the social and economic ladder.

Part 2 collects six essays giving us Buddhist approaches to deal with desire and consumption impetus. Pracha Hutanuwatr and Jane, his Scottish wife, draw on their experience with grassroots movement in Siam and Burma the Buddhist framework in counter-consumerism. They propose the self-confidence and community-confidence supported by local wisdom aiming at the localization of political and economic activities as a remedy for consumerist monoculture that is harmful for all beings. The issue of confidence resonates with David Loy's concept of lack. We find other Buddhist teaching that are picked up to guard consumerism, e.g. *Tilakkhana, paticcasamuppada, shunyata*, mindfulness proposed by the other contributors to this part.

To me Part 3 is practical as the contributors provide many examples on how a Buddhist ethics on consumerism can be developed. Ajahn Amaro's major emphasis is on monastic disciplines. Santikaro explains that the "good old" *dana*, if practiced skillfully, is a powerful weapon to fight consumerism. I was also impressed by the elegant but simple Japanese Zen practice. It encourages us to mindfully cherish material and the consequent value of minimalism. The last essay is by the late David Chappell. He systematically puts forth

five measures to counter consumerism; open disclosure, mutual correction, inclusive decision making, "glocalization" and regarding the pain of others. It seems to be a good conclusion of the book.

Other contributors are Norman Fischer, Joseph Goldstein, Linda Goodhew, Sunyana Graef, Rita Gross, Ruben Habito and Duncan Ryuken Williams.

To be frank, I started this book with strong emotion, hoping to find clues for a radical anti-consumerist action. There is no trace of such thing. Nevertheless, it is not a compromising one at all. The tone of the book reflects the Buddhist teachings of the middle path (as opposed to extremism), nonjudgmental attitude and emphasis on intention. It invites us to look back to the process in our mind when contacting with the outer world. By this understanding, we can engage in realistic individual improvement and social action, with determination and compassion. Reading this book, I am certain that counter-consumerism from Buddhists will not be modest for long as Kaza has challenged us from the beginning. More people are awakened by the peril of natural catastrophe and the sufferings of all beings. To me, Kaza does a wonderful job in taking us from the gloomy phenomena of consumerism through real individual experiences and pains, through real actions that illustrate abstract religious teachings, ending with hope and encouragement.

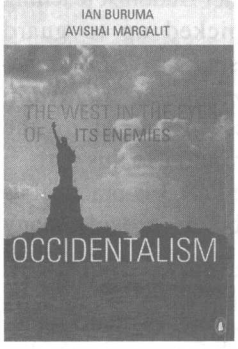
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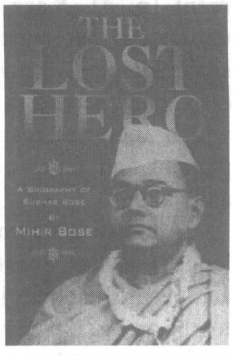
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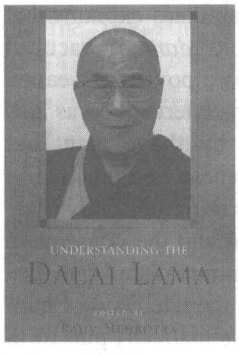
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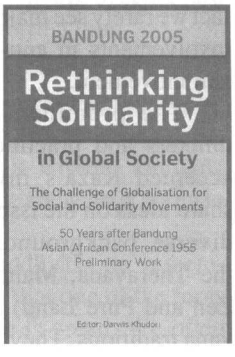
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