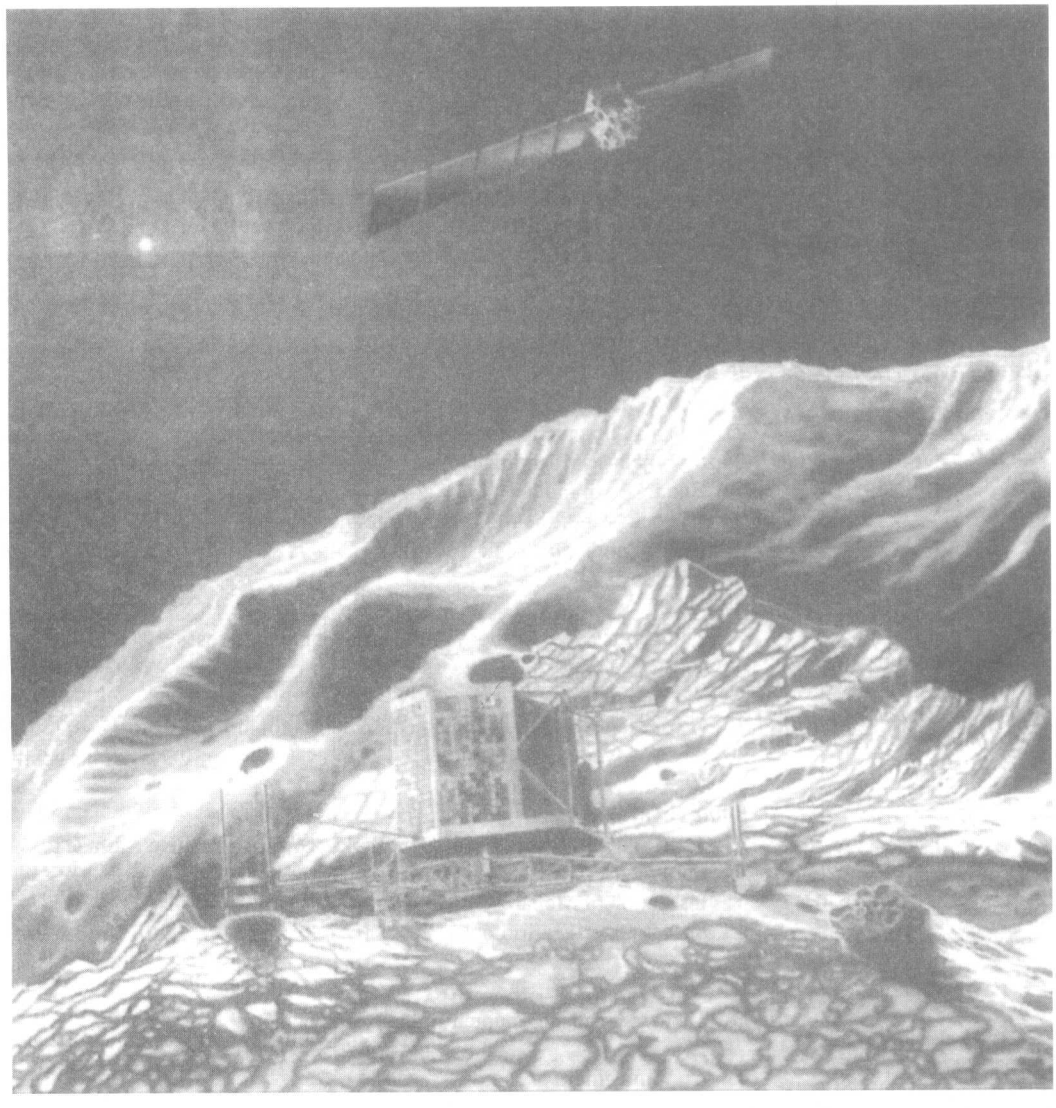
SEEDS OF PEACE

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New Dream, New World : Spirituality and Global Change



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SEEDS OF

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PEACE

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The goals of INEB are to:

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

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Space Probes

We whirl around in outer space,
To catch a comet by its tail
And gather stardust.
We bring it back to earth, to analyse,
Hoping to find the cosmic seeds,
Within the dust of starry skies.
Hoping to realise how all that manifested in the universe,
Evolved for better or for worse.

Equation solved, will we set out to manufacture cosmic seeds
And sow the universe with Brave New Worlds,
Lay claim to real estate as life evolves
And watch the comedy of life as it revolves ?
Will history repeat itself again, again,
Will all those Brave New Worlds contain,
The seeds of suffering and pain,
Of greed and ignorance, ill will, craving and delusion,
Continuing the long sad saga of confusion,
Or will the seeds of saving graces, goodness, truth and beauty,
Come to full fruition in these outer spaces,
Uniting all the old and newborn Species and all races,
In universal Love and Brotherhood,
In true fulfillment of the Cosmic Motherhood ?

Venetia Walkey

Pasang Lumphun - Thailand, January 2004

Editorial Notes

Some of our readers may have heard already that Sulak Sivaraksa, the editor/publisher, is again being accused of *lese majeste* — the most notorious crime with the maximum punishment of 15 years in prison. The latest charge was made on 6 November 2008. Many friends around the world have been very concerned and have sent messages to the Principal Private Secretary to H.M. the King asking for royal intervention so that the Chief of Police could stop the false charges triggered by Thaksin Shinawatra, the former prime minister, and the two puppets who succeeded his premiership.

Sulak is positive that he would be free either through the grace of His Majesty or through the Law Courts. In the last case initiated by the then dictator, General Suchinda Kraprayoon, it took four years before he was acquitted triumphantly as the judge said clearly that the defendant's speech was to protect the constitutional monarchy and to alert the young to serve the poor and to protect the environment — warning them against the new demonic religion of consumerism, which appears in the form of globalization.

The gist of the Siamese problems is that we have been uprooted from our Buddhist culture, which helped our people to transform greed into generosity, hatred into loving-kindness and delusion or ignorance into true understanding or wisdom. Now, the elites in Siam care more about greed (wealth), hatred (power), and delusion (egoism/individualism, sometimes in the name of nationalism). For the establishment, monks and laity, Buddhism means form and ceremony, being intertwined with superstition, feudalism and commercialism. People in responsible position are afraid to speak the truth, have no time to understand the poor and the oppressed, who are the majority in the country. They have no moral courage and have no time to reflect that their lifestyle is contributing to a wider gap between the rich and the poor — also endangering the global habitat.

However since Siam is in such a deep crisis, politically, economically, culturally and spiritually, we hope the Siamese will soon return to the Noble Eightfold Path of morality, right mindfulness and transcendental wisdom.

If the elites care about the poor and learn from their indigenous knowledge and local wisdom, they will understand social suffering and its causes. Then they will follow the eightfold path mindfully to overcome social predicaments.

It is heartening that Ms Wanida Tantiwitthayapithak who passed away recently at the age of 52 and who had dedicated her life to the cause of the Assembly of the Poor for more than two decades is now recognized by Thammasat University, her alma mater. They even established awards for MA theses based on concerns for the poor, in her honor. The first awards were given on 10 December 2008.

On 14 December, Chulalongkorn University also honored a commoner, Phya Anuman Rajadhon, who passed away 40 years ago. The Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation is (partly) named after him — a person who contributed so much to the understanding of our culture.

On the same day, there was the cremation of the late Thanpuying Phoonsukh Banomyong, perhaps the most significant woman of our generation. Once we understand her contribution to Siam as well as that of her husband, Pridi Banomyong, we will then be on the right track of regaining our national consciousness — turning away from the devil's discus to the lotus of the Buddha.

Now we also have a Bhikkhuni order established in our kingdom. This may indeed help the monks to be aware of their duty as role models of simplicity and humility. The nuns in Taiwan and in Sri Lanka serve as fine examples.

Indeed if we look at the Sangha in Laos and learn how the monks in that country are trying to adapt themselves to be more relevant to the changing world, we may use that as a touchstone to change our direction from globalization to localization - with an awareness of the social and the political structure that is creating so much violence.

The way the Sangha in Burma is confronting the dictators in that country should really be a good example for all of us, since the monks only use loving-kindness vis-à-vis the brutality of the oppressors.

The best example of all is the Tibetans under the spiritual guidance of H.H. the Dalai Lama. Despite the stubbornness of the Chinese government and its brutality in Tibet for half a century, we hope the Chinese too will change for the better.

So change is not only for Mr. Obama. And change must be more fundamental than political rhetoric. Indeed we need to change from Gross National Product to Gross National Happiness. The Kingdom of Bhutan has initiated this project successfully. Even the royal Thai government in 2007 supported the last international conference on this theme.

Now the Economic Summit at Davos is interested in GNH. The organizers have asked the Ven. Matthieu Ricard to address them on the topic at their next gathering. The venerable is famous for his book *Happiness: A Guide to Developing Life's Most Important Skill* — to mention only one title.

Schumacher College is England too has started a Think Tank for alternative economics, or aligning Buddhist economics more appropriately in terms of a Green New Deal.

The Future World Council is also active in guiding us out of the present crisis, so that the world will be livable for at least the seven generations to come.

Some of these initiatives are reported in the following pages. We hope you enjoy our publication, which is now in its 25th volume. International Network Engaged Buddhists too will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year. We trust that they along with our other activities indeed constitute seeds of peace.

Please keep on supporting us for the next two decades or so.

International:
A Primer on the Wall Street Meltdown

NEW YORK — Flying into New York Tuesday, I had the same feeling I had when I arrived in Beirut two years ago, at the height of the Israeli bombing of that city — that of entering a war zone.

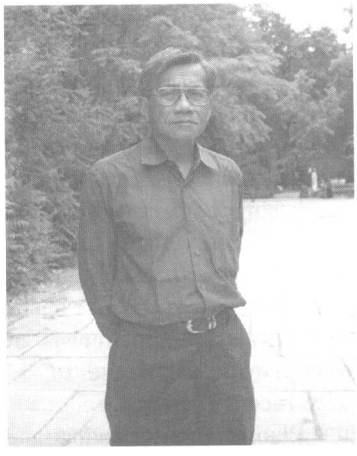
The immigration agent, upon learning I taught political economy, commented, "Well, I guess you folks will now be revising all those textbooks?"

The bus driver welcomed passengers with the words, "New York is still here, ladies and gentlemen, but Wall Street has disappeared, like the Twin Towers."

Even the usually cheerful TV morning shows felt obligated to begin with the bad news, with one host attributing the bleak events to "the fat cats of Wall Street who turned into pigs."

This city is shell-shocked, and most people still have to digest the momentous events of the past two weeks:

- a trillion dollars' worth of capital going up in smoke in Wall Street's steep plunge of 778 points on Black Monday II, Sept. 29, as investors reacted in panic to the US House of Representatives' rejection of President George W. Bush's gargantuan $700-billion bailout of financial institutions on the verge of bankruptcy;
- the collapse of one of the Street's most prominent investment banks, Lehman Brothers, followed by the largest bank failure in US history, that of Washington Mutual, the country's largest savings and loan institution;
- Wall Street's effective nationalization, with the Federal Reserve and the Department of Treasury making all the major strategic decisions in the financial sector and, with the rescue of the American International Group (AIG), the amazing fact that the US government now runs the world's biggest insurance company.



Over $5 trillion in total market capitalization has been wiped out since October of last year, with over a trillion of this accounted for by the unraveling of Wall Street's financial titans.

The usual explanations no longer suffice. Extraordinary events demand extraordinary explanations. But first...

Is the worst over?

No, if anything is clear from the contradictory moves of the last week — allowing Lehman Brothers and Washington Mutual to collapse while taking AIG over and engineering Bank of America's takeover of Merrill Lynch — there is no strategy to deal with the crisis, just tactical responses, like the fire department's response to a conflagration.

The proposed $700-billion buyout of banks' bad mortgaged-backed securities is not a strategy but mainly a desperate effort to shore up confidence in the system, to prevent the erosion of trust in the banks and other financial institutions and preventing a massive bank run such as the one that triggered the Great Depression of 1929.

What caused the collapse of global capitalism's nerve center? Was it greed?

Good old fashioned greed played a part. This is what Klaus Schwab, the organizer of the World Economic Forum, the yearly global elite jamboree in the Swiss Alps, meant when he told his clientele in Davos earlier this year: "We have to pay for the sins of the past."

Was this a case of Wall Street outsmarting itself?

Definitely. Financial speculators outsmarted themselves by creating more and more complex financial contracts like derivatives that would securitize and make money from all forms of risk — including exotic futures instruments as "credit default swaps" that enable investors to bet on the odds that the banks' own corporate borrowers would not be able to pay their debts! This is the unregulated multi-trillion-dollar trade that

brought AIG down.

On Dec. 17, 2005, when International Financing Review (IFR) announced its 2005 Annual Awards — one of the securities industry's most prestigious awards — it had this to say: "[Lehman Brothers] not only maintained its overall market presence, but also led the charge into the preferred space by ... developing new products and tailoring transactions to fit borrowers' needs.... Lehman Brothers is the most innovative in the preferred space, just doing things you won't see elsewhere." No comment.

Was it lack of regulation?

Yes — everyone acknowledges by now that Wall Street's capacity to innovate and turn out more and more sophisticated financial instruments had run far ahead of government's regulatory capability, not because government was not capable of regulating but because the dominant neoliberal, laissez-faire attitude prevented government from devising effective mechanisms with which to regulate. The massive trading in derivatives helped precipitate this crisis, and the US Congress paved the way when it passed a law in 2000 excluding derivatives from being regulated by the Securities Exchange Commission.

But isn't there something more that is happening? Something systemic?

Well, George Soros, who saw this coming, says what we are going through is the crisis of the "gigantic circulatory system" of a "global capitalist system that is...coming apart at the seams."

To elaborate on the arch-speculator's insight, what we are seeing is the intensification of one of the central crises or contradictions of global capitalism, which is the crisis of overproduction, also known as overaccumulation or overcapacity.

This is the tendency for capitalism to build up tremendous productive capacity that outruns the population's capacity to consume, owing to social inequalities that limit popular purchasing power. Profitability is thus eroded.

But what does the crisis of overproduction have to do with recent events?

Plenty. But to understand the connections, we must go back in time to the so-called Golden Age of Contemporary Capitalism, the period from 1945 to 1975.

This was a period of rapid growth both in the center economies and in the underdeveloped economies — one that was partly triggered by the massive reconstruction of Europe and East Asia after the devastation of the Second World War, and partly by the new socioeconomic arrangements that were institutionalized under the new Keynesian state. Among the latter, key were strong state controls over market activity, aggressive use of fiscal and monetary policy to minimize inflation and recession, and a regime of relatively high wages to stimulate and maintain demand.

So what went wrong?

Well, this period of high growth came to an end in the mid-1970s, when the center economies were seized by stagflation, meaning the coexistence of low growth with high inflation, which was not supposed to happen under neoclassical economics.

Stagflation, however, was but a symptom of a deeper cause: The reconstruction of Germany and Japan and the rapid growth of industrializing economies like Brazil, Taiwan and South Korea added tremendous new productive capacity and increased global competition, while social inequalities within countries and between countries worldwide limited the growth of purchasing power and demand, thus eroding profitability. This was aggravated by the massive oil price rises of the '70s.

How did capitalism try to solve the crisis of overproduction?

Capital tried three escape routes from the conundrum of overproduction: neoliberal restructuring, globalization, and financialization.

What was neoliberal re- structuring all about?

Neoliberal restructuring took the form of Reaganism and Thatcherism in the North and Structural Adjustment in the South. The aim was to invigorate capital accumulation, and this was to be done by (1) removing state constraints on the growth, use and flow of capital and wealth, and (2) redistributing income from the poor and middle classes to the rich on the theory that the rich would then be motivated to invest and reignite economic growth.

The problem with this formula was that in redistributing income to the rich, they were gutting the incomes of the poor and middle classes, thus restricting demand, while not necessarily inducing the rich to invest more in production. In fact, what the rich did was to channel a large part of their redistributed wealth

to speculation.

The truth is neoliberal restructuring, which was generalized in the North and South during the 1980s and '90s, had a poor record in terms of growth: Global growth averaged 1.1 percent in the '90s and 1.4 in the '80s, whereas it averaged 3.5 percent in the '60s and 2.4 percent in the '70s, when state interventionist policies were dominant. Neoliberal restructuring could not shake off stagnation.

How was globalization a response to the crisis?

The second escape route global capital took to counter stagnation was "extensive accumulation" or globalization, or the rapid integration of semi-capitalist, non-capitalist or pre-capitalist areas into the global market economy. Rosa Luxemburg, the famous German revolutionary economist, saw this long ago as necessary to shore up the rate of profit in the metropolitan economies. How? By gaining access to cheap labor, by gaining new, albeit limited, markets, by gaining new sources of cheap agricultural and raw material products, and by bringing into being new areas for investment in infrastructure. Integration is accomplished via trade liberalization, removing barriers to the mobility of global capital and abolishing barriers to foreign investment.

China is, of course, the most prominent case of a non-capitalist area to be integrated into the global capitalist economy over the past 25 years.

To counter their declining profits, a sizable number of the Fortune 500 corporations have moved a significant part of their operations to China to take advantage of the so-called "China Price" — the cost advantage deriving from China's seemingly inexhaustible cheap labor. By the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, roughly 40-50 percent of the profits of US corporations were derived from their operations and sales abroad, especially in China.

Why didn't globalization surmount the crisis?

The problem with this escape route from stagnation is that it exacerbates the problem of overproduction because it adds to productive capacity. A tremendous amount of manufacturing capacity has been added in China over the past 25 years, and this has had a depressing effect on prices and profits. Not surprisingly, by around 1997, the profits of US corporations stopped growing. According to another index, devised by economist Philip O'Hara, the profit rate of the Fortune 500 went from 7.15 in 1960-69 to 5.30 in 1980-90 to 2.29 in 1990-99 to 1.32 in 2000-02.

What about financialization?

Given the limited gains in countering the depressive impact of overproduction via neoliberal restructuring and globalization, the third escape route became very critical for maintaining and raising profitability: financialization.

In the ideal world of neoclassical economics, the financial system is the mechanism by which the savers or those with surplus funds are joined with the entrepreneurs who have need of their funds to invest in production. In the real world of late capitalism, with investment in industry and agriculture yielding low profits owing to overcapacity, large amounts of surplus funds are circulating and being invested and reinvested in the financial sector — that is, the financial sector is turning in on itself.

The result is an increased bifurcation between a hyperactive financial economy and a stagnant real economy. As one financial executive notes, "There has been an increasing disconnect between the real and financial economies in the last few years. The real economy has grown ... but nothing like that of the financial economy — until it imploded."

What this observer does not tell us is that the disconnect between the real and the financial economy is not accidental — that the financial economy exploded precisely to make up for the stagnation owing to overproduction of the real economy.

What were the problems with financialization as an escape route?

The problem with investing in financial sector operations is that it is tantamount to squeezing value out of already created value. It may create profit, yes, but it does not create new value — only industry, agriculture, trade and services create new value.

Because profit is not based on value that is created, investment operations become very volatile and prices of stocks, bonds, and other forms of investment can depart very radically from their real value — for instance, the stock of Internet startups that keep on rising, driven mainly by upwardly spiraling financial valuations, and that then crash.

Profits then depend on taking advantage of upward price departures from the value of

commodities, and then selling before reality enforces a "correction," that is, a crash back to real values.

The radical rise of prices of an asset far beyond real values is what is called the formation of a bubble.

Why is financialization so volatile?

Profitability being dependent on speculative coups, it is not surprising that the finance sector lurches from one bubble to another, or from one speculative mania to another.

Because it is driven by speculative mania, finance-driven capitalism has experienced about 100 financial crises since capital markets were deregulated and liberalized in the 1980s.

Prior to the current Wall Street meltdown, the most explosive of these were the Mexican Financial Crisis of 1994-95, the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-98, the Russian Financial Crisis of 1996, the Wall Street Stock Market Collapse of 2001, and the Argentine Financial Collapse of 2002.

Bill Clinton's treasury secretary, Wall Streeter Robert Rubin, predicted five years ago that "future financial crises are almost surely inevitable and could be even more severe."

How do bubbles form, grow, and burst?

Let's first use the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-98 as an example.

- First, capital account and financial liberalization at the urging of the IMF and the US Department of Treasury;
- Then, entry of foreign funds seeking quick and high returns, meaning they went to real estate and the stock market;
- Overinvestment, leading to a fall in stock and real estate prices, leading to panicky withdrawal of funds — in 1997, $100 billion left the East Asian economies in a few weeks;
- Bailout of foreign speculators by the IMF;
- Collapse of the real economy — recession throughout East Asia in 1998.

Despite massive destabilization, efforts to impose both national and global regulation of financial system were opposed on ideological grounds.

Let's go to the current bubble. How did it form?

The current Wall Street collapse has its roots in the Technology Bubble of the late 1990s, when the price of the stocks of Internet startups skyrocketed, then collapsed, resulting in the loss of $7 trillion worth of assets and in the recession of 2001-02.

The loose money policies of the Fed under Alan Greenspan had encouraged the Technology Bubble, and when the US fell into a recession, Greenspan, to try to counter a long recession, cut the prime rate to a 45-year low of 1.00 per cent in June 2003 and kept it there for over a year. That had the effect of encouraging another bubble: the real estate bubble.

As early as 2002, progressive economists, such as Dean Baker of the Center for Economic Policy Research, were warning about the real estate bubble. However, as late as 2005, Ben Bernanke, then chairman of the Council of Economic Adviser and now chairman of the Federal Reserve, attributed the rise in US housing prices to "strong economic fundamentals" instead of speculative activity. Is it any wonder that he was caught completely off guard when the subprime crisis broke in the summer of 2007?

And how did it grow?

Let's hear it from one key market player himself, George Soros: "Mortgage institutions encouraged mortgage holders to refinance their mortgages and withdraw their excess equity. They lowered their lending standards and introduced new products, such as adjustable mortgages (ARMs), 'interest only' mortgages, and promotional 'teaser rates.' All this encouraged speculation in residential housing units. House prices started to rise in double-digit rates. This served to reinforce speculation, and the rise in house prices made the owners feel rich; the result was a consumption boom that has sustained the economy in recent years."

Looking at the process more closely, the subprime mortgage crisis was not a case of supply outrunning real demand. The "demand" was largely fabricated by speculative mania among developers and financiers that wanted to make great profits from their access to foreign money — lots of it from Asia — that flooded the US in the last decade. Big-ticket mortgages or loans were aggressively made to millions of people who could not normally afford them by offering low "teaser" interest rates that would later be readjusted to jack up payments from the new homeowners.

But how could subprime mortgages going sour turn into such a big problem?

Because these assets were then "securitized" with other assets into complex derivative products called "collateralized debt obligations" (CDOs), by the mortgage originators working with different layers of middlemen who understated risk so as to offload them as quickly as possible to other banks and institutional investors. These institutions in turn offloaded these securities onto other banks and foreign financial institutions. The idea was to make a sale quickly, make a tidy profit, while foisting the risk on the suckers down the line.

When the interest rates were raised on the subprime loans, adjustable mortgages and other housing loans, the game was up. There are about six million subprime mortgages outstanding, 40 percent of which will likely go into default in the next two years, according to Soros' estimates.

And five million more defaults from adjustable-rate mortgages and other "flexible loans" will occur in the next several years. But securities whose values run in the trillions of dollars have already been injected, like a virus, into the global financial system. Global capitalism's gigantic circulatory system is fatally infected.

But how could Wall Street titans collapse like a house of cards?

For Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and Bear Stearns, the losses represented by these toxic securities simply overwhelmed their reserves and brought them down. And more are likely to fall once their books — since lots of these holdings are recorded "off the balance sheet" — are corrected to reflect their actual holdings of these assets.

And many others will join them as other speculative operations, such as credit cards and different varieties of risk insurance, seize up. American International Group (AIG) was felled by its massive exposure in the unregulated area of credit default swaps, derivatives that make it possible for investors to bet on the possibility that companies will default on repaying loans. Such bets on credit defaults now make up a $45-trillion market that is entirely unregulated. It amounts to more than five times the total of the US government bond market. The mega-size of the assets that could go bad should AIG collapse was what made Washington change its mind and salvage it after it let Lehman Brothers collapse.

What's going to happen now?

We can safely say, then, that there will be more bankruptcies and government takeovers, with foreign banks and institutions joining their US counterparts; that Wall Street's collapse will deepen and prolong the US recession; and that in Asia and elsewhere, a US recession will translate into a recession, if not worse.

The reason for that last point is that China's main foreign market is the US and China in turn imports raw materials and intermediate goods that it uses for its exports to the US from Japan, South Korea and Southeast Asia. Globalization has made "decoupling" impossible. The US, China and East Asia are like three prisoners bound together in a chain-gang.

In a nutshell...?

The Wall Street meltdown is due not only to greed and the lack of government regulation of a hyperactive sector. It stems ultimately from the crisis of overproduction that has plagued global capitalism since the mid-1970s.

Financialization of investment activity has been one of the escape routes from stagnation, the other two being neoliberal restructuring and globalization. With neoliberal restructuring and globalization providing limited relief, financialization became attractive as a mechanism to shore up profitability. But financialization has proven to be a dangerous road, leading to speculative bubbles that lead to the temporary prosperity of a few but which ultimately end up in corporate collapse and in recession in the real economy.

The key questions now are: How deep and long will this recession be? Does the US economy need another speculative bubble to drag itself out of this recession? And if it does, where will the next bubble form? Some people say the military-industrial complex, or the "disaster capitalism complex" that Naomi Klein writes about, is the next one, but that's another story.

Walden Bello
is president of Freedom from Debt Coalition, senior analyst at Focus on the Global South, and professor of Sociology at the University of the Philippines.

USA:
On Obama

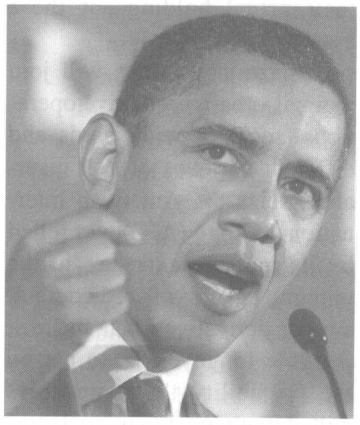
Amy Goodman: Today, we host a discussion on Obama's foreign policy, particularly with respect to hotspots in the Middle East, in South Asia, Africa and Latin America. We'll talk about the concerns and hopes of those who live in countries at the receiving end of American foreign policy.

We're joined on the phone and through video stream in studios by a number of people. First, Australian investigative journalist, bestselling author, documentary filmmaker, John Pilger, joins us on the telephone from Britain, just back from the United States. His latest book is called *Freedom Next Time: Resisting the Empire*; his most recent film, *The War on Democracy.*

And we're joined in our firehouse studio by Mahmood Mamdani. He is professor of government and anthropology at Columbia University and has written extensively on post-colonial African politics. His most recent book is *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror.* His latest article for *The Nation* magazine focuses on recent events in Darfur and is called "The New Humanitarian Order."

We'll start with John Pilger in Britain. You were just in the United States in Houston. You're back in London right now. Your response to the election of Barack Hussein Obama as president of the United States?

John Pilger: Well, my response, Amy, is that really anyone was better than Bush and the Bush administration. Having



experienced election night in the United States and then seeing the response here, I feel that it's time that analysis and critical thinking took over and that those of us who wish to think that way, who wish to think critically, really should start addressing the — this rather manipulated emotional response. I don't, in any way, cast doubt on the sincerity of the way people are speaking about the election of Obama around the world, although I think the reaction that you just played from the Middle East is rather more near the realism that is close to truth. But I do think we have to consider President-elect Obama as a man of the system.

Michael Moore had it right when he said the other day, let's hope that Obama breaks all his election promises, as politicians generally do, because all his election promises, in terms of foreign policy, are a continuation of business as usual. And even if there is a return to what used to be called a multilateral world, I think there has to be critical analysis of the return to the pretensions of America as a peacemaker around the world. We had to endure this, and I mean endure it during the Clinton years, and I don't think that we, in the rest of the world, ought to have to endure it now through the Obama years, so that we have a continuation, if you like, of liberalism as a divisive, almost war-making ideology, being used to destroy liberalism as a reality, because that has gone on under so-called liberal presidents, from Kennedy to Clinton, Democratic presidents. And President-elect Obama suggests to us, in his promises, that he is going to continue that, bombing Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Someone said to me — in fact, I was talking to my daughter when I got off the plane from Houston this morning, and she said, "What was it like over there?" And we were discussing it, and I said, "Well, it comes down to, I suppose, asking an Afghan child how they feel when their family has been destroyed by a 500-pound bunker-busting bomb dropped by the United States and dropped by President Obama, as he continues that war. I think that's the reality that we really have to begin to discuss now, having celebrated, and rightly celebrated, the ascent of the first African American president of the United States.

JG: And, John Pilger, what sign would you look for in these early days now, as Obama begins to move into a transition period, that would indicate to you that he would be trying to break, in one way or other, from this neoliberalism of the Clinton years?

JP: Well, it's difficult to

know. Breaking from the Bush years is going to be the first, and I suppose breaking from the Bush years means actually talking to people and negotiating. I think breaking from, let's say, the Democratic years — the Bush, yes — the Clinton years will mean giving us a sign that the ideological, rapacious, war-making machine that has been built over many years and reinforced, as perhaps never before during the eight years of Bush, that that ideological machine does not transcend a loss of electoral power. You see, that's really the central issue here, that a kind of ideological consensus has been built under Bush. Now, yes, Obama has been voted in, but will that vote, will that — will a new president transcend this ideological machine?

You know, during the campaign, there was almost nothing between McCain and Obama in foreign policy. Indeed, Obama went further. I mean, he even declared Jerusalem the capital of Israel. He threatened Latin America. He, at times, seemed to be going further than Bush. And, of course, people, realists, the so-called realists, would shake their heads and say, "Well, yes, he has to do that."

Look, in answer to your question, I think he has to — in order to show that he is in any way different — he has to start dismantling this machine, for example, going against his promise to continue the embargo on Cuba, to drop that; to reach out to the governments of Venezuela and Bolivia and Ecuador, each of which is under attack, subversive attack by the United States; to face the reality that Afghanistan is a colonial war; and to not let the so-called withdrawal from Iraq be a sham, that it leaves these so-called enduring bases. That, any one of those, any change in one of those, would indicate that Obama is truly different.

...

AG: We're turning now to Mahmood Mamdani, professor of government and anthropology at Columbia University. His most recent book, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror.* The latest piece in *The Nation*, "The New Humanitarian Order." Your response to the election of Barack Obama?

Mahmood Mamdani: Well, I think John Pilger has given a good account of the limits within which Obama will operate. And perhaps I should talk about the possibilities within those limits.

When the Cold War ended, the losing power in the Cold War, the Soviet Union, began a process of reform. The U.S. never did begin a process of reform. Instead, it embarked on a war on terror after 9/11, in order to build on the military machine inherited from the Cold War. And the war on terror, we know, has been mainly an advertising campaign, a lethal advertising campaign. So I agree with Pilger that Obama's first task is going to be to cut through this ideological sham and to bring the American people to face realities.

The most that Obama can contribute, within the context of being the president of an imperial power, is to recognize the changing world situation, to recognize that this is the end of the era of a single superpower, that the U.S. will operate amongst several powers, that the U.S. has to learn to live in the world rather than simply to occupy it.

And I think there are several indications from the campaign — I mean, the campaign was full of extreme and contradictory promises and provocations. But if you look on the side of the promises, there are indications that this is within the realm of the possible. There is the discussion of the need to speak to the president of Iran without any preconditions. There is that remarkable primary debate with Hillary and Edwards, where a reporter asked the three of them who would Martin Luther King support on this day, and Hillary and Edwards responded by convincing the audience why King would have supported them. And Obama responded by saying King would not have supported anybody, that King would have organized his movement to push the winning candidate to pursue the objectives. Well, that's the real question now in the U.S. today.

There was a movement, a youth movement, to elect Obama. Will that movement dissolve itself? Will that movement build itself now around the objectives for which it organized? Will America recognize, as I believe South Africa has after the election of Mandela, that the election of Mandela was not change, but an opportunity to change? And whether that opportunity is realized and transformed into a program of social justice within the country and peace abroad will depend on the movement that pushes Obama and gives him the opportunity to respond to it.

JG: One of the big changes that surprised many people when Bush came into office was that he had opposed this whole idea of the United States getting involved in interventions for

nation-building, and then he actually became a prime proponent of regime change around the world, basically following a lot of what the Clinton administration had tried to do, this humanitarian intervention, spreading democracy. Do you fear that there might be some directions of Obama in this direction? You've written about Darfur, this whole pressure for, quote, "humanitarian" intervention that actually becomes a new form of imperialism.

MM: Well, look, the lesson of Bush is that when a candidate steps from the arena of electoral politics to the presidency of the U.S., the kinds of interests and pressures that now come to bear on the candidate are different, larger. And the context within which the president now operates is different. There are anxieties about the particular kinds of people who gathered around Obama, especially as regards foreign policy and particularly as regards Africa. Some of the liberal humanitarian interventionists, the most vocal of them, what I call Democratic neocons, like Pendergast, for example, are huge Obama fans and are there around him.

AG: Let me play for you a quote of the person closest to him, and that's Joe Biden, his vice president. Last month, in the presidential debate, Gwen Ifill asked Joe Biden about his reputation as an interventionist and his support for sending U.S. troops to Darfur.

Sen. Joe Biden: I don't have a stomach for genocide when it comes to Darfur. We can now impose a no-fly zone; it's within our capacity. We can lead NATO if we're willing to take a hard stand. We can. I've been in those camps in Chad. I've seen the suffering. Thousands and tens of thousands of people have died and are dying. We should rally the world to act, and we should demonstrate it by our own movement to provide the helicopters to get those 21,000 forces of the African Union in there now to stop this genocide.

AG: That's the Vice President-elect Joe Biden. Professor Mahmood Mamdani?

MM: Well, I read the verbatim account of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on which Joe Biden sits, grilling Andrew Natsios, Bush's representative to Sudan. And Andrew Natsios was basically saying there is no genocide in Darfur. And they forced him, literally, compelled him, to simply use that word, "genocide."

I think you're right that this particular vice president is enamored with wanting to show U.S. power in a humanitarian way. And what's worrying about it is, of course, that we know — we know that mortalities in Darfur declined dramatically from early 2005. We know that the Save Darfur campaign and its figures on mortality — 400,000 — are simply not true; they do not reflect the reality at all. We know that the U.S., when it promised in 2006 to give $50 million for the African Union troops, did not give a single dollar. We know that there is a huge gulf between war talk and actual practice on the ground. I think this is one of the things Obama will have to confront, and one hopes that Biden, like other vice presidents, will simply be one small voice in the administration that's coming.

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JG: I'd like to turn back to London to Tariq Ali, who is there, veteran journalist, commentator and activist. He was born in Pakistan and lives in London. Tariq, your reaction to the election of Barack Obama and to what it might mean for your native land, Pakistan?

Tariq Ali: Well, I mean, my reaction was not so different to that of other people you've already interviewed. I mean, historically, the fact that there's going to be a black family in the White House can't be underestimated in terms of the impact that will have on black consciousness in the United States. I think it's important in its own right for that reason.

As for what the policies are going to be, the situation is pretty depressing. I mean, Obama, during his campaign, didn't promise very much, basically talked in cliches and synthetic slogans like "change we can believe in." No one knows what that change is. In foreign policy terms, during the debates, his — what he said was basically a continuation of the Bush-Cheney policies. And in relation to Afghanistan, what he said was worse than McCain, that we will actually — we should take troops out of Iraq, send them into Afghanistan and, if necessary, go in and take out people inside Pakistan without informing that government.

Now, I think once he is in power and sees the intelligence reports coming in from Afghanistan, he will realize that that's not a serious option. I mean, the British are already saying that sending in more troops isn't going to help, because the war is lost. The United States intelligence agencies are already involved in panic discussions with the people they are fighting, the neo-Taliban, to try and persuade them to join the coalition, which they're refusing to do as long as

there are foreign troops there. So, escalating the war I don't think is a serious option. And if he does it, it will be a very, very serious mistake, on the same level in scale as invading Iraq. So, he would be very ill-advised to do it. And I think some of the people around him will probably tell him that that was a foolish and intemperate remark in the heat of an election battle, so not to seem too wimpish, since he was already supposedly opposed to the war on Iraq, and that he will pull back from that.

I think the key is what he's going to do in Iraq. Is Iraq, as Joe Biden wants, going to be balkanized, with permanent U.S. bases in northern Iraq and a Kurdish area, more or less, kept going as a U.S. Israel protectorate? Or, are they going to do what the U.S. traditionally does, long before the "war on terror," which is find local relays? And in that case, I think they'll have to do a deal with Iran. And I think the most critical interview with Ahmadinejad on his last visit to New York was Amy questioning him about his position on the Iraq war, etc. He got a very easy ride on CNN and other shows, which indicates that they will be asking Iran to play a role in stabilizing Iraq, and they will be asking Pakistan to do the same in Afghanistan. That is more traditional U.S. policy. And if Obama moves in that direction, it will mean withdrawing troops and having an exit strategy in Afghanistan.

AG: Tariq Ali, we're also joined in Washington, D.C. by the Iraqi blogger and political analyst Raed Jarrar, Iraqi consultant for American Friends Service Committee. Raed, the latest news today, at least six people have been killed, more than 20 wounded, in several bombings around Baghdad. At least thirty Iraqis have died, eighty wounded, since Monday. And you might say that Barack Obama is president today, because in 2002 he made that speech against the war in Iraq. That, I think, won him the Democratic nomination against Hillary Clinton. I don't think the Democratic Party emphasizes this now, but that was the main difference, as she and the other leading opponents of Barack Obama in the presidential campaign voted for the invasion, and he spoke against it. What are your hopes, Raed?

Raed Jarrar: Well, I think the Obama campaign did deliver a message to the public in the U.S. that he will be the one to end the occupation. And wherever I travel around the U.S., people do have the impression that Obama will be the president who will withdraw the troops. The campaign was very vague about describing troops' withdrawal, all the troops, within 16 months.

Now, the fine print of the campaign suggests the opposite, actually. The fine print suggests that Obama will continue the same policy through leaving what he calls "residual force," the thing that both Bush and McCain wanted to leave indefinitely. So I don't have a lot of hope, based on the statements. Now, no one knows what will happen in the next few months, whether Obama will, you know, unveil this progressive face that everyone is waiting to see, or whether he will continue the same policy.

Now, on the shorter term, I think there is a major difference, that I'm happy that the Obama-Biden campaign have come out to criticize the long-term agreement. On their website, there is a very strong statement asking the Bush administration to either submit any agreement with Iraq to the Congress or postpone it until the next administration and Congress. I think this is a very important step on the short term, but I don't have a lot of hope regarding the statements on the long term. I hope that there will be a modification of that policy to a new policy that is based on a complete withdrawal, that leaves no permanent bases, no mercenaries in Iraq, because without that policy, I think the situation in Iraq will continue to deteriorate.

JG: And I'd like to come back to Mahmood Mamdani here with us in the studio. You've heard now quite a bit of skepticism about the potential in the new Obama presidency. Your thoughts? I think you're sensing a little bit more optimism?

MM: Well, I mean, my sensing is that we have to place the man within the context. I am equally skeptical of those who believe Obama is capable of everything as I am one of those who believe he is incapable of anything. He'll simply be muzzled by context.

I think that, you know, this campaign began as a campaign on the question of peace. He began as a peace candidate and ended up as a redistribution candidate. Foreign policy had the front seat at the beginning and had the back seat towards the end of the campaign. So we don't really know much.

What we do know is that any president who wants to make an impact on history can only do so at a moment of crisis. And this is a moment of profound crisis, domestically and internationally. Obama's campaign announce-

ments, I believe, give us very little clue as to what he is going to do. His appointments, I agree, give us some clue, and there is reason for concern. But at the same time, there will be returns coming in if the appointments lead to the policies that we fear they may lead to. It's a time of possibilities, and it's a time to organize and put the pressure.

AG: We have to leave it there. I want to thank you very much for being with us. Last question, though: do you think the movements that elected Obama can, without the Obama machine, remarkable online and on-the-ground organizing, what, ten million e-mail list — we were getting texts and emails every couple of hours — can reconstitute itself without that? Because now that will be the state. How do people show their — express their positions if they differ from the state?

MM: Has the movement been absorbed into the state? Look, there's a remarkable difference between the youth movement of the '60s, which mainly organized outside the system, and the youth movement which has brought Obama to power, because this movement has organized within the system to reform the system. Obama keeps on saying that this movement must not go away, that change hasn't come, that this is the beginning of change. Now, will the candidate be able to tame the movement, or will the movement be able to stamp itself to some extent in the coming days?

AG: We'll leave that question there. Mahmood Mamdani and all of our roundtable, thanks so much for joining us.

Amy Goodman is the host of the nationally syndicated radio news program, Democracy Now!

Siam:
Prison Sentence for Ex-Thai PM Thaksin
What does it mean?

The prison sentence handed down to ex-Thai PM Thaksin is just one part of the present Thai political crisis. I write this short piece because I have been contacted by both the BBC TV and radio to give a telephone interview, but on both occasions the telephone line went dead during the interview. Times like this can make us paranoid. It was probably a technical fault which just happened to occur twice. Anyway please feel free to use any of the content of this short article in any way.

Ex-PM Thaksin was found guilty of a "conflict of interest" because he was Prime Minister at the time when his wife bought a piece of land at a knock-down price from the Thai state. The land originated from bankruptcies in the 1997 economic crisis. Earlier PM Samak was found guilty of appearing on a TV cooking programme and forced to resign. Samak was head of the Peoples Power Party (PPP), the descendant of Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party (TRT) which was dissolved by the courts during the time of the military junta.

It is interesting to note that Thaksin's wife was not found guilty of any corruption by the courts, nor was the organisation that held the land auction. This means that there is no evidence that the price paid for the land was below market rates or artificially depressed.

We need to look at the context of the court rulings. We are in the middle of a deep political crisis caused by an inter-elite conflict. One side of this conflict is made up of politicians who believe in parliamentary democracy, but do not respect Human Rights (Thaksin's TRT and PPP). On the other side, are politicians of the Democrat Party, bureaucrats, army generals, the ultra-right wing PAD protestors and members of the Royal Family, especially the Queen. This side want to decrease the democratic space in Thailand. Their excuse is that they believe that the poor are too stupid to deserve the vote. The poor majority, both urban and rural, have consistently voted for TRT's universal health care scheme and the government's grass-roots Keynesian policies. They reject the Monetarism of the Democrat Party and the Sufficiency Economy.

The Thai courts have never been independent. Today they serve the elite faction which is against Thaksin. During Thaksin's time they served him. It is easy to punish an ex-PM, exiled in the UK. In the mean time, the widespread corruption among

all politicians of all parties and among the military top brass, is untouched. There are numerous land accusations against former Ministers, Prime Ministers and military generals. The junta that overthrew an elected government in 2006 and then appointed themselves to the boards of lucrative state enterprises are not being brought to account for abuse of power or corruption.

Today, in Thailand, every public institution is compromised by double standards. This includes the Royal Family, the courts, the media and most of academia. That is why the PAD protestors are allowed to occupy Government House and organised armed protests, attacking police with weapons. This is not about a strengthened Civil Society asserting its democratic rights. The PAD have powerful backers which allow it to break the law. Meanwhile the King has remained silent. Is this a sign of his long standing weakness? Yes, I think it is. But others believe that he supports the PAD. There is no concrete evidence to back this up, however. One cannot just assume that because the Queen supports the PAD, that the Monarchy does too.

The Thai public who are outside the minority supporters of the PAD, are angry and becoming more and more disenchanted with the elites. Many Royalists were shocked that the Queen supported the PAD. But this public does not have a voice. They were passive voters for the government. Nevertheless, some government politicians are trying to mobilise people. These are the Red Shirts, as opposed to the PAD Yellow Shirts. Yellow is the colour of the King. But the Red Shirts are not socialists and only a fraction are republicans at the moment.

The courts are helping to do what perhaps the military cannot do. They are pushing towards a civilian coup to topple the elected government. They may dissolve the governing party. Then there will be extra-Constitutional moves to set up a Special National Government. The Constitution will be changed to decrease the voting rights of the poor, if these elites get their way.

The only hope for Thai democracy is if civil society groups and academics refuse to take sides in this damaging conflict. We need to expand democracy and build a third alternative, independent from the TRT-PPP or the PAD-authoritarians. Unfortunately most Thai academics have disgraced themselves by their double standards. The hope must lie with some sections of the NGO movement, students, the Left and the more advanced trade union activists.

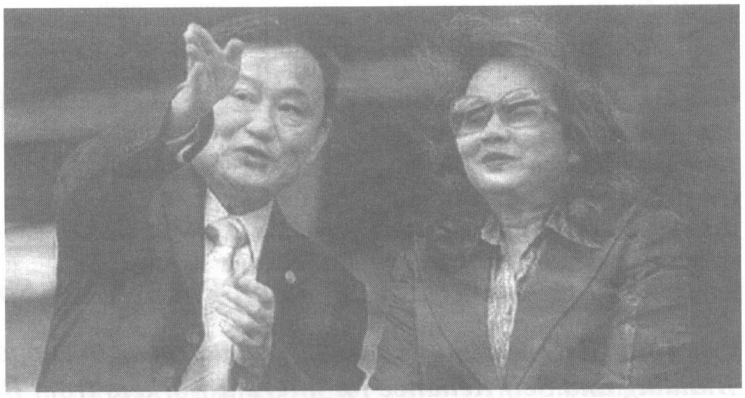
Giles Ji Ungphakorn

Siam-UK:

Home Office Shuts Door on Ex-Thai Premier and Wife

Thaksin Shinawatra, the deposed Thai Prime Minister and former owner of Manchester City Football Club, has had his visa revoked by the British Government, two years after he fled to exile in London following a military coup.

An immigration officer at the British Embassy in Bangkok has also e-mailed airlines warning them not to allow Thaksin, 59, or his wife Potjaman, 51, both thought currently to be in China, to board flights to Britain after a Thai court last month sentenced him to two years in prison for corruption. According to media reports in Thailand, Thaksin was considering sanctuaries such as China, the Philippines and the Bahamas.



Thaksin and his wife at the City of Manchester Stadium in August

A Whitehall source confirmed yesterday that the Home Office had revoked the couple's visas under rules banning entry

to those convicted of offences that can carry a jail sentence under British law. The Thai Government confirmed that it had been informed — in fact, the only person who appeared not to have been notified was Thaksin himself. "I spoke with Thaksin's secretary and he said that Thaksin still has not been notified by the British Government," said Phongthep Thepkanjana, a spokesman for Thaksin.

Unconfirmed reports said that the Thaksins had been granted honorary citizenship by the Bahamas. The couple are said to be in China, where they build a £5.5 million home.

Pracha Prosobdee, a member of the ruling pro-Thaksin People Power Party (PPP), told a Thai newspaper: "We don't have to be concerned about Thaksin and his family. There are the Bahamas and several countries in Africa and around the world that will gladly welcome high-guality people like him." The tycoon first fled to London after the military coup in 2006 and bought a £3 million penthouse flat in Kensington, West London, and a £4.5 million mansion in Weybridge, Surrey. He bought Manchester City in July last year and sold it in September to Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al-Nahyan of the Abu Dhabi United Group for Development and Investment for £210 million. He retained the post of honorary president but the club's board is believed to be considering stripping him of the title.There is also concern over his link to a 10 per cent holding of the club's shares through associates.

Last month Thailand's constitutional court convicted him in absentia of abusing his power as Prime Minister over his wife's purchase in 2003 of a 772 million baht (£14 million) plot of land in central Bangkok. The court found that a government agency sold the property at Thaksin's behest for a third of its market value.

The visa revocation puts an end to attempts by Thailand to extradite Thaksin from London. Indeed, it may have been a desire to avoid a complicated and politically charged extradition process that motivated the Home Office to take the procedurally much simpler step of revoking the visas — making Thaksin, at a stroke, someone else's problem.

Thai prosecutors complained that the British decision would complicate the job of extraditing Thaksin. It will now be harder to keep track track of him, and he could end up in a country with which Thailand does not have an extradition treaty.

Thaksin was the most popular, but also the most divisive, Prime Minister that Thailand has known. His village healthcare schemes and programme of cheap loans won him the love of rural voters who had been ignored by the metropolitan political class, and carried him to three successive election victories. But many middle class urban Thasis abhorred him, accusing him of using the vast wealth he acquired as a businessman to corrupt the country's institutions and make it impossible to unseat him and his supporters.

Supporters of Thaksin still control Thailand's Government, and this month more than 50,000 people attended a rally in Bangkok to hear him speak by telephone. Yesterday the Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat — Thaksin's brother-in-law — said: "The revoking of the visas is the decision by the Government of Great Britain. We cannot criticise."

from *The Times*,
Novemver 10, 2008

Siam-Burma:
Peace is Possible Here and Now

Interethnic Youth Camp, Phang Nga, Southern Thailand

Thai NGO SNF has embarked on a project to support Human Rights, Peace Building and Self Reliance for migrant workers from Burma in Southern Thailand. An interethnic youth camp was one of the first project activities.

In the Andaman coastal area of Southern Thailand there are many distinct ethnic groups including Thai Buddhists, Malay Muslims and Morgans (Sea Gypsies); plus a number of ethnic groups from Burma such as Tavoy, Karen, Arakhan, Burman and Mon. There is often racial

tension and discrimination between groups. To address this a *Peace Building for Youth Empowerment* camp run by Youth Awakening, a Thai training organization, took place in Phang Nga, Thailand. The 20-day training was held between April and May 2008 and brought together youth from these five ethnic groups.

Than Let Oo and Lin Oo at 12 and 13 years old are the youngest members of this peace camp. They are Christian and their parents came from Burma to work in Phanga Nga Province, Thailand. At the beginning of the camp, facilitators could see fear in their eyes. They stick together during meals, leisure time or in the learning circle. Prior to the camp they stayed in their migrant worker community and never got to know outside people directly so they could hardly speak Thai.

Migrant workers are treated as third class citizens with a lot prejudice from the Thai community around them.

"In the past, I would never make friends with Burmese migrant worker kids. In the history books in school, I learned that the Burmese were invaders, they burnt our capital and took the gold away. They are our enemy. But when we worked and played together for 3 weeks, I realized that they are just human beings like me and I like them, they are now my friends." (Jaree, 15, A Thai Buddhist with strong leadership and sense of superiority when camp started).

It is not only migrant workers from Burma who are marginalized. Muslims in the area are becoming isolated. Their situation has worsened in the past five years due to flare-ups of ethnic and religious conflict and violence in the provinces further south. Three Muslim teenagers out of seven were asked to leave the camp when facilitators found they had a gun with them and constantly harassed other members especially those from Burma. The other four Muslims stayed to the end and integrated to become close friends with other mem-bers of the camp.

"Saw and I became friends when we were put together in the same family when we visited Ka Yao during our study tour, we had to talk to each other, walked around together on top of what other learning activities going on in the camp, so we become closer friends now." (Ismael, a 16 years old Muslim. Saw is a son of migrant workers from Burma).

Win Win Maw, a Mon Buddhist (far right) from Burma commented on a Muslim participant,

"At first I didn't want to talk to Wudy (Muslim boy) because we did not know each other before. But now I enjoy talking to him. Even though we come from different cultural background we are now friends".

She didn't mention the scary image of Muslims in the Thai media with news like Buddhist monks being beheaded in the south.

"At first I thought the Burmese and the Thai couldn't get along. But learning in this camp made me realized that we are human beings. We have the same rights and dignity as all other people"

This was a comment from Prapatsorn, a Morgan Buddhist, who is 15. Morgan people are indigenous people along the Andaman cost of Thailand and Burma. They were, and some of them still are sea nomads. They have been here since before the Thai or Burmese came to settle in this peninsular. They are also treated as outcast citizens. They have a different language and cultural practices, and are also in a very fragile position.

Youth from these diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, living in the same province were together in this pilot peace camp for 20 days. In summary, they successfully learned to respect ,love each other and become close friends. Facilitators did not preach them to care for each other or to respect human rights. The love and respect occurred through the process of experiential and participatory learning e.g. group challenge exercises; sharing of cultural values; visiting a fishing community suffering due to modern development; non-violent communication; critical reflection about the prejudices of in their own community and last but not least, playing and living together over a long enough period of time.

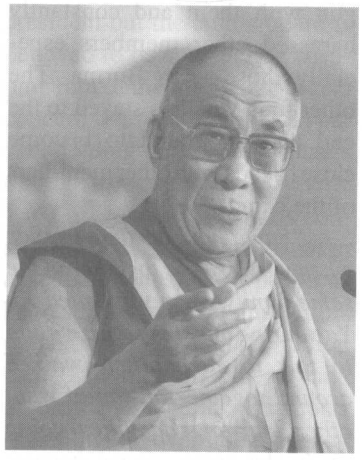
At the end of the camp, everyone could see the vivid change in Than Let Oo and Lin Oo the youngest in the group. Their eyes were bright, smile genuine; they teased the elder youth, as kids of their age would do to their elder sisters and brothers. They all shed tears when the camp ended. They left the camp knowing in their hearts that ethnic and religious differences don't need to be a barrier to friendship.

Pracha Hutanuwatr &
Jane Rasbash
October 2008

Tibet:
Few Options for the Dalai Lama

"...Tibetan culture may die a slow, painful, death under relentless Han Chinese pressure unless the international community puts pressure on the Chinese government. But that, too, has been tried and has not worked. Trade surpluses clearly matter more in this world than a small nation without a clear map. In this age of respect for human rights and multiculturalism, that would be a shame for the world."

-The Wall Street Journal,
17 November 2008



China invaded eastern Tibet in the early 1950s, forcing the Dalai Lama to flee to India in March of 1959. In response to the Chinese invasion, Tibetans first attempted armed conflict, while urging the international community to recognize Tibet's independence. The shift of the US under Nixon shifted to an alliance with China meant that they failed on both fronts.

In 1988, the Dalai Lama announced publicly that he would pragmatically set aside any rights to reclaim an independent Tibet. Instead, the Tibetan ruler opted to negotiate for some form of genuine autonomy for Tibetans short of a state. He dropped early suggestions that it should have its own political system and came to accept that it would be within the framework of the constitution of the People's Republic of China and its political system. The Dalai Lama called this conciliatory approach his Middle Way policy.

Such conciliatory talk has, however, not been accepted by China. In March 2008 China's leading official in Tibet derided the Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace Laureate, as a "wolf in monk's robes", and officials regularly call him a "splittist," asserting that he is concealing a secret plan to reconstruct a separate Tibetan nation. The eight rounds of talks between Beijing and the Dalai Lama's envoys since 2002 led to a statement by China that it would never discuss autonomy with the Tibetans.

Last March, on the 49th anniversary of the Dalai Lama fleeing across the Himalayas into exile, Tibetans across Tibet rose up in open revolt against Chinese rule. The protests started in Lhasa and soon spread across the current day Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan Provinces. Some of the protests turned violent, most notably one in Lhasa on 14th, but the vast majority were peaceful demonstrations. There were at least 125 protests by monks and nuns, farmers and nomads, businessmen and students, a visceral expression of frustration after decades of authoritarian rule. The protestors' messages varied somewhat, but most included slogans such as "We Want Our Dalai Lama To Return To Tibet" and "China Out Of Tibet". The Chinese crackdown that ensued has been brutal—thousands of Tibetans have been arrested, beaten and imprisoned. De facto marital law continues today in many Tibetan areas.

Cameron Stewart, an Australian journalist, writing about his recent visit to Lhasa in November, said, "As night falls, hundreds of Chinese troops fan out across this rebellious city, armed with riot shields and assault rifles. They set up sentry posts on street corners and dispatch patrols in groups of six soldiers, three with shields and three with guns. These patrols spend the night walking down the lanes of Lhasa's Tibetan quarter, looking for any sign of dissent...When the sun rises, the soldiers do not melt away, but are replaced by a new rotation of troops. The military stranglehold on Lhasa by day is maintained with one chilling addition — snipers are installed on rooftops around the city's most holy site, the Jokhang Temple, ready to train their guns on the hundreds of Tibetan pilgrims praying in Barkhor Square below. The heavy military presence betrays China's unspoken fear that it is losing, rather than winning, the hearts and minds of local Tibetans, who accuse Beijing of subjugating their culture and religion to preserve national unity."

In response to China's continuing draconian rule in Lhasa and across the Tibetan plateau, the Dalai Lama said on 3 November in Tokyo at the Foreign

Correspondent's Club, "My trust in the Chinese government has become thinner, thinner, thinner. Suppression is increasing and I cannot pretend that everything is OK."

Earlier, in October, 73-year old Dalai Lama conceded that his Middle Way policy has, "failed to bring some positive change inside Tibet. I have to accept the failure." The Tibetan leader called for a review by exiled Tibetan leaders of his conciliatory approach to negotiate with the Chinese government, saying that all options, including returning to a call for independence, should be on the table and discussed openly.

Despite the ominous atmosphere surrounding the Dalai Lama summoning Tibetan leaders to Dharamasla, the prominent Beijing-based Tibetan writer and intellectual, Woser, wrote, "There may never in history have been another gathering that so stirred the hearts of Tibetans at home and abroad. This is primarily because Tibetans have never before been separated for so long. To the more than 100,000 Tibetans in exile, the Tibet on this side of the Himalayas is their homeland. To the almost 6 million Tibetans within the borders, on the far side of the Himalayas lies another Tibet which, though very small, contains Tibet's soul... on that side of the mountains in Dharamsala (the seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile) there will convene a representative assembly of Tibetans from all over the world to discuss Tibet's future direction — obviously, an epochal event. At the beginning of March, His Holiness the Dalai Lama declared that the problems of Tibet were for the Tibetan people to solve, and the future of Tibet was for the Tibetan people to decide."

The six-day meeting in late November brought together nearly 600 Tibetan exiles for intense debate on the current round of talks with China, the Middle Way approach, independence as an ideal or strategy, and the impact of the current crackdown in Tibet. While there were widely varying views expressed by the delegates, an atmosphere of solidarity and a sense of urgency was reported. The Dalai Lama did not attend the meeting, saying that his presence might inhibit discussion.

The November meeting concluded with a strong endorsement of the Dalai Lama's Middle Way approach, and reaffirming the delegates' absolute "faith and allegiance" in the Tibetan leader. The endorsement came as no surprise. However, the delegates clearly stated that exile Tibetans might take a position seeking independence if results of engagement were not evident "in the near future". Many delegates specifically urged the Dalai Lama's envoys not to be sent again for talks to China, a position that was noted in the final declaration of the meeting. Finally, the delegates declared that, whether seeking "independence" or "autonomy," the Tibetan people will maintain total commitment to non-violence in their struggle for freedom.

Matthew Pistono

Sweden:
The Right Livelihood Award

The Right Livelihood Award recipients this year include Krishnammal and Sankaralingam Jagannathan, and their organization LAFTI (Land for the Tillers' Freedom) (India) "for two long lifetimes of work dedicated to realising in practice the Gandhian vision of social justice and sustainable human development, for which they have been referred to as "India's soul'"; Amy Goodman (USA) "for developing an innovative model of truly independent political journalism that brings to millions of people the alternative voices that are often excluded by the mainstream media"; Asha Hagi (Somalia) "for continuing to lead at great personal risk the female participation in the peace and reconciliation process in her war-ravaged country"; and Monika Hauser (Germany) "for her tireless commitment to working with women who have experienced the most horrific sexualised violence in some of the most dangerous countries in the world, and campaigning for them to receive social recognition and compensation."

Letter from the Secretariat Office

Dear INEB members and readers,

Now INEB is entering its 20th year. From its establishment in February 1989, INEB has put immense effort in helping to build peace and social justice in various areas and regions. During the two decades, we have lost some senior members within our circle. We still remember Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, The Venerable Maha Ghosananda of Cambodia, The Venerable Rewattadhama of Burma, Suzuki Ryowa, David Chappell and others who contributed to the founding of INEB. Fortunately, we welcomed a new generation of young Buddhists who continue the spirit of our founders.

However, our aim of cultivating a peaceful, healthy and just world is not accomplished yet. It is still a long way to go. Many socially engaged Buddhists are still facing wars and conflicts, discrimination, human rights violation, oppression and poverty. Many people expect a gloomy future in the years to come. Major challenges would include food sovereignty, energy crisis, financial crisis and global climate change. Because a lot of Buddhists are the grassroots and the poor living in the Global South. Perhaps they would be the first and the most affected by the world crisis. What INEB should offer are practical alternatives and practical approaches toward an engaged Buddhist social movement. They would be topics for serious discussion in the very near future.

Change is painful. Social change involves of course a great deal of pain. But as an engaged Buddhist, we can go back to the Three Jewels, i.e. wisdom and compassion, at any time. We know that change is inevitable and the human being has a capacity to interfere with and designate the course of change. With this truth and with the genuine loving kindness to all beings, we can engage the world with a clear and peaceful mind.

To continue our task, support from all directions is needed. Our members and readers can be of great help with your donation and subscription of *Seeds of Peace*. Many of our readers are the alumni of INEB youth leadership training programs who are working at local communities in poor countries such as Cambodia, Burma, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, etc. They are unable to share the cost of printing and mailing. If you wish to donate extra fund to sponsor the membership of the young readers in the poor countries, you can mention how many readers you want to support and in which country. And, we thank you very much.

We are happy to announce that INEB Sri Lanka has become active again. In Colombo, Sewalanka Foundation organized a big meeting in collaboration with our Spirit in Education Movement and the Thai Ministry of Culture. They also encouraged young artists to launch an exhibition entitled *Dream in Divergence : A Socially Engaged Art.*

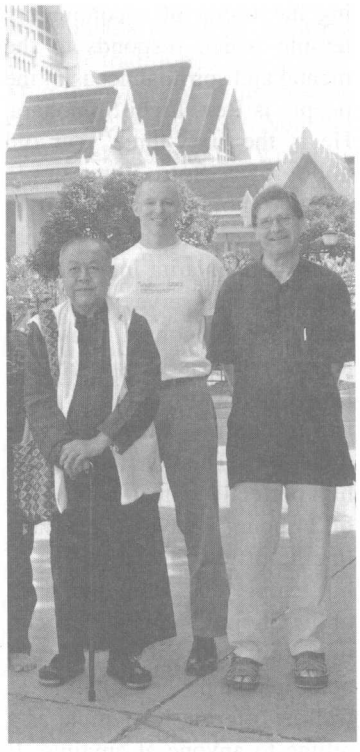
Finally, please do not forget that in November we will have INEB Conference in Chiangmai, Siam. The conference will serve as a space for our serious but joyful discussion on the role of INEB in responding to the global challenges in the future. The information will be available in our website or you can e-mail me at ineboffice@yahoo.com.

Yours in the Dhamma,
Anne Lapapan Supamanta
Executive Secretary

Japan's "Suicide Priests"

Suicide is an act that has often been seen as a cultural value in Japan from the ritualized and often public performance of disembowlment *(hara-kiri)* of feudal warriors to the blind loyalty of kamikaze suicide bombers in World War II. While this may be true on a certain level, the staggering rate of suicides in present day Japan points to something different. Across the board, from rural to urban, from young to middle aged to elderly, Japanese are taking their own lives in unprecedented numbers. For ten straight years (1998-2007), since the full onset of the Japanese economic recession, Japan has exceeded 30,000 suicides per year. To give a sense of this average annual number, that is 10 times the number of people who died in the terror incident on the World Trade Center in New York and about 9 times the total number of Palestinian deaths since the Second Intifada began in 2000. The total number for this ten year period is over 300,000 deaths which exceeds the number of people killed in the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined. This is by far the highest suicide rate among the G7 nations with France coming in a distant second. Globally, Japan ranks 8th in the world following only the cluster of economically ravaged countries in Eastern Europe.

The face of suicide in Japan looks more in the fashion of a business man who hangs himself in a private room; a young adult who jumps in front of a commuter train at rush hour; or the latest trend, people who kill themselves on the noxious fumes of sulfur oxide. There is no dignity in these acts; no (voluntary) witness by the community. These are acts which reflect a deeper existential and spiritual crisis; and a loss of sense for the meaning or purpose of life. In Japan, modern economic values have replaced the human relationship values of traditional feudal Japan. In this way, the achievement of a life of material prosperity has overtaken the development of human and community relationships, something which was the basis of Japanese identity and nationhood.



In consort, the religious institutions of Japan from which many of these relational norms and ethics were derived have also decayed from the influence of this kind of development. Japanese Buddhism's current crisis can be summed up in the term "Funeral Buddhism". This is a pejorative term developed by a Japanese sociologist to describe how Japanese priests largely function as ritualists for their lay congregation's observation of ancestor worship through funerals and regular memorial services.

Yet there is a critical link in the passage from life to death amidst which the Buddhist priest lives that connects him to the sagging humanity of Japan. When someone commits suicide, there is a funeral and a priest who must deal with a grieving family. Although there is a social stigma in Japan concerning suicide and some families do their best to keep it secret, the priest is one of the few who may learn of the real nature of a person's death. In a nation where there are on average 90 suicides per day, there is no lack of opportunity for priests to have contact with this problem. For a few it is something they cannot turn their eyes away from. In this way, from a wide variety of backgrounds, we are seeing individual priests becoming actively engaged in not just the issue of suicide but the wider problems of alienation and human relationships in Japan.

The largest number of suicides by far, accounting for one third, are middle aged business men. These men are the ones who have born the brunt of the recession, most directly through the accumulation of bad debts and the unsustainable level and load of work they must endure along with the pressure to always perform economically.

One priest who has a unique connection to this world is Rev. Katsumi Fujisawa, the forty-seven year old vice-abbot of Anraku-ji, a Jodo Shin Pure Land temple in Tokyo. He is somewhat unusual for a Japanese priest in that he did not attend a Buddhist university and receive a degree in Buddhist studies, but rather graduated from one of Japan's top secular schools, Waseda University. After graduating, he remained aloof from temple life and became a computer engineer in an IT company for twenty-three years.

Experiencing first hand the hardships and dissatisfactions of the typical Japanese salary man led him to a deeper investigation of Buddha Dharma and an interest in the suicide issue. In March 2006, Rev. Fujisawa quit his job in his company to return to attend full-time to the activities of his temple. Since then he has also taken time to become increasingly active in the suicide issue. He was part of a petition campaign to demand for basic government legislation for suicide prevention. This bill passed in June 2006 and has become a watershed event for publicly recognizing that this problem is not just an individual one but a larger, social one. Rev. Fujisawa has also recently established a local group called "Buddhist Priests Taking on the Suicide Problem" and become a leader in trying to develop a nationwide network of priests concerned with this issue. It is felt that such a network is needed: 1) to help such individual priests and temples to sustain such social work; 2) to better provide those people in need with actual temples and priests whom they can visit in person during crisis; and 3) to expose and educate a largely ignorant society about these priests' activities.

Another priest who is realizing the vision of a community temple which responds to the mental and spiritual needs of the people is Rev. Eichi Shinohara. He is the sixty-three year old abbot of a Soto Zen temple called Choju-in located in a rather remote area of Chiba near the massive Narita International Airport which serves the Tokyo area. Rev. Shinohara himself is a heart type. He likes to engage personally with people in crisis and to confront them in a very direct way. This character makes him perfectly suited for the kind of 24 hours 7 days a week help line he offers. Operating out of his temple and from the basis of his Choju-in Sangha Association, Rev. Shinohara provides 24 hour telephone consultation as well as offering his temple as a refuge to anyone at anytime. If someone visits suddenly or calls in the middle of the night, it is Rev. Shinohara's policy to never refuse them.

Rev. Shinohara feels that the Buddhist priest as counselor (not as ritualist for a funeral) has the potential to provide critical support to the medical system which is poorly developed to deal with the rise in mental illness in Japan. Rev. Shinohara emphasizes the personal connection that a priest can develop with someone. He sees himself as a friend, without office hours, fees or subsequent expectations for a cure based on payment. He also eschews the doctor-patient barrier of "professionalism" to which most psychiatrists and psychotherapists ascribe. For example, he may take the time to share a meal as he finds that the suicidal often don't eat well and a good meal helps them think better. However, unlike many religious professionals, he emphasizes simply listening over sermonizing, while offering patience, time and energy. While most people, including priests, feel this kind of work can only be done by licensed professionals, Rev. Shinohara emphasizes that more people with such listening skills and concern for others need to get involved. In this way, he often encourages other priests to confront this problem even if they don't have a license.

A third priest working on this issue is Rev. Toshihide Hakamata, the forty-seven year old abbot of Gesso-ji, a Soto Zen temple in town of Fujisato-cho in one of Japan's most northern and rural areas of Akita. Akita is notorious in Japan for suicide, having had the highest rate in the country for the eleven years running. We are not so surprised to learn of the high rates of suicide in urban Japan where community has broken down and individual alienation is high. However, the countryside, where the traditional values of Japan are supposedly preserved, struggles with this problem as well. With the depopulation of rural areas in Japan, suicide related to solitude, especially among the elderly living in depopulated mountainous regions, is high. However, Rev. Hakamata notes that suicide is common among old people who don't just live alone but also live with their families. Rev. Hakamata comments that, "In the countryside as well, human relationships have become fractured. For example, farm work is no longer done cooperatively. Each family works in a different company. Children have become fewer, and in these households,

children aren't disciplined. The real meaning is that there is no connection across generations." In Japan, technology has become relatively ubiquitous, and those in rural areas tend to spend as much time by themselves with their cell phones, TVs and computers as urban people. In the countryside, the space between houses and communities and the reliance on automobiles actually increase the lack of physical connection among people.

In his village, Rev. Hakamata leads a group residents called the Thinking about Our Hearts and Lives Association *(kokoro-to inochi-wo kangaeru kai)*, which consists of 28 members. In 2003, they established a café called *Yottetamore* in the back of the city hall in the lobby of the Three Generations Exchange Center. In this age where Starbucks and other such high end cafés can be found in practically every rail station and on every corner in the cities, it is a statement about life in this region that there is not even a single café in Fujisato-cho. The *Yottetamore* café with its modern yet warm and very inviting ambience thus provides not only a place to talk about problems but simply to get a good cup of coffee. The purpose has been to provide a place where anyone can freely get together to talk. Rev. Hakamata comments that, "Whoever comes here will find someone who will listen to them carefully. People know that once a week at this place there will be someone that will surely give them some mental support."

Our final profile in this short essay is of Rev. Jotetsu Nemoto, the abbot of Daizen-ji, a Rinzai Zen temple in a rural region of Gifu in central Japan. Rev. Nemoto represents yet another totally different background and approach to the suicide issue. Rev. Nemoto dropped out of one of the top universities in Japan to eventually ordain in the strict monastic tradition of Rinzai Zen. After four years of living in such a monastic setting, Rev. Nemoto came back out into the world to search for his place in society again. Part of his re-integration experience was working part time in a MacDonald's on the west side of Tokyo, and this put him on the front line of alienated, urban Japanese youth.

Rev. Nemoto found that many expressed doubts or little hope about their futures and what to do after graduating school. He remarks, "They really have no hopes, and I discussed this with them. There is this gap between what they feel they are and can do and what they are expected to be like as a model person." At this point, Rev. Nemoto began to visit and write comments on internet sites created by young people who had some connection to suicide. In 2004 with the various people he had met through his web surfing, he created a "community group" on the internet called "Those Who Want to Die" *(shi-ni tai hito)*. It was a support group where suicidal people who didn't want to be by themselves could talk about any kind of thing from daily living to death. They also sometimes got together, to talk face to face or to visit famous places where people like to commit suicide, sometimes to chant and pray for the dead. Besides this basic e-mail work, Rev. Nemoto has developed some unique spiritual practices using the internet, like e-mail sutra copying. Rev. Nemoto also uses the conference call capabilities of the software called Skype to create a virtual Zen meditation practice session.

The impressive aspect of this general movement of priests to deal with the issue of suicide is that no one is really championing a single proper method or approach to engaging this work. Each priest has their own unique background and abilities and each of them is engaging in the way that works best for him. The one common feature that does arise in all the priests we've surveyed thus far is the emphasis in counseling on deep listening and creating close personal relationship. This is a practice inherent in the Buddhist practice tradition but it also a very basic human competency. Through these "suicide priests", we can gain a deeper insight into the potentials for a robust and authentic socially engaged Buddhist movement in Japan; that is a movement which deals with the real and pressing suffering of the people on the ground and which also confronts these problems on a structural level. It is also remarkable that the idea of socially engaged Buddhism is now gaining interest at the center of the major denominations which are struggling with managing the future of their temples. By providing various human services to the people, they see how they may be able to revive their social role and re-establish themselves in the 21st century.

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Globalization and Spiritual Traditions, 8th Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue

Dedicated to David Chappell (1940-2004)

Amidst tea gardens planted on verdant hills of southeastern Taipei, Taiwan, at a local trailhead is the campus of National Chengchi University — co-host to the 8th Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue International Conference featuring Globalization and Spiritual Traditions, June 11th-13th, 2008. Scholars of religions worldwide convened to share their thoughts on how people could understand each other *with their own faith*. Each belief system one adheres to has the seeds for comprehending other realities, yet most people dwell in their own faith as truth. Once people enter your own beliefs in depth, the adherent's religion broadens to a paradigm for humanity as a philosophy of tolerance and compassion. Interfaith begins with this profound faith as a vehicle for universal humanitarian comprehension.



My entry into large-scale interfaith dialogues was with Ven H. Ratanasara (Sri Lanka) — as we were delegates rekindling the Parliament of the World's Religions (September 11th-27th, 1893) a century later with the 2nd Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions also held as the first one in Chicago, August 28th-September 4th, 1993. Eight thousand people attended representing 125 religions for interfaith discussion resulting in the declaration *Towards a Global Ethic*.

Early interfaith commitment became increasingly important by the pursuits of a socially engaged professor of religion at the University of Hawaii — David Chappell (USA — Canadian born) who initiated the Journal of *Buddhist-Christian Studies* in 1981, and subsequently the Buddhist-Christian Society (1987). Based on Prof Chappell's involvement in a 1994 UNESCO interfaith conference on the theme of religions contributing to peace, he edited *Buddhist Peacework: Creating Cultures of Peace* (2001). As a social-historian of comparative religion, Prof Chappell reached out for Buddhist-Christian interfaith tolerance recognition and worked with Ven Hsin Tao (Taiwan) to help initiate Buddhist-Muslim dialogues in conference series. In 2004 David Chappell passed away at 64. I spoke with him just before that time where he was teaching comparative religion studies at Soka University of America in Aliso Viejoat, Southern California. We discussed at length the beauty of young students becoming engaged with interfaith as a basis for globalization through understanding cross-cultural spiritual beliefs.

Why understand other religions? This is a dilemma in the process of globalization through the ages as observed by conference delegate Michael von Brück (Germany). Religions are the underlying ethical beliefs in our globalization, and some people try earnestly to dialogue for comprehending other faiths to reach peaceful solutions to perceived differences and what constitutes religion. A conference speaker John Berthrong (USA) argued Confucianism deemed by most scholars not to

be classified as a religion has the trappings at certain levels of a *bona fide* belief system sourced from China. What are religions? The Parliament of World Religions welcomes a multitude — of which they are mostly glossed over by a select number dominant religions in the name of the Holy Book (Bible) as Western Middle-Eastern — Judaic - Christian - Islamic, and Eastern religions — Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Daoism, Shinto — and extinct religions such as existed in ancient Egypt and Mayan civilizations. These are the categories of Ven Hsin Tao's Museum of World Religions in Taiwan. Of these religions, Buddhist and Islamic (including Judaic Christian) beliefs are important for global understanding in terms of the millions of world adherents, especially in Asia. Buddhist-Muslim dialogue represents world religions of supposed oppositions, yet mutual discussion opens layers of commonality with culturally specific attitudes.

President Se-Hwa Wu of National Chengchi University — opened the conference dialogue introducing the event's five themes and citing Taiwan as an example for having a range of belief systems coexisting peacefully. The first theme considered the effects of globalization on the world's spiritual traditions. A second theme looked at religious pluralities of multiple religious identities. A third theme engaged spiritual practice and socio-ecological questions. A fourth theme examined religious formation in a complex pluralistic world encouraging leadership to work towards the promotion of peace and justice. A fifth theme specifically considered Buddhist-Muslim dialogue for



creatively harnessing their spiritual treasures for peace and harmony, and to avoid conflict and violence.

At the conference Hsiang-Chou Yo (Taiwan) pointed out how Buddhists contribute for social and humanistic transformation in modern society integrating economics, politics, and the environment. Prof Yo offered the experience of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) founded by Sulak Sivaraksa in 1989 and the recent Taiwan 2007 INEB Conference held at Hongshi Buddhist College for dialogue on spiritual practice and socially engaged commitments. For Islam — Marcia Hermansen (USA) traced the religion's globalization from Morocco to Indonesia interacting with plural local customs and beliefs for centuries.

The many conference interfaith participants shared their academic and personal endeavors at the campus of National Chengchi University (June 11th-12th) and Museum of World Religions (June 13th). Organization and support came from the College of International Affairs of National Chengchi University, Museum of World Religions, UNESCO, The Elijah Interfaith Institute, and Global Family for Love and Peace.

Buddhist-Muslim dialogues guided by Ven Hsin Tao for "getting to know each other" were initially launched at Columbia University, New York, in March 2002. Since then interfaith conferences proceeded to Malaysia (May 2002), Indonesia (July 2002), France at UNESCO Paris (May 2003), Spain at the Parliament of the World's Religions (July 2004), Morocco (November 2005), China (October 2006), and Taiwan (June 2008). The 9th Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue is entitled "Toward a Global Family" at the United Nations, New York, September 3rd-4th, 2008.

Thanks to Ven Hsin Tao and David Chappell our mutual interfaith dialogue has emerged committed to facilitating world peace.

Prof *David Blundell* teaches cross-culturally on languages and belief systems at universities in Taiwan, Sri Lanka, India, and the USA.

Buddhism in India

Introduction: Buddha and his early disciple's period.

We all know that Buddhism starts with the Buddha's experience of enlightenment under the bodhi tree some 2,500 years ago in a place called Buddhagaya in the present state of Bihar in northern India. He gained enlightenment at the age of 35, taught for about 40 years, and gained *Parinirvana* at the age of 80. After the Buddha's passing away, Buddhism continued to develop in India for roughly 1,500 years after the first one hundred years covered by the life of the Buddha and his immediate disciples.

The development of 'three *Yanas*'

These fifteen-hundred years can be roughly divided into three great phases of development of Buddhism in India. The first five hundred years of development is generally known as *Hinayana* Buddhism, which holds the *Arahanta* ideal, the ideal of individual enlightenment. The ideal of gaining *Nirvana* for oneself was not concerned with helping other people, which in fact was the original ideal of Buddha himself. *Hinayana* Buddhism was mainly responsible for the development of *Abhidharma* or higher teaching on mind's functioning and analyzing in great details.

The second great phase of development of Buddhism was generally known as *Mahayana* Buddhism. The ideal of *Mahayana* is one of *Boddhisatva*, a being striving to gain enlightenment not only for oneself but for all sentient beings. The Bodhisattva realizes that the enlightenment of one is inseparable from the enlightenment of



all.

The third phase of development of Buddhism is generally known as *Vajrayana* Buddhism. The ideal of *Vajrayana* is to become a *'Siddha'*, which literally means the perfect one. The followers of *Vajrayana* practice esoteric meditation and symbolic rituals to gain enlightenment within this lifetime. Although we speak of these three *Yanas* in this way one must not imagine them as completely exclusive. The Mahayana took up many elements from *Hinayana* and the *Vajrayana* took up many elements not only of *Hinayana* but also of *Mahayana*.

The Revolution and the Counter-Revolution.

During this period Buddhism also spread to other parts of the Asian continent such as east and central Asia, China, Japan, Tibet and the islands of Java and Sumatra. But while Buddhism was taking hold outside it was losing ground in India itself. By the end of the 12th century A.D. Buddhism practically declined in India. There were so many reasons behind its disappearance. Some of the reasons were a revival of Brahmanism; a revived Hinduism, which borrowed certain things from Buddhism, and the over-generalization of Buddhism in the monasteries, and also partly because of the Islamic invasions as result of that many Buddhist monasteries were destroyed, especially Nalanda. Buddhism gradually disappeared from India and was replaced by a revived orthodox Hinduism.

Revival of Buddhism in India.

In the 19th century Buddhism was virtually extinct from India, leaving aside around 20,000 Buddhists in eastern Bengal and Assam. There was also little influence from Theosophical Society and Dharmapala's effort to restore Mahaboddhi Temple together with other Buddhist Sights under the auspicious of Mahaboddhi Society. He built many other *Viharas* including Sarnath. Kripasarana Mahsthavira's contribution was also noticeable in founding the *Bengal Buddhist Association* in Calcutta. He was instrumental in uniting Bengal and north-eastern Indian Buddhists. He also built up many other branches in Shimla, Ranchi, Shillong, Darjeeling and few other places. In the mid 19th century a few intellectuals who supported egalitarian movements looked at Buddhism as an alternative to orthodox Hinduism.

Since the 1950's the number of Buddhists increased dramatically. The arrival of Tibetan refugees, which was due to China's invasion of Tibet, was a very important event. Another important phase was when the north-eastern region of Sikkim was incorporated into

India in 1975 with a predominantly Buddhist population. The most important of all was mass conversion of half a million untouchables (Dalits) under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar in 1956. Dr. Ambedkar dedicated his life to eradicate untouchablity. He became a great leader in politics, did lots of work in law education and economics to bring about great changes for untouchables and other people in India in all those areas. Now Dalits are embracing Buddhism all over India. They think that Buddhism is the best way out of their terrible state of oppression. For them Buddhism is a path to achieve dignity, self respect and freedom from the hell of caste.

Contemporary Buddhist movement in India.

At present, there are many different Buddhist organizations in India. I could only give a glimpse of a few nationwide important movements such as, *Bhikkhu* Sangha, Vippasana meditation group, *Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana* and groups of Tibetan refugees in Dharamsala and other parts of India.

One of the very widely known Buddhist groups is the Vippasana meditation center which was inspired by S.N. Goenka. There are many Vippasana centers under the guidance of Venerable S.N.Goenka in many parts of the world including India. They are spread throughout India mostly situated close to big cities. They offer ten-day meditation course for beginners and some courses for advanced students and for facilitators. It provides all facilities free of charge. They mainly depend on beneficiaries' donation. People volunteer in many different ways to help run centers. They derive their inspiration from vippasana meditation practice in Theravada school of Buddhism. S.N. Goenka says that the Buddha did not teach any sect, so he remains non-sectarian and his meditation center is open for all. They emphasize on breathing practice and then take a close look on human nature according to *Vippasana* meditation tradition.

Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana (TBMSG) is one of the biggest Buddhist movements in the state of Maharastra and they also have centers in other parts of India such as Gujarat, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh Goa etc. TBMSG is the Indian wing of the *Friends of the Western Buddhist Order* (FWBO), whose members have taken refuge to three jewels and have also taken ten precepts from Ven.Sangharakshita or his senior disciples. The order is central to this new Buddhist movement. The FWBO was founded in 1979 by Venerable Sangharakshita, an English Buddhist who had lived in India for 20 years until 1964. During this time he became well known and appreciated by Dr. Ambedkar. After the latter's death Sangharakshita did what he could to help the new Buddhist movement in India to survive and grow. TBMSG is actively involved in social work for dalit community in different parts of India. They run many social, educational and developmental projects for children, youth, women and elders through hostels, pre-primary schools, libraries, sewing classes, crèche, medical projects, cultural projects, sports, adult literacy classes, meditation courses, comparative exam training centers, karate classes etc. They have retreat centers which offer courses in Buddhist studies and spiritual practices such as meditation, spiritual friendship, community life and other projects. They are also involved in relief work in natural disasters and running trainings for NGO's.

Broadly speaking, we can find all forms of Buddhism in India today. We find Theravada Buddhists in form of *Bhikkhu* Sangha and other Theravada Buddhist organizations, Mahayana Buddhist monastery especially in Buddhagaya and some other parts of India. We also have H.H. the Dalai Lama and Tibetan refugees in many parts of India representing Tibetan Buddhism. After Dr. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism, we find a large number of Ambedkarite Buddhists, who in fact believe in Navayana (Neo-Buddhism). There are so many Buddhist organizations involved in social, political and economical development of *Dalit* people. We find people who follow *Thich Nhat Hanh* and other Buddhist teachers in big cities such as Mumbai, Delhi etc. There are also many Osho Meditation centers. It is not possible to mention all of them on the present occasion.

I am very happy to see these changes taking place in India. Within the last five decades great changes have taken place in the religious life of India. I believe that India will only develop when it will overcome its major form of discrimination of caste and transform each individual's mind through spirituality. I am very hopeful about the future of Buddhism in India. To me, it would not be surprising to see Buddhism flourishing again in its birth land and bring about great social changes which Dr. Ambedkar had envisioned during his lifetime.

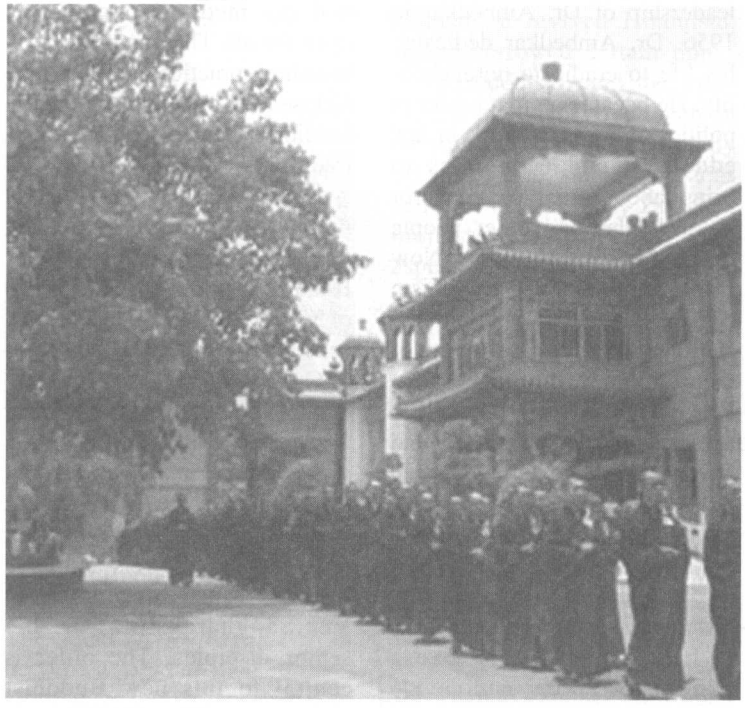
Deepak Dhammadarshi

Taiwan:
Out of the Monastery, Into the Crowds

In Taiwan, being a Buddhist increasingly means working to change society for the better.

Shih Chao-hwei isn't your typical Buddhist nun. She has fought publicly for animal rights, helping enact a 1998 ban on horse racing in Taiwan. She has argued forcefully against the "divine pig" practice, in which pigs are raised to grotesque proportions and then slaughtered to honor Hakka ancestors. And she has lobbied hard for laws to limit abortion.

Her latest cause: blocking casinos. President Ma Ying-jeou's government has signaled its willingness to allow gambling on outlying islands like Penghu. If Shih gets her way though, that will never happen.



Many Buddhist monks and nuns remove themselves from the hurly-burly of society by retreating to meditate in remote monasteries. But Shih has done just the opposite. She is one of the most visible, aggressive practitioners of what some call "engaged Buddhism"—a socially (and sometimes, politically) active strain of Buddhism that in recent years has been gaining more adherents in Taiwan and throughout Asia.

"Meditation is just the training of the spirit," she says. "But we must put that training into practice—we must transfer it to society."

Behind that imperative is a philosophical struggle within Buddhism, between those who prioritize personal liberation and those who prioritize social change. "Most Buddhists only concern themselves with achieving inner harmony, or maybe helping people who are facing difficulties," Shih says. "But I think that's not true harmony ... if you only pay attention to your own welfare, you'll just focus on what you can gain or lose. But if you pay attention to a cause or struggle, you can forget yourself. Then true harmony will occur."

Not all Buddhists would agree, of course. Some object to Shih's brand of in-your-face activism, finding it hard to reconcile with the classical image of Buddhist masters who retreat to remote monasteries to escape the petty desires, struggles and chaos of society.

But Shih's basic philosophy is shared by some of Taiwan's most rapidly growing Buddhist groups, such as Tzu Chi Buddhist Compassion Relief Association and Dharma Drum Mountain. Although those two groups avoid Shih's brand of political activism, they too preach social engagement as a means of attaining Buddha's goals.

Receptive Audience

That message is finding a receptive audience. According to Ministry of the Interior officials, in 2006, there were more than 8 million Buddhists in Taiwan, up sharply from the 5.5 million in 2001. It is hard to know how many of those count as "engaged Buddhists" or whether they specifically joined Buddhist organizations to engage in social activism. But experts say most of the increase is explained by Taiwanese who are ditching the island's traditional mishmash of Taoist, Buddhist and folk beliefs and instead joining more institutionalized

groups—especially "engaged" Buddhist groups. Dharma Drum, for example, says its membership has grown tenfold in the last 15 years.

The ideas behind modern-day "engaged Buddhism" have a long pedigree. According to David Schak, a professor at Australia's Griffith University and an expert on Taiwan's activist Buddhists, Taiwan's Buddhist revival traces to Master Tai Xu, a monk who was active in early 20th century mainland China.

Master Tai advocated a sort of Protestant Reformation for Buddhism, arguing that monks and nuns should get out of the monasteries and become more engaged with society. Tai himself became politically engaged, serving as a de facto liaison between mainland China's government and Southeast Asia during World War II.

Some of Tai's followers came to Taiwan after the communists seized power in mainland China, where the new regime began harsh crackdowns on organized religion. One of these exiles was Ying Shun, who is seen as the father of modern-day, engaged Buddhism in Taiwan. While advocating social involvement, though, Ying thought Buddhists should not get mixed up directly in politics.

Ying's followers in turn include most of the big names in activist Buddhism in Taiwan today. Among these are the nun Shih, who is also the head of the Life Conservation Association and a professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Hsuan Chuang University; Hsing Yun, the founder of the famous Fo Guang Shan monastery outside Kaohsiung, southern Taiwan; and Cheng Yen, the nun who founded and is the driving force behind the global Buddhist relief group Tzu Chi.

Good Works

Tzu Chi perhaps best exemplifies activist Buddhism in Taiwan. The organization places less emphasis on study of scripture—aside from reading Cheng Yen's aphorisms—and more on good works. Such work is carried out through a massive, global volunteer network, which the group says numbers 10 million worldwide. That network has delivered aid to victims of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, victims of Hurricane Katrina in the United States in 2005 and victims of the earthquake in Sichuan province, mainland China earlier this year.

Behind Tzu Chi's social and relief work is a philosophy that attempts to resolve one of Buddhism's fundamental contradictions, Schak says. "If you look at Buddhism, there's a conflict between cultivating yourself through meditation and study and doing things for other people—applying compassion," Schak says. "With Tzu Chi, there's a kind of 'Nike' ethics there: 'Just do it.' You cultivate yourself by helping others."

Take Lai Rei-ling, 32, who works in the humanitarian development department of the Hualien-based Tzu Chi Foundation. Lai worked in Taiwan's television news media until she was injured in a car accident while doing a story near Hualien. With the help of Tzu Chi's famous "blue angel" volunteers, she recovered at the Tzu Chi hospital. She has been with the organization ever since, and now teaches media skills—including interview skills and film, video and web production—to other Tzu Chi volunteers with the goal of producing positive stories about Taiwan that will be distributed by the organization. Lai says Tzu Chi teaches its members to appreciate how fortunate they are, and that this comes with an obligation to help those who are not as lucky. According to Lai, Master Cheng Yen says this sense of social obligation is a return to the "real" teachings of the Buddha.

From Study to Practice

"Most Buddhists think, 'I pray, so I'm a good Buddhist,'" Lai says. "But according to Master Cheng Yen, Buddha said you can't just study, you must put your study into practice. That's why we [Tzu Chi members] don't focus on studying Buddha—we put into practice what he taught."

Tzu Chi may be best known for its disaster relief, putting Buddhist compassion into real-world practice through donations, medical help and shelter.

After Hurricane Katrina, it committed US$4 million to relief efforts, including providing dental treatment for evacuees in Houston from a mobile dental vehicle. After the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, Tzu Chi delivered 12 tons of food, medical supplies and relief supplies to Aceh province, Indonesia and sent a medical and relief team to Sri Lanka with another two tons of supplies. And after the massive 2006 earthquake in Indonesia, it set up a medical clinic in the Bantul region, which treated 265 patients, and also delivered rice and other supplies.

Dharma Drum, founded in 1989, is a more recent "engaged" Buddhist group that emphasizes education. "Through education, people can see that doing good



deeds is good for oneself," says Susan Chen of Dharma Drum's Department of International Relations and Development. When asked about her organization's brand of engaged Buddhism, Chen says that "in old Buddhist teachings, when you die you go to heaven, to another place. But what we're promoting is that you try to build this paradise on earth."

She and others regularly help the elderly, especially praying for the dying. They run a 24-hour hotline allowing relatives of those near death to request Dharma Drum volunteers to come pray for their loved ones.

Social Impact

Griffith University's Schak says that in Taiwan, the impact of "engaged" Buddhism has been primarily social. Tzu Chi and Fo Guang Shan, another global Taiwan-based Buddhist group, were started in the 1960s and 1970s respectively. They grew along with Taiwan's economic progress and improved higher education.

During the martial law era, Taiwan had laws controlling religion. When martial law was lifted in 1987, Tzu Chi, Fo Guang Shan and other Buddhist organizations boomed. Since then, such groups have been a key driving force behind the rise of Taiwan's civil society amid democratization.

Now, Tzu Chi and Fo Guang Shan are huge, media-savvy organizations. Tzu Chi is known for its regimented hierarchy, while Fo Guang Shan has embraced unconventional public relations methods—radio broadcasts, comic books, megaphones and a theme-park like monastery outside Kaohsiung—to win converts.

Like Tzu Chi, Fo Guang Shan also engages in charity work and disaster relief. It donated ambulances to relief efforts after the Sichuan earthquake in May. It gave all proceeds from its Buddhist choir's tour of the United States to victims of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. It runs orphanages, senior citizens' homes and clinics around the world, as well as mobile medical clinics in remote parts of Taiwan.

Culture and Education

But where charity work is a focus for Tzu Chi, it is not the main priority for Fo Guang Shan. "Culture and education are much more influential than charity programs," says Manho Shih, a Fo Guang Shan nun. "The goal is to learn the Dharma—the teachings of the Buddha—and then apply those teachings in daily life."

Manho Shih says Fo Guang Shan prefers the term "humanistic Buddhism" to describe its brand of faith. But it shares a core philosophy—putting Buddhism's teachings into practice to improve society—with other activist Buddhist groups.

"The thinking is, our mentality should be transcendental, but we should be engaged in mundane affairs—in people's affairs," she says. "In our temple, we emphasize the spirit of the Bodhisattvas [enlightened ones who put off complete personal liberation to help others, similar to "saints" in Christianity]. We emphasize extending a helping hand to people."

For Dharma Drum, as with Tzu Chi, social engagement has limits, though. Both groups insist on steering clear of politics. During the protests against former President Chen Shui-bian in the fall of 2006, for example, Tzu Chi's Cheng Yen specifically instructed followers not to take to the streets to join the so-called "Red Shirt Army." For Dharma Drum, it is also important to stay above the political fray. "We don't get involved in any politics, because religion shouldn't be manipulated by politicians," Susan Chen says.

Not so for Master Hsing Yun, the founder of Fo Guang Shan, who is one Buddhist leader who has dabbled in politics. During the 2006 anti-Chen protests, for example, he publicly urged the president to step down. In 1996, Fo Guang Shan found itself at the center of a political scandal in the

United States when controversy erupted over campaign donations to the US Democratic Party after then Vice President Al Gore had lunch at the Hsi Lai Temple outside Los Angeles—a Fo Guang Shan branch temple.

Political Involvement

There have been other instances of political involvement. A Buddhist monk ran for president in Taiwan in 1996 but got embarrassingly low support. And in the run-up to the 2000 presidential election, Master Wei Chueh, the founder of Chung Tai Chan Monastery in central Taiwan, urged people to vote for the Kuomintang (KMT). In the 2004 presidential election, Wei condemned then President Chen Shui-bian for de-emphasizing Chinese culture in Taiwan and for wrecking the economy. (Chen won both times, and the master later stepped down from a leadership position.)

The Life Conservation Association's Shih Chao-wei may be the most overtly political of Taiwan's engaged Buddhists. She unapologetically admits that she has broken with her one-time master, Ying Shun, in entering the political arena. But for Shih, engaging in political struggle is the only way to build a society that better reflects Buddhist compassion toward all living things.

Not that she has always succeeded. In battling the "divine pig" practice, for example, Shih says her organization has come up against fierce resistance from conservative Hakkas. "They say we don't respect their traditions," Shih says. "They say, 'you're Buddhist, we're Taoists, and you shouldn't use your religious ideas to oppose our actions.' So the problem is very complex, and we haven't succeeded yet."

Shih's political engagement has also led to deep disappointment. Before the 2000 presidential election, she supported Chen Shui-bian because she viewed his Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) as being more pro-environment than the KMT. She also thought a transfer of power would be good for Taiwan after 50 years of KMT rule.

But now, she says, "in terms of the environment, the DPP hasn't done a good job." So in elections earlier this year, she decided not to endorse either party, because "their stances don't have much connection with our issues."

"Now we support issues, we don't support specific politicians or parties," Shih says. But if Shih sounds jaded by her experience with partisan politics, her enthusiasm for social change is undiminished. Increasingly, it seems, that is also true for more and more of Taiwan's Buddhists.

Jonathan Adams
Taiwan Review, 01/12/2008

Dharma Index for Ethical Business

Corporate Social Responsibility has some universal features as well as a cultural and religious context. In the Indian tradition the pursuit of wealth or "artha" and pleasure or "kama" is balanced and guided by dharma or ethical living, moral duties as well as cosmic harmony (which implies harmony with the global environment). Recently with the rise of the huge middle class and rapid economic growth the unbridled pursuit of wealth and consumerism is prevailing over dharma. Similarly in China and South East and East Asia, which were traditionally influenced by Buddhist values, fast economic growth is leading to some genuine development but also to corruption, environmental destruction and mindless consumerism. Businesses and investors who feel socially and ethically concerned do not always have well defined alternative evaluative norms and options. The Dow Jones Dharma Index tries to provide such an alternative option.

Launched in the beginning of 2008, the Dow Jones Dharma Index is the world's first index tracking the financial performance of companies around that world that comply with dharmic (or Hindu and Buddhist) principles. The Index was the result of collaboration between Dharma Investments and Dow Jones Indexes. The Index uniquely provides asset managers reliable and objective benchmarks to manage portfolios compliant with dharmic principles. The Index was made possible after extensive research and collaboration across a diverse group of spiritual leaders, academics and community figureheads. The DJDI is guided by an Ethical Principles document signed by 23 leading Hindu/Buddhist academics,

blessed by the most eminent spiritual leaders, and monitored semi-annually by the Supervisory Board. Licenses for the Index will be distributed to asset managers around the world managing a variety of financial products such as mutual funds.

The word 'dharma' is used by all Indian and other Asian traditions in diverse ways. For the purposes of this Index, dharma particularly relates to values in Hinduism and Buddhism, with some reference to Sikhism and Jainism. Key Hindu concepts highlighted as critical for a dharmic investment ethics includes ahimsa (non-violence or non-aggression) and loka-samgraha (protection of the world). Of particular importance in Buddhism for ethical investment are the ideals of loving kindness (metta), compassion (karuna), and non-violence (ahimsa). It must be added that loving kindness and nonviolence in both traditions are also directed towards all sentient beings and even nature.

The Dow Jones Dharma Index includes five indices: one global and one each for the USA, India, the UK, and Japan. Potential investments are screened according to dharma-based guidelines including corporate governance, and social and environmental impact. They reward companies that have worked to better the welfare of the world, whether in terms of environmental preservation, sustainability, or acting for the good of society, and they exclude companies that have negative impacts in any of these areas.

Dow Jones has launched "dharma indices" to track the stocks of companies that observe the values of dharma-based religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. The Dow Jones Dharma Index is the first to measure dharma-compliant stocks and now track more than 3,400 companies globally, including about 1,000 in the United States, according to the company. In addition to the global index, Dow Jones has created dharma indexes for the United States, Britain, Japan and India.

Nitesh Gor, chief executive of Dharma Investments says that "The principle of dharma contains precepts relevant to good conduct, but also the implicit requirement of mindfulness about the sources of wealth — and therefore responsible investing". Advisory committees of religious leaders and scholars will screen and monitor companies' policies on the environment, corporate governance, labor relations and human rights, among other criteria. Companies from business sectors deemed un-dharmic, such as weapons manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, casinos and alcohol, are barred from the index. Bhakti Charu Swami of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness notes, "If one only considers the profit motive of an investment without recognizing how that profit was generated, one may unknowingly commit sinful activity. Every link in the entire chain of events is liable for the results."

Socially responsible investing now encompasses about 10 percent of the $24 trillion U.S. investment marketplace, according to the Washington-based Social Investment Forum. Apart from the obvious appeal to Hindu/Buddhist investors, the Indexes will also appeal to non faith-based ethical investors. This is due to the comprehensive exclusion of traditional sin sectors, in combination with environmental, corporate governance and animal testing screens.

There is a need promote the Dharma Index in Asia and elsewhere particularly in times of economic malaise on the one hand and the unethical image which many business's have. It will provide a culturally rooted valuation to judge ethically good investment. Such an Index can be sometimes more effective than all the government rules and regulations. It provides real options in a morally cynical world.

Prahlad Singh Shekhawat

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The Tenth Cycle Birthday Anniversary of Sathirakoses

Sathirakoses was the pseudonym of Phya Anuman Rajadhon (Yong). A foundation bearing his name was established on 14 December 1968 when he reached his 80th birthday. From its inception, the Foundation's primary objective was to help writers and painters cultivate their talents without having to compromise themselves by succumbing to socioeconomic dictates or conditions; that is, by turning into commercial artists. Additionally, the Foundation aimed to provide moral as well as financial support to sick and ageing artists who were no longer able to take care of themselves or materialize their creativity.

In his writings, Sathirakoses often collaborated with Nagapradipa, which was the pen name of Phra Saraprasert (Tree). Both pen names came from their last names. Subsequently, however, the former had to change his last name to the title conferred to him by the king since he was working as a civil servant in the Office of the Prime Minister. Field Marshal Phibunsongkram the then prime minister also changed his last name from Khitasangha to the title conferred by the king despite the fact that he had ordered the abolishment of all royal conferred titles — Khun, Luang, Phra, Phya, and Chao Phya.

The aforementioned Foundation eventually expanded its name to become Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa (hereafter SNF) in order to preserve the pseudonyms of both giant figures in the Thai literary world. Also expanded were the Foundation's objectives and range of activities. They fall under the rubric of education or more specifically alternative/non-mainstream education, focusing on the cultivation of the Three-fold training of morality, mindfulness and wisdom, which is holistic as opposed to compartmentalized like mainstream (Western) education.

Those interested in learning about SNF's activities in the past 40 years can refer to websites such as www.sulak-sivaraksa.org, www.sivaraksa.com and www.semsikkha.org and publications such as *Pacarayasara, Seeds of Peace, 35 Years of Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation*, etc.

As far as Sathirakoses is concerned, SNF in conjunction with the Thai government commemorated his centennial birthday anniversary by organizing major nationwide ceremonies held on 14 December 1988 in Bangkok as well as many other provinces. Exhibitions on his life and work were held nationally and internationally—in Europe, the United States, Russia, Mongolia, China, India, Japan, etc. His writings were translated into numerous foreign languages. UNESCO had also recognized Sathirakoses' talents and declared him one of the world's leading personalities.

The commemoration of Sathirakoses' centenary was held yearlong in order to overlap with Nagapradipa's 100th birthday anniversary. Nagapradipa however was unfortunate to suffer a premature death, and his influence was not as extensive as Sathirakoses'. Nagapradipa's main impacts were limited to the study of the Thai and Pali languages. Sathirakoses on the other hand had served as a main pillar of both Silpakorn University and the Royal Institute. He also became Director General of the Fine Arts Department and acted as a crucial linchpin between traditional Thai arts and modern arts, enabling the two to coexist harmoniously in the country. Prior to his intervention, Thai traditional arts were denigrated and eclipsed in the name of nationalism and modernism fanned by the new authoritarian leaders.

Sathirakoses possessed amazing administrative skills. He did not emphasize the achievement of personal success and shunned the limelight. He was always ready to sincerely praise his subordinates and friends—never fearing that their achievements would eclipse his reputation.

In lengthy exegeses Sathirakoses openly admired the literary skills of Nagapradipa who was also his *kalyanamitta*. He contended that Nagapradipa's literary skills were superior to his. At times he also criticized the latter in passing.

He also respected all his superiors at the Thai Customs Department such as Prince Phrompong Atthiraj (the Director-General who was also blind), William Nunn and Norman Maxwell. He treated his colleagues and subordinates with kindness and generosity and served as a role model for everyone in terms of honesty, diligence, perseverance, and simplicity. If his subordinates wanted to tap on his knowledge or expertise, he was more than

willing to teach them—including academic subjects that were forbidden during Absolutism such as economics. Bunchana Atthakorn interestingly revealed this latter point. Most people did not know that he admired Tom Paine's The *Rights of Man*.

When he moved to the Fine Arts Department he was surrounded by experts from the world of the arts and culture—a field in which he had little background. He learned a lot from them and regularly gave them moral support. Not only that! He also found the means to support them concretely in various ways (often done furtively). Individual artists who benefited from Sathirakoses' support included Silpa Bhirasri, Phra Chen-Duriyang, Dhanit Yupho, and Maha Sila Viravong (from Laos). Maha Sila Viravong completed his magnum opus while working at the Fine Arts Department.

It seems that he was compelled to transfer from the Fine Arts Department to work in the Office of the Prime Minister. There the Director General envied him (of course Sathirakoses did not say this directly). Working under a military dictator must also have been hard for Sathirakoses. His deft and clever maneuvers enabled him to 'survive' in his new position.

The prime minister asserted that King Videharaja in the *Mahosatha Jataka* has four advisers. Likewise, he also had four, namely: Phya Anuman Rajadhon (Yong), Luang Wichien Paedyakom (Thien), Phra Rachathamnithes (Pian), and Luang Saranuprapun (Nuan). Sathirakoses never openly admitted it, but he was close to the other three advisers (all virtually unknown these days). It appears that Sathirakoses was held in esteem by the prime minister, judging from the fact that he was able to convince the PM to see the virtue of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab (whom the PM hated) and to publish the latter's *Nithan Borankadee* (Historical Tales) as a commemorative book to be distributed at the Prince's funeral ceremony.

Sathirakoses also held Prince Narisaranuwattiwong in great respect. He wrote to the Prince asking for knowledge concerning Thai studies, especially the Thai arts, and advices on royal matters. The Prince soon admired and perceived Sathirakoses as "a fellow student," and they regularly corresponded with each other. Their correspondence can be witnessed in *Bun Thuek Rueng Kwam Rue Tang Tang* [Notes on Various Kinds of Knowledge], which has served as an important reference for Thai studies.

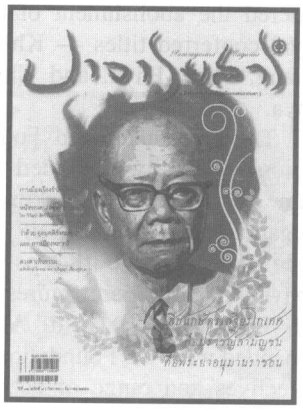
Among the masterpieces of Sathirakoses include *Hitopades, Kamanita and Lutti Khong Puean* (with Nagapradipa). When Nagapradipa passed away, Sathirakoses continued producing several other important works such as *Some Traditions of the Thai*. He carefully collected data from various Thai cultures and traditions; many of which were in decline. He dealt with a wide range of issues—marriage, construction of houses, and lives of farmers and temple inhabitants (despite the fact that he had neither planted rice nor been ordained as novice before). He wrote about the subjects of his study with great clarity and precision. In writing *Lutti Khong Puean* (Friends' Religions) he relied on both Thai and English sources and sought direct knowledge from numerous religious leaders.

As for family life, he respected his parents and teachers. He nurtured well his children, grandchildren, and siblings. He led a simple but not meager existence. He was rich in generosity and loving-kindness. And, it should be noted, he had only one wife—at a time when polygamy was widely practiced in society. She became his life partner.

He well understood and had no illusions about the traditions and ceremonies of the kingdom. He did not reject modernity. Nor did he slavishly follow modern trends. In short, we can learn a lot from his way of life to benefit contemporary society and the future generation.

Some of the things he wrote or translated (with or without Nagapradipa) may now be outdated, but most of them are still worthy of reading—for obtaining knowledge as well as for appreciating their literary beauty. They will help guide us to the truth, especially in terms of our culture(s) and ancestors. Bridges can also be drawn between Sathirakoses' works and Chinese studies and Indian studies.

It has now been more than four decades since Sathirakoses passed away. On the occasion of his tenth cycle birthday anniversary on 14 December 2008, we should attempt to know him better by closely studying his literary and anthropological works as well as by emulating his way of life.



Gross National Happiness Creates a Sensation in Brazil

What happened in Brazil recently superseded all expectations. When Dasho Karma Ura and Michael Pennock were invited to participate in a series of conferences about Gross National Happiness in São Paulo, a few hundred people were expected to attend. To the organizers' mounting astonishment, as the days and weeks passed, the news of the coming events reverberated throughout countless networks, verbally and electronically, like a positive virus, and many people received the announcement five times, from five different sources. GNH became a positive virus in cyberspace!

By the time the various events took place, from the 28th of October to the 2nd of November, more than 2000 seats had been booked, and when the visitors arrived in Brazil — the Bhutanese delegation composed of Dasho Karma Ura and Dorji Penjore of the Centre for Bhutan Studies and Rinzin Dorji of the Gross National Happiness Commission, and Population Health Epidemiologist Michael Pennock from Canada — there was a total waiting list of hundreds of people.

After a day of preparation at the Ecovillage of the Future Vision Institute which organized the conferences, the programs began with a presentation at the Banco Real — Santander, one of the largest banks in Brazil and world renowned for its commitment to sustainability. The major event took place in a grand auditorium whose 1000 seats were completely reserved one week before the event! The program was opened by the São Paulo Minister of the Environment, who has publicly pledged to apply GNH in this largest city of the world, with its population (including satellite cities) of 25 million inhabitants. "In this way São Paulo can contribute to the international effort to apply GNH in practice," the Minister stated.

An extra dose of happiness was provided by the "Doctors of Joy", a group of clowns who bring happiness to children in cancer wards throughout the country. The lecture of Dasho Karma Ura, the Director of the Centre for Bhutan Studies, described the origin, philosophy and statistical application of GNH in Bhutan, and then psychologist Susan Andrews, the coordinator of GNH in Brazil, spoke about the new Science of Hedonics, the latest scientific research on happiness and the illusion of the "American Dream". Michael Pennock, who spent three months in Bhutan helping to prepare the GNH survey, lectured on the application of GNH in Canada and the western world, and Brazilian economist Ladislaw Dowbor explained the deficiencies of GNP and the need for a new path to progress.

Before the event, the visitors were pratically mobbed by a battalion of television crews and press reporters, and after 5 hours of non-stop interviews, the news of GNH received full page coverage in the major newspapers, magazines and sites of Brazil. The event was attended by more than 50 journalists.

Further events were hosted by the Catholic University of São Paulo and the University of Campinas, considered to be the best and most progressive universities in Brazil. In all the lectures, what most aroused the interest of the public was the conjunction of objective and subjective approaches developed by the Centre for Bhutan Studies, its careful elaboration of indices which guide the implementation of all development programs in Bhutan, and the application of GNH in the west, especially in Canada.

Finally the whole group of lecturers returned to the Future Vision Ecovillage to a weekend seminar program, where they advised a select group of 200 Brazilian mayors, business people, NGO leaders, journalists and opinion-makers on the implementation of GNH in Brazil. The inspiration of the group was inexpressible. As someone commented, now Brazilians have another motive to be happy - not only carnival and football, and not only because their country is becoming a major superpower in the world, with its vast resources of water and energy, food and forests. The GNH events mobilized a far more profound source of satisfaction — the application of a new paradigm for progress which takes into account not only material, external factors, but also the subtle and most precious aspects of life: trust and generosity, interpersonal harmony, and inner peace.

Even after the events, the organizers are receiving a

shower of emails from people all over the country, with ideas, suggestions, and actions plans to apply GNH in their areas. No one could have expected this. It seems, as French philosopher Victor Hugo once said, "There is no more powerful force in the world than an idea whose time has come."

Susan Andrews,
GNH Coordinator Brazil

GNH Movement Spreads

Soon after the coronation of the new King of Bhutan H.M. Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck early in November 2008, the 4th international conference on Gross National Happiness will was held in Thimphu, the capital of the country. The King said in his coronation address: "Throughout my reign, I will never rule you as a king. I will protect you as a parent, care for you as a brother, and serve you as a son. I shall give you everything and keep nothing...".

Although the GNH exercise in Bhutan is was the point that, after meticulous preparations, the "GNH Index" was launched at the conference, the words of the King exemplify that GNH is not just about indicators, it is about inspiration and a vision on human development.

In Brazil, a visit of a Bhutanese delegation organized by the Future Vision Ecovillage turned out to become a lecture tour with at times more than thousand people eager to know about Gross National Happiness. Professor Swee-Hin Toh, INEB Executive Committee member from Australia, reports that great interest is also shown in Australia for 'GNH'.

In Thailand we are now working on a project supported by the Thailand Research Fund that asked us to organize a series of workshops and public lectures on the subject and formulate a possible synthesis between a variety of concepts for alternative development in order to empower initiatives to create added value by networking and new modes of cooperation.

In the first workshop, held at SASIN business school, we started our experiment in multi-stakeholder dialogue with Jon Ungpakorn for the NGO sector, Prida Tiasuwan, responsible business, senator Rosana Tositrakul reviewing government and Ajarn Sulak as an independent spiritual leader. The meeting titled 'Today's Crisis. Hidden Opportunities for Change' coincided with the occupation of Government House in Bangkok by the PAD. By now, we not only are speaking about the political crisis in Thailand, but a global financial breakdown and repeated warnings, among other by the WWF, for an ongoing environmental crisis.

In December there was a meeting in Bangkok with venerable Matthieu Ricard who is a French Tibetan monk who publishes the bestseller *Happiness. A guide to life's most important skill* which was presented to him the Thai edition during his visit.

Also in December Dr. Apichai Puntasen tried to organize the second conference on Buddhist Economics in Ubon Ratchathani University, but has to postpone due to the PAD's closing all airports in Bangkok.

In 2009 we intend to intensify the series with presentations of Schumacher College Think Tank pioneers Satish Kumar and Vandada Shiva, as well as members of the French commission on Economic Perfomance and Social Progress chaired by Nobel economist Dr. Joseph Stiglitz.

An UN Special Task Force on Reviewing Financial System is also chaired by Joseph Stiglitz and was inaugurated in the UN Assembly by among others the Belgian priest and pioneer of the World Social Forum, Francois Houtart. After heavy lobbying, the task force is occupied by now, however, by technocrats rather than activists. The Schumacher College Think Tank, the Heinrich Boll Foundation initiated 'EcoFair Trade Dialogue' chaired by Wolfgang Sachs, and other initiatives towards change of the economic world order should be offered a platform to counter attempts to wipe the problems that caused the financial meltdown under the carpet and to formulate alternative approaches from a critical holistic perspective.

From GDP-growth driven development we should turn to wellbeing and happiness for all as the core of our aspirations.

Hans van Willenswaard

Transcending the Nationalist Thresholds Toward a Positive Attitude to Burma

"To transcend nationalist history, one needs to nurture the seeds of humanism, rather than nationalism. Nation is fake. The notion that one speaks the same language and belongs to the same nation is false. In contrast, humans are real. All human beings, regardless of language and religion, are fellow beings in suffering!"

On 11 July, panel discussions and a musical event were organized at the Chiengmai University Auditorium to raise funds for the victims of Cyclone Nargis. Entitled *Sixty Days after Cyclone Nargis*, the event featured a keynote speech by Sulak Sivaraksa from the Sathirakoses-Nagpradipa Foundation.

"Thai nationalist history fundamentally stems from the impression that we have never been colonized by westerners. Thus, we look down on our neighboring countries which used to be under colonialist rule. At the same time, we aspire to be just like westerners even though we have so little idea who they are. Conventional westerners pride themselves on their fair skin, and despite many changes until now, a lot of mainstream westerners still hold on to the notion. Thus, this has given rise to nationalism and a contempt for our neighbors, i.e. Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia. Subconsciously we have never overcome our historical grudges against people from Burma in particular for having been defeated by them a couple of times. We have been inflicted with the notion that the Burmese razed Ayutthaya to the ground. A nation defeated in war grows malicious ideas. Similarly, the Americans may have a malicious view toward the Vietnamese since they once lost to them. This will simply make nationalism even worse.

"As we worship westerners, we have been brainwashed by them to hold on to nationalism. Notions such as racism were never found here, but were instilled in us by westerners. Hitler, in particular, insisted that the Germans were Aryan and the Jews were degenerate. In order to differentiate ourselves from others, we have changed the country's name from "Siam" to "Thailand", thinking we are better than them. This is the second ignorance and without addressing it, we shall never overcome nationalist history.

"The ruling class has stuffed into our heads this patriotism, and films such as Sri Suriyothai, Naresuan, *etc, have been made to instil the notion. Luckily, the story of Thao Suranaree, who fought against the Lao rebels during Rama III's reign, has not been made into a film. In other words, we harbor nationalist attitudes against our neighbors and look down on them. Historical biases have been created and perpetuated by the dictatorial ruling class. The Burmese junta made a monument to Bayinnaung with his finger pointing at Siam. It simply helps the dictators. Similarly, the case of Preah Vihear is being used for a similar purpose: to oppress one's own population and to stir up hatred against our neighbors.*

"As stated earlier, to transcend nationalist history, we need to nurture the seeds of humanism, rather than nationalism. With understanding, we can transcend nationalism, and humanism comes hand in hand with democracy. We shall not forget that it was Mr. Pridi Banomyong who brought democracy to this country. I am glad that a department store I drove past before coming here had a big banner with Pridi's picture. Otherwise, we will find that there are only pictures of just one single family that are put up everywhere, and I am so bored with that. Propping up pictures of the elite helps to instil nationalism and classism. But in a democracy, one needs to shun classes and take all human beings as equal.

"If we understand Pridi Banomyong, we can go beyond nationalism. After democratizing the country, Pridi made a film, The King of the White Elephant, *in which he reiterated that Burma and Siam were never enemies, but friends. Those who fought were the King of Burma on one hand and the King of Siam on the other. They fought because of their greed, hatred and delusion. But regarding the people of the two countries, we have always been friends and loved one other.*

"Pridi was also a leader of the Free Thai Movement, and after World War II, he helped to set up the League of South East Asian Nations, 40 years before ASEAN. A meeting was held in Bangkok and Aung San was among those who attended. Then, Burma was still not independent,

yet as members of the League, we were on an equal footing. We were getting together as a democratic socialist bloc to withstand the power of the USA, which was taking over from Britain. We came together in order to overcome nationalist history.

"And before Burma became independent, and while Aung San was still alive, after returning from the meeting to found the League, he invited cultural ambassadors from Siam to Burma. He was interested in how close the cultures of the two countries were. The team from Siam was led by Phya Anumanrajadhon (or Sathirakoses). Aung San addressed the group by saying that the Siamese and Burmese must love each other and stand in unity. The Burmese never hated the Siamese; thus, we need to learn not to hate them, but to love them just like they love us. Most importantly, the Buddhism of the two countries is very similar, therefore we should learn from each other and once we can depart from nationalism, we shall learn from Buddhism in Burma. Only then shall we realize that their Buddhism is more advanced. The person who made this statement was Phra Vimaladhamma, President of Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University and abbot of Wat Mahathat. He said that we need to learn from the school of Buddhist meditation in Burma, but the Thai monks are arrogant, priding themselves for not having been colonized. "How could the Burmese be compared to us?", they say. Thus, without transcending nationalism, we can never learn from our friends.

"A lesson learned from Nargis is that monks in Burma have always stood by the poor. They always devote themselves to the service of the destitute and victims of natural disasters, whereas their Thai counterparts simply want to be invited to eat in the royal palace, crave ecclesiastical titles, money, luxuries, etc. We should learn from people in Burma and give the things needed to address their suffering. Many westerners have done better than us on this, so we can no longer deceive ourselves. On the contrary, we need to share the suffering with our friends in Burma. Do not be arrogant and assume that we are better than the Burmese. We can and have to learn from them, and vice versa.

"In the four Noble Virtues, we start from having metta *or loving oneself, and then extend loving kindness to those who suffer more than we do, or* karuna. *Then we nurture sympathetic joy* (mudita) *toward others; that is, we learn to love even those who oppress or exploit us, particularly the Burmese regime. We shall nurture this sympathetic joy toward them, and harbor no hatred or anger toward them. We only want to destroy the unjust structure. And the unjust structure in Burma is as vicious as the one in Siam. It could be worse in Burma since they are so blatantly dictatorial. But we have hidden dictators who keep supporting the Burmese regime; both the Thaksin and Samak administrations are equally bad on this count.*

"With this understanding, we shall neither hate the Burmese nor the Burmese dictators. We shall not hate Thaksin or Samak, but we simply want to destroy the structure. We can learn from Burma, particularly from the Burmese monks who have come out to challenge the Burmese troops. By contrast, there have been no Thai monks coming out to challenge consumerism, capitalism or feudalism. Based on love, the Burmese monks have come out and recited the Metta Sutra which partly reads, just as a mother can sacrifice her life for her child, we should extend our love to all living beings. They recited the sutra while being beaten by the Burmese army. Similarly, we have to learn from Tibetan monks who have to endure a similar plight.

"All these lessons can help us overcome nationalist history. In all history classes, we have been told that wars are good, and all heroes are noble. This is fake. We are made to look in awe at King Naresuan, and the more we worship him, the more we adore militarism and the more we love to wage wars. We need to understand the many shortcomings of King Naresuan. Why do we not learn from King Ekathosarot who went to war with King Naresuan, but later, after he took the throne, renounced all wars and issued the best laws ever. All the 44 wars we have had with the Burmese are equally bad, and in all the wars, the most important person was not King Naresuan, but the army officers and to ordinary Soldiers who lost their lives and were survived by widows, and all the elephants and horses that were killed. If we change our attitude toward history, we will renounce the nationalist aspects of it and start to realize the importance of studying peace, the point reiterated in Pridi Banomyong's The King of the White Elephant.

"Once we can overcome nationalism, we will realize that those exiled in our country, including the ethnic Burman, Mon, Karen, Kachin, etc., and even those Malayu in the South, or the nomads such as the

Moken, have the same dignity as we have. Based on humanism, we will love them and want to fight to protect their human rights. We will fight for their dignity just as we do for our own children. With this understanding, we will become nobler and have more dignity. We will then be interested in learning from our friends in Burma, Lao, and Cambodia, all of whom are akin to us."

Sulak Sivaraksa,
11 July 2008,
Chiang Mai University
Translated by Pipob Udomittipong
http://prachatai.com/english/news.php?id=703

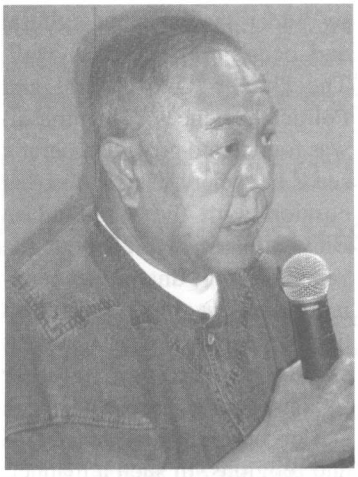
Turning the Crisis into an Opportunity

How can we turn the incumbent crisis into an opportunity?

In Buddhism, the right view is most important and it can be attained only by skillful means or *Upaya Kusala*. One shall acquire such a right view when one is able to understand the suffering of society, its causes, how it ceases and the ways through which the cessation of suffering can be achieved.

Many accuse the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) of creating an unrest, the ramifications of which cannot be felt just at the Government House where it has been laying siege to, not just around the Makhawan Bridge, but in many places throughout the country.

The next question to ask is whether PAD's action can be justified or not. Then we have to ask also if the government and its majority votes have been justified or not. Based on electoral system, the current House of Representatives and the government have been formed democratically. But in essence, the foundation of governance rests on ethics. The first House Speaker of this House of Representatives was removed from his post due to his grave breaches of the law and the Prime Minister was also unseated by his illegal actions, not to mention other criminal cases he has to face. Other Ministers and Members of the



Parliament have dubious characters and even the outgoing PM used to state in public that he functioned as a puppet to the former Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, who had wrecked the country.

If PAD's action cannot be justified, why would an increasing number of people join them over the past 100 days? It is also a good sign that the labour movements which had been quite weak have become stronger. The student movements which had been shattered since the 1976 uprising have also come out to join the PAD. Isn't this such a vitally important sign?

Having said that we have to acknowledge many weaknesses of the PAD. The PAD's five key leaders and other leading members have been acting arrogantly. While hailing themselves as the right faction, they are ready to stump on other parties and blame them unjustly. Derogative terms and false information have been put out by them against their opponents. Worse, they even cunningly rely on the dreadful feudalist and nationalist values to perpetuate their cause while ignoring the plight of the majority of the poor who are suffering such as the Assembly of the Poor and other truly nonviolent civil society movements such as those in Udonthani, Ubonratchathani, Prachuab Kirikhan, etc.

As PAD claims nonviolence as the basis to advance their cause, it is rightful for other groups to peacefully push forward their goals, be it the National United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) or National Democratic Alliance against Dictatorship (NDAD). But all parties have to refrain from violence, physically and verbally, and should train their minds toward the peaceful path.

The PAD and other factions should heed the criticisms and their own conscience. They should change their attitude and become less arrogant as well as should express themselves creatively. Their mission should be to expose corrupt practices of the elites and mainstream media and education which have made us all succumb to the new im-

perialism such as of the USA and China. The elites also join hand with multinational corporations, Thaksinomics and the Crown Property Bureau.

PAD's ASTV can be an important alternative medium to instill alternative education to arouse the conscience of the middle class to make them understand the grassroots people according to dhammic socialism.

This is a possible hope and this will be more poignant than the demand for a national interim government. The "New Politics" cannot be mulled by just a few people, but have to be developed from our traditional wisdom which had been destroyed by modern education since the reign of King Rama V. He also destroyed our traditional democratic foundation which was inspired by the Sangha or monastic community which represented a the genuine form of democracy and contributed immensely to our economy, politics and culture.

The secular kingdom began to reign over the monastic order since King Rama V, marking the beginning where by the Thai people were subjugated by monarchism and the West. Those who refused to obey the autocracy, which was linked to western imperialism, were accused of being insurgents, including the uprisings in Ubonratchathani, Phrae, and Pattani. Those in Bangkok who refused to yield to the system were either jailed or removed from government positions such as Tienwan, Kraisri Pleng, Narin Klung and the Bangkok Era 130 faction that tried to end absolute monarchy in 1912.

In Bangkok Era 150, Pridi Banomyong was able to lead civilians to join the military leaders, to replace the ancien regime by people's sovereignty here at this point on 24th June 1932. The former abbot of Wat Mahathat, Phra Assabha Thero, affirmed that the revolution was meant that for the first time transform the plebs, the serves to become proud citizens or owners of their country.

Pridi did not just seek equality under the law, but cultural and economic equity as well. The University of Moral and Political Sciences (Thammasat) was founded to grow democratic seeds in society. During the discussion with the Buddhadasa Bhikkhu Pridi agreed with the venerable that dhammic socialism must be built based on the Sangha model and powers should be devolved to other regions among those who speak and observe different languages and religions. In such a manner, people in the Deep South or in the Northeast shall not feel inferior to those in the Central Plain.

This peaceful and nonviolent approach has been trampled on by the unjust forces since the 1947 coup and we had been more and more under American hegemony and multinational corporations.

Here at this point on 24th June 1932, the Revolutionary Party declared their six principles;

1. National sovereignty, politically, judicially, economically, etc. shall be upheld

2. National security shall be maintained and any assault shall be kept to its minimum.

3. Economic prosperity of the people shall be maintained and the new government shall ensure employment of all people through laying down the national economic plan to prevent hunger among people.

4. All citizen shall stand equal (contrast to the extreme privileges being bestowed on some members of the royal family).

5. All citizens' liberties and freedom shall be ensured as long as they do not contravene with the four above principles.

6. Every citizen shall be promoted to attain the highest education possible.

Isn't it sad that the six principles are not reflected in the current ruling class, and not resonated in education institutions or mainstream media and the current education simply intends to subjugate people making them succumb to the sheer forces of capitalism, consumerism and feudalism?

To overcome the contemporary crises, the six principles have to be applied appropriately. To come to terms with the dominating paradigms, one needs to steadfastly uphold truth and nonviolence. *Sila* means normal and to restore social normality, the gap between the rich and the poor and exploitation have to be eradicated. And this has to be done through *Samadhi* or peaceful and tranquil mind. The less selfish one is, the more one can be humble. Then, other people and other sentient beings are not taken as our enemies, but greed, hatred and delusion inside us all. Guided by the right attitude, the wisdom shall emerge and shed light on the truth that we all are interdependent and thus shall be kind to each other to make possible peace in the world.

Wisdom is the light that quells darkness including fear and selfishness. It will breed in us the moral courage to challenge any immoral power.

Wanida Tantiwittayapitak,

a friend of ours and part of the civil society movement and advisor to the Assembly of the Poor, just departed from us to another world. She fought along with the poor peacefully and showed no hatred toward the oppressors and those exploiting the poor. In final the moments of her life, she had ample time to contemplate on mindfulness to cultivate her own peace and other beings' peacefulness.

Her words are striking;

"At last good shall overcome evil and truth shall prevail over falsehood, should we be patient enough."

The Buddha advises us that patience is the most important element for practice.

Let's us pray and extend our loving kindness to the PAD and other factions, emanate our love to every member in the cabinet and those inside and outside the House of Parliament, government officers, business communities and all people as well as those in the emerging multinational companies and imperialism. Let us refrain from holding anger and grudges against others and be united to dismantle the unjust social structure through truth and nonviolence.

S. Sivaraksa,
16th September 2008,
the Equestrian Monument
at the mark declaring
the dawn of democracy
on 24th June 1932, Bangkok

Institution of Monarchy and Lèse Majesté

To my profound regret, on the occasion of the royal cremation ceremony of Her Royal Highness Princess Galyani Vadhana on November 15, I will be attending an important meeting held at Schumacher College in England; thus missing out on the chance to pay my last and final respects to the Princess.

Nonetheless, I sent offerings to the monks presiding over the religious ceremony at Dusit Throne Hall where the royal cremation urn rests in state, when I learned the Siam Society, to which the late Princess had kindly extended Her Royal Patronage, had obtained His Majesty the King's permission to take part in the merit-making ceremony.

Most people do not know that the Princess had graciously conveyed her kindness to me on several occasions. I had entreated her to preside over the Honorary Presidency of the Siam Society. Besides, I had gained a private audience for the younger sister of His Majesty the former King of Bhutan with HRH Princess Galyani at her royal residence.

The Princess later accepted an invitation from the Bhutanese royal family to visit Bhutan, as delightfully described in her book of her visit to the country.

Likewise, on the centenary of the birth of her august father, I submitted to the Maha Bodhi Society in Leh, Ladakh, in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, to erect a library with the Mahidol royal family name.

To me, to pay homage to a person abroad is more significant than other forms of adoration in one's own country. Princess Galyani had congenially bequeathed an initial sum of money to set up the project.

The Venerable Sumedho from England and the Venerable Sanghasena from Ladakh were invited to an audience with Her Royal Highness to receive the above contribution, certainly an act of great merit.

On the occasion of His late Majesty Ananda Mahidol's demise for half a century on 9th June 1995, Dr. Hans Fradrich, director of the Berlin Zoo, consulted me that he would like to build a Thai pavilion to replace the former one which was bombed during the Second World War. This zoo is unique. Animals are mostly in open air and/or in warm buildings with different styles of Asian and African architecture to denote where the animals have come from. As His late Majesty was born in Germany, Dr. Fradrich would like to build the Thai pavilion on that special occasion connected with Him. I asked Her Royal Highness whether this would be appropriate. She did not only agree with the idea but helped to contact the Thai Foreign Ministry and the Fine Arts Department to facilitate the building of the Pavilion which bears an inscription in Thai and German dedicated to His late Majesty Ananda Mahidol.

When General Suchinda Kraprayoon indicted me on charges of lese majeste, the Princess let her concern be known, bringing me profound gratitude. In the end, as it turned out, I won the cases brought against me by the general.

It is woeful that politicians continually and endlessly con-

done trickery and ruse to press lèse majesté charges against me and other less fortunate people: even though they know fully well that His Majesty the King had emphatically expressed his view, to no uncertain degree, on this subject in his speech delivered before the annual birthday anniversary celebration on December 4, 2005.

His Majesty had made it known publicly that such allegations would cause harm to him as well as the royal institution.

Nonetheless, governments which claim their ardent loyalty to the royal institution pay little attention to His Majesty's concern, and wittingly disobey his address altogether.

Therefore, to assume that they purposefully bring up such cases in public to depose the most important high institution of the nation, could not be far wrong.

As for me, the allegation of lèse majesté, arising from my interviews given to *Fah Deaw Kan* magazine, dated October 4-December 2005, has become front-page news in Siam. This article later reappeared in another book by me, again in Thai. Surprisingly, the book was not banned, although another under the title "Three-quarter Century of Democracy and Its Obstacles" was confiscated, regarding which I have already filed a case against the Royal Thai Police with the Central Administrative Court.

It appeared that the police wanted to close the case as quickly as possible. When the cases were submitted to the Office of the Attorney-General on October 5, 2005, I filed an official objection.

Under a clause in the Thai Criminal Code relating to police investigation, the accused is allowed to request for the submission of additional evidence and witnesses to the investigation officers.

If the investigating officers did not follow the letter of the law, I declared I would take each and every person connected with the cases to court.

After the September 19, 2006 coup d'état, when Police General Sereepisut Taemeeyaves became national police commissioner, he informed me verbally on May 4, 2007 that the Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary had submitted a request to his office that the charges be dropped. There was no written document to bear out the statement.

On April 10, 2007, I was again indicted by the police for harbouring behaviour disrespectful to the monarchy, linking the charges to the article appearing in an English publication, *Seeds of Peace*, January-April 2005 issue.

Upon answering the charges at the Chana Songkram police station, the case became quiet. It was not until November 3 of this year that the officers sent another notice for me to appear before the Office of the Attorney-General.

As before, I objected on the grounds of wanting to give further evidence, and call additional witnesses on my behalf. Once more, I was set free.

In this light, it is questionable how the former government under Thaksin Shinawatra and those previously and currently serving under his "nominees", more than most governments in the past, recurrently brought up lèse majesté cases against innocent people, as duly brought to light in an article in English by academic David Streckfuss.

Mr Streckfuss argued that lèse majesté cases in Siam appeared most during this said period. Is it possible that the present Prime Minister — who claims his fervent loyalty to the throne, and his legitimacy to remain in the premier's seat to supervise the royal funeral ceremony this coming November 15 and the King's birthday anniversary celebration on December 5 — has, in reality, acted as a direct "nominee" of the person who has been accused of being irreverent to the monarchy?

It is evident that at the gathering of "Red Shirt Supporters" organised at the Rajamangala Stadium on November 1 this year, before Thaksin Shinawatra appeared on a giant screen (projected from abroad), a satirical play critical of the Thai monarchy was staged, even though no names were mentioned.

Unsurprisingly, his government has not taken any legal action against the organisers or those involved.

Eventually, when Thaksin Shinawatra appeared on the screen, he iterated that his safe return to this country depended on the kindness of the King (even though his crimes are not founded on lèse majesté but on corruption charges). He added that he would call on the power of the people to seek his return, too.

Does this mean that if the Highest Authority of the Land does not come to his aid, he would call on the power of his supporters to move against the High Institution?

Such is the arrogance and bigotry of a person who does not know his place!

Doesn't Thaksin Shinawatra know that the King would not act in a way that contravenes the law?

In contrast, when he was the Prime Minister of Siam, he allegedly ordered the concerned authorities to drop all criminal

proceedings against the leader of the Bangkok—based Dhammakaya Buddhist Sect. That would surely be a deliberate and fraudulent act against the law.

The lèse majesté-related cases are becoming superfluous as to be meaningless, including one concerning not standing up during the playing of the Royal Anthem. Such allegations are not helpful to the perpetuity of the monarchy. Those desiring to attack the monarchy also use rumours by word of mouth, and numerous websites that do not augur well.

In my opinion, on the occasion of the celebration of the King's birthday anniversary this year, similar to the 60th anniversary of His Majesty's ascension to the throne ceremony in 2006, the Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary should recommend to the police to withdraw all charges relating to lese majeste under its jurisdiction. Such would bring about immense acclaim and greatness of the highest degree upon the King.

If left in the hands of the "nominee" government, nothing good would be done. The Prime Minister does not only delude himself to claims of fervent loyalty, but also disclaims any responsibility over the ordering of the shootings that ended in a number of people maimed and one dead among civilian demonstrators in Bangkok on October 7 of this year.

P.S. You may have already learned from the media that police from Khon Kaen came with a court warrant to bust me on the evening of November 6. They failed to deliver the summonses to me (which showed their courtesy).

I was taken to Khon Kaen by car and arrived there around two o'clock in the morning. The lèse majesté charge pressed against me stems from a speech I'd made at Khon Kaen University on December 11, 2007 on the occasion of Constitution Day and the Day of International Human Rights.

To my curiosity, the arrest came three days after I had been notified of the same charge pressed against me at the Chana Songkram police station. There must be someone masterminding this operation, which may either be intended to protect or disturb His Majesty the King even though he is advanced in years. They don't spare even him.

P.S.S. Even though bail was granted to me late at night on November 6 through to November 7, I am required to report to the police in Khon Kaen every month until the public prosecutor decides whether to prosecute me or not. It may look like the officials are keen to relinquish the burden soon, but they confided to me that they had to come to arrest me, and that the warrant was issued this time because of an order from above. It is common for people in Siam to claim the 'order from above' as an excuse. I simply want to know, who has such a high status?

Sulak Sivaraksa is a prominent writer and social critic.

Sulak Sivaraksa
Bangkok Post, 12 November 2008

Sri Lanka Amarapura Maha Sangha Sabha
has decided to confer
honourary awards to
Prof. Sulak Sivaraksa, (Thailand)
&
Prof. Dharmachari Lokamithra, (India)
for their outstanding and exclusive services rendered to nurture Buddha Sasana Worldwide
as
"Engaged Buddhists"
at
Bandaranaike Memorial International Conferrence (B) Hall
on
29th November 2008 at 4.00 p.m.

Since Sulak Sivaraksa could not leave Siam, due to the fact that the People's Alliance for Democracy were in control of both Bangkok airports in their protest against the government until 3rd December 2008. His speech of thanks were however translated to Sinhala and Tamil.

The Venerable Monks and all Members of the Gathering,

For me, it is a great blessing for the Sangha of the four nikayas to honor an ordinary Buddhist from Siam, the country which has been taking refuge in Buddhism that has its lineage from Lanka almost one thousand years ago. All Siamese have been feeling indebted to the venerable Sihala Bhikkhus. Since the Ayudhaya period, Siamese monks with strong devotion sought to ascend the Sri Pada Mountain in order to pay respect to the Buddha's foot-prints. They visited and paid homage to the Sacred Tooth Relic Temple in Kandy and worshiped the Sri Mahabodhi Tree at Anuradhapura, and several stupas hailed highly by the Siamese. The *Mahavamsa* has simply been regarded as the history of the Siamese, and *Visuddhi Magga* written by Phra Buddha Ghosa from here has been treated as one of the most important scriptures for Buddhist scholarship in Siam from the past until present.

Similar to the Lanka lineage, the Siamese Sangha is divided into the *Gamavasi* (town-monks

concentrating on textual study) and *Aranyavasi* (forest-dwelling monks concentrating on meditation practice). Unfortunately, while the former tends to focus simply on theoretical knowledge, the latter lacks scriptural insight. In the past, as the spiritual refuge, the Sangha made people realize the importance of *dana, sila* and *bhavana* as a way to minimize our greed, hatred and delusion. The poor and the rich did not have vastly different lifestyles. Everyone lived in harmony with nature. Even the king abided by teaching of the monks treated as their teachers. In other words, both the *Dhamma Chakra* and *Anna Chakra* have mutually benefited each other to steer on the right path. As a vehicle is supported by two wheels, the wheel of power is to be accompanied by the wheel of Dhamma to lead the nation to the common good.

Despite major historical changes, Siam has never been colonized by the West, though we have been forced to absorb Western civilization. Among the Siamese elite, Western science was regarded as compatible with Buddhism. But in the past century, the Siamese elite started to increasingly worship Western civilization and denigrated the social implications of Buddhism. For them, a cunning mind (the head) becomes more important than a meditative mind (the heart). Simple lifestyles in harmony with nature have been replaced by modern ones inspired by technological advancements and globalization. People take for granted contentment, and are ready to compete and struggle for things. Reductionist approaches are taken as a norm over holistic thinking. The situation has become exacerbated with the rise of nationalism, capitalism and consumerism. People in modern days fail to realize that Western education adopted by mainstream institutions actually perpetuates ignorance and delusion. Meanwhile, nationalism is reflected by the emerging militarism and capitalism and consumerism by greed and sexual indulgence. The latter is succinctly portrayed by mainstream advertisements, particularly on TV, which hinge by and large on sexual appeal.

As Einstein said, science without spirituality is blind and spirituality without science is lame. In fact science and spirituality need each other. Science without spiritual values can be exploited by military and commercial interests and can lead to the production of nuclear weapons and genetically engineered seeds for example. Spirituality without science on the other hand can end up as dogmatism and fundamentalism and can lead to crusades and holy wars!

Under traditional Buddhism, it is hard for practitioners to catch up with the *Akusalamula* or the three roots of evil in a new cloak. Even monks are overwhelmed by nationalism and treat other nations and religions as their enemies. Otherwise, they are simply engrossed in materialism and capitalism which give rise to Buddhist commerce and indulging rituals. They even jump on the bandwagon with those who oppress the marginalized and vulnerable groups and women. Western civilization essentially promotes the attempts to defeat everything, be it fellow human beings and other living beings, as well as nature.

Stereotypical teachings on karma may at times cause misunderstanding. The poor are instilled with notions that their destitute life is resulted from their actions in the previous lives, which is obviously a wrong teaching. According to the Buddha, karma stems from intention and once our mind is blessed with the wholesome roots, then our wholesome verbal and physical action shall be emanate. And with practice, one can overcome our intrinsic fear and breed bravery and together with all *kalayanamitra* or good friends, we shall destroy the unjust social structure. The dismantling of unjust social structure can be done without breeding hatred toward the capitalists or militarists or terrorists. But we shall take them as our fellow human beings who suffer in the cycle of rebirth. With the training of mind, peacefulness shall emerge in all of us and the implication of such a truth can be effectively expanded into society. We may not win in the short term, but it is the only way through which we can heal ourselves and society and the whole planet earth. Previously, our friends in the West have been waging wars against nature using sheer violence, weapons, education and media as well as power of money to indoctrinate people.

It is time for Buddhists to reject the mainstream cultures which prevail in the modern world. We shall return to the teachings of the Buddha, essentially, the awakening from greed (capitalism and consumerism), hatred (nationalism and militarism) and delusion (the unwholesome knowledge or the knowledge based on selfishness).

Our friends in Tibet have been subjugated to the power and exploitation of the Chinese for half a century. Yet, most Tibetan

monks teach their followers to love and forgive their oppressors. During the Saffron Revolution last year, Buddhist monks in Burma showed an exemplary protest against the vicious junta by chanting them *Metta Sutta* to extend loving kindness to them despite their being slaughtered and tortured by the junta. With deep enough understanding and the right interpretation, Buddhist teachings can benefit our course of action a great deal.

The four noble truths encourage one to start from pondering sufferings. The majority of the people in the world suffer and are oppressed as a result of the unjust social structure. Sticking to the path laid by the Buddha, one shall see that sufferings do not simply affect us, but all people in society, and that they result from greed (capitalism), hatred (nationalism and militarism) and delusion (mainstream education and media that indulge the public).

With the understanding of suffering and its causes, we can together help to quell it by taking the *Ariya Magga* course of action which in brief is represented by the *Tri Sikkha* including *sila* needed for creating normality in ourselves and society; *samadhi* for training our mind to enlighten us that we all are related to other human beings and other living beings as well as nature and are able to care less to our self; and eventually *pañña* or wisdom which is the true understanding, the wholesome understanding, the awareness beyond any myths. At this level, such wisdom shall give rise to compassion, the selfless understanding and loving kindness extended to all sentient beings which become one, just like the great example of *karuna* and *pañña* wisdom the Buddha bestowed on us. Let us all follow the footprints of he Buddha.



World Future Council protests against arrest of Thai Councillor Sulak Sivaraksa

Hamburg, November 17, 2008: "We sharply denounce the arrest of our Councillor Sulak Sivaraksa", World Future Council (WFC) founder Jakob von Uexkuell said today in Hamburg. "Sulak Sivaraksa is one of Thailand's most respected spiritual leaders. Arresting him on account of *lese majesty* is just another attempt to silence an inconvenient thinker and social critic."

The 76-year-old advocate of socially engaged Buddhism and founder of numerous institutions and movements was arrested in Bangkok on November 6 in connection with a speech he delivered at Khon Kaen University last December. In the speech he critically commented on the high expense of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's golden jubilee in 2006. The criminal charge of *lese majesty* carries up to 15 years prison sentence.

"Sivaraksa's arrest is a blow against human rights and freedom of speech in Thailand", von Uexkuell said. For months conflicts between the government and the opposition People's Alliance for Democracy have been coming to a head in the country.

"Sivaraksa is a calm and respected spiritual leader who has peacefully advocated democratization of Thai society for decades."

Democratization and commitment to a sustainable society for future generations are also key issues of the WFC. For this reason Sulak Sivaraksa was appointed to the Council. "The WFC will address the Thai government with a protest letter and call upon the government not to persecute Sulak Sivaraksa nor other regime opponents any more. In addition we will ask the King to commit himself personally to the protection of Sulak Sivaraksa, since it is known that the arrest has not been ordered by the King's government", von Uexkuell said.

The WFC consists of 50 international experts who work together for climate protection, human rights, peace, and ethics in politics, economy and science. It promotes a safe, just, and sustainable future by informing globally about best policies and contributing to their implementation.

Sivaraksa was already arrested for *lese majesty* in 1984 and 1991. He was released on bail last week. Two other regime critics are in prison for insulting the monarchy.

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Taktser Rinpoche Thupten Jigme Norbu

The Central Tibetan Administration mourns the demise of Taktser Rinpoche Thupten Jigme Norbu, former representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Japan and former abbot of Kumbum monastery in Amdo.

Taktser Rinpoche, who is the eldest brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, breathed his last at his home in Indiana in the United States, on Friday evening, 5 September, owing to prolonged illness. He was 86 years old.

As a mark of respect and gratitude for dedicating his entire life to the revival of Tibet's heritage and hope for the Tibetan people, the departments and offices of the Administration remained closed, following an hour-long prayer session at 2 p.m.

Senior officials of the Central Tibetan Administration, including the members of the Kashag, attended the prayer session.

In his brief address, Kalon Tripa Samdhong Rinpoche expressed his condolences to the family members over the sad demise of Taktser Rinpoche.

Taktser Rinpoche was recognized at the age of three as the



reincarnated abbot of Kumbum monastery in Amodo, Tibet, one of the most important monasteries in Tibet, and was therefore already a prominent figure in Tibet's religious hierarchy even before his brother His Holiness the Dalai Lama was born.

In 1950, when His Holiness the Dalai Lama was still in Lhasa, Chinese officials attempted to persuade Taktser Rinpoche to travel to Lhasa and convince His Holiness the Dalai Lama to accept the "peaceful liberation" of Tibet, even promising to make him the governor of Tibet if he succeeded, according to one account. Taktser Rinpoche eventually agreed to travel to Lhasa to see His Holiness, but evaded his Chinese escorts on route and instead conveyed to His Holiness the Dalai Lama his deep misgivings about China's influence in Tibet, and urging His Holiness to retreat to the border with India.

Upon leaving Tibet in the 1950s and over a long and prolific writing career, he wrote several academic papers and books on Tibet including his own autobiograghy, Tibet Is My Country, one of the first books on the Tibetan experience to have scholarly credibility. He went on to serve as Professor of Tibetan Studies at Indiana University in the United States, where in 1979 he founded the Tibetan Cultural Center.

Taktser Rinpoche was a tireless advocate for the protection of Tibetan culture and the rights of the Tibetan people in Tibet. Each year - including this year prior to the Beijing Olympics - he participated in long walks and cycle rides to raise awareness of the plight of the Tibetan people.

He is survived by his wife Kunyang Norbu, and three sons.

from *Tibetan Bulletin*
Sept.-Oct. 2008.



Mme Phoonsukh Banomyong
2 January 2455 - 11 May 2550
Final cremation 14 December 2551
(with bust and photograph of her husband Pridi Banomyong at the office of the Sathirakoses - Nagapradipa Foundation)



Ms. Wanida Tantiwityapitak
7 November 2498 - 6 December 2550
First awards in her honor by Thammasat University
10 December 2551
(photographed with the editor of this journal)

The E4 Declaration: Building the Green New Deal

The world is in the grip of a fourfold crunch — the crisis of Ecology, Economy, Energy and Ethics. We face this crisis with both concern and hope. Concern for the misery it is creating and hope that we have the courage to look deeply into the causes these problems and find real, lasting solutions.

Governments are putting new money into circulation, bailing out banks, and are solely focused on reflation whatever the cost. At best, this amounts to short-termism.

So what else can we do?

We need a new approach — to save the economy by investment in saving the planet through measures that will benefit all of us (including the bankers).

Building on the idea of a Green New Deal, this document addresses three crucial questions: What must we do right now? What transformation must follow? What might the future look like?

I) What policies do we need now?

We first need a Green New Deal with a clear focus on green investment. Investments today determine the shape of the economy tomorrow, and so must be adapted to the future needs. To counter recession tax relief must be used to stimulate green demand. We propose the following actions:

1) *Re-regulate financial sector*: "No more absurd credit creation mechanisms"

a) Limit the capacity of banks to generate unsustainable credit (for example by ensuring a global framework that reinstates appropriate reserve-requirement ratios and/or leverage ratios).

b) Require transparency of financial instruments and ensure appropriate scale of financial institutions (for example by splitting up too-big-to-fail banks and tougher auditing).

c) Make sustainability and ethical criteria central to pension funds and to independent credit and risk rating (for example by compulsory carbon reporting).

2) *New green investments*: "Stimulate investments to save the planet".

a) Set up new and extend existing credit institutions that drive green and local investments (for example through lower interest rates)

b) Green and fair procurement: increased use of the state's purchasing power to stimulate information, training and jobs for green infrastructure, sustainable energy and biodiversity.

c) Given the above restrictions on credit, counter this by providing safe and sustainable investment opportunities with state guarantees for projects that have high sustainability and ethical ratings.

d) Incentives and investment for ecosystem services and biodiversity (for example for farmers, rural and marine regeneration.)

e) Encourage business to help one another through WIR-type currencies providing liquidity in times when credit is scarce.

3) *Fairer taxes and rising* green taxes "Tax bads not goods"

a) Shift tax-base from labour to resources

b) Introduce fairer taxes for less social inequality (balances the regressive effects of 3 a)

c) Outlaw off-shore tax havens and tax corporate profits in the countries where they're earned.

The more we increase green investment, the more we need to shrink investment in unsustainable parts of the economy, or else we risk overshooting ecological and social limits, and thus to trigger new boom and busts. Therefore we need new principles.

II) Principles of transformation

Today's economy has two major structural flaws: Economics doesn't recognise ecological limits and singularly maximises financial returns. Thus growth in financial capital is now increasingly is happening at the expense of other types of capitals. We need a vision that both supports human rights and wellbeing and acknowledges that human beings are part of nature. This leads to an Economy firmly rooted in Ecology.

The E4 declaration recommends eight principles:

1. *Quality of life*: The basic aim of the economy is to meet human needs equitably and improve quality of life. Measure economics success by wellbeing metrics.

2. *Ecological realities*: The economy must be designed on the basis of ecological systems and internalise environmental values in economic decisions

and move rapidly to a resource-light economy.

3. *Appropriate Scale*: We should aim to develop more direct relationships between buyer and seller and meeting local needs with local production — within a global framework.

4. *Optimal Diversity*: Diverse social, cultural and economic systems are more resilient against sudden collapse.

5. *From ownership to stewardship*: Support a diversity of business models that encourage individual and mutual ownership & social entrepreneurship at a small scale, but stewardship and shared ownership on the larger scale.

6. *Stable & dynamic*: The optimum health of any complex system is at a balance point between stability and dynamic diversity.

7. *Equity*: Every single human being has basic rights that must be met by social and economic systems — the current system manufactures poverty and inequality. We also need to ensure intergenerational equity.

8. *Beauty and elegance*: Beauty and elegance lift the spirit and enhance human well being.

Monetary systems should be redesigned to serve these principles rather than to simply to maximise financial gains.

III) Glimpses of the future

This section focuses on four vital areas, /showing how the application of these principles will impact / to give/provide' a flavour of a future just and sustainable world: food, money and governance energy.

Food and Farming

With a properly designed food chain, we could feed everybody who is ever likely to be born to the highest standards of nutrition and gastronomy. All we really need to do is to develop food and farming expressly to feed people without wrecking the rest of the world. The basics are:

- Traditional husbandry — but the tasks must be eased by appropriate science and technology. We are not advocating a simple return to the past but a "New Agrarianism".
- As far as possible food should be grown and prepared locally. Wealth created from the food chain should remain within communities.
- Support existing initiatives that aim to transform food culture (for example Slow Food), schemes to increase access to land, and new food and farming models such as community-supported agriculture, land trusts and co-operatives.

Money

Money is a human-made construct and the way it works can be changed. We can create money systems which are stable and help the real economy to work within ecological limits rather than forcing us beyond those limits.

- Expand accounting to include social and environmental capitals.
- Encourage complementary currencies promoting social and environmental value as well as supporting geographical areas or economic sectors at different scales.
- Re-localise the finance system with strong support for community based institutions and investments.
- Finance systems should always be subordinated to the interests of the community and of the ecosystem]
- Support and develop the new models of money creation (for example TERRA) and interest-free lending into large scale experimentation / action research and evaluation. This will replace compound interest with a more intelligent circulation mechanism.

Chiemgauer currency in Germany, JAK Bank in Sweden, time banks, Wirtshaftsring in Switzerland are already making money work for us rather than us working to pay the costs of money. [square box sold]

Governance:

We can transform governance through a positive vision for what people want to see in their local, national and international areas *giving* peoples' control of their own lives.

- Adopt principle of subsidiarity — decisions and responsibility to be taken at the lowest possible level.
- Having a sliding scale of regulation — larger organisations more heavily regulated.
- Strengthen the rights of stakeholders.
- Decouple governments from corporations
- Democratic oversight an accountability of transnational corporations
- Change structures and charters to control corporations
- Introducing maximum & minimum wages and maximum ratios of difference between most and least paid.
- Take responsibility for environmental refugees
- Develop appropriate and

effective international institutions for a just economic and ecological order.

(Self-organisation and self-determination at community level is already being shown by for example Transition Initiatives around the world, connected through a network enabling knowledge sharing.)

Energy:

Rapid technical advances and price reductions in large-scale renewables have the potential to quickly replace coal and nuclear 'base-load' generation. This necessary investment should not overshadow the development of smart local solutions which are an essential part of providing a resilient energy network.

- Global carbon cap and trade system, based on IPCC science, that internalises the externality of carbon dioxide at source will progressively price ensure fossil fuels are fully costed.
- Rapid deployment of energy efficiency programmes (for example retrofitting existing housing and other buildings, providing mass employment opportunities).
- Large-scale electricity grid upgrade to enable remote large-scale renewables (for example offshore wind and concentrated solar power).
- Encourage implementation of small-scale, local renewable & high efficiency technologies
- Adopt smart policy measures to support the above actions (for example government guaranteed feed-in tariffs, and roll-out of renewable obligations).
- Remove institutional barriers, for example by rethinking unfriendly grid tariffs and policies, and re-designing smart local mini-grid systems, already successfully implemented in Woking, UK and many places in Germany.

Issued by: Schumacher College 2nd Think Tank on Holistic Economics, Nov. 2008.

Thai arrest over 'royal insult'

One of Thailand's best-known social activists has been arrested on charges of insulting the monarchy.

Sulak Sivaraksa is often described as the founder of Thailand's movement of non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The 76-year-old was detained in connection with a speech he made last December. He has been released on bail.

Thailand's strict lese majeste law prohibits any criticism of the monarchy, and is punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

The authorities have been invoking the law more frequently in recent months, at a time of heightened political tension and uncertainty over the future of the monarchy.

'Defending monarchy'

Officially, Thailand's revered monarchy is above politics. In reality, though, it is now at the centre of a debate that is raging in Thailand over what kind of political system the country should have.

The anti-government protesters from the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) have justified their disruptive actions in the government's Bangkok offices by claiming they are defending the monarchy against a plot to abolish it.

The government, led by allies of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, insists it has no such plans.

A decision by the queen to preside over the funeral of a PAD protester last month has only added fuel to the debate, with many in the Thaksin camp complaining that she has taken sides.

In an attempt to protect the monarchy's image, the army has warned that it will not tolerate anything that could be interpreted as criticism of the royal family.

Charges mount

Mr Sulak is the latest casualty of this tough stance — he was arrested over comments he made to a human rights forum last December. He has been charged for the same offence twice before, in 1986 and 1991, but was acquitted in both cases.

Earlier this year a government minister lost his job after being accused of insulting the monarchy; two student activists have also been charged for failing to stand up for the king's anthem in a cinema; and an Australian writer is in jail awaiting trial on charges he insulted the crown prince in a novel.

The police say they are processing 32 cases of lese majeste — an unusually high number.

Jonathan Head
BBC News, Bangkok
Friday, 7 November 2008

Thai intellectual arrested on anti-monarchy charge

BANGKOK, Thailand: One of Thailand's most prominent intellectuals has been arrested on a charge of insulting the country's monarchy, an offense that could send the 75-year-old to prison for 15 years, his lawyer said Friday.

Sulak Sivaraksa, 75, was arrested Thursday for remarks made during a speech he gave in December last year to mark International Human Rights Day, lawyer Somchai Homla-or said.

Sulak denied the charges and was freed on bail, the lawyer said. Insulting the monarchy, known as the crime of "lese majeste," carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison.

Sulak has been arrested several times before on lese majeste charges, but was never convicted, Somchai said.

The lawyer would not quote the passages from the Dec. 11, 2007 speech on philosophy, society and human rights that the police considered offensive. He said Sulak considered his critical remarks to be an effort to protect the monarchy.

Police recently said they are investigating about 30 such cases. A 41-year-old Australian writer is in jail awaiting formal charges for allegedly inappropriate passages in a novel.

In recent years, a nationalist fervor that emphasizes devotion to the monarchy has swept Thailand, making authorities more sensitive to possible criticism.

Thais in 2006 celebrated the 60th anniversary of King Bhumibol Adulyadej taking the throne. In the same year, a coup toppled Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was accused of showing disrespect to the monarchy as well as corruption.

Thaksin's opponents continue to fight against his political machine, which they sometimes accuse of seeking to establish a republic. The government, led by Thaksin's allies, consistently avows its loyalty to the crown.

Almost all Thais revere the monarchy, and especially admire the 80-year-old king. However, the lese majeste charge is often used for political purposes as a way of smearing its targets.

The British-educated Sulak has been associated with reformist movements in Thailand since the 1960s, when he was the intellectual mentor to students who went on to take part in an uprising against a military dictatorship in 1973.

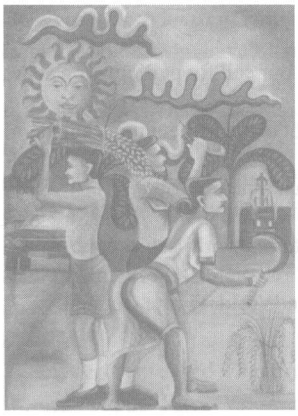
He fled abroad after a right-wing counterrevolution in 1976, the first of several periods he spent in exile.

A colorful figure who often wears traditional Thai clothing, Sulak is closely associated with Buddhist humanist causes, and is known to friends as a staunch monarchist.

The Associated Press
Friday, November 7, 2008

The Economist 8/12/2008 published an editorial on 'The King and Them' — the untold story of the palace's role behind the collapse of Thai democracy. Its leading article is "Thailand's King and its crisis — a right royal mess" with the subtitle: "Thailand's interminable political conflict has much to do with the taboo subject of its monarchy. That is why the taboo must be broken." The editorial ends thus.

As *The Economist* went to press, on the eve of the king's birthday, he was reported to be unwell, and unable to deliver his usual annual speech to the nation. So he had still not repudiated the yellow-shirts' claims to be acting in his name. His long silence has done great damage to the rule of law in Thailand. He could still help, by demanding, as no one else can, the abolition of the archaic lèse-majesté law and the language in the current charter that supports it, and so enable Thais to have a proper debate about their future. He made a half-hearted stab at this in 2005, saying he should not be above criticism. But nothing short of the law's complete repeal will do. Thailand's friends should tell it so.





Siam-Sri Lanka Art Exchange Program

Siam-Sri Lanka Art Exchange Program is a community development art project, based on contemporary issues and their impacts on the local community in Sri Lanka. The Sewalanka Foundation in partnership with the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation had invited 24 artists from every religion and with diverse backgrounds in Sri Lanka, to work and live together with two Thai artists Hongjorn Sa nae-ngamcharoen and Bhanuwat Jittivuthikarn in the Islander Centre near Anuradpura for one month, from 1st August - 31st August 2008. At the end of residential program local artists had the opportunity to collaborate and create new works based on the local issues. At the end of the program we asked all the artists to work together to create a large painting which show their collective dream on how they want Sri Lanka to become in near future. They have learned to respect the others, to recognize difference, and to use art as a means to create and recreate new relationship between people.

From 10th January - 10th March seven artists and two potters will be trained in Rajamangala University of Technology and supervised by Somyod Kumsang, a lecturer in the Thai art department. In February three of them will be selected to participate in the 5th International Art Festival & Workshop, in Chiang Rai. Where they will have an opportunity to gain experience from established national award artists from Thailand. This program will also participated by artists from various countries including China, France, the United States and Japan.

Puppeteer Exchange Program

From 6-13 December 2008, four puppeteers from Saranga Puppet Society, Sri Lanka and two university professors from Colombo University will participate in an exchange workshop program with Sema string puppet troupe from Thailand. They will show their collaborative work at Lido theatre as part of the 7th Bangkok Theatre Festival 2008, Theatre Sparks Life during 9th - 12th December. During March 2009 Sema Puppet troupe will visit Sri Lanka for a period of 3 weeks to work together with Saranga Puppeteers to create a new set of puppets and produce a new production based on Sri Lankan local folklore.

Traditional Thai massage training from 6 August - 29 August 2008

Wiwat Thanapanyaworakhun is a traditional Thai massage trainer who was trained at Wat Po. From 6-29 August 2008 he instructed more than 50 Sri Lankan participants, including social workers and local residents who aimed to use reflexology skills to help relieve those who are affected by the local conflict. The training program took place in Colombo, Anuradpura, Islander Centre and Vavoniya , one of the conflict areas between the Tamil and the Singhala

Dear Mr.Sivaraksa,

We would like to thank you for your impressing video statement which supported our call for participation at the worldwide Stand up events.

The cooperation with you and the World Future Council added an additional weight to the Millennium campaign, thereby contributing to the overwhelming success:

More than 116 million people in 131 countries joined the Stand Up events — that's nearly triple of last year's number. Nearly 2% of the world population!

We are more than ever convinced: if those who are struggling for a better and fairer world act in concert, the MDGs are absolutely achievable.

Having said this we are looking forward to a further cooperation with you and the World Future Council.

Best regards,
Renée Ernst and the German Campaign Team



You inspired over 116 million people to Stand Up and Take Action from 17-19 October 2008! Congratulations and thank you!!

Dear Fellow Campaigners,

A HUGE Guinness World Record shattering thank you for mobilising an incredible 2% of the world's population to Stand Up and Take Action for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As the countdown to 2015 begins, you have sent a clear message to world leaders that we will not stay seated while promises to end poverty still remain unfulfilled (www.standagainstpoverty.org).

On behalf of the United Nations Millennium Campaign (www.endpoverty2015.org) I want to thank all our major partners including the Global Call to Action Against Poverty, Art of Living Foundation, World Future Council, faith groups, social movements, NGOs, youth organisations, women's groups, trade unions, local governments, Ministries of Education, other line Ministries and, of course, the UN system for this unprecedented mobilisation.

Information on some of the amazing things that happened over the weekend, as over ***116 million people*** spread across ***131 countries*** organized almost ***8000 registered events***, is still trickling in. For more of a breakdown on the numbers by country and region, refer to the bottom of the email.



Your Action IS making a real difference ....

We know that mass mobilisations have the power to change the course of history and with this year's Stand Up, together we have shown, in no uncertain terms, that the people of the world will not stop calling their leaders to take urgent action, until the MDGs are achieved. What makes this mobilisation unique is the massive number of **people** from the South & North, standing up to raise issues that matter to them at the local and national level, issues that their own governments need to address; while at the same time drawing inspiration from being *part of a much bigger global movement.* What is even more powerful is that an overwhelming majority of the people who stood up are from the poorest countries in the world. And as their voices grow louder, they can no longer be ignored. It should be noted that there was also an important increase this year in the solidarity from nearly all rich countries, particularly Australia , the Gulf, Singapore and Europe. For the campaigners in the North, this year's Stand

Up gives a ***fresh boost of energy and legitimacy*** as they are now speaking on the strength of over 115 million people from the South, who have Stood Up and spoken for themselves, clearly articulating their priorities and demands.

The diversity of events and multiplicity of people that self-organise around the International Poverty Eradication Day continues to be the strength of Stand Up. On the one hand, we had the poorest people from Benin to Dominican Republic raising their voice against poverty and inequality. On the other hand, we had one of the most influential Muslim leaders, His Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto in Nigeria and Bono pledging their support to the people's call for the MDGs. Millions of people who had not previously campaigned against poverty joined for the first time. From the Friday prayers in the mosques of Egypt and Indonesia to Churches across the world on Micah Sunday, from football stadiums in Europe to major cricket games in Bangladesh and India, from Femi Kuti in Lagos to top musicians in Uganda and Zimbabwe, there was only one call to local, national and world leaders: ***keep your promise to deliver the MDGs by 2015.***

When I am asked ***what difference*** this year's Stand Up has made in the lives of poor people. I direct them to the women in upper Egypt who were, for the first time, able to Stand Up and read a pledge on the MDGs in public, or the poor in Kariobangi in the sprawling urban slums of Nairobi, where local government leaders were for the first time, responding to the MDG demands of the 200,000 poor people who stood up this year. The Take Action component added additional energy with millions of trees being planted and several other concrete actions like school feeding programmes being initiated by the people, to be mainstreamed into government programmes. Millions of people taking actions and asking that their governments match their passion and commitment by taking action as well.



An important sign of the recognition that Stand Up is gaining was that this year at least four ***Heads of State joined or issued written statements*** on Stand Up for the MDGs — in the Philippines, Nepal, Rwanda and the U.K. The entire Parliament in Uganda stood up in solidarity and there are many, many other influencing opportunities that Stand Up created. We had stories on BBC, CNN, Reuters, AP and Al Jazeera at the international level with great coverage in national and local media, getting the message out that citizens will continue to hold their governments to account for their promises.

Just a month ago, world leaders assembled at the UN to recommit themselves to the MDGs. With over 116 million people telling their leaders that their commitments are being closely monitored, we will go to the Financing for Development Conference in Doha next month with ***renewed energy to convert the strength of these numbers into concrete policy and practice changes*** in our own local and national contexts. We challenge Heads of State, Finance Ministers and Parliaments at the national level to come to the conference with the same commitment.

Warmest wishes and once again congratulations on this massive show of ***people power*** against poverty and inequality. I hope you will closely follow up with all the partners and organisations that you helped to mobilise and inspire them further to join our on-going campaign for the MDGs from now to 2015.

Warmest wishes,
Salil Shetty

Director
Millennium Campaign
United Nations
304 East 45th Street, FF604
New York 10017 , NY , U.S.A.

Tel: 212 906 5126
Fax: 212 906 6057

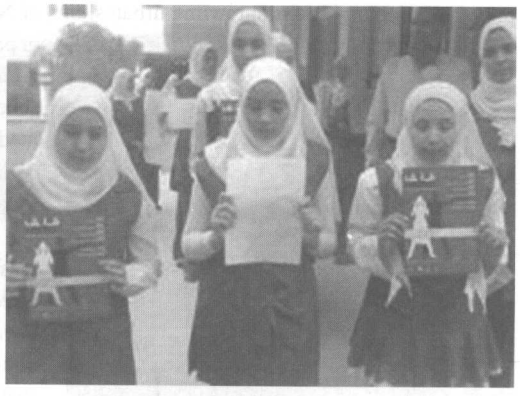
ENDPOVERTY 2015
millennium campaign
www.endpoverty2015.org

The UN Millennium Campaign Supports citizens' effort to hold their governments to account for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

For a closer look at the numbers....

The largest numbers, as expected, continue to be from Asia ***(73 million)***, which is where most of the world's poor reside. But the increases are stunning, with the total almost doubling compared to 2007 and Asia alone having mobilized over 1% of the world's population which was our global target for this year. Philippines , with an unbelievable 35 million Filipinos standing up for the MDGs, is in a different league altogether. This was the result of an incredible partnership between the UN system, civil society, private sector and even some parts of the government itself. The countries in Asia that have massively increased their participation this time are Bangladesh with over 13 million people, Indonesia with over 7 million and Nepal with over 1.5 million. Thailand and Malaysia also went up. India , home to an estimated third of the world's poor, had 14 million people standing up against poverty this weekend.

The most spectacular increase, however, has been in Africa where the number of people joining the campaign this year has gone up massively, by three times, from 7.1 million in 2007 to almost ***25 million*** this year. Nigeria , as it should, leads the African league table with almost 9 million Nigerians standing up, a very big increase from last year. There was a massive surge in participation in Kenya with 2.9 million, Malawi and Rwanda with 2.6 million each and Ghana and Sierra Leone with over 1.6 million and several other countries as well. I am particularly inspired by the 1.4 million Congolese who told the world quite clearly that the people of the DRC are not going to wait for peace before claiming the MDGs. Tanzania and Uganda had almost half a million people each and I understand they are both countries that have under reported.



With a huge increase in participation from Egypt (going up to over ***15 million***), the Arab region numbers have shot up as well. Over 1.2 million Palestinians, both living in Palestine and in refugee camps in the region, continued to raise their voices against poverty. As a proportion of their national population, on top of the league table are Philippines, Palestine, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Egypt and Malawi — all countries where over a ***fifth of the population*** (the mind boggles!) took part in the campaign last weekend. Equally impressive are Bangladesh, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and Nepal where between ***5 and 10% of the country's population*** stood up for the MDGs.

Dear Mr. Sivaraksa,

The second half of 2007 proved to be a busy period for the Committee of 100 for Tibet (C100). In November 2007, the Missing Peace exhibition, co-organized by the C100, was well received at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco. Over 2,000 people attended the opening gala event. In 2008, the Beijing Olympic Games offered a rare opportunity to shine a spotlight on the Chinese government's handling of Tibet. C100 Board member played key roles in organizing the Olympic campaign in San Francisco and helping with global campaigns. Our annual Member Newsletter (enclosed) more fully describes the accomplishments and status of C100 projects and future activities.

In the last year, a number of new members have joined the Committee including Prince Hans Adam ll of Liechtenstein who is well known internationally for his advocacy of self-determination and who generously funds the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination (www.selfdetermination.net) at Princeton University.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, this year we also developed and launched a new logo and brochure (enclosed) to more clearly and boldly communicate our mission. We also redesigned our web site, **www.c100tibet.org**, and added a companion web log, **blog.c100tibet.org**, to enable us to communicate news about our activities and Tibet more dynamically. We encourage you to take a look at both.

The coming 12 months is likely to be an important period for the Tibet cause. During this post-Olympics period it will become clearer whether the Chinese government is sincere or not in negotiating with the representatives of the Dalai Lama and what more needs to be done by the international com-

munity and Tibet Support Groups to facilitate an eventual solution. In addition, 2009 marks the 50th anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan uprising in Tibet and the 20th anniversary of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama. This 50/20 conjunction will be of great significance to Tibetans in Tibet and around the world.

At this critical juncture, we would like to solicit your help in how best to leverage the collective prestige and moral stature of the Committee members over the next one to two years. All comments of suggestions are welcome but we are particularly interested in ways to advance Tibetan self-determination. Your input is very important to us so we invite you to send your thoughts and ideas directly to the C100 Board at ***board@c100tibet.org*** *or to the address above.*

Finally, please send any updates to your contact information to Geoff Lewis, our Director of Committee Liaison, at **geoff@c100tibet.org.** We encourage you to provide us with an email address to allow us to reduce our costs and be able to send you more timely information. This will be used solely for communications from the Board. Geoff is always available to answer any questions that you may have.

We continue to deeply appreciate your membership of the Committee of 100, as does the entire Tibetan support community.

Sincerely,
Giovanni Vassallo, Tenzin N. Tethong
Committee of 100 for Palo Alta, California Tibet

Pune, India

7th December 2008

My dear Sulak,

I arrived back here a couple of days ago after an extremely rewarding trip to Sri Lanka, the only grey part being you not being able to join Ramu and me.

Harsha is extremely impressive and I think you did very well to encourage his participation in INEB. He is one of the most capable people I have met, and his presence with us will bring many benefits. We talked a lot about networking and common programmes for Buddhists in South and Southeast Asia. One thing I would like to do is to organise a small workshop on Buddhism and education involving you, Samdhong Rimpoche and others. It is a very big issue for us. He was very keen indeed.

I saw a lot of Sewa Lanka's work, all very impressive. I hope that some of our people can go there and learn from him and his organisation.

We had the rebirth of INEB Sri Lanka, unfortunately without you. They have some very impressive monks with them, and all are ready and eager to go, and bring Buddhism more alive in that beautiful island. I shall be very interested to see how they develop from here.

Like you I received an award. Harsha spoke very passionately about you and what you have done. Once again it was a great pity you could not be with us, but I do hope you can go soon — a very warm and appreciative reception awaits you.

I hope to pass through Bangkok sometime in March. I cannot come to the January Ineb meeting as I had planned something earlier. You mentioned that you wanted to talk to me. I am not sure what it was. Can it wait until the end of March.

I hope you are well and that those in power and influence in Thailand are ready to listen to you.

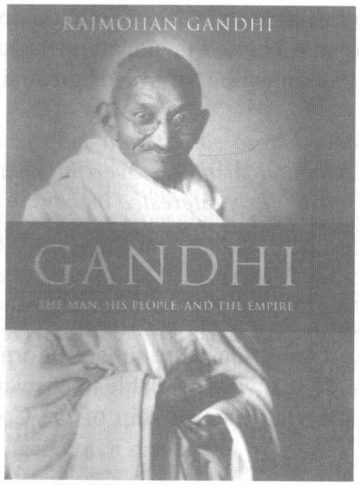
with much metta,
Lokamitra

Dear Ajarn,

Many greetings from all friends in Bhutan. We were invited for lunch by H.M. King Jigme and he greeted us one by one. He asked us to convey his gratitude to you for organizing the "hugely successful" GNH 3 Conference in Siam.

Hans and Wallapa vanWillenswaard

MOHANDAS — A TRUE STORY OF A MAN, HIS PEOPLE AND AN EMPIRE
By Rajmohan Gandhi,
745pp, Indian Rupees 495/-
ISBN 0143 - 10411 - X



There are several volumes and books written about Gandhi including the fact that Gandhi himself maintained a good account of his own life and ideas. Was Gandhi a saint or politician? Was he a shrewd tactician and strategist or allowed himself to be guided by his conscience alone? He declared himself to be the friend of British people but remained a committed foe of the British Empire. He was a critic of the West but openly acknowledged the influence of the writings of Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau and Emerson. Gandhi was a man of God but definitely not a godman. He was a Hindu and did believe that truth was not necessarily confined to one faith alone. Even before he was fully thirteen, he was married to Kastur Makanji Kapadia. She was a few months older than him. His brahmacharya (celibacy or chastity) tests when he was over seventy were puzzling to many around him. But he had no doubts and believed that in order to address the violence around him he had to summon his chastity. From his attempts to become an English gentleman and to becoming the symbol of common man in India, the transformation in him had been complete. There was no irony. This was a genuine transformation of a man who understood his call through experiments with his own life and ideas. Gandhi also had the anxiety of one who sensed being on the threshold of a great undertaking. Hence his sorrow and mourning at the time of Indian independence could be understood because of the partition of the country in to India and Pakistan and the communal violence that engulfed the Indian subcontinent.

This book is a homespun craft of a gentle weaver from the backyard of the Gandhis. There are outstanding works on Gandhi written by his colleagues, associates, friends, followers but none would surpass this contribution in unraveling the knots of challenges that Gandhi himself had in relation to his ties with his wife and children. The book touches in subtle ways about the transformation of Kasturba as an ally and friend of Mohandas. It took several years for Mohandas to accept Kasturba as she was. Author observes that India and his family exerted different and at times conflicting pulls on Gandhi, whose responses to the pulls were not always predictable. His wife and children believed that the family always came last. His struggle to become a good father and counsel for his children had remained one of the biggest challenges of his life. The love and indifferences of a father-son relationship comes clear through the heart wrenching circumstances revealed in this volume in the ties between him and his first son Harilal. They both loved and followed each other, as Gandhi did with his other children but the circumstances forced Gandhi and Harilal to look aside and kept them at distance as they remained until their death.

Who is Gandhi? The search about Gandhi is continuing even after several decades of his death. In author's words this book is an attempt to identify the 'true' Gandhi and to convey the truth. This book is an attempt to understand Gandhi as a human being. Rajmohan Gandhi considers that Gandhi has not sufficiently been seen, felt or understood. Author seeks to explain Gandhi's complexity, looks at his quirks, failures and weaknesses, and looks too for the secret behind the power of a frail man. It is stunning to sense this nature as Gandhi himself speaks about the two sides of his nature. It was during a meeting on 31st August 1924 in Bombay's Excelsior Theatre, several critics of non-cooperation were disturbed by the ardent supporters of non-cooperation. Gandhi asked the disturbers to stand up and apologise, which they did. Then Gandhi spoke of his own nature with two sides, the severe and the mild. He went on to admit that the former had alienated his wife, son and departed brother and whenever he wore that face, Gandhi added, his concealed love had to looked for. Rajmohan Gandhi writes that India would see and experience his gentler side.

Rajmohan Gandhi observes that Gandhi was different from other politicians in India at least on three grounds. First, he identified with the poor who seemed to accept him as their champion. Second, being familiar with the British from his London and South African days, he approached them as an equal. Third, he appeared to regard every place in India as his home. The author also points to the reasons for the success of Gandhi. Gandhi had brought from South Africa equipment rare among the Indian elite politicians: familiar-

ity with, and understanding of, the poor masses, and similar assets in respect of the white ruling class. It was Gandhi who brought a change in the lives of several elite Indian leaders who joined him in the fight for freedom. In the words of J.B. Kripalani they were born again as Indians after their encounter with Gandhi and his methods of struggle for freedom.

The depth of his involvement in South Africa became a basis for his future work in India. India was always in his sights. He wrote 'that all my preparations are meant to equip myself for work there'(India). Among other insights revealed in this volume on Gandhi, the value of political lessons is immense for the people and societies engaged in transformational work. First, his ability to anticipate the course of the battle was remarkable as was his grasp of how people would respond; second, he was able to function because he never advocated methods of violence to overthrow the state and third, he had built a talented and trustworthy team of political associates, staff and an effective chain of command. Rajmohan writes that in planning his moves with deliberation, Gandhi also knew how to accelerate, stop or negotiate.

Since the beginning of his South African days Gandhi understood the interconnectedness, practical and moral, of the three questions that remained significant until his life and even beyond. They are: Hindus would not deserve freedom from alien rule if they continued to teat a portion among them as untouchables; caste Hindus were unlikely to obtain *Swaraj*(self-rule) if untouchables opposed it and if they fought each other, Hindus and Muslims would neither merit nor attain independence. His political life would consume as much time and even more in addressing these questions than he thought that it would take to deal with the British Empire.

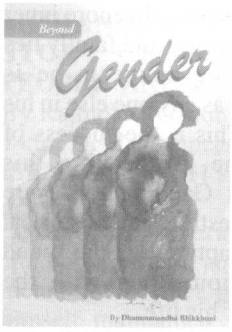
Gandhi's life itself is a message. He was not a man without faults nor a thinker who had answers to all his questions. He dared to dream and possess an ideal. His leadership and courageous idealism inspired the weak. He gave strength and self-belief to a nation and people abandoned between the British Empire, elite politicians and the violent nationalism of the extremists through his commitment to nonviolence. In Gandhi they sensed both empathy and force. *Swaraj*(self-rule) through *satyagraha*(truth force) and independence through nonviolent resistance would remain his twin objectives based on his life long commitment to truth and nonviolence.

Swaraj, for Gandhi, meant empowering the weak. He said in August, 1947: *I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away.*

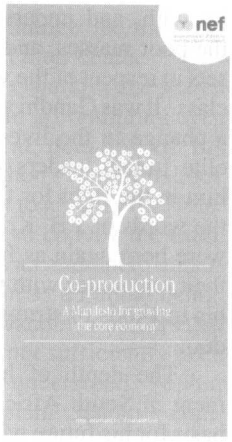
Gandhi's life is an experiment. In all his experiments, he believed that he needed to develop inner firmness, an internal spirit that holds on to a goal. In the words of the author this book at its intent talks of a youth, a man and an old man hungry to change history. In my view this book reveals much more than what we know and continue to learn about Gandhi. It is difficult to separate Gandhi's personal and political life. This book attempts to reveal the more inner side of his person and family ties including the moments he is defenseless as any one else in his situation. This is the success of this volume in speaking this truth about Gandhi. There are many interesting and historical moments captured as the mood of the nation along with the narration of his life.

Rajmohan Gandhi is master craftsman in bringing together of the various phases of Gandhi's life and reflecting the unity of thought and even tracing their roots to his early childhood. He traces to the roots and shades of Gandhi's early life. Rajmohan Gandhi's works are usually a fine blend of in-depth scholarship, critical consciousness, independent mind possessed by time, culture and history of people. In this volume he rightfully climbs the family attic, as the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, and finds a precious truth of one of the greatest human beings in the modern history of the world. Gandhi was human to his faults and divine in his mission. He was absorbed in the struggle for freedom of India. His decision to fight was both political and spiritual. To sum up this review I narrate Gandhi's experience in the Sistine Chapel I Rome as he was deeply moved by a crucifix on the alter. He wrote in Young India(31 Dec.1931): *It was not without a wrench that I could tear myself away.... I saw there at once that nations like individuals could only be made through the agony of the Cross and in no other way.* This was no less true in his personal life. This book is a testimony to these extraordinary experiences of ordinary human beings.

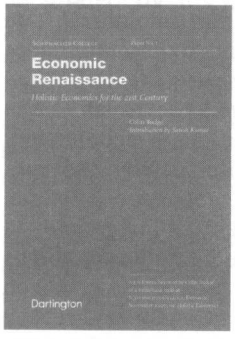
Ramu Manivannan
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Chennai, INDIA



Beyond Gender
By Dhammanandha Bhikkhuni
Printed by Wanida Press 2007



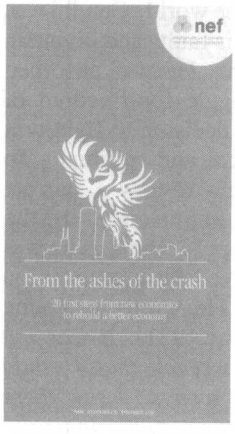
Co-production:
A Manifesto for Growing the Core Economy
Edited by Mary Murphy
Published by New Economics Foundation, 2008



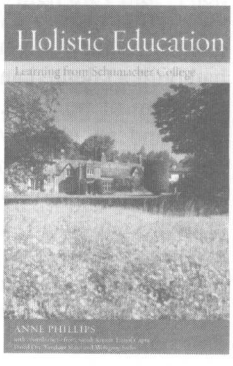
Economic Renaissance:
Holistic Economic for the 21st Century
By Colin Tudge,
Introduction by Satish Kumar
Published by Schumacher College 2008



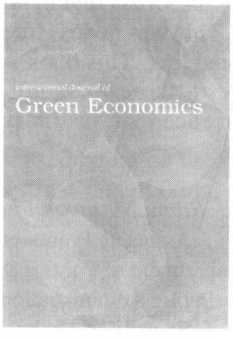
EnlightenNext
The Magazine for Evolutionaries
Issue 42 December 2008 — February 2009
Published by EnlightenNext, Inc.



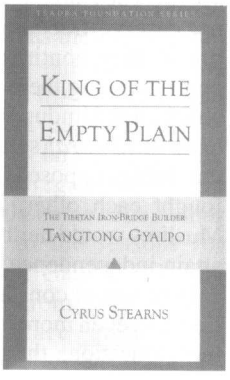
From the Ashes of the Crash:
20 First Steps from New Economics
to Rebuild a Better Economy
Edited by Mary Murphy
Published by New Economics Foundation, 2008



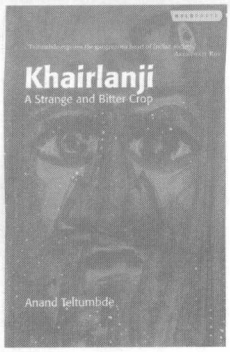
Holistic Education:
Learning from Schumacher College
By Anne Phillips,
Published by Green Book, 2008



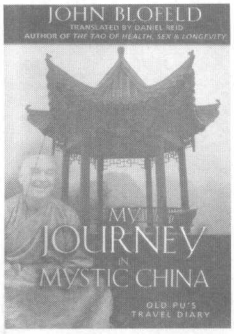
International Journal of Green Economics
Volume 1, Nos. 3/4, 2007
Published and typeset in the UK by Inderscience Enterprises Ltd



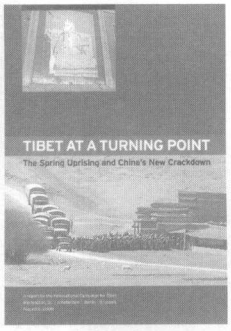
King of The Empty Plain:
The Tibetan Iron-Bridge Builder Tangtong Gyalpo
By Cyrus Stearns,
Published by Snow Lion Publication, 2007



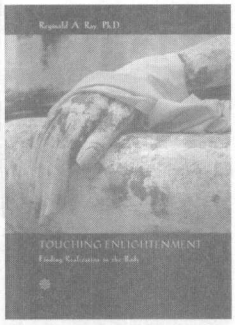
Khairlanji: A Strange and Bitter Crop
By Anand Teltumbde
Published by Navayana Publishing, 2008



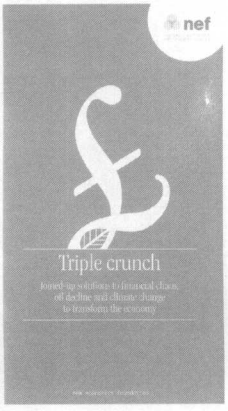
My Journey in Mystic China: Old Pu's Travel Diary
By John Blofeld,
Translated by Daniel Reid, Author of
The Tao of Health, Sex & Longevity
Published by Inner Traditions 2008



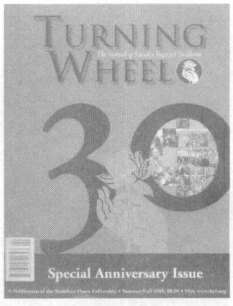
Tibet at A Turning Point:
The Spring Uprising and China's New Crackdown
A report by The International Campaign for Tibet, 2008



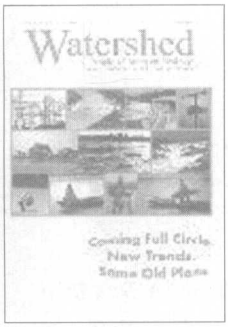
Touching Enlightenment:
Finding Realization in the Body
By Reginald A. Ray,
Published by Sounds True, Inc, 2008



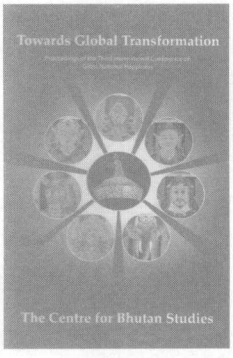
Triple Crunch:
Joined-up Solutions to Financial Chaos,
Oil Decline and Climate Change
to Transform the Economy
Edited by Ruth Potts
Published by New Economics Foundation, 2008



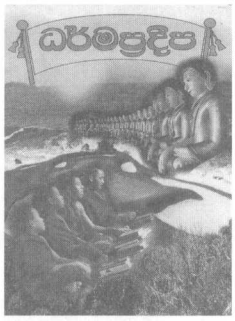
Turning Wheel:
The Journal of Socially Engaged Buddhism
Special Anniversary Issue, Summer/Fall 2008
Published by Buddhist Peace Fellowship



Watershed: People's Forum on Ecology Burma,
Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam
Vol. 12 No. 3 November 2008
Edited by Witoon Permpongsacharoen,
Published by Towards Ecological Recovery
and Regional Alliance (TERRA) 2008



Towards Global Transformation:
Proceeding of the Third International Conference
on Gross National Happiness
Published by The Centre for Bhutan Studies
First published 2008



The first issue of INEB Sri Lanka journal in Sihala and will appear three issues a year — like *Seeds of Peace*

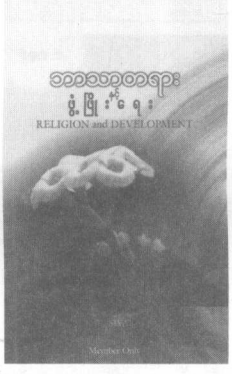


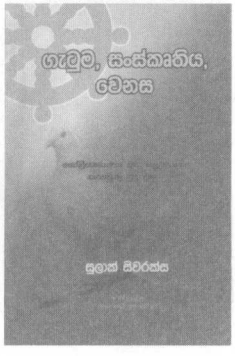
Earlier, Laos has started its periodical in the national language to conscientise Buddhists to be aware of their role in the modern world.



Supot Dantrukoon's new edition on the mysterious death of the late King Rama VIII on 9th June 1945. The author is persistent in trying to reveal the truth on this very sensitive issue. The Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation has given him an award for his dedication and courage in dealing with a matter which no one dares to touch.

The Burmese edition of ***Religion and Development*** by S. Sivaraksa





The Sinhala edition of ***Conflict, Culture, Change*** by S. Sivaraksa

Turning Wheel: The Journal of Socially Engaged Buddhism, a publication of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, USA, in its Special Anniversary issue, regards ***Seeds of Peace: A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society*** by Sulak Sivaraksa as one of the 30 great reads. It has been translated to a number of languages such as German, Italian, Korean, Sihala, Indonesian. There will be two new titles by Sulak Sivaraksa by the end of March 2009. They are ***Global Healing: A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society*** and ***Rediscovering Spiritual Values: Alternative to Consumerism from a Siamese Buddhist Perspective.***