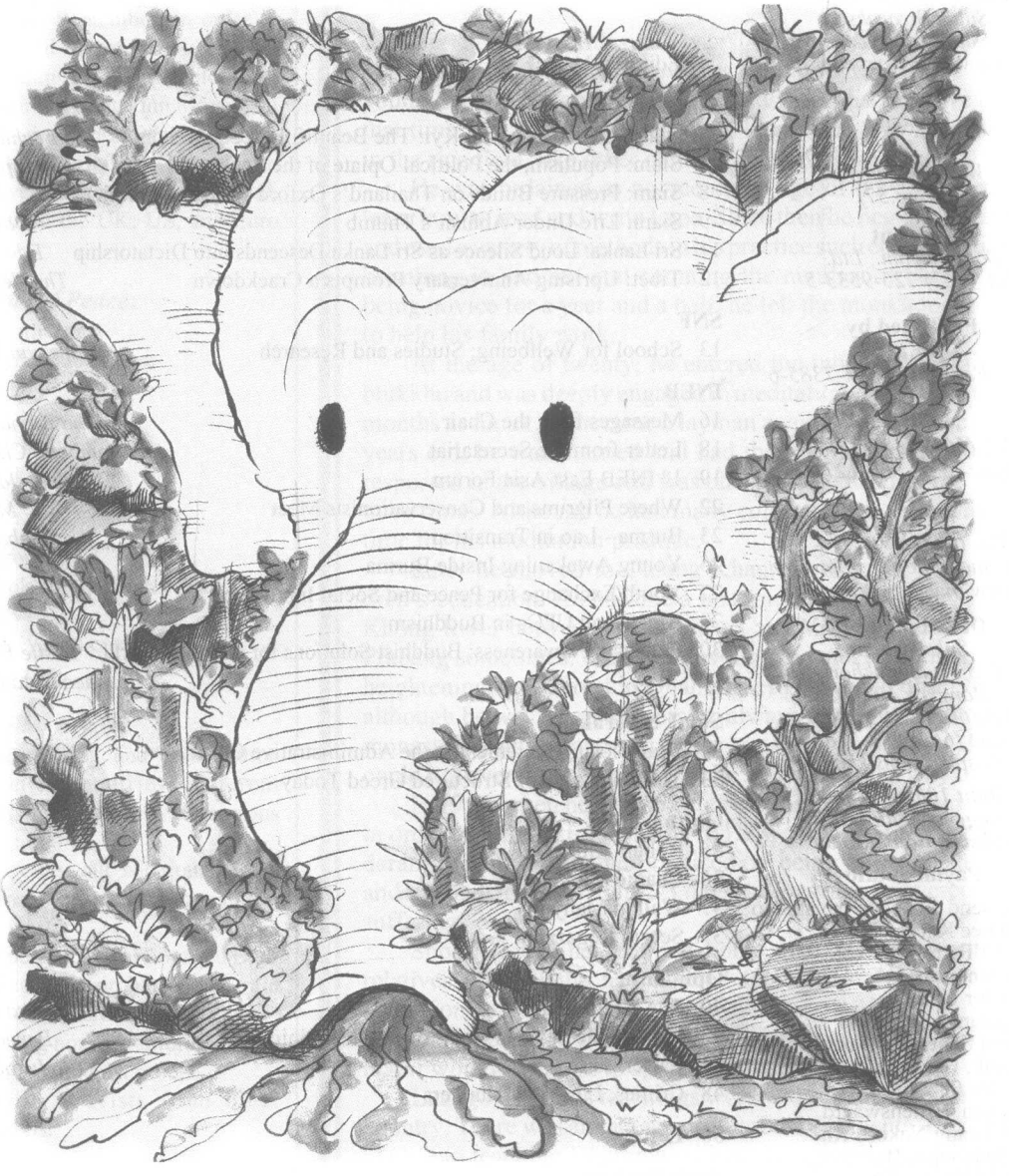
SEEDS OF PEACE

Vol.26 No.3 Sept.-Dec. 2553 (2010)



Would Reconcilliation Be Possible without Truth ?



SEEDS OF

CONTENTS

4 Editorial Notes

Country Reports

5 Burma: Aung San Suu Kyi: The Beautiful Freedom Icon — *Prahlad Shekhawat*
6 Siam: Populism, the Political Opiate of the People — *Philip Cunningham*
8 Siam: Pressure Builds on Thailand's Oxford-educated Premier — *Peter Janssen*
9 Siam: Life Under Abhisit's Thumb — *David Streckfuss*
11 Sri Lanka: Loud Silence as Sri Lanka Descends into Dictatorship — *Edward Mortimer*
12 Tibet: Uprising Anniversary Prompts a Crackdown — *The New York Times*

SNF

13 School for Wellbeing: Studies and Research — *Hans van Willenswaard*

INEB

16 Messages from the Chair — *Harsha Kumara Navaratne*
18 Letter from the Secretariat — *Somboon Chungprampree*
19 1st INEB East Asia Forum — *Jonathan Watts*
22 Where Pilgrims and Conservationists Meet — *Matteo Pistono*
23 Burma - Lao in Transition — *Sombath Somphone*
25 Young Awakening Inside Burma — *B B L*
27 Youth Exchange for Peace and Social Innovation — *Melva Yolla*
29 Aliens and UFOs in Buddhism — *Piya Tan*
30 Enhancing Awareness: Buddhist Solutions for a Future World — *Leslie E. Sponsel and Poranee Natadecha-Sponsel*

Sulak Sivaraksa

31 Oral Closing Statement at the Administrative Court
33 The Challenge of Structured Greed Today

Obituaries

36 Robert Aitken
36 Chanid Saipradit
37 Wallop Manyum
39 Sergio Regazzoni

Opinions

40 The Real Enemy — *Phra Paisal Visalo*
42 Few Intellectuals in Court of Public Opinion — *Benedict Anderson*
44 Easter Earth — *Jakob von Uexkull*
48 Crimes, Lies, and Blunders — *Richard Falk*

50 **Letters**

Book Reviews

54 Wisdom of Sustainability Dutch Edition — *Hans van Willenswaard*
55 Rethinking Karma: The Dharma of Social Justice — *J. Tyson Casey*
56 Human Development, Well-being & Globalization — *Prof. V.S. Vyas*

57 **News Items**

58 **Recommended Readings**

Editor & Publisher
Sulak Sivaraksa
www.sulak-sivaraksa.org
www.sivaraksa.com

Cover
Drawing
by
Wallop Manyum
(see p.37)

Lay-out
Song Sayam., Ltd.
Tel. (662) 225-9533-5

Published by
SEM
Tel. & Fax: (662) 314-7385-6
&
TICD
Tel. (662) 438-9331-2
Fax: (662) 860-1277
&
INEB
Tel. (662) 860-2194
email: ineboffice@yahoo.com
www.inebnetwork.org

Distributed by
Suksit Siam
113-115 Fuangnakhorn Rd.
Bangkok 10200
Tel.(662)2259536-40
Fax: (662) 222-5188
email: spd@semsikkha.org

Baht 100 per issue
suggested annual
subscription US$ 50

Payment info

Please send a cheque payable to
-Anchalee Karutach
1795 O'Farrell St. Apt. 101,
San Francisco, CA 94115,
USA for US$
-Mingmanas Sivaraksa
127 Soi Santipap, Nares Road,
Bangrak, Bangkok 10500
Siam for £
-Hans van Willenswaard
77,79 Fuang Nakorn Rd,
Wat Rajabopit, Bangkok,
Siam 10200 for Euro
-Jill Jameson
6 Hamilton Road, Warrandyte,
Victoria 3113, Australia
for Australian dollars

* **Kyabjc Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche with Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche**

PEACE

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

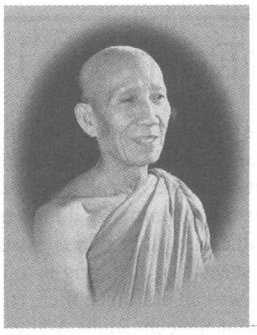
To contact *Seeds of Peace*:
666 Charoen-Nakorn Road
Klongsan, Bangkok 10600, Siam
Tel. (662) 860-2194
Fax: (662) 437-7201
email:spd@semsikkha.org
www.sulak-sivaraksa.org

INEB
666 Charoen-Nakorn Road
Klongsan, Bangkok 10600, Siam
Tel. (662) 860-2194
email: ineboffice@yahoo.com
www.inebnetwork.org

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.

Spirit in Education Movement (SEM)
29/15 Ramkhamhaeng 21 (Nawasee)
Ramkhamhaeng Road
Wangthonglang, Bang Kapi
Bangkok 10310, Siam
Tel. (662) 314-7385-6
email: sem_ram@yahoo.com



Luang Por Tian

Luang Por Tian Jittasupo was born as Pan Intapew on 5 September 1911 in Loei Province. His father died since he was young. He did not go to school as his village did not have one at that time. His childhood was spent helping his mother working in the rice field, like other children in the village.

He was ordained as novice at the age of ten and started to learn how to read and write Laos. Since then he began to meditate and used a variety of methods in his practice such concentrating on breathing in and out and counting the number of breath. After being novice for a year and a half, he left the monkhood in order to help his family work.

At the age of twenty, he entered the monkhood again as a bhikkhu and was deeply engaged in meditation practice. After six months as monk, he became a layman again. When he became 22 years old, he was married and had three children. He was well respected in the village and was chosen to be head of the village three times. Although he had many commitments, he always had time for his meditation practice.

Later he moved to Chiang Khan for the sake of his children's education. He became a boat merchant, traveling in Mae Khong River between Chiang Khan and Vientiane, even Luang Prabang sometimes. Through traveling, he met many meditation heightening his interest in Dhamma. However, he observed that although he was a "good" person, always giving away money to monasteries and practicing many types of meditation, he still could not overcome his anger, so he strove to find a way out of it.

In 1957, when he was 45 years old, he decided to leave home in order to find the true Dhamma. He went to Wat Rangseemukdaram for his search and practiced by being aware of the mind and the body only. Within 2-3 days, he was able to overcome the sufferings of life.

Shortly after, he returned home and told his family and relatives on what he had learned for almost three years as a layperson.

On 3 February 1960, he ordained as monk again as he saw that it would help him to spread the teachings.

Luang Por Tian's teachings were widespread throughout the country. There was an increasing number of students. He devoted his life to teaching Dhamma without being concerned about his comfort and health. In 1982, his health was in decline and he was diagnosed with stomach cancer. However, he persisted to work until his final moments.

Luang Por passed away peacefully at Tub Ming Kwan Dhamma Centre in Loei province on 13 September 1988. He was 77 years old in his final year, and 31 years of his life was spent teaching Dhamma.

Editorial Notes

The Royal Thai Government has appointed three commissions with the intention of overcoming the present crisis, politically, economically, and socially. The chair of each commission is a respectable man of good reputation for honesty and integrity, but we fear that their mission will not achieve real and fruitful solutions. Many people, especially in the North and Northeast do not trust any commission whatsoever.

One wonders whether reconciliation will at all be possible if we do not seriously confront the truth. The first of the Buddha's four noble truths states that suffering is to be confronted. Then we must find out the causes of suffering (the second truth) before we can eliminate them (the third truth) by following the Noble Eightfold Path of Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration (the fourth truth).

In this country we have been taught to ignore the truth. We are only aware of half- truths, which are dangerous. For instance, we are told that Siam was the only country in Southeast Asia which was not colonized by the western powers. This is a half-truth. Politically we remained independent but we lost extra territorial rights to the imperial powers of the 19th century—including Japan. We did not become equal partners to all the western powers until after the Siamese revolution of 1932 which introduced democracy to Siam under the nonviolent leadership of Mr. Pridi Banomyong who was thrown out of the Kingdom in 1947 with the demise of Thai democracy. We have still not recovered our Constitutional Monarchy. Yet we claim to be democratic with the King as the head of state. The law of *lese majeste* demonstrates clearly that we are at best under a semi-absolute monarchy. Would any member of the three commissions be willing to discuss this issue?

Besides we have been colonized intellectually by the West ever since we opened the country to it in the 1850s —at first under European hegemony and now almost entirely under American imperial power; globalization which is in fact Americanization. And at the same time we still cling to feudalism and hierarchy with strong centralization. State Buddhism has lost its spiritual impact and has become part and parcel of hierarchical feudalism and consumerism, using superstition for political and economic gains for those in power and seeking position.

The name Thailand itself stands clearly for racism, especially at the expense of the Malays in the south and other ethnic minorities in the Kingdom who have been exploited politically, economically and culturally — not to mention immigrants from Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Most educated Thais are not aware of this and are not concerned about the fact that they are still required to salute the flag twice daily at 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Words in the National Anthem itself are full of lies. Germany under Hitler, Italy under Mussolini and Japan under Tojo did likewise but since these three countries lost the war, they gave up these bad practices. Yet, due to the Free Thai Movement during World War II led by Mr. Pridi Banomyong in collaboration with the Allies, this Kingdom was not regarded as being defeated in the war and so we could carry on with the worst kind of patriotism and racism to this very day.

During the Fifth Reign we introduced the Royal Anthem to be played at the end of every theatrical performance and the audience had to follow the English custom of standing up in respect to the King. In the UK nobody does this anymore and the British abolished this custom. Yet it is vigorously enforced in this country. Recently a young man refused to stand up in a cinema when the royal anthem was playing, and he was arrested for *lese majeste*.

The above facts are crucial to culture of the so-called educated elites who want to cling on to feudalism to show that they are in the upper-class or aspire to join that class. At the same time capitalism determines their daily culture and behavior, stressing on economic neoliberalism — taking advantage of the less able as much as they can and mindlessly exploiting the natural resources.

The poor who have been uprooted from the provinces in the name of national development have to live in slums in the capital city and other big towns. Yet they contribute much to the welfare of the middle class — by being domestic workers, manual laborers, barbers, taxi drivers, etc. providing all kinds of food (delicious and affordable) in many street corners.

Yet the so called elites disdain them, accusing them of having bad smell and look down on their sub-culture, which is mostly Laotian. This is indeed the crux of the Red shirts movement challenging the status quo.

Unless we reform politically to be a real Constitutional Monarchy with the Sangha as a model for fraternity, equality and liberty from greed hatred and delusion, there will be no real solution, because the elites by upholding out-dated feudalism also aspire more in the name of globalization, i.e. there will be more high rises in Bangkok and other cities, with more traffic jams, and pollution. Rivers and canals will be more and more unbearable. The poor will not even have street corners to sell their delicious food to help the lower middle class and they may increasingly have to turn to violence for survival. The government says that it is concerned about the poor. At the same time, it allows the army to use the emergency decree to suppress the people everywhere.

Has anyone really listened to the poor and respect their dignity? Do the elites realize that some of the poor have organized themselves nonviolently — not only for their own benefits but for the welfare of all sentient beings as well?

Burma:
Aung San Suu Kyi :The Beautiful Freedom Icon

Aung San Suu Kyi has the rare combination of intelligence, physical charm, a generous compassion for her military tormentors and she symbolizes hope and principled commitment, sometimes against all odds. Her college friends from Oxford days point out that she represents a kind of moral beauty and even a spiritual beauty of a pilgrim. She inspires democracy pilgrims all around Asia and the world. Such a beauty, so rare today, reminds one of Rabindranath Tagore's writing whom she might have read while growing up in India. In Tagore's story 'Letters from a Wife', the wife says "I am beautiful as my mind feels free".

In 1960 Suu Kyi came to India with her mother Daw Khin Kyi, who had been appointed Burma's ambassador to Delhi. Four years later she went to Oxford University, where she studied philosophy, politics and economics. There she met her future husband. After stints of living and working in Japan and Bhutan, she settled down as an English don's housewife and to raise their two children, Alexander and Kim.

When she arrived back in Rangoon in 1988, initially to look after her critically ill mother, Burma was in the midst of a major political upheaval. Thousands of students, office workers and monks took to the streets demanding democratic reform. "I could not, as my father's daughter, remain indifferent to all that was going on," she said. Much of Suu Kyi's appeal within Burma lies in the fact she is the daughter of the country's independence hero, General Aung San. He was assassinated during the transition period in July 1947, just six months before independence. Aung San Suu Kyi was only two years old at the time.

Suu Kyi was soon propelled into leading the revolt against then-dictator General Ne Win. Inspired by the non-violent campaigns of US civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and India's Mahatma Gandhi, she organized rallies and travelled around the country, calling for peaceful democratic reform and free elections. But the demonstrations were brutally suppressed by the army, who seized power in a coup in 1988. The military government called national elections in May 1990. Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party (NLD) convincingly won the polls, despite the fact that she herself was under house arrest and disqualified from standing.

In summer 2007, there were widespread protests in Burma over fuel prices, followed by anti-government demonstrations led by Buddhist monks, which were violently ended by the government. The monks facing army guns walked peacefully chanting the Metta Sutra invoking loving kindness and friendship for the military. Suu Kyi appeared outside her home to meet some of the monks in September that year, her first public appearance since 2003. In May 2009, as the latest period of detention was due to expire, the NLD appealed to the government to release her, saying she was suffering from low blood pressure and dehydration, but the appeal was rejected.

Shortly after, a US national was arrested for swimming across a lake and breaking into her compound. Then, a few days later, Suu Kyi was herself arrested and charged with breaching the conditions of her detention, although the man had apparently not been invited to visit. After a trial, she was convicted and sentenced to a further 18 months of house arrest. It became very clear that the arrest and continued detention were designed by the military to keep her away from the public eye until elections scheduled to take place in 2010.

All her life she says she made choices not sacrifices. She does not want to belittle the sacrifices of her followers. After she got the Nobel Peace Prize she could have made an easy choice to leave Burma, be with her two young boys and a dying husband in Oxford and enjoy the comforts of a political celebrity and promote the cause of Burmese democracy like the Dalai Lama is promoting the Tibetan cause from India. She chose to stay and suffer with her people, an amazing symbol of solidarity.

E .F. Schumacher was sent by the British government in the 1950's to advise the Burmese government on economic development. His study on Burma, lead to his famous book *Small is Beautiful* in which there is a section called Buddhist Economics. Schumacher realized that instead of teaching, Britain could learn from Burma's humane,

human scale and self-sufficient economy with little strain on the environment. As if people mattered, he added. The literacy promoted by the monasteries was higher than in Britain then. In his book; *Beyond Optimism: A Buddhist Political Ecology*, Ken Jones taking an anti-ideological activist stance calls for outer work of 'eco-social liberation' and inner work of 'psycho-spiritual liberation'.

Suu Kyi is inspired both by her Buddhist heritage and her early education on Asian culture and democracy in India and later in Oxford. If Burma had built on its earlier foundation headed by an enlightened leadership like that of Suu Kyi, combing the best of Asia and the West in a democratic system, it could have provided an example to the world.

At the presentation in 1991 the Chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee, Francis Sejested, called her "an outstanding example of the power of the powerless". For the Burmese people, Suu Kyi who just celebrated or rather marked her 65th birthday, represents their best and perhaps sole hope that one day there will be an end to the country's military repression. As a pro-democracy campaigner and leader of the opposition NLD, she has spent more than 11 of the past 19 years in some form of detention under Burma's military regime. Suu Kyi has often said that the detention has made her even more resolute to dedicate the rest of her life to represent the average Burmese citizen. The UN special envoy Razali Ismail has said privately that she is one of the most impressive people he has ever met.

During long periods of confinement, earlier solitary, she has busied herself studying and exercising. She meditates, listens to the BBC, works on her French and Japanese, and relaxes by playing Bach on the piano.

In her book *Freedom from Fear* Suu Kyi proposes that dictators are worried more by the fear of freedom than the loss of power and economic influence. Those who deny freedom and those who suffer at their hands and accept their plight both seem to be locked together, imprisoned by their fear of freedom. Her refusal to enter into combat with her jailors on terms set by them and managing to keep the spirit of freedom alive, without fear, is her shinning humanity. The quality of inner and moral beauty, spiritual in its stoic grace, has enhanced Aung San Suu Kyi today as the international icon of heroic and peaceful resistance in the face of brutal oppression.

Prahlad Shekhawat

Siam:
Populism, the Political Opiate of the People

Populism pits the "people" against the "elite" in order to foment change. Demagogues use half-truths, truisms and outright lies to make it happen.

For better or worse, populism has been on the upswing in Thailand in the last 10 years, roughly corresponding to the rise and fall of Thaksin Shinawatra's rule.

Although Thailand has seen populist behaviour before, most especially under the boot of Plaek Phibulsonggram who was a contemporary of Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo, and who was to some extent influenced by the rabid populism that transmuted into fascism at the time, it wasn't until Thaksin's arrival on the national stage that the Thai term *prachaniyom* was coined to replace the English-loan word for populism.

The good news for a Bangkok establishment fearful of red shirts taking to the streets again is that populist movements tend to fall apart rather quickly, typically due to the lack of sustainable infrastructure and hard-to-resolve internal contradictions, or, more simply, just by becoming unpopular.

Even populist leaders such as Thaksin who managed to scale the heights of power tend to fall, and fail, rather quickly, because taking over the top slot instantly converts them into a symbol of a new, unjust elite, an easy target for a fresh wave of resentment on the part of those who feel betrayed or excluded from the spoils of power.

The bad news for the establishment is this. Populism isn't conjured up out of thin air or pulled out of the ether. It is rooted to the earth, a reflection of real and perceived problems on the ground. It clings to pre-existing fault lines, makes claim to them, manipulates them, exacerbates and explodes them, in the hopes of triggering a seismic shift in

power.

Once the cat is out of the bag, indeed even if the cat has run away, the underlying fault lines and rifts, are right there in the open for all to see. If such a social rift is neglected, it will produce new populists to replace the old ones.

Conditions on the ground, such as the vivid rich-poor gap in Thailand, which seemed in recent memory to be a tolerably exotic if not particularly likeable aspect of Thai society, and may indeed be no worse than other places where no protest is evident, now suddenly seems terribly unjust.

And it should, to the degree it is a reflection of an unpalatable truth, large or small, which many would prefer to ignore than countenance.

Fingering such fault lines is what populists do, and if that were the alpha and omega of populism, it would not be a precursor to fascism.

But then the demagogue comes marching in, the truth gets mangled, and the victims of injustice become unwitting enablers of a wily politician's fame and fortune.

As Henry Louis Mencken famously said, the demagogue preaches "doctrines he knows to be untrue to men he knows to be idiots".

As such, the fortunes of demagogic politicians who seek to ride the wave of public indignation depend in large part on media reach, rhetorical persuasion and the ability to amplify complaints in a way that aggrandises the speaker and personifies the cause, until the two are seen as inseparable.

Populism would be less troubling if there was a way to lose the demagogue, but it is precisely the demagogue, who breathes fear and fire into the mix, using lies, half-truths and shrill identity politics, who sways sentiment and moves people to action.

Demagoguery is a project to rid reality of nuance, irony, complexity and even the truth, while casting things in high-contrast black and white. Populist leaders need the polarising, Manichaean divide to get traction, even if it means widening a fragile fissure or ruthlessly exploiting existing cracks in the social edifice. If they can't meet the people in person, they use the media, especially television, and nowadays the internet, while employing proxies and sycophants to do the up close and personal.

It is telling that so much UDD air-time and stage time at the Ratchaprasong red shirt rallies was frittered away ranting not about poverty, not about unemployment, not about health care or police abuse or minimum wage or slum conditions, but about a horrible, fanged, foaming, blood-thirsty death and destruction-obsessed psycho-killer subhuman monster who goes by the uppity name of Abhisit Vejjajiva.

Everyone's entitled to their opinion of the prime minister; I for one happen to find him intelligent, thoughtful, polite and almost mild-mannered to a fault, though I'd like to see him reach out more to the poor and dispossessed.

But say what you will about the PM's policies, his questionable actions to date and—perhaps more pertinently—a certain degree of ill-timed non-action, the man is no Dracula.

Populists, even when not under threat, are ever in search of enemies, the more dastardly, stark and cartoon-like the better. If they can't find the Dracula of their dreams, they paint fangs on political rivals.

At Ratchaprasong, the red shirts, in both word and deed, betrayed a desperate desire for a truly convincing enemy to whip up the degree of incendiary hatred necessary to provoke fighting in the streets that would in turn set the stage for a rescue from their very own personalised knight in shining armour. They daily portrayed their patron's rival as the devil incarnate, but failed to convince their own political base, let alone society at large.

Thai populism today does not paint a pretty picture of the legendary "land of smiles", let alone a believable and balanced one, because it conceals ruthless political ambition and thrives on manipulative lies and ill will.

But it cannot be dismissed out of hand, either. The yellow shirts used populist technique, not just vilifying their political foes, but initiating the divisive politics of shirt colour to create a destabilising we-them divide in the first place. While Sondhi Limthongkul and Chamlong Srimuang were not strictly populist in the sense that they chose to uphold the status quo and embrace the elite rather than challenge it, they nonetheless introduced a troubling kind of more-Thai-than-thou attitude which edged society closer to the slippery slope of loyalty tests and prosecution of "unThai" activities.

It was at red shirt-controlled Ratchaprasong this past May where a rather more earthy populism briefly blossomed, and subsequently withered, as the core leadership abandoned the crowd and the absent patron

went shopping at a pricy boutique in Paris.

The message of red shirt propaganda, however badly twisted, smoke-screened and distorted, however opportunistically hitched to a desperate tycoon trying to regain fame and fortune, was not just hot air.

A bleak, borderline subversive vision of Thailand as a country split into two classes was shrewdly introduced, branded and marketed, court jester-style, on the red stage in which credible singers, emcees, comedians and political hacks all chimed in and tried to stay on message.

They can claim some success to the degree that a trumped up we-them divide deepened and spread around the country, but it wouldn't have taken wing if it did not contain at least a kernel of truth.

While material conditions in the countryside have generally improved, there truly is a stark divide between rich and poor that goes far beyond unequal bank accounts and extends to the social sphere, an endemic divide that offends democratic sensibilities.

If the red shirts have anything worthwhile to say, it is a truism that predates them and will outlast their demise.

There is injustice in the land and it needs urgent tending to.

Philip Cunningham,
Bangkok Post,
29/06/2010

Siam:
Pressure Builds on Thailand's Oxford-Educated Premier

Bangkok (dpa)—As Thailand tumbles towards anarchy and a possible upheaval of the status quo, Abhisit Vejjajiva—the country's articulate, Oxford-educated prime minister—is under growing pressure to act.

For the past six weeks, Bangkok has witnessed an unprecedented anti-government movement seize the commercial heart of the capital, leading to escalating violence between troops and protestors that has already claimed 26 lives.

A solution to the standoff via negotiations failed last month but is not out of the question. Mediators are desperately trying to bring both sides back to the table, but much depends on the 45-year-old Abhisit.

"I think peace is in his hands," said Gothom Arya, a respected former election commissioner who is trying to mediate a political compromise between the government and the protestors.

Gothom has tabled a proposal for discussion between Abhisit and the protestors that includes a dissolution of the house within five months, and the setting up of an independent commission for political reform which might even touch on the sensitive issue of the monarchy.

It is currently the only peaceful solution on the table, other than Abhisit bowing to the protestors' demand that he immediately dissolve parliament and hold new elections.

The showdown between the government and the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD), better known as the red shirts for their trademark protest clothing, has reached boiling point.

Blood has already been spilt on both sides.

On April 10, government troops were dispatched to Phan Fa Bridge in the old part of Bangkok, where the UDD had been holding protests since March 12, to clear the area of demonstrators.

They ran into stiff resistance from the red shirts, some of whom were armed with grenade launchers and assault rifles. The ensuring street battle claimed 25 lives, including those of five soldiers, and left more than 840 injured. The government troops retreated.

Then on Thursday night, grenade attacks on civilians on Silom Road, in the heart of Bangkok's financial district, left one dead and 86 wounded. It is not known who was behind the attack.

Anti-government demonstrations are the norm in Thailand's recent political history, but the current red shirt movement has been unique in several respects.

Firstly, never before have protestors from the provinces flocked to the capital in such numbers to air their grievances.

At least 30 per cent of the UDD hard-core followers come from rural areas, while the remainder mostly come from Bangkok's urban poor or lower middle class, many of whom have rural roots. Past political movements in Bangkok have been led by students or members of the metropolitan middle class.

Secondly, past protests have usually been on the receiving end of the guns, not firing them. In this case, there have been about 40 unexplained attacks on army and government installations, in parallel with the UDD demonstrations. On Thursday, civilians were also targeted.

The red shirts comprise different groups, ranging from genuine devotees of liberal democratic principles to dangerous characters with past military experience, according to the government's assessment.

Thirdly, while previous protests have been opposed to military rule or corrupt politicians, this is the first movement that comes close to being a popular uprising against the entire establishment.

Leaders of the UDD have used unusually strong rhetoric at their protests, calling for an overthrow of the "ammat" or bureaucratic elite, for a "class war" and a "people's revolution."

The UDD blames General Prem Tinsulanonda, the president of the Privy Council of Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej, 82, for orchestrating the September 19, 2006 military coup that toppled their political hero, former premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

Thaksin, a former billionaire tycoon, put in place populist policies during his two-term premiership between 2001 and 2006 that won the hearts of the rural and urban poor and gave them a sense of political entitlement they now miss and want to regain.

The red shirts want polls because they are confident their political arm, the Puea Thai opposition party, would win, given the immense popularity of Thaksin and his political allies.

But a return to power by an elected pro-Thaksin government is a threat to the so-called political elite, which was arguably responsible for his removal from power and the two-year jail term on abuse of power charges, which turned him into a fugitive.

Some political observers see this as more reason for Abhisit, himself a product of the Bangkok elite who appears to have the trust of the military and monarchists, to take a lead in initiating the political reforms the red shirts are calling for.

These include a reform of the monarchy, which is currently protected by one of the world's toughest lese majeste laws.

"If Abhisit had moral courage, he would talk to the king privately and announce the measures (for reform)," said Sulak Sivaraksa, a well-known social activist and a proponent of modernizing the monarchy.

"If it comes from him, it will be much more important than if it comes from the red shirts," Sulak said.

Peter Janssen, dpa

Siam: Life Under Abhisit's Thumb

The Thai government cracks down on dissent in the restive mortheast.

The physical signs of emergency rule have largely disappeared from northeast Thailand. Gone is the barbed wire strung around provincial halls. Gone, too, is the military presence felt in villages following the end of antigovernment demonstrations in Bangkok in May. Everything appears back to normal.

Yet since returning home from Bangkok, supporters of the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship, known as the "red shirts," feel persecuted. Of the 417 persons detained under the emergency decree on charges ranging from illegally demonstrating, weapon possession, to arson, 134 are in the northeast. The vast majority of the more than 800 arrest warrants issued by the government since the crackdown are for suspects upcountry. News of the murders of two red-shirt leaders—one in the northeast—has had a profound effect and spawned rumors of other leaders who have disappeared without a trace.

It's hard to get information on what's going on. Fearing arrest or worse, many leaders have fled the region, gone underground or remained silent. They worry they are being watched and that their phones are bugged. Many are reluctant to meet with journalists or human-rights groups.

There is a perception among red shirts that the government can do virtually anything it wants under the emergency law. For its part, the government has yet to provide any specifics on how it plans to handle red-shirt prosecutions since releasing a list of detainees last month, except to say that some with lesser offenses may receive an amnesty.

The government appears to be continuing efforts to dismantle the groups' regional organizational capacity. According to one red-shirt source in the northeast who asked not to be named for reasons of safety, most red-shirt community radio stations turned their transmitters in to the authorities last month. Citing the emergency decree and under pressure by the government's Center for the Resolution of the Emergency Situation in Bangkok, the Khon Kaen provincial governor's office, according to this source, looked into pulling down Khon Kaen's red-shirt community radio station antennae. Only assurances that the owner would sue the government if it did so stayed the government's hand, at least for now.

In the short term, then, it appears the Thai government's decision last week to extend emergency rule over much of the country's northeast region has worked. There is a pronounced silence hovering over the region. Even many households have gone silent. Left without access to red-shirt radio or television, many families have chosen to listen to nothing at all. They say watching the government-controlled news or even reading the newspaper upsets them too much.

When Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva's government sponsored a phone call-in program to solicit views from the public on "national reconciliation," suggestions from many angry red-shirt callers—such as dissolving parliament and prosecuting Deputy Prime Minister Suthep Thaugsuban for the government's alleged use of excessive force—were no doubt seen by the government as unconstructive. Yet long before the Abhisit government announced its reconciliation "roadmap" in early May, red shirts claim they already had one: namely, to dissolve parliament, remove the ban on red-shirt media and put an end to perceived double standards in the justice system. So most did not bother to call in at all: They chose silence.

The silence and the appearance of normality in the northeast, however, is deceiving. They mask feelings of fear, frustration, disgust and anger.

Historically, the mood now is not like after the coup in 2006 or even after the military crackdown in 1992 when scores of demonstrators were reported killed. It is more like Thailand after the bloody suppression of students at Thammasat in October 1976. Like the red leaders now, the student leaders then were accused of terrorism, lese majeste and inciting unrest. The events of 1976 initiated a spiraling down of Thai society into military dictatorship, profound divisiveness and sustained repression.

Many in Thai society—and not just red shirts—are beginning to wonder whether the government's approach is leading Thailand back to dictatorship by extending the state of emergency for an undefined period. There is precedent for this. In 1958, Thailand's normal juridical order was suspended as military-issued decrees took precedence over criminal and constitutional law. From a legal point of view, Thailand operated under this state of affairs for four decades. It was only with the 1997 constitution that significant advances were made to clear up the lingering vestiges of dictatorship. The 2006 military coup that unseated democratically elected Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra again plunged Thailand into uncertainty.

The Abhisit government says that the crackdown on the red shirts is necessary to preserve the integrity of rule of law. But the use of the emergency decree does exactly the opposite, and it undermines the long-term strength and viability of the legal regime. Even though the state of emergency was lifted for five provinces, the extension of emergency law for another three months in 18 others and in the capital, Bangkok, is merely the latest manifestation of an increasingly long state of legal uncertainty.

It is difficult to imagine how the Democrat Party-led government in Bangkok can broach the silence or assuage the anger of many in the northeast. Certainly, lifting emergency law or allowing red-shirt radio and television back on the air would not win back the hearts and minds of residents of the northeast. The government can't "give back" rights people feel entitled to in a democracy, nor should policy makes be surprised if restoring rights breaks the silence of the northeast and gives voice to even greater anger.

David Streckfuss
Khon Kaen, Thailand.
14/7/53

Sri Lanka:
Loud Silence as Sri Lanka Descends into Dictatorship

It is now over a year since the president of Sri Lanka, Mahinda Rajapaksa, claimed victory over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). But war is still being waged on the "paradise island" — by the government, against the country's journalists.

Last week alone saw one media outlet receive a threatening letter and the head of another charged with fraud by the supreme court after publishing stories critical of the government. And two international NGO workers involved in protecting journalists had their visas revoked.

The situation has been deteriorating for some time. According to Amnesty International at least 14 media workers have been killed in the country since 2006 and more than 20 are thought to have fled—more per capita than have left Iran. Arbitrary arrests, abductions and assassinations have been documented for over three decades. No one has ever been prosecuted for these attacks on the media.

In January last year, as the Sri Lankan army closed in on the last remaining pockets of resistance held by the LTTE, the government imposed a media blackout on the war zone. (It also denied humanitarian access to civilians trapped by the fighting and, like the rebels, displayed callous contempt for civilian life.)

Away from the killing fields, the local media suffered a sharp spike in attacks. Just days after independent broadcaster MTV was raided by gunmen, Lasantha Wickrematunge — editor of the Sunday Leader and prominent government critic — was assassinated in broad daylight in a high-security zone regularly patrolled by the army.

The end of the war has changed nothing. Phones are tapped. Emails hacked. Media outlets harassed and journalists threatened. One — Prageeth Eknaligoda — has been missing since January's presidential election. Small wonder that so many journalists say they now resort to self-censorship.

And they are not the only ones who live in fear. NGO workers, lawyers, members of the opposition — the culture of impunity puts them all at risk. The state has also ramped up its vitriol against external critics: last week a cabinet minister began a hunger strike and orchestrated a siege of the UN offices in Colombo in response to the secretary-general, Ban Ki-moon, setting up a panel of experts to advise him on accountability for alleged war crimes during the final stages of the civil war last year. The minister has since ended his "fast to death" amid growing speculation that the protests were supported, if not sponsored, by the government.

All this is happening under the noses of the world's press. While burning effigies of Ban draw the spotlight for a few days, Sri Lanka's slow descent into dictatorship has mostly gone unnoticed. Global media coverage of the conflict in Sri Lanka during the past four years is about a tenth of that given to Iraq. In 2009, the New York Times and the Guardian devoted four times more space to the Israeli military offensive in Gaza (death toll 1,400) than the bloody end of Sri Lanka's civil war (estimates range between 7,000 and 40,000 civilian dead). China Daily gave Gaza over six times the coverage, and the Independent Newspapers group in South Africa over 10 times. All papers ran more articles on Tiger Woods last year than on the Sri Lankan conflict.

This global silence plays into the hands of the Sri Lankan government's apologists, both those who delude themselves and say, as one did in a meeting at London's Frontline Club last week, that missing journalists have merely run off with mistresses, and those who are paid to delude others. The government has spent lavishly on public relations firms such as Bell Pottinger — which counts General Pinochet and Trafigura among its past clients — and its US subcontractor Qorvis, which also represents Equatorial Guinea's unsavoury dictator. The pardoning on World Press Freedom Day of JS Tissainayagam, a journalist previously sentenced to 20 years' hard labour, is part of this PR strategy.

All of us who care about universal values, and freedom of expression in particular, have a duty not to let Rajapaksa's twisted version of events go unanswered. If we do so, we encourage other states to believe

that they too can get away with the "Sri Lanka option" — using brutal methods to crush internal opposition, without regard for civilian casualties or international law. It has been reported that leaders from Colombia to Thailand have been following Rajapaksa's "success" with great interest.

Those brave Sri Lankan journalists who continue to seek out and report the truth despite the high risk of "disappearance", torture and assassination, surely deserve the support of their international colleagues. Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya's murder has rightly been denounced around the world. Wickrematunge, who chillingly foretold his own death in an editorial published posthumously, should be no less well known. The Committee to Protect Journalists, a press freedom organisation, rates freedom of expression in Sri Lanka as lower than in Saudi Arabia or Uzbekistan, yet somehow the world — including the mainstream media world — does not seem to notice.

Surely it is time for that to change.

Edward Mortimer
The Nation,
Thursday, July 15, 2010

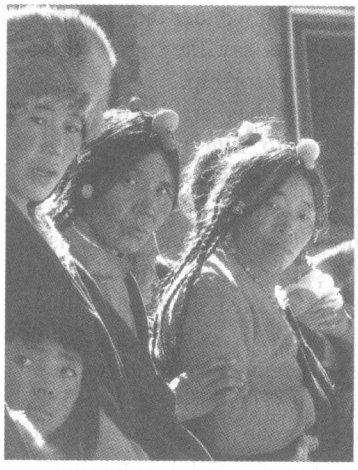
Tibet:
Uprising Anniversary Prompts a Crackdown

Disturbances broke out on March 10, 2008, the anniversary of a failed Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule in 1959. The protests turned violent and were described as the largest since 1989, which ended in a bloody clash with Chinese security forces and the imposition of martial law.

In July 2010, a detailed report by Human Rights Watch says Chinese security forces violated international law in brutally putting down Tibetans' protests and riots in 2008. The 73-page report, based on interviews with 203 Tibetan witnesses who had fled China and visitors who were in the Tibetan areas at the time, is the most comprehensive independent assessment so far of the mayhem.

The report also traced the origins of the deadly ethnic rioting in Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, to brutal attempts by security forces to suppress a peaceful protest by monks on March 10, four days before the riots broke out.

Authorities have continued to deploy troops to occupy areas they fear might erupt as a result



of the crackdown and its aftermath. In the period before the anniversary in 2010, China again increased security across parts of the vast Tibetan plateau to dissuade any Tibetans from holding protests.

The 2008 disturbances were a public relations nightmare for the ruling Communist Party, which held its annual meeting of the National People's Congress in Beijing in March of that year. Harried by pro-Tibet demonstrations around the world, China was hard pressed to present a harmonious image to the world when it played host to the Olympic Games in August 2008.

At the end of February 2009, Tibetans continued their protests with the start of Losar, the Tibetan New Year. They began an informal grass-roots boycott despite government officials' handouts enticing them to celebrate the new year. They protested by not dancing and holding dinner parties for vigils. The Losar campaign signified the discontent that many of China's six million Tibetans continue to feel toward domination by the ethnic Han Chinese.

Words From the Dalai Lama

In 2009, the Dalai Lama delivered one of his harshest attacks on the Chinese government in recent times, saying the Chinese Communist Party had transformed Tibet into a "hell on earth" and that the Chinese authorities regarded Tibetans as "criminals deserving to be put to death."

The spiritual leader of the Tibetans spoke in Dharamsala, India, the Himalayan hill town

that is the seat of the Tibetan government in exile. Tibetans outside of China and their supporters held rallies around the world marking the uprising's anniversary.

The furious tone of the speech may have been in reaction to the clampdown. The Dalai Lama may also have adopted an angry approach to placate younger Tibetans who have accused him of being too conciliatory toward China. The Dalai Lama advocates genuine autonomy for Tibet and not secession, while more radical Tibetans are urging him to support outright independence.

The Han Migration

In seeking to pacify Tibet, China's government invested $3 billion in the Tibet Autonomous Region in 2009, a 31 percent increase over 2008. Tibet's gross domestic product is growing at a 12 percent annual rate, faster than the robust Chinese national average.

But if the influx of money and people has brought new prosperity, it has also deepened the resentment among many Tibetans. Migrant Han entrepreneurs elbow out Tibetan rivals, then return home for the winter after reaping profits. Large Han-owned companies dominate the main industries, from mining to construction to tourism.

The increased ethnic Han presence — and the uneven benefits of Han-led investment — have kept the region on edge. Some Chinese officials acknowledge the disenfranchisement of Tibetans, though they defend the right of Han to migrate here.

Robert Barnett, a scholar of Tibet at Columbia University, said the goal of maintaining double-digit growth in the region had worsened ethnic tensions. "Of course, they achieved that, but it was disastrous," he said. "They had no priority on local human resources, so of course they relied on outside labor, and sucked in large migration into the towns."

Development programs are sometimes well received, and sometimes they create resentment. Since 2006, the Tibetan government has mandated that Tibetan farmers, herders and nomads use government subsidies to build new homes closer to roads. But many times the amount falls short, forcing farmers to take out loans.

Among the Han, it is not just farmers who are profiting from the land. Large companies from other parts of China are finding ways to tap Tibet's resources.

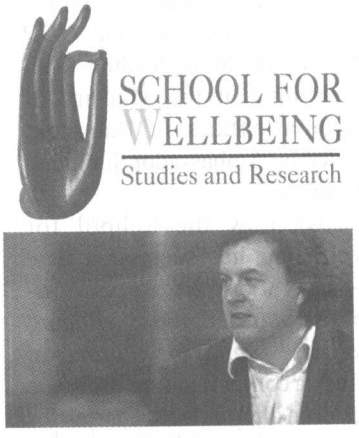
On July 19, China National Gold Group, the nation's largest gold producer, began work at a polymetallic mine whose daily output is expected to reach 15,000 tons. Tibet has more than 3,000 proven mineral reserves, including China's biggest chromium and copper deposits. *China Daily*, an official English-language newspaper, quoted a Tibetan official in March saying that mining could make up at least 30 percent of Tibet's gross domestic product by 2020, up from 3 percent now.

The New York Times,
26/06/2010

School for Wellbeing Studies and Research

A (nearly) one year old baby

Awareness on social entrepreneurship is growing. Is Suan Nguen Mee Ma Co., Ltd. — in English: Garden of Fruition — a 'normal' commercial publisher based in Bangkok or are we a social enterprise? Maybe it depends on how you define social enterprise. In addition to the often, maybe *too* often, according to our shareholders, a-commercial quality of the books we publish in a sequence of one or two titles per month, we also try to be a social innovator and initiate movements that induce 'systemic' change in society. In that sense we have been working with much trial and error on shaping cooperation between small-scale, organic, rural producers and mindful urban consumers. These team efforts resulted, after investing substantial determination from the very beginning of our company, in the Thai Green Market Network, now gaining remark-





Vandana Shiva
Right Livelihood Award Recipient, India
Author of ***Stolen Harvest, Water Wars*** *and* ***Earth Democracy***

able momentum. Also in an early stage we played an innovative role in introducing Social Venture Network (SVN) in Thailand and promoting corporate social responsibility and ethical investment in the business sector. Garden of Fruition started up the *Business and Society* quarterly which is now the home magazine of SVN Asia (Thailand).

More recently our company published several books on Gross National Happiness (GNH) and alternative economics and we were the organizers of the 'GNH3' conference in Nongkhai and Bangkok in 2007. The dynamics of the conference ignited the GNH Movement-project supported by Thailand Research Fund and ThaiHealth Foundation /TGLIP. After a series of dialogues involving Thai and international thinkers like Jon Ungpakorn, Thai Magsaysay Award recipient, Ron Colman, GPI-Atlantic Canada, Matthieu Ricard, French physicist, Tibetan monk and author of *Happiness. Life's Most Important Skill* this resulted in the foundation of an independent, permanent, think tank: the School for Wellbeing Studies and Research. The founding partners of the School for Wellbeing are the Faculty of Political Science at Chulalongkorn University, the Centre for Bhutan Studies, Thimphu, Bhutan and the Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation established by Sulak Sivaraksa in 1968.

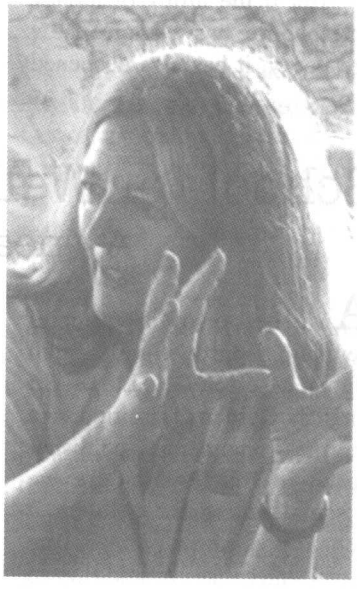
The initiative to start the School has now been strengthened by the support of many Advisors from Thailand, Bhutan and other parts of the world including Vandana Shiva, Helena Norberg Hodge, Satish Kumar and Judith Simmer-Brown. The patron of the School for Wellbeing is the Prime Minister of Bhutan H.E. Jigmi Y. Thinley.

In a meeting convened on 20 August 2009 at Chulalongkorn University by Surat Horachaikul, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Political Science, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed. Sulak Sivaraksa, Dasho Karma Ura, the President of the Centre for Bhutan Studies and Apichai Puntasen exchanged visions on Buddhist Economics in the 21st Century.

Just a few days later we organized the visit of Nobel laureate Joseph E. Stiglitz to Thailand culminating in a public dialogue *Globalizing the GDP Debate* including leading Thai economists at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bangkok, hosted by Ambassador Surapong Jayanama.

By now the School for Wellbeing has secured a new 3-year stage of its action-research, titled the *Wellbeing Society scenario project* in which a comparison will be made between alternative scenarios for Thailand: the neo-liberal and populist scenario induced by big business, the welfare state driven by centralist government, and the wellbeing society scenario where civil society would be the major actor.

The design of this project would not have been possible without public exchanges during the first year with Helena Norberg Hodge, author of *Bringing the Food Economy Home*, and Robert Biswas-Diener, a new generation pioneer of the positive psychology school in the USA and author of *Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth.* Another important exchange will take place in the first week of August 2010 with Nic Marks, founder of the Centre for Wellbeing at the New Economics Foundation (NEF), London, U.K. Nic is the lead author of the *(Un-) Happy Planet Index. An index of human wellbeing and environmental*



Helena Norberg-Hodge
Right Livelihood Award Recipient, Sweden/Ladakh
Author of ***Ancient Futures*** *and* ***Bringing the Food Economy Home***

impact.

Preceding the establishment of the School for Wellbeing Studies and Research much attention was given to the case of the Map Ta Phut industrial zone near Rayong, Thailand. In fact we were alerted on the situation by the presentation of Takayoshi Kusago, Japan, during the GNH3 conference. His argument was that we should not only apply GNH to agriculture-driven societies like Bhutan and rural parts of Thailand but take directly into consideration the urban-industrial complex and induce transformation from its core. His case-study was Niamata City in Japan where the local community could only reverse cancer-causing industries by civil action and a strong and sustained vision of a 'green' future for the city.

One of the researchers who were instrumental in putting a halt to irresponsible industrialization in Map Ta Phut will also supervise a segment of the *Wellbeing Society* scenario project. The research team will try to extend the Health Impact Assessment (HIA)—approach that successfully revealed the destructive effects of industry in Map Ta Phut, towards a Wellbeing Impact Assessment that makes it possible to account for all costs, including so-called externalities, and economic, environmental, social, cultural benefits of the various development scenarios. The impact assessment will initially be applied to a comparison between organic agriculture and chemical based mainstream agro-business, including diverse ways of connecting with urban consumers.

This holistic cost-benefit analysis may also apply to comparing the effects of diverse modes of property in the research part on *Re-thinking Property* to be taken up by political scientist Surat Horachaikul. A possible thesis is that a private property regime resonates primarily with the neo-liberal scenario, and public property with the state-driven or socialist scenario. While the nearly obscured concept of common property seems to offer the legal-philosophical foundation for a wellbeing society scenario driven by civil action.

To complete the scenario comparison project, well-known philosopher Soraj Hongladarom, Director of the Center for Ethics of Science and Technology at Chulalongkorn University, will explore how Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can contribute towards bridging the urban-rural divide. And how the level of participation in policy development, or: evidence based shared choices for or against scenarios, can be improved by public training with the help of ICT—supported decision making games and simulation or 'serious games' to be developed for 'social labs' in universities and adult education centres.

The research project of the School for Wellbeing starts at a moment when a series of 'reform committees' have been installed by the government of Thailand in order to address the causes of the recent violent unrest. Former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun and respected social thinker Prawes Wasi have taken up leadership of the twin bodies. Comments have been made that the well-funded committee and assembly show many old faces and some scepticism has been expressed that there is a great risk of 'reform' attempts that have been going on for decades being ruminated without much impact.

In that framework a genuinely independent think-tank like the new School for Wellbeing-initiative, though very small and vulnerable, may be much needed. For the 'school' the key word is transformation rather than reform. From that perspective the School for Wellbeing intends to critically support reform efforts.

In line with the genuinely independent outlook of the School for Wellbeing we welcome with great anticipation the visit of Vandana Shiva to Bangkok. Vandana Shiva is a leading advocate of the organic movement of small-scale farmers. She emphasizes the essential role of women in agriculture. She is recipient of the Right Livelihood Award and among many other endeavours, including critical assessment of the WTO, initiated the Planet Diversity conference in Bonn in 2008.

Her book *Earth Democracy, Justice, Sustainability and Peace* will be launched in Thai translation. This will be her third book in Thai translation.

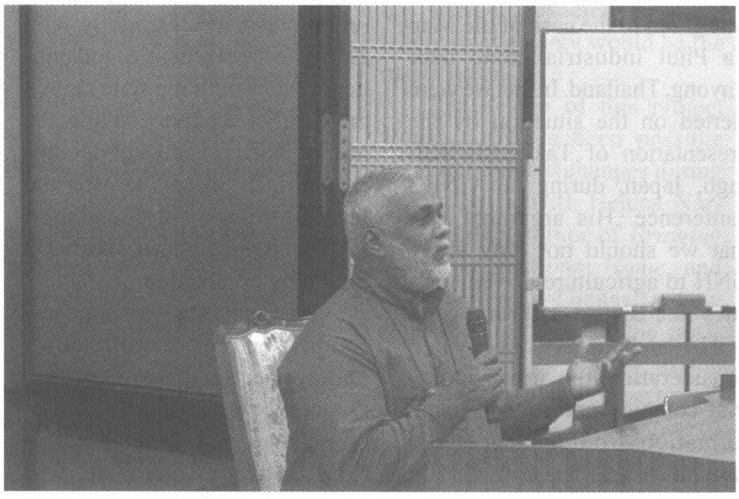
In 1998 Dr. Vandana Shiva received the Commemorative Medal by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand on the occasion of the Celebration of the 18th World Food Day, organised by FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok.

Dr. Vandana Shiva is planned to speak on Saturday morning 28 August 2010 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on *Earth Democracy, Justice, Sustainability and Peace.*

Please check www.schoolforwellbeing.org for confirmation and latest announcements.

Hans van Willenswaard

Message from the Chair



The Executive Council (EC) and Advisory Council (AC) of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) will be meeting together in Bangkok on November 19-22, 2010. The last EC/AC meeting was held in November 2009 in Chiang Mai immediately after the biennial INEB Conference. At the 2009 meeting we took some decisive steps towards strengthening the network. We agreed on updated versions of INEB's vision and objectives, we discussed future program priorities, and we agreed to develop an active EC and AC to strengthen regional and thematic activities and meet annually to review objectives and programs.

After this meeting, a few members of the EC and AC agreed to volunteer additional time and form a working committee to strengthen the new INEB structures. This working committee has met once every 2 months to assist the new Executive Secretary with streamlining and strengthening the Bangkok Secretariat, improving networking systems, and developing strategies for financial sustainability. The initial targets have all been achieved. The Executive Secretary has done a tremendous job and today we can be confident of having a properly coordinated and efficiently run Secretariat.

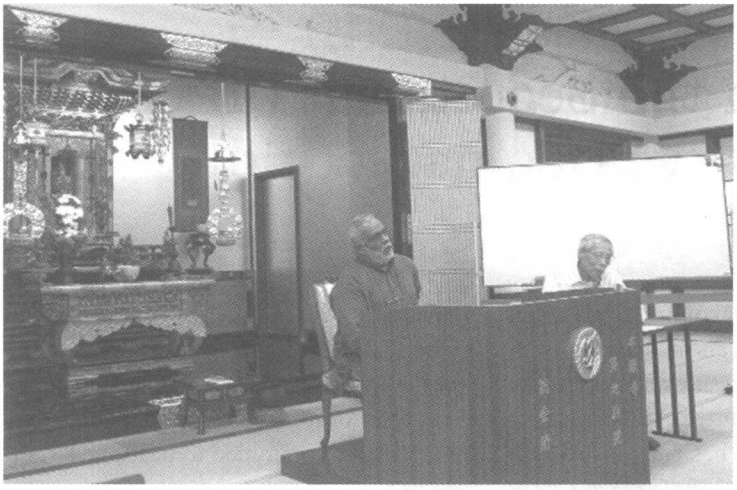
These efforts have provided a strong foundation for the EC/AC to build on at the November gathering. A draft agenda has already been sent to the members so they have time to reflect and prepare for the upcoming meeting. I would like to add a few additional considerations that might contribute to our upcoming discussions.

Over the past few months, I have participated in a number of meetings to increase awareness about INEB and promote INEB work. It is very clear that there is strong interest and need for this type of network. The rapid changes we humans have been experiencing (and causing) are affecting mental and physical wellbeing, social networks and environmental systems in ways we are only beginning to understand. People are searching for ways of addressing these challenges. They are searching for ways of combining spiritual practice and social action.

By bringing together people on the same path, INEB has the potential to inspire and catalyze much broader social change. The potential is great, but in order to reach it, we need to look internally and assess the best way forward. As a network and a nascent social movement, INEB is at a crossroads.

This November when we meet to discuss the way forward, we can learn from the experiences of other networks and social movements. Most movements are started by great leaders. These leaders attract a following with their clear vision and charisma. As the movement grows and expands, institutions begin to emerge to manage resources and logistics. This is the time that many great leaders and movements have lost their spirit and values. Movements don't produce managers and executives. They produce mobilizers, activists, leaders and followers who are resistant to organizational structures and management systems. Their only accountability is to their charismatic leader. Many of us have personal experience with this process.

Looking at my few years of experience with INEB, I see that it is an extension of friends, supporters and followers of Ajahn Sulak. It includes a special group of people who have contributed immensely to engaged Buddhism all over the world. It includes people who have met him at meetings, conferences



and other events. It also includes those who have joined him as followers and admirers. I am one of them. I was seeking someone I could look to as an elder and a teacher and talk to on matters related to spirituality, modernity and development. I had been missing that, and when I searched to fill that vacuum, I found him. Whenever I traveled, I would stop and spend some time with him to discuss all of these issues. Through this, I came to join the network and developed relationships with other members. Probably many others have a similar story. My experience is that INEB is a network of spiritual friends, *kalyanamitra*, who came together through Ajahn Sulak.

The reason I say that INEB is at a crossroads is because Ajahn Sulak himself has said that he wants to retire and travel less. He has asked some of us to support him to restructure and build a network with an efficient organization to coordinate, support activities and programs and ensure accountability to an expanding membership. This is a challenging task since INEB has always been a loose collective without a structure or clear accountability. Some members fear that an organizational structure and systems will harm the character of INEB. Others argue that these systems are needed for the sustainability and future of the network.

The initial steps towards strengthening the organizational core of INEB have already been done with the active participation of the working committee. All decisions were made in a collective and open manner. It's important that we are mindful and establish organizational systems that are consistent with our spiritual practice. When it comes to change, the biggest barrier will be our own psychological conditioning. Our minds get caught in past experiences and past ways of doing things. If we want a positive change, we will need to focus on present conditions and work together.

I hope that all members of the EC and AC will join us in Bangkok in November to take the next steps. For INEB to adjust to change and contribute to a broader social movement, we need to have a clear plan of action. We have already clarified our vision statement, objectives and program priorities. In our next meeting we need to discuss our organizational structure, financial sustainability strategies and plan of action.

Most of the preliminary work have already been done. The Executive Secretariat has prepared an activity plan and budget for the Secretariat. The organizing committee for the 2011 INEB Conference has met twice in India, prepared a program and budget and booked the venue. We already have draft activity plans for programs related to Buddhist visual art, climate change, youth leadership, and alternative economics that can be discussed and approved by the EC and AC. Most importantly, we have seen the commitment and motivation of young INEB members in preparing for the upcoming meeting. Their efforts have been admirable and are a good indication of the future of the network.

Harsha Kumara Navaratne
August 2010

Did you renew your subscription?

May we remind our readers to renew your subscription or help others who cannot afford to pay for ***Seeds of Peace*** so the publication will be available to all who seek something to read beyond those provided by the mainstream mass media. The suggested rate is USD.50.00 per year. If you can support more, we would be very grateful for your generosity. Your money will go to support INEB activities for grass-root people in poor countries.

Letter from the Secretariat Office

Dear INEB members and readers,

The month of May has turned Bangkok from being the 'city of angels' to the 'city of anger', with people all over the country divided, and misperceiving one another. The tragedy in central Bangkok is over for the moment, but peace hasn't yet been restored, even though it looks like a peaceful city again. A number of national committees for peace, conciliation and reform have been set up. Phra Paisal Visalo is one of those who has been involved in them and he is committed to peace and non-violent solutions.

The Youth Exchange for Peace and Social Innovation batch three has finished with an impressive outcome. Each of the exchanged participants is very active and ready to work for social change. Some are involved as *coaches* for the new batch of participants. The fourth batch is beginning their exchange now, including seven new participants who are interning with Deer Park (India), Khmer Youth Association (Cambodia) and INEB (Thailand).

The trip to visit Buddhist groups and organizations in Japan by the Advisory Chair, Executive Chair and Executive Secretary of INEB was positive for further communication and collaboration. Also, a second preparation meeting for the upcoming INEB conference 2011 was discussed and planned at Deer Park, India.

For the coming months, the following activities of interest to INEB members will be taking place:

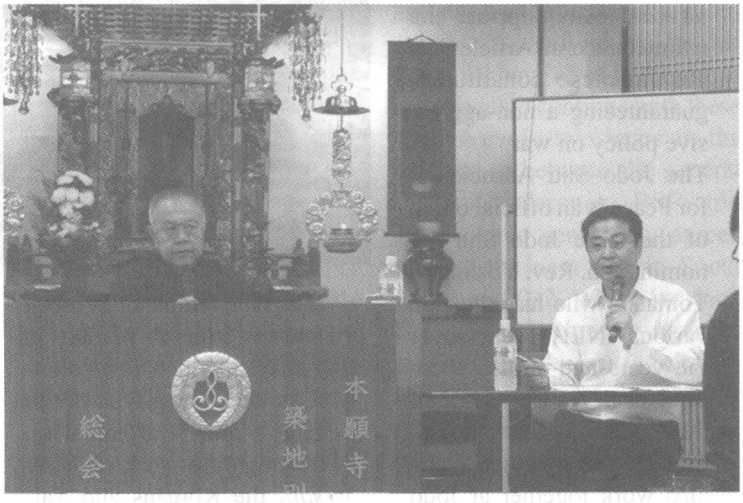
- Buddhist-Christian consultation on Structural Greed, 23-26 August, Chiang Mai
- Engaged Buddhist Session, 4-8 September, Taipei
- World Buddhist Conference, 25-26 September, Kuala Lumpur
- Consultative meeting on Buddhist Education for Social Transformation (BEST), 29 September, Bangkok

Once again, to remind you that the annual AC and EC meeting will be organized during 19-22 of November 2010 at Wongsanit Ashram, Siam (Thailand). It will first start with the two days of retreat and continue for the next two days with the AC/EC meeting. After this meeting, we will hold the Young Buddhist Executive Meeting during 23-25 of November.

Yours in Dhamma,

Moo — Somboon Chungprampree
Interim Executive Secretary

1st INEB East Asia Forum Buddhism Confronting the Suffering of Contemporary Society



In early April of this past year in Tokyo, members from the International Network of Engaged Buddhists' three principal East Asian communities (Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea) held the 1st INEB East Asia Forum, entitled "Buddhism Confronting the Suffering of Contemporary Societyé. This was a significant event in a number of ways. It marked INEB's continuing growth and development of stronger, independent regional networks, such as the one already established among South Asian members. It also marked the maturation of INEB ties within Japan, which for the first time hosted an INEB meeting after Korea (2003) and Taiwan (2007) hosted previous INEB general conferences.

Indeed, some space should be taken here to introduce the Japanese hosts and their activities, which formed a central part of the 4-day meeting. The core organizational support for the meeting came from five different Buddhist groups with individual leaders who have developed close cooperative ties over the years through both domestic and international activities.

- The Kodo Kyodan Buddhist Fellowship is a *Lotus Sutra* based, lay denomination under the leadership of Rev. Masazumi Okano, who is now active on the INEB Advisory Committee. Kodo-san, as it is commonly called, also houses the International Buddhist Exchange Center (IBEC) where Rev. Okano is working with Jonathan Watts (INEB Executive Committee and Think Sangha) on documenting and supporting a variety of engaged Buddhist activities in Japan. Kodo-san hosted the first day of the conference by welcoming all the Korean and Taiwanese participants to their large annual *Hanamatsuri* festival (Japanese Vesak) commemorating the birth of the Buddha and the annual blooming of the cherry blossoms.
- The AYUS Network of Buddhists Volunteers on International Cooperation is a network of Buddhist priests and laypersons established in 1993 to work on international relief issues and the support of small NGOs. Its Office Secretary, Mika Edaki, has attended the past four general INEB Conferences, and with her interests in the HIV/AIDS issue and gender issues, she invited a representative from *Occur*—the Japan Association for the Lesbian and Gay Movement—to speak to the conference on its third day. This presentation and the ensuing conversation was very meaningful, since conservative East Asian society and Buddhism in general is not open to talking frankly about these issues. Further, the participants were intriguied to find out how some Japanese priests have supported Occur by hosting memorial services for gays, who have been largely abandoned by their families but whom still have a community of friends and lovers who seek to grieve for them properly. In addition, Rev. Tomokazu Matsumoto, an AYUS Board Member, gave a presentation on the second day on Japanese Buddhism's com-

plicity and what he called "pro-active support" of the Pacific War. Rev. Matsumoto, a Jodo Shin Pure Land priest, is active in a network of fellow Pure Land priests called *Nenbutsu-sha Kyujo-no-kai*, who support the maintenance of Article 9 of the Japanese constitution guaranteeing a non-aggressive policy on war.



- The Jodo Shu Association for Peace is an official organ of the large Jodo Shu denomination. Rev. Yoshiharu Tomatsu, who has attended various INEB events over the years and is also a co-founder of AYUS, is one of the leaders of this association. He and Jonathan Watts also work together at Jodo Shu Research Institute on documenting and supporting Buddhist-based terminal care in Japan while linking with those in field internationally. Both Rev. Tomatsu and Jonathan gave presentations on the second day on the unique history and situation of Japanese Buddhism, who's tradition of laicized monks is hard for even Koreans and Taiwanese of the same basic tradition to understand. In addition, the One Spoonful *(Hitosaji)* Association run by a young group of Jodo Shu priests, three of whom participated in the last INEB Conference in Thailand, led the group on their bi-weekly, evening street patrol supporting the increasing number of homeless people in the Asakusa area of Tokyo. This event was one of the most meaningful for the Korean and Taiwanese participants as the previous day we visited the grand temple of Senso-ji and its vibrant market in Asakusa, which when shuttered at night gives way to large numbers of homeless. Through the work of *Hitosaji*, the Koreans and Taiwanese could also come to see the positive side of a laicized Sangha that can more easily enter the lay world and support common people in need.
- The Zenseikyo Foundation for Youth and Child Welfare is an organization under the directorship of Rev. Jin Hitoshi, who is involved in a wide variety of social issues concerning suicide and youth problems, especially the phenomena of shut-ins *(hiki-komori)*. Zenseikyo is also the host of the Rinbutsuken Institute of Engaged Buddhism, established in 2008 to develop and support Japanese Buddhists concerned with social issues and the public benefit awareness of temples and priests. On the third day of the conference, Rev. Jin was part of a presentation on the major problem of suicide in Japan and the growing attempt of Buddhist priests to confront it. The Association of Priests Grappling with the Suicide Problem, under the leadership of Rev. Katsumi Fujisawa and supported by two young Jodo Shu priests, Rev. Yukan Ogawa and Rev. Eka Shimada, who attended last year's INEB Conference, gave a compelling presentation on the problems of alienation in Japan. This was followed by a discussion session which included two Rinzai Zen priests, Rev. Jotetsu Nemoto and Rev. Soin Fujio, also active in the Association. On the final day of the conference, Rev. Fujio gave the group a special inside tour of the great Rinzai temple, Kencho-ji, located in Kamakura just south of Tokyo.
- The Nichiren Shu International Cooperation Foundation is an official organ of the Nichiren denomination under the direction of Rev. Kanshin Mochida. Besides attending to the official overseas activities of the Nichiren denomination, Rev. Mochida is involved in cooperative efforts with Buddhists from other denominations on domestic

and international issues. He is part of the Buddhist NGO Network, to which AYUS and IBEC also belong, which brings together a variety of Buddhist based, professional Japanese NGOs concerned with overseas aid and development work. Rev. Mochida hosted the entire group at his temple for a welcoming dinner on the second night. During this time, Dr. Hsiang-Chou Yo (INEB Executive Committee) gave a presentation on Taiwanese Buddhism, highlighting the need to support and develop small, engaged temples, which are independent of the four huge temples that dominate the Taiwanese Buddhist landscape. His appeal that temples should be centers for providing both physical and mental health care to the common people was a point that resonated with the Japanese participants who are also looking to revive the temple as a center for community service. Afterwards, Ms. Shin Hwei Wu, a Classical Taiwanese vocalist and a colleague of Dr. Yo, gave a special and moving performance in the Buddha Hall.

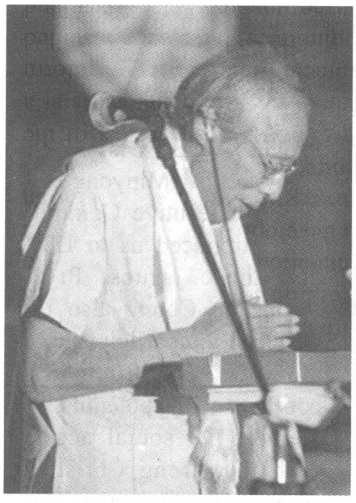
➢ It is of course important to mention the contributions of the participants from Korea. The Korean delegation largely came from Buddhist Solidarity for Reform (BSR), a lay organization formed to monitor and work on problems of corruption in the Korean monastic Sangha. It was fascinating and inspiring for those from Japan and Taiwan to see how Korean lay followers are actively involved in the issue of monastic reform, a problem in which the lay sangha is usually completely shut off from by the monastic Sangha. While Drs. Kisuh Sung and Dr. Minyong Lee (INEB Executive Committee) introduced us to BSR and these issues, Prof. Yoonsuhn Chung also introduced the participants to the wider issue of religious conflict and the potential for cooperative social action with the strong Christian communities in Korea. This issue was also very revealing for the Taiwanese and Japanese, where Christianity is not a significant social force. In addition, Ryoo Jung-Gil, a participant from the Jungto Society lead by Ven. Pomnyun Sunim (INEB Advisory Committee), gave a presentation on the pressing environmental issue of the development and exploitation of four large rivers in South Korea. This is a problem that some Korean monks have become active in demonstrating about.

The 1st INEB East Asia Forum offered just a taste of the potential for a much deeper interaction on a wide variety of issues. The group was able to start, but not get into any detail on, a number of purely Buddhist issues, such as teachings and the nature of the sangha. Even amidst our common Mahayana and East Asian heritage, we found some stark contrasts in the nature of our traditions. Furthermore, there was the wide range of common as well as divergent social problems. While it would have been fruitful to have spent more time in formal meetings exploring these issues, many of the most meaningful moments of the forum came in the exposure trips mentioned above. Indeed, these events were where we developed more fellowship and *kalyanamitra*, core themes for the larger INEB network that are the basis for sustained and meaningful cooperation on social issues. On this basis, we have already forged an agreement to continue with these forums every two years in the off year in between the general INEB Conference. BSR and Jungto have generously agreed to host the next one in South Korea in 2012, where we look forward to deepening our mutual appreciation and to entering more deeply into the world of Korean Buddhism.

INEB Leaders Journey to Japan

From June 23 to July 1, INEB's leading founder Sulak Sivaraksa, the present chairman of the INEB Executive Committee Harsha Navaratne, and the new INEB Executive Secretary Somboon Chungprempree (Moo) travelled to Japan to meet groups and individuals who are committed to socially engaged Buddhist work, discuss issues of common interest, and look for opportunities to collaborate and build long-term relationships. The trip was scheduled in the wake of the new, positive restructuring process around the INEB Secretariat as well as the developing interest in INEB in Japan and the gradual creation of a core group of Japanese INEB participants. This group, headed by Prof. Hisashi Nakamura and Rev. Masazumi Okano (both on the INEB Advisory Committee), sponsored a public symposium on June 23rd entitled "Buddhism for Social

Change: In the Midst of a Globalizing World". Ajahn Sulak and Harsha both gave talks designed to deepen the understanding of engaged Buddhism among Japanese and to further expose them to the work of INEB. In the days that followed, Ajahn Sulak, Harsha, and Moo were taken around Tokyo and Kyoto by Prof. Nakamura and Jonathan Watts to meet a variety of both Buddhist and non-Buddhist groups potentially interested in INEB work. On July 24th, they met with representatives from the Niwano Peace Foundation, Rissho Koseikai, and the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP). On July 25th, they gave talks at the International Center of Keio University. On July 26th, Ajahn Sulak returned to Thailand while Harsha and Moo went on to Kyoto where they met representatives of the Jodo Shin Pure Land based Ryukoku University. Over the years, it has been ironic that INEB projects have often been supported by a variety of progressive Christian aid organizations in Europe, while Buddhist organizations in affluent parts of East Asia have shown little understanding or interest in the work of INEB. While INEB is slowly developing grassroots networks in these East Asian countries, it is also hoped that INEB can make stronger linkages with both religious and secular aid organizations in East Asia.

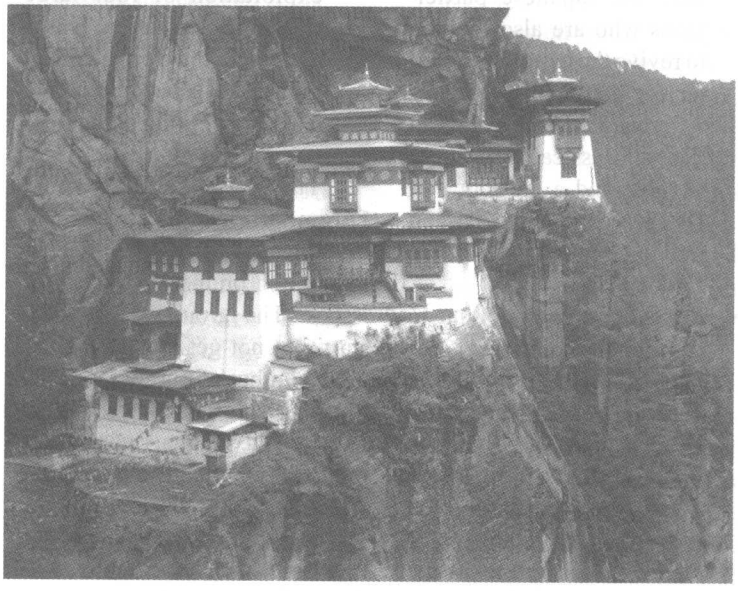


Hisashi Nakamura

Jon Watts

Where Pilgrims and Conservationists Meet

The Buddhist hermitage of Taksang—the Tiger's Lair—hangs precariously to a dramatic 3,000 foot cliff above a dense jungle forest. The white walls of the temple architecture contrast with the deep mountain greens and dark shadows. A nearly thousand-foot waterfall cascading by the hermitage casts a rainbow sheen around the site in the afternoon sun. And the hum of hermits' chant blows down the valley. This is Bhutan's national icon and one of most significant Buddhist pilgrimage sites in all of the Himalaya. Bhutanese and Tibetan pilgrims have journeyed to Taksang for more than a thousand years to pay homage to past saints who have consecrated and imbued the site with blessing. The occasional visit by Bhutanese royal family members over the last five generations have ensured that the shrines and temple roofs were kept in fine shape. Until five years ago, Taksang was strictly off-limits to all foreign tourists.



"For more than 1,200 years, Taksang has been a container of profound blessing," Khenpo Phuntsok Tashi, Director of the Bhutanese National Museum,

says, "Now with the tourists, there is a danger to the sanctity. Especially if the sightseers come to Taksang carrying the three poisons—desire, anger, ignorance."

In the Buddhist worldview, a physical location can be imbued with and secure blessings. This occurs when powerful masters and yogis practice meditation, conduct rituals, and importantly, make an auspicious connection with the spirits and deities who reside in the mountains, streams and forests. After a site is consecrated in this manner, it is believed to be worthy of pilgrimage for the site has, as Khenpo calls it, "the existence of blessing." The physical site no longer is simply a hillside or a stream but rather the topography itself assumes sacredness where the land becomes a support for the inner journey of the pilgrim and meditator.

In May of 2010, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), NEKORPA, and Bhutanese Buddhist leaders met at Taksang to study the confluence of traditional Buddhist pilgrimage and conservation. This effort is but one in a growing movement which understands conservation efforts are highly successful when initiated and carried out in concert with faith-based communities.

In Taksang specifically, current challenges that the Buddhist yogis are experiencing include not only the increasing amounts of garbage and plastic waste discarded by tourists, but also noise pollution. More significant, however, than garbage, disruptive yelling, and tourists banging on the door of meditators' huts in search of a toilet, is the increasing amount of "three poisons" that are carried to Taksang.

"Though a site can be imbued with blessing, those blessing can easily be eroded when individuals bring their mental and physical garbage," Khenpo continued. The recent drying up of a sacred spring associated with Taksang's principal protector deity, Sengé Sadmdhup, is believed to have occurred because plastic water bottles have polluted the stream.

"Plastic is but a manifestation of greed. Sengé Samdhup is sending us a warning not to throw plastic into the water," one monk at Taksang said.

WWF and NEKORPA are submitting recommendations to the Bhutanese government, which, among them include waste management tools, but importantly focuses on education of local Bhutanese, for tour guides and operators, and most importantly, for the tourists. The education for tourists will be tied to the government permit process. Suggestions include a one-hour "course" led by Bhutanese monks to instruct tourists on a pilgrimage ethos to take to the mountain, and "to carry out what you carry in, leaving no trace." Such recommenadtions are not limited to Taksang, but indeed should be required for all pilgrimage sites around the world.

The case study at Taksang will be featured in a report by the WWF to be released in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010 at the Conference on Biological Diversity. The report features sacred sites, biodiversity conservation and climate change in the Eastern Himalayas.

For more information see www.panda.org and www.nekorpa.org.

Matteo Pistono,
Executive Director,
NEKORPA

Burma - Lao in Transition
A personal reflection from my visit to Myanmar (19-24 October 2009).

The military junta in Myanmar is not much different from the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) in its first 15 years after coming into power in 1975. In those years, it was obsessed with maintaining stability and power militarily, politically, socially, and economically over all aspects of Lao society. However, the LPRP in the late 1980s and early 1990s realized that its policies to build a planned centralized economy were not working — production and trade were sluggish; social progress was slow, and people's living standards were low. Some of the leaders realized that the country needed greater economic growth and social development in order

for the Party to continue its rule. Its leaders had learned from Russia's experience of "Glasnost" and China's post-Mao era of economic reforms under Deng Xiao Peng and decided to change its course from a centrally planned economy to a market economy — slowly at the beginning and faster as the Party gained confidence that it can pursue economic growth without giving up its political power and military control. Like its Chinese and Vietnamese neighbors, the Lao leaders learned that it can open the economy in a "controlled" manner, by starting with the Party allowing some level of relaxation of the economy particularly through people who are loyal to them, which means to members of their families and clans, and then later extend that to members of the urban elite and business entrepreneurs who have business knowledge and experience.

As a result of the gradual opening to the market economy, many Lao, especially those in the urban areas and peri-urban areas, are able to benefit from the positive impact of more rapid economic development and see their lives improve over the last ten years. The government also started to invest more in infrastructure development, especially in the cities and towns, and also allow more and more foreign investments.

With the economy growing at a steady pace, and with no threat in sight to the Party's rule, the Government also began to accept some advice from the international organizations, bilateral governments, and ASEAN, in the areas of governance reform, legal reform, and civil service reform, etc. The Government quickly realized that agreement to such reforms often result in greater development assistance and foreign investments, as well as international "praise". However, everybody inside and outside the country also knows that many of such reforms are slow and are often more "rhetorical than real".

The military junta of Myanmar is also showing clear signs of embracing the market economy. But it also wants to have a monopoly over economic development. Ironically, international sanctions by the west, especially the US, only give the military leaders greater opportunities to strengthen its political and economic hold over the country's national wealth and resources. It is evident that while ordinary Burmese live in greater and greater economic deprivation and hardships as a result of the international sanctions, the military leaders continue to become more and more wealthy.

Historically, for most ruling parties to be strong, they usually need some form of alliances and support from at least some, if not all, of its multi-ethnic groups. However, this does not seem to be so in the case of Myanmar, where the military junta continues to distrust and suppress its ethnic and religious minorities. In the case of Myanmar, the lack of trust between the different ethnic groups also seems to be a major barrier to progress of real federalization and nation building. The military junta is probably trying to build alliances with some groups, but external and internal interferences make this difficult and continue to undermine inter-ethnic and inter-faith trust.

The question is how can Myanmar develop trust and share both power and wealth among the different ethnic and religious groups? How do people chart a road map for peaceful nation building? Who can be the facilitators?

During my first-ever 5-day visit to this beautiful and very rich land, I recognized two potential institutions that can play the role as facilitators and peace-builders. They are the faith-based organizations and the civil society groups. The people running these institutions, at least the ones I met, are very intelligent, hard working, and committed to social justice and sustainable development. They are doing very good work already, and in the best way they can. Some of them have gained the trust and confidence from the government authorities in their local areas. To scale up these efforts, the groups will need facilitators to connect these institutions and to have a system of sharing and learning. And secondly, for many of the donor organizations inside and outside Burma, they will also need facilitators to coordinate and network among them so that they can channel more resources to support the initiatives of the local civil society groups and networks. Third, there is a need to look for positive elements in the policies of the ruling junta and help implement these positive elements to demonstrate success, reduce fear, and build trust between all groups. They can start small and be built up slowly to gain more and more trust and confidence among all partners. This approach should be applied in all sectors of development—social, environmental, economic, and political. Success in one dimension will have positive impacts in another dimension, and these successes will multiply and gain momentum.

It is encouraging to see that there are already many good examples of cooperation between groups working together in development projects or in building peace. In this respect, more efforts are needed to document and disseminate the success stories of such development and inter-faith and inter-ethnic peace building initiatives. These success stories and experiences need to be shared more widely within and outside the country.

As an external NGO, SEM is playing a strategic facilitation role in fostering and preparing individuals from local faith-based and civil society groups in inter-faith and inter-ethnic social engagement and sustainable community development. As the space for social participation and engagement opens up, these groups will be well prepared to contribute to shaping the development of the country. I have great hopes that the commitment and efforts of the civil society groups in Myanmar will pay off in the not too distant future.

Sombath Somphone

Young Awakening Inside Burma

Buddhist Youth Leadership Training is a pilot project which was started in January 2008 with the aim of empowering young Buddhists to become active leaders working for community development and peace building. It was initiated by a group of Grassroots Leadership Training (GLT) and International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) alumni, who have experience in community development and youth programs.



Youth Development Awareness (Loikaw-BY)

There is a three year strategic plan of training for awareness raising, leadership skills, capacity building small project initiatives. The project attempts to promote the Spirituality of the young people by introducing the concept of socially engaged Buddhism, upgrading the awareness on social, cultural and environmental issues and motivating them to get involved in their local community development actions by introducing the concept of sustainable development. The training design is totally focused on inspiring the young to have a strong commitment for society, practicing participatory decision making and strengthening the youth network in different areas and ethnic backgrounds.

The first year of the project focused on awareness raising and leadership trainings. In this second year (2009), it continued the on-going training and extended capacity building by providing specific skills training, workshops, supporting the alumni's knowledge with fellowship and exposure. The alumni have begun volunteer services in community social welfare or environmental protection activities. In 2008, there were two leadership trainings for young people in Mon State, Kayin State, Kayah State, Yangon, Mandalay, Southern Shan State and Northern Shan State, completed by 54 youth. Another 119 young people attended awareness raising training.

In 2009, two Buddhist Youth Meetings for Spiritual Development (BYMSD) were organized for 23 youths from Chin State and

23 from Ayeyarwaddy Division. Buddhist Youth Leadership Training (BYLT) was conducted for the third time and 25 participants from 9 regions attended. Alumni are from 13 ethnic groups; Kayin, Mon, Kayah, Yin Baw, Yintaleh, Shan, Inn, Danu, Pa-Oh, Pa Laung, Kayan, Burmese and Chin.

To build the capacity of alumni, a ToT (Facilitation Skill Training) was conducted for 23 alumni from six areas. A Participatory Rural Appraisal Training was organized in both Kayah State and Kayin State for alumni in Loikaw, Dee More Soe, Southern Shan State, Mon State, Kayin State and Yangon. A total of 41 participants attended Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and a number of them are conducting PRA in their local area for rural development projects.

BYP, with occasional assistance from partner organizations has provided support for alumni and core group members to travel to trainings, seminars and workshops in Myanmar and in neighbouring countries. Four alumni were supported for mushroom cultivation training and are now growing them and teaching others to do so. One alumnus was supported for a Gender ToT and a Gender Analysis workshop and has become a good facilitator. Five Buddhist youth attended the "National Students and Youth Gathering" held by Student Christian Movement (SCM) in Yangon as part of the interfaith network. One alumnus from Chin State was supported to attend the Micro Credit Union (MCU) training conducted by the Lokattha Cariya Foundation (LCF) and he is now organizing the people in his area to set up a self reliant savings group.



Growing trees
(Anada-alinn, Taunggyi BY)

One Yangon alumnus had been supported for joint internship between Alin Ein's Green Movement and BYEP in 2008. Now he is a permanent staff member there and a good facilitator for our trainings and those of other organizations. In the second year, BYP extended the internship program to three others.

BYP supported a total of seven Core Group Members and staff for various meetings and seminars, and has encouraged like-minded youths to form small civil society groups. Ten of these groups are active at this time.

BYP alumni report regularly on activities in their area, ensuring adequate follow up and updates of all activities. Three of the Core Groups have matured to the extent that they organized their own annual meetings, to which BYP staff were invited.

The 1st Alumni Annual Assembly (AAA) was held at Mudon, Mon State in March 2009 attended by alumni from Mon, Kayin, Kayah, Southern Shan, Chin and Yangon. The 2nd AAA was successfully organized as a big forum at the end of 2009 with 63 alumni from nine areas and seven core group facilitators attending.

BYP believes that the program has succeeded significantly in terms of the attitude changes of those young people who have become more interested in social work. They commit themselves as "Socially Engaged Buddhists" and are willing to get involved in community service activities. The program is not intentionally producing staff for NGOs but is empowering young people to become good leaders who contribute to community development and environmental affairs.

The relationship with the government sector has been improving as some training and activities were organized in Kayah State with official approval by the Departments of Religious Affairs and Social Welfare. Some youth groups have been recognized by their local government.

BYP is pleased to have had a successful year on many fronts and is grateful to donors for their support.

Bo Bo Lwin
Executive Committee of INEB

Youth Exchange for Peace and Social Innovation

During the last three years, INEB (International Network of Engaged Buddhists) and its network from four different countries have been exchanging their members and volunteers in order to support an organic process of learning, towards an enriching and deeper understanding of the many factors which bring about individual and social change.

As in the previous years, during 2009/2010 INEB facilitated 7 young people from partner organizations: Deer Park Institute (India), PADETC (Laos), Khmer Youth Association (Cambodia), and Dharmajala (Indonesia) for extending youth capacity building through the Youth Exchange for Peace and Social Innovation.

Nicky from Dharmajala, Indonesia, and Jiraphat Buain from INEB were posted with Deer Park Institute (DPI) in India. As a result of the exchange, Jiraphat built up the first Deer Park Blog, started a Local Wisdom Project, and produced a short documentary on a workshop of Medicinal Herbs. She also translated *Community Study Tool Book* from Thai into English as a youth community studying tool. She worked intensively with the local Indian community (local volunteer youth and school children) which she hadn't done before, helping her to realize that she can be a great facilitator for youth capacity building.

Meanwhile, Nicky was involved with an Ecology Project, which he also had never done before. He worked with the local



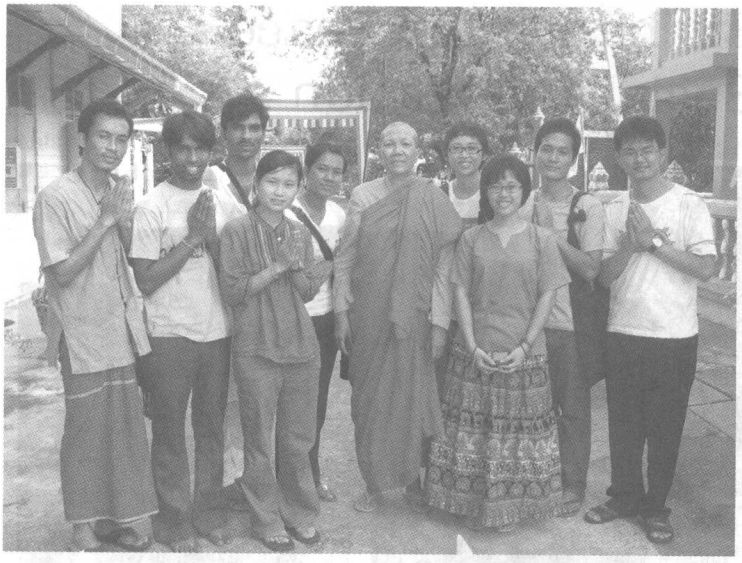
Tibetan community, who came from different backgrounds: monks, students, and youth. He also finished the first Deer Park Ecology Guide Book, a guide to conduct a three-day workshop. This experience made him think of being a teacher, an idea that never came up before the exchange.

Sent through INEB, Myo Aung from Myanmar gained a lot of experience from the Khmer Youth Association. He learned about community mobilization and shifted his focus from organizational development to community development, which is very helpful for him to build up his community in his hometown. He also learned how to do effective fund raising. Coming back to his home town in Myanmar, together with the youth there, he is establishing a library as a youth learning centre.

Dharmajala was a host for Kimleng Meas, a young lady from Khmer Youth Association (KYA), Cambodia. She is a trainer and shows her interest in Buddhism. During her staying with Dharmajala, she learned about mindful living and how to build peace, not only for the outer world, but the most important is cultivating the peace within. She also contributed in completing Dharmajala's Sunday School Program. By her presence in Dharmajala, she helped Dharmajala's members to understand about KYA and its work.

PADETC in Laos received two young ladies, one from Cambodia and one from Indonesia. A pictorial training booklet about earth worm raising, compost and bio-extract making was produced by Channa from KYA. This training booklet resulted from her learning process on those topics. She also conducted a training on the same topic for youth and children in schools.

PADETC's first Karacomix, "Action Learning for Change: Discovery Farming in a Village", was completed and



used as a training module on action research by the help of Melva from Dharmajala. This is a result of her learning and participation in conducting Action Learning for Change (also called action research). At the same time, she learned how to empower the youth to make change in society. Being exposed to alternative education models and approaches, she also strengthened her capacity, knowledge, and skill as a teacher.

Santosh Priya, a charming young man from Deer Park Institute, was posted with INEB. His confidence and communication skill improved a lot during his 10 month exchange period. He learned about eco-village design education, organic farming, and local wisdom. Completing his exchange program, he wrote a book about engaged Buddhist leaders in his mother language, Hindi. He also decided to continue the local wisdom project started by Jiraphat at Deer Park.

It can be said that the year 2009/2010 was a satisfying for INEB and all other partners. All participants have shown concrete results and contributions, not only with their host organizations, but also their home organizations, communities, and countries.

Welcoming the new participants for the year 2010/2011, with the initiative from the last batch participants, INEB held a short course for these seven young people (2 from India, 2 from Indonesia, 1 from Thailand, 1 from Myanmar, 1 from Cambodia) to strengthen their knowledge about engaged Buddhism so they will be able to bring Buddhist views and practices to their daily life and work. It was a five-day course which the first two-days were an exposure trip and the rest was workshop on engaged Buddhism.

Moo Ban Dek (Children Village School) in Kanchanaburi Province was chosen for them to learn about alternative education. In this beautiful place, their view about education changed. They saw and experienced directly how different the children there. This amazing school gave them a deep impression about how our education system could be.

Wat Songdhammakalyani, where Ven. Bhikkhuni Dhammananda stays was chosen as the second place for them to visit. Ven. Dhammananda is the first Theravada bhikkhuni in Thailand. From her the participants learned about women's position in Buddhism and in their country. Ven. Dhammananda also shared how her temple tries to contribute to society. One action they are doing is waste management.

Apart from Ven. Dhammananda, these seven young future leaders got a chance to meet with Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa. He probably is the first engaged Buddhist activist that the participants met and the meeting left a deep impression on them and gave them an understanding of engaged Buddhism.

The three-day workshop was facilitated by Pi Anne, Pi Ja, and Pi Na. Pi Anne gave them more detailed understanding about engaged Buddhism, structural violence, and how an engaged Buddhist should be. Meditation techniques focusing on breathing was shared by Pi Na. He also brought participants to be engaged with nature.

Pi Ja shared her knowledge on coaching skills. Coaching skills workshop usually takes three days, but in this short course, Pi Ja tried her best to wrap up the three-day course into a one-day course. And the result was good. All participants got the key points of coaching skills.

From the short course on engaged Buddhism, they got the big picture about what it is. They understand that the first step they must do is to understand their own self first. Next, understanding social structure is also important. And the most important is to practice meditation in order to balance the mundane and the non-mundane.

Melva Yolla

Aliens and UFOs in Buddhism

And on the pedestal these words appear:

"My name is OZYMANDIAS, King of Kings.

Look on my works ye Mighty, and despair!

No thing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that Colossal Wreck, boundless and bare,

The lone and level sands stretch far away.

(Percy Bysshe Shelley, 1818)

In 2001, the Taliban of Afghanistan obliterated what remained of the Buddha statues of Bamiyan, about 230 km (143 mi) northwest of Kabul. There were two images, one (37 m = 121 ft) built in 507, and bigger one (55 m = 180 ft) in 554, probably by the Kushans, and were the largest examples of standing Buddha carvings in the world.

In the 11th century, when Mahmud of Ghazni attacked Afghanistan (and west India), he tried but failed to destroy the images. He ended only looting the Buddhist monasteries there. Even in the 17th century, Nader Shah, the ruler of Iran, using cannons, could not destroy the statues. But in 2001, the Taliban, using dynamite, anti-aircraft guns and artillery, successfully demolished the Buddha images. The demolition efforts began on 2 March and was completed only after a few weeks.

The question now is: Who really destroyed these precious world-heritage Buddha images? In Buddhism, we try never to blame any people, much less a single person, for wrongs done. They are the result of many causes and conditions. Who made and supplied them with those powerful weapons? Why were they so determined to destroy the images which would have been lucrative tourist attractions that would enrich the region? Why were the images built in the first place?

About a year after the bombing, I was invited to attend a Friendship Day inter-faith forum in one of prestigious Singapore schools. It was attended by some 800 international students. The Muslim speaker spoke first and understandably was apologetic, stating that such violence was against the spirit of Islam. The Hindu speaker, too, spoke of non-violence and tolerance. (The Christian speaker sadly missed the forum, I was told, as he could not find his way there.)

In my turn, I said that we need to look at the incident as a bigger picture. The Buddha images have been put together from the elements, and have to return to them sooner or later. For practising Buddhists, Buddha images represent inner peace and impermanence. Everything in this world, no matter how beautiful or good, must perish. The Taliban only sped up the process.

The historians and art lovers mourned the loss; the informed Buddhists celebrated impermanence.

A Taliban official was reported on a Islamic website as saying that the destruction of the statues was carried out after a single Swedish monuments expert proposed to restore the statues' heads. When the Afghani council suggested that the funds be used to feed the children instead, he refused. The frustrated Taliban reacted by destroying the images.

Is it better to maintain an ancient statue or to feed hungry children? Any thinking Buddhist would know the right choice. The point is that we could have preserved both: the rich past and the living present of the country.

According to the UNICEF 2007 report on "The State of the World' Children," 10.9 million children under five die in developing countries each year. An FAO 2009 news release states that 1.02 billion people do not have enough to eat — more than the total populations of the USA, Canada and the European Union.

Now let us look at a modern "Bamiyan Buddha." Many people are impressed by the "flying saucer" stupa of the Dhamakaya movement in Thailand. The dome is covered by 300,000 Buddha images. These images and the dome surface were built from silicon bronze, normally with titanium and gold. The structure is said to be able to last for 1000 years. The cost: 30,000 million baht (about USD930 million or SGD1,270 million).

I wonder how many of the world hungry, or the poor and hungry of Thailand herself, all these wealth and technology could feed?

I feel deeply saddened and alienated as I write this, reflecting on how the religious can so cavalierly use structure and words simply in the rhetorical name of "world peace" and "love for mankind," obvious of the true realities, or ignoring them. It is more meaningful to reflect on the impermanence of the Bamiyan Buddhas and the hungry Afghan children, and do something about it. Or, if you like, you could

investigate why the Turkish marauders invaded 11th century India in the first place: there were many golden UFOs then, too.

As Viktor Frankl, the famous neurologist who survived the Holocaust said, "Ever more people today have the means to live, but no meaning to live for."

Piya Tan
Revisioning Buddhism 22
[an occasional re-look at the Buddha's Example and Teaching]
Copyright by *Piya Tan*, ©2010 rev

Enhancing Awareness: Buddhist Solutions for a Future World

Since suffering is the most elemental and pivotal concern of Buddhism, as expressed in the Four Noble Truths, and since suffering will continue to escalate in human experience, Buddhism will inevitably become increasingly important throughout more of the world during the 21st century. Suffering will increase because of the pressures of human population growth; because of the failure to distinguish between needs and wants, mindfully moderating the latter; and because of the assumptions of industrial society and capitalist economies that unlimited material growth and economic development are possible in spite of a limited resource base. As a consequence, competition, inequality, conflict, violence, and war will only intensify in the future and generate ever more suffering. These factors have recently contributed to diverse economic, political, social, and environmental crises, notably the poisoning of the Gulf of Mexico with pollution from the catastrophic oil leak of the Deepwater Horizon since late April 20, 2010, and the growing problem of global climate change, which is likely to persist for centuries.

From the above perspective, the greatest challenge to Buddhism in the future remains that of enhancing people's awareness about the causes of suffering. Buddhism needs to draw attention to the sources of suffering at the individual, societal, and global levels, including the futility of prioritizing the material over the spiritual. Buddhism provides a solution to suffering, or at least for greatly reducing it, through the Noble Eightfold Path, whose application includes the ecological as well as the personal. The ongoing environmental crises ranging from the local to the global levels has been an arena for unprecedented interfaith dialog and collaboration. Buddhism has been an important contributor to this conversation since at least the 1986 Assisi Declarations, sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund on the occasion of its 25th anniversary celebration.

Modern means of communication, especially the internet, facilitate the sharing of ideas and information as never before. Such tools are only likely to proliferate exponentially in the future as they have done previously, and in unanticipated ways with far-reaching ramifications. The internet is among the most democratic of institutions of any time or place in the world, limited only by an individual's access to it, unless there is some kind of censorship. Accordingly, there are unprecedented opportunities for sharing the wisdom of the Buddha, surely as relevant today as it was millennia ago, if not even more so. For example, of the 15,000,000+ websites on Buddhism revealed by Google.com, 708,000 address Tibetan Buddhism. Through these sites, many refugees in the Tibetan diaspora, including the Tibetan government in exile in Dharamsala, India, have found solidarity.

Buddhism spread throughout much of Asia over more than two millennia. In recent centuries, it has spread beyond Asia into much of the rest of the world. In these successive phases of the historical diffusion of Buddhism, its universal themes have been manifested in particular variations in response to regional, historical, cultural, and political contexts. This spread has not necessarily involved conversion of individuals from other religions, although that has happened as well, but often it has involved simply the recognition of the enduring validity and utility of the core principles as well as some of the traditional practices of Buddhism, the latter including meditation. Thus, individuals may embrace aspects of Buddhism while continuing to pursue another religion.

Leslie E. Sponsel and
Poranee Natadecha-Sponsel

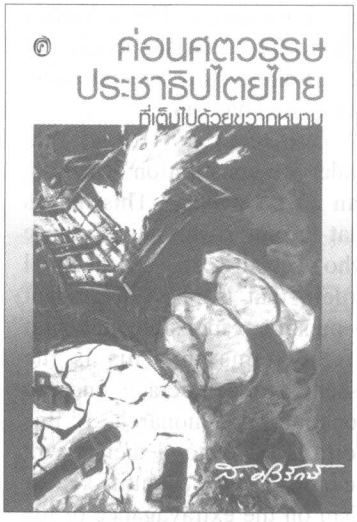
Oral Closing Statement at the Administrative Court

Sulak Sivaraksa is the plaintiff filing a lawsuit against

1) Officials in charge of the print media in Bangok
2) The Ministry of Interior
3) Officials concerning registration of the print media in Bangkok
4) The Fine Arts Department
5) The Royal Thai Police Headquarters
6) The Prime Minister

Based on the charge made by the plaintiff whose Thai book A *Quarter of a Century of Thai Democracy: A Path Filled with Obstacles* was confiscated on 2 October 2007 the Administrative Court had accepted the complaint, now registered as Black Case 85/2551, since 24 February 2008. The Court had made a secret inquiry into the case on 27 November 2009.

The plaintiff requested the permission of the Court to openly state that after hearing the defendant's testimony on 27 November 2009 the plaintiff could not but feel sorry for the four individuals who served as witnesses.1 The plaintiff stated that the testimony to the court of each police officer confirmed his allegation that in Thailand the Royal Thai Police is a state within a state. The actions of these police officers pointed to the fact that Thailand is a police state or an authoritarian state. In their testimonies, each of the police officers merely affirmed that the confiscated book contains messages that disrupt public order but did not refer to any particular articles in the legal statute to support their accusation. They only relied on their personal opinions. They are



law enforcers, but their words and actions seemed to be geared towards finding faults with ordinary citizens.

An example from the article "Reflections on the Sixtieth Anniversary Celebrations of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne" should be raised. The article mentions that tears filled the king's eyes as he left the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall on 9 June 2006. It states that perhaps he was overwhelmed by the sight of the masses of well wishers who came to pay homage to him or by the grief of the loss of his elder brother who passed away that very day 60 years ago.

The witnesses for the police stated that this comment was inappropriate and disrupted the public order.

In the same article it is also mentioned that the king's grandchildren who have a foreign last name were present at the ceremony but the four princes who are also royal grandchildren were nowhere to be seen. It thus asks why the four princes were missing. This is a factual question. One of the missing four princes had even entered the monkhood during the cremation ceremony of the princess mother.

For the police witnesses one was already disrupting public order merely by raising these doubts. The plaintiff had previously handed in documents referring to the fact that the four princes were still potential candidates to inherit the throne according to the palace law governing members of the Royal Household. The plaintiff had also submitted a letter written by one of the princes and photographs of the four princes to the court.

The article also mentions that King Mongkut invented Phra Siam Devatiraj. This however is an historical fact. Likewise, the assertion that a movie actor started instigating the cult of King Rama V during the present reign is a fact. The plaintiff had also submitted documents to the court indicating that Mr. Ekapun Bunluerit was the referred to actor.

How could the mentioning of these facts lead to public unrest? Additionally, the article contends that King Naresuan the Great should be treated as an ordinary human being filled with greatness as well as flaws. The point is to learn how to view human beings, including those who are regarded as larger-than-life figures, in both their positive and negative dimensions.

Again, how could this remark disrupt public orderliness? If the past cannot be critically interrogated, then why study history? For instance, when there was an academic work criticiz-

ing the legendary deeds of Thao Suranari some politicians rallied the masses in Nakhon Rachasima province to attack the writer. This was sheer opportunism on the part of the local politicians. The law enforcers should be neutral. Is it proper to condone these prejudices? And is this a democratic regime, which upholds the rule of law and justice? If police officers are acting like bullies with complete disregard for historical facts how can this country be as civilized as other countries? Or are we admitting that we are actually living in a time of dictatorship like during the Sarit Thanarat period?

One of the four witnesses questioned whether the plaintiff is really a Thai and should be allowed to reside in the country by writing the article.

After hearing this, the plaintiff could not help but feel that this type of people wants the country to have citizens who are only economic animals devoid of human dignity, liberty, and rights. Don't they want the country to have intellectuals who have moral courage at all?

We must not forget that the country is a democracy with a constitutional monarch. The monarch is not 'God King' but simply king; that is, an ordinary human being. It was the dictator Sarit Thanarat who employed devious ploys to captivate the people, exaggerating the grandeur of the monarchy and making it beyond reproach and criticism. This may prove fatal to the monarchy as an institution.

The plaintiff has consistently spoken and written on this matter in order to make the Thai people mindful of and understand this specific point. The abovementioned book contains chapters pertaining to "The role of the monarchy and democracy" and "The monarchy and the constitution." They provide essential knowledge about democracy under a constitutional monarch. The officials who confiscated the book did not read or did not even mention these two chapters.

We must not forget that under the constitution "the king can do no wrong." This means that for any royal activity those who officially carry out the royal order—that is, the government —must be responsible on behalf of the monarch. This is the essence of democracy under a constitutional monarch. If this point is understood then it will be clear that the plaintiff's criticism on the extravagance of the sixtieth anniversary celebrations of His Majesty's accession to the throne was actually directed at the government. At that time Thaksin Shinawatra had already lost legitimacy as head of government. The difference between worship through material offerings and through practice must also be pointed out. If the government sincerely worships the king then it must help cultivate the dignity of his subjects. Society and culture should exist in harmony with nature. Instead of the extravagant procession of the royal barges, which consumed a lot of money, perhaps using that money for the cleaning up of the Chao Phya River and its streams might be a better way of worshipping the king.

The book also talks about the excessive material offerings often made by the Sangha. The point that needs to be emphasized is that for both the Sangha and the monarchy, if there is no transparency and if criticism is prohibited, then their demise will be more likely.

At the end of the stated article is the following note: "No magazine would publish this article." Some have thus hastily concluded that the various magazines did not want to stir public unrest. But if we look at it more deeply, we can arrive at another conclusion. That is, mainstream magazines are all ethically enfeebled. They have subordinated themselves to capitalism, consumerism, and elitist conservatism. The article also ends with a message stating that it has been translated into English and published in *Seeds of Peace* (Sept.-Dec. 2006). It is a magazine published locally. The officials in charge of print media however did not confiscate this magazine.

A word of warning is necessary. If constructive criticisms cannot be openly published then destructive ones will proliferate in the underground media. This is what is happening today. And if everything uttered or written is considered to be a threat to public order then real public disruptions will explode. The recent crisis must also be seen in this light. The warning sincerely raised by the plaintiff thus needs to be heeded.

The plaintiff would like to add that this was not the first time that he had been violated by the powers-that-be in the guise of law enforcers. He had faced a series of such violation. He had been falsely charged with lese majeste before. For instance, General Suchinda Kraprayoon filed a lese majeste lawsuit against the plaintiff. The Bangkok Criminal Court however acquitted the plaintiff of this charge. The final court decision contains this crucial passage:

> The wording in the disputed sentences is strong, impolite and inappropriate. However, when we look at the

whole context of the talk and not only parts of it, we can clearly see that the intention of the defendant was to give a talk that was respectful and loyal to the monarchy. He did not want any group of people to abuse the monarchy for political purposes. Accordingly, what the prosecution refers to as constituting lese majeste is not reasonable and contradicts the truth. The evidence is not strong enough to find the defendant guilty of lese majeste. (Decision of the Criminal Court, 26 April 1995)

In the present case, the defendants did not read the entire book. They merely picked out certain passages to accuse the plaintiff and they relied on personal opinions that are filled with prejudices. The plaintiff is thus of the opinion that the decision of the officials in charge of print media to confiscate the stated book is an illegitimate action.

The Administrative Court gave the verdict against the plaintiff on 28th July

The Challenge of Structured Greed Today

Let me offer some starting points from which to discuss the relations between needs, greed, and peace from an engaged Buddhist's perspective.

One possible and traditional way of looking at these issues is that greed is at odds with needs and peace. Greed denies the basic needs of the majority of humanity and violates countless lives in the form of war, exploitation, oppression, etc.

One only has to examine the gap between the rich and the poor within and between countries (or even continents) or compare the rate of infant mortality or average longevity in, for instance, Africa with that of North America or Western Europe. The world spends exponentially more on building weapons and stocking arsenals (can we talk about the global war economy?) than on healthcare and curing easily preventable diseases. Wars, and this has been the trend since the latter half of the twentieth century, have increasingly claimed the lives of women and children; the warriors are increasingly operating at a safe distance (e.g., the zero casualty policy) while ordinary women and children are increasingly rendered helpless and vulnerable; that is, killed. So much for security. Whose security are we talking about in the first place?

All these facts have been pointed out for decades. Back then scholars and activists pointed to the existence of what was known as "structural violence," a form of violence to be distinguished from personal violence or violence perpetrated by an identifiable subject. If one wanted to talk about peace, one could not remain silent on structural violence or could not single-mindedly focus on personal violence. The idea was to dismantle these violent structures. I was deliberately using the past tense in the previous sentences because it seems that now structural violence is again becoming invisible.

By invisible I don't merely mean that structural violence has become increasingly intricate and complex that it becomes more difficult for us to grasp it. More likely, structural violence is right in front of our eyes but we still don't see it because of our ideological/delusional blinders. Even well-meaning and good-intentioned folks don't see it, and in turn they become complicit in the violence. Let me try to put a little more flesh on what I've just said.

If you need a further explanation on structural violence, may I refer to my latest English book, *The Wisdom of Sustainability: Buddhist Economics for the 21st Century* especially from pages 14-15.

Perhaps today greed is no longer depicted as antithetical to needs and peace. Greed has become a virtue, so to speak, and becomes something on which needs and peace depend or feed. For instance, many of our economies are structured in such a way that the means to help make the poor better off is by making the rich even richer (the so-called trickledown theory). When the rich go bankrupt the poor are even worse off. And how many billionaires have their own foundations and donate millions each year to humanitarian or nonprofits organizations? It is as if to say the more profits they make (the greedier they are) the more starving children and dying mothers will be saved. Don't they give the violent structure a human face? Don't they help make us accept 'reality' as it is —as necessary and the only possibility? Think about it.

Sometimes to hold onto our greed and to turn a blind eye to structural violence we live in

idyllic gated communities or we take meditation courses. Both can be seen as a form of escapism. In the former, the peacefulness of our communities shield us from the structural violence in which we take part. In the latter, we confuse inner peace and outer peace, personal violence and structural violence. At the personal level, our lives can be peaceful, nonviolent, and quiet. As individuals we can be compassionate and filled with loving-kindness. Yet, we can unwittingly take part in structural violence. We must also develop or cultivate responsibility for structural violence. Yes, without inner peace there cannot be outer peace. But inner peace can also be achieved at the expense of outer peace. And outer peace must not be reduced to the personal or subjective level. For instance, it is interesting that Buddhadasa Bhikkhu talks about Dhammic Socialism not Buddhist Capitalism. Is he saying that a mindful and socially conscious capitalist investor (even someone who preaches about self-reliance and the sufficiency economy) is part of the problem because capitalism is the problem and that investor is invested in protecting and preserving its structures?

The four noble truths encourage one to start from pondering sufferings. The majority of people in the world suffers and is oppressed by unjust structures. Sticking to the path laid by the Buddha, one shall see that suffering does not simply affect us, but all people in society (and in the world), and that they result from greed (capitalism), hatred (nationalism, fundamentalism, militarism, etc.) and delusion (mainstream education and media, etc.). To confront suffering implies that there's something wrong, that society is not universal enough, that the way things are result from contingent/impermanent actions and they can be changed. Suffering is not the result of karma. 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 manifested. And with practice, we can overcome our intrinsic fear and cultivate bravery and together with all kalayanamitra or good friends, we can undo the unjust structures. The dismantling of unjust structures 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 round of rebirth.

Einstein once observes that 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 all kinds of war (e.g., with God on our side, we can do no wrong and everything is possible). Let us extend this insight to politics. Politics without spirituality/ethics is blind. Conversely, spirituality/ethics without politics is simply a series of worthless platitudes. Without political and social engagement, spirituality is merely a form of escapism and callous indifference.

Some have asserted that Buddhism is a religion promoting indifference par excellence. Buddhism, the reasoning goes, is indifferent to differences and aims to embrace everyone with compassion and loving-kindness, leading to Balance and Harmony. For instance, *upekkha* is often translated as equanimity, indifference, or neutrality. And *upekkha* is inter alia part of the Four Sublime States and the Ten Perfections. Here, Enlightenment or nirvana is treated as stodgy conservatism.

At the same time, Buddhism is emancipatory because it suggests that we are constituted by the world as much as we constitute it. Thich Nhat Hanh famously calls it "inter-being." He puts it this way:

In one sheet of paper, we see everything else, the cloud, the forest, the logger. I am, therefore you are. You are, therefore I am. We inter-are. I know that in our previous life we were trees, and even in this life we continue to be trees. Without trees, we cannot have people; therefore, trees and people inter-are. We are trees and air, bushes and clouds. If trees cannot survive, humankind is not going to survive either. We get sick because we have damaged our environment, and we are in mental anguish because we are so far away from our true mother, Mother Nature.

I'd like to point out some important elements from this passage. Affirming that *I am, therefore you are. You are, therefore I am. We inter-are* suggests that there is no autonomous, independent, absolute, and sovereign subject. Rather, in contradistinction to the modern Kantian subject, the Buddhist subject is relational, interdependent or dependent, socially constituted, and vulnerable. That I am is because you did not take my life from me. In other words, you have granted me the gift of

living. That you are implies that I did not take your life too. Our mutual vulnerability—not only in the sense that we could injure or kill one another, but also in the sense that we are susceptible to one another's touch, care, etc. —makes us human. This condition is not something to be overcome or disavowed —e.g., live in gated or bounded community, build Fortress Europe, threatening other countries with preemptive strikes and unilateral intervention, etc. Rather, it must be cultivated for we would be losing an important human condition if we turned a blind eye to it. It's perhaps also a delusion or ideological fantasy that we could overcome vulnerability which is constitutive of being human.

Since we inter-are, your loss would greatly impact me or my very being. Put differently, your loss would rattle my very being as if a part of me has gone missing as well. As humans our existence only comes in the form of being-with or being-together. Engaged Buddhists thus seek to maximize the livability of all sentient beings; that is, how to foster conditions that would help guarantee that all sentient beings have livable lives. This implies that violent structures have to be dismantled. This means that a modicum of peace has to be disturbed—that being a good Buddhist also entails cultivating dissensus, rupturing the unjust status quo, stirring trouble, etc. A non-violent protest does not mean that no one will be bothered, disturbed, etc.

How then do we square *upekkha* with inter-beingness? Are they contradictory? A way of responding to this question is not to see *upekkha* as the final state (after all it is one of the Ten Perfections) but as a shift in perspective. One should be generous, friendly, compassionate, etc. (towards specific individuals, groups, etc.) but must also be able to shift perspective to maintain equanimity. We may become addicted/attached to compassion and generosity for they make us feel superior, and we may be compassionate as long as the other is completely helpless, dying, starving, etc. Our compassion ends when they assert their agency, when they no longer want to remain victims (waiting to receive our generosity). In our quest for justice, we may hate our enemy to the point of attempting to destroy him or her by all means. Therefore, *upekkha* does not mean that anything goes but must be cultivated because it is part of Buddhist agency based on hospitality towards others.

Since we inter-are, your loss would greatly impact me or my very being. Put differently, your loss would rattle my very being as if a part of me has gone missing as well. As humans our existence only comes in the form of being-with or being-together. Engaged Buddhists thus seek to maximize the livability of all sentient beings; that is, how to foster conditions that would help guarantee that all sentient beings have livable lives. Interbeing, which implies vulnerability, is therefore a condition for an ethical relationship. It posits a transformed kind of agency [that is] bent no longer on predatory mastery but on generous hospitality towards others. Thus one simple meditation might look like this: I breathe therefore I am because I am part of this world, and there's only one world.

A lecture given at the Institute of Religion, Culture and Peace, Payab University, Chiang Mai on 23rd August 2010 for **Buddhists and Christians Engaging Structural Greed Today: A Consultation addressing a Spiritual and Moral Crisis**.

Organized by Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches.

Draft proposal on the upcoming INEB Conference 2011.

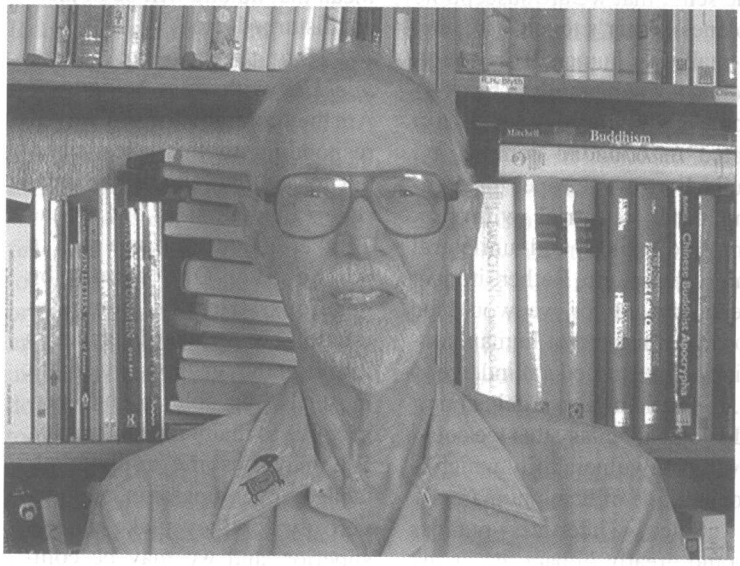
FUTURE OF BUDDHISM: From Personal Awakening to Global Transformation

at Bodhgaya, India.

19-23 October 2011	International Youth Volunteer Workshop
19-25 October 2011	Buddhist Art Workshop
24-25 October 2011	Arrival & Registration
26-29 October 2011	Conference
30 October 2011	Study Visit
30 October 2011	INEB Advisory/Executive Committee Meeting
31 October 2011	Departure
1-7 November 2011	Clergy Retreat at Saranath
	Optional lay retreat
	Optional pilgrimage to Buddhist sites

Robert Aitken Roshi (1917 - 2010)

was the master of the Diamond Sangha, a Zen Buddhist society he founded in Honolulu in 1959 with his late wife Anne Hopkins Aitken.



A lifetime resident of Hawai'i, Aitken Rōshi was a graduate of the University of Hawai'i with a BA degree in English literature and an MA degree in Japanese studies. In 1941, he was captured on Guam by invading Japanese forces, and interned in Japan for the duration of World War II. In the camp, he met the British scholar R. H. Blyth , who introduced him to Zen Buddhism. After the war, he practiced Zen with Senzaki Nyogen Sensei in Los Angeles, and traveled frequently to Japan to practice in monasteries and lay centers with Nakagawa Sōen Rōshi, Yasutani Haku'un Rōshi, and Yamada Kō un Rōshi. In 1974, he was given approval to teach by Yamada Rōshi, Abbot of the Sanbo Kyodan in Kamakura, Japan, who gave him transmission as an independent master in 1985.

Aitken Rōshi was the author of more than ten books on Zen Buddhism, and co-author of a book-length Buddhist-Christian dialogue. In Hawai'i he was instrumental in founding the Koko An Zendo, the Pālolo Zen Center, the Maui Zendo, and the Garden Island Sangha. A number of other centers in Europe, North and South America, and Australasia are part of the Diamond Sangha network.

Aitken Rōshi was co-founder of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (now with a local East Hawai'i Chapter) and served on its international board of advisors. He had been active in a number of peace, social justice, and ecological movements, and his writing reflects his concern that Buddhists be engaged in social applications of their experience.

Robert Aitken died on August 5th, 2010, in Honolulu, Hawaii. His final book is currently in the process of publication.

Mrs. Chanid Saipradit

15 January 1913 - 15 June 2010

Chanid Saipradit was Kularb's wife and life partner. They served as one another's *kalyanamitta*. In conjugal life they loved and were loyal to each other (no small feat given the fact that many Thai couples cannot even do this). In social life their compassion extended to encompass all citizens and inhabitants, especially the poor. Both struggled for social justice without caving in to the military dictatorship. Although Chanid led a simple life and was ever humble, she possessed immense moral courage. He translation work was also unrivalled, serving as a model for later generations. Chanid Saipradit passed away at the ripe old age of 97. This is nevertheless still an important loss for all those who are concerned about Truth, Beauty, and the Good.





The SNF asked Hongjorn Sanehngamcharoen to paint Kulab Saipradit's portrait to be hung at the Sriburapa Auditorium, Thammasat University. The painting was first shown to Mrs. Chanid at her Sriburapa residence, who received it with her son and daughter-in-law from Sulak Sivaraksa, representing the SNF.

Wallop Manyum

(6 September 1946 - 4 May 2010)

Wallop Manyum passed away quietly in Chiangmai on 4 May. According to his wish, his body was donated to a hospital. He did not want any funeral service to be organized for him. Friends and relatives however held a small religious ceremony for their own sake in order to properly mourn for him.

Wallop was a good artist. He was especially keen on drawing cartoons, which were often humorous political satires. His cartoons had been published in *The New Yorker* magazine in the US and many leading newspapers in the Thai kingdom. He had drawn several covers for my books and illustrations based on a northern story for the diary of the Foundation for Children.

Wallop first met me in 1968 at the office of the *Social Science Review*, which was located opposite to the Uthane Tawai School. At the time he was a recent graduate of Chiangmai University. He told me that he had high respect for M.R. Kukrit Pramoj and that he had travelled to see the latter privately at a hotel in Phrae province—only to be sexually molested by him. We then laughed heartily at this story.

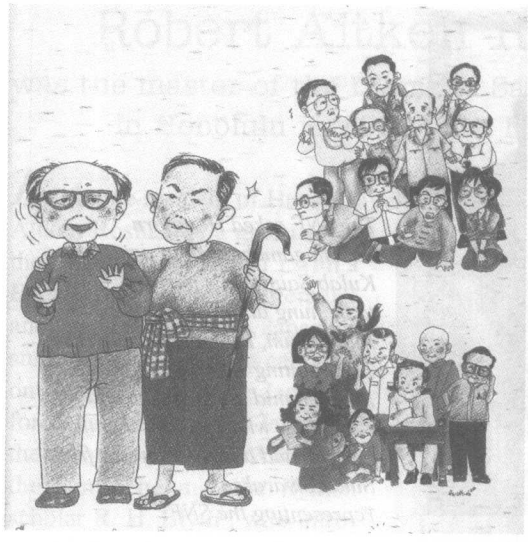


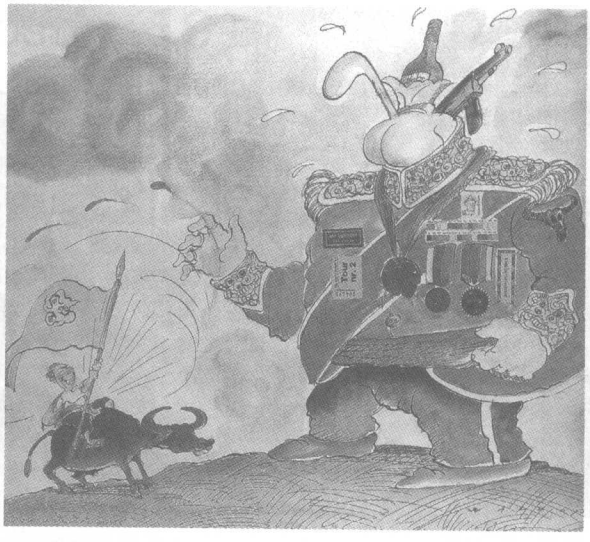
Wallop with Dr Puey Ungphakorn in London

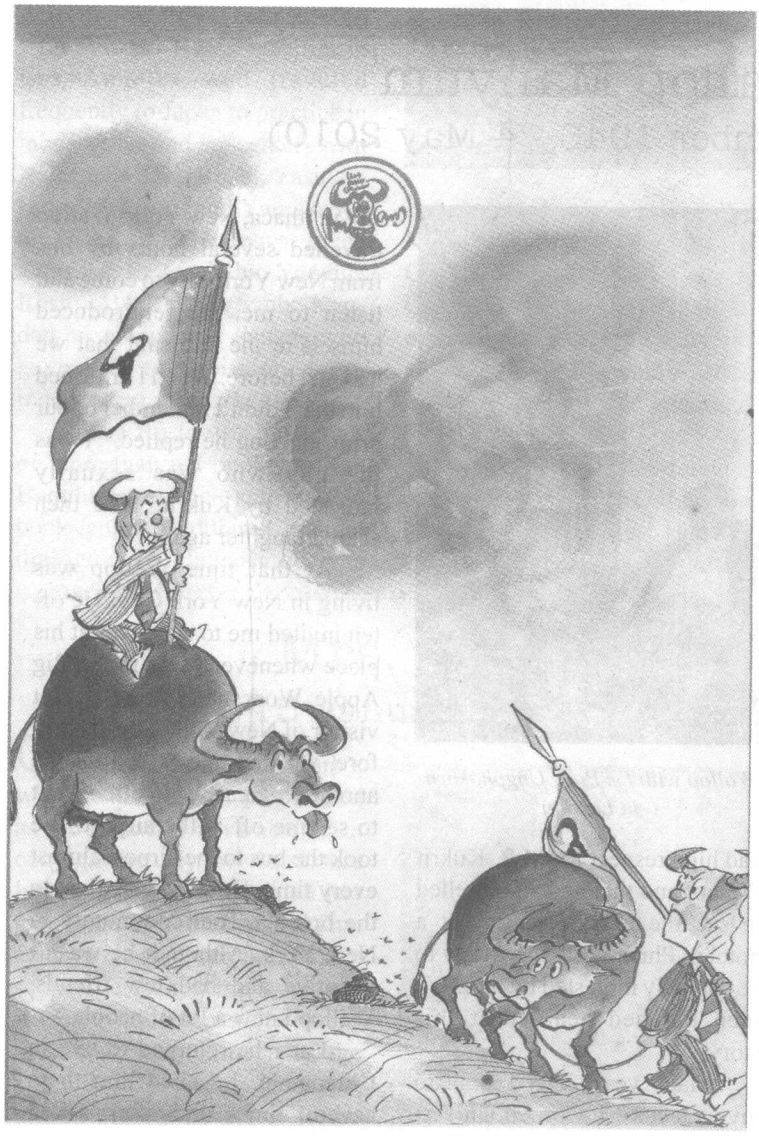
Many years later I went to give a lecture at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Wallop travelled several hours by bus from New York City to come and listen to me. He reintroduced himself to me and said that we had met before. When I informed him that I didn't remember of our prior meeting he replied, "I was the guy who was sexually molested by Kukrit." We then shared laughter again.

At that time Wallop was living in New York City. He often invited me to stay over at his place whenever I was in the Big Apple. Work made me a frequent visitor of New York City. Therefore, we met and talked to one another regularly. He often went to see me off at the airport. We took the bus to the airport almost every time. He introduced me to the broader Thai community in New York. Although he wasn't talkative and had few friends, Wallop knew a lot of people.

Later he returned to live in Chiangmai. I visited him there several times and often asked







him to draw cartoons for my publications.

Wallop had a nice house in Chiangmai. But the lack of good urban planning made him vulnerable to exploitation by land developers. He was subsequently forced to relocate to the outskirt of the city. There Wallop and his wife took quite an active part in the community's life. They successfully managed to get the community to construct a library and a playground for children. Wallop even had a space to exhibit his cartoons. He also had plenty of time to take care of his favorite pet dog.

Wallop did not have a happy marriage life. Cancer also troubled him for many years. But he regularly cultivated mindfulness. He had Phra Paisan Visalo as a kalyanamitta. Wallop learned to let go of many things and when the time came he was mindful and ready to accept death.

Wallop did not aspire to be in the limelight. People will soon forget him. But his cartoons will be of enduring value, especially the so-called man and buffalo series.

A Personal Appreciation of Sergio Regazzoni

4 November 1943 - 30 July 2009

I was one of the founders of Asian Culture Forum on Development (ACFOD) and later became its co-ordinator. ACFOD questioned the then concept of development, which was rather materialistic, promoting GNP and the like. We promoted alternative development, stressing on cultural and spiritual aspects of human beings, who needed their roots, culturally, religiously and socially. We felt that to collaborate with friends of different faiths was essential. Hence ACFOD collaborated closely with CCFD, when Jose Osaba was in charge of Asia. He was my personal friend too.

After he left CCFD, it was very fortunate that Sergio Regazzoni became his successor and I was privileged to work with Sergio as a partner and a friend all through the time that he was at CCFD and even after he retired from CCFD I still collaborated with him through his good work at Lebret Center.

In our Buddhist terminology, Sergio was my *Kalayanamitra* a good friend who is your external voice of conscience that is he cares for you and speaks truthfully to you skillfully reminding you of your short coming. Yet he never made any judgment on your belief, your speech or your action.

Sergio introduced me to quite a number of his friends, not only Catholics and Europeans, but also Vietnamese, Chinese, Laotians, Indonesians, Burmese and Cambodians. Some of them have become very close to me



and my family.

Sergio and I traveled in Vietnam and Cambodia at the time most people were afraid to be there. He went to see people in difficulty, listened to them and tried to help them in whatever way he could.

When I was in difficulty in my country, especially with the charge of lese majeste which was the most serious crime like treason, Sergio helped me in every way he could. He even got hundreds of French students writing to the King of Siam to pardon me. When my Thai friends were in danger in Siam, Sergio arranged for them to live safely in France for some years. He did like this with victims of other countries also.

When Sergio invited me to France I not only met good Europeans who were alternatives to the main stream of Eurocentric, but had a chance to meet non Europeans from the so called Third World especially some dear Asian friends like Abdurahman Wahid of Indonesia whom we hardly met in Asia, we were able to travel together in France, some time for many days. It was indeed a real privilege.

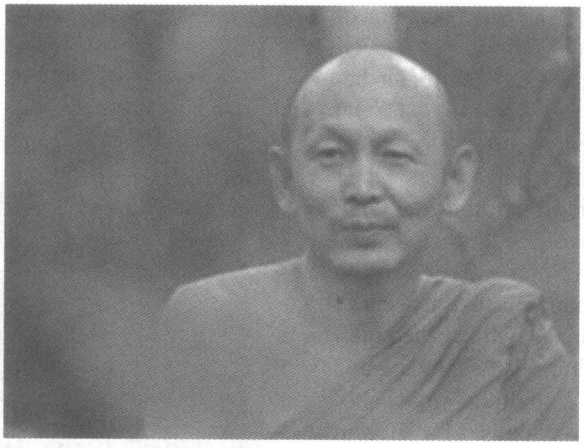
Sergio never propagated Christianity or Catholicism to me or to his non Christian friends. Yet through him, I learnt to appreciate the best in Christianity. I really admired Fr. Lebret although I never met him, for his commitment to spiritual socialism which was similar to my Buddhist guru, Bhikkhu Buddhadasa.

I find Sergio to be really selfless, willing to serve others with a good sense of humour. I hope his vision for a better world, with peace and social justice, will prevail. Although he is no longer with us, I hope his vision will become a reality in the future.

When Sergio was with CCFD the organization had the atmospheres of friendship — against the mainstream of quantitative development. When he was in charge of Lebret Center, he found it difficult to raise funds for the good cause for alternative development. Since he has gone, I hope CCFD would perhaps have a policy of supporting Lebret Center and CCFD itself would again have an atmosphere of good friendship, rather than trying to be an efficient development agency.

The Real Enemy

To solve external conflicts, we must start at their root cause, in our hearts



The violence that occurred on April 10 on Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue was a great loss for all parties involved — be they the government, the UDD — and all Thais. Every one of us lost. If the destruction on that day was called a victory, then it was a victory for anger and hatred.

After the violence, everyone is pointing finger at the other side, overlooking the crux of the problem. It is anger and hatred that push us into being vindictive enemies. The more we feel angry and hateful, the more vigorous our finger-pointing gets, and the louder our condemnation becomes. So much so we have forgotten it is the anger and hatred in our hearts that have driven us to be part of the violence, directly and indirectly.

Anger and hatred do not hurt others only, they also hurt us. Whenever we let anger and hatred dominate us, they affect our mind, our disposition, our behaviour.

Hatred and anger turn people who used to have goodwill towards one another into enemies, ready to jump at each other's throat, to beat up, even to kill with cold blood. In other words, they have turned us into devils without our realising it.

It might be true that a person we hate is vicious and inhumanely cruel. But treating him in such a fashion will make us similarly inhumane. We view him as sub-human, but our action reduces us to his level, or even lower. We do not see him as human because of our hate and anger, which have driven us to destroy our own humanity.

Just because he or she has a different political ideology or wears a shirt of different colour, we view it as sufficient to brand him or her evil. This results from our presumption that people of that ideology, of this and that shirt colour, are all bad, unpatriotic, fascists. We may not know them at all, but because they belong to the group or the institution that we despise, it is enough for us to label them as bad.

Rationally, we may understand that a view one holds does not make them a bad person. But emotionally, the fact that he or she subscribes to the ideology which we detest, or belongs to the group that we hate, is enough to make us hate them. It is easy to see the other side as bad people. For when we believe we are on the side of righteousness, the people on the other side must be the evil ones.

But it does not stop there. When we believe they are evil, we feel it is legitimate to deal with them as we deem appropriate. The reasoning is that we should not let such bad people live and create more problems. We are ready to condemn them with the crudest language we could find. We are ready to make accusations, lie, or inflict pain on them. But the more we do that with people we label "evil", the more evil we ourselves become.

When the "angels" are ready to use any means to get rid of the "devils", they become devils themselves.

There is indeed a fine line between "angels" and "devils". Whenever we let hatred and anger dominate our hearts and minds, the angels easily become devils. Take note:

When we fight with the devil, be cautious not to become the devil ourselves. When hate and anger arise, it will push others away from us, particularly the people who are the target of our anger. Strangely, however, the more we grow apart, the more similar we become in dis-

positions, views and behaviours, which only mirror each other. We similarly believe they are right and the other side is wrong. We are alike in cursing the other side with rude, angry words. Our behaviours, such as making false accusations, are the same.

Isn't it strange that the more we hate someone, the more we behave like them, although we label them evil? The more we want to hurt others, the more we hurt ourselves because we allow hate and anger to dominate our minds. It does not only put us on fire, it also destroys our image, reduces our humanity, and leads to many actions that we must repay. We plunge ourselves in the deep pit of vengefulness and suffering, which is so difficult to climb out of.

Everyone is human. They love, hate, are happy, and sad — like us. They have dreams and fears — also like us. But we are fixated with the labels we attach to them. For example *prai* (the oppressed), *amataya* (the elites), PAD, UDD, police, troops, or any organisations they belong to. So much so that we cannot see their humanity. We are so fixated with the colour of the shirts they wear that we cannot see them as a person. When we hate, we see them as the evil we must eliminate. We condemn and demonise them. The more we see them as less than human, the more righteous and more legitimate we feel to hurt them.

The age of catastrophe, which we call *migasanyee*, is a time when people can cruelly kill one another because we see the other side as just flesh, or *miga*, instead of people. We do not have to wait several hundreds of years to enter such an age. We are in the middle of it right now. People no longer see the humanity in others. We will pass this era when we start to see people beyond the labels, ideologies, shirt colours; to see the humanity of one another.

What is important is not to reclaim the street space from the protestors. We must return humanity to the yellow shirts, the red shirts, the police, the soldiers. Only then we can live together in peace.

We can only see others' humanity when we interact with one another as humans, when we open our hearts to listen to them instead of just acting our roles or insisting on listening selectively to what confirms our prejudices. One important dharma in time of conflicts is *sajja nurak*, which is not to be stubbornly attached to the belief that only one's view is correct. One should constantly remind oneself that the view of the other side may also be correct, so we are more open to other people's views.

In conflicts, all sides tend to insist they are right and the other side is wrong. Thus, they are not willing to listen to the other side. This applies not only to the conflicts between the government and the protesters, but also to people who love each other, such as husband and wife, father and children. During an argument, is there anyone willing to listen? This is because we are confident that we are right. Because we don't know how to listen, the quarrel is getting more serious.

Even when it involves people who love each other, listening is difficult. It is then all the more difficult for people we hate. Because we close our heart, we are more convinced that "we are right and you are wrong". But how can we be sure that we are 100 percent right or good, and the other side is 100 percent bad?

How can we know if our information is 100 percent accurate? How can we be certain that what they are demanding is wholly out of selfishness? How can we be sure when we have never opened our hearts to listen to their points of view, for we have concluded right from the start that they are wrong and evil?

The Buddha's teachings in the *Kalamasutra* are very important in this time of conflicts. It reminds us not to believe something just because "we hear it from others, because it is logical, because it agrees with our ideas, because it is plausible, or because the speaker is our teacher [or credible]". If it is the case, don't conclude that what you have heard or what you have been informed, including the opinions based on those information, are wholly correct.

It is difficult to have compassion for the other side, although it is good for our own mind. But at least we should see them the way they really are. When we all desire justice, we should give justice to others and ourselves by viewing them the way they are. But how can we do that when we are full of prejudices? It is only when we can transcend these prejudices and open our hearts to listen to the other side, when we do not believe so easily, that we can see other people accurately as they are.

It is only then that we will realise other people are not our enemy. Our hatred and anger are.

Edited translation from
an article in Thai
by *Phra Paisal Visalo*
printed in the ***'Matichon'***
newspaper on April 18, 2010.

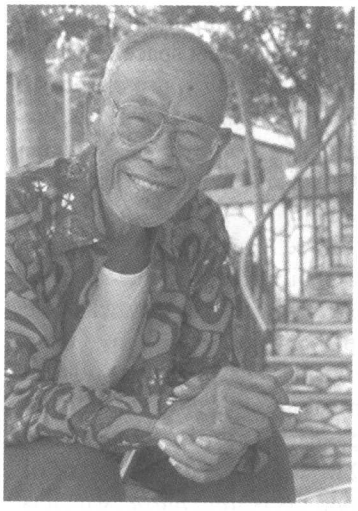
Few Intellectuals in Court of Public Opinion

Over the past few weeks, I have had the enjoyable experience of reading through most of the annual volumes issued by the Nippon Foundation. Most of the contributions are eye-opening, not merely for their quality, but also for their comparative reach, and the doors that they open to various networks of people concerned about the adequacy of a long list of state policies. Nonetheless, as a whole, they arouse certain anxieties in my mind, possibly because I spent many academic years as a so-called political scientist.

The past decade, say 1998 to 2008, has seen many rapid changes not only on the countries covered by the foundation's initiative, but in the globe as a whole. It has ended with the most colossal, and global, economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, and followed the regional financial crisis of 1997-1998.

Politically speaking, the decade started with an admirable outburst of reformist politics, but has ended depressingly with the entrenchment of oligarchies in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia. In all these places, the level of economic inequality has rapidly increased, human rights have been constantly abused, and state control of the mass media has become more formidable.

What struck me on reading many of the papers in the foundation's volumes was the relative invisibility of all this turmoil. One could use as an example Thailand, now in the grip of a long-term political crisis, of which the signs were already



Pramoedya Ananta Toer

visible at the start of the new century. But the Thailand papers barely mentioned Thaksin Shinawatra, the problems of the monarchy, or the bitter insurrection in the Muslim, Malay-speaking, far South. There was no warning in them of the coming red shirt movement we read about every day in the newspapers. One could read most of the papers on the Philippines without getting any idea of the disastrous presidency of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, and so on.

Why should this be so?

One could start with the long-term decline of the traditional public intellectual, whose primary readership or audience was the public at large. In the 1960s and 1970s the most influential public intellectual in the Philippines was certainly Renato Constantino, who wrote many historical studies with a strong left-nationalist character, and who was bitterly hostile to what he called the persisting "colonial mentality" among his fellow citizens. He was not alone. For example, the Protestant American William Henry Scott also wrote influential books about the early history of the Philippines, and about the abused pagan minorities in the Luzon Cordillera. Neither of them was an academic or a professional journalist. Today almost no such commanding people exist. No Indonesian had so grand an output as the late Pramoedya Ananta Toer, who never finished high school, but wrote a series of extraordinary novels and short stories for the general public, even though he spent many years in prison. As yet, he has no successor.

In Thailand, Sulak Sivaraksa has for decades been his country's most powerful social-political critic, and has repeatedly been accused of insulting the monarchy. He has no academic appointment, and is not a journalist. But he is now in his 70s, and has no obvious successor.

Malaysia has one such person, who is still quite young, the satirist, editor, outstanding filmmaker, and essayist Amir Muhammad. Again, not an academic, journalist or civil servant.

You will have noticed that I emphasise particularly the absence of academic occupations. This point leads me to the first of two profound changes making the survival of public intellectuals difficult: it is professionalisation of universities, following the American example, which in turn borrowed heavily from 19th Century Germany. This professionalisation was originally built on the powerful institution of the disciplines, in other words the fragmentation of knowledge and

study according to the logic of the division of labour. In itself, it discouraged historians interested in anthropology and economists interested in sociology; but it also meant that success in scholarly life was largely determined by senior figures in the disciplines.

In addition, professionalisation encouraged the development of technical jargon understandable only by people in the same academic disciplines. This in turn meant that, more and more, academics wrote for each other, published in "professional journals", and in university presses. The general public was increasingly excluded by this tendency. Writing books for this kind of readership was typically regarded as superficial and unscientific. Elegant prose was less and less esteemed.

Nonetheless America was in some ways unique. First of all, it had no national-level state-owned universities, unlike almost every other country in the world. Most of the top universities were private. Second, the country developed thousands of universities in response to popular demand, at a time when university degrees were thought of as requirements for well-paying jobs within and without the universities themselves. Thirdly, the country has a long tradition of hostility to university intellectuals in general, meaning that only a small minority of professors had any powerful connections to the political elite or the mass media. Yet the American example was very powerful from the 1950s onwards, given the country's hegemonic global position during and after the Cold War. Tens of thousands of youngsters from most parts of the so-called Free World were invited to to come to America to



Apichatpong Weerasethakul

get advanced degrees, and were amply funded by private foundations and state agencies. On their return home, they were supposed to follow their teachers' example and reinvent university life, often with substantial American financial and political support.

But this task was carried out only in part, given the character of the societies from which the youngsters had come. In Southeast Asia, for example, the top universities are usually owned by the state, and their staffs are civil servants of one sort or another. There is a long tradition of respect for learning, based on both pre-colonial and colonial-era social orders. This respect for learning is fortified by the strong connection to the state. Professors have access to the political elite and the mass media in a way almost unthinkable in the USA. On the other hand their social status has usually not been paralleled by comparable financial support. In the US professors are very highly paid, many senior professors earning US$100,000 (3.2 million baht) plus every year. In Southeast Asia, in contrast, professors are badly paid, so end up working on useless state research projects, moonlighting at other universities, speculating in real estate, and various kinds of mass media opportunities such as becoming columnists in newspapers, TV personalities and so forth. Students are often neglected or ignored, or treated in a bureaucratic manner.

A good many academics prefer not to teach at all, but sit in research institutes which is rarely very productive. This is why so many of the best students are largely autodidacts and despise their nominal teachers.

Under such circumstances many academics pragmatically align themselves with the political elite. Otherwise they compete fiercely for grants made available by agencies in the rich countries, who have their own agenda.

Moonlighting for the mass media has its own problems. TV slots pay well, but usually no one is given more than 5 minutes, which is not enough to explain anything important. Writing columns at least encourages academics to write for a wide general public, but serious scholars cannot turn out weekly columns without endlessly repeating themselves, chatting about themselves, and obeying the instructions of the editors and owners of newspapers. They become employees—of the state, of the foreign foundations, or newspaper moguls, and TV managers. Small wonder that they have little time to do real research, write significant books, or seriously challenge anything. They are also peculiarly isolated.

Let me give you one striking example. A couple of years ago, I gave a lecture at a top Bangkok university for about 300 professors and students. In the course of this talk, I spoke at some length about the first genuine genius Thailand has produced since the 1960s—the great film-maker Apichatpong Weerasethakul, who won two top prizes at Cannes within the space of three years, and has also won awards all over the film world. At the end, I asked those who had ever heard of Apichatpong to raise their hands. About 10 hands were raised, all

by students. How many had seen any of his films? About six, again all students.

I suddenly realised the isolated ignorance of the professors, who only watch Hollywood films, and their arrogance: film-makers have no university degrees!

Almost no bridges between professors and film-makers, novelists and painters, and so on. No wonder that film-makers and novelists usually have a very low opinion of professors. Only unprofessional students are connected to the two worlds. All of this suggests some of the reasons why it is unlikely to find public intellectuals in universities, though there are always important exceptions.

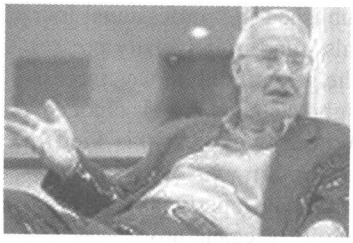
But one cannot blame universities without considering the environment in which they exist. Here I come to the second major change affecting the survival of the public intellectual. This can be described as the changing culture of the elite and the ways in which they make use of the power of the state.

The first thing to notice is the gathering trend for the elite to send their children to so-called international primary and secondary schools in their own countries, then send them overseas for various tertiary degrees, mainly to the US and the UK, as well as France, Japan, Australia, Singapore and so on. This outlook obviously implies indifference to, if not contempt for, the countries' own educational institutions. For this reason, the elite have few qualms about massive political interference in university life. In the end, only degrees from foreign universities have any real prestige.

This situation is the opposite of what occurred in the early days of independence when everyone was proud of their schools, and teachers were still generally respected. What do the children of the elite study, if they study at all? You can be sure the degrees will be mainly professional-commercial: business management, marketing, economics, technocratic or small scale projects unlikely to create problems - not only for themselves but also for the youngsters that they sponsored and financed.

Anecdote: When I last spoke with Amir Muhammad, he told me that his little publishing firm had just printed a collection of short stories by gay and lesbian writers. Knowing the harsh legal penalties for "abnormal" sexual relations in Malaysia, I asked him if he was afraid of repression. "Not at all," he said, laughing. "Our rulers never read books, only two-page policy recommendations and the daily press. Plus, the book is in English, which they are not very good at anyway."

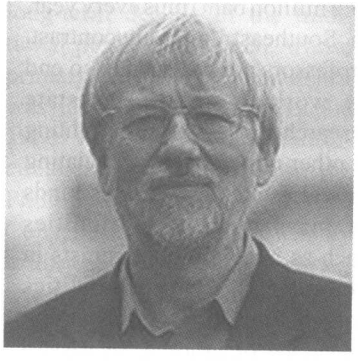
Benedict Anderson
Bangkok Post,
June 26, 2010



Benedict Anderson is professor emeritus of International Studies at Cornell University and a well-known authority on 20th century Indonesian and Thai history and politics. This is the first part of his keynote speech given at the international conference on the 10th anniversary of The Nippon Foundation Fellowships Program for Asian Public Intellectuals held recently in Manila.

Easter Earth

Collapse, the Jared Diamond bestseller, is subtitled *How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive*. Easter Island is the most prominent example of a society which chose to fail, continuing its environmentally destructive rituals until tipping-points were passed and it was too late to turn back. Collapse and starvation came quickly. For while building a civilisation takes centuries, it can be undone in years—or less. The Katrina hurricane turned sophisticated New Orleans into a war zone within days.



Jakob von Uexkull

Diamond describes other societies which saw the warning signs, changed in time and survived. Today the worldwide warning signs could not be clearer, yet our responses so far are pathetic. Unlike Easter Island, a failed Easter Earth will not be re-settled and revived by

voyagers from elsewhere. On the other hand, its population is unlikely to become extinct. A minority are likely to continue existing in a "radically transformed world that is much more hostile to the survival and flourishing of life" (Clive Hamilton, *Requiem for a Species*, 2010). If they are still able to study history and realise at how little cost their ancestors could have chosen a different path, they will no doubt curse those responsible for their predicament, i.e. our generation.

That is the reality of global climate change, "the greatest debacle since we came out of the caves" (Norman Myers). Recent studies show the world carbonising at unprecedented rates with CO_2- emissions exceeding the most pessimistic worst-case scenarios of only a few years ago. Clive Hamilton reports climate scientists suffering from "barely suppressed panic" and having trouble sleeping. Aware of the unique irreversibility of climate change, they are also worried about immobilising the public with too much fear.

Apparently we—the global public—are too immature to face the facts, and thus we risk losing our last opportunity to change course. For, while it is already too late to avoid many drastic and disastrous regional changes, our actions between now and 2020 will decide if tipping-points for global catastrophic effects can be avoided (James Hansen). Copenhagen has been described as our last hope to pull back from the abyss in an orderly way. From now on it will be very messy. It is likely that only an economic collapse will be able to generate the immediate rapid emission cuts required.

This is the very inconvenient truth we now face. The Easter Islanders continued cutting trees to support their rituals until none were left to support their lives. Fortunately, our "growth"-rituals may hit natural limits before this point is reached.

Our leaders from left to rights continue to worship GDPism (i.e. growth fetishism) as the magic answer to all problems and protector from all evil. But more perceptive thinkers have realised that this cannot continue, and are asking how well-being and life quality can be secured in the years A.G. (After Growth). What reforms are required to ease the transition to a steady-state economy and ensure that the sectors which continue to grow (while others shrink) protect our common future?

The identification and implementation of these policy changes globally—while recognising the different responsibilities of rich and poor—is now the overriding responsibility of politics, civil society and business, if we are still to avoid global disaster. This does not mean yet more appeals "calling for" such changes but pro-active cross-sectoral alliances working with policy-makers worldwide to implement them.

So far responses to the Earth Emergency from politics, business and civil society have been un-coordinated and declamatory. An ever-growing number of international "summits" and "fora" endorse strong declarations, usually coupled with the creation of yet another "Young Global Leadership Initiative", but achieve very little except revealing the growing gap between words and action.

Policy improvements, on the other hand, can effect rapid changes. But they require an understanding of the extent of the challenge we face, as climate change alters the planet, including our societies and economies. "The happy political message that we can deal with climate change, without affecting our standard of living ... and do so in a sustainable way, turns out, unfortunately to be wrong." (Dieter Helm, *The Economics and Politics of Climate Change*, OUP, 2009)

We have plundered the planet to generate "returns" it cannot afford. To argue about whether we can now afford to repair the damages as far and as fast as humanly possible is absurd, for the alternative will be immensely more costly.

The Harvard Economist Prof. Stephen Marglin laments that "thinking like an economist destroys community". The British environmental journalist George Monbiot laments "the possessive individualism" which prevents effective civil society co-operation.

Climate change, according to Clive Hamilton, demands that we "change who we are" from consumers to citizens. We have no option, as our modern belief system will collapse anyway when its promises of a stable future, continued progress and mastery over nature dissolve. So the question is not whether we replace it but with what? Do we trust and expand or fear and contract our selves? Climate change can be dealt with either by reducing our empathy—until the climate refugees flood in—or by expanding it.

Already in a 2004 poll 90% in the USA saw their country as "too materialistic". In a 2007 UNDP poll in 30 countries, 75% wanted a legally binding international agreement to combat climate change. Still, our media cynics and political "leaders"

tell us that most people are not ready to face the reality of a world of increasing constraints and higher prices. Surprisingly, even civil society activists share this belief. The Director of Survival International writes that he attended "an annual meeting of the heads of international advocacy NGO's, including some of the biggest... I suggested that 'consume less' is surely the real conclusion of all environmental awareness (and much more), and questioned why this message—which once held such an important role in both western and eastern thinking—was absent from the messages of all major NGOs. The comment was not welcomed." (Stephen Corry, *Question: Progress?*, July 2010)

How much longer will we continue to be intimidated by growth fetishism? Would it not make more sense to develop alternatives before it collapses, either because our planet can no longer afford it, or under its own weight? What have we got to lose? Responding to yet another report lamenting that the Japanese (and the Germans) do not consume enough to support global "growth", Mark Clifford, Executive Director of the Asia Business Council writes that "weak consumption ... might actually be making Japan a global leader in environmental sustainability ... Average life expectancy ... is one of the highest anywhere, while crime levels are among the lowest. The nation's artistic life ... is exquisite and world-famous ... Social cohesion remains strong. Income disparities are low ... (P)lenty of ... Japanese are indulging their appetite for life." (TIME, 2.8.10) Current political, business and civil society strategies will not deliver what is needed in time. But history shows that rapid and deep changes can be achieved by small groups united by commitment, truth, a common understanding—and passion! 'Best practices' require 'best policy' incentives—to multiply fast enough and replace the perverse incentives upholding the status quo. We need to shift our focus from trying to push back the darkness by fighting individual problems to letting in the light of better policies. Without them, we will soon be overwhelmed. Accelerating climate change will also undo our past achievements in strengthening human security and rights, and alleviating hunger and poverty, as the structures of global governance collapse over water conflicts, mass refugee streams and other by-products of a destabilised climate.

This was already understood almost 20 years ago in Rio when the world's nations—including the USA under President Bush Sr.—endorsed the Agenda 21 Plan of Action. In ***Agenda 21:*** *The Earth Summit Strategy to Save our Planet*, a book endorsed by the Earth Summit Director Maurice Strong, Editor Daniel Sitarz sets out what was —and still is—required:

"Effective execution of Agenda 21 will require a profound reorientation of all human society, unlike anything the world has ever experienced—a major shift in the priorities of both governments and individuals and an unprecedented redeployment of human and financial resources. This shift will demand that a concern for the environmental consequences of every human action be integrated into individual and collective decision-making at every level." (*Earthscan* 1993)

We have wasted much time since then and our moment of truth is fast approaching. We are not as rich as we thought. Many of our 'investments' are part of the (state-supported) financial bubble economy and thus likely to evaporate when needed, as they do not represent real claims on real resources. Much 'growth' is increasingly defensive. Unpaid past bills for externalised costs are rapidly coming due. The real power is increasingly held by nature. Natural laws cannot be changed either by dictators or by democratic majorities.

So where do we start?

Current global economic and financial rules are widely seen to perpetuate and increase the privileges of the rich industrialised countries. Without Western willingness to share real power by making these rules fair and transparent, our civilisation is doomed. This requires disempowering the bankers who hold the global economy hostage! The "need to placate the markets" must no longer be allowed to govern our political and human priorities. The absurd vicious circle of governments and societies paying trillions and risking ruin to rescue and underwrite banks only to then be threatened by these same banks from adopting policies to protect people and planet must be broken!

A realistic agenda for change must therefore begin by breaking the global power of the financial 'bond vigilantes', the Temple money changers of today. The right to property must be subordinated in practice (and not just in pious declarations) to the right to life for current and future generations. To uphold the poverty line, we need to uphold the greed line. Giving to Africa what was given to Wall Street may sound unrealistic and idealistic today. So did the fall

of the Berlin Wall six months before it happened. Conventional wisdom can change very quickly once the alternatives become visible.

It is important to remember that whatever a society has the resources to do, it can finance! Our productive resources—currently grossly underutilised—can and must be mobilised now to help the poor majority (especially) mitigate and adapt to climate change. This will seldom be profitable enough to attract the financial markets and poor countries will understandably not want to take on more debt to protect themselves against a disaster they are not responsible for. As it is also currently not politically realistic to obtain the required funding from wealthy governments (i.e. taxpayers), the rules of money creation must be changed to create this money anew.

The easiest way would be through reformed IMF SDRs (Special Drawing Rights). The World Future Council Commission on Future Finance has explained how such new money, if created only to pay against performance, i.e. for new solar and wind energy plants, will not cause inflation. (See *Breaking the Funding Deadlock: Creating New Money to Finance Climate Security* and *Climate Justice*, WFC, December 2009)

It is symptomatic of the state of our societies that it has so far been very difficult even to initiate a public debate on this proposal, which has the potential to save untold millions of lives now and in the future! By removing the monetary barrier, such a reform could initiate a global crash programme to speed up renewable energy production, renovate inefficient buildings, spread integrated urban transport systems etc.

This would not only help reduce the threat of accelerating climate change and create many millions of new jobs all over the world. It would also begin to reduce the enormous daily natural capital waste and destruction caused by the non-utilisation of potential renewable energies, for the sunshine and wind of today can no longer be accessed tomorrow!

It could also establish the new principle that every citizen of the planet has the right to a basic income from our common natural capital. As our Earth becomes increasingly crowded and privatised, this principle of 'pre-distribution' becomes increasingly important for the lives of the "needy and restless millions" (Pankaj Mishra) whom our Earth cannot afford to turn into Western-style consumers.

Also, this proposal can be implemented tomorrow, without having to overcome the massive vested interests which any re-distribution will encounter. But of course we need both. Military spending must be reduced and re-allocated. The tax burden needs to be shifted from labour to resources. Global common goods should be placed in trusts, with sustainable usage caps and fees distributed as "commons rent" to all citizens. Knowledge production needs to be publicly financed and freely shared to build a democratic and participatory economy. The basic right to healthy food and water must be legally guaranteed, as in Belo Horizonte/Brazil. (See *Celebrating the Belo Horizonte Food Security Programme*, WFC 2009) Furthermore, future generations need an institutional representation nationally and internationally and we must have more realistic indicators of human progress than GDPism. (Forthcoming, WFC 2010)

These reforms would transform our lives and stop our war against the planet before we (inevitably) lose it. They would also ensure a more equitable access to nature's gifts, which has to be the starting point if we are to be effective before it is too late. The rule of money must be subordinated to the preservation and enhancement of real human and planetary wealth, beginning with its most basic level: a stable global climate.

That is the transformative importance of the WFC's "New Money" proposal. To refuse to engage with it because we are not "monetary experts" is to refuse to empower ourselves. We now need to rethink all aspects of our personal and professional lives, i.e. our actions as citizens, consumers, producers and donors, not only to ensure that we become (and stay!) part of the solution, but that we do this effectively. Future generations will not judge us by whether we "did our best". They will judge us by the results.

The Easter Island society's choice to fail was made up of many individual choices and so it is today on a global level. We will soon find out if the great historical moment has encountered too small a human race—one not up to the challenge—or not.

Jakob von Uexkull
Founder
Right Livelihood Awards
World Future Council
August 2010

Crimes, Lies, and Blunders: Attacking the Freedom Flotilla

There exists a strong international consensus that the Israeli attack on the humanitarian peace convoy was a flagrant violation of international law amounting to a crime against humanity. The attack on Mavi Marmara and other vessels forming the Freedom Flotilla took place in international waters where freedom of the seas confers an unrestricted right of navigation. The Israeli use of force against unarmed ships carrying humanitarian supplies to the people of Gaza was unlawful in its essence, and, as well, grossly disproportionate and excessive. It was in a context in which these ships were carrying 10,000 tons of food, medical equipment, and building materials to bring a small measure of relief to the 1.5 million Gazans who have been enduring an unlawful and harsh blockade since mid-2007, causing increasing hardships to the entire civilian population. The blockade is a brazen instance of collective punishment imposed on the people of Gaza, evidently in vindictive response to the vote of January 2006 that brought Hamas an unexpected victory in a free and fair election. From a legal perspective the blockade was a criminally unlawful Israeli policy that violated the unconditional prohibition against collective punishment contained in Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The peace convoy was intended to bring Gazans needed goods and materials, as well as to show international solidarity on the part of these 700 or so idealistic activists drawn from 50 countries who volunteered for the journey, never realizing that they were risking their lives. That some of these activists are dead, wounded, or lying beaten in Israeli jails is tragic, and at the same time highlights the unwillingness of the political leadership in Tel Aviv to abide by either international law or elemental morality. This unwillingness was reinforced by the cruel Israeli refusal after the incident to inform families and diplomatic representatives of the names of the casualties. Israel isolated those detained, deprived them of all evidence of what had take place, while its officials flooded the media with a distorted version of the events, completely silencing the more authentic narratives of the victims of IDF violence. It was a cynical case of managing news by disseminating ridiculous distortions as if facts, such as the absurd claim that the heavily armed attackers were the ones acting in self-defense. The UN Security Council in its Presidential Statement of 31 May unanimously condemned the attack and called for an impartial investigation; most importantly, all members of the Council except the United States, demanded an end to the blockade. Only time will tell whether there is enough muscle behind the demand to achieve the humanitarian outcome that was the objective of the peace convoy, and is the uncompromising demand of world public opinion.

This condemnation of the Israeli attack and its handling of the aftermath is the easy part of an assessment. What is more difficult to figure out is why the Israeli leadership decided to confront this widely publicized humanitarian mission with such crude violence when it could have easily upheld its blockade without provoking such a firestorm of protest and opposition. Israel could have waited until the convoy was closer to shore, and then escorted or accompanied the ships to either an Israeli or Gazan port, dealing with the activists humanely in the process. Instead, it deliberately attacked and boarded the lead ship, Mavi Marmara, flying the Turkish flag. From start to finish Israel acted as its own worst enemy, with a bewildering reckless disregard of its own national interests. Why would Israel want to provoke outrage in Turkey, the one important country in the region with whom it had a long record of strong cooperation and friendship? Similarly, why would Israel act in such a manner as to make it exceedingly awkward for the United States and EU countries to step forward in their usual manner as protectors of Israel in the face of widespread international hostility, especially among Islamic countries? And beyond this, why would Israel hand the Palestinians such a major public relations victory in the struggle for the high moral ground in the unresolved political conflict between these two long suffering peoples?

These questions have no obvious answer. The widely admired Israeli journalist, Amira Hass, argued that the incident

demonstrated that the Israeli political leadership had shown that it has lost its common sense, which means that its grasp of political reality is so shaky that it inexplicably acts against its own best interests. This is a frightening interpretation as it suggests a disposition to act both recklessly and unlawfully, confirming Israel as an exceedingly dangerous loose cannon with respect to the entire Middle East, which could drift at any point into a devastating regional war. It gives an added darkness to Israel's militarist posturing with respect to Iran. Other explanations involve seeking to convey to the Palestinians and other potential adversaries that Israeli behavior will never be shaped by respect for international law or the authority of the UN, and that any *external* criticism will be ignored and its source vengefully attacked. The fury vented toward Richard Goldstone after he submitted a sober fact-finding report critical of Israel's behavior during its three week one-sided mass attack (so-called Operation Cast Lead) on a defenseless Gaza between 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009 in important ways prefigured the excessiveness of the Mavi Marmara attack.

There are no present indications that Israel will pay a heavy geopolitical price for its heavy handed crimes. Clearly Tel Aviv can live, has long lived, with a slap on the wrist by the UN and most of the nations in the world. Its main protector, the United States, has already fallen into line, refusing to condemn Israel's behavior just as it stood by Israel, thereby abandoning its alleged support for the rule of law, by denouncing the Goldstone Report. In this respect, none of the outrage arising from the attack on the peace convoy will deprive Israel of the impunity it has enjoyed when it engages in behavior that violates international criminal law. Perhaps, the most significant long lasting international effect will be to strain relations with Turkey for the foreseeable future, and this will certainly alter the regional balance.

More important so far as the Palestinians are concerned is what happens at the grass roots throughout the world. It has been apparent for some time that the Palestinians and their supporters had turned away from armed resistance to the Israeli occupation, and were relying on a variety of soft power instruments to pursue their primary goal of self-determination and an end to occupation. Arguably since the Lebanon War of 2006, and certainly since Operation Cast Lead in 2008-09, the Israelis were losing the Legitimacy War to the Palestinians. This Legitimacy War is waged on a global battlefield, and features the campaign of boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) that is likely to surge in the wake of the grim experience of the Freedom Flotilla. We need to remember that it was a similar anti-apartheid campaign that led to the collapse of the racist regime in South Africa in the early 1990s. This line of thinking was reinforced by the Turkish Foreign Minister's statement in the Security Council that a nation that follows the path of lawlessness and criminality would lose "its legitimacy as a respectable member of the international community." It is notable that these were the words of Mr. Davutoglu that received the most attention in media commentary around the world.

The ebb and flow of a Legitimacy War are often difficult to discern. Historians have suggested that Britain lost India when its soldiers massacred Indian civilians at Amritsar in 1919, although it took almost 30 years of struggle, Gandhi's inspired leadership, and the impact of World War II to achieve independence. Similarly some have insisted that when the South African police shot unarmed demonstrators in the back at Sharpesville in 1960 they lost the Legitimacy War that eventually led to the downfall of apartheid in 1994. Ironically, Israeli historical memory must be reminded of the crude British naval interception of the Exodus carrying Holocaust survivors in 1947 that sparked the collapse of British colonial administration of the Palestine Mandate a year later. We cannot of course tell whether the Mavi Marmara incident will prove in retrospect to be a similar tipping point, which may take years or even decades to work its way out in the form of Palestinian liberation and Zionist collapse. What we can discern even now is that the Palestinians have gained intense support in many sectors of world public opinion, and that this has the potential by way of a massive soft power mobilization to change the balance of forces that has for so long kept the Palestinians in painful captivity. One can only hope that the lurid bloodshed in the Mediterranean on the early morning of 31 May will catalyze a massive popular movement that can finally bring peace and justice to both peoples in whatever form they freely choose.

Richard Falk
2 June 2010

March 25, 2010

Dear Friend:

The situation in Tibet remains very difficult. Tibetans face a range of social, cultural, economic, environment and political pressure that make living their daily lives a real struggle. This is not a good situation for Tibetans or for the Chinese, two people who have lived in friendship and harmony as neighbors for most of the time in their long historical relationship. His Holiness the Dalai Lama continue to pursue a middle way approach to find a way to create a peaceful, stable future where Tibetan concerns and needs are addressed in a concrete manner within the People's Republic of China.

I am happy to inform you that our talks with the Chinese leadership have resumed after a gap of 15 months. My delegation spent a week in China this past January making efforts to find a solution that will improve the lives of Tibetans in a substantial way and promote a peaceful and secure future for China and the region.

It is critical that a political solution for Tibet is reached with China; however, this will not occur in the short term. It is going to take a lot of work on both sides. As you know, the situation on the ground is not good. Tibetans need more tools, resources and grant support to improve their livelihoods, preserve their culture and protect their environment.

I am very pleased that the Bridge Fund has been able to continue their high impact program which supports education, health care, environmental protection, cultural heritage preservation and innovative economic development with Tibetan partners despite the difficulties in the region.

This program is really making a difference and supports Tibetans to manage their own organizations, programs and projects. This year The Bridge Fund is partnering with World Wildlife Fund and UNESCO and working with support from groups in China to support significant work on the Tibetan plateau.

I hope you will continue your generous support for their work. It is critically needed for the future of the Tibetan people.

With best regards,
Lodi G. Gyari
Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

***

21st May 2010

Dear Sulak,

As you can imagine, we've been thinking a lot about you and your family and colleagues in recent weeks, and we hope you haven't been too adversely affected by the terrible events in Bangkok (even Silom Road, which I used to walk down when I was there). We find it hard to make sense of it all, especially as the media don't really provide any background, but I hope it will eventually be commented on in *Seeds of Peace*.

I now have the final document from the people's tribunal, and I'm very glad they included your statement from a Buddhist perspective, which is an indispensable contribution to any discussion of Sri Lanka.

I enclosed a photo I took when you were with us, just as a memento. I hesitated for quite a while, not knowing how the postal service was being affected by the upheaval; I hope it reaches you now.

Margret joins me in sending you our warm regards and our hope that Siam will emerge from its own crisis reconciled and renewed.

With our very best wishes,
Professor John May
Irish School of Ecumenics
Trinity College Dublin

***

15th June 2010

Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa,
My dear Sulak,

This morning I started reading May-Aug. issue of *Seeds of Peace*. When I came to the Obituary note written by you on George and Lilian I was shocked about the deliberate lie you had written about my obstructing their visit to Sri Lanka. You talk so much about being a Kalyanamitta but why didn't you verify this from me. No government was ever that friendly to me for me to make demands like that even if I did not like them to come. I never got inflamed with them. I knew them for a long time and whenever they came my house was open to them. I cannot understand why this allegation and insult.

Sulak, George and Ariyaratne are three different characters—may be having certain common goals. But the ways we work are different and I respect you for what you are...

I always sensed that you always had reservations about my work. I did not mind that. I knew people who have even tried to eliminate me are your close friends and you are promoting them. I didn't mind that either. Every time I had an opportunity I gave you the highest place humbling myself because I did want you to get rid of the feeling that I am a competitor to your name and fame. I always upheld you with honesty.

You may continue to insult me and ignore the contribution we have done to translate Buddhism for social change. I will take it with equanimity and never retaliate.

Sulak, I am a poor man who is doing his best for the living world. I don't want to steal any thing from you.

Wishing you all the best and with Blessings of the Triple Gem,

Sincerely,
A T Ariyaratne
Sarvodaya Movement
98, Rawatawatta Road, Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

***

text "The European Buddhist Union in Action" on p. 55. My Belgian friend Frans Goetghebeur, the actual EBU president, could be a most willing partner as a source of this development.

With kindest regards,
Lucien Cosijns
Pr. Poppestraat 44, 2640 Mortsel, Belgium
T. +32 3 455 6880, F. +32 2 706 5883
E. lucien.cosijns@telenet.be, www.interfaithdialoguebasics.be

Dear Sir,

I could not help mull over what Sulak Sivaraksa says in his various articles over these many years, that it is cheaper for a country to have monarchy than presidency.

This could not be truer than during the recent visit to Greece. Most of the people spoken to expressed their aggravation and anger, blaming their 340 or so parliamentary representatives for brazenly bankrupting the country, and putting it in ruins. Many wish to see the return of the monarchy.

King Constantine of Greece, then, aged 23, young and inexperienced, although certainly without his good intents, sided with the oppositions against the military force that had seized power. Prompted on by his mother, the queen, he did not hesitate to make what proved to be an ill-fated move. Consequently, toppled and dethroned, the former king lives a life in exile in England ever since, longing to make his eventual return to the Greek throne.

In the context of the on-going political crisis in Thailand, many parties, on both the extreme right and left, have expressed openly, at times warily, their enmities towards the monarchy. They wish to bring an end to the long-held tradition: few even advocates a replacement with such aggrandizement as a presidium.

Ajarn Sulak, contrary to others, aptly compares the Thai monarchy to an age-old tree that has withstood trials and tribulations over the years, since the time of the founding of Bangkok. As in Greece and other countries, once uprooted, truncated, and demised, he argues, monarchy cannot simply be replanted or replaced, even if, in years to come, the populace wishes for its return.

An ultra-royalist to some and an anti-monarchist to many, he asserts his long held belief that the monarchy needs adaptation, particularly, pertaining to greater transparency and less regal rigidity. Above all, it should exercise more loving compassion to those who are 1) suffering from injustice, 2) languishing in poverty, and 3) devoid of opportunities and rightful rights.

Monarchy merits safeguarding from external forces as well as dysfunction within. It requires changes and restructuring to sustain itself into the 21st century. As for the needy national reforms sought for by many, whatever the outcomes, we can never consent to and allow for the abolition of monarchy from Thailand.

Siroch A

6th August 2010

Dear Ajarn,

I cannot say how moved I am by your kindness and compassion. The audience with His Holiness which you made possible through the good offices of Dr. Kanchana was a highlight in my mother's previous life, and she was for ever grateful to you. She was also particularly fond of Dr. Kanchana, who came and visit her on a few occasions. She unfortunately did not have a chance to meet Khun Jeffery, who has been such a devoted and true friend.

Thank you. I wish to contribute also to the building of a the Vajarayana stupa dedicated to Tara, the female Bodhisattva being built in Hua Hin, and will address my donation to you.

With all best wishes.
Jean-Louis

Wisdom of Sustainability Dutch Edition

A stone in the Pond?

After *Seeds of Peace*, Sulak's first book in Dutch translation, *Wisdom of Sustainability* has now been released as *Wijs en Duurzaam* by the same publisher, Asoka, Rotterdam. I do not expect it to become a bestseller but it certainly provides a timely contribution to the debate on the direction of Buddhism in Europe.

Dutch and Flemish share a tiny linguistic community in Europe covering the Netherlands and part of Belgium. Before it started booming in the 1970's in this part of the world, Buddhism was represented by only a handful of eccentrics. The Therevada monks from Thailand who settled in Holland in this era came there to serve the ethnic Thais in the first place. But soon a growing number of Dutch, many of them young people like myself, woke up to the need of a paradigm shift and Buddhist meditation was a great help in exploring the mind and our perceptions of the world. Vipassana meditation groups and retreats became a familiar part of the 'personal growth' activity agenda.

Ajarn Sulak entered the stage in 1994. He was invited as a keynote speaker together with Nobel Peace laureate Mairead Maguire at the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the International Federation of Reconciliation (IFOR), a by then global peace movement based in Holland, strategically positioned between the original World War I and II antagonists England and



Germany. Sulak was in exile at the time of the IFOR celebrations. It was, to my knowledge, the first time that the need for social awakening and activist engagement was addressed from a Therevada perspective.

Only three years later the Dutch version of *Seeds of Peace* was launched, coinciding with the Alternatives to Consumerism conference held later that year in Thailand. By then the diverse Buddhist community in the Netherlands had reached a critical mass such that it could claim subsidized television and radio broadcasting rights. One of the early documentaries of the Buddhist Broadcasting Foundation (BBF) showed Sulak visiting the Netherlands and explaining his vision of engaged Buddhism.

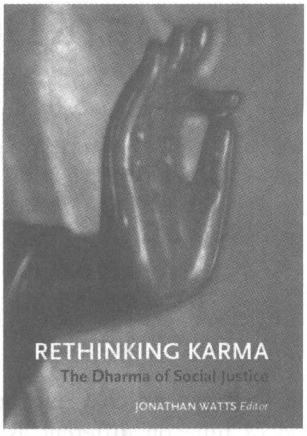
His first book remarkably found fertile soil among the emerging Social Venture Network (SVN) generation of business people who wanted to make a difference and transform the economy. Through the Dutch SVN network Sulak was invited to address the annual international conference and soon SVN took root in Thailand through intensive exchanges and discussions, later igniting the by now mainstream Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) movement. Will *Wijs en Duurzaam. Een boeddhistisch geinspireerde economie* cause another ripple in the pond? Sulak not only addresses the classical good qualities of an enlightened business person or the need to 'green' production practices a little bit. *Wisdom of Sustainabilty. Buddhist Economics for the 21st Century* gradually and graciously, therefore very convincingly, builds up the argument that we need to radically challenge what has been analyzed as 'structural violence', deeply inherent in our global economic architecture.

Hopefully the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) of which Sulak Sivaraksa is a founder, will organize in the second part of 2011 an international 'think tank' meeting on Buddhist Economics in Europe and probably in the Netherlands.

Hans van Willenswaard

Rethinking Karma: The Dharma of Social Justice

by Jonathan S. Watts, Editor
Silkworm Books, 2009, 260 pages,
$24.95, paperback



The moment I cracked open *Rethinking Karma,* I lost track of time. I have been investigating the topic of socially engaged Buddhism for years and in the process, constantly questioning my own imderstanding of what socially engaged Buddhism looks like as a practice. When ethics are added to the mix, it's an even more complex puzzle. But after spending a few hours with *Rethinking Karma* I was reorganizing my thoughts on social engagement, rethinking karma, moving it into a more centralized position.

When I read the introduction to *Rethinking Karma,* my hesitation with the karmic viewpoint expressed in many other books on ethics was affirmed. As Watts states, "karma does not mean fortune or the results; it just means action." Watts then leads the reader to arrive at an understanding of karma as "action based on intention."

My favorite essay in the collection is "Karma: The Creative Life Force of Human Beings," by Nalin Swaris. An abridged version of a chapter in his book, *The Buddha's Way to Human Liberation,* this essay articulates the importance of collective karma for me in a way that continues to shape my individual actions. Swaris states, "Karma is first and foremost the collective action of beings sharing the same species potential." He goes on to state:

> *Humans are not born into a social vacuum. They inherit a world, that is to say, physical and social conditions brought into being by the generations that preceded them. They themselves will leave behind what they inherited either unchanged or significantly changed for the next generation.... Human conditions have conditionally co-arisen, and thus come into being through the action of other beings.... To understand karma as collective action is to understand the necessity of collective action for freedom.*

This is one of many ways to challenge the more common understanding that individual karma is something we carry around, something we are born with, and something we will carry into the next life. This static view of karma is historically Brahminist, not Buddhist, and the Buddha's teachings on non-self, impermanence, and ethics radically transforms this Brahminist understanding. Over time, however, individual karma has been adopted by groups in power as a means of rationalizing oppressive experiences (race, class, caste, gender, ability, etc.). "The law of karma emphasizes personal responsibility and positive action, not passivity to harmful social conventions," writes Mangesh Dahiwale in his essay "An Awakened Vision: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Struggle to Re-ethicize Indian Society." If you are unfamiliar with Ambedkar's work, the Dahiwale essay included in the book is a wonderful introduction.

Rethinking Karma is a critical and comprehensive approach to the historical, social, political, and economic development of karma and the present understanding of the "law of karma." The essays illuminate the extent to which the politics of karma were intricately woven throughout the history of Buddhism and the countries that experienced Buddhism as a state religion. However, the thread of justice that is stitched throughout the book offers many new insights into these conditions.

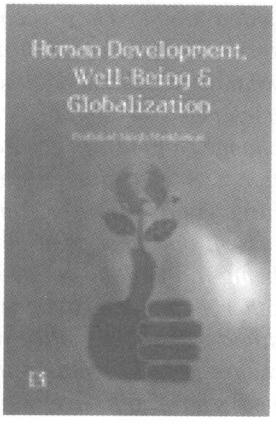
Over the past few months, I have found myself returning to this book for one reason or another. As time has passed, the insights that I have gained from *Rethinking Karma* have both consolidated and expanded. To quote David Loy's concluding essay, "karma is not something I *have,* it is what I *am*, and what I am changes according to my conscious choices." With this understanding, I can work with others to shape the collective karma that we all experience and influence, based on our individual intended actions.

J. Tyson Casey
from *Turning Wheel,*
Summer 2010

Human Development, Well-Being & Globalization

Author: Prahalad Singh Shekhawat
ISBN: 81-316-0321-0
Page: 256
Price: Rs. 650/US$45
Year: 2010

The thematic articles over a period of time on different aspects of human development, well-being and globalization are infused with an alternative, multidisciplinary and cross-cultural perspective. An attempt has been made in this book to rethink concepts, ideas and issues and suggest the need for consideration of broader and multidimensional meanings of development. There is a profound dissatisfaction and confusion about narrow economic and social concepts and indicators of development and social progress. The human development approach associated with Amartya Sen has offered a remarkable course correction in terms of focusing not just on income but on capabilities to enable one to choose and live a valuable life which is worth living. It is argued in the book that capabilities can be even more fulfilling if they lead to real empowerment and multidimensional well-being. Well-being is conceived not as self-centered happiness but more in the sense of human flourishing and virtues. In the context of neo-liberal globalization and its malaise which is manifest in global warming and climate crisis, the present global economic crisis as well as the crisis of meaning and purpose of our common humanity, ideas have been put forth for alternative globalization in the form of



the World Social Forum as opposed to the World Economic Forum. More ethically sound reconsiderations of old assumptions about integration of the world, our planet's future and global well-being have been explored.

"Mr Shekhawat has taken up those aspects of development which are generally relegated to the background in current academic discussion. His grasp of conceptual and historical factors is evident in these writings. I do hope that the analysis that he has attempted and the suggestions he has offered will be seriously considered by scholars and practitioners of social and economic change".

Professor V.S. Vyas
Professor Emeritus and Former Chairman of the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur and Member, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council.

Prahlad Singh Shekhawat is a writer, freelance journalist and founder director of a non-profit NGO, Alternative Development Centre, Jaipur. He has a Master's degree in International Development Studies from the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. He also studied creative writing at the University of Oxford. He was Associate Fellow, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur and Research Associate, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. He is part of the civil society network and people's campaigns on many issues and advisor to the Children's Rights Network in Rajasthan and Consultant to HIVOS-International, a Dutch NGO.

Prahlad Singh has given lectures in Europe and Japan on Indian culture, civil society and environmental movement. He has presented papers at many conferences and also chaired sessions at two international conferences. He has contributed to various journals in India and abroad and also writes for magazines and leading newspapers like *Tehelka* and *Hindustan Times*. His published works include *Aspects of Human Development* and *Culture and The Anand Cooperative Model*.

Professor V.S. Vyas

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

The Privy Council Meeting held at Buckingham Palace on the 21st July 2010, Her Majesty The Queen, on the recommendation of the Privy Council, approved an Order granting a Supplemental Charter to the University of Wales Lampeter, and directed the Lord Chancellor to apply the Great Seal to the Charter. This Charter allows the University of Wales Lampeter to merge with Trinity University College Carmarthen, to create a new university called University of Wales: Trinity Saint David. This is an historical event which brings together the two oldest academic institutions in Wales.

23rd July 2010

****

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Right Livelihood Awards, all Award Laureates will be invited to Bonn, Germany, from September 14th-19th, 2010. During the conference, the Laureates will have time to network, to form new alliances to strengthen their work, to exchange experience, knowledge, the insights from successes and failures. Having become a tradition, these "family gatherings" are an important aspect of the Right Livelihood Award Foundation's work to continuously support its Recipients.

****

Buddhist Insights for a New World Economy
3rd Conference of the Buddhist Economics Research Platform, January 18-19, 2011 in Brisbane, Australia

Interested participants should email an abstract of their planned presentation (about 250 words) accompanied by a biographical note (100 words) electronically by September 15, 2010 to:

Dr. Peter Daniels
Environmental and
Ecological Economics
Griffith School of Environment
Griffith University, Nathan 4111
Brisbane, Australia
Phone: Australia 61-7-3735-7189
Fax: Australia 61-7-3735-7459
Email: p.daniels@griffith.edu.au

****

Celebrating Luang Por Tian Jittasupo's Centenary

at Rajabhat University
Sakolnakorn
16-17 December 2010

****

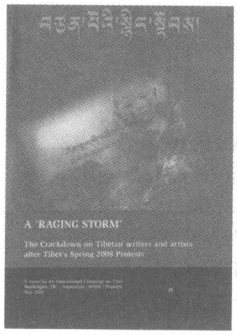
Eco-village Design Education and Training of Trainers, Siam
17 January to 6 March 2011
Wongsanit Ashram

In the follow-on Training of Trainers course, prepare to be enlightened in an innovative approach towards creating and facilitating transformative learning experiences. As with the EDE, the TOT is an experiential and participative course.
For further information please contact
Ms. Narumon,
ede@wongsanit-ashram.org

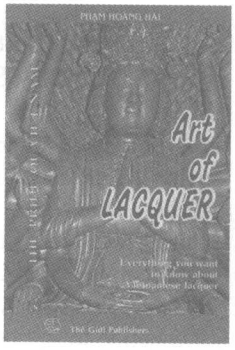
****

Sem Pringpuangkaew's 16th Annual Lecture

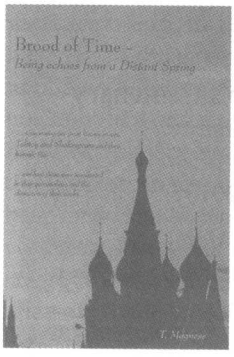
by
Venerable Phra Bhavanaviteht (Khemadhammo Bhikkhu)
on
"The Angulimala program, Buddhism, and perspectival diversity"
at SEM 666 Charoen Nakorn Road, Bangkok
22 January 2011.



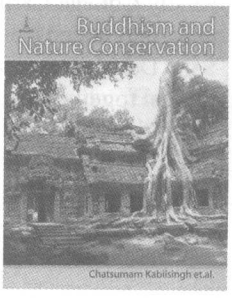
A 'Raging Storm':
The Crackdown on Tibetan Writers and Artists after Tibet's Spring 2008 Protests
A Report by the International Campaign for Tibet, 2010



Art of Lacquer
The Pride of Vietnam
Published by Thê Giöi



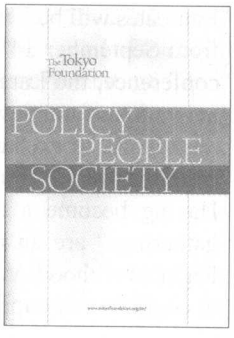
Brood of Time — Being Echoes from a Distant Spring
By T. Magness
First Published in Australia by Griffin Press, 2009



Buddhism and Nature Conservation
By Chatsumal Kabilsingh et.al.
Second published, June 2010
Published by Thai Tibet Center



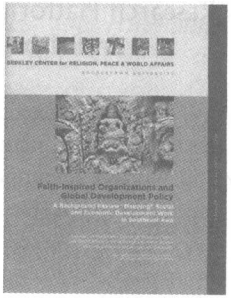
Contradictions of Globalization:
Democracy, Culture, and Public Sphere
Edited, with an Introduction by Tessa Morris-Suzuki
Published by International House of Japan, 2008



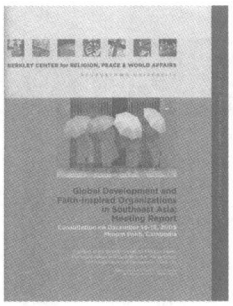
Developing Policy, Investing in People, Transforming Society
Published by the Tokyo Foundation



Empowering Grassroots Civil Society in Myanmar
Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Research of Twelve-Year Grassroots Leadership Training (GLT) Programme (1996-2008)
By Ratana Tosakul, Bo Bo Lwin, Peinn Pein, Dau Nyoi, Irene, Sing Kham, Ko Tar, Naw Aung, and Jessica Armour
Published by Spirit in Education Movement (SEM) Thailand, 2010



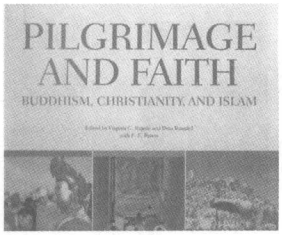
Faith-Inspired Organizations and Global Development Policy
A Background Review "Mapping" Social and Economic Development Work in Southeast Asia
A Project of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs and the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University



Global Development and Faith-Inspired Organizations in Southeast Asia: Meeting Report
Consultation on December 14-15, 2009
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
A Project of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs
and the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University



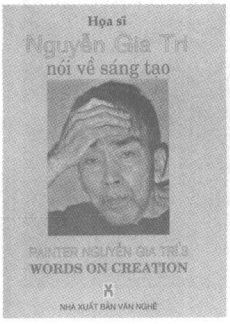
Half of the World
Photographic Essay by Hiroshi Matsumoto
Published by Masaru Shimizu
Design by Kiyoshi Awazu
Published on February 28, 1992



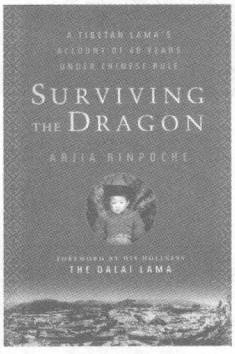
Pilgrimage and Faith: Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam
Edited by Virginia C. Raguin and Dina Bangdel
with F.E. Peters
Published by Serindia Publications
in association with the College
of the Holy Cross, 2010



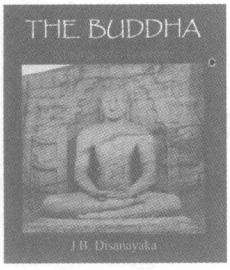
La Laque Vietnamienne
By Nguyen Dang Quang
Edition Tre



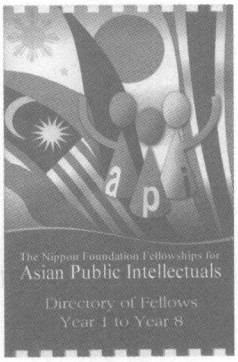
Nguyen Gia Tri
Painter Nguyen Gia Tri's Words on Creation



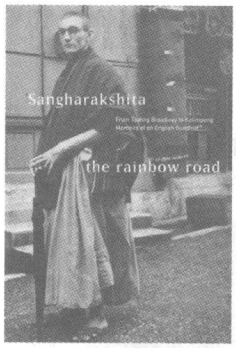
Surviving The Dragon: A Tibetan Lama's Account of 40 Years Under Chinese Rule
By Arjia Rinpoche
Foreward by His Holiness The Dalai Lama
Printed by Rodale Inc., 2010



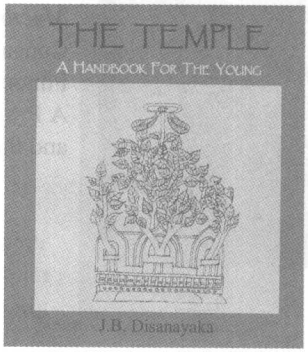
The Buddha: In History and Tradition
By J.B. Disanayaka
First Edition 2009
Published by Sumitha Publishers
Printed by Tharanjee Prints



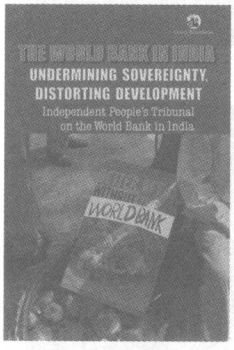
The Nippon Foundation Fellowships for Asian Public Intellectual
(API Fellowships Program)
Directory of Fellows Year 1 to Year 8
Published for the API Fellowships Program
10th Anniversary Regional Celebration, Manila, May 28-30, 2010



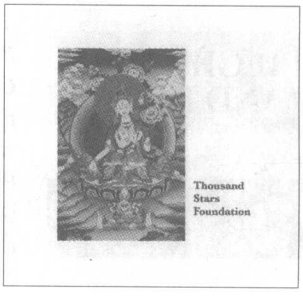
The Rainbow Road:
From Tooting Broadway to Kalimpong
Memoirs of an English Buddhist
By Sanghrakshita
Published by Windhorse Publications, 1997



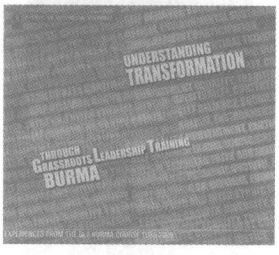
The Temple: A Handbook for The Young
By J.B. Disanayaka
First Edition 2010
Published by Sumitha Publishers
Printed by Tharanjee Prints



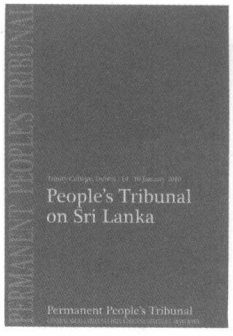
The World Bank in India:
Understanding Sovereignty,
Distoring Development
Edited by Michele Kelly & Deepika D'Souza
First published by Orient Blackswan Private Limited, 2010



Thousand Stars Foundation



Understanding Transformation through
Grassroots Leadership Training — Burma
Experience from The GLT Burma Course 1996-2008
Published by Spirit in Education Movement (SEM)



People's Tribunal on Sri Lanka
Trinity College, Dublin / 14-16 January 2010

Suksit Siam Bookshop
opened on 20th April 2510
at 175 Rama IV Road, Bangkok
has now moved to its new location
at 117-119 Fuang Nakorn Road, Bangkok 10200
Tel: 02-225-9536-8, Fax: 02-222-5188
email: suksit-siam@gmail.com
www.kledthaishopping.com
Open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. except Sunday.
English books on Engaged Buddhism are available.